

Dan Wesol - Light

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Our topic today is light. We hope to answer the following four questions. What is light? What is the opposite of light? How are light and darkness used in the Bible?

Why is it important to understand these polar opposites in the narrow way Jesus, the light of the world, has shown us to walk?

What is light? According to the Merriam Webster dictionary, light is something that makes vision possible. Again, the dictionary definition of light is something that makes vision possible. That's a simple yet wonderful definition for physical beings that have eyes to see, as well as a wonderful analogy to the Bible.

Visible light and the beautiful colors that are refracted from that light can only be appreciated by sentient beings. The objects that light shines upon can be far more appreciated than viewing the same objects in the darkness. The sun's rays shining on a mountain brings out its grandeur. We turn our heads when we see a waterfall in the day. We are captivated by its beauty, the life it contains, and gives the power of the cascading water drops.

As light makes vision possible, the Bible makes spiritual vision possible. The reading and studying of its words brings light to the heart and mind of the reader. The prophet Isaiah makes this clear when he says in Isaiah 8:20 to the law and to the testimony. If they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them. The Bible opens our eyes of faith to the God of the Bible, the creator of the heavens and the earth.

The apostle Paul says this in Romans 10:17. So belief cometh of hearing and hearing by the word of Christ. The psalmist tells us in Psalm 119, 129, and 130 from the Message translation. Every word you give me is a miracle word. A miracle word.

How could I help but obey? Break open your words. Let the light shine out. Let ordinary people see their meaning.

The Cambridge Dictionary's first definition of light is the brightness that comes from the sun, fire and from electrical devices and that allows things to be seen. A bright light, fluorescent ultraviolet light, a beam ray of light, the brightness that comes from the sun and allows things to be seen is a beautiful analogy to Christ as he is described in Malachi 4:2 as the son of righteousness. With healing in his wings, Jesus life allows the heights and depths of God's attributes love, justice, power and wisdom to be seen. The full application of the Son of righteousness is to Jesus and the church, Christ head and body. As Matthew 13:43 says, Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun.

During the messianic age the world will be enlightened with the knowledge of God by Christ and the church. This son of righteousness was pictured by Cyrus, whose name means son in Isaiah 44:2 Jehovah says of Cyrus, he is my shepherd and shall perform all my pleasure, even saying of Jerusalem she shall be built, and of the Temple thy foundation shall be laid. In reprint 3642, Brother Russell writes, tradition says that this prophecy was read to Cyrus and resulted in his proclamation permitting the Jews to remain return to their own land. In reprint 4699. He goes on to say, as the typical Cyrus encouraged the typical Jews to return from Babylon, so the antitypical our present Lord will see to the drying up of the Euphrates and Israel's opportunity and encouragement to

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return to the land of Abraham and many of the natural seed of Abraham and have done just that.

By God's grace the Jewish people have returned to the promised land God gave them for an earthly inheritance. They are clinging to God's promise to their forefather Abraham.

Cyrus healing work was to restore the Israelites from captivity in Babylon to return to the land of Israel to rebuild the temple to the Most High God, so that they may worship God in their own land again. It was a restorative act, just as the times of restitution According to the Encyclopedia Britannica, Light is electromagnetic radiation that can be detected by the human eye. Electromagnetic radiation occurs over an extremely wide range of wavelengths, from gamma rays to radio waves. Within that broad spectrum, the wavelengths visible to humans occupy a very narrow band, from about 700 nanometers or billionths of a meter for red light down to about 400 nanometers for violet light. The spectral regions adjacent to the visible band are often referred to as light, also infrared at the one end and ultraviolet at the other.

The speed of light in a vacuum is a fundamental physical constant, the currently accepted value of which is exactly 299,792,458 meters per second, or about 186,282 miles per second. Have you ever thought about the contrast to that? That's a speed limit within the universe. What about a speed limit with God? Is there any speed limit to your prayers to God?

By no means. I like the way one brother put it, your prayers are answered at the speed of thought as you think it. You have that redemption, you have that forgiveness, you have that deliverance through your prayer, through the speed of thought. No single answer to the question what is light? Satisfies the many contexts in which Light is experienced, explored and exploited.

The physicist is interested in the physical properties of light, the artist in an aesthetic appreciation of the visual world through the sense of sight. Light is a primary tool for perceiving the world and communicating within it. Light from the sun warms the Earth, drives global weather patterns, initiates the life sustaining process of photosynthesis. On the grandest scale, light's interactions with matter have helped shape the structure of the universe. Indeed, light provides a window on the universe from cosmological to atomic scales.

Almost all of the information about the rest of the universe reaches Earth in the form of electromagnetic radiation, unquote.

There are seven types of electromagnetic radiation based on their wavelengths. Radio waves, microwaves, infrared radiation, visible light, a very narrow slice of the electromagnetic spectrum, ultraviolet radiation, X rays and the smallest gamma rays. God's power, wisdom and artistry is revealed to the natural eye, as the apostle Paul says in Romans 1:18-20 for the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth and unrighteousness, because that which is known about God is evident within them. Evident within them, for God made it evident to them. For since the creation of the world, his invisible attributes, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made so that they are without excuse.

Look out your window, you can see that God. There's a Creator. There's a creator of all that is outside that window of ours, whatever it might be, whether it's trees, whether it's the animal creation, whether you look at the sky and the clouds, you look at the ecosystem, the rain that's falling down, and then goes back into the clouds. The philosopher Ralph Waldo Emerson came to the same conclusion when he makes the profound observation, all I have seen teaches me to trust

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the Creator, for all I have not seen.

Yet the apostle Paul makes it clear there is still far greater depth of God's love and wisdom, not seen by the natural eye or mind, but revealed in the Bible to those seeking to serve God and in spirit and in truth. This is in 1st Corinthians 2:14, 9 and 10 and Hebrews 11:3. But the natural mind receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him. Neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. First Corinthians 2:9, 10.

But as it is written, eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them, that love him, but God hath revealed them unto us by his spirit. For the Spirit searcheth all things yea, the deep things of God and Hebrews 11:3. By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the Word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of the things which are visible.

On to answering our next question. What is the opposite of light? Darkness. The first definition of darkness in the Merriam Webster dictionary says devoid or partially devoid of light. Not receiving, reflecting, transmitting, or radiating light.

A dark room. The Cambridge Dictionary furnishes the definition of the fact of there being no light somewhere after the sun has gone down. Wikipedia goes on into a little bit more detail. Darkness, the polar opposite to brightness, is understood to be the condition of a very small amount or even an absence of visible light. Humans are unable to distinguish color in conditions of either high brightness or darkness.

You can't see that spectrum in conditions of insufficient light perception is achromatic and ultimately black. No color at all. The emotional response to darkness has generated metaphorical usages of the term. In many cultures, complete darkness is when the sun is more than 18 degrees below the horizon. In terms of physics, an object is said to be dark when it absorbs photons, causing it to appear dim compared to other objects.

For example, matte black paint does not reflect much visible light and appears dark, whereas white paint reflects lots of light and appears bright.

A dark area has limited light sources, making things hard to see.

That's interesting. Making things hard to see. Isn't that what the adversary does? The Prince of Darkness how are light and darkness used in the Bible? Light and darkness are shown to be polar opposites.

They are used to contrast one another, just as they are in nature. The first chapter of the Bible begins with the creation of the heavens and the earth, and in Genesis 1, verses 3 to 5, darkness covers the surface of the deep. God says, let there be light, and there was light. So in the beginning it was complete darkness.

Remember, it was completely covered with water.

God separated the light from the darkness, calling the light day and the darkness night on the first day, the sun as the greater light to rule the day, and the moon as the lesser light to rule the night. Light is used as a metaphor for God our Father in heaven, for His Son Jesus, for righteousness, for wisdom, understanding, for joy, and uplifting hope. In Scripture, light stands for enlightenment concerning the knowledge of God. As the psalmist suggests, this light or knowledge of God goes

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hand in hand with our salvation, our deliverance. Psalm 27:1 Jehovah is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear?

Jehovah is the strength of my life, of whom shall I be afraid?

Light is spoken of in the Holy Scriptures as a metaphor for spiritual truth. The word of God in Psalm 119, 105 this is a familiar one. Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path. So our daily steps and into the future. God is with us.

His word is a light to us. The Apostle Peter tells us we have the word of prophecy shining like a lamp in second Peter 1:19, and we have the sure word of prophecy made more sure whereunto ye do well that ye take heed as unto a lamp shining in a dark place until the day dawn and the day star arise in your hearts. The apostle James tells us, every good gift and every perfect gift is from above coming down from the Father of lights, with whom can be no variation, neither shadow that is cast by turning. James 1:17 the apostle John writes the truth he was taught from Jesus that God is light, and in him there is no darkness at all.

First John 1:5 Here we have the ultimate contrast between light and darkness. God is light. This is true on a physical and spiritual level. On the physical level, God told Moses on Mount Sinai, when Moses was to receive the law the second time from God, that no man can see me and live.

This is in Exodus 33, 18:23 Then Moses said, I pray thee, show me thy glory, and he said, I myself will make all my goodness pass before you and will proclaim the name of the Lord before you, and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious and will show compassion on whom I will show compassion. How wonderful. That's inserted in this section of the Scriptures.

I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious and show compassion upon whom I will show compassion. This is the God that we have to deal with. He is a compassionate God. He's a gracious God. But he said, you cannot see my face, for no man can see me and live.

Then the Lord said, behold, there is a place by me, and you shall stand there on the rock, and it will come about while my glory is passing by, that I will put you in the cleft of the rock and cover you with my hand until I have passed by. Then I will take my hand away, and you shall see my back, but my face shall not be seen. Moses as a human being could not be in the presence of the glory of God. God doesn't explain the physical science as to why this would occur, but it is clear that the light, power, and energy from the eternal God would be far too great for any human being. God sheltered Moses in the cleft of the rock to protect him from his glory, the great and brilliant light and power of his being.

This appears to be similar to the glimpse the apostle Paul was permitted to see of Jesus after he was glorified to the Divine nature. When Paul was on the way to Damascus to bind the followers of Jesus and bring them back to Jerusalem, Jesus appears to him in a flash of light. The light blinded Paul until Ananias was sent to him to restore his sight. That event is in Acts 9:3-8. The apostle John says of Jesus in John 1:4-5, in him was life, and the life was the light of men, and the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.

John describes the pure life, the loving life, the sacrificial life Jesus led as the light of the human race. The light Jesus shone in his compassionate words and conduct is contrasted with the darkness, the selfish and proud words and conduct of the world, the darkness, the world's thinking and corrupt values could not comprehend the light, the mercy, love, justice, forgiveness, and

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faithfulness that Jesus taught. In John 8:12 Jesus says he is the light of the world. He that followeth me shall not walk in the darkness, but shall have the light of life. The apostle Paul instructs the Christians, saying, the night is far spent, the day is at hand.

Let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. Let us walk honestly as in the day, not in rioting and drunkenness, but Romans 13:12, 13. In Proverbs 4:18, the path or way of life of the righteous is like the light of dawn that shines brighter and brighter until the full day. Darkness, in contrast, is used as a metaphor for evil, wicked or evil people, for depressed times or times of mourning, for gloom and for folly. Satan is not called darkness, but the prince of darkness.

Darkness is his arena. In Proverbs 4:19 the way of the wicked is like darkness they do not know over what they stumble. Solomon, under the pseudonym of the preacher, observes in Ecclesiastes 2:13, 14 that wisdom excels folly as light excels darkness. The wise man's eyes are in his head, but the fool walks in darkness, the implication being that the wise person walks in the light and refuses to walk in darkness, where an injury or death could occur, because you can't see the path in front of you, and you stumble and fall. In Isaiah 5:20 the prophet Isaiah proclaims woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who substitute darkness for light and light for darkness.

Although this applied to Israel at the time, it also describes our day well. The light of truth and sacrifice taught in Scripture is evil spoken of and branded intolerant or extreme. On the other hand, the relativity of morals, the teaching of no absolute truth, and instead that anyone's philosophical truth is equal to that of the Bible, is spoken well of and called tolerant.

In reality, the tolerance is extended only to those who agree with those embracing the same view. How much tolerance do those received throughout the world today who embrace the God of the Bible, the truth that is taught in its pages? Jesus said, if the light that is in you is darkness, how great is the darkness? This applies well to Lucifer, who was one of the two bright morning stars. His name even means brightness.

His light became darkness so quickly when he deceived Eve into eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and he became a liar and a murderer. Since then he has continued to practice evil. The only time Satan transforms himself into an angel of light is for deceiving.

But always remember, although Satan is vicious, Jesus is victorious.

Darkness that could be felt was applied as the ninth plague on the people and land of Egypt. The darkness was so thick the Egyptian people couldn't even leave their homes. But all the children of Israel had light in their homes. What joy must have filled the hearts of the Israelites knowing that Jehovah was on their side. This was clearly shown by the light that shined from their homes.

They could meet together and go to each other's homes because they were blessed with the light to see. See. In 2nd Samuel 22:29 David likens the Lord to a lamp. He says, the Lord illumines my darkness. When David had his low points, and sometimes they were very low, when he was feeling depressed, he called upon his God, and the Lord was a light and encouragement to his downcast heart.

2nd Samuel 22:29 Thou art my lamp, O Lord, and the Lord illumines my darkness. In Psalm 11:2 David also brings out how the wicked bend the metaphorical bow to shoot arrows of darkness at the upright in heart. Psalm 11:2 for behold the wicked bend the bow. They make ready their arrow

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upon the string to shoot in darkness at the upright in heart. When these arrows of darkness are aimed at our heart, take up the shield of faith to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil.

1 Ephesians 6:16 Many times we need the help of our brothers and sisters in Christ to hold up that shield of faith. Thank God for our brothers and sisters in Christ that have tempered the steel of that shield of faith with a simple phone call, a text of scripture, a card, an encouraging word in season how good it is. When the Israelites were fleeing from Pharaoh and his army in Exodus 14:20, the cloud that went before Israel went behind them, and it created darkness for Pharaoh and his army and light for the Israelites at night. So the angel of the Lord protected Israel with light to dispel darkness and preserve life, and cast darkness on the Egyptian army, attempting to enslave the Israelites again. Jehovah showed his favor to his people through the light he shone upon them and all their animals and all their things.

Jehovah's disfavor was upon Pharaoh and the Egyptians by the darkness cast upon their way.

And this should have been clearly perceived by the Israelites as well as the Egyptians in the last chapter of the Bible. Revelation 22:5 speaks of no night, nor need of a lamp or the light of the sun, because the Lord God shall illumine them. As the Book of Revelation is a book of symbols, it is not the literal night, or a literal lamp or literal sun. No night or darkness is referred to. After the millennial age and little season are past, all evil will be vanquished, as Revelation 21:4 says, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away.

There will be no need of the light from a lamp. The law of God and the Son, the Gospel, or the good news of the kingdom of God, because the kingdom will have accomplished its work. Every human being who has loved God and his righteous principles and has been brought to perfection mentally, morally and physically, fully tested and proven worthy will reign over the restored earth according to the original design for Father Adam.

Why is it important to understand the polar opposites of light and darkness in the narrow way Jesus, the light of the world, has shown us to walk first? It is important because we have chosen God. We believe him and love him and embrace the light and love in his word and the love he has shown us in giving his only Son to die for us and the whole world and mankind. In reprint 4328, Brother Russell writes, the infant Christian church prepared it prospered at Jerusalem. Not only was the Lord's blessing upon the apostles in their ministries, but upon others of the church also, who, full of love and zeal for the truth told the good tidings as they had opportunity.

They had the gospel message in its purity, and it was a pleasure to tell it. They needed not inducements of social advancement, financial prosperity, honorable titles, and good salaries. The message itself incited love and devotion and enkindled a flame of sacred love in their hearts, which tended to make each believer a burning and a shining light as the Lord himself had enjoined. This same condition of things prevails again today, since the smoke of the Dark Ages is being washed from the eyes of our understanding, and since the dust and must of human tradition are being brushed from the word of the Lord. Now as then, the truth charms, sanctifies, energizes all who receive it, and each according to his ability is quickened to its service, regardless of cost or time of energy, of human disapproval and ostracism.

We don't want to be in the darkness of sin, ignorance, or superstition. We choose light and need to know what it is and what it's not.

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Second, it is important to understand the polar opposites of light and darkness. Because if we're living the way of life, Jesus lived one of love for God, for our brothers and sisters in Christ, love for our neighbors, love for our enemies, denying ourselves, taking up our crosses, and embracing the truth and righteousness, then we will be in the light and not in darkness. On either side of the way to the right and the left are the shadows, the darkness, the sin of the world in contrast to the light. The apostle John connects loving our brothers or sisters with being in the light, hating our brothers or sisters with being in darkness.

He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother is in the darkness. Even until now. He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is no occasion of stumbling in him. But he that hateth his brother is in the darkness, and walketh in the darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because the darkness hath blinded his eyes. Wow.

Jesus says of those following him and living the same way of Life in Matthew 5, 14, 16 from the Message translation. Here's another way to put it. You're here to be light, bringing out the God colors in the world. God is not a secret to be kept. We're going public with this as public as a city on a hill.

If I make you light bearers, you don't think I'm going to hide you under a bucket, do you? I'm putting you on a light stand now that I've Put you there on a hilltop on a light stand shine, keep open house. Be generous with your lives. By opening up to others. You'll prompt people to open up with God, this generous Father in heaven.

Jesus followers become lights themselves. Instead of casting a shadow. We dispel shadows by being a light in our thoughts, in our prayers, in our looks, in our words, and in our conduct toward others. A modern worship song's lyrics describe the light we're to produce in a colorful way. It's called Lights Shine Bright.

I want to magnify your light I want to reflect the sun Cut like precious diamonds with the colors by the millions this is the only world we know and for now this rentals our home if we gonna be a reflection Gotta make this third rock glow Just so you know Lights shine bright everywhere we go Music for the people to illuminate the soul Lights shine bright everywhere we go Music for the people Making music for the people when you think of that lyric, music for the people to illuminate the soul, do you think of the song of Moses and the Lamb, that wonderful song of deliverance, the good tidings of great joy which shall be to all people? How can our faces not be bright with that song on our lips? How can we not illuminate the hearts of others with such a hope burning within us?

Finally, it is important to understand the polar opposites between light and darkness because we don't want to be gray, a mixture of light and darkness. In Revelation 3:15 and 16, part of the message to the church of Laodicea is that you were neither cold, refreshing nor hot healing, but lukewarm.

When we're somewhere in the middle, we're great. Instead of being zealous, we're ambivalent, losing the refreshing and healing power of the truth. Remember when Jesus was present with the disciples on the way to Emmaus and they didn't know it was him? The disciples were distraught because our Lord Jesus had been crucified three days before and then amazed by reports that he was not found in the tomb but was alive. They seemed to be somewhere in the middle of their faith.

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What should they do now? Then Jesus came to them in the outward appearance of a stranger. But this stranger spoke gracious and encouraging words that kept recharging them spiritually. Jesus says to them in Luke 24:26-27 from the Message translation, don't you see that these things had to happen, that the Messiah had to suffer and only then enter into his glory? Then he started at the beginning with the books of Moses and went on through all the prophets, pointing out everything in the scriptures that referred to him.

Just Jesus reminded them that Christ would have to suffer and die, would be glorified afterward. According to the Scriptures. This is what the disciples needed to hear. They needed to get back to the word of God. This was Jehovah's design for the Messiah to give himself a voluntary sacrifice planned long ago and written long ago to reassure them.

These things were from God.

When they got to Emmaus, the disciples didn't want their new friend to leave. So it says they constrained him to stay with them. They sat down for a meal together, and when Jesus took the bread blessed and broke it, their eyes were opened to know that it was him, and he vanished from their sight.

In Luke 24, 32 and 33 you have their reaction. They said, one to another, was not our hearts burning within us while he spoke to us in the way, while he opened to us the Scriptures, and they rose up that very hour and returned to Jerusalem and found the 11 gathered together and them that were with them. What an effect Jesus words had on their faith, and then is revealing himself to them.

They went from lukewarm confusion to a hot zealous faith. Their hearts burned within them now filled with faith and joy and zeal. They probably ran back to Jerusalem to tell the 11. He is risen.

Let us not be gray and shine forth a dim light to one another at this convention. But may our love and zeal for Jehovah, his son Jesus and his truth burned brightly within our hearts as it did for the disciples on the way to Emmaus and back to Jerusalem. May we live. Malachi 3:16 at this convention and afterward then they that feared Jehovah spake one with another, and Jehovah hearkened and heard, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared Jehovah and that thought upon his name.

May we be full of faith, filled with God's Holy Spirit, lights that shine bright a city set on a hill to brighten the hearts of those still looking for the truly all encompassing good news of God's kingdom and glorify our Father in heaven. Amen.