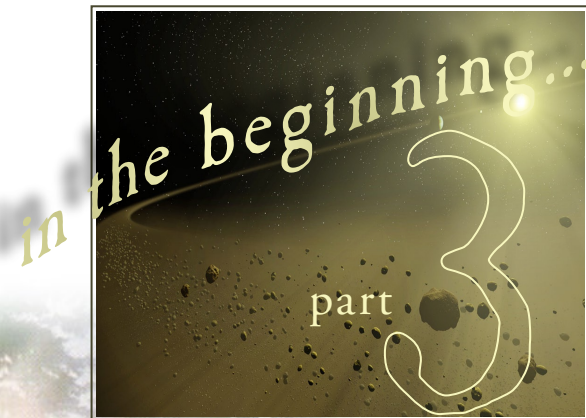


In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. **In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men.** The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.

(John 1:1-5)



You Call *That* Living?

There was an order to things, back in the very beginning, all the way back when God in the Son was crafting what we know to be Creation. The ancient (if anything set outside of time and place can indeed be termed “ancient”) second member of the Trinity systematically set in place the various parts of the universe. In their turn the earth, the waters and dry land, vegetation, the stars and planets, the beasts, and finally man were imagined and made substantial by Him. But before everything else, the first thing He created by His first recorded words was light: “*Let there be light.*”

I saw no temple in [the new Jerusalem], for the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. And the city has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God has illumined it, and its lamp is the Lamb. The nations

will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it.

(Revelation 21:22-24)

It must have been important, this thing called light. And it was. If it is dark when I go out to the barn to build a wooden bookshelf, the first thing I do is turn on a light. It is the beginning of the project. Since God possesses His own illumination, the light must have been for the benefit of creation itself—the growing things, the beasts of the field, and the odd, two-legged ones to follow.

Far back in the very beginning of things the Son of God took from Himself the essence of crystalline light, and in that blindingly glorious beam He transplanted from Himself to His new creation pure, unadulterated, sinless life. And by those two pristine elements man would walk.

But, of course, he didn't. Man chose an alternate path. Instead of light and life, he chose darkness and death.

And you were dead in your trespasses and sins...
(Ephesians 2:1)

Blinded by the Lie

So God let man run with that a while. And, over time, what God called "death" became what man called "living." Over time man forgot that life without God is not life at all, but the darkness of death—estrangement from His light. But man grew content with such a "life," for he had been blinded by the lie.

Satan does not scream at us; he doesn't beat us about the head and shoulders, forcing us through sheer might to his will. Instead, he whispers sweetly into our ears those things most pleasing, those things that will draw us pleasantly away from righteousness and toward evil. He paints himself in light to draw us away from the *true* light, and toward the true darkness in which he lives.

And man listened, and was beguiled by his beauty. Thus man lived until the Son came down to His creation, to be born in flesh in a rude shed, cradled not by golden threads, but by a stone depression smeared with cow slobber.

The Way Through

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.

(John 1:14)

And now once more, as before in the Garden, the true light was in the world. And what man had been calling "life" would forever be counterfeit, for now the Source was once again in the world. He would now offer the authentic thing to all who would believe: *real* life, *real* light.

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."

(John 8:12)

Man still had a choice. Christ's life, and the light it would bring to those dwelling in darkness and death, was an *offer*—not a birthright. Death and darkness were still an option that many would choose. But now, for the first time since that fateful day in the Garden, man could live in hope; not only would there be the promise of eternal paradise with God—a return to that sublime communion once shared in the beginning—but even the believer's earthly sojourn would be illumined by His light and life. No more was man on his own. He now had not only a way out, but a way *through*.

Drawn to the Light

They were the first Gentiles to seek Him. They were the first from outside the Jewish faith—these oriental magi—to acknowledge that this child was God.

After coming into the house they saw the Child with Mary His mother; and they fell to the ground and worshiped Him. Then, opening their treasures, they presented to Him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

(Matthew 2:11)

No matter what darkness they had left behind, they were drawn to the light—the light of Christ. But what drove them to their knees? What made these strangers kneel before a new child and call Him God? What draws anyone? What is it about Christ, that we are drawn to Him, and call Him Lord? Why does it work?

Because He is light! The wise men traveled in ignorance, not knowing what they would find at the end of their journey. What if God's Son had been a revolting beast? What if God had sent a perfectly hideous thing to die on a cross for our sins? Would the magi have so readily knelt before Him in adoration?

Of course not. Why should they worship a God of darkness and evil? The wise men worshipped a gentle child who represented in flesh a God of love—a God of light. Because God is not a hideous beast, the Christ child could not be.

The heavenly star that brought them did more than just point the way; it helped describe the object of their search.

The hope and salvation offered by Jesus are only part of the reason why we are drawn to Him. Like the wise men of old, we follow the star in ignorance. We may have heard that the object of our search will offer us good things, but we don't know for sure until we stoop down to enter the cave where He lies.

It is at that point—the point at which we discover the truth—that our salvation is realized. We wouldn't want salvation from a monstrous God; we wouldn't trust His promise of hope. But because God is light, because He is truth, integrity, justice, righteousness—and because He has given us a Savior who is just like Him—then we believe, and are saved.

Revelation

The holy radiance of God was either invisible or lethal to mankind—until Christ. Finally we had a visible, touchable part of God—God without death.

The light of Jesus not only is a light that saves, it is a light that reveals. He reveals God to man through His personality and through his integrity. Jesus manifests the personality of God in flesh.

If darkness represents mystery, bleak foreboding, and evil, then the light of Christ represents revelation, hope, and righteousness. Jesus came into the world not to emphasize the mysteries of God, but to explain them. In Him we have the essential truth of God.

The light of Jesus reveals the truth of God to man, but it also reveals the purpose God intends for men and women who call upon His name. And that purpose is to worship and serve Him. To adore Him.

In the light. 