



"We are to order our lives by the light of His law, not our guesses about His plan."  
—J.I. Packer

12-Jul-19

## An Illuminating Prophecy

Many people miss a vital prophecy embedded in [Genesis 1:1-3](#):

In the beginning [God](#) created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light.

It may seem a bit hard to find a prophecy here, but leave it to the apostle Paul to find it. In [II Corinthians 4:6](#), he recognizes the first command in God's Word, "Let there be light," to contain Scripture's first prophecy as well. His comments in this passage provide essential commentary on [Genesis 1:1-3](#): "For God, who said, 'Light shall shine out of darkness,' is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ" (*New American Standard Bible*®, Copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission.).

Paul's words express more than his penchant for metaphor. By linking "Let there be light" with the light Christ shines in the minds of those the Father

calls, the apostle asserts that that ancient command prophesies of the nature and scope of God's work with mankind through the years. Also, under the inspiration of God's Spirit, he "translates" God's command with a *future* tense verb. Many modern translations render it as "light *will* [or *shall*] shine." These translations are faithful to the Greek texts, which express the verb "to shine" in the future tense.

Paul links God's ancient command, uttered on the first day of Creation of the physical world, to His ongoing *spiritual* work with mankind. The same God, who way-back-when created the heavens and the earth, the same God who commanded illumination of the vast deep, commands light to shine in our minds, thereby revealing the deep things of God (compare [Job 11:7](#); [12:22](#); [Daniel 2:22](#)). If He did not shed that light about the "glory of God," our knowledge of Him would be limited to that of His nature and power as exhibited in the physical creation ([Romans 1:20](#)). Without God's revelation in our mind, we would know—could know—virtually nothing of God's purposes and plans for us as individuals.

In [I Corinthians 2:9-11](#), this same apostle connects dots to give us insight as to how humans learn of God's plans for us:

But as it is written: "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who [love](#) Him." But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God.

[Jesus Christ](#), the genuine Light Bringer ([II Peter 1:19](#); [Revelation 22:16](#)), is that Spirit ([II Corinthians 3:17](#)) who by His Word brought light to a darkened earth about 6,000 years ago. He is the same Spirit who enlightens the darkened minds ([Ephesians 5:8](#)) of those the Father has called. David writes of that Spirit: "For You will light my lamp; the LORD my God will enlighten my darkness" ([Psalm 18:28](#)).

The fact that God provides a second witness of this truth in [II Samuel 22:29](#) suggests its weight. The God-ordained circumstance of the true children of

God is simply and plainly this: *Collectively, they serve as the light of [the world](#), situated where everyone can see them.* Hiding His people in monasteries, sequestered from those of a darkened mind, is not God's way:

You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. ([Matthew 5:14-16](#))

"You are all sons of light" ([I Thessalonians 5:5](#)), Paul writes. Aside from this plain, definitive statement, God refers to His own as "sons [or *children*] of light" three other times: [Luke 16:8](#) (in a parable); [John 12:36](#); and [Ephesians 5:8](#). In [Philippians 2:15](#), Paul reminds us that we are "lights in the world"; it is God's will that we shine "in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation."

Paul's use of the Greek proposition *ek* ("out of" or "out from") in [II Corinthians 4:6](#) tells us a great deal about how God lights things up. *Ek* connotes separation or even parturition, the separation of mother and newborn child. The first use of *ek* is in [Matthew 1:3](#), where Perez and Zerah are described as "of" (that is, "out of") their mother, Tamar. One commentator perceptively writes that *ek* "has a two-layered meaning ("*out from* and *to*") which makes it *out-come* oriented (out of the depths of the source and extending to its impact on the object)." It is not surprising, then, that *ek* appears repeatedly in [John 1:13](#); God's people are not born of blood, but of (*ek*, "out of") God. They are like God but distinct beings.

Importantly, in [II Corinthians 4:6](#), the apostle does not write that light was to shine *on* the surface of the deep, but that it was to emanate *from* the darkness. From or out of darkness, the light would shine. The light does not merely *illuminate the surface*, as a "beam" of light from the sun might, but *emanates* from below.

This God-created light is distinct from its Creator, perhaps shining forth from miles away, from the hub of darkness itself, a discrete light, a darkness-destroying light burning in a place estranged from Him, unlike Him, by nature contrary to Him. It shines in the chaos of *tohu* and *bohu*. Yes, it was

God's light, in that He created it, yet it was distinct from Him. This light bespeaks the boundless, transformative power of God's Spirit as it worked, perhaps at an atomic level, to accomplish the Creator's purposes. (The concept of a purposeful creation appears in [Revelation 4:11](#): "For You created all things, and by Your will they exist and were created.")

The word *shine*, mentioned earlier, first appears in [Matthew 5:15](#), where Jesus reminds us that people do not hide a lamp but place it on a stand to ensure maximum light spread. In verse 16, He continues, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven." Notice the possessive pronoun: Christ says the light is "*your* light." He avoids the term "His light" because the light in us, though engendered by Him, sent out (*ek*) by Him and sustained by Him, is *separate* from Him. It is light burning in independent beings, each one of whom was once just as helplessly darkened as the *tohu* and *bohu* of [Genesis 1:2](#).

By way of analogy, consider several light bulbs on the same circuit lighting a large room. Though energized by the same source (a far-away generator), they remain separate lights. (As [Zephaniah 3:5](#) points out, the Generator will not fail. Yet, if we cut the power cord connecting us to that Generator, our light will surely fail. This inexorable reality is the message underlying the Vine and Branches analogy given by Jesus in [John 15:1-8](#). Separated from Him, we can do nothing.) So, Christ, dwelling in us, spiritually energizes each one of us individually. Though empowered by the same dynamic Being, whose resources are inexhaustible, we remain separate entities, transformed by His light.

Put differently, we are not a reflection of God's light, as some errantly declare. Rather, *we are God's light*, shining inside freestanding organisms. [Revelation 4:2-6](#) and [Daniel 7:9-10](#) indicate that Christ now dwells with the Father in ineffable light. When we walk in the same light in which Christ walks (I [John 1:5](#)), we are *like* Him, in many ways indistinguishable from Him, but we are not Him.

[John 1:5](#) notifies us that the darkness could not overcome the light sent out from Jesus Christ. Anciently, He confronted the darkness of *tohu* and *bohu*, swiftly transforming it into an organized and productive creation, one capable of facilitating His plans. Likewise, we, the recipients of God's light

"are transfigured much like the Messiah, our lives gradually becoming brighter and more beautiful as God enters our lives and we become like him" ([II Corinthians 3:18](#), *The Message*).

The prophesied creation of light will continue until there are billions of points of light, each one distinguished from the Father of Lights ([James 1:17](#)) as separate beings, yet each one indistinguishable from Him in terms of character and purpose.

- Charles Whitaker

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## **From the Archives: Featured Article**

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by Martin G. Collins

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