



\* Prayers Anchored in the  
Gospel of John

Monday Day 9

\* Shed upon your Church, O Lord, the brightness of your light, that we, being illumined by the teaching of your apostle and evangelist John, may so walk in the light of your truth, that at length we may attain to the fullness of eternal life; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

\* [www.bcponline.org](http://www.bcponline.org)

\* **The Collect**  
Collecting your thoughts so you can focus  
on God.

## John 1 (NIV)

<sup>19</sup> Now this was John's testimony when the Jewish leaders<sup>[e]</sup> in Jerusalem sent priests and Levites to ask him who he was. <sup>20</sup> He did not fail to confess, but confessed freely, "I am not the Messiah."

<sup>21</sup> They asked him, "Then who are you? Are you Elijah?"

He said, "I am not."

"Are you the Prophet?"

He answered, "No."

<sup>22</sup> Finally they said, "Who are you? Give us an answer to take back to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?"

<sup>23</sup> John replied in the words of Isaiah the prophet, "I am the voice of one calling in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way for the Lord.'"

<sup>24</sup> Now the Pharisees who had been sent <sup>25</sup> questioned him, "Why then do you baptize if you are not the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?"

<sup>26</sup> "I baptize with water," John replied, "but among you stands one you do not know. <sup>27</sup> He is the one who comes after me, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie." <sup>28</sup> This all happened at Bethany on the other side of the Jordan, where John was baptizing.

 **Scripture**

\* This is a time when you will want to understand the passage and the original intent of the author. Feel free to read it several times and also to write down any questions you might have.

# \* Meditation

Legend says,  
the cave of Christmas  
where the child of light  
burns in the darkness  
is hidden  
in the center of the earth.

Access is not easy.  
You cannot just amble to a mantle,  
note the craft of the crib child,  
and return to the party for more  
eggnog.  
You may see a figurine in this way,  
but you will not find the child of light.  
The center of the earth is not the  
surface.  
You must journey  
and, wayfarer,  
you need a guide.

Even the Wise Men had to risk  
the treacherous courts of Herod  
to consult the map of Scripture.  
They knew that a star, no matter how  
bright,  
could not take them all the way

It is true  
that sometimes angels hover in the  
sky  
and sing directions,  
but they cannot be counted on  
to appear.  
Besides, you are not one  
to keep watch over a flock by night  
There is another pointer of the way,  
a map of a man,  
who when you try to read him,  
reads you.  
Unexpected angels are pussycats  
next to this lion,  
a roar that once overrode Judea.  
You may not heed  
but you will hear  
his insistent,  
intruding,  
unsoothing voice.

Some say this thunder is because his  
father  
stumbled mute from the Holy of Holies,  
tongue tied by an angel who was peeved  
by the old man's stubborn allegiance to  
biological laws.  
The priest was silenced in the temple  
because he thought flesh could stop  
God.  
The son of the priest shouted in the  
wilderness  
because he feared God would stop flesh.  
His open mouth was an open warning.  
His name is John,  
a man who was a lamp...

John Shea, [\*Starlight: Beholding the Christmas Miracle  
All Year Long\*](#) (New York: Crossroad, 1993), 174.

 **Meditation**

1<sup>19</sup> Now this was John's testimony when the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem sent priests and Levites to ask him who he was. <sup>20</sup> He did not fail to confess, but confessed freely, "I am not the Messiah."

\* I wonder what it was like to grow up knowing that your cousin was chosen to be the Messiah and not you? I should imagine that the temptation to not confess Jesus as Messiah might have been high for cousin John. It was a golden opportunity for him to take the spotlight from his relative. But John received Jesus. This is a welcome relief to the wearisome story that will follow. Chalk one up for the institution of the family!

Len Thompson

\* **Meditation**

His name is John,  
a man who was a lamp,  
at least that is what Jesus said,  
“a burning and shining lamp.”

The implication is clear:  
The lamp is a torch through the darkness  
to find the Light of the World.  
As the lamp comes closer to the Light,  
its radiance is overwhelmed.  
It is in the presence of a stronger shining.  
It decreases as the Light increases.  
Yet there is no comparison.

The child cannot be found by competition.  
The lamp and the Light meet  
in the mystery of communion.  
The two become one  
while remaining two.  
Follow John and find Jesus.  
Find Jesus and find the Illness of John.

But John is not so easy to follow.  
He is no toady  
He lacks senility  
and does not work for pay  
In truth,  
he is more guardian than guide,  
more dragon at the gate than porter at the door,  
more fire on the earth than lamp on a stand.  
Opposite of the sought-after child in every way  
The child is round,  
this one has edges;

the child nurses on virgin's milk,  
this one crunches locusts;  
the child is wrapped in swaddling clothes,  
this one is rubbed raw by camel hair.  
Yet they know one another  
even exchange smiles.  
They share a mystery,  
this hairy man and smooth child.

Jesus came out of John  
as surely as he came out of Mary.  
John was the desert soil  
in which the flower of Jesus grew.  
John was the voice in the wilderness  
who taught Jesus to hear the voice from the sky.  
John would push sinners beneath the water  
and Jesus would resurrect them on the waves.  
John was the fast  
who prepared for Jesus the feast.

No man ever less a shepherd than John,  
yet loved by one.  
If you are surprised that Jesus came from John,  
imagine John's prophetic puzzle  
when the predicted “wrath to come” came  
and he said, “Let's eat!”

John expected an ax to the root of the tree  
and instead he found a gardener hoeing around it.  
He dreamt of a man with a winnowing fan and a fire  
and along came a singing seed scatterer.  
He welcomed wrathful verdicts,  
then found a bridegroom on the bench.  
When John said, “There is one among you  
Whom you do not know,”  
he spoke from experience.

John Shea, [\*Starlight: Beholding the Christmas Miracle All Year Long\*](#) (New York: Crossroad, 1993), 174.

 **Meditation**

Jesus, could I be like John? Can I point to you and step out of the spotlight when the crowd loves to hear my message? Help me to know without hesitation that I am never the Messiah, the answer, the important part of your mission; Jesus is the One to be noticed.

Jesus it will be a privilege to cry in the wilderness, preparing the way for others to receive Jesus. Help me to have the courage of John, to say what needs to be said. Amen

Len Thompson

 **Response**



\* Jesus came so that we could receive Him and open ourselves to have many conversations with Him. Take a few minutes to receive the presence of Jesus into your whole day. Ask for opportunities today to point people to Jesus.

\* Prayer

\* May you be blessed to point others to Jesus. Jesus considered no one greater than John or more blessed. So may you thunder in the wilderness, preparing the way for the Lord, with great blessing. Len Thompson

\* **Blessing**