

The People Who Walk in Darkness Will See a Great Light

Christmas Eve 2019

One of the many themes that run throughout the Christmas season is that of light. That has been our focus as we've moved through this advent season each week.

In Genesis 1, light was the first thing God called into being. In Isaiah 9, the prophet foretold that a unique Light would come into the world casting out all darkness:

Isaiah 9:2, 6-7 The people who walk in darkness will see a great light; Those who live in a dark land, The light will shine on them...**6** For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. **7** There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness From then on and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will accomplish this.

The apostle John begins his gospel account by proclaiming that the Light has come into the world, but that the world did not comprehend or receive it:

John 1:1-5 **1** In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. **2** He was in the beginning with God. **3** All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. **4** In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men. **5** The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it ... There was the true Light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man. ¹⁰ He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. ¹¹ He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him.

Yes, Light has always played an important role in God's account of His working in our world. It's a vivid image of His creative power making everything out of the darkness of nothingness. It represents so clearly the wonder of how the light of His presence and character penetrates and transforms all that it touches. We even see the confusion and resentment that can come to people whose lives stand in opposition to the piercing effects of light.

So far during this Advent season we've seen how:

- * Light Exposes
- * Light Casts Out Darkness
- * Light Warms, Cleanses, and Aids Healing

And tonight we're going to see how:

- * Light Illumines or Gives Direction

4. Light Illumines

Some may be asking how this principle, Illumination, differs from our first principle of light exposing. The major difference is that exposition deals with the bringing to light, or explanation, of something currently or previously hidden (i.e. a secret sin, a bad habit or lifestyle, a grudge, etc.).

Dan 2:22 "It is He who reveals the profound and hidden things; He knows what is in the darkness, And the light dwells with Him. **23** "To You, O God of my fathers, I give thanks and praise, For You have given me wisdom and power..."

Ps 139:12 Even the darkness is not dark to You, And the night is as bright as the day. Darkness and light are alike to You.

On the other hand, illumination carries with it the idea of projecting clarity into the darkness which still lies somewhere beyond us on our journey (i.e. paths vs. detours, obstacles vs. barriers, friends vs. foes, etc.). This principle of light speaks to its ability to shine beyond our current location and limitations, granting insight and wisdom needed for the future.

Job 29:2 "Oh that I were as in months gone by, As in the days when God watched over me; **3** When His lamp shone over my head, And by His light I walked through darkness;

Proverbs 6:23 For the commandment is a lamp and the teaching is light; And reproofs for discipline are the way of life

Is 42:16 "I will lead the blind by a way they do not know, In paths they do not know I will guide them. I will make darkness into light before them And rugged places into plains. These are the things I will do, And I will not leave them undone."

Many years ago, on the coast of Normandy, a lighthouse keeper lived with his two children in a lighthouse. One day, the lighthouse keeper went to the shore for provisions. While he was gone, a storm arose. He was unable to return to the lighthouse.

The time for lighting the lamp came. Mary said to her little brother, "We must light the lamp, Billy." The two children climbed the long, narrow stairs to the tower where the lamp was kept. Mary pulled up a chair and tried to reach the lamp in the great reflector, but it was too high for her to reach. She went down the stairs and came back with a small lamp in her hand. "I will hold this up," she said, "so the sailors can see a light." Again, she climbed on the chair, but the reflector was too high to catch the light.

"Get down," said Billy, "I know what to do." Mary jumped down, and Billy got on the chair. "Stand on top of me," he said. Mary stood on her brother, and then she raised the little lamp high. The reflector caught its light, and the light shone far out across the water. She held the lamp first with one hand, and then with the other to rest her arms. Then she said to her brother, "Does it hurt you, Billy?" "Of course it hurts," he said, "but we must keep the light burning!"

This was precisely the heart of our Father God, shortly after the fall of mankind in Eden. Genesis 3 tells us that from that point, in the midst of this newly introduced darkness, a plan was formulated to introduce a restorative light to the world.

Gen 3:15 And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, And you shall bruise him on the heel."

And as the years passed, man's condition worsened, and their need became even more desperate. Blindness and darkness consumed them.

Job 5:14 "By day they meet with darkness, And grope at noon as in the night.

Job 12:24 "He deprives of intelligence the chiefs of the earth's people And makes them wander in a pathless waste. **25**

"They grope in darkness with no light, And He makes them stagger like a drunken man.

Jeremiah 17:9 "The heart is more deceitful than all else And is desperately sick; Who can understand it?"

Then, "in the fullness of time", the Father sent His Son, Jesus, to redeem a sin-darkened world. He came to a people with hearts that were dark and sick, eyes blinded by their own pride, and spirits bound by the empty regulations of the law.

Gal 4:3 So also we, while we were children, were held in bondage under the elemental things of the world. 4 But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, 5 so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.

And when Jesus arrived, He brought all of the splendor and brilliance of heaven with Him.

Col 2:9 For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form, 10 and in Him you have been made complete, and He is the head over all rule and authority;

But sadly, most did not recognize either the source of this light, the purpose it served, nor the aid it was intended to bring.

John 1:4-5 In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men. 5 The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.

2 Cor 4:3 And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, 4 in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. 5 For we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your bond-servants for Jesus' sake. 6 For God, who said, "Light shall shine out of darkness," is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.

Oh, what love, what hope, what wisdom, what glory is available to all who allow the light of Jesus to shine in their hearts. But what darkness overshadows those who selfishly, stubbornly refuse.

John 12:35 So Jesus said to them, "For a little while longer the Light is among you. Walk while you have the Light, so that darkness will not overtake you; he who walks in the darkness does not know where he goes. 36 "While you have the Light, believe in the Light, so that you may become sons of Light."

The scary truth exists, however. We do not know for sure how long the transforming light of Christ will be available before His second return, ending all opportunity for the lost. And how long will the healing and restorative light of Jesus be available for those hurting believers who desire to see their lives and relationships made new. Or how long before the empowering, sanctifying light of the Son of God will be available to direct the child of God before that Day of Accountability? We do not know! So we must pursue this illuminating light of Jesus TODAY, while it is still called today.