

THE TRUE LIGHT

John 1:4-9

INTRODUCTION

- The Coming of the Light festival is celebrated by Torres Strait Islanders on 1 July each year, marking the arrival of the gospel to the Torres Strait Islands in 1871
- What a different view to how many in Australia today view the work of missionaries among the natives, as negative and insensitive, and spoiling their idyllic existence!
- Light has been defined as “electromagnetic radiation that can be perceived by the human eye”
- Light is essential for human existence – without it we could do very little, our health would be destroyed, and our existence would be deprived of much pleasure
- Thank God for giving us light, particularly the light of the sun!
- But how much more must we thank God for giving us the light of salvation!
- God has revealed himself to mankind in his kindness to us, but how may the infinite God be known by feeble man?
- One of the ways God has expressed himself to mankind is through metaphors of things within his creation, things that we all understand and are familiar with (e.g. Father, Shepherd, Rock)

- A primary metaphor and description of God in Scripture is “light”
 - ✓ “God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.” (1 John 1:5)
 - ✓ He is the “Father of lights” (James 1:17)
 - ✓ He dwells “in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see” (1 Timothy 6:16)
 - ✓ The LORD is to his people, “an everlasting light” (Isaiah 60:19)
 - ✓ In the New Jerusalem, the glory of God and the Lamb are the light of it (Revelation 21:23; 22:5)
- In John’s Gospel, Christ repeatedly describes himself in terms of “light”
 - ✓ The light of men (John 1:4)
 - ✓ The true light (John 1:9)
 - ✓ The light of the world (John 8:12)

As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.
(John 9:5)
 - ✓ The light (John 1:5,7,8; 3:19-21; 12:35-36,46)
- Often when God and Christ are described as “light”, the term is used in contrast with “darkness”

- This reminds us that the broader picture of the whole of human history – past, present and future – is one of a great, over-arching cosmic battle between light and darkness, God and Satan, righteousness and sin, truth and error, life and death
- As believers we must learn to view the events of this world, as well as the events in our personal lives, not as isolated, random happenings, but as elements of the great spiritual war between the kingdom of light and the kingdom of darkness

I. CHRIST THE TRUE LIGHT BRINGS ILLUMINATION INTO A DARK WORLD

A. The world is under darkness

1. God spake light into existence at the beginning of the creation, and proceeded to create a universe that was free from the darkness of sin
2. But Lucifer committed the first sin by rebelling against God (Isaiah 14), who then tempted man to sin, bringing the whole creation under the curse and into darkness
3. As the people of Galilee are described as “sitting in darkness” and “in the region and shadow of death”, so this describes all of humanity under sin (Matthew 4:13-16)
4. Men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil (John 3:19-21)

5. Satan's evil spiritual forces that hold sway in the hearts of the people of this world, are called "the rulers of the darkness of this world" (Ephesians 6:12)
6. Satan has blinded the minds of unbelievers so they remain in darkness (2 Corinthians 4:4)
7. The natural, unregenerate man is incapable of receiving the things of the Spirit of God (1 Corinthians 2:14)
8. In contrast to Christ, who is the "true light", Satan presents himself as a counterfeit light, deceiving multitudes into thinking they are following the light when they are actually in darkness (2 Corinthians 11:13-15)

B. Christ, the true light, delivers us from our darkness

1. Even as Satan blinds sinners' minds, so God illuminates the heart by his grace, bringing salvation through faith in Christ
2. "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." (2 Corinthians 4:6)
3. In our natural, blinded state, we have no inclination to seek the Lord – it is only by his grace that our hearts are turned to seek him
4. Charles Wesley described this work of grace wherein God illuminates our hearts:

Long my imprisoned spirit lay,

*Fast bound in sin and nature's night
Thine eye diffused a quickening ray
I woke, the dungeon flamed with light
My chains fell off, my heart was free
I rose, went forth, and followed Thee*

5. Christ lighteth every man that cometh into the world.
(John 1:9)
 - a. Some view this as general revelation through nature
 - b. Quakers view this as man's "inner light"
 - c. Calvinists see "every man" as the elect only
 - d. Some see it as prevenient grace that God gives to all
 - e. The preferred view is that the witness of Christ comes to all men, exposing our sin and need of salvation – some reject this light, while others receive it (John 1:10-13)

6. Christ gives sight to the blind, but only to those blind ones who acknowledge their blindness and their need of a Saviour (John 9:39-41)

II. CHRIST THE TRUE LIGHT BRINGS PURITY INTO A DEFILED WORLD

- A. God's light is representative of his holiness (1 John 1:5-7)
- B. Christ came to deliver from the darkness of sin

1. The whole plan of redemption is the eradication of sin and its effects
2. In order to remove sin, Christ entered into the darkness of this world, in the light of his perfect righteousness
3. He was never tainted by darkness, and having offered himself for our sins, ascended into glory
4. Sinners who believe in him are delivered from the darkness of sin – its penalty, power and presence
5. Believers now become “the light of the world” in this dark world, displaying the light of Christ through their righteous lives (Matthew 5:14-16; Philippians 2:14-16)

III. CHRIST THE TRUE LIGHT BRINGS LIFE INTO A DEAD WORLD

- A. Humanity is spiritually dead in sin’s darkness (Ephesians 2:1; Luke 15:24)
 1. This death is a separation and estrangement from God, placing us under his condemnation and wrath, and will result in eternal death in the lake of fire (John 3:18; Revelation 21:8)
 2. We have no capacity in ourselves to bring ourselves into a state of spiritual life, and to deliver ourselves from the second death
- B. Christ as light describes his life-giving power
 1. “In him was life; and the life was the light of men” (John 1:4)

2. Greek scholar, A T Robertson, writes of this verse, “Here the article with both *zôê* and *phôs* makes them interchangeable. ‘The light was the life of men’ is also true.”
3. Jesus said, “I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.” (John 8:12)
4. “The Son quickeneth whom he will” (John 5:21)
5. “Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel” (2 Timothy 1:10)
6. John 1:5 describes the darkness’ response to the light of Christ – “And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not” (John 1:5)
7. The word for “comprehended” (*katalambano*) has a double meaning
 - a. It refers to restraining and conquering – the darkness of evil cannot overcome Christ’s light – he is victorious!
 - b. It refers to mental understanding – the darkness of Satan’s kingdom does not understand Christ’s light – his wisdom is infinitely greater!

CONCLUSION

1. God in the beginning spoke the word, “Let there be light” – and there was light

2. Has that word been spoken into your darkened soul, so that by faith you now have Christ's light within you?
3. There are multitudes who are deceived into thinking they have light and life, while they are in darkness and death
4. Those who claim to have light, yet walk in darkness, are liars (1 John 1:6-7)
5. This world is filled with those that "call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter" (Isaiah 5:20)
6. But God's people know the difference between light and darkness by the word of Christ in Scripture and the inner testimony of the Holy Ghost
7. Those who are saved are admonished to live as children of light (Ephesians 5:8)
8. We are called to awake from sleep, that Christ may give us light (Ephesians 5:14)
9. We are to be the "light of the world" and let our light shine by our good works (Matthew 5:14-16)
10. We are to be like John the Baptist who "came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe" (John 1:7)