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1. "LET THERE BE LIGHT"

God is Light; in Him there is no darkness at all. (1 John 1:5) In the beginning there was nothing, but when God who is Light decided to spread Himself out, He spoke and Light became dominant and darkness retreated to where He sent it. (Genesis 1:1-4) He is the Light but He created other lights, the sun for the day and the moon and stars for the night. (Genesis 1:14-18)

In these days it seems to be fashionable to deny these statements which describe the beginning of the world as we know it. Yet to understand humanity's reason for existing at all it is important to believe what God has done. Yet even His chosen people, the Jews, did not understand God's heart; the difference between light and darkness – two opposing forces. The understanding was

foreshadowed by God's instruction not to eat from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. John understood when he wrote, "Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. 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". (John 3:19-21) So it could be said that God said, "Let there be understanding of what is open, clear, honest, beautiful and pure" even as He created the world into which He was placing His highest creation, Mankind.

So there was a lack of understanding until Jesus came into our world as a man. "The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us". (John 1:14) "In Him was life, and that life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood (overcome) it". (John 1:4&5) Jesus Himself testifies that He is the Light of the world. (John 8:12) He goes on to say that whoever follows Me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life. The Pharisees argued with Him, but their prejudice was based on the deception that had endured for thousands of years, even though there had been visits by the Angel of the Lord in their history, who had come in dazzling light and fire. (eg, Genesis 15:17; Exodus 3:2; Judges 6:21&13:20)

This refusal to believe in spite of God's generosity to provide evidence – "those that rebel against the light, who do not know its ways or stay in its paths (Job 24:13-17) ...they want nothing to do with the light, for all of them there will be deep darkness". Jesus had to tell the Pharisees that they were spiritually blind (John 9:41) because of their

stubborn refusal to believe Him, in spite of His demonstrated ability to restore sight, as had been promised that the promised "servant of the Lord" would do. (Isaiah 42:7)

Darkness, figuratively, is a place of rejection from the presence of God (Matthew 22:13), ignorance (Ephesians 4:18), secret sin (1 Corinthians 14:24&25), misery and deep depression (Job 10:22) and condemnation (Job 10:2).

But David was a believer. He knew that God was Light. "God wraps Himself in light as with a garment". (Psalm 104:3) "You have laid Your hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me...where can I go from Your Spirit? 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; the night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to You". (Psalm 139:5-12) "In Your light we see light ". (Psalm 36:9) "Send forth Your light and Your truth, let them guide me; let them bring me to Your holy mountain, to the place where You dwell". (Psalm 43:3) "The Lord is my light and my salvation – whom shall I fear? (Psalm 27:1) When David was caught out in sin he became desperate to be back in the light. (Psalm 51:1-12)

Isaiah saw the state of the earth – thick darkness over the peoples. (Isaiah 60:2) He wanted people to rise up, shake off the darkness and receive the Light of God and His glory. These words he has written are a challenge down through the years. He had written before, "Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness". (Isaiah 5:20)

But Daniel also knew his God. "He knows what lies in darkness, and Light dwells with Him". (Daniel 2:22) God, who is the Light, created

the Light, pours out the Light into the dark places whenever His children desire and ask for it. He has appointed His children to be speaking spirits with the power to say "Let there be Light". Thus Isaiah can prophesy, "Your Light has come, and the glory of the Lord rises upon you". (Isaiah 60:1) Jesus could say, "When a man believes in Me, he does not believe in Me only, but in the One who sent Me. When he looks at Me, he sees the One who sent Me. I have come into the world as a Light, so that no one who believes in Me should stay in darkness. (John 12:44-46)

We can see the Light in Jesus when we open our eyes and our hearts to Him!

2. THE POWER IN THE LIGHT

Many times in the Bible when God sends His light, it is in the form of fire, flame and lightning or flashes of light.

God's first covenant with Abraham by fire was after Abraham came to God to express his doubts about the original promise. (Genesis 12:2&3) When was God going to fulfil His promise about a son? (Genesis 15:2-18) First Abraham was given a vision and he chose to believe God. This faith in God was credited to Abraham as righteousness. (verse 6) God's response to trust is always something special and exciting. God asked Abraham to set out some animals as an offering and he waited until night when "he fell into a deep sleep and a thick and dreadful darkness overcame him". In that "dream" the Lord came as smoking brazier and blazing torch and passed between the animals which had been divided in halves. The covenant was ratified by the Father and

the Son, so that it could never be broken. The writer to the Hebrews explains this action. "When God made His promise to Abraham, since there was no one greater for Him to swear by, He swore by Himself". (Hebrews 6:13-17)

God called Moses by flames in a bush that did not burn up. This is how the Angel of the Lord (pre-incarnation Jesus – God's personal representative) appeared to Moses. (Exodus 3:2-4) When Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt a pillar of fire led them by night, every night, to give them light. (Exodus 13:21&22) But when God appeared to them on Mount Sinai in lightning, (Exodus 19:16) instead of the people recognising God's powerful presence for favour, they reacted in fear and did not want to hear Him speak to them. (Exodus 20:19) Moses' reprimand to them had no effect. "Has any other people heard the voice of God speaking out of fire"? (Deuteronomy 4:33) Neither was he able to persuade them. "On earth He showed you His great fire, and you heard His words from out of the fire". (Deuteronomy 4:36)

Throughout the Old Testament, though, there were many who did trust God as Light and it always became a special encounter.

David's song of praise to God acknowledges "out of the brightness of His presence bolts of lightning blazed forth". (2 Samuel 22:25) He also recognised that God used this power against His enemies so that they might acknowledge Him. (Psalm 18:12-14) Asaph writes that when God wanted to display His power among the people His "lightning lit up the world". (Psalm 77:18) A Psalmist writes that "the Lord reigns...righteousness and justice are the foundation of His throne. Fire goes before Him...His lightning lights up the world". (Psalm 97:3&4)

Also "I know that the Lord is great...He sends forth lightning with the rain". (Psalm 135:7)

Elihu, in his speech to Job, acknowledges "how great is our God – beyond our understanding...see how He scatters His lightning...He fills His hands with lightning and commands it to strike its mark...At this my heart pounds...listen to the roar of His voice...He unleashes His lightning beneath the whole heaven and sends it to the ends of the earth. After that comes the sound of His roar; He thunders with His majestic voice. When His voice resounds He holds nothing back. God's voice thunders in marvellous ways; He does great things beyond our understanding". (Job 36:30-37:5)

Ezekiel's vision and call from God confirms God's presence in light. (Ezekiel 1:4) There was flashing lightning, surrounded by brilliant light. In the centre was fire like glowing metal and in the fire were four creatures. They appeared like coals of fire or torches, and fire moved back and forth. They moved as flashes of lightning. (Ezekiel 1:13&14)

Jeremiah honours God by declaring that He made the earth by His power; He founded the earth by His wisdom...He sends lightning with the rain". (Jeremiah 51:16)

Daniel describes the Man whose body was like chrysolite, His face like lightning, His eyes like flaming torches". (Daniel 10:6)

Zechariah describes what will be seen when the Lord appears – His arrow will flash like lightning". (Zechariah 9:14) Matthew also describes the coming of the Son of Man. "As lightning that comes from the east is visible even in the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man". (Matthew 24:27) Luke says similarly, "For the Son of Man in His day will

be like lightning, which flashes and lights up the sky from one end to the other". (Luke 17:24)

The appearance of the angel that rolled away the stone from Jesus' tomb was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow. (Matthew 28:3)

When Paul was on the road to Damascus it was a light which flashed from heaven which stopped him in his tracks and completely changed his direction. (Acts 9:3) He continued to testify to this phenomenon (Acts 22:6-11 & Acts 26:13&23) because it so radically changed his life.

When an angel of the Lord came to free Peter from his prison cell, it came as light. (Acts 12:7) Yet, although Paul describes God, the blessed and only Ruler, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone is immortal and who lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or can see, (1 Timothy 6:15&16) yet, this same God, our God, sees fit to reveal Himself to us through light, both physical and enlightenment of our minds, if we choose to see Him. "What may be known about God is plain...because God has made it plain...for ever since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities – His eternal power and divine nature – have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse". (Romans 1:19&20)

There was such a magnetic power that exuded from Jesus, the Light of the World. He truly demonstrated this as He ministered for those three years.

3. THE REVELATION IN THE LIGHT

Not only was the light for seeing clearly in the darkness and for power. God is Light for fresh understanding. We use the expression "see the light" when we mean that we have reached an understanding that we did not know previously. This is the sense of what Job admits about God's wisdom and power, counsel and understanding. (Job 12:13 and 22) "He reveals the deep things of darkness and brings deep shadows into the light". Ever since Adam and Eve chose to believe the devil rather than obey God's command, mankind has tended towards wrongdoing. But we have been given a conscience which convicts us. We have a choice at that point of whether we will go deeper into sin by justifying ourselves or whether we will walk into the light and obey the conscience within.

Whether we are actually a follower of God, or not, this conscience is a gift from God, which is incorporated into our design. We were created to be light-bearers. This is the image of God. Most people instinctively want to be good people, but without a standard we do not know what good actually is. It is truly amazing that God has given us an ability to do any good at all when we do not choose to follow His advice and His standard. Ideally, though, His revelation leads us safely throughout our lives.

Throughout the story of God's relationship with mankind as written in the Bible, God has had Bible writers reveal God's wisdom. One of the early incidents recorded was when Cain became jealous of his brother. (Genesis 4:5&6) But Cain chose to go into darkness rather than choose the light. This choice opened up a slather of even worse crimes.

God's chosen people, Israel, were to be a light (of leadership) to the nations. "The Lord has declared this day...that He will set you in praise, fame and honour high above all the nations He has made". (Deuteronomy 26:18&19) He adds – if you will carefully obey the Lord your God. (Deuteronomy 28:1) But most ignored God's word and then their own consciences until they were no longer open to God's Light. Paul describes their state. "My heart's desire and prayer to God for the Israelites is that they may be saved...they are zealous for God, but their zeal is not based on knowledge. Since they did not know the righteousness that comes from God and sought to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness". (Romans 10:1-4) "What Israel sought so earnestly it did not obtain. God gave them a spirit of stupor, eyes so that they could not see and ears so that they could not hear". (Romans 11:7&8)

Because of the deep symbolism and wisdom in the written law of God there is a very clear picture of God's light. The Israelites were commanded to bring clear oil for the light so that the pure gold lamps could be filled to burn continuously for God's presence and glory. Only pure oil would be good enough to give pure light, and the lamps must be tended continually. (Leviticus 24:2-4) Jesus told a story about ten virgins who waited for the bridegroom. Only five kept their lamps ready. (Matthew 25:1-13) Keeping the light of God's presence, and allowing His revelation and wisdom to guide us is important to develop our relationship with our God.

Isaiah wrote about the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit. "The Spirit of the Lord will rest upon Him – the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of power, the

Spirit of knowledge and of the fear (reverence and honour) of the Lord – and He will delight in the Lord (love to obey and always do the will of)".

(Isaiah 11:1-3)

God has promised that He will reveal His thoughts to man. (Amos 4:13)

He wants His light to get out there and Amos had already had personal experience when God called him to prophesy. Amos found that God reveals His plans to His servants, those who want to understand His will and His ways and then speak them and do them.

(Amos 3:7) This aspect of God as Light and wisdom becomes a privilege for those who receive.

The apostle, John, was the most open to receive the secrets of God's heart when he wrote the revelation of the last days. He wrote that those who read this and take it to heart are blessed. (Revelation 1) He saw such a vision of the Light that he fell down under the presence and power. The glorified Jesus, the Light of the world, came before him, and John describes this encounter, finishing his description with the words – His face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance.

The glorified Jesus had messages for the lampstands – the churches which are to carry the message of the gospel to the peoples of the world.

At Ephesus they needed to repent because they no longer reflected the light of God. If they did not repent Jesus would remove their lampstand. It seems that a useless lampstand is a problem to God.

(Revelation 2:3-5)

To the Laodicean church they needed to repent because they were lukewarm. Their light had no heat, so it did not draw those who were

cold. But it was not cold either where it would have been irrelevant.
(Revelation 3:16)

John is then given a vision of the throne of God – lightning flashes from the electricity of His presence and the colours from the intensity and depth of the light. (Revelation 4:2-6) Every action in heaven seemed to cause flashes of light. (Revelation 8:5 and 11:19)

4. THE LIGHT IS TO BE A BLESSING

Every time God moves it is to bring light, whether to push back the darkness, to demonstrate His power or to bring revelation. He is intent on shining into our lives.

David was convinced – "The Lord is my light and my salvation – whom shall I fear?" (Psalm 27:1) He longed to be a reflection of His God. He goes on in this psalm, "One thing I ask of the Lord, this is what I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze on the beauty of the Lord". His resolve is, "my heart says of You, seek His face! Your face, Lord, I will seek". (verse 8) "The Lord is God, and He has made His Light shine upon us". (Psalm 118:27) "Let the light of Your face shine upon us, O Lord." (Psalm 4:6) The more God's light shone into David's life, the more God's love and blessings flowed to him.

Moses was told by God this was how the priest was to bless the people. "The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make His face shine upon you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn His face towards you and give you peace". (Numbers 6:24-26)

Eliphaz was trying to comfort Job in his troubles. "Submit to God and be at peace with Him...you will pray to Him and He will hear you...what you decide on will be done, and light will shine on your ways". (Job 22:28)

When Jesus, the Light of the world, came, God's light and favour were more freely given. At His birth the glory of God was demonstrated in the heavens as His light shone and the angels sang the Good News. "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom His favour rests". This promised favour is His "Shalom" – not just peace but completeness, restoration, healing, wholeness. This is the greatest blessing God could bestow. In Nazareth Jesus read the words of God from Isaiah; "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent Me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour". Then He said, "today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing". (Luke 4:18-21) From that moment Jesus personally demonstrated this. "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and He went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with Him". (Acts 10:38) The four gospel accounts tell many stories about these acts.

"By His (Jesus') death He destroyed him who holds the power of death – that is the devil – and freed those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death". (Hebrews 2:14&15) If sin and death are darkness then **Jesus brings the light to each situation**. That is why, although there are many stories written in the gospel accounts,

John wrote, "Jesus did many other things as well. If every one of them were written down, I suppose that even the whole world would not have room for the books that would be written". (John 21:25) Down through history, from that time, there are indeed many more stories about the blessings that God has poured out. Recently, we (the writers) were asked a question about the blessing that God gives and we admitted that we had many stories, even one for each day. The questioner commented that it might take the rest of the day to tell, and our reply was "Maybe the next two weeks!" **The blessings of the Light flow unceasingly to those who will receive**, because God has made some awesome promises that are for all time.

"This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know He hears us – whatever we ask – we know that we have what we asked of Him". (1 John 5:14&15)

"I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by My Father in heaven. For where two or three come together in My name, there am I in the midst". (Matthew 18:19&20)

"To Him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work within us, to Him be glory in the church and in Jesus Christ throughout all generations." (Ephesians 3:20&21)

"When He, the Spirit of Truth, comes, He will guide you into all truth". (John 16:13) "I (Jesus) have given them the glory that You gave Me, that they may be one as We are One: I in them and You in Me." (John 17:21-23) The Light in us connects us to God, Jesus and the Holy

Spirit, who function as One, and to all who are also in the Light. "How good and pleasant it is when brothers live together in unity...for there the Lord bestows His blessing, even life for evermore. (Psalm 133:1&3) "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, cleanses us from all (every) sin." (1 John 1:7)

5. THE LIGHT BRINGS LIFE

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through Him all things were made; without Him nothing was made that has been made. In Him was life, and that life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood (overcome) it." (John 1:1-5) We have repeated these words that we quoted in chapter 1 because we want to talk about the life that God has chosen for us, an abundant life or life to the full. (John 10:10)

Jesus said this is why He came – to lead His sheep into green pasture where they would flourish. He laid down His life so that those who chose to follow Him might be "saved". We need saving from the devil's kingdom, a control over people whose hearts and allegiance he has stolen. It is the devil who keeps people in darkness and prone to sin and he desires to hold them, trapped in ignorance and every evil so that they are punished, as he will eventually be. Paul writes that the god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. (2 Corinthians 4:4&5)

What then is life to the full? Paul describes it. "Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ".

- He chose us in Him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in His sight.
- In love He predestined us to be adopted as His sons (and daughters) through Jesus Christ.
- In Him we have redemption through His blood, (His shed blood has paid the price of our purchase from the kingdom of darkness.)
- the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace (unmerited favour) which He lavished on us.
- all wisdom and understanding
- He has made known to us the mystery of His will – to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ.
- We are marked in Him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit.
(Ephesians 1:3-14) Does all this take us to fullness of life?

There is more. Paul follows on with a prayer:

- that we may have wisdom and revelation, so that we may know Him better;
- that the eyes of our heart may be enlightened that we may know the hope to which He has called us, the riches of His glorious inheritance in the saints (we are Jesus' reward for His obedience to death on the cross)
- and His incomparably great power for we who believe.

And God appointed Christ to be Head over everything for the people of God, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills

everything in every way. (Ephesians 1:22&23) Together His family are His full representation on the earth. This is why the crimes committed by those who say they are Christian have such a devastating effect in the arena of the "lost" – those who are not yet in the Kingdom of God.

Peter wrote his letter to God's elect – His chosen people, Jew and Gentile (or non Jew). He writes in detail about holy living, having begun his discourse with the exhortation "be holy in all you do". (1 Peter 1:15) Then he says, "Live such good lives (conduct yourselves properly) among the unbelievers that they...may see your good deeds and glorify God". (1 Peter 2:12) The responsibility of the church is to bring others into the family of God. The Light in us and through us is supposed to bring **ETERNAL LIFE** to others. Peter's argument is that if we are rejected and suffer for the name of Christ we are blessed. "It is time for judgment to begin with the family of God". (1 Peter 4:16) The life-giving Light becomes a responsibility, yet, at the same time, it is a privilege.

Elihu was trying to encourage Job in his troubles and observed – God (wants)...to turn back a soul from the grave, so that the light of life may shine on him. (Job 33:26-28)

Jesus said He is the Way, the Truth and the Life. God wants us to know how to have fullness of life and there is the way God has set. It is a narrow gate because this is Jesus Himself. (John 10:7-9) There is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved". (Acts 4:12) But it is an open gate and free to anyone who will enter. We sometimes express it – Jesus is glad to give you the ticket to pass through! Once through the gate the journey is described by Isaiah as the "Way of Holiness". (Isaiah 35:8) It is for the Redeemed, those who

have been "bought" from the devil's control through the Blood of Jesus. On this road we will see the glory of the Lord, the splendour of our God. Knowing the Truth will keep us faithful and ETERNAL LIFE is the end of the journey.

There is of course another way – the wide one. God has given us free will to choose. Perhaps "broadmindedness" seems like a good quality and "all roads" lead to the same place? Many people apparently choose this but Jesus, the Light of the world, says that this road leads to destruction. (Matthew 7:13&14) The end of this road is darkness. God spoke about this choice a long time ago. "Choose life, so that you and all your children may live and that you may love the Lord your God, listen to His voice and hold fast to Him. For the Lord is your LIFE. (Deuteronomy 30:19&20)

6. LONG FOR THE LIGHT

When there is no light it is a very scary place. The ninth plague in Egypt was darkness "that can be felt". (Exodus 10:21-23) No one could see anyone else or leave his place for three days. It was a prophetic act of God, to be followed by the death of the firstborn in Egypt. But this act, far from melting Pharaoh's heart, made him more angry and, though he did not realise it, sealed his fate and that of many of his people. When Jesus was on the Cross darkness came over the land for three hours, and then Jesus breathed His last. (Luke 23:44-46) **When there is darkness in our lives it is a good time to remember that Jesus died for us, but He rose again and is still the Light of the world.**

Micah is interceding for God's people who are in spiritual darkness because they have rebelled against God. "Though I sit in darkness, the Lord will be my light. Because I have sinned against Him, I will bear the Lord's wrath, until...He will bring me into the light; I will see His righteousness". (Micah 7:9) He knows that God cannot condone sin but is also merciful and full of grace to wayward people.

David takes comfort from God's promises after he has been attacked both physically and emotionally. "In God I will not be afraid...for You have delivered me from death...that I may walk before God in the light of life". (Psalm 56:13) "Blessed are those whose strength is in You, who have set their hearts on pilgrimage...for the Lord is a Sun and Shield". (Psalm 84:5&11)

There is a permanent invitation to walk in the Light. It was spoken of prophetically by John the Baptist, who came as a witness to testify concerning that Light, so that through him ALL men might believe. "The true Light that gives light to every man was coming into the world." (John 1:6-9) Then the invitation was given by God after Jesus was born into this world. "For God loved the world so much that He gave His One and Only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life". (John 3:16)

Yet the invitation was planned long before Jesus came in the flesh. "This is what God the Lord says – "I, the Lord, have called You in righteousness; I...will make You to be a covenant for the people and a light for the Gentiles, to open eyes that are blind, to free captives from prison and to release from the dungeon those who sit in darkness". (Isaiah 42:6&7) God really does not want us to be caught up in darkness. Simeon, with the baby Jesus in his arms, spoke in the

power of the Holy Spirit, that his eyes had now seen what God had promised so long ago, and what he had longed to see before he died – the Light for revelation to the Gentiles. (Luke 2:32) God has decreed that His Servant will be the Light, the brightest light, like the sun, (Malachi 4:2) but God has also made lesser lights, the moon and the stars. When God speaks it comes to pass so it is profitable to know who these lesser lights are, in the same sense that Jesus is the greater light.

Joseph had a very strange dream, which was deeply offensive to his family. (Genesis 37:9-11) He saw the sun, moon and stars were bowing down to him. This actually happened that his brothers did bow down to him, (Genesis 43:26) and Joseph became a type of saviour to his family. His father acknowledged that he was over his brothers. (Genesis 48:22) Nevertheless Jacob's words for Judah were even more powerful. "You are a lion's cub...the sceptre will not depart from Judah... until he comes to whom it belongs and the obedience of the nations is His". (Genesis 49:10) The King will come from the line of Judah, though it is not a priestly or kingly heritage. Yet the nations will bow down to Him. (Philippians 2:10)

These stories are relevant to show how God reveals His plans in part to many different people and in their own context. The writer to the Hebrews puts it thus: "All these people were still living by faith...People who say such things show that they are looking for a country of their own...they were longing for a better country – a heavenly one". (Hebrews 11:13-16) **Until we see and understand the Light of God we will always have a longing for fulfilment in our lives.**

Sometimes this longing is demonstrated through choosing representations of God or saints or even things in the world that God created, such as animals or trees. In some religions it is creations of the imagination which are representative gods. This is what God calls spiritual adultery – any god but God. This is why Jesus as Light of the world is such a safeguard for us. He came to show us the Father, and make Him known. (John 1:18) It is easy for us to visualise light in its many forms, all of which God is happy for us to understand as vision of Him. To worship an unknown and unseen God is a stretch of faith but as Light we can see Him when we close our eyes.

When Jesus walked here on the earth He said something which seems very logical – a man who walks by day will not stumble, for he sees by this world's light. It is when he walks by night that he stumbles, for he has no light". (John 11:9&10) But Jesus was answering a question about going into a dangerous situation. He only did what the Father wanted Him to do, so therefore the Father's Light would be there where He was going. **This should be our own desire and longing; to be always in the Light of God.**

7. RECEIVE THE LIGHT

Walking in the Light is what God desires for all whom He chooses. "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". (1 Peter 2:9) "If we walk in the Light, as He is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another". (1 John 1:7) We are encouraged to receive the Light as our armour

against the deeds of darkness. (Romans 13:12) Indeed, the heavenly Father "has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of Light. For He has rescued us from the dominion of darkness, and brought into the Kingdom of the Son He loves". (Colossians 1:12)

But there seems to be a requirement that people are willing to receive the blessing. "Let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience". (Hebrews 10:22) When the Light of God shines in it will expose all our shortcomings and test us as to whether we believe that Jesus has really died for all the sins of the whole world, including our own. This act of dying on the Cross was the greatest gift God could give us. "We have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all". (Hebrews 10:10) "Their sins and lawless acts I will remember no more". (Hebrews 10:17) Then we do not just receive and then take the gift for granted either. After we have received we need to persevere. (Hebrews 10:36) The evil one will continue to accuse us, through our own conscience or others who are the devil's obliging agents, very happy to criticise, mock and judge our actions.

The presence of Jesus with us and in us is like a powerful fire. The disciples on the road to Emmaus commented, "Were not our hearts burning within us while He talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?" (Luke 24:32) He said to His disciples, "You are going to have the Light just a little while longer. Walk while you have the light, before darkness overtakes you...put your trust in the Light while you have it, so that you may become sons of light." (John 12:35&36) This

is not surprising if Jesus is a Light to the Gentiles and for glory to God's people, Israel. (Isaiah 42:6&7; Isaiah 49:6; Luke 2:32) "'Is not My Word like fire?' declares the Lord". (Jeremiah 23:29)

It is beautiful that there are many flowers that open up to the sun. Though when their petals are folded they look very plain, when they are open to the sun they shine in all their created glory. Many animals also like to bask in the sun to absorb its warmth. They might hide away in the darkness but they are created to flourish when the sun shines on them, and they unselfconsciously receive what God has provided. But humans have a moral choice. Our consciences tell us when we have chosen darkness but we foolishly stay there when the Sun is calling us into the Light. David was realistic about this tendency. "Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting". (Psalm 139:23&24)

God has determined that His Light is shed upon the righteous. (Psalm 97:11) When we understand the gift Jesus has won for us and thankfully receive it, that is our right standing before our holy God, He says "the path of the righteous is like the first gleam of dawn, shining ever brighter till the full light of day." (Proverbs 4:18) "His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and goodness. Through these He has given us His very great and precious promises, so that through them we may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires". (2 Peter 1:3&4)

We, the writers, ask people to receive a prayer of blessing but some refuse. It is curious thing as to why people would refuse the light of

God which is such a wonderful gift. Sometimes it is because they love their sins but sometimes it is because they do not know how good and generous our God is; that the punishment for their sin is already on Jesus. They do not know that we come to Jesus just as we are to be forgiven and cleansed, and to be filled with the power of the Holy Spirit, who will help us to conform to God's way. Our God is a consuming fire who burns up all the rubbish in our lives, (Deuteronomy 4:24) but this is a good thing in order that we may be holy as He already sees us in Christ. "The lamp of the Lord searches the spirit of a man; it searches out his inner being". (Proverbs 20:27) This is also a blessing because the Holy Spirit convicts us of sin and then helps us overcome. **Every time we respond to the Light of God shining into our lives we become more like Christ, so that we can reflect Him.**

8. RADIATE THE LIGHT

The glory of Christ was mightily demonstrated at His Transfiguration. (Matthew 17:2) "His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light." This glory was witnessed by Peter, James and John. Peter mentions it in his letter, (2 Peter 1:16-18) because this was a life-changing experience which convinced him of the plans and purposes of God and the truth of who Jesus is and why He came. John's purpose of writing his gospel account was "that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name." (John 20:31) Yet, although John had witnessed the transfiguration of Jesus on the mountain, he

"fell at His feet as though dead" when he had the vision of Jesus glorified in heaven. (Revelation 1:17)

We mentioned previously the greater light and that God had also created lesser lights. John (the Baptist) was a lamp that burned and gave light, and you chose for a time to enjoy his light. (John 5:35) Many people were drawn to go out to him in the desert where they were baptised for repentance so that their sins could be forgiven. They were challenged by John to live honestly. (Luke 3:3-14) So powerful was his preaching that some wondered if John might possibly be the Christ. (Luke 3:15) But John testified that he only baptised with water, but One more powerful than he would come. He was only a lesser light even though his ministry was very powerful. The One to come would baptise with the Holy Spirit and fire. (Luke 3:16) It is Jesus who lights a flame within our hearts so that we can be His lesser lights to shine in this world for Him. Once our light is lit we are asked not to hide it but to let it shine forth. (Matthew 5:14-16) "Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven." (Matthew 5:16)

There are several Scriptures that encourage us. "Do everything without complaining or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you shine like stars in the universe". (Philippians 2:15) "Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever". (Daniel 12:3) "The righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father." (Matthew 13:43) "As the flock of His people they will sparkle in

His land like jewels in a crown. How attractive and beautiful they will be!" (Zechariah 9:16)

In the love poem, Song of Songs, the friends see a beautiful sight – Jesus, the lover, and His beloved – "Who is this that appears like the dawn, fair as the moon, bright as the sun, majestic as the stars in procession?" (Song of Songs 6:10) When the greater light and the lesser light walk together, bound by love, it is always a beautiful witness to others.

This willingness to love one another is important if we are to radiate the Light. "Anyone who claims to be in the light but hates his brother is still in darkness. Whoever loves his brother lives in the light." (1 John 2:9&10) Jesus commanded us, "Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know you are My disciples, if you love one another." (John 13:34&35) Paul exhorts us, "Live a life of love, just as Christ loved us...For you were once darkness, but now you are Light in the Lord. Live as children of Light, for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth". (Ephesians 5:2,8&9) "You are all sons of the Light and sons of the day. We do not belong to the night or to darkness." (1 Thessalonians 5:5)

But the best way to radiate the Light is to live daily in it. When we worship God and look to Him, and spend time in His presence we truly reflect His glory. David wrote, "Those who look to Him are radiant. (Psalm 34:5) "Worship the Lord in the splendour of His holiness." (1 Chronicles 16:29, Psalm 29:2, Psalm 96:9) It is recorded that after Moses spent time with God on the mountain he was not aware that his face was radiant because he had spoken with the Lord. (Exodus 34:29-35) Paul explains that only in Christ the veil with which Moses

covered his face has been taken away. "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 Corinthians 3:13-18) "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." (2 Corinthians 4:6) "The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel", (2 Corinthians 4:4) but when they see this Light in our countenance they will be challenged to become seekers. It grieves God that His lampstands are not shedding His Light. Peter writes that "we have the Word...and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place". (2 Peter 1:19)

9. REST IN THE LIGHT

The Bible says that God rested on the seventh day or ceased from His work. (Genesis 2:2&3) The book of Hebrews speaks more of this. (Hebrews 4:4) All those who did not have faith in God and disobeyed (through unbelief) will never enter God's rest. Jesus was found worthy because He was faithful to the One who appointed Him. (Hebrews 3:2) We are warned: "see to it, brothers (and sisters), that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called 'Today', so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness". (Hebrews 3:12) There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God, for anyone who enters God's rest also rests from his own work, just as God did from His. (Hebrews 4:10)

There is a mystery here because Jesus said in defence of working on the Sabbath, "My Father is always at His work to this very day, and I, too, am working." (John 5:17) But later He says, "the work of God is this: to believe (have faith in) the One He has sent." (John 6:29)

Resting in the Light, then, is very simple – trust and obey. But maybe it is too simple?

David found it simple. "I trust in You, O Lord; I say 'You are my God'...let Your face shine on Your servant; save me in Your unfailing love." (Psalm 31:14&16) "Trust in the Lord and do good; dwell in the land and enjoy safe pasture. Delight yourself in the Lord and He will give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the Lord; trust in Him and he will do this: He will make your righteousness shine like the dawn, the justice of your cause like the noonday sun. Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for Him." (Psalm 37:3-7)

Isaiah describes it so. "You will keep in perfect peace (in Hebrew language – shalom shalom – the word doubled for emphasis) him whose mind is steadfast, because he trusts in You." (Isaiah 26:3)

Jeremiah describes this rest. "Ask where the good way is, and walk in it, and you will find rest for your souls." (Jeremiah 6:16)

Jesus said, "Come to Me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light." (Matthew 11:28&29)

When we are in this rest that God expects of us, it is His Light that accomplishes the works God is doing through this Light in us. Isaiah prophesied a long time ago: "The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a

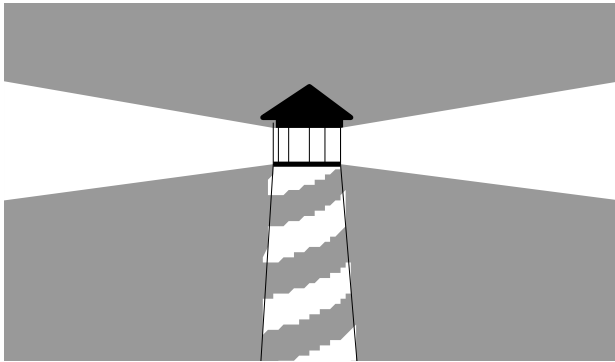
light has dawned." (Isaiah 9:2) When Jesus began His ministry, Matthew records that the prophecy was fulfilled. (Matthew 4:16) But then Paul acknowledges that he considered that God had commissioned him to bring this Light to the Gentiles, those who were not Jews, or God's originally chosen people. His listeners believed his message as from God Himself and "all who were appointed to eternal life believed." (Acts 13:47&48)

We do not know who will receive the Light from us, but it is our responsibility to shed this Light wherever we go. David understood it was his witness and his words. "Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path." (Psalm 119:105) "The unfolding of Your words gives light; it gives understanding to the simple." (Psalm 119:130)

But there is a final promise of rest in heaven, where we will no longer struggle to walk in the light because it will be permanent place of glory and rest. John describes his vision which is supposed to be a blessing for all who read it. "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. The nations will walk by its light". (Revelation 21:23&24) "The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and His servants will serve Him. They will see His face...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." (Revelation 22:3-5)

We could ask the question as to why God makes these promises through His prophets and then such a long time goes by. Hope rises and falls but this is the test of our trust, until we are completely confident that God ALWAYS keeps His promises. But throughout the Bible God has consistently given clues for those who are hungry

enough to search diligently. We have written many of these clues in this booklet in the hope that it will help the reader to research further. The last chapter of the last book of the Old Testament records Malachi writing: for those who revere My name, the Sun of righteousness will rise with healing in His wings, (Malachi 4:2) and the last chapter of the last book of the New Testament records light even brighter than the sun and healing of the nations. (Revelation 22:2-5) We come into the Light, we walk in the Light and we choose to live in the Light so that this Light can shine through us.



**"Send forth Your light and Your truth, let them guide me;
let them bring me to Your holy mountain,
to the place where You dwell." (Psalm 43:3)**