

**GOD'S GREATEST SERMON**  
**John 1:1-5**

12 Jan 2014

Turn to John's Gospel! – Today we begin our journey. – We're at the trailhead. – We're about to embark on a study of probably the most famous book in all the Bible. – The Apostle John will be our companion & guide for about the next two years, as the Holy Spirit illumines this inspired text for us.

Proverbs says that 'he who walks with the wise will grow wise'. – I can't think of a wiser companion than John, the 'beloved disciple, the 'Apostle of Love'.

In our almost 5 yrs as a church, I've never done a Gospel yet at Antioch. – We've got a number of newer, younger believers who need such a foundational book. – Plus we've always got the unsaved in our midst. – And we have the rest of us, who need one thing more than anything else. – *Know what that need is?*

Christian, what is your greatest need and our greatest need as a church (in 2014, and always)? – What would most impact us as a church and revive & awaken us, more than anything else?...

Answer: A greater love for Christ.

Interesting, where did we end last year in 1 Cor., chp. 16? – One of the last vss, v. 22, "If anyone does not love the Lord, he is to be accursed."

Our greatest need is the thing that will cost us most if we fail at it: loving the Lord Jesus, growing in our esteem and affection for Christ, overcoming apathy toward the Saviour, making sure we don't "lose our first love".

Where better then to go, but to John's Gospel? – The other 3 Gospels are like visiting an art gallery to scan & browse the art. – But John's Gospel calls us *to gaze*, to stand still.

John's is a smaller gallery, but with larger paintings of exquisite beauty. – He handpicks 8 of Jesus' miracles and zooms in on Jesus' teaching & His glory to which that sign pointed.

The other 3 Gospels present Jesus. – John *interprets* Jesus. – They focus more on Jesus outwardly & publicly; John on Jesus inwardly & privately.

Matthew writes to Jews, showing Jesus as King. – Mark to Romans, showing Jesus as Servant. – Luke to Greeks, showing Jesus as Man. – But John writes to all, Jews & Gentiles alike, showing Jesus as God.

~ The early church fathers compared the four gospels to the four living creatures in Revelation. – John was the 'eagle gospel', soaring high above the other 3 gospels, with steady wing & searching eye. –

John gives this panoramic, sweeping vision of the majesty of God's Son, Jesus.

~ Augustine, "John rises above all peaks of the earth, ...above all plains of the sky, ...above all heights of the stars, ...above all choirs and legions of the angels."

~ Calvin said John is the *key* that opens the door to the other 3 Gospels.

~ Luther calls it, “the one, tender, real crown-Gospel of them all”.

~ MacArthur says, *Many have called John the holy of holies in the NT, the most sacred place you can go...the most heavenly of all the 4 Gospels. ...Because in this gospel, the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ is fully displayed. In this gospel, we will fellowship in the deepest way with the Lord Jesus. We will hear His beating heart. We will touch His wound prints and hopefully with Thomas we will say, “My Lord and my God.”*

+ It’s been said that John’s Gospel is like a pool a child can wade in, yet an elephant can swim in it, it is so profound.

~ John Piper, “...there may be no better book in the Bible to help you keep on trusting and treasuring Christ above all.”

+ An evangelist at a rescue mission in Chicago, reaching guys off the streets, said this: “[we] have found John’s Gospel best for dealing with these tough, hard men. Its straight, unequivocal words about sin & salvation somehow go home and carry conviction to the most abandoned, while its direct invitation wins a response as nothing else does.”

→Beloved: WHO would God have you to invite to church, to bring along with you in the coming days, to discover Christ on the pages of John’s Gospel? (Be thinking & praying about this.)

~ J.C. Ryle writes that he “commented on many a verse in John’s Gospel with fear and trembling; saying with Paul, “Who is sufficient/adequate for these things”; and hearing God’s word to Moses, ‘The place whereon thou standest is holy ground’.”

~ The commentator, Bruce Milne, writes: *the fascination of John continues undiminished, its challenge unending. ...the impact on the history of the world of John’s 21 brief chps is in the end incalculable. ...they comprise a moral and spiritual potency which over the centuries has transformed communities, toppled kingdoms, liberated multitudes, and remade human character on a scale without parallel in the accumulated literature of the ages.*

*...Simply put, in the paragraphs of John’s gospel YOU will meet the living Lord Jesus Christ, in His glory and grace, His majesty and tenderness, and you can experience His presence as a perceptible reality in your life (Jn. 20:31!).*

*...[in John’s Gospel] we are invited to approach reverently, to gaze wonderingly and adoringly upon the glory of the everlasting Son made flesh, and then go forth to live for Him amid the realities of our everyday world.*

→Two years from now, when we (DV) reach the end of our journey, we will surely know Christ better. – YET I must warn you: Two yrs from now, we’ll also be forced to admit that Christ is even further *beyond our grasp*. – He cannot be domesticated; He is untameable, dangerous, and mysterious. – Yet He is ever summoning us to explore Him further, to know Him more, to love and obey Him better.

+ Remember how C.S. Lewis puts it in Narnia? – The great, wise lion Aslan says to Lucy, “Welcome, child.”:

*“Aslan,” said Lucy, “you’re bigger.” - “That is because you are older, little one,” answered he. “Not because you are?” [said Lucy. Aslan replies:]  
“I am not. But every year you grow, you will find me bigger.”.*

→O how I pray this for us: for you, for me, for us as a church – that as we work our way through the wonders of John’s Gospel, we will find Christ bigger and bigger and bigger.

→This was the very reason John was written: Turn to 20:30-31...

(a) For unbelievers to be persuaded to *believe* in Christ;

AND...

(b) For believers to keep believing & abiding in Christ, to deepen our understanding of our new life in Christ.

I.e., John is written to *awaken* faith in the lost & to *sustain* faith in the saved.

Turn back to the start. – Look at the title: “Gospel According to John”

Gospel = headline, breaking news!, a great proclamation, a triumphant declaration.

According to John = Though John never once uses his name. – But the unanimous view of the Church for the first 18 centuries of Christianity, from the earliest days, was that John wrote it.

When you read John, what do you find? – The author is an eyewitness, an apostle, one of the Twelve, one of Jesus’ inner circle of three (esp. combining from the other Gospels). – The only label he wants is this: the “disciple whom Jesus loved”.

Once James & John, these two sons of Zebedee, were known as the ‘Sons of Thunder’. – They wanted to call down fire upon others. They and their mom were elbowing for a top spot in Jesus’ kingdom. – But now?

Now, after some 50-60 years of serving Christ & His Church. – Now, John says, ‘Just call me the “disciple that Jesus loved”’. – Nothing is more amazing than that. – Me, unworthy me, sinful & guilty me. – Loved by Him, His beloved.

→That’s true for each of us. – Gal. 2:20b, “the life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me.”

It was widely known in the early church that John outlived all the other apostles. – He was probably an old man when this Gospel was written. – It was probably in the mid 80s or early 90s AD, from Ephesus.

Ephesus had become the hub of Christian influence across Asia Minor (Turkey). – You can imagine how many would’ve looked to John, this last apostle, as their pastor, and defender of the faith. He’d probably baptised them, their kids, and now their grandkids.

Clement tells us that these believers & churches appealed to John to write. – Imagine them saying, ‘Pastor John, won’t you please write one more gospel? Won’t you compliment and supplement what Matthew, Mark & Luke have already written? You have an incredible story to tell; but if you don’t write it down, future generations will never know.’

Persecution was mounting at that time. – Jewish Christians were kicked out of synagogues, cut off from their families, and tempted to revert back to Judaism. –

Error was also spreading. – Some were denying Jesus full deity; others denied his full humanity.

Others claimed to be believers, but showed no fruit, no obedience. – Others were still Jews or pagans, and had yet to hear of this Saviour, or were yet unconvinced of why they should risk it all and surrender their lives to Him in faith.

So the old apostle pulled out ink bottle, quill, and papyrus and went to work.

And he begins in a magnificent, breathtaking way....

Stand, Read vv. 1-5 & Pray:

Give title, “God’s Greatest Sermon” (a phrase I stole from a friend)

WHO is this passage all about? – 7x here, John speaks of One that he calls, “the Word”. – And by v. 14, we know he’s talking about Jesus. – But no other NT author calls Jesus “the Word”, and Jesus never used it of Himself. – So why does John?

The Greek term here for “Word” = *Logos*.

For centuries, pagan Greeks had spoke much about the importance of the *Logos*. – For them, the *Logos* was some impersonal force that controlled & governed the universe. – *Logos* = reason, or wisdom, or some organising principle that gave structure & order to the world.

But then: along comes this Galilean fishermen who says, ‘Let me tell you about the *Logos*, the ultimate, true *Logos*. Not some impersonal force or power, but a Person. A Man, like no other man. In fact, He is *the Source* of all human reason & wisdom. He is *the* meaning behind all the meaning that you search for in the universe.’: v. 1...

But remember that mainly, John was writing, not with a Greek mindset, but as a Jew, a Jewish Christian. – For Christians & Jews, *Logos* means one thing: the Word of God, God speaking, God revealing Himself to us.

→ Imagine any relationship without communication, if you couldn’t speak, or had no way of sharing about yourself with one another?...

Well then: *What would we know about God if He did not speak to us?* – Where would we be if God were not a talking God? – What if God was non-communicative, and didn’t want to be known, or to disclose Himself to us?...

See, only God can tell us about God. – Only God if opens His mouth can we know anything about Him, what He's like, what He's thinking, what He's feeling, what He wants of us.

And let's be clear: *God had every right to stay silent.* – God didn't owe us a single syllable. – He had every reason to remain withdrawn & aloof, cold & distant, impersonal and unknown.

But He didn't. – 1 Jn 4 tells us, "God is love". – And the nature of love is to communicate. – God's instinct is to be gracious, and to be relational, to be known. – So He speaks, and He reveals Himself.

God spoke, and the world was made in a mere 6 days, and man was made in His image. – God spoke, and Abraham left Ur and the Jewish nation was born. – God spoke, and His Law was given to Moses. – God spoke, and the prophets declared, 'Thus says the Lord'. –

But God had one more Sermon stored up. – This would be His final speech, and His greatest message ever. – God saved His best Word for last:

Heb. 1:1-2a, "God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in His Son...."

Jesus is the *Logos*, God's Word. – When God wanted to best express Himself, He sent Jesus. – When God wanted to speak His mind, to reveal His heart, to sum up His whole message to us, what did He send? –

NOT just another prophet, or vision, or angel, or experience. – Not just a religion, or a system, or an 'ethos', or an instruction manual. – Not just another word, but "THE Word", the incarnate Word, Jesus:

1:1a...

In giving us His Son, God gave all that Heaven could give. – He gave us Himself. – He gave us a living, breathing paragraph, a pulsing message, a flesh-and-blood sermon, named Jesus.

HOWEVER: Don't think that Jesus only became God's Word at His incarnation, when He came to earth. – No, John's Gospel give us the bigger picture. – A much bigger picture.

John starts like no other Gospel starts. – Mark & Luke begin with John the Baptist. – Matthew begins with a genealogy. – John begins in *eternity*.

The other Gospels begin at Bethlehem. – John begins in the *bosom* of the Father. – The others began with cradle and manger and prophecy. – John goes back, back, back to the counsels of the *Trinity*:

Reread: vv. 1-2...

**\*SIX GLORIOUS FEATURES of Christ the Word – that we might believe & adore & obey Him:**

1. v. 1a, The ETERNAL Word

+ When you meet a new person, what's one of the first questions you ask? – 'Hey, where are you from?'...

That's what is going on here with Jesus. – John is telling us, 'Here's why you need to know this Christ. Look at where He is from!'

v. 1a – John surely had Gen. 1:1 in mind here.... –

Christ' coming to earth was so epic, so monumentally significant, that it was like a new creation, a 2<sup>nd</sup> beginning. – You can see why Calvin says that John's Gospel should've been placed first in the NT. – It's the launch of a new story, a new covenant that God was doing in Christ.

NB, not the normal past tense used here, but the imperfect tense, which = past continuous, ongoing action. – NB, v. 3, everything else in the universe 'became'. – But Christ "was". – Everything else came into existence. – But Christ always existed – uncreated, with no beginning. –

Everything & everyone else has a starting point. – Not Christ. – Before the starting point of history started, the Word was standing there. – At the dawn of time, there stood God's Son.

→Try & get your head around that. – You can't! – Try and push back as far as your mind can fathom, before creation, before Satan fell, before time began. – Push back a million years before that, then another million, another million, another billion, another billion, and still:

Christ is there, existing, conscious, personal, presiding as Lord, the living Word, the eternal Logos, the self-revelation of His Father.

→When you looked into the eyes of Jesus of Nazareth, you looked into the eyes of eternity. – *You met a Man who never began*, in so far as His divine nature. – You met a Man who had forever been the eternal Son of God. –

He was not just born. – As Scripture says, He was 'sent, given', 'coming down out of Heaven'. – Christ was a literal Melchizedek, "having neither beginning of days nor end of life" (Heb. 7).

Micah 5:2, "But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you One will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel. His goings forth are from long ago, from the days of eternity."

Jude v. 25 exults in this truth, "To the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, *before all time* and now and forever. Amen."

~ Arius, the heretic and original JW, said this: "There was once when Christ was not." – To which Athanasius, the great defender of Christianity, replied, "There never was when He was not".

→This is the Christ we will meet at every turn in our journey through John's Gospel: the pre-existing, eternal Christ. –

Beloved, you must realise: ONLY an eternal Christ can save us from our sins. – Only an eternal Christ can take away our guilt and reconcile us to a holy God –

Only an eternal Christ deserves all our devotion, and all our worship, for all eternity.

## 2. vv. 1b, 2, The INTIMATE Word

v. 1b, with God = used 2x, repeated in v. 2, so must be extra important! – Not normal Greek pronoun for “with” (*para*), but special one (*pros*) = “to, towards”, i.e. facing. –

From eternity, Christ enjoyed an intimate, personal relationship with His Father, face to face. – God’s Son was the Darling of Heaven, the apple of God’s eye.

As we’ll see in v. 18, “the only begotten...in the bosom of the Father”. – As Jesus prays in Jn 17:5, “Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.”

→ Christ forever existed, but not simply as God, but as another Person in the presence of God. – A theological bud is starting to blossom here. – The Christian doctrine of the Trinity is unfolding for us here, in all its beauty and mystery. – One God, yet more than one Person in that Godhead, communing with one another from eternity past.

## 3. v. 1c, The EQUAL Word

v. 1c – Remember, this is John, a Jew speaking. – Nobody was more repulsed by polytheism. – Monotheism was their lifeblood, a doctrine they would die for, that there is only one God.

YET John declares that this eternal Word, Christ, was also God. – Two beings in the Godhead, each fully sharing in all that deity entails, all of God’s nature and character.

Nothing greater could’ve ever been said about Christ than this: v. 1c...

Let this sink in for a moment: John has just told us that whatever God was, Christ was. – All that God is, infinite, eternal, transcendent, Almighty, unchangeable, exalted & holy, unique & solitary. – ALL that God is, Jesus, the Word, “was”.

And if this wasn’t jaw-dropping enough, Jesus will say later in John, “I and the Father are one. ...He who has seen me has seen the Father”.

NB here in v. 1c, John doesn’t just say that Christ was ‘godly’, or ‘divine’, or celestial or heavenly. – No: v. 1c...

As Heb. 1 goes on to say, “He [God’s Son] is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of His nature”. – As Php. 2:6 puts it, Christ “existed in the form of God” and had “equality with God”. – As Col. 2:9 puts it, “in Him [Christ] all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form.”

+ This afternoon, the JW comes to your door: He pulls out his translation (though they are usually more subtle, and save this tactic for later), *The New World Translation*, which says in Jn. 1:1, “...the Word was a god.” –

Here is where grammar affects your eternal destiny. – JW's defend their translation of Jn 1:1 by saying it's not capital 'G' "God" in the original, because there is no "the" (definite article). – Instead, they say is only "a god" in the Greek.

But that's a lie. – And it is bad Greek, which no reputable Greek scholar would ever support. – By way of summary, let me show you how they are twisting Scripture:

If the JW's were consistent, here's how they would've translated other vss in John 1: 1:1a, "In a beginning"; 1:6, 'There came a man sent from a god' – 1:12, '...he gave the right to become children of a god' – 1:13, '...who were born of a god' – 1:18, 'No one has seen a god'!

Ridiculous! – It's obvious in the context that cannot be the meaning. – Likewise then with Jn. 1:1.

No, John says what he says: Jesus, the eternal Word, was fully, equally, 100% God.

SUMMARY of the importance of v. 1:

We have seen that 'The Word was *with* God, God's eternal Fellow; the Word *was* God, God's own Self.'

~ Kent Hughes: "The simple sentence of verse 1 is the most compact and pulsating theological statement in all of Scripture."

+ This one sentence was enough to keep theologians busy for the first few *centuries* of Christianity, hammering out & articulating how it is that Jesus, the Word, is distinguished *from* God, and yet is identified *with* God. – No sentence in the Bible is more foundational to our doctrine of the Trinity.

→If Jn. 1:1 is not true, then John's Gospel is *blasphemous*. – No man can claim what John claims about Jesus unless Jesus is God. That's what is at stake here.

Now John steps into time & space history...

#### **4. v. 3, The CREATING Word**

All that we see around us in this vast world – where did it all come from? – And how did we get here?...

v. 3 – As we'll see later in John, Jesus says, "whatever the Father does, the Son also does" (5:19). – Even creating the universe.

When God made the world, He chose not to do it alone. – He chose to involve a personal Agent, a Sr. Executive, a special Mediator, who would assist Him in every aspect of universe-making: v. 3a...

Jesus, the eternal Word, was God's unique Agent in the creation of all that exists. – Recall that in Genesis, nothing was made without God speaking: "Then God said, 'Let there be....', and there was...." No word from God, no world.

Recall also in Prov. 3 & Prov. 8, God uses Wisdom to create the world. – That may also foreshadow Jesus, the wisest One who ever lived. – “One greater than Solomon is here”.

+ All the 200 billion stars in this Milky Way galaxy, which is but one of some 200 billion other galaxies. – All those ‘octillions’ of gigantic stars, Jesus made. – He spoke, and they sprang forth. – He commanded, and they were created. – What a glorious, cosmic Christ, the ‘creating Word’.

QUESTIONS: Here in v. 3, is John just saying the same thing positively, then negatively?  
– No:

He is saying that EVERYTHING God first made (v. 3a), and all that exists today (v. 3b, some 5,000 yrs later), NONE of it (seen & unseen, past & present) got here without Christ.

NB also, some (like Arians & JWs & Mormons), might say that v. 3a, “all things”, doesn’t include Christ. – They say Christ was created first by the Father, and then with God created all *other* things.

HOWEVER, v. 3b refutes that: v. 3b – I.e., anything that has ever “come into being”, been “made, created” was made by Christ. – Therefore, Christ was not made. – You can’t bring yourself into being. – Christ never came into being, He never began.

1 Cor. 8:6, “...there is but one God, the Father, from whom are all things and we exist for Him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we exist through Him.”

Col. 1:16-17, “For by Him [Christ] all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities – all things have been created through Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.”

→I.e., John is saying, ‘Whether you believe in this Jesus or not, regardless of what you think about Him, realise this: *He made you*. Even the very breath that you use to deny Him, the energy you use to take His name in vain, that came from Him. You owe your entire existence to Him, and so does all creation.’ – Reread: v. 3...

~ Stephen Hawking, “The eventual goal of science is to provide a single theory that describes the whole universe.” (*A Brief History of Time*, p. 10). – What is that “single theory”. – Jesus of Nazareth, the eternal Word!

→What’s this mean for us? – Milne: *If Jesus Christ shares the nature of God, we are called to worship Him without cessation, obey Him without hesitation, love Him without reservation and serve Him without interruption. To Him be all glory forever.*

~ As we sing:

*Jesus is Lord! Creation’s voice proclaims it,  
For by His power each tree and flower was planned and made.  
Jesus is Lord! The universe declares it,  
Sun, moon and stars in heaven cry, Jesus is Lord!*

## 5. v. 4a, The LIVING Word

What hope this brings to our dying world:

+ Nearly 1500 people have died on our roads here since 1 Dec. – 1500 people thinking they were getting away for a break; instead, they never made it home.

One of our members just 2 days ago heard that her sister's husband and her best friend's husband both died. – Days earlier, they were all together, enjoying life. – The next minute, they're gone.

v. 4a – “Life” = one of John's favt words, used 36x in this Gospel. – Where did Christ draw His life from? – From nowhere and from no one. – It was inherent & intrinsic to Him as the everlasting Word, eternally God, self-sustaining, life-giving, not life-needing. – Fountain of all life: v. 4a...

No Jesus, no life, period. – Not in the natural realm, not in the spiritual realm. – Not at creation, not in salvation, not anywhere.

John's Gospel will show us that this Living Word came that people might have life, and have it more abundantly (10:10). – He died so that people might have everlasting life (3:16). – He gave His flesh for the life of the world (6:51). – Only those who eat His flesh and drink His blood have life (6:53-54). –

Only those who come to Him have life (5:40). – When He gives His life, people perish no more (10:28). – Christ alone has the power to lay down His life and to take it up again (10:18). –

After raising Lazarus from the dead, He declared, “I am the resurrection and the life” (11:25). – Soon after He said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life” (14:6). – His Father granted that He, the Son, would have “life in himself” (5:26).

→Dear friend, are you alive, spiritually alive to God? – Are are you still a dead sinner – spiritually unresponsive to God, to His Word, to the horrifying reality of eternity?

Do you realise what God offers you in Christ, this Living Word? If you will repent of your sin & believe in Christ alone, He promises you new life, totally new life. – NOT just life after death, but life *before* death – a relationship with the living Christ, the Lord of life.

## 6. vv. 4b-5, The SHINING Word

Not only is ours a dying world, it is also a dark world. – Mankind is shrouded in darkness, blanketed in a thick, black, spiritual darkness. – It is the darkness of sin and ignorance and evil, which brings bondage and guilt and death.

A thick veil of spiritual blindness hangs over our world. – Yet John declares:

v. 4b – Jesus, the Word, is not only the Life-bringer, but also the Light-bearer; another favourite term of John's. – The first recorded words of God (when “darkness was over the face of the deep”) are, “Let there be light” (Gen. 1:3). –

Yet long before God created light, God's Companion was Light, the light of His own dear Son. – The Light predestined to enter this dark world bringing salvation, rescuing us from our spiritual blindness.

John's Gospel will show us that this shining Christ is "the light of the world" (8:12; 9:5), that He has "come into the world as a light" (12:46), that all who follow Him "will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life" (8:12). –

YET we will see that people "love darkness rather the light". – So they take the Life of the world and the Light of the world and they nail Him to a tree. –

They want His life to die and His light put out. – When Jesus hung on that cross, at midday, the heavens went black, the world became dark. – But it did not last. – The darkness was doomed to fail. ("Now...the prince of this world will be driven out", 12:31)

v. 5 – + KIDS: Go into the darkest room you can find, and light one tiny match. – Who wins, darkness or light?...darkness is dispelled, none of it can hide, it runs from the light!...

Light & darkness are in perpetual conflict in John's Gospel. – Probably the idea here in v. 5b is, "did not master it", couldn't grasp it, didn't get it. – But probably also the idea of, "couldn't conquer or defeat Christ's light".

When Jesus came to the cross, in Luke 22:53 He said, "This is the hour of the power of darkness". – At Calvary, Hell threw everything it had at Jesus. – Satan's dark domain, with all His demons, pulled out all the stops. –

Satan had been trying throughout Christ's ministry. – By killing all the babies in Bethlehem, but the Light got away. – By often assaulting Jesus with demon-possessed maniacs. But the Light cast out these demons every time.

By trying in the Garden of Gethsemane to overwhelm Jesus with fear and sorrow. – But the Light prevailed and still went to the cross. – By wounding the Light on the cross and killing Him. –

YET by that very death, the Serpent's head was crushed. – God's Light in Jesus could not be extinguished. – Neither death nor darkness could hold Him. – On the 3<sup>rd</sup> day He rose!

Repeat: v. 5...

NB, a wonderful contrast in verb tenses here, very encouraging: v. 5a, present tense = Christ's light keeps shining, has always shone, is still shining now! – BUT v. 5b, past tense = the darkness has not comprehended, never has, and still does not until now!

This is God's shining Word, the Light that cannot be put out. – One day even sun & moon will be destroyed, and all the stars will fade. – Yet still Christ will shine.

→Christian, do you recall your conversion? – When a dead man was made to live. – When a darkened, blind man was made to see? Can you remember? – Nothing more stupendous could ever happen to you: vv. 4-5...

You can see it on a person's face: life & light. – Young or old, it doesn't matter. – It will show. – You will shine, you will be truly alive, when you know this living & shining Christ!...

→Do you know this life? – Do you have this light found only in Christ? – Or are you still walking in darkness, blindly groping your way through life, desperately in need of Christ, the Light of the world?...

PRAY: *...my deep sense of the utter inability of any preacher to enter fully into these vast and sublime truths. ...There is something here which nothing but the light of eternity will ever fully reveal. (Ryle)*

**"GOD'S GREATEST SERMON"**  
**Application Questions**  
**John 1:1-5**

1. Why does John call Christ "the Word"? Why is that significant? What does it tell us about God's nature and His desire for a relationship with us? What role does the "word of God" play in the Old Testament? How does this affect your view of Jesus, and your relationship to God?
2. v. 1a, What if Christ were not the eternal Word? What would that mean for our faith?
3. vv. 1b, 2, What if Christ were not the intimate Word, facing the Father? What would that mean for our faith? (especially the doctrine of the Trinity) Why didn't John just say, 'Jesus is God'?
4. v. 1c, How is Christ the "equal" Word? Could anything greater be said about Christ than this? How does this affect your view of all the great stories of the Old Testament, that everything God does, Christ is doing? (creation, flood, Babel, plagues, parting the Red Sea, walls of Jericho, etc.!)
5. v. 3, What if Christ were not the creating Word? What if someone/something else had created Christ, what then? How does this affect your trust in & love for Christ? How does this give us boldness in witnessing to those who reject or ignore Christ?
6. v. 4a, What if Christ were not the living Word? Name all the kinds of life in this world that all come from Him? Why is it that, most of all, we need spiritual & eternal life from Him? By what means is a dead sinner made alive?
7. vv. 4b-5, What if Christ were not the shining Word? Do you remember what spiritual blindness was like, before God saved you? What were the crucial things your blindness kept you from seeing? How do we see the conflict between light & darkness played out in the Bible, in history, and in the world around us today?
8. vv. 4-5, Describe what a person looks like who has Christ's life & light in them? How do they speak and act? How do they relate to the church, and to the world?