

LET THERE BE LIGHT, JOHN 1:1-13

The Light Before Christmas #1

◆**Intro:** I'm guessing that if ever you were in one of the building-burning riots that took place last year across our country you might have wished there was someone, some force that could swoop in and stop the mayhem instead of videoing the whole thing from the sky. But I'm also guessing that it never occurred to you to wish some man had the powers of a spider, of some man could dress up like a bat, or that some man could breath under the aqua and summon the sea's power to aid this fight. I'm willing to bet that when you were in the hospital this year or laid up in your bed at home with COVID wondering if you'd merely lose your taste, or if you'd not live 'till next week, you would very well have liked someone to step in with a miracle ivermectin shot or something that would reverse your sickness or that of your loved one. But I'm also relatively sure it never occurred to you for a moment to call for some Strange Doctor, whose cape had a personality of it's own, to help you. And I'll venture that if you lost your job last year, or if your wages got cut, or if you got in the mail your Social Security announcement that American retirement was secure only until 2037, at which time benefits would drop to 79% of the original plan, -that you wished there was someone we could elect to the White House who was so savvy that he could solve such troubles. But I'm sure you didn't think Magnito could probably help. And do you know why? Because all our wished-for super-heroes are just stories. They're not real. They don't exist. I don't believe in them, and

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you don't believe in them. We just watch them on the screen and pretend somehow, someday, there might be someone to stop the craziness of life. But none of us really write the North Pole, do we?

◆And so I wouldn't blame you for being a little skeptical when you read in the Bible that there was a man in the middle east, that a couple thousand years ago who could control wind like Storm in the X-men, or do Aqua-man one better by walking on the water. You might think that you are too old for stories like that. So the Christ of the Bible might not be someone you think about on the buss while coming home from school, or someone you whisper to in your bedroom before going to sleep.

◆But let me ask you this. If there really was an Iron Man in town, wouldn't you want his number? If there really was a super person who could catch jumbo jets, wouldn't you want to ask him for help with that tree that fell on your car? And if there really was a Christ of Christmas wouldn't you still be thinking about him in January?

◆I have one purpose in looking at our text today; to help you be impressed with Jesus the Messiah. And to grasp what a big deal this is. In conjunction with the Sunday Schools presentation this year, we will focus our Advent season on the theme of Light.

◆**1.** John's gospel starts out describing Jesus as light. **If Jesus is the light John is referring to, by all rights Jesus alone deserves my reverent adoration and my greatest attention.**

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That is to say, for everyone in the room today, and the world for that matter, in any culture, and at any time in history before now or to come, the most appropriate response to Jesus is bow before him as the true God he is.

◆If you are an atheist here today the most appropriate response to this Christ of Christmas is to make him your God. If you are a Hindu here today, it means you really ought forsake all the thousands of god's you've been taught about and worship only Jesus. If you are skeptic and consider yourself beyond religion in general, it means you will never know the true meaning and purpose of your existence until you bow your knee to this Jesus of Nazareth. If you claim to be a Christian here today, but to you that's not as important as baseball, and worship is something you attend to when you have no other plans, it means you really have no clue what you're claiming. Let's explore!

◆John brings us all the way back to the opening verses of Genesis where Moses wrote down God's summary record of the world's start.

◆*Genesis 1:1-4 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. 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. And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness.*

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◆Clearly the Apostle John is thinking of this text, isn't he?

1. Moses starts out with "In the beginning" and John copies him verbatim.
2. Moses writes that God "created" the universe (*the heavens and the earth* are a Hebrew way of saying "everything in the universe" as though it was a compound word like woodshed. We don't say "the shed where the wood is", we say woodshed. And for universe the Hebrew says *hashamyim et haerets*). And so, when John tells us about Jesus, he says "everything that was created" was created through Jesus.
3. In Genesis God spoke things into existence that were not. And John refers to Jesus as the "word", something spoken. (But more than that as we will see.)
4. Moses writes that God said "Let there be..." The verb is *hayah*, "to be, to exist". The noun form would be "life". And John writes "in him was life".
5. The first aspect of the universe that Moses speaks of is light. And John tells us "that life was the light of men".

◆A. Do you see what John is asserting here? He is equating Jesus with God the Father. He is saying that Jesus is the Creator himself. He is saying that the Jewish man who died on a cross around 33AD existed... somewhere... before the planet did! WHAT? you say. In calling him the Logos he is telling the Greek audience the same thing. In greek philosophy the logos is the

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“reason” or “word” behind reality. The ideal pattern, the force and structure of existence. To the modern he says the same. Most scientists today affirm the Big Bang theory based on the measurable deceleration of the expanding universe. The Big Bang theory asserts that the material world is not eternal, and had a specific start in time and space. That’s exactly what it means to have a beginning. Genesis teaches the same scientific reality as the Big Bang; our world had a beginning. But who or what pulled the trigger?

◆Well, either it was something a part of the created universe, or something outside time and space. There’s only one logical choice there. Science agreeably teaches us that every effect has a cause. Nothing cannot cause something. The Bible agrees.

◆*Hebrews 11:3 By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God’s command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible.*

◆So what caused the Beginning/Big Bang must be outside the limitations of space and time. Something or someone all powerful, preexistent, eternal. Something very much like what we call God! That’s why Paul can write...

◆*Romans 1:20 For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.*

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◆*By all rights Jesus alone deserves my reverent adoration and my greatest attention. Just how awesome is a Creator?*

◆**B.** How BIG, or powerful, or significant must someone be to be the Creator of everything else? If the Sun were the size of a basketball, the Earth would be the size of a sesame seed, 25 meters away. If you shrunk the Earth to the size of a basketball while keeping the Solar System to scale, then the Sun would be a ball 107 feet in diameter That's a 10 story building! The Sun is so large 1 million earths could fit in it's space. And yet it is a small star. If the next nearest star (Proxima Centauri) took the location of our sun, our Earth would be half way from its core to its' surface. If we shrunk the solar system to the size of an American football field, the Sun would the size of a dime on the goal line. Mercury's diameter would be scarcely as large as the point of a needle and just under a yard away. And Earth would be on the two-yard line and about the size of a grain of sand. In reality the distance to sun is 93 million miles. It would take an airliner more than 20 years to fly that distance. As Creator, Jesus is larger than, grander than everything in the known universe. *By all rights Jesus alone deserves my reverent adoration and my greatest attention.*

[Communion]

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◆2. Philosopher Immanuel Kant said that the greatest evidence for God is the starry host above and the moral law within. We've talked about the starry host. Let's consider the moral law. **If Jesus is the light John is talking about, I need to consult everything he says if I don't want to stumble through life.**

◆A. It will help you to know that by *light* John is also indicating truth, law, all that is right. Light commonly referred to the Law in Jewish teaching.

◆*Psalms 119:105-106 Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path. I have taken an oath and confirmed it, that I will follow your righteous laws.*

◆You can tell John is hinting at this too. He moves from cosmic reality (creator) to moral reality (law/right living). In fact, without the existence of a Creator, we have no explanation for the concept of morality. And yet every human has it; a sense of right and wrong. Animals mostly don't, although some soulish creatures have a bit of a sense. But all humans know it. Where does it come from if we are material accidents of combining molecules? Check this out, also written by John:

◆*John 3:19 This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil.*

◆1Jn 2:9-11 Anyone who claims to be in the light but hates his brother is still in the darkness. Whoever loves his brother lives in the light, and there is nothing in him to make him stumble. But whoever hates his

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brother is in the darkness and walks around in the darkness; he does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded him.

◆Light represents righteousness. Dark represents immorality.

John is telling us that Jesus is the rule against which we measure all goodness and truth.

◆Now a lamp does not show us our final destination, only our next step on the path. Do you want to know the next right step to take? Ask Jesus about it, literally.

◆And when you are involved in anything that makes you feel dark, you might want to consult Jesus' teaching on that topic.

◆**B.** When John calls Jesus the "light of men" and the "light that shines in the darkness" he is also using an image we are all familiar with: the battle between good and evil. In the old cowboy Westerns the bad guys wore the black hats and the good guys wore the white hats. The yin yang philosophy pictures good and evil as two equal and opposite powers in a single circle. Star Wars is famous for describing the Force as having a "dark side". This is what John is saying here, except that there is no contest, the Light is the ultimate power. Evil holds no candle to Christ. Jesus is everyone's answer to what is morally right and wrong.

◆**C.** Now, some folk readily admit that Jesus was a good teacher, someone who showed a good example of human morality from which we can learn what is right and wrong. But Jesus was not merely a good teacher. Oh no, not at all. Lots of people say he

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was a good teacher, or a teacher of goodness but this is not even close. Lewis observes that Jesus taught outrageous things. He said he existed before Abraham. He said he was the only way to heaven. He said we would die and come back to life. People who say such things are on a par with someone who claims he's a chicken egg. Such a one is a Liar, Lunatic or Lord. That is, we can dismiss this guy as a fake claiming false things that are clearly fable, or we can dismiss him as crazy and out of his mind, or we can accept him as the God he claims to be. But let's not ever talk this nonsense about Jesus being a good teacher. He has not left us that option.

◆**Conclusion:** But here is your option:

◆John 1:10-13 He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God— children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

◆Choose right now to recognize him! Choose right now to receive him even again! Believe in his name, be forgiven of every thing wrong you ever did! Let the things he taught become your rules for life.

◆To sum it up then, John's use of the term "light" in reference to Jesus reminds us of his divine Creator status, as well as his singular moral authority, and invites us to believe. John writes his gospel that everyone hearing these words would bow to the

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Word of God, who as verse 14 tells us, became flesh and lived in a house among us!