

## *Light*

Opening Hymn: #154 — Light of the World

Here is definition #1 of “light” in my dictionary [from a scientific viewpoint]: “Electromagnetic radiation that has a wavelength in the range from about 4,000 (violet) to about 7,700 (red) angstroms and may be perceived by the normal unaided human eye.” There is of course electromagnetic radiation below 4,000 angstroms (ultraviolet) and above 7,700 angstroms (infrared). X-ray are in this invisible region of the spectrum.

“Light” also describes knowledge and understanding. These are definitions nine and ten:

“**9.** Something that provides information or clarification: *threw some light on the question.* **10.** Public attention; general knowledge: *brought the scandal to light.*” In this sense of the word a human being can be a “light.” Note what Jesus said about John the Baptist:

John 5:35 **He** was a burning and a shining **light**: and ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his **light**.

God is ... what? I found three places where we are told explicitly that God is ...

1 John 4:8 God is **love**. [repeated in vs. 16]

1 John 1:5 God is **light**, and in him is no darkness at all.

Heb. 12:29 God is a consuming **fire**. (Fire is often equated with light).

“Light” is an amazing thing. Nothing moves faster. A distant star gives off light in all directions. These photons of light travel for incredibly long periods of time and when they arrive here, we observe them with telescopes and even our eyes. Dictionary definition of a photon:

“The quantum of electromagnetic energy, generally regarded as a discrete particle having zero mass, no electric charge, and an indefinitely long lifetime.”

God asks Job a series of penetrating questions one of which concerns light:

Job 38:24 (Knox) Tell me by what means light is scattered over earth [and] heat diffused.

We’ve come a long way since the days of Job, but we still don’t have a good answer to that question.

Light, which we receive from the sun, is critically important to all life, animal and vegetable. If the sun were to burn out, life on earth would cease. The first creative work concerned light (“God said, Let there be light: and there was light”—Gen. 1:3).

James 1:17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the **Father of lights**, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

There **IS** variableness with the sun. It changes throughout the year causing the days to grow shorter and colder, or longer and warmer. Clouds can obscure the sun for a time. But there is no such variableness with our heavenly Father. He is the same yesterday, today, and forever (*Hebrews 13:8*).

All the ancients considered the sun important, and many cultures worshipped it. There is one place where Job describes various sins he could be guilty of. Job listed worshipping the sun and moon as sins:

Job 31:26-28 If I beheld the sun when it shined, or the moon walking in brightness; and my heart hath been secretly enticed ... this also [would be] an iniquity to be punished by the judge: for I should have denied the God that is above.

Although the Jews were guilty of idolatry from time to time, we have no record they ever worshipped the sun and moon. They knew God created them. David, in Psalm 8 [vs. 3] calls them the work of [God's] fingers." Ra ["ray"] was the name of the Egyptian sun god. Imagine how the Egyptians must have felt when the plague of darkness fell upon their land. It was an awesome demonstration of how powerless their sun god was:

Exodus 10:21-23 And the Lord said unto Moses, Stretch out thine hand toward heaven, that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, even darkness which may be felt. ... and there was a thick darkness in all the land of Egypt three days: ... but all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings.

When God manifests himself to human beings, he usually uses light (or fire; in Mark 14:54 Peter warmed himself at a fire—the Greek word is usually rendered light).

Exodus 3:2 And the angel of the Lord appeared unto [Moses] **in a flame of fire** out of the midst of a bush: and ... the bush was not consumed.

Exodus 19:18 And mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because **the Lord descended upon it in fire.**

Exodus 24:16-17 And the glory of the Lord abode upon mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days: and the seventh day he called unto Moses out of the midst of the cloud. And the sight of **the glory of the Lord was like devouring fire** on the top of the mount in the eyes of the children of Israel.

Exodus 13:21 And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and **by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light.**

During the wandering in the wilderness God's presence was manifested in that cloud-like pillar. When it moved, the Israelites moved. When it stopped, the Tabernacle was erected under it. God's presence was also exhibited inside the Tabernacle, but it was seen only by the high priest. We call it the *Shekinah* light within the Most Holy. Interestingly, the word *Shekinah* does not appear in the Old Testament. It is a Hebrew word meaning "dwell." The concept but not the word *Shekinah* appears in ...

Psalm 80:1 Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, thou that leadest Joseph like a flock; thou that dwellest between the cherubims, shine forth.

This clearly refers to the two cherubim in the Most Holy which were part of the lid of the ark of the covenant. If there was no light in the Most Holy, how would the high priest know where to sprinkle the blood on the Day of Atonement? Surely no one thinks he would be in total darkness and have to orient himself using only his sense of touch!

As we have already seen, the creation of light was so important it occurred first. So when in the creative process did God create evil? If you say he did not create evil, what do you do with ...

Isaiah 45:7 I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and **create evil**: I the Lord do all these things.

## Where Did Evil Come From?

Once upon a time a university professor challenged his students by asking this question: “Did God create everything that exists?” The students said he had. The professor went on: “If God created everything, then God created evil since evil exists, and according to the principal that our works define who we are, then God is evil.”

I’m glad we don’t usually meet people who argue like this. I’m not sure I’d know the best thing to say in this instance. The story continues:

Another student raised his hand: “May I ask you a question, professor?” “Of course.” “Professor, does darkness exist?” The professor responded, “Of course it does.”

The student replied, “But in fact you are wrong, sir. Darkness does not exist. Darkness is only the absence of light. Light we can study; darkness we cannot. We cannot measure darkness. How can we know how dark a certain space is? We actually measure the amount of light that is present. Darkness is just a word we use to describe a situation where there is no light.”

The student was not finished: “Sir, does evil exist?” Now uncertain, the professor responded, “Of course, as I have already said, we see it every day. It’s called man’s inhumanity to man; there’s crime and violence everywhere in the world. These are all manifestations of evil.”

But the student disagreed: “Evil does not exist sir, or at least it does not exist by itself. Evil is simply the absence of God. It is just like darkness. Evil is a word we use to describe the absence of God. God did not create evil; it is not like faith, or love, that do exist just as does light. Evil is what happens when God’s love is not present in man’s heart. It’s like the darkness that is produced when you withdraw the light.”

How true. Darkness was the steady-state condition before God’s creative act brought forth light. Similarly evil is the condition when God’s righteousness and love is absent. Look again at that Isaiah 45:7 text. Light is contrasted with its opposite: darkness. The next word, peace, is also contrasted with its opposite: “not peace” [translated “evil”]. That Hebrew word is translated “calamity” (Psa. 141:5), “adversity (1 Sam. 10:19), “misery” (Ecc. 8:6), and similar words. It is never rendered “sin.” Sin cannot be associated with God in any context. There are other texts in the Old Testament that associate “evil” with God; in all the cases I checked, all use this same Hebrew word meaning calamity/adversity/misery. The Hebrew word is never sin.

## God is Light—Others Are Too!

1 John 1:5 says God is light. “Light” is one of the themes in the gospel of John. The word “light” (meaning illumination, not weight) appears more often in John than in the other three gospels combined. The opening verses of chapter one tell us that the *Logos* [translated “Word” in King James] is also light:

John 1:2-4 [Weymouth] All things came into being through him [the Logos], and apart from him nothing that now exists came into being. In him was Life, and that Life was the **Light** of men. The **Light** shines on in the darkness, and the darkness has never overpowered it. [vs 9] **There was the true Light**, which lightens every man, coming into the world.

We know when John uses the Greek word *Logos* he is talking about Jesus. God is Light. So is Jesus Christ, God's representative. In vs. 9 John says every person is to be enlightened. We say "to be" because Jesus has not yet enlightened every man. He has not enlightened those who lived and died before he was born, and even today billions die without hearing a word about the only name through whom salvation is possible. So there has to be a future time of resurrection and instruction in righteousness to fulfill this Scripture.

John characterized Jesus as light in later chapters of his gospel:

John 3:19 And this is the condemnation, that **light is come into the world**, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

John 8:12 Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, **I am the light of the world**.

Just as Jesus was a light in the world, the disciples of Christ are also spoken of as lights. That seems appropriate because we are also God's representatives on earth:

Matthew 5:14 **Ye are the light of the world**. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. [vs. 16] Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

Ephes. 5:8 For ye were sometimes darkness, but **now are ye light** in the Lord: walk as children of light:

1 Thes. 5:5 **Ye are all the children of light**, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness.

We become transformed into lights because we have an association with the heavenly father and his son Jesus Christ. This is beautifully illustrated in what happened to Moses when he communed with God at the top of Mt. Sinai:

Exod. 34:29 [NIV] When Moses came down from Mount Sinai with the two tablets of the Testimony in his hands, he was not aware that his face was radiant because he had spoken with the Lord. (vs. 33) When Moses finished speaking to them, he put a veil over his face. But whenever he entered the Lord's presence to speak with him, he removed the veil until he came out. And when he came out and told the Israelites what he had been commanded, they saw that his face was radiant.

In his second letter to the church at Corinth the apostle Paul used this experience to teach a lesson about how our communion with the heavenly Father changes us:

2 Cor. 3:18 [NIV] We, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord.

Paul is using the experience of Moses and his communion with God as the inspiration for this thought. Even though Moses was changed by his experience, he did not realize it until he saw the reaction of the people when they saw him. Likewise we are being transformed by our experiences. We may not think any change has occurred in us, but others around us can see it.

Moses was not the only one who experienced a supernatural kind of radiance. Jesus in the transfiguration vision was also changed:

Luke 9:29 As he prayed, the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment was white and **glistening**.

This is the only place where the Greek word *ex-as-TRAP-to* is used. Strongs says it means “to be radiant (used of very white garments).” The three disciples saw a vision of the Lord in glory and he was “shining.” And if we are faithful, we will “shine” too:

Matthew 13:43 Then shall the righteous **shine forth** as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.

We perceive color based on the wavelength of light reflected by objects. Pure, white light consists of all colors—we see them when a prism breaks a ray of light into a rainbow-like spectrum from deep violet to bright red. Raindrops refract the sun’s rays and produce a rainbow in the sky. Revelation chapter 4 describes what John saw in heaven. God is seated upon his throne and ...

Rev. 4:3 There was a rainbow round about the throne.

Once again, light is associated with the heavenly Father. Combine all the colors of a rainbow and you get the color white, the most frequently mentioned color in Scripture.\*

Pure sunlight is so bright that if you were to look directly at the sun, you would permanently damage your eyes. Paul saw an even brighter light. This is how he described his Road-to-Damascus experience to King Agrippa:

Acts 26:13 At midday, O king, I saw in the way a light from heaven, **above the brightness of the sun**, shining round about me and them which journeyed with me.

The experience blinded him and were it not for a miracle, he would have remained blind. Many believe this experience left him with weak eyes for the rest of his life. I don’t think so. Here’s what happened when Ananias came to him:

Acts 9:17,18 And Ananias ... entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Spirit. And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and **he received sight forthwith**, and arose, and was baptized.

Ananias said he had been sent so Saul would receive his sight, and Saul “received his sight forthwith.” Was this just a partial healing? I doubt it. Brethren love to speculate about what Paul’s “thorn in the side” might be, but I don’t think it was “weak eyes.”

The description of the kingdom in the last chapter of the Bible mentions perpetual light as something enjoyed by those in God’s favor:

Rev. 22:5 And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever.

This verse echoes a prophecy by Isaiah centuries before John wrote the Revelation:

Isaiah 60:19 The sun shall be no more thy light by day; neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee: but the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory.

---

\* White=66; blue=49; green=41; red=32; black=18; yellow=4; gray=4; brown=4.

Throughout the Bible Satan, the great opponent of God, is associated with darkness. Paul tells King Agrippa what he heard during that “Damascus road” experience:

Acts 26:18 To turn [the Gentiles] from **darkness** to **light**, and from the **power of Satan** unto **God**.

Col. 1:13 Who hath delivered us from the **power of darkness**, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:

Today we look back at the middle of the last 2,000-years and call it the “dark ages.” As far as most of the world is concerned, they are still in the “dark ages” as far as a knowledge of God and his great plan for blessing mankind is concerned, But we who have had our eyes open can rejoice that the heavenly Father has seen fit to call us out of darkness into his marvelous light. (*1 Peter 2:9*) May we never lose our appreciation of this great favor. May we cherish this wonderful promise as we continue to walk in the narrow way of sacrifice that leads to life:

Psalm 89:15 Blessed are the people that know the joyful sound:  
they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance.

Closing Hymn: #151 — Arise and Shine

## Songs in the Night -- November 28

God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.--1 John 1:5

The Scriptures represent God as being a light. In the tabernacle he was represented by a brilliant light on the mercy seat, called the Shekinah glory. Our Lord Jesus, filled with the light of the Holy Spirit, was called "the true Light." And it was he that said of his followers, "**YE** are the light of the world. ... Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." Similarly the divine power at Pentecost was represented by flames of light, cloven tongues of fire. Similarly the Spirit of the Lord from his Word is, in the Scriptures, pictured as the blaze of light from a lamp. As we read, Thy Word is a lamp to my feet, a lantern to my footsteps. The flame of sacred love, the Holy Spirit of the Father and of the Son, was enkindled in our hearts through the Word of grace and the impartation of the Holy Spirit. In proportion as we have fed this flame (the Spirit) with the truth, **WE** have become burning and shining lights in the world—the Spirit of the Lord in us.

*Z'09-188 R4419:4*

*[First given in Los Angeles, July 2005]*