

## The Gospel of John - 1.c

**<sup>5</sup>And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness overcame it not.**

***“The Light of Christ, illumines all” (Presanctified liturgy)***

***“Come receive the light, from the (never-setting, ἀνεσπέρου φωτός) Light, that is never overtaken by night; and glorify Christ who has risen from the dead.” (Matins of Pascha)***

St. Gregory the Theologian: “The Light shines in darkness, in this life and in the flesh, and is chased by the darkness, but is not overtaken by it—I mean the adverse power leaping up in its shamelessness against the visible Adam, but encountering God and being defeated—in order that we, putting away the darkness, may draw near to the Light, and may then become perfect Light, the children of perfect Light.” [“Oration XXXIX, on the Holy Lights (Epiphany),” II, in *Nicene*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ser., VII:352.]

Saint Chrysostom: “He calls death and error, ‘darkness.’ For the light which is the object of our senses does not shine in darkness, but apart from it. But the preaching of Christ has shone forth in the midst of prevailing error, and made it vanish. And by having come to be in death has He overcome death, so that He has recovered those already held by it. Since then neither death nor error can overcome it, since it is bright everywhere and shines by its proper strength, he says, ‘The darkness overcame it not.’ For it cannot be overcome, and will not dwell in souls which wish not to be enlightened.” [Hom. 5, *P.G.* 59:39, 40 (col. 58).]

### **Overcame - katalambanó: to lay hold of, seize**

Original Word: καταλαμβάνω / Transliteration: katalambanó / Phonetic Spelling: (kat-al-am-ban'-o)

Definition: to lay hold of, seize

Usage: (a) I seize tight hold of, arrest, catch, capture, appropriate, (b) I overtake, (c) mid. aor: I perceived, comprehended.

“The meaning of the verb, **katalambanó** (overcame) is twofold. It can mean that I take hold with the mind and therefore understand and comprehend something. It can also mean I can seize hold with the hand, and thus overpower, overcome and destroy. Both meanings are applicable here, since darkness has neither understood the light of God in order to accept it, to espouse it, and to enter into it, nor has it been able to oppose the light to the extent of overcoming and destroying it (Gospel of John, Bishop Gerasimos of Abydos).”

### **John the Baptist makes his testimony concerning the Christ**

- ❖ John the evangelist was a disciple of John the Baptizer (John 1:29-42)
- ❖ St. John is making clear the distinction that the Baptist is not the Messiah.

**<sup>6</sup>There came to be a man who was sent forth (apestalmenos: to send, sent forth, commissioned, ἀποστέλλω) from God, whose name was John. <sup>7</sup>This same came for a witness, in order that he might bear witness concerning the Light, that all might believe through Him. <sup>8</sup>He was not that One, the Light, but was sent that he might bear witness concerning the Light.**

- ❖ The forerunner is sent forth from God, this is why he was called an angel, for the virtue of an angel is that they speak nothing of himself. (Theophylact)

“I send forth My messenger before Thy face (Matthew 11:10)” ( Εγὼ ἀποστέλλω τὸν ἄγγελόν Μου πρὸ προσώπου Σου).

Saint Gregory: “That which is called *angelos* in Greek is in Latin messenger (*nuntius*). Fittingly is he called angel, who is sent to announce the heavenly Judge, so that he may be in name that which he fulfills in his office. Exalted indeed is his name, but his life was no less exalted than his name.” [“Sermon in the Basilica of SS. Marcellinus and Peter on the Gospel,” *P.L.* 76 (cols. 1095-1099), in Toal, I:48.]

- ❖ **All did not believe** not an account of John being deficient but according to their free-will many did not accept the Light (Theophylact)
  
- ❖ All saints are “lights” but only Christ is “The Light” (Theophylact)

St. Irenaeus: “But what God, then, was John, the forerunner... who was promised by the Prophets (Behold, I send forth my messenger, and he shall survey the way before me: and the Lord, whom you seek, shall suddenly come into his temple, even the angel of the covenant, whom you take pleasure in: behold, he is coming, said the Lord Almighty. Malachi 3:1) John therefore, having been sent by the founder and maker of this world is...deemed more than a prophet (“But what went ye out to see? A prophet? Yea, I say to you, and much more than a prophet. [Mt. 11:9]). John announced beforehand in the same way as others did, and actually saw Him when He came and pointed Him out and persuaded many to believe on Him, so that he did hold the place of both prophet and apostle.”

- ❖ The name ‘John’ means the ‘grace of the Lord’ (Jerome)
- ❖ Origen speculated that John was actually angel because of his being filled with the Holy Spirit while still in the womb of Elizabeth. He was bearing witness from his very beginning.
- ❖ Why does the Christ even need a witness, why not just reveal himself in his unveiled essence but no one could have endured the encounter with the unapproachable Light. (Chrysostom)

Chrysostom: “Let us pray then, that henceforth with the revelation of these thoughts and rightness of doctrine, we may have also a pure life and bright conversation, since these things profit nothing unless good works be present with us. For though we have all faith and all knowledge of the Scriptures, yet if we be naked and destitute of the protection derived from (holy) living, there is nothing to hinder us from being hurried into the fire of hell, and burning forever in the unquenchable flame. For as they who have done good shall rise to life everlasting, so they who have dared the contrary shall rise to everlasting punishment, which never has an end. Let us then manifest all eagerness not to mar the gain which accrues to us from a right faith by the vileness of our actions, but becoming well-pleasing to Him by these also, boldly to look on Christ. No happiness can be equal to this. And may it come to pass, that we all having obtained what has been mentioned, may do all to the glory of God; to whom, with the Only-Begotten Son and the Holy Ghost, be glory for ever and ever. Amen