The Source of all Light

Matt. 4:12-16

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**Introduction:** How important is light? I found dozens of absolutely matchless benefits that come from light. Here are just a few:

**Photosynthesis: The sole source of food generation for all living organisms.**

**Vision and sight: Eyes are of no value unless there is light. Light gives us colors too.**

**Body growth and sleep: Sunlight is essential to life. It produces Vit D and regulates sleep and body growth.**

**Drying and evaporation: Light dries out the earth after rain and is exclusively responsible for the water cycle that gives all rain and snow.**

**Sanitation of Earth: Light sanitizes the earth by braking down dead plants and animals.**

**Temperature regulation: Only places with light can support life. Light keeps the planet warm enough to support life.**

**In health care: Light is used to treat jaundice, skin conditions and depression.**

**For communications and signal: We use it to transmit data, broadcasting, phone calls, computer networking and diagnosing disease.**

**Electricity generation: We can convert it into electricity in our day. Solar power!**

**Microscopy: Used to study microorganisms to diagnose disease.**

**Light is essential to all life! It is the wellspring of life, but where does it come from? Not surprisingly it comes from the Life Giver, God.**

**1 Jn. 1:5** This is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all.

When God created the universe and set about to fill it with life, the first thing He created was light. Life cannot exist, as we have just observed without light?

**Gen. 1:3-4** Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. 4 God saw that the light was good;

Just as The Scripture uses light as a metaphor for knowledge and truth it uses darkness to represent ignorance and lies:

**Eph. 6:12** For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual *forces* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*.

**Col. 1:13** For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son,

**1 Thess. 5:4-6** But you, brethren, are not in darkness, that the day would overtake you like a thief; 5 for you are all sons of light and sons of day. We are not of night nor of darkness; 6 so then let us not sleep as others do, but let us be alert and sober.

**Matt. 22:13** "Then the king said to the servants, 'Bind him hand and foot, and throw him into the outer darkness; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

Apart from Scripture, the phrase “keep someone in the dark” means to withhold the truth from them. To “bring something to light” is to reveal that truth to people. With the fall and spiritual death of humanity, the world descended into darkness. Spiritual death is the ultimate darkness, because it is the ultimate separation from the only source of light and life and truth. There is no greater darkness than to not know God who is light.

After being cared for by angels and recovering His human strength, Jesus was ready to begin the earthly ministry He came to do. His baptism authenticated Him in every possible way. The Father and the Spirit put their stamp of authenticity on Him and John’s baptism confirmed that Jesus was the Messiah that John had been preaching about. John’s ministry continued alongside Jesus’ for about a year. The book of John documents the details starting in John 1:19 and going through chapter 4.

**Jn. 1:19-23** This is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent to him priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" 20 And he confessed and did not deny, but confessed, "I am not the Christ." 21 They asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" And he said, "I am not." "Are you the Prophet?" And he answered, "No." 22 Then they said to him, "Who are you, so that we may give an answer to those who sent us? What do you say about yourself?" 23 He said, "I am A VOICE OF ONE CRYING IN THE WILDERNESS, 'MAKE STRAIGHT THE WAY OF THE LORD,' as Isaiah the prophet said."

**Jn. 3:23-30** John also was baptizing in Aenon near Salim, because there was much water there; and *people* were coming and were being baptized-- 24 for John had not yet been thrown into prison. 25 Therefore there arose a discussion on the part of John's disciples with a Jew about purification. 26 And they came to John and said to him, "Rabbi, He who was with you beyond the Jordan, to whom you have testified, behold, He is baptizing and all are coming to Him." 27 John answered and said, "A man can receive nothing unless it has been given him from heaven. 28 "You yourselves are my witnesses that I said, 'I am not the Christ,' but, 'I have been sent ahead of Him.' 29 "He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom's voice. So this joy of mine has been made full. 30 "He must increase, but I must decrease.

About a year after Christ’s baptism and temptation, Herod and his wife had enough “truth telling” and confrontation over their sin.

**Mk. 6:17-19** For Herod himself had sent and had John arrested and bound in prison on account of Herodias, the wife of his brother Philip, because he had married her. 18 For John had been saying to Herod, "It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife." 19 Herodias had a grudge against him and wanted to put him to death ….

“In 4:12-17, Matthew picks up the story of that first year where the Apostle John leaves off, giving three features of Jesus’ early ministry that show God’s perfect work through His Son. It was the right time; it was in the right place; and it was the right proclamation.” ***John MacArthur***

**Now when Jesus heard that John had been taken into custody [12a]:** Matthew begins his account of Christ’s ministry with the end of John the Baptist’s. There are no longer two parallel ministries. There are no longer to preachers of the Kingdom. John’s words have come true.

**Jn. 3:30** "He must increase, but I must decrease.

Scripture again confirms that all of Christ’s life on earth took place on God’s pre-determined and very precise time schedule. Paul called Christ’s incarnation “the fullness of time.”

**Gal. 4:4** But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law…

The Apostle John called His crucifixion for your sins “His hour.” That is grinding the timetable very thin indeed. In fact Christ’s death did take place at the very hour that the Passover lambs were ritually killed in the temple.

**Jn. 8:20** These words He spoke in the treasury, as He taught in the temple; and no one seized Him, because His hour had not yet come.

**Jn. 12:23** And Jesus answered them, saying, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.

**He withdrew into Galilee [12b]:** He escaped to the region of Galilee. It is primarily to the west of The Sea of Galilee. It was 60 miles north to south and 30 miles east to west. It was a Roman region that had become heavily populated in Christ’s day. There were 2 million people there and Nazareth was a principle city of the region.

The word “withdrew” describes escaping from danger. Herod had imprisoned John and Jesus had a ministry of preaching to complete and so He returned to Galilee and eventually to His home town of Nazareth. He was particularly unwelcome there. The self-righteous religionists of Nazareth considered Jesus the illegitimate child of a lowly carpenter. His mother was a tramp.

Luke describes Christ’s return to Nazareth in detail:

**Lk. 4:14-16** And Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about Him spread through all the surrounding district. 15 And He *began* teaching in their synagogues and was praised by all. 16 And He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up; and as was His custom, He entered the synagogue on the Sabbath, and stood up to read.

**Lk. 4:28-31** And all *the people* in the synagogue were filled with rage as they heard these things; 29 and they got up and drove Him out of the city, and led Him to the brow of the hill on which their city had been built, in order to throw Him down the cliff. 30 But passing through their midst, He went His way. 31 And He came down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and He was teaching them on the Sabbath

Did Jesus withdraw because He was afraid to die? Absolutely not! It withdrew because it was not the year, the month, the day or the hour for Him to die. He would die according to the prophecies of Scripture at the precise time determined and set by The Father and The Son. He would die during Passover week at the exact time the symbolic lambs would die only Jesus would be “The Lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world.”

**And leaving Nazareth, He came and settled in Capernaum, which is by the sea, in the region of Zebulun and Naphtali. [13]:** Not only was the time chosen by God for Jesus’ ministry, but the place had been chosen and announced centuries before. Jesus, Israel’s Messiah, would not be from their capitol Jerusalem. He would headquarter in and carry on His ministry from the last place in the world any religious Jew would expect or even accept. Nathanael summarizes this perfectly….

**Jn. 1:45-46** Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found Him of whom Moses in the Law and *also* the Prophets wrote-- Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." 46 Nathanael said to him, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see."

Being loathed and nearly killed in Nazareth, Jesus went to live in Capernaum whose name means “village of compassion.” It was on the northern shore of The Sea in the region of Zebulun and Naphtali. These two tribes of the northern kingdom were the first to absorb the wrath of Israel’s enemies for they were on the northern border where most invasions took place. They were deported by the Assyrians nearly 700 years before Jesus appeared there.

Spiritually, politically and humanly, this is a dark place. For over 7 centuries these people have not known anything about the God of Creation. They have lived in despair and grief. Most were gentiles and the Jews that were there had slipped away into the religious darkness. By the time the first century dawned, Galilee was groaning under the oppression of Rome, who brought another layer of pagan darkness to her already bleak existence.

***This was* to fulfill what was spoken through Isaiah the prophet: [14]:** In eternity past God had decreed and designed this place to be very dark. He would now act to bring light into agonizing blackness. He would send God the Son who is the Creator of life to light up the darkest corner of Israel.

**Isaiah 9:1-2**  But there will be no *more* gloom for her who was in anguish; in earlier times He treated the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali with contempt, but later on He shall make *it* glorious, by the way of the sea, on the other side of Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles. 2 The people who walk in darkness Will see a great light; Those who live in a dark land, The light will shine on them.

**"THE LAND OF ZEBULUN AND THE LAND OF NAPHTALI, BY THE WAY OF THE SEA, BEYOND THE JORDAN, GALILEE OF THE GENTILES [15]:**

**“The way of the sea”** is actually a road that runs along the western side of the Sea of Galilee. It passed through Galilee of the Gentiles, and stopped in Capernaum at the northern end.

**Galilee of the Gentiles:** In order to destroy as much of Israel as possible and take possession of this rich and fertile land the Assyrians replaced the Jews with other Assyrians and as many conquered gentile peoples as they could. It became pagan in every way. This is why the Jews called it “Galilee of the Gentiles.”

**"THE PEOPLE WHO WERE SITTING IN DARKNESS SAW A GREAT LIGHT, AND THOSE WHO WERE SITTING IN THE LAND AND SHADOW OF DEATH, UPON THEM A LIGHT DAWNED."** [16]: The default thought of men is that the most religious are the closest to God. The most moral are the ones God favors. Those who know and have the Scriptures are the ones God will bless first. But God always does the unexpected. You should expect that if you read the Bible and believe it!

**Matt. 9:10-13** Then it happened that as Jesus was reclining *at the table* in the house, behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and were dining with Jesus and His disciples. 11 When the Pharisees saw *this*, they said to His disciples, "Why is your Teacher eating with the tax collectors and sinners?" 12 But when Jesus heard *this*, He said, "*It is* not those who are healthy who need a physician, but those who are sick. 13 "But go and learn what this means: 'I DESIRE COMPASSION, AND NOT SACRIFICE,' for I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners."

“Just as Isaiah had predicted eight centuries earlier, the despised, sin-darkened, and rebellious Galileans were the first to glimpse the Messiah, the first to see the dawning of God’s New Covenant! Not mighty and beautiful Jerusalem, the queen city of the Jews, but Galilee of the Gentiles would first hear Messiah’s message. Not the learned, proud, and pure Jews of Jerusalem, but the mongrel, downcast, nontraditional mixed multitude of Samaria and Galilee had that great honor. TO those who were neediest, and who were most likely to recognize their need, Jesus went first.” ***John MacArthur***

We started off talking about light so let’s finish the same way. What light did God send to the darkened, stone cold dead men of Galilee? It was the only light in creation. It was the light of Himself. And it was beamed into the darkness by Jesus Himself. The truth is that no one sees God or ever will if they do not see Christ Jesus His Son.

**Jn. 1:18** No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained *Him*.

**Jn. 1:4-5** In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men. 5 The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.

The Baptist came proclaiming that Jesus was and is the light of God.

**Jn. 1:8-9** *The Baptist* was not the Light, but *he came* to testify about the Light. 9 There was the true Light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man.

During His meeting with Nicodemus, Jesus said …

**Jn. 3:19-21**  "This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil. 20 "For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. "But he who practices the truth comes to the Light, so that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God."

Later while standing in the temple, just as the lights from the feast of tabernacles (representing the glorious shekinah light of God) were being extinguished …

**Jn. 8:12** Then Jesus again spoke to them, saying, "I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life."

**CONCLUSION:** Do not fear the darkness that is descending upon our post-Christian world. Spiritual darkness is not new and it is still dispelled in exactly the way it has always been. By embracing Christ who is the light of the world. Purpose to walk and live in the light of Christ. A light that cannot be quenched, and like all light, it shines brightest in the darkest places.

Remember this when you are tempted to believe that men will no longer come to Christ. Our God chose the darkest hour and the darkest geographical spot in Israel to burst upon the minds and hearts of men.

When tempted to think that no one in this dark world will ever turn to Christ when we tell them the gospel or pray for them, remember this! Countless ones have already been saved out of every manner of darkness and despair. Now is the best time to behold Christ and show Him to others. Love and trust Him to be what He has always been …. The light shining in the darkness of lost men. If He can save you He can save anybody. David lived in dark times, but he learned to live in the light of the truth of God.

**Ps. 36:5-10** Your lovingkindness, O LORD, extends to the heavens, Your faithfulness *reaches* to the skies. 6 Your righteousness is like the mountains of God; Your judgments are *like* a great deep. O LORD, You preserve man and beast. 7 How precious is Your lovingkindness, O God! And the children of men take refuge in the shadow of Your wings. 8 They drink their fill of the abundance of Your house; And You give them to drink of the river of Your delights. 9 For with You is the fountain of life; In Your light we see light. 10 O continue Your lovingkindness to those who know You, And Your righteousness to the upright in heart.