

John 5:35

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

He was a burning and a shining light: and ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light.

Analysis

Jesus characterizes John as 'a burning and a shining light'—burning with Holy Spirit fire, shining with reflected glory. The past tense 'ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light' indicates their initial enthusiasm had waned. Popular enthusiasm for prophets often proves superficial, fading when their message confronts sin or demands change.

Historical Context

John's ministry enjoyed temporary popularity (Matthew 3:5-6) before his imprisonment and execution. The religious leaders' initial interest gave way to skepticism when he endorsed Jesus and challenged their authority.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. Why does initial religious enthusiasm often fade when God's message becomes demanding?

2. How do we distinguish between being a 'light' that attracts attention versus one that leads to Christ?

Interlinear Text

ἐκεῖνος ἦν ὁ λύχνος ὁ καιόμενος καὶ φαίνων
He **was** ^{G3588} **light** ^{G3588} **a burning** **and** **a shining**
G1565 G2258 G3088 G2545 G2532 G5316

ὁμοῖς δὲ ἠθέλησατε αγαλλιασθῆναι πρὸς ὥραν ἐν τῷ
ye **and** **were willing** **to rejoice** **for** **a season** **in** ^{G3588}
G5210 G1161 G2309 G21 G4314 G5610 G1722

φωτὶ αὐτοῦ
light **his**
G5457 G846

Additional Cross-References

2 Peter 1:19 (Light): We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts:

Matthew 11:11 (Parallel theme): Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.