

Notes for the Ones Called-Out to Meet

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Light In The Darkness

by Dan Trygg

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was with God in the beginning. ³ All things were created through Him, and apart from Him not one thing was created that has been created. ⁴ Life was in Him, and that life was the light of men. ⁵ That light shines in the darkness, yet the darkness did not overcome it. ⁶ There was a man named John who was sent from God. ⁷ He came as a witness to testify about the light, so that all might believe through him. ⁸ He was not the light, but he came to testify about the light.”

John 1:1-8

“And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of a unique-child from a Father, full of grace and truth.”

John 1:14

“For God, who said, ‘Light shall shine out of darkness,’ is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ. ⁷ But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, so that the surpassing greatness of the power will be of God and not from ourselves...”

2 Corinthians 4:6-7

“But we all, with unveiled face, contemplating the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.”

2 Corinthians 3:18

God’s plan for dispelling and defeating the darkness of evil has been to introduce light into that darkness. This is true on a galactic scale, as well as in the life of an individual. Of course, that statement must be understood as it was meant, as a metaphor for the goodness and righteousness of God overcoming and defeating the evil of Satan and the evil world system he has devised and controlled. Light and darkness have been metaphors for various things for centuries. Visiting the Qumran community, where the Dead Sea scrolls were discovered, it was interesting to find out that they thought of themselves as the “sons of light” because they were enlightened by spiritual truth, but everyone who did not see things the way they did were “sons of darkness”, lost in ignorance, deception and were thought of as evil. It has been suggested that John the Baptist may have been influenced by people of Qumran. We know that the apostle John had been a follower of John the Baptist before he directed them to Jesus (Jn. 1:35). If true, the use of this metaphor to begin the prologue to the gospel of John was built upon a well-established word picture from that time.

John begins his record of Jesus’ ministry by introducing “the Word”. The Word (‘thought’, ‘message’) had already been present when time first began. He was “with” (‘to’, ‘towards’, ‘extension of’) God, and, at the same time, He was and is God. All things were created by means of Him. He Himself is not created, because the text says that “apart from Him not one thing was created that has been created.” Life was being in Him, ...spiritual life. This spiritual life was being the “light” of humankind. This light (spiritual life) shines (‘flashes forth, reveals, illuminates’) in the darkness. And the darkness cannot overcome it (‘hold it down’). The darkness is not able to prevent it from spreading, illuminating, revealing, making reality visible.

What a powerful word picture is described in just these first five verses! Into a world of “darkness” (ignorance, evil) the Light of God has come. *The spiritual darkness cannot stop it, anymore than natural darkness can stop light.*

Then the apostle introduces John the Baptist, “a man sent from God to bear witness to the Light”. Why? “In order that all might believe by means of him.” God sent John to testify of this Light of life, so that people would put their trust in Him. Though the Light had created the world, the world did not recognize or receive Him when He came. **But for those who did take Him to themselves, who put their trust in Him, to them He gave authority (legal right and power) to become children of God.** We find out later in the gospel more about what that meant. Jesus would later explain it this way, “Walk while you have the Light, so that darkness will not overtake you; he who walks in the darkness does not know where he goes. While you have the Light, believe in the Light, so that you may become sons of Light” (12:35,36). **God’s agenda is not just to reveal information to us, He wants to make us His children, children of Light! *He wants to transform us from children of darkness to become children of Light.***

Then we come to God’s strategy for revealing Himself to the world. “The Word became flesh and dwelt (‘tented’) among us, and we saw His glory (radiance), radiance as of a unique-one (‘only-kind’) of a father...”. This verse is so familiar it is hard to put aside our pre-understandings and see it as it really is, ...a word picture. It has been mistranslated as “glory as of the only-begotten from the Father”. That is adding a lot to the verse that is not there. First of all, there is no “the”, ...neither time. Secondly, the word translated as “only-begotten” literally means “only-kind” or “unique”. The word for “glory” can refer to the appearance of character, honor, reputation, grandeur, or remarkable appearance of a person, how he or she carries him or herself, how she or he behaves. So the word picture is that **we learn about a child’s father as we behold how the child appears and acts. What was the glory that the Word came to reveal? *A glory that was “full of grace and truth”.*** The *torah* or “instruction” came by means of Moses, but

the grace and the truth of the Word's radiance came into being by means of Jesus Christ. He, Jesus, is the unique ('only-kind') God, the One being unto the bosom of the Father. He has explained or interpreted the Father to us.

God's strategy to make Himself known to the world was to live inside a human being and display His character and express His message through what He said and did. Jesus made the Father known by how He lived.

This is exactly the same strategy He wants to use His people for. He wants to reveal our Father through how we live and talk, how we behave. Let's go back to John 1:14,15 again, and apply it to your life. God's Word, His message, became flesh in your life. The Holy Spirit is dwelling within your "earthly tent", your physical body. God's plan is that His radiance, His outshining glory, would be displayed and revealed through the way you carry yourself. And the main thing He wants to display through you is graciousness and truth. **When people meet you or interact with you, it is God's strategy that they would know Him because they met you! This is incarnational ministry.**

Isn't that exactly what Paul is saying in 2 Corinthians 4:6-7? "God, who said, 'Light shall shine out of darkness,' is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, so that the surpassing greatness of the power will be of God and not from ourselves." **God has placed His light within our "clay pot" bodies, so that it would be obvious to all that the "outshining", the "radiance" of God's character is not what is typical of human beings. Our very lives, our interests, our concerns, our treatment of others, our willingness to help and serve should display that God is at work in us.** People should know something about our Father because they have observed His Spirit emanating from our lives. In fact, they will *know* that it is not "just us". They will know that God must be doing something *in* us. It is from *God*, not *us*. Of course, the place where that should be most clearly and openly displayed should be in our relationships with one another in the body of Christ. **The *agapē*-love of God should be evident and recognizable as being "more than human". It should tell others that we are followers of Jesus. We have what He had.**

How does this happen? As many as take Jesus to themselves, and trust in Him as their Savior and Master, will become "children of Light". **We are born from above, born of the Holy Spirit. Our identity has changed. In fact, our very essence has changed. We are new creatures, a new creation.** Old things have passed away, behold new things have come (2 Cor. 5:17). There is something different about us now. It is the life of the Spirit which is inside of us. **We have actually become a new person that did not exist before. That metaphysical change is fundamental to who we now are, and how we are to live.** Our identity has changed. We are no longer "of" this world. We live here, but we are no longer "from" here, or "for" here, as we were before. We are now children of Light. We were formerly darkness, but now we are Light in the Lord. **We are to walk and live as children of Light, now, trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord. The fruit of the Light consists of all that is good, righteous and true.** Our citizenship is no longer here. This is not what our focus should be. Our citizenship is in heaven. We are learning to think from the perspective of God. **We are to be developing our spiritual walk, so that we could learn to be led by the Holy Spirit.** He will lead us to do things that we would never have considered on our own. Those are the very things that will reveal the life and perspective of God at work within our minds and hearts. It will show in our behavior, in our attitudes and our treatment of others.

In 2 Corinthians 3, the apostle Paul describes the process of transformation we are all to be going through, if we are in Christ. In order to come to Christ, the veil of spiritual blindness has been removed, and we have chosen to trust in Him. But that is just the beginning. We are called to be *disciples*, active-followers, apprentices-in-training, doers-of-the-word, implementers-of-faith. That means **each of us is on a quest to put our roots down deeper in our relationship with God so that our lives can expansively grow outward in the world and reveal Jesus.** Paul put it this way, "we all, with unveiled face, contemplating ('gazing at') the glory of the Lord, ...His outshining, revealed character and the radiance of His life impacting ours..., are being transformed (radically changed from the inside-out) into the same likeness, from one degree of glory to another, just as from the Lord, the Spirit." **As we draw near to God, and meditate on Him, worship Him, love Him, and interact with Him, He will affect change in our lives.** We will find ourselves changing on the inside, in our thoughts, our attitudes, our interests, our concern about others. The fruit of the Spirit's inworking presence will grow in us so that the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God will be more readily seen in our lives. While Moses had only a skin-deep, outside-in glow of the "glow-ry" of God's "*Shekinah*" Presence upon his skin, after meeting with God, God has given us a radiance that starts in the heart and expands through our entire being. **We will be transformed.** It will be a radiance seen in our hearts and our passions, our love and our concern, in our sacrifices and our service. We will become more and more like the Word who was made flesh and dwelt among us. **The presence and activity of God will be upon our lives, and expressed through our actions. We will demonstrate and emanate graciousness and truth. People will know something about God because they have encountered us.** It was always God's plan to "bring many sons and daughters to glory" (Heb. 2:10). **It is up to us to do our part, to pursue the intimacy with God that leads to transformation on the inside, and the fruit of light on the outside.** You *are* Light in the Lord. Walk in that Light, so that people will *know* God because they *met* you!