

LIGHT TRIUMPHANT!

(John 1:5)

I. WELCOME/INTRO

A. Read Today's Text: John 1:1-5

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were created through Him, and without Him nothing came to be that came to be. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness overcame it not.

B. Opening Prayer

C. The Big Ideas Previously Discussed

- Jesus is the eternal Son of God, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity
- He is the Word of God the Father (Revelatory and Dynamic)
- He is the Co-Creator of the Universe
- He is the Divine Fountainhead of Light (truth and holiness) and Life (divine, spiritual life)

D. Today's Text: *And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness overcame it not.*

E. Today's Big Idea: Jesus is the Absolute Victor over the Powers of Darkness (or, He Himself is the Light Triumphant)!

F. Caveat: I can hear you saying, "It sure doesn't seem like He is getting much victory over the powers of darkness!" (e.g., ISIS, Russia, China, moral free-fall in America, religious liberty under assault, and Christian leaders and churches compromising, struggling, and even falling apart)? ***But when we look at today's text, and understand it correctly, we'll see that He is indeed!***

G. My approach today:

1. Four Key Questions:

- What is the darkness that John is referring to?
- What is the Light John is referring to?
- What does John mean when he says that the darkness did not overcome the Light?
- How exactly is the light is presently shining in the darkness?

2. Various Applications and Encouragements

III. WHAT IS THE DARKNESS JOHN IS REFERRING TO? (Luke 4:5-7)

A. *Then the devil, taking Him up on a high mountain, showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And the devil said to Him, "All this authority I will give You, and their glory; for this has been delivered to me, and I give it to whomever I wish. Therefore, if You will worship before me, all will be Yours."*

--Luke 4:5-7

B. Definition: The Darkness is *the fallen world system*; it is human society to the extent that it is under the authority and power of Satan, as he works through sinful men and institutions.

IV. WHAT IS THE LIGHT JOHN IS REFERRING TO? (John 8:12, 2 Cor. 4:1f)

A. Primarily: The Christ of God. *In Him was life, and the life was the light of men (John 1:4); The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world (John 1:9); Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, "I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life."* (John 8:12)

*For God, who said, "Light shall shine out of darkness," is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ . . .
18 But we all, with unveiled face, beholding⁶ as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory; this comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.⁷ – 2 Cor. 3, 4*

B. Secondarily: The People of God, the Gospel of God, and the Word of God (More in a moment)

V. WHAT DOES JOHN MEAN WHEN HE SAYS THAT THE DARKNESS DID NOT OVERCOME THE LIGHT? (Gen. 3:15, John 12:20f)

A. In OT times, the Darkness tried to *prevent* the Light from coming, and could not (Gen. 3:15)

B. In the days of the Lord's flesh, it tried to *destroy* (overcome) the Light . . .

"Now My soul is troubled, and what shall I say? 'Father, save Me from this hour'? But for this purpose I came to this hour. Father, glorify Your name." Then a voice came from heaven, saying, "I have both glorified it and I will glorify it again." Therefore the people who stood by and heard it said that it had thundered. Others said, "An angel has spoken to Him." Jesus answered and said, "This voice did not come because of Me, but for your sake. Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out. And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all to Myself." This He said, signifying by what kind of death He would die. – John 12:27f

“And now I have told you before it comes, that when it does come to pass, you may believe. I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming, and he has no claim on Me. But that the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father gave Me commandment, so I do. Arise, let us go from here. – John 14:29f

C. . . . and could not, and did not!

- Gen. 3:5: Only a bite upon the heel!

And you, being dead in your trespasses and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, He brought to life together with Him, having forgiven us all our trespasses,¹⁴ having blotted out that which stood against us, even the certificate of debt consisting of decrees³ opposed to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.¹⁵ And having stripped the rulers and authorities of their power, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it. –Col. 2:13f

VI. HOW EXACTLY IS THE LIGHT PRESENTLY SHINING IN THE DARKNESS? (Mt. 5:14, Phil. 2:14-16, 1 Peter 1:19, 1 John 2:8)

- Through the people of God (Mt. 5:14, Phil. 2:14-16)
- The Gospel of God

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.” – John 3:16f

And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, in whom the god of this age has blinded the minds of those who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them. – 2 Cor. 3

- The Word (or Truth) of God

Moreover, we also possess the trustworthy prophetic word, which you do well to keep in view as though it were a lamp shining in a dark and dismal place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts; recognizing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one’s private inspiration, for no prophecy ever had its origin in the will of man, but holy men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. --2 Peter 1:19f

VI. APPLICATION AND ENCOURAGEMENT

1. We need to understand God's purpose in history: He is taking a people out of the darkness, not turning the darkness into light.

"If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you." –John 15:19

"I have manifested Your name to the men whom You have given Me out of the world. They were Yours, You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word. –John 17:6

Grace to you and peace from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen. – Gal. 1:3-5

Now when He had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each having a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. And they sang a new song, saying: "You are worthy to take the scroll, and to open its seals, for You were slain, and by your blood you have purchased for God men out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and have made them a kingdom and priests to our God; and they shall reign upon the earth." R-5

2. We need to understand our role in His purpose and plan

- a. We are a People on Pilgrimage, journeying through the darkness of this present evil world to the Kingdom of God (Exodus, Rev. 12)
- b. We are a People who are following the Light of Christ (Exodus, Numbers)
- c. We are a People inviting other to people to join us!

3. We need to understand that, despite appearances all around us, God is NOT failing in His purpose and plan!

- a. Encouragement from the parables of the Kingdom
 - The seed of the Word WILL fall on good soil, bringing forth 30, 60, and a 100 fold
 - The wheat WILL grow alongside tares, till the harvest comes
 - The mustard seed of the Kingdom WILL grow into tree that shelters billions of song birds in its branches
 - The leaven of the gospel WILL spread through the lump of the whole earth

b. Encouragement from Jesus' words to Peter: "I say to you, that you are Peter, and upon this Rock I WILL build My Church, and the gates of Hades will NEVER prevail against it!"

c. Encouragement from Jesus' Bread of Life Discourse:

And Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst. But I said to you that you have seen Me and yet do not believe. All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out. For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. This is the will of the Father who sent Me, that of all He has given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day. And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day." – John 6:35

d. Encouragement from Jesus' Upper Room Discourse:

If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. –John 15:19

e. Encouragement from research about Muslim conversions (Reading)

f. Encouragement from research about religiosity in America (Chart)

g. CONCLUSION: God is not failing in the Christian world mission, or in the American Church, or at Tree of Life, or at the Branches and Twigs of life, which are you and your family!

4. We need to keep our vessels full, our lamps lit, and our lights shining (Mt. 5: 14, 25:1-13)

- Note: By fixing our eyes on Christ!

5. Great examples of believers who are letting their lights shine