

The Radiance Of God's Glory

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There was a time in human history that historians called the Age of Enlightenment. It was the Enlightenment of the 1800s, not the Reformation or the Renaissance, that dislodged the religious establishment from its dominant role in cultural and intellectual life by liberating science from the "shackles" of theological tradition.

But in doing so, the Enlightenment enabled the independent development of contemporary culture. And therefore, the enlightenment of humanity from religion that began in the 1800s paved the way for the scientific religion of evolution and humanism.

This clearly shows Satan uses a false light to lead people into deeper darkness.

Human history has often confused false light with proper illumination, but Scripture makes clear that only God gives light that leads to life. He calls His people out of darkness into marvelous light, empowering us to shine as witnesses in a world overshadowed by spiritual blindness.

Now people whom God is currently calling into His church are experiencing true spiritual enlightenment—as we are today as we listen to sermons, exposition of God's Word—as potential firstfruits for God's Kingdom. In a world that is overshadowed by blindness, so we are here to have that blindness removed.

However, for the world, the true era of true spiritual enlightenment will occur after the Tribulation and the Day of the Lord. During the Millennium God will shine light on people's minds, revealing Himself and His way of life.

Truth will finally be seen by everyone.

Among all the benefits we as inhabitants of the earth have received from God, few are more amazing than having light and the ability to use it. By light we gain extraordinary knowledge and access to many of our comforts and necessities, not to mention its exceptional purity, delicacy, and the variety of colors it reveals to our eyes.

It is not surprising that light has a powerful influence on human imagination. In a dark world, its wonder inspires dark reverence and worship, because human nature often worships the creation rather than the Creator.

Humanity's misguided obsession with light led some ancient and current cultures to worship the sun and the moon, and there have been elaborate systems of moon worship throughout the ages.

Now those who worship light itself unknowingly find themselves in spiritual darkness, that is, spiritual ignorance, because light represents truth that exposes the false dark use of it. And when God places the light of the Spirit in a person's mind, it allows us to think beyond the level of the animals and become a reasoning, intellectual being.

Job 32:8 There is a spirit in man, and the breath of the Almighty gives him understanding.

As a result of this light, this mind power that God has given us, we can invent and build amazing things. We design vehicles for all purposes to move the body from one place to another and places to live with all sorts of conveniences.

At the same time, animals continue to rely on God-given preprogrammed instinct for their survival and their well-being.

Thanks to God's promise of a special blessing to Abraham, which included illumination, the descendants of Israel have created and developed the vast majority of the remarkable inventions that humanity has seen.

After God tested Abraham with the command to sacrifice Isaac and found him faithful, Abraham named the place, "The Lord Will Provide." And God

promised that his descendants would be a blessing to all nations, and we see that in the wonderful inventions having to do with light, such as: refrigeration, manufacturing, agriculture, chemistry, and physics are all products of God's blessing of illumination to the children of Israel as part of the promise to Abraham.

There are Christian-influenced Israelite countries where Christ was openly encouraged to influence people's minds, and the Word of God was read, preached, and taught publicly without hindrance. This stands in stark contrast to the earlier ages of human history, which we are reverting back to because of the severe darkness that we were entering into at the end of the age.

But sadly, as most of Jacob's descendants (renamed Israel by God), reject ties with God and His Word, there is also a significant loss of true illumination. The light of the minds of Israel's descendants is fading, and even now it is just a flicker.

Morally and spiritually there is mostly darkness in this spiritually bankrupt society. Even in cultural Christianity or mainstream Christianity, there is very little in it that resembles what is in the Scriptures, what is in the Bible. It is more strictly religious tradition than it is truth.

Now from Genesis to Revelation, the story of light runs like a golden thread revealing God's truth, power, and glory. Light represents His presence, His holiness, His guidance, and His salvation through Jesus Christ, the true Light of the world. Light also symbolizes truth, goodness, and God's redemptive work. There are many things that the Bible uses light as a symbol for.

In contrast, darkness symbolizes error, deception, and sin, the realm of Satan and those who reject God's truth. With little effort we see substantial darkness in the world today.

Job 37:21 (NASB) Men do not see the light which is bright in the skies [because their troubles are so overwhelming that everything seems dark to them].

It is impossible to understand the biblical imagery of light without seeing it as the great antithesis and conqueror of darkness.

Against the backdrop of the conflict between light and darkness of the context, light has the qualities of rulership over the universe, accompanied by a sense of awe to what a subject might feel toward a benevolent king.

We find this theme of rulership in the creation account, where on the fourth day of creation, God made the two great lights, the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night—the sun and the moon.

Biblical writers expressed fear about the absence of light, and we see this emphasis in Job's picture of deposed rulers in Job 12:25, who grope in darkness without light, and in Isaiah 5:30, where he sees an apocalyptic vision of light, darkened by its clouds.

In Matthew 6:22-23, Jesus described a vision of good eyesight producing a whole body full of light and its opposite producing a whole body full of darkness.

Please turn with me to John 13, verse 21. The apostle John repeatedly emphasized that a godless life is characterized by darkness. A very dramatic example of this darkness is Judas' betrayal of Jesus.

John 13:21-30 When Jesus had said these things, He was troubled in spirit, and testified and said, "Most assuredly, I say to you, one of you will betray Me." Then the disciples looked at one another, perplexed about whom He spoke. Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of His disciples, whom Jesus loved. Simon Peter therefore motioned to him to ask who it was of whom He spoke. Then leaning back on Jesus' breast, he said to Him, "Lord, who is it?" Jesus answered, "It is he to whom I shall give a piece of bread when I have dipped it." And having dipped the bread, He gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon. Now after the piece of bread, Satan entered him. Then Jesus said to him, "What you do, do quickly." But no one at the table knew for what reason He said this to him. For some thought, because Judas had the money box, that

Jesus had said to him, "Buy those things we need for the feast," or that he should give something to the poor. Having received the piece of bread, he then went out immediately. And it was night.

Now the repetition of the phrase "now after the piece of bread" in verse 27 and "having received the piece of bread" in verse 30, suggests that Satan's influence over Judas and Judas' departure from the group must have happened simultaneously.

There is great tragedy in the abrupt comment, "And it was night." Judas left Bethany for Jerusalem, about two miles away, and under the guidance of the prince of darkness, he committed this act of darkness, carrying out this work of darkness at night.

Please turn with me to Luke 22, verse 52. Judas left the light of Christ's presence and entered into the world of darkness. "And it was night." Light symbolizes illumination, the opposite of darkness, and it might have been that when Judas opened the door to leave, John saw the city shrouded in darkness. John's four words matched Jesus' statement when Judas betrayed Him.

Luke 22:52 Then Jesus said to the chief priests, captains of the temple, and the elders who had come to Him, "Have you come out as against a robber with swords and clubs? When I was with you daily in the temple, you did not try to seize Me. But this is your hour, and the power of darkness."

So we see there that a lot of bad things happen under darkness and a lot of dark things happen in darkness. Of course, we see the world in darkness during the light of the day as well, but a lot goes on at night.

John's comment, "And it was night," increases the implication that Jesus' life was full of challenges. The opposition of darkness and light is illustrated by the growing conflict between Jesus and His enemies.

Now please turn over to John 8, verse 42. As the conflict grew nearer, Jesus says it shows the difference between what He had seen with His Father and what they had heard from theirs. And when they protested, He declared that God was His Father and that the Devil was their father.

John 8:42-47 Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I proceed forth and came from God; nor have I come of Myself, but He sent Me. Why do you not understand My speech? Because you are not able to listen to My word. You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth [or you could say in the light], because there is no truth [or no light] in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it. Because I tell you the truth, you do not believe Me. Which of you convicts Me of sin? And if I tell you the truth, why do you not believe Me? He who is of God hears God's words; therefore you do not hear, because you are not of God."

So truth is an abstract concept that people often struggle to understand and value. Pilate, for instance, had become so caught up in politics that he no longer recognized what truth was, and we see that in our politicians today, certainly.

Jesus told the Jews that because they were children of their father, they did not know what truth was. They lived in a world of lies and distortion and falsehood. In a sense, truth was a foreign language to them; their native language was lies.

Today we see that darkness continues to take hold of this society, partly because most people speak one language, the language of lies and deceit. In this society, politicians, lawyers, salespeople, advertisers, scientists, doctors, teachers, and parents are all recognized for often distorting the truth.

In stark contrast, light benefits all life. The creation of light was the initial step in the creation of life. "Let there be light" was the first command God spoke after His creative Spirit moved upon the primary material out of which

He created the heavens and the earth, and which lay, until the word was spoken, in the chaos of darkness and desolation.

So the final focusing of light on the fourth day of creation completed the initial creative process, establishing the essential condition for all organic life.

The origin of light is explained by God's purpose and nature, whom the apostle John described as not only the Creator of light, but in a broad sense as light itself: "God is light."

Now the word light is rich in its meaning and depth. Its material brilliance is used throughout the Scriptures as the symbol and synonym of all that is luminous and radiant in the mental, moral, and spiritual life of humans and angels.

The eternal God, because of His holiness and moral perfection, is described as dwelling in unapproachable light. Every aspect of the word light, from the natural light of the physical world to the spiritual glory of God, is present in the Bible.

There are 3 main types of light.

The first is natural light. The sun is the light of the day, the moon and stars are the light of the night.

Light's qualities are beauty, radiance, and usefulness. Natural light rejoices the heart. It is truly sweet, and without it people stumble and feel helpless. They wait for it with inexpressible longing. Life, joy, activity, and all blessings depend on light in a major sense.

Light and life are nearly synonymous with those who rely on them, like farmers for crops. And similarly, darkness is associated with death. The severest plague in Egypt, aside from the slaying of the firstborn, was the plague of darkness, the ninth plague that overran the Egyptians. Exodus 10: 23 says, "But the children of Israel had light in their dwellings." This was a major miracle at that time that God performed in addition to taking light from the Egyptians but providing light for the Israelites.

Light is essential for good health. Light extends life both physically and mentally.

The Alberta Department of Education in Canada carried out a two-year study on various types of light. The study was conducted by physicians and educators, social workers, nutritionists, and dentists. And the study found that students exposed to full spectrum light similar to natural daylight with trace ultraviolet light learned quickly, tested higher, grew faster, had one-third fewer absences due to illness, had two-thirds fewer cavities than expected. Very interesting.

God provides ways for our health to be improved. A winter study of veterans at a soldier's home in Massachusetts examined calcium absorption under two lighting systems. Calcium absorption increased 15% under full spectrum light. Calcium absorption decreased by 25% under standard lighting similar to what you would find in most offices.

Natural light also has an uplifting effect. It is known that women struggle mentally and emotionally with long dark winters in Alaska. Some experience severe depression during those times. Research shows that natural light can help reduce seasonal depression.

The second type of light is one we are sadly so familiar with in the sense. It is artificial light. When natural light fails, people through discovery or invention provide themselves with some temporary substitute, no matter how dim and inadequate it may be.

I turn off all the lights in my room each night here and it is still bright in there because of all the night lights and the spotlights and everything coming through the windows.

You remember the biblical story of the young man Eutychus, who, while sitting in a window, fell asleep listening to Paul preach all night.

Acts 20:8 There were many lamps in the upper room where they were gathered together.

They had lamps, they had artificial light that they used even way back then and beyond, and no doubt Adam and Eve probably did the same.

But there is a problem with artificial light. One study by John Ott, PhD, dramatizes the importance of full spectrum light similar to daylight. The study placed 2,000 mice under four different types of light. In an otherwise identical controlled environment, C38 strain mice developed spontaneous tumors and died at these following time periods. They developed spontaneous tumors and died at:

7.5 months under pink fluorescent light.

8.2 months under cool white (standard office) fluorescent lighting.

15.6 months under full spectrum fluorescent light.

And 16.1 months under natural sunlight.

So it affects our longevity as well, the type of light that we have.

Please turn to Job 24, verse 13. Only God can create the perfect light for our well-being. In contrast, Satan's favorite time of day is night, when darkness is illuminated by artificial light. More crime and immorality occur at night than during the day.

Job 24:13-17 "There are those who rebel against the light; they do not know its ways, nor abide in its paths. The murderer rises with the light; he kills the poor and needy; and in the night he is like a thief. The eye of the adulterer waits for the twilight, saying, 'No one will see me'; and he disguises his face. In the dark they break into houses which they marked for themselves in the daytime; they do not know the light. For the morning is the same to them as the shadow of death; if someone recognizes them, they are in the terrors of the shadow of death."

Satan illuminates false light, the wrong light, while at the same time he is surrounded by darkness. He focuses his false light on the pleasure of sin.

It is our duty to illuminate the right and true light, and we must be clear of the blood of the sins of the world by shining as true lights in the world. It does make a difference whether we are doing the right or the wrong things, because we want to be the best witness possible for God's way of life.

The third type of light is mental, moral, spiritual light. The phenomenon of natural light have their counterpart in the inner life of a person.

Few words lend themselves with such beauty and appropriateness to the experiences and conditions and radiance of the spiritual life. For this reason, the Scriptures use light mainly in the figurative sense.

Light is inherently suited to portray spiritual realities. In secular life, a line of distinction is drawn between intellectual and spiritual knowledge and illumination.

So education that enlightens the mind may leave the moral person untouched, as we see in our elementary schools, our high schools, our colleges, our universities. They have intellectual knowledge but it is secular and sexual many times.

Education that enlightens the mind may leave the moral person untouched. This distinction rarely takes hold in the Bible, which views a person as having free will and regardless of their faculties is interdependent with their actions. Every thought, movement, look, and statement is interconnected with the individual.

A few passages, however, refer to the light that mainly reaches the mind through divine instruction. Regarding God's instruction, Psalm 119:130 states,

Psalm 119:130 The entrance of Your words gives light; it gives understanding to the simple.

Proverbs 6:23 For the commandment is a lamp, and the law a light; reproofs of instruction are the way of life.

So even here, the instruction encompasses both moral and mental enlightenment.

Isaiah 5:20 describes moral confusion and blindness which cannot distinguish light from darkness. We see that in the world today as well when a person does not know what sex they are.

For the most part, light and life go together.

Psalm 27:1 The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?

So light used figuratively is mainly connected with spiritual life, including the illumination that extends to all the faculties of the mind, intellect, conscience, reason, and will.

Let us turn over with II Corinthians 4, verse 1. In the moral realm, the development of these faculties depends entirely on the renewal of the spirit. Light is frequently used for spiritual illumination, especially the illumination that is effected in the mind by the indwelling of God's Spirit.

II Corinthians 4:1-6 Therefore, since we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we do not lose heart. But we have renounced the hidden things of shame, not walking in craftiness nor handling the Word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them. For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your bondservants for Jesus' sake. For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

Verse 6 tells us that the same God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness at the creation is the One who illuminates our hearts and minds to

truth. The apostle John recorded that Jesus said, "He who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen that they have been done in God."

Throughout the Bible, light is the symbol of knowledge, purity, and truth. In contrast, darkness is a symbol of ignorance, error, sin, and misery. The idea here is that God removes ignorance and floods our minds with light and truth. So David asked God to "send out Your light and Your truth! Let them lead me."

The truth is generally used as a symbol for what brings joy and prosperity, and is strongly associated with spiritual joy that results from the positive influences of the Spirit of peace.

We know that "God is light" and is gloriously associated with light.

In all of the Bible's references to light, light is not self-generated. It usually appears unexpectedly outside the earth and human realm, transforming that realm with divine radiance.

As a symbol, light represents both the transcendence and immanence of God; it is from above, but it permeates everyday life. So light is often used as a symbol of holiness and purity, and it represents an attribute of holiness and thus a personal quality of God.

Please turn to I John 1, verse 5. God is light just as much as He is love and truth and spirit. Spirit and light are expressions of His essential nature and love is the expression of His personality corresponding to His nature. God not only loves but *is* love. It is His very nature, and He imparts this nature to the realm in which His children dwell in light.

So the most succinct statement is found here:

I John 1:5-7 This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in

darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin.

The darkness mentioned in verses 5 and 6 is the universal symbol and condition of sin and death. In direct contrast, light mentioned in verse 7 is the symbol and expression of holiness. God, by His presence and grace, is to His holy priesthood and His holy nation as a marvelous light.

Please turn over to Isaiah 60, verse 19. Now the glory of His holiness and presence is the everlasting light of the redeemed. Israel's vision of the final triumph of goodness includes the assertion that the Lord will be your everlasting light.

Isaiah 60:19-20 "The sun shall no longer be your light by day, nor for brightness shall the moon give light to you; but the Lord will be to you an everlasting light, and your God your glory. Your sun shall no longer go down, nor shall your moon withdraw itself; for the Lord will be your everlasting light, and the days of your mourning shall be ended."

So God will be our eternal truth, goodness, purity, righteousness, and holiness—our everlasting light!

Let us turn over to I Timothy 6, verse 13. God is linked with light as a symbol of divine glory. He covers Himself "with light [His righteousness and truth completely cover Him] as with a garment" in Psalm 104:2. By extension, God, who is light, inhabits a heaven bathed in light.

I Timothy 6:13-16 I urge you in the sight of God who gives life to all things, and before Christ Jesus who witnessed the good confession before Pontius Pilate, that you keep this commandment without spot, blameless until our Lord Jesus Christ's appearing, which He will manifest in His own time, He who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone has immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see, to whom be honor and everlasting power. Amen.

This is the only place in the New Testament where the Greek word translated as "unapproachable" is used. The light where God dwells is so bright and brilliant that mortal eyes cannot survive it. This offers a powerful depiction of God's dwelling place.

Please turn over to Exodus 33, verse 20. The declaration is added in verse 16 that no person has ever seen God or can see Him, and this truth is stated in the Old and New Testaments.

Here in the Old Testament in Exodus 33, we are going to read verses 20 through 23.

Exodus 33:20-22 "You [that is, Moses] cannot see My face; for no man shall see Me and live." And the Lord said, "Here is a place by Me, and you shall stand on the rock. So it shall be, while My glory passes by, that I will put you in the cleft of the rock, and will cover you with My hand while I pass by."

So picture that he is behind a rock for protection from the light, and God took His hand and He put it over in front of him and then He passed by. We just cannot imagine the amount of power that was emanating from just the time that Moses had with God. And his face shone when he came down from that mountain, and people were just in awe of that. So even being close and shielded from that light, it still affected Moses physically.

Then God said,

Exodus 33:23 "Then I will take away My hand, and you shall see My back; but My face shall not be seen."

John 1:18 says, "No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him."

Flip back to the New Testament to Matthew 4, verse 12. As a symbol for God, light takes the more specific form of representing Messiah. Isaiah's prophecy predicted Christ's coming as light and spiritual illumination in

Isaiah 9:2, where he writes, "The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them a light has shined."

Jesus applied this prophecy to Himself in Matthew 4 when He began His Galilean ministry.

Matthew 4:12-17 When Jesus heard that John had been put in prison, He departed to Galilee. And leaving Nazareth, He came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is by the sea, in the regions of Zebulun and Naphtali, that it might be fulfilled, which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying: "The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles: The people who sat in darkness have seen a great light, and upon those who sat in the region of the shadow of death, light has dawned." From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

The spiritual illumination arrived in Galilee through Jesus Christ, who brought God's truth. Light had dawned on them just as prophesied in Isaiah.

It is a powerful light symbolizing the clarity and evidence of the truth, and this was not like the light of a candle, but the full strength of the sun or greater. It is a bright light because it illuminates important things of great significance, so it will endure for a long time and reach far.

And it is a shining light that is growing. The work of Christ, like a grain of mustard seed or the morning light, was small at first but gradually increased in brightness as His light shone.

Now please turn over to John 1, verse 4. Christ, the eternal Word is Himself, the radiant splendor of God's glory. The biblical phrase "light in the Lord" signifies the source of light in life. The implied message is, if God is light, to come to God is to go to the light and to receive life.

So John's introduction, praising the personified Word, repeatedly uses the symbolic language of light to refer to Christ.

John 1:4-9 In Him [that is, Jesus Christ] was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. This man came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all through him might believe. He [that is, John the Baptizer] was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. That was the true Light [that is, Christ] which gives light to every man coming into the world.

As the predicted Messiah, Jesus was to be a light to the Gentiles as well. Christ declared Himself the light of the world, and as light He was God manifested in the flesh. Jesus as the Word is the eternal expression of God as a word is the expression of a thought. In the essence of His being God, Christ is the light of life.

Accordingly, Christ the Word manifested the attributes of the divine nature as life, love, and light. These are inseparable and constitute the glory which the disciples saw in Him. In revealing and giving life, Christ became the light of men.

Please turn over to Matthew 27, verse 45. So God reveals the knowledge of His glory through the face of Jesus Christ, and this salvation is called the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ.

Christ is a teacher, the enlightener, the guide, the Savior of humanity. He gives us light, that is, He gives us understanding, truth, and wisdom. So Jesus, as the One who brings the true knowledge of God, is the light of humanity. And when people tried to extinguish the light of men, darkness fell when Jesus was being crucified.

Matthew 27:45-46 Now from the sixth hour until the ninth hour there was [physical and spiritual] darkness all over the land. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?" that is, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"

So the New Testament portrays Jesus as the personification of light, of divine illumination.

In John 8:12, Jesus said, "I am the light of the world." And He clearly stated that those who rejected this divine light will bring judgment upon themselves. Sin separates us from God, and if we are separated from God, we are separated from spiritual enlightenment, from spiritual understanding.

If God and His Son are light, then light also symbolizes salvation and new life. The individual who does what is true comes to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that his deeds have been done in God.

So when Jesus spoke of Himself as the light of the world, those who follow Him are described as people who will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life. According to I Peter 2:9, God's own special people are those who have been "called out of darkness into His marvelous light." And when light exposes something, it becomes illuminated because anything that becomes visible is light, as Paul explains in Ephesians 5:8.

Ephesians 5:8 For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light.

In John 5:35, Jesus called John the Baptizer a burning and shining lamp. Significantly, John was called by the Greek word *luchnos*, translated "shining lamp." *Luchnos* means a portable lamp or other direct illuminator, literally or figuratively.

On the other hand, the followers of the New Testament are referred to by the Greek word *phos*.

Matthew 5:14 "You are the light of the world."

So *phos* means to shine or make manifest, especially by rays. It also implies luminousness (in the broadest application, natural or artificial, abstract or concrete, literal or figurative). So we are the light of the world, and we are to shine and make manifest, meaning live God's way of life.

This affirms that John (the Baptizer) came to shed light on a specific event—the coming of the Son of God. However, members of God's church are to shine and make visible God's entire way of life. So we must be shining witnesses by living God's way of life and teaching others about it as well.

Please turn over to Colossians 1, verse 9. Now, even in the hidden meanings of the words, we see confirmed in the Bible two specific purposes, two specific commissions. Those rescued from the power of darkness and brought into the Kingdom of God and His beloved Son are strongly associated with light as the thing that defines our very essence.

In Colossians 1, where we find the preeminence of Christ described, we will read verses 9 through 13.

Colossians 1:9-13 For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy; giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light. He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love.

Just like cultural Christians who do not live by Christ's example, the Jews during Christ's time mistakenly supposed that they were a light to those who were in darkness while being in darkness themselves.

Please turn over to Romans 2, verse 17. The Jews were as guilty as the Gentiles for being in darkness, and even though they should have been a light, but they only had the *form* of knowledge and truth in the law.

Romans 2:17-24 Indeed you are called a Jew, and rest on the law and make your boast in God, and know His will, and approve the things that are excellent, being instructed out of the law, and are

confident that you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, having the form of knowledge and truth in the law. You, therefore, who teach another, do you not teach yourself? You who preach that a man should not steal, do you steal? You who say, "Do not commit adultery," do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples? You who make your boast in the law, do you dishonor God through breaking the law? For "the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you," as it is written.

The Jews were such hypocrites that they were a cause of blasphemy among the Gentiles, because the Gentiles looked at the Jews as claiming to be God's people, but not living His way of life.

So being a light equates to illumination of knowledge and understanding of truth and much more.

Those whose knowledge is rooted in emptiness and darkness only have the appearance of it, like a well-drawn picture that is colorful but lacks life. A form of knowledge produces only an appearance of godliness; it only creates an illusion of holiness. We find this in tares in the church. We do not know who they are because they are doing this very thing, but we know that they are there.

A form of knowledge can deceive people, but it cannot fool God's heart-searching, discerning eye. A form may be the vehicle of power, but in reality it only produces the noise of sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal.

Sinners fear the light, so God must call people into the light because it is His work. We cannot do anything on our own to bring someone into the church, but with God's help we can do a lot to let our light shine as faithful witnesses and do the work of God in the way we are to preach the gospel to the world.

In short, there are five primary methods that light relates to the faithful Christian.

1. Light is a type of Christian who walks with God.

2. Light refers to the testimony of the Christian or the witness of the Christian.
3. Light is a figure of the state of the Christian after he leaves Satan's kingdom of darkness and is brought into the church.
4. Light refers to the walk of the Christian in which he serves God in a godly way and directs his life according to the Word of God.
5. Light refers to the defense of the Christian who lives above reproach and has a godly witness before his neighbors.

The church is portrayed as the possessor and giver of light as Christ lives in us through His Spirit. The church brings glory to God by revealing His glory to people through its reflection of the life and light of Christ.

Paul's description of the light of God's gospel to the faithful in Corinth best captures the various meanings of light.

II Corinthians 4:6 For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

So this is the link between physical creation and the new creation, between the Old Testament and the New Testament, between physical reality and spiritual reality.

Let us begin to wrap this up.

The apostle John described the wonder of the New Heavens and New Earth by highlighting the holy city at its center. In the New Jerusalem, God's people will enjoy unhindered worship and fellowship under the great King, Jesus Christ.

Please turn with me to Revelation 21, verse 10. The divine King's presence, the glory of God, will shine light for the city, and the nations and kings will bring their splendor into it.

The final pictures of light that we see in the Bible appear in John's vision of the New Jerusalem, the city of God in the book of Revelation. The New Jerusalem comes down from heaven, shining with the glory of God. Its radiance is like a rare jewel.

Revelation 21:10-11 And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God. Her light was like a most precious stone, like a jasper stone, clear as crystal.

Starting at verse 22, the passage describes the glory of the New Jerusalem. The city does not need the sun or moon to shine because God's glory illuminates it and its lamp is the Lamb. Illuminated by God's overwhelming glory, the holy city no longer needs a temple. However, spiritually, it still has a temple because the Lord God and the Lamb are its temple.

Revelation 21:22-25 But I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it. The Lamb is its light. And the nations of those who are saved shall walk in its light, and the kings of the earth bring their glory and honor into it. Its gates shall not be shut at all by day (there shall be no night there).

So all the glorious purposes of God, ordained from the foundation of the world, will be fulfilled. The rebellion of the angels and humanity will finally be subdued as the King of kings assumes His rightful sovereignty.

Now, absolute and unchangeable holiness characterizes all within the universal Kingdom of God. The redeemed, made so by the blood of the Lamb, are in eternal glory, and life is everywhere, and death will never rear its ugly head again.

So at the end of the age, God's light will wipe out all remnants of darkness. The heavens and the earth are both renewed. Light, truth, holiness, joy, beauty, service, the presence of God, the worship of God, and the likeness to Christ, all are eternal realities.

Words cannot truly and adequately express what God has prepared for those who love Him, for those who walk in the light of God's presence.

Now the next chapter, Revelation 22, let us read verses 3 through 5.

Revelation 22:3-5 And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him. They shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads. There shall be no night there: They need no lamp nor light of the sun, for the Lord God gives them light. And they shall reign forever and ever.

So God is the only reliable source of eternal light, of eternal truth, goodness, purity, righteousness, holiness, understanding, and justice.

There will be no physical or spiritual night, no more idolatry or intellectual darkness. The Scriptures will be read everywhere, the pure Word will be preached everywhere, and the Spirit of God will shine and work in every mind.

For a final scripture, please turn to Psalm 89, verse 14. All this will occur with perfect understanding and joy. Everyone will be filled with wisdom and comfort, walking continually in the light of the Lord. All of this will last forever and ever. The whole purpose of light is to reveal and glorify God. God is light!

The glory and light of the New Jerusalem will be the presence of God, with no artificial illumination. The servants of God will reign with Christ forever in eternal light!

Psalm 89:14-15 Righteousness and justice are the foundation of Your throne; mercy and truth go before Your face. Blessed are the people who know the joyful sound! They walk, O Lord, in the light of Your countenance.

So righteousness, justice and judgment, mercy and truth surround God on His throne, and they are essential aspects of how God rules. And as

ambassadors, we should also treat others in exactly that way, the way that God has, showing our light, not under a bushel but to the world, living God's way of life, not going into darkness occasionally but living in the light all the time 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Spiritually, our thoughts and actions should reflect justice, righteousness, mercy, and truth because any unfair, unloving, or dishonest action or unforgiving action cannot come from God.

This biblical vision, which closes with the breathtaking hope of the New Jerusalem, where God Himself will be our everlasting light and where night will be no more, testifies to the eternal promise of God's presence. Until then we are called to walk in the light as He is in the light, reflecting the radiance of Christ so that others may also see the way of eternal life in the Kingdom of God.

So may the Lord be to you an everlasting light!