

The Light of the World
John Shirk

Genesis

1

God is Light; in Him there is no darkness¹

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth

The earth was formless and empty

Darkness covered the face of the earth.

God said

Let there be light

and there was light.

God saw the light

And pronounced it good.²

God planted a garden³

Placed a man and a woman in it

Image bearers

Children of the Light

God saw it

And it was good

But it would not stay good

An angel of light fell into darkness

In the shape of a serpent he whispered

Taste the stolen fruit

Savor its sweetness

Your eyes will surely see

The light will stream in

You will be like God

The first lie from the father of lies

With the first bite

Their eyes were opened

But it was not light flooding in

But darkness⁴

A great darkness

A darkness bringing death⁵

But

God promised to conquer the darkness

Defeat the fallen angel of light

And crush the serpent's head⁶

For

God is Light; in Him there is no darkness
And the Light
Would not go out

2

Men loved darkness rather than light
Because their deeds were evil⁷
God saw the darkness in the hearts of mankind
Every inclination was wicked
Every thought full of violence

He was deeply troubled
He gazed down into the darkness
He chose a faint glimmer of light
A single man
A solitary family
To ride out the storm⁸
Sent to wash away the darkness
When the rain stopped
The sun appeared
With a rainbow
As a promise
God is Light; in Him there is no darkness
And the Light
Would not go out⁹

...

3

Again darkness grew
Creeping over the earth like a mist
But God is Light; in Him there is no darkness
He spoke to a childless man

**Look at the stars in the sky
The lights in the heavens
So shall your offspring be¹⁰
Like the stars
They will be a light to the world
Until the Light of the World
Comes to bless the nations¹¹**

That night
When the sun went down
A Flaming Torch
Split the darkness
The Light of the World
Made a covenant with the first Jew¹²
Darkness would cover the face of the earth
But God is Light; in Him there is no darkness
And the Light
Would not go out

Question:

How did the serpent deceive the children of the Light and convince them to embrace the darkness? How does he try to deceive you?

Exodus

1

It was a dark time for the children of the Light
Enslaved with no glimmer of hope¹³
When the Light broke the darkness
In the form of a Bush¹⁴
Burning brightly
Yet not consumed

Calling the prophet
A voice warned

**Bare your feet
The ground is holy**

The prophet hid his face
Afraid to gaze on the brilliant brightness

But the Light had pierced the darkness
To see the oppression
And suffering
Of His people

The Light would soon defeat the darkness
End their suffering
Set them Free

The prophet asked one question

*Who are you?
Tell me your name*

The Light
Answered from the bush

**YAHWEH
I AM
That is my name
Forever**

**YAHWEH
I AM
That is my name
Call on Me when you walk in darkness
Cry out to Me when you have no hope**

2

Crushing their oppressors
The Light freed His people

Follow Me

He said
As He led them out of bondage
A Cloud by day
A Pillar of Fire by night¹⁵

A Lamp unto their feet
A Light unto their path¹⁶
Hemming them in¹⁷

A Vanguard
Splitting the sea before of them
A Rearguard
Swallowing enemies behind them¹⁸

Day and night
They followed the Light
To a mountain in the desert¹⁹
Lightning lit the sky
A voice thundered

YAHWEH
I AM
That is my name
Follow Me only

YAHWEH
I AM
That is my name
Do not misuse it²⁰

The Light gave them a Lamp
That shone brightly
On their path²¹
Illuminating their choice
Walk in the Light
They would never stumble²²
But close their eyes
Embrace the darkness
Walk in blindness
They would fall
Hard

Question:

In what ways did the Light lead them through the desert?
In what ways does the Light lead you?

...

The Promised Land

1

They followed the Light
To a land flowing with milk and honey
A promised inheritance
Where the Light would shine on them
Forever

Twelve leaders sent to explore it
Saw the goodness of the land
The milk
The honey
But giants stood in their way
Clouding their vision
They turned from the Light
Refusing to follow
Retreating to the desert
Returning to the darkness²³

But
God is Light; in Him there is no darkness
And the Light
Would not go out

Light led them like a Shepherd
Shining down
On bread from heaven²⁴
And living water from a rock²⁵
It showed the way
The way of truth
The way of life

Until once again
They reached the land of milk and honey
Once again
The Light split water before of them
Illuminating a path through the river
This time they chose to walk in the Light
And received the promise²⁶

2

Darkness crept over the earth
And men loved darkness
Rather than light
Because their deeds were evil²⁷
They turned away from the Light
Everyone did what was right
In their own eyes²⁸
Like sheep they went astray
Leaving their Good Shepherd²⁹
They rejected the King of kings
Asking for a lesser king³⁰
Their wish was granted
And darkness consumed them
Until the land flowing with milk and honey
Flowed with blood
They were exiled from their home
The Light departed³¹
Leaving them in the darkness
They had embraced

But
God is Light; in Him there is no darkness
And the Light
Would not go out

Question:

Why do you think people are prone to turn from the Light and choose darkness? What are some large or small ways you have turned from the Light and chosen darkness?

...

The Psalms

But even as they wandered in darkness
They praised the Light
Reciting their poetry

YAHWEH

I AM

You are my Light and my salvation

Whom shall I fear?

You are the stronghold of my life—

Of whom shall I be afraid?

YAHWEH

I AM

One thing I ask of you

May I dwell in Your house

And gaze on Your beauty

Beholding Your Light

YAHWEH

I AM

Hear my voice

Be merciful and answer

I remain confident

I will see Your Light

In the land of the living

I will be strong and take heart

I will wait for

YAHWEH

I AM³²

For
God is Light; in Him there is no darkness
And the Light
Would not go out

Question:

How did the poets praise the Light of the World? What role does praise play in your life as you wrestle with darkness and Light?

...

The Prophets

The Light spoke through prophets
Telling of a new dawn
For on those who walk in darkness
A Light would shine
A Child would be born
A Son given
He would be called
IMMANUEL
GOD WITH US³³
Wonderful Counselor
Mighty God
Everlasting Father
Prince of Peace
He would banish the darkness
By the power of
YAHWEH
I AM³⁴
Who would take Him by the hand
And send him as a Light
To open blind eyes
And set captives free³⁵

Of Him, the great
YAHWEH
I AM
Spoke through His prophets

**Is it too light a thing that My Servant
Should save the children of the Light?
I will make You
The Light of the World
Your salvation shall reach the end of the earth.³⁶**

**A day is coming when
YAHWEH
I AM
Will shine a Light on You
His glory (the glory that He does not share)
He will share with You
On that day
When darkness covers the earth
And thick darkness blinds all people
YAHWEH
I AM**

**Will arise upon You
His glory (the glory that He does not share)
Will be seen upon You
The nations will see the Light
The Light of the World
They will bask in Your Brightness**

**On that day
The sun will no longer light the day
Nor will the moon shine at night
YAHWEH
I AM
Will be the everlasting Light
Providing glorious illumination
YAHWEH
I AM
Will be a Sun that never sets
A Moon that never wanes
An everlasting Light
Bringing an end to sorrow³⁷**

But as poets and prophets wrote
Of the Great
YAHWEH
I AM
They were filled with fear
Of misusing the Name
No one dared speak it
No one dared let it cross their lips
No one dared risk the judgment of the Light

Then the poets stopped writing
The prophets no longer spoke³⁸

Darkness obscured their vision
For centuries the Light was unseen
Its voice was unheard
Its name was unspoken

But
God is Light; in Him there is no darkness
And the Light
Would not go out
...

Question:

How did the prophets describe the Light of the World before
He came? How would you describe Him today?

The Gospels

1

In the fullness of time
A star appeared
A light in the heavens
Beneath it
Angels lit up the sky
Shepherds trembled³⁹
Wise men traveled⁴⁰
To see
The Child who was born
The Son who was given
The Light dawning in the darkness
IMMANUEL
GOD WITH US
YESHUA
SALVATION
The promise of
YAHWEH
I AM

...

The Child grew in stature
And in favor with God and man⁴¹
Until fully grown
He rose from the water
Heaven opened
A Dove descended
A voice spoke
YAHWEH
I AM
Announcing

This is the Son I love⁴²

Dawn broke
Those living in darkness
In the land of the shadow of death
Could finally see the Light⁴³

2

On the last day of the feast
At the ceremony remembering
YAHWEH
I AM
Bringing water
From a rock in the desert
The Son cried out

**Let the thirsty come to Me
Believe in Me
Living water will flow
From your dry souls**

Some thought Him a prophet
Some the promised Servant
Of the great
YAHWEH
I AM
Others doubted
But no one laid a hand on Him
For His time had not yet come⁴⁴

That evening
As night fell and darkness covered the city
Enormous golden lamps were lit
Illuminating the temple
Visible throughout the city
A reminder of the Pillar of Fire
The Light of
YAHWEH
I AM
Which led them through the desert
Music played
Men danced
Until the Son cried out
Speaking the Name
The Name they dared not speak

**YAHWEH
I AM
The Light of the World
Follow Me
You will never walk in darkness
But have the Light of life**

The music ceased
The dancing stopped
Blasphemy
The Son was misusing the Name
Claiming to be the Light of the World
Claiming to be the Pillar of Fire
Claiming to be the prophesied Servant
Claiming to be
YAHWEH
I AM

Who is this?
They wondered
Only a son of darkness
Would dare

*Such claims require witnesses
You only speak for yourself
You prove nothing*

My Father is My Witness

Where is your Father?

**You do not know My Father
You listen only to your father**

*We are Jews
Sons of God
You are a son of darkness*

**I am not a son of darkness
I honor my Father
You dishonor Me
Follow Me
You will never face death**

They grew angry

*Our forefather died
You say you subdue death
Are you superior to our forefather?
You are a son of darkness*

He stood calmly

**Before your forefather
YAHWEH
I AM**

They could stand no more
They picked up stones to stone Him
But the Light of the World
Blinded their eyes
And slipped away
No one laid a hand on Him
For His time had not yet come⁴⁵

...

3

The Light of the World Continued to shine

**As long as I am in the world
YAHWEH
I AM
The Light of the World⁴⁶**

**I came to open blind eyes
And blind those who refuse to see⁴⁷**

**When two or three are gathered
Reflecting the Light
Walking in the Light
Following the Light
The Light will be with them⁴⁸**

**You are the light of the world
A city on a hill that cannot be hidden⁴⁹
Built on a Rock
Shining Light into the darkest places
Overcoming the gates of Hell⁵⁰**

**Walk in the Light while you have the Light
So you may be children of the Light
Before darkness comes⁵¹
For in a little while
You will mourn
When the sons of darkness
Put out the Light
Then after three days It will shine again⁵²
Illuminating you with joy⁵³**

**I have told you these things
So you may have peace
Darkness covers the face of the earth
But take heart
The Light will overcome the darkness⁵⁴**

4

But men loved darkness
Rather than light
Because their deeds were evil

The Light of the World
In a garden
Was betrayed by a kiss⁵⁵

Whom do you seek?

YESHUA, SALVATION from Nazereth

**YAHWEH
I AM**

They fell to their faces

Whom do you seek?

YESHUA, SALVATION from Nazereth

**I told you
YAHWEH
I AM**

And they arrested Him⁵⁶
For His time had come

5

The Light of the World
Weighed down
By the darkness of the world
Was dragged to the top of a hill
And smothered
By the sons of darkness

Its flame flickered and dimmed
Until the Light of the World
Cried out

It is finished!

And the sun that had been lit
By His command
Heard Him speak and grew dark
Darkness fell over the earth
As the Light of the World
Went out⁵⁷

Placed in a rich man's tomb⁵⁸
Shrouded in darkness
A darkness of death

But
God is Light; in Him there is no darkness
And the Light of the World
Would not stay out

On the third day
When the Son rose
The Light of the World
Shone again
Having conquered the darkness
Having defeated death
It shone ever brighter⁵⁹

...

6

On a mountaintop
The Light of the World
Met the children of the Light

**You are my witnesses
I will send you the promise
Remain in the city
Until you are clothed with Light⁶⁰**

**All authority is Mine
Take the Light of the World
To all the world
Teaching them
To follow the Light**

**And the Light of the World
Will shine on you
Forever⁶¹**

Then the Son rose
Into the heavens
The Light of the World
Disappeared in the clouds

As they gazed upwards
Messengers appeared

*Don't keep looking at the sky
The Light that has left
Will one day return⁶²*

Darkness enshrouded the earth
But the children of the Light
Returned to the city
With great joy
To await the Light⁶³

For
God is Light; in Him there is no darkness
And the Light of the World
Would not go out

Question:

Who is the Light of the World? How did He conquer the darkness?

Acts

When the feast arrived
The world gathered in the City
Celebrating the Light on the mountain
That gave the Lamp

The children of the Light
Gathered to worship the Light
The wind blew
The house shook
The Light descended
Tongues of Fire
Fell on them
But like the Bush
They were not consumed
They opened their mouths
Light poured forth
The Light of the World
The Light through whom all things were made
The Light that brought life for all mankind
The Light they had seen with their own eyes
Which they had looked at
And their hands had touched
The Light the darkness could not overcome
The Light that was
And then was no more
And then was again
YESHUA
SALVATION
The Light of
YAHWEH
I AM

They called out

*Follow the Light
Walk in the Light
Reflect the Light*

People from every nation
Saw the Light
Became children of the Light⁶⁴
Took the Light of the World
Into all the world
Blameless and innocent
Shining like stars
In a crooked and twisted generation⁶⁵

But darkness continued to envelop the earth
A darkness bringing death
Enticing the children of the Light
To embrace the darkness
Leading them like sheep
From their Good Shepherd
To follow the prince of darkness
The fallen angel of light
Many turned from the Light
Building kingdoms of darkness
Doing what was right in their own eyes
Waging war in the name
Of the Prince of Peace

But the gates of hell could not prevail
There was always a spark
A glimmer of Light
Shining in the darkest places

Because
God is Light; in Him there is no darkness
And the Light of the World
Would not go out

Question:

Why does it often appear that the darkness is winning? How should we respond when the Light seems dim?

...

Today

Today
Darkness covers the face of the earth
The prince of darkness
The fallen angel of light
The father of lies
Still roams about
As a roaring lion
Seeking to devour⁶⁶
Still whispering lies

*Taste the stolen fruit
Savor its sweetness
Your eyes will surely see
The light will stream in
You will be like God*

Deceiving all who will listen
Deluding them with darkness
Drawing them towards the eternal abyss
Where there is no light

But
God is Light; in Him there is no darkness
And the Light
Continues to Shine

Today
If we walk in the darkness
Denying our sin
We deceive ourselves
But when we walk in the Light
Allowing it to illuminate our lives
And reveal the dark places
Where our brokenness hides
We can reject the darkness
And be cleansed⁶⁷

Today
Walking in the Light
We do not lose heart
As the Light shines through us
Illuminating the Way
For those in bondage to darkness
Deceived by the fallen angel of light

Today
We have no light of our own
But we are the light of the world
As we reflect the Light of the World

We carry the Light
In broken jars of clay
It shines through the cracks
Revealing beauty from our ashes
Renewing us day by day
Readying us for the unseen, eternal kingdom⁶⁸

We walk in the Light
Waiting for the return of the Light
When the Son will shine in the eastern sky
Riding a white horse
With fire in His eyes
And crowns on His head

When the King of kings
And Lord of lords
YAHWEH
I AM
Fulfills His promise
Defeating the prince of darkness
Conquering the fallen angel of light
Crushing the serpent's head
Casting him into outer darkness
Where no light will ever shine

When
YAHWEH
I AM
Returns for His children⁶⁹
To take them home

Darkness will no longer cover the earth
Nor the hearts of men

The sun will no longer light the day
Nor will the moon shine at night

YAHWEH
I AM
Will be the everlasting Light of the World
Providing glorious illumination

YAHWEH
I AM
Will be a Sun that never sets
A Moon that never wanes
Bringing an end to sorrow

YAHWEH
I AM
Will wipe the tears from their eyes
Bringing an end
To death
Mourning
Crying
And pain⁷⁰
Vanquishing the darkness
Making all things new
As it was in the beginning
So it evermore shall be
Good
As the children of the Light
Bask forever in the glorious Light

YAHWEH
I AM
The everlasting Light of the World

Question:

What areas of your life have you tried to hide from the Light?
What happens when you let the Light illuminate your
darkness?

Questions

1. How did the serpent deceive the children of the Light and convince them to embrace the darkness? How does he try to deceive you?
2. In what ways did the Light lead them through the desert? In what ways does the Light lead you?
3. Why do you think people are prone to turn from the light and choose darkness? What are some large or small ways you have turned from the Light and chosen darkness?
4. How did the poets praise the Light of the World? What role does praise play in your life as you wrestle with darkness and Light?
5. How did the prophets describe the Light of the World before He came? How would you describe Him today?
6. Who is the Light of the World? How did He conquer the darkness?
7. Why does it often appear that the darkness is winning? How should we respond when the Light seems dim?
8. What areas of your life have you tried to hide from the Light? What happens when you let the Light illuminate your darkness?

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¹ 1 John 1:5

² Genesis 1:1-4a

³ Genesis 2:8

⁴ Genesis 3:1-7

⁵ Matthew 6:22-23

⁶ Genesis 3:14-15
⁷ John 3:19
⁸ Genesis 6:5-8
⁹ Genesis 9:8-17
¹⁰ Genesis 15:5
¹¹ Genesis 22:18
¹² Genesis 15:17-18
¹³ Exodus 1:8-18
¹⁴ Exodus 3
¹⁵ Exodus 13:21-22
¹⁶ Psalm 119:105
¹⁷ Psalm 139:5
¹⁸ Exodus 14:15-31
¹⁹ Exodus 19:2
²⁰ Exodus 20
²¹ Proverbs 6:23
²² Psalm 119:165
²³ Numbers 13-14
²⁴ Exodus 16
²⁵ Exodus 17
²⁶ Joshua 3
²⁷ John 3:19
²⁸ Judges 17:6
²⁹ Isaiah 53:6
³⁰ 1 Samuel 8
³¹ Ezekiel 10:18
³² Psalm 27
³³ Isaiah 7 14
³⁴ Isaiah 9:2-7
³⁵ Isaiah 42:6-7
³⁶ Isaiah 49:6
³⁷ Isaiah 60
³⁸ Amos 8:11, Micah 3:5-6
³⁹ Luke 2:8-18
⁴⁰ Matthew 2:1-12
⁴¹ Luke 2:52
⁴² Matthew 3:13-17
⁴³ Matthew 4:16
⁴⁴ John 7:37-44
⁴⁵ John 8:12-59
⁴⁶ John 9:5
⁴⁷ John 9:39
⁴⁸ Matthew 18:20
⁴⁹ Matthew 5:14
⁵⁰ Matthew 16:18
⁵¹ John 12:35-36
⁵² Matthew 16:21, Mark 8:31, Mark 9:31, Luke 9:22
⁵³ John 16:16
⁵⁴ John 16:33
⁵⁵ Matthew 26:47-49, Mark 14:43-45
⁵⁶ John 18:3-12
⁵⁷ Matthew 27:24-56, Mark 15:6-41, Luke 23:26-49, John 19:1-37
⁵⁸ Matthew 27:57-61, Mark 15:42-47, Luke 23:50-56, John 19:38-42
⁵⁹ Matthew 28:1-10, Mark 16:1-8, Luke 24:1-12, John 20:1-18
⁶⁰ Luke 24:49
⁶¹ Matthew 28:18-20

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- ⁶² Acts 1:9-11
 - ⁶³ Luke 24:52,
 - ⁶⁴ Acts 2
 - ⁶⁵ Philippians 2:14-15 (ESV)
 - ⁶⁶ 1 Peter 5:8
 - ⁶⁷ 1 John 1:5-10
 - ⁶⁸ 2 Corinthians 4
 - ⁶⁹ Revelation 19:11-16
 - ⁷⁰ Revelation 21:4