

From Darkness to Light

- Dark world (dark outside; fewer hours of sunlight; depression; need light)
- Dark world (hatred, bombings, shootings, national headlines; doesn't: all evil, sin, hatred, hostility between people living in dark. E.g., people suffering evil, causing people to suffer evil.
- Dark world (so many reject truth of Scripture; Christ is denied, mocked; teachings manipulated, mutilated to endorse sins he stood against. Godless culture, understatement. Dark world.
- Darkness isn't just outside us, also within. WE live in dark world; add to darkness. We sin, too; carry guilt. Can smile, but every one carries in heart shame of personal darkness, ways disappointed self and God. Guilt is dark feeling. Dark world.
- Isa 60:2, **"Darkness covers the earth, and thick darkness is over the peoples."** Thick darkness of sin, hatred, unbelief – we understand, know what means.
- One time in world's history, especially dark, different reason. Started ~400 BC. Before, prophets, brought light. ~400 BC, darkness, God silent. Didn't send any more prophets. Malachi text, last. Darkness, quiet, empty void. That's what darkness is: absence of light (like silence / sound). Something missing. (Iron Mnt. – light missing.) What was missing between testaments; what is missing today in world of darkness (sin, hatred, unbelief)? Light, of Christ, because **Isa 60:2a**.
- But God wants people from D2L, to see light of Christ. So **vs. 6-8**, or to bring from D2L. Witness, courtroom, take stand, proclaim truth, "need to know, understand;" his mission, ministry – witness, point to light. How? 2 ways. **Vs. 23**. Driving to other side of mountain. John was voice calling "clear mnts out of hearts, light of world coming!" John also second Elijah (remember, prophets of Baal?) – bold prophet, stood up for truth. Many people thought Elijah from heaven, because **Mal 4:5**. So **vs. 21**. But John was second Elijah. Father Zechariah: **"He will go on before the Lord, in the spirit and power of Elijah" (Lk 1:17)**. Even Jesus, when talking about John: **"I tell you, Elijah has already come, and they did not recognize him."** Then, **"Then the disciples understood that he was talking to them about John the Baptist" (Mt 17:12-13)**. All of this to say: in world of thick darkness that covers peoples, God sent John (wilderness voice, "prepare;" second Elijah, bold prophet) to lead people from D2L so could see, **vs. 9**.
- Iron Mnt – lit match. Immediately focused there. Drawn to, mesmerized. Campfires. Such contrast to darkness around it. That's light of Christ, that John proclaims, Jesus brings! Stands out, draws you in. **Vs. 9**. When Christ came into world, not just tiny helpless baby, but born to be world's Savior who would shine through thick darkness settled on people: of sin, hatred, unbelief. To fill empty void in hearts; came to people with no hope, peace, comfort, forgiveness, life, reason to live; people with empty hearts, living in total darkness – to bring from D2L.
- **Vs. 4**. Life & light go together (plant example). Life & light go together. Same for eternal life and light of Christ. Without Jesus, we're plants in closet (know need something, feel emptiness, but wither in lightless existence). That's what we and world are like without Jesus. But open closet, let light flood in, what happens? Life happens. Empty darkness of unbelief penetrated with piercing light. Call that conversation; work of HS; brings people to faith, shows light; brought you to faith, showed you light. Now what has happened in your heart, life? Emptiness is banished, darkness gone, you can see. Can see: baby in Bethlehem is Savior; dying on cross to take away sins; blood cleanses you of all guilt; morning light shining into tomb and see empty; into future, that someday you'll rise from dead, go to heaven to see Jesus face to face in eternal life. **Vs. 4**. Life & light go together. When you have light of Christ (when know, believe, see light of Gospel – that sins are forgiven through sinless life, innocent death, glorious resurrection of Word made flesh, who made dwelling among us, JC, Son of God), when you have light of Christ, then you have eternal life, and God has brought you from D2L.

- But still live in dark world. Darkness still covers earth, thick darkness still over the peoples, because so many still live in dark closet and have never seen light; or some who have seen light of Christ turn away from it and prefer darkness of closed closet; or (us?) see light of Christ, but discouraged by darkness everywhere else, wish Christ would make his light bigger and brighter, if not in rest of world then certainly in our hearts. We live in dark world.
- But vs. 5. The light of Christ will continue to shine. Light of Christ's Gospel will never be extinguished, and Satan's darkness can never overcome it, no matter how dark the world is. So just like campfire burning in night, or Advent candle burning in church, let eyes of your faith be drawn to, even mesmerized by light of Christ. John the Baptist is holding this candle before your eyes, "Look, light of world; he's here." So let that light of Christ shine in your heart, in your life, even when feel surrounded by darkness, because your Savior Jesus has brought you from darkness to light.

John 1:4-9, 19-28

⁴In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. ⁵The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

⁶There was a man sent from God whose name was John. ⁷He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all might believe. ⁸He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light. ⁹The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world.

¹⁹Now this was John's testimony when the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem sent priests and Levites to ask him who he was. ²⁰He did not fail to confess, but confessed freely, "I am not the Messiah." ²¹They asked him, "Then who are you? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the Prophet?" He answered, "No."

²²Finally they said, "Who are you? Give us an answer to take back to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" ²³John replied in the words of Isaiah the prophet, "I am the voice of one calling in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way for the Lord.'"

²⁴Now the Pharisees who had been sent ²⁵questioned him, "Why then do you baptize if you are not the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?" ²⁶"I baptize with water," John replied, "but among you stands one you do not know. ²⁷He is the one who comes after me, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie."

²⁸This all happened at Bethany on the other side of the Jordan, where John was baptizing.