

Sunday September 6, 2026

Religious _____ can blind us to who God truly is.

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

POP QUIZ

1. Why did John the Baptizer's ministry attract so much attention?

- A. John was the first prophet in 400 years.
- B. John had been appointed by the Sanhedrin.
- C. John performed miracles throughout Jerusalem.
- D. John claimed to be Israel's Messiah.

2. What was the Baptizer's preaching theme?

- A. Relocate
- B. Reorganize
- C. Retaliate
- D. Repent

3. Why were priests and Levites sent from Jerusalem to question John?

- A. To become John's first disciples
- B. To investigate his identity and ministry
- C. To invite him to preach in the temple
- D. To ask him to perform a miracle

4. How did John first respond when the delegation asked who he was?

- A. He confessed that he was not the Messiah.
- B. He claimed to be Elijah returned from heaven.
- C. He identified himself as the promised Prophet.
- D. He presented his prophetic résumé.

5. How did the sermon reconcile John's denial that he was Elijah with Jesus' statement that he was the Elijah to come?

- A. John had forgotten his true identity.
- B. Jesus was speaking only figuratively about John's courage.
- C. John came in Elijah's spirit and power but was not Elijah returned bodily.
- D. The two passages contradict one another.

6. Who is the ultimate fulfillment of the Prophet like Moses promised in Deuteronomy 18?

- A. Elijah
- B. John the Baptizer
- C. Aaron
- D. Jesus Christ

7. According to Keypoint 2, what can religious expectations do?

- A. Blind us to who God truly is
- B. Guarantee that we understand Scripture
- C. Remove every source of disappointment
- D. Prove that our traditions are biblical

8. How did John define himself when the delegation demanded an answer?

- A. As the light shining in the darkness
- B. As a voice crying out in the wilderness
- C. As the king of Israel
- D. As the mediator of the covenant

9. What did John's baptism publicly signify?

- A. Membership in the Jerusalem priesthood
- B. Freedom from any future temptation
- C. Repentance and the need for spiritual cleansing
- D. Political resistance against Rome

10. What did John communicate by saying that he was unworthy to untie Christ's sandal strap?

- A. John was unwilling to perform humble service.
- B. Jesus and John possessed equal authority.
- C. John considered himself greater than a slave.
- D. The Lord is so great that John felt unworthy of performing the lowest service.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

MONDAY: Interpreting God’s Silence:

1. What do you tell yourself when God does not answer according to your timeframe or plan?
2. When God appears silent, people may immediately think:
 - “God has forgotten me.”
 - “God does not care.”
 - “Nothing is happening.”
 - “My situation will never change.”
 - “If God loved me, He would answer now.”

How do you respond? What does Scripture say about your response?

TUESDAY: Knowing Who You Are

John did not allow the delegation’s questions to define him. He did not exaggerate his importance, and he did not deny his calling. He possessed a sober, Scripture-shaped understanding of himself.

Distorted belief	John’s response	Gospel-centered truth
“I must prove that I am important.”	“I am not the Messiah.”	I do not need to be the Savior.
“I am worthless and have no purpose.”	“I am a voice.”	God has given me a calling.
“Other people determine who I am.”	“Just as Isaiah said.”	God’s Word defines my identity.

1. Are you allowing God’s Word or other people’s opinions to define your identity?
2. In what area are you tempted to promote yourself, protect your reputation, or seek recognition?

WEDNESDAY: Examining Your Expectations

Because John did not fit the priests’ expectations, they became increasingly frustrated. How frustrated are you with God right now?

- “My life should be different.”
- “If God were good, this would not have happened.”

1. Name one expectation that is presently producing anger, anxiety, or disappointment. Ask, “Did God actually promise this, or have I demanded it?”
2. Could a religious tradition or personal preference be preventing you from hearing what Scripture actually says?
3. What does Scripture say about surrendering your expectations and submitting more fully to God’s Word?

THURSDAY — Becoming a Faithful Voice

1. Do your words consistently direct people toward the Lord, or do they draw attention toward you?
2. Where has God placed you to serve as a faithful voice for the Lord this week?
3. What fear, distraction, or desire for approval keeps you from speaking biblical truth with both boldness and love?

FRIDAY — Responding to Christ

1. Is there an area in which familiarity with Scripture and church has produced complacency rather than obedience?
2. What specific act of humble service can you perform this week without seeking attention or recognition?