

Black and White

07/27/2014

Hymns: 19 The Light of the World Is Jesus 42 Heavenly Sunlight
Psalm 139:1-12; Isaiah 9:2-7

Let's start off today with a very familiar riddle. What's **black** and **white** and read all over?

- Newspaper
- Zebra with a sunburn
- Zebra covered in catsup

The riddle serves as a springboard into our topic for today: the concept of black and white – light and darkness.

On March 5, 2008, NBC News published an article entitled:
Black Pups Face Doggie Discrimination
Subtitle: – Dark-coated pooches tend to linger in shelters the longest.

Here are a few quotes from that article:

Big, black dogs are often the last to be adopted from animal shelters — a phenomenon known in pet rescue circles as "black dog syndrome."

A Humane Society representative summed it up this way:

*"...I think that every person that has worked in a shelter can attest that in shelters **animals with black coats** can be somewhat harder to adopt out — or to even get noticed."*

The president of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals said **of** dogs with black coats:

*"They're the hardest to adopt out, they're in the shelters the longest and therefore, they're **most likely to be euthanized...**"*

Not surprisingly, black cats face a similar fate. After all, who wants a black cat crossing his path several times a day? To the superstitious, that sounds like just asking for trouble.

And think about those old westerns. The bad guys wore – *black hats* – and the good guys wore – *white ones*.

And do you remember the *Wizard of Oz*? That Wicked Witch of the West was dressed from head to toe in **black**. And for the younger generation there's of course that evil, black warrior from *Star Wars*, *Darth Vader*. So what's the deal with *black*? Why did it get such a bad rap? We'll be looking at that today, but before we do, let's review what we learned last time.

Review

We looked at the topic the *Bride of Christ* and found this bride is the church, that is, the body of

believers who have put their faith and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ as their Savior. We saw how God uses the covenant of a marriage between a man and a woman to demonstrate how Jesus Christ relates to His bride, the church. From there, we examined something called *the wedding model* patterned after the Jewish wedding customs in practice at the time when Jesus walked this earth.

First, came a solemn agreement or covenant by a man and woman to become husband and wife. The man paid a price to purchase his bride, and the bride freely chose to enter into a marriage covenant with him. Then the husband left his bride for an unspecified period of time to prepare a place in his father's house for the couple to live.

Second, the bridegroom returned to claim his bride, shouted, and she, being ready and waiting, answered his call and met him. He took her with him to the place he prepared where they united as husband and wife and friends celebrated at a great banquet.

In this study, we saw a beautiful picture how the Lord, has gone to prepare a place for us, will come again with a shout, and we will meet Him in the air to go with Him to His father's house. This is called the *rapture* of the church. We anxiously anticipate the shout from our Bridegroom, the Lord Jesus Christ. When we leave this earth, a **counterfeit** Christ, called the Antichrist and also called the Beast, will come on the world scene. We'll learn about him next time.

But today, we want to build a foundation for that study and explore what the Bible says about the differences between the good and evil, light and darkness. In the process, we should get a better idea of our own nature and the forces of good and evil that surround us.

Genesis 1:1, there's nothing like starting at the beginning.

Genesis 1

[1] *In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.*

[2] *And the earth was without form, and void; and **darkness** was upon the face of the deep.*

Interestingly, by the second verse in the Bible, we have already encountered *darkness*. It is certainly an important topic.

As we will learn today, *darkness* often refers to evil. Could evil have begun at this point? Perhaps, but we're not told. We do know it was here by Genesis chapter 3 when Satan comes on the scene.

And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

[3] *And God said, Let there be **light**: and there was **light**.*

[4] *And God saw the **light**, that **it was good**:*

Notice **light was good**. Significantly, there's **no mention** of darkness being good.

and God divided the **light** from the **darkness**.

[5] And God called the **light Day**, and the **darkness** he called **Night**. And the evening and the morning were the first day.

Could this seemingly endless cycle of night and day symbolize the struggle that we face on the earth between evil and good? Again, it is interesting to consider, but we're not told.

As you may know, we have a medium-sized, two-year-old **black** doggie named *Grace*. Some of you have even seen her. She doesn't wear a watch, but she certainly can tell time. We really don't even need an alarm clock to get us up in the morning. *Grace* is up at the crack of dawn. She's very considerate but still let's us know when morning has arrived.

Back about five weeks ago we had the summer solstice, the first day of summer, and the longest day. Sunrise on that day was just before 6 a.m. Thankfully, today sunrise is about twenty minutes later. That's twenty minutes more sleep in our case.

It's interesting to note that you're living at a place called *Sunrise*. After this study today, perhaps when you hear or read that name or see that rising-sun symbol, you can think of the **light** that God brought into the world to dispel **darkness** – both the physical one, the sun, and the spiritual one, the Son of God. As we learned when we studied heaven, there's coming a time when the **brilliant light from the Lord** will illuminate **all of heaven**.

Revelation 22

[5] And there shall be **no night** there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for **the Lord God giveth them light**: ...

That is one of the **last verses** in the Bible. What a contrast from the beginning of the Bible. It starts with darkness but ends with light.

Here are a couple of passages that refer to Jesus Christ in particular as the light:

Isaiah 9

[2] The people that **walked in darkness** have **seen a great light**: they that dwell in the land of the **shadow of death**, upon them hath the **light shined**.

John 3

[19] And this is the condemnation, that **light is come into the world**,

speaking, of course, of Jesus Christ

and **men loved darkness rather than light**,

The people rejected Him. Why?

because their **deeds were evil**.

[20] For **every one that doeth evil hateth the light**, neither cometh to the light,

[why?]

lest his deeds should **be reproved**.

People want to be comfortable in their sin. Perhaps as a Christian you've experienced this where unbelievers do not want you to be around them because you remind them **by your very presence** that **what** they are doing is wrong. If flawed Christians evoke that kind of reaction, we can see how the sinless Jesus Christ would produce a far greater conviction among godless men.

[21] But he that **doeth truth cometh to the light**, that his **deeds may be made** [known], that they are wrought in God.

And in the commission that the Lord gave to Saul who became Paul the Apostle the Bible shows us the clear parallel of meanings for light and darkness:

Acts 26

[18] To open their eyes [speaking of the Gentiles], and to turn them from **darkness to light**, and from the power of **Satan unto God**,

The parallel here is clear: *darkness* refers to Satan and *light* to God.

Light and *darkness* can also refer to having your mind illuminated vs. being unable to understand and see the truth. Sometimes we say a light went off in his head. By that we mean that he finally understands something. Similarly, when someone does not *get it* we say that they are *blind* or *in the dark*.

The following very familiar passage describes the day of the Lord's wrath that begins after the church is called home to be with the Lord:

I Thessalonians 5

[2] For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord

...the time of the Lord's wrath

so cometh as a **thief in the night**.

[3] For when they shall say, *Peace and safety*; then sudden **destruction cometh upon them**, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.

*[4] But ye, brethren, are not in **darkness**, that that day should overtake you as a **thief**.
[5] Ye are all the children of **light**, and the children of the **day**: we are not of the **night**, nor of **darkness**.*

So we have just read Jesus is light and light can mean *understanding*. Next, we have a verse that asserts that God, the Father, also is light.

I John 1

*[5] This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that **God is light**, and in him is **no darkness at all**.*

This hearkens back to the question I posed after reading of darkness in Genesis 1:2 and is food for thought. Now, we have it clearly laid out that God the Father and the Son are light and without darkness. Yet was this always the case? The Bible says it wasn't. Can anyone think of when that happened?

II Corinthians 5:21

*[21] For he [God] hath **made him** [Jesus] **to be sin for us**, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.*

In the following verse we have different imagery describing the same event.

John 3

*[14] And **as Moses lifted up the serpent** in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up:*

Do you remember that story. Israelites wandered in the wilderness and complained. The Lord sent snakes that killed some of them. They cried to Moses, and Moses made a bronze snake on a pole. All who were bitten that looked at that serpent on the pole were healed. The serpent and its bite represented sin. Satan, the author of sin, is even called "that old serpent" (Revelation 12:9; 20:2).

In Luke 23, we see God used darkness to punctuate the weight of evil that His Son bore on the cross :
Luke 23

*[44] And it was about the sixth hour, and there was a **darkness over all the earth** until the ninth hour.*

*[45] And the sun was **darkened**, and the veil of the temple was rent in the midst.*

We have seen that *light* represents **good** and enlightenment, and *darkness* stands for **evil** and lack of understanding. We've also learned that when Jesus Christ bore our sin on the cross he *became* sin at that moment in some mysterious way on our behalf.

This convergence of good and evil did not stop with Jesus Christ. Did you know that if you are born again, you have a **war** going on within you? Here's what the Apostle Paul said about that.

Romans 7

[18] For I know that **in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing**: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.

[19] For **the good that I would [,] I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.**

[22] For I delight in the law of God after the inward man:

[23] But I see another law **in my members, warring against the law of my mind**, and bringing me into captivity to the law of **sin** which is **in my members**.

[24] O wretched man that I am! **who shall deliver me from the body of this death?**

Here he gives the answer.

[25] I thank God through **Jesus Christ our Lord**.

He's our Savior, our Deliverer and He's the One Who empowers us by His Spirit.

So then **with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.**

This war **he** speaks of is between the **darkness** of the **old nature** we received when we were **born** physically and the **light** of the **new nature** we received when we were **born again**.

Application

Unlike the sad fate of black dogs, God does not judge us by our hair color.

I Samuel 16

[7] ...for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for **man** looketh on the **outward appearance**, but the LORD looketh on the **heart**.

While that's some comfort, unfortunately man has a **heart** problem.

Jeremiah 17

[9] The **heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked**: who can know it?

Each of us has a choice to make. Since the fall of Adam, men have been born with a fatal flaw – a sin nature. Each one of us falls short of God's perfect standard. It's a **black and white** issue.

*For all have **sinned**, and come short of the glory of God;* (Romans 3:23)

There's no gray here. To be acceptable to God we must be perfect.

*For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is **guilty** of all.* (James

2:10)

To put it another way, if I break the law, I am a lawbreaker.

Unlike innocent black shelter dogs that did nothing to deserve their fate, we deserve to be condemned, God has made provision through the death, burial, and resurrection of His Son, the spotless Lamb of God, that whoever trusts in Him can receive His righteousness and be made perfect in God's eyes.

When we accept His free gift of salvation, God makes us a new creation and places the **light** of His Holy Spirit within us. Until we shed these bodies we still have **the darkness** of the **old nature** we're born with, but we also have the option to enlist the power of this **new nature** and to **win the war** and **live a life** victorious over the **bondage of sin** and pleasing to God.

Benediction

*Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling,
and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy,
To the only wise God our Saviour,
be glory and majesty,
dominion and power,
both now and ever. Amen. (Jude 24-25)*

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