

Church of God, The Eternal

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Dear Chosen of God:

In Satan's world of darkness, the true light of God that will be reflected in and through God's chosen ones will not be accepted and appreciated. If the true Christians are living by the word of God through His Spirit, then they will be walking in that light. We should never get discouraged because there is little reward from this world of darkness for obedience to God. For our reward, we must be looking forward to the future. Exercise of the physical has very little profit, but spiritual exercise promises a better physical life. But most importantly, it promises eternal life in God's Kingdom. "For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come" (1 Timothy 4:8).

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not (John 1:1–5).

For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil (John 3:17–19).

We have to decide just how much we love the ways of this world of darkness or how much we are determined to strive to stay in that true light. Satan began his rulership of darkness over mankind through his deception in the Garden of Eden and has continued that deception from that time forward till the present. He has tried from the very start to cover with darkness God's eternal light—that eternal light that God the Father sent to this earth through His Son, Jesus Christ.

God called and opened the minds of all His apostles, prophets, and chosen people and gave that true light to them by divine revelation. Just as Satan appeared in the Garden of Eden, he is still very much on the job trying to deceive and snatch that light—the true light—away from God's people and send them right back into darkness. This has happened to thousands of God's people in our day as it happened in the New Testament church.

Which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness; But was rebuked for his iniquity: the dumb ass speaking with man's voice forbad the madness of the prophet. These are wells without water, clouds that are carried with a tempest; to whom the mist of darkness is reserved for ever. For when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error. 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. 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, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. 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. 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 (2 Peter 2:15–22).

Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened (Romans 1:21).

Since man was created with a carnal mind that wants to give in to the flesh and do what is right in his own eyes, he has no defense—by his own strength—against Satan's power being used against him. It is God through His Spirit who enlightens His chosen servants and gives the strength to stand against Satan's deception.

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand (Ephesians 6:10–13).

The works of darkness around us can have their effect in many different ways. I will give you a vivid example that most of us, if not all, experienced just recently. Those of us who attended the Feast of Tabernacles just experienced a foretaste of what it will be like to live in the Millennium. We know by faith that when Christ sets up His Kingdom on this earth it will far surpass anything we can experience in this life, even the keeping of the Feast of Tabernacles today. We know that through God's Spirit. Here is one way that the darkness of this world has recently affected us: Think of how you felt just after the Feast, the first day or two after returning home. Myself, just having to function back in this world's system, I felt more of a loss this year than I can ever remember. May God hasten that day when this world will not have that empty, negative, and hollow feeling. This just reinforces the fact that God did shine down upon His people with peace, warmth, and light at His Feast this year.

Just living in this world and seeing the unfair—evil—corruption and sin on every side is enough to discourage us if we allow it. Jesus Christ our Savior certainly understood our plight when He prayed to the Father in John 17:15–16: "I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world."

We need to keep our focus on the Kingdom and that bright future and not let this world drag us down and cause us many unique problems. We could certainly be discouraged by the financial and monetary system of this world—how they control us through the pocketbook. That is one of Satan's strongest sources of darkness with which he discourages and dissuades those who strive to live by every word of God. He has them where it hurts physically, and would love to destroy a Christian's faith in God and His promises. There are many cruel ways in which this world could affect us if we allowed it. Many times it seems like those who try to live an honest, godly life and work hard on the job—even going above the call of duty at times, being conscientious, hardworking, doing the hard jobs along with the easy because they can be depended upon to do the unpopular work—are often taken advantage of.

Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward. For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously (1 Peter 2:18).

Even taking abuse while serving your boss faithfully is also partaking of the abuse that Christ withstood. Many times this is required of those who try to live right. That is another reason to long for that Kingdom. God is fair and just, and in His Kingdom justice will be carried out. Those who would use the system for their own advantage—trying to get in good with the superiors or play favorites—will not be given that opportunity.

There are many ways that the darkness of this world brought on by Satan affects us. Another huge source of the darkness around us is in the way this world has been planned around the pagan calendar, causing the Sabbath to be a very big day for the world and Friday evenings the time for worldly functions and recreation. All of Satan's holidays are constantly thrown in our faces, and this makes us have to wisely choose our activities around and away from them. This sometimes causes strained relationships with unconverted relatives who simply do not understand, because they have not been enlightened like God's people.

There is a spiritual darkness that afflicts and tries many of God's people because they have unconverted mates or family members that have turned from that revealed way and gone back into the darkness of this world.

And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty (2 Corinthians 6:15–18).

Even if there are no conflicts, it pains us down in our very beings to see those who once endorsed God's loving way turn aside in bitterness. The only solution to hardness and deep-seated feelings between any of God's people is to work things out and be in the oneness of Christ, not plotting another course, a different direction. Christ is one and His way is only one. There cannot be many ways to the oneness of Christ and God the Father. Christ prayed that His disciples would all be one spiritually as He and the Father were. "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me" (John 17:21).

The Apostle Paul understood what we should do to walk in that light, the true light of Jesus Christ.

That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness (Ephesians 4:22–24).

For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light: (For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth;) Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret. But all things that are reproved are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light. Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light (Ephesians 5:8–14).

This month puts us into some of the darkest times of the year—the days are shorter, nights are longer. A large portion of the evil that transpires in this world happens in the nighttime under the cover of darkness. There is little if any good news on the world scene: murder, crimes committed daily in close proximity to our own homes, all kinds of sicknesses and disease. To the average people of the world, with all that is going on in their lives, there are created many reasons for stress, unhappiness, gloominess and just plain bad feelings. We as God's people have access to the help that will keep us from getting pulled down by all of the darkness around us, and there are many things we can do to help us have a peaceful state of mind.

God loves us and cares for us as His own children. He will never give up on us no matter what, unless we give up on His way and show we are unwilling to do what it takes to become His spiritual sons and daughters.

The ways that will help us keep our focus in these dark times and stay closer to God and the brethren, we have probably heard many times.

- A. Keep studying God's word on a regular and constant schedule.
- B. Make sure we keep a personal relationship with God the Father and Jesus Christ through study, prayer, meditation, and fasting.
- C. Attend church as often as we possibly can, and fellowship with God's people regularly.

D. As much as possible, stay in contact with as many of God's people as you can.

E. Remember the sick and those with trials and severe tests, and always pray for one another.

There are no Holy Days during this period of darkness with which to have that added inspiration for this portion of the year. We were given that light through Jesus Christ and the revelation.

Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls. Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy [Spirit] sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into. Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy (1 Peter 1:8–16).

Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not; But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 4:1–6).

Keep in mind, the children of Israel forgot! They did not remember the lessons they should have learned while going through all of the tests and trials, and their sins caused them to be in darkness.

Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come (1 Corinthians 10:11).

If we allow God's Spirit to live in us through obedience to His inspired way of truth, then we can have that true light in which the darkness of Satan can never cause us to fail.

In much love and affection,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Leon S. Whitaker". The ink is dark and the handwriting is fluid, with a large initial 'L' and 'W'.

Leon S. Whitaker