

John 1:6-8, 19-28 NAU



How
Are
You
Reflecting the Light of the World?

Saturday, 12/12 at 4:00 † Sunday, 12/13 at 9:00

Third Sunday in Advent – 2020

Join us on Wednesdays in Advent: Service at 11 & 7

Christmas Eve at 6; Christmas Day at 10

Introduction: Dear friends in Christ: Why are we here – *in this difficult world, rather than in the glory of heaven?* **God has a purpose for each one of our lives!** Jesus said that we, His followers, ARE **salt** and **light**; in other words, we are HERE to make an *eternal difference* in the lives of others!

In this sermon, *let's notice how God worked through John the Baptizer*. Then, *near the end of this sermon*, let's identify **some practical ways** in which God can work through you and me to make an eternal difference in the lives of others!

As we get into the text, keep in mind that the Holy Spirit is moving *John the Apostle* to write about *John the Baptizer*.

1. **The Purpose of John the Baptizer:** ⁶ **There came a man sent from God, whose name was John.** ⁷ **He came as a witness, to testify** [*to tell the truth*] **about the Light** [*about*

the coming Messiah, who is the TRUE LIGHT of the world], so that all might believe [in Jesus] through him [that is, through John the Baptizer].⁸ He was not the Light, but he came to testify about the Light. // So why did God send John the Baptizer? To tell people the truth about Jesus! And why is such truth important? Jesus said, “...you will know **the truth**, and **the truth** will make you free” (Jn. 8:32 NAU). Free from what? Free from our sins eternally condemning us!

2. **The Identity of John the Baptizer:**¹⁹ This is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent to him priests [those who performed sacred rites] and Levites [those who performed tasks related to the temple rites] **from Jerusalem** [which is about 20 miles away] **to ask him...**
 - a. The Christ: “**Who are you?**”²⁰ **And he confessed and did not deny, but confessed, “I am not the Christ.”** // Because of John’s ✦miraculous birth, ✦strong truth-telling, and ✦popularity, they wondered if he, *John the Baptizer*, might be the Christ – *the Messiah, the Promised Savior* – yet John said, “I am not...”
 - b. Elijah:²¹ **They asked him, “What then? Are you Elijah?” And he said, “I am not.”** // Why did they mention Elijah as a possibility? Because of these words in the last book of the OT; God the Father said, “Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the LORD” (Mal. 4:5 NAU). Do those words mean that Elijah, the great OT prophet, would actually return? This is what the angel Gabriel said to Zacharias about John the

Baptizer: “[Your Son, whom you will name John,] will go *as a forerunner* before [the Christ] **in the spirit and power of Elijah...**” (Lk. 1:17 NAU).

- c. **The Prophet: “Are you the Prophet?” And he answered, “No.”** // They didn’t say, “Are you a prophet,” but are you **THE** prophet? What does that mean? The LORD spoke these words about 1,400 years before the time of Jesus: **“I will raise up a prophet** [*a particular prophet, in other words, THE prophet*] **from among their countrymen like you** [*Moses*], and I will put My words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him” (Deut. 18:18 NAU). John the Baptizer was not THE prophet, *but Jesus IS THE prophet!*
- d. ²² **Then they said to him, “Who are you, so that we may give an answer to those who sent us? What do you say about yourself?”** ²³ He said, **“I am A VOICE OF ONE CRYING IN THE WILDERNESS, ‘MAKE STRAIGHT THE WAY OF THE LORD,’ as Isaiah the prophet said.”** // John basically said: 700 years ago, God moved Isaiah to write about a person who would come and cry out in the wilderness – *in order to prepare the way for the Christ. I AM THAT PERSON!*

3. **The Work of John the Baptizer:** ²⁴ **Now they had been sent from the Pharisees** [*“an organized society of Jews who claimed authority in interpreting the Scripture and setting rules for the observance of the law in daily life” (Friebert, BW)*]. ²⁵ **They asked him, and said to him, “Why then are you baptizing, if you are not the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?”** ²⁶ **John answered them saying, “I baptize in**

water, *but among you stands One whom you do not know.* ²⁷ *“It is He who comes after me, the thong of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie.”* ²⁸ These things took place in Bethany beyond the Jordan, where John was baptizing. // Did you catch what John said? *“...among you stands One whom you do not know...”* John indicated that THE VERY CHRIST was among them, *in that same multitude of people!*

4. **God’s Work through Us to Others:**

- a. Last week I asked: *Why will people come to us?*
Because they know: 😊 we do what we say; 😊 we care about them; 😊 we pray for them; 😊 we are kind to them; 😊 we are honest with them; 😊 we speak relevant words to them; and 😊 we offer them God’s forgiveness and peace!
- b. Today I am asking: *What can we do toward others?* 😊 like and share the Bethlehem Facebook posts; 😊 send Christ-centered Christmas cards; 😊 display Christ-centered decorations inside; 😊 display Christ-centered decorations outside; 😊 invite others to attend with us; and 😊 encourage others to read the Christmas parts of each Gospel account (Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 1:1 – 2:20; John 1:1-14).

Let Us Pray: Dear Father, as John the Baptizer prepared the way for Jesus – *by telling the truth to all who would listen*, so help us to do the same as we take action to like, share, send, display, invite, and encourage!