

John 1:6-9

God sent a man, John the Baptist, ⁷ to tell about the light so that everyone might believe because of his testimony. ⁸ John himself was not the light; he was simply a witness to tell about the light. ⁹ The one who is the true light, who gives light to everyone, was coming into the world.

Background

Verse 6 introduces John the Baptist. “Baptist” wasn’t his last name or denomination. It described his function. He baptized people who were preparing for the coming of the Messiah. This was a four-part “baptism of repentance” where individuals acknowledged:

- Their personal sins.
- The nation’s rejection of God.
- Their readiness for the coming Messiah.
- Preparation for the Messiah to set up His kingdom.

John the Baptist was the forerunner of the Messiah, as was predicted in the Old Testament (Malachi 3:1). But in contrast to Jesus, who is referred to as God (v1), John was merely a man sent by God (v6). John was a witness to the Light, but Jesus is the true Light (v9).

Teaching Points

1. The goal of witnessing is evangelism.

Notice in verse 7 that John was sent to witness by verbally sharing the message of Christ. This is the essence of evangelism. Some Christians think being a good neighbor is enough, but simply being a model citizen doesn’t fulfill our mission in witnessing. The goal is to ensure others hear the gospel and make the decision to believe. While we should *also* be good neighbors, our witness must include evangelism.

2. Christ is God's standard of perfection for everyone.

Verse 9 speaks of Jesus as the true Light, which shines on everyone. The primary meaning of this verse is that all people fall short of God's moral standards. Just as a light reveals dust in a dark room, Christ's Light shows humanity’s moral shortcomings.

Application

1. You don't have to do miracles or have a lot of charisma to be a good witness.

John the Baptist is a great example of this application. He never did any miracles, yet he was called “the greatest” by Jesus in Luke 7:28. The power of being a good witness came from being sent by God to announce the Messiah. We are sent to do the same.

We don’t need to be “cool” or have amazing charisma to witness effectively. John the Baptist lived in the wilderness, wore odd clothing, and ate locusts and honey. Despite his unconventional lifestyle, his humility and God-given mission made him a powerful witness. Let’s follow his example by asking God for a humble heart and the boldness to be faithful witnesses.