

# “LET THERE BE LIGHT”

## *A Meditation on the Light in Genesis 1:3*

It blows my mind to think that “in the beginning” God *spoke* the universe into existence, starting with light on day one: “God said, ‘Let there be light,’ and there was light” (Gen. 1:3; see also 1:6, 9, 11, 14, 20, 24). This light confounds many, since the sun, moon and stars were not created until the fourth day of creation. So what exactly is the light on the first day that preceded the other lights? I believe it is the physical manifestation of the glory of God, brought forth by the Spirit, who was hovering over the face of the waters.

God often begins a new covenantal work among His people by filling it with His glory. He does this to sanctify it, so that it becomes an acceptable meeting place for Him to fellowship with His people. This is particularly true of places of worship, which is what this world was created to be. Consider three examples.

The first example is of God’s glory filling the tabernacle. After Moses erects the tabernacle of the tent of meeting, and finishes the work by putting everything into place as the LORD commanded him, we read, “Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. And Moses was not able to enter the tent of meeting because the cloud settled on it, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle” (Ex. 40:34-35).

The second example is of God’s glory filling the temple. After Solomon finished building the house of the LORD, he had the priests bring “the ark of the covenant of the LORD to its place, in the inner sanctuary of the house, in the Most Holy Place, underneath the wings of the cherubim... And when the priests came out of the Holy Place... the house of the LORD, was filled with a cloud, so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud, for the glory of the LORD filled the house of God” (2 Chron. 5:7, 11, 13b-14). Then Solomon blessed all the assembly of Israel and offered a prayer of dedication. “As soon as Solomon finished his prayer, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices, and the glory of the LORD filled the temple. And the priests could not enter the house of the LORD, because the glory of the LORD filled the LORD’s house. When all the people of Israel saw the fire come down and the glory of the LORD on the temple, they bowed down with their faces to the ground and worshiped...” (7:1-3).

The third example is of God’s glory filling the new temple of the Holy Spirit, the Christian. While we know that the whole earth is full of God’s glory (Isa. 6:3), no where is this glory seen more clearly and radiantly than in Christ. However, many cannot see this glory, because “the god of this world has blinded the minds of unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God” (2 Cor. 4:4). But praise be to God, “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 Christ” (2 Cor. 4:6). Paul makes it clear that there is a parallel between our salvation, which results from a sovereign God filling our hearts with “the light of the knowledge of the glory of God,” and what He did on the first day of creation, when He said “let there be light.” This is yet another indicator that the light on the first day of creation was God’s glory.

“Let there be light” is a picture of our salvation. It is also a picture of the coming of Jesus Christ, which makes sense since there is no light (or salvation) apart from Christ. Jesus himself said, “I am the light of the world” (Jn. 8:12). Jesus is “the light [that] shines in the darkness” (Jn. 1:5). Zechariah prophesied that the Messiah would “give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace” (Lk. 1:79). Centuries earlier the prophet Isaiah said, “The people who walk in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shined” (Isa. 9:2). Our salvation hinges upon our recognizing the light and coming into the light (Jn. 1:9-11; 3:19-21).

The world began with God’s glory being its light, and it will end with God’s glory being its light for all eternity. In Revelation 21, an angel shows John the New Jerusalem. John says, “And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb” (vs. 22-23). For all eternity God’s people will bask in the sunshine of the light of God’s glory, while sinners “will be thrown into outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth” (Matt. 8:12).

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