

Coach House Church BEACONS

LIGHT & DARK

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I saw something in the news recently that caught my eye and made me think. Apparently someone has been launching a large number of satellites into space. These are being sent up in batches and are currently orbiting quite close to the earth. I understand that at some point they are going to move further away from the earth to form part of a new network. Now what makes these satellites unusual is that the angle of the solar panel they carry reflects the sun's light towards the earth making them visible as they pass over. Because they are in groups at the moment you can see multiple trails of light all heading in the same direction.

This got me thinking about these lights shining in the dark night sky.

Right at the beginning of the bible, in the book of Genesis, we are told that "the earth was formless and empty, and darkness covered the deep waters" This was the situation before God started to work on creating the world we live in. The first thing that God said was "let there be light" and He noted that the light was good. God made a separation between light and dark, He called the light "day" and the darkness "night". God made a conscious choice so separate the light, which He called good, and the dark which obviously wasn't good.

One of Jesus' close friends, whom we usually call disciples, John, wrote down some of the things that Jesus did. Today we call this book the gospel of John and you can find this book in the New Testament section of the bible.

At the start of the book John describes Jesus as having been with God at the time of the creation. In fact John is saying that it was Jesus who did the actual work of putting

the earth into place and everything that went into it. Verse 3 says this “God created everything through him, and nothing was created except through him” That very first event, that separation of light and dark, was seen by John as being very important.

Lets read what John wrote starting at verse 5 .

“The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness can never extinguish it. God sent a man, John the Baptist, to tell about the light, so that everyone might believe because of his testimony. John himself was not the light; he was simply a witness to tell about the light. The one who is the true light, who gives light to everyone, was coming into the world”

So Both John the Baptist and John the disciple testified that Jesus was this light. The bible uses the picture of light and dark many times to show that those who know Jesus are in the light and those who don't know Jesus, or have rejected Jesus, are in the dark

John narrates a story in his gospel about a man named Nicodemus. Nicodemus was an well educated man, in fact, he was a teacher of Jewish Law or Pharisee. This meant that he would have known the books of the Old Testament, as we now call it, inside out. He would have visibly kept the rules and regulations that God had set out. He was well respected but Jesus tells him that he had no understanding of the things of God. Now John tells this story because Nicodemus came to see Jesus at night. Nicodemus was in the darkness, in other words he did not have that personal relationship with Jesus that would have brought him into the light. Because Nicodemus knew the scriptures well he would, like all Jews, have been aware that someone was going to come as a saviour to the Jewish nation.

Jesus told Nicodemus that he was that person and he spoke to Nicodemus to help Nicodemus understand what he needed to do. It was to Nicodemus that Jesus spoke some of the most often quoted words in the bible. “For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life” The verses after this are less often quoted but tell us a little more about light and dark. “There is no judgement against anyone who believes in him. But anyone who does not believe in him has already been judged for not believing in God's only begotten son. And the judgement is based on this fact. God's light came into the world, but people loved the darkness more than the light, for their actions were evil.

All who do evil hate the light and refuse to go near it for fear their sins will be exposed. But those who do what is right come to the light so others can see that they are doing what God wants”

So the bible displays this wonderful symmetry, in the beginning the light and the dark were separated, and, at the end of time the light and the dark will also be separated.

Nicodemus understood what Jesus was saying and made a response. We don't read about that response in the initial story, but Nicodemus does appear twice more in Johns gospel. Firstly he speaks up for Jesus in the Jewish council. The rulers wanted to arrest Jesus because they felt he was guilty of breaking the law. Nicodemus pointed out that Jesus couldn't be judged as guilty of anything without a trial. Later, after Jesus crucifixion, Nicodemus went with Joseph of Arimathea to prepare Jesus' body for burial. He brought 35 Kilos of perfumed ointment, such a huge amount would normally only have been used to embalm a King and would have cost at least a years wages. Nicodemus was sure of what he believed and no longer wanted to be seen with the darkness of the Pharisees, but with the light of Jesus. Remember how John put it. Nicodemus wanted to “come to the light so that others can see that they are doing what God wants”

Remember those satellites? Well it seems that John was right, people really don't like the light, there have been complaints about the light they reflect. So, the satellite owner is going to turn them a bit so that they will no longer reflect the light. They will simply disappear into the darkness.

And this is our choice. Will you turn away from the light of Jesus and simply disappear into the darkness or will you turn towards Jesus and reflect His light for all to see?



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