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Light of the World

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Light of the World

Abstract

"If we see any light, which is almost every moment of our lives, we are seeing a representation of Jesus Christ as creator, healer, and redeemer."

Posting about Jesus the light-bringer from *In All Things* - an online hub committed to the claim that the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ has implications for the entire world.

<http://inallthings.org/light-of-the-world-2/>

Keywords

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Disciplines

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Comments

In All Things is a publication of the [Andreas Center for Reformed Scholarship and Service at Dordt College](#).

Light of the World

 inallthings.org/light-of-the-world-2/

Josh Matthews

“I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.” John 8:12

“As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.” John 9:5 (ESV)

Jesus as “the light of the world” is an ongoing theme in the Gospel of John. We find it twice in chapters 8 and 9, both when John mentions encounters between Jesus and condemned or despised people.

Chapter 8 features the woman condemned for adultery. After Jesus tells her to “go and sin no more” in verse 11, he tells the Pharisees in verse 12 that he is the “light” of the world. John juxtaposes these two scenes, connecting forgiveness with his identity as “the light,” even though Jesus’ declaration to the Pharisees might have occurred long after his encounter with the woman.

Chapter 9 features a similar scene. Jesus heals a blind man, and his disciples ask him whether the man is blind because he’s a sinner. Jesus tells them that the man’s blindness will “display the works of God.” He declares that he is the “light of the world.” Then he restores the man’s eyesight.

One point that John makes about Jesus as “the light” is that He offers a ministry of healing, restoration, forgiveness, grace, and truth. Jesus forgives the adulterous woman and he heals the blind man, both of which demonstrate to all onlookers that he, as the light of the world, is the true Messiah who can heal and forgive.

John not only makes Jesus as “the light” a running theme through his gospel, but it is a central structuring metaphor of the entire book. The well-known opening of the gospel, in chapter 1, declares that Christ is the Word who is “the light of all people.” He is the “true light” who gives that light to everyone. It is as if, for every scene we read in John’s Gospel, we must consider and ponder how it reveals the idea of Jesus as the light of the world.

We are apt to think of light as physical light, as photons that allow our eyes to see things, but it means that and more in John’s Gospel. Obviously, the healing of the blind man provides sight to him who could see nothing but darkness. But Jesus, as the light of the world, also provides insight. He reveals and makes sense of the creational order. He provides proper ways of seeing and knowing anything.

This point is clearer when we consider the relation of John’s Gospel to the creation account in Genesis. The first chapter of John’s gospel refers heavily to the Genesis 1, in which light is created. It’s been often noted that the sun, which offers us our primary source of light and heat, was created on Day 4, and that light itself was created on Day 1. This indicates that there’s a light greater than or prior to sunlight.

John himself makes clear that that light is Jesus, not a created light, but the Word through whom all things were made. The Creator, the Word of God, is the light of the world. The Light created the light on Day 1. He made Himself known throughout all creation by representing who He is in all light everywhere.

This is a powerful truth, relevant to every moment of our lives. Anything in creation that gives light, insight, and vision comes from the Creator. It also always points to the Creator. All light testifies to the One who is the true light of the world.

If we see any light, which is almost every moment of our lives, we are seeing a representation of Jesus Christ as creator, healer, and redeemer. The truth that Jesus is the light of the world is there all the time for us to see.