

The Incarnation: Tradition and Truth
Lesson 3: Believe and Receive John 1:9-13
Pastor Mike Bayer VillageAlive.com

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Introduction

John the Baptist was sent as a witness that all through him might believe—IOW through John's witness all who were exposed to his witness might believe in the Messiah.

We ended with verse 8 where John the writer says that John the Baptist was NOT that light—not the LIGHT OF TH WORLD—but a witness to that light.

Verse 9 starts off by describing the TRUE LIGHT...

A. What is the True Light? :9

1. So who is coming into the world in this verse?

Was it Jesus or every man that comes into the world?

It can read both ways in the Greek.

- NCV: 9 The true Light that gives light to all was coming into the world!
- NIV: 9 The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world.
- NLT: 9 The one who is the true light, who gives light to everyone, was going to come into the world.
- KJV: 9 That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.
- NKJV: 9 That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world.

The basic meaning of the verse is not changed not matter which way you read it.

Jesus is the LIGHT and He is bringing light to all...

Isaiah 60:1-3

1 Arise, shine;
For your light has come!
And the glory of the Lord is risen upon you.
2 For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth,
And deep darkness the people;
But the Lord will arise over you,
And His glory will be seen upon you.
3 The Gentiles shall come to your light,
And kings to the brightness of your rising.

From the beginning—Gen 1:1-3, the Messiah, Jesus was coming to this earth—He was on His way. He made several pre-incarnation appearances—but He was always on His way.

2. The True Light

a. True and Perfect-Complete Light: The word TRUTH here may be in reference to Gen 1:1-3 where God said, “Let there be light.” It was the very first thing ever recorded that God spoke. Here—true light is the original divine idea of ‘the light’ –this light is the perfect light that has so far been represented by imperfect light.

The same word and concept is used regarding the temple...

Hebrews 8:1-2

¹Now *this is* the main point of the things we are saying: We have such a High Priest, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, ²a Minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle which the Lord erected, and not man.

Hebrews 8:24

²⁴For Christ has not entered the holy places made with hands, *which are* copies of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us;

Just as we see light around us—it is like the imperfect earthly temple compared to the heavenly temple. So Christ the True Light is the completion, the fulfillment the perfect light that all other light is a shadow of.

b. What ‘light’ is in you?

Matt 6:22-23 “The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light. ²³ But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness!

- ...if the light that is in you is darkness: All other lights aside from Christ are mere shadows or imitations of the true light—at best they may be representative of true light—but are NOT true light.

Rev 21:22-23 ²² But I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. ²³ The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it. The Lamb is its light.

- As my little one cell flashlight is to the SUN—so is the sun and all other light sources to the TRUE light.

B. Many Reject the True Light 10-11

Here we see John using the Hebrew style of side-by-side writing where clauses and thoughts are connected by the conjunction “and” ...this is also a type syllogism—a type of deductive reasoning based on assumptions and then a conclusion...

1. He was in the world (He governed and regulated the universe because....)
2. The world was made through Him (...He made it all and by Him it is held together)
3. The world did not know Him. (lit. did not acknowledge Him. Rom 1:25 worshiped the creation rather than the creator.)
4. He came to His own
5. His own did not receive Him

C. All Can Receive the True Light 12-13

These two verses are keys to John's theology of the work of the Messiah. Where Matthew and Luke share the details of the incarnation—the birth of Christ—John here shares the theology—the meaning behind the birth.

a. Receive and believe: Here they are the same. To believe in Christ is to receive Him. Believing in or upon His name is the same as believing in Him.

b. We Become God's children: We are given a power-right to become 'children of God.'

1b. The new birth

Here John introduces the NEW BIRTH of the child of God in the middle of explaining the theology of the incarnation—the birth of Jesus. Why does he do that?

Because just as the birth of Christ—the Messiah was a miraculous event that could not be accomplished by man, even though God used mankind (in this case Mary a virgin) to accomplish His will—likewise the NEW BIRTH can ONLY be accomplished by GOD—even though He may use human agency to give 'witness' to the who Jesus is—the NEW BIRTH is a work of GOD just as Jesus birth was a work of God.

The angel Gabriel says to Mary when she asks how can this thing happen to me, "...The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God."

And in John 1:13 we are told that we (all believers in Him) "were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor the will man, but of God." And in verse 12—we are called the Children of God.