

The World Did Not Know Him (John 1:6-13)^a

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John 1:6-9

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. This man came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all through him might believe. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world¹

1. “came for a witness, to bear witness”

A. John’s emphasis upon witnesses

I. The Trinity

- a. The Father (John 5:31-32, 34, 37; 8:18)
- b. Christ Himself (John 8:14, 18; cf. 3:11, 32; 8:37)
- c. The Spirit (John 15:26; 16:14)

II. The works of Jesus (John 5:36; 10:25; 14:11; 15:24)

III. Scripture (John 5:39; 45-46)

IV. John the Baptist

V. The Disciples (John 15:27; 19:35; 21:24)

VI. The Samaritan woman (John 4:39)

VII. The multitude (John 12:17)

2. “that all through him [John the Baptist] might believe”

A. The evangelistic purpose (John 20:30-31)

“And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.”

3. “He was not that light”

- A. Underscoring the superiority of Jesus over John the Baptist (John the baptist: “He must increase, I must decrease” [John 3:30])
- B. The ministry of John’s baptism may have gone as far afield as Ephesus (Acts 18:25)
- C. Jesus “was” whereas John “came”
- D. Jesus was God whereas John “was a man”
- E. Clarifying that John was not the Messiah

4. “gives light to every man” - “whether he sees it or not”²

- A. The light shines on all, but there is a need to overcome blindness

I. Stage 1: general revelation (Rom. 1:25)

a. “General”

- i. Does not refer to the character of the revelation itself: “the revelation is of a general nature”
- ii. Refers to its audience: it is general in scope, available to all people at all times in history
 - Some revelation is not historically general (e.g., DNA, CMB, Hubble images)
 - As our ability to discern more of the physical world increases, so does the related revelation of God
 - This is to be expected since God’s handiwork is impressed throughout His creation

II. Followed by Special revelation (Ps. 19)

- a. General revelation - “The heavens *declare* the glory of God . . . *there is no speech or language where their voice is not heard* . . .” (Ps. 19:1-3)
- b. Special revelation - “The *law* of the LORD is perfect . . . the *testimony* of the LORD is sure . . .” (Ps. 19:7-8)

- B. Every man - in the sense that a function of the light is to bring *salvation* or *judgment*

- I. Jesus Baptizes with the Spirit and with fire — every man will undergo one or the other

- II. The light shines in the darkness and is not comprehended (John 1:5)

- III. Men loved darkness rather than light (John 3:19)

- IV. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose [them]. (Eph. 5:11)

V. Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels of the hearts. Then each one's praise will come from God. (1Cor. 4:5)

C. Division emphasized - separating power of light vs. darkness

I. Light becomes SALVATION: for those who respond

II. Light becomes JUDGMENT: for those who reject

5. "coming into the world"

A. Phrase "coming into the world" - applies to the light or every man?

I. KJV, NKJV - men are coming into the world

II. ESV, NASB, HCSB, NET - the true light, coming into the world (emphasizing the incarnation)

a. John 1:10-11 - He was IN THE WORLD . . . He CAME to his own

III. Barrett - refers to the incarnation

'all who come into the world' is a common rabbinic expression for 'every man'³

in the next verse the light is in the world; it is therefore natural to suppose that it should previously be described as coming . . . preferred, and it must be supposed that reference to the incarnation begins already in this verse⁴

John 1:10-13

He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.⁵

1. "was In the world . . . made the world"

A. Greek order

I. in the WORLD (He was)

II. and the WORLD (through Him became)

III. and the WORLD (Him did not know)

The world missed its great opportunity. It did not come to know the Word when the Word was in its very midst.⁶

IV. Emphasis: THE WORLD - made by him, did not know

V. Shocking: the Created world rejected their Creator!

2. **“He came to his own, and His own did not receive Him”**

A. Greek order

I. to HIS OWN (he came)

II. and HIS OWN (Him not they received)

III. Emphasis: His very own: 1) he came to; 2) rejected

IV. Shocking: Israel rejected their Messiah!

B. Two groups which missed Jesus

I. The *world* (didn't recognize their Creator)

II. The *Jews* (did not receive their Messiah)

3. **“the world” vs. “his own”**

A. Gentiles vs. Jews

B. Gentiles “did not know”, but Jews “did not receive”

I. The Jews should have known better

4. **Source of major misunderstanding and misinterpretation of NT passages**

A. The presentation of Jesus as King and Messiah to Israel

B. The postponement of the kingdom

C. The impossibility of the kingdom until Israel recognizes Messiah

D. Something different is afoot in this age having to do with “the world”

5. **“But as many as received Him”**

A. Contrasted with His own nation which rejected him (Rom. [10:19-21](#))

B. Three groups

I. The world (at large) which did not know him

II. His own (nation) which did not receive him

III. Those who received him (from both the world and the nation)

6. “He gave the right (ἐξουσίαν [exousian], bestowed authority) to become children of God”

A. children(τέκνα [tekna]) emphasizes begotten (born), less so inheritance (e.g., sons)

I. “who were BORN” (John 1:13)

B. The world believes that God is Father of all men—the “brotherhood of man”, but not in the sense related here

7. “the ones believing in the name of Him”

A. What’s in a name? For us, just a label. Biblically/historically - the whole personality/character

B. Trusting in His person

C. Demons “believe—and tremble” (James 2:19)

I. They believe in His name, Who He is, *but they don’t trust in His person*

8. “who were born, not of blood nor the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God”

A. Greek order: “who: not of X, not of Y, not of Z, BUT OF GOD WERE BORN”

B. “were born” is passive, as one might expect!

C. bloods (αἱμάτων [haimatōn], plural) - procreation: mother and father, physical descent

I. Singular would have been a possible contradiction with the idea of redemption by the blood (singular) of Christ (1Pe. 1:18-19)

D. “will of man” = θελήματος ἀνδρός [thelēmatos andros] = could refer to husband

E. Summary idea: NOT BY HUMAN AGENCY

F. Similar to the incarnation: NOT BY HUMAN AGENCY

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Endnotes:

1. [NKJV](#), John 1:6-9
 2. [Ref-1515](#), John 1:6
 3. [Ref-1515](#), John 1:9
 4. [Ref-1515](#), John 1:9
 5. [NKJV](#), John 1:10-13
 6. [Ref-1516](#), John 1:10
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Sources:

- NKJV** Unless indicated otherwise, all Scripture references are from the *New King James Version*, copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.
- Ref-1515** C. K. Barrett, *The Gospel According to St. John* (London, England: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1955, 1965).
- Ref-1516** Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to John, Revised Edition* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1994). ISBN:0-8028-2504-4^d.
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Links Mentioned Above

- a** - See http://www.spiritandtruth.org/teaching/John_by_Tony_Garland/004_John_1_6-13/index.htm.
- b** - See <http://www.spiritandtruth.org/id/tg.htm>.
- c** - See <http://www.spiritandtruth.org>.
- d** - See <http://www.spiritandtruth.org/id/isbn.htm?0-8028-2504-4>.