

Christmas Series 2018
"JESUS: Light to Live By"
(Part 3- 12/16/18)

John 1:1-14 (MSG)

The Life-Light

(1-2)"The Word was first, the Word present to God, God present to the Word. The Word was God, in readiness for God from day one.

(3-5)Everything was created through him; nothing—not one thing!— came into being without him. What came into existence was Life, and the Life was Light to live by. The Life-Light blazed out of the darkness; the darkness couldn't put it out.

(6-8)There once was a man, his name John, sent by God to point out the way to the Life-Light. He came to show everyone where to look, who to believe in. John was not himself the Light; he was there to show the way to the Light.

(9-13)The Life-Light was the real thing: Every person entering Life he brings into Light. He was in the world, the world was there through him, and yet the world didn't even notice. He came to his own people, but they didn't want him. But whoever did want him, who believed he was who he claimed and would do what he said, He made to be their true selves, their child-of-God selves. These are the God-begotten, not blood-begotten, not flesh-begotten, not sex-begotten.

(14)The Word became flesh and blood, and moved into the neighborhood. We saw the glory with our own eyes, the one-of-a-kind glory, like Father, like Son, Generous inside and out, true from start to finish."

Themes that John 1 introduces:

- Light (1:4; 1:9; see also 8:12; 9:5)

John 8:12 (ESV)

"Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.""

John 9:5 (ESV)

"As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.""

- The struggle between light and darkness (1:5; see also 3:19-21)

John 3:19-21 (ESV)

“And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed. But whoever does what is true comes to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that his works have been carried out in God.”

- The power of the light over darkness (1:5; see also 12:35-36a)

John 12:35-36a (NLT)

“Jesus replied, “My light will shine for you just a little longer. Walk in the light while you can, so the darkness will not overtake you. Those who walk in the darkness cannot see where they are going. Put your trust in the light while there is still time; then you will become children of the light.”

- Rejection (1:11; see also 4:44)

John 4:44 (ESV)

“(For Jesus himself had testified that a prophet has no honor in his own hometown.)”

The overarching theme of this Gospel is that the Word, who was “in the beginning with God, and...was God” (v. 1), “became flesh and lived among us...full of grace and truth” (v. 14).

The surprise is that “those who were his own didn’t receive him” (v. 11). These would include those charged with the spiritual welfare of the Jewish community—scribes, Pharisees, and priests—men who should have seen the light in Jesus’ life—who should have welcomed him with open arms. The blessing is that “as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become God’s children” (v. 12).

JOHN 1:9-13. HIS OWN PEOPLE DID NOT ACCEPT HIM

9“The true light that enlightens everyone was coming into the world (Greek: *kosmos*). **10**He was in the world, and the world was made through him, and the world didn’t recognize (Greek: *egno*—recognize or know) him. **11**He came to his own, and those who were his own didn’t receive him. **12**But as many as received

him, to them he gave the right to become God's children (Greek: tekna), to those who believe in his name:"

"The true light that enlightens everyone was coming into the world" (*kosmos*) (v. 9). This is quite a statement, because the *kosmos*, in this Gospel, is a world in rebellion against God—a dark world. The fact that the light comes into the *kosmos* or that God loves the *kosmos* (3:16) is no endorsement of the *kosmos*, but instead bears testimony to God's capacity for love.

The true light came to enlighten everyone—not just Israel (or any other sub-set of humanity).

"was coming into the world" (v. 9b). This clearly refers to the incarnation, a fact that is confirmed by the following verses that speak in poetic form of the experiences of Jesus.

"He was in the world and the world (*kosmos*) was made through him; and the world (*kosmos*) didn't recognize (*egno*) him" (v. 10). The light came into the world where he could be seen and where his light could enlighten human understanding. All that exists owes its existence to him. But in spite of all that, the *kosmos* failed to recognize him—did not understand him—rejected him—crucified him.

"He came to his own, and those who were his own didn't receive him" (v. 11). The Word (Jesus) came to the Israelites, God's chosen people. God prepared them for centuries to receive him into their midst, but they rejected him.

However, we should be careful not to judge. Much of the world today is still in rebellion—still prefers darkness to light, because its deeds are evil (3:19-20). That is true of all of us at certain points in our lives. We are all sinners, in need of God's grace (Romans 3:23).

Romans 3:23 (ESV)

"for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,"

"But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become God's children (*tekna*), to those who believe in his name" (v. 12). In this Gospel, Jesus is the Son (*huios*) of God—and is the only one who is called *huios*. This Son is empowered to bring those who receive him and believe in his name into the family of God as children (*tekna*) of God—adopted into the family, but full heirs—entitled to all the rights and privileges of family members.