

JESUS THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD, THE SPECIAL WITNESS OF JOHN THE BAPTIST JOHN 01:06–08

Introduction

There was one person who was a very special witness to Christ, John the Baptist. John's sole task on earth was to witness and to bear testimony to the Light of the world. His purpose stands as a dynamic example for every believer. The purpose of the believer is to bear the same witness as John: Jesus Christ is the Light of the world.

- I. John was a man sent from God (v. 6).
- II. John was a man sent on a very special mission (v. 7).
- III. John was a great man, but he was not the Light (v. 8).

I. *John 01:06 John the Baptist: The Messenger of God*

A man sent from God. Note three points.

1. "There came a man" and *only* a man. A strong contrast is being made between what had been said about Christ and what is now being said about John.

=> Christ "was...in the beginning"; He was "with God" and He "was God" (Jn. 1:1-2).

=> John was "a man" who had come into existence at birth, just as all men begin their existence at birth. John was the son of a man, whereas Jesus Christ was the one and only Son of God (Jn. 3:16). John was not a divine being, not even an angel. He was a mere man.

Job 7:17 "What is man that you make so much of him, that you give him so much attention.

Psa 8:4 What is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him?

Isa 40:21 Do you not know? Have you not heard? Has it not been told you from the beginning? Have you not understood since the earth was founded?

Isa 40:22 He sits enthroned above the circle of the earth, and its people are like grasshoppers. He stretches out the heavens like a canopy, and spreads them out like a tent to live in.

John 3:27 To this John replied, "A man can receive only what is given him from heaven."

2. The man, however, was "*sent from God*": and he was sent on a very special mission. Two facts show this.
 - a. The word "sent" (See *Sent*, Jn. 1:6)
 - b. The phrase "from God" (*para Theou*) means from beside God. John was not only sent by God, He was sent from the very side and heart of God. He was only a man, but a
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man of high calling and mission, of enormous responsibility and accountability. He was a man sent by God, not by man.

Thought 1. Note three significant points. The servant and messenger of God...

- is not sent forth by men, but by God. He is sent forth as the ambassador of God.
- is sent forth from God, from the very side and heart of God.
- is a man of high calling and mission, of enormous responsibility and accountability.

John 15:16 *“You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit — fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name.”*

2 Cor 5:18 *All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation.*

2 Cor 5:19-20 *That God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men’s sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ’s behalf: Be reconciled to God.*

2 Cor 3:5-6 *Not that we are competent in ourselves to claim anything for ourselves, but our competence comes from God. He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant — not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.*

2 Cor 4:1-2 *Therefore, since through God’s mercy we have this ministry, we do not lose heart. Rather, we have renounced secret and shameful ways; we do not use deception, nor do we distort the word of God. On the contrary, by setting forth the truth plainly we commend ourselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God.*

Eph 3:7 *I became a servant of this gospel by the gift of God’s grace given me through the working of his power.*

1 Tim 1:12 *I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has given me strength, that he considered me faithful, appointing me to his service.*

1 Cor 1:27-29 *But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things — and the things that are not — to nullify the things that are, so that no one may boast before him.*

3. The man was named John. His name means gracious. He was a man sent forth with a name to match his message: *God’s grace* is now to enter upon the scene of world history. Prepare the way for the Lord, who is the embodiment of God’s glorious grace.

JOHN 01: 06 SENT – APOSTLE – COMMISSION

*There came a man who was sent from God; his name was John.
John 01:06*

The word *sent* (*apestalmenos*) means to send out; to commission as a representative, an ambassador, an envoy. Three things are true of the person sent from God.

1. He belongs to God, who has sent him out.
2. He is commissioned to be sent out.
3. He possesses all the authority and power of God, who has sent him out. □

II. *John 01: 07 Mission of John: Proclaim the Light*

A man with a mission. Note two points.

1. The man came to bear witness to the Light. He was sent with a very specific message, and that message was to proclaim the Light, Christ Himself. Christ is the answer to darkness. Christ's life did shine in the darkness. Very simply, since man had brought darkness into the world (by sin), the life of Christ was the light of man, the beam that showed man the way, the truth and the life.
=> Christ showed man the way God intended him to live.
=> Christ showed man the truth of life, that is, the truth about God and man and the truth about the world of man.
=> Christ showed man the life, that is, how to save his life and avoid the things that can cause him to stumble and lose his life.

John 8:12 *When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."*

John 12:35 *Then Jesus told them, "You are going to have the light just a little while longer. Walk while you have the light, before darkness overtakes you. The man who walks in the dark does not know where he is going."*

John 12:46 *"I have come into the world as a light, so that no one who believes in me should stay in darkness."*

2 Cor 4:6 *For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.*

Eph 1:18-19 *I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of his mighty strength.*

1 Pet 2:9 *But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.*

1 Pet 2:10 *Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.*

1 John 2:8 *Yet I am writing you a new command; its truth is seen in him and you, because the darkness is passing and the true light is already shining.*

Acts 20:18 *When they arrived, he said to them: "You know how I lived the whole time I was with you, from the first day I came into the province of Asia."*

Thought 1. The message is a given message. The servant of God is not left on his own to think up a message; he is not dependent upon his own reason, thoughts, and ideas. His message is Christ, the Light of the world.

2 Cor 2:17 *Unlike so many, we do not peddle the word of God for profit. On the contrary, in Christ we speak before God with sincerity, like men sent from God.*

2 Cor 4:1-2 *Therefore, since through God's mercy we have this ministry, we do not lose heart. Rather, we have renounced secret and shameful ways; we do not use deception, nor do we distort the word of God. On the contrary, by setting forth the truth plainly we commend ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.*

1 Th 2:13 *And we also thank God continually because, when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but as it actually is, the word of God, which is at work in you who believe.*

Deu 4:2 *Do not add to what I command you and do not subtract from it, but keep the commands of the Lord your God that I give you.*

Deu 12:32 *See that you do all I command you; do not add to it or take away from it.*

Prov 30:6 *Do not add to his words, or he will rebuke you and prove you a liar.*

Rev 22:19 *And if anyone takes words away from this book of prophecy, God will take away from him his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book.*

2. The purpose of the man's witness is clearly stated: that through Christ all men might believe. His purpose was not...
 - to start a movement for God
 - to organize and administer
 - to minister (Note that John never healed or performed a miracle nor built a programme around the synagogue or temple, Jn. 10:41.)

His purpose was not even to preach. His purpose was to lead men to believe in the Light. He witnessed and proclaimed the Light so that all men might believe. The man was sent to focus on people and to lead them to believe in Christ Jesus. (See Believe Jn. 2:24.)

Thought 1. The servant of God has *one primary purpose*: to lead men to believe in Christ Jesus, the Light of the world. The servant's *purpose* is not to organize, to administer, to oversee, to manage, to teach or to preach. His purpose is as stated: to lead men to believe in Christ Jesus. Everything else is method, not purpose. Men have too often confused methods with purpose. The result has been that teeming millions are still unreached and teeming thousands are being deceived by confusing the methods of religion with the purpose of God: the salvation of men through belief in His Son.

John 3:16 “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”

John 5:24 “I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life.”

JOHN 02:24

SAVING FAITH : BELIEVE — COMMIT — ENTRUST

The word commit or entrust is the very same word “believe” (see Jn. 2:23). This gives an excellent picture of *saving faith*, of what *genuine faith* is — of the kind of faith that really saves a person.

1. Saving faith is not head knowledge, not just a mental conviction and intellectual assent. It is not *just believing the fact* that Jesus Christ is the Saviour of the world. It is not just believing history, that Jesus Christ lived upon earth as the Saviour just as A J Abdul Kalam lived upon earth as the President of India. It is not just believing the words and claims of Jesus in the same way that a person would believe the words of Abdul Kalam.
2. Saving faith is believing in Jesus, *who* and *what* He is, that He is the *Saviour* and *Lord* of life. It is a man giving and turning his life over to Jesus. It is a man casting himself upon Jesus as Saviour and Lord.
3. Saving faith is commitment — the commitment of a man's total being and life to Jesus Christ. It is a man's commitment of all he *is and has* to Jesus. It gives Jesus everything; therefore, it involves all of a man's affairs. The man trusts Jesus to take care of his past (sins), his present (welfare) and his future (destiny). He entrusts his whole life, being and possessions into Jesus' hands. He lays himself upon Jesus' keeping, confiding in Him about his daily necessities and acknowledging Him in all the ways of life. He follows Jesus in every area and in every detail of life, seeking His instructions and leaving his welfare up to Him. It is simply commitment of a man's whole being, all he is and has, to Jesus.

There are three steps involved in faith, steps that are clearly seen in this passage.

1. There is the step of *seeing* (Jn. 2:23) or *hearing* (Rom. 10:16). A man must be willing to listen to the message of Christ, the revelation of truth.
2. There is the step of *mental assent*. A man must agree that the message is true, that the facts of the case are thus and so. But this is not enough. Mere agreement does not lead to action. Many a person knows that something is true, but he does not change his behaviour to match his knowledge. For example, a man knows that eating too much harms his body, but he may continue to eat too much. He agrees to the truth and knows the truth, but he does nothing about it. A person may believe and know that Jesus Christ is the Saviour of the world and yet do nothing about it, never make a decision to follow Christ. This man still does not have faith, not the kind of faith that the Bible talks about.
3. There is the step of *commitment*. When the New Testament speaks of faith, it speaks of *commitment, a personal commitment to the truth*. A man hears the truth and agrees that it is true and does something about it. He commits (entrusts) and yields his life to the truth. The truth becomes a part of his very being, a part of his behaviour and life. □

JOHN 01:05 LIGHT

The Light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.
John 01:05

Light reveals, strips away (Jn. 3:19-20), routs the chaos (Gen. 1:2-3), and guides (Jn. 12:36, 46). It shows the way, the truth and the life (Jn. 14:6). □

JOHN 01:05 DARKNESS

Darkness does not understand the light, does not overcome the light, does not extinguish the light (Jn. 8:12). □

JOHN 08:12 JESUS THE LIGHT

When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "I am the Light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." **John 08:12**

Jesus is said to be the *Light of men* (Jn. 1:4) and the *Light of the world* (Jn. 8:12; 9:5; 12:46). It is possible for the Light, Jesus Himself, to *be in men* (Jn. 11:10; see Col. 1:27) and for men to become children of Light (See *Light — Believers*, Jn. 12:34-36).

Apparently, Jesus used the word light often. John uses the word twenty-four times.

What is meant by calling Jesus the Light?

1. Jesus, the Light, is light by nature. Light is what He is within Himself, within His being. His nature, His essence, His character. Scripture says...
 - that “God is Light” (1 Jn. 1:5);
 - that Jesus is “the image of the invisible God” (Col. 1:15);
 - therefore, “Jesus is Light.” He is “the Light of the world.”
2. Jesus, the Light, tells us that He is holy, righteous and pure. Light is the symbol of purity and holiness. Light means the absence of darkness and blindness; it has no spots of darkness or blackness, nor of sin and shame.
3. Jesus, the Light, reveals. His light shows clearly the nature, the meaning, and the destiny of all things. His light shines in, spots, opens up, identifies, illuminates, and shows things as they really are. The light of Jesus Christ shows the truth about the world and man and God. The light of Jesus Christ reveals that He loves and cares for man and wants man to love and care for Him.
4. Jesus, the Light, guides. His light allows a man to walk out of darkness. Man no longer has to grope, grasp, and stumble about trying to find his way through life. The path of life can now be clearly seen.
5. Jesus, the Light, does away with darkness and with chaos. His light routs, wipes out, strips away, and erases the darkness. The empty chaos of creation was routed by the light given by God (Gen. 1:3). Jesus Christ is the Light that can save man from chaos (Jn. 14:1, 17; 12:46; 16:33).

Jesus proclaimed Himself to be the Light of the world at the great Feast of Tabernacles (Jn. 7:2). The very first ceremony of the Feast holds great significance for Jesus’ claim. It was called “The Illumination of the Temple” and was held in the Court of the Women. The centre of the Court was surrounded by large sections of stadium-like seats. In the open space of the Court sat four huge candelabra. When darkness fell the candelabra were lit, and the elders danced and led the people in singing psalms before the Lord all night. The brilliance and glow from the burning flames of the huge candelabra were said to be so bright that the light could be seen throughout the whole city. It was against this background that Jesus cried out, “I am the Light of the world.” □

JOHN 12:35–36 LIGHT – BELIEVERS

Light is one of the great themes of Scripture.

1. God is light and in Him there is no darkness at all (1 Jn. 1:5).
2. Jesus Christ is the Light of the world — the very embodiment of the heavenly light (Jn. 8:12; 9:5).

3. The light of the knowledge of God is seen in the face of Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 4:6).
4. Jesus Christ “gives light to every man” who comes into the world (Jn. 1:9).
5. Believers are said to become “children of light” through belief in the Light, Jesus Christ Himself (Jn. 12:36).
6. Believers have been transferred from the dominion of darkness into the Kingdom of Christ, the inheritance of light (Col. 1:13).
7. Before they come to Christ, believers are not only in darkness but are an embodiment of darkness. But when they come to Christ, believers are placed in the Light and become an embodiment of the Light itself (Eph. 5:8).
8. Believers are the light of the world (Mt. 5:14-16).
9. Believers are to set their light on a lamp stand — to make their light conspicuous (Mt. 5:15).
10. Evil doers shun the light (Jn. 3:20f).
11. The creation of light is a picture of the expulsion of spiritual darkness (Gen. 1:2f). □

III. *John 01:08 The Humility of John the Baptist*

A man who was great, but he was not the Light. John the Baptist was extraordinarily great. Jesus Himself said, “Among those born of women there has not risen anyone greater than John the Baptist” (Mt. 11:11). But, he was not the Light. The humility of John was striking. (Read Jn. 1:19-23, 27 for the impact of his humility and the example he set for every servant of God.) No matter how great the ministry of a man may be in the eyes of men, that man’s ministry is eclipsed by the greatness of John. Yet John says, “The thongs of [His] sandals I am not worthy to untie.” (Jn. 1:27)

Mat 23:12 For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.

Phil 2:3-4 Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.

James 4:10 Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.

1 Pet 5:5 Young men, in the same way be submissive to those who are older. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.” ■