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THE LIFE AND THE LIGHT – Part 2 (John 1:1 – 18)

In Part One of this study, we looked at the background of the writing of the book of John including some information about the author. The introduction to chapter one gave us some key teaching on the purpose of the book and initial descriptions of who Jesus is. It included mentioning a man named John the Baptist, whose ministry was to announce to the world the true identity of Jesus. The rest of the chapter focuses our attention on Jesus himself, further claiming that he is the true Way and Word.

JESUS CHRIST, THE WAY

John 1:9-11 - The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. There was the true Light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man. He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him.

Perhaps the saddest verses in Scripture are John 1:10-11. The King who created the world condescended to enter it as a man. Rather than receiving honor, He was rejected and crucified by the ones He loved. His own people not only rejected Him... they didn't even recognize Him.

Anytime Christ is rejected, it is a tragedy. And this is where Christianity attracts such a high level of hatred from many in our world. The message of forgiveness and salvation through Christ alone is an exclusive message that is not welcomed in a society that values toleration above all else. It is wrong to deny anyone their religious liberty (Christians have fought for the rights of all people to have the right to worship as they please), but the gospel of Christ, based on this verse and others like it, claims there is only one way to God.

Rejection of Christ doesn't have to be the response, however. There are those who do hear the message of

the Word, the Light, and accept it. As sad as verses ten and eleven are, the next two are tremendous:

*John 1:12, 13—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**, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.*

JESUS CHRIST, THE WORD

When John started this chapter, he referred to Jesus as the Word, the one who spoke all things into existence and continues to sustain all creation. He calls him the same thing here in verse 14, which we often hear at Christmastime:

*John 1:14—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.*

For more than 1,400 years God "dwelt" with His people in the tabernacle or temple. Yet, the Lord did not literally dwell in these structures. Each was a symbol of God's presence.

1 Kings 8:27 - But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain you; how much less this house that I have built!

Jeremiah 23:24 - Can a man hide himself in secret places so that I cannot see him? declares the LORD. Do I not fill heaven and earth? declares the LORD.

Whereas God had always dwelt symbolically with His people, in Christ He came to dwell physically with them in the flesh. John is eager to proclaim this truth and the fact that he personally witnessed it.

John 1:17—For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

When God came to earth, light and life came as well. The Old Testament brought a measure of true light, but as a candle next to the sun, it was not sufficient. The Law demonstrated the problem, but was powerless to provide a solution. It showed us that man by nature is a sinner.

Romans 3:10-18 - "None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands; no one seeks for God. All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one. Their throat is an open grave; they use their tongues to deceive. The venom of asps is under their lips. Their mouth is full of curses and bitterness. Their feet are swift to shed blood; in their paths are ruin and misery, and the way of peace they have not known. There is no fear of God before their eyes."

Intellectually, physically, emotionally, volitionally, each of us has a sin nature profoundly permeating our being. Spiritually, the verdict of Scripture is that man is dead in his sin. The Law fulfilled its purpose in pointing this out, and the faithful Old Testament saint longed for a savior. He knew that temple sacrifices could not remove his sin and looked to a day when God would provide the ultimate sacrifice—the once-for-all sacrifice able to cleanse him both now and forever.

*Hebrews 9:24-26 - For Christ has entered, not into holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true things, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf. Nor was it to offer himself repeatedly, as the high priest enters the holy places every year with blood not his own, for then he would have had to suffer repeatedly since the foundation of the world. But as it is, **he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.***

Christ did not enter our world as another light, but as **the** light and **the** life that all men need. He came to die and give eternal life; He also came to provide light. Knowing Christ enables man to rightly understand himself and the world around him. Thus, divine light should pour into every aspect of a believer's life, affecting one's worldview and politics.

Proverbs 1:7 – The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction.

The Old Testament progressively revealed details about the Messiah, and the faithful believer anticipated Messiah's coming. Yet, in the first century, the masses longed for a ruler who would break the chains of Rome and inaugurate a time of blessing. Many thought Messiah would be a military leader, which is why they shouted "Hosanna!!" when Jesus entered Jerusalem (John 12:13). His popularity increased until the hopes of the masses were dashed and their esteem turned to hatred. They refused accept that God's savior came to die.

Few throughout Jesus' ministry understood that God had come and would die to save them from their sins. The prophets did foretell a time of great blessing for God's people, yet that time had not yet come. Messiah came the first time to die, but when He comes again it will be to reign (Rev 19:11-16). Then God will richly bless Israel and fulfill His every promise as the nation turns to Him.

*Zechariah 12:10 - **And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and pleas for mercy, so that, when they look on me, on him whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for him, as one mourns for an only child, and weep bitterly over him, as one weeps over a firstborn.***

The Gospel of John carries a clear message that begins by identifying Jesus Christ. God called John the Baptist to testify about Jesus, thereby preparing the way for our Lord's ministry. From John 1:19 through chapter 11 we are given an overview of Jesus' public ministry. As we move through these accounts, we will continue to see the claim that Jesus is the Christ as well as the substance for belief to rest upon.