

3. The True Light

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Light is electromagnetic radiation of a wavelength that is visible to the human eye. It travels approximately 186,282 miles per second while the speed of sound is only 1,125 ft per second.

The most common light sources are thermal. As the temperature of an object rises very high, we get to see different colors of light – producing first a red glow, then a white one, and finally a blue color as the peak moves out of the visible part of the spectrum and into the ultraviolet. These colors can be seen when metal is heated to “red hot” or “white hot”.

Of course this limits to physical light. But is that what apostle John is talking about in the first chapter of his Gospel? No, this Light is the Source of all lights. Without this Light, nothing can exist. The name of this Light is Jesus.

To understand what John is telling us, we need to go back to v4 and 5:

John 1:4-5 In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. 5 And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.

A. A MAN FROM GOD

John 1:6-8 There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. 7 This man came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all through him might believe. 8 He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light.

Other Gospels, such as Matthew 3, Mark 1, and Luke 3, give far more information about John the Baptist than this Gospel. But apostle John concisely explains the ministry of John the Baptist in these three verses.

John was sent as a witness to Jesus Christ, to tell people that the Light had come into the world. The nation of Israel, in spite of all its spiritual advantages, was blind to their own Messiah and rejected Him.

Why did the nation reject Jesus Christ? Because they did not know Him and didn't care to know Him. They were spiritually ignorant. Jesus is the “true Light” – the original of which every other light is a copy – but the Jews were content with the copies. They had Moses, the Law, the temple and the sacrifices; but they did not comprehend that these “lights” pointed to the true Light who was the fulfillment, the completion, of the Old Testament religion.

Let me put this in our terms: There is no other country in the world like America which has so much spiritual advantage in Christianity. There are more Christian schools, churches, books, CDs and Bible teachers here in the U.S. than any other nation. Then why is it that America is becoming a heathen nation each minute?

It is because of people's choice. Not only the unbelievers of the U.S., but also even the majority of believers would rather immerse themselves into the worldly lifestyles than obey the Lord Jesus. Parenthetically, they don't want to see their sins the way God sees. They compromise the biblical standards; they justify their sins with their own self-righteousness; and they blatantly ignore God's commandments from the Bible. Then they wonder why the churches in American don't have power against satan's spiritual attacks.

The first eighteen verses of the Gospel of John are introductory – you can call it a prologue. In these eighteen verses, John gives us the entire theme of the entire Gospel. It is like a briefing before the main lecture. It is so typical of the Hebrew literary style – giving out a prologue and followed by more fine details like Moses did in Genesis chapter 1 and 2 that explains the creation process by the Lord.

In the first five verses, John explains about the deity of Christ; the Word is God; Jesus created everything that exists, etc. Now there is a sudden change – *“There was a man sent from God...”* – John the Baptist who was from Judea which is the southern part of Israel. I guess technically he was a Southern Baptist.

In next few weeks, we are going to encounter John the Baptist in more detail, but here is something we need to pay attention to. Up until Christ, John the Baptist was the greatest person who ever lived. How do I know? Jesus says so.

Matthew 11:11 “Assuredly, I say to you, among those born of women there has not risen one greater than John the Baptist; but he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

Greater than the Israel heroes like Abraham, Moses, even king David. That is quite a compliment from the Lord Jesus for John the Baptist. Why is that? Because he performed the greatest task: For the first time, publically introducing Jesus Christ as the Son of God, the Savior of the world. John the Baptist came to be a witness who spoke the truth about the upcoming Savior Jesus who is the True Light.

John the Baptist was the pointer to Jesus, if you will. With his life and testimony, he pointed the people around him to the Savior. Are you pointing people to the Messiah Jesus? That is the highest goal any Christian can have – a man and woman sent from God.

Matthew 5:16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.

Each time I walk out the door of my home, I hope and expect the Lord to use me to bring honor and glory to Himself through me. For an example, when I do a ride along with Pima County Sheriff’s deputies as a chaplain or go out to the Pima County Regional SWAT team trainings as their official water boy dragging my ice chests with Gatorade bottles inside, I pray that the Lord uses me to minister to them with the Word of God and even lead them to the Savior. For several occasions, the Lord gave me that privilege to do so.

B. THE TRUE LIGHT FOR EVERYONE

John 1:9 That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world.

Of course, apostle John is using a metaphor for Jesus as the True Light. John didn’t mean that Jesus was a literal light. It was not that Mary and Joseph didn’t use a night light because they had a glowing baby Jesus like some Nativity scene models. If Jesus was a person with glowing light on Him, Judas didn’t have to kiss Him to identify him. If so, he would have told the high priest, “Look for the One with glow.”

God’s light reveals His unbending truth to people and their dark sins to themselves and the others who are around them. Generally, God’s light speaks of the glory of God. That is the reason why the Medieval artists used a halo around Jesus’ head to show His glory.

God's light is not to hurt us. Do you remember when you were a kid, you have a friend who stuck his flashlight into your eyes? It is not like that. His light invites us to get out of our moral and spiritual darkness into His truth.

But do you remember when you were in darkness and couldn't find your way around, when someone brought forth a beam of light to you and guided you to the safe place, you appreciated that light. God's eternal light to the truth, Jesus is inviting you to His safe place through His Word.

C. JESUS WHO?

John 1:10 He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him.

At the end of our Israel trip a few years ago, we, some of the people from our church and other Calvary Chapels, were waiting for our plane in Tel Aviv Airport in Israel. My wife and I went to a cafe to get a cup of smoothie. When the young employees of that cafe saw us, they really got excited and spoke to one another in fast speed Hebrews while they were glancing at me several times. Then one of them asked Karen if I were Jackie Chan, famous martial art movie star.

I don't know what possible resemblance Jackie who is from Hong Kong and me from Sweden can have. Actually it was not the first time, I've been asked if I were him. He is good looking, rich, and famous. Within a half hour, he makes more what I earn in a whole year. But I am taller and a born-again Christian, a child of Living God.

It is one thing for people to not recognize you, it is a literal life and death difference eternally for people not to know Jesus as their Savior and God.

Secular media, skeptics, cult leaders, and liberal Bible scholars all insist that either Jesus was a mere man with good moral; or a good teacher, but not God or altogether not even close to what we believe.

John Allegro, a Semitic scholar, wrote a book called *The Sacred Mushroom and the Cross*. And he said, "Jesus Christ was not a historical man at all but Jesus was a code name for a sacred hallucinogenic mushroom allegedly used by the first Christians." That puts a whole new spin on, "Hey dude, do you want Jesus?"

A French-Canadian cult said, "Jesus' resurrection was a cloning performed by aliens who made humans in laboratory a DNA experiment 25,000 years ago." I think these people have those hallucinating mushrooms too much for their dinner.

D. HIS OWN REJECTED HIM

John 1:11 He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him.

The Jewish Talmud says, "He was the illegitimate son of Mary." It also says that Jesus was called Panthera and He learned magical arts in Egypt and then came to Israel to instigate a rebellion.

As many of us have learned from Matthew, Mark, and Luke's Gospels, the Jewish leaders during Jesus' time hated Him so intensely that the murderous hearts of the Roman soldiers were pale in comparison. These Jewish people were so shackled by religious tradition and selfishness of their own hearts that they could not understand spiritual truth.

Jesus came to His own people whom He created with His own hands, they nailed His hands on the cross.

E. AS MANY AS RECEIVED HIM

John 1:12-13 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: 13 who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

Jesus is an equal opportunity Savior. He doesn't care where you were born; who your mama and daddy are; how rich or poor you are; how smart or dumb you are; how good looking or not, thank God! There is only one thing He cares: believe in Him as the Savior and Lord. Then you are in, baby.

His own Jewish people rejected Him, but some of the people in the world – a.k.a. Gentiles – received Him. Did you get that? The action word here is “receive”, not achieve, nor earn. It is God's sovereign gift to man, not man's achievement.

Ephesians 2:8-9 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, 9 not of works, lest anyone should boast.

Liberal scholars and Reverend Oprah Winfrey insist that we are all God's children. It is an absolutely wrong theology. Everybody is a child of God by creation, but not by redemption. When you receive Christ into your heart as the Savior and Lord, then you have the right, the power, and the privilege to be called a child of God.

Matthew 7:13 “Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it.

F. APPLICATIONS

- 1) Our lives and testimonies of Jesus Christ should constantly point the people around us to the Messiah Jesus.
- 2) When the Lord reveals the darkness of our sins, it is the right and wise thing to confess them to the Lord and walk away from them and never to return.
- 3) We should never think that our salvation has anything to do with ourselves, nor anything we've done.