

Introduction

In verses 1-3 we saw the relationship of the Word of God to the Godhead, to creation, and to mankind. Now before the book tells us more about the Light of the World, there is a brief introduction of John the Baptist. He is simply called John here, though 14 verses in the synoptic gospels call him John the Baptist.

1. Man Sent from God, v. 6

Man – not just any person or a woman, but a man. What about Deborah in Judges 4:4? So there are examples of women in leadership in government or business (Lydia, seller of purple, Acts 16:14). But in the church this is not permitted. Note 1 Tim. 2:9-14, esp. verse 12, and 1 Tim. 3:15 which gives us the context in which Paul is writing. This is how things are to be done in the church.

Sent – God had prepared him from birth to be his man at the proper time, to call Israel to repentance (Luke 1:16-17).

God sends us out to via the Great Commission, but we are not “sent” like Jesus in the incarnation (John 20:21).

2. Bear Witness of the Light, vv. 7-8

Three times John is said to be a witness. A witness is one who testifies, as under oath. He testifies favorably in this case.

How about us? Our outreach ministry here is sort of pathetic, as far as numbers of participants goes.

The object of the witness is the Light, the Lord Jesus Christ. We are not testifying of ourselves, or of all our good works to men, or of some modern philosophy, or whatever. We are to tell people about the Light of the World.

Why a witness? That men might believe. This is the first use of the word believe in this gospel of belief. And it is not just any belief of any facts but belief in Christ.

3. Not the Light, v. 8

John was not the Light. He pointed men to the light. There are many false christs today who want to take advantage of people and say they themselves are the light...follow me...give me money...

But the attitude of a person should be one of true humility, like John's in John 3:30. Not one of ambition. Still he had a good testimony--Matt. 21:26. Acts 19:1-7 indicates there were some who really were “hangers on” to John's ministry.

Question: Was John the Baptist Elijah?

John 1:21-25 answers the question plainly. John understood himself *not* to be John the Baptist, and the Pharisees understood him that way too. But compare this to Matt. 11:14 which seems to make a close identification of Elijah and John the Baptist. The key there is the “if.” There was a question as to whether they would hear the Lord's words (Matt. 11:15). It turns out that they were not willing to accept it, so that John was not Elijah after all. Elijah did appear in Matt. 17:3. Matt. 17:11 says that Elijah's coming is yet future, but it will happen. The one who was in the place of Elijah for the first coming of our Lord, John the Baptist, was spoken of as Elijah by the Lord in Matt. 17:12 and verse 13 indicates that the disci-

ples understood his way of speaking to them about John. Luke 1:17 says that John will come in the spirit and power of Elijah. Thus by association he could be called Elijah.

It doesn't seem to fit to me that Elijah would be re-incarnated as John the Baptist. First of all, we don't believe in reincarnation. And second, the only thing Elijah has to do is come back to the earth like he left in 2 Kings 2:11. He does not have to be born from the womb as a new person like John the Baptist did.