

# The Darkness Disappears and the True Light is now Shining

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## **1. The Sun of Righteousness Shines on you**

Thousands of people nowadays travel to distant countries full of hope and expectation, in search of fortune and success. It is not long before many become frustrated by the realities of a life void of mercy. Increasing pessimism sets in when they realize their limits and failures. They return to their homelands in utter defeat. If you examine the faces of passers-by on the street you discover sometimes empty eyes like burntout volcanoes, without hope.

It is possible for them to escape their pains and hardships if they come to the living God and live their lives before Him. The majority of the world's peoples have forgotten their Creator and are seeking material goals and worldly desires and they live isolated lives.

Man's departure from God in some countries has reached the point of atheism and forbidding belief in His existence. But the eternal and consoling reality of God always appears in His creation. For example, in Kazakhstan the government requires teachers to teach their students a program which denies the very existence of God. Using modern scientific methods, they seek to erase from the mind and awareness of the child any belief in God. They claim that the world consists only of matter and that man has no spirit or soul. Also, that there is no life after death and belief in such is mere imagination.

However, one day a girl asked her teacher: "Why do you strive and speak against God as if He has no existence? Since the name "God" exists in our language, it follows that there must indeed be such a person." The youngster had hardly finished speaking when the teacher slapped her face. He then hurried to inform the administration of what had happened. They decided to send this child to a strict atheistic boarding school, so that there she would learn to deny her faith. This girl's mother was a widow and a believer, so she started to pray and cry out to God. Rushing to the various departments she tried to save her daughter from this atheistic school. Finally she fled with her to the Girgis Mountains, to a faraway place where there were still some traces of freedom amidst the wilderness and the mountains. Here the light of God's knowledge was not extinguished and faith in His existence was upheld. The little girl found friends who also believed in a Creator God. As her knowledge of the merciful and living God increased and her trust in God as the solid foundation of her faith grew, she no longer felt lost and aimless. She had found the world's Light and was able to reflect Him in her circle.

Dear reader, we do not know your situation. However, if worries assail you or darkness surrounds you, come to God who is the Light of the world. He is waiting with open arms to

embrace you and give your life a new meaning. Think about the following explanations so your mind will be illuminated and you will gain a living hope for your future.

## **2. Rise to Welcome the Light**

How great is God's promise to you! He invites you to His wonderful light. Do not wrap yourself in your problems and darkness. For God's light is shining on you. Open your heart to His gentle light. You will be illuminated by His brightness and become like a mirror reflecting the glory of God. He is inviting you personally. So do not hold on to your sorrows. And do not let your anger and hatred shut the door to your heart, for God's love is speaking to you and His power will renew you.



One dark night a traveler saw a light in the distance and joyfully went towards it. But the road was still dark. Anyway, he had found a target and ran towards it. When he was a hundred meters from the street light he could see something of his surroundings, until now hidden from his sight. Standing under the lamp he was able to read by its light a street map. He also discovered that his clothes were muddy, soiled during his journey in the dark without his noticing. He tried to clean them under the revealing rays of the light. Finding a house which was lit he approached it and stood near the entrance. To his surprise and fear he could now see many more dirty stains on his white shirt, and he was ashamed of himself.



Dear reader, come to God's light. Draw near to His majesty and do not fear that your sins will be exposed in His light. Confess your sins to Him. You cannot be renewed with the eternal light unless you admit your need to be cleansed and purified. For everyone who thinks he is righteous is still in darkness. But the one who humbly draws near to God, finds his pride broken. Then he starts to walk in the light. You see, the nearer we approach God the clearer our spiritual condition looks. The saints are the broken ones. Therefore our pride needs to be broken before God. Otherwise He cannot heal us. The apostle John experienced

this truth, for he wrote in his letter:

**If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9).**

You too, confess to God all the sins you have committed, lies, stealing or impurity. Approach the Light of Truth and confess your weakness to the Lord. Do not deceive yourself and do not imagine that you are righteous. **There is none good except God.**

We assure you, dear reader, that God loves you just as you are, for He loves sinners. He desires every man to repent and return to Him voluntarily so that none may perish.

A young man lost his way in a dark forest and was scared of the sounds around him. He started to grope amongst the thick trees and thorns which tore his clothes. Suddenly he heard a voice just behind him say, "Stop and turn back!" He imagined he had misheard, so he continued along slowly. But once again he heard the voice, this time nearer and clearer than before.

He then took out a matchbox and struck a match. In its flickering light he could see that he was standing on the edge of a deep chasm; one more step and he would have fallen to the bottom to his death.



God calls you today: **"Stop and return. Come to Me."** If you continue in sin you will fall into eternal hell. Repent and return to the living God. Leave your sin and open your heart to the Spirit of our God. Do not stay away but come and stand in His Light. God's love is drawing you to Himself so that He can fill you with His pure life.

Some people hear the call of God, respond and try to do His will. They readily accept any sacrifice or labor to please Him. A Sheikh in Bangladesh was preaching to his hearers about the law of God. He was stressing to them that hell awaited everyone who did not keep all the requirements of the Law. Suddenly, he realized that he himself was also in danger of going to hell, because he realized the corruption of his thoughts and the error of his speech. So he decided to fast and pray until he was pure and clean in all his ways. After six months of fasting, his wife deserted him as she didn't want to live with a hermit. Life with a recluse is



unnatural. However this devout Sheikh persevered for one year, trying to purify himself. Then he started feeling pessimistic and despair overcame him, for he realized more and more that no one is able to reform himself by his own efforts; even prayer does not save man from his sins.



It was then that God sent him some faithful friends who guided him to the true Light which shines from the Holy Scriptures. He applied himself to the study of these books and was illuminated by the divine Light. Thus he was cleansed from his past life by the saving grace of God and was transformed into an upright man.

Would you like to read what that Sheikh read and to discover prayerfully what he discovered? Meditate on the following passage and ask God to open your eyes so that you will be saved from your sins by the power of His splendid light.

**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).**

### **3. The Divine Light Has Shone**

The message of the coming of the Divine Light is not a mystical religious concept. It is, rather, **the promise of God** which He gave to the fathers of faith. Read the following passages from the Gospel to judge for yourself that God has indeed pierced the darkness of our world, sending to us His light.

**In the sixth month, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. The angel went**

to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you." Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God. You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High... his kingdom will never end."

"How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?" The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. For nothing is impossible with God."

"I am the Lord's servant." Mary answered, "May it be to me as you have said." Then the angel left her (Luke 1:26-38).

This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about. His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit. Because Joseph, her husband, was a righteous man and did not want to expose her to public disgrace he had in mind to divorce her quietly.

But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins."

All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: "The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel, which means, God with us."

When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded and took Mary home as his wife. But he had no union with her until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus (Matthew 1:18-25).

In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria). And everyone went to his own town to register. So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her first-born, a son. She wrapped him in strips of cloth and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in strips of cloth and lying in a manger.

Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests."

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about."



**So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told (Luke 2:1-20).**

Dear Reader, have you realized that the Divine Light has shone in the deep darkness of our world? Night had fallen on Bethlehem and its outskirts. Every living creature had gone to sleep except a group of shepherds keeping their nightwatch in the fields.

Suddenly, the heavens were opened and a penetrating light flashed around them lighting up the night and scaring the shepherds. What increased their dread was the appearance of the Angel of the Lord before them in splendid brightness. And the glory of the Lord shone around them. They fell down, dumbfounded and with eyes blinded. It is the resurrection day, and the day of reckoning, they thought! Their sins awoke, accusing them before their sleeping consciences. All their life lay open in its nakedness before them. They were greatly afraid and were trembling with terror. But the Angel of the Lord told them not to be afraid, announcing to them gently: "Fear not, I have come with the message to you that today is born a Savior who is the promised Christ, promised by God through His prophets. He is the mercy to mankind from the merciful God, the One who saves from the Day of Judgment all who trust in Him." You too will find in this message the secret of enlightenment: Whoever repents from his sins before God, will be filled with the joy of heaven. And whoever receives the word of the Lord in his conscience will realize the joy of his freely given salvation.

Thus the loving God has prepared for you a great mercy. He is addressing you personally; He will not reject you nor destroy you but will reveal to you His saving purpose.

Have you grasped the secret of the eternal light? Christ was born in a stable in a lowly manger. He took on human form in a humble place so that man will not say, "I am rejected because I am too bad and too small for God to love me." No! For Christ himself was born like a refugee, rejected by society in order to give each despairing soul hope and a realization that God comes to him, and is close to him and loves him personally.

In one of the Ottoman Sultan's palaces in Istanbul you can see a glittering cradle for the infants of the ruler made of pure gold. It is decorated with glittering jewels. The names of the princes who occupied this cradle are not known to the world. But this empty golden cradle rests in a corner of one of the museums.



But the lowly Christ born in a poor manger is known through the centuries because He is God's true sign, the miracle-maker to this day. He is ready to lift you out of your lostness; set you free from the bonds of sin and redeem you from the evils of this world. He will give you eternal life.

The angels of God rejoiced when Christ was born. Their brightness lit up the place where those frightened shepherds sat. The divine light engraved in the depths of their beings the unique knowledge that the promised Christ had come, and that the prophet who was to be greater than Moses had arrived, that the eternal king greater than David had been born. He did not come with weapons of destruction, but with love to conquer death, sin and Satan. He bears all the authority of God because He is born of His Spirit and He is God's Word incarnate.

The multitude of believers today confess with great joy that Jesus Christ is their personal Savior, the only effective one. Their songs of grateful praise rise daily from our globe and reverberate in the vast space so that even the stars and planets speak of the glory of God and proclaim His presence and saving power, praising and saying:

**Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests (Luke 2:14).**

When the angels had left the shepherds, darkness once more descended. But they arose at once and went to Bethlehem to see this thing which had happened. They hurried, stumbling in the dark as they went, but inside them there glowed this new wonderful light. The shepherds found the place where Jesus had been born and their hearts overflowed with joy. They saw the baby lying in a manger and knelt down and worshipped Him. They departed afterwards into the dark night singing and when they reached the village they told of the

appearance of the angel to them, and that they had seen the infant in the stable in Bethlehem. The people shook their heads and thought about what they heard. It sounded like a fable invented by the shepherds. None of them believed what they heard about the incarnation of the Word of God. They did not hurry to the child in the manger to bow before Him. It was then that those shepherds realized that salvation was prepared for all men. However, not all accept the message of God. Only those who obey the call are illuminated by it. No doubt the shepherds were amazed at not seeing any wealth or glory or greatness surrounding the baby, but they believed in God's Word which had become incarnate, the promised one, lying in a humble manger.

The whole world has not been the same since the birth of Christ. All those who followed Him started observing a new calendar based on this outstanding historic event which has changed human history.

#### **4. The Light Shines in the Darkness**

**I am the light of the world, whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life (John 8:12).**

Christ is God's wonderful light which has come to our earth to illuminate all people. Before Him came prophets, philosophers, kings and sultans. Many thought that one or other of these was the Savior of the world. But they all passed away. Only Jesus Christ has continued; the lighthouse shining in darkness. He will illuminate all who come within the rays of His love.

You will probably ask us: "Why does Christ say that He is **the light of the world?** What are the new teachings and thoughts He brought which were not proclaimed by other prophets and kings?"

Christ came to us in the image of the incarnate God and in the essence of the creator. He declared to us that the Almighty is eternal love. For He is not a God who is remote and unknown, indifferent to us, guiding whom He will and misleading whom He will. But He is the loving Father who despises not nor rejects wretched man. Instead He offers everyone His compassion and His truth in Christ. This is the theological revolution which the Son of Mary brought. Since that time we fear God not as a tyrant nor as a judge. The reason is that the great God is our heavenly Father who has bestowed on us sonship. He cares for us, as a father cares for his children. He loves us, and offers us His free salvation from the bondage of sin and death.

Do you trust the message of Christ and believe that God is your spiritual father? Jesus Christ has descended to your level because He desires to pour out His love into your thirsty heart.

Christ fulfilled His new teaching in His own life for He is "God's Incarnate Word." Through

the power of His heavenly father He loved His enemies and blessed His cursers and lived a life of purity in word and deed. He healed the sick and raised the dead. He did not merely preach God's word; but He lived it out. All the prophets before Him declared Gods will to man. But Christ was God's Word itself. The Almighty became flesh in Him so He could say:

**Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father (John 14:9).**

Christ has taught us who God is: Love which knows no end, mercy which is unsearchable and power which is limitless. Christ came not to destroy the hateful and exterminate the godless; rather He said:

**For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost (Luke 19:10).**



How great is this witness of Christ to Himself. Our Lord is gentle and humble in heart, to such an extent that He laid down His life a ransom for many. He did not appear as a master or a tyrant but witnessed to Himself saying:

**The son of man did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many (Matthew 20:28).**

In this statement Christ announced the character of His new order, making it clear to His

followers that:

**Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave (Matthew 20:26-27).**

Pride is not the slogan of Christianity, but humility and service, as well as self-sacrifice for the sake of others. This includes even those who refuse to accept the sacrifice. These virtues are the fruit of the teachings of Christ, who declared to us that God is a loving Father. He lived these principles before our eyes.

## **5. Darkness Hates the Light**

Have you heard of a doctor or prophet or leader or philosopher who was able to perform miracles and wonders like Jesus Christ? He silenced the storm with the power of His word, and fed the five thousand in the wilderness with five loaves and two fish. By the word of His mouth He cast out evil spirits from those possessed. He healed the sick who came to Him from all their diseases. No problem nor illness nor any other authority was able to oppose the authority of His love. Christ offered His miraculous services free while He himself was content to remain poor. He did not glorify Himself but honored His heavenly Father and revered His name continually. He was so humble that He could say: "**By myself I can do nothing**" (John 5:30).

Jesus presented the gospel to the poor and delivered them from their trial by the power of His spirit. However, His greatest work was to take away the sin of the whole world. He has freed us from Satan's chains of bondage after announcing to us that our corrupt nature needed salvation. Christ delivered His followers from the mistaken idea that their piety will save them, giving them at the same time a wonderful hope. It is through His divine love that He can save them from God's wrath over their sins. Jesus has carried the sins of the world and also suffered the judgment for all mankind. He reconciled God with man through the sacrifice of Himself. Christ then is the gentle, purifying, healing light. All who draw near to Him will not be condemned but will be justified and saved. Those who follow Him will not walk in darkness but will have the light of life.



Christ overcame all kinds of temptations but did not sin. Neither His enemies nor the Roman authorities could accuse Him of any transgression or wrong doing. For the divine light dwelling in Him overcame every temptation, darkness or corruption. The inspired revelation attests to the holiness of Christ at all times, no sin was found in Him. Thus He alone was worthy to substitute for sinners. Out of the greatness of His love He suffered for our sins and covered our transgressions. On the cross He cried out:

**My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? (Matthew 27:46).**





For Christ, who announced to us the Fatherhood of God and who was from eternity one with Him, suffered judgment on our behalf. He was the Lamb of God who bore our sins, and endured suffering in our place. Have you realized the greatness of the justification which God offers you?

The holy God cannot forgive without reason, because the demands of justice would then conflict with the demands of His love. Justice requires the destruction of the sinner and his eternal damnation because he has transgressed the law and offended against God. Sin is transgression, but divine love wants the salvation of the sinner. For this reason God sent Christ as a substitute for humanity in order to erase the sin of the world and suffer the judgment on our behalf. By so doing he kept the law, fulfilling its demands and silencing the vile prosecutor, because Christ, in His love paid the price of our reconciliation. The following incident will throw light on these deep spiritual truths.



There lived in a western country a minister of religion who had the habit of speeding in his car. One day the police stopped him and gave him a ticket for speeding. He had to appear in the local court. At first the minister was pleased to learn that the judge was an elder in his church. So he went, reassured because the judge was his friend.



You can imagine his surprise when upon entering the court room he saw the judge seated, looking stern. His puzzlement increased when the judge asked him his name and profession and whether he was familiar with the traffic regulations. When the minister replied "Yes", the judge asked him, "Why then were you speeding? You must know that you broke the law and that you are guilty." When the minister heard these words he was upset, because he was aware that police officers were often lenient with speeding offenders. He was angry that his friend the judge had made much of his minor offense, leading him to admit his guilt before those present. Since he admitted he had broken the law, the magistrate fined him a sum equal to half his monthly salary.



When the sentenced man left the court he hurried home. Later he phoned the judge's house and asked for him. His wife answered and told him he was not home. The minister angrily demanded of her why her husband had acted in that way. He had exposed him in front of all in the court room and imposed a fine which he could not afford. She kindly replied: "When my husband saw your case papers this morning he laughed heartily, then said, 'Today I'll teach my good friend the minister a lesson in justice and mercy he will never forget!'" The minister retorted, "Where is mercy and where is justice? I have to pay an enormous sum for a trivial offence!" The judge's wife tried to calm him by saying: "Be patient awhile, pastor. You will soon understand the purpose behind your spiritual brother's action."

At that moment the mailman rang the minister's doorbell and handed him an express letter from the judge. Opening it he found a check for the speeding fine, plus all court expenses.

The judge had enclosed a note which read: "I am your close friend; I love you and respect you. However, I am bound also by the principles of justice. Because of our friendship everyone in the court room expected me to be lenient with you and impose a light sentence. I could think of no other solution than to impose on you the stiffest sentence provided by the law. At the same time, I determined because I love you to pay the whole fine. Will you accept this treatment as a humble lesson in the union of God's love and justice shown in Christ's sacrifice for us?" God, in His perfect holiness, will under no circumstances pervert justice. On the contrary He will judge us according to the law and condemn us to the death and punishment which we deserve. Thanks to His great love for us He laid on Christ all our iniquities. He died in our place. In this way He has paid the price of our deliverance from the consequences of judgment. His death of Christ was the great victory over darkness.



The just took the place of the unjust to open for us the road to grace and light. Since that time the sun of righteousness shines on Christ's followers. No longer do they have to live in the darkness of their sins, because Christ has finally freed them from sin's penalty. Satan has no

rights over them or any authority because Christ represents them before the Father. Thus all believers in Christ confess the redemptive sacrifice of Christ with thankfulness and praise as the divine revelation, 700 years before the death of Christ, the prophet Isaiah expresses it:

**Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth (Isaiah 53:4-7).**

Dear Reader, Christ is the "**Great Sacrifice**" we read about in the scriptures. Reconciliation between the world and God was accomplished by His death. We suggest that you memorize these inspired words from Isaiah, and consider them deeply in order to understand the meaning of the sufferings of Christ. Thus you will obtain God's righteousness prepared for you personally.

## **6. The Light Overcomes the Darkness**

**I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in me will live even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. (John 11:25-26)**

As the rising sun shines in its glory, so the Light of the world, Christ, rose and shone when He emerged from the dead. He did not remain in the grave like the rest of the prophets and world leaders; neither did His body decay in the ground, but He actually rose and emerged from the sealed tomb.

Christ showed himself alive after His glorious resurrection. He mingled among the people, speaking to them, eating with them, showing them the nail prints in His hands and side, and then blessed them and granted His peace to them. The disciples of Jesus were frightened when they first met the One risen from the dead. However, later they were glad when they realized that His resurrection from the dead was the greatest proof of His authority and victory. They were greatly comforted and were reassured of their complete justification and their firm hope.

Christ is alive and is seated today at the right hand of God. Death could have no hold on Him, neither could Satan keep Him in his power. Likewise, before His crucifixion Satan could not overcome Him with temptation, for Christ remained without sin. Thus, by His steadfast faith, His strong love and His living hope **He finally overcame the devil**. As a result of this the darkness was overcome and Satan was defeated. All who cling to Jesus do not fear magic or superstition nor the evil eye, because all these forces have been defeated.



The living God is our strong refuge to whom we hasten for protection. Thus no evil spirit or any other creature is able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The resurrection of Christ demonstrates His permanent unity with His heavenly Father. His death on the cross was not a punishment for sins He had committed, nor was it a defeated ending to His life. Had He been executed for a wrong He had done His body would have remained in the tomb.

Therefore His glorious resurrection is **a proof of His holiness**. It is evidence of our new privilege and the legal standing of our justification. Ever since the resurrection of Christ from the dead our reconciliation with God has been confirmed. The Eternal Judge has accepted the sacrifice of Jesus for us; He has raised Him victoriously and justified all His followers eternally.

From the resurrection of Christ we receive great hope because **He has conquered death**. It had long held its power over man and the whole universe. Even today most people dislike speaking about death openly. The living are afraid of the hour of their death, because of their fear of a fiery judgment after the grave.

But the man Jesus opened the door of our dark prison and made a way for us to the light. Since the day of His resurrection all Christianity shouts with joy "Christ is risen, in truth He is risen!" We believe that we arose in Him when He arose. The shouts of victory and hope will never cease, as the apostle Paul exclaimed:

**Christ Jesus has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel (2 Timothy 1:10).**

**When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: 'Death has been swallowed up in victory.' Where, O death, is your victory? where, O death, is your sting? The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God! He gives us victory through our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 15:54-57).**

No longer is death a fearsome thing to those who are in Christ Jesus, to those who believe in His death and resurrection. Faith in the living One who was raised from the dead gives us a sure hope of eternal life.

## **7. The Sun Scatters the Thick Clouds**

Forty days after His resurrection from the dead, Christ ascended to God His father and took the rightful glory which He had laid aside when, for our sakes, He became man.

Shortly before His crucifixion He took three of His disciples aside and climbed the lofty

mount Hermon. He wanted to reveal to them the splendor of His eternal glory and show them the majesty of His timeless essence. It was to confirm them in faith and ensure their steadfastness when the hour of temptation and desertion would come. Therefore He laid bare His veiled glory so that they would not be distressed or doubt His divinity.

The twelve disciples of Jesus were young men from humble families; six were fishermen. They had publicly confessed their sins before God in the wilderness and had been baptized by John in the Jordan for repentance.

When the disciples heard about Jesus from John, that He was the Lamb of God who would take away the sin of the world, some left their ascetic master at once and they followed Him. They began to appreciate the force of His love in the light of His words and deeds. However, the brightness of His glory was veiled from their eyes until He revealed it to His three disciples on the high mountain peak.

Jesus forbade His chosen followers to discuss His transfiguration until after His ascension to His Father, because the understanding of His glory does not come by logic or by philosophy, but is perceived by faith after complete surrender to Him. Study the account of Christ's transfiguration so that you may realize how Jesus is alive today, and see the glory of the Risen One from the dead and the power of His endless rule.

**After six days Jesus took with him Peter, James and John the brother of James and led them up a high mountain by themselves. There he was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun and his clothes became as white as the light. Just then there appeared before them Moses and Elijah, talking with Jesus. Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here. If you wish, I will put up three shelters: one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah." While he was still speaking a bright cloud enveloped them, and a voice from the cloud said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!" When the disciples heard this, they fell, face down to the ground, terrified. But Jesus came and touched them. "Get up," he said. "Don't be afraid." When they looked up, they saw no one except Jesus (Matthew 17:1-8).**

Jesus' face shone as the sun, and His original glory showed through. His disciples then realized He was no ordinary person but indeed the Light of the world in bodily shape; the Son of the most high God. **"Light of light, very God of very God, begotten not created, of the same substance with the Father."** When this truth struck them they dropped to the ground as dead, because their human frame could not endure the glory of God. Then Jesus got them up and commanded them not to fear.

After Jesus died and rose from the tomb and ascended in glory to His Father, hell was angered. The evil one took revenge on the followers of Jesus through the fanatical religious zealot Saul. He started to persecute, in the name of God, the believers in Christ. Using the utmost cruelty he forced them to renounce their faith. Those who held on to their faith were condemned to death. Because of his zeal the Religious Council in Jerusalem granted Saul

special powers to confiscate their property and authority to persecute and condemn the Christians in Damascus.

As Saul was approaching Damascus, the Lord Jesus stopped him on the way and showed His glory to the pious bigot. In an instant He revealed to him that the crucified one whom he was persecuting was alive. He had not remained in the grave, and though rejected by His own people He was in truth the Light of the world.

When you look into the apostle Paul's testimony closely you will understand how the living Lord, even in our own day is meeting individuals, purifying, filling and sending them to the nations to spread His light to those living in darkness, even as Paul (formerly Saul) speaking of the appearance of Christ to him said:



**On one of these journeys I was going to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests. About noon, O king, as I was on the road, I saw a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, blazing around me and my companions. We all fell to the ground, and I heard a voice saying to me in Aramaic, 'Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.' Then I asked, 'Who are you, Lord?' 'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting,' the Lord replied. 'Now get up and stand on your feet. 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. I will rescue you from your own people and from the Gentiles. I am sending you to them to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me' (Acts 26:12-18).**

This historic event shows us clearly that zeal and fanaticism for one's religion does not justify a man, but the mercy of Jesus the Redeemer is what saves sinners and sanctifies their

hearts alone.

Christ in His majesty did not destroy Saul the persecutor of His Church. On the contrary, He had pity on him and spoke to him personally. He forgave his sins and set him free by His grace. He made plain to him that Jesus and the members of His church are in complete union for ever. For Christ suffers when members of His church are persecuted, as though He suffered personally. His love shines through them and His Spirit possesses their life. This truth, namely the unity of Christ and His church, was the secret which penetrated the mind of Paul the Apostle. It became the new message in his preaching.

When the number of Christians increased and multiplied, Satan tried to wipe out the church finally. During this wave of persecution John the beloved disciple was imprisoned on the island of Patmos. He was left to perish there of hunger and thirst. At the same time many of the believers in Christ were seized, tortured and killed.



The Lord Jesus stood over His servant John while praying alone, revealing Himself to him and assuring him that the gates of hell would not prevail against His church because He was her living Lord. John recorded his unique experience as follows:

**On the Lord's Day I was in the Spirit, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet, which said:**

**"Write on a scroll what you see and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea."**

**I turned around to see the voice that was speaking to me. And when I turned I saw seven golden lampstands, and among the lampstands was someone "like a son of man," dressed in a robe reaching down to his feet and with a golden sash around his chest. His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and his eyes were like blazing fire. His feet were like bronze glowing in a furnace, and his voice was like the sound of rushing waters. In his right hand he held seven stars, and out of his mouth came a sharp double-edged sword. His face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance.**

**When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. Then he placed his right hand on me and said: "Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last. I am the Living One; I was dead, and behold I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades (Revelation 1:10-18).**

Jesus Christ is alive and all power in heaven and earth has been delivered into His hands. His face shines as the sun in its glory. The rays of His holiness shine and illuminate the life of all His saints, even the one falling to the ground overwhelmed by a sense of judgment. Christ is love and life and does not desire the death of the sinner, rather that he should repent, and by his prayers, words and deeds carry the heavenly light to other people. Thus Jesus saved John from death and placed him on his feet to live and to witness the true glory of Jesus.

Dear Reader, if you study the birth of Jesus Christ, and His life, death and resurrection and realize that He is living in heaven in His eternal majesty, then you will understand the meaning of Jesus' words: "I am the light of the world." His infinite greatness is stronger than any worldly authority or majesty, and he who believes in Christ, His death and resurrection will be filled with the peace of God. The living Christ imparts heavenly peace to everyone who believes in Him.

## **8. The Descent of the Heavenly Light on Men**

After the resurrection of Jesus from the dead, and shortly before His ascension to heaven, He instructed His disciples to await together the promise of the Father, so that they would obtain power when the Holy Spirit descended on them.

**But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses (Acts 1:8).**

Christ died and arose from the dead to give us peace with God. He has purified us from all our sins so that the Holy Spirit can live in us. Indeed the death of Christ was the reason for our enlightenment.

After Christ's ascension to heaven, His followers met in prayer in obedience to Christ's command. On the tenth day they heard the sound of a strong wind around them. However, the leaves of the trees did not move and neither did anyone feel the wind blowing. There was no lightning. But suddenly they saw flames of fire. They looked around them but did not



notice anything burning. The flames then split into tongues and hovered over each of those present. Everyone was filled with the Holy Spirit and this was that momentous hour of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit descended on the followers of Christ.

The risen Christ did not hold on to His life or His glory for Himself only, but also desired to give His spirit to all who asked for it. In this way He fulfilled His sure promise:

**I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life (John 8:12).**

Obtaining the Holy Spirit is the right of everyone who opens himself to the gospel of Christ. His atoning death purchased the right of grace to all who believe in Him. You too are chosen to receive God's Holy Spirit if you repent of your sins and believe in the blood of the Lamb of God who redeemed you eternally.

The outpouring of the Holy Spirit was one of God's promises in the Old Testament, known to all of the believers of that period. And God fulfilled His promises after the ascension of Christ. All Believers have looked forward to the moment concerning which He inspired the prophet Ezekiel to say:

**I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you (Ezekiel 36:26).**

Jesus did not want to leave His loved ones orphans, but came to them in the Person of His Spirit. Since that time, the peals of thankfulness and praise ring round the earth. The Holy Spirit does not demand intelligence, or wealth or high degrees in order to indwell a man. All he needs is a repentant heart, prepared to receive Him and believe in Jesus Christ.

## **9. Receive Christ the Light of the World by Faith**

Before His death Jesus warned His disciples against following Him in a traditional sense without commitment, but urged them to exercise sound faith so that their lives would be renewed. He said to 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. Put your trust in the light while you have it, so that you may become Sons of light (John 12:35-36).**

Dear Reader, if you want the Spirit of Christ to come within you, follow Jesus. Open your heart to His word. If you do, His eternal power, peace and righteousness will truly flood your life. In Christ alone you will find the true path because He proclaimed the truth about Himself when He said:

**I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me (John 14:6).**

In every time and place there are deluding lights shining. They flash for a while then vanish. Of one thing you may rest assured: Jesus is the only one who loves you truly. Without Him you remain lonely and lost, without hope, awaiting eternal flames. But if you want to leave the darkness of this world, and long to be free from sin and its bonds, come to Jesus and He will grant you heavenly strength. If you believe in the only Savior, reject every teaching, creed and false affiliation which opposes His will.

You may ask us: "How can I believe in Christ, when I do not know Him well?" We would reply: "Study His life in the Gospel and you will know Him. Examine His words and ponder them deeply."

**You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life (John 5:39).**

Walk beside Him on the way, consider His actions. Speak to Him in prayer, as you would to a faithful friend. He knows you and listens to you. He is keen to answer your prayers, because He loves you personally. He will not fail you nor forsake you, for that is His eternal purpose:

**He does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us. As a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear him; for he knows how we are formed, he remembers that we are dust (Psalm 103:10-14).**

We encourage you to place your hand in the hand of Christ and make a covenant with Him for time and eternity. He is willing to lead, counsel, protect, strengthen and keep you so you will experience His love and His true and faithful promises. Then you will appreciate what David the prophet realized when he wrote:

**The LORD is my light and my salvation whom shall I fear? The LORD is the stronghold of my life of whom shall I be afraid? (Psalm 27:1).**

Faith in Christ is not merely intellectual knowledge but a decision involving a heartfelt and final commitment to entrusting your life to Him. When you follow Christ you will experience His power, love and peace which passes knowledge.

**Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household (Acts 16:31).**

You will also experience that total submission to your Redeemer who will illuminate your life and make you a son of light. Faith is not just feeling, that is, to feel that the Lord is inside you. It is enough to submit your life to Him, to believe that He has accepted you and you have become His child. In His steadfast love He promised that whoever opens His heart to

Him will receive eternal life (Revelation 3:20).

In case you don't know how to speak to Christ, who rose from the dead, or if you wonder how to entrust your life to Him, we have written a prayer of surrender for you which you can repeat in your own words. Pray thus with us:

**"Oh Lord Christ, the Gospel tells us that you were born a man for our salvation, and died and rose again for our justification. Have mercy on me, the sinner, according to your love and forgive my sins. Cleanse my heart with Your precious blood, and purify my thoughts with Your Holy Spirit. I believe that You died for me, and also that You have reconciled me truly with the holy God. I thank You for Your sufferings. Accept me as Your own and let me not wander away from You. Quicken me with Your Spirit and fill me so that I may know and be assured that the great God is my heavenly Father and that I have become His child. I thank You from the bottom of my heart because You have accepted me just as I am, because of Your pure love. Amen."**

Dear Reader, be assured that the Lord Jesus has heard your prayer, not because you are just or religious, but on the contrary because you are a lost sinner. Speak to God your Father and tell Him all the details of your life. Thank Him for all His blessings and guidance to you. Commit the control of your life to Him and read His Word daily. You will receive heavenly strength day by day. His creative words will renew you and change the course of your life. You will become meek and humble in following Jesus' example.

## **10. You Are the Light of the World**

Jesus did not live exalted and remote from His followers. On the contrary, He was humble, sharing with them His love and wisdom. By telling them, **"You are the light of the world"** (Matthew 5:14), He was giving them a special privilege. The Christian by nature is not righteous in himself and is no better than the Hindu, the Muslim, the Jew or the heathen. Being justified through the blood of the crucified and being filled with the Holy Spirit bestows on each believer in the Savior the privilege of being called a child of God. Thus in Christ he becomes a light to the world.

The word "Christ" means Anointed with the Spirit of God. Jesus was always filled with the Holy Spirit because He was born of this same Holy Spirit. In this way He was able to redeem the world. As for true Christians they are anointed with the Holy Spirit, not because they were born into a Christian family or because they received Christian teaching. All these things do not make a genuine Christian. However, after repentance and faith in Christ a person becomes a child of God. It is then that he puts on the new man who is born of God in righteousness, holiness and truth. Jesus declared to His followers the goal of their life by saying:

**Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven (Matthew 5:16).**

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The saved Christian resembles a small mirror which reflects the rays of the sun. Whereas the mirror is unable to contain all the light of the sun, it is still able to reflect all it can absorb of its light to its dark surroundings. Whoever looks at the sun's rays reflected in the small mirror is dazzled by their brightness.

In the same way each Christian has the privilege to reflect the love of Christ, His joy and peace to others. For the patience of Christ, His kindness, goodness, meekness and purity are the fruit of the Holy Spirit which every Christian is expected to live out, diffuse and reflect in his environment. Life lived with such power does not need many words because the language of love is one which every person understands.

A young black woman asked a minister if she could serve in his house for a whole year and his wife agreed. This girl was honest, kind and loyal during the whole period she was with them. When the year was up, she wanted to leave. The minister asked her: "Why don't you stay with us? You have become one of the family; we respect you and love you." She replied: "No, because my father, the head of the tribe, has sent me to serve in your home for one year, and then to serve in a Muslim Imam's home for another year. When I have done so, I am to return to my father and report to him which one of the two lives a better life at home, and which one treats his wife, children and servants better; then my father and the whole tribe will adopt the better religion."

The minister quickly began to relive, in his own mind, his words and behavior during the past year, lest he should have been at fault towards any of his household or relatives. He understood that his whole life had been a witness, indeed a mirror reflecting the Spirit who indwelt him. I wonder what the neighbors and servants and friends see in your life? Are you a clear mirror reflecting the light of Christ?

The love of Christ does not lead us to boast or brag about ourselves because through Him we have received the right of sonship. From Him we obtain the power of a life lived in the Holy Spirit. Thus the believer does not seek glory for himself, because everything he does is the result of the operation of the Spirit of the Lord who dwells in him. His life then becomes one of praise and thanks to the one who redeemed him and bestowed salvation on him.

Christians are not vanquished slaves of God, and do not bow before Him in fear and trembling but serve Him with joy and gladness all the days of their life. Their motivation is not fear but love.

The Apostle Paul described the second birth and Christian behavior in the following words: **"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 5:8-9).

In these two verses the apostle Paul makes it clear that followers of Christ have a past and a present in their life. Their past was when they were surrounded by darkness filled with iniquity and guile, but now they are cleansed by the blood of Jesus, urged on by His mercy and illuminated by His light, so that they can be established in Him without fear. They know that neither hardship nor persecution nor death can pluck them from His hand. Paul the apostle called them "children of light" because Christ who illuminates them is the Light of the world.

Neither high degrees nor a life of asceticism nor mental discipline can change a person, only the Spirit of God can create in him a new being. Since man is by nature a sinner this regeneration cannot be accomplished in his own strength, but by the power of God's Word and through His Holy Spirit.

Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, unless a man is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the spirit gives birth to spirit" (John 3:5-6).

However, the birth of a man by the Light of Christ is not the ultimate goal in God's plan of salvation, but the growth of the believer until the fruits of the light are seen in his character, that is the goal. Paul, in this connection, mentions goodness, righteousness and truth as being characteristics of God's light. All of humanity longs for these qualities to the point where some who adhere to certain creeds and ideologies try to find them in man himself. It is useless! The life of God does not inhabit those who are dead in sins and iniquities. Only Christ can give light to your life and grant you the ability to live for truth, purity and love. He helps you to be free from selfishness, and teaches you to care for others, to bear them without grumbling, and to serve and forgive them.

An important part of the new life in Christ is a wise and clear testimony to Jesus before unbelievers. The living Lord entrusted His messenger Paul with the task of opening the eyes of the Gentiles, so that they would turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to the living God. Do you know that the small flame from a burning match can, on a dark night, be seen as far away as three kilometers? Your life, your words and prayers are a shining testimony and a light in the darkness which cannot be hidden. That is why God calls you to be faithful in the small things, and pass the light which is in you to others.

Pray to Jesus to send you to someone who is hungry for righteousness; listen to the yearning of his heart and you will appreciate his problems. At the same time listen to the voice of God's Spirit to hear what He wants you to say to this person. Be obedient and faithful. Pray that the eyes of your relatives and friends may be opened to see Jesus the Savior and leave their sins. Pray for them continually that the light of Jesus will shine through your life. He alone can illuminate the deepest depths of darkness and make the black heart white, whiter than the snow on the mountain peaks. Every true Christian has the privilege of inviting his

brother man to eternal life. You can be a lighthouse in the darkness and a help to others.

One must admit that witnessing and serving Christ is not welcome in some quarters. Sooner or later we shall find opposition and persecution. The enthusiasm of the volunteer slackens and discouragement sets in. Then his spiritual life begins to become more and more lukewarm. For this reason the apostle Paul warns us and encourages us to watch and pray so we can discern between good and evil. Then we will call evil evil, and we will follow goodness in practice. Study the inspired word with diligence and you will gain wisdom to serve your God.

**Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them. For it is shameful to even mention what the disobedient do in secret. But everything exposed by the light becomes visible. This is why it is said:**

Wake up, O sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you (Ephesians 5:11-14).

## **11. God Is Light and Unites us in His Light**

When the Holy Spirit draws you to the gentle light of Christ, you realize more and more that God is your Father in spirit and truth. This is the news which the apostle John shared with us, saying:

**God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth. 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 (1 John 1:5-7).**

The other truth which we grasp when we draw near to our creator is: God is Holy for when the godly prophet Isaiah saw the Lord in the temple he cried out: "**Woe to me!**" **I cried. "I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the LORD Almighty"** (Isaiah 6:5).

If you examine this revolutionary declaration you will see that the Holy God cleansed the sinner who confessed his sins. God has chosen him, since he put himself unconditionally at God's disposal and he has been filled richly with Gods grace as His servant.

In a different way, the glory of God was revealed to Ezekiel when he was an exile in Iraq. He saw Him "seated" on a great throne, shining more brightly than the sun. His throne was continually moving. In the Old Testament, the wonderful diversity of the glory of God showed the riches of His attribute and names.

The apostle John described the vision of the Almighty in a way different from all that went before. Since Christ announced himself as "The Light of the World" we understood that God is our loving Father. For God the Father and Christ His Son and even His Church bear this

quality of light, because they are made of the same substance and the same spirit.

God is the measure of all that can be called righteousness, with no darkness in Him at all. His love requires of us a total separation from evil. The love of the Father is truth and clear of all lies. He wants His attributes to be personified in all His children.

The Father of our Lord Jesus Christ has enabled the followers of His Son to "walk" in His light, and has admitted us to the company of other children of light. The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit have been from the beginning wholly one in love and mutual esteem. As Jesus prayed saying:

**I 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. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me (John 17:22-23).**

It is not only God's intention to enlighten us, save us and sanctify us, but also to keep us from selfishness and to fill us with a desire to serve other Christians. True Christianity exhibits itself in fellowship between Christians.

This principle requires first of all ridding ourselves from suspicion of other believers, so that we trust them and their words. This leads us to give up our spiritual pride. We thus experience a change in our thinking so that we begin to think in a spirit of harmony and humility. As Jesus said:

**Whoever wants to be first must be your slave just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many (Matthew 20:26-28).**

This rule is the motto of the children of light. We no longer are masters but willing servants to all people. The person who follows Jesus spends his time and money in the service of others, even those who reject Him. Our Lord Himself taught us so. His followers discipline themselves, in patience enduring hardships, even as God was patient with them.

We do not say that believers in Christ are perfect. All of us are human, and subject to the temptations of anger, boasting, laziness, lying and every other evil. However, the indwelling Spirit of God gives us the victory. If we stumble or go astray or sin we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Atoner for our sins.

**If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9).**

The spirit of God the Father is our life and the blood of Jesus Christ is our righteousness. For without a constant cleansing in Christ's blood we cannot receive the power of God or remain walking in His light, even as He is in the light. Thus constant forgiveness of our sins is the



condition for remaining in the light.

Every time we draw near to God in the Holy Spirit, the corruption of our heart is exposed and makes us weep about our condition. But the humility of Christ entitles us to join the company of the repentant and live in the grace of the triune and only God.

## **12. Do you Still Hate your Brother?**

**The darkness is passing and the true light is already shining. Anyone who claims to be in the light but hates his brother is still in the darkness. Whoever loves his brother lives in the light, and there is nothing in him to make him stumble. 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 (1 John 2:8-11).**



During his long life, John the apostle of love came across a variety of wrong ideas and much darkness. He saw that philosophers and founders of religions have come and gone. Some of their tombs were highly venerated, others were neglected. By contrast, the tomb of Christ lies empty because He is alive. He has risen from the dead. His love is immortal, His power is invincible and His Gospel still saves.

When John discovered this truth, he testified boldly that the darkness had gone and its force was broken; death was vanquished and the life of God was manifest. The era of darkness is ended and the age of grace is here. Rays from Christ's love shine upon you, granting to all who approach Him, enlightenment, pardon and divine power. Christ is that powerful light which does not wane, because He humbled Himself and died on the cross for the sins of the world.

**Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father (Philippians 2:9-11).**

What is regrettable is that some believers still keep traces of hatred in their hearts, rejecting some brothers and sisters. John declares to them that light and darkness cannot coexist in the same place. Either you forgive your brother man all his sins without reserve and forget them forever, or your eye is dimmed and you walk in darkness. Jesus taught us saying,

**Love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you, and persecute you; that you may be the children of your Father who is in heaven (Matthew 5:44-45).**

Through the influence of Christ's spirit within us we are able to make friends of our worst enemies. How much more our brothers and sisters in the Spirit? They are our eternal relatives. So we forgive them and forget their lapses. We approach them, embrace them, converse with them, confide in them and share our burdens with them.

Every offense or misunderstanding separates you from your fellowman. So don't wait until the offender comes to you and apologizes: you go to him and make it up; approach him and ask his forgiveness. The one who apologizes first is stronger in spirit. The one who waits, as being in the right until the other comes to him, is still weak and puny in his spiritual life.



In a certain Christian African tribe there is a custom between spouses: If they disagree over something and exchange unkind words and one of them later comes to his senses and understands the problem, he or she stands in a corner of the house and says in an audible voice: "I am foolish." If the other is strong in spirit he stands in the opposite corner and says: "I am more foolish."



Then both gradually walk towards one another and one says to the other: "I wronged you" and the other replies: "I wronged you more." In this way the two are reconciled to each other, if they are believers living in the grace of their God.



Pray God to grant you the spirit of humility and ask Him to change your mind and thinking so that you will be established in His word and learn better the eternal principle of judgment.

**Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you. Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? (Matthew 7:1-3)**

A soldier went with his group to a swimming pool. In the course of the training he noticed another soldier from a tribe hostile to his about to drown. His first reaction was to leave him alone but the Spirit of God convicted him and changed his thinking. As a result he dived towards that man, who clutched him in despair nearly drowning his rescuer. The rescuer had to strike him sharply making him unconscious, then he dragged him to the shore. Setting him down he bent over him, using mouth to mouth resuscitation and bodily massage until signs of life returned to his face.



On the following day, the rescued man approached his deliverer, mumbling shamefacedly: "Thank you because you saved me; I shall not forget this deed as long as I live." Later his father, together with the chiefs of his tribe, visited the parents of the believing soldier and bowed before them as a sign of gratitude for the rescue of their son. In this way peace was restored between these two tribes who would have been at odds for a long time.

Had the believing soldier left the drowning man to his fate, only his conscience would have troubled him, but the Spirit of God living within him overcame the temptation of darkness. God's holiness banished the hatred that the evil one had put in his heart. The love of Jesus conquered; the darkness was dispelled and the true light shone brightly.

What is your condition? Can you remember someone who bothers you? Thank the Lord for him! Through him the Lord wants to teach you victory over self so that you will love your enemy as God loves you. You will not find rest in your heart from the conviction of God's Spirit until you pray for the good of your enemy and serve him, guided by the Spirit of the Lord.

### **13. The Commencement of the Last Battle between Light and Darkness**

The apostle Paul who traveled the Mediterranean preaching, summed up his letter to the Romans in these words:

**Love does no harm to its neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law. And do this, understanding the present time. The hour has come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. 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. Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy. Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature (Romans 13:10-14).**

The apostle Paul taught that towards the end of human history darkness would try to destroy the reign of Christ with a well prepared attack. So the apostle calls on all followers of Jesus to arm themselves with the armour of light. By this he does not mean swords or arrows, nor cannons or poison gas nor yet laser beams or nuclear arms, because the love of God does not call us to an unholy war. On the contrary, it warns us against using violence towards others as Christ warned his foremost apostle Peter telling him:

**Put your sword back in its place...for all who draw the sword will die by the sword (Matthew 26:52).**

Thus the idea behind the Crusades has no basis or justification in the Gospel. The Christian endeavour is accomplished spiritually not politically. The means it uses are spiritual not destructive weapons. Ponder the nature of these spiritual weapons in the letter of Paul the apostle to the people of Ephesus so as to grasp the meaning of our spiritual fight.

**Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints (Ephesians 6:11-18).**

The believer's fight is not primarily aimed at the enemy but first and foremost against self. Therefore we have to conquer the "I" and to mortify our bent to lust, drunkenness and adultery, denying hate, jealousy and pride from our minds in the name of Jesus. We should desire for our fellow man what we desire also for ourselves, as the Book says:

**Then make my joy complete by being likeminded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus (Philippians 2:2-5).**

As for the last battle, it will be fierce and without mercy, as Christ told his disciples:

**Watch out that no one deceives you. For many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many (Matthew 24:4-5).**

In those days of tribulation men will easily accept wrong doctrines and false ideas. Therefore we need to be well-grounded in truth. Jesus Christ is the only truth in whom we need to be established. We have to put Him on us as we would put on our best suit of clothes, as the



Book says:

**Clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature (Romans 13:14).**

Thus your friends will see Christ in your speech and actions; so stand firm in His pure love with meekness and humbly do good to all. Christ's righteousness will protect you from the evil one and his power, because the Lord is your only refuge and you will have confidence if you rest in His care.

Since ancient times the fight between light and darkness has been waged. This fight is about truth and faith and honesty. Christ came to destroy the works of Satan. He called him "the prince of this world." John the apostle testified that "the whole world lies in the wicked one." But whoever opens his heart to the light of Christ is set free from the power of the evil one and is transferred from darkness into His marvelous light. Jesus told His loved ones:

**Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing (John 15:4-5).**

No Christian can overcome Satan and his angels by himself. However, the Son of God is the only overcomer. A man does not possess the power of the divine light unless it is given to him by Christ. Thus, when we pray "**deliver us from the evil one**" we are admitting that we cannot deliver ourselves from the grip of Satan or escape his wiles. The grace of God is what secures us in Christ and frees us from Satan's authority. We are like the moth which is attracted to the light only to fall prey to its glare. When we cast ourselves on Christ the "I" us expires and the Lord realizes himself in our lives.

Satan will try by every means to shake those who are in Christ. When he fails to split the Church from inside, he comes with threats, investigations, imprisonment and torture to make Christ's followers deny their heavenly Father and blaspheme His name. Darkness always operates against the light and tries to extinguish it. Christ assures us:

**"The gates of Hades (hell) will not overcome it" (Matthew 16:18). "He who stands firm to the end will be saved" (Matthew 24:13).**

In the last days we shall hear and see through the media of radio and television and videocassettes seductive shows and hear about many political and religious causes. We shall be subjected to tribulation from the world. However, our inward self will remain in peace, because the tender voice of the Holy Spirit is stronger and able to subdue the deceptive sounds, as Jesus told us:

**All this I have told you so that you will not go astray. They will put you out of the synagogue; in fact, a**

**time is coming when anyone who kills you will think he is offering a service to God. They will do such things because they have not known the Father or me. I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world (John 16:1-3,33).**

Then will be fulfilled in us the inspired promises which say:

**Christ in you, the hope of glory (Colossians 1:27).**

## **14. Christ Returns in Great Glory**

At the end of the age, darkness will increase, evil will become entrenched and many will blaspheme deliberately and publicly the names of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Religious thinkers will unite to try and secure peace on this earth. They will exclude the crucified Son of God from their false religions and will ban belief in Him. In the end period the Antichrist will have mastery for a short term. He will dazzle people with his brilliant abilities and supreme power to delude the masses, even the chosen ones. Employing every trick, scheme and deceit to attract the masses, he will perform apparent miracles and secure international arrangements for the good of the nations. His spite towards Christ the Light of the World will know no limits and his persecution of the rest of Christ's Church will appear in more savage forms.

At the height of this tribulation, Christ the Lord will be revealed like lightning from the East to the West. His light will be piercing, and will dazzle and terrify all those who have rejected Him and did not expect His return. They will melt like wax at the sight of His coming in glory with all the angels of heaven. The enemies of the cross will be startled when they learn that their own beliefs were deceit and conceit and that all their piety was in vain. The brightness of the light of the returning Christ will expose every religious lie and reveal to every eye that Jesus Christ alone is the way, the truth and the life and that no one comes to the Father except through Him.

In the papers and magazines these days we read many articles which discuss the pollution of our globe and its gradual deterioration as a fact. Actually the number of nuclear and hydrogen bombs in storage is enough to wipe out all life on our small planet fifty times over. If man is able to destroy the world in which he lives, how much more can God in His judgment wipe out all those who have become wicked by reason of having clung to the wicked one.

The true believer in Christ is certain that he received eternal life, as a gift from God. The Holy Spirit who lives in him is the guarantee of the glory which shall be revealed at Christ's second coming. The appearance of the saints is the start of the new creation for the whole universe. All creatures await the appearance of the children of light at the return of their

Lord.

**Now if we are children, then we are heirs heirs of God and coheirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory. I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed (Romans 8:17-19).**

Christ will defeat the darkness in a glorious victory when he raises the dead from the grip of the enemy of life. In the following verses we read how Paul the apostle scorns the power of the tyrant, saying:

**Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?" The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 15:55-57).**

The saints shall not enter the fires of hell, for Christ is their protection, their life and their righteousness. At the moment of His return they will be transformed into their Lord's likeness. Those who have denied themselves and honored the Father and the Son in the strength of the Holy Spirit will live with Him forever. They who love the Lord shall shine as the sun, as Jesus said:

**The righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father (Matthew 13:43).**

Dear Reader: What is the goal of your life? Do you wish to go home to God your Father and behold Him face to face? No human being whatsoever can approach His light or gaze at His holy majesty. For we are all sinners from our childhood. However, since the blood of Jesus Christ has cleansed us from all sin, and since His spirit has renewed us, He can also motivate us and comfort us until we cast ourselves into the arms of God, which are open to embrace us as a Father would a beloved child to his breast.

Study carefully the following prophecy: **"Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away. He who was seated on the throne said, I am making everything new!"** (Revelation 21:3-5).

The children of God have the distinction of living in fellowship with their heavenly Father. So we should not expect a paradise where there is drunkenness or sexual desire, but we do expect to see our Father face to face and be in His presence forever. We long to go home where we shall all kneel before the Father repeating the words of the prodigal son:

**I am no longer worthy to be called your son, make me like one of your hired men (Luke 15:19).**

Then the Father will put on us the robe of His mercy and embrace us, placing a ring of righteousness on our finger and lead us into His joyous feast. He has redeemed us by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ according to the summing up of the Gospel which says:

**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 (John 3:16).**

Be assured, dear reader, that no one will enter heaven on the basis of his prayers, or fasting, or good deeds or vows. No! But Christ has bought us for God from the bondage of sin by His precious blood. Therefore we now have the right to enter the home of our heavenly Father. The Church will experience the truth that the Lamb of God is the shining light for the believers, in whose light we live and move forever. This is in keeping with the vision of John which says:

**He showed me the Holy City, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God... the city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light. Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life (Revelation 21:10,23,27).**

When this promise is fulfilled, we shall remember with gratitude what the prophet Isaiah wrote 2700 years ago:

**The sun will no more be your light by day, nor will the brightness of the moon shine on you, for the LORD will be your everlasting light, and your God will be your glory. Your sun will never set again, and your moon will wane no more; the LORD will be your everlasting light, and your days of sorrow will end (Isaiah 60:19-20).**

At that time, everyone will learn that Christians do not worship three gods because the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are One. Those who love Him are united in His unity and love. No doubt that Christ's intercessory prayer was fully answered when He prayed saying: "**I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one**" (John 17: 22).

## 15. Quiz

Dear Reader, If you have read carefully the pages of this book, you will be able to reply to the following questions easily, knowing that each question summarizes one subject. Try to write the answers by reviewing the subjects. In doing so you will gain for yourself much blessing. If you answer the questions correctly, we will send you a booklet from our publications. Should you have questions about any subject in this book, please write it on a separate piece of paper and send it with the answers of this quiz.

1. Why did the girl in Kazakhstan cling to God?

2. What did the Sheikh realize after his time of fasting and asceticism?
3. What does the birth of Christ mean?
4. What are the new revelations which Christ brought?
5. What is the greatest work accomplished by Jesus Christ?
6. How did the resurrection of Jesus from the dead affect His followers?
7. What do you learn from Paul's confrontation with the Living Lord?
8. Do you know how the Holy Spirit can indwell you?
9. How can you be sure of your soul's salvation?
10. How do we become light for the world?
11. What does the love of God demand of us and why?
12. How can you apply the lesson of forgiveness in your life?
13. What is included in the whole armour of God?
14. What will happen in the last days? How do you prepare yourself for Christ's return?

Please write with your answers your name and address clearly, so that we may send you the next booklet. Our address is:

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