

The Light of This World

Light to See in This World

Please turn to John chapter 11.

Anyone walking needs light to see the path in front of them. When the midday sun shines directly on an obstacle, we perceive it clearly and can avoid it. In low light, however, a person can get tricked and find themselves in a critical situation very quickly.

A winter hazard for early-morning pedestrians is a phenomenon called black ice, where a transparent layer of ice can appear like a wet sidewalk instead of an icy one. Not realizing what's ahead you can easily proceed unawares and end up slipping or falling. Not the way you want to start your day!

Daytime gives us light to see in this world. Jesus pointed out a singular benefit of the daytime: *seeing!*

John 11:9:

"Are there not twelve hours in the day?" replied Jesus. "If any one walks in the daytime, he does not stumble—because he sees the light of this world."

Walking in the daytime of the s-u-n, we see and do not stumble. Walking in the daytime of the S-o-n, we see and do not stumble spiritually.

John 8:12:

Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, “I am [the light of the world](#). Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have [possess] [the light of life.](#)”

Walking in the daytime is the opposite of stumbling in darkness. When we walk in the daytime, we see the light of this world — Christ. Jesus declared that the one who follows him will not walk in darkness, but will instead have “the light of life”. What a glorious purpose for living!

Where Light Comes From

Let’s pause for a moment to consider where light comes from. God is the One Who, in creating the heavens and earth, set in motion the blessed dependability of *physical* light. Each 24-hour period, the sun comes up and the sun goes down. Each new day therefore brings with it a fresh opportunity to walk in the daytime, physically speaking.

God is also the One Who set in motion the blessed dependability of *spiritual* light. [Each day God wants to shed light on our path, if only we would choose to walk in the daytime spiritually.](#)

The spirit of God is clued in to every situation, no matter where we go. The spirit’s prompting illuminates our way so we can move in the right direction; and when we move ahead with God’s help, He always provides a way of escape from the pitfalls in our way!

Turn in your Bibles to James 1. We know, from the First Epistle of John, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. What a powerful truth to found a life on! If we would escape darkness in any category, we have but to [turn to God, the Father of lights.](#)

James 1:17:

Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from [the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.](#)

What is the relationship of *the Father of lights* to *the light of the world*? It's really quite simple. [God, the Father of lights, fathered His Son Jesus Christ, the light of the world.](#)

A Spirit-Forward Life

Let's talk about the present. Today we are made of parts both visible and invisible. Our visible parts — our body and breath — are grounded in the earth, and can only rise just so far above it, like our shadow. Our invisible part — the spirit — knows no such limitations. The body and soul are anchored in the dust from which they arose. The spirit lives, however, in another realm; the realm of life and light from which it came. Our spirit is always in the daytime, and like God, it never varies.

Would that we should always walk in that kind of clarity! Surely God would have us to [give pre-eminence to the invisible over the visible](#), to the spiritual over the natural. I want my daily choice to be to [live a spirit-forward life](#). That's a lifestyle of setting out each day with the conviction that [I am first and foremost a spiritual being](#), with the living spirit of God alive and fully operative within me.

Please turn to 1 Thessalonians 5. From the following verse, many of us have learned to think of ourselves as three-part beings of body, soul and spirit. But that's not exactly what the Word says.

1 Thessalonians 5:23:

Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole **spirit and soul and body** be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Thessalonians says that **we are spirit, soul and body**, and in that order. The *spirit* is placed in lead position because **the spirit is to have primacy in our lives**. Only then can we truly **walk in the daytime, living a spirit-forward life**.

Surely, you've heard people confess before that "I'm only human." Technically, that statement is not true of the believer. **You are human, and much more, having the very spirit of God born within you**. Does that elevate you to another plane? It most certainly does! And does that give you a source of power to propel you to new heights? Definitely! How aware are we at any given moment of the glorious victory we have, being seated with Christ at God's right hand? We should concentrate, not on the darkness that surrounds us, which is from the world; but on the light within us, which we have received from God.

2 Corinthians 4 speaks of the power of this light of God radiating out from us.

2 Corinthians 4:6,7:

For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us.

Ancient Eastern lamps were made out of clay. These earthen vessels had a reservoir that could be filled with olive oil, and a spout for a wick that could be ignited to give light. The treasure each of us has in the earthen jar of clay that is our body is the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ! When we walk in the daytime, that light illuminates everything around us. We know where we're going because we can see clearly without obstructions.

Day = Light

We've been talking about origins, so let's turn to Genesis chapter 1. In the beginning, where did daytime come from? [Daytime was God's idea.](#)

Genesis 1:3-5:

And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light.

And God saw that the light was good. And God separated the light from the darkness.

[God called the light Day](#), and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

How intriguing! The first day was the day God decided to call the light Day. [Why was the first day, Day?](#) Because [there was light](#).

Remember what God had *not* done up to this point. He had not yet made Heaven or any of the lights that He would later place within it. There was no sun, no moon, no stars. So where then did the light come from? Directly from God Who is Light.

From Light to Lights

When God first introduced light, He spoke of it in the singular.

Genesis 1:3:

And God said, "Let there be **LIGHT** [singular],"...

Later in the creation account, however, He speaks of it in the plural.

Genesis 1:14:

And God said, "Let there be **LIGHTS** [plural]..."

So now He's gone from "Let there be *light*" to "Let there be *lights*." *Why were lights needed when the creation already had light?* That's a good question, and one that deserves a thoughtful answer.

A Greater Light and a Lesser Light

But first, a curious Bible fact:

[Did you know that the sun and the moon are never mentioned in the creation account?](#)

What the Bible actually says in Genesis 1 is that [God made two great lights, a greater light and a lesser light.](#)

Genesis 1:14-16:

And God said, "Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night. And let them be for signs and for seasons [or appointed times], and for days and years,

and let them be lights in the expanse of the heavens to give light upon the earth.” And it was so.

And God made the **two great lights**—the **greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night**—and the stars.

Knowing to what these verses refer in the heavens, we tend to substitute the sun and the moon in our minds for the actual terms used in the text, “greater light” and “lesser light”. However, I would submit to you that **God would have us to understand** a deeper, more profound truth from this passage: **the nature of the true light shed by Him and by His Son.**

We know that God does nothing haphazardly. Things He does in the visible, natural world are designed to teach us about our invisible Maker, Who is Spirit. What better way to **teach man about the Father of lights and His Son, the light of the world**, than to paint it across the canvas of the celestial vault? For those with eyes to see it, this passage in Genesis introduces us to the knowledge that **God Himself is the greater light, and His Son Jesus Christ the lesser light.**

You see, God did not use the words “sun” and “moon” in this passage because it wasn’t ultimately about them. They **are only temporary expedients and will one day be superseded by the two true great lights, the Father and His Son**, as we will see in greater detail as this presentation develops.

The eternal verity that this Scripture is designed to showcase is that **God is THE great light over all, and His Son is the great light of the world**, in subjection to God, his Father and the Father of lights.

As we develop this theme, we will compare and contrast two distinct sets of great lights:

- The *astronomical* lights (sun and moon); and
- The *heavenly* lights (God and Christ).

The Story of Light

Let's take a moment to reflect on what I like to call *the Story of Light*: how God designed the sun and moon to teach us the ways in which the light of God radiates both from God Himself, and also from His Son.

We'll take the time to look at five key aspects of the Story of Light: origin, domain, rhythms, resemblance, and duration.

Origin

The first aspect of the Story of Light that we will consider is **ORIGIN**.

Both the sun and the moon have lessons to teach us about the light coming from the Father and the Son.

Astronomical Lights Lesson

Only the sun emits light of its own. What we perceive as moonlight is simply reflected sunlight.

Heavenly Lights Parallel

- The greater light, God the Father of lights, is the light source.
- The lesser light, Christ the light of the world, is His reflection.

Stop to remember the last time you were outdoors marveling at the lunar disc on a clear, moonlit night. You may have even noticed your own shadow in the moonlight. Wasn't the sight of that luminous orb stunning? That's how dazzling the light of Christ is in this dark world.

The first chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews illustrates the beauty of the heavenly Father-Son relationship.

Hebrews 1:3 [TPT]:

The Son is the dazzling radiance of God's splendor, the exact expression of God's true nature — his mirror image! ...

Christ as the Son may be the lesser light, but that in no way makes him an inferior being. He is the dazzling radiance of God's splendor, the exact expression of God's true nature, his Father's mirror image! Think about that the next time you admire the reflected light of the full moon in all its glory.

Domain

The second aspect of the Story of Light that we'll consider is **DOMAIN**. The illustrative creation passage is

Genesis 1:16-19:

And God made the **two great lights**—the **greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night**—and the stars.

And God set them in the expanse of the heavens **to give light on the earth,**

to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good.

And there was evening and there was morning, the fourth day.

It is clear from the context of verse 16 that in the creation account, the “greater light” refers to the sun, and the “lesser light” to the moon. Each had its own domain.

Astronomical Lights Lesson

The sun rules over the day; the moon rules over the night.

When the sun is up, the moon’s radiance pales in comparison.

The moon shines most splendidly in the dark of night.

Heavenly Lights Parallel

- The greater light, God the Father, rules the day.
- The lesser light, Christ the Son, rules the night.

The Father rules the daytime, where there is no night. “God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.”

Turn to John 11. The Son, as the light of this dark world, rules the night. Jesus himself expressed his authority in this regard.

John 11:9,10:

Jesus answered, “Are there not twelve hours in the day? If anyone walks in the day [that is, God], he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world [that is, Christ].

But if anyone walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light [of God and of Christ] is not in him.”

To walk in the light of this world, which is Christ, is to have light to see and not stumble in the night which surrounds us. The light of Christ trumps the darkness of this world.

Rhythms

The third aspect of the Story of Light that we'll consider is **RHYTHMS**. Returning to our keynote passage, let's again read

Genesis 1:14:

And God said, "Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night. And let them be for signs and for seasons [or appointed times], and for days and years,

God set lights in the heavens to establish the rhythms which would order man's life upon earth. Certain rhythms were solar, set by the sun; other rhythms were lunar, set by the moon.

Through light, God designed the *rhythms for man*.

- *Days* set the rhythms of man's *present*.
- *Years* set the rhythms of man's *earthly life*.
- *Seasons* set the rhythms of man's *eternal life*.

Let's explore the rhythms established by days, years, and seasons so we can mine their treasures.

Astronomical Rhythms (Days)

Astronomically speaking, *days* are a function of **the greater light: the sun**.

A *day* is the time it takes the earth to complete one full rotation on its axis. At any given time, it's *daytime* on the side of the earth facing the sun; it's *nighttime* on the side facing away from the sun. This is the divinely established cycle of *day and night*.

Heavenly Rhythms (Days)

Heavenly speaking, **days** are a function of **the greater light: God**.

Days set the rhythms of **man's present**.

Genesis 1:3-5:

And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light.

And God saw that the light was good. And God separated the light from the darkness.

God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night.

And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

God set up the cycle of night and day with **man's needs in the here and now** in mind. In what would later become a weary, sin-stained world, man would need the respite of the night before facing the challenges of another day.

Because time was God's idea and not man's, it was not pointless, but purposeful. **The cycle of day and night gave man the repeated opportunity to choose God on a daily basis**. Man's days would be long enough for him to embark and continue on the path of eternal redemption. God's plan for man on his salvation journey was that he should **redeem the time each day**. As it says in

Ephesians 5:16:

making the best use of the time, because the days are evil.

Astronomical Rhythms (Years)

Astronomically speaking, **years** are a function of **the greater light: the sun**.

You may have heard the birthday refrain, “one more trip around the sun.” *A year is the time it takes the earth to complete one full revolution around the sun.* Earth’s orbit is a function of gravity. As the heavyweight in the solar system, *the sun is the object around which all others revolve.*

Heavenly Rhythms (Years)

Heavenly speaking, *years* are a function of *the greater light: God.* All things begin and end with God.

Years set the rhythms of *man’s earthly life.*

Interestingly, the second occurrence of “year” tells the life story of the first man — the first Adam.

Genesis 5:3-5:

When Adam had lived 130 years, he fathered a son in his own likeness, after his image, and named him Seth.

The days of Adam after he fathered Seth were 800 years; and he had other sons and daughters.

Thus all the days that Adam lived were 930 years, and he died.

The Psalmist reminds us that *the days of a man’s years are in the hand of God.*

Psalm 31:14,15a:

But I trust in you, O LORD; I say, “You are my God.”

My times are in your hand; ...

Astronomical Rhythms (Seasons)

Astronomically speaking, [seasons \(or appointed times\)](#) are a function of [the lesser light: the moon](#).

[A month](#) is the time it takes the moon to complete both its [rotation on its axis](#), and its [orbit around the earth](#). Because the moon's rotation and orbit match perfectly, the effect from earth's vantage point is that the same side of the moon always faces the earth.

Like other ancient peoples, the [Hebrews followed a lunar calendar calculated by the cycles of the moon](#). Fixed times or seasons therefore followed a monthly cycle. A new moon clearly identified the start of a new month.

Heavenly Rhythms (Seasons)

[Heavenly speaking, seasons](#) are a function of [the lesser light: Christ](#).

[Seasons \(or appointed times\)](#) set the rhythms of [man's eternal life](#). Seasonal festivals such as Passover, Pentecost and Tabernacles were all held on a [monthly cycle](#). The annual Hebrew calendar of events told the story of man's redemption by a coming Redeemer. The Messiah who would ultimately accomplish man's salvation was the luminary whose life and ministry the calendar depicted. Each festival was a milestone on the road to eternal life, and each was defined by the lesser light who embodied that truth.

To what do such feasts correspond on the road to redemption?

- Passover and Unleavened Bread point to:
 - [Christ's crucifixion and resurrection](#).

- Firstfruits and Weeks point to:
 - The ascended Christ's giving of the holy spirit on Pentecost.
- Trumpets, Atonement and Tabernacles point to:
 - Christ's return as kings of kings and lord of lords at the end of the world.

These seven appointed times served as God's mile markers on the redemption highway in anticipation of the future work of Christ, which in turn would become the milestones in man's road to eternal life.

Resemblance

The fourth aspect of the Story of Light that we'll consider is RESEMBLANCE.

Astronomical Lights Lesson

For centuries men have been fascinated by the apparent similarity in size of the sun and moon when viewed from the earth. The difference between the two is just one half of one degree!

One of the most impressive of all celestial displays is the eclipses of the sun and moon. This could not happen without the relative sun-moon size differential just mentioned. Solar and lunar eclipses serve as milestones in the passage of time. We can count on them.

Heavenly Lights Parallel

As the spiritual axis of the universe, the LORD God is compared to the sun.

Psalm 84:11a:

For the LORD God is a sun and shield; ...

The arising of [the Lord Christ](#), who shares His glory, is also compared to the rising sun.

Malachi 4:2a:

But for you who fear my name, [the sun of righteousness](#) shall rise with healing in its wings...

This same [Lord Christ](#) is also called the sunrise in Luke.

Luke 1:78,79:

because of the tender mercy of our God, whereby [the sunrise shall visit us from on high](#)

[to give light](#) to those who sit in darkness ...

The [most remarkable resemblance](#) between sun and moon is in their [faithfulness](#).

Psalm 136:7-9:

to him who made the great lights, for his steadfast love endures forever;

the sun to rule over the day, for his steadfast love endures forever;

the moon and stars to rule over the night, for his steadfast love endures forever;

Psalm 104:19:

He made the [moon to mark](#) the seasons [or [appointed times](#)];
the [sun knows its time](#) for setting.

Just as we count on the sun to rise and set, we can always count on the steadfast love of our God and His Son.

Lamentations 3:22,23:

The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; his mercies never come to an end;

they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.

Duration

The fifth and final aspect of the Story of Light that we'll consider is **DURATION**.

Astronomical Lights Lesson

In the second heaven and earth:

- The sun is the luminary for the day.
- The moon is the luminary for the night.

Heavenly Lights Parallel

- The two great lights, sun and moon are transitory, having originated with the second heaven and earth and passing out of existence in the third.
- The two great lights, God and Christ are everlasting, shedding light throughout the ages.

Isaiah reveals that the astronomical lights of sun and moon won't endure forever but will instead be replaced by the Lord Himself in time to come.

Isaiah 60:19,20:

The sun shall be no more your light by day, nor for brightness shall the moon give you light; but the LORD will be your everlasting light, and your God will be your glory.

Your sun shall no more go down, nor your moon withdraw itself; for the LORD will be your everlasting light, and your days of mourning shall be ended.

The Book of Revelation elaborates further on how [God will provide light in the new heaven and new earth](#).

Revelation 21:1:

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more.

Revelation 21:23-25:

And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God [the greater light] gives it light, and its lamp [the lesser light] is the Lamb.

By its light will the nations walk, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it,

and its gates will never be shut by day—and there will be no night there.

Light to Light Up This World

We have considered various aspects of the Story of Light. We know that the world in which we live was transformed from the moment that God first introduced light.

- God the Father of lights fathered Christ the light of this world.
- God in whom is no darkness rules the day and Christ the light of life rules the night — this dark world in which we live.
- Through light, God designed the daily, yearly and monthly cycles that set the rhythms for our present, our earthly life, and our eternal life. “Our times are in your hand.”
- Like the sun and moon that never stop shining, the Father and the Son never cease to shed light in our lives in all seasons and at all times.
- Unlike the transitory luminaries of sun and moon, **God and Christ are the two everlasting great lights for all eternity.**

Today we are God’s light-bearers. To what purpose has He called us? In the words of Jesus Christ:

Matthew 5:14-16:

“You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden.

Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house.

In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

Bearing the lamp of the spirit within, let us shed forth the light of Christ in this dark world so that all men can see and come to know the one true God.