

## "The True Light"

- I'm probably like you
- I've confronted a few challenges over the past few months
- I've had to make some pretty big changes in my life
- But in late December and early January, I found myself in John
- As I've been writing and recording some devotionals for the radio
- And studying this book to a greater degree than I have for a long time
  
- At some point in my study, I began to understand - or at least to suspect
- That the gospel was intended to - or maybe just succeeded in - increasing our faith
- And as I read what others had written about the book
- And examined some of the key verses they pointed out
- I realized it was indeed helping me in my belief
- The belief in Jesus that I needed day by day - for the challenges, for the changes
  
- That's why I was convinced we needed this study
- Perhaps I just needed the study
- But I know it will be helpful for you too
  
- There are some things we should know about the gospel of John before we begin
- This is probably the last of the four gospels written
- It's written in light of what the previous three already said
- While the synoptic gospels (those which are seen together: Matthew, Mark, and Luke) focus on what Jesus did
- John focuses more on who Jesus is
- They also follow Jesus' ministry in Galilee, while John tells of what He said and did in Jerusalem
- Written by the Apostle John, son of Zebedee and Salome and the brother of James
- The book declares its purpose in chapter 20 verse 31
  
- "But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name."
  
- We'll make this our goal in the series, to come to believe or increase our belief in Him, so that we may have eternal life, abundant life, through Him
  
- If, as it has been said, the gospels each emphasize a different origin of Jesus
- Matthew as the Messiah, from Abraham to David
- Mark as a servant, from Nazareth

- Luke as the perfect man, from Adam
- Then John shows that he came from heaven and that He is God
- It appears that the writings of John, this gospel, 1st, 2nd, 3rd John, and Revelation were all written in the last ten years of his life
- He could be referred to as the “beloved apostle”
- Or, as he calls himself in this book, the disciple “whom Jesus loved”
- There are a few significant events, those you’ll notice in Matthew, Mark, and Luke that John leaves out
- Including Jesus’ birth, His baptism, His temptation in the wilderness, the last supper, Gethsemane, and His ascension
- He does include seven signs or miracles, six of which are not mentioned in the synoptics
- Also not found elsewhere, seven “I Am” statements
- I am the bread of life
- I am the light of the world
- I am the door
- I am the good shepherd
- I am the resurrection and the life
- I am the way, the truth, and the life
- I am the true vine
- He also says “before Abraham was, I am,” and the Jews picked up stones to cast at Him
- And He says “I am he” when the band of men, led by Judas, come to take Him away
- At that statement, the men fall to the ground
- It is clear that Jesus is making a declaration about His deity
- The Jews know it
- And the band of officers, chief priests, and Pharisees feel it
- We will have confirmation in this study of John’s gospel

#### John 1:1-14

- This passage makes something clear
- There is a man who has come into the world that gives power to become part of God’s family
- The man who has come is eternal – He was there at the beginning
- He is the Creator – the creator of life and the giver of new life
- There was also one came before Him to declare who He was
- Of course, Old Testament scripture prophesied His coming, tells of His life, death, burial, and resurrection
- Who He is and why He came are perhaps the most important pieces of information in the world
- We find them in the first few verses of John...

## John 1:1-3

1. In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.
2. The same was in the beginning with God.
3. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.

- This is the revelation of who He is
- He was there at the beginning (1a), that is, eternity past
- He was with God (1b)
- And He was God (1c)
- All things were made by Him (3a)
- Nothing exists apart from Him (3b)
- Obviously eternal, obviously deity, clearly all powerful
- You may have noticed someone like this in the Genesis account, reading Genesis 1:26...

“And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness:”

- We're about to learn more about a very important person...

## John 1:4-5

4. In him was life; and the life was the light of men.
5. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.

- Men are in need of life and light – He brings life and light (4)
- Even though He shined the light, some did not lay hold of it (that's the definition of comprehend in verse 5)
- Some did not embrace Him
- While, praise the Lord, some did
- There was a certain degree of rejection of life and light
- What kind of life are we talking about?
- Later we'll see it called eternal life
- In John 3:15 “That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.”
- Or called everlasting life
- John 3:36 “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.”
- It is life that avoids death and wrath
- It is life that is abundant

- John 10:10 "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."
- It is superabundant in quantity, and superior in quality
- What kind of light?
- That which reveals and reproves evil
- John 3:20 "For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd."
- And one that those who follow the truth can run to
- John 3:21 "But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God."
- A light that permanently removes us from darkness
- John 12:46 "I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness."
- Someone bore witness of Him...

John 1:6-8

6. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.
7. The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe.
8. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light.

- A man came before Him to prepare the way
- He was not the light, but declared the true light was coming
- He points Him out directly and declares His mission later in the chapter
- The key was, as it is now, belief (7)
- John the Baptist, not too unlike us, was declaring the Light has come (8)
- All who believe in Him must declare, to every creature, the Light has come
- In fact, we are called by Him, directly and deliberately, to be light
- He has enlightened us, we must shine
- Matthew 5:14-16 "Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house.  
Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."
- There is further explanation here...

John 1:9-11

9. That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.
10. He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.
11. He came unto his own, and his own received him not.

- This is a message that has come to, and is for, every man (9)
- "The blood atonement He made was unlimited in its potential. It is limited only in its application, effectively saving those who are brought by the Holy Spirit to repentance and faith."
- When He comes to His creation, many know Him not – or they don't come to know Him (10)
- Even His own people do not receive Him (11)
- He is the life and the true light, and yet He is rejected
- This is an astonishing thought
- Already explained to some degree, as we read John 3:20 "For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved."
- Still, we find ourselves asking...
- If the Word is, who verse 1 says He is, how can we, made by Him from dust, fail to embrace Him?
- How could those in Israel, who knew the scriptures, speaking explicitly of Him, have failed to recognize Him?
- This is especially heart-wrenching as we go on...

#### John 1:12-13

12. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:
  13. Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.
- It is a different story for those who believe (12b)
  - They become part of His forever-family (12a)
  - They are born again, not of the flesh, but of the Spirit, by God (13)
  - This is radical, permanent transformation
  - It is as radical as a dead man coming to life - because that's what it is
  - Ephesians 2:4-5 "But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)"
  - There is no other way into God's family
  - The second person of the Godhead came into this world to save
  - Jesus will declare it plainly later in the series...
  - John 14:6 "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father,

but by me."

- And we know the identity of "The Word"...

John 1:14

14. And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

- The Word is born in Bethlehem: Emmanuel, God with Us – Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace

- One Jesus, by name

- He lived a sinless life and died in our place on the cross

- He was buried, then rose again from the dead

- Today He provides the free gift of salvation to all who will believe

- He is full of grace and truth (14b)

- He is our Savior from sin, death, and hell

- By this we know who He is and what He has done – the most important pieces of information in the world

- The question is for the Apostle John: what will we do with them?

- He desires, and has written this book, that we might believe

Christopher Harper, January 2021