

The Light Of All People

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[0 : 00] Now, this evening we're going to be exploring verses 4 to 9. Although we can look upon verse 4 as the main text that we're going to try and hang everything that I say on this evening.

That verse says, In him was life, and the life was the light of men. In him was life, and the life was the light of men.

Now, I'm going to be exploring four things from these verses. Firstly, tracing the source and fountain of light and life.

Secondly, the tragedy and triumph of the light. Thirdly, the true enlightenment. And fourthly, the light and the church.

Before I plunge into those themes, I just want to remind you of the nature and importance of these verses in the first chapter of John's Gospel.

[1 : 21] Verses 1 to 18, otherwise known as the prologue. Sometimes they've also been called an overture. An overture is a literary and musical term.

And it usually points to the fact that, let's say in music, that the orchestra will play a preliminary part known as the overture.

But contained within that preliminary part are the themes that have to be further developed in the main body of the music.

And this is exactly what John is doing here. This is why this overture and this prologue is so important.

He's announcing the themes that he will further develop in the body of the gospel. And thereby preparing his readers and his audience for that.

[2 : 30] For example, in the beginning was the word and the word was with God or the word was towards God. He's already announced this unique relationship that Jesus has with the Father.

And it's repeated and repeated throughout the gospel. In him was life. John uses the word life 38 times in his gospel.

And we'll quote some of these verses later on. The themes of glory, the themes of truth, the themes of light.

All of these are in the prologue, are in the overture of John's gospel. So that's the first thing, the nature and importance.

And last week we looked at the relationship of the word within the being of God. And let me just repeat this to you.

[3 : 33] You must grasp that John repeats two things that he said in verse 1. He repeats them in verse 2.

And therefore he's emphasizing those two things. I hope you noticed that. I tried to convey that last week. Notice how he puts it in his opening words.

In the beginning. Notice what he says in the second clause. The word was with God. And then notice what he says in verse 2.

And it's another demonstrative pronoun that he uses. He and him alone was in the beginning with God. That is to say he is emphasizing powerfully the eternal existence of Jesus Christ within the being of God.

In terms of his origins. And he's emphasizing powerfully the distinction that is within the being of God. When he says that he was with God.

[4 : 40] So we looked at the relationship of Jesus Christ within the being of God. John goes on to discuss the relationship of the word in terms of creation.

And we're not going to look at that. I'm just leaving that. I can't address everything that is there. And then thirdly.

John is looking at the relationship of the world. To the human race. To the world. In him was life. And that life was the light of all humanity. So relationship within the being of God. Relationship to creation. And relationship to the world or the human race. Let's then look at these four things. Tracing the source and fountain of life.

[5 : 44] Notice what John says here. In him was life. I mentioned last week that these tiny little prepositions are so important for John.

He doesn't say that from him is life.

He doesn't say that he knows where life is. And that he will point to life for us. He says in him was life.

That is to say he is the fountain and source of all life. And notice the simplicity of that first statement there in verse 4.

In him was life. Unqualified. Whether that's organic. Whether that's chemical. Whether that's biological. Whether that's spiritual.

[6 : 47] In him was life. He doesn't need to obtain that life from somewhere else. In him was life.

Life. And notice that word life. This word life. It's a lovely word in Greek. Zoe. And it's the only word that John uses for life.

Especially in reference to Christ throughout his entire gospel. In him was life. In him was life. In him was life. But principally Zoe.

And what does he mean by that? The life of God. Eternal life. The life that courses through the eternal being.

Jesus has a lot to say about life, doesn't he? In this gospel. I am the way, the truth and the life. I am the resurrection and the life.

[8 : 02] A person's life does not consist in the abundance of the things that they possess. If you want to find life, die to yourself.

And when John says in him his life is already in the trajectory of his gospel here in this chapter. Moving inexorably to the incarnation. Verse 14. And that life that John is talking about is over and above everything else I've just said.

Is the incarnate life. The historical life of Jesus Christ. It's that light, that incarnate life.

It's that beautiful life. It's that life of supreme obedience as a human being. It's that life in total harmony with the will of God as a human being.

[9 : 15] It's that life that is the life for others. That is the light of all people. And what did that incarnate life reveal?

It revealed that he is the redeemer, as John puts it here, of all people. In him was life and the life was the light of humanity.

There is no other figure in the history of humanity of whom this can be said. But more than that, that light lights up like nothing else can.

The kind of life that is open to every single one of us. Let me just ask.

Is Jesus Christ your light and your life this evening? Because that's really what it's all about.

[10 : 46] Is he your life? Is he your light? I could say a lot more in this first point.

But I've got another three to try and get across. So I'm going to leave it there at the moment. And go on to what I'm calling the tragedy and triumph of the light.

Look at verse 5. The light shines in the darkness. And the darkness has not overcome it.

Again, notice that little preposition in. If we ask ourselves, where is this brilliant light shining? Is it shining in some rarefied place?

This light of every man, woman, boy and girl that God seeks to bring to them. No, it's not shining in any rarefied place.

[11 : 52] Not in a race of angels. It's shining in the darkness. And notice it's in the darkness.

It's not shining away from the darkness. It's not shining towards the darkness. Or beyond the darkness. It's shining in the darkness.

It's shining in the darkness. But notice another thing. That word that John uses, shines, is in the present tense. So he's not saying it has shone.

And it's finished shining. He is saying it has shone. And shone. And shone.

Down through the corridors of time and history. And continues to shine. What's this darkness that this light is shining in?

[13:08] You know, I was thinking about that. I was asking myself this question. And it just came to my mind that I don't think I could give a better answer than the crisp answer that the scriptures itself gives.

The world, the flesh and the devil. The world with all its fake promises.
The world with all its froth and candy floss. The world with all its voices.
Trying to seduce us. And trying to lure us. And keep us in the darkness. The flesh. The flesh.
Our own will. Our own, shall we say, affair with the darkness.

[14:29] The darkness. And the devil.

Paul tells us in Colossians that there are dark powers in this world. Dark spirits. Beings that are out to keep us in that darkness.

But bear this in mind. These spirits that I'm referring to pose as angels. As something to be desired. To make one wise. To make one wise. You know.

The light, says John. Shines. Shines. In the darkness. You know.

[15:39] It even shines in your own personal darkness. That's famous Psalm 23 that we know well. Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death.

The Hebrew that underlies. Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death. Can also be translated. Though I walk through deep darkness. And even though I am walking through some form of deep darkness.

The light. Still shines. The light of Jesus Christ. My Savior. The light of God who will never let me go.

Who tells me that no weapon that is formed against me shall prosper. Amen. Before I leave this point.

Verse 5 says. The darkness has not overcome it. But there is another very legitimate translation.

[16:59] Which is in some of our English translations. And that other legitimate translation is. Because. The darkness has not understood it.

The darkness has not recognized the light. And that's actually said. In verse 10.

He was in the world. And the world was made through him. Yet the world did not know him. Or recognize him.

He came to his own. And his own people did not receive him. I want to ask you tonight.

Which of these two translations. Belong to you. Have you not recognized this great light.

[18:07] That shines in the darkness. Have you not understood it? It's the Savior. Who wishes to befriend you.

And take you to an eternal life. But. The translation. That we have here.

The darkness. Has not overcome it. I just want to say one more thing. About this point. Not even the darkness.

Of the cross. Of Jesus Christ. Overcame. Overcame. Overcame. That light. Because.

You remember. The whole place was enveloped in darkness. It tells us. Unusually. There was darkness over the land. Until the third hour.

[19:09] After he was crucified. But remember. There was a soldier. Somehow or other. Who could sense the light.

That was shining. Even at Golgotha. And remember. There was a thief. That could sense that light. Lord. Remember me. When you come into your kingdom. The thief at the other side. Railed against them. Which of these two meanings.

Apply. To you. That takes me to my third point. The true enlightenment. In verse nine. The true light.

Says John. Which gives light. To everyone. Was coming into the world. The true light. The true light. The true light. The true light. The true light.

[20:13] That's behind our English. And it's in some other translations. Is very well translated. Like this. The true light. Which enlightens everyone.

Was coming into the world. That's why I've called this third point. The true enlightenment. John.

John. John. John. Is narrating here.

The historical sequence. Of events. He's just spoken about. John the Baptist. Because he came. As we know. In time.

And in history. Before Jesus. So John is narrating. The sequence. Of historical events. And he's spoken about. To John the Baptist.

And he's saying. However. The true light. Which gives light. To everyone. Was coming. Was coming. John. Of course.

[21 : 10] Is post resurrection. And his whole perspective. Is post resurrection. But he's talking. He's historically. Just now.

In the sequence. Of history. And time. Now. All I want to say. About. This verse. Verse 9. I want to say something.

About the word. True. It means. Real. Now.

It's just come after. John the Baptist. He's not saying. That John the Baptist. Is a fake. Far from it. He's not saying. That John the Baptist.

Is a lie. Far from it. But. As we'll see. In a moment or two. There's maybe. A kind of. Bit of a problem.

[22 : 04] Between. Some of the. Audience. Or readers. Or clientele. That John is trying. To reach. In terms of their understanding. Of John the Baptist.

Place. In the whole history. If you like. Of salvation. And. He's already told them. We'll come back to this.

In a minute. That John. Wasn't the light. He came to bear witness. And this is what he means. When he's seen the real. The real light. Was coming.

The one that was. Light himself. The one that. Would go on. To say. I am the light. Of the world. But more than that.

This word. Aletheia. This. This word. That's translated. Real or true. It also has a nuance. And a connotation. Of trustworthy. Trustworthiness.

[23 : 04] Who can we trust. In this world. Can we trust. Any politician. Any politician. Any politician. Any politician.

Can we trust. Those voices. That I was speaking. About a moment ago. That are promising. Us happiness. And joy. And pleasure. Can we trust. These voices.

That tell us. We need this. This. This. This. This. And we need. To keep needing it. The true light. That enlightens. Every single. Human being. came. Came into the world. Jesus said.

Remember. In John 14. Don't let your hearts. Be troubled. You trust in God. Trust.

[24 : 08] Also. In me. And then. He went on. To say. These words. If. It. Were. Not. So. I. Would. Have. Told you.

I. Have. To say. To you. That. There. Lies. The reason. That I'm. Still. Standing. Here. Preaching. I. Can. Think. Of. A million. Objections. To. Christianity. I.

stake. Everything. On. The true light. That came. Into the world. The one.

Who says. If it were not. So. I. Would have. Told you. Everything's.

[25 : 08] On him. On him. He's. The one. That. Enlightens. Everyone. There's.

A movement. As you know. In history. Known as the. Enlightenment. There's. Books. About the. Scottish. Enlightenment. And the.

European. Enlightenment. movement. And. We heard. This morning. About. Luther. And.

Luther. Appeared. If you like. About the end. Of the medieval age. About the end. Of that age. Not at the beginning. Of the medieval age.

Say. 1100. 1200. Or the middle of it. 1300. But at the end of it. But that age. Was known. As the age. Of authority.

[26 : 07] Medieval age. And people. Began to get. Restless. About that. God. And they thought. Why should I just.

Believe. What the church. Is telling me. Especially. When it speaks. Another language. EG. Latin. And you know. Sometimes. There's unintended.

Consequences. From certain. Historical. Movements. And some people. Think that. The reformation. Sowed the seeds. Of the enlightenment. Well look. What Luther did.

We heard this morning. He got the Bible. Translated. In the language. Of the common. People. And. Thereby. Saying to them.

Read it yourself. Use your own reason. That's exactly. What the enlightenment. Was about. Let's.

[27 : 00] Use our. Reason. And reject. Revelation. Very. Very. Dangerous.

Because. This light. That has. Come into the world. Is the light. That. Enlightens. Every. Single. Single. Human. Being. Are you.
Part of this. Spiritual. Enlightenment. Has. Christ. Has. Christ. Enlightened. You. And. You. And. Showing you.
That you're. Made. In the image. Of God. And. Showing you. That although. You're. Flawed. And. Twisted. And. Crooked. Not. Straight. And. Although. That you. Go to the wells. Of the world.
[28 : 01] And you do not. Really. Find. An inner. And. Deeper. Peace. And. Satisfaction. Have you. Listened. To Christ.

Because. He. Can. Enlighten. You. I. Am. The way. He. Said. The truth. Of. The life. And. Finally. My. Fourth. Point. Probably. Going. Over. A wee. Bit. Of. Time. Here. I. Apologize. For. That. The light. And. The church. I've.
Looked. At. Tracing. The source. And. Fountain. Of. Life. In. Him. Was. Life. And. That. Light. Was. The light. Of. All. Men. I've. Looked. At. The. Tragedy. And. Triumph. Of.
The light. The light. Shines. In. The darkness. And. The darkness. Has. Not. Overcome. It. I've. Looked. At. Jesus. Christ. As. The true. Enlightenment. And. I. Finish. With. The light.
[28 : 55] And. The church. And. To do. That. I go. Back. The way. To John. The Baptist. Verse 6. I'll just.

Drink this first. There was. A man. Sent. From. God.
Whose name. Was. John. He came. As a witness. To bear witness. About. The light. That all. Might. Believe. Through him. He was. Not. The light. But. Came. To bear.
Witness. Of. The light. Now. It's a remarkable. Thing. To think. That. John. Keeps. Interrupting. His. Prologue. By. Bringing. John. The Baptist. Into. And. After. The prologue. He has. More. Verses.
[29 : 51] About. John. The Baptist. About. The fact. That. He's. Not. The light. About. The fact. That he confessed. He was. Not. The light. Etc. Etc. Etc. Etc.

And. In a sense. It's a key. To understanding. The gospel. Of. John. Because. There is. Clearly. Historically. In. John's. Time. The author. Of. The gospel. Time. This. This. Problem. Between. Between. How people. Understand. John. The Baptist. And.
How they. Understand. The whole. Message. Of salvation. So. I'm not going. Into that. But. I'm using. What is said. About. John. The Baptist. To apply. To us.
Just. As. John. Was sent. From. God. To. Bear. Witness. So. Are you. And I. Just. As.
[30 : 49] John. Was sent. To testify. Concerning. Jesus. Christ. So. Are you. And I. Jesus.
Stated. Something. Truly. Remarkable. About. The church. I used. It. As the call. To worship. Truly. Remarkable. Of. The church. The community. Of. Faith. The believing. Community. He said. This. You. Are the light.
Of the world. What a statement. Jesus. You can. Cop with that. Jesus. Said. I am the light. Of the world.
But. This. Same. Jesus. Turns. Round. To the community. Of faith. To the believing. Community. And he says. You. Are the light. Of the world. Notice.
[31 : 48] What he's saying. He's not saying. You could be the light. Of the world. You know. If you tried hard enough. He's not even saying.

You should. Be the light. Of the world. He says. You are. The light. Of the world. If you like. Whether you like it. Or not. You. For whose benefit.
Does the church exist. Well.
Think of what Jesus has just said. You're the light. Of the world. God. Our Christianity.
[32 : 53] Is to be visible. It's to be seen. It's not to be invisible. Light's not invisible.

Invisible. And this light. And this light. Is to go. Far.
Beyond. The sanctuary. When Jesus says. You are the light. Of the world. He means.
Twenty. Four. Seven. when you're at your work when you're in your house when you're among your neighbours in all your network of relationships between parents and children children, siblings mums, dads, mother-in-laws, father-in-laws he means 24-7 you're the light of the world he don't stop being the light of the world and where are where is the believing community whom Jesus says is the light of the world where is it to be the light of the world yeah you've guessed in the darkness and what is it people are to see I'll just mention this we're just about finished

I did read it already but it's worth reading again in the same way let your light shine before others so that they may see your good works now the word good here in Matthew's gospel is the word kalos and that word kalos means beautiful attractive there ought to be something attractive and winsome about the light that shines from a Christian in their community you know

[35 : 31] I was brought up in the AV and I remember a kind of mentor that I had Raymond McEwan and we used to meet and talk and walk and talk and I remember him one day saying aye brother he says the common people hurt him gladly and I said where is that to Raymond Mark 12 37 and that's how the AV describes it the common people hurt him gladly there was something attractive about the eternal word made flesh the one whose life was the most holy life ever lived yet it did not repel attracted let's rejoice shall we in the coming of this light of our saviour into our world and into our personal world let's say to our friends and families in him is life that the light shines in the darkness and the darkness will never overcome it let's tell them that and let's tell them that the real enlightenment is found in Jesus

Christ is Jesus Christ your light and your life and if he is are you letting your light shine may the Lord bless those thoughts to us for his glory and for our good Christ peace do I don't to that to