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# INTRODUCTION

**AND THEN IT DAWNED ON ME...**

**321**

4am.

It can't be.

Why is my alarm sounding off at...? A memory surfaces like a shipwreck through the silt: Ack, the video!

A day earlier I had decided to film at the beach—a time-lapse of the sunrise for my next YouTube video. They say the benefit of wise planning is that 'your future self will thank you'.

My future self never thanks me. In fact my present self is often cursing my former self: 'What were you thinking?'

This became my muttered mantra as I pulled on my clothes, noticing already how bright the sky was becoming. 'Smart move, Glen. Filming a sunrise in the summer!'

I drove to a nearby beach and set up the tripod. My camera's time-lapse feature was broken so I was going to have to take a shot manually every 10 seconds then edit them together afterwards: 25 frames per one second of film. In the end I'd get about eight seconds of footage. Oh well, at least it wasn't too cold and the sky was clear, warming gradually into a dappled wash of pinks and oranges. After a while it almost seemed worth it. Until, that is, the event. The nuclear event. Or the alien invasion. Or...

Whatever it was, the intruder made its slow, relentless incursion over the horizon. It emerged as an enormous

sliver of piercing light pressing itself up out of the sea—completely out of shot. My camera was pointed 30 degrees too far east. I looked up from the viewfinder where everything was muted: the grey-blue of the ocean, the yellow wisps of cloud, the pink sky. But to the right of my beautifully framed sunrise: there it was—a blaze of iridescent gold, slicing through the pastels of this seaside idyll. And what I'm about to confess to you is one of the most embarrassing admissions of my life. Can you keep a secret? OK, here goes. For three and a half seconds my thoughts were consumed by this one question, *What IS that??*

The one thing it *couldn't* be was the sun. I knew for certain it wasn't the sun, because the sun was due to rise right in the middle of my perfectly framed shot. I'd got up at 4, remember? And the night before I'd consulted an app which I'd downloaded specially for the filming. It assured me of the angle of sunrise. I'd done my homework and I knew precisely where to point my camera. I'm not an idiot, right?

Right?

And so for three and a half seconds my mind gets to work rationalising the situation. Because, the one thing I *know* is that the sun will rise in the middle of my camera's cross-hairs. For the best part of an hour, I'd been fixed on this particular shot: click, wait, click, wait, click, wait. This little plus sign in the centre of my viewfinder, *this*

is where the sun goes. *This* is its place. So whatever *that* thing is, over there, out of shot, that must be... what? A ship? An explosion? A... *second* su...?? Aw c'mon. It's not, is it? It can't be.

It is though, isn't it?

It was. It was the sun. Exploding with the equivalent of 10 billion hydrogen bombs per second. Lighting up the sky like a million-watt lamp. The sun was rising in its unmistakably glory. And yet I did mistake it. For some, admittedly brief, portion of my life, I looked at the sun—the *sun*—and refused to acknowledge it for what it was. It did not fit the frame I'd prepared for it and so I lived with a ridiculous contradiction, tying myself in knots before it finally dawned on me in the deepest sense.

I had made an embarrassing mistake. I'd been looking at things all wrong. I had committed to a certain frame and, once I realised, I needed to adjust, to turn, to reframe, to centre myself again on the reason for my being there. I jerked the camera around to capture the last two thirds of the sun's regal ascent from the sea. The time-lapse was ruined. I'd have to do it all again tomorrow—this time with the sun at the centre.

A day later I got the shot I needed (though not the sleep!). My future self did not thank me. But at least he saw the funny side.

## REFRAMING

*How to See Life: A Guide in 321* is about reframing. It's about changing perspectives in order to look at life again. I think all of us need to do this, no matter our background, no matter our religious affiliations or lack of them. We *all* need to shift perspective. Because—here's an unflattering thought—I reckon you, like me, can focus on all the wrong things. I doubt you're as ridiculous as I was on the beach that morning, but I wonder if you too get distracted, and whether your life is as centred as it could be—or should be.

We all get things wrong. We all fill our vision, at least some of the time, with stuff that's unworthy of our attention. Therefore we need help to refocus on what's important—to reframe our lives and to see things in their proper perspective.

Here's my goal: I want to cast a vision for life that centres on *Jesus*. I happen to believe that Jesus is like the sun and that we are like foolish film-makers, focusing on all the wrong things. You might not share that belief (yet), but in the interests of full disclosure I feel I should declare my biases. I'm a Jesus-guy and I want to show you what life looks like when you put *him* in the cross-hairs of your viewfinder.

## THE PLAN

The plan for *How to See Life: A Guide in 321* is simple. Whether you've been a Christian for decades or whether you've never considered the faith, I want to do a couple

of things. First, I want to show you Jesus, *then* I want to show you life *as illuminated by Jesus*. Both those things are necessary. Because if Jesus is like the sun, then you can look at the sun (if you're careful!). But you can also look at everything else by the light of the sun. That's the plan.

We begin in the first section by examining the story of Jesus. At points we'll be using the Gospel of John (that's the fourth biography of Jesus in the Bible, written by his close companion called John). As John introduces Jesus he says:

*In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.* **JOHN 1:4–5**

Jesus' arrival in history is like the sunrise...

*The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world.* **JOHN 1:9**

And when Jesus proclaims his own identity, he declares:

*I am the Light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life.* **JOHN 8:12**

There is a brilliance to Jesus that has attracted billions down through the ages. Many have found in him something irresistible—something that has caused them to reframe their lives. History itself has turned on the coming of

Christ and our modern vision of life has been shaped by Jesus more than any other figure.

Whether you call yourself a Christian or not, the way you see life, love, beauty, truth, goodness, meaning, purpose, and destiny will owe more to Jesus than anyone else. That's because Christianity has been the world's most enduring and influential view of life. In the history of the world, more people have oriented their lives to *Jesus* than to any other focal point. At his arrival, history turned. The clocks were reset. The world has never been the same.

Therefore as we look at the story of Jesus, we're encountering something that really has illuminated life. Jesus has, in fact, been like a dawning light to this world.

And once we've looked at Jesus, we're in a position to look at life *in the light of* Jesus (that's the middle three sections). In particular we will explore Jesus' vision for God, the world, and ourselves. According to Jesus, life is all about God's THREE-ness, the world's TWO-ness and our ONE-ness. Don't worry about the numbers right now, they'll be explained as we go.

From the contents page you'll see the final section is a selection of FAQs (Frequently Asked Questions) which turn to common critiques of Christianity. You may consider some or all of these questions to be barriers to Christian faith. You may think there should be another dozen besides. You're right. There could be another six dozen!

But I hope it's OK if we address these 12, and to do so at the end. I tend to think that questions are best asked and answered once we've got our bearings. On the beach that morning I had three and a half seconds of the most urgent questions. But my questions were the wrong questions, asked from the wrong perspective. Once I'd reframed things, I saw the questions (and the answers—*and myself!*) in a new light.

It's like that with Christian faith. I had many questions before I'd become a Christian. Many of those questions have changed now, and so have I. But I still have questions—far more than before. Faith in Jesus hasn't erased my doubts but it has re-oriented the way I view them. In so many ways the invitation to Christian faith is an invitation to *embrace* certain questions, not to eradicate them. What's more, it causes us to *ask* questions of ourselves and of the beliefs we once held dear. With Jesus we end up with more questions, and that's OK. The goal is not so much to solve all problems, but to frame them properly.

Having said all that, if you feel you have to skip ahead to the FAQs, by all means take a sneak peek. But I think if you wait, you'll get a more rounded view of how these issues fit into the whole.

## GETTING THE MOST OUT OF THE BOOK

Here are three ways you can get the most out of *How to See Life: A Guide in 321*. (Explore your options at [321course.com](http://321course.com))

### READ

#### JOHN'S GOSPEL.



I've put together a guide which you can access on Bible.com and on YouVersion, the world's biggest Bible app. In 21 five-minute readings you'll be introduced to history's greatest figure via the world's all-time bestseller! Each reading includes a brief thought and some questions for reflection. There is a shining brilliance to Jesus in the Bible. I can only describe it second-hand. I urge you to see him for yourself.

### EXPERIENCE

#### 321—THE ACCOMPANYING COURSE.



Alongside this book there's a course you won't want to miss. *321* can be viewed online or on your mobile device right now. The course is personalised, so you'll need to create an account with your email and a password to access the content. Don't worry, it only takes a few seconds to set up, and it's completely free. Watch the gorgeous animations, bringing

each chapter's story to life, and enjoy the multi-media experience. Why not take your time to both read and then watch the content, soaking it in and giving yourself space to think it all through.

**JOIN**

**WITH OTHERS.**



I've helped tens of thousands of people to 'see life' according to 321 and whenever I do it in groups, I always learn something new. We see more when we're all looking *together*. So why not experience the course or read the book with a friend, or a bunch of friends? Find ways of connecting with others, online or in person.

Enough of the introduction. Let's get to it. It's time to meet the star of the show...