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The Word Incarnate John 1:9-14

It is a terrible thing when a person feels totally and completely rejected. My heart has gone out to spouses over the years who have faithfully and sacrificially poured themselves into their marriages only to have their husband or their wife after 5, 10, 15, or 20 years of marriage turn to them and say, "I want a divorce." It has to be a terrible thing for a person to pour everything that they have and are into a marriage and then have someone you have trusted, cared about, and loved say to you in essence that it was not good enough. It is a terrible thing when a person feels totally and completely rejected. But there is no one in this world presently or in the past who has ever experienced the degree of rejection that was experienced by Christ. This brings us to the passage of scripture that we are studying this weekend.

We are considering the introduction to the Gospel of John. It goes from **John 1:1** and concludes with **John 1:18**. These eighteen verses answer the question "What makes Jesus qualified to reveal God to man?" In seeking to answer this question from our study of this passage what have we learned so far?

First of all, what we learn about the Word and God in John 1:1-2 makes Jesus qualified. What were those things we have learned about the Word and God? *We learned that the Word like God is eternal.* Look at the first phrase of John 1:1 "**In the beginning was the Word**" or in other words "At the beginning of time was continuing the Word." What else did we learn about the Word and God? *We learned that the relationship between the Word and God throughout eternity was close.* What did the verse say? "**In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God**" or in other words, the Word was face to face with God. And what was the last thing that we learned about the Word and God? *We learned that the Word was God.* Isn't this exactly what the verse tells us, "**In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.**" Then John goes on in verse two, to essentially repeat what he has just shared in verse one.

What makes Jesus qualified to reveal God to man? First of all, what we learn about the Word and God in John 1:1-2 makes Jesus qualified. What else qualifies Jesus to reveal God to man?

What we learn about the Word and Creation in John 1:3-5 makes Jesus qualified. What were those things we have learned about the Word and creation? *We learned that all things came into being through the Word.* Look at **John 1:3**. What does it say? "**All things came into being by Him and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.**" Every created thing owes its existence to the Word without exception.

What else did we learn about the Word and Creation? *We learned that the creation of the heavens and the earth is Christ's initial attempt, as the Word, to reveal God to all of mankind.* What did John 1:4 say? "**In Him (the Word) was life, and the life was the light of men.**" The life that was unleashed through Christ at creation was the first light made available to men to lead them to acknowledge the majesty and power of God." What else did we learn about the Word and Creation? *We learned that Christ's initial attempt to reveal God to mankind through creation has only, at best, been marginally successful.* What did John 1:5 say? "**And the light shines in darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.**"

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What we learn about the Word and John the Baptist in John 1:6-8 makes Jesus qualified to reveal God to man. So what do we learn about the Word and John the Baptist from this passage? First of all we learn that John the Baptist was sent by God or in other words we learn that John the Baptist was sent by the Word (John 1:6). Again, let us look at the very first phrase, **"There came a man, sent from God, whose name was John."** But why was John the Baptist sent? This leads us to a second thing we learn about John the Baptist and the Word. We learn that John the Baptist was that special "voice" Isaiah prophesied would prepare the way of the Lord in Isaiah 40:3 or in other words would prepare the way for the "Word." Let me read for you **John 1:7-8, "He came for a witness, that he might bear witness of the light, that all might believe through him. He was not the light, but came that he might bear witness of the light."** John the Baptist and the Word were prophetically linked and must be seen tied together if Jesus is to be taken seriously as the light.

Hopefully you now appreciate why John 1:6-8 had to be placed where it has been placed in John 1 and are equally well prepared to move on in our text.

What we learn about the Word incarnate in John 1:9-14 make Jesus qualified to reveal God to man.

Let me read John 1:9-14 for you from the New American Standard Bible, **"There was the true light, which, coming to 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. (12) But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, (13) who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. (14) And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth."** In considering these verses we will learn a great deal about the Word incarnate. Hopefully it will personally minister to you in your own personal walk.

Unfortunately we will not be able to finish this section this weekend but hopefully what we are able to cover this weekend will personally encourage us to persevere in our pursuit of obedience.

What is the first thing that we learn about the Word incarnate? We learn that the Word, the true light who alone is able to enlighten every man, chose to come into the world (John 1:9). Let us read **John 1:9, "There was the true light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man."**

Notice the first phrase in the verse, **"There was the true light."** The apostle John is simply carrying on with his thought introduced in **John 1:6-8**. In those verses we saw John the Baptist bearing witness of the light. Because John the Baptist bore witness of the light, the Apostle John can now feel free to expand further on the light which John the Baptist bore witness.

The apostle John calls this light the "true light." The word "true" (ALETHINOS) here means "real." It is real or true because it is the ultimate expression of God's truth. For instance, manna provided in the Old Testament was genuinely bread supplied from God but Jesus is true bread. What do I mean by this? God certainly provided manna from heaven to supply for the needs of the Israelites but that manna was not the ultimate expression from heaven of God's supply for those in need. The ultimate expression from heaven of God's supply for those in need was the true bread, the Lord Jesus Christ.

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Those who ate the manna that God provided the Israelites had to eat again but those who choose by faith to eat the true bread who is also supplied from heaven, the Lord Jesus Christ, will never need to eat again, spiritually speaking.

The Word in creation had supplied light but it was not the true light. The ultimate expression of light that the Word was willing to supply to this world was Himself (John 1:9). Again let us read John 1:9 but this time let us go a little further, **"There was the true light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man."**

When the apostle John refers to the "coming" of the true light he is alluding to the incarnation of the Word which is more clearly spelled out in **John 1:14.**

How badly did the world need the true light to come? Without the incarnation, without the coming of the true light, the world had no hope of being enlightened (John 1:9). Look at the next phrase in **John 1:9.** What does it say? **"There was the true light, which coming into the world, enlightens every man."** What does the Apostle John mean when he says, **"enlightens every man?"**

Does this mean that everyone will be saved? Of course not. The apostle makes it very clear to us in this gospel that though the true light came into this world that men by and large rejected that light and chose to remain in darkness. Listen to **John 3:19-20, "And this is the judgment, that the light is 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, lest his deeds should be exposed."**

If "enlightens every man" does not mean that every man is saved when the true light comes into the world what does it mean? The phrase "enlightens every man" simply means that the only way for any particular individual to be saved is by the true light enlightening them (Romans 5:18).

Listen to the words of Martin Luther in commenting on this verse "There is only one light that lighteth all men, and no man comes into the world who can possibly be illumined by any other light." In other words, if there is no other light that can enlighten men other than the true light, then every individual man who is enlightened can only be enlightened by the coming of the true light.

This interpretation is supported by the wording of **Romans 5:18.** Let me read this for you, **"So then as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men, even so through one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all men."** Did Paul, when he said that Christ's death resulted in justification to all men, mean that there was no man left unjustified? No! Obviously the Epistle of Romans makes it absolutely clear that this is not true. It only meant that if any man, whoever that might be, was going to be justified he could only be justified on the basis of Christ's death and on no other basis. This is exactly the same thought that John is putting before us in **John 1:9.**

I know that this could be confusing, but perhaps Augustine can give us some help. Augustine uses the illustration of one teacher in a city, who then, is said to instruct all the city, meaning not that everyone actually goes to him to be instructed but that none are taught except by him.

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Knowing that the world cannot be enlightened apart from the coming of the true light you would think that when the true light came that just as the Israelites flocked to the manna that God supplied from heaven in order to meet their physical need that people in the same way would flock to the true light in order to meet their spiritual need but unfortunately this was not the way it was.

Let us go on to read **John 1:10-11**, "**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 those who were His own did not receive Him.**"

What do we learn about the Word incarnate in John 1:9-11. First of all we learn that the Word, the true light who alone is able to enlighten every man, chose to come into the world (John 1:9).

And secondly we learn that the true light was rejected. (John 1:10-11). What a scandalous response! With each step that John spells out in these verses the scandal of the rejection of Christ is intensified. John begins by focusing on the rejection of the true light by the world in John 1:10.

Let us look at **John 1:10** and see what it says, "**He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him.**" The Apostle John emphasized the culpability of the world by the simplest of all devices, repetition. Three times he repeats the word "world," and each time in the Greek it comes first in the clause. Clearly John wants us to fasten our attention on the world and how they treated Christ. Let us look at the first time John refers to the "world" in **John 1:10**.

How does the verse begin? "**He was in the world.**" The verb "was" emphasizes continuity. He did not simply pay a fleeting visit. He came into this world for an extended period of time. They saw His miracles and heard what he had to say and were able to observe his life closely. The overwhelmingly powerful evidence that He was the Christ, the Son of God, the light of the world, SLOWLY passed before their eyes. The world could not say that they did not have time to consider the evidence. But this is not all that the verse says.

Look at the next phrase in **John 1:10**, "**and the world was made through Him.**" The world having been created by the Word has a responsibility to the Word.

Listen to **Revelation 4:11**, "**Worthy art Thou, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for Thou didst create all things, and because of Thy will they existed, and were created.**" If the Word is worthy to receive glory and honor and power simply because of His creative activity without any other consideration it would also seem that the Word is worthy to have the evidence that He paraded before the world in His incarnation taken seriously but obviously the world chose against this.

How do we know this? Look at the third occurrence of the word "world" in **John 1:10** "**and the world did not know Him.**"

When John says that the world did not come to know Him, he is not talking about head knowledge. He is talking about a personal relationship. The world had the opportunity to consider the evidence and enthusiastically embrace the Word, which was the reasonable and proper response, but they rejected Him. What is described in **John 1:10** certainly is terrible but the picture that John paints of

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the rejection gets even more graphic in **John 1:11**. Let us now read this verse "**He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him.**" Now I would like to break this down for you a little further.

First of all it says "**He came to His own.**" When John says that the true light came to His own (TA IDIA) he literally meant He came to His own things. This is the very expression, which is used with respect to the action of John, when he took Mary, the mother of Jesus, "to his own home," in **John 19:26-27** and this is how we should understand this phrase here. John is saying that the true light came to His own home.

He went home, and the home folk did not receive Him. What did the verse say? "**He came to His own (to His own home), and those who were His own (or in other words, His own family) did not receive Him.**"

It might not have been so bad if Jesus had gone to the Romans or the Greeks or the barbarians and had a bad reception. That might even have been expected. But He did not go to any such place. He went home. The true light was not rejected simply by the world but by Israel, His own people.

S.D. Gordon in commenting on this passage said that he pictures someone coming home at the end of a hard day's toil. He is worn out by the exertions of the day, glad to be finished with his work, and looking forward to being at home with his family. His step quickens as he gets near his home. He feels in his pocket for his key, but it is not there; somehow he has misplaced it. But that does not matter; the family is at home. So he goes up to the front door and rings the bell. And nothing happens. No one opens to him. They leave him standing outside.

You might say that this is a silly illustration. This would never happen! But my answer would be to you. It did. It happened to Jesus. He came to His own and His own did not receive Him.

CONCLUSION

What makes Jesus qualified to reveal God to Man?

What we learn about the Word and God in John 1:1-2 makes Jesus qualified. What we learn about the Word and Creation in John 1:3-5 makes Jesus qualified. What we learn about the Word and John the Baptist in John 1:6-8 makes Jesus qualified to reveal God to man. What we learn about the Word incarnate in John 1:9-14 make Jesus qualified to reveal God to man. And what have we learned so far about the Word incarnate?

We learned that the Word, the true light, who alone is able to enlighten every man, chose to come into the world (John 1:9). And we also learned that the Word, the true light was rejected (John 1:10,11). Rejected by the world and rejected by His own.

Unfortunately this tragedy has been repeated again and again. Jesus continually comes to us who are His own, to us who have received so many blessings at His hand, to us who have the Scriptures so full of the revelation of His love and of what His loving purpose has done for us and expects from us. He comes to us whom He has created, whom He loves, and for whom He died. And all too often it is still true that His own people do not receive Him.