



God Is Light
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This Booklet was written for those who are new believers in Christ Jesus by Given O. Blakely - Each morning those who were following this teaching on Facebook would receive another short lesson to help them consider this eternal truth concerning the fact that “God Is Light”

Chapter 1 - INTRODUCTION

GOD IS LIGHT

“And this is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is light, and in Him there is no darkness at all” (1 John 1:5)

INTRODUCTION

The comprehension of God, to a measurable degree, is essential to the experience of His fellowship. Those who “know NOT God” “will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power” (2 Thess 1:8-9, NASB). This is not generally known among religious devotees, yet has been clearly revealed in Scripture. Jesus came to make God understandable to us. This is not a luxury or novelty, but a necessity! As the Savior Himself said, “no one knows the Son, except the Father; nor does anyone know the Father, except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son wills to reveal Him” (Matt 11:27, NASB). There is no academic explanation of this text that can obviate this Divine statement. The aggressiveness with which God addresses the matter of us knowing Him is comforting, bringing hope to the fainting heart. In Christ we come to “know God,” which constitutes “eternal life” (John 17:3).

This being the case, an ignorance of God is most serious. In fact, it causes alienation from the Lord. This is why the Spirit witnesses, “This I say therefore, and affirm together with the Lord, that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind, being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart” (Eph 4:17-18, NASB). The alarming thing is that the ignorance of God prevails in the so-called “church.” Far too many religious leaders are more familiar with the ways of the world than the “way of God” (Acts 18:26). The “wisdom of this world,” though soundly condemned and rejected by God as a means to knowing Him, (1 Cor 1:20-21) is fearlessly embraced by many accepted teachers. The result has been the dissemination of religious dogmas and perspectives that do not require a Living God, interceding Christ, or empowering Holy Spirit. This observation is not intended to be “negative,” as commonly conceived. Rather, it is a sincere attempt to forthrightly address a grievous condition. It must be remembered that all who do not “know God” will be eternally cut off from Him, and there are no exceptions (2 Thess 1:8-9). Candidly, we have too many religious “experts” in earthly matters, and too few in God Himself,

Chapter 2 - SOME DECLARATIONS OF GOD

Before proceeding further in this study, it will be good to consider how the nature of God is proclaimed in Scripture. God desires to be known and understood (Jer 9:23-24), and thus has provided us with considerable insight into His Person. These things are not designed to simply add information to our intellectual data bank. Rather, they are addressed to the heart, and are provided to quicken our spiritual understanding. It will at once become evident that God does not desire to be known simplistically.

We are provided with a panoramic view of His nature, which comprises seemingly contradictory characteristics. These seeming contradictions, however, are only in the human imagination, and will, if entertained, result in a misapprehension of the Divine nature.

Our next few lessons will deal with these Divine traits.

Chapter 3 - GOD IS "ONE"

"Now a mediator is not a mediator of one, but GOD IS ONE." (Gal 3:20)
There is a unity in God that is challenging to our hearts and minds. He is One, totally harmonious in all of His nature."Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, THE LORD IS ONE; you shall love the Lord your God with ALL your heart, and with ALL your soul, and with ALL your mind, and with ALL your strength" (Mark 12:29-30). God's Oneness demands that your total person be involved in loving Him.

"GOD IS ONE" – Not numerically "one," but "One" in UNITY. He is not One God in three Persons, but three PERSONS in One God. It is written, "For THERE ARE THREE that bear witness in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one" (1 John 5:7). "The Word" is the glorified Christ, depicted as One who "was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and His name is called The Word of God" (Rev 19:13). The blood in which His vesture [clothing] was dipped is the blood of His enemies, whom He sounded defeated (Col 2:14-15). No part of God [the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit] compete with another part. How unlike ourselves this is. We have contrary laws within our persons, struggling against each other (Rom 7:18-22). When we would do good, evil is present with us. GOD HAS NO SUCH STRUGGLE. He is truly "ONE." The Son does not compete with the Father, and the Holy Spirit does not compete with the Son. They are "ONE" – perfectly united.

The mercy of God does not compete with His wrath, and His wrath does not compete with His grace. The accent is upon God and Christ Themselves, not one or more of their virtues. It is the business of professing Christians to obtain an

accurate understanding of these things. That understanding is referred to as “the knowledge of God” (Hoses 6:6; 1 Cor 15:34; Col 1:10; 2 Pet 1:2).

Chapter 4 - AS SOME SEE GOD

TO THE PHILOSOPHER, GOD IS AN IDEA

The philosopher approaches God as though He were an idea – a notion conceived in the corrupt heart of man. Such men do not see any advantage in believing, or trusting, in God. To them, He is something to argue about – someone about whom they can banter back and forth. They do not think God created them, that they are accountable to Him, or that He will judge them, and determine their eternal destiny. They actually think of themselves as a god, capable of planning and carrying out their own personal objectives. Carnal philosophers have gone so far as to affirm the concept of God is the result of man groping for an answer to his existence and circumstance. This is just the reverse of the actual situation. Man is an extension of God, the Lord is not an extension of human reasoning. Man is created “in the image of God. As it is written of man "he is the image and glory of God" (1 Cor 11:7). That is why mankind can reason, discern, purpose, and understand. His natural aptitude is traced to his Origin – God Almighty. That is why he can be “born again” (1 Pet 1:23), becoming a “new creation” (2 Cor 5:17) – things that cannot be said of any other form of life.

The theory of evolution, in all of its various aspects, is a feeble attempt to remove from human thought the fact that all men are answerable to God Almighty, who "giveth to all life, and breath, and all things" (Acts 17:25).

Chapter 5 - RELIGIOUS MISCONCEPTIONS #1

The Legalist

Legalists are extant in great numbers in the professed Christian community. These are people who teach and function on the basis of law, rules, and outward regimen. They do not accent the grace of God, which “brings salvation,” then "Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ" (Titus 2:11-13).

The grace of God is an effective teacher. However, the legalist neither relies on, nor communicates, the grace of God. The Old Covenant was a legal system, commanding men what they were to do, and forcing them to live “through fear of death . . . all their lifetime subject to bondage” (Heb 2:15). It was actually designed to teach men they could not measure up to Divine requirements on their own. They would have to be “born again” (1 Pet 1:23), regenerated (Tit 3:5), and become a “new creation” in Christ Jesus (2 Cor 5:17).

The legalist, for example, with his propensity for a Law system, is so inclined because of a total misconception of God. He perceives God's intention as trying to make men better, improving their lives, and, by rules, leading them into more productive lives. He sees God as basically a Lawgiver, with other attributes flowing from that primary trait – all with the intention of making the world a better place to live.

While God is, indeed, the Lawgiver, that is not His primary quality. We know this is the case because men cannot be saved by Law – even Divine Law. They are saved “by grace through faith” (Eph 2:8), a situation the advocate of Law has a difficult time swallowing. Now, in Christ Jesus, there is a new thing – “THE LAW OF FAITH.” It is written, “Where is boasting then? It is excluded. BY WHAT LAW? Of works? Nay: but by THE LAW OF FAITH (Rom 3:27). The NIV reads, “boasting . . . is excluded. On what principle? On that of observing the law? No, but on that of faith” (Rom 3:27). Faith provides an incentive and Divine power to accomplish what no other “law” can do. God is not a “Legalist,” even though He does have requirements. In salvation through Christ Jesus, He has provided an effective means of fulfilling those requirements: “by grace through faith.”

Chapter 6 - RELIGIOUS MISCONCEPTIONS #2

God is a Determinist

The determinist conceives God as overriding the human will, beneficially implementing His eternal purpose independently of our involvement. Thus the salvation of the individual is perceived as finalized either in eternity, or at the point a profession of faith is made. These two views are expressed in a distorted proclamation of predestination, and the “once saved, always saved” heresies. They are reasonable to those who embrace them because of their view of God – but their view of God is incorrect. Others, embracing a modified form of determinism, conceive of the Holy Spirit being thrust into the human heart violently, even throwing the recipient to the ground in a state of unconsciousness – commonly called “slain in the Spirit.”

All of these views, however honorable they may appear to those embracing them, spring from a misapprehension of the nature of the Living God. The salvation of God is a Divine enterprise in which the saved themselves participate. They experience a “new mind,” a “new spirit,” and are “renewed in the spirit of their mind” (Eph 4:23). They are given access to “the throne of all grace (Heb 4:16). They experience “the fellowship of Christ,” into which they are called (1 Cor 1:9). They personally experience “joy unspeakable, and full of glory” (1 Pet 1:8). They themselves “walk in the light” (1 John 1:7), and can be “filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding” (Col 1:9). They can even come to the point where they can “prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God” (Rom 12:2).

God does “determine,” to be sure – but when it comes to salvation, His determined will is that the saved be “PARTAKERS of Christ” (Heb 3:14), and “PARTAKERS of the Divine nature” (2 Pet 1:4) – and partaking postulates a personal, and growing, awareness. No one is carried to glory in a sleeping car.

Chapter 7 - Some see God as INCAPABLE OF CAUSING HARM.

There is a wide range of doctrines that have originated from this erroneous view. One extreme position is that there is no hell – that God will not punish anyone in a “lake of fire” – even though God says He will (Rev 20:10,14,15). Others, sensing the danger of such a position, present the modified view that the wicked will NOT be punished eternally, but will be ultimately annihilated – even though God speaks differently (Mark 9:44-46; Rev 21:8). Some foolishly say that God no longer chastises His people – even God affirms that He does (Heb 12:6-7). Still, others are adamant in their insistence that no sickness, death, or calamity, come from the Lord – even though the Scriptures speak to the contrary (Ex 9:8-11; Num 12:10; 2 Sam 12:15; 1 Cor 11:30).

Some say GOD does not “hate,” even though God Himself says that He does (Psa 11:5; Isa 61:8; Amos 5:21; Zech 8:17). Some affirm that God is only “love.” The Scriptures do declare, “God is love” (1 John 4:8). They also affirm, “GOD IS a consuming fire” (Deut 4:24; Heb 12:29), “GOD IS a jealous God” (Deut 6:15; Nah 1:2), “GOD IS angry with the wicked every day” (Psa 7:11); “GOD IS holy” (Psa 99:9), “GOD IS righteous” (Dan 9:14), “GOD IS light” (1 John 1:5).

All of these positions evidence a failure to see the Lord as He really is. Reader, you CANNOT afford to be wrong about God, His nature, and His will.

Chapter 8 - THE ERRONEOUS DEISTIC VIEW OF GOD

A deistic view of God dominates in many segments of the Christian community. This view sees God as withdrawn from His creation and salvational enterprise: “a creator who does not intervene in the universe” (Oxford). God is thus perceived as no longer immediately involved in these processes, but has left them to run, so to speak, on automatic pilot. Also, those who embrace this view are persuaded miracles no longer happen, and there is really not a category of things that is “supernatural,” or things that operate independently of the laws of nature. Thus, they conclude, there are no longer miraculous interventions in the affairs of men. Therefore, the enterprise of salvation is solely in the hands of redeemed humanity, and the wisdom of men is now the only means of understanding the Word of God. Again, these proceed from flawed logic that has grown out of a failure to understand God Himself. The irony of the view is that “eternal life” is itself the ultimate unnatural intrusion in the word. In fact “eternal life” is defined by Jesus Himself, when speaking to His Father in heaven: “As Thou hast given Him power over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as Thou hast

given Him. And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent." (John 17:2-3).

Having walked among a body of people who unwittingly have embraced the Deistic view, I can tell you that they rarely speak of "eternal life." They also are not known for preaching and teaching about the knowledge of God (1 Cor 15:34), being given wisdom and spiritual understanding (Col 1:9), being kept from falling (Jude 1:24), having access to God with confidence (Eph 3:12), the Holy Spirit interceding for us when we do not know what we ought to pray for (Rom 8:26-27), praying for the sick with the expectation of them being raised up (James 5:14-15), and a host of other revelations of the contemporary working of God Almighty.

The Deistic view of God is an unbelieving view, and has been perpetrated by the devil himself. It is one of those "doctrines of demons" (1 Tim 4:1).

Chapter 9 - THE DECLARATION

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

The message declared by John is virtually unknown in our day. This proclamation was made in the eventide of John's life, when the truth had accomplished much within Him, and through him. Here is a summary-view of the Father. It is not intended to tantalize the intellect, but to enlist the heart, soul, mind, and strength in the love of God. "And this is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is light, and in Him there is no darkness at all" (1 John 1:5).

God is not "the light," or "a light," but "LIGHT" itself; i.e., that is His nature. Here we have a summation of Divine essence on the intellectual side, while "God is love" is a synopsis of its moral side. Mark it well, "light" and "love" are not attributes or qualities of God, but God Himself. John states that this is the "message we have heard from Him and announce to you" (NASB). We do not have a record of these precise words (i.e., "God is light") being given to John, and I do not believe it is his intention to provide a quotation of Christ. Rather, this is an overview of the Divine message; a statement that sums up the revelation given to the Apostles. Note that it was not a revelation of duty, but of a Person; not a delineation of routine, but the proclamation of God Himself. The rarity of such a message in our time is staggering!

Chapter 10 - THE MESSAGE

"This then is THE MESSAGE which we have heard of Him, and declare unto you, that GOD IS LIGHT, and in Him is no darkness at all." (1 John 1:5)

There is a current prevalence of feigned Christianity with NO message! I am more and more astounded at this condition. Whole bodies of theological thought exist that have no BASIC message to proclaim. A "message" is "a significant point or

central theme” (Oxford). As used in Scripture, “message” means “announcement; promise; the act of promising, a promise given or to be given; a promised good or blessing” (Strong’s); “announcement; promise” (Thayer).

A true and valid “message” is NOT the announcement of a variable, or something that possibly can be. It is a word to be believed, and in which men can trust. In our text it is the affirmation, “God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all.” It is not possible for any circumstance or experience of life to effectively contradict this statement, neutralize it, or cause it to be irrelevant.

In professed Christian circles, there are announcements being made that are variable, and do not properly depict the Living God. Some of them are systems of problem resolution. These include, “Jesus will heal your marriage/family” – but Jesus can also divide a marriage (1 Cor 7:13-15). He can divide families (Matt 10:35-36). Some declare, “Jesus has healed you: – but Jesus can also make a person sick (1 Cor 11:30). Like it or not, God is not a problem-solver, but a Savior. He can also cause all manners of problems or difficulties (Lk 6:22; John 15:18). Others are proclaiming a message that is merely a promotional tactic, designed to build human institutions. Those embracing these approaches HAVE NO MESSAGE to proclaim, and therefore major on what the Bible does NOT mean. They can tell you what the “gift of the Holy Spirit” is NOT. They provide profound disquisitions on what “the grace of God” is NOT. They are experts in delineating things that were ONLY for generations that preceded this one. They are adept at identifying the heretics of the day, but have nothing to offer in their place. They have no message – nothing to affirm!

However, this was not the case with the Apostles. They HAD A MESSAGE, and it is quite unlike what is common in our day. It was a message proclaimed to them by the Lord Jesus Himself. It is not a message that can be catechized or systematized. It did not consist of a number of poignant affirmations that could be placed in a creed. This is a message woven into the fabric of everything the Lord Jesus declared. It is entwined in every aspect of “the Apostles’ doctrine.” “GOD IS LIGHT” is the supporting foundation for every pillar of the faith. It is the cornerstone of all “sound doctrine.”

Chapter 11 - MEN ARE TO LEARN AND KNOW THAT “GOD IS LIGHT”

If men do not ultimately come to the conclusion that “GOD IS LIGHT,” they have either NOT heard the message, have NOT believed it, or have NOT comprehended it. For our thoughts of the Lord to be valid and effective, they must find their way in this sacred vestibule – the place where God and His Word reign supreme in the area of thinking. Until they do, we are deficient in our view of the Lord, the matters revealed by Him, and how we think. No Christian should remain illiterate, for too much depends upon the personal ingestion of God’s Word. The Jews were not illiterate. From the very beginning they learned to read. The Law stipulated, “And thou shalt TEACH them diligently unto thy children,

and shalt TALK of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them FOR A SIGN upon thine hand, and they shall be as FRONTLETS between thine eyes. And thou shalt WRITE THEM upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates" (Deut 6:7-9). Their posture before God depended upon them READING. If a "missionary" labors among an illiterate people, the people must not remain that way. If God has sent laborer, He will give them wisdom in how to do this.

The bottom line of sound theology is GOD, not man! It is who GOD is, not who we are! It is what HE has said, not what we THINK He has said, or worse yet, what men have said! It is what HE has done, not what we should do! The very thought is revolutionary, let it do its work in your heart!

Chapter 12 - THE SOURCE OF THE MESSAGE

"This then is the message which we have HEARD OF HIM, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all." (1 John 1:5)

This was not a second-hand message – one handed down by the fathers, so to speak. It was the message the Apostles heard "FROM HIM," Who Himself, when He was in the world, He was the "Light of the world" (John 9:5).

JESUS WAS PRIMARILY THE EXPOSITOR OF GOD! He was not sent to the world to expound the duties of men – although He made those known. He did not come to correct social and domestic disorders – although He had the solution for those conditions. He came to unveil God to us because that was our BASIC deficiency – NOT knowing God. In "the end," when Jesus comes it will be "In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God" (2 Thess 1:8). The Divine assessment of our race was, "There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God" (Rom 3:11).

Jesus did not come to show us the way to institutional prominence, but the way "to the Father" (John 14:6). Although fully man, it was primarily the "fulness of the Godhead" that was found in Him "bodily" (Col 2:9). He was the "express Image OF GOD," not of Adam (Col 1:19; 2:9; Heb 1:3). He "declared the Father," unveiling His matchless Person to those who had "sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Rom 3:23). As Jesus Himself proclaimed, "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him" (John 1:18). As great as the Sermon on the Mount was, that was not the core of Christ's teaching. He came primarily to "reveal" the Father – that was His mandate. As it is written "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath DECLARED HIM" (Matt 11:27). If you miss the Father in Christ's teaching, you have missed His teaching--altogether!

John sums up the teaching of Jesus, compressing it into a single statement: “God is Light!” That is the message that got through to their hearts from the words of Jesus. They “heard” it from Him, i.e., that is the true understanding of His message! This was not a creed, it was the message! It was not a position, it was the message!

Chapter 13 - GOD DWELLS IN THE LIGHT

“Who only hath immortality, DWELLING IN THE LIGHT which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honor and power everlasting. Amen” (1 Tim 6:16).

The diffusion of the Divine nature dominates everything around Him. From this viewpoint, He dwells in the light. It is not that the light affects God – it does not. Light is the RESULT of His Presence. When Scripture affirms that God DWELLS IN THE LIGHT, it means that everything about Him is dominated by Him. That domination is not ruthless, but is the potentially beneficial result of His Person. Everything and everyone are really subordinate to Him. It will only take an encounter with Him to confirm this reality. How different from ourselves, who are influenced by what is around us. GOD IS NOT THAT WAY! He is the One that dominates, not the one who is dominated. He is the One who influences, not the One who is influenced. Man, by his very nature, is subject to another – God is not!

What is more, this light cannot be approached by man. No one can intrude into it, or stumble into it unintentionally. However, “unapproachable” does not mean inaccessible. It does mean our natural powers cannot bring us into such light. BUT JESUS CAN! That is why He came into the world.

Chapter 14 - THE FATHER OF LIGHTS

“Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from THE FATHER OF LIGHTS, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.” (James 1:17)

The “Father of lights” is contrasted with the “power of darkness” in Scripture: “Who hath delivered us from THE POWER OF DARKNESS, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son” (Col 1:13). The “power of darkness” refers to the potency of the kingdom over which Satan presides. Without “the kingdom of our God and His Christ” (Rev 12:10), it is impossible to withstand Satan’s ruthless advance among men. However, the fact that “God is light” means that those whom He has received in Christ, can overcome the devil (Rev 12:9-11).

The Source of all illumination is God. The source of all moral and spiritual darkness or ignorance is Satan. “Every GOOD gift and every PERFECT gift is from above, and cometh down from the FATHER OF LIGHTS, with Whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning” (James 1:17). The magnitude of this

statement is staggering. From the sun, moon, and stars, to spiritual insights and scientific understanding, all “light” come from God. He is the “Father of lights” because He Himself IS Light. He is not simply the Origin of light—although He is that—He is Light itself! We see it in the heavenly bodies, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Word of God, the people of God, and various spiritual insights!

Chapter 15 - CALLED INTO HIS MARVELOUS LIGHT

"But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath CALLED YOU out of darkness INTO HIS MARVELOUS LIGHT." (1 Pet 2:9)

Although the light in which God dwells is unapproachable, by grace we are “CALLED” into it—and it will not blind us or consume us! “Him Who hath called you out of darkness into His marvelous light” (1 Pet 2:9). The realm we once occupied is called “darkness” because it obscured God to us. While there, dominated by the devil and enslaved to sin, we did not know God. We were thus “ignorant” of Him, and therefore alienated from Him (Eph 4:18). Whatever position is embraced concerning man’s free moral agency, he had to be “called” out of darkness. He could not find his way to God without the Lord Jesus Christ! All of this does not negate the fact that we DID respond to the call. The Divine image in humanity has been marred, but it has not been destroyed, praise the Lord! God “called,” and we answered; but the glory for the situation goes to God, not to us.

His “marvelous light” produces wonder in the heart of those called into it. It captures their attention, and enthralls their hearts. It causes the world to lose its appeal, and sin to become distasteful and obnoxious. We have not been called into a religious system or regimen. We have not been summoned to a new way of life, although new life results from our acceptance of the call. Rather, we have been called into a spiritual realm that warms the heart, challenges the mind, and satisfies the soul. It is a domain dominated by the Living God. His traits and qualities pervade the “heavenly places” in which we have been “made to sit” in Christ Jesus (Eph 2:6).

Chapter 16 - ALWAYS SEEKING TO DIFFUSE HIMSELF

It is the nature of light to disseminate itself – to spread out and extend itself. So it is with God, Who is “Light.” He desires to disperse Himself throughout all His works. Everything He has made bears some resemblance to Himself, declaring some aspect of Him. This is because He has diffused Himself into His creation. This situation gives no sanction to Pantheism that views everything as God. The mirroring of Divine qualities does not cause a thing or a person to be an object of worship. Apart from Jesus Christ, the pinnacle of this diffusion is found in “the

sons of God,” created in Christ Jesus “unto good works” (Eph 2:10; 1 John 3:1-3) – “works” in which God is evident.

This is another way of saying God desires to make us like Himself. We are being “transformed” by our exposure to the “Light.” It is not something that is merely automatic, or is the result of a legal procedure set in motion by an absent God. The Father Himself is imminent in all of His works, particularly that of salvation. Through His “exceeding great and precious promises,” which were uttered and are apprehended in the light, we become “partakers of the Divine nature” (2 Pet 1:4). This occurs because the Lord desires for it to be so. It is His will!

The process of conformity to the “Image of His Son” is His predetermined purpose; that is what He desires, and will, accomplish: “For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren” (Rom 8:29). This intent may have been obscured by men and their misdirected doctrines, but it has not been forgotten by God. Wherever a soul is found that desires to be “like Him,” an individual is found in the heart of God’s will.

Chapter 17 - REVEALED IN CREATION

LET THERE BE LIGHT

The very first expression of God in creation was the origination of light. “And God said, LET THERE BE LIGHT: and there was light” (Gen 1:3). The Person of God is revealed in the creation because it is an expression of Himself. Thus it is written, “O LORD my God, Thou art very great; Thou art clothed with honor and majesty. Who coverest Thyself WITH LIGHT as with a garment” (Psa 104:1-2). The permeation of creation with the influence of its Creator is the reason for its resounding and unending testimony to Him. Thus it is written, “The heavens DECLARE the glory of God; and the firmament showeth His handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge. There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard” (Psa 19:1-3).

The tone for creation, and all activities occurring therein, was set with the first recorded words of the Almighty: “LET THERE BE LIGHT!” Illumination, understanding, and perception are the priorities of the Kingdom! It is the first item on the moral agenda, just as surely as it was in the natural creation. Where there is no spiritual light, there is no communion with God, and salvation has not been realized! Salvation is, in fact, the experience of spiritual light. As it is written, “For God, who commanded THE LIGHT to shine out of darkness, HATH SHINED in our hearts, to give THE LIGHT of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” (2 Cor 4:6). Regenerated souls are the new creation of God – and, as in the natural creation, it began with LIGHT. That “light” was the commencement of the knowledge of God – knowing Him.

Chapter 18 - NO DARKNESS IN HIM

There is no darkness in God--that is the express statement of Scripture. "God is light, and in Him is NO DARKNESS AT ALL" (1 John 1:5). James adds this word, "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the FATHER OF LIGHTS, with Whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning" (James 1:17). As Light itself, and the Source of all light, there can be no declination in Him – no variableness, inconsistencies, or deficiencies. Men all possess defects. God does not. Not a "shade" of these uncomely traits exist in the Living God!

The implications of this obvious conclusion, however, have escaped the multitudes. Legion is the name of those that have sought "fulfillment" OUTSIDE of the Lord. There are professional musicians that have exercised their abilities OUTSIDE of the spiritual realm in order to "find fulfillment." Others, with inclinations to precision and exactness, have chosen to be technical devotees rather than immerse themselves in the Lord.

Why do such conditions exist? Why are churches empty Sunday nights, while the theaters and arenas are full? Why do churches pamper the appetites of those they seek to enlist by offering entertainment and other matters less honorable and glorious than the Lord? It is because God is not perceived as all-sufficient. Men go down to Egypt for help because they do not think it can be found in God (Isa 31:1). Humanity perceives Him as having some darkness, some shadow – some deficiency and inadequacy! They cannot believe they can be "complete" in Christ Jesus (Col 2:10). But they are wrong, and these are serious misconceptions! "In Him is NO darkness AT ALL!"

There is one thing those who indulge fleshly appetites have in common. Drunkards, drug addicts, adulterers, fornicators and sodomites, together with the covetous, have utterly failed to apprehend God. They do not perceive Him as all-satisfying, and thorough in provision. They have sought for solace in the arms of another, and for fulfillment in the indulgence of their appetites. By so doing, they have spurned the loving call of God! To such individuals we do NOT offer a method of discipline to help them overcome their habits. We offer them a satisfying God that "is Light," and "dwells in the light." There are things a bottle, a needle, and fleshly indulgence cannot mollify. But there is nothing God cannot address thoroughly, satisfactory, and abundantly! Also, in His mercy, He has provided lawful outlets for legitimate fleshly appetites. But these provisions are never meant to take the place of Him.

As I see it, this is an area in which the contemporary church has miserably failed. This is the root of all attempts to compromise the Gospel approach to people.

Chapter 19 - ILLUMINATION

"But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after YE WERE ILLUMINATED, ye endured a great fight of afflictions" (Heb 10:32). Other

versions read, “after being enlightened” (NASB), “after you had received light” (NIV).

We cannot talk about “Light” without concentrating on ILLUMINATION – one of, if not the primary, aspect of light. Light is something that is “received” prior to conversion, and is what prepares its recipient to be saved. The saved are enabled to see things they could not see, or understand, before. Examples of what is seen include: the fact of being a sinner, the result of being a sinner, and the way to come out of the category of “sinner.” Both God and Christ are also seen with greater clarity, as well as self.

In some religious circles, an inordinate emphasis on academic approaches to Scripture has succeeded in obscuring the availability of illumination. Some equate “study” with receiving light. Study and receiving light are not the same. However, God’s word speaks without any complication on this matter. If light does not illuminate, it has no lasting and beneficial effects. Such a thought (no lasting and beneficial effects) is unthinkable when it comes to discussing Light Itself, which is “the Lord of glory” – a phrase describing the God who IS light! Illumination takes place when God enlightens, or gives understanding to, the individual.

Some will conclude I am opposed to “study” and “learning.” Let such prattlers take note that I have expended much of myself in my labors. Yet my reliance is not on my labors, but on my God. Illumination does not exclude the necessity of study, prayer, personal discipline, and total involvement. It does, however, give meaning to such activities, producing results having to do with our identity with God through Christ Jesus.

It is illumination, or Divine clarity, that makes those activities profitable. Study without illumination, or “spiritual understanding” (Col.1:9), is like an automobile without an engine, or a carpenter without tools. When God, who is Light, sheds light on a text, or a subject, the individual can take hold of the truth, and use it profitably.

Chapter 20 - HEATHEN RELIGION IS DOMINATED BY DARKNESS

"This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is NO DARKNESS AT ALL." (1 John 1:5)

All heathen religions, whether found in crude or intellectually refined forms, have this in common: they are dominated by spiritual darkness. By “heathen,” I mean cultures that do not know God – the real God. This word does not mean uneducated, socially crude, or like an untamed beast. The Israelites were warned, "Thus saith the LORD, Learn not THE WAY OF THE HEATHEN, and be not dismayed at the signs of heaven; for the heathen are dismayed at them." (Jer 10:2). Some of those “heathen” were among the most educated and astute thinkers in the world: the Egyptians, the Babylonians, the Assyrians, etc. They were noted for their buildings, their writings, their libraries, and scientific

methodologies. They were “heathen” because of their lack of the knowledge of God. Today, there are “heathen” in some of the most advanced countries of the world.

There are tribal peoples that dance themselves into a frenzy, inflicting pain upon their bodies and sacrificing their own offspring, doing so because their god is shrouded with mystery. Such people were among the “prophets of Baal,” with whom the prophet Elijah contended (1 Kgs 18:22-40). Those false prophets were from an intellectually and culturally advanced people. But they did not know God. That is why they were “heathen.” The “heathen” are groping to find a way to appease an angry and unknowable deity. The more refined and philosophical religions, have their routines, designed to produce favor in the eyes of an “unknown god.” Their disciplines are rigid, yielding no joy or satisfaction, because they are offered to a god that dwells in darkness, which is no god at all! It is unfortunate that many “Christians” are actually dominated by a God of whom they know very little. They lisp in infant speech, and know very little about the eternal God’s manners, will, purpose, and gifts. They do not have a grasp of His Word – the things He has revealed. This is the direct result of being taught by those who are basically ignorant of God themselves. They have. In fact, learned the way of the heathen.

Whatever we may think of these circumstances, and however men may explain them, they are in sharp conflict with the nature of God, the Gospel of Christ, and the Holy Scriptures. “God is light,’ and therefore He CAN be known.

If you live in a country where little is known of God, pray that God will send you some of His ministers. He does this. As it is written, “Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man?” (1 Cor 3:5). You can read an example of God sending someone to a people who did not know Him in Acts 16:9-15). Those men were sent to Macedonia, a Grecian city advanced in intellectual and social manners.

Chapter 21 - THE BANE OF MYSTERIOUS RELIGION

By “bane,” I mean curse, nemesis, and affliction. In the salvation that is in Christ Jesus, “the Son of God is come, and hath GIVEN US AN UNDERSTANDING, that we may know Him that is true, and we are in Him that is true, even in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life” (1 John 5:20).

When men – any men – know little of God, they can only receive little from Him. While it is true that there is much about God we do not know, there is also much that we can, by the will of God, know about Him and His will. It is understandable why there is a shroud over understanding in some third world countries. But when someone comes in the name of the Lord taunting the people with speaking and praying in unintelligent words, that is quite another matter. When Paul spoke of an “unknown tongue,” he did not mean it was a supernatural tongue, like angels’ language, but that it was unknown to the people who were

hearing it. Hearing a word that is not understood brings no Divine benefit to the people. In fact, when the tower of Babel was attempted, God proved there was no genuine value in speaking in a tongue that could not be understood (Gen 11:7-8). That was a curse, not a blessing!

On the day of Pentecost, there was preaching in tongues, or languages – but they were understood as the native languages of the people hearing them (Acts 2:11). They were the tongues of men, not of angels (Acts 2:8-11). That is something God Himself did, and men ought to learn from it, and cease from imposing their vain tradition on such texts as First Corinthians 14.

Mysterious religion, however, is not confined to the heathen cultures of the world. It has found its way into the professed Christian community as well. When we are dealing with an area of abundant revelation, it is completely out of order to speak in unintelligent words.

By “mysterious religion,” I mean a system of theological thought that shuts one up to a fundamental ignorance of God. It is one that has no message of illumination, only procedures or experiences that cannot be explained. Permit me to name a few of them. The notion of a “prayer altar” where people “pray through” in agony, has been fostered by the acceptance of an “unknown God.” Others, coming to God in a similar way, but not through a prayer altar, are trying to “do enough” to make them acceptable to God. They too are suffering from a flawed view of the Lord.

Another theological persuasion that is growing in our country concerns the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Such things as being “slain in the Spirit,” being edified by utterances not understood by the one expressing them, and being directed independently of understanding, have more in common with heathendom than with the “faith once delivered to the saints.” If that seems offensive, remember, “God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all.” Such experiences, claiming to be from God, contradict the very nature of Him with Whom we have to do. Apart from this, there is no clear text of Scripture that teaches the acceptability or preeminence of such experiences. They have produced more questions than answers, thus showing they are NOT without shadows – God, however, IS “without shadow!”

Chapter 22 - SPLENDOR IN WHICH ALL ELSE IS REVEALED

“In Thy light, WE SEE LIGHT.” (Psa 36:9)

Because God is light itself, nothing can be truly comprehended apart from Him.

“For with Thee is the fountain of life: in Thy light shall we see light” (Psa 36:9).

That is, in the light that emanates from Him, we are able to see the truth that proceeds from Him. The “light” that we see within the illuminating influence of His light is subordinate light – lesser light. That is, it is what proceeds from Him, as distinguished from His Person. As we walk in the light as He is in the light (1

John 1:7), we are able to see the truth that He has revealed, which is “the light” we are enabled to see, or perceive.

At this point, we rise above the limitations of nature. Ordinarily, for example, the greater light of the sun obscures the lesser lights of the stars and moon. When the sun is in its zenith, the lesser lights of the moon and stars cannot be seen. Too, a giant floodlight drowns out the lesser lights of a candle, or a flashlight, or a single low-watt bulb.

However, this is not the sense of this text. The subordinate light that we behold in God’s light is legitimate and necessary. It is subordinate light because it cannot of itself shine. It’s illuminating traits are borrowed light, coming from the giver of light. Keep in mind, we are speaking of things that pertain to life and godliness, and are directly related to the redemption that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. The more of God that we see and understand, the more of the truth we see and understand. If God is not understood, the truth is not understood – academics notwithstanding.

Chapter 23 - THE LORD JESUS CHRIST

"For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give THE LIGHT of the knowledge of the glory of God IN THE FACE OF JESUS CHRIST." (2 Cor 4:6)

So far as men are concerned, in its highest manifestation, God’s light illuminates the “face of Jesus Christ,” who is the “Light of the world” (2 Cor 4:6; John 8:12). It is the influence of God Himself that makes Jesus understandable to us. That is why Jesus said, “and no man knoweth who the Son is, but the Father” (Luke 10:22). Again, Jesus said, “No man can come to Me, except the Father which hath sent Me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of (by) God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath LEARNED OF THE FATHER, cometh unto Me” (John 6:44-45). While it is true, those in Christ “know” Him, it is PREEMINENTLY true that the Father knows the Son. Jesus Himself said, "As THE FATHER KNOWETH ME, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep" (John 10:15). It is His (the Father’s) light that has enabled us to see Jesus, not merely our human capacities.

It is in the Light of God Himself that we have been enabled to see “the light of the world.” Let us say it even more succinctly, in words that the Holy Spirit teaches; “For God, who said, Light shall shine out of darkness, is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ” (2 Cor 4:6, NASB).

Now, there is no valid knowledge of God outside of Jesus. Prior to Jesus, in the most precise sense of the word – the redemptive sense – It is thrice written, "As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God." (Rom 3:10-11; Psa 14:1-2;

53:2). Throughout history, no one has had any proper understanding of God unless God revealed Himself to them. For men, the zenith of that revelation is given in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Chapter 24 - THE WORD OF GOD

The Word of God is described as a “light” and a “lamp.” “Thy word is a Lamp unto my feet, and a Light unto my path” (Psa 119:105).

God’s Word is a “light” and a “lamp” because of the One who said it – the one who Himself is “Light.” Whatever comes from, or emanates from, the Living God is characterized, to some degree, by His nature.

Moral illumination is found in Scripture that assists us in distinguishing between good and evil. More than that, God and Christ are irradiated there. The Word of God, particularly the Gospel, is like a “light that shineth in a dark place” (2 Pet 1:19). It identifies the enemy, the course, and our destination. It tells us where required resources can be found, and how to appropriate them. Above all this, it shows us our Father and our Savior, making them understandable, and thus accessible, to us. Truly, His Word is a light.

The Word of God is perceived, however, only within the influence of the Greater Light, which is the Lord Himself. Peter prescribes an approach to understanding the “more sure word of prophecy.” We do well to give due attention to it. “We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the Day Star arise in your hearts” (2 Pet 1:19).

Do not miss the significance of this passage! The “prophetic word” (NASB) we have received has been made “more sure,” i.e., is “more fully confirmed” (NRSV). That word, Peter writes, was spoken on the “holy mount,” when Jesus was transfigured. “For He received from God the Father honor and glory, when there came such a voice to Him from the excellent glory, This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with Him in the holy mount” (2 Pet 1:17-18). The day that word was spoken from heaven, the disciples did not fully comprehend it. However, Peter says this is a different day. The word spoken by God is fulfilled now, and He is speaking to humanity through an exalted Christ (Heb 1:1-2). But even this is not the end of the matter.

Chapter 25 - A MORE SURE WORD

"We have also A MORE SURE WORD of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto A LIGHT that shineth in a dark place, until the DAY dawn, and the DAY STAR arise in your hearts." (2 Pet 1:19)

The “more sure word of prophecy” is the Gospel of Christ, “which is the power of God unto salvation” (Rom 1:16). Other versions read, “the prophetic word

confirmed” (NKJV), and “made more sure” (NASB). The prophets foretold what was going to take place, or happen, in the future. The Gospel proclaims what has happened, and is presently available.

One might suppose that a “more fully confirmed” word of prophecy would be relatively easy to understand – i.e., that its implications are obvious. Peter does not say this. He rather counsels us to pay close attention to that word – to let it permeate our hearts and minds. Dwell upon it, and let it dominate your mind. And what will be the outcome of such a procedure? What will happen if you think upon the word of the Gospel, pondering its Savior and His promises, together with the declaration of His accomplishments? You will be brought to the greater Light – “whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto A LIGHT that shineth in a dark place, until THE DAY DAWN, and the day star ARISE IN YOUR HEARTS” (2 Pet 1:19). When that occurred, you will be walking “in the light, as He is in the light” (1 John 1:7). That is, you see things as they really are, and they will make perfect sense to you.

And what causes that “day to dawn?” How is it that the “Day Star” arises in your heart, bringing joy and gladness to it? Was it your diligence? Your will? Your historical or language expertise? As much as these may have entered, they did not bring the blessing! It was God Who shed the light upon you, and it is God Himself who is to be thanked! Truly, in His light, you were enabled to see light!

Chapter 26 - THE SPIRIT OF WISDOM AND REVELATION

"That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him" (Eph 1:17)

If “the spirit of wisdom and revelation” was unique to the Apostles of the Lamb, Paul would not have prayed for the church, but would have confined his activity to teaching the church. If it was a matter of the Ephesians not having enough information, the Apostle would not have prayed for them, but would have confined himself to enlarging upon aspects of the truth in which they were deficient.

Note, he prays that “the spirit of wisdom and revelation” will be given to them – by God, who Himself is “Light.” This is more than a prayer for the Holy Spirit to be given to the Ephesians. They had already received the Spirit, “sealed” thereby until the day of redemption (Eph 1:13-14). It was not a matter of them receiving the Holy Spirit, or being “baptized” in the Holy Spirit. If that were the case, that is how Paul would have prayed. He prays for a Divine activity that would eventuate in the more precise merging of their spirit with the Holy Spirit. He prays for their apprehension of what God has already revealed. The enlargement of their “spiritual understanding” was essential to their growth and survival. Similarly, Paul prayed for the Colossians, “asking God to fill you with the knowledge of His will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding” (Col 1:9).

The “spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him” would result in a proper perception of the Lord. It would free them from debilitating misconceptions. Such a spirit would bring them within the circumference of blessing, thereby enabling their growth into Christ in all things. This was not a temporary provision to carry them forward until the compilation of the Scriptural canon. That would not be accomplished until nearly 300 years after this writing. The answer to the need for which he prayed was not a Bible with 66 books instead of 39, as necessary as that is. Those with a full copy of the compiled Scriptures need this prayer just as surely as the Ephesians. “Revelation” equates with the “day dawning” mentioned by Peter (2 Pet 1:19). It is when the spirit of man apprehends what has been provided in Christ. How we need this spirit in our churches! It is nearly altogether absent, and it is no wonder. In all of the prayers I have heard, there have been very few for this blessing. Perhaps that is why it is so scarce.

Chapter 27 - THE EYES OF YOUR UNDERSTANDING BEING ENLIGHTENED

"The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints." (Eph 1:18)

some versions read “the eyes of your heart” (NASB, NIV, NRSV). To be sure, the “heart,” or center of the human makeup, is involved. But it is discernment that is being underscored, and thus the word “understanding” is appropriate. What men need is not a mere sense of the truth of God, but an understanding of it. That is the focus of this prayer.

This is a most unusual expression, indicating its profundity. It is the “understanding” that needs to be illuminated – that requires exposure to the God of all light. This is the seat of the understanding, not understanding itself. There is a phrase in the Song of Solomon that aptly describes the separation of the heart from the mind. “I sleep, but my heart waketh” (Song of Sol 5:2). Sin brought a film of obscurement over our hearts. Consequently, it is possible for the intellect to be very productive, while the heart is dull and obtuse. The first and great commandment requires that we love God with both “heart” and “mind” (Mark 12:30) – and the “heart” is mentioned first!

Intellectual clearness is imperative if we are going to do a work for God, but warm and illuminated hearts are even more necessary. There have been many a soul, with the eyes of their heart opened by the Lord, who worked mightily for God, while their intellect appeared to lag behind! But there has never been a person used mightily of God whose intellect, though superior, was attended by a cold and undiscerning heart. The Pharisees and Sadducees are an epitaph to the futility of an emphasis upon the intellect. It is the heart, or understanding, that must be illuminated. Once illumined, it will compel the intellect to come along, yielding great benefit.

If there is a single deficiency in our churches, it is the absence of “heart.” The lack of interest, zeal, commitment, and service, gives indication that hearts need to be converted (John 12:40). How we must fervently pray for God to “open the eyes” of men’s “hearts.”

Chapter 28 - SO YOU MAY KNOW

"The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; THAT YE MAY KNOW what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints," (Eph 1:18)

There are priorities in the kingdom of God, and spiritual understanding addresses them all. If you are a careful student of Scripture, you will note that neither Jesus nor the Apostles prayed for, or taught about, ideal families and governments – although such can be correctly desired. No church was upbraided for their families being deficient, though that condition surely existed. You never read of a church being soundly rebuked because their men were not the “priests” or leaders of their households, though that condition no doubt existed. Whatever you may think of these mundane conditions, they cannot be allowed to take the precedence over revealed kingdom priorities. Remember, it is in God’s light that WE SEE LIGHT. When we apprehend God and “know” Him, as is realized in Christ (John 17:3), we gain the advantage in areas of domestic and social obligation, even though Divine light gives no guarantees of excellence in those realms. It is quite true that religious men have gained prominence and wealth in areas in which Divine excellence is neither promised, nor guaranteed.

There are at least three primary areas requiring divine illumination. They are all pivotal, and will yield a large and satisfactory spiritual harvest. These are spheres where spiritual ignorance is lethal. If they are not comprehended, everything else becomes obscure. They are in our text: The assurance of faith, so necessary to overcome the world, cannot be produced apart from illumination in these areas: The hope of His calling, the riches of His glorious inheritance, and The surpassing greatness of His power (Eph 1:18-19). I will be covering these in the next three lessons.

Chapter 29 - THE HOPE OF HIS CALLING

"The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is THE HOPE OF HIS CALLING . . ." (Eph 1:18)

“THE HOPE OF HIS CALLING” has to do with WHY God has called us, and the destiny to which we have been appointed. The near-total failure of the modern churchman to understand this hope is evidence of the ongoing need for Divine involvement. This is “the hope of glory,” springing from the possession of Christ within: "To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is CHRIST IN YOU THE HOPE OF GLORY (Col 1:27). This is the appointed destiny of being “conformed to the image of His

Son” (Rom 8:29), and becoming “like Him, for we shall see Him as He is” (1 John 3:1-3). The “heavenly calling” that apprised us of the Lord’s fervent desire to save us, summoned us away from, and out of the world order.

In Christ, we are being oriented for glory; even being made ready to judge the world and angels, and rule the “world to come” – “Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? And if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters?” (1 Cor 6:2); “For unto the angels hath He not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak. But one in a certain place testified, saying, What is man, that thou art mindful of him? Or the son of man, that thou visitest him?” (Heb 2:5-6).

The saints possessing the kingdom, reigning with Christ throughout endless ages, is on the Divine agenda: “But the saints of the most High SHALL take the kingdom, and POSSESS the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever;” “Until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given TO THE SAINTS of the most High; and the time came that THE SAINTS POSSESSED THE KINGDOM;” “And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be GIVEN TO THE PEOPLE OF THE SAINTS of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him;” “If we suffer, we shall also REIGN WITH HIM: if we deny him, he also will deny us.” (Dan 7:18,22,27; 2 Tim 2:12).

That is a large undertaking, and if the saints do not have a grasp of it, it will not exert its power upon them! Only God can so illuminate the heart, so that it is fully persuaded of the reality of these things – things God Himself has appointed.

Chapter 30 - THE RICHES OF HIS GLORIOUS INHERITANCE

“The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of His calling, and what [is] THE RICHES OF THE GLORY OF HIS INHERITANCE IN THE SAINTS.” (Eph 1:18)

Here is something that, in Divine light, is to be known – that is, we are to possess an intelligent and insightful grasp of this fact – “The riches of His glorious inheritance in the saints.” This proclaims an aspect of the kingdom of God that Satan tirelessly seeks to obscure. The saints are God’s heritage! They are “HIS INHERITANCE.” Salvation is what they have received – THEY ARE WHAT THE LORD RECEIVES. Jesus gains us as a bride and “joint heirs.” God receives us as His personal “inheritance.” This is the real substance of Christ’s intercessory prayer on the eve of His death. “Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word; That they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us: that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me. And the glory which thou gavest Me I have given them; that they may be one, even as We are One: I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that

Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them [the disciples], as Thou hast loved Me" (John 17:20-23).

Note, Jesus does not pray that we may be one with each other, but one in Him and the Father ("that they also may be IN US"). The very glory the Father gave the Son is given to those God has chosen for His inheritance ("the glory which Thou hast given Me, I HAVE GIVEN THEM"). The oneness for which Jesus prayed is precisely identified: "I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be perfected in unity." The world believing that Jesus loved the disciples and has sent them forth does NOT depend upon us being one with each other. It DOES depend upon us being one with the Father and the Son! This is not to deprecate unity among believers, or diminish its necessity. The Spirit has made us "one" in Christ. But we are one with each other BECAUSE we are "one" with the Father and the Son." If that unity does not exist, it is not possible to be truly united with one another. We are not to simply try to be united with one another. When we were "baptized into Christ," we came into unity with the Father and the Son, and, consequently, were united with everyone else who is has been united with Them. Our commission is to "KEEP the unity" (Eph 4:3). It is our duty to maintain that unity in the bond of peace: "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." However, the real power comes from unity with the Father and the Son.

The disunity and division among professed believers that is found in America, is also found wherever it has sent missionaries. I particularly desire that my friends in third world countries see this, and do their part in ridding their country of Christian divisions, so they can work together. The same mandate applies to America.

Chapter 31 - THE SURPASSING GREATNESS OF HIS POWER

"The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, And what is THE EXCEEDING GREATNESS OF HIS POWER His power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power" (Eph 1:18-19)

"The surpassing greatness of His power" is "TOWARD US WHO BELIEVE." It is staggering to consider its greatness. Other versions read, "the surpassing greatness of His power" (NASB), "the incomparably great" (NIV), "immeasurable greatness" (NRSV), "unlimited is his power" (BBE), and "incredible greatness of God's power" (NLT). This is the power the Father employed to raise Jesus from the dead and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places.

Now, in this blessed "day of salvation," this power is DEVOTED TO THE PEOPLE OF GOD. Paul knew believers were prone to underestimate the

greatness of the power available to them in Christ. How frequently we are faced with smallness when hearing the objectives of professing believers. Too often they neither talk nor pray as though they were persuaded of the greatness of the power that is focused toward them.

Whether it is forging forward, holding their ground, or breaking new ground, smallness plagues the modern church. No wonder they do not seek the mighty power of God; they are not doing much that requires power. Many of my third world “friends” they speak as though those in America are one ones with the unlimited power. They ask us for help, for supplies, etc.

The truth of the matter is, however, that every aspect of the kingdom of God requires Divine might. You cannot “stand against the wiles of the devil” without it. You cannot “compel” men to come to Christ without it (Lk 14:23). You cannot “grow up into Christ in all things” without it (Eph 4:15). However, if the “eyes of your heart” have not been opened to its greatness, the power of God will elude you.

“God is light!” That is why Paul prayed this prayer, and that is why it can be answered – IN YOU!

Chapter 32 - RESTORATION AND RECOVERY, #1

We do not want to close this study without pointing out an aspect of Divine light that is indispensable to our situation. God Himself addresses the fallen condition of mankind – the need for restoration and recovery. Malachi spoke of the coming Messiah, Who is the “BRIGHTNESS of His (the Father) glory, and the express image of His person” (Heb 1:3). His prophecy proclaims the correction of the dilemma caused by sin. “But unto you that fear My name shall the SUN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall. And ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, saith the LORD of hosts” (Mal 4:2-3).

The “SUN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS” is the Lord Jesus Christ, sent by God the Father to brighten a realm darkened by sin. As that glorious “Sun” rose to its pinnacle, shining in pristine glory, it brought more than illumination! Jesus, seated at the right hand of God, is the Sun at high noon, exercising remedial influence toward humanity. The rays of His brightness bring healing to our sin-stricken race, and recovery to those ruined by the fall.

That recovery is evidenced in two ways. First, those who bask in the rays of this ordained “Sun” “go forth and skip about as calves from the stall” (NASB).

Released from spiritual imprisonment, they are like the lame man that who healed at the gate Beautiful (Acts 3:1-10). His ankle bones received strength, and he “leaped and praised God” (Acts 3:8). The joyous liberty of the saved is wonderful to behold, more marvelous still to experience. How is it that such

spiritual and moral strength is imparted to those embracing the Savior? It is the “healing” caused by the influence of His Person and Presence.

Chapter 33 - RESTORATION AND RECOVERY, #2

"But unto you that fear My name shall the Sun of Righteousness arise with healing in His wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall" (Mal 4:2).

In the place of “wings,” several versions read “rays” (NIB, NIRV, NIV, NJB). The idea is that wherever “the Sun of Righteousness” goes, healing and recovery are being brought to the people. It is the sort of thing that is depicted in Peter’s salient statement of conversion: "For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls." (1 Pet 2:25).

The “Sun of righteousness,” which is the enthroned Jesus, imparts strength to overcome the adversary. In this sense, we “tread down the wicked,” refusing to be led astray by their influence. As Malachi continued, "And ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, saith the LORD of hosts" (Mal 4:3).

However, according to apostolic doctrine, we shall do more than this, we shall judge them in the last day. As it is written, "Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world?" (1 Cor 6:2). That is when “the wicked become as “ashes under the soles of our feet.”

In the renewed strength imparted to us by God’s risen “Sun,” we can resist the devil, wrestle against principalities and powers, and mortify our members that are upon the earth! Hallelujah for the “Sun of righteousness!” Where this is not happening, like it or not, God’s “Sun of righteousness” is NOT shining.

Chapter 34 - CLOSENESS TO GOD ENABLES SOUNDNESS

"But IF we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." (1 John 1:7)

One final observation: closeness to God produces soundness of heart and soul.

Those who live afar from God shut themselves up to spiritual sickness, weakness, and ignorance. We cannot hope to be well in our hearts if we do not avail ourselves of the light of God’s presence. It is for our own protection and spiritual health that we are admonished, “seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand OF GOD. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth” (Col 3:1-2).

You must not view this as a harsh and abrasive law; it is the means to your survival. Besides this, it is the only logical thing for you to do, “for ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ IN GOD” (Col 3:3). It is imperative that this be comprehended – understood. If you do not understand this, then you must set

out at once to gain that understanding. This is why there were Apostolic prayers of this sort:

1. "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of WISDOM and REVELATION in the KNOWLEDGE of Him: The eyes of your UNDERSTANDING being ENLIGHTENED; that ye may KNOW what is the hope of His calling, and what [is] the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power" (Eph 1:17-19).

2. "For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be FILLED WITH THE KNOWLEDGE of His will in all WISDOM AND SPIRITUAL UNDERSTANDING; That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto ALL PLEASING, being fruitful in EVERY GOOD WORK, and increasing in the KNOWLEDGE of God" (Col 1:9-10).

I exhort you to aggressively oppose any form of religion that allows you to stay at a distance from God, remaining in ignorance of GOD and what He has provided in Christ Jesus. Such a religion is a curse! The Gospel of Christ summons you to come close to the Lord, not linger at a debilitating distance. This is why we are admonished, "let us DRAW NEAR with a sincere heart in FULL ASSURANCE OF FAITH, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water" (Heb 10:22). The closer you are to the Lord, the better you are. The further you are from Him, the worse you are.

Chapter 35 - CONCLUSION

"This then is the message which we have HEARD OF HIM, and declare unto you, that GOD IS LIGHT, and in Him is no darkness at all." (1 John 1:5)

Let the proclamation warm your heart: "GOD IS LIGHT!" This is a word God revealed about Himself, and it is intended to be known – discerned and comprehended. If you have not thought about it before, begin now to think about it, and to do so regularly.

May the thought refresh your spirit, challenge your mind, and strengthen your soul! My prayer is that you will be able to confess the following with holy men of old. "The LORD is M Y LIGHT and my Salvation; whom shall I fear? the LORD is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?" (Psa 27:1). What person or circumstance can trouble and disgrace you if you are persuaded of this?

In Christ Jesus it is gloriously true, "The people which sat in darkness saw GREAT LIGHT; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death LIGHT IS SPRUNG UP" (Matt 4:16). The Father sent the Son as "A LIGHT TO LIGHTEN the Gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel" (Luke 2:32). That was when Jesus entered the world to lay down His life, and take it up again (John 10:17-18). That was when "the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we BEHOLD HIS GLORY, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth" (John 1:14).

However, that Light, as glorious as it was, is nothing to be compared with the Light that emanates from the glorified Christ. Now, the LIGHT of Jesus is transforming in its effects. As it I written, "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, ARE CHANGED INTO THE SAME IMAGE from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord" (2 Cor 3:18). And again, "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath SHINED INTO OUR HEARTS, to give THE LIGHT of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor 4:6). That did not happen when Jesus walked among men, going about, doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil. His bodily presence did not transform people, or enable them to know God. But it does take place now, because the light of the glory of God is also resident in the glorified Christ.

Now go in the strength of that light! That is what makes you "the light of the world."

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