

Am I in the Light or Am I in the Darkness?

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God's truth tends to be very, very simple in concept. That is true for the physical universe. I was reading a book a while back called Einstein's Cosmos by Michio Kaku. Mr. Kaku is a PhD and a well-regarded scientist—you'll see him on PBS specials from time to time. He wrote a book, Einstein's Cosmos, in 2004, and he said this about Einstein: "Einstein's theories are based not so much on arcane mathematics"—arcane means mysterious or secret—"but simple physical pictures. Einstein would often comment that if a new theory was not based on a physical image simple enough for a child to understand, it was probably worthless." In his book, Welcome to My Mind, Abner Eisenberg, PhD, says this on page 557 about knowledge and wisdom: "Knowledge leads us from the simple to the complex." The more we know about something it gets more and more complicated. "Wisdom leads us from the complex to the simple." How true that is and it's true in the Bible.

The Apostle John drew a very simple analogy that when you get right down to it, explains everything. Let's go to 1 John 1:5. The amount of wisdom and understanding in this scripture just boggles the mind. I'll be reading out of the King James unless otherwise noted.

1 John 1:5 *This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you [this is a simple message], that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. (KJV)*

What a concept. God is light—it's not that God *has* light, it's that God *is* light. We are told to continually scrutinize ourselves, continually examine ourselves. So let's go to 2 Corinthians 13:5, and just as a reminder, let's notice the following scripture. Paul is telling us:

2 Corinthians 13:5 *Examine yourselves, [what are we supposed to be examining?] whether ye be in the faith; [then he goes on to add to it] prove your own selves [meaning put to the test]. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you [living in you], except ye be reprobates? (KJV)*

Christ promised on the night He was taken, the Father and I will come and make Our abode in you. That's what He's referring to, and when we examine ourselves, we ask the question, is Christ really in Me, is the Father really in Me—if so, how much? So let's ask ourselves the question (and this is the title of the sermon):

Am I in the Light or Am I in the Darkness?

This is a very important question as we examine ourselves. Let's establish a principle—the first point we want to make.

1. Christ came to give light to the world.

He says so. So let's turn to Luke 1:78-79; I'll read this out of the New Living Translation. The person speaking is Zacharias who is the father of John the Baptist, and we know that John the Baptist's mission was to introduce the Messiah. So John the Baptist's father is talking here.

Luke 1:78 *Because of God's tender mercy, [notice this] the morning light from heaven is about to break upon us [referring to Christ], 79) to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, and to guide us to the path of peace. (KJV)*

The light lights up our path; the light brought by Jesus Christ shows us the way to peace. Then look at John 8:12. Christ is speaking, again about this concept of light. Notice what He says about Himself.

John 8:12 *Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying [notice what He says], I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life. (KJV)*

Think about this, if Christ came to bring light to the world, that implies that before He came, the world was in darkness—total darkness—and He brought light to the world. He says, *I am the light of the world*. Prior to His arrival on this earth, we know the history of the world, and, except for a few that God has chosen, the world has lived in darkness to the point that God had to destroy the world and start all over again.

That leads us to the second point and this is critical to the world we live in today:

2. Mankind lives in and loves darkness.

Mankind has created darkness, he lives in darkness, and he loves it. Let's go to John 1:4, again talking about what Christ brought in His presence, in His example for all of us. The verses before that were talking about Christ as the Word, and certainly He came as the Word and we have His words recorded.

John 1:4 *In him [referring to Christ] was life; and the life was the light of men. (KJV)*

His life was meant to be a light to all of us.

5) And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not. (KJV)

The Jews rejected Christ—they wanted Him dead so many times over; they rejected Him and His message and that continues to this very day.

Look at chapter 3:19, we're establishing the fact that mankind lives in darkness and mankind loves it. It's like a pig living in the mud—the pigs love it, everybody else hates it but the pigs love it.

John 3:19 *And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, [through Jesus Christ, but notice this] and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. (KJV)*

Mankind doesn't want to hear about God. Remember Ancient Israel at Mount Sinai, Moses came down and they heard God's voice from the mountain, and what did the people say? Give us more, we want to hear more about God? No, they said, we don't want God to speak to us directly! You go up on the mountain, God talks to you and you come back and tell us what God said—we don't want to hear God! If that isn't the typical human mind, I don't know what is. You had the ability to have God talk to you, directly, and you rejected it, and that is the way the world is today. Let's go to Psalm 82:5, I'll read this out of the New Living Translation. David was bemoaning the state of the world that he lived in and how much worse is it today?

Psalm 82:5 *But these oppressors know nothing; they are so ignorant! Because they are in darkness, the whole world is shaken to its core. (NLT)*

That is true for the world today. In a few months from now, we could be at war with North Korea. We could have a preemptive nuclear strike—it's very possible. The whole world is shaken to its core today because God is showing people that apart from Him, nobody is safe. You can't go to a movie and be safe, you can't walk a mall and be safe and kids aren't safe in school. God is showing the world that.

Remember in the Garden of Eden, God was in the garden. Because God was in the garden, there was light in the garden. Therefore Adam and Eve were in the light but we know what happened—Adam and Eve made the choice to reject the light. Once they made that choice, darkness descended over the face of the earth and with the exception of Jesus Christ walking this earth as the light of men—the light to men—it has been in darkness ever since. Man's fruit since then has been nothing but evil.

Let's look at the world today, in the first world (the developed world) we have perversion of all kinds—horrible perversion—in our education, in our media, movies, television, video games, these are filled with evil, filled with lawlessness, filled with violence, filled with demonism. Then in the third world, the poverty-stricken world, where people just don't have a chance at all, we find grinding poverty with no chance to escape—famine, pollution, disease, ignorance—where people live a short time and they're lucky if they live to be thirty or forty years old, if something doesn't get them—horrible, marauding bandits or some kind of horrible disease. Everywhere in this world there is hatred—it's

getting worse and worse between races, between cultures—there’s hatred, there’s bigotry, there’s perversion and there is war. All of this occurs without God in the picture. God is nowhere to be found in the minds of the vast majority of human beings because look at the results—God is not in the picture and utter darkness defines the world that we live in because God is not there.

That leads to the third point. We have to understand what’s behind all of this darkness.

3. There are beings of darkness and forces of darkness in this world.

Beings and forces. Satan’s biggest deception is deceiving the world that he doesn’t exist. If the world knew he existed, they might be better on guard, but to them, Satan is a myth. In the Middle Ages people believed in Satan or back in biblical times people believed in Satan but we’re more modern than that, we’re more sophisticated than that and nobody believes in a Satan, therefore he is better able to deceive the world. Let’s go to Ephesians 2:2-3. (Back in the King James.)

Ephesians 2:2 [Paul says] *Wherein in time past ye [that refers to all of us] walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince [the word “prince” in the Greek can mean “chief ruler”] of the power of the air, the spirit [he is spirit] that now worketh in the children of disobedience [the spirit that works in all of mankind]:*

3) Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath [the Greek for “wrath” means violent passion—anger, bitterness, hatred], even as others. (KJV)

Paul goes on to expand on that in chapter 6; let’s go Ephesians 6:12. When we think things are going bad or when we have opposition or we have trouble we have to think of who’s behind it—what’s behind it—we have to get the big picture and Ephesians 6:12 tells us that.

Ephesians 6:12 *For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, [sometimes we think other humans are our enemies, they’re not] but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world [we just read that Satan is the chief ruler], against spiritual wickedness in high places. (KJV)*

The margin in the King James says, “wicked spirits in high places”. It’s not just that the world is in darkness but there are forces behind the darkness that are driving the darkness, pushing mankind into evil deeds, and the world gets darker and darker.

Think about this, just as one example—think about the recent school shootings. One hundred years ago this would be beyond comprehension, that somebody would go into a school and shoot little kids. You just wouldn’t think about that—it just would never happen. After Sandy Hook (I’ve driven right by that school) it was, what, twenty-nine

kids?—I can't remember off the top of my head—some teenager goes in and shoots and kills multiple kids and that's not an isolated incident anymore. You see it happen once a week, once every few days all over the country. If this doesn't tell us that there are spiritual forces behind this, I don't know what will. You look at the lives of these people who commit these acts and anybody who understands anything about the spirit world and believes in a spirit world knows that demons are behind this, Satan is behind this. This is not normal, in the sense of hundreds of years ago in this country, people would never do such things. This is evil at its core where somebody goes and kills innocent little children.

Thankfully, God has rescued us from the forces of darkness, these beings of darkness. Let's go to Colossians 1:13 out of the New Living Translation. We can be so thankful that God has rescued us—He has pulled us out of this.

Colossians 1:13 *For He [referring to God] has rescued us from the one who rules in the kingdom of darkness [Satan] and He has brought us into the Kingdom of his dear Son ... (NLT)*

What did we read earlier in John 8:12? Christ says, I'm the light of the world. So God, by calling us, brings us out of darkness into the light.

That leads to our fourth point:

4. Our calling takes us from darkness to light.

Before we were called we lived in darkness. We were puppets on a string, influenced, maneuvered, manipulated by this world but once God called us—gradually, over time—that stopped. Let's go to Acts 26 and we're just going to read the beginning of verse 18. Here, Paul is telling us what his commission is. Remember Christ struck him down and he talked to Jesus Christ directly. Obviously this came from Jesus Christ; Christ told Paul what his commission was to be and Paul is telling us. Paul is stating his commission, and it is this:

Acts 26:18 *To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God ... (KJV)*

That is Paul's commission, to go out and preach the truth to those who will hear and those who will hear, then, through the power of God's Spirit, will change and turn away from Satan—away from the powers of darkness, and will walk into the light. Let's go to 2 Corinthians 4:6; Paul expands on this. He's using the example of when both God and Christ created the world. God was the originator, Christ was the doer, but notice what he says referring back to Genesis 1; he's drawing an analogy.

2 Corinthians 4:6 *For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, [referring to Genesis 1] hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the*

knowledge of the glory of God in the face [the Greek also means “presence”] of Jesus Christ. (KJV)

What Paul is saying is, as God commanded the light to shine out of darkness in the very beginning, God has created a light in the presence of Jesus Christ to shine on us. Christ’s example is a light to us because we want to follow in His footsteps. We look in the gospels of how He behaved, how He acted, what He said, what He didn’t say, how He treated other people, and we look to that as an example and that is a light to us as to how we ought to behave. Now let’s go to 1 Peter 2:9. This is telling us again—Peter is expanding on the fact that our calling, if we respond to the call, takes us out of darkness and into light. Very familiar scripture—we sometimes tend to focus on the first part of this verse but we’re going to focus on the latter part today.

1 Peter 2:9 *But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar [special] people; that ye should [notice this] shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light ... (KJV)*

God does the calling (we’re told in other scriptures), He turns those He called over to Jesus Christ, and we come out of darkness and we then walk in the light. This is done through the revelation of the Holy Spirit, through the power of the Holy Spirit, the light shined on us as individuals, at some point that light shined on us and then we began to see the truth. The Bible started to make sense to us whereas before it was just a bunch of gibberish. God shined the light on us, He revealed to us, through the power of the Holy Spirit opening up our minds, that we should walk in the light and not in the darkness, and therefore once that transformation has occurred, and we have committed ourselves to God and Christ we must never, ever, walk away from the light. If we walk away from the light, we’re walking to darkness.

That leads us to the fifth point:

5. Once we are called, we are not to come close to the darkness.

I think if we’re honest with ourselves, particularly when we were first called or when we were new Christians, sometimes we tended to straddle the fence. We tended to keep one foot in the world and one foot in the Church and somehow we thought we could manage that. I remember once, I was in the air force and I was wrestling with the Christmas subject and my parents always made a big deal about Christmas and trees—it was a big family thing—and so the first year when I started to understand it I shrunk the tree from this high to about that high [making hand gestures], thinking that somehow you could ease into it or somehow satisfy God—God would be happy with me with a one-foot tree instead of a seven-foot tree.

We went through all of this kind of stuff when we were first called. We know over time it doesn’t work. You’re either dark or you’re light. You’re in the darkness or you’re in the light. Let’s go to 2 Corinthians 6:14. Sometimes we view this as—it comes up maybe in

business, a business decision, or do I take this job, or whatever, but this is much more than just where we work or where we are employed.

2 Corinthians 6:14 *Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers.*
[Notice the principle] *For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness?*
(KJV)

That's a good question because if you rub elbows with unrighteousness and you're trying to be righteous, the unrighteous can influence us, can't they? He goes on to say,

14 continued) *And what communion has light with darkness?* (KJV)

That paints a very clear picture. The word *communion* in the Greek means partnership, or it can mean, literally, participation or social intercourse—partnership, participation or social intercourse. He says, what partnership can light have with darkness? What social intercourse can light have with darkness? He's asking the question and this analogy is, we have to be careful because we don't want to walk away from the light—we just don't want to do that, and the more we drift towards the darkness, the easier it becomes for us to drift a little more, and then drift a little more.

Look at Ephesians 5:11—Paul's letter to the Ephesians; I'm going to read this out of the NLT. Paul is again talking about light and darkness. If you look at this, the analogy of light and darkness flows through the Bible. You could pick it up just going right through the Bible.

Ephesians 5:11 *Take no part in the worthless deeds of evil and darkness; instead, rebuke and expose them.* (NLT)

The older I get, the longer I've been in the Church, the thing I learn is, if God's not involved, it will be worthless. Whatever I try to do, if God isn't behind it, it will be worthless. We learn that because we fall flat on our face when we don't involve God in what we do. Take no part in the worthless deeds of evil. Once we come into the light, we cannot turn back to darkness, we just can't do that. What I mean by that is, what do we put in our minds? Is it light or is it dark? We can find darkness all over this world. You can press a button and find darkness on your computer or on your cable system or on your satellite dish—you press one button and you're right in the middle of darkness.

What we put in our minds, who we associate with—and I'm not saying we shouldn't have friends outside the Church because there are some reputable, upstanding people, but we have to be very, very careful of what we put in our minds and of who we associate with. For us, there are forces, as we've already talked about, that will provoke us to return to darkness. They will provoke us to return to darkness after we've been enlightened. Isn't a shame to walk into light and then, as the world does—I don't like the light, I like this darkness over here or I like dusk over here—I don't like the light.

God is testing us; after we've been called He routinely tests us to see if we're going to walk in the light or not. He will bring tests, challenges, and then He allows them or causes them, and then He stands back and He says, okay, let's see what they do—are they going to stay in the light or are they going to drift into darkness? Let's go to John 12:46. Christ is speaking before His very last Passover—vital information He's trying to get across to His disciples. He's telling them, I'm going to go away (I'm paraphrasing a lot of what He said that night; they didn't fully understand it) and you're going to have to stand on your own but I'm going to give you the Holy Spirit to help you.

John 12:46 *I am come a light into the world, [already read that, we understand that; now, what's the purpose?] that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness.* (KJV)

The Greek word for *abide* means “to stay”, and it means to stay in a given place or to stay in a given state—could be a state of mind. To stay in a given place or stay in a given state, to continue to dwell, or to remain. God allows trials and temptations to come upon us to see how we will react; whether we're going to go back in the world and do what the world does or whether we're not.

I'll give you a personal example. This goes back to 1975 and I was a fairly new elder then and this was at a time when there was the beginning of a rift between Mr. Herbert Armstrong and his son, Garner Ted Armstrong, and the pastor where I was, was very, very liberal and just did things—I just kind of rolled my eyes—and yet we were under authority. He knew I didn't support him in what he was doing and he was a Garner Ted Armstrong man, so to speak, and he made it clear, and from the pulpit one time (he was going on a trip for a week or two), I'm sitting out in the audience and he says, I don't want to leave you without a minister so I'm going to invite So-and-So to come in next week.

Of course, I'm sitting out in the audience as an elder, and it was like all the people's heads just turned and were looking at me because he made such a statement. So you have a choice, you can fight back or you can turn the other cheek. Let God handle it, or take up a sword myself and start swinging it to try to undermine him, or something like that. I just made the decision, we're in the middle of a movie here—I don't know how this thing between Mr. Armstrong and his son is going to play out; God knows, and God either controls or allows or causes certain things to happen, and it becomes very clear, so I just didn't say a thing, didn't do a thing, just ignored it and if people asked me questions I really didn't answer them.

Christ's example, when He was berated, He mostly kept quiet. When He was slapped in the face, He said, I could call legions of angels, but He didn't. We read in His very first sermon, we're to turn the other cheek, we're to walk the extra mile. We have to get the big picture when something happens to us individually. We have to get the big picture of what God is doing and most of the time, it's my experience, that we don't know until it's over with. God sees from eternity to eternity. We see life as if through

soda straws; we can see only little bits and pieces, and we have to have faith that God knows what He's doing. God is going to get us through this if our heart is right and if we obey; He will bring us out the other side and we will be better off than where we started. Romans 8:28 tells us that nothing happens for our harm, everything God does or allows or causes happens for our ultimate good.

So the issue is, am I going to be like Christ or not? Will I let darkness creep in—meaning going back in the world, fighting like the world, or not? The fact is that every year at Passover, somewhere around the world, there are some who were there the year before and are not there the next year. We've all seen it over the years—some just drop by the wayside because they turn away from the light and they go back into darkness.

That leads us to the sixth point and this has to do with the era that we live in. Here's the problem:

6. Laodicea is deceived into thinking they walk in the light.

It's a deception from Satan. The whole era that we live in is deceived by Satan into thinking that they walk in the light when the reality is, they might not. Let's go to Revelation 3:17, very familiar scripture, the letter to Laodicea. I'm going to read this out of the New Living Translation. It puts it into modern, colloquial English.

Revelation 3:17 *You say, 'I am rich. I have everything I want. I don't need a thing!'* (NLT)

That's the era that we live in—we're talking *in the Church* (this isn't the world).

17 continued) *And you don't realize that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind* [that means deceived] *and naked.* (NLT)

Laodiceans believe that they walk in the light. They're deceived into thinking, just because I warm a seat at Church, maybe I tithe, keep the holy days, attend Sabbath services, just because I do these things, I'm walking in the light and I'm going to be in God's Kingdom. Look at 1 John 1:6—John is the one who draws this analogy of light and darkness and he makes things so simple. He has a unique ability in his writing to be very clear—very short sentences, very much to the point.

1 John 1:6 *If we say that we have fellowship with him* [referring to God], *and walk in darkness* [if we say we have fellowship but our conduct is in darkness], *we lie, and do not the truth:*

7) *But 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 cleanseth us from all sin.*

8) *If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and* [even more important than that] *the truth is not in us.* (KJV)

If we say we have no sin. He's not saying, I have never sinned, but if we say to ourselves, in this area I am not sinning, or in that area I have no sin, in reality God is saying, you do, and you have to be careful, and don't let yourself be deceived.

9) If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (KJV)

This is the beauty if we will just confess our sins but the point is (we're talking light and darkness) to confess your sin, you have to admit you have a sin. To confess a sin, you must be close enough to God and have the mind of God, and the mind of Christ, to see that we sin and not be deceived. One of the prayers when we examine ourselves is God, show me my sins, show me the way You see me—not the way I want to see myself because we look at ourselves through rose-colored glasses. We have to ask God, show me how You see me. That means with all the warts, with all the blemishes, with all the faults that all of us have. Then we can confess our sins, as we see here in verse 9, and we will be cleansed from all unrighteousness.

10) If we say that we have not sinned, we make him [God] a liar, and his word is not in us. (KJV)

If we say we have not sinned. Remember Laodicea, the big characteristic is *I have need of nothing*—I haven't sinned, I don't need forgiveness, I don't need the blood of Jesus Christ because I'm doing okay, thank you very much—don't need anything. You see there is a principle in the Bible (we'll cover two scriptures) that there are those among us—I'm talking about the greater Church of God, I'm not talking about a specific group—who walk in darkness. They go to the Feast, they attend Sabbath services, they fellowship, but despite all of that they walk in darkness, the Bible says so. Let's go to Matthew 13:24—this is the parable of the sower. There's a point here (there are many points in this parable); we're just going to hone in on one that's pertinent to what we're talking about today.

Matthew 13:24 *Another parable put he forth unto them [Christ], saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field:*

25) But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way.

26) But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also.

27) So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares? [Where did they come from?]

28) He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up?

29) But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them.

30) *Let both grow together [this is as a test for all of us] until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn. (KJV)*

Jumping to verse 36, Christ explains this:

36) *Then Jesus sent the multitude away, and went into the house: and his disciples came unto him, saying, Declare unto us the parable of the tares of the field.*

37) *He answered and said unto them, He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man;*

38) *The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one;*

39) *The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels.*

40) *As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world. (KJV)*

We see here very plainly that God allows tares and the good wheat to grow together and it is a test for us. I think if we look back in the Church we see people that we fellowshiped with, that sat beside us and they were no more converted than a stone. That's just the way it is. Now let's jump to 2 Peter 2:9. Peter understood this and he gives us some things to look out for. He promises, he starts off by saying, God knows how to deliver us out of trials—He does!

2 Peter 2:9 *The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations [or trials], and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished:*

This has direct relations to Matthew 13 that we just read.

10) *But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government [that means authority]. Presumptuous are they, selfwilled, [meaning, not praying, God, I just want to do your will, I don't want to do my will, my will doesn't work—and I think we've all seen that in our lives] they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities.*

11) *Whereas angels, which are greater in power and might, bring not railing accusation against them before the Lord.*

12) *But these, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not; and shall utterly perish in their own corruption; (KJV)*

Let's just stop here—this is so true today. We have seen people who hear a rumor and then they repeat it and they never call the source to find out what the truth is, they just repeat the rumor. Speaking evil of things that they don't even understand—they don't

even have a clue. They won't take the time—they heard a rumor about an individual—to pick up the phone or go visit them and say, did you really say this or did you really do this? What they will do is believe the rumor and then repeat the rumor—never check to see if it's true. That's a sad state of affairs but Peter said this is going to happen, we'd better expect it.

13) [Guess what's going to happen] *And shall receive the reward of unrighteousness, as they that count it pleasure to riot in the day time. Spots they are and blemishes, sporting themselves with their own deceivings while they feast with you;* (KJV)

God is saying very plainly through Peter, there are people who are going to feast with us but they are deceived and they repeat deceivings.

18) *For when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh,* (KJV)

Oh, did you hear this? Did you hear what So-and-So did or what So-and-So said?

18 continued) ... *through much wantonness, [who are they alluring?] those that were clean escaped from them who live in error [meaning who live in darkness].*

19) *While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage.*

20) *For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein [going back into the world], and [allow themselves to be] overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning.*

21) *For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them.* (KJV)

For example, Matthew 18 says, if your brother offends you or somehow crosses you, or you hear a rumor like that, go to him and talk it over—very clear but people refuse to do that.

22) *But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.* (KJV)

In examining ourselves, we need to make sure that we are not deceived as to our spiritual condition—Laodicea is, and we live in that environment, but we don't have to be Laodicean. We need to know, and should ask God to show us, how He sees us, and not how we might deceive ourselves into thinking we are.

That leads to the seventh point:

7. Even now, we can, in certain areas of our lives, walk in darkness.

Because we're not perfect, we're just not (even when you can plug in how many years each one of us has been in the Church). We can walk in darkness in certain aspects, certain areas of our lives. Look at 1 John 2:8—John is speaking very plainly, very clearly.

1 John 2:8 *Again, a new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in him and in you: [why?] because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth. (KJV)*

He's saying, if you're right with God, if you've been baptized, if you've accepted Jesus Christ as your redemption, the darkness has passed.

9) He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now. (KJV)

Every so often, we experience hate from a brother and John is saying if you do that, if you have hate for your brother, you're living in darkness.

10) He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him.

11) But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes. (KJV)

Remember Laodicea is blind. We don't want to go there, we don't want to be part of that. My point in the seventh point is we all walk in darkness to some extent. We're not totally, completely converted in every aspect of our life. In certain areas we are less converted than in other areas of our life. We have work to do! The reason for that is we have blind spots—we've all had them—we have spiritual blind spots, we just don't see it. The longer we're converted, the longer we're in God's Church, the closer we get to God and Jesus Christ, the more the blinders are taken off and we begin to see ourselves.

David, in Psalm 19 (we won't turn there), speaks of *secret* faults. Those are faults maybe we hide from others but they are also faults our human nature hides from ourselves. We just don't want to go there, we don't want to see it, we don't want to admit it. Now let's go to Luke 11:34, talking about in certain areas of our lives, we can live in darkness or maybe we're in the grey area of dusk—one foot in and one foot out.

Luke 11:34 [Christ is saying] *The light of the body is the eye: (KJV)*

The Greek for eye can mean “vision”. The light of the body is the vision.

34 continued) ... *therefore when thine eye [or your vision] is single [the Greek word for single means “clear”], thy whole body also is full of light; but when thine eye is evil, thy body also is full of darkness.*

35) *Take heed therefore that the light which is in thee be not darkness.* (KJV)

It has to do with what’s inside us; God knows the heart. Then, a final scripture under this seventh point, Romans 13:12. Here, Paul gives us a warning, and it is so much more true today because we are far closer to the coming of Jesus Christ than he was when he wrote this. This applies to us:

Romans 13:12 [Paul says] *The night is far spent, the day is at hand [we’re getting close]: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.* (KJV)

If we’re close to God, if we walk in the light, stand in the light, allow God’s light to shine on us, it is like armor because it protects us from the world of darkness. So one reason to examine ourselves is to ask God to show us our blindspots—show us areas in our life that we just don’t see right now and God will do that because I’ve had that happen—you thought you were okay in a certain area and you find out you’re not. How could I have done that, how could I have thought that?—and we want God to open up our mind to see that.

The eighth and final point—this is the one we need to take most seriously:

8. Those who live in darkness will end up in darkness.

In the end our character is going to be exposed. There are no secrets to God and any darkness will be exposed. Any darkness that we have inside of us—if we’re living in darkness in a certain aspect of our life or our character—it will be exposed. Let’s go to 1 Corinthians 4:5—talking about the time when Christ returns. It’s not that far off, maybe in our lifetime, maybe not, depending on how old we are.

1 Corinthians 4:5 *Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who [referring to Christ] both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts ...* (KJV)

At some point we’re going to have to stand before God and admit who we are, what we’ve done and what’s in our heart, and God is going to show us that. We will have to account for it. We won’t turn there but Moses said, be sure your sins will find you out—Numbers 32:23—yes. There are times (and I’ve seen people do it and I think I’ve kidded myself in times past) that somehow you can hide your sins from God or God is going to wink at this or God is really not going to pay attention to this, or we put it in scales: I’ve done so much good that the good outweighs the bad.

I remember a high-ranking minister say one time (he had committed some horrible sins) God winks at my weaknesses because of all that I do for the work. As though it's in a balance, and of course we're deceived into thinking it's in a balance—no, it's not in a balance. It's not a matter of how many checks are in the good side versus how many checks are in the bad side. It's what's in our heart. We're going to see now that those whose hearts are in the light will be acknowledged and will be praised in that sense. Let's go to John 3:20—this analogy of light to darkness is so revealing and so clear.

John 3:20 *For every one that doeth evil hateth the light [you can't argue with that], neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd. (KJV)*

You walk into the light and the light reveals everything. Somebody who hates the light, doesn't want the light—lives in darkness, doesn't want to walk into the light—because that person is going to be seen for who and what they are. What John is telling us is there is going to come a time when all of that is going to be revealed.

21) *But he that doeth truth [it's interesting he would put it that way—not only understands the truth but does the truth] cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest [apparent], that they are wrought in God. (KJV)*

At some point God is going to look at us and we're either in the light or in the darkness. We either do the light, once we understand the light, or we do not. How many times have we said to ourselves, that's unfair, how can they do that—we've all said that. How can God allow this—that's just not right, that's just not fair. We don't have to worry about that in this life. We can have peace in this life despite being on the receiving end of things that are “unfair” or not right—why?—because God knows and He will judge accordingly at the appropriate time. So we can have peace in the midst of unfairness or opposition or attacking because God knows and He will judge accordingly. I'm so thankful I don't have to judge all that stuff. God's perfect mind will do the judging. Let's go to Matthew 22:11—this is the parable of the king and the marriage of his son. Notice this applies to the Kingdom of God and the marriage supper of Jesus Christ.

Matthew 22:11 *And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment:*

12) *And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he [the man that didn't have the garment] was speechless. (KJV)*

In other words, he was not prepared, and we are told in Revelation 19:8 that in the marriage supper we will be clothed in fine linen, clean and white, which represents the righteousness of the saints. So you tie in Revelation 19:8 with Matthew 22:11; this man didn't have a wedding garment—not white, not clean, not righteous. Then because of that, in verse 13 ...

13) Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. (KJV)

The reality is not everybody is going to make the Kingdom of God. Just because somebody attends the Feast or sits in Sabbath services or pays their tithes, doesn't mean they're going to make the Kingdom of God. In those days, when the person is bound hand and foot and cast into outer darkness there are going to be people who say, Oh, if I had only listened, meaning, listened to God and God's Word—if I had only listened. So the question for us as we wrap this up is, will I have on the righteous garment when the wedding supper begins? When Christ comes, will He see in me a white garment of righteousness or will He see something else? Will He see something dark or something grey? What is Christ going to see when He returns?

As we conclude I want you to think about this principle because this analogy of light and darkness is so real and so true. We can study and measure light (you might have done it in high school physics class or college physics class, something like that). If you've ever passed light through a prism, the white light that we have is broken up into all the different colors as it passes through the prism—you can shine it on a wall and I think most of us have seen that. Scientists can take the various colors and measure their wavelengths and study them and learn a lot about the universe by studying the composition of light. So we can study light but have you ever thought about this: We cannot measure darkness.

You can't measure darkness. The only way to measure darkness is to measure the amount of light and if there's no light—none at all—then you have darkness. Darkness is a term we use to describe what happens when there's no light. You can't measure it but when the light is taken away, then we have darkness. As in the analogy we've been covering today of light and darkness, evil automatically exists when God is not there. We read in the beginning, God is light. If you remove the light, now you have darkness. In the physical world, you remove a shining light—I've been down in Carlsbad Caverns, way down deep under the ground, and for a few minutes they shut the electric lights off and that is total darkness. You can hold your hand up and you can't see anything. When you remove the light, you have darkness but you can't measure the darkness, you can only measure the light.

Evil automatically exists when God is not present. Some people accuse God of creating evil. No, God does not create evil; God's absence, by definition, means evil is there—that's darkness. When mankind removes God from their lives or their country, that leaves darkness. That is what is happening to us today, it's happening to the Laodicean Church today. When God is not present, evil exists by definition. Evil is like the darkness that comes when there is no light.

We've discussed this very simple concept of light and darkness today and darkness is nothing more than the absence of light. Spiritual darkness is nothing more than the

absence of God. You can't project darkness, can you? We can project light—you go to a movie theater and you have a light source and they're projecting a movie on a screen, but have you ever considered that you can't project darkness—it's impossible. You can't measure darkness, you can only measure light, and I think there's a reason for that—God is showing us the only worthwhile thing is light, and I am the light, God says. As we examine ourselves it's time to believe the simple analogy given to us by John—we either walk in the light or we walk in the darkness.

Let's close with one scripture, John 12:35—this is His last time with the disciples and He's telling them a very important principle.

John 12:35 *Then Jesus said unto them [his disciples], Yet a little while is the light with you [I'm only going to be here a little while longer]. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth.*

36) *While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light.*
(KJV)

The admonition for us is to believe the light, stay in the light, remain the children of light. Let's remember, as we look at ourselves, this very simple analogy of light verses darkness and let's make sure, going forward, that all of us walk in the light.