

John 1:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.

Analysis

The Logos is identified as 'the true Light' (to phos to alethinon)—not merely genuine as opposed to false, but the ultimate reality to which all other lights point. This Light 'lighteth every man that cometh into the world,' indicating universal availability of revelation. While interpretations vary (common grace, general revelation, or the gospel's offer to all), the emphasis is on Christ as the source of all true illumination. Without Him, humanity remains in darkness regardless of other light sources—philosophical, religious, or natural.

Historical Context

In the ancient world, light symbolized life, truth, and divine presence across cultures. Israel's temple menorah represented God's presence; Greek philosophy spoke of enlightenment through reason. Jesus supersedes all such lights—He is the true, original Light from whom all other illumination derives. This verse grounds Christian epistemology: Christ is the source of all truth and knowledge.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. How does Christ as 'true Light' affect our understanding of truth claims from other sources?
2. What does it mean that Christ lights 'every man'—does this suggest universal revelation or salvation?

Interlinear Text

Ἐν	τὸ	φῶς	τὸ	ἀληθινόν	ο	φωτίζει	πάντα
That was	G3588	Light	G3588	the true	which	lighteth	every man
G2258		G5457		G228	G3739	G5461	G3956
ἀνθρωπον	ἐρχόμενον	εἰς	τὸν	κόσμον			
G444		that cometh	into	G3588	the world		
		G2064		G1519		G2889	

Additional Cross-References

John 12:46 (Light): I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness.

1 John 2:8 (Truth): Again, a new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in him and in you: because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth.

John 1:4 (Light): In him was life; and the life was the light of men.

Isaiah 49:6 (Light): And he said, It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth.

John 1:7 (Light): The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe.

John 14:6 (Truth): Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

1 John 5:20 (Truth): And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life.

John 6:32 (Truth): Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven.

Isaiah 8:20 (Light): To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.

1 John 1:8 (Truth): If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

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