

After 62 AD there were no miracles or God-appointed teachers, such as we find in today's Dispensation of Grace. Even Paul's later commissions were limited to the epistles he wrote. The Colossian believers had learned of the Gospel message without his presence (Col. 1:5). That message was the Gospel of John, which was written that men . . . might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son (expression) of God; and that believing . . . might have life through His Name (John 20:30-31). They were enlightened by the words of Scripture and the divine generation of the Holy Spirit which is done in secret. In fact, every believer today has been saved by grace, which is the Holy Spirit providing him/her with the faith to believe (Eph. 2:8-10).

Paul himself had been struck by a blinding *light* on the road to Damascus which resulted in his call and conversion, by a direct "lightening strike" from Jesus Christ. He was a "chosen instrument . . . to bear My (Christ's) Name before the Gentiles (nations) and kings and the sons of Israel" (Acts 9:15, NASB). Paul states, **For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, "I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles (nations), that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth"** (Acts 13:47).

Paul used the figure of *light* to explain how our walk in this eon demands that while once we were *darkness* "now you are Light in the Lord; walk as children of Light" (Eph. 5:8, NASB). Ephesians 5:9-10 (NASB) says: **For the fruit of the Light consists in all goodness and righteousness and truth, trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord.** Verse 13 (NASB) says about the works of darkness: **But all things become visible when they are exposed by the light, for everything that becomes visible is light.** What we are being told is that *light* turns that which it shines upon into *light* also.

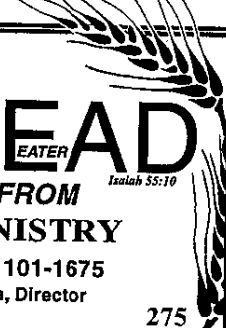
The phrase "God is light" implies that He is the source of all the material and energy in this universe, the One Who contains all the wisdom and righteousness in creation. Various verses from the Psalms emphasize this: "For Thou wilt light my candle: the Lord my God will enlighten my darkness" (Psa. 18:28); "For with Thee is the fountain of life: in Thy Light shall we see light" (Psa. 36:9); "His lightnings enlightened the world: the earth saw, and trembled" (Psa. 97:4); "Light is sown for the righteous (ones), and gladness (joy) for the upright (ones) in heart" (Psa. 97:11). May the reader find that *light* and be found walking in it.

MORE
SEED & BREAD
FOR THE SOWER & FOR THE EATER
Isaiah 55:10

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GOD IS LIGHT

By M.B. Hammond

Every morning, light shines from the east and disappears in the western skies at evening—God's incredible natural light from His created sun (Gen. 1:3-5), found at the center of our solar system. Consequently, through modern science and research, we know more about what this "light" is. However, do we know much about "God's light"? What is meant in John's Gospel when it states, "In Him was life; and the life was the *light* of men" (John 1:4)? What is meant in Isaiah 5:20 when it says, "O house of Jacob . . . let us walk in the *light* of the Lord"?

Scripture conveys an essential fact about God in another verse: ". . . God is *light* and in Him there is no darkness at all" (1 John 1:5). *Light*, found here and in many Biblical passages, seems to be used in both literal and figurative ways. When the word *light* is found in Old Testament Hebrew poetry or New Testament parables, it might warn us that the figurative use may be in practice. When it is found in a straight narrative in Scripture, perhaps it cautions us to place the literal meaning first, and to examine the potential figures of speech second.

In the engineering world, a technical definition of *light* would be considered as waves (energy packets) of radiation in the visible range of the electromagnetic spectrum (the infra-red and ultra-violet ranges are included at opposite ends, though invisible to the naked eye). Since much of the whole color spectrum is being used for men's purposes with various communications and information systems, God has no such restrictions and can "see it" all very clearly. When the famous mathematician and physicist, Albert Einstein, established the mass to energy conversion relation ($E = mc^2$), it clearly showed that God's work in creation flowed out of His endless store of *light*. When the masses of the solar system and stars of heaven are considered, we begin to see the infinite immensity of the power of God in all

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of its glory, contained in His "unapproachable light" (1 Tim. 6:16).

In contrast, the word *darkness* usually means the "absence of light." But figuratively speaking, it frequently refers to "the works of evil" or even "Satan's realm." *Darkness*, considered as the range beyond the visible spectrum which is not seen by the human eye, also has an energy transfer and a duplicate wave and particle nature. It bears its own signature. One can find it on film with chemicals (phosphorescence) and certain instruments.

To begin the study of *light*, we need to contrast *light* with *darkness*, as used in the Bible. For example, Psalm 139:11-12 (NIV) states, If I say, "Surely the darkness will hide me and the light become night around me, even the darkness will not be dark to You (God); the night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to You." Thus, God sets no limits in the detection and understanding of both good and evil. Another example is in Ecclesiastes 2:13-14 (NIV) which says, I saw that wisdom is better than folly, just as light is better than darkness. The wise man has eyes in his head, while the fool walks in darkness, but I came to recognize that the same fate overtakes them both. Here the idea is that while *light* is better than *darkness*, both good and evil men must face death. But the mitigating factor today is that the Lord Jesus Christ is "the light of this world." John 8:12 quotes Christ verifying this with: . . . I (Jesus) am the Light of this world: he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life. He provides us *life*, by the salvation resulting from believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, as established by what John 3:16 says.

The Gospel of John begins with the words: In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made. In Him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in the darkness, and the darkness comprehended it (could not extinguish it; John 1:1-5). The next verses say, There was a man sent (Gk.-apostolos) from God, whose name was John. The same came for a witness, to bear witness (testify) of the Light, that all men through him might believe. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world (John 1:6-9). God has given all men an innate knowledge of a Supreme Being (see *More Seed & Bread* No. 251, *God's Gift of Conscience*), but not knowing how to find Him, men have made many substitutions. While men's science cannot define what *life* really is, in Scripture we find the *light* and energizing *life* gift of God enables men to think, feel and use all the senses He has given us. As shown above, *light* is also the enlightenment that God grants faithful men to know and understand His righteous order.

In describing Christ's work and function, John 1:16-18 says, From the fullness of His grace we have all received one blessing after another, for the Law was given through Moses, grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever

seen God, but God, the One and Only who is at the Father's side has made Him known (NIV). Thus, the *light* that Jesus brought to men was inclusive of both grace and truth, both of which are part of the figurative aspects given for *light*. In Matthew 5:14-16 Jesus says to His disciples, Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven. The *light* to which Christ refers is the message they taught all Jews about new life in Him with resurrection in view. These men also brought this message to the people in the Acts Period.

At the beginning of His ministry, Jesus, while in Capernaum, quoted from the Prophet Isaiah: The people living in darkness have seen a great light; and on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned (Matt. 4:16, NIV). Here *darkness* refers to the Israelites who had fallen into sinful idolatry, and had lost the righteousness of God's Law. Jehovah was not primary in their minds or those of their leaders, with the harmful results that their leaders were more protective of their own wealth and power than of teaching about Him. The "great light" that came was Jesus Christ and the Word of God that He expressed. This verse above might also refer to the fact that the King of the coming Kingdom of God was there or *dawned* on earth to them. The actual continuing/governing of His future Kingdom does not require His personal presence, even though His *light* might *dawn* or enlighten mankind again. Some statements from Isaiah predict this, such as Isaiah 40:5: "And the glory (great light) of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh will see it together. . . ." Two others are: Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord rises upon you (Isa. 60:1, NIV); and Then will all your people be righteous and they will possess the land forever. They are the shoot I have planted, the work of My hands for the display of My splendor (God's glory in the earth; Isa. 60:21, NIV). We can see here that *light* or *enlightenment* is fundamental to God's work. Synonymous words used for *light* are *enlightenment*, *glory*, *splendor*, *shine*, *brightness*, *truth* and *grace*.

In Ephesians 3:9 (NASB) Paul says, And to bring to light (enlighten all men) what is the administration of the mystery (secret) which for ages has been hidden in God In Ephesians 3:2 (NASB) Paul had already asked the people of the nations "if indeed you have heard of the stewardship (administration) in God's grace which was given to me for you." Paul's purpose here, following Acts 28:28 (about 62 AD), was to let the believers know that a major change had taken place in God's work with mankind. In the Acts Period, believing men had the manifest works of the Holy Spirit to confirm their message (1 Cor. 12:7). Now it was "brought to a full end (Phil. 1:6) until the Day of Christ Jesus (the Kingdom)." Believers, addressed as *saints* (Col. 1:2), had the hope which was the Word of Truth, the Gospel (Col. 1:5).