

I. In the beginning

- A. John 1:1-18 . . . In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. [2] He was in the beginning with God. [3] All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. [4] 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. [6] There came a man sent from God, whose name was John. [7] He came as a witness, to testify about the Light, so that all might believe through him. [8] He 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. [10] He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. [11] He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him. [12] 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, [13] who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God. [14] And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth. [15] John testified about Him and cried out, saying, "This was He of whom I said, 'He who comes after me has a higher rank than I, for He existed before me.'" [16] For of His fullness we have all received, and grace upon grace. [17] For the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ. [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.
- B. These first eighteen verses of John 1, present a somewhat mysterious explanation of who Jesus Christ is. And yet it is simple and clear when we accept that there are mysteries about God we cannot explain.
- C. Last week we talked about the first four verses which teach –
1. That Jesus is the Word – the One who explains God to us in words and ways we can understand.
 2. That Jesus is a distinct person, and yet at the same time, He is God.
 3. That Jesus created everything – which proves He is God.
 4. That Jesus brings us life, and the life He brings is the light that shows us the way out of the lies and darkness of Satan and into the truth of God and the abundant life God has for all who trust and obey Him.

5. John wrote about the transforming power of this light in 1 John 1:5-7, where he says . . . “God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all. [6] If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; [7] but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.
6. And in Romans 8:29, Paul describes God’s transforming purpose for the light that comes from the life Christ gives us: “Those whom [God] foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that [Jesus Christ] would be the firstborn among many brethren.

D. Prayer

II. The Light

- A. John 1:5 . . . The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.
 1. The Light shines in the darkness – In the same way that the light of nature reveals God’s invisible attributes, His eternal power, and His divine nature to all mankind in every place and in every age (Romans 1:18-20), so the light of Christ reveals God to all mankind in ways we can understand.
 2. The darkness did not comprehend it – Without taking us too far off track, I want to point out that the Greek word for “comprehend” can also be translated as “overpower” or “overtake.”
 - a. For example, it is translated as overtake in John 12:35 . . . “For a little while longer the Light is among you. Walk while you have the Light, so that darkness will not overtake you (so as to prevent you from seeing where you are going); he who walks in the darkness does not know where he goes.
 - b. My purpose in pointing this out is because both translation options fit the context of John 1:1-18. And this is affirmed by the fact that some Bibles use comprehend and some use overpower.
- B. In this context, the words did not comprehend are telling us that the darkness did not understand the meaning and purposes of the Light. Therefore the darkness did not embrace the Light and live according to the purposes of the Light.
 1. The point here is that the evil that is darkness exerts such a powerful influence over those who live in the darkness that the truth about the Light and the true purpose of the Light makes no sense to them.

And its not that the Light cannot make sense to them, for the Holy Spirit both convicts and illuminates. But because the nature of the darkness is contrary to the nature of the Light, it naturally does not comprehend the Light.

2. Paul explained this in 1 Corinthians when he said that the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, and that those who cling to the wisdom of the world do not know God, and that proclaiming Jesus to be the Savior of the world is a stumbling block to some and foolishness to others, and that the natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him (1 Corinthians 1:18,21,23; 2:14).
- C. As I stated earlier, some Bibles translate the second half of this verse as “and the darkness did not overpower it.” In other words, the darkness did not vanquish, or subdue, or overwhelm the Light so as to extinguish or hide the Light. In fact, the darkness cannot hide the Light, or defeat the Light, or drive it out of existence.
1. The point here is that the devil and all his demons and all the evil they have set lose in the world are not able to vanquish the Light that is Jesus Christ. He is still here and shining as bright as ever.
 2. In Matthew 16:18, Jesus stated this same truth to Peter when He said “You are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hell will not overpower it.”
- D. So why spend so much time looking at the two ways the second half of John 1:5 can be translated? Because the truth conveyed in this verse, whether you use the words “did not comprehend” or “did not overpower” is the same, and that truth is that the Light that is Christ has shined, is shining, and will continue to shine in the darkness.
1. And this Light has revealed, is revealing, and will continue to reveal
 - a. what we need to know to be set free from all the darkness that is seeking to destroy us,
 - b. and what we need to know to be redeemed from the penalty and power of sin,
 - c. and what we need to know to be reconciled to God and to move forward in living a godly life – now and throughout eternity.
 2. Jesus is recorded as saying something very similar in John 8:31-36 . . . “If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; [32] and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free. . . Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is the slave

of sin. [35] The slave does not remain in the house forever (at any time he can lose both his position and place because he is a hireling); [however], the son does remain forever (he retains his position and place because he is a family member). [36] So if the Son (a play on words) makes you free (gives the slave his freedom so the slave can remain in the home as a free man), you will be free indeed.”

3. Therefore, we can put John 1:5 this way, “And the Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness neither comprehended it nor vanquished it.”

III. The Witness and the World

A. John 1:6-7 . . . There came a man sent from God, whose name was John. [7] He came as a witness, to testify about the Light, so that all might believe through him.

1. Luke’s account of John the Baptist is the most detailed account in the Gospels, and in Luke’s recounting of the Angel’s words to John’s father, Zacharias, we read: “For [John] will be great in the sight of the Lord; and he will drink no wine or liquor, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit while yet in his mother's womb. [16] And he will turn many of the sons of Israel back to the Lord their God. [17] It is he who will go as a forerunner before [Jesus] in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers back to the children, and the disobedient to the attitude of the righteous, so as to make ready a people prepared for the Lord” (Luke 1:15-17).
2. Luke also gives us the essence of John the Baptist’s message concerning the how and what of being prepared. Luke 3:8-14 . . . “Therefore bear fruits in keeping with repentance, and do not begin to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham for our father,’ for I say to you that from these stones God is able to raise up children to Abraham. [9] Indeed the axe is already laid at the root of the trees; so every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.” [10] And the crowds were questioning him, saying, “Then what shall we do?” [11] And [John] would answer and say to them, “The man who has two tunics is to share with him who has none; and he who has food is to do likewise.” [12] And some tax collectors also came to be baptized, and they said to him, “Teacher, what shall we do?” [13] And he said to them, “Collect no more than what you have been ordered to.” [14] Some soldiers were questioning him, saying, “And what about us, what shall we do?” And he said to

them, “Do not take money from anyone by force, or accuse anyone falsely, and be content with your wages.”

3. John the Baptist also said: “He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him” (John 3:36).
 4. Without question, knowing the truth and believing the truth it is true is important. But to living according to the truth is more important, for without that, knowing and believing are worthless.
- B. John 1:8 . . . He (John) was not the Light (Messiah, Christ), but he came to testify about the Light (to tell the people that the Light is coming and what they need to do to be ready for the arrival of the Light).
- C. John 1:9 . . . There was the true Light (Jesus Christ), which, coming into the world, enlightens every man (both Jews and Gentiles).
1. Just as God has placed evidence of Himself in everyone who has been or ever will be born into this world, and just as God added to that internal evidence the external evidence of creation – which reveals God’s invisible attributes, His eternal power, and His divine nature (Romans 1:19-20) – so God has given the world Jesus Christ as the universal – yet human – Light that reveals God’s truth and life to all mankind in clear and easily understandable ways.
 2. Jesus himself said, “I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life” (John 8:12).
 3. In other words, Jesus is one of God’s universal revelations of truth – as is the Holy Spirit (John 16:8-11), the written word of God (2 Tim 3:16-17), the church, and you and me as individual Christians (Matt 5:14-16; Phil 2:14-15). And these, together with God’s implanted inward revelation and His outward revelation of nature, bring the truth of the Light to everyone everywhere.
- D. John 1:10-11 . . . He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. [11] He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him.
1. Even though Jesus was present in the world, and even though He created the world, and even though He put a self-revealing seed into each individual born into this world, and even though He uses creation to reveal Himself to all humanity everywhere, and even though He is a human – and therefore easily understood revelation of God to

the world, the world did not know who He was. They did not recognize Him.

2. And as if that wasn't bad enough, He came as a Jew to His own chosen people – the Jews – and they refused to accept Him as the Messiah. Instead, they rejected Him and finally killed Him as an enemy of their religion, and as a threat to the status of the Jewish religious leaders.
 3. Sadly, it is still this way today. Even though Jesus is the creator of the world, and even though He put a self-revealing seed in each individual, and even though creation reveals who He is, and even though He is the human revelation of God in the world, many in the world do not know Him, and many more don't want to know Him.
 - a. The reality is, our evangelistic efforts are not just up against ignorance of the truth, they are also up against intentional unbelief and the deliberate rejection of Jesus Christ – which means they are also rejecting His will and His word regarding how they are to live.
 - b. As Jesus said, “The gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. The gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it” (Matthew 7:13-14).
 4. Vs 11 ends with these words: “did not receive Him.”
 - a. To “not receive” Jesus Christ is a willful act of unbelief. It is to disbelieve who God says Jesus is, which produces distrust of what Jesus says, and the rejection of His life as a model for us to follow.
 - b. In other words, to receive Jesus Christ as God's sent one is to believe in Jesus Christ as God's sent one. And the proof that we believe in Jesus Christ is in our obedience and service to Him as Lord over our lives.
 - c. Therefore, receiving, believing, and obeying form an interlocking reality that requires all three to take us from being children of the devil to being children of God.
 - d. As Paul said in Romans 2:13 . . . It is not the hearers of the Law who are just before God, but the doers of the Law will be justified.
 - e. In James 2:20,26 , James affirms this same truth when he says, “Are you willing to recognize . . . that faith without works is useless? [26] Just as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead.”
- E. John 1:12 . . . 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.

1. But as many as received Him – that is, as many as received, believed and obeyed Him . . .
2. To them He gave the right to become children of God – to them He gave the right or authority or power to become children of God.
3. Even to those who believe in His name – this refers to those who have not seen Christ in person, but have only heard about Him and His teachings. This includes everyone who has come to faith in Jesus Christ since His ascension. Therefore, to everyone who receives, believes, and obeys, Jesus gives the right to become children of God.
 - a. Lets think about this for a moment. The Greek word translated “right” can also be translated “authority” or “power,”
 - b. This ought to catch our attention, because John is telling us that receiving, believing, and obeying Christ not only puts us in a standing with God whereby He makes us His children, it also puts us in a standing with God whereby He gives us the power to live as His children are supposed to live.

IV. Conclusion

- A. The divine power of Jesus Christ has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of God – who called us to faith in Jesus Christ, and who (that is, Jesus Christ) made us children of the Father by His own glory and excellence, and has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them we may become partakers of His divine nature, having escaped the corruption or darkness that is in the world (2 Peter 1:3-4).
- B. In Jesus Christ is life, and this life is the light that leads us out of the kingdom of darkness and into the kingdom of Light. May our daily lives reflect this change of life, location, family, and allegiance.