

Light of the World

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[0 : 00] Okay, now I'm going to warn you. We have this wonderful new device up here.! Oops, I changed slides.

! I skip and walk back there.

Well, now if it happens, it's my fault. Alright. I was given the whole chapter. Well, almost the chapter. I'm going to skip the first part.

I don't know what that is. It has to be the microphone. There's a story in there, in the first part of John. If you look in your Bible, it may be italicized.

It may be in brackets. It may be missing altogether. It may be, like in mine, it's real small print. That story about the woman who was caught in adultery and was brought to the Lord in the temple, that story isn't in the oldest manuscripts.

[1 : 16] It's a very good story, and it has good teaching. It probably happened, but it was not a part of John's Gospel originally. And somewhere along the way, it got added.

The problem is it didn't get added in the same place in all the versions, and it didn't even get added just to John. It got also in Luke at one point and not John, depending on what manuscript you're looking at.

So I'm skipping that. So we won't have anybody throwing down here in front of me this morning. But we're going to start... Snakes. Huh? Go get the snakes.

Snakes. We're going to start with verse 12, but I'm not actually starting with verse 12. Because if somebody can read verse 12 real loud, I'll tell you why I'm not starting there.

When Jesus spoke again to the people, He said, I am the light of the world. Whoever follows Me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.

[2 : 14] So I'm talking about the light of the world. Where does light show up in the Bible first? Genesis. Genesis. Genesis. And God said, let there be light.

And there was. By the way, when you talk about Genesis, who is the creator of all that stuff?

Christ. It's interesting. Christ is the creator, and He said, let there be light. And there was. And then we get to John chapter 8, and He says, I am the light of the world.

Well, you can't even... If you're reading John's Gospel, you can't even start there. You've got to go back to chapter 1. So turn to chapter 1.

You might want to keep your finger in aid, but chapter 1. And here we go. I'm going to assume that that battery is going bad. Do you want me to move the other microphone in front of you?

[3 : 16] Yeah. And I'll turn this one off. There we go. That solved that problem. We only need this for recording.

We don't... I don't even know if that thing works. I hope you got this, Steve. I don't... You all may be in trouble. Get this thing out. Yeah. Anyway, I'll probably beat myself with it.

That's all right. All right. All right. Is that a little something? Is that something better than nothing?

John, I'll just stand here the whole time. That'll work. Okay. That thing is trying to loosen up on you.

And I'm going the wrong way. Give me a second here. Now we're going to get it. It's a rechargeable battery. Not the battery. Not the battery.

It's a connection, I think. All right. Here we go. John chapter 1, starting in verse 1. It says, In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was fully God.

[4 : 17] The Word was with God in the beginning. All things were created by Him, and apart from Him, one thing was created that has been created. In Him was life, and the life was the light of mankind.

And the light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not mastered it. A man came, sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify about the light, so that everyone

might believe through Him.

He Himself was not the light, but He came to testify about the light, the true light, who gives light to everyone who was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was created by Him, but the world did not recognize Him.

He came to what was His own, but His own people did not receive Him. But to all who have received Him, those who believe in His name, He has given the right to become God's children. Children not born of human parents, or by human desire, or a husband's decision, but by God. Now the word became flesh, and took up residence among us.

[5 : 28] We saw His glory, the glory of the one and only, full of grace and truth, who came from the Father. See, I don't think you can understand the Gospel of John until you have a good grasp of chapter 1.

You can't grasp, you can't understand what, all the things that John recorded about Jesus until you really understand and have a handle on what's going on in chapter 1.

If you don't have a handle on it, all you've got is a story about a man who lived 2,000 years ago and did some great things and was a nice teacher. And that won't do you any good.

There are a whole bunch of people in the world, by the way, that believe that's who Jesus was, and guess where they're going to end up? Yeah. They're not going to be on a new earth. You won't see them there.

But with chapter 1, we have a problem. Because it forces us to grapple with this Jesus. Who was Jesus?

[6 : 33] Not just what did He do and what did He say, but who was He? And in fact, in this chapter, the Jewish leaders are going to say, who are you? That's the question we need to be asking ourselves as we go through the Gospel of John.

He said, and somebody already read it, it was Roger, I am the light of the world. The one who follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have light of life. See, He was standing.

If you take that one section I told you we took out, the last time we were talking it was the Feast of the Tabernacle. And during that feast, on the last day, they lit up, well, maybe on, it's seven days, so they probably lit it every day, but on the last day, there was a huge menorah.

Huge. And they lit all the candles on the top of it. And it lit up the whole temple area. And Jesus was standing there probably with this thing behind Him.

And He said, I am the light of the world. This thing back there that represents your Jewish religion that you're hanging on to is not the light.

[7 : 48] He was supposed to point to me. I am the light of the world. And those that walk in light have eternal life.

Now, back in John 1, it says, the true light who gives light to everyone was coming into the world. And here He is. And then it also says, in Him was life and the life was the light of mankind. Why did you come to Jesus?

Because you needed what? Saving. Saving. But only so that you wouldn't what? Perish. Perish. You wouldn't die. You were coming to Him really for life.

And in order to get that life, what did you have to do? You had to step into His light. And He had to show you the truth. He's truth.

[8 : 55] He revealed Himself to you through His Word or however that happened in your life. And He says, here, walk in My light and you'll have life.

I am life. Here we have not just light, we have God incarnate. You know what that means?

He's God in flesh and blood. In human form. Human. He's fully divine, which means He's fully God, and He's fully human.

He's like you and me in that sense. We had a body. He had a... He may even have a receding hairline. We don't know. May not have lived long enough to...

You know, some of us didn't start receding until we got it. Oh. He's the one who created everything. He came to reveal light in a darkened world.

[9 : 56] You know, back in creation when He said, let there be light, He was bringing order to the chaos of the universe. He was bringing light to bear so that life could come.

Because think about it. If He had not established light, He just took the world, divided the water, made the dry ground, and said, plants grow, what would have happened? Well, they might have grown, but if there was no light, they wouldn't have grown very long.

Because what does light do? It gives life. They know that if you're in Russia, there's places out in Siberia that don't get much sunlight during the year. Most of the year it's dark. Those people don't thrive. You know what they do in order to thrive? They go into rooms that have artificial light, sunlight, and they stand there for a while every day in order that their bodies can get what they need. Because guess what? Where do you get most of your vitamin D if nothing else? Sun. You need sunlight to live healthily. You have to have it.

[11 : 07] Now you can slather on all the sunscreen and that won't do you any good. I mean, you won't get skin cancer, but you're not going to thrive either. But you need some light on your skin. He came to a darkened world, a world consumed with its own self.

You know, that's Adam and Eve. What did they sin? Why did they sin? They were deceived, obviously, but what were they looking for? What did they think was an attractive offer? What were they after? To be like God. But in order, and the way they were going to do that is they were going to decide what is right and what is wrong. Think about that. What's wrong with our society? What's wrong with our own lives? Because we're always, think about this, something that you're not sure is right or wrong, what do you do? You debate it in your mind and then you make a decision, this is right or this is wrong. We do the same thing that Adam and Eve did.

[12 : 10] We reach to choose for ourselves what is right for us and what is wrong for us. Who is the one who really determines what's right and wrong?

God. In fact, Jesus said, if you love me, you will follow my commands. He determines what's right and wrong. We don't. We don't do too well at that. See, humanity wanted to be like God to be gods. That's what Satan wants, by the way, is to be a god. We want to control our own destiny. And I can talk to some of you and you say, I don't do that. I'm going to say, when was the last time you felt God was telling you to do something? You said, I'm not going to do that. I'm going to do this instead. You're telling God, you can't tell me what to do.

[13 : 09] You may not have been quite that abrupt, but I'm going to do what I think is right for me. I'm going to go that way. Now, often God hasn't said, I'm going to go that way. And when you get to the end of the road, he says, now, here's the shortcut back to where you're supposed to be. We seek our own glory. By the way, the Tower of Babel, do you know what they said? Let's build a tower that goes to the heavens so that we can make a name for ourselves. Look at the people in our society. Those that are grasping to get ahead. What are they trying to do? Make a name for themselves. Well, I think that sometimes you go to the cemetery and you see the gravestones. You ever see the great... I told you. Do you ever see the great big ones? Yeah. Why do you think they're great big ones? Because they wanted the people to know the data name. They wanted to make a name for themselves. We do that all the time. They want to seek their own glory.

[14 : 21] The world. But in doing so, they failed to live in the light and they stumble around in the dark. And it's interesting that the darkness they stumble around in is of their own making. Anytime that we're living in the dark, it's because we've chosen dark as opposed to light. We've chosen to do our own thing and go our own way and make our own choices and that puts us in darkness. Because we're turning our back on God. I was reading about Exodus. We're doing that in Sunday school. When Israel was at the sea and whether the Red Sea or Reed Sea doesn't make any difference how you want. They're at the sea and here comes the Egyptians. You know what God's the pillar of light did? He went from meeting Israel and went around to the back side of it. If you read the scripture real close, it says the side that the Egyptians saw was darkness. The side that Israel saw was light. There's a picture.

[15 : 34] Israel is God's people following God's leadership to be saved through the waters. He's leading them in the light. But Egypt is a place of death and oppression and he's leading them in the darkness.

It's so dark they can't even see where Israel is. which side of the light are you on this morning? The light side or the dark side?

Star Trek, right? Or Star Wars, rather. Only the true God can draw us back into the light and bring His creation with Him.

You know, that's what the whole new earth is all about. God's going to say, look, all this that you corrupted, I'm going to bring it back into light. I'm going to bring it back to where it belongs. I'm going to redeem it. And I'm going to bring hope and truth and grace to bear in it. the true light who gives light to everyone was coming into the world.

[16:54] He was in the world and the world was created by Him but the world did not recognize Him. If you just scan down the last half of that chapter that I have there, you'll see that the Jews are going, we don't understand, you're crazy, you're this, you're that, you don't know what you're talking about, who's your father, all this back and forth, what they're saying is, we reject you.

We reject you. Because you don't fit what we've chosen to believe. We have our ways, we have our rules, we have our laws, we have our rituals, we have our religion.

Please, don't disturb it. Leave us alone, go away, we don't know who you are. And Jesus at one point even says, you don't know me because you don't know the father.

They didn't recognize him. They asked, who is your father? Who are you?

And the first time I read that, I go, it was a question like, who are you? That's an innocent question. Who are you? But I don't think that's how they said it. I think they said, who are you? Who do you?

[18:07] And I said, who do you think you are? You see, Jesus can't be easily dismissed. You have to ask that question.

There are those people who do their very best during their life to avoid that question. They don't want to be confronted with that. Have you ever met somebody that when they found out you were a Christian or you said the word Jesus to them, they run away.

I mean, literally, they'll run away. I had a friend of mine when I was a brand new Christian. I went back. He was a friend of mine from the Army. I came back. We were at the University of Arizona and I went to his house and I walked in his house and we were talking and I said, well, you know, the Lord Jesus, and he pulled out a gun and he said, you say one more word about Jesus and I'm going to shoot you.

He was serious. Now, he later became a Christian. But not for my doing. It was some young lady that he saw across the room and said, who's she? She's special. I said, she happens to be one of the people in our fellowship.

I'll introduce you. You see, you can't just walk away. You can't. C.S. Lewis said, you have a choice.

[19:24] You deal with Jesus, you only have three choices. Three things that you can choose from. You have to identify him as one of these three things because these are the only possibilities. One, he's a crazy man.

Insane. Or, he's a liar and a fraud. That's what the Jews thought. Or, he's who he says he is. God, I am.

Now, I don't think that a crazy man could do the miracles and speak the truths that he spoke and did. Lots of people who weren't Christians recognized that this man did things that nobody else had done.

I don't think a liar would go to the cross and die a really torturous death just to cover up his fraud. That only leaves us one possibility that he is God in the flesh, carnate deity, coming to redeem his creation.

Just like he said. And he wants to bring us into relationship with himself as a source of life and hope and loyal love and grace. And he would do that by going to the cross, dying for us and paying the price of our redemption.

[20:44] redeeming that which belonged to God but had been lost to the devil. You know that when Adam and Eve sinned and they were thrown out of the garden, they no longer were subjecting themselves to God.

They had subjected themselves to whom? Satan. Because it says in the Scriptures, whoever sins is a slave to sin.

In fact, Jesus said that. I tell you the solemn truth. Everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin. a slave to sin. You serve the one who's your master.

You serve the one you follow. And if you're walking in darkness, you're following Satan who's the father of lies.

[21 : 58] and he's also responsible for death and all that coming into the world through Adam and Eve. If you're a follower of Christ, you walk in the light, then you're a servant or slave of Christ.

It's a binary choice. Just like before, you only had three choices, who Jesus is. Now you only have two choices. Who are you going to serve? By the way, the word serve in Hebrew means serve or slave or worship.

You only have two choices. Two choices. When we're in the darkness, we often don't see that choice.

An unsaved person doesn't understand they have two choices. They think this is the way it is. And often they don't understand who they're serving. But we were created as a being, as a race to serve something.

If you go back to the garden, the first mandate that Adam got was to serve God in the garden. Then Adam said, you know what?

[23 : 22] I'll do my own thing. And we've been doing our own thing ever since. But we're serving someone else even though we think we're in charge of our own destiny. Go ask the guy that's laying in the hospital dying of cancer if he's in charge of his life.

Go ask the guy that is in prison because he did something really horrible if he's in charge of his life. why do children throw tantrums?

Because they're not in the charge of their life and they want to be. And that tantrum is saying, you can't tell me what to do. Have you heard that mama? You can't tell me what to do.

That's that little sinful nature trying to take control of their lives. But they're actually just showing the character of their spiritual father, Satan.

You see, the truth is, we were created in God's image. We were created in God's image to bear His image before all creation. We are to be His representatives, His regents or co-regents here over creation.

[24 : 42] He was told us, told human beings to have dominion over the earth. Now, God's plan, we would take care of the earth. In our plan, we had taken dominion of the earth and what would we be doing with it?

We're in the process of destroying it. We were destined to walk with Him, like Adam did in the garden.

How many of you are looking forward to your turn to walk in the garden with Jesus? Amen. We were destined to know Him and to delight in Him and He in us.

Like the Song of Songs says, I am my beloved and He is mine. But how can we free ourselves? If the wages of sin are death and we're all sinners, we only got one future and that is to die. That's it.

[25 : 48] We don't control that. That's why when I get up in the morning and I go walking, I say, Lord, thank you for this new day. Why? Because it's not guaranteed. In fact, the walk is not guaranteed to get finished before a car comes and gets me.

Right? Or something jumps out of the woods. If we die for ourselves, for our own sins, we're just dead.

That's it. It's over. We're done. But, Jesus came. He paid the price.

Well, how could He pay the price if we can? Well, the answer is, we're sinners. He's not. He didn't have to die. His wages were not death because He had never sinned.

Now, here's the other problem we have. When Adam and Eve made the wrong choice and fell into sin and turned the world over, all creation, over to Satan to be the Lord of this world, He now controlled God's creation.

[27 : 05] Now, God's still sovereign. He can get it back and He has control over even Satan. But, Satan claims us. Now, how many of you have ever gotten a ticket to say, if you turn this ticket in, you redeem this ticket, you can have this thing?

Well, God says, I want my people and my creation back. I'm going to redeem it. And Satan looks at Him and says, and with what?

And he points to His Son, my only begotten Son, who went to the cross and died and redeemed us. He paid the price to liberate us from my enslavement to Savior. He is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world, as John the Baptist declared.

And then Jesus said, it's not enough to get redeemed, that's just the beginning of the journey. That just gets you on the going out part of the journey.

[28 : 20] We've got to get to the going in part, which is the new earth, heaven, however you want to look at it. And Jesus said, if you continue to follow my teachings, you are really my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.

You want to live as free people? Follow His teaching. Submit to His Lordship. then you'll know the truth.

How will you know the truth? Because He is truth. You'll get to know Him personally, intimately, and He'll set you free. Set you free.

Set you You'll be a child of God destined to live with Him forever. Jesus said this in this chapter we've been looking at.

A slave does not remain in the family forever. But a son remains forever.

[29 : 29] So if the son sets you free, you will be really free. You want to have a place at the table in the household of God forever? Be set free by the son.

Don't remain a slave. Because that father, the father of lies, table is in a very nasty place and I don't think that's going to be a banquet.

No longer a slave but a son and daughter. Joining with the father to accomplish the work He gives us. And here's the neat thing. You'll be free to be fully human.

See, we unsaved people and before us, even us, we're in the process of learning this. We don't really know what it means to be human. We think we do. God has so much more for us than what we think we know.

We were talking about the Sunday school. Stephen was talking about Jesus' new body. He ate. He talked. You could touch him. Fellowship with him.

[30 : 40] But he could go through doors. He could appear and disappear. somehow Jesus is more human than we are now. Guess what we're destined for? I don't know if we're going to be like that.

I'm not particularly looking for the scars to be on my body when I get there like he has. But you can be fully human. You can find out what it was that God intended you as his image bearer to be.

To be the people of God, living with him in our midst. You know, that was the whole purpose of the Bible. If you go from Genesis and the Garden of Eden all the way to Revelation, God's purpose has always been the same.

To live in the midst of his people. To live with his creation. That they would be his people and he would be their God in intimate fellowship.

Living with him in our midst full of grace and love for us. So I guess the thing we need to get from this chapter is come to the light, walk in the light, the light of the world, and find truth and be set free.

[31 : 55] Find life as it was meant to be from the beginning. Let's pray. Lord, we thank you that you speak truth and you are truth.

that you died to set us free. Lord, how horrible and deadly was our slavery to sin. But how joyous and great is our freedom in you to walk with you, to know you, to love you, to serve you as your image bearers, as your brothers and sisters, as your sons and daughters, as your people.

open our eyes, open our hearts, and let us allow you to use us and transform us into the image of our Lord and Savior.

I pray in his name. Amen.