



# GOD is light

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**“I**n the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. And the earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep; and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters.” Gen 1:1-2 Most of us are very familiar with this opening verse of Scripture. We teach our children to quote this verse, and contrary to ever changing theories about the origin of the universe, we believe the truth of this verse with all of our hearts. For a moment lets focus on the initial state of the freshly created earth—it was formless, void and dark.

While we are caught up in awe that God simply spoke the universe into existence, it is easy to overlook the significance of His next command. *“Then God said, “Let there be light”; and there*

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*was light.” Gen 1:3 Isn’t it interesting that the very first “refinement” to God’s newly created heavens and earth was the introduction of light? “And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. And God called the light day, and the darkness He called night. And there was evening and there was morning, one day.” Gen 1:4-5*

As we continue through the “days of creation” we can make another interesting observation associated with “light.” When God created “light,” note that He didn’t create any apparent source(s) of that light. In fact, its not until day four that God created the sun, moon and stars, “Then God said, “Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night, and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days and years; and let them be for lights in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth,” and it was so. And God made the two great lights, the greater light to govern the day, and the lesser light to govern the night; He made the stars also . . . And there was evening and there was morning, a fourth day.” Gen 1:14-17, 19

This begs the question of where did “light” initially come from, given that it was created before the sun, moon and stars? Perhaps we could simply say, “God said it, it was so, and I believe it.” On the other hand, perhaps God is revealing Himself, sharing something of His essential nature with His creation that is important for us to grasp. Before we consider this point however, let’s make another observation in this text.

God not only created light, but continued until He had created life on earth. Note that this creative process went from “formless, void and darkness” to a world filled with light, then continuing on to the creation of life as we know it today. Think about it, consider the role that light played. The creation of life seems to have been interdependent with God first creating light. To create light was to create life!

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We live in an artificially illuminated world. We enter a dark room and without thinking we turn on a light. We wouldn't think of driving at night without headlights. With light, our vision at night is almost as good as in daylight. But practical electric lights have only existed for about 150 years. Older illumination methods used light from various forms of fire, but these were feeble instruments against the consuming darkness. Darkness seemingly was so powerful that it became a synonym for ignorance, evil and uncertainty. While light, on the other hand symbolizes safety, goodness and wisdom.

The Scriptures closely associate God with light. In fact the image of light and illumination is frequently used to illustrate His power and influence. When we think of Moses and the burning bush (Ex 3) we envision a bush on fire without burning up, but that burning bush was visible and the Lord used this phenomenon of light to signify His presence and to draw Moses. The Holy Place in the Tabernacle was illuminated by a lamp stand with seven lamps that burned continuously (Ex 25:37; 27:20) A pillar of fire hovered over the Tabernacle or led Israel in the wilderness at night. (Ex 13:21-22) Nadab and Abihu offered strange fire before the Lord and He visibly destroyed them with fire. (Lev 10:1-2) Elijah's sacrifice on Mount Carmel was consumed by the fire which fell from the Lord. (1 Kg 18:38-39) The wise men sought out baby Jesus by following the light of His star. Mt 2:1-2) These familiar incidences of light illustrate this relationship of deity with light.

Notice how the metaphors of light and darkness are used in the following passages. *"He reveals mysteries from the darkness, and brings the deep darkness into light. They*

*grope in darkness with no light, and He makes them stagger like a drunken man."* Job 12:22, 25 *"The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear?"* Psa 27:1a *"For with Thee is the fountain of life; In Thy light we see light."* Psa 36:9 *"O send out Thy light and Thy truth, let them lead me; Let them bring me to Thy holy hill and to Thy dwelling places."* Psa 43:3 *"How blessed are the people who know the joyful sound! O Lord, they walk in the light of Thy countenance."* Psa 89:15 *"Thou hast placed our iniquities before Thee, our secret sins in the light of Thy presence."* Psa 90:8 *"Thy word is a lamp to my feet, and a light to my path."* Psa 119:105 *"I saw that wisdom excels folly as light excels darkness."* Ecc 2:13 *"The people who walk in darkness will see a great light; those who live in a dark land, the light will shine on them."* Isa 9:2 There are hundreds of such references that show God closely linked with light.

1 John 1:5 reads, *"And this is the message we have from Him and announce to you, that God is light, and in Him there is no darkness at all."* When we think of God we often think about characteristics of deity, such as omnipotence, omnipresence or omniscience. In this verse, the Apostle advances our discussion of God and light to the next level; by observing that God is not like light, — He is light! When Jesus was transfigured (Mt 17) we shouldn't be surprised that His essential nature was being manifested.

1 Timothy 6:15b-16a reads, *"He (Jesus) who is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords; who alone possesses immortality and dwells in unapproachable light; whom no man has seen or*

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can see.” In addition to Jesus dwelling in light, keep in mind the illumination that John described in the heavenly city, *“And the city has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine upon it, for the glory of God has illumined it, and its lamp is the Lamb. And the nations shall walk by its light.”* Rev 21:23-24a Remember the earlier comments about light being created on day one. By faith we know that heaven will be illuminated by God and His Lamb. I have no problem believing that on day one of creation He also was more than able to illuminate His new creation without identifiable sources, such as the sun.

Returning to John’s epistle, to the verse I first remember learning to quote, *“if we walk in the light as He Himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.”* 1 John 1:7 Light is vital to our salvation. Since Jesus is light and in the light, our walk with Him is only possible if we come into the light. Peter wrote, *“You are A CHOSEN RACE, A ROYAL PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR GOD’S OWN POSSESSION, that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.”* 1 Pet 2:9 We must be in the light with Jesus to have access to His cleansing blood. Also being with Jesus in the light is the basis of our fellowship together.

In this publication issue, various writers share their thoughts about God and light. Some will examine the impact of light in the lives of individual Christians and consider how Satan himself uses light to accomplish his ungodliness. Finally, some will address how we as Christians are to abide steadfastly in the light, and to recognize our role as Christ’s light in the world and to the world.

## I Am The Light Of The World

Kelli Hinton

**T**hat is quite a statement that Jesus made in John 8:12 and John 9:5. First, let’s look at the context. Jesus was teaching in the temple and the Pharisees brought a woman to Him who had been caught in adultery. Jesus turned the entire conversation around by pointing out that no one within the sound of His voice was without sin...including the scribes and the Pharisees. Of course, they knew that they were not without sin and started backing off. 1 John 1:5-10 gives an explanation of this, which is exactly why those men started walking away. They KNEW that all have sinned (Romans 3:23). Now, as for the woman caught in adultery, Jesus forgave her. Why? Because He is a promise keeper. The promise of being cleansed from all unrighteousness IF we are faithful and confess our sins to Him! Whew! That is so powerful! That gives us a lot to be thankful for, doesn’t it? Jesus is the ultimate light of the world. In a world full of darkness and sin, He shines as the light of salvation.

God separated physical darkness and light on the first day of creation, and it is the same way today. Imagine what it would be like to be climbing up a mountain on a narrow path. It is rocky, there are obstacles you must climb over, you can’t turn around and go back down, but you have to keep climbing. One missed step, and you could fall in the deep dark canyon, which leads certainly to death. It is the deepest darkest night, and you can see nothing. No light. Only darkness. Does it seem like there is no hope? Can you imagine the sheer terror you would

feel? Can you imagine how much you would long for just a little bit of light to help guide your pathway? Isn't this how our life is? We are on the narrow path. Satan throws obstacles at us all of the time. We have to climb over the hurdles of life. We cannot go back in time, we have to just keep moving ahead toward the future. The darkness of sin seems to be all around us, and we long for a light to shine to help guide our way in this dark world of sin. There is hope! God called us out of darkness into His marvelous light (I Peter 2:9) Jesus told us that He is *"the light of the world."* (John 8:12). We have the answer! We don't have to live in darkness and grasp for hope. We have that answer and that hope – it is Jesus Christ, our Savior! What a blessing! *"I am the light of the world"* – that gives us such hope! As Christians, we have committed ourselves to walk as children of light (Ephesians 5:8-11). We have committed to searching for that light from Jesus, and to shine that light to others.

*"I am the light of the world."* This makes me think of a night light that we bought once we had a baby. The way that it is designed to work is that it will only shine its light when it is dark in the hallway, but when it is daytime or when there is plenty of light in the hallway, then, the night light will turn off. Do we have to unplug it every time we want the night light to turn off? No, that's the ease of having this night light. It is always connected to the outlet. The outlet is the night light's source of energy. We need to always be connected to our source of energy – God. When darkness approaches us (aka... sin), then our light will shine brighter. What happens if the night light gets bumped by my

husband as he is walking down a dark hallway to get our crying baby in the middle of the night and it falls out of the outlet? Just like we need to do sometimes in our Christian walk, we need to get plugged back in!

How do we get plugged back in? *"I am the light of the world."* We need to spend time with Him. We need to spend time in study of God's Word, spend time in prayer, spend time talking to other Christians, spend time going to Gospel meetings or singings, spend time meditating on our own spiritual walk. What is the common thread there? Time! We get so busy in this world that we forget to set aside enough time for God and for our own spiritual well-being....much less time that we should be spending to help others in their spiritual walks as well. How can that night light shine its light when we need it most in the dark? Only if it has spent time plugged into the source. We need to recharge our light for our own spiritual walk, and to help show that light to others.

*"I am the light of the world."* Such a powerful phrase. As I end this article, I leave you with the words from one of my favorite hymns. When you are having a tough day, or have become unplugged from the source, think on the words of this hymn and get plugged back in! We are all in this together!

*In Christ alone my hope is found;  
He is my light, my strength, my song;  
This cornerstone, this solid ground,  
Firm through the fiercest drought and storm.  
What heights of love, what depths of peace,  
When fears are stilled, when strivings cease!  
My comforter, my all in all –  
Here in the love of Christ I stand.*

## His Face Shown

Aaron Lumpkin

**A**mong all of our Savior's heavenly teachings, throughout all of His inspired miracles, amid his countless holy deeds and righteous living, the account of His Transfiguration is unparalleled. It is unique because it is the only instance we have recorded of Jesus being revealed in His true glory while he walked as a man on this earth. Peter, speaking of this unprecedented event, says that "*we were eyewitnesses of His majesty.*" 2 Pet 1:16 While we can see Jesus' divine character in so many aspects of His life, His divinity itself is manifest in the Transfiguration in a fashion that is without equal.

Each of the three records of this holy event (Mt 17:1-8; Mk 9:2-8; Lu 9:28-36) provides details that help us visualize what transpired. Jesus ascends a high mountain one night to pray, taking just his inner circle of disciples: Peter, James, and John. Having fallen asleep, the three awake to see Jesus "*transfigured before them: And His face shone like the sun, and His garments became white as light.*" Mt 17:2 Beyond this amazing sight, Moses and Elijah, whose souls have long since departed this realm, are standing and talking with Jesus, also cloaked in glory! And then a bright cloud surrounds them and God the Father speaks: "*This is my beloved Son, with whom I'm well-pleased; listen to Him!*" After falling to the ground in fear, they rise up to see only Jesus, once again in His non-transfigured state.

The English word that is used to describe Jesus' change in appearance (in Matthew

and Mark's accounts) is "transfigured." The original Greek word is *metamorphoō*, from which we get our English word 'metamorphosis.' It simply means a change in form or appearance. The apostle Paul uses the same Greek word in Rom 12:2 when he tells the Roman saints to "*not be conformed to this world be transformed by the renewing of your minds.*" In this supernatural circumstance, Jesus was transformed, in appearance and/or form, from physical to heavenly, from human to divine. So many questions can arise from the details of this majestic occurrence, but the greatest point is that in this peculiar instance "*He received glory and honor from God the Father*" in an undeniable display of heavenly light. 2 Pet 1:17 It's no wonder that Hebrew writer can so boldly claim of Jesus that "*He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature.*" Heb 1:3

But why was such a demonstration necessary? There's no doubt that this would have left an indelible impression on the three eyewitnesses. As was previously mentioned, Peter offers this example as proof of his credibility in teaching about Jesus (2 Pet 1:16-18). John also probably references the Transfiguration when says "... *and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth,*" Jn 1:14 during the introduction to his gospel account. No doubt Peter, James, and John could gain great courage from witnessing this extraordinary sight as they would soon tackle their charged task and face impending suffering for the cause of their divine rabbi. In telling others (after His resurrection) of this momentous instance, the faith of all subsequent

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believers can be increased from the spectacular Transfiguration of our Redeemer.

However, I would suggest that this isn't the primary reason why Jesus was transfigured on that holy mountain that day. As we read the text surrounding the event, we gather that this event takes place not long before Jesus heads to Jerusalem for the final time to fulfill His ultimate destiny. Peter has just recently made his great confession of Jesus' deity. (Mt 16:18ff) The apostles no longer need to be persuaded of Jesus' identity – they already believe. Only 3 of the 12 even view the event, and according to Luke's account, much of what occurs during the Transfiguration they miss because they are asleep, suggesting that their presence is incidental. (Lu 9:32) Jesus is speaking with Moses and Elijah about *"His departure which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem."* (Lu 9:31) The presence of these two former servants of God is fascinating on so many levels, and perhaps helps us understand the true purpose of the fantastic event. Like Jesus, they had both developed a relationship with God the Father through prayer and fasting. These righteous men were each tasked with specific and crucial roles by the Almighty. Moses and Elijah both understood what it was like to feel alone, to be rejected by their own people, and to fear for their lives at the hands of foreigners. They had boldly taught the LORD's message, performed numerous signs, and experienced the sadness of seeing Israel's moral wrestling with their God. Both of these great men of faith had completed their mission, and their lives on this earth ended in miraculous fashion. And yet

here they stood in glory with Jesus, also shrouded by light. What other two figures in history could begin to relate to Jesus' experiences thus far, or appreciate the task at hand? It seems that Moses and Elijah are sent, and Jesus is transfigured, to remind Jesus of who He is, what His mission is, and that like them the LORD will afterwards bring Him to glory. It's so easy for us to focus on the deity of Christ and neglect to appreciate His humanity. Yet we see in the Garden of Gethsemane His dread of the cross, His pleading to avoid what must occur. Just as Luke records an angel coming to strengthen Jesus in the Garden as He prays (Lu 22:43), Jesus' prayers and fears on the mountain are not ignored by His Father. Moses and Elijah appear, Jesus is transfigured, and God the Father expresses His pleasure in His Son, for the sake of encouraging God's pious Priest. (Heb 5:7) King David's poetic words regarding our Father's attitude toward the sufferings of His Servant Jesus are particularly fitting: *"For He has not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; Nor has He hidden His face from Him; But when he cried to Him, He heard."* Ps 22:24

In the Transfiguration we see Jesus as light in a literal sense, but we can find numerous references to our Messiah as light in a figurative sense long before this great scene takes place. The psalmist in Psalm 118, prophesying about the Christ, says *"Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the LORD ... The LORD is God, and He has given us light."* Ps 118:26-27 Isaiah often speaks of the promised Prince of Peace in terms of light: *"The people who walk in darkness will see a great light; those who live in a*

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*dark land, the light will shine on them.” Isa 9:2 And as an 8-day old infant, Simeon holds the tiny Savior of the world in his hands and says, “For my eyes have seen Your salvation, which You have prepared in the presence of all the peoples, a light of revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of your people Israel.” Lu 2:30-32 Jesus understood this symbology, and having been recently reminded of his role as the Light at the Transfiguration, tells his skeptics shortly before his death, “While you have the Light, believe in the Light, so that you may become sons of Light.” Jn 12:36*

As sons of the Light, we should take great courage from our glorified Savior, knowing that we too are being transfigured into a glorified state. The great lawgiver, Moses, covered his face after coming down from Mt Sinai due to the glory of God (Ex 34:29ff). Elijah, on that same mountain covered his face to hide his eyes from the God’s glory. (1 Kgs 19:13) *“But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed [transfigured] into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.” 2 Cor 3:18*

## Walking In The Light

Dale Cathey

**P**salm 119:105 *“your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.”* And in 1 John, 1:5-7, *“this is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say we have fel-*

*lowship with him while we 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 cleanses us from all sin.”*

The Psalmist here in chapter 119, points out three essential things about the Bible as our Spiritual road map to glory. It has been given to us to say, *“This is the way, walk ye in it.”* Isa 30:21b The Psalmist here points out three things about the Bible. It has been given to us to guide us (105-108), to guard us (109-110) and to gladden us (111-112). God's word guides us in our walk. Light on the path shows us the direction in which we are headed; a Lamp shows us the next step. In Proverbs 6:23, *“for the commandment is a lamp, and the law a light; reproofs of instruction are the way of life.”* A light no matter how bright, will not show us all the twists and turns ahead in the road, but will give us a general sense of direction. That's what the Bible does. The bible, for the most, sheds its light on our way by giving broad general principles. An example of this is, the Bible does not say "thou shalt not smoke or dance or drink or take drugs." It does however say, *“that our body is the temple of the Holy Spirit and that we are not to defile it.”* 1 Cor 6:19-20 We live in a dark world. We should never venture out into this dark world without the light-giving word.

John and his fellow apostles wrote of their experiences in receiving the word wrote, *“God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all.”* God is not silent. He has spoken and his word is an expression of Himself as light. Without this light, we would be completely “in the dark” concerning our origin,

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our present purpose, and our future. Without this light, we would be groping in the darkness for the meaning of masculinity and femininity. Without this light, we would be left to our own judgments, opinion, and whims concerning the nature of marriage, sexual expressions and fidelity. Without this light, we would be adrift in a sea of conflicting notions of truth and error, right or wrong. Without this light, we would be left to our own judgments. [Jason Hardin] Who are we that we should hold that position of authority. We are not the light, there is only one true light and that is God.

So what does it mean to walk in the light? Biblically the phrase, "walking in the light" has the idea of relinquishing sin by following Jesus. The only old Testament occurrence of this phrase is in Isaiah 2:5, "*O house of Jacob, come and let us walk in the light of the Lord.*" In the New Testament, "walking in the light" is directly related to following Jesus, who said, "I am the light of the world. He who follows me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life." Jn 8:12 To walk is, in short, to live one's life. One's lifestyle or way of life can be considered a "walk." The word also indicates progress. Walking is related to growth; it is taking steps to maturity. Light in the Bible can be a metaphor for life, happiness, righteousness or understanding. The Bible is clear that the light comes from the Lord God, the "*Father of the heavenly lights.*" Jas 1:17 He is the opposite of evil. Putting it all together, "walking in the light" means "growing in holiness and maturing in the faith as we follow Jesus.

The apostle John used the "light" meta-

phor in relation to the Messiah. He writes that "*Jesus is the true light that gives light to every man.*" John 1:9 In John 1:5, John says that God's very nature is light, Jesus, then is the provider of light to the world.

Our Christian duty is to live in the light God gives. "*Now you are the light in the Lord. Walk as children of light.*" Eph 5:8 When we walk in the light we cannot walk in the darkness. Sin is left in the shadows as we let our light "*shine before men.*" Mt 5:16 It is God's plan for us to become more like Christ.

Walking in the light means we consider Jesus as the light in this world, and we walk in that light by following His precepts, living in His power, and growing in His grace.

In conclusion, I dare say no one prefers darkness over light. The fearful description of "being cast into the outer darkness," being separated from God is a place no one wants to go. You see, that separation into the "outer darkness, separated from God" is forever, not just for a short time. Let us purpose in our hearts to become more like Christ, living in his light and shining our own lights for others to see.

## From Darkness to Light

Carol Fertig

**T**wice I have been in darkness that I considered to be profound and utter darkness. The first time was deep in Carlsbad Caverns in New

Mexico when all light was extinguished to demonstrate how it feels to be in total darkness. The second time was in a tunnel through a mountain between Anchorage, Alaska, and Whittier, Alaska. Lights were turned on occasionally during that trip just so we passengers wouldn't get overly anxious. Darkness so profound is dense, terrifying, disorienting, threatening and altogether anathema to us. No wonder the Egyptians couldn't even get out of their places during the plague of darkness! How appropriate that sin and Satan reside in that terrible place: darkness.

In 2 Corinthians 6:14b, the Holy Spirit says, “. . . *For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness?*” We understand these two are the same: light = righteousness and darkness=lawlessness. Two locations are depicted here, and Colossians 1:13 identifies these two as “. . . *the domain of darkness and . . . the kingdom of His beloved Son.*” Two specific places exist which are under the authority of two entities. Metaphorically, God is light and Satan is darkness, and each has his domain. Colossians 1:13-14 says that, “*He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.*” The “us” of these verses are the faithful believers Paul has been addressing in the opening verses of the chapter.

The residents of the domain of darkness practice sin, such as the young man lacking sense in Proverbs 7:6-9 who is captured by the seducing woman in the night and darkness. We know this from our own experi-

ence of waking in the morning to hear the early news of the horrors that have sometimes taken place in the previous night. Sin loves to hide in the dark. There is danger in the darkness of the domain of Satan, for it is a place where evil thrives and holds sway over the inhabitants. In the first part of verse 14 in 2 Corinthians 6, Paul encourages the brothers (and sisters) in Corinth not to be “. . . *unequally yoked with unbelievers.*” Yoking together righteousness and lawlessness, or light and darkness just won't work. They have totally different agendas and qualities; the ones living in the darkness live in the flesh, but the ones living in the kingdom of God, the light, live in the spirit. Paul says to the Ephesians, speaking of those who are disobedient, “*Do not become partners with them; for at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light. (for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true). And try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord.*” Eph 5:7-10 He goes further and says, “*Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. For it is shameful even to speak of the things that they do in secret. But when anything is exposed by the light, it becomes visible. . . .*” Eph 5:11-14a

It is clear that God wants His children to be in the light with Him. There is a great cosmic battle going on between the forces of darkness and light: “*For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.*” Eph 6:12 Not only does God desire us to be in the light with Him, David

says in Psalm 18:28, *“For it is you who light my lamp; the Lord my God lightens my darkness.”* God is active on our behalf in our struggle with the darkness. He gave us all the armor Paul tells us to don in Ephesians 6:10-17: truth, righteousness, the gospel, faith, salvation, and His word. God encourages, comforts, and strengthens us. *“I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.”* Phil 4:13 And ultimately, the gift of His Son as a sacrifice completed the delivery of believers from *“the domain of darkness”* and the transfer of them *“to the kingdom of His beloved Son.”* Col 1:13 We understand that we enter the kingdom of Christ when we are buried with Him in baptism and walk in the light with Him.

In the darkness there is no hope; in the light hope thrives. Darkness will end, but Light is eternal in Heaven. For the faithful servants of God, at the end, John says, *“And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for The Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever.”* Rev 22:5 What a magnificent plan God made and carried out for us in taking us from the despair of darkness to the bountiful beauty of light!

## Armor of Light

Mark Gray

**P**aul tells the Romans, *“Besides this you know the time, that the hour has come for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now*

*than when we first believed. The night is far gone; the day is at hand. So then let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light. Let us walk properly as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and sensuality, not in quarreling and jealousy, But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.”* Rom 13:11-14 When we think of armor, most typically, the shining armor of a medieval knight comes to mind. A helmet, a breastplate, sword, and shield like Paul mentions in his “Armor of God” section in Ephesians 6. Armor was developed in ancient times for protection from injury in battle and it is no different today. We also must don a suit of armor for protection from our enemy.

The suit firefighters wear is called bunker gear and is also a type of armor. It is designed to protect the wearer from the heat of fire. When it is worn properly it covers all skin and protects the person inside from several hundred degrees of heat. Sometimes, it is not worn properly and that heat finds its way in. I was working training fires one day and had put on and taken off my gear at least seven times in the course of several exercises. The next time I put the gear on my hood (which covers my neck and ears) hung up on my air mask. I didn’t realize it until the fire started burning nice and hot and so was the side of my face. Luckily I didn’t get burned and was able to cover up fairly quickly. The heat immediately found my uncovered spot. It was just as hot on my legs and back, but I was protected.

Like that heat, darkness surrounds us looking for a weak spot, an exposed spot to

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wedge its way in. Our enemy is darkness. *"We do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against... the cosmic powers over this present darkness."* Eph 6:12 Light is the natural enemy of darkness. The dimmest light shines like a beacon in a dark room. Our armor is made to battle the forces of darkness. Unfortunately that darkness can come from both without and within.

The "powers of darkness" are clever and can be disguised. Jesus warned that there would be *"false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves."* Mt 7:15 Peter goes into great detail about these "wolves" disguised as followers of Christ. He writes that *"they have eyes full of adultery, insatiable for sin. They entice unsteady souls. They have hearts trained in greed. ...They promise freedom, but they themselves are slaves to corruption."* 2 Pet 2:14, 19 Darkness works to twist the Word of Light to deceive and defeat us. The enemy tries to destroy absolutes which Isaiah warned against. *"Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness."* Isa 5:20 Throughout the history of the Israelites, idolatry worked its way in and infiltrated their lives so that the laws of the True and Living God were muddied with customs of false gods. From the time of Moses, through the Judges, into Solomon's reign, and most of the period of the king's, false gods caused the nation to call "evil good," with King Manasseh going as far as burning "his son as an offering" (2 Kgs 21:6). When we look around, is this "Christian nation" any different? We slaughter children in the name of choice and convenience.

"The works of darkness" that creep up from within are the most dangerous. Our own desires can create darkness and defeat us; *"each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death."* Jas 1:14, 15 Peter adds, *"Whatever overcomes a person, to that he is enslaved."* 2 Pet 2:19 We must be careful to defend against our own weaknesses that would go against the Will of God and cause us to be slaves to the darkness.

Since we know our own desires can lure us into temptation and sin, how can we guard against it? Unlike soldiers' armor or the bunker gear mentioned before, we must ALWAYS wear the armor of light! *"Put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires."* Rom 13:14 Our enemy never rests and never retreats. *"Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour."* 1 Pet 5:8 Peter encourages us to be watchful. Only we know our true weaknesses. We have to be watchful to strengthen that weakness and cover that exposed area to war against the darkness.

When Peter warns against the darkness of false prophets, he says, *"They count it pleasure to revel in the daytime."* 2 Pet 2:13 Unfortunately the darkness we war against does not care if the sun is out. The darkness has worked centuries to convince the rest of the world that evil is good and good is evil. How can we battle such an enemy as this? Our light must be bright enough to outshine the daylight!

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What is God's will for us? We must be like Him to follow Him. What is God like? He is Holy! *"As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, but as He who called you is Holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written, 'You shall be holy, for I am Holy.'"* 1 Pet 14-16 We cannot be like the world regardless of how much we want to be. We are commanded to be different! *"Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind."* Rom 12:2 We are commanded to be set apart from the world! *"You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for His own possession."* 1 Pet 2:9 We are commanded to be light! *"What fellowship has light with darkness?"* 2 Cor 6:14

## Disguised As An Angel of Light

Steven D. Baxley

**T**hus far this publication has primarily been concerned with God as Light. Abundant scriptural evidence has been mustered together to demonstrate how God and the idea of Light interact, and the power of the Bible's testimony concerning God as Light. However, the Scriptures also make it clear that Satan attempts to disguise himself as a being participating in that light: *"And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light."* 2 Cor 11:14 It is worthwhile to

consider just how Satan goes about doing this, in order to be able to see through his disguise.

Satan shows his true character in events recorded in the earliest part of the Bible, Genesis. He manifests himself to Eve in the form of a serpent (which undoubtedly would have appeared harmless enough to Eve ... she doesn't scream and run away in fear! Satan's first words to Eve are *"Did God actually say, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden?'"* Emphasis on this question could well be placed on the word "actually." With these words, Satan seeks to cast doubt on what God had said. The tactic apparently works, because although Eve answers correctly with what God had indeed said, she is willing to listen to more of what Satan has to say. Satan continues today to cast doubt on God's Word in various ways. Satan says to man: "the Bible is full of errors and can't be trusted" and therefore can be ignored. Satan says to man: "the Bible isn't really from God" and therefore can be disregarded. Satan says to man: "the Bible is old-fashioned and out-of-date" and therefore can be discarded. Satan says to man: "God doesn't really care about obedience" and therefore it doesn't really matter whether we listen and follow God's Word or not. All of these statements are false, but man continues to listen to this angel of darkness disguised as an angel of light.

What happened with Eve in the garden is typical of how Satan works through lies, deception, and doubt. In John 8:44, Jesus speaks of Satan's basic character: *"You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer*

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from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies." In his war against God, Satan will use the lie to accomplish his purposes. Satan also deals with half-truths, which of course are also half-lies. It is as impossible for Satan to tell the whole truth as it is for God to tell anything less than the whole truth. The important thing is to be able to see the lie for what it is and not listen to it. Repeatedly, Satan is called the deceiver: *"And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world—he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him."* Rev 12:9 In his deceit, Satan attempts to make man believe that good is evil, and evil is good: *"Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter!"* Isa 5:20 The only reliable standard for understanding what is really evil, what is really good, what is really true and what is not, is to rely on God's revelation: *"Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth."* John 17:17 In spite of this, man continues to listen to this angel of darkness disguised as an angel of light.

Just as God *"dwells in unapproachable light"* (1 Tim 6:16) and *"in him is no darkness at all"* (1 John 1:5), Satan deals in and inhabits darkness. He doesn't dwell in the twilight, but dwells firmly in spiritual darkness. Just as light drives darkness out before it, light can have no fellowship with darkness. Those who seek to dwell in light cannot try to live in fellowship with the light while dab-

bling in darkness: *"Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness? What accord has Christ with Belial? Or what portion does a believer share with an unbeliever? What agreement has the temple of God with idols?"* 2 Cor 6:14-16 Christians have been delivered from the domain of darkness and transferred to the kingdom of God's beloved Son (Col 1:13). And yet, Christians often try to continue to listen "just a little" to this angel of darkness disguised as an angel of light

Since Satan, despite his attempts to camouflage himself as something he is not, is a being of the darkness, his eternal destiny will be a place of darkness. Hell is described in various ways in the Scriptures, including darkness. In the conclusion to the Parable of the Talents, Jesus has the master giving the command concerning the one-talent man who hid the talent: *"and cast the worthless servant into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."* Mt 25:30 A similar end is found in Matthew 22:13 in the Parable of the Wedding Feast and in Matthew 8:12 where Jesus describes the final destiny of those who are without faith. In Heaven, there will be no need of sun, since God will the light of his people (Rev 21:23; 22:5). Those in Hell will be eternally away from God's presence and thus, His light (2 Thes 1:9). And yet, even with the knowledge of Satan's ultimate punishment, man continues to listen to this angel of darkness disguised as an angel of light.

## Light of the World

Mt. 5:14-16

Ron Gray

**I**n this physical world, there is one light that dispels the darkness. That light is the sun. Although the sun never stops emitting its brilliant light, at times in certain places on earth, that light cannot be seen. During those times, mankind relies on the lesser lights: candles, lamps, and light bulbs. These lights are a meager substitute for the radiance of the sun.

The Bible tells us that God is light; you can read about that in this publication. And Jesus says in His sermon on the mount that we are the light of the world. The light that we bring is very small in comparison to the light that God shines forth, but nevertheless, it is noticed in this dark world. It has been said that the human eye can see the light of a candle from over 10 miles away. This point is brought out in Matthew 5:14, *“a city set on a hill cannot be hidden.”*

What does that city on a hill have to do with our being the light of the world? Jesus is telling us that when we become followers of Christ (Christians) we are on display for the rest of society to see. We are no longer individuals hidden away in our mundane lives; we are a chosen people. *“But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.”* 1 Pet 2:9

The world is filled with “darkness,” the darkness from which we were called. Within that dark place sins and immorality abound.

The contrast between the citizens of darkness and the citizenship into which we were called is drawn by the apostle Paul in Philip-  
pians 3:19-20. *“Their end is destruction, their god is their belly, and they glory in their shame, with minds set on earthly things. But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.”*

We as God’s children are displaying the light that His Son has brought into a dark world; a world which has no hope without Him and is struggling to find the light. Since we bear the honor of sharing God’s light, we also bear the responsibility to live a life worthy of the light and a duty to display our light for others to see.

### Our light reflects the Glory of God

*“Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making His appeal through us.”* 2 Cor 5:20a. Because we have become citizens of heaven and no longer have our minds set on earthly things, we are foreigners here. As with any ambassador, the life we live reflects upon the nation that we represent. As we live Godly lives following the example that Jesus Christ has set for us, we shine our lights for the glory of God and His kingdom. By doing otherwise, we would convict ourselves of hypocrisy and bring shame upon the cause of the Lord.

*“...with full courage now as always Christ will be honored in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.”* Phil 1:20b-21.

### Our light displays the Godly life

*“For it is You who light my lamp, the*

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*Lord my God lightens my darkness.” Ps 18:28*

As Christians, we suffer the same storms, illnesses, and problems as those who are outside of Christ, however, we have a loving Father who hears our prayers and is quick to help us and to bless us bountifully. Though we still live in the world where darkness abounds, God gives us a measure of His glorious light. He lights our lamps so that we are in the world, but not of the world.

Once our lamps are lit (when we become Christians), we should be proud to display that important aspect of our lives to those around us. As the scripture goes on to say, *“Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house.”* Mt 5:15. It would be foolish to light a lamp and then hide it under a basket, after doing all that it takes to make light and then to hide it from view. It would also be foolish to “put on Christ” and immediately proceed to hide that fact from the world. *“For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.”* Gal 3:26-27

### **Our light beckons to the lost**

*“Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.”* Ps 119:105

The Word of God is powerful. The Old Testament is filled with examples of the Lord pleading with His children to hear and obey. He tells them that He loves them and that if they will live by His word, they will be blessed. So often, they did not heed His loving plea and suffered for their sins. Though the New Testament brings in a new “perfect law of liberty,” we are not by any means at

liberty to ignore that law. Modern philosophy states that “God just wants me to be happy.” My response is, “Why are there over 1000 pages in God’s Word if He had nothing more than that to say?”

When people see that you love and respect the Lord, that you are at peace in a turbulent world, and that you follow the Word of God as a lamp to light your way, they are witnessing a gospel sermon without a word. The apostle Peter wrote of just such a life; here he speaks of a wife and her husband, but teaches a lesson that can apply in other instances. *“Likewise, wives, be subject to your own husbands, so that even if some do not obey the word, they may be won without a word by the conduct of their wives, when they see your respectful and pure conduct.”* 1 Pet 3:1-2

I remember when I was just a young child hearing my uncle speaking to my father who was struggling spiritually. He said, “The Lord doesn’t need you; He will be fine with or without you. You need Him.” God’s light is not diminished one iota if we refuse to let our lights shine. We need His light to save us from the darkness of sin. In putting on Christ in baptism, He lights our lamps. After that, the question that arises in our own hearts is, “What will I do with that light?” The answer can be found in the voices of our own little children.

**“This little light of mine,  
I’m gonna let it shine,  
Hide it under a bushel – No!  
I’m gonna let it shine,  
Won’t let Satan blow it out,**

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I'm gonna let it shine,  
All around the neighborhood,  
I'm gonna let it shine,  
Let it shine till Jesus comes,  
I'm gonna let it shine,  
Let it shine all the time,  
let it shine."

## Abiding in the Light

Russ Ward

There are still many things that amaze and cause me to wonder about the Kingdom of God and His expectations for those who choose to be a part of it. Creation itself is so diverse and part of that creation is the people He formed. A cross section of any congregation reveals such a myriad of shapes, sizes, features, abilities, and yes different ways of thinking, so as to create this mix of emotions and feelings that is to be molded into a singleness of focus for the Lord; and for the betterment of the body in and of itself. If the truth be known we all think we know how that should work. Thus the expectation that our Savior voiced and shared with the Father that somehow through all of this diversity we would be one with each other as He and the Father are one seems incredulous at certain points in time to our way of thinking even when we know that is the truth.

I would like to say that I have the answers, but I don't; and no one else does either. We can provide flippant or off the cuff answers; just hovering over the surface or our attitude and actions, and combine them with scriptural backing but this is often done

with no real life application involved. (*I.e. no real sacrifice on our part*) There are things God has unfolded before us in bits and pieces, some hidden to be diligently sought after while other portions are revealed in blatant transparency. Collectively these pieces complete a picture when all together. Now we know that sometimes these pieces are easy to find and put together, sometimes they are difficult requiring much soul searching and directed implementation (*I.e. Not what I want to do but what I will to do*); and others may remain hidden until such time that all is laid before us. John opens before us both simplicity and complexity. "*Whoever says he is in the light and hates his brother is still in darkness. Whoever loves his brother abides in the light, and in him there is no cause for stumbling. But he that hateth his brother is in the darkness, and walketh in the darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because the darkness hath blinded his eyes.*" 1 John 2:7-11.

Now no one will say that they hate the brethren. That is such a strong emotion. I don't really hate, I just don't care for, or just really don't like, or possibly I just don't care to be around some of the brethren. Here is where we may be missing the point. Put before us is love and hate. John says we are either practicing the one or the other. In God's eyes there is no grey matter where light is concerned. Let's therefore consider just a few things to allow us to see where we might be standing or rather if I may take liberty and ride John's coattails where we may be walking.

Do we love God? "*We love because he first loved us. If anyone says, "I love God,"*

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*and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen.”* 1 John 4:19-20 We would never ever say that at any point in time we do not love God and yet John clarifies that our love for God is not real or genuine if we in turn do not have a genuine love of the brethren that we see and interact with on a regular basis. Now John says we show love because God loved first and it is His example that we follow. If the love of brethren is not present then the only conclusion according to John is that we really don't love God. This becomes observation #1 for us to consider. Am I disillusioned thinking that I'm walking in the light and really be walking in darkness simply because I lack the understanding of what loving God truly is all about with regard to my brethren?

Christ said *“If you love me keep my commandments.”* John 14:15 John states *“Whoever says “I know him: but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him, but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected.”* 1 John 2:4 John adds to this, *“Beloved, I am writing you no new commandment, but an old commandment that you had from the beginning...At the same time it is a new commandment that I am writing to you, which is true in him and in you.”* 1 John 2:7-8 So what is this old/new commandment we are to keep in order to reflect our love of God? What is it we need to have in order to see the love of God perfected in us? According to John it is a love of one's brother; for the one who hates his brother is walking in darkness. Now to some this becomes a duty, a check list or punch

card of sorts. I am here to help, ready and willing to assist if the need arises but not to get too close to the lives of the brothers and sisters around me. This becomes observation #2 for us to consider. Are we liars to ourselves and others or are we truth seekers and commandment followers? Do we know where we are going because we are in the light and our eyes are opened or do we think we are in the light when in fact our eyes are blinded and we are stumbling in darkness?

We make this way too hard on ourselves. Do we love God first and have love of the brethren second, or do we love brethren because we love God? What do we do when it becomes difficult to have love of some brethren or even for those brethren who may have wronged us? How does God view this as He looks down upon His creation? This becomes observation #3 and our final one to consider. We find that in order to be devoted to God and to have a relationship with Him through Christ our Savior the love of brethren must be present in our lives. Regardless of how it comes about it must exist and its existence must be prevalent in our walk of Faith. It is that learned love, the love that is willed through the mind of man, to consider those of this earth over oneself. We find that sacrificing self for righteousness sake and sacrificing self for the benefit of others reflects humility of heart, a direction of purpose, and strength of hope found within the love of Christ who first loved us even to the point of death. Show me someone who has true love for God's people and I in turn will show you someone who illuminates to all those around them the true light found within Christ Jesus our Lord and Master.

## Lights Shining in Darkness

Ephriam Davis

**T**he inspired writer John opens his account of the gospel by clearly declaring the deity of Jesus Christ from the beginning by Him simultaneously being: (1) the Word, (2) with God, and (3) God. John 1:1-2, 14 In the same context John tells us that, *“life was in Him, that the life was the light of men, and the light shines in the darkness, but the darkness did not understand it.”* John 1:4-5 Jesus Christ of course is the true Light which gives light to every man. (John 1:9) The logical conclusion here: Jesus = Word = God = Light. In the physical realm, it is easy to understand that light disperses darkness. For example, when we walk through a door into a darkened room of an unfamiliar building, the first thing we naturally do is reach out our hand using the sense touch to hopefully find and turn on the light switch on the nearby wall. It is comforting to then have a light that shines in the darkness, as we are better able to see. We are then able to either find what we might be searching for or distinguish areas of safety from those of potential danger as we move about. Throughout scripture we find many examples where this simple physical analogy is used to explain how God, who is the spiritual light, disperses the darkness of sin. So what did John mean when he basically said *“the darkness did not understand it, (the light)?”* We will examine at least two scriptural explanations.

First, in just only 3 verses after John 3:16 which, as a side note, is probably the most quoted scripture passages in all of the Bible, the inspired writer makes some very striking

statements of truth. *“And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and **men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.** For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed.”* John 3:19-20 It is interesting to note that most rational thinking people don't like being in the dark. Generally, when we go to bed at night we might turn off the lights, so that we can more readily get to sleep. But we still typically find ourselves wanting to have a small night light on so that we can still see and be able to safely navigate through the darkened room should the need arise in the middle of the night. Most of us know of worldly people who “like to party” or even describe themselves as “party animals.” They actually host or participate in wild parties. They might even pay money to go to night club businesses where provocative music is played to promote “social” alcoholic drinking and sexually suggestive dancing. (1 Pet 4:3) These environments are always purposefully dimly lit to facilitate these activities, and create the perception in the minds of participants that their acts are hidden. It is common practice for managers of banks, shopping markets, insurance offices, and grocery stores to turn off lights at the end of a business day. In contrast, when it is closing time at night clubs, the business owner/operator actually turns on all of the lights. Why is this unique practice done? The night club owner unwittingly makes application of a principle of scripture *“...men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does*

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*not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed.”* John 3:19b-20 Therefore, it is easy to know what night club patrons do when the lights are turned on.

Second, the apostle Paul reminds us of “... *Moses, who put a veil over his face so that the children of Israel could not look steadily at the end of what was passing away. But **their minds were blinded (hardened)**. For until this day the same veil remains un-lifted in the reading of the Old Testament, because the veil is taken away in Christ. But even to this day, when Moses is read, a veil lies on their heart (mind). Nevertheless when one turns (repents) to the Lord, the veil is taken away.”* 2 Cor 3:13-16; Ex 34:33-35 In short, even with all of the written OT prophesies and clear evidence of NT fulfillment concerning the coming of Jesus Christ, many refused and still refuse to believe, repent, and confess Him in obedience of the gospel. Of course the Bible is its own best commentary, as Paul goes on to say, “*And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. The god of this age (the devil) has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. For we do not preach ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who said, Let light shine out of darkness,’ made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.”* 2 Cor 4:3-6 For example, earlier in this article, we mentioned John 3:16. It is often misapplied by most of those in this world who actually profess to be “Christians” as justification that

mental belief is the only requirement for salvation. Ironically, these same individuals will also add that a person should then “pray for Jesus to come into their heart to be saved”, which is something they **do without scriptural substantiation**. However, they are completely and often willfully blinded to some things that they actually should **do with scriptural substantiation**. In fact, Jesus Christ is also quoted earlier in this very same context as saying, “*Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.*” John 3:5 This is a clear teaching that baptism in water is equally a requirement for salvation.

Finally, not having certain knowledge or specific understanding is essentially another sense of being the dark. Centuries ago lighthouses were created and placed at strategic locations along the coast to help ships safely navigate into harbor and avoid crashing into dangerous rocks that might be along the shore. What rational person would drive their automobile in the dark at night without the benefit of lights? We turn on lights to help us see where we are going, stay on the road, and avoid collisions. In fact, within most cities we also have street lights to further help. Just as these lights disperse physical darkness to give us saving knowledge to guide us to where we want to go, the word of God gives us saving knowledge to disperse the spiritual darkness of sin to guide us to where we should want to go. “*For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light.*” Eph 5:8