
JOHN: THAT YOU MAY BELIEVE

LIGHT SHINES IN THE DARKNESS

A message presented by Pastor Marc Minter
to First Baptist Church of Diana, TX on May 27, 2018

INTRODUCTION

In Jesus' final hours, we see Him troubled by the darkness surrounding Him. One of His closest friends betrayed Him unto death, and the devil himself takes on a personal assaulting role. Jesus seems utterly alone and victimized as the night intensifies. However, Jesus is not merely a passive sufferer. No, right in the midst of this deepest darkness, Christ makes Himself known as the God of light. In this message, we shall consider God's sovereign rule over darkness and light, and we shall marvel at the God who does all these things.

MESSAGE MADE SIMPLE

"I am telling you this now, before it takes place, that when it does take place you may believe that I am he... Truly, truly, I say to you, one of you will betray me" (Jn. 13:19, 21).

In Jesus' final hours, we see Him troubled by the darkness surrounding Him. One of His closest friends betrayed Him unto death, and the devil himself takes on a personal assaulting role. Jesus seems utterly alone and victimized as the night intensifies.

However, Jesus is not merely a passive sufferer. No, right in the midst of this deepest darkness, Christ makes Himself known as the God of light. Moreover, God is revealed in Christ as the truly sovereign ruler of all – even the darkness.

We see the God of the Bible as one who is greater than we ever knew and more awesome than we could have imagined. His power and might extend far past the boundaries we often envision in our finite assumptions. To the watchful eye, God shows His brilliant light in the midst of darkness. For He is the God who forms light and creates darkness; and He is the God who has promised that darkness will one day be no more.

JOHN 13:18-30 (ESV)

18 I am not speaking of all of you; **I know whom I have chosen.** But the **Scripture will be fulfilled**, ‘He who ate my bread has lifted his heel against me.’

19 **I am telling you this now, before it takes place, that when it does take place you may believe that I am he.**

20 Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever receives the one I send receives me, and whoever receives me receives the one who sent me.”

21 After saying these things, **Jesus was troubled in his spirit**, and testified, “Truly, truly, I say to you, one of you will betray me.” 22 The disciples looked at one another, uncertain of whom he spoke. 23 One of his disciples, whom Jesus loved, was reclining at table at Jesus’ side, 24 so Simon Peter motioned to him to ask Jesus of whom he was speaking.

25 So that disciple, leaning back against Jesus, said to him, “Lord, who is it?”

26 Jesus answered, “It is he to whom I will give this morsel of bread when I have dipped it.” So when he had dipped the morsel, he gave it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot.

27 Then after he had taken the morsel, **Satan entered into him. Jesus said to him, “What you are going to do, do quickly.”**

28 Now no one at the table knew why he said this to him. 29 Some thought that, because Judas had the moneybag, Jesus was telling him, “Buy what we need for the feast,” or that he should give something to the poor.

30 So, after receiving the morsel of bread, he immediately went out. **And it was night.**

THE POINT I’M AIMING AT TODAY

In Christ, God shows the brilliance of His light in the midst of darkness.

MESSAGE OUTLINE

- (1) JESUS IS LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS
- (2) THE TROUBLING DARKNESS
- (3) DARKNESS IS SUBSERVIENT
- (4) THE GOD OF LIGHT REGULATES DARKNESS
- (5) APPLICATION: A SIMPLE SELF-ASSESSMENT

MESSAGE

(1) JESUS IS LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS

- *The prophet Isaiah spoke of a light to come*
 - “**2 The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shone...** 6 For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. 7 Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with **justice** and with **righteousness** from this time forth and forevermore” (Is. 9:2–7).

- *John introduced Jesus as that prophesied light*
 - “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. **In him was life**, and the life was the **light of men**. The **light shines** in the **darkness**, and the **darkness** has not overcome it... 9 **The true light**, which **gives light** to everyone, was **coming into the world**” (Jn. 1:1-5, 9).

Summary: **Chris** is the **light of the world**, and **He will prevail** over darkness!

Segue: But, we see Christ **surrounded** and **troubled** by **darkness** here.

(2) THE TROUBLING DARKNESS

- ***Jesus was genuinely troubled***
 - “**Jesus was troubled in his spirit**, and testified, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, one of you will betray me’” (v21)
 - Jesus was “**greatly troubled**” when He saw the whole scene near the tomb of His beloved friend Lazarus (Jn. 11:33).
 - Jesus declared, “**Now is my soul troubled**,” when He considered the wrath of God He was about to endure upon the cross (Jn. 12:27).
 - Now (in Jn. 13:21), Jesus is “**troubled**” by the betrayal of a friend.
 - While John does not highlight Jesus’ Gethsemane prayer in His Gospel (as the synoptic writers do [Matt. 26:36-46; Mk. 14:32-42; Lk. 22:39-46]), he nevertheless shows the reader that Jesus Christ was/is a real human with real life-experiences and real troubles.

- ***Jesus’ trouble was understandable***
 - Jesus’ betrayer was a close friend
 - “**He who ate my bread has lifted his heel against me**” (v18)
 - Who cannot empathize with heartache like this?!
 - One of the twelve... who ate with Christ at the Last Supper... who ate of the miraculous bread Christ formed from His divine power... who had walked with the Bread of Life who satisfies all true hunger... look and see that the traitor is a friend!
 - Consider further, “**no one at the table knew**” (v28)!
 - Oh, what treachery there is here!
 - Judas was no scary-faced, dark-cloaked, shifty-eyed conspirator.

- It seems that he may have been reclined directly beside Jesus at the Last Supper, at the seat of honor!¹
- The dark angel himself was on the attack
 - **“Satan entered into him [Judas]” (v27)**
 - There may be times when some of us have said, **“the devil has been after me this week.”** But we should not flatter ourselves in this way.
 - The **devil** is but a **created** thing; he is **confined to time** and **space** just as any other thing which God has made.
 - **Satan is not capable** of simultaneously being in more places than one, and you can rest assured that there are much **more important people in the world** to bother than you at the moment.
 - However, Satan had no other care in the world at that moment during the Last Supper.
 - There was no lesser demon or even a legion of them that entered Judas to ensure that his treacherous task would be accomplished.
 - No, **Satan himself** entered the **man who reclined** with Jesus at the **table** from which Jesus **symbolically served** His own **body** and **blood**.

¹ The host at a feast (whose role is here filled by Jesus) might well dip into a common bowl and pull out a particularly tasty bit and pass it to a guest as a mark of honour or friendship. The word behind this piece of bread (psōmion), used only here in the New Testament, means, literally, a morsel, and commonly referred to bread, though sometimes to meat. The Evangelist may well be thinking of an early point in the paschal meal when bitter herbs were dipped into a bowl of fruit puree, the ḥarōset̄ sauce of dates, raisins and sour wine. This ‘sop’ Jesus passed to Judas Iscariot. That Jesus could pass it so easily suggests Judas was close by, possibly on his left, the place of honour.

- **Darkness had surrounded Jesus**

- In John's characteristic metaphorical way, he tells us that darkness has come
 - **"it was night"** (v30)
 - John told us right from the beginning that Christ's light was shining **"in the darkness"** (Jn. 1:5).
 - John warned us that people in this world **"love the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil"** (Jn. 3:19).
 - John spoke of a **"darkness"** that was coming and that would **"overtake"** those who **"remain"** in it (Jn. 12:35, 46).
 - And now, it appears that Christ Himself is being overtaken by the darkness of **"night"** (Jn. 13:30).
 - It was night for that day... and it was night for Christ's earthly ministry... He was about to die.

Summary: **Darkness had come, and it was troubling...**

Segue: But, the darkness was **subservient... not dominant.**

(3) DARKNESS IS SUBSERVIENT

- **Darkness is subservient to Scripture**

- The one who **"lifted his heel against"** Jesus (v18) did so in order that **"Scripture will be fulfilled"** (quoting Ps. 41:9).
 - There are more than 300 prophecies about the Messiah in the Old Testament, and many of them point to ways in which the Messiah would suffer.
 - Judas' dark betrayal was **according to plan.**

- **Darkness is subservient to Christ**

- The **betray**er among the twelve was “**chosen**” by Jesus (v18), included as a ‘disciple’ to accomplish **God’s purposes** (Jn. 17:12).
- **Jesus knew all about** the secret betrayer, saying, “**one of you will betray me**” (v21).
 - Jesus **specifically acknowledges** the betrayer as such by giving him the **choice** “**morsel**” of the **meal** (v26).
- **Jesus even commanded** the satanically-possessed betrayer to do the dark errand on Jesus’ time-table rather than his own.
 - “**What you are going to do, do quickly**” (v27).

- **Subservient darkness shows Christ’s light**

- “**I am telling you this now, before it takes place, that when it does take place you may believe that I am he**” (v19).
 - Very likely, this verse should be placed among the “**I Am**” **statements** from Christ in John’s Gospel (see Jn. 6:35, 8:12, 10:7-9, 10:11, 11:25-26, 14:6, 15:1).²
 - Whether one counts this as an official “I Am” statement, there is **no doubt that Jesus is claiming divinity** here.
 - He is the sovereign, who knows and commands those things that have not yet come to pass.
 - Here we are introduced to the **gloriously sovereign God**.
 - This God... the God of the Bible... the God Christ reveals... is awesome in powerful and brilliantly glorious.

Summary: The darkness surrounding Christ was **under His charge/control**.

Segue: **Let us marvel** at the God of light who creates and controls darkness!

² Dr. Ricky Cummings lists the seven oft-cited “I Am” statements in his compilation of texts noting Christ’s divinity. https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5a79ffc8edaed853418a84eb/t/5a8ded08ec212d8e1f25bfc5/1519250697094/1_Christ+the+Logos+Part+1_2-18-18+PM+for+sermon+notes+and+PowerPoint.pdf

(4) THE GOD OF LIGHT REGULATES DARKNESS

- ***God is in charge of both light and darkness***
 - God **creates light & dark, well-being & calamity**
 - **“I am the LORD, and there is no other, besides me there is no God; I equip you, though you do not know me, that people may know, from the rising of the sun and from the west, that there is none besides me; I am the LORD, and there is no other. I form light and create darkness; I make well-being and create calamity; I am the LORD, who does all these things”** (Is. 45:5–7).
- ***God is incomparably sovereign***
 - God **knows the end & accomplishes His will** (or brings it to pass)
 - **“...I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done, saying, ‘My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose,’ ...I have spoken, and I will bring it to pass; I have purposed, and I will do it”** (Isaiah 46:8–11).
 - **From God comes all things – both good and bad**
 - **“Who has spoken and it came to pass, unless the Lord has commanded it? Is it not from the mouth of the Most High that good and bad come?”** (Lamentations 3:37–38)
 - The **purposes of God prevail** over man’s plans
 - **“Many are the plans in the mind of a man, but it is the purpose of the LORD that will stand”** (Proverbs 19:21)
 - **“Let all the earth fear the LORD; let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him! For he spoke, and it came to be; he commanded, and it stood firm. The LORD brings the counsel of the nations to nothing; he frustrates the plans of the peoples. 11 The counsel of the LORD stands forever, the plans of his heart to all generations”** (Psalm 33:8–11).

Summary: While this does **present** us with a **God who is unsettling**...

Segue: This **unsettling God** is **fascinating, awe-inspiring, and trustworthy**.

(5) APPLICATION: A SIMPLE SELF-ASSESSMENT

1. Are you fascinated by God?

a. If not, **does that concern you?**

- i. I mean, if you got the chance to meet a **notable celebrity**, a **political giant**, a **war hero**, a **real-life genius**, a **master artist**, or some other **fascinating character**... wouldn't you be **interested**?
- ii. So, the **God who is all of those things**... the God who **made any person** you just **thought about**, who fits into one of those categories... **isn't that God fascinating** to you?
- iii. Do you think your **lack of fascination** means there is **something wrong with Him**?

b. **Are you fascinated by God?**

- i. Could it be that your **lack of fascination** is **due to your indifference** towards **Him**? Towards His **word**? His **truth**?
- c. Do you really think **if you spent more time gazing** upon this **gloriously holy God** that you'd be **LESS interested** in Him?

2. Does God inspire awe in you?

a. Have you been assuming that **worship is a music style** or a **feeling** or an **experience**?

- i. Haven't you been **worshiping God right now**, while we've been considering His greatness?! ...**I have!**

b. Are you **motivated to worship** and **praise** God by **considering** His **glory**? His **power**? His **beauty**? His **grace**?

c. **God is most certainly awe-inspiring**... **What do you not know** about Him **that would inspire awe** in you **if you knew it**?

3. Do you trust Him to keep His word?

- a. What do you know God has promised but you don't really believe?
 - i. Hasn't God promised to judge sinners everywhere?
 - ii. Hasn't God promised to save sinners through Christ?
 - iii. Hasn't God promised that no one will be saved apart from Christ?
 - iv. Hasn't God promised that He will bring justice and peace to the world in His own good time?
 - v. Hasn't God promised that He is working in all things right now to bring about the salvation of His children?
 - vi. Hasn't God promised that He will never leave nor forsake those He loves?
- b. Do you trust Him to Keep His word?

In Christ, God shows the brilliance of His light in the midst of darkness.

SUGGESTED RESOURCES

The Sovereign Sacrifice by John Piper

<https://www.desiringgod.org/messages/the-sovereign-sacrifice-foreknown-foretold-for-faith>

You Cannot Follow Me Now by John Piper

<https://www.desiringgod.org/messages/you-cannot-follow-me-now>

Notes on John 13:16-20 by J.C. Ryle

<http://rediscoveringthebible.com/Ryle13vv16-20.pdf>

Christ is the Eternal God by Dr. Ricky Cummings

https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5a79ffc8edaed853418a84eb/t/5a8ded08ec212d8e1f25bfc5/1519250697094/1_Christ+the+Logos+Part+1_2-18-18+PM+for+sermon+notes+and+PowerPoint.pdf

Christ the LORD (YHWH) by Various

https://www.monergism.com/thethreshold/articles/onsite/calvin_prayers.html