

We have a great hope in our faithful God's promise in Rev 21:23-25. Why will we no longer need the sun or moon in the New Jerusalem?

Revelation 21:23-25 NLT - 23 And the city has no need of sun or moon, for the glory of God illuminates the city, and the Lamb is its light. 24 The nations will walk in its light, and the kings of the world will enter the city in all their glory. 25 Its gates will never be closed at the end of day because there is no night there.

And when you gave your life to Jesus, He brought light, life, and a new beginning to you. God is faithful to offer us the opportunity to begin again whenever we find ourselves in sin and darkness.

John 8:12 NLT - 12 Jesus spoke to the people once more and said, "I am the light of the world. If you follow me, you won't have to walk in darkness, because you will have the light that leads to life."

How have you seen the Light of Jesus overcome the darkness in your life or in others?

WRAP-UP

Our Advent Season begins in darkness, but the Light of Jesus brings us hope because God is faithful, and His light has overcome the darkness. We can find light and life in Jesus, who came as a humble child, and will return again to re-create a new heaven and earth

MEMORY VERSE.

The Word gave life to everything that was created, and his life brought light to everyone. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness can never extinguish it. -John 1:4-5 NLT

PRAYER (20 MIN) Ask your group to pray for you regarding one area where you can apply this study in your life.

Challenge – Explore more about the Genesis story, Gospel of John and more at the Bible Project site by Tim Mackie. Bibleproject.com

“In the beginning ... again”

Advent-Hope - #1

INTRODUCTION

The celebration of Advent, as the word implies, is a celebration of “coming”. For the Christian Church it celebrates both the coming of Jesus to earth as a baby thousands of years ago, and the anticipation of His future, second coming when there will be a new heaven and a new earth. Each week of Advent we reflect on a different theme. This week our theme is Hope. We reflect on how the coming of Jesus brings us hope. Christian hope is not just wishing to get something we desire, it is a confident expectation of the good God is bringing in the future.

Ice Breaker

What are your earliest Christmas memories?

Key Passage

John 1:1-5 NLT - 1 In the beginning the Word already existed. The Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He existed in the beginning with God. 3 God created everything through him, and nothing was created except through him. 4 The Word gave life to everything that was created, and his life brought light to everyone. 5 The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness can never extinguish it.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. The Word

In our key passage (John 1:1-5), John starts his gospel with a very familiar phrase, “In the beginning”. There is no doubt that John’s readers recognized that John was pointing them back to the story of God’s creation. But John doesn’t quote all of Gen 1:1, “in the beginning ‘God’...”, instead John begins with “In the beginning was ‘*the Word*’”. He uses the term “logos” which can refer to an expression of purpose, wisdom, or reasoning. And he states that the Word was God. As John reveals in verse 14, he uses Logos (Word) to denote the person of Jesus, who, during

His life on earth, was the expression of God's purpose, wisdom, and power.

John 1:14 NLT - 14 So the Word became human and made his home among us. He was full of unfailing love and faithfulness. And we have seen his glory, the glory of the Father's one and only Son.

If you were given access to God's wisdom, and purposes, what are the grand questions in life that you would ask, like, "Does my life have a purpose?" or "Why is there evil in the world?" Do you think we can find answers to those questions in the life and teachings of Jesus, the Logos?

If we read the first chapter of Genesis, we see that God created all things by speaking them into existence (e.g. Gen 1:20 "Then God said, let there be..."). God's plans and purposes for creation came through His Word.

Now look at John 1:2-3. What do these verses reveal about Jesus' role in creation. How does Hebrews 1:2 parallel John 1?

Hebrews 1:2 NLT - 2 And now in these final days, he has spoken to us through his Son. God promised everything to the Son as an inheritance, and through the Son he created the universe.

2. Darkness and Light

As we study this passage, it helps our understanding to keep in mind that John's audience was primarily Jewish. When they read the Genesis account, they were not seeking an explanation of the science of creation, they were trying to understand God's plans and purposes and His will in the creation of the universe. Because of that worldview, their terminology may mean something different than we expect it to mean.

Darkness is not only the absence of light. What are some of the things we associate with darkness? In what ways do we use darkness as a metaphor?

Genesis 1:2 NLT - 2 The earth was formless and empty, and darkness covered the deep waters. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the surface of the waters.

When you read Gen 1:2 we find the world is formless/*tôû* and empty/*bôû*, a wilderness of a watery abyss /*t'hôm*. covered in

darkness/hôšek. This is not an environment where life would flourish. It was not aligned with God's plans and purposes.

On day 1, in Gen 1:3, God said let there be light/'ôr, and there was illumination. But if the Sun, moon, and stars weren't created until day 4, this was not sunlight. What was the source of the light?

God's light advanced His order and purpose. It established a framework in which life would flourish.

John 1:4 NLT - 4 The Word gave life to everything that was created, and his life brought light to everyone.

In John 1:4 we see that in the Word was life/*zōē*, a full, genuine, and vigorous life. And that life brings light to mankind.

Darkness is the antithesis of light. You can't have light and darkness together. Once light appears, it dispels darkness.

1 John 1:5 NLT - 5 This is the message we heard from Jesus and now declare to you: God is light, and there is no darkness in him at all.

When man sinned in the garden he was separated from the presence of God. We were back in spiritual death and darkness, caused by the fractured relationship to our source of light and life. But God was not willing to leave us in darkness.

What did Isaiah prophesy about the advent of the Messiah?

Isaiah 9:2, 6 NLT - 2 The people who walk in darkness will see a great light. For those who live in a land of deep darkness, a light will shine. ... 6 For a child is born to us, a son is given to us. The government will rest on his shoulders. And he will be called: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

3. Hope

In the season of Advent, we find hope. In the beginning God brought His light and life in Genesis 1, and He did so again when the Word became flesh in Bethlehem. God promises another new beginning in Revelation when He will re-create a new heaven and a new Earth.