

# God is Light – 1 John 1:5

## *(Getting ready to walk in the light)*

**Introduction** – John has told us what he hopes to accomplish in his letter for his readers: “...that you also may have fellowship with us...” and “...that your joy may be full.” (vv3-4). Fellowship and joy require us to understand some things about God, about His character and plan. “God is light, and in Him is no darkness – none at all.”

This sermon is like the toss before the serve. It might seem at first as though it has no purpose, no “so what.” But if the toss isn’t done well, the serve will never make it. There is so much biblical imagery to consider when John writes, “God is light.” Meditating upon this truth before moving on to its application will hopefully provide greater clarity and punch to what is to come in this epistle.

**Light and Creation** – God is not a light among many lights, nor is He simply a light-bearer. Even though He created light (Gen 1:3), He is Himself uncreated light. God, who is the Word, spoke the Word, and He, who is Light, said, “*Let there be light.*” In the Nicene Creed, the church confesses Jesus Christ as “God of God, Light of Light.” God is light and so He visited His people in the glory-cloud, in a pillar of fire, and was symbolized in the lit lampstand of the tabernacle (Num 8:1-4). Light is connected to the bringing forth of life (the first Word-Act of Creation) and so “*The LORD is my light and my salvation*” (Psalm 27:1). This light was to go forth to all the earth: The LORD’s Servant is given “...as a light to the Gentiles, that You should be My salvation to the ends of the earth” (Isaiah 49:6).

**Light and the New Creation** – Jesus said, “*I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life*” (John 8:12). In fact, the Old Creation had fallen into darkness, and the New Creation was the bringing forth again of light and life (Isaiah 60:1-3). In one sense, the Old Covenant was a covenant of veils, shadows, and types – a kind of darkness (Heb 1:1-4). In that sense, there is nothing but darkness in the old ways, or in any way that is not Jesus Christ, the light of the world, the One who spoke the New Creation into existence. The veil of the Old separated the people from the light of God’s glory, but with the New, the veil is removed and the full light of God shines; we can see the Father (John 14:9).

**Light and Revelation** – God’s self-revelation through the law and the prophets is described in terms of light (Prov 6:23, Psalm 119:105, 130). But this light is shown forth clearly in the coming of the Word-made-flesh. “*In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it*” (John 1:4-5). He was the true light (John 1:9), and warned them to walk in that light while He was with them (John 12:35-36).

**Darkness** – In contrast, the darkness was a refusal to enter into the light, a refusal to acknowledge the truth of Jesus and His Words (John 3:19-21). And so why do men not come into the light? Men love their evil deeds and this requires that they suppress the truth – it requires that they lie to themselves about what truth is, a truth they know (Rom 1:18-23). But our text makes clear that coming to God is to come to the Light – and in Him there is no darkness, none at all. Like Gollum, we love to hold on to “our precious,” and we withdraw into the darkness.

**Light Overcoming Darkness** – This is the nature of God and the nature of light: it overcomes the darkness. When God created the heavens and the earth, darkness was on the face of the earth and then God said, “*Let there be light.*” When His people were in great darkness, He proclaimed, “*Arise, shine, for your light has come!*” In the same way, “*For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ*” (2 Cor 4:6).

**Light and Living** – It has already been hinted at, but we must also note clearly the ethical and moral aspect of light. The effect of the light is not just to make people see, but to enable them to walk.

**Moral Perversion** (Isaiah 5:20) – “*Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; Who put darkness for light, and light for darkness*”

**Works of Light and Darkness** (Eph 5:8-14, Rom 13:11-14, 1 Thess 5:4-8) – These passages (as will 1 John 6ff) make more sense when we understand that walking in the light or walking in the darkness first have to do with abiding in Someone and only secondly in walking in a particular manner. Walking in the light is something you do because you are in the light. And being in the light, biblically speaking, can only mean abiding in Jesus, who is that Light.

**The Good News and Light** (2 Pet 1:19) – The creation could not bring forth its own light, and neither can we be light nor come to the light except God speaks the Word, “*Let there be light*” in our hearts. And so John preaches, “God is light and in Him there is no darkness, none at all.” This Light is life for the world – it is what brought forth your life, your new creation existence, and it is the only true way to fellowship and joy – fellowship with God, fellowship with man, joy in Christ and joy in one another.