

**In the Beginning... *Jesus is the LIGHT***  
**John 1**  
***EBC Advent 2024***

**Introduction**

Good morning!

This Advent season we are focusing on how the Apostle John presents the Lord Jesus to us in the introduction of his famous gospel, John 1. Our purpose in doing so is so that we can fix our minds and hearts on Jesus the Savior this Christmas season, and understand better exactly WHO He is and WHAT He has come to do.

**Review: Jesus is the WORD; Jesus is the LIFE**

Pastor Michael started our series by unpacking the opening/first line of John's introduction of Jesus, whom he refers to as the "Word of God". As the "Word", Jesus comes to deliver grace to cover our failure as God's agents in the world, and His truth to enable us to reclaim God's purposes for our lives.

Last week we explored John's view of Jesus as the "life". Though "life" is denied to Adam and Eve in the Garden due to their sin (physical, moral, spiritual), through Jesus, it is brought near and offered again.

This morning, we will continue our exploration of John's introduction of Jesus by examining how Jesus is the "light of God" which dispels the darkness and illuminates our lives with the love and presence of God.

Let us pray...

**Exposition of John 1:**

1 John 1:1-5

Last week, we saw how John associates Jesus with "life" – we saw last week "life" is not just being a living being, but a living being in communion with God, in relationship with God – the quality of "life" we are destined for. Now, John aligns this concept of "light" and "darkness" with the "life" we have in Jesus Christ. He says that "life" in communion with Jesus is what brings "light" to humanity, and the darkness cannot overcome it.

So, lots of questions for us to address here:

- *First, what does John mean by calling Jesus "light"?*
- *Second, what is the "darkness" he contrasts "light" with?*
- *Third, what does it mean that Jesus ("life") brings "light" to people?*

Like last week, we will turn to the OT for our initial answer since we see that John is repeating the creation sequence in Genesis. After that, we will go back to John himself to see how this gets defined in light of Christ.

**OT background to "Light"**

*What is "light" in the OT?*

To answer this question, lets first go back to Genesis...

The first occurrence of “light” is when God created “light” in Gen. 1:3. Now, later in verse 14, God establishes “lesser” lights to govern the creation. So, the question is: what is the “light” spoken of here in Gen. 1:3? Scholars debate this, but in my estimation “light” here refers to an extension of God’s own divine presence – a creative act that dispels the utter darkness from ever casting a permanent shadow, so to speak, over God’s creation. In Hebraic thought, “light” was thought to have some form of existence apart from just illumination from the sun or moon, and an existence within God Himself (i.e. ability to have daylight even when clouds are blocking the sky, before and after sunset when light still remains). So, what this means is that when the sun is created, it augments something that is already in existence that manifests the presence of God. Let me show you some biblical examples of what I am trying to get at:

Psalms 104:1-2

Isaiah 30:6

Psalms 27:1

We might say that “light” is:

*“Light” in the OT:*

*Divine manifestation of God’s glorious/saving presence which dispels darkness*

*What is darkness in the OT?*

So, let’s go on to the next question: what is darkness?

Notice that darkness exists, but is never actually said to be created by God. Now, this raises questions from scholars and theologians on how you explain the existence of darkness, which is part of creation but not explicitly said to be created by God.

In fact, the purpose of the light is to separate and distinguish the darkness from the light. Now, in OT and Hebrew thought, darkness is associated with disorder and “chaos” – we might call it the non-god-bad-material from the good-God material. So, the purpose of light in Genesis is to give “light” and order and purpose to creation.

Elsewhere in the OT, “darkness” becomes associated with sin, death, evil, and all the things that are contrary to God, God’s laws, and purposes. Let me show you:

Proverbs 4:10-15

Exodus 10:21-23

*“Darkness” in the OT:*

*The absence of God and/or the rejection of His commandments*

God’s creative act in Genesis to overcome darkness and create order with His presence; but “light” is lost. Last week, I showed how the loss of access to “life” in the Garden results in, each of which could also be said for what happens to the “light”:

- *Physical (death)*
- *Moral (death)*
- *Spiritual (death)*

Okay, the next question then is: how do human beings access the “light”?

*What does God’s “light” do for human beings?*

God’s bigger plan in history will be to restore the “light” of His divine presence to the creation; and that He will do this by removing the spiritual blinders which inhibit His creation from knowing and loving Him – *in a word, the moral confusion and spiritual isolation human beings have from God is overcome by Him sharing His light with them.*

According to the prophet Isaiah, a time of exile and darkness and gloom was coming for the people.

Isaiah 8:22

But then look at what is promised in the very next chapter...

Isaiah 9:1-2, 6-7

*God promises to bring His light (presence of salvation) to His people through a future King who will instruct God’s people and lead them to peace with one another (and Him!)*

### **Back to John...**

With these OT concepts in mind, lets come back to John and see if we can understand what it means to refer to Jesus as the “light”.

*Jesus is the “light” of God’s presence/salvation*

John 1:4

John 8:12

The “Light” is the “life-source” of humanity (source and direction – where it comes from and where it goes), which is defined by Jesus. “Light reveals the glory of the one God” in the face of Jesus.

*Jesus is the light of God which overcomes the darkness*

John 1:5

Darkness opposes light, but light “shines on” and overcomes the darkness.

*Jesus is the light of God which calls people to leave darkness and walk in fellowship with Him*

John 1:9-11

John 3:18

John 12:35-36, 46

### **Main Idea:**

*Jesus is the light which reveals God, overcomes darkness, and calls people to walk in fellowship with Him*

### **Application: How to walk in the light with Jesus**

And how exactly do we walk in the light?

To answer this, I want us to turn to another part of John's writings towards the end of your NT – same author, same ideas, only practically applied. Now, this section of scripture is a little lengthy, but listen closely to what John tells us about the Lord Jesus and how to walk in the light.

1 John 1:5-2:11

What I love about this portion of scripture, these beautiful writings of John, is the absolute clarity they bring to us. This is what the "light" brings for our lives: *clarity*. What becomes clear, exactly?

*Fellowship with Jesus means to walk in the "light" of God's presence/commandments*

*To walk in the light is to love as God/Christ loves (sacrificially)*

*Even if we misstep in the light (sin), Christ's sacrifice in our place covers/forgives our sin*

*You cannot have fellowship with Jesus and continue to walk in darkness (i.e. reject Christ)*

In other words, you cannot be a Christian and live a life that is characterized by pride, hatefulness, bitterness, rebelliousness, callous, selfishness, greed, envy, gluttony, abusiveness, immorality, or anything else like this.

Such things are "works of darkness" and are in conflict with the light!

So, friend, I have to ask you: this Advent/Christmas season, where are you walking? Are you moving in the light, growing in your devotion, affection, and pursuit of the Lord Jesus – demonstrated by an ever-increasing capacity to love others as Christ does? Or, are you heading in the way of darkness – focused and preoccupied exclusively with worshipping yourself, your own desires, your own way, and growing in your indifference towards the needs of the people around you?

Sadly, in our culture, the word "love" is a slippery term, and is used in a variety of ways, a lot of which are in direct contradiction to the kind of love Jesus calls us to exhibit and which the Bible talks about. Our culture likes to use the word love to (often!) look down on Christians and others and congratulates themselves on how "loving" they really are...

But the difference is that the love which characterizes Christ, God, the scriptures, is a love that is costly, gritty, tenacious, and doesn't ever give up.