

GOD IS LIGHT

The Attributes of God

Banska Bystrica, 26th March 2017

<p>Καὶ ἔστιν αὕτη ἡ ἀγγελία ἣν ἀκηκόαμεν ἀπ' αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀναγγέλλομεν ὑμῖν, ὅτι ὁ θεὸς φῶς ἐστὶν καὶ σκοτία ἐν αὐτῷ οὐκ ἔστιν οὐδεμία.</p>	<p>1John 1:5 This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that <u>God is light</u>, and in him is no darkness at all</p>
<p>πάντα δι' αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο, καὶ χωρὶς αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο οὐδὲ ἓν. ὃ γέγονεν ⁴ ἐν αὐτῷ ζωὴ ἦν, καὶ ἡ ζωὴ ἦν τὸ φῶς τῶν ἀνθρώπων· ⁵ καὶ τὸ φῶς ἐν τῇ σκοτίᾳ φαίνει, καὶ ἡ σκοτία αὐτὸ οὐ κατέλαβεν.</p>	<p>John 1:3-5 All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. ⁴ In him was <u>life</u>, and <u>the life was the light of men</u>. ⁵ The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.</p>
<p>ὅτι ὁ θεὸς ὁ εἰπὼν· ἐκ σκοτῶν φῶς λάμψει, ὃς ἔλαμψεν ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ἡμῶν πρὸς φωτισμὸν τῆς γνώσεως τῆς δόξης τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν προσώπῳ [Ἰησοῦ] Χριστοῦ</p>	<p>2Cor 4:6 For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," has shone in our hearts to give the <u>light of the knowledge of the glory of God</u> in the face of Jesus Christ.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">בִּי הִצַּלְתָּ נַפְשִׁי מִיָּדָיִם לִפְנֵי אֱלֹהִים בְּאוֹרְךָ הַחַיִּים</p>	<p>Ps 56:13 For you have delivered my soul from death, yes, my feet from falling, that I may walk before God in the <u>light of life</u></p>
<p>καὶ ἡ πόλις οὐ χρεῖαν ἔχει τοῦ ἡλίου οὐδὲ τῆς σελήνης ἵνα φαίνωσιν αὐτῇ, ἡ γὰρ δόξα τοῦ θεοῦ ἐφώτισεν αὐτήν, καὶ ὁ λύχνος αὐτῆς τὸ ἄρνιον</p>	<p>Rev 21:23 And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the <u>glory of God gives it light</u>, and its lamp is the Lamb.</p>
<p>καὶ νύξ οὐκ ἔσται ἔτι καὶ οὐκ ἔχουσιν χρεῖαν φωτὸς λύχνου καὶ φωτὸς ἡλίου, ὅτι κύριος ὁ θεὸς φωτίσει ἐπ' αὐτούς, καὶ βασιλεύσουσιν εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων.</p>	<p>Rev 22:5 And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord <u>God will be their light</u>, and they will reign forever and ever.</p>

OUTLINE

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- 0.1. THE ATTRIBUTE OF GOODNESS
- 0.2. THE LIGHT – PHYSICAL AND SPIRITUAL

1. GOD AS LIGHT

- 1.1. RADIATING POWER
- 1.2. GIVING LIFE
- 1.3. CAUSING JOY

2. THE LIGHT OF GOD FOR US

- 2.1. SPACE (DIMENSIONS)
- 2.2. OTHERS (OTHER THINGS)
- 2.3. ORIENTATION (TRUTH)
- 2.4. ACTIVITY (ENERGY, WORK)

3. TO REMEMBER

0. INTRODUCTION

0.1. THE ATTRIBUTE OF GOODNESS

- Goodness and being (the medievals understood God's goodness, in terms of being: goodness and being are interchangeable)
- "combination" of attributes (goodness and)
- "The message that "God is light" needs to be compared with the declarations elsewhere by John that "God is spirit" (John 4:24) and that "God is love" (1 John 4:8). All three stress the immateriality of God and the "Godness" of God—viz., God in his essence. Light emphasizes especially the **splendor** and **glory** of God, the **truthfulness** of God, and his **purity**."¹

0.2. THE LIGHT – PHYSICAL AND SPIRITUAL

- But if light travelled at a constant speed, then not enough time has passed since the Big Bang for photons to reach the edges of the visible universe, resulting in what scientists call the Horizon Problem.²
- "light" → metaphor
- connotations: glory; truth; holiness; joy; life; guidance...

1. GOD AS LIGHT

1.1. RADIATING POWER

- dynamic; radiating; (→ the Sun nuclear fusion) "process" (not processual theology)
- **Dt 4:24** For the LORD your **God** is a consuming **fire** (יהוה אלהיך אש אכלת), a jealous **God**.
- **Heb 12:29** for our **God** is a consuming **fire** (ὁ θεὸς ἡμῶν πῦρ καταναλίσκον).

1.2. GIVING LIFE

- **Ps 56:13** For you have delivered my soul from death, yes, my feet from falling, that I may walk before **God** in the light of life
- **2Cor 4:6** For **God**, who said, "Let **light** shine out of darkness," has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of **God** in the face of Jesus Christ.

1.3. CAUSING JOY

God's blessedness in himself, is that attribute, whereby, being for ever free from all evil, and having all fulness of perfection and sufficiency in himself, he doth most perfectly and unchangeably enjoy himself.³

- **Ps 31:16** Make your **face shine** on your servant; save me in your steadfast love!
- **Ps 67:1** May God be gracious to us and ble^ss us and make his face to shine upon us
- **Ps 4:6-7** There are many who say, "Who will show us some good? Lift up the light of your face upon us, O LORD!"⁷ You have put more joy in my heart than they have when their grain and wine abound.

2. THE LIGHT OF GOD FOR US

Eph 5:14 anything that becomes visible is **light**

2.1. SPACE (DIMENSIONS)

- "I believe in Christianity as I believe that the sun has risen: not only because I see it, but because by it I see everything else"⁴

¹ GABELEIN (ed.) *1John 1:5*.

² <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-3978402/Was-Einstein-WRONG-speed-light-New-theory-completely-change-view-universe.html> (26/03/2017)

³ WILSON, W. *The Attributes of God*, London : Seeley & Burnside, 1835, p. 381

⁴ LEWIS, C. S. *They Asked for a Paper*, p. 166.

- → reality (**Is 42:6-7** I will give you as a covenant for the people, a light for the nations, ⁷ to **open** the **eyes** that are blind, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, from the prison those who sit in darkness)
- → freedom to “breathe” (**Ps 118:5** Out of my distress [הַמִּצָּרִים] I called on the LORD; the LORD answered me and set me free → and set me in a large place [בְּמַרְהֵב].)
- → perspective (hierarchy of beings)

2.2. OTHERS (OTHER THINGS)

- → relationships
- → community; fellowship (**1John 1:3** that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed **our fellowship** is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ)

2.3. ORIENTATION (TRUTH)

- darkness → death
- → life (**Ps 36:9[10]** For with you is the fountain of life; in your light do we see light [נִרְאָה אֹרֶךְ].)
- → self-knowledge (confession) (**Ps 32:3-5** For when I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. ⁴ For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was dried up as by the heat of summer. Selah ⁵ I acknowledged my sin to you, and I did not cover my iniquity)
- **James 5:16** ...confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, ...**1 John 1:8-9** If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. ⁹ If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.
- **Eph 5:14** ...for anything that becomes **visible is light**. Therefore it says, "Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.

2.4. ACTIVITY (ENERGY, WORK)

- → acceptance of love
- **John 8:12** Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

3. TO REMEMBER

- To really know God is to experience spiritual light.
- God as light gives joy in holiness, fellowship in truth.