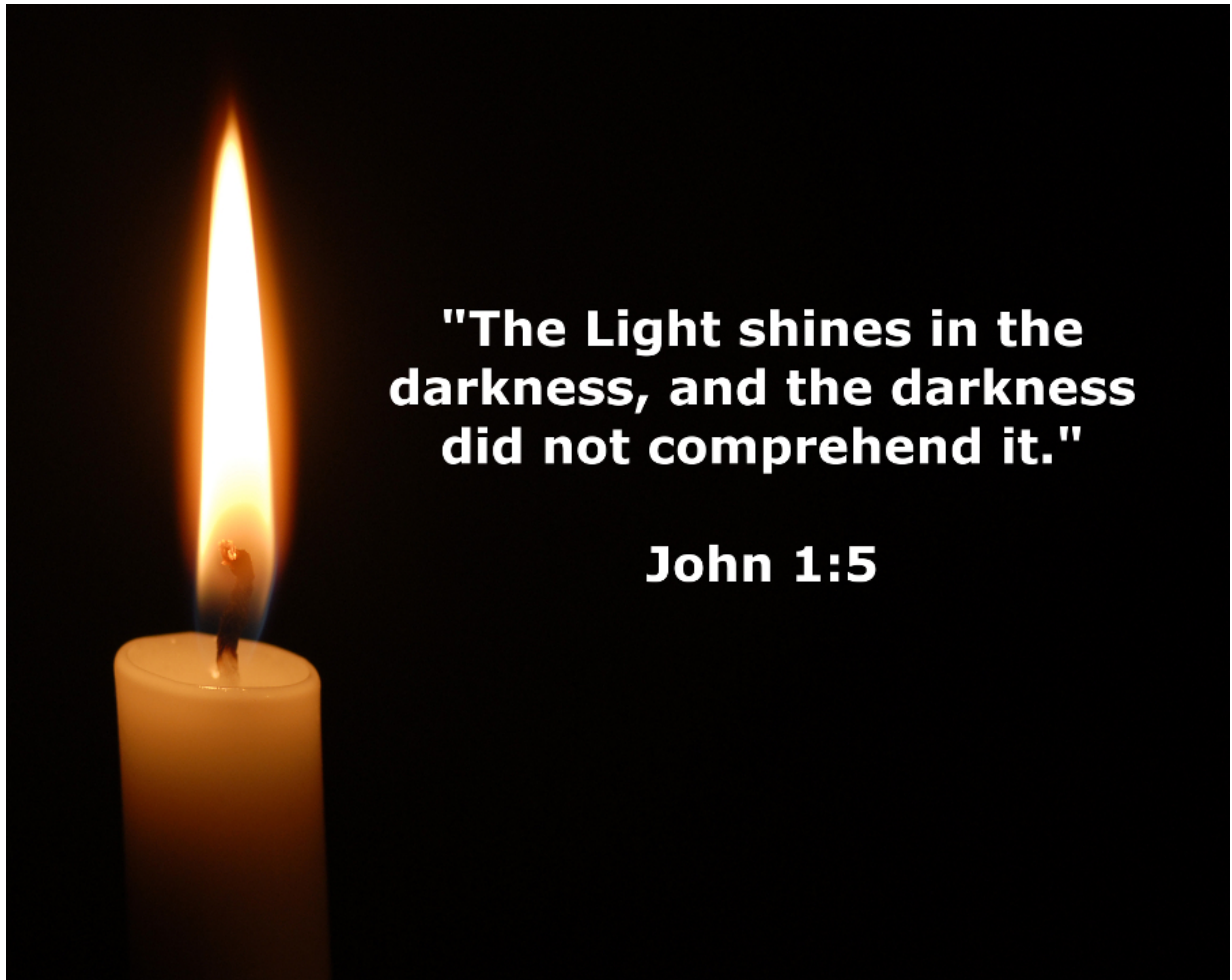


“The Light Shines in the Darkness – John 1:5 Meaning”

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The Light Shines in the Darkness – John 1:5 – iStock photo used under license

"The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it." (John 1:5)

This lesson explains the meaning of John 1:5.

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Consider. What does this verse (John 1:5) mean to you? How would you explain "The Light shines in the darkness" to an inquisitive believer or to a person who does not know Christ?

Scriptures in this lesson are taken from the 1995 New American Standard Bible (NASB) on the Bible Gateway website (Ref. 1) unless indicated otherwise.

1. The Light shines in the darkness

a. What is "The Light"?

Throughout the New Testament, "light" figuratively denotes truth and knowledge together with spiritual purity (Thayer's Greek Lexicon, Ref. 2). In John 1:5, the "Light" is God's divine illumination to reveal and impart life through Jesus Christ. The Light that shines in the darkness is the life-giving, saving truth embodied in Christ and by his love and effort imparted to mankind (Ref. 2).

b. Was the "Light" only in the past or is it ongoing?

The Light of Christ is perpetual. It always shines, and it never ceases. The life-giving, saving truth of Christ shining in the darkness was an ongoing truth for the Apostle John and is an ongoing truth for us today -- not only for us, but also for us to share with others.

The verb "shines" in John 1:5 is in the present tense (Englishman's Concordance, Ref. 3). A Greek verb in the present tense means a present, continued action that is an actual fact (Ref. 4). The Greek verb for "shines" is *phainó* and means to *shed light* or *appear* (Strong's Concordance, Ref. 3). John uses the same word in 1 John 2:8.

c. In John and 1 John, what is the "darkness"?

In John 1:5 the Greek word for "darkness" is *skotia* (pronounced *skot-ee'-ah*) (Ref. 5). *Skotia* [darkness] figuratively means ignorance (lack of knowledge) of divine things, wickedness, and the resultant misery (Ref. 5).

John uses *skotia* figuratively for "darkness" in John 1:5, John 8:12, John

12:35, John 12:46, 1 John 1:5, as well as 1 John 2:8, 9, and 11. For example, Jesus said, "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).

Skotia also has a literal meaning -- *dark* because of the absence of daylight (John 6:17, John 20:1).

d. How does a person get out of the "darkness"?

Believe in Jesus

Jesus tells us how we (or any person) can get out of spiritual darkness. Jesus said, "I have come as Light into the world, so that everyone who believes in Me will not remain in darkness" (John 12:46). The key for getting out of the darkness and into the light is to believe in Jesus. The Greek word for "believe" in John 12:46 is *pisteuó* (pronounced *pist-yoo'-o*). *Pisteuó* means *trust in, have faith in, and put confidence in* (Ref. 6). A person who believes in Jesus trusts in, has faith in, and puts their confidence in Jesus.

2. And the darkness did not comprehend or overcome it

The Greek verb translated as "comprehend" or "overcome" in John 1:5 is *katalambanó* (pronounced *kat-al-am-ban'-o*) (HELPS Word-studies, Ref. 7). *Katalambanó* means:

- *To take hold of exactly, with decisive initiative* (eager self-interest);
- *To grasp something in a forceful (firm) manner; and*
- (Figuratively) *To apprehend (comprehend), "making it one's own"* (Ref. 7).

In John 1:5 the Bible is clear that the darkness did not and still does not comprehend [*perceive or understand*] the Light of Christ. Likewise, the darkness has not overcome the Light of Christ, nor will it ever overcome the Light of Christ.

Let us rejoice! The Light of Jesus Christ is perpetual and is victorious over the darkness. The Light of Christ shining in the darkness gives us hope. As disciples of Christ, let us seek ways we can help provide the Light of Christ to others, to help them "see the Light" so that they will not remain in darkness.

Summary. In John 1:5, the "Light" is God's divine illumination to reveal and impart life through Jesus Christ to mankind. The Light shines perpetually, and it never ceases. Because of ignorance and wickedness, the darkness has not perceived or understood the Light. The darkness has not overcome the Light nor will it ever overcome the Light. As Christ's disciples, we have hope because Christ and his light are victorious over the darkness.

Apply. Think for a moment. In your own words, how would you describe the meaning of "The Light shines in the darkness"? How can you share the Light of Christ with others?

Related Lesson

"Jesus is the Light of the World" - John 8:12, John 12:46

References

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