

**“The True Light Shines”  
John 1:1-14  
December 13, 2020**

**Lights/Read through Chron. Bible**

**Doctor called Denise—expecting our second child, overdue, middle of July—“Would you like to have your baby today”? Can you guess what her answer was? At the time I was serving as a youth and worship pastor—she called me—and asked, “How do you like the thought of having our second child today?” What are you telling me? Are you in labor? No! But...**

**I remember it so well because inducing the labor meant waiting at that point. So what did I do before the labor pains arrived, in between visiting with and encouraging my wife? I walked back and forth in the room and worked on a goal I had to memorize the first chapter of John’s Gospel. Over and over I would go back to the beginning and start through it—so much so that the first 18 verses at that point were totally embedded in my mind and heart. I began quoting it from memory to Denise...then the labor started, the quotes were done, and our second child, Beth, was born. I have often thought, memorizing scripture during the process of labor and delivery really locks it in your mind!**

**But a word of advice to all you young men; do not try to recite scripture to your wife when her actual labor begins—**

that is not a good idea unless maybe you quote Isaiah 56:1 in the New English Translation that says, “For I am ready to deliver you!” That might be okay, but leave it at that!

John’s Gospel is dear to my heart. I feel like it is a part of me, and I can’t really say when it occurred, but somewhere along the way after memorizing the first chapter, I found a profound confidence in my faith as it related to who Jesus was, and is, and why He, over all other claimants to devotion, why Jesus alone is deserving of my absolute loyalty and worship.

So what I’d like to do today, is walk through the first few verses of John’s Gospel with you and tell you why I believe Jesus Christ is the true light of God, why He is the only light we need, and what the coming of this light into the world means for you and me. In other words, what, if anything does the arrival of this light require of us?

### **John 1:1–5 (ESV)**

**<sup>1</sup> In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup> He was in the beginning with God. <sup>3</sup> All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. <sup>4</sup> In him was life, and the life**

**was the light of men. <sup>5</sup> The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.**

Let's just take the very first clause:

**In the beginning was the Word...**

Many of you know the Bible begins with the phrase "in the beginning," and here at the very start of John's Gospel it's like we are given a new beginning. But now instead of in the beginning God, we have "in the beginning was the Word." Another way you could translate this verse would be to say in the beginning the Word already was!

You see, while in the other Gospels Mark starts out with the ministry of John the Baptist, and Matthew and Luke with the birth narratives, John has another agenda. John wants to take us all the way back before space and time. He wants us to see that this one who is the Word comes from outside of this universe and world in which we find ourselves. But now look at all of verse one:

**John 1:1 ESV**

**In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God.**

**Here we have the language of relationship. The Greek prepositional phrase “with God” tells us that this one who is the Word is in relationship with God. And then shock of all shocks, we are told that the Word was God!**

**(Time of third century heretics to modern day JW's some have said this last phrase should be translated with a (small g) god. No! For one thing John was a monotheistic Jew; he would never, never, never, refer to any other thing or person as a god. Secondly, in the arrangement of Greek words, which is known as syntax, in this particular arrangement there is no rule that requires that in the absence of the definite article before the word God you must insert an indefinite article and translate it “a god.”) Only done because they want to avoid the clear implications of this passage. The one who is the Word—the very expression of God was with God and was God! (JW NWT 1950 page 312—made up tense—“properly rendered in the perfect indefinite tense” footnote c, why? To avoid having Jesus say, “Before Abraham was I am!” They have Jesus saying “I have been” according to the phony tense they just made up! Then, when it was pointed out, they just deleted it!)**

**John 1:2 ESV**

**He was in the beginning with God.**

Here again—relationship the Word who is God, is nevertheless distinguishable. (diff. Judaism/Islam)

**John 1:3 (ESV)**

**<sup>3</sup> All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.**

Psalm 33:6 tells us by the Word of the Lord the heavens were made. Here we learn everything that has been made has been made through the agency of this one who is the Word!

Do you realize what this means? If all things were made through him, and if without him nothing was made that has been made, then this one who is the Word is the source of not only all physical life but all spiritual life as well! Look at verses 4 and 5

**John 1:4–5 (ESV)**

**<sup>4</sup> In him was life, and the life was the light of men.**

**<sup>5</sup> The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.**

Here we can see that in this one who is the Word we find both the source of life and light—two of John's favorite words! And when John speaks of

**light, often in the very same context he speaks of darkness. For John, darkness is the world apart from God. Darkness is the world of human beings alone, and alienated from God—sinful, selfish, blind, boastful, ignorant, or indifferent to God.**

**The life we all need is the life that comes from God (John 20:31) (Garden—declaration of independence—spirit in human beings died— from that point on, human beings are born out of relationship with God. The spirit is that aspect or dimension of human beings that makes the life of God a reality in us—it died-went out like a used up light bulb.)**

**And we see here that this Word is the One who has life and light in Himself!**

**And this life, who is the Word, is the light that shines in the darkness—all those places where God is rejected or ignored—and here is the best news—the darkness cannot overcome the light!**

**Dear people, no matter how dark things look, please never forget, there is no such thing as parity between light and darkness. We don't believe in a perennial dualism as many religions teach. The light shines in the darkness and the darkness cannot overcome it!—oh it was so good last week hearing the prophecy of Isaiah from**

chapter 9—“the people who walk in darkness will see a great light; those who live in a dark land, the light will shine on them—Galilee/Nazareth.

### **John 1:6–13 (ESV)**

**<sup>6</sup> There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. <sup>7</sup> He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him. <sup>8</sup> He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light. <sup>9</sup> The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. <sup>10</sup> He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. <sup>11</sup> He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. <sup>12</sup> But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, <sup>13</sup> who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.**

Here we see that the light coming into this world is to be distinguished from the witness to it—namely John the Baptizer. And here in verse 9 the Word who is the light is described as the true light (later in John this Word who is the true light will be described as the true bread of life and the true vine. The whole idea here is that the light must be received. If the light is rejected, there is no other

alternative but darkness. But as many as received Him, who believed in his name, He gave the right or the power to become children of God. How do you become a child of God? You do not run from the light, but to the light—even as it exposes the darkness in you and around you.

### **John 1:14 (ESV)**

**<sup>14</sup> And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.**

Here is John's version of what Matthew and Luke both describe as happening in Bethlehem.

The Word became flesh—and tabernacled— or more literally pitched His tent among us. This is so reminiscent of what took place with Moses and the tent or tabernacle in the wilderness when God's very presence was with His people in the desert. John picks up this theme and in essence says, "Jesus is now the place of God in this world, and it is through Him—and as we will learn later, through Him alone that we can be made alive.

**Jesus is the true light of God because He comes from God and is God.**

**Unlike all the other prophets, Jesus has life in himself. He is the very Word of God and therefore the very source of life.**

**Jesus is the only life and light we need. How could we ever imagine a more resourceful friend to meet our needs than the one through whom all things have been made?**

**The light has come, and what is required of us?**

**We must respond. We can never be indifferent to the shining light of Jesus because His light shines in such a way that all of my dark places are uncovered and exposed!**

**The question is, will you respond?**