

Jesus as John Introduced Him

Understanding Jesus by Understanding the True Light Coming into the World But Not Being Known or Received by Some

Introduction

John 1:9-11

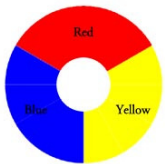
⁹ There was the true Light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man. ¹⁰ He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. ¹¹ He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him.

What are we talking about here when we say “the **true Light...**”? Who are we talking about when we say “**He** was in the world...”?

- Are we talking about the pre-incarnate Logos/Word we have been talking about so far in John’s introduction of Jesus, his Prologue?
- Or are we talking about the incarnate Logos/Word (our Lord Jesus) who is clearly coming into view in verse 14, “the Word became flesh and dwelt among us”?

Pastor Kit Culver argues that John is talking about BOTH! He argues that John’s introduction is primarily thematic not and strictly chronologically ordered. He sees the passage before us today, John 1:9-11 as transitional. He gave a very helpful picture that I want to pass on to you. Imagine a color spectrum. Remember ROY G BIV to remember the colors of a rainbow. The primary colors are red, yellow and blue. The other colors are derived from mixtures of the primary colors. Between Yellow and Blue and consisting of a mixture of both is the color green.

The Primary Color Wheel



Kit likens our passage (really 9-13) to the color green -- comprised of a mixture of yellow and blue. John is speaking about the pre-incarnate Logos/Word, God (Yellow); AND about the incarnate Logos/Word, Jesus (Blue) at this unique time in history when the former is becoming the latter, i.e. when the pre-incarnate Logos/Word is being incarnate in the person of Jesus.

John’s introduction/prologue begins in verse 1 speaking of the pre-incarnate Word, in verses 6-8 John introduces John the Baptist, verses 9-13 transition us through a “Green” area where both the pre-incarnate Logos and the incarnate Logos are in view, and in verse 14 John is writing fully of the incarnate Word.

Kit argues that John the Baptist himself stands at the entry of this time of transition and that the Apostle John's inclusion of John the Baptist at this point of transition between the pre-incarnate Logos and the incarnate Logos in his introduction of Jesus is particularly fitting.

I must acknowledge this as one of my points of growth in considering John's prologue. I had before most readily understood John the Baptist to be the one who prepared the way for Jesus. But seeing him as John includes him here I see him as preparing the way for the pre-incarnate Logos/Word who was God, Yahweh Himself, who had promised to come to His people and deliver them and right all that was upside down. Isaiah 40 begins with this language. Yahweh Himself would come to restore. This was why the second temple was constructed, so that Yahweh would come. This was the expectation at the time of John and Jesus, that Yahweh would come and establish the KOG ruled by a king in the line of David, a kingdom like David's. Isaiah had prophesied that Yahweh would come in the person of His Servant as prophesied in his Servant Songs (see last week), and as preceded and heralded by a forerunner who would announce and prepare the way for the coming of Yahweh.

When we see John the Baptist as coming to prepare the way for Jesus, we are susceptible to seeing him isolated from the greater salvation history of which he is most definitely a part. However, when we see John the Baptist as not only the one who went before Jesus but also, and first, as the one who went before Yahweh the pre-incarnate Logos/Word as He came to His people as He promised He would in a way greater than He had in the rest of all the OT times, then we see him as the herald of the Servant promised in all the Scriptures. He heralded Yahweh's coming. And soon enough John will make clear to his readers that Yahweh came in the person of His Servant who is Jesus our Lord. Yes John heralded Jesus but Jesus is the incarnation of the Logos who "was God" and in whom existed life and Light.

Today we are living in the heart of the green between the yellow and blue. John the Gospel Writer is writing about Jesus but by way of speaking first of the eternal Word who was God and in whom was life and Light. **The Word** coming following the **preparation of John** would become incarnate in **Jesus**.

This makes Jesus bigger than a really special baby in a manger, it makes Him even bigger than the one who can forgive our sins and get us to heaven. What Jesus do you want to know? The Jesus of your current understanding, or the Jesus revealed in all the Scriptures? It is ironic that to know the bigger Jesus we have to pay attention to the smaller details.

Let's continue to do that right now in verses 9-11 of John 1. Let's read from the beginning.

I. Who, How, What...

A. Verse 9

"There was the true Light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man."

1. Clause 1 -- "There was the true Light"

a) Words of Clause 1

(1) "Light"

(a) Light from 1-8 -- From last week: Remember the Light was the life which was in the Word who was God (1-5). And from God's first "Let there be light" (Gen 1:3) I am helped by letting LIGHT point to the creating/redeeming presence and work of God which brings about His purposes from the darkness of pre-creation or the darkness of fallen estranged humanity. Light (all that is of God and His life), darkness (all that is not of God and is of death). If estranged humanity can be pictured by darkness, redeemed humanity in communion with God can be pictured by Light. The Light of the Word was in the world since creation, subdued but present after the fall, and it would be most evident in the person of Jesus the incarnate word.

(2) “true”

(a) “true” -- real or genuine, especially think of **ultimate** contrasting “what is earlier and provisional or anticipatory” (Carson). Ladd (as Carson quotes him) says it indicates real “because it is the full revelation of God’s truth.” John uses ‘true’ to describe the ultimate expression of several things (worshippers, bread, a vine, God Himself). Consider John’s use of the “true bread.”

(i) John 6 -- ³² Jesus then said to them, “**Truly, truly, I say to you, it is not Moses who has given you the bread out of heaven, but it is My Father who gives you the true bread out of heaven.**

God had provided mana that was bread indeed, but it was not His ultimate provision for His people, that was bound up in the person of Jesus. From mana to Jesus, from Light to true Light. It is the movement from prior to ultimate.

(3) So “true Light” indicates... a distinction between the Light so far spoken of and the “true Light” John wants us now to consider. The prior manifestation of the Light was genuine, but not the ultimate expression that John here calls to mind.

(4) “was” -- “The true Light was” (lit. rendering)

(a) Was = Existed

(b) John wants us to start here, “OK, there existed the true light.”

(c) “Was”, the verb “to be” is distinguished from verbal idea of “coming” in the next clause

b) **Meaning of Clause 1 -- There existed at this singularly most important time in salvation history, in the eternal Word that was God the true=ultimate Light -- the ultimate power and purpose and presence of God Himself.**

2. **Clause 2 -- “which, coming into the world, enlightens every man”**

a) **Phrase 1 -- “coming into the world”**

(1) **Carson: This phrase describes the “true Light”** not “every man” as in AV and NIV footnote

(2) **“coming”** -- NOT “was (ἦν from εἰμί, I am) in the world”; but the true Light is described here as “coming” (ἐρχόμενον from ἔρχομαι, I come) in some special way. Carson: “The coming of the Word into the world described in the Prologue, is nothing other than the sending of the Son into the world, described in the rest of the book.” p. 122. JP: remembering the transitional time John is describing carry with you at the same time both the coming of the true Light in the pre-incarnate Logos/Word and in the incarnate Word during this climactic transitional time of salvation history between the age that was and the age that has now come about in Christ Jesus.

(3) **“world”** -- **What did John have in mind in his use of “world”**

(a) **Created order** -- the universe of all that God created

(b) **John’s Uses of “the world” as Carson describes**

(i) **Positive Overtones -- John 3:16: God so loved the world...**

(ii)**Neutral Overtones -- John 21:25:** And there are also many other things which Jesus did, which if they *were written in detail, I suppose that even the world itself *would not contain the books that *would be written.

(iii)**Negative Overtones -- the world especially of men in rebellion against God.** Carson says this is the “vast majority” of uses; it is “not the universe, but the created order (especially of human beings and human affairs) in rebellion against its Maker” (Carson p.123).

(iv)[All uses of ὁ κόσμος in the Gospel of John](#)

(4) **Meaning of the true Light “coming into the world”** -- When we read these words think here of the ultimate expression of the Light (the creative ordering redemptive power and presence of God) coming into the fallen and estranged world in a new and special way at this climactic time of salvation history exceeding the Light’s former being in the world. What does this true Light do? Look at the next phrase, the true Light coming into the world, “enlightens every man.”

b) **Phrase 2 -- “enlightens every man”**

(1) **“enlightens” as per Carson’s range of meanings**

(a) **Illumination of inner knowledge**

(i) **as in general revelation (Ro 1:20)**

(ii) **incarnation enlightening every man not without exception but without distinction**

(iii) **seeing Christ as light for every man**

(b) **Primary lexical meaning: “to shed light upon” i.e. to make visible. Not inner illumination of General or even Special revelation but “objective revelation”** the light that comes into the world with the incarnation of the Word, the invasion of the “true Light”. It shines on every man and divides the race: some flee others receive. See John 3:16-21

(2) **“every” -- means every.** The reason I think it may not mean all men is that it does not seem to be the case that all men are illumined in the first sense. But if we go with Carson to the second sense then indeed all men stand in the objective true Light that has come regardless of how they respond to it.

(3) **Meaning of “enlightens every man” -- shines on every man** not causes every man to see and believe and come to Him. Men have the true Light but that does not mean that all men see the true Light and come to God as He intends. There must be a receiving, a response of faith.

(a) Some do see and come-- John 1:12-13

(b) Others stand in the same Light but don’t come -- John 3:19-21 **19 This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil. 20 For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed.**

- c) **Meaning of Clause 2 -- The true Light of the Word coming into the estranged world shines in a new and ultimate way for all to see.**
3. **Meaning of Verse 9 -- The true Light (the ultimate manifestation of the power and presence of God) existed at the time of John the Baptist and he bore witness of this true light who was the Logos who was God Himself, and this Light that John was heralding shines for all to see.**

But the sad new is broken first in the next two verses.

B. Verse 10

**He was in the world,
and the world was made through Him,
and the world did not know Him.**

1. **“He”** -- Think first of the pre-incarnate Word in whom was life and Light, who “was God” Himself. Then think also of Jesus who John is shortly to present as the incarnation of that Word.
2. **That the world was made through the pre-incarnate Word was already established in verse 1-3.**
3. **The new and sad development is John’s statement that “the world did not know Him.”** It was not that the world did not know of Him. The world of men in estrangement from God did not know Yahweh Himself even as He was coming to them in the shining Light of the Word at this climactic time of salvation history.
 - a) ILLUS. -- I picture a son estranged from his father but living in the same house. The son does not care to have a relationship with the father. He has a separate entrance to the house and that is just fine with him. He comes and goes and does life independent of his father and finds every excuse to decline his father’s invitation to dinner, for a walk, to share some time. No, the son is doing his own thing and has no time of the father. He is aware of his father’s existence; but he has no desire to cultivate a relationship with him.
 - b) So too in the time John is writing about in our passage. The world of men is very much like the estranged son in my illustration -- aware of God but having no interest and no meaningful relationship with Him.
4. **Read v. 10 with some sorrowful amazement that I believe is behind John’s words.**

He was in the world,
and the world was made through Him,
and [still] the world did not know Him.

5. It is not that at the time of Christ there was no knowledge of God. It was that the world did not seek to come to the Light and know God as He was revealing Himself: in the creation, as He always does; in the Scriptures, that were available to them; or in the witness of John the Baptist, who was declaring this to be the time Yahweh Himself in the person of the Isaianic Servant was coming to establish His kingdom. The Logos Light was in the world, the world was made through Him and yet the world did not know Him. Is that not the sad bad news?

I am afraid it gets worse before it gets better.

C. Verse 11

**He came
to His own,**

**and
those**

who were His own did not receive Him.

1. "His own" from 11a

- a) Some think this indicates the created world -- the world that belongs to Him by virtue of His creating it.
- b) Others think this indicates His heritage (Culver, Carson) as in the Jewish nation with its central city Jerusalem a.k.a. Zion, the place of promise where God would dwell in the temple with His people as distinguished in some special way from the rest of creation.

(1) Is 2:3

And many peoples will come and say,
"Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord,
To the house of the God of Jacob;
That He may teach us concerning His ways
And that we may walk in His paths."
For the law will go forth (A)from Zion
And the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.

Even if "His own" in v.11a might refer to some impersonal heritage, the use of "His own" in v.11b is clearly a reference to people -- God's own people

2. "His own" from 11.b

a) Masculine plural accusative

b) It is right to interpret this here: "those **people** who were His own." Who were these people? They were the people of Israel.

(1) Remember that God had chosen Abraham and his descendants as his special people through whom all the families of the earth would be blessed (**Gen 12:3**). **Hold this in mind. God chose Abraham and promised to bless him and his descendants in a special way SO THAT His blessings would come through them to the rest of the world.** The descendents of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were the people of Israel. He called that people group "My Son" ("Israel is My son, My firstborn...Ex 4:22) and he designated them in distinction from others as His people.

(a) Ex 6:2-9 esp. 7a-- "Then I will take you for My people, and I will be your God;"

(2) [Jeremiah](#), [Ezekiel](#), [Hosea](#), [Zechariah](#) all spoke like this

(a) Jer 32:38 -- They shall be My people, and I will be their God;

(3) Apostle Peter picks up on the distinction between Israel (the people of God) and the rest of humanity. Although I think he is addressing Christian regardless of whether they were Jewish or Gentile, you can hear in Peter's words the distinction afforded Israel by God.

(a) 1 Peter 2:9-10 -- But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for *God's* own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; **10** for you once were not a people, but now you are the people of God; you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

(b) See also [Rom 9:23-26](#); [Eph 2:esp 11-13](#)

c) **God's Intention for Israel** -- God intended "His own people" (Israel) to serve a representative and mediatorial function to the rest of the people of the earth. The general calling of humanity as image-bearers and sons of God was made specific by God in Israel. God intended Israel out of all the peoples to be His people representing Him and mediating His blessing to the other people of the world. Pastor Kit says Israel's calling was "to mediate the knowledge of Yahweh and His blessing to all of the earth's families" (Culver, p.27).

(1) The Logos Light came to "His own heritage" and "those people who were His own" because it was God's intention to work with and through Israel. But not Israel that is Israel in name only comprised of people circumcised in the flesh by the hand of man but not circumcised by the hand of God in their hearts.

(2) God intended and intends to work through Israel as Israel is in the true Israel who we know is Christ Jesus our Lord. Go forward with me for a bit in the life and ministry of Jesus and His disciples

(a) [Mat 10:1-14](#) when Jesus sent out the 12 to minister as He Himself had been ministering. Read at least vv. 5-8

(i) Pastor Kit sees Jesus' choice of His 12 apostles as not coincidental with the 12 tribes of Israel; but as purposeful to communicate that He was reconstituting Israel out of the Israel that had failed in the God designed functions of Israel. Jesus is the true Israel as he is the true bread and the ultimate expression of the true light.

(b) [Mat 15:21-28](#) when Jesus was conversing with the non-Israelite Canaanite woman. Read at least v. 24.

(3) These focusing of Jesus ministry on the people of Israel were never intended to be a limitation on the scope of His ultimate ministry but they were intended to work with Israel so that Israel would become Israel indeed and serve in representative and mediatorial capacity God had intended for them all along -- that through Abraham and his descendents God's blessing would come to all the families of the earth.

(4) Returning back to our passage, that the Logos Light came to "His own" must be regarded in a similar way. God was at this time (that John is writing about -- this time of the ministry of John the Baptist) breaking into the darkness of estranged humanity and "reconstituting" Israel out of the Israel that had failed to be Israel. He came to His own at least in the witness of John the Baptist for the greater purpose of working with and through to all the families of the earth.

3. But the Sorry Sad News is that "those people who were His own people"...

a) **"did not receive Him."** How did they not receive Him? First of all they did not receive the pre-incarnate Word in that they did not receive the witness of John that this was the time that Yahweh Himself was coming in the Isaianic Servant. This lack of receipt is seen in the fact that not all of Israel received the ministry of John the Baptist, not all came to him to be baptized, not all were thus prepared to receive Jesus as the Christ. Secondly, clearly they did not receive Him as the incarnate Word either,

i.e. they did not receive Jesus. This is seen in the lethal resistance to Jesus climaxing in His arrest, conviction, crucifixion at the hands of the people of Israel.

- b) His own did not receive Him. In what sense did they not “receive”? We will see next week in verse 12 and 13 that that receiving implies believing, “as many as **received** Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who **believe** in His name...”. The people of Israel by in large at the time of Yahweh’s coming in the Logos-Light did not believe that He was coming at this time and in this way.

That His own did not receive Him is the sad bad news.

II. How this Helps us Know Jesus

A. Jesus is the incarnation of the eternal, personal, divine Word in whom is life and who is the Light of men. He is Yahweh come in the person of the Isaianic Servant following the heralding of the Isaianic forerunner (John the Baptist) at the climax of salvation history -- the promised prophesied time when Yahweh Himself would come to His people to deliver and restore and inaugurate the Kingdom of God. He is bigger than my personal Savior. He is God’s goal. He came at a time that is the time of fulfillment in God’s plan of salvation (Mk 1:15), the fullness of time (Gal 4:4); the time of the summing up of all things in Christ (Eph 1:10).

B. Jesus is Yahweh come to accomplish His ultimate purposes.

Conclusion

That the Logos-Light came to Israel and His own did not receive Him is not only sad bad news for them; it is also a warning for us!

People can turn away from the light of the Lord.

Christians can turn away from the light of the Lord.

Christians can turn away from Jesus.

I am not saying that a Christian can lose their salvation.

I am saying that the fact that Israel did not receive Him even though He came to them should alert us to humanity's common ability to **not deal with the Light** that has most ultimately come in Christ. We can live as if our lives are bound up in something else than Him who is the incarnation of the eternal God in whom is life and Light.

We have the capability of looking down at our feet that still walk in fallenness of the world; instead of looking up to the realized reality of what God has done in Christ.

God has sovereignly allowed us to live amongst the remaining fallenness of the earth, sharing in the suffering of our Lord Jesus. But we must do so with our heads not lifted in pride but lifted so that our minds would see the heaven in which our true citizenry lies. We are strangers and aliens just passing through and we are passing through on mission.

What is our mission?

It is the same mission as that of John the Baptist, only instead of bearing witness of the Logos light coming and being incarnate in Christ Jesus, we bear witness that the eternal Word has come and brought to us life and Light in the person of Jesus. Brothers and sisters, God has come to us in the person of Jesus and we share in His life. We are His and He is ours.

We must testify this to ourselves because the hardships we endure want to tell us that the KOG has not come. But it has. The King has come. He has redeemed. He has granted us new life in Him. We are the objects of His love. He has called us to Himself and then called us to mission. We must testify this to ourselves. I don't mean only me to you and you to me; I mean you to yourself and me to myself as well. Remember Jesus. Remember that He is the incarnation of the eternal divine personal Word, Yahweh Himself and He has given you life in your union with Him. We must testify to ourselves.

And we must testify of this to all the nations, to all people as Jesus has commissioned us. The road is hard. Our feet stumble. John ministered faithfully and not all responded. Yahweh in the Logos came to His own and His own did not receive Him. Jesus apostles and disciples suffered hardship as we read in our Bibles. We suffer hardship as well.

Persevere beloved of God. Persevere!

Transformation Card

Nov 8, 2015

Sermon Audio Input

Full Msg. Title: Jesus as John Introduced Him, Part 4
Short Ver. Title: John 007
Series Title: The Gospel of John
Text: John 1:9-11
Key Words: Light, World, Know, Receive

Message Outline

Jesus as John Introduced Him

Understanding Jesus by Understanding the True Light

Coming into the World But Not Being Known or Received by Some

III. Who, How, What...

IV. How this Helps us Know Jesus

Please See

Pastor Kit Culver's sermon and study notes for his John 007 message, "The Logos and the Fullness of the Times - A New Work" from 8/23/15.

Examine the Scriptures (Be Berean!)

- John 1:1-18

Consider & Discuss (Be Transformed!)

- Who was the "true Light" John was writing about in verses 9-13, the pre-incarnate Word, Jesus, or both?
- How does John use, "the world"? Does it indicate all of the created order? The world of men in rebellion to God?
- In light of all men not seeming to be enlightened, in what sense does the true Light enlighten every man?
- In what sense did the world not "know" the true Light?
- Who are the people John calls "His own"?
- What is it to "receive" or not receive the true Light?

- **Community Group Discussion: How does John the writer of the Gospel help us understand Jesus by speaking of the true Light coming into the world but neither being known or received?**

Memory & Meditation Verse

⁹ There was the true Light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man. ¹⁰ He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. ¹¹ He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him. . John 1:9-11

Community Life

- **Looking Ahead: Goal for Fall 2015:** That we (each and together) would be the members of the body of Christ God intends, being “transformed by the renewing of our minds”, ministering and being ministered to as He has gifted. **Means:** While actively and thoughtfully listening to what God has given us in the Gospel of John, I encourage everyone to either participate in one or more of the Community Groups available at SHC, or come up with your own God honoring “Body Life Plan.”

Next Sunday

John 1:12-13