

The Light of the World

In the spring of each year, God's children know that they must be careful to avoid pagan sunrise celebrations. However, as Passover approaches, we must recognize Jesus Christ as the brilliant Sun of righteousness who, at the time prophesied of by Malachi, will arise with healing in His wings to those who have a proper fear for God's name:

But to you who fear my name the Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in His wings; (Malachi 4:2)

In this Bible study, I would like to discuss in more detail the New Testament's focus on the importance of spiritual light to every child of God. In order to partake of God's Passover in a worthy manner (I Corinthians 11:27-29), we must examine ourselves aided by the brilliant illumination of the Sun of Righteousness.

Behold the Lamb of God!

First let us put the focus where it belongs – on Jesus Christ – the Light of the world. My first motivation for this Bible study was Mark Schindler's inspiring 1999 pre-Passover sermonette, "Behold the Lamb of God." To repeat the main point from Mark's sermonette: When examining oneself before Passover – and at any other time – we must have the priority of looking at and to the Lamb of God. We are to be looking at Jesus Christ! We are to be comparing ourselves with Him. We are to be examining ourselves by His light. Why?

That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world. (John 1:9)

Jesus Christ was and is the true Light. He is the Sun of Righteousness, the Light of the world, the Giver of light. He has enough light in Him to lighten every man – every human being who ever lived.

And He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light. (Matthew 17:2)

Peter, James and John literally beheld the Lamb of God and witnessed His brilliance first-hand. In the vision commonly known as the Transfiguration, these three disciples were privileged to be given a peek into the future – a glimpse at what Jesus Christ looks like right now. His face shone like the sun. Have you ever tried looking at the sun? Even at sunset or during a solar eclipse, the experts warn against looking directly at the sun. Yet we are commanded to "behold the Lamb of God." Even Jesus' clothes appeared as white as the light. The word "light" here is translated from the Greek word *phos*, which can mean light, lamp, fire or – very appropriately – star:

I, Jesus... am the Root and the Offspring of David, the Bright and Morning Star. (Revelation 22:16)

Some stars are actually much hotter and brighter than our sun. Referring again to Matthew 17:2, the word *phos* was derived from another Greek word *phao*, which means *to shine* or *to make manifest*:

Jesus answered, "Neither has this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him. I must work the works of Him that sent me, while it is day: the night comes, when no man can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world. (John 9:3-5)

What does the word "manifest" mean? Although it is not frequently used in modern, everyday language, it is often used in New Testament scriptures. There are fifty occurrences in the King James Version. The word is translated from the Greek word *phaneroo*, and it means *apparent, clear, distinct, evident, obvious, plain, unmistakable* and *visible*.

Jesus said these words – recorded here in chapter 9 of John's gospel account – as He was healing a man who had been blind since birth. God had evidently caused this man to be blind since birth so that his experience and healing could be used to teach God's people a lesson regarding the great difference between spiritual darkness and light. The blind man had suffered in physical darkness all his life, and now Jesus was bringing physical light to him. Notice that the works of God are again linked to the light of God. What is the work of God if not to bring His spiritual light into this spiritually dark world?

Jesus said that He must do His Father's work during the period of spiritual daytime – the short time He had been allotted to sojourn in the world as a human being. He warned that spiritual night – relative spiritual darkness – would return to the world after His departure. His work in this window of opportunity, however, was to give spiritual eyesight and spiritual light to those who had been spiritually blind and in spiritual darkness, but who were willing to follow Him, believe on Him, and accept His offer of spiritual eyesight and light:

Then Jesus cried out and said, "He who believes in Me, believes not in Me but in Him who sent Me. And he who sees Me sees Him who sent Me. I have come as a light into the world, that whoever believes in Me should not abide in darkness." (John 12:44-46)

He who sees Jesus Christ also sees God the Father. Once again:

He who has seen me has seen the Father; (John 14:9)

Do we have spiritual eyesight? Do we see Jesus Christ? Do we see God the Father? Do we see God?

Jesus came as the Light so that, through Him, we are able to see God. If we believe on the Light of the world, we do not have to live in spiritual darkness. Let us now go back to chapter 3:

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)

What is the condemnation that Jesus is talking about here? It is translated from the Greek word *krisis*, which can also be translated as *judgment* (its most common translation), *accusation*, or *damnation*. Jesus is clearly telling us here that spiritual light came into the world through Him; but because their deeds were evil, men (the majority of mankind is implied) were deceived by Satan into a preference for spiritual darkness. Evildoers hate spiritual light. They will not go to the Light of the world to have their works examined and judged in His brilliance. But we – His brothers and sisters – *must* do so.

The people who sat in darkness have seen a great light, and upon those who sat in the region and 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." (Matthew 4:16-17)

Although the law of God had been made available to the people of Israel, their continual rejection of His way of life caused them, before this time, to remain in spiritual darkness, under the shadow of death. The Light of God dawned at the beginning of Jesus' ministry. As Matthew had mentioned in verse 14, Jesus quoted this scripture from the book of Isaiah 9:2:

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, upon them a light has shined.

Returning to the New Testament:

Through the tender mercy of our God, with which the Dayspring from on high has visited us; to give light to those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace. (Luke 1:78-79)

This was part of the prophecy of Zacharias, with which he was inspired shortly after the birth of his son, John the Baptist. The English word "Dayspring" is translated from the Greek word *anatole*, which means *a rising* – as of a rising of the sun or the stars. The word is derived from another Greek word, *anatello*, which is translated in Matthew 4:16 as "dawned" (NKJV) or "is sprung up" (KJV). The Dayspring was, of course, Jesus Christ, the Sun of Righteousness. He had visited Elizabeth and John (and possibly Zacharias, as well) while both John and the human Jesus were still in the wombs of their mothers. Zacharias also included the prophecy of Isaiah 9:2 (quoted above) in his own prophecy. He was inspired to foresee that the Dayspring would give light to the world that was sitting in darkness and under the shadow of death, and that, with the illumination of Jesus' inherent light, He would guide those who believed on and obeyed Him into the way of peace.

A light to lighten [NKJV: to bring revelation to] the Gentiles, and the glory of your people Israel. (Luke 2:32)

As Zacharias had prophesied shortly after the birth of his son, John the Baptist, so the righteous, devout and Spirit-filled Simeon prophesied shortly after the birth of Jesus Christ. He foresaw that, not only would Jesus be a Light to bring glory to Israel, but He would also bring spiritual light and revelation to the Gentiles.

In Him 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 [John] was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. That [Jesus] was the true Light, which gives light to every man coming into the world. (John 1:4-9)

The apostle John puts much emphasis here on Jesus being the Light of the world. Jesus' inherent light came from His inherent eternal life. As mentioned in scriptures that we have already examined, His light shone through the darkness that reigned on the earth up until His first coming.

Although it is true that the world and its spiritual darkness did not (and still do not) understand the Light of God, the English word "comprehend" is probably not the best translation of the Greek word *katalambano* in this case. It might be better given one of its alternate translations, "overcame," "taken," "apprehended," or "overtook." Satan and his darkness were powerless to overcome the Light brought to the earth by Jesus Christ.

God sent John the Baptist, shortly before the beginning of Jesus' ministry – not to *be* the Light, but to be a witness of the Light. He was not an after-the-fact witness sent to report on Jesus' ministry of light *after* it took place. God called Matthew, Mark, Luke and John to do that job. John the Baptist was sent and inspired to prophesy of Jesus' ministry *before* it took place. He was sent as a present-day (for that time) prophet to remind those who remained in the physical territory of Israel of the long-existing prophecies concerning the Light of the world – prophecies that had been spoken and written for hundreds of years previously by the great Old Testament prophets. John was sent so that, when these prophecies were fulfilled, his inspired words would still be ringing in the ears and minds of his listeners. It is highly likely that some of John's listeners were among the pioneer members of the early church of God.

**Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, "I am the light of the world. He who follows me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life."
(John 8:12)**

Jesus again proclaims that it is He who is the Light of the world. In John 1:4, we read that Jesus said that His inherent eternal life was the light of men. Now He adds to this and tells us that those who follow Him will not be consigned to darkness but that, like Him, they too can have the light of eternal life. What an offer! What a promise!

**Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours in the day? If anyone walks in the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world. But if one walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him."
(John 11:9-10)**

Jesus' disciples were surprised when He told them that He would return to Judaea so soon after the Jews had attempted to stone Him. Jesus' reply to His disciples indicates that there must have been some inference in their question that they were surprised that He would return to Judaea in broad daylight. He turned their question into another lesson, emphasizing to them that He is the Light of the world, that men would not stumble if they walked in the spiritual daytime, illuminated by the Light of the world. He also told them that, conversely, men who walk in spiritual night-time, not illuminated by the Light of the world, are likely to stumble because the light is not in them. Jesus implies here that men who are illuminated by the Light of the world will become imbued with that very same light.

This is the final "light" scripture in the gospel accounts. The next time we read of the Light of the world, He is confronting Saul:

As he journeyed he came near Damascus, and suddenly a light shone around him from heaven. Then he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?" And he said, "Who are you, Lord?" Then the Lord said, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. It is hard for you to kick against the goads." (Acts 9:3-5)

Saul was, of course, greatly shocked by this great Light from heaven. He previously thought that, as a Pharisee, he had possessed a great measure of spiritual light; but, in order to teach him a strong, never-to-be-forgotten lesson that he had actually been living in spiritual darkness, Jesus gave Saul a glimpse of His heavenly light and took away his physical eyesight for three days:

Then Saul arose from the ground, and when his eyes were opened he saw no one. But they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus. And he was three days without sight, and neither ate nor drank... "And in a vision he has seen a man named Ananias coming in and putting his hand on him, so that he might receive his sight"... And Ananias went his way and entered the house; and laying his hands on him he said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you came, has sent me that you may receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit." Immediately there fell from his eyes something like scales, and he received his sight at once; and he arose and was baptized. (Acts 9:8-9, 12, 17-18)

The Light of this world gave Saul back his physical eyesight at the instant that He gave him the spiritual light of His Holy Spirit. For the remainder of Saul's life, this astounding encounter with the Light of the world never strayed far from the forefront of his mind:

"Now it happened, as I journeyed and came near Damascus at about noon, suddenly a great light from heaven shone around me... And those who were with me indeed saw the light and were afraid, but they did not hear the voice of Him who spoke to me... And since I could not see for the glory of that light, being led by the hand of those who were with me, I came into Damascus." (Acts 22:6, 9, 11)

Saul – now the apostle Paul and under arrest for the Christian doctrines he was preaching – recounts to his captors the startling events of His conversion and adds some more details about how it had affected him. He certainly had not forgotten the great impression that the great Light had upon him. Like the effect of shining a brilliant light into the eyes of a man in a previously dark room, the glory of the Light of God had blinded Saul for three days.

"At midday, O king, along the road I saw a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, shining around me and those who journeyed with me." (Acts 26:13)

Paul, again under arrest, repeats the account of his conversion to King Agrippa. Again, he adds a little more detail about his meeting with Jesus Christ. He told Agrippa that the Light of God was even brighter than the sun. It is evident that, to Paul, the brilliant Light of God was one of the most unforgettable things about the events of that remarkable day. He continued by telling Agrippa about the work Jesus Christ, the Light of God, gave him to do:

**‘But rise and stand on your feet; for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to make you a minister and a witness both of the things which you have seen and of the things which I will yet reveal to you. I will deliver you from the Jewish people, as well as from the Gentiles, to whom I now send you, to open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me.’
(Acts 26:16-18)**

Jesus had, on that memorable day, commanded Saul to take His light to the Gentiles, to turn them from their spiritual darkness, and to open their eyes, which had been blinded for millennia by the power of Satan. Continuing:

"Therefore, having obtained help from God, to this day I stand, witnessing both to small and great, saying no other things than those which the prophets and Moses said would come - that the Christ would suffer, that He would be the first to rise from the dead, and would proclaim light to the Jewish people and to the Gentiles." (Acts 26:22-23)

Paul concluded his defence by telling Agrippa that he had not preached anything other than what was foretold by Moses and the prophets. For example, here are three prophecies on the bringing of spiritual light to the Gentiles:

I, the LORD, have called you in righteousness, and will hold your hand; I will keep you and give you as a covenant to the people, as a light to the Gentiles. (Isaiah 42:6)

Indeed He says, ‘It is too small a thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will also give you as a light to the Gentiles, that you should be my salvation to the ends of the earth.’ (Isaiah 49:6)

The Gentiles shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising. (Isaiah 60:3)

Returning to the New Testament and now to Paul's epistles:

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. (II Corinthians 4:2-6)

Paul's thoughts and teachings were so very much affected by the great lesson Jesus Christ had given him by revealing His glory and His light to him and by inflicting him with three days of blindness. All of God's true children, Paul writes here, have renounced hidden things and commend themselves in God's sight by the manifestation (the revealing and clarification) of the truth. The light of the true and glorious gospel of Christ is hidden from those whose minds are blinded by Satan. God is the one who commanded His Light to shine in the spiritually dark world. The Light of God had shone into Paul's heart and mind, and into the hearts and minds of his brethren. God had given them the light of the knowledge of His glory in the face of Jesus Christ – a face that Paul had seen in person.

Who alone has immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see, to whom be honour and everlasting power. (I Timothy 6:16)

Who is the only One who has immortality? The previous verses (13-15) of this chapter tell us that it is Jesus Christ – the King of kings and Lord of lords. He dwells in a magnitude of light that no human being is able even to go near. Paul knew firsthand that this was true. No man can look upon the unfiltered light of God and survive the experience. Like Moses, Paul had experienced a limited glimpse of that light and, even though its intensity had probably been dimmed in order to preserve Paul's life, he had described it as being more brilliant than the sun. That light contains and represents God's eternal power and honour.

But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who has abolished death, and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel: (II Timothy 1:10 KJV)

Yet more making manifest! What is made manifest by Jesus' appearance? Paul is writing about the testimony and gospel of God (see verse 8). He was telling Timothy (verse 9) not to attempt to hide these things, nor to be ashamed of them. If he did try to hide these things, Paul warns, he would be working against the illumination, revelation and clarification of them that was brought about by the coming of Jesus Christ, who came to this earth to abolish the darkness of death and to bring the light of eternal life. We too must be shining lights and examples of God's way of life.

God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, (Hebrews 1:1-3)

The English term "express image" is translated from the single Greek word *charakter*. In this instance it means the exact expression of any person or thing, the precise reproduction in every respect. Jesus Christ is the express image – the clear image or manifestation – of His Father. Jesus teaches this fact to His disciples in John 14:7-11. He is the brightness of His Father's glory.

Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning. (James 1:17)

Notice that, just like His holy Son, God the Father is total Light. Neither of them has any shadows or dark spots whatsoever. The apostle John has the same view as James on this point:

The life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us... 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. (I John 1:2, 5)

Think about this! John had seen eternal life. And John had seen the light of God. Because of the different timing of their calling, John had somewhat different experiences with the Light of God than those Paul had, as we have already seen. But John too had been given a glimpse of the brilliance of the Light of the world. Together with Peter and James, John was present at Jesus' transfiguration. Also, he had seen Jesus immediately after His resurrection, and he had seen Him ascend to heaven in a cloud. John had been blessed to see, with his own eyes, these wondrous manifestations of eternal life. He had seen the Son of God who had dwelt – and now dwells again – in the inexpressibly glorious presence of God the Father. John makes some plain statements here. He tells us that God is pure light and that He has no trace of darkness in Him whatsoever. John was later blessed with a whole series of visions of the blindingly brilliant, glorified Christ:

And in the midst of the seven lampstands One like the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the feet and girded about the chest with a golden band. His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes like a flame of fire; His feet were like fine brass, as if refined in a furnace, and His voice as the sound of many waters; He had in His right hand seven stars, out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and His countenance was like the sun shining in its strength. (Revelation 1:13-16)

Here is John's description of the glorified Christ. So much of his portrayal focuses on brightness and light. We have already seen that Jesus' face and garments shine brighter than the sun. John gives us more details. Jesus wears a golden girdle or sash. Pure gold reflects light like no other metal. His head and hair are as white as wool or snow. Have you ever tried to look at snow on a sunny winter's day without sunglasses? It is blindingly bright. The snow reflects the brilliance of the sun and even reflects some of the ultra-violet light, giving it a slight blue tinge. Jesus' eyes are like a flame of fire. They are probably like a very hot – perhaps white hot – fire with very bright flames. His feet are like fine brass, so brilliant that they look as though they are burning in a very hot furnace. He has seven stars in His right hand. Many stars are much brighter than our sun and so, of course, are the angels that these stars symbolize. Finally, John reminds us that Jesus' face shines like the noonday sun in full strength. Everything about Him is brilliance and light.

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 honour into it. Its gates shall not be shut at all by day (there shall be no night there). (Revelation 21:23-25)

The brilliance and glory of God the Father and Jesus Christ – the Light of the world – will make the comparatively dim light of the sun and moon obsolete in the Holy City. The nations of the saved will be blessed to be able to live in the brilliant light of God and His Holy City. The future submission, obedience and obeisance of the world's kings to the Great God will add even more brightness and glory to the New Jerusalem. The city will be permanently accessible and the ever-present Light of God will ensure that there will never be night or darkness there.

And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb... 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. (Revelation 22:1, 4-5)

Here is something else that is as clear as crystal and also reflects the Light of God. This river of life that John is describing here will flow out of God's throne-room. As I was eating breakfast on the lovely sunny morning of the day that I was writing this Bible study, I was looking out of our dining room window at the creek meandering through the trees at the back of our property. There are very few sights more beautiful than the morning sunlight twinkling from the pure water of a crystal-clear stream.

At the time John is referring to here, God's servants will be able to look upon His face without dying. How? Because we too will then be born sons and daughters of God the Father and brothers and sisters of Jesus Christ. Like them, we then will possess eternal life and we will have their light living in us and radiating from us – totally! We will discuss this area in more detail later in the study.

John repeats that there will be no night in the Holy City and tells us that candles, lamps, and even sunshine will be obsolete, because the Light of God will provide more than enough illumination.

Called out of Darkness into His Light

Now that we have laid the foundation of our study based on the fact that God the Father is the Originator of all light and that Jesus Christ is the Light of the world, let us look at some scriptures in which God commands His children to come out of the spiritual darkness of Satan's world and into His spiritual light.

But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that you should show forth the praises of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvellous light: (I Peter 2:9)

Why are God's people looked upon as a chosen generation? Why are we a royal priesthood? Why are we a holy nation? Why are we a peculiar people? Here is the answer. Here is the reason. So that we may show forth – or make manifest – praise to the Great God.

God has called us out of spiritual darkness and into His marvellous, wonderful, admirable, excellent light. The Greek word for "marvellous" is *thaumastos* and can also mean that the Light of God is humanly incomprehensible, extraordinary, striking, and surprising.

And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts; (II Peter 1:19)

Peter advises God's children that we will do well to take heed of the sure word of prophecy (KJV) which has been solidly confirmed. He compares this word of prophecy to a light that shines in a dark place. Peter was not writing this letter to unconverted people who were still awaiting the light that conversion brings. Verse 1 of this epistle states that he was writing "to those who have obtained (*past tense*) like precious faith with us by the righteousness of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ."

The dark place, of course, is Satan's world. The light is the light that God's children should use to illuminate our paths until the darkness of this age of man is over – when the Day of the Lord dawns. At the beginning of that day, the Morning Star (KJV: Daystar) will arise in our hearts and we will be filled with the Light of God.

And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations... as I also have received from My Father; and I will give him the morning star. (Revelation 2:26-28)

Here, Jesus promises that He will share the brightness of the Morning Star with His brothers and sisters who overcome and keep His works until the end of this age of darkness.

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 His Son cleanses us from all sin. (I John 1:6-7)

John gives a solemn warning to God's people here. He warns us that, if we claim to have fellowship with God but continue to walk in our pre-conversion darkness, God will look upon us as liars. If, on the other hand, we will constantly strive to walk in the same light that God is in – and that is in God – then we will have fellowship (through Him) with our fellow Christians, and He will cleanse us from all sin through the blood of Jesus Christ. In chapter 2 of this, his first epistle, John continues to discuss the Light of God and delivers a second stern warning from God:

Again, a new commandment I write to you, which thing is true in Him and in you, because the darkness is passing away, and the true light is already shining. He who says he is in the light, and hates his brother, is in darkness until now. He who loves his brother abides in the light, and there is no cause for stumbling in him. But he who hates his brother is in darkness and walks in darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes. (I John 2:8-11)

John's words here hold a very similar message to that which we read in chapter 1. For those who are called, the deep spiritual darkness that preceded the coming of the true Light of the world is now consigned to the past. Also, for each individual Christian, the spiritual darkness that covered every one of us before our conversion was consigned to the past when the Light of God came into our lives. But beware! Through John, God warns us – twice for emphasis – that if we claim to have the Light of God illuminating our lives, but are harbouring hatred for even one of our brethren, then we do not have God's light in us. Rather, we are spiritually blind, we are still in spiritual darkness, not knowing where we are going, and we are therefore very likely to stumble. But if we truly love all of our brethren, we are living in the illumination of the Light of God, which protects us from any possibility of stumbling.

God's people must retransmit His light

How far that little candle throws his beams! So shines a good deed in a naughty world. (*Shakespeare*)

In fibre-optic telephone cables, voice, internet and other signals are converted into high-speed pulses of light using high-intensity lasers. But every hundred miles or so the light becomes dim and the signals must be reproduced, regenerated, and made brilliant again. Even though we are human and imperfect, we are the begotten children of God the Father and brothers and sisters of Jesus Christ. As such, we are to absorb, reflect and reproduce the light that they have put within us. Here are some scriptures in which we are commanded to retransmit the Light of God:

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

No man, when he hath lighted a candle, covers it with a vessel, or puts it under a bed; but sets it on a candlestick, that they which enter in may see the light. For nothing is secret, that shall not be made manifest; neither any thing hid, that shall not be known and come abroad. (Luke 8:16-17)

No one, when he has lit a lamp, puts it in a secret place or under a basket, but on a lampstand, that those who come in may see the light. (Luke 11:33)

As we have already read in John 8:12 and 9:5, Jesus tells us that He is the Light of the world. But in Matthew's gospel account, Jesus tells His disciples that they too are the light of the world. And by extension, because we are His brothers and sisters and His end-time disciples, He is also telling us that we too are the light of the world.

Jesus then continues by telling us how to utilize the spiritual light that He is giving to us. We are not to hide His light in us like someone putting a candle under a bowl, a bed or a basket. Did you ever notice, by the way, that a potential fire hazard is implied in these latter two examples? We are to intentionally make His light manifest. We are to put it on display like someone putting their candles where they belong – on a candlestick.

More interesting questions arise from these verses: Who is Jesus referring to as "all who are in the house," "they which enter in," "those who come in," and the "men" to whom we are to let God's light in us shine unto? Yes, God's people – those who are already in His house or household. But is Jesus referring only to those who are in God's church at this time? Or does this grouping include all of our non-church friends, neighbours and associates as well as our brethren? I would think probably the latter. The setting of the light on a candlestick or lampstand seems to refer most specifically to those who are already in God's household. But what about the city that is set on a hill? What is the symbolism here? We can imagine a city on a hill consisting of many Christian homes – each with its lamps burning brightly on their lampstands. If all of these Christian homes keep their curtains and blinds open, how will that city appear to passing or approaching night-time travellers? What a welcoming sight it will be!

Although it is right, of course, for us to take care about discussing God's precious truth with non-members (Matthew 7:6), it would be hypocrisy for us to behave very differently with non-members than we do with church members. We can shine God's light most effectively by treating *everyone* with the utmost friendliness, courtesy and respect.

We are to let His light in us shine before men. This implies allowing it to shine in a natural, proper and humble way – not in a forced, artificial and vain manner. We are to let His light in us shine before men so that they may *see* our good works. Notice that Jesus does not say that we are to let it shine before men so that they may *hear* our good words. It has been said many times in reference to these verses that a good light does not make any noise! A light that makes noise – as some fluorescent lights do – can be very irritating and annoying. If God is calling a person and that person is attracted by the shining light and good example of God's children, that person will seek the inspired words of those He has called as His human spokesmen. Continuing:

The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness! (Matthew 6:22-23)

The lamp of the body is the eye. Therefore, when your eye is good, your whole body also is full of light. But when your eye is bad, your body also is full of darkness. Therefore take heed that the light which is in you is not darkness. If then your whole body is full of light, having no part dark, the whole body will be full of light, as when the bright shining of a lamp gives you light. (Luke 11:34-36)

Jesus tells us here that one's whole body will be full of light if his eye is good or, as the King James Version has it: "single." Obviously, Jesus is not saying that one's physical vision will be better if he only has one eye. If that were true He would have designed and created every human being like the mythical Cyclops! This archaic usage of the English word "single" is translated here from the Greek word *haplous*, which can also be translated as "simple," "whole," "sound," or "good fulfilling its office." So one's whole body will be full of light if his eyes are healthy, whole, undamaged, sound, fulfilling their office, and doing their job.

But, Jesus continues by saying that, if one's eyes are bad (KJV: evil), his body will be full of darkness. How can a person's eyes be bad or evil? The word is translated from the Greek word *poneros*, which can also be translated into the English "diseased" or "blind."

Jesus concludes this section by emphasizing the point that, if one's vision is no better than darkness, then how great that darkness is. Only a blind person can, in the physical sense, completely understand what Jesus is saying here.

Physical light and visual information enters our brains and minds through our physical eyes and their peripheral equipment, which includes the optic nerves and the pineal gland. The pineal gland is a remarkable little organ. In humans it is shaped like a pinecone, hence its name. But in some animals, it is shaped like an eye, and in a *very* few animals (some lizards including the tuatara) it actually *is* a third eye! The human pineal gland is situated at the place where the two optic nerves cross and it is designed to be very sensitive to light and darkness – or rather to the signals of light and darkness passed to it from the optic nerves. When it senses darkness, the pineal gland produces melatonin, which causes its owner's mind and body to shut down and to go to sleep. When it senses light, the pineal gland stops its melatonin production and induces us to wake up. Now that you know why it was hard for you to keep your eyes open when the auditorium lights were switched off during Mr. Armstrong's Feast telecasts, you no longer need to feel guilty!

René Descartes, a 17th Century French mathematician, scientist, and philosopher held some very interesting views on the importance of the pineal gland, which are somewhat relevant to our study. From Encyclopædia Britannica:

According to Descartes, a human being is a union of mind and body, two dissimilar substances that interact in the pineal gland. He reasoned that the pineal gland must be the uniting point because it is the only non-double organ in the brain, and double reports, as from two eyes, must have one place to merge. He argued that each action on a person's sense organs causes subtle matter to move through tubular nerves to the pineal gland, causing it to vibrate distinctively. These vibrations give rise to emotions and passions and also cause the body to act. Bodily action is thus the final outcome of a reflex arc that begins with external stimuli and involves first an internal response, as, for example, when a soldier sees the enemy, feels fear, and flees. The mind cannot change bodily reactions directly – for example, it cannot will the body to fight – but it can change the pineal vibrations from those that cause fear and fleeing to those that cause courage and fighting. Descartes furthermore argued that men can be conditioned by experience to have specific emotional responses.

We will return to Descartes' point that the pineal gland is "the uniting point between the mind and the body because it is the only non-double organ in the brain." Although not totally accurate, Descartes' conclusions were brilliant for his time and are somewhat similar to the conditioning that CGG minister Martin Collins discussed in his [February 17, 2001 sermon on Response Conditioning](#). With the results of all the recent studies, it is impossible to deny that information that enters our brains through our eyes – whether from movies, television, the Internet, books, magazines, newspapers or real life – has a direct influence on what we do. Jesus warns us that if we fill our eyes with evil things our minds and bodies will be filled with spiritual darkness.

But Jesus was not just telling His followers to keep their physical eyes healthy and free from evil sights. He was making a very important spiritual point, which is related to all His other teachings on the subject of spiritual light and darkness. Returning again to the Greek word *haplous*, this Greek word can quite rightly be used in the spiritual and ethical sense as well as the numerical sense. Although used infrequently today, the terms "single," "singular," "singularity," "double" and "duplicity" – referring not to numbers, but to human character – were very common in pre-twentieth century English. In this sense, the word "single" means sincere, unswerving in purpose or intention, and the word "singular" means unique, extraordinary, remarkable, uncommon, peculiar (See Titus 2:14 and I Peter 2:9), unusual or not customary. On the other hand, "double" means two-faced or hypocritical and "duplicity" means double-dealing, treachery, trickiness or deceitfulness. Moving on:

So the master commended the unjust steward because he had dealt shrewdly. For the sons of this world are more shrewd in their generation than the sons of light. (Luke 16:8)

Jesus tells us that, during this age of darkness, the people of the world are more worldly-wise than are God's people – those who are imbued with the light of God. This implies that the light of God is not designed to give worldly wisdom, but rather to give the more transcendent wisdom and knowledge of spiritual things. Knowledge and wisdom of spiritual matters is, even in this age, of much more value than worldly wisdom, and it certainly will be more valuable in the World Tomorrow (Matthew 6:19-34).

But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God. (John 3:21 KJV)

If we want to be doers of God's Truth, Law and Word (Romans 2:13, James 1:22-25), we must take our deeds to the true Light and ask Him to illuminate them, to examine them, to make clear their origin, and to correct us as necessary. The true Light will show us that our deeds of truth are really not our own, but rather that they are works of God done through the light of His Holy Spirit shining in us. Our deeds will be "wrought in God" if we willingly bend them and shape them – like wrought iron – according to His guidance and correction. We must take our deeds to God for examination during the time of self-examination prior to Passover, and on an ongoing, year-round basis.

You have sent to John, and he has borne witness to the truth... He was the burning and shining lamp, and you were willing for a time to rejoice in his light. (John 5:33, 35)

Jesus pointed the Jews who were then persecuting Him to John the Baptist as a superb example of a brilliant spiritual lamp, burning and shining with the light of God. Jesus reminded these Jews that, for a short time, at least some among them had been willing to rejoice in the spiritual light that God was shining through John. Considering that John was very like the prophets Jeremiah, Elijah and even the Messiah Himself (Matthew 16:13-14; Mark 6:14-20; James 5:16-17), we too should look at John's example and endeavour to emulate it.

For so the Lord has commanded us: 'I have set you as a light to the Gentiles, that you should be for salvation to the ends of the earth.' (Acts 13:47)

This was Paul and Barnabas speaking to the envious Jews of Antioch who were contradicting the truth that the two apostles were preaching. God had begun to use the two as lamps to shine His light of salvation to the Gentiles around the world. Paul and Barnabas were quoting here from Isaiah 49:6:

Indeed He says, 'It is too small a thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will also give you as a light to the Gentiles, that you should be my salvation to the ends of the earth.'

So we have seen that God calls, chooses and uses human beings to retransmit His spiritual light.

Children and inheritors of light

God also teaches us that, like Jesus, we too should be children of light; and if children, then inheritors (Romans 8:17) – of light:

Then Jesus said to them, "A little while longer the light is with you. Walk while you have the light, lest darkness overtake you; he who walks in darkness does not know where he is going. While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light." These things Jesus spoke, and departed, and was hidden from them. (John 12:35-36)

Jesus told His unbelieving listeners that they would only have the benefit of His spiritual light in person for a short time. He advised them to avoid spiritual darkness by beginning to walk (i.e. to *act* upon His words) while He was with them in person – while His light was present to illuminate their path. He told them that those who walk in spiritual darkness are like blind men who don't know where they are going and are stumbling around. Again, He strongly advised them to believe in Him as the Light while they had the benefit of His illuminating presence. He promised them that, if they did believe in Him as the Light, they would become brothers and fellow-heirs (Romans 8:17) with Him – children of the Light. This promise is extended to all of those who will truly believe in His light.

But is mere belief the only requirement for us to become children of light? No. Jesus says that we are to *walk* while we have the Light. Walking requires action and effort. The apostle Paul agrees with his Lord on this:

For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light (for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth), finding out what is acceptable to the Lord. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them. For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret. But all things that are exposed are made manifest by the light, for whatever makes manifest is light. Therefore He says: "Awake,

**you who sleep, arise from the dead, and Christ will give you light."
(Ephesians 5:8-14)**

Paul wrote these things to the members of the Ephesus congregation in the First Century AD, but his words are just as applicable to the modern congregations of God's church around the world. Paul told the Ephesians that, before their conversion they were darkness personified, just like all the other people in the world; but since their conversion, they had become light through Jesus Christ. This being the case, he told them, they were to walk as children of light. And so must we.

Paul then equates spiritual light with goodness, righteousness and truth – some of the *fruits* of God's Holy Spirit. He warns us to stay away from and to expose the works of spiritual darkness, which he equates with *unfruitful* works. Also, as Paul had also warned the Corinth congregation (II Corinthians 4:2-6), he warns us that we must renounce and stay far away from evil things that are hidden and done in secret. He tells us that all of those hidden works of darkness, which their doers believe are being done in secret, will eventually be made manifest:

**Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God.
(I Corinthians 4:5 KJV)**

They will be illuminated and exposed by the light of God. He tells us that the light of God exposes, illuminates and clarifies all things and that, conversely, whatever exposes, illuminates and clarifies is light. Of course, Paul is writing about clarification and exposure for God's purpose, according to His will, and in a godly, proper and appropriate manner – not for the purposes of unrighteous judging or gossip-mongering.

Paul then (in Ephesians 5:14) quotes God as saying, "Awake, you who sleep, arise from the dead, and Christ will give you light" and he writes that the foregoing is why God said these words. Commentators differ as to which scripture this is cited from. The three main suggestions put forward, all in the book of Isaiah, are these:

**The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, upon them a light has shined.
(Isaiah 9:2)**

Arise, shine; for your light has come! And the glory of the LORD is risen upon you. (Isaiah 60:1)

Your dead shall live; together with my dead body they shall arise. Awake and sing, you who dwell in dust; for your dew is like the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead. (Isaiah 26:19)

Paul's quote reads like a combination of all three of these scriptures. But it is possible that is not a direct quotation from Old Testament scripture at all. Paul does not state that "It is written..." Rather he states that "He says..." It may have been something that Jesus had said directly to Paul during their in-person time together. However, even though we do not know the origin of the statement for certain, it appears to have a dual meaning. The first meaning is for living human beings – the Christians of this age – that if we will rouse ourselves from our pre-conversion sleep, which was as spiritually dark as the deepest sleep of death, then Jesus Christ will share His spiritual light with us. Secondly, when God raises us from the sleep of death, He will give us a measure of spiritual light that – as we read earlier in I Timothy 6:16 – we could not have withstood in this physical life. Paul wrote similar words – on this sub-topic of the inheritance of light – to the church in Colossae as he had written to the Ephesians:

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. (Colossians 1:12-13)

We are to be continually thankful to God the Father. It is He who puts us in a condition to be called "saints," to be inheritors of His spiritual light, to be delivered from spiritual darkness, and to be transferred from this world into His Kingdom. Likewise, to the congregation in Thessalonica, Paul wrote:

For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night... But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief. You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness. (I Thessalonians 5:2, 4-5)

To the people of the world, who remain in a condition of spiritual darkness, the return of Jesus Christ and the Day of the Lord will come without warning – like a thief in the night. But those who are the children of light and of the day will not be taken by surprise. How can we recognize those who are children of darkness? Isaiah gives the answer:

To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them. (Isaiah 8:20)

Those who uphold God's law and His testimony are not in a condition of spiritual night or darkness. They are blessed to be the brothers and sisters of Jesus Christ. Like their Elder Brother, they are heirs of God, children of light and children of the day.

They are also blessed to be the Bride of Jesus Christ. They will not be surprised or dismayed at the coming of the Day of the Lord because, like the Bridegroom, they are looking forward to His return in the same excited and expectant way that a bride counts down the hours to her wedding day. John was given some awe-inspiring visions of the light-clad Bride of Christ:

Now a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a garland of twelve stars. (Revelation 12:1)

From his vision, John describes the church of God as a woman surrounded by brilliant light. She is clothed with the dazzling sun. She has the radiant moon under her feet and a crown of twelve sparkling stars on her head.

Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband... Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls filled with the seven last plagues came to me and talked with me, saying, "Come, I will show you the bride, the Lamb's wife." 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... The construction of its wall was of jasper; and the city was pure gold, like clear glass. The foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with all kinds of precious stones: the first foundation was jasper, the second sapphire, the third chalcedony, the fourth emerald, the fifth sardonyx, the sixth sardius, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, and the twelfth amethyst... 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 honour into it. Its gates shall not be shut at all by day (there shall be no night there). (Revelation 21:2, 9-11, 18-20, 23-25)

What is John describing here? A bride or a city? In verse 2, John compares the holy city – New Jerusalem – to a bride adorned for her husband. In verse 9 an angel tells John that he is going to take him to show him the Bride – the affianced wife of the Lamb. He then takes John to a great, high mountain and shows him the stunningly beautiful holy city – the New Jerusalem – coming down from heaven. The Bride of Christ and the holy city are evidently one and the same. This should not surprise us. Cities and city-states are often given female attributes in biblical prophecy (See Psalm 9:14; 137:8; Isaiah 1:8; Jeremiah 6:2; Micah 4:8-11). A city does not consist only of buildings, land and vegetation. To a very great extent, a city and its character are made up of its inhabitants. For a vivid, though negative, example of this concept, please review the account of Sodom and Gomorrah in chapters 18 and 19 of the book of Genesis. The gleaming holy city that John sees in his vision will be illuminated by the Bridegroom and it will be populated with God's children who constitute the Bride of Christ, and who radiate His light.

As God's church is the affianced Bride of Christ, there is a message here for us. Look at the light-enhancing qualities that God builds into His holy city. Overall, it is like very precious, highest quality jasper stone, which is as clear as crystal – transparent so that the light of God is able to shine through it. The wall of the city is also like transparent jasper and its foundations are adorned (like the breastplate of judgement described in chapters 28 and 39 of the book of Exodus) with a variety of beautiful, light-reflecting, precious stones. Each foundation may even be constructed of one huge, solid, precious stone! The twelve gates of the city are enormous pearls. The city and its streets are constructed of gold so pure that it is transparent. We will return to the significance of all this transparency later.

Beware of cheap imitations!

Do you think that the prince of darkness is going to take all this light-bringing lying down? Do you think that he is going to allow his realm of darkness to be illuminated without a battle?

Let us make no mistake. Satan is a master of disguise and deception. He has foisted his counterfeit "holy" cities – Babylon and Rome – on this world and God compares them to women too: depraved and immoral women (Psalms 87:4; 137:8; Isaiah 13:19; 21:9; 47:1; Revelation 14:8; 17:1-9 & 16-18; 18:2-7).

To deceptively win over more followers, Satan will make an evil counterfeit of anything good that God has created. Yes, he has even made a counterfeit of the light of God! Why should this surprise us? Satan has had a lot of experience with light:

How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground, you who weakened the nations! For you have said in your heart: 'I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation on the farthest sides of the north; (Isaiah 14:12-13)

Satan's former name – from the time when he was a high-ranking angel – is recorded here as *Lucifer*, which is a Middle English rendition of the Latin *luc-ferous*, meaning *more light*. The Hebrew name, though, is *Heylel*, which means *Light-Bearer, Shining One, and Morning Star*. We have already seen that Jesus Christ is the true Morning Star. Did God honour Lucifer with this name when he was still a faithful servant? Or did he take it to himself when he began his attempt to take over God's throne... when he rebelliously proclaimed, "I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be (like) the most High." (Isaiah 14:14)? Let us examine Ezekiel's parallel account:

Thus says the Lord GOD: "You were the seal of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone was your covering: the sardius, topaz, and diamond, beryl, onyx, and jasper, sapphire, turquoise, and emerald with gold. The workmanship of your timbrels and pipes was prepared for you on the day you were created. You were the anointed cherub who covers; I established you; you were on the holy mountain of God; you walked back and forth in the midst of fiery stones. You were perfect in your ways from the day you were created, till iniquity was found in you." (Ezekiel 28:12-15)

How perfect was this Heylel! Notice that he was clothed with similar precious stones as the walls of the holy city and the breastplate of judgement. How much his pure and perfect appearance matched the light-transmitting splendour of God and His heavenly temple!

The name *Heylel* comes from another Hebrew word *halal*, which can mean *praise, glory, shine, flash forth light, glory, commended, celebrate, give, and renowned*. All of these meanings are appropriate to the era during which Lucifer was an obedient archangel of God. But *halal* can also have these negative meanings: *boast, boastful, mad, and act like a madman*, which are all appropriate to his spiritual condition *after* his rebellion. Heylel has passed on his deceptive appearance to his followers:

For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works. (II Corinthians 11:13-15:)

We must be very careful not to be deceived into believing that Satan's ministers of darkness are ministers of light. How can we know the difference? Again, we receive the same answer from Isaiah:

To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them. (Isaiah 8:20)

And again, the apostle John adds to Isaiah's words:

He who says he is in the light, and hates his brother, is in darkness until now. (I John 2:9)

If a person claims to be in the light of God – claims to be a member or minister of God's true church – but harbours hatred even for one fellow-member, he remains in spiritual darkness.

God's true light illuminates and clarifies truths that have been darkened or "fogged" by Satan's counterfeits:

But has now been revealed [KJV: made manifest] by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. (II Timothy 1:10)

Satan has even made perverted counterfeits of the good news of eternal life and immortality. But we can have the darkness and fog cleared away if we will examine God's Word by His light that is made available to God's called and chosen ones through the appearance of Jesus Christ and, thus, through His Holy Spirit. Repeating Ephesians 5:13:

But all things that are exposed are made manifest by the light, for whatever makes manifest is light.

The word "exposed" is translated from the Greek word *elegcho*, which can also be translated *reproved, refuted, confuted, found fault with, or corrected*. A deceived belief in any of Satan's counterfeits can be corrected by examining those beliefs with illumination from the light of God.

Which Light is Right?

Another of Satan's counterfeits is to deceive God's people into using the wrong light by which to examine themselves.

In the early years of the church, some Jewish members of God's church developed an excessive and inappropriate confidence that, because of their physical nationality, they were able to shine God's light to the spiritually blind. Paul found it necessary to reprove them:

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... For "the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you," as it is written. (Romans 2:17-19, 24)

David, even though he knew himself to be a member of God's chosen people, even though he was so close to God and was a man after God's own heart (Acts 13:22), knew very well from bitter experience that he was as capable of sin as were all other men. He knew that he too had to examine himself. And when he was examining himself, he did not use other human beings as his standard of righteousness. Neither did he judge others in an unrighteous manner. David asked God to be his Partner as he examined himself. He asked God to judge him, to examine him and to prove him:

Vindicate me, O LORD, for I have walked in my integrity. I have also trusted in the LORD; I shall not slip. Examine me, O LORD, and prove me; try my mind and my heart. For your lovingkindness is before my eyes, and I have walked in your truth. (Psalm 26:1-3)

God and His attributes were before David's eyes. David saw God! He saw God as he examined himself. He saw God's lovingkindness and he trusted in it. He saw the light of God before his eyes. It illuminated his path and enabled him to act, to do, to walk in the truth of God.

Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. (I Corinthians 11:27-29)

We too are to examine ourselves while discerning the Lord's body – while beholding the Lamb of God – comparing ourselves with Him, not with other human beings, nor with any other inferior standard. As we examine ourselves prior to Passover – and during the rest of the year – we must avoid the temptation to compare ourselves with other church members. We must not examine ourselves by the comparatively dim light of other, fallible church members. Such erroneous spiritual comparisons can be damaging both to the comparer and to the compared.

Now this is not to suggest that we should not emulate good examples that we see in our fellow-members. They do have the light of God in them and radiating from them, but they are still human and subject to error. Their spiritual light is dim in comparison with that of Jesus Christ. We must examine ourselves by His standard. By His light.

We might think that it should go without saying that we should not compare ourselves with the people in the world. Yet God still finds it necessary to warn us about this through His Word:

Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? (II Corinthians 6:14)

It does not make any sense at all for the children of the light to examine ourselves in the darkness of Satan's world with which – like our Elder Brother (John 14:30) – we have nothing in common. Repeating John 3:19-20:

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.

Many of the people of this world much prefer spiritual darkness to light. For evidence of this, one need only look at today's popular entertainment. The world's increasingly depraved preferences are made manifest by their evil deeds. So many of them hate spiritual light. They ridicule it and scorn it. They stay away from it because they have some knowledge that, by approaching it, their dark and evil deeds will be shown for what they are.

In one memorable scene of his semi-autobiographical story, "Resurrection," Tolstoy alludes to John's inspired words as he introduces his readers to an aging, deceiving, lying, immoral Russian princess, who "was all the while casting uneasy glances at the window, through which a slanting sunbeam was moving toward her, a betrayer which might shed too bright a light on her wrinkled face."

Do we really want to use the world's darkness as our standard?

But if one walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him. (John 11:10)

Most unknowingly, but some evidently willingly, the people of the world remain in a night of spiritual darkness, which seems to be getting proportionally deeper and darker, the closer we get to the end of this age. As they are devoid of spiritual light, many stumble from one false philosophy to another. For the time being, God has allowed Satan to blind them to His light:

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. (II Corinthians 4:4)

God deems it better that the majority of the people of Satan's world not have access to His light now. But God is fair and loving. He has not denied it to them forever. He will offer it to them at a later time.

But God's true light has been given to us at this time, and we must use it – the real thing – for our spiritual illumination.

Examine yourself!

As we have already read in I Corinthians 11:27-29, every year, as we prepare for the Passover, we are reminded to examine ourselves. We are commanded to do this to ensure that we do not partake of Jesus' body and blood in an unworthy manner. Notice that each church member is to examine *himself*. Not others! Paul adds emphasis to this point in II Corinthians 13:5:

Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you – unless indeed you are disqualified?

Paul repeats the word "yourselves" (Greek: *heautou*) three times for emphasis. After his deep repentance of his pre-conversion background of condemnation, Paul became able to teach the Corinthian brethren that it is wrong to examine others in a judging manner. Although he knew and taught Jesus' teaching about righteous judgment (Matthew 7:16, 20; Luke 12:27; John 7:24; I Corinthians 5:3, 12-13; 6:2-4), he also knew that it was wrong for him to judge others in a wrong way and, as implied in I Corinthians 2:15; 4:3-4 and 9:3, it was wrong for others to judge him.

Where did Paul receive his doctrine on this topic of the wrong type of judging? He received it from Jesus Christ:

Judge not, that you be not judged. For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you. And why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me remove the speck from your eye'; and look, a plank is in your own eye? Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye. (Matthew 7:1-5)

While teaching this to His disciples in His so-called "Sermon on the Mount," Jesus returns to His symbol of vision, a subject very closely related to that of light. He questions the logic of one of His disciples who had theoretically been trying to meticulously examine a spiritual speck in the eye of a fellow disciple, thus shutting out a comparatively small amount of spiritual light, while at the same time neglecting a huge spiritual log in his own eye, which was totally blocking his own spiritual vision. Jesus warns His brothers and sisters against hypocrisy. He commands us to give priority to clearing our *own* spiritual vision.

A few days before Passover one year, I suffered a minor eye injury. My eye doctor had quite a lot of trouble inserting a temporary, protective contact lens into my injured eye because, he told me, I don't normally wear contact lenses and I have unusually

strong eyelid muscles, which tend to reject any foreign article from my eyes. I learnt a lesson from this unpleasant experience. We are to clear out the spiritual specks and logs from our *own* spiritual eyes and, once they are out we must, with all of our strength, keep them out. Television, radio, motion pictures, books, magazines and the Internet are tools that Satan has used to cause so much confusing, counterfeit, pseudo-spiritual junk to be made available to today's Christians. We must work very hard to recognize it, reject it, and keep it out.

The Mirror

Every day of our lives we all make use of "physical self-examination implements." Mirrors! So, while we are on the subject of self-examination, let us expend a few paragraphs to discuss the subject of glass and mirrors! In the King James Version of the Bible, mirrors are called "glasses" or "looking-glasses." But although glass *was* known and used from very early times, mirrors – until comparatively recently – were usually made of polished brass. Here's what Easton's Bible Dictionary says:

Glass... was known to the Egyptians at a very early period of their national history, at least BC 1500. Various articles both useful and ornamental were made of it, as bottles, vases, etc. A glass bottle with the name of Sargon on it was found among the ruins of the north-west palace of Nimroud. The Hebrew word "zekukith" (Job 28:17) rendered in the Authorized Version "crystal," is rightly rendered in the Revised Version "glass." This is the only allusion to glass found in the Old Testament. It is referred to in the New Testament in Revelation 4:6, 15:2, 21:18 & 21. In Job 37:18 the word rendered "looking-glass" is in the Revised Version properly rendered "mirror," formed, i.e., of some metal. Exodus 38:8 "looking-glasses" are brazen mirrors. A mirror is referred to also in James 1:23.

Yes. Glass and bronze mirrors were known back in the time of Job, who (as many Bible historians believe) probably lived either during Moses' lifetime, or even some time before:

Gold and glass cannot equal it, nor can it be exchanged for jewels of fine gold. (Job 28:17 RSV)

Glass is here given a high value, even comparative with gold.

With Him, have you spread out the skies, strong as a cast metal mirror? (Job 37:18)

Here Elihu asks Job, sarcastically, if he had a part in the creation of the sky, which has light-reflecting and light-diffusing properties like a vast mirror. In the New Testament:

For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known. (I Corinthians 13:12 KJV)

Like many Bible students, I used to think that the symbolism in this verse was referring to a person looking at a brilliant light through a piece of darkly tinted glass. But, as is shown in more modern translations, the word "glass" is better translated, "mirror":

For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known. (I Corinthians 13:12 NKJV)

Paul is telling the members of the Corinth congregation that, even though we – God’s people – have the light of God dwelling in us during our human lives, the reflection of it is dim because we are still human, in comparison with what it will be when we see the Light of the world face-to-face. Paul equates the light of God with spiritual knowledge. Our spiritual knowledge is limited now but, when we see the Light of the world face to face, He will increase our knowledge to be all but equal with His own:

But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord. (II Corinthians 3:18)

Encyclopædia Britannica’s article "Mirror" tells us that "when light falls on a body some of the light may be reflected, some absorbed, and some transmitted through the body." This is an important concept to keep in mind as we continue our study of spiritual light. Each time Moses spoke face-to-face with God, his face shone so brightly with the light he had absorbed that, for the comfort of His fellow-Israelites, he had to wear a veil until the radiance wore off:

And when Moses had finished speaking with them, he put a veil on his face. But whenever Moses went in before the LORD to speak with Him, he would take the veil off until he came out; and he would come out and speak to the children of Israel whatever he had been commanded. And whenever the children of Israel saw the face of Moses, that the skin of Moses’ face shone, then Moses would put the veil on his face again, until he went in to speak with Him. (Exodus 34:33-35)

Every one of God’s children should be able to see the spiritual light of God – the glory of God – when we look at ourselves in His spiritual mirror. Through the power of His Holy Spirit, God’s light will – if we are making proper and frequent use of God's mirror – be gradually increased in us every day of our Christian lives. But what *is* God’s spiritual mirror? James gives the answer:

But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does. (James 1:22-25)

James tells us clearly that God's spiritual mirror is His perfect law of liberty. We need to use the mirror of God's law to examine ourselves properly. God commands us to look into the spiritual mirror of the perfect law of liberty, to see if there are any spiritual dirty marks on our spiritual faces. Because we are human and physical, we need this spiritual mirror to tell us what is and what is not a spiritual dirty mark!

But let us not take this symbolism too far. These spiritual dirty marks are not like the innocent results of a small boy's play. They are symbols of sin – the transgression of God's holy law – that made necessary the torture and death of our perfectly faultless Lord!

One of my daughters has a very interesting *physical self-examination implement*. It has a regular, flat mirror on one side and a convex mirror on the other side, which magnifies the image. But its notable feature is that it also has built-in, battery-powered lights that illuminate the user's face. God's spiritual mirror also has a built-in light:

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

We need this built-in light in order to effectively examine ourselves. As we saw in the previous section, we must not examine ourselves by the darkness of Satan's world – nor even in the relatively dim light of our fellow church members. We must "behold the Lamb of God." We must examine ourselves by the brilliant light of Jesus Christ and His commandments.

Our self-examination must not stop with merely recognizing that we have some spiritual dirty marks. We must wash them off our faces by confessing them and being truly sorry for having done them, and we must strive – through true and sincere repentance – not to continue getting our spiritual faces dirty.

Shadows

Let us repeat our earlier quote from Encyclopædia Britannica's article "Mirror":

When light falls on a body some of the light may be reflected, some absorbed, and some transmitted through the body.

Considering this concept a little further, we can see that, if the body – the object or thing – on which the light falls is one hundred percent transparent, none of the light will be reflected and none will be absorbed. All of it will be transmitted through the body. From the same Britannica article:

High-purity, ultratransparent oxide glasses have been developed for use in fibre-optic telecommunications systems, in which messages are transmitted as light pulses over glass fibres.

If the object on which the light falls is less than one hundred percent transparent – and *no* physical substance is perfectly, one hundred percent transparent – some of the light will be absorbed, some of it will be reflected, and a shadow will be produced on the far side of the object away from the light source. So let us now turn our attention to the related subjects of physical and spiritual transparency, opacity, reflection, absorption and the production of shadows.

First of all, let us establish that a shadow is not necessarily a negative phenomenon, even though it is dependent upon the light source that produces it. For example, a shadow can give cool shade from oppressively hot sunlight (which might be an appropriate symbol of Satan's counterfeit light). Here are some biblical examples of "good" shadows:

A man will be as a hiding place from the wind, and a cover from the tempest, as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land. (Isaiah 32:2)

On the mountain height of Israel I will plant it; and it will bring forth boughs, and bear fruit, and be a majestic cedar. Under it will dwell birds of every sort; in the shadow of its branches they will dwell. (Ezekiel 17:23)

So Jonah went out of the city and sat on the east side of the city. There he made himself a shelter and sat under it in the shade, till he might see what would become of the city. And the LORD God prepared a plant and made it come up over Jonah, that it might be shade for his head to deliver him from his misery. So Jonah was very grateful for the plant. (Jonah 4:5-6)

It is like a mustard seed which, when it is sown on the ground, is smaller than all the seeds on earth; but when it is sown, it grows up and becomes

greater than all herbs, and shoots out large branches, so that the birds of the air may nest under its shade. (Mark 4:31-32)

In modern terminology, however, the symbolic usage of the words "shade," "shadow," "opaque" and "opacity" always give a negative connotation, while the word "transparent" gives a very positive implication. Nineteenth century novelist Wilkie Collins has one of his heroes esteeming another by saying, "To say you are as transparent as a child, sir, is to pay the children a compliment." Before continuing, it might be helpful to quickly review the dictionary definitions of some of the words that we will be using in this section of our study:

Shadow:

Origin: Middle English *shadwe*, from Old English *sceaduw-*, *sceadu*: shade

- 1: Partial darkness or obscurity within a part of space from which rays from a source of light are cut off by an interposed opaque body
- 2: A reflected image
- 3: An imperfect and faint representation; an imitation of something; a copy
- 4: The dark figure cast upon a surface by a body intercepting the rays from a source of light
- 5: Dark
- 6: A shaded or darker portion of a picture
- 7: A source of gloom or unhappiness
- 8: A state of ignominy or obscurity

Opaque:

Origin: Latin *opacus*

- 1: Exhibiting opacity: blocking the passage of radiant energy and especially light
- 2: Hard to understand or explain; obtuse; thick-headed

Opacity:

Origin: French *opacité* shadiness, from Latin *opacitat-*, *opacitas* from *opacus*: shaded, dark

- 1: The quality or state of a body that makes it impervious to the rays of light; broadly: the relative capacity of matter to obstruct the transmission of radiant energy
- 2: Obscurity of sense: unintelligibility; the quality or state of being mentally obtuse; dullness
- 3: An opaque spot in a normally transparent structure (as the lens of the eye)

Transparent:

Origin: Middle English, from Medieval Latin *transparentis* and *transparere*: to show through; also from Latin *trans* + *parere*: to show oneself.

- 1: Having the property of transmitting light without appreciable scattering so that bodies lying beyond are seen clearly; allowing the passage of a specified form of radiation (as X rays or ultraviolet light); fine or sheer enough to be seen through.
- 2: Free from pretence or deceit; frank; easily detected or seen through; obvious; readily understood; clear.

Some of these words and their meanings, when applied to human character, are very relevant to our study. With these definitions in mind, let us look once again at James 1:17:

Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.

As we saw in our first examination of this verse, both God the Father and Jesus Christ are total spiritual Light. They have no shadows or dark spots whatsoever! Because they are so absolutely perfect, we can think of them as not casting any shadows. They are so pure that they are one hundred percent transparent and therefore invisible:

Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: (Colossians 1:15)

Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen. (I Timothy 1:17)

By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible. (Hebrews 11:27)

What about us? If we answer God's call to stand and walk in the brilliant spiritual light of Jesus Christ, will we cast spiritual shadows? Yes, we will, because we are not yet pure. Although it is true that we have committed ourselves to leave the darkness of Satan's world behind us, we are not yet perfect. We are not yet spiritually transparent. Rather, we are spiritually opaque to some degree. We are still human, physical, imperfect and impure. As we have already read in II Corinthians 3:18, we are to be going from glory to glory every day of our lives – decreasing in spiritual opacity and increasing in spiritual clarity, purity and transparency – becoming more like God. As Jesus commanded, we are to be becoming perfect as He and His Father

are perfect. See Matthew 5:48; John 17:23; I Corinthians 13:10; II Corinthians 13:11; Ephesians 4:13; Colossians 1:28; and so many more relevant scriptures.

Are there any scriptural examples of what a spiritual shadow was in the early New Testament era, and still is today? Yes, there are. We know that the shadows mentioned in the books of Colossians, Hebrews and James are spiritual because the Light that produces them is spiritual:

Now this is the main point of the things we are saying: We have such a High Priest, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, a Minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle which the Lord erected, and not man. For every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices. Therefore it is necessary that this One also have something to offer. For if He were on earth, He would not be a priest, since there are priests who offer the gifts according to the law; who serve the copy and *shadow* of the heavenly things, as Moses was divinely instructed when he was about to make the tabernacle. For He said, "See that you make all things according to the pattern shown you on the mountain." (Hebrews 8:1-5)

While the temple, its priesthood and its furnishings still existed, they were physical copies, examples, and patterns – shadows – of God's throne room and its furnishings in heaven. Some of the activities of the priests were physical copies – shadows – of the duties of God's angels. The high priest was a physical shadow of the great, eternal High Priest – Jesus Christ. Although God designed these shadows, they were subject to imperfection because they were physical. Moving forward to chapter 10:

For the law, having a *shadow* of the good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with these same sacrifices, which they offer continually year by year, make those who approach perfect. (Hebrews 10:1)

The sacrificial law had "a shadow of good things to come." This was just one shadow. We saw in the previous paragraph that there were others. The author of the book of Hebrews stresses that the sacrificial law was a shadow of the good things to come; not the perfect image of them. The idea here may be compared the relatively inferior detail contained in an 18th century silhouette with that in a modern, high-resolution photograph.

The sacrificial system could not make those who gave the offerings perfect. Nor was it meant to! However, as it was God who designed and instituted the sacrificial system, we should beware of criticizing it as a failed project or experiment. Ezekiel

40:41-42, 44:11, 46:24, and Zechariah 14:21 all strongly indicate that God will reinstitute His sacrificial system at some time after the return of Jesus Christ. Although this letter to the Hebrews is thought to have been written in approximately 68 AD, not all of the spiritual shadows perished with the temple just two years later:

So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, which are a *shadow* of things to come, but the substance is of Christ. (Colossians 2:16-17)

The Greek word for "shadow," as used here by Paul, is *skia* (which has some similarity to the Old English words *sceaduw* and *sceadu*, which were forerunners of the modern English word). The Greek word can mean *shade caused by the interception of light, an image cast by an object and representing the form of that object, a sketch, or an outline*. A physical light produces a physical shadow. A spiritual light produces a spiritual shadow.

But does this mean – as some claim – that God's laws regarding meat and drink, Holy Days, New Moons and Sabbaths are done away because they are merely parts of the shadow and not the light that produces the shadow? No, it does not. Such thinking is illogical.

In addition, does Paul say that these things "*were* a shadow of things to come"? Does he suggest that, at that time, during his lifetime, the shadows no longer existed or were no longer necessary? No, he does not. Does he suggest that they were only maintained because the temple and the priesthood were still in operation at the time at which he wrote this? No, he gives no such implication. Notice the word, "are." It is translated from the Greek verb *esti* – the third person singular *present* indicative of *eimi* ("to be" or "to exist"). The shadow still existed in Paul's time. God was still shining His spiritual light from heaven upon His children on earth. The results were spiritual shadows – or silhouettes – from each child.

What did these silhouettes show God's New Testament children doing? It showed that they were eating clean foods, keeping God's Sabbaths and Holy Days, and noting and using the lunar cycles as reference points for the counting of His months and His Holy Days.

What are the shadows right now at the beginning of the twenty-first century? Why would they be any different than they were in the time of the apostle Paul? Administratively, the main difference between our time and that of Paul is that the temple and the Aaronic priesthood "shadows" are no longer in operation. But is the destruction of the temple "shadow" a logical or scripturally valid reason to do away with God's other shadows – His laws concerning clean and unclean foods, His Sabbaths, His Holy Days, and His lunar method of counting them? Let us ask some more relevant questions on this subject:

First, had the Source of spiritual light returned to earth in Paul's time? No, He had not yet returned. To repeat, God was still at that time shining His light from heaven upon His children on earth, so the same set of spiritual shadows were still being produced.

Second, has the Source of spiritual light returned yet? No, He has not. This means that God is still shining the same light from heaven upon His children on earth. Thus, the same set of spiritual shadows is still being produced today.

The Night is Almost Over

As we draw this Bible study to a conclusion with a glimpse into the Word Tomorrow, it is necessary for us to take a second look at some of the scriptures we have already examined. The dark six-thousand-year night of this age is almost over. The Day of the Lord and the Kingdom of God will soon dawn:

The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. (Romans 13:12)

As the night is almost over and the day is almost here, we must shake off the works of spiritual darkness and clothe ourselves with the protective armour of God's spiritual light:

Now a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a garland of twelve stars. (Revelation 12:1)

Please note that the woman's clothing is not armour of steel, chained mail or Kevlar. It is raiment composed of the same spiritual light as that Jesus Christ wears:

Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, led them up on a high mountain by themselves; and He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light. (Matthew 17:1-2)

And in the midst of the seven lampstands One like the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the feet and girded about the chest with a golden band. His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes like a flame of fire; His feet were like fine brass, as if refined in a furnace, and His voice as the sound of many waters; He had in His right hand seven stars, out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and His countenance was like the sun shining in its strength. (Revelation 1:13-16)

It is very exciting to look forward to that day when all of God's people will be clothed with the same brilliant light as our Elder Brother wears right now:

Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. (I John 3:2)

Those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the firmament, and those who turn many to righteousness like the stars forever and ever. (Daniel 12:3)

He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels. (Revelation 3:5)

But we cannot sit back and relax. It is the wise will shine like the stars and the brightness of the firmament. It is the overcomers who will receive the brilliantly white garments. It is very dangerous for us to think that Jesus Christ has already done it all for us, or that He and His Father *will* do it all for us. Yes, true wisdom must come from God; but overcoming takes personal effort, and there are other extremely important things that we must be doing:

I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see. (Revelation 3:18)

Here again we read of pure, refined gold and white raiment. We must be putting effort into obtaining this pure, refined, spiritual gold and white raiment. To "buy" these things means that we must be willing to give up certain physical luxuries in order to acquire them. If we act upon His counsel, Jesus Christ promises that He will cover our remaining imperfections and He will heal our remaining blindness.

And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts; (II Peter 1:19)

What must we be doing to be effectually heeding God's confirmed prophetic word? The English word "heed" is translated from the Greek word *prosecho* which means *to beware, to turn the mind to, to be attentive, to care for, to apply and attach one's self to, to cleave to, to devote thought and effort to*. If we zealously apply these things, we will be shining His light in this spiritually dark world. The word *prosecho* can also mean *to bring near*, as in the bringing of a ship into its safe harbour. Although these metaphors may be somewhat mixed, our rough voyage through the dark and stormy spiritual night of this age is almost – but not quite – over.

Often, when a severe storm suddenly springs up in the Strait of Georgia between Vancouver Island and the Canadian mainland, the car ferries that ply the strait get caught in it. Although these ships are quite large and equipped to ride out a certain severity of tempest, their captains' biggest problem is in bringing the ships safely into the docks. Occasionally the seas are so rough that the captains will make their vessels ride the storm all night rather than risk the safety of their passengers and crew in an overly-dangerous docking procedure. One of the most hazardous parts of our turbulent spiritual journey is the bringing of our "ship" into the safe harbour of the day – the Day of the Lord. When that great day arrives, any matter or doctrine that was

fogged, darkened or confused because of the evil of Satan's world will then be made crystal clear because of the full presence of Jesus' light:

Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal [KJV: make manifest] the counsels of the hearts. Then each one's praise will come from God. (I Corinthians 4:5)

And repeating Ephesians 5:13 one last time:

But all things that are exposed [Greek: elegcho: reproved, found fault with, corrected] are made manifest by the light, for whatever makes manifest is light.

As we read in Revelation 3:18, our remaining flaws will be covered by the white raiment that He gives us. Once those flaws have been blotted out (Acts 3:19) and wiped away at the return of Jesus Christ, we will perfectly transmit the brilliant light of God:

Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears to hear, let him hear! (Matthew 13:43)

Therefore He says: "Awake, you who sleep, arise from the dead, and Christ will give you light." (Ephesians 5:14)

Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls filled with the seven last plagues came to me and talked with me, saying, "Come, I will show you the bride, the Lamb's wife." 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. (Revelation 21:9-11)

Yes, we will perfectly transmit the brilliant light of God because the Bride will then be just like the Bridegroom. Like Him, we will be faultless, flawless, pure, clean, and clear. Like Him, we will be perfectly, one hundred percent transparent!

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