

2021.12.26 - Advent - Light Of The World - Josh Siders

So What? In a darkened world, Jesus shines his light.

Feel What? Relieved

Now What? Have a Merry Christmas!

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Giving
- Upcoming Events
 - Sabbath Sunday
 - PJ Brunch
- Candle Lighting online

INTRODUCTION

The context of Jesus' birth is quite fascinating. In the First Covenant, the Prophet Isaiah had foretold that the people who walked in darkness would see a great light. So, it happens, that there were quite a few people who were looking for a deliverer who would come and overthrow the Roman Empire and return Israel to her glory days around the time of Jesus' birth.

Instead of finding a heroic conqueror, they found a Baby:

Luke 2:25-32 (NIV): Now there was a man in Jerusalem called Simeon, who was righteous and devout. He was waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was on him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's Messiah. Moved by the Spirit, he went into

the temple courts. When the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what the custom of the Law required, Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying: “Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you may now dismiss your servant in peace. For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the sight of all nations: a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of your people Israel.”

This theme of light continues throughout Scripture, which can be confusing for some of us.

The Enlightenment Period was catalyzed by the Cartesian postulate: I think, therefore I am. They put the locus of being not in some outside source, in us, ourselves. I possess cognitive processes, therefore I have meaning in and of myself.

So when we talk about perceiving, we locate it in our own understanding. We learned a new concept, so we grasped it through our intellect. When we perceive something new, we're given credit. We studied. We connected the dots. We understand now.

But for Jewish culture, there's often a different way of perceiving what's true, and that's through sight. There's talk of an unveiling or a revealing. These are sight words. On the surface, it's an equivalent description. But when we probe a bit deeper, there's a world of difference.

But with seeing something new, it's done to us. The sun comes up and shines its light. We don't do anything to

deserve that. It just happens, and it happens equally for all.

So, when we read Jesus' birth story told from another angle, a more poetic angle, we need to make sure we can hear it for what the Biblical authors are try to say to us:

John 1:1-5, 14 (The Message): The Word was first, the Word present to God, God present to the Word. The Word was God, in readiness for God from day one. Everything was created through him; nothing—not one thing!—came into being without him. What came into existence was Life, and the Life was Light to live by. The Life-Light blazed out of the darkness; the darkness couldn't put it out. ... The Word became flesh and blood, and moved into the neighborhood. We saw the glory with our own eyes, the one-of-a-kind glory, like Father, like Son, Generous inside and out, true from start to finish.

- The glorious, divine presence which hovered over the tabernacle in the First Covenant has now been manifested in their midst in the person of Jesus of Nazareth
- God has come near to us in the form that we can recognize: In the very form of an infant

SOLUTION

John 8:12 (NIV): When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever

follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”

When Jesus refers to himself as the light of the world, he is making a missionary claim. This light isn't to be contained for only certain people. It's not to be contained to just one geographic area. The entire world is to come and behold this light.

And when he says people will have the light of life, he is making an existential claim. It's in this light that there will be found meaning and purpose. And since this light is given from God himself, it cannot be extinguished.

APPLICATION

Now, when Jesus calls himself the light, I can't help but think of ways in which we interact with light and how it affects us.

- **Light illuminates:** When light shines, it brightens and
- **Light exposes:** When what was once dark is now brightened, we're shown what is broken, gnarled, and in need of repair. Jesus does this, but also doesn't leave us there.
- **Light sanitizes:** Light cleanses and removes harmful elements that can no longer survive.
- **Light warms:** Light gives a
- **Light beautifies:** We see color because of the way light interacts with objects

INSPIRATION

**J.R.R. Tolkien, "Noel": "Grim was the world and grey
last night: The moon and stars were fled, The hall was
dark without song or light, The fires were fallen dead.
... The world was blind, the boughs were bent, All
ways and paths were wild: Then the veil of cloud apart
was rent, And here was born a Child. ... Glad is the
world and fair this night With stars about its head,
And the hall is filled with laughter and light, And fires
are burning red. The bells of Paradise now ring With
bells of Christendom, And Gloria, Gloria we will sing
That God on earth is come."**

CONCLUSION

- Invite the worship team to return to the stage
- Call the greeters forward
- Instructions for candle lighting
- Drop your candles in the boxes as you exit

**Prayer
Invitation**