

A Light in a Very Dark World

"Now when Jesus heard that John had been taken into custody, He withdrew into Galilee; and leaving Nazareth, He came and settled in Capernaum, which is by the sea, in the region of Zebulun and Naphtali. This was to fulfill what was spoken through Isaiah the prophet: "THE LAND OF ZEBULUN AND THE LAND OF NAPHTALI, BY THE WAY OF THE SEA, BEYOND THE JORDAN, GALILEE OF THE GENTILES— "THE PEOPLE WHO WERE SITTING IN DARKNESS SAW A GREAT LIGHT, AND THOSE WHO WERE SITTING IN THE LAND AND SHADOW OF DEATH, UPON THEM A LIGHT DAWNED." — MATTHEW 4:12-16

The world is a very dark place. Theologically we see this from the Fall of humanity, the separation from God and presence of sin and evil in the world. Death is one of the most powerful symbols of the curse God leveled on our world and there is no escape. The world (in every sense of the word) is subject to futility, enslaved to corruption (Rom. 8:21).

Humanity is in a very dark place. Colossians 1:13 tells us humanity dwells “under the domain of darkness” which the god of this world holds us in slavery. We live in an upside down world that has no bearings on how God calls His people to live and act. Much of what makes perfect sense to us makes no sense to a dark world.

The family is in a very dark place. Christmas ought to be a time of celebrating family and enjoying the rich blessing of family. Not so much for many, at least this Christmas. In our own context we have several funerals, people isolated from each other because of intensely different convictions about Covid and safety. Many families will reconnect, but some are not. The world has defined family very differently and even divided family in this new mode of living.

Our culture is in a dark place. The tension, conflict and internal enmity in our culture is very unsettling. Between ethnic struggles, political upheaval and all the pandemic issues continuing to linger we have a lot swirling around our lives. Global warming, economic instability, inflation and a massive shortage of resources (interpret as you like) has left many extremely anxious for the future.

Individuals are in a dark place. We have a huge uptick in suicides. Our neighborhoods are struggling with injustice issues, and people are struggling with personal identity and significance in an overwhelming cascade of redefining our existence as human beings. We could go on and on but suffice it to say that we live in dark circumstances. In Psychology Today, Dr. Deepak Chopra’s new book on Meta Humans, invites people to consider “stepping into a richer reality and form of wakefulness.” In the book, Dr. Chopra describes how everything we think we see is created inside our visual cortex, which he notes, is completely dark. “The picture you take to be a snapshot of the world was fabricated by your mind.”¹

Jesus is the true light of hope in the world. Self-enlightenment may end up discovering more about the image of God (whether one believes in it or not) but will end up only celebrating broken humanity. Our minds can only do so much to rescue us from our circumstances. Only Christ is the true light to help us discover our new humanity in Christ. This issue is not so much to reach our own potential but our significance in Christ.

¹ Chopra, Dr. Deepak. 2019. *"Metahuman" Unleashing Your Infinite Potential*. Edited by Maureen Seeberg. September 26. Accessed December 10th, 2021. <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/sensorium/201909/metahuman-dr-deepak-chopra>.

The church is (now) the light in a dark world. The Scriptures tell us to let our light shine in such a way so that the world will see your good works and glorify God (Matt. 5:16). God has called us to reflect the light of His glory to a lost world. People desperately need a hope that transcends the temporal quick-fixes that we have been grinding on to help solve bigger issues. If this light does not shine from us the world will remain in terrible darkness. That being said, if a person or church is in darkness, the light needs to shine there first (Matt. 6:22-23). May you see Christmas and the New Year as an opportunity for the light to shine in the darkest places.

In Christ,
Brad Little