

The Gospel of John: Part 03 The Light

6 *There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. 7 He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him. 8 He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light.*

9 *The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. 10 He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. 11 He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. 12 But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, 13 who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.*

14 *And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.*

15 *(John bore witness about him, and cried out, “This was he of whom I said, ‘He who comes after me ranks before me, because he was before me.’”)*

16 *And from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. 17 For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. 18 No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known.*

I started to group these verses with 19-34 since they are very similar and at first look I felt I would be giving the same message twice. Upon further thought I decided that there is too much that need to be broken down here to group it with the message on John the Baptizer. This is still part of the prologue and it deals more with Jesus than John. Try to keep with me since we will be talking about two John's today. John the Baptizer and John the author of the gospel we are studying.

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As I stated last time, in this opening prologue John is trying to counter heresies that are creeping into the church and some of John the Baptizers followers are more concerned with him than Jesus. John is trying to point out that the Baptizers role was just to introduce Christ and people should not get hung up on who he is or was.

It's kind of interesting how this still happens today. Some mega preachers have become like rock stars and people get so excited to hear them. Names like Stanley, Graham, Piper, MacArthur: when people get a chance to hear these great preachers they get all excited about seeing them, and the message kinda becomes secondary. Now I'm not criticizing that we like hearing these men preach. I have some preachers that I wrongfully hold up as idols. We just need to keep it in perspective it isn't the messenger but the message that matters.

It is actually getting to be fairly common for one preacher to preach at multiple churches through video. We even have a church like that here in Jackson, and I'm not criticizing that. It's great that people are being saved and discipled in churches that do it that way. It's just we have to remember not to elevate the man delivering the message above the message, which is what was happening with the Baptizer.

It's easy to get caught up in numbers. As I was preparing to start these lessons I constantly had that fear of no one showing up. I used to do a bible study with youth on Tuesday nights. I was going really well. More were coming and then one Tuesday everyone got mixed up on which day the lesson was. I remember sitting there in the room ready to teach and I look and it's five after and I see my wife and three kids sitting there. I started thinking surely someone else will show. 10 after I was getting discouraged. At 15 after I realized I either needed to pack up my family and go home or start the lesson

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with just my family there. At first I was sad and hurt no one was there to hear me teach then I realized that my wife and kids was there and it wasn't about having a lot of people listening to stroke my ego, but about teaching the message that God had for us that night.

I believe it was one of the best lessons ever. I definitely got taught a lesson that it wasn't about me but about God. I'm of the Baptist tradition and our denomination is a big number pusher. The big concern is how many baptisms were there in each church in the last year. A church is considered to be doing good if it keeps growing and getting new members. One of the biggest churches in America spends more time talking about what God can do for you and not near as much talking about what God already did for you and why. The numbers have gotten more important than the message.

So now that we have talked about how important the message is let's get back to the message. In verse 6 we see that John is making sure we recognize that He is talking about the baptizer. He is telling us that John is just a witness for Jesus. *He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him.* John's purpose is to tell others about Jesus. Why is his purpose to tell people about Jesus? So that they may believe.

Listen to Romans 10:13-17 **13** *For "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved"* **14** *How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching?* **15** *And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!"* **16** *But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?"* **17** *So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.*

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Faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ. There has to be someone witnessing about Christ for people to believe. We come to Christ in Faith. In Hebrews Paul tells us that, *“faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.”*¹ Jesus says to Thomas in the Gospel of John *“Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”*² God sends people out to witness to tell others about Jesus. God sends us out to let the light that Jesus is inside of us shine so that others will want to know exactly what it is that is different about us. But God uses us to be a witness and tell them about Jesus. Belief comes by hearing, so we must go and tell everyone about Jesus. This lie that Satan has spread that your faith is a private thing and you shouldn't push it on others nothing but Satans way of using you to send people to Hell. Think about that your not witnessing could very well send your best friend to Hell.

So now let's move on. Again John the author is wanting to make sure we don't mix up the Baptizer with Jesus. *He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, yet the world did not know Him.*

The true light is Jesus and to explain these next few verses we need to go into some doctrine. I'm not going to set here and quote a lot of verses to prove every thing I say, but the manuscript I post online will have them referenced. If you want to check me out then please go online and look them up. Man is born sinful due to the sin of Adam.³ This sin is

¹ Hebrews 11:1

² John 20:29

³ Psalm 51:5, Ephesians 2:3, Genesis 8:21, Job 14:4, Romans 5:12

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so deep and so total that we cannot respond to it with out the help of God.⁴ God in His infinite wisdom knew this and because of His grace and mercy uses the Holy Spirit to enable us to be able to choose to believe or choose not to believe.⁵ God does this for everyone.⁶ That is why it says the light that enlightens everyone was coming into the world.

The next line *He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, yet the world did not know Him*, is John's way of saying isn't it amazing That the creator of the world was standing right there and no one knew Him. All of creation screams God's name, yet here He is and noone could see it. Even Jesus' very own disciples did not fully grasp it until after the resurrection.

He came to His own, and His own people did not receive Him. The Jews had the Holy scripture. They memorized it. They discussed it around the kitchen table. They knew that God was coming. They knew that a Messiah was coming. All of scripture spoke about Jesus. They should have seen it. Yet they missed it. They were waiting on God and when He showed up they said Yeah, okay, your God but we're waiting on God.

But to all who did receive Him, who believed in His name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were not born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God. That is another one of those statements that should make you want to drop to your knees in worship. Do you fully get what that is saying. If you believe in Jesus' name you get the right to claim god as your father. If you believe that Jesus is the son of God, that he left Heaven and came to earth to live a sinless life so that

⁴ Psalm 14:2-3, John 6:44, John 6:65, John 5:44, John 8:43, Isaiah 44:18-20, Jeremiah 13:23, Matthew 12:34, Romans 8:7

⁵ Acts 16:14, John 6:44-45, John 3:18

⁶ John 3:16, John 3:15, Isaiah 55:1, Isaiah 55:3, Ezekiel 33:11, Matthew 7:7-8, Matthew 11:28, Revelation 22:17

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He could take your sin to the cross and die in your place. If you believe that on the third day He arose from the grave then you have the right to claim yourself as a child of God. You don't have to be Jewish, you don't have to be born into any denomination. You don't have to clean up your act first so that He will accept you. You don't have to say any magical words in a prayer. You just believe in the name of Jesus and call on God your father.

Now like a parent God will then start to clean you up. A parent that sees their child have a bike wreck doesn't just say, oh that's too bad. No they take them in their arms and they look for where it hurts. They start cleaning out the wounds. Sometimes that's painful, sometimes we don't want to give up on what is causing is causing the wound. But a good parent is going to do what is necessary to heal their hurt child.

If you believe in Jesus, God is going to heal you. It will take some hard lessons that you want like. He will do some things that will make you raise your fist and scream, "It's not fair." But God loves you and knows what you need for healing. He is going to convict you of your sin. A sin that you love and enjoy will become something you hate and despise and makes you miserable every single time you fall prey to the temptation. It's going to hurt

Just as alcohol burns when it cleans out a wound sometimes God's healing of us will burn and hurt but God is making sure that He takes his child and shapes them into the person that they can be. As a child of God there will be times you will feel His arms around you, just telling you that you are His child and He loves you. Child of God doesn't that sound wonderful.

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So have you received Christ. Have you believed in Jesus and have you claimed that right to be called a child of God. John finishes this by again pointing out the preexistence of Christ and showing us that Moses gave the law to show us our sin, but Christ came to show us God's grace. Jesus came to show us God Himself.

I'm going to quickly discuss verse 14 and then we will start our discussion. *And the word became flesh and dwelt among us.* God became flesh and dwelt among Us Immanuel, "God with us." That should touch us.

I'm going to relay a story from James Boice Montgomery's commentary. He relays a story Martin Luther told about this verse.

He tells of an unspiritual man that showed no reverence for Jesus. Martin Luther said that when the words "And was made man" were sung in church, this man neither crossed himself or nor removed his hat, which were common in the Roman Church of the day. The creeds would be recited and the man would not kneel.

"Luther says, "Then the devil stepped up to him and hit him so hard it made his head spin. He [the devil] cursed him gruesomely and said: 'May hell consume you. ... If God had become an angel like me and the congregation sang: "God was made an angel," I would bend not only my knees but my whole body to the ground! ... And you vile human creature, you stand there like a stick or a stone. You hear that God did not become an angel but a man like you, and you just stand there like a stick of wood!"⁷

⁷ James Montgomery Boice, *The Gospel of John : An Expository Commentary*, Pbk. ed. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books, 2005), 30-31.

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That is just a story but it should make us pause and thank Jesus, whom all things were created through loved us so much that He became flesh so that we His enemies could become children of God. Let's reflect on that as we go through the next couple of weeks.