

John 1:31

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And I knew him not: but that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water.

Analysis

John's repeated 'I knew him not' emphasizes that his witness came through divine revelation, not natural acquaintance (though they were relatives). His baptismal ministry served the singular purpose of manifesting Christ to Israel. This illustrates the Reformed principle that all means of grace exist to reveal Christ and draw His people to Him.

Historical Context

Though Mary and Elizabeth were relatives (Luke 1:36), Jesus and John apparently had little contact before Jesus' baptism. John's ministry began around 26-27 AD, preparing Israel for Christ's public revelation.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. How do our ministries and gifts serve the ultimate purpose of revealing Christ to others?
2. What does it mean for Christ to be 'manifested' rather than merely introduced or presented?

Interlinear Text

κάγω οὐκ ἤδειν αὐτόν ἀλλ' ἵνα φανερωθῆται τῷ
And I not knew him but that he should be made manifest G3588
G2504 G3756 G1492 G846 G235 G2443 G5319

Ἰσραὴλ διὰ τοῦτο ἥλθον ἐγὼ ἐν τῷ ὕδατι
to Israel therefore G5124 am I with G3588 water
G2474 G1223 G2064 G1473 G1722 G5204

βαπτίζων
baptizing
G907

Additional Cross-References

Malachi 3:1 (Parallel theme): Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts.

Luke 1:17 (Parallel theme): And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.

Acts 19:4 (Parallel theme): Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.

Matthew 3:6 (Parallel theme): And were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins.

John 1:33 (Parallel theme): 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.

John 1:7 (Parallel theme): The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe.

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