

# LIGHT RULES DARKNESS

(No. 1235 – 3/6/23 – Sermon Online Zoom)

## I. INTRODUCTION: Light is a very important theme in the Bible from cover to cover (literally!)

### A. In the beginning

1. God's first creative act was light—darkness (the absence of light) already existed:

**Gen. 1:1-5:** *<sup>1</sup>In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. <sup>2</sup>Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters. <sup>3</sup>And God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light. <sup>4</sup>God saw that the light was good, and He separated the light from the darkness. <sup>5</sup>God called the light “day,” and the darkness He called “night.” And there was evening, and there was morning—the first day.*

- a) God immediately recognized that light is *good* [Heb. *tob* = “good, better, best; pleasant, beautiful, gracious, joyful, kind”]; nothing was said about darkness
- b) There was to be no mixing or confusing of light and darkness—God separated them and gave them different names
- c) Light and darkness cannot coexist—light always erases and obliterates darkness
- d) God *is* light—there is NO darkness in Him:

**1 John 1:5:** *This is the message we have heard from Him and declare to you: God is light; in Him there is no darkness at all.*

- e) Light travels faster than anything else in the universe—186,000 miles/sec is the absolute speed limit to which all else is relative (Einstein's theories of relativity)
- f) We cannot see without light—vision is reflected light entering the eye (“light by which we see” Ps. 36:9 NLT)

2. The fourth day God created the sun, moon and stars to rule:

**Gen. 1:14-19:** *<sup>14</sup>And God said, “Let there be lights in the expanse of the sky to separate the day from the night, and let them serve as signs to mark seasons and days and*

God lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or can see  
1 Tim. 6:16.

*years, <sup>15</sup>and let them be lights in the expanse of the sky to give light on the earth.” And it was so. <sup>16</sup>God made two great lights—the greater light to govern [“rule” NKJV] the day and the lesser light to govern [“rule”] the night. He also made the stars. <sup>17</sup>God set them in the expanse of the sky to give light on the earth, <sup>18</sup>to govern the day and the night, and to separate light from darkness. And God saw that it was good. <sup>19</sup>And there was evening, and there was morning—the fourth day.*

a) God established light as ruler of the day and the night

b) He also recognized that this was good

B. Physical light and darkness have spiritual counterparts that are frequently mentioned in Scripture...

## II. TWO KINGDOMS IN CONFLICT

A. Spiritual light and darkness

1. **Col. 1:12-13:** <sup>12</sup>*Giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light. <sup>13</sup>For He has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son He loves.*

2. **Eph. 6:10-12 (KJV):** <sup>10</sup>*Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might. <sup>11</sup>Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. <sup>12</sup>For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.*

3. **Acts 26:13, 16-19:** <sup>13</sup>*I saw a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, blazing around me and my companions... [Jesus said]: <sup>16</sup>“I have appeared to you to appoint you as a servant and as a witness of what you have seen of Me and what I will show you. <sup>17</sup>I will rescue you from your own people and from the Gentiles. I am sending you to them <sup>18</sup>to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power [“dominion, authority”] of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in Me.” <sup>19</sup>...I was not disobedient to the vision from heaven.*

Paul was  
blinded  
by the  
light he  
saw  
when  
Christ  
spoke to  
Him!  
(Acts 9)

B. Jesus came to shine into the spiritual darkness of the world

1. Light dawned at the beginning of Christ's ministry:

**Mat. 4:12-17:** <sup>12</sup>When Jesus heard that John had been put in prison, He returned to Galilee. <sup>13</sup>Leaving Nazareth, He went and lived in Capernaum, which was by the lake in the area of Zebulun and Naphtali—<sup>14</sup>**to fulfill what was said through the prophet Isaiah** [see Isa. 9:1-7]: <sup>15</sup>“Land of Zebulun and land of Naphtali, the way to the sea, along the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles—<sup>16</sup>**the people living in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned.**” <sup>17</sup>From that time on Jesus began to preach, “Repent, for the **kingdom of heaven is near.**”

a) What did the Galileans see? Light—a great light! They had been living in darkness for a long time—darkness which Isaiah likened to “the shadow of death.”

b) Notice the emphasis on the reigning Messiah's government and kingdom in **Isa. 9:6-7:**

<sup>6</sup>For to us a Child is born, to us a Son is given, and **the government will be on His shoulders.** And He will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. <sup>7</sup>Of the **increase of His government** and peace there will be no end. **He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom,** establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever.

c) Light had finally dawned because Jesus, the light of the world, had begun to proclaim the Good News of the kingdom of light!

2. Christ's life brought light to everyone:

**John 1:1-5** (NLT): <sup>1</sup>In the beginning the Word already existed. The Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup>He existed in the beginning with God. <sup>3</sup>God created everything through Him, and nothing was created except through Him. <sup>4</sup>**The Word gave life to everything that was created, and His life brought light to everyone.** <sup>5</sup>**The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness can never extinguish it.**

C. People must choose to leave darkness in order to follow Jesus and walk in the light:

1. **John 8:12:** *When Jesus spoke again to the people, He said, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows Me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”*
2. **John 3:16-21:** <sup>16</sup>*“For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life. <sup>17</sup>For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through Him. <sup>18</sup>Whoever believes in Him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because He has not believed in the name of God’s one and only Son. <sup>19</sup>This is the verdict: **Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light** because their deeds were evil. <sup>20</sup>Everyone who does evil **hates the light, and will not come into the light** for fear that his deeds will be exposed. <sup>21</sup>But whoever lives by the truth **comes into the light**, so that it may be seen plainly that what he has done has been done through God.”*

Whenever people reject the light, their “foolish hearts are darkened (Rom. 1:21)

a) Spiritual darkness is evil and sin:

**Eph. 5:3-14:** <sup>3</sup>*But among you there must not be even a hint of **sexual immorality**, or of any kind of **impurity**, or of **greed**, because these are improper for God’s holy people. <sup>4</sup>Nor should there be **obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking**, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving. <sup>5</sup>For of this you can be sure: **No immoral, impure or greedy person—such a man is an idolater—has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.** <sup>6</sup>Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God’s wrath comes on those who are disobedient. <sup>7</sup>Therefore do not be partners with them. <sup>8</sup>**For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light** <sup>9</sup>(for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) <sup>10</sup>and find out what pleases the Lord. <sup>11</sup>**Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them.** <sup>12</sup>For it is **shameful** even to mention what the disobedient do **in secret**. <sup>13</sup>But everything exposed by the light becomes visible, <sup>14</sup>for it is **light that makes everything visible**. This is why it is said: “Wake up, O sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.”*

- b) Satan is the prince of darkness—he can only “*masquerade* as an angel of light” (2 Cor. 11:14)
- c) Darkness is *bad*—it is often associated with judgment (Ex. 10:22; Isa. 8:22; Joel 2:2; Mat. 8:12; 22:13; 25:30; 2 Pet. 2:4, 17; Rev. 16:10), blindness, confusion, and disorder (Gen. 1:2; Job 10:22; Acts 13:11), groping, staggering, and stumbling (Job 5:14; 12:25; John 12:35; 1 John 2:11), pestilence and plague (Ps. 91:6), imprisonment (Isa. 42:7; 61:1), and death (Isa. 9:2).
- d) Why would anyone love darkness? Because they think they can hide there—they refuse to give up their sinful life (Isa. 29:15; John 3:19-21; 1 Cor. 4:5; Eph. 5)
- e) Coming out of darkness into the light involves **repentance and confession of sin:**

<p>What fellowship can light have with darkness?! (2 Cor. 6:14)</p>
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**1 John 1:5-10:** <sup>5</sup>*This is the message we have heard from Him and declare to you: God is light; in Him there is no darkness at all.* <sup>6</sup>*If we claim to have fellowship with Him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth.* <sup>7</sup>***But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, His Son, purifies us from all sin.*** <sup>8</sup>*If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.* <sup>9</sup>***If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.*** <sup>10</sup>*If we claim we have not sinned, we make Him out to be a liar and His word has no place in our lives.*

- 3. **John 12:35-36, 46:** <sup>35</sup>*Then Jesus told them, “You are going to have the light just a little while longer. Walk while you have the light, before darkness overtakes you. The man who walks in the dark does not know where he is going.* <sup>36</sup>***Put your trust*** [“believe” NKJV] ***in the light while you have it, so that you may become sons of light.***” *When He had finished speaking, Jesus left and hid Himself from them...* <sup>46</sup>*I have come into the world as a light, so that no one who believes in Me should stay in darkness.*
  - a) We must believe in the light—we must believe in Jesus
  - b) Faith in Christ causes us to be born from above and become “sons of light”; the “chains of darkness” can no longer hold us! (2 Pet. 2:4)

D. Through the preaching of the gospel, God calls us out of darkness into His light and commands light to shine into the hearts darkened and blinded by sin, unbelief, and the devil

1. **2 Cor. 4:3-7** (NKJV): <sup>3</sup>*But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to **those who are perishing**, <sup>4</sup>whose minds the **god of this age has blinded**, who do not believe, lest the **light of the gospel** of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them. <sup>5</sup>For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your bondservants for Jesus' sake. <sup>6</sup>For it is the **God who commanded light to shine out of darkness**, who has shone in our hearts to give the **light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ**. <sup>7</sup>But we have **this treasure** in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us.*

- a) Paul compares the original creation of light with true gospel conversion
- b) From the context, the “treasure” (v.7) we have is the *light*—God’s glory in our hearts!

2. **1 Pet. 2:9-10**: <sup>9</sup>*But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of **Him who called you out of darkness into His wonderful light**. <sup>10</sup>Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.*

3. **1 Thess. 5:1-8**: <sup>1</sup>*Now, brothers, about times and dates we do not need to write to you, <sup>2</sup>for you know very well that **the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night**. <sup>3</sup>While people are saying, “Peace and safety,” destruction will come on them suddenly, as labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. <sup>4</sup>**But you, brothers, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief**. <sup>5</sup>**You are all sons of the light and sons of the day**. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness. <sup>6</sup>So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be alert and self-controlled. <sup>7</sup>For those who **sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, get drunk at night**. <sup>8</sup>But since **we belong to the day**, let us be self-controlled, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet.*

### III. CALLED TO BE THE LIGHT IN THIS DARK WORLD

- A. While Jesus was here on earth, *He* was the light of the world; but after He returned to heaven, He transferred that responsibility to *His disciples*:
1. **John 9:5:** *While I am in the world, I am the light of the world.*
  2. **Mat. 5:13-16:** <sup>13</sup>*You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men.* <sup>14</sup>**You are the light of the world.** *A city on a hill cannot be hidden. <sup>15</sup>Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead, they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. <sup>16</sup>In the same way, **let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.***
  3. NOTE: The two great ruling lights (sun and moon) which God created on the fourth day are distinctly different in the way they shine [see 1 Cor. 15:41]:
    - a) The sun produces its own light continuously
    - b) The moon has no light of its own—it can only *reflect* the light of the sun—it is a “faithful witness” of the sun’s light:

**Ps. 89:35-37:** <sup>35</sup>*Once for all, I have sworn by My holiness—and I will not lie to David— <sup>36</sup>that his line will continue forever and his throne endure before Me like the sun; <sup>37</sup>it will be established forever **like the moon, the faithful witness in the sky.***
    - c) John the Baptist was a witness of the true light:

**John 1:6-9:** <sup>6</sup>*There came a man who was sent from God; his name was **John.** <sup>7</sup>He came as **a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all men might believe. <sup>8</sup>He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light. <sup>9</sup>The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world.***
    - d) In the same way, we are called to be Christ’s “witnesses” (Acts 1:8), pointing people to the true light so that all might believe!

- e) We are like the moon—we have no light of our own—we can only *reflect* the light coming from the “face of Jesus”:

**2 Cor. 3:18:** *And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into His likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.*

**2 Cor. 4:6:** *For God, who said, “Let light shine out of darkness,” made His light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the **glory of God in the face of Christ.***

B. To be lights, we must be full of light (2 Cor. 4:7):

1. **Mat. 6:22-23:** <sup>22</sup>*The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are good, your whole body will **be full of light.*** <sup>23</sup>*But if your eyes are bad, your whole body will be **full of darkness.** If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness!*
2. We get more light through the illumination of the Holy Spirit and revelation from the Word of God
  - a) **Luke 2:28-32:** <sup>28</sup>*Simeon took Him [baby Jesus] in his arms and praised God, saying: <sup>29</sup>“Sovereign Lord, as You have promised, You now dismiss Your servant in peace. <sup>30</sup>For **my eyes have seen Your salvation,*** <sup>31</sup>*which You have prepared in the sight of all people, <sup>32</sup>**a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to Your people Israel.”***
  - b) **Ps. 119:105:** ***Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path.***
  - c) **Ps. 119:130:** ***The unfolding of Your words gives light; it gives understanding to the simple.***
  - d) **Eph. 1:17-19:** <sup>17</sup>*I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the **Spirit of wisdom and revelation,** so that you may know Him better. <sup>18</sup>I pray also that the **eyes of your heart may be enlightened** in order that you may know the hope to which He has called you, the riches of His glorious inheritance in the saints, <sup>19</sup>and His incomparably great power for us who believe.*



3. We need to stop whining and complaining about all the darkness in the world and SHINE into it!

**Phil. 2:14-16:** <sup>14</sup>*Do everything without complaining or arguing,* <sup>15</sup>*so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you SHINE like stars in the universe* <sup>16</sup>*as you hold out the word of life—in order that I may boast on the day of Christ that I did not run or labor for nothing.*

4. A last day's model for evangelism:

**Isa. 60:1-4:** <sup>1</sup>*Arise, SHINE, for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD rises upon you.* <sup>2</sup>*See, darkness covers the earth and thick* ["gross, dense, gloomy"] *darkness is over the peoples, but the LORD rises upon you and His glory appears over you.* <sup>3</sup>**Nations WILL COME TO YOUR LIGHT**, and kings to the brightness of your dawn. <sup>4</sup>*Lift up your eyes and look about you: All assemble and come to you; your sons come from afar....*

- a) Darkness will increase in the last days:

**Mat. 24:10-12:** <sup>10</sup>*At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other,* <sup>11</sup>*and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people.* <sup>12</sup>**Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold.**

**2 Tim. 3:1-4:** <sup>1</sup>*But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days.* <sup>2</sup>*People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy,* <sup>3</sup>*without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good,* <sup>4</sup>*treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God.*

- b) But God's glory and reigning grace will also increase:

**James 4:6:** *But He gives us more* ["greater" NASB] *grace. That is why Scripture says: "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."*

**Rom. 5:17, 20-21:** <sup>17</sup>*For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ...* <sup>20</sup> **But where sin**

*increased, grace increased all the more,<sup>21</sup> so that, just as sin reigned in death, so also **grace might reign through righteousness to bring eternal life...***

**2 Cor. 3:18:** *And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into His likeness **with ever-increasing glory**, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.*

#### IV. GOOD NEWS: LIGHT RULES!

- A. God created light to rule the darkness (Gen. 1)
- B. Light always prevails—it always wins!

1. **John 1:5** (NLT): *The **light shines in the darkness, and the darkness can never extinguish** [“overpower, prevail against”] **it**.*
2. There is a kingdom of darkness with powerful rulers, but God *has* delivered us from the dominion of darkness and *translated* us into the kingdom of His dear Son—we no longer live there and darkness has no jurisdiction, power, or authority over us at all!
3. **1 John 2:8-11:** *<sup>8</sup>Yet I am writing you a new command; its truth is seen in Him and you, because **the darkness is passing and the true light is already shining**. <sup>9</sup>Anyone who claims to be in the light but hates his brother is still in the darkness. <sup>10</sup>**Whoever loves his brother lives in the light, and there is nothing in him to make him stumble**. <sup>11</sup>But whoever hates his brother is in the darkness and walks around in the darkness; he does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded him.*
4. **Prov. 4:18-19:** *<sup>18</sup>The path of the righteous is like the first gleam of dawn, **shining ever brighter** till the full light of day. <sup>19</sup>But the way of the wicked is like deep darkness; they do not know what makes them stumble.*

The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. (Rom. 13:12)

- C. Light will reign forever in the eternal kingdom:

1. **Rev. 21:23-24:** *<sup>23</sup>The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for **the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp**. <sup>24</sup>The nations will walk by its light....*
2. **Rev. 22:5:** *There will be **no more night**. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the **Lord God will give them light**. And they will reign for ever and ever.*