

Light vs Darkness – The Patience of the Saints

December 19, 2020

We've just closed out the celebration of Hanukkah, lighting our candles, pondering the beauty of Yeshua the Light of the world, seeking his face in the flames each night, praising God for the mighty blessings he has given us. Perhaps seeing the connection of the birth of the Messiah and how he was the dedicated substitute for sin, the one that would sanctify our temple by his blood. We look around and see houses decorated with light displays of various expressions, Christmas trees, life and activity all around us as many are preparing for Christmas. Some are decorating their homes and yards with light to reflect the birth of our Savior, remembering that God sent his only son to this earth for redemption. Some are engaged in worldly pursuits, gifts, and temporal pleasures that have nothing to do with the Light that came into the world, you could say that even if their home is alight with decorations, they are actually in spiritual darkness, lost in an abyss, caught in the clutches of hell, and they don't even know it.

You see there are those that know the principle of the scripture, He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, Colossians 1:13, their life is a testimony to the Light, they've experienced the resurrection power of being born again when they died to the world & self and entered the Kingdom of God by his Spirit – darkness and sin no longer rule over their thoughts, emotions, or actions. Then there are those that have not experienced this reality in their daily walk. They may have heard this scripture, maybe even the quote it, but there is no evidence of that truth in their life they are always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. 2 Timothy 3:7 And of course, there are many that do not know the scripture or principle at all – they are either ignorant (untaught or untrained) or they're willfully defiant toward the Word of God.

This battle of light vs darkness began at creation. When God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. The light was good and God divided the light from the darkness. Genesis 1:2-4 That division has continued up through today and will continue until we reach the age to come where when darkness will be eliminated forever, the Light will be all we know.

As we look around our nation and the world we can clearly see that darkness is gaining ground. Just in our nation alone this year we've seen riots, and increased murders, suicides, drug addictions, abuse, depression, financial calamity, hurricanes, fires, and of course COVID and the fall out of darkness that has come from that – fraud, perversion, greed. From the 2020 World Watch List "Around the world, more than 260 million Christians live in places where they experience high levels of persecution, just for following Jesus. That's 1 in 8 believers, worldwide." Not only is the secular world seeing an increase in darkness, the believers are feeling the impact of that battle of Light vs darkness.

The scriptures expose this darkness and the motivations behind it.

“He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. **And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God.**” John 3:18-21

There is war in the place where Light and darkness meet. Only one will prevail. We know from an eternal standpoint that Light wins, but what about the battle that is raging within each one of us? Engaging in the war against darkness is not easy but if we are willing to come to the light and have our deeds exposed, the outcome will change the culture around us – in our lives, in our homes, in our families, in our communities, our work, our nation, even in the world.

Where do wars and fights come from among you? Do they not come from your desires for pleasure that war in your members? You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet you do not have because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures. Adulterers and adulteresses! **Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.** James 4:1-4

When we embrace the pleasures of this world and seek our own above and/or at the expense of another, we are operating as an enemy of God. When we compromise our integrity with unholy policies or ideologies, we are operating as an enemy of God. When we craft our actions or words to avoid negative perceptions and conflict or even to receive the praise of our family, friends, coworkers, or strangers, we are operating as an enemy of God.

As born again believers, children of God, we are called to be like our Savior and Lord, we are called to be light bearers that do not hide that light from the world – but to shine brightly for all to see so that they would be drawn to the light and be transformed. We are called to be holy as he is holy, without spot, without blemish. The hour is late and we must examine ourselves and prepare for the battle at hand and the days ahead. We cannot allow ourselves to stay in darkness, we must embrace the Light and let Him work in and through us to purify these vessels, to clean our cup from the inside out.

“The heart is deceitful above all things, And desperately wicked; Who can know it? **I, the Lord, search the heart, I test the mind,** Even to give every man according to his ways, According to the fruit of his doings. Jeremiah 17:9-10

The LORD not only searches our heart, but he also tests our mind. He will work with us in the searching and changing so when the testing comes we will be able to stand and overcome – well trained for the battle.

The bride prepared herself and the wise virgins had their vessels full, these things didn't just "happen" they were diligently pursued. Are you in pursuit of these things? Do you spend time in the Light of God, in his word, in his presence? Do you avoid being in the Light of God because it's uncomfortable or you feel overwhelmed with negative emotions like shame? Psalm 139 is an in depth discovery of how there is nothing hidden from God. We must allow His light to expose to us darkness within, we should not run from it, make excuses, or ignore it, but face it with Holy Spirit, repent, go to the cross and let Yeshua have the sin - exchange it for purity that is purchased by the blood. Fill your vessel with oil, cleanse your garments.

And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. Romans 12:1-2

This is a place of war – the spirit may be willing, but the flesh is weak. Our flesh is self-serving and self-preserving, it does not want to let go of its sin dominion – yet when we are born again, the spirit within us must rise up and subdue our flesh. The transformation from darkness into the light happens as the mind is renewed. The mind has been filled with whispers from the world systems, TV programming, music, movies, doubts, fears, unknowns. The mind is assaulted by doctrines of demons, those that twist the scriptures for their own gain, and straight up lies from the enemy. We wage war for our thought life, for what we feed our mind, what we feed our spirit.

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, 2 Corinthians 10:3-5

Our weapons are mighty to pull down strongholds, cast down arguments, anything that exalts itself against the knowledge of God – we are to bring every thought into captivity and submit it to the Word so that only His truth prevails. How do we bring our thoughts into captivity? That comes from a sober awareness of what we are thinking and abiding in the Word to know what is true. As a thought enters it is not allowed to take root or grow until it is held up to the standard of the Word – if it contradicts then it is cast down. We invite Holy Spirit into our thought life, he will help us to discern what is of God and what is not.

Our weapons also pull down strongholds. It's imperative that we know what our strongholds are so we can battle for them to be removed.

Let's look at the strongholds revealed in the scriptures and as we go through them take note of the ones that trigger you, and do not be afraid to dig deeper into them with the LORD – bring them into captivity before Him, and His love will purge you of that stronghold. Remember, this is war, it is not easy and it's not pretty, but it is imperative that Light wins and you have that stronghold removed.

Pastor Gene Hall from Kingdom Life Ministries has stated that “behind every lie is a fear, and behind every fear is an idol. Idols are established whenever there exists failure to trust in the provisions of God that are ours through Jesus Christ. Strongholds are pulled down and confronted bondage is broken as the spiritual weapons of God’s work, the Blood of the cross, and the name of Jesus are employed.”

...work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure. **Do all things without complaining and disputing, that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, holding fast the word of life.**.. Philippians 2:12-16

Stronghold: Unforgiveness

Manifestations:

- Anger: 1 John 3:15, Proverbs 15:1, Colossians 3:15
- Envy: James 3:16, Proverbs 14:30, 1 Corinthians 13:4
- Jealousy: Galatians 5:19-20, Galatians 5:22
- Bitterness: Hebrews 12:15, Ephesians 4:32
- Pride: Proverbs 16:18, 1 Peter 5:5
- Complaining: Philippians 2:14, 1 Timothy 6:6

Stronghold: Shame

Manifestations:

- Rebellion: 1 Samuel 15:23, Psalm 68:6, James 4:7
- Pride: Proverbs 16:18, 1 Peter 5:5
- Controlling: Philippians 4:6, 1 Thessalonians 5:11
- Cursing: Exodus 20:7, Colossians 3:8, Proverbs 18:21
- Deception: 2 Corinthians 11:14, Psalm 101:7, John 14:6
- Masking: Matthew 23:28, John 15:3
- Self-Centered: James 3:16, Matthew 16:25
- Money: 1 Timothy 6:10, Deuteronomy 6:5

Stronghold: Rejection

Manifestations:

- Sex for Approval: 1 Corinthians 6:18, 1 Corinthians 6:13
- Man Pleaser: Proverbs 29:25, 1 Corinthians 7:23
- Materialism: Matthew 16:26, 1 Timothy 6:6
- Non-Trusting: Proverbs 28:26, Psalm 32:10
- Fear: Job 3:25, 1 John 4:18, 2 Timothy 1:7
- Manipulating: 1 Thessalonians 4:7, Zechariah 8:16

If we do not address these spots on our garments then they are vulnerable targets for the enemy, they are not covered by armor.

Jurena Cook, pastor at Messiah's church, shared a vision she had some time ago where she saw a battlefield. On one end of the battle was a fierce, evil, black horde and on the other end were the saints of God, they were advancing toward each other. When she looked closely at the saints there were many that had black spots on their white garments. She saw that these areas were where the horde had access to bring great injury to the saint. Those saints that did not have spots on their garments were able to overtake the enemy and were protected in the battle.

Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. James 4:7:8

Let the LORD bring the strongholds you may have to light. You are cleansing your hands and purifying your heart through the process – removing the spots from your garments. Submitting to God for healing and restoration is the very act of resisting the devil. The enemy will quickly flee from you if every time he taunts, tempts, or trips you up, it causes you to draw closer to God.

In the book "The Three Battlegrounds" Francis Frangipane states: "Jesus prepared His disciples for everything, including spiritual warfare. ... he charged them to become wise "as serpents" yet innocent and harmless "as doves" (Matt.10:16) This fusion of divine wisdom and Christ like innocence is the taproot of all spiritual victory. Indeed, we can defeat the enemy, but wisdom must precede warfare and virtue must come before victory. We must learn the ways of God, which means that we must think with wisdom. And we must be pure of heart, that we may see God and gain discernment. Indeed it is the lack of discernment that has left us vulnerable to satanic attack.

As we clean our garments, fill our pots with oil, study to show ourselves approved, and press into the heart and wisdom of God we will be more than conquerors for the time that is quickly approaching. As we look around us we can see the world systems starting to take shape as the scriptures declare, we have no excuses, for those who have ears to hear, the LORD is speaking loudly.

"Behold, I send My messenger, And he will prepare the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, Will suddenly come to His temple, Even the Messenger of the covenant, In whom you delight. Behold, He is coming," Says the Lord of hosts. "But who can endure the day of His coming? And who can stand when He appears? For He is like a refiner's fire And like launderers' soap. He will sit as a refiner and a purifier of silver; He will purify the sons of Levi, And purge them as gold and silver, That they may offer to the Lord An offering in righteousness. Malachi 3:1-3

The Lord is a refiner's fire – His presence purifies. He is refining us even now, preparing the way for his coming. But before that day, there will be cataclysmic events that will radically change the face of the earth and will affect every living soul on this planet. Persecution of the believer will be the norm, and we must prepare our garments, our resolve, and be girded up in the Spirit to endure.

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, **that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.** Ephesians 6:10-13

Our strength comes from the Lord and the power of His might. As we purify ourselves, the whole armor of God will fit securely and He will give us the ability to withstand in the evil day. We will have the ability to stand in His peace, to stand in His word, to stand in His victory no matter what is happening around us or even what is happening to us.

“Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, **“Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death.** Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and you who dwell in them! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! For the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has a short time.” Now when the dragon saw that he had been cast to the earth, he persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male Child. But the woman was given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness to her place, where she is nourished for a time and times and half a time, from the presence of the serpent. So the serpent spewed water out of his mouth like a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away by the flood. But the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed up the flood which the dragon had spewed out of his mouth. **And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.**” Revelation 12:10-17

Important pieces of that scripture to take note: This time in history future when the dragon makes war against the children of God – those who keep his word and have the testimony of Jesus. This is a significant event for the believer as an outpouring of grace for obedience to the faith and power to fulfill our mission is released. This is when salvation, strength, the kingdom of our God and the power of His Christ come in great manifestation.

Rev. 13 & 14 both comment on the patience of the saints as it relates to this event in history future - the persecution and martyrdom of the saints of God.

Then he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, His tabernacle, and those who dwell in heaven. It was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them. And authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation. All who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. If anyone has an ear, let him hear. He who leads into captivity shall go into captivity; he who kills with the sword must be killed with the sword. **Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.** Revelation 13:6:10

Then a third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, "If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives his mark on his forehead or on his hand, he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation. He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever; and they have no rest day or night, who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name." **Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.** Then I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, "Write: 'Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.'" "Yes," says the Spirit, "that they may rest from their labors, and their works follow them." Revelation 14:9:13

To clarify the word patience, which also means endurance and perseverance:

Romans 5:3 And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance;

Colossians 1:11 strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy;

Hebrews 12:1 Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,

James 5:11 Indeed we count them blessed who endure. You have heard of the perseverance of Job and seen the end intended by the Lord--that the Lord is very compassionate and merciful.

While no one likes to think about those scenarios, we need to be willing to examine ourselves now and prepare for that eventuality. There are three ways that we overcome the enemy, so that we have the patience to endure, and we obtain the crown of life that is presented to those killed for their faith:

The blood of the Lamb cleanses us from all sin and unrighteousness, removes the spots, and secures our place in God's Kingdom.

The word of our testimony gives all glory to God alone, it lifts up the name of Yeshua, just as the serpent was lifted up in the wilderness during the Exodus, and all that look to Him, calling upon His name will be saved. The power of our testimony – the words we speak, the life we live, display the manifold wisdom of God to all creation.

Not loving our lives to the death is the loudest SHOUT of victory to our God and King. Within that sacrifice is the power of resurrection, and when a seed falls to the ground it will produce fruit. Laying our life down is sharing in the suffering of our Lord Jesus, it is the ultimate expression of love for God and His eternal purposes. It is the ultimate expression of faith. That act destroys the kingdom of darkness and gives our Lord precision when he executes his judgment upon the devil and the kingdom of darkness.

I know this is a heavy topic. It is one we dare not avoid. We must be in communion with the LORD on these very things. The enemy is terrified that you will grab ahold of the truth within these scriptures and that you would abandon yourself to the power of God to transform your life.

As you press in, I strongly encourage you to be diligent, militant even, to dedicate time with the LORD in worship. He will inhabit your praise, he manifests himself with the atmosphere of worship. This is the place of intimacy where He will tenderly examine your heart, address the spots, set you free, light you on fire, and empower you to live and die for Him.

The Light that has come into the World is still here, he is beckoning you to come deeper into His presence, into His word, and to become the agent of Light that will change your family, your neighborhood, your workplace, our city, our state, our nation – one person at a time. I implore you not to run from this blessed opportunity. I implore you not to let the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life to rob you of your inheritance in Yeshua. He is the greatest gift we could ever receive. He loves you more than you can comprehend.

Jesus prayed to the Father:

I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth. As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me; for You loved Me before the foundation of the world. O righteous Father! The world has not known You, but I have known You; and these have known that You sent Me. And I have declared to them Your name, and will declare it, that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them.” John 17:14-18 & 24-26

Hear his heart for you and be the light of hope that this dark world needs so desperately. May the LORD bless you with strength for the journey, patience for the battle and that the joy set before you would enable you to endure until the end to the praise and glory of His name.