

SABBATH BIBLE LESSONS
Senior Division



The Light
of the World (IV)

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“We Have Found the Messiah”

“Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world” (John 1:29).

“John was sent in the spirit and power of Elijah to prepare the way of Jesus. Those who rejected the testimony of John were not benefited by the teachings of Jesus.”—*Early Writings*, p. 259.

Suggested Reading: *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 132–143.

1. John the Baptist

- a. Considering the interview of John the Baptist with the Jerusalem authorities, what lessons can we learn from the way the Baptist identified himself and his work? John 1:19–28.
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“When [John] the Baptist began his ministry, many thought that he might be the prophet Moses risen from the dead.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 135.

a. John 1:19-28 And this is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who art thou? 20 And he confessed, and denied not; but confessed, I am not the Christ. 21 And they asked him, What then? Art thou Elias? And he saith, I am not. Art thou that prophet? And he answered, No. 22 Then said they unto him, Who art thou? that we may give an answer to them that sent us. What sayest thou of thyself? 23 He said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias. 24 And they which were sent were of the Pharisees. 25 And they asked him, and said unto him, Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet? 26 John answered them, saying, I baptize with water: but there standeth one among you, whom ye know not; 27 He it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose. 28 These things were done in Bethabara beyond Jordan, where John was baptizing.

1. John the Baptist

- b. What did John declare the day after the interview with the priests and Levites? John 1:29–34.
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“With awe and wonder the people looked upon the One just declared to be the Son of God. They had been deeply moved by the words of John. He had spoken to them in the name of God. They had listened to him day after day as he reproved their sins, and daily the conviction that he was sent of Heaven had strengthened. But who was this One greater than John the Baptist? In His dress and bearing there was nothing that betokened rank. He was apparently a simple personage, clad like themselves in the humble garments of the poor.”—Ibid., p. 137.

b. John 1:29-34 The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. 30 This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me: for he was before me. 31 And I knew him not: but that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water. 32 And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him. 33 And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. 34 And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God.

2. "He Brought Him to Jesus"

- a. What did John the Baptist say the following day? Who is specifically mentioned as hearing him? John 1:35, 36.
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a. John 1:35-36 Again the next day after John stood, and two of his disciples; 36 And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God!

2. "He Brought Him to Jesus"

- b. What essential attitude of an evangelist did these two disciples of John the Baptist have? John 1:37–39.
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“If John and Andrew had possessed the unbelieving spirit of the priests and rulers, they would not have been found as learners at the feet of Jesus. They would have come to Him as critics, to judge His words. Many thus close the door to the most precious opportunities. But not so did these first disciples. They had responded to the Holy Spirit’s call in the preaching of John the Baptist. Now they recognized the voice of the heavenly Teacher. To them the words of Jesus were full of freshness and truth and beauty. A divine illumination was shed upon the teaching of the Old Testament Scriptures. The many-sided themes of truth stood out in new light.

“It is contrition and faith and love that enable the soul to receive wisdom from heaven. Faith working by love is the key of knowledge, and everyone that loveth ‘knoweth God’ (1 John 4:7).”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 139.

b. John 1:37-39 And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. 38 Then Jesus turned, and saw them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye? They said unto him, Rabbi, (which is to say, being interpreted, Master,) where dwellest thou? 39 He saith unto them, Come and see. They came and saw where he dwelt, and abode with him that day: for it was about the tenth hour.

2. "He Brought Him to Jesus"

- c. Who were these first two disciples? John 1:40. [Note: When writing the gospel of John, the author never identified himself by his name.] Explain Andrew's desire, after spending time with Jesus, to share the good news. Verse 41.
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"The disciple John was a man of earnest and deep affection, ardent, yet contemplative. He had begun to discern the glory of Christ—not the worldly pomp and power for which he had been taught to hope, but 'the glory as of the Only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth' (John 1:14). He was absorbed in contemplation of the wondrous theme.

"Andrew sought to impart the joy that filled his heart. Going in search of his brother Simon, he cried, 'We have found the Messiah.'"—Ibid.

- c. John 1:40-41 One of the two which heard John speak, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. 41 He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the Christ.

3. Peter, Phillip, Nathaniel

- a. What did Jesus say to Simon Peter as soon as He saw him? John 1:42.
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“Simon waited for no second bidding. He also had heard the preaching of John the Baptist, and he hastened to the Saviour. The eye of Christ rested upon him, reading his character and his life history. His impulsive nature, his loving, sympathetic heart, his ambition and self-confidence, the history of his fall, his repentance, his labors, and his martyr death—the Saviour read it all, and He said, ‘Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, A stone.’”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 139.

- a. John 1:42 And he brought him to Jesus. And when Jesus beheld him, he said, Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, A stone.

3. Peter, Phillip, Nathaniel

- b. How did a new disciple show his desire to share the good news the next day? John 1:43–45.
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b. John 1:43-45 The day following Jesus would go forth into Galilee, and findeth Philip, and saith unto him, Follow me.
44 Now Philip was of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter.
45 Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.

3. Peter, Phillip, Nathaniel

- c. How did Nathanael express doubt in his heart about the good news, and how did Philip try to remove that doubt? John 1:46. What may we learn from the method these first Christian evangelists used in their work?
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“While they trust to the guidance of human authority, none will come to a saving knowledge of the truth. Like Nathanael, we need to study God’s word for ourselves, and pray for the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit. He who saw Nathanael under the fig tree will see us in the secret place of prayer. Angels from the world of light are near to those who in humility seek for divine guidance.

“With the calling of John and Andrew and Simon, of Philip and Nathanael, began the foundation of the Christian church. John directed two of his disciples to Christ. Then one of these, Andrew, found his brother, and called him to the Saviour. Philip was then called, and he went in search of Nathanael. These examples should teach us the importance of personal effort, of making direct appeals to our kindred, friends, and neighbors. There are those who for a lifetime have professed to be acquainted with Christ, yet who have never made a personal effort to bring one soul to the Saviour.”—Ibid., p. 141.

- c. John 1:46 And Nathanael said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see.

4. If You Believe On Me

- a. Despite Nathanael's disbelief, what did Jesus say about him? John 1:47. What remark of Jesus caught Nathanael by surprise, and what was his response? Verses 48, 49.
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a. John 1:47-49 Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and saith of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!
48 Nathanael saith unto him, Whence knowest thou me? Jesus answered and said unto him, Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee. 49 Nathanael answered and saith unto him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel.

4. If You Believe On Me

- b. As Jesus was looking forward with joy to the precious blessings that His work would bring to humanity, what did He say to Nathanael? John 1:51. Explain this verse.
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“If you believe on Me . . . your faith shall be quickened. You shall see that the heavens are opened and are never to be closed. I have opened them to you. The angels of God are ascending, bearing the prayers of the needy and distressed to the Father above, and descending, bringing blessing and hope, courage, help, and life, to the children of men. . . .

“And it is through Christ, by the ministration of His heavenly messengers, that every blessing comes from God to us. In taking upon Himself humanity, our Saviour unites His interests with those of the fallen sons and daughters of Adam, while through His divinity He grasps the throne of God. And thus Christ is the medium of communication of men with God, and of God with men.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 142, 143.

- b. John 1:51 And he saith unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man.

4. If You Believe On Me

c. How can we come to God through Christ? John 14:6.

“Desires for goodness and holiness are right as far as they go; but if you stop here, they will avail nothing. Many will be lost while hoping and desiring to be Christians. They do not come to the point of yielding the will to God. They do not now *choose* to be Christians.

“Through the right exercise of the will, an entire change may be made in your life. By yielding up your will to Christ, you ally yourself with the power that is above all principalities and powers. You will have strength from above to hold you steadfast, and thus through constant surrender to God you will be enabled to live the new life, even the life of faith.”—*Steps to Christ*, pp. 47, 48.

c. John 14:6 Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

5. REVEALING JESUS' CHARACTER

- a. What highly effective method of evangelism should each of us use? 1 John 3:10, 11.
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“Now that Jesus has ascended to heaven, His disciples are His representatives among men, and one of the most effective ways of winning souls to Him is in exemplifying His character in our daily life. Our influence upon others depends not so much upon what we say as upon what we are. Men may combat and defy our logic, they may resist our appeals; but a life of disinterested love is an argument they cannot gainsay. A consistent life, characterized by the meekness of Christ, is a power in the world.

“The teaching of Christ was the expression of an inwrought conviction and experience, and those who learn of Him become teachers after the divine order. The word of God, spoken by one who is himself sanctified through it, has a life-giving power that makes it attractive to the hearers, and convicts them that it is a living reality. When one has received the truth in the love of it, he will make this manifest in the persuasion of his manner and the tones of his voice. He makes known that which he himself has heard, seen, and handled of the word of life, that others may have fellowship with him through the knowledge of Christ. His testimony, from lips touched with a live coal from off the altar, is truth to the receptive heart, and works sanctification upon the character.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 141, 142.

- a. 1 John 3:10-11 In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother. 11 For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What did John the Baptist say about Jesus Christ as soon as he recognized Him?
2. What was Andrew's first evangelistic experience—and what should we learn from it?
3. How did Philip manifest a concern similar to Andrew's?
4. Explain how we are to come to God.
5. Summarize the most powerful means of evangelism.