

# Light of the World

December 22, 2019 ~ John 1.1-18

## Gospel of John is Unique

- ❖ John's gospel account is unique – not a synoptic (“see together”)
- ❖ No account of Jesus' birth, baptism, prayers in Gethsemane, or ascension
- ❖ **!!!** ~ John contains no parables
  - ❖ Parables were meant to obscure – no obscuring desired by John
- ❖ John is a simply written, yet profound book / One writer described . . .
  - ❖ John is “a pool in which a child may wade and an elephant may swim”
  - ❖ “Its stories are so simple that even a child will love them, but its statements are so profound that even philosophers can't fathom them.”
- ❖ John mainly tells us Who Jesus is – not so much what He did or said
  - ❖ Purpose of book in **20.30-31** “And truly Jesus did .. have life in His name”
    1. “that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God”
    2. “and that believing you may have life in His name”
- ❖ Records 7 “I am” statements and 7 miracles that testify of Him

## Jesus' 7 “I Am” Statements

1. **ch6** ~ “the bread of life” Jesus is as essential to living as food
  2. **ch8** ~ “the light of the world” Jesus allows us to see everything as intended
  3. **ch10** ~ “the good shepherd” Jesus protects us from predators
  4. **ch10** ~ “the door of the sheep” Jesus shelters us from worldly dangers
  5. **ch11** ~ “the resurrection and the life” Jesus promises us life beyond this life
  6. **ch14** ~ “the way, the truth, and the life” Jesus alone can promise this
  7. **ch15** ~ “the true vine” Jesus alone allows us to be productive in life
- Focus today will be on 2<sup>nd</sup> one – after some more about 18 verses

## John 1 Parallels Genesis 1

- ❖ **Genesis** “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth”
- ❖ **John** “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 made through Him...”
- ❖ John obviously links the 2 books – He strongly asserts the divinity of Christ

## Xition: Prologue summarizes entire book

## Overview of John's Prologue

- ❖ Narrator sets context of entire gospel / Provides unseen backstory (*Job 1 & 2*)
- ❖ 10 concepts:
  - ❖ **Word** ~ "logos" from Greek culture / surpasses & subsumes its meaning
  - ❖ **life, light, darkness** ~ light is synonymous with life / and darkness w/death
  - ❖ **witness, belief** ~ John the Baptist (**v7-8**), but also John (**v14** "we beheld")
  - ❖ **glory** ~ **17.5** "the glory which I had with You before the world was"
  - ❖ **law, grace, and truth** ~ Jesus greater than John the Baptist and Moses
- ❖ Incarnation not revealed till v14 in that "the Word became flesh"
  - ❖ Yet role of incarnate Christ shown in **vss 5, 10, 11** / rejection of light
- ❖ Jesus not revealed as Person in question until v17
- ❖ Prologue begins (**v1**) and ends (**v18**) in eternity – Word, God, Son, Father

## John's Prologue in History

- ❖ For 8 centuries Roman Catholic masses ended by reading this "final gospel"
- ❖ Still in many Christmas services include this reading
- ❖ These 18 verses convey essence of the gospel / convey beauty and mystery

## Key Concepts of First 5 Verses

- ❖ **v1-2** ~ Divinity (*eternality*) of Christ clearly stated in first two lines
  - ❖ J I Packer wrote in "Concise Theology" that "Jesus was a man who convinced those closest to him that he was also God." - (Two Natures p108)
- ❖ **v3** ~ describes His role as Creator of everything / Jesus Himself apart from it
- ❖ **v4** ~ Jesus is life itself – not just Creator or Giver of life – but root/ground of life
- ❖ **v5** ~ dilemma introduced – the great gulf between light and darkness

## Look at Life in Seven "I Am" Statements

- ❖ Explicit ~ "bread of life", "resurrection and the life", "way, the truth, and the life"
- ❖ Derived ~ "the true vine", "light of the world" (**v4** ~ "life was the light of men")
- ❖ Protect ~ "good shepherd", "door of the sheep"
- ❖ **Read John 10.9-11** ~ "I am the door .. His life for the sheep"

**Xition:** All 7 of Jesus' "I am" declarations relate to life

## Jesus is Author & Sustainer of All Life

- ❖ v4 ~ “In Him was life” / v3 ~ “All things were made through Him”
- ❖ All that lives in the world owes its existence and its ongoing sustenance to Jesus
  - ❖ Life is not just animal life, or plant life, it’s the energy bound up in stars as well
- ❖ Everything in life is intimately connected to, and critically dependent upon, Jesus
  - ❖ “**Intimately connected**” because everything only has meaning because of Jesus
  - ❖ “**Critically dependent**” because apart from Jesus nothing can or would exist
- ❖ Jesus IS life / Everything is rooted in Jesus
- ❖ Everything exists in Him, by His power, and for His glory

## To Deny Christ is to Deny Reality

- ❖ **III: Pens with 2 Tim 2.12b** ~ “If we deny Him, He also will deny us.”
  - ❖ Atheists deny the existence of God (*thus too Jesus as our source of life*)
  - ❖ Many professing believers deny that belief in Christ is essential to salvation
    - Such people deny **John 20.31 (read)** – 1) errors, 2) diff interpretation
- ❖ Such beliefs are absurd given the nature of Who Jesus is / Creator and Sustainer
- ❖ Personification of Wisdom ~ **Prov 8.36** ~ “All those who hate me love death”
  - ❖ **Ecc 7.12** ~ “.. wisdom gives life to those who have it.”

## v7 ~ John a “Witness of the Light” for Israel

- ❖ **vss 6-9** ~ John the Baptist was a “witness of the Light”
  - ❖ A witness gives testimony under oath, such that “all through him might believe”
  - ❖ Jesus said of John, “He was the burning and shining lamp, and you were willing for a time to rejoice in his light.” (**John 5.35**)
  - ❖ John’s witness was primarily to children of Israel – Galilee included

## v9 ~ John a “Witness of the Light” to “Every Man”

- ❖ **v10** goes farther ~ “gives light to every man coming into the world”
  - ❖ **Isaiah 9.1-2** reads “In Galilee of the Gentiles. The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; Those who dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, upon them a light has shined.”
    - Galilee permeated with Gentiles since Solomon gave cities to Hiram

**Xition:** Isaiah contains key references to Christ as light to Gentiles

## References in (and to) Isaiah

- ❖ Read **Is 42.6** ~ “I, the Lord, have called you .. light to the Gentiles.”
- ❖ Read **Is 49.6** ~ “Indeed He says, ‘It is too small .. salvation to the ends of the earth.’”
- ❖ Read **Mat 4.15-16** ~ “The land of Zebulun .. Light has dawned.” (**Is 9 and 42**)
- ❖ Read **Luke 2.29-32** ~ “Lord, now You are .. Your people Israel.” (**Is 9, 42, 49, 60**)
- ❖ Read **Acts 13.42-48** ~ “So when the Jews .. to eternal life believed” (**Is 42 and 49**)
  - ❖ Paul applied this reference to himself and Barnabus as Christ’s followers

## God is Light / Satan is Darkness / People are Darkness or Light

- ❖ **1 John 1.5** ~ “God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.”
- ❖ Satan referred to as “**Prince of Darkness**” since 3<sup>rd</sup> century
  - ❖ John Milton’s “**Paradise Lost**” and Martin Luther’s “**A Mighty Fortress**”
- ❖ **Eph 5.8** ~ “For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord”

## All Deeds Will Be Seen

- ❖ Read **John 3.19-21** ~ “And this is the .. been done in God.”
- ❖ Read **Luke 8.17** ~ “.. nothing is secret that will not be revealed, nor anything hidden that will not be known and come to light.”
  - ❖ III: “**In Cold Blood**” by Truman Capote ~ Calendar with all seeing eye
  - ❖ III: “**Lord of the Rings**” ~ The Eye of Sauron of Mordor

- God is light – and in Him is no darkness at all
- Though we, His children still have darkness in us, we’re given this promise
  - ❖ “Their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more” (**Heb, Jer**)
- We must not turn away from the light of God – In Christ alone is life (and light)

Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling,

And to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy,

To God our Savior, who alone is wise,

Be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever.

Amen \***pause**\* Go in peace . . .

# Light of the World - Handout

December 22, 2019 ~ John 1.1-18

1. List ways in which the Gospel of John is unique (i.e., not a synoptic)
2. What is the two-fold purpose of John's gospel as given in John 20.31?
3. What are the 7 "I am" statements in John?
  - 1) \_\_\_\_\_
  - 2) \_\_\_\_\_
  - 3) \_\_\_\_\_
  - 4) \_\_\_\_\_
  - 5) \_\_\_\_\_
  - 6) \_\_\_\_\_
  - 7) \_\_\_\_\_
4. The opening of John is identical to the opening of \_\_\_\_\_
5. What concept ties all 7 "I am" statements together?
6. "Everything in life is \_\_\_\_\_ to, and \_\_\_\_\_ upon Jesus."
7. How are people to treat John the Baptist's witness testimony for Christ?
8. What Old Testament texts best portray Jesus as a "light to the Gentiles"?
9. Why do people prefer darkness over light?