

# “THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD”

*John 1:1-14*



**Theme:** In Bethlehem, God’s powerful provision for the problem sin became flesh.

Introduction: The absence of light is eerie and terrifying. In Mammoth Cave, KY one can have a tour of the cave during which the guide will warn you that he is about to turn out the lights to provide the experience of total darkness. For several seconds, there is no light – none. You cannot see your own hand in front of your face. It is an oppressive darkness one can actually feel.

Spiritually, the absence of light is a condition of existing in a sinful condition. The darkness of soul causes a person to have no awareness of anything righteous – their inability to see even their own hand in front of their face is a condition of alienation from righteousness that is felt. It is an eerie and terrifying condition of soul filled with dread of the next eternal step in which ruin awaits them. Some grope in this darkness seeking to find something to illumine their darkened state. As Paul told the Ephesians (4:17-19) – *“So this I say, and affirm together with the Lord, that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind, being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart; and they, having become callous, have given themselves over to sensuality for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness.”*

In our text this morning, God demonstrates the mercy He has for such blinded, darkened sinners whose condition is lost and separate from God – the very source of light. **In Bethlehem, God’s powerful provision for the problem sin became flesh.**

## I. THE PROBLEM OF DARKNESS - 1:1-5

### A. THE RECTITUDE OF THE LIGHT - vv. 1-4

1. John begins His gospel with a most exalted view of Jesus Christ as the preexistent One, God very God.
2. *“In the beginning”* is a reference to eternity past – cp. *Genesis 1:1; Colossians 1:17*.
3. The concept of *“logos”* [*‘Word’*] – a title for the Son of God representing the manifestation of God’s truth as the perfect expression or revelation of the Person and character of God.
4. Since *“the Word”* is credited with creating all that is, all that is depends upon Him for life – that is, the ability to live eternally in harmony with God – v.3.
5. When a person’s life is in harmony with God, they are no longer in

darkness, but are walking in the light – cp. [1 John 1:5-7](#).

6. Thus, the light (representing righteousness and holiness) comes directly from the work of the giver of life – “logos.”
7. *“The Light of men”* signifying the contrast to “darkness” which represents the sinful and shameful expressions of the flesh – and its hostility to God.

#### **B. THE RESISTANCE TO THE LIGHT – v. 5**

1. There does remain a struggle between Light and Darkness – between righteousness and depravity – as darkness cannot endure where there is light – [John 8:12](#).
2. Darkness is full of resistance to the penetrating Light – *“The Light shines in the darkness ...”* – cp. [John 3:19-20; 11:10](#).
3. John declares: *“Darkness did not comprehend it”* [καταλαμβάνω] – is not able to overpower or take possession of the Light to extinguish it.
4. There is no fellowship or compatibility between light and darkness – cp. [2 Corinthians 6:14](#).
5. Thus, the Light shining in darkness is a demonstration of how unacceptable it is for men to continue to darkness without God doing something to intervene – cp. [Isaiah 9:2; Matthew 4:14-17](#).

## **II. THE PROVISION IN DARKNESS – 1:6-9, 14**

#### **A. THE WITNESS TO THE LIGHT – vv. 6-9**

1. The power of Darkness is revealed in the necessity of one to come and give testimony concerning the Light who would *“testify about the Light”* – cp. [Luke 1:76-79](#).
2. Thus, John came to identify the Light of Life – *“There came a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness, to testify about the Light, so that all might believe through him. He was not the Light, but he came to testify about the Light.”*
3. The purpose was to prepare men’s hearts to believe through *“the true Light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man.”* – v. 9
4. The *“true Light ... enlightens every man”* – that is, he shines upon all men and those who believe would not remain in darkness, those who love the darkness will reject the light that shines on them – [John 7:7; 12:46](#).

#### **B. THE WORTHINESS OF THE LIGHT – v. 14**

1. This conflict began when *“the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us,*

- and we saw His glory ...”*
2. Literally, the glory of God – depicted throughout Scripture as a bright light – lived *“among us”* – [σκηνώω] took up residence in our midst to the extent that *“we saw His glory”*
  3. This was not a generic glory – but was the actual glory of God – *“... glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.”*
    - a) *“grace”* [χάρις] – refers to that “effective manifestation of God’s undeserved love toward sinful men<sup>1</sup>” – that was seen in the miracles, teachings, and most eloquently in the death of the Lord.
    - b) *“truth”* [ἀλήθεια] – refers to that saving light that John has already referred to repeatedly – Jesus Christ is the embodiment of the saving realities of grace.
  4. Of these elements of His moral glory Christ is *“full”* – there was no limit on the amount of glory displayed by Christ through His deeds and actions – regardless of the fact that they were veiled.
  5. Since the LOGOS is the manifestation (or revelation) of God, He was how we were able to behold the glory of God – cp. *John 1:18; Hebrews 1:1-3a.*

### III. THE POWER OVER DARKNESS – 1:10-13

#### A. THE REJECTION OF THE LIGHT – vv. 10-11

1. Through profound and intimate relations with humanity, the LOGOS had prepared the way for His advent – for him to be received and recognized.
2. However, the world failed to recognize Jesus – the One Who was the LOGOS, the Creator and Illuminator of life – *“He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him.”*
3. This rejection is even more tragic in view of the response of His specially chosen and prepared people – *“He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him.”* –
4. Their obstinance was the result of their love for sin – which is always the cause for the rejection of the Lord Jesus – cp. *John 3:19.*

#### B. THE REGENERATION THROUGH THE LIGHT – vv. 12-13

1. The focus changes from the Nation to the individual who responded by receiving Him (defined as believing in His Name) – *“But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name.”*

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<sup>1</sup> Lenski, p. 91.

2. Those drawn to the Light and who desired the life that comes from being *“children of God”* – *“were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.”*
3. God is credited with the glory of our new birth – it is a work He alone has done, is doing, and could ever do.
4. Jesus came into the world to provide the grace and truth needed for those in darkness to be quickened by that grace and through that truth and reconciled to God.

## **So What?**

- **Before the incarnation, Jesus existed together in perfect unity with the Father, displaying His glory.**
- **Through the incarnation, Jesus made it possible for us to know God and to see His glory.**
- **Rejection of Christ Jesus is to choose darkness, sin, and judgment; while submission to Him brings light, righteousness, and salvation.**