

“The Unknown Savior”  
John 1:9-10  
(Preached at Trinity, April 20, 2016)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

**Disclaimer:** These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. In **Verses 4-5** John describes the coming Christ as the Light of men who shines forth in the darkness.  
In **Verses 6-8** John the Baptist is introduced as the one sent from God to herald the coming of “the Light.”  
**John 1:8 NAU** - " He was not the Light, but he came to testify about the Light."
2. Now in **Verses 9-10** John gives us further information about the Light.  
**John 1:9-10 NAU** - "There was the true Light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man. <sup>10</sup> He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him."
3. These verses tell us several things about the coming of Christ as the Light of men.
  - I. First, He is the true light
    - A. The NT Greek uses two different words to describe truth – both adjectives
      1. The first is ἀληθής which describes true as opposed to false. It speaks of historical fact. John uses this word several times.  
**John 4:18 NAU** - "for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; this you have said truly."  
**ESV** - "What you have said is true."  
**John 5:31-32 NAU** - "If I alone testify about Myself, My testimony is not true. <sup>32</sup> "There is another who testifies of Me, and I know that the testimony which He gives about Me is true."  
**John 8:13 NAU** - "So the Pharisees said to Him, "You are testifying about Yourself; Your testimony is not true."
      2. Here, however, John uses the word ἀληθινός – this word refers to something real or genuine.  
**John 4:23 NAU** - "But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers." (i.e. – genuine worshippers)  
**John 6:32 NAU** - "Jesus then said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, it is not Moses who has given you the bread out of heaven, but it is My Father who gives you the true bread out of heaven."  
**John 15:1 NAU** - "I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser." (genuine vine)

3. The two words are similar but distinct. In John 19:35 he uses both words.  
**John 19:35 NAU** - "And he who has seen has testified, and his testimony is true (as opposed to false); and he knows that he is telling the truth (a genuine statement), so that you also may believe."

B. Jesus is the Genuine Light

1. This implies that all other lights are imperfect, defective, faulty or misleading
2. Man has always sought these defective forms of light
  - For some it was government – the Romans put great emphasis on this. Many today see government as the solution to our problems and the source of our confidence.
  - For some it was philosophy – the Greeks put great emphasis on this, seeking to explain life through the power of knowledge and reason
  - For others it is technology and progress – this describes modern man. All of our hopes rest on our technologies.
3. These things are not necessarily bad – they are just imperfect lights  
None of these things can provide man's true need. None of these can reconcile men with God. Christ alone is the genuine Light that is able to enlightening men spiritually.

II. Second, the genuine Light enlightens all men

A. This is one of those cases where John uses the universal in a particular way

1. The word translated "every" is from the common adjective -  $\pi\alpha\tilde{\nu}\varsigma$   
The word "all" can have several meanings:
  - a. All without exception – **John 1:3 NAU** - "All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being."
  - b. All of a particular class of people – **John 2:15 NAU** - "And He made a scourge of cords, and drove *them* all out of the temple, with the sheep and the oxen; and He poured out the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables"  
**John 6:37 NAU** - "All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out."
  - c. All sorts of people  
**John 3:26 NAU** - "And they came to John and said to him, "Rabbi, He who was with you beyond the Jordan, to whom you have testified, behold, He is baptizing and all are coming to Him."  
**John 12:32 NAU** - "And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself."
2. There is a sense in which Christ enlightens every man.  
The Gospel is a universal offer of grace. The Law convicts all men
3. The light of Christ shines forth upon all men. He exposes the darkness of sin. The problem is men love their world of darkness. They don't want their sins exposed and so they hate Christ.  
**John 3:19-20 NAU** - "his is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil. <sup>20</sup> "For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed."

4. But this isn't John's point here which is why we reject the KJV translation here. In the context John isn't speaking of all men universally. **Verse 13** speaks of particular men who come by the power of God.
- B. John is declaring here that the Gospel is for all the nations – all sorts of people
1. In the Old Covenant God's covenant was to a particular people. He was the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The Jews thought they were the only people. God couldn't possibly be a blessing to others. This was Jonah's problem. He hated the thought that he might be the instrument of God's blessings upon a pagan nation.
  2. In the New Covenant Christ has become a light to the nations  
Isaiah prophesied this  
**Isaiah 42:6-7 NAU** - "I am the LORD, I have called you in righteousness, I will also hold you by the hand and watch over you, And I will appoint you as a covenant to the people, As a light to the nations, <sup>7</sup> To open blind eyes, To bring out prisoners from the dungeon And those who dwell in darkness from the prison."
  3. This truth is exposed clearly in **Verses 11-12**  
**John 1:11-12 NAU** - "He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him. <sup>12</sup> But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God"
  4. The light of the Gospel of Christ is offered to all. The wall of distinction has been torn down.  
**Romans 1:16 NAU** - "For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek."
- III. Third, although Christ has burst forth upon the earth men do not know Him
- A. There is a sense that all men DO know Him as Creator
1. Paul declares the universal knowledge of men  
**Romans 1:19-21 NAU** - "because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. <sup>20</sup> For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse. <sup>21</sup> For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened."
  2. Creation declares the Creator  
**Psalms 19:1-2 KJV** - "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork. <sup>2</sup> Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge."
  3. The conscience is also an inner testimony of the Creator  
**Romans 2:14-15 NAU** - "For when Gentiles who do not have the Law do instinctively the things of the Law, these, not having the Law, are a law to themselves, <sup>15</sup> in that they show the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness and their thoughts alternately accusing or else defending them,"

4. Having our existence in the Creator we should bow before Him in thanksgiving and worship. He sustains all things, maintains all things, reigns over all things and fallen man is oblivious to it.  
**Colossians 1:16-17 NAU** - "For by Him all things were created, *both* in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities-- all things have been created through Him and for Him. <sup>17</sup> He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together."  
**Romans 1:21-22 NAU** - "For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. <sup>22</sup> Professing to be wise, they became fools,"
  5. Christ was in the world long before the incarnation but fallen man was oblivious to it.
    - a. John says, "in the beginning was the Word"
    - b. Jesus was in the world, sustaining the world. He gives life-giving rain and fruitful seasons. He is the life of men, and yet men did not know Him  
**John 1:10 NAU** - "He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him."
- B. The Light was born in Bethlehem. Glory to God in the highest. The Savior is born. He walked the earth.
1. His own received Him not. They rejected His claims and turned from the light. They didn't know their Messiah.
  2. He then turned to the Gentiles and shined upon them with brilliance and still fallen man does not know Him
  3. The lost man despises having his sin exposed. One of the most distasteful aspects of the Gospel is telling people they are sinners. Most think God is well-pleased with them. They despise the notion that God is angry with them.
  4. The brilliance of Christ shines forth in the Gospel – but men will not have Him. And there is the danger of reshaping Christ and the Gospel to make Him more appealing to fallen man.

#### Conclusion:

1. John's testimony in the opening verses of this Gospel is that the true Light has come upon the world. And while most turn away from the Light, while most hate the light, some are given the power to become the sons of God. It demands a supernatural work of God.  
**John 1:13 NAU** - "who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God."
2. In **Chapter 3** John declares  
**John 3:16 NAU** - "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life."  
 If men choose to dwell in darkness the fault is all their own. The Light shines brightly and men choose to turn away.
3. Have you seen His radiance? Does the light of Christ shine upon everything you do?