

John 1:3-4

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[0 : 00] Just before the time of Christ, an important individual within Pharaoh's court was put in jail. And as he languished in jail, he saw the light coming through the narrow slit they had as a window.

He realized that the light he was seeing was the light of the sun. And at that time, revolutionized the ideas that had been up until then concerning light.

It took 1,300 years later nearly, before Francis Bacon, a monk, 13th century monk, he came up with many forward thinking theories.

He incensed the church of his day by saying that one day people would go around in horseless carriages. One day they would even take to the air in aircraft.

But he, in his famous experiment, threw a glass of water in front of a window and demonstrated a rainbow.

[1 : 10] And demonstrated that light could be split up into its individual colors. And it's amazing the discoveries that are made by Christian people.

Another believer, Isaac Newton, among many other things he proved and did, he showed that different parts of light could be separated through a prism.

And it seems that we haven't come really that terribly far since we're just still building on the theories and the facts that Newton came up with concerning light.

So it's not surprising this evening that Christ is described here at the beginning of the Gospel of John as the true light.

God and Christ the light. And if we were listening to the Psalms, all these Psalms describing God as the light.

[2 : 20] And when we think about it, what a complete image we have when we think of Christ as the light. Many of the cathedrals of Europe were designed to maximize the light as a reflection of Christ the light.

Canterbury Theatre was taken down and rebuilt in 1185. It was rebuilt in Gothic style to maximize the light getting into the building to demonstrate the light of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Perhaps some of our disruption men should have taken a leaf out of the book of the designer of some of these churches from up to a thousand years ago.

So light shines from the furthest corners of the universe. We can observe light from stars that could have died almost an eternity ago according to our thought.

Without light there would be no view of reality in the physical sense, let alone the spiritual. Without light there would be no meaningful travel.

[3 : 40] And we think of the cold, slimy life that exists at the bottoms of caves. Very poor form of life compared to the variety of life that we have on the surface of earth.

Being a lazy kind of a gardener, I took old, worn carpets from the house and spread them across the vegetable patch so they don't have to dig it up quite as much and so the weeds don't grow quite as much.

But unfortunately there's some bald patches in the carpet. It's amazing how the weeds seed in these parts through light.

Through light we see the beauty and shape of an object, the colour of an object.

It gilds and glorifies God's creation. Light is a wonder that fills space. And of course it seems to exist by itself.

[4 : 55] But we know that it exists through the great creator God, Christ himself. Genesis 1 tells us that light was created by God in the first place.

That much malign text. God saying, let there be light. And there was light. God dispelled the darkness.

He did away with the void. And brought in light and order. When we think about it, it takes eight minutes for the light from the sun to reach earth.

Travelling at a phenomenal speed. And one of these books with scientific facts that I read. At 60 miles an hour to reach the sun.

Just amazing. Just a phenomenal distance. That if it were possible, and it's not even possible now, to have a spacecraft that would travel through space at 60 to 70 miles an hour and sit there in space.

[6 : 21] Someone could have set off at the time of the disruption and still wouldn't have arrived at the sun. That's the distances involved in the creation of God.

That's the distance that the light we see from the sun travels to reach this world that we live in. John 1 describes all the light throughout eternity as coming from God, who is one and the same, who is equal and one with the Lord Jesus Christ.

And talking in John 1 and verse 10. This light was in the world. He was in the world, and though the world was made by him, the world knew him not.

To put it in the words of the hymn writer, veiled in the flesh, the Godhead see. It's just amazing that light came into the world in such a manner.

Scripture tells us that in Christ was all the fullness of the Godhead in human form. Our minds can't take it in.

[7 : 45] Such light in the spiritual sense coming in to the world. The great hymn by Walter Chambers Smith expresses the light of God.

Another Aberdonian, by coincidence, we talked about an Aberdonian this morning. Here's another Aberdonian who wrote that great hymn, Immortal, Invisible, God only wise, In light and accessible, hid from our eyes.

Most blessed, most glorious, the ancient of days, Almighty, victorious, thy great name we praise. It is only when we see the light of God that we see the sheer shabbiness of our own light.

My children have, they'll kill me for saying this because they've grown up a wee bit and I don't think they play this game any more. They play a game called German Spotlight where they take the very best torch in the house and the torches of today are a lot better than I was a boy and they go out into the garden with their friends and shine the torch and catch people in the light of the torch.

German Spotlight. And you take that very good torch and put it on during the day. There's hardly any light.

[9 : 24] You wouldn't really know it was on and yet it'll pick out someone at a hundred yards at night. And I suppose it's a bit like the difference between our light and the light of Christ described in John chapter 1.

And after grappling with the nature of God through the Old Testament, John tells us that Christ came. And men and women were able to see the light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

The coming of Jesus the light made the contrast between darkness and light appear even more intense. And so tonight, Christ stands before the world in perfect purity.

There's no shades of light or darkness with God. In God there is no darkness. What does 1 John 1 verse 5 tell us?

God is light and in Him there is no darkness at all. We know of shades of darkness and light.

[10 : 47] Remember sitting preparing this sermon on a day where one minute it would be glorious sunshine the next moment there would be a huge rain cloud over and you'd have to put the light on.

Tremendous variation in light. Not so with God. And even in the situations where there is darkness God penetrates that darkness.

what does Psalm 139 say? Darkness and light are the same to God. You may have noticed that if you've travelled to America and if you travel and just the darkness is coming in this country as you fly west the dusk seems to last a very long time.

with a five hour time difference you seem to be in light all the time and you seem to be beating the darkness. What a pathetic attempt any attempt ours is to beat the darkness.

Eventually the darkness catches up as we approach the coast of America. So darkness is part of this physical world.

[12 : 16] But in the spiritual sense Christ has totally overcome the darkness. And I want to talk about having talked about Christ the light to talk about the light in us as believers and then go on to talk about the darkness that's in the unbeliever and then finish very briefly on the light that is ours in heaven.

What a marvelous thing it is that God who is light and Christ who is light should call people like you and I from darkness into the light of the gospel.

What a great thing it is that we as Christians reflect the glory of Christ. What a marvelous privilege it is tonight.

Paul wrote this to the Corinthians God who said let light shine out of darkness made his light shine in their hearts to give us the light of the glory of God in the face of Christ.

What a great thing it is to see the light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. Everyone who is a Christian tonight to some degree we can say that we've seen that light for a precious thing more precious than anything else we could experience on this earth.

[13 : 59] In thinking of this concept of seeing the light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ I think of Bartimaeus.

Remember Bartimaeus the beggar outside of Jericho when he came to Jesus and Jesus told him to receive his sight he looked in the face of the perfect man as he received his physical sight and as he received his physical sight he came to have spiritual sight as well came alive spiritually and I don't know if he was around a few years later and ever read Paul's letter to the Corinthians if he had read that verse I'd quote it he'd have said well that's just exactly what happened to me all these years ago on the road just outside Jericho an amazing thing it is to have spiritual sight what a precious thing it is

I think it's expressed well in Wesley's hymn long my imprisoned spirit lay fast bound by 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 Christ's power and light is your power and light in a very real sense this evening you and I share in the glory of Christ's resurrection he has given us that light we share in the glory of his resurrection let me ask you tonight do people see Christ in you do they see the light within you I'll tell you one thing for sure they won't see it in the literature the past times and the culture of this world and they won't see it in the

Bible because they don't even read their Bibles Jesus who was the light of the world has left us to be as ambassadors and as individual Christians you and I give light to a dark world we're described as the children of the light you said Jesus in Matthew 5 and 14 are the light of the world how is the light kindled the light is kindled by Christ within us remember John the Baptist forerunner of Christ we read about him tonight forerunner of Christ he was only the lamp the true light was coming in to the world we as new testament believers reflect the true light the Lord Jesus Christ God has called you from darkness into the marvelous light of the gospel so we then as the light of the world we talk of the original sin within us shorter catechism that I talked so much about this morning talks of original sin but if there's such a thing as original sin and there is there had to be original righteousness and the positive spin on original sin has to be original righteousness as we come into the light of

Christ we're being brought back to original righteousness it's not a marvelous thought you and I as we live the Christian life are being brought back to original righteousness we'll never reach perfection but that's the direction that God through the work of the Holy Spirit is doing in us through sanctification he's doing a great restoration work within you and me well that's the light that's in us as believers a marvelous theme but where there's a positive there's a negative the bible talks of a world in darkness and that's what I'm going to talk about now a world in darkness I think it was in Martin Lloyd Jones I read the sinner is a monstrosity in

[19:16] God's universe wait a minute not just a wee bit extreme to say that the sinner is a monstrosity with a God who is perfect and hates sin it's a fair description of the sinner if you told your non-Christian friend they'd be appalled but that's what biblical Christianity teaches sin and mankind the pinnacle of God's creation is not the way God intended it to be we talk of the darkness the dark ages associated with ignorance we talk of how before the 18th century enlightenment people in darkness and I wonder if future generations will see the day that we're living in days of spiritual darkness yes great progress has been made scientifically we're finding out more and more about the universe that God created but in the western world anyway there's great darkness great ignorance of the soul the most important part within each one of us not only is the non-Christian world in darkness but the bible describes it as darkness the bible asks the question what will a man give in exchange for his soul what will a woman give in exchange for her soul what is a man advantaged if he gains the whole world and then loses his soul there's something within you and me and within each human being that's so great something greater than the whole world a soul placed by God and people of all classes are knowledgeable about great things today but ignorant of the importance of the soul

Paul talks of the ignorance futility and blindness of man outside of God he says this of the Ephesian people before they came to Christ without hope and without God in the world let me ask you is your life a superficial life or are you taking care of your soul if you're a Christian let me ask you do you feel the spiritual darkness around you in the secular age well the day is coming for the person who doesn't feel that darkness who hasn't experienced the light and a just and holy God will open the books but in the meantime the person who is in darkness finds the gospel and its preachers boring and irrelevant there's a text for people like that I don't know if there's anyone tonight here like that but the text is light has come into the world but men love darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil sin when it's finished brings forth death as Paul said in

Romans the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against ungodliness and unrighteous men notice that ungodliness leads to unrighteousness and so there's one solution tonight and that is that men and women be brought out of darkness into the marvelous light of the gospel the Bible talks repeatedly of people who don't live for God as children of the night the Christian of course is a child of the light we hear of the nightlife in various places in the days that we're living in and Paul indeed talks of the hidden works of darkness Paul talks of the works of the flesh and lists a terrible catalogue he goes on to talk about the works of the spirit those who are in the light and lists the fruit of the spirit an amazing catalogue of virtues the fruit of

God the Holy Spirit there's things today that men and women call civilization and to God their darkness darkness like a mass produced like a machine people follow each other like a mass produced machine Paul in another place talks of people following the patterns of this world the person in darkness is following the patterns of this world it's very easy as we all know here tonight to follow the patterns of this world I think to some degree we all find ourselves following the patterns of this world being influenced by this world it's the light of

Christ that shines in and has us go in a different direction and you think how have I managed if you have been a Christian for years to go in that different direction well you haven't managed it's the light that Christ has given you that's kept you in the Christian faith that's kept you going it's sad that people are such sheep people do things according to the way they're done in this world Paul talks of a people free from righteousness and I can think of a lot of valueless things but I can't think of anything more valueless than a life lived free from righteousness what a contrast from the light of

[26 : 47] Christ that we talked about earlier on life that starts with great hope ending up in the grave sin when it's finished brings forth death that's the reality death came through sin what makes the resurrection of Christ so important is that he conquered death he rose from the dead sin and darkness no longer as power ultimately over you and me we're coming into the light and that brings me to the last point the light of heaven a marvelous thing that is we've talked of Christ the light we've talked about the light that's in you and I as believers but there's much better to come we can't even imagine what's to come and we think of what light is and heaven is described as a place of fantastic light there's a lamb in the midst of the throne and no need for light and to me heaven sounds like a place where the light is so tremendous so fantastic that the bodies we have now can't even take it in and how we should look to that place that place of true light that place where the risen Christ is up there at the right hand of

God the Father if you haven't already started on the journey into light tonight is the night to do it I trust that each one of us will be found in the light of Christ let's unite our hearts in prayer Lord our God we thank thee for the greatness of Christ the true light we pray that each one of us would be more effective in reflecting that true light in a very real sense we feel that we've just touched on this great subject and Lord we are aware that there's so many mysteries concerning thee and concerning thy great plan of salvation we thank thee tonight for the faith that's in our hearts for the light that we've already seen that has us enthusing about

Christ the light we pray that each one of us would in the days that lie ahead become more and more into that light that we would shine more and more until we reach the perfect day continue with us then as we sing thy praises for we ask it in the name of Jesus Amen closing psalm is psalm 139 another psalm that has this great theme it's a traditional version you'll find it on page 432 from thy spirit whither shall I go or from my presence fly ascend thy heaven lo thou art there there if in hell I lie to cry the morning wings and dwell in utmost parts of sea even there

Lord shall thy hand me lead thy right hand hold shall me verse 11 goes on to say if I do say that darkness shall recover from my sight then surely shall the very night about me be a slight close in prayer Lord our God with the psalmist we acknowledge thee as the one who transcends even light itself and who is the true light we pray now that thou would part us with thy blessing for we ask this in the name of Jesus Amen Amen