

## ***Jesus, Life and Light*** (John 1:4–13)

The introduction to the Gospel of John lays the foundation for a book written that people might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God and that by believing they may have life in His name (John 20:31). What we read should enrich our celebration of the birth of Jesus as it deepens our appreciation of the Person whose birth we are celebrating, the reason He has come into the world, and the response which the birth of Jesus demands of us.

### **1. Jesus is Life and Light (1:4).**

- a. Jesus told the people, probably on the last and greatest day of the Feast of Tabernacles, that those who follow Him will have the light of life (John 8:12). Having already promised “living water” (7:37), He used the ceremony of the Illumination of the Temple to declare that He was the light of the world.
- b. Jesus is the source of both life and light in creation, both in the material sense and the spiritual sense. Biological life is “light” in that it reveals a Creator (cf. Romans 1:18–25).
- c. Jesus came as the ultimate, true light, the perfect Revelation of God, who showed the way to have eternal life, to be eternally accepted in the presence of an infinite, holy God (cf. John 6:33, 35, 48; 11:25–26; 14:6; 10:10, 28; 3:19–21; 12:35–36a).

### **2. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not mastered it (1:5).**

- a. The light shone at creation and continues to shine, in the material world and spiritually in Jesus, through the Word which testifies of Him and through those who follow Him, as sons of light.
- b. And the darkness has not mastered the Light. The darkness, that is, evil or evil people or the realm in which evil operates, has neither suppressed that light nor understood it. This is a sad, sobering picture of unbelieving people around us, whose primary need is to have their eyes opened to the light of the gospel.

### **3. John witnessed to the true light (1:6-9).**

- a. God commissioned John to witness to or testify to Jesus as the true light, which he did (cf. 1:6–8, 15, 19–36; 3:29).
- b. As a witness, John was a light (John 5:35), but not the Light.
- c. The true (genuine, ultimate) Light entered the world and gives light to all, in that He reveals the heart of a person and divides mankind into those who flee from the light and those who are drawn to it.

### **4. Mankind in general and Israel in particular rejected the Light (1:10-11).**

- a. The world (mankind and particularly sinful mankind) did not recognize the Light when He entered into their world and lived among them (v. 10). By their preference to darkness, they did not submit to their Creator.
- b. Even Israel, God’s chosen people, did not receive the Him (v. 11).

### **5. Some did receive the light and became children of God (1:12-13).**

- a. We learn about people, that our status is not naturally children of God, but that it can become that by being born of God; that our responsibility is to accept Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God, entrusting ourselves to Him because of who He is; that this is are one and only opportunity to become children of God, to have the Life which matters.
- b. We learn about God, that a person becomes a child of God only by God. Neither ancestry, nor procreation, nor parental decision can make you a child of God, but only God does that.
- c. We learn about Jesus Christ that He must be the object of belief and that He is the one who give the right to become a child of God.

We celebrate Christmas understanding that the life and light in Jesus Christ is incomparable to all which the world may offer. Believers live from Christmas to Christmas enjoying that life and light which is theirs in Christ.

#### *Questions for further thought and discussion:*

- Jesus was the true Light, yet only received by some. How should that affect our understanding of how we testify to Him and what the response might be?
- In light of this passage how would you explain to a person what their response to God needs to be in order to have eternal life?
- What struggles do you face personally, perhaps at Christmas time, that could be met by a deeper appreciation of Jesus as life and light? How?