

JESUS: "I AM THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD"

Jesus' "I AM" (9)

Banská Bystrica, 25th May 2014

ἐν αὐτῷ ζωὴ ἦν, καὶ ἡ ζωὴ ἦν τὸ φῶς τῶν ἀνθρώπων·	John 1:4 In him was life, and the life was the light of men.
ἐγὼ εἶμι τὸ φῶς τοῦ κόσμου· ὁ ἀκολουθῶν ἐμοὶ οὐ μὴ περιπατήσει ἐν τῇ σκοτίᾳ, ἀλλ' ἔξει τὸ φῶς τῆς ζωῆς.	J 8:12 "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.
ὅταν ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ ᾶ, φῶς εἶμι τοῦ κόσμου.	John 9:5 As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.

OUTLINE

0. INTRODUCTION

- 0.1. LEWIS'S TRILEMMA
- 0.2. "GOD IS LIGHT"

1. JESUS: THE LIGHT OF ALL MEN

- 1.1. UNIVERSALISM?
- 1.2. PRAEPARATIO EVANGELICA

2. JESUS: THE LIGHT OF THE GOSPEL

- 2.1. JESUS' LIFE
- 2.2. THE GOSPEL

3. JESUS: THE LIGHT OF LIFE

- 3.1. THROUGH DARKNESS TO LIGHT (WAITING)
- 3.2. OBEDIENT TO KNOWLEDGE (WALKING)

4. CONCLUSIONS

0. INTRODUCTION

- "This recalls the statement of the Prologue: "In him was life, and that life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood [overcome] it" (John 1:4-5). Jesus professed to be not only the inexhaustible source of spiritual nourishment, but he also was the genuine light by which truth and falsehood could be distinguished and by which direction could be established."¹
- **Eph 5:13** ...for everything that becomes visible is light.
- Light = life-giving truth; eyes-opening truth; truth in the whole perspective of reality (much deeper of a concept than just a physical phenomenon) = moral point of view
- Darkness defined: **Is 59,1-17** – injustice, deceit, hatred etc.

0.1. LEWIS'S TRILEMMA

- Lewis's trilemma is an argument intended to prove that confining Jesus to the role of a good teacher is not logically possible based on Jesus' outrageous claims about his own divinity, such as

¹ Expositor's Bible Commentary, The, Pradis CD-ROM:John/Exposition of John/II.

that he is the only Son of God, that he has the unique ability to forgive sins, that he would rise from the dead, etc. It was the proposal of a trilemma (mentioned by others the previous century) that was popularised by C. S. Lewis in a BBC radio talk and in his writings. It is sometimes summarized either as "Lunatic, Liar, or Lord", or as "Mad, Bad, or God".²

- Tetralemma(?) - he never said anything like that - he never existed - Christianity was the religion of the slaves of the first century

0.2. "GOD IS LIGHT"

- **1John 1:5** This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that **God is light**, and in him is no darkness at all. → no dark intentions; no "strings attached"
= God is perfectly transparent, He has no side intentions, He exaggerates nothing, He hides nothing – we (can) know, what His intentions are
- **Psalm 27:1** he LORD is my **light** and my salvation; whom shall I fear?
- **Prov 6:23** For the commandment is a lamp and the teaching a light, and the reproofs of discipline are the way of **life** (וְדַרְכֵי תוֹכַחַת מוֹסֵר).
(וְדַרְכֵי תוֹכַחַת מוֹסֵר).
- **Prov 16:15** In the **light** of a king's face there is **life**, and his favor is like the clouds that bring the spring rain.
- **John 1:4** the **life** was the **light** of men.
- **2 Timothy 1:9-10** ...his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began,^{2 10} and which now has been manifested through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel

I am the light – a metaphor in a moral realm

- relationship between TRUTH and LIGHT: I can know the truth (e.g. I am going to die), but that doesn't mean I see it in a perspective (I'm going to die AND I'm going to meet with God, I need to repent and get reconciled with Him) = I need to see things from God's perspective (= to have His light)

John 9:39 – this doesn't sound very pleasant, I am so sure of myself, it's hard for me to humble myself = whoever wants to have light has to admit he's walking in darkness

John 3:19 – people loved darkness rather than light = darkness conceals my dirt

- when God reveals what's in me I start seeing the bad news, but there is the other part, the good news of God's grace

Once I have the light, I need to walk in it. **2 Pt 2:22** ... The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.

1. JESUS: THE LIGHT OF ALL MEN

- "natural law"; "natural theology"; conscience (can be deformed by wrong use)
= everyone has the light (spark) = everyone has the means he/she to search for the Light (fire)
- some things are naturally good to us (e.g. a child is able to discern injustice)
- there is a spark in everyone – when he/she hears the Word of God (the gospel), the fire is kindled
- we were created to search for Him

[C.S.Lewis:] Every one has heard people quarrelling. Sometimes it sounds funny and sometimes it sounds merely unpleasant; but however it sounds, I believe we can learn something very important from listening to the kind of things they say. They say things like this: "How'd you like it if anyone did the same to you?" - "That's my seat, I was there first" - "Leave him alone, he isn't doing you any harm" - "Why should you shove in first?" - "Give me a bit of your orange, I gave you a bit of mine" - "Come on, you promised." People say things like that every day, educated people as well as uneducated, and children as well as grown-ups. Now what interests me about all these remarks is that the man who makes them is not merely saying that the other man's

² http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lewis's_trilemma (24-May-14)

behaviour does not happen to please him. He is appealing to some kind of standard of behaviour which he expects the other man to know about.³

1.1. UNIVERSALISM?

- the right use of the *natural* morality/law/theology cannot *replace/substitute* the gospel **it always leads to the gospel!!!**
- **Rom 2:15** They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness, and their conflicting thoughts accuse or even excuse them
- **Mt 25:40** 'Truly, I say to you, as you **did it to** one of the least of these my brothers, you **did it to me.**'

1.2. PRAEPARATIO EVANGELICA

- "Christians have long practice at explaining their use of traditional (and even "pagan") ways of thought. When early Christians saw the many parallels between their own new religion and the ancient practices of Mediterranean paganism, they argued that God had already sowed the older cultures with ideas and themes that would grow to fruition once they were interpreted in a fully Christian context. The traditional religions should be seen as a preparatio evangelica, a preparation for the gospel."⁴
- Don Richardson *Eternity in their Hearts*. "The argument at the core of the book is that many tribes of the world already have a concept of the existence of one, true, "sky-god", even if they know little about him. He may go by different names, but he is the same God that we worship."⁵

2. JESUS: THE LIGHT OF THE GOSPEL

- **2Cor 4:6** For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ (ἐν προσώπῳ Χριστοῦ).

2.1. JESUS' LIFE

- **John 1:4** In him was life, and the life was the light of men.
- **John 12:35-36** "The **light** is among **you** for a little **while** longer. Walk **while you have the light**, lest darkness overtake **you**. The one who walks in the darkness does not know where he is going.
³⁶ **While you have the light**, believe in the **light**, that **you** may become sons of **light**."

2.2. THE GOSPEL

- **John 3:19** And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the **light** because their deeds were evil.
- **1 Cor 1:21** ...it pleased God through the folly of what we preach (διὰ τῆς μωρίας τοῦ κηρύγματος) to save those who believe.

Jesus came to bring forgiveness. God's love is demonstrated in pity. He pitied men so much that He reached out to us. It's hard to recognize our pitifulness. We want to be loved because we're someone, and to be pitied. Jesus came to give us His eyes and His ears.

3. JESUS: THE LIGHT OF LIFE

A born again Christian faces dark places on His walk with the Lord. It's essential that we acknowledge God's exhortation. But sometimes we don't obey the light God gives us and we start walking on the path of darkness: **John 12:36** While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light.

³ LEWIS, C.S. *Mere Christianity*.

⁴ JENKINS, P. *The Next Christendom*. Oxford : Oxford University Press, 2002, p. 122.

⁵ <http://stonge.intheway.org/documents/Eternity%20in%20Their%20Hearts.pdf> (24-May-14)

- **Psalm 36:7-9** How precious is your steadfast love, O God! The children of mankind take refuge in the shadow of your wings. ⁸ They feast on the abundance of your house, and you give them drink from the river of your delights. ⁹ For with you is the fountain of **life**; in your light do we see light (בְּאֹרֶךְ נְרָאֵה אֹרֶר). ⇒ without the light from God we do not even *know* what *light is!*
- The light of nature is like a spark, the light of the gospel a lamp, the light of grace a star, but the light of glory the sun itself. The higher our ascent the greater our light; God dwelleth in the light which no man can approach unto. 1 Tim. vi. 16 (Thomas Adams in SPURGEON *Treasury of David*)

3.1. THROUGH DARKNESS TO LIGHT (WAITING)

the process of searching and waiting: (from the outward word to the inward word)

- **2 Peter 1:19** And we have something more sure, the prophetic word, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts
 - It's crucial that we wait and do not panic
 - Jesus promises: **John 8:12** he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life (light of the gospel is not enough to get to the finish – we need to follow Him and we need His light for every day's following)

3.2. OBEDIENT TO KNOWLEDGE (WALKING)

- **Psalm 56:13 - 57:1** For you have delivered my soul from death, yes, my feet from falling, that I may walk before God in the **light** of life (לְהַתְהַלֵּךְ לְפָנֵי אֱלֹהִים בְּאֹרֶר הַחַיִּים).
- **Psalm 89:15** Blessed are the people who know the festal shout, who walk, O LORD, in the light of your face (בְּאֹרֶר פְּנֵיךְ יְהוָה לְכוּ),
- **Isaiah 2:4-5** ...nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore. ⁵ O house of Jacob, come, let us walk in the light of the LORD (לְכוּ וְנִלְכֶה בְּאֹרֶר יְהוָה).
- **Ps 112:4** Light dawns in the darkness for the upright; he is gracious, merciful, and righteous.
- **Luke 8:17-18** For nothing is hidden that will not be made manifest, nor is anything secret that will not be known and come to light. ¹⁸ Take care then how you hear, for to the one who has, *more will be given*, and from the one who has not, even what he thinks that he has will be taken away." = when we know what to do and we don't obey – we're leaving the path of light

4. CONCLUSIONS

- Jesus' light is truth in the perspective of the whole truth about us and eternity – to see where we are with God.
- Jesus' gospel sheds light on our sins and gives light for life – to follow him.
- Jesus gives us more light after we obey the light we already have – to understand more.