

Study 2 – I Am The Light Of The World

Light is something we tend to take for granted in our modern society. At the flick of a switch we can *turn night into day* and continue most of our activities.

That wasn't the case in 30 AD. Day and night were very different. Some activities could continue by fire or torchlight after darkness fell, but for most sunset marked the end of work until the sun rose the next morning.

Light was a vital ingredient for life to continue. Darkness brought an end to most useful activities. It also brought danger, both from the *creatures of the night* (human as well as animal), and from obstacles and pits which were hidden by the dark.

It's not surprising that throughout the Old Testament and in the society of Jesus' time, light was equated with good and darkness with evil.

Reading: Genesis 1:1-5

¹*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.* ²*Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.*

³*And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light.* ⁴*God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness.* ⁵*God called the light "day," and the darkness he called "night." And there was evening, and there was morning—the first day.*

1. What was the original state of the universe?

2. What are the first recorded words God spoke in the Bible?

3. What resulted from those words, immediately and then subsequently?

4. What was God's assessment of the light?

Reading: 1 John 1:5-7

⁵*This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. ⁶If we claim to have fellowship with him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live out the truth. ⁷But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.*

5. **Genesis 1:1** tells us that God is the author of light. What does **1 John 1:5** say about God?

6. What does **1 John 1:6** say about the way we live our lives?

7. What sorts of actions are “walk[ing] in the darkness” (**verse 6**)?

8. How do we “walk in the light” and what are two results of walking in the light?

Reading: John 1:1-9

¹*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was with God in the beginning. ³Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. ⁴In him was life, and that life was the light of all humanity. ⁵The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.*

⁶*There was a man sent from God whose name was John. ⁷He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all might believe. ⁸He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light.*

⁹*The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world.*

9. Who does John introduce us to in **John 1:1** and who does he mean?

10. What does John say are this person’s characteristics and function?

11. What else does John say is in him? (**verse 4**)

12. What is the connection between light and life?

Reading: John 8:12

¹²When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”

Reading: John 9:1-7

¹As he went along, he saw a man blind from birth. ²His disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?”

³“Neither this man nor his parents sinned,” said Jesus, “but this happened so that the works of God might be displayed in him. ⁴As long as it is day, we must do the works of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work. ⁵While I am in the world, I am the light of the world.”

⁶After saying this, he spit on the ground, made some mud with the saliva, and put it on the man’s eyes. ⁷“Go,” he told him, “wash in the Pool of Siloam” (this word means “Sent”). So the man went and washed, and came home seeing.

13. Light has a number of functions; describe as many of them as you can.

14. What are some of the different ways Jesus brought light to the world?

15. What sort of life is Jesus describing in **John 8:12**?

16. How does Jesus compare physical blindness with spiritual blindness in **John 9:1-5**?

17. Who are the people who are eternally blind?

18. What is the cure for this eternal blindness?

Paul’s description of the Ephesians, applies to Christians today (**Ephesians 5:8-10**):

⁸*For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light* ⁹*(for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth)* ¹⁰*and find out what pleases the Lord.*

19. How does **Ephesians 5:8** describe followers of Jesus? How do we live as his followers? What should our goal be?

Reading: Matthew 5:14-16

¹⁴*“You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. ¹⁶In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.*

20. What is God’s purpose for those who follow Jesus? How are we to do this?

God our creator sees the *big picture* of life on earth; we see just a small part of it, as though we were walking through the darkness with a candle to light our path. Jesus has replaced the candle with a searchlight, but many people don’t want to come into his light because they don’t want their actions to be seen. Our God given purpose is to reflect God’s light in our own lives, so others will see what we do and be directed to the one who has called us out of darkness into his wonderful light.

Summary: Study 2 – I Am The Light Of The World

Formless, empty and engulfed in darkness, that was the state of our world until God spoke. “*Let there be light*”, the first word of God recorded in the Bible, achieved God’s purpose of bringing light and life to his creation. From the very beginning God declared that light was good.

The New Testament expands our understanding of light. **1 John 1** reveals that God is not only the author of light, he IS light. In his act of creation, God has drawn from his own nature. “*God is light, and in him is no darkness at all*” (**1 John 1:5**). Darkness, the original state of the universe before God’s intervention, remains the universal symbol and condition of sin and death; light is the symbol and expression of holiness and the presence of God.

Light reveals dangers hidden by darkness, it provides energy for life to grow. It makes it possible for us to follow a particular pathway, and presents us with models we can see to follow. It allows us to work, read, and observe. Light brings life and life in turn produces light. This is what John tells us in the first chapter of his gospel, as he introduces us to Jesus, the Word of God. “*In him was life, and that life was the light of all humanity*”. (**John 1:4**)

When Jesus spoke about light, he didn’t say he had brought light, he said that he IS light (**John 8:12, 9:5**). By coming to earth, Jesus revealed God in a way he had never been seen before. He also revealed the way God’s plan for his people had been distorted and twisted, so that the leaders of the Jews were leading the people away from God. These leaders were spiritually blind, and because of that, they didn’t recognise who Jesus was.

People today are spiritually blind as well, when they reject Jesus as God and choose to live life the way they want, rather than the way God directs. God our creator sees the *big picture* of life on earth; we see just a small part of it, as though we were walking through the darkness with a candle to light our path. Jesus has replaced the candle with a searchlight, but many people don’t want to come into his light because they don’t want their actions to be seen.

Spiritual blindness can be cured by the presence of the Holy Spirit, in dwelling directing and guiding, and we receive the Holy Spirit when we believe that Jesus is God and accept him as our Saviour and the Lord of our lives.

All those who do catch and reflect the light of God and of Christ are called *lights*. Christians have been called out of the darkness we lived in before we knew Jesus, and are now called “*children of light*” (**John 12:36, Ephesians 5:8**). But as followers of Jesus we are to live our lives in line with our calling which is to find out what pleases the Lord (**Ephesians 5:10**). Ephesians also tells us that the fruit of light is goodness, righteousness, and truth. Are those apparent in your life? If not what will you do about it?

God has a purpose in calling us to follow Jesus. Our purpose is to bring glory to God in heaven, and we are to do this by reflecting God’s light in our own lives, so others will see what we do and be directed to the one who has called us out of darkness into his wonderful light.

Psalm 104

- ¹ Praise the LORD, my soul.
LORD my God, you are very great;
you are clothed with splendor and majesty.
- ² The LORD wraps himself in light as with a garment;
he stretches out the heavens like a tent
- ³ and lays the beams of his upper chambers on their waters.
He makes the clouds his chariot
and rides on the wings of the wind.
- ⁴ He makes winds his messengers,
flames of fire his servants.
- ⁵ He set the earth on its foundations;
it can never be moved.
- ⁶ You covered it with the watery depths as with a garment;
the waters stood above the mountains.
- ⁷ But at your rebuke the waters fled,
at the sound of your thunder they took to flight;
- ⁸ they flowed over the mountains,
they went down into the valleys,
to the place you assigned for them.
- ⁹ You set a boundary they cannot cross;
never again will they cover the earth.
- ¹⁰ He makes springs pour water into the ravines;
it flows between the mountains.
- ¹¹ They give water to all the beasts of the field;
the wild donkeys quench their thirst.
- ¹² The birds of the sky nest by the waters;
they sing among the branches.
- ¹³ He waters the mountains from his upper chambers;
the land is satisfied by the fruit of his work.
- ¹⁴ He makes grass grow for the cattle,
and plants for people to cultivate—
bringing forth food from the earth:
- ¹⁵ wine that gladdens human hearts,
oil to make their faces shine,
and bread that sustains their hearts.
- ¹⁶ The trees of the LORD are well watered,
the cedars of Lebanon that he planted.
- ¹⁷ There the birds make their nests;
the stork has its home in the junipers.
- ¹⁸ The high mountains belong to the wild goats;
the crags are a refuge for the hyrax.
- ¹⁹ He made the moon to mark the seasons,
and the sun knows when to go down.
- ²⁰ You bring darkness, it becomes night,
and all the beasts of the forest prowl.
- ²¹ The lions roar for their prey
and seek their food from God.

²² *The sun rises, and they steal away;
they return and lie down in their dens.*

²³ *Then people go out to their work,
to their labor until evening.*

²⁴ *How many are your works, LORD!
In wisdom you made them all;
the earth is full of your creatures.*

²⁵ *There is the sea, vast and spacious,
teeming with creatures beyond number—
living things both large and small.*

²⁶ *There the ships go to and fro,
and Leviathan, which you formed to frolic there.*

²⁷ *All creatures look to you
to give them their food at the proper time.*

²⁸ *When you give it to them,
they gather it up;
when you open your hand,
they are satisfied with good things.*

²⁹ *When you hide your face,
they are terrified;
when you take away their breath,
they die and return to the dust.*

³⁰ *When you send your Spirit,
they are created,
and you renew the face of the ground.*

³¹ *May the glory of the LORD endure forever;
may the LORD rejoice in his works—*

³² *he who looks at the earth, and it trembles,
who touches the mountains, and they smoke.*

³³ *I will sing to the LORD all my life;
I will sing praise to my God as long as I live.*

³⁴ *May my meditation be pleasing to him,
as I rejoice in the LORD.*

³⁵ *But may sinners vanish from the earth
and the wicked be no more.*

Praise the LORD, my soul.

Praise the LORD