

## WEEPING MAY ENDURE FOR A NIGHT, BUT...

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### *Psalm 30:5*

This study is about light and darkness, life and death. The Bible is full of such contrasting terms, such as *day* and *night*, *light* and *darkness*, *laughing* and *weeping*, *joy* and *sorrow*, *good* and *evil*, *life* and *death*, *morning* and *evening* ... and speaking of evening, one of God's most beautiful spectacles in His book of nature is a sunset! No two sunsets are alike, and each one changes moment by moment as the sun sinks in the horizon. When the atmosphere and the clouds in the sky are just right, a sunset is a thing of beauty.

The Master Painter brushes the heavens with bold strokes of gold, crimson, yellow and purple. Rainbows of color reach high above the mountains and just above their rim, when the sun sinks from view, there blossoms a great medallion of thin silvery hues, lining the clouds. The colors linger until darkness settles in and the first twinkling stars appear in the heavens. Ben Burroughs beautifully describes this beauty:

It's twilight time and sunbeams spray  
their diamonds through the trees.  
A hush descends upon the dell,  
putting my heart at ease.

Songbirds chirp their good night song,  
they, too, desire a rest;  
Do they feel a twinge of sorrow,  
as the sun sinks in the west?

For the song they sing is plaintive,  
at least it sounds that way.  
The birds, like human beings,  
will miss the warmth of day.

Oh, the solitude, the quiet,  
hold me in their mystic spell,  
Yet I know I must not linger,  
for reality tolls the bell;

So I set my footsteps homeward,  
as a bird flies to its nest,  
But in my heart it's twilight time,  
a time that I love best.

Yet, beautiful as a sunset is,  
there is a sense of sadness,  
since it means the ending of another day  
and the coming of night.

Night is welcomed by millions,  
because it means recreation and rest  
from their daily labor, but *symbolically*,  
night means life's ending - death.

Going to the Great Creator's written Word, the Bible, we note that on the sixth day or epoch, the last of the creative week, God created all mammals and reptiles. Toward the end of the day He created man and woman, placing them in a specially prepared place of beauty and perfection called - the Garden of Eden.

We will not go into the details of the temptation and fall of our first parents. We know that they were cast out of the garden, beyond the reach of the trees of life and condemned to die. As the end of that day of banishment drew near, we can picture Adam and Eve looking longingly toward the garden as it was slowly enveloped in darkness. We can imagine how the darkness turned the trees black, symbol of sorrow and weeping, while the heavens blazed a crimson-red, symbolic of the blood, wars and death to follow.

God, in withdrawing His favor from man, pulled down a giant, invisible curtain of separation, leaving the world in spiritual darkness. It was the beginning of the long night of sorrow, weeping, sickness and death of which the Psalmist wrote. But since the earth belongs to a Loving and All-wise God, He already had made a plan for the eventual restoration of man from sin and death. He left an opening in that curtain to send out a beam of light to reach that part of the earth which today we call the Middle East, and which extended from Egypt to Asia Minor and from Canaan to Babylon.

Thus, the Creator kept dealing with God-fearing men—with Abel, Enoch, Noah and eventually with Abraham to whom He promised the land of Canaan, and that *"in his seed all the families of the earth would be blessed."* See Gen. 22:15-18.

The centuries rolled on, from the Patriarchal age to Moses and the welding of the children of Israel into a nation; the conquest of the land of Canaan under the leadership of Joshua; followed by the period of the Judges. Then followed a period of Kings - the 70 years of desolation, and the Maccabees - to the Roman conquest of Israel. During all these centuries, God dealt exclusively with the nation of Israel. They alone enjoyed rays of spiritual light. The rest of the world was in utter darkness, a prey to Satan and his demons, corrupted both morally and spiritually. For the Gentiles, it was a long night of weeping, darkness and death.

But then one night, some 4,000 years from Adam, God's wonderful time clock struck the hour, and a small group of shepherds, watching their flocks at night on a hillside near Bethlehem, were suddenly alerted by a light which illuminated the countryside with the glory of God! To them, the angel of the Lord said, *"Fear not, for I bring you tidings of great joy which shall be to ALL THE PEOPLE. For this day in the city of David is born Christ the Lord..."* (Luke 2:10-12).

Now, for the first time, this GREAT JOY was not to be exclusively for the Jewish people, but for *ALL PEOPLE*, including all Gentiles in due time. This is confirmed by the following scriptures: *"The people which sat in darkness saw great light, and to them, which sat in the region and shadow of death, light is sprung up. A Light to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of Thy people Israel"* (Matt. 4:16; Luke 2:32).

Mankind had been groping in the darkness without God and without any hope or light, staggering like a drunken man (Job 12:25), and in the shadow of death (Psa. 107:10).

It was a long 4,000-year night of sorrow and weeping for the Gentiles. The Jews had gone through the same night, but they had been given a measure of spiritual light and hope in God's promises; they had the Law and the Prophets with God as their Guide, Protector and Deliverer, while the rest of the world had no living God, no Holy Law, or hope of any kind. It now seemed that God intended to grant all the rest of mankind also a measure of light, knowledge, hope and protection.

Were the Gentiles living in God's light when Jesus was born? No! Thirty years passed before Jesus began His ministry. Did He at that time go and preach to the Gentiles? Again, No! Rather, He commanded His disciples, when He sent them to preach the Gospel, NOT to go to the Gentiles or the Samaritans, but to seek only the lost sheep of the house of Israel (Matthew 10:5). Why did Jesus give such a command? Because the Jewish Age had not yet ended, and it was to them that the High Calling was to be first offered. A few thousand accepted the Gospel, but as a nation, the Jews rejected their Messiah and His message. Thus, it was now possible to open this wonderful door of opportunity to the Gentiles.

That the Gospel would be preached to the Gentiles also was foretold by Jesus in Matthew 24:14 when He said that this Gospel of the Kingdom would be preached to the WHOLE WORLD as a witness before the end comes. Jesus commanded His disciples to do so in Matthew 28:19 and Acts 1:8, where He said that they would be "*witnesses of me*" (Jesus) in Jerusalem, Judea, and Samaria and even to the uttermost parts of the earth.

Nevertheless, when the Gospel began to be preached from Pentecost on, it was preached *exclusively to the Jews* for three and a half years. Later Cornelius and an Ethiopian official were the first Gentile converts. The resistance of the Jews to the Gospel finally compelled Paul to declare to them, "*It was necessary that the Word of God should first be spoken to you. Seeing you thrust it from you and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, we turn to the Gentiles*" (Acts 13:46).

But it was through Peter that the door was finally opened wide to the Gentiles. Sent, by means of a vision, to Caesarea and the house of the centurion Cornelius, Peter, after preaching the Gospel, was amazed to see the Holy Spirit descend on Cornelius and his household. Finally, God's light had come to the Gentiles, thus ending their long night of spiritual darkness.

In 70 AD when the Jews rebelled against the Romans and the latter destroyed the Temple, Jerusalem and the Jewish polity, the survivors were dispersed throughout the empire and, as Jesus proclaimed, their house was left desolate.

Jesus, while on earth, had said, "*I am the light of the world; he that follows me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life*" (John 8:12). In John 1:4 we read, "*In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.*" Also, "*Jesus said to them, 'Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while you have the light unless darkness comes upon you; for he that walks in darkness knows not where he goes. While you have the light, believe in the light that you may be the children of light'*" (John 12:35, 36). While Jesus was on the earth, the land was illuminated by His presence, but now He was gone and God's light of favor on Israel had been removed, so the whole world seemed to have lapsed into complete darkness.

But not so! Jesus had also said to His disciples, "**You** are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid" (Matt. 5:14). The apostle Paul had added, "*You are the children of light and the children of the day; we are neither of the night nor of the darkness.*" "*For God, who commanded the light to shine out of the darkness, has shined in our hearts to give the light of knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ*" (1 Thess. 5:5; 2 Cor. 4:6). He advises us in Eph. 5:8, "For you were sometimes darkness, but now are you light in the Lord; walk as children of light." And the Apostle John adds, "*If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of*

*Jesus Christ His Son cleans us of all sin.*" What does this mean? Peter explains: *"You are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a peculiar people, that you should show forth the praises of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light."* (1 Pet. 2:9). Therefore, we can sing with the Psalmist, *"The Lord is my light and my salvation, who shall I fear?"* (Psalm 27:1).

If we are indeed the light of the world, it means that each of us is shedding forth the light of Christ on some part of the world, wherever each of His children lives and have their influence. We are the light of the world for our families, children and neighborhood, for friends and acquaintances, indeed, probably, for more people than we realize. This may be hard to believe, but it is, nevertheless, true.

The Apostle Paul, who is called the apostle to the Gentiles in Acts 26:18, reports the commission given him by the Lord: *"I sent you to the Gentiles to open their eyes and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God; that they may receive forgiveness of sins and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me."* So he became the greatest missionary of the early church, and as the number of believers increased, each became a light-bearer. As the Gospel spread from Judea to Samaria, on to Galilee, Syria, Asia Minor, Greece, Egypt, Rome, Spain, France, England, Ireland, Germany, Poland, the Scandinavian countries and finally Russia, all these places became illuminated, so there was no longer total spiritual darkness.

However, the long night of sorrow and weeping continued unabated, and the new Christians suffered just as much as the rest of the world. *"For we know that the whole creation groans and travails in pain together until now"* (Rom. 8:22).

The light did not spread unopposed. Darkness moved in to destroy it, and it has been an unending battle to this day. Paul describes it this way: *"... we wrestle against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual darkness in high places"* (Eph. 6:12). Christians have been persecuted, devoured by lions, crucified, burned at the stake, tortured, exiled, murdered, etc. Light, momentarily, may be overcome by darkness, but it cannot be destroyed because it is from God who IS Light (see 1 John 1:5).

Early in the last century some reformers became interested in the wonderful promises of our Lord's return. Some, in their desire for His return, began to set dates for this to happen. Others, basing their deductions on chronological calculations, claimed the Lord had already returned. We know both were mistaken, but they were right in that we are truly approaching the end of the long night of sorrow and weeping. The glow *in the east* (Israel) is a sure sign that the morning is nigh. The Apostle Paul described it thus: *"The night is far spent, the day is at hand; let us therefore cast off the works of darkness and let us put on the armor of light"* (Rom. 13:12).

Solomon wrote that when the day breaks, the shadows flee away (Song of Solomon 4:6), and we can rejoice that there shall soon be no more night time of sin, sickness, death and sorrow (Revelation 21:25), and that the morning shall soon bring joy to all groaning mankind. It will not be long until the Sun of Righteousness will arise with healing in His wings (Malachi 4:2), and mankind will enjoy the true light and the true life. Isaiah 60:19 describes this time: *"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."*

Each time I greet the golden glow,  
that lights a morning sky,  
I feel a thrill beyond compare,  
and all my hopes are high.

With rays of tenderness divine,

my sunrise sprays the world,  
To fill my heart with faith and strength,  
for daybreak has unfurled.

The heavens become radiant,  
with God's eternal light,  
A wondrous finale  
to the darkness of the night.

Just think! No more sickness, accidents, wars, or billions of dollars wasted on armaments. No more crimes, jails, prisons, police, guards, lawyers, courts, judges, or funeral processions. It will be the end of evil in this world. Its wicked prince will be cast into a bottomless pit for 1,000 years, and then God *"shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away."* Yes, and *"THERE SHALL BE NO NIGHT THERE!"* (Rev. 21:4, 25).

### **God's Precious Promise**

Close your eyes for a moment to the scenes of misery and woe, degradation and sorrow that yet prevail on account of sin, and picture before your mental vision the glory of the perfect earth. Not a stain of sin mars the harmony and peace of a perfect society; not a bitter thought, not an unkind look or word; love, welling up from every heart, meets a kindred response in every other heart and benevolence marks every act. There sickness shall be no more; not an ache nor a pain, nor any evidence of decay—not even the fear of such things. Think of all the pictures of comparative health and beauty of human form and feature that you have ever seen and know that perfect humanity will be of still surpassing loveliness. The inward purity and mental and moral perfection will stamp and glorify every radiant countenance. Such will earth's society be; and weeping bereaved ones will have their tears all wiped away, when thus they realize the resurrection work complete."

### **Jesus as King**

***Praise to our King who is coming to reign,  
Glory to Jesus the Lamb Who was slain.  
Life and salvation His empire shall bring,  
Joy to the nations when Jesus is King.***

***All men shall dwell in His marvelous light.  
Races long severed His love shall unite.  
Justice and truth from His scepter shall spring,  
Wrong will be ended when Jesus is King.***

***Men shall learn right in His Kingdom of Peace.  
Freedom shall flourish and wisdom increase.  
Foe shall be friend when His triumph we sing.  
Sword shall be sickle when Jesus is King.***

***All shall come back who have lived long ago.  
Love like a banner shall over them flow.***

**Sin shall be conquered as light shines within.  
Hail happy day when Jesus is King.**

**Oh that will bring...Praise to our King!  
Praise to our King! Praise to our King!  
Sing the glad song who to Jesus belong;  
Glory to Jesus, to Jesus our King!**

*"The Desert will rejoice, and flowers will bloom in the wastelands. The desert will sing and shout for joy; it will be as beautiful as the Lebanon Mountains and as fertile as the fields of Carmel and Sharon. Everyone will see the LORD's splendor, see His greatness and power...The blind will be able to see and the deaf will hear. The lame will leap and dance and those who cannot speak will shout for joy. Streams of water will flow through the desert; the burning sand will become a lake and dry land will be filled with springs...There will be a highway there, called "The Road of Holiness." There shall not pass over it one who is unclean yet it is for them...No lion will be there; no fierce animal will pass that way. Those whom the LORD has rescued will travel home by that road. They will enter Zion with gladness, singing and shouting for joy. They will be happy forever, and forever free from sorrow and grief." Isaiah 35*

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