

# Do You See the Light ?

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Date: 04 December 2022

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- [ 0 : 0 0 ]     When I was in my late teens, I lived in Mallorca for about a year. And I worked every single night.
- And I think it was from around 9pm to 3am every night that's when I worked. Because I was DJing in a bar and I was there every night.
- And the apartment that I lived in was in Palma Nova and it was right on the beach. Literally a couple of meters away from the beach. And I remember sometimes after work, 3am, coming home from work and going for a swim in the middle of the night.
- And it was quite nice. It sounds awful in Scotland, but let me tell you. In the Spanish sunshine, the sun heats up the sea during the day.
- And then the ground cools a lot quicker than the water. And so in contrast, the water is still warm at night. And so sometimes, you know, even at 3am, come home from work and then go for a wee dip.
- [ 1 : 0 4 ]     And they had these floats set up, you know, for all the folks during the day. And I would maybe go for a wee swim out and then sit in one of these floats and just have a wee look at the stars. And just ponder life.
- I wasn't a Christian at this point, but I used to like doing that. It was just my time, you know, because the beaches were empty. The sea was empty and it was just you and the water. And it was quite lovely. But it wasn't all lovely.
- I remember actually becoming quite unsettled by the darkness in the water. I don't know if you've ever swam in the water at night. Well, no matter how many times you go in the water during the day and you know what's there and you know what's not there and you know that sharks don't come to Mallorca and stuff like that.
- When you're in the water at night and you can't see in the water, it's quite unsettling. You just think, what could be lurking down there? And your mind starts to play tricks on you and you think about everything and anything that could be lurking in there.
- Now, the fear of darkness is one of the most common fears and it doesn't just affect children. It's sometimes called skotophobia, which comes from the Greek word skotos, which is actually used in John 3.19 and it means darkness.
- [ 2 : 2 3 ]     John tends to write about the darkness more than any other Bible author. And he usually uses the word skotia or skotia, which relates more to the result of darkness and the consequence of darkness.
- But that's one word. John 3 uses skotos. It's the only time he uses this word in his gospel in John 3.19. And while the more common word he uses means the result or consequence of darkness, skotos means the essence of darkness itself.
- It's the essence. It's the nature of darkness. And so this is the only time he uses it in his gospel. And the reason is that he's talking about why people love the darkness. Because it's the nature of darkness.

It's the essence of darkness that they love. Because the nature of darkness is the thing that conceals their dark deeds. They don't love the consequence. They don't even know the consequence yet of the darkness that they love.

But the essence and nature of darkness gives them the opportunity to act in ways they otherwise wouldn't act. Don't know if you've ever done something at night or in the dark that you wouldn't do during the day.

[ 3 : 34 ] Probably when you were younger, you remember more times like that. But people tend to do things when it's dark that they wouldn't otherwise do when the light is shining. And so I like the word I used, lurking, like the creatures in the water at night, as if they're up to no good.

Because it's the same view, isn't it, that children have with monsters. At night time when they're going to bed and they think about monsters lurking under the bed or in the cupboard or in the hallway. And my children are at that point where they're like, can you turn the light on?

Is there any monsters? Can you hold on tight to me? Can you stay all night? Because this view of in the darkness, creatures lurk. And monsters lurk in the dark waiting for their prey.

And this is what animals do on the hunt, isn't it? In Genesis 4, God says to Cain, sin is crouching at the door and Cain is its prey.

And you see, many people know about Cain and Abel. They know the story about Cain and Abel and think Abel is the victim, which he is. But what is often missed is that Cain is also the prey to something else, namely sin and darkness.

[ 4 : 50 ] And so there is actually a sea creature, not in New Yorker, but there is a sea creature that lurks in the dark waters. Yet this particular fish, I don't know if you know about it, uses a little light to lure in its prey.

I don't know if you've ever heard about that. In the Disney film Finding Nemo, you find this fish. If you've ever seen that film, there's this fish and it's got this little light. And so Nemo's dad and Dory see this light and they're like, oh, drawn to the light.

But they don't see that it's luring them into this terrible monster fish. And that's what Levi calls it. He calls it a monster fish. Does anybody know the name of this fish? It's called an angler fish.

And it's a real fish. And so while one might rightly be scared of the dark, because who knows what dangers lurk in there, it's quite unsettling that there's a creature that uses light to lure in its prey towards their demise.

And so if you're ever deep sea diving and you see a little glowing light, don't go near it. Especially if you happen to be a clownfish like Nemo's dad.

[ 6 : 00 ] But I wanted to tell you about that because there's something going on in this passage that John talks about. There's something about these different reactions to light that reveal how people view the light.

And so the question in John chapter 3 is, with the light coming, Is the light like a rescue boat that's coming in the night to save people floating in the water when their ship went down?

Is the light of Christ like a rescue boat coming in the night to save people who are drowning? Or, is the light like an angler fish luring its prey in to destroy them?

Do people see the light? And if they do see the light, what do they think the light means? What do they think the light has come to do?

So let me read John chapter 3, verses 16 to 21, and we're going to explore this question. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have eternal life.

[ 7 : 13 ] For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he's not believed in the name of the only Son of God.

And this is the judgment. The light has come into the world, and people love the darkness rather than the light, because their works were evil. For everyone who does wicked things hates the light, and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed.

But whoever does what is true comes to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that his works have been carried out in God. Well, on the one side we have Jesus, a Jewish man from Nazareth in the first century, and on the other side is you and me, non-Jewish people living in Scotland in the 21st century.

Most people in Scotland now see a massive gap between the two, and wonder how this man back then has any relevance to us here and now.

Yet this passage seems to indicate that when Jesus came into the world, light finally came into the darkness, and therefore every man will now be judged by what they do with this light.

[ 8 : 38 ] Now Jesus says something later on in John's Gospel that explains this. In John chapter 9, after Jesus healed a blind man, in a discussion with the religious leaders, they asked if he considered them to be blind.

And Jesus said, If you were blind, you would have no guilt. But now that you see, we see, your guilt remains. And so this is what it's like.

This is the judgment. If you didn't know it was wrong to steal, and you took something from a shop without paying, you wouldn't be guilty like you would if you knew that it was wrong.

And what Jesus is saying to these religious leaders, is that they claim to see. They claim to know the difference between right and wrong. They claim to see. They claim to be in the light, and be leading people.

They're the ones who are saying, we see. That's what Jesus says. You're the ones saying, we see. He's not really saying they do see, but he's saying, you claim to see.

[ 9 : 43 ] And since they claim to know right from wrong, and since they claim to see the way of God, they are guilty, because they are knowingly doing what is wrong. And so back in John 1, John chapter 1 verse 17, John wrote, The law was given through Moses.

Grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. And so when the law came through Moses, that brought a certain level of knowledge about right and wrong, didn't it?

And so Paul says in Romans 3, that through the law comes knowledge of sin. And so there's a greater accountability. After the law came, there's a greater accountability for everyone, because the law has now come, and given a knowledge of sin.

But then John said that while the law was given through Moses, grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. And so what John is saying, is that there's both an even greater accountability, because where there was law before, now there is light.

But not only that, there is an even greater glory, because where there was a grace mediated through Moses, now there's an even greater grace through God's own Son.

[ 10 : 54 ] And so the question is, not only do you see the light, John saw the light. This is what he is saying. He is saying, the Word became flesh and dwelt among us.

John saw the light. He's saying, the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen His glory. Glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

And because from His fullness, we have all received grace upon grace, because the law was given through Moses, grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

Or to put it in terms of our passage in chapter 3, John has seen the light, which was a glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

This light that John saw was full of grace and truth. From His fullness, we have all received grace upon grace, because the law was given through Moses, but now the Son Himself was given.

[ 12 : 00 ] And in Him, the fullness of grace and truth of God was revealed. So do you see the light? John's asking, do you see the light?

And what do you think it means? Now I don't think that statement in John chapter 1, that the law was given through Moses. I don't think he's contrasting something bad with something good.

It's not like how Paul uses the law in his argument. You see, what John is saying is, there was a great glory in the law.

There was a great glory in Moses. There was hardly any greater revelation in the Old Testament than that through Moses. There was hardly a greater person in the Old Testament than Moses.

The glory of God literally shone off his face. And he led Israel out of an impossible situation that they'd been in for 400 years. And Moses spoke to God as if face to face.

[ 12 : 58 ] The law written on stone by the finger of God was given through Moses. God was revealed through the law. And his glory, his grace, his truth, his everlasting word came through Moses.

Who himself spoke with God and shone with his glory. How incredible is that? But what John is saying is, as amazing and glorious as that was, that Moses could speak with God.

That Moses could see something of God's glory. That Moses could make known God's name. That Moses could deliver God's everlasting word in the law. It is nothing compared to the moment that eternal word became flesh.

The one who is God's glory came to earth. The one who has God's name. The one who came from the Father's lap. The only one who has ever really seen God.

You think Moses has seen God? No one's seen God. But the one who came from the Father's lap. The only one who has seen God. The one and only son from the Father. Is himself full of grace and truth.

[ 14 : 07 ] This revelation, this light is far superior to them that. It's not just something superior. It's exponentially greater than anything that has ever come before.

The word becoming flesh far exceeds the law and revelation and glory and efficacy. Jesus far exceeds Moses and who he is in relation to the Father.

And so what was seen in the face of Moses was nothing compared to what is seen in the face of Christ. Do you see the light?

That's what John is saying. There's nothing compared to Christ. And the question might well then be how can you not see the light?

How could you not see this light? Well, the answer may be this. John 3.19 says this. And this is the judgment.

[ 15 : 06 ] The light has come into the world. How could you not see the light? Well, people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. Now, you might be sitting there saying to yourself, well, hang on.

Just because I don't believe in Jesus, I don't know if you've ever been at this point, just because I don't believe in Jesus doesn't mean I am evil. Well, John technically isn't saying that here.

He isn't saying you're evil. He's saying their works were evil. But you might say, well, I do more good deeds than I do bad things. But even then, I wouldn't say I do wicked things.

I wouldn't say that I do wicked things. But perhaps John's point is this in this little section. Perhaps his point is that the things that people do, while they are in the dark, you don't really see it for how truly ugly and wicked it really is.

We don't really see sin for what it is while we're in the dark. Who among us could truly measure our deeds when we were in the dark?

[ 16 : 14 ] Could we ever know what sin was doing to us while we didn't know the light? You see, how is it that the world can downplay sin as though it's some naughty, playful thing?

You see that all over the place? Oh, your sins. It's because it's in the darkness. That's how you can downplay it. And I know many of you have been there.

We've all been there. I've been in the darkness. And I remember what it was like to completely justify and downplay sin because you just don't know what it's like. You don't know how it is.

You don't know what sin is and what it does until you're in the light. But when the light shines and exposes every part of it to show up for what it truly is, you won't think that it doesn't do anyone any harm.

The light shows darkness for what darkness really is. Ignorance may be bliss, but think of it this way.

[ 17 : 12 ] What if you had a disease that was destroying you? What if you had a disease that was destroying you yet it was easily curable and the cure was freely available?

Would you think that ignorance of having that disease was bliss? What if you knew that there was a history of this disease in your family and then you were offered a test to see if you had this and you said, nah, no thanks.

I'd rather not know. You see, the light exposes. Tests, medical tests expose something, but why do they expose it?

Why does the light expose the things in the darkness? It's not to destroy. See, John chapter 3 says the light exposes, but it exposes so that it can save.

So like that illustration, even when a condition comes to light, only certain treatment will cure it. And so John is saying, we all have this condition of darkness and death and only the true light and life of Jesus can cure it.

[ 18 : 20 ] Nothing else will work. And so while there might be other claims to light elsewhere, nothing works but Jesus. Claims of other religions, claims of atheism.

I used to be an atheist. Atheism claims that religion belongs in the dark ages and science has brought us into the light.

That's what I used to believe. And so therefore, we don't have any need for religion because that is superstition and science has brought us into the light. We don't need it. Yet these things are false claims of light.

And so, when I was an atheist, that's what I thought, but now I know that atheism is like a placebo for darkness. In the words of a medical professor who studies the placebo effect, he said this, placebos may make you feel better, but they will not cure you.

And let me tell you from first-hand experience that atheism is like that. In respect to the darkness you see in the world and the darkness you know that's in your own heart, like a placebo, denying that there is a God may make you feel better for a while about these things, but it won't cure you.

[ 19 : 38 ] It will not cure you of the darkness. It's simply a way to hide in the darkness from the light of God. And there are two things of these claims of atheism. Number one, that it holds an intellectual high ground and number two, that it holds a moral high ground.

Neither of these things are true. Intellectual high ground, completely false and arrogant. There's plenty of evidence for God and plenty of reason to believe atheism doesn't hold the intellectual high ground.

That's just a way of making you feel smart about your choice of taking a placebo. You see, just claiming that you have the intellectual high ground, that's atheism's way of making you feel smart about denying God.

So you feel like it's a smart choice to deny God. But what does the Bible say in Psalm 14? It says, it's the fool that says in his heart there is no God. Not the smart person.

Neither does it hold the moral high ground, for it cannot even give an absolute moral standard. It cannot justify having morals at all. The explanation of atheism, of a view that denies God, the explanation of morals is that morality is a social construct.

[ 20 : 55 ] The moral code then becomes subject to the whim and desire of humans and society. And so this is what happens. You have found both a way to require humans to only be accountable to humans and your moral code is written and subject to human desires.

Wow. And what do we get as a result of that? Well, you've seen it today in this world. There's no moral high ground. No moral code. Both your intellect and your morals are just another way to hide in and perpetuate darkness.

You see, atheism is not a more enlightened view of the world. Rather, it's just another way to love the darkness and hate the light. But it does this because it views the darkness and the light in the wrong way.

And this is the point. Okay, the world views the darkness and the light in the completely wrong way. And so it's not just a question of whether or not you see the light, it's what you think the light means.

And we want to help others see the light. We want to help people see the light, but part of that must be showing what the light means. And so let me share with you just two ways that people see the light and three things that will help others see the light in the right way.

[ 22 : 13 ] So two ways to see the light. As we said before, you can see the light as a rescue boat coming in the night to save you, or you can see it like the light of an anglerfish luring you into your death.

Two ways to see the light. Whatever way you view it, the light is Jesus. He is the light that came into the world, so it's all about how people view Jesus. Whatever your view, the fact remains that Jesus came into the world, and he came into the world as light coming into the darkness.

And so when you look at Jesus, when you look at who he is and what he came to do, when you look at his words and life, what do you do with that light? How do you view that light?

What do you think about Jesus and what he came to do? Do you look at Jesus? Do you look at Jesus and see yourself being exposed like it is the end of the darkness you love?

Like it's the end of that thing that allowed you to do what you desire? Do you look at Jesus and do you only see loss? Folks, this is what a lot of people out there think.

[ 23 : 13 ] They look at Jesus and they think, no thanks, because that means a loss to everything that I love. Do you only see Jesus and see judgment and condemnation?

That's what Jesus means, judgment and condemnation. Do you see it as an end of who you are and an end of all you love? Because if that's what you think Jesus came for, then you're viewing his light like the light of an anglerfish, as if it's only there to lure you in and ruin your life.

Or, do you look at Jesus and do you see God's love? Do you see a way out of the darkness? Do you see what this darkness is really doing to you and where it leads?

Do you look at Jesus and do you see freedom from being trapped in the darkness? Do you look at Jesus and see his compassion, not his condemnation? Do you see life and not death?

Do you see it not as a loss and an end, but as a second chance and a new beginning? Because if that's what you think Jesus came for, then you're seeing the light of Jesus like a rescue boat coming to you in the night to save you from the darkness you're drowning in.

[ 24 : 28 ] Now, which one is it? Which one is true? Either way, it would be a terrible thing, wouldn't it, to view it one way and find out the other way is true. No matter which way it is, it would be a terrible thing to view it one way and find out the other way is true.

You see, depending on which one it is, you should either run toward the light or you should run away from it. It's either like the rescue boat or the angler fish.

One of them you want to go to, the other you want to get away from. And so, in order to tell which one is the right way to see the light, John gives us at least three big indicators in this passage to tell us the true way to see the light.

The three big indicators are this. Number one, God's love. Number two, God's truth. And number three, God's grace. And we're going to run through these quickly.

Firstly, God's love. If you really want to see the light, you need to know that God sent his son because he loves you. He loves you.

[ 25 : 35 ] The light came into the world not to show us that God has forsaken us and left us in the dark, but that he loves us and wants to bring us into the light. If we have any hope of showing people the light, we need to show them that God came, God sent his son because he loves them.

He came to rescue them, not forsake them. If you want to see the light, you need to see how the person and work of Jesus is a massive signal that God loves you.

The person and work of Jesus is a signal of God's love. In this light, you are loved, not forsaken. That's what we want to tell people.

In the light, why should you come to the light? Because in this light, you are loved, not forsaken. Jesus is the love of God. Secondly, God's truth.

If you really want to see the light, you need to know that when Jesus exposes our sin, he does so not to condemn us, but to free us from it. The light brings truth to the darkness to show it for what it really is.

[ 26 : 45 ] Only by remaining in the darkness will you be condemned. That's what John says. It might be exposing to come to the light, but that is the truth uncovering all the lies of the darkness.

Jesus said in John 8, If you continue in my word, you will know the truth and the truth will set you free. You see, the darkness is the thing that's trapping you, not the truth, not the light.

You will know the truth and the truth will set you free. If you really want to see the light, you need to see how the truth of Jesus is meant to set you free, not condemn you. When he brings light to your sins, it's to set you free, not condemn you.

In this light, you will know the truth and you will be free, not condemned. Jesus is the truth of God in flesh.

Finally, God's grace. If you really want to see the light, you need to know that the light came to save you, not destroy you. It's not like the anglerfish.

[ 27 : 49 ] Jesus' light is not like the anglerfish. He's the rescue boat. He is the ark of our salvation that saves us from the flood. God gave the world his one and only son so that the world would not perish but have eternal life.

He sent his son not to condemn the world but so that the world might be saved through him. The light did not come to judge us but by coming to the light we are accountable for what we do with that.

Do you see the amazing and gloriously brilliant grace of God in his son Jesus? Because if you don't see that then you've not seen the light and when we want to show people the light we want to show them that his grace is to save us not destroy us.

His light is to save us not destroy us. You may love the darkness but the darkness does not love you. We've all been in the dark.

Paul says in Ephesians 5 chapter 5 he says this at one time at one time you were darkness but now you are light in the Lord.

[ 29 : 01 ] Walk as children of light for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true and try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord. Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness but instead expose them for it is shameful even to speak of the things that they do in secret but when anything is exposed by the light it becomes visible for anything that becomes visible is light.

Therefore it says awake oh sleeper and arise from the dead and Christ will shine on you. What a beautiful thing it is.

We need to show folks that they don't need to be afraid to come to the light. It's not to condemn them. It's not to destroy them. It's to save them and free them from the darkness.

You may love the darkness but the darkness doesn't love you. You may think that the darkness gives you what you desire. You may think that the darkness gives you freedom but it really condemns you.

You may think that the darkness hides you and saves you from judgment but really the darkness destroys you. The darkness forsakes you but God's love is for you and he gives his light to you.

[ 30 : 22 ] The darkness condemns you but God frees you by the truth of his son. The darkness destroys you but God saves you and gives you eternal life in his son Jesus.

Folks how do we show people the light? How do we see the light? We need to see the light as God's love and God's truth and God's grace and we need to show people out there that God's light the light of Jesus means God's love God's truth and God's grace and how do we show that?

Both by explaining this about Jesus and also by showing with one another God's love and God's truth and God's grace to one another. The light is Christ and he has come as light that we may see in him the love of God the truth of God and the grace of God and seeing that we may come to Jesus who is the light and have eternal life in his name.

Let me pray. O Father of glory we thank you so much that you have sent your son into the world and that you have sent him as a light because he is light.



he is the light of the world and him was life and that life was the light of all man. We thank you that your light has been spreading throughout this entire earth that your light has been overcoming darkness for over 2,000 years that your light has shone into our hearts that we might see Jesus and in Jesus we might see your love and that we might see your truth and we might see your grace and know that in the light we have life for in the darkness there is only death but in the light of Jesus there is life everlasting.

[ 32 : 24 ] God we thank you for this in his name. Amen. Well I'm going to sing one last song Jesus paid it all.