



*Deliverance
From Darkness*

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Deliverance from Darkness

Keeping the Torch Lit

Among the ancient Greeks the runner that won the race was not the man who crossed the line in the shortest time, but the man who crossed it in the least time with his torch still burning. We are so busy with life's activities that we are in danger of allowing the torch of our spiritual life to become extinguished. It was when Moses paused in his going that he heard the voice of God.—*Doran's Ministers' Manual*.

The light will shine on those in darkness.

Isaiah 9:2

The people who walk in darkness will see a great light; those who live in a dark land, the light will shine on them.

The apostle John also referred to Jesus as the "true light" (John 1:9). Jesus referred to himself as "the light of the world" (John 8:12). Whenever we see the lights of Christmas, let them remind us that they recall Christ, our true Light.

In a time of great darkness, God promised to send a light who would shine on everyone living in the shadow of death.

He is both "Wonderful Counselor" and "Mighty God." This message of hope was fulfilled in the birth of Christ and the establishment of his eternal Kingdom. He came to deliver all people from their slavery to sin.

Those in darkness have seen a great light.

Matthew 4:16

"THE PEOPLE WHO WERE SITTING IN DARKNESS SAW A GREAT LIGHT, AND THOSE WHO WERE SITTING IN THE LAND AND SHADOW OF DEATH, UPON THEM A LIGHT DAWNED."

By quoting from the book of Isaiah, Matthew continues to tie Jesus' ministry to the Old Testament. This was helpful for his Jewish readers, who were familiar with these Scriptures. In addition, it shows the unity of God's purposes as he works with his people throughout all ages.

The "Kingdom of Heaven" has the same meaning as the "Kingdom of God" in Mark and Luke. Matthew uses this phrase because the Jews, out of their intense reverence and respect, did not pronounce God's name. The Kingdom of Heaven is still near because it has arrived in our heart. See the note on [3:2](#) for more on the Kingdom of Heaven.

Jesus started his ministry with the same message people had heard John the Baptist say: "Repent of your sins." The message is the same today as when Jesus and John gave it. Becoming a follower of Christ means turning away from our self-centeredness and "self" control and turning our life over to Christ's direction and control.

The eyes of the blind shall see.

Isaiah 29:18

On that day the deaf will hear words of a book, and out of their gloom and darkness the eyes of the blind will see.

The world described here, under Christ's rule, will be far different from the one we live in today. There will be no more violence or gloom. This new

world will be characterized by joy, understanding, justice, and praise to God.

The Gentiles have an equal share in God's inheritance.

Acts 26:17-18

rescuing you from the Jewish people and from the Gentiles, to whom I am sending you, to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me.'

Paul took every opportunity to remind his audience that the Gentiles had an equal share in God's inheritance. This inheritance is the promise and blessing of the covenant that God had made with Abraham (see Ephesians 2:19; 1 Peter 1:3, 4). Paul's mission was to preach the Good News to the Gentiles.

We are rescued from the doom of Darkness

Colossians 1:13

For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son,

The Colossians feared the unseen forces of darkness, but Paul says that true believers have been transferred from darkness to light, from slavery to freedom, from guilt to forgiveness, and from the power of Satan to the power of God.

We have been rescued from a rebel kingdom to serve the rightful King. Our conduct should reflect our new allegiance.

You are sons of the light and of the day.

1 Thessalonians 5:4-5

But you, brethren, are not in darkness, that the day would overtake you like a thief; for you are all sons of light and sons of day we are not of night nor of darkness;

It is good that we don't know exactly when Christ will return. If we knew the precise date, we might be tempted to be lazy in our work for Christ. Worse yet, we might plan to keep sinning and then turn to God right at the end.

Heaven is not our only goal; we have work to do here. Christians must keep on doing God's work until death or until we see the unmistakable return of our Savior.

You are called into the marvelous light.

1 Peter 2:9

But you are A CHOSEN RACE, A royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR God's OWN POSSESSION, so that you may proclaim the Excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;

Christians sometimes speak of "the priesthood of all believers." In Old Testament times, people did not approach God directly. A priest acted as intermediary between God and sinful human beings. With Christ's victory on the cross, that pattern changed.

Now we can come directly into God's presence without fear (Hebrews 4:16), and we are given the responsibility of bringing others to him also (2 Corinthians 5:18-21). When we are united with Christ as members of his body, we join in his priestly work of reconciling God and people.

People often base their self-concept on their accomplishments. But our relationship with Christ is far more important than our jobs, successes, wealth, or knowledge.

We have been chosen by God as his very own, and we have been called to represent him to others. Remember that your value comes from being one of God's children, not from what you can achieve. You have worth because of what *God does*, not because of what you do.

Those who dishonor God will be given darkness.

Romans 1:21

For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

Your whole body will be full of darkness, when you have an evil eye.

Paul clearly portrays the inevitable downward spiral into sin.

First, people reject God;

Next, they make up their own ideas of what a god should be and do;

Then they fall into every kind of wickedness: greed, hate, envy, murder, quarreling, deception, malicious behavior, and gossip.

Finally, they grow to hate God and encourage others to do so.

God does not cause this steady progression toward evil. Rather, when people reject him, he allows them to live as they choose.

God gives them over to or permits them to experience the natural consequences of their sin.

Once caught in the downward spiral, no one can pull himself or herself out. Sinners must trust Christ alone to deliver them from destruction.

An evil eye will cause the whole body to be evil.

Matthew 6:23

"But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light that is in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!

Spiritual vision is our capacity to see clearly what God wants us to do and to see the world from his point of view. But this spiritual insight can be easily clouded. Self-serving desires, interests, and goals block that vision. Serving God is the best way to restore it. A "good" eye is one that is fixed on God.

Men loved darkness rather than light.

John 3:19-20

"This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil. "For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed.

Many people don't want their lives exposed to God's light because they are afraid of what will be revealed. They don't want to be changed.

Don't be surprised when these same people are threatened by your desire to obey God and do what is right, because they are afraid that the light in you may expose some of the darkness in their lives.

Rather than giving in to discouragement, keep praying that they will come to see how much better it is to live in light than in darkness.

Light and darkness have no fellowship.

2 Corinthians 6:14

Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness?

Paul urges believers to not "team up," that is, form partnerships with unbelievers because this might weaken their Christian commitment, integrity, or standards. It would be a mismatch.

Earlier, Paul had explained that this did not mean isolating oneself from unbelievers (see 1 Corinthians 5:9, 10). Paul even urges Christians to stay with their unbelieving spouses (1 Corinthians 7:12, 13).

He wanted believers to be active in their witness for Christ to unbelievers but not lock themselves into personal or business relationships that could cause them to compromise their faith.

Believers should do everything in their power to avoid situations that could force them to divide their loyalties.

In Christ, there is no darkness.

1 John 1:5-6

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. If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth;

Light represents what is good, pure, true, holy, and reliable. Darkness represents what is sinful and evil. The statement "God is light" means that God is perfectly holy and true and that he alone can guide us out of the darkness of sin.

Light is also related to truth in that light exposes whatever exists, whether it is good or bad. In the dark, good and evil look alike; in the light, they can be clearly distinguished.

Just as darkness cannot exist in the presence of light, sin cannot exist in the presence of a holy God.

If we want to have a relationship with God, we must put aside our sinful ways of living. To claim that we belong to him but then to go out and live for ourselves is hypocrisy. Christ will expose and judge such deceit.

The light of the gospel is the image of God.

2 Corinthians 4:4

In whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

The Good News is revealed to everyone, except to those who refuse to believe. Satan is "the god of this world." His work is to deceive, and he has blinded those who don't believe in Christ (see 11:14, 15).

The allure of money, power, and pleasure blinds people to the light of Christ's Good News. Those who reject Christ and prefer their own pursuits have unknowingly made Satan their god.

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Illustration:

"Mind the Light"

I read the story, told by a brother minister, of the lighthouse keeper on Robbins' Reef off the rocky shore of New England.

Jacob Walker, after years of faithful service of minding the light, caught a cold one stormy night and rapidly grew worse and died.

His wife buried his body on the hillside above the shore, on the mainland, in plain view of the lighthouse upon the reef. Then she applied for and received the appointment as the keeper of the light. For twenty years she carried on alone, and then a New York City reporter went out to get her story.

In the course of the interview she told him this: "Every evening I stand in the door of the lighthouse and look across the water to the hillside where my husband sleeps. . . . I always seem to hear his voice saying, as he often said when he was alive, '**Mind the light! Mind the light! Mind the light!**'"

Across the troubled waters and the crashing breakers of our time there comes another voice to us, a voice from that "green hill far away, without a city wall," a voice out of the blackness of earth's darkest day to us in the darkness and evil of our day. And the message of the Son of God is the same.

"Mind the light! Mind the light! Mind the light!" And, God helping us, as Christian patriots, we will!—*Christian Observer*.

Illustration"

Keep the Light Burning

On the coast of Norway is a lighthouse where a keeper lived with his two children. One day he went to the distant shore for provisions. A storm arose, and he was unable to return.

The time for lighting the lamp came, and Mary, the elder child, said to her little brother, "We must light the lamp, Willie."

"How can we?" asked Willie. "We ain't big enough." But the two children climbed the long, narrow stairs to the tower where the lamp was kept.

Mary pulled up a chair and tried to reach the lamp in the great reflector; it was too high.

Groping down the stairs, she ascended again with a small oil lamp in her hand. "I can hold this up," she said to her little brother.

She climbed on the chair again, but still the reflector was just beyond her reach. "Get down," said Willie; "I know what we can do." She jumped down, and he stretched his little body across the chair. "Stand on me," he said.

And she stood on the little fellow as he lay across the chair. She raised the lamp high, and its light shone far out across the water.

Holding it first with one hand, then with the other, to rest her little arms, she called down to her brother,

"Does it hurt you, Willie?" "Of course it hurts," he called back, "but keep the light burning."

Are we keeping the light of God's love burning in the world even though it hurts? Are we holding it up so that all nations may see its beams afar?—*The S. S. Banner*.

Illustration:

Little Jane Understood

At church little Jane had listened to a sermon on "Let Your Light Shine." The only part she remembered was the text, but she didn't understand what it meant until her mother explained,

"It means being good, obedient, and cheerful."

In the afternoon there was trouble in the nursery, and Jane excused herself for being naughty by saying, "I've blowed myself out."—*Church Business*.

Prayer to salvation.

Lord God in heaven, I come to you in the name of Jesus.

I acknowledge to you that I am a sinner, and

I am sorry for my sins and the life that I have lived;

I need your forgiveness.

I believe that your only begotten Son Jesus Christ shed His precious blood on the cross at Calvary and died for my sins, and I am now willing to turn from my sin.

Your Holy Word declares in Romans 10:9 that if we confess the Lord our God and believe in our hearts that God raised Jesus from the dead, we shall be saved.

Right now I confess Jesus as the Lord of my soul. With my heart, I believe that God raised Jesus from the dead.

This very moment I accept Jesus Christ as my own personal Savior and according to His Word, right now I am saved. Amen

References:

Holy Bible: King James Translation

- New American Standard Bible
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Additional comments and charts are taken from: *Life Application Study Bible*. Illinois: Tyndale House 2007. Print