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The Lord God is a Sun

#1124-B

Series: Making the Spiritual Switch



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Try it sometime. Try turning off the lights at your house at sunset. Try spending an entire evening in total darkness. After you've bumped into all the furniture, found it impossible to find your way around the kitchen or even eat a cold meal, it will not be difficult to imagine what it would be like if tomorrow morning the sun didn't come up at all. Even if you yielded to the need to light a single candle, life would be difficult at best. About all you could do would be to grope your way to the bed and go to sleep. Picture living an entire day in that same kind of darkness!

Then take it a step further. Imagine the quality of life if the sun *never came up again*. That possibility is almost beyond imagination, but some results are obvious: plants dependent upon sunlight would die; human beings, who also need sunlight, would fall prey to illnesses and depression; chilling cold weather would set in.

LET THERE BE LIGHT!

It's easy to see why the first thing God did in the creation process was to say, "Let there be light" (Genesis 1:3). And, of course, when God spoke, *there was light*.

Those words are fraught with meaning, for without God, there is no light, either physically or spiritually. Light is a gift from God; it is not something He owes mankind. Should God speak a word, this world as we know it would be plunged into total darkness for all eternity. Creating light was a deliberate act from His sovereign hand to demonstrate to us the difference between the kingdom of light and the kingdom of darkness.

Were Satan to have his way, there would be no light. His entire scheme of things functions best in darkness. That is why immorality, drugs and other forms of Satanic deception are often found in dark places. Bars and clubs which promote immorality are notoriously dark. The works of Satan fester best in the darkness; the works of God are manifested best in the light.

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The contrast is so great that the best words to describe two things totally different are “they are as different as night and day”. The study of light brings us to the spiritual switch which deals primarily with God’s “interim” source of light, the sun. It is only an “interim source”, because the day is soon coming when the sun will be put to bed one night and never rise again. It will never need to do so because it is a temporary substitute for the real thing. One golden daybreak you and I will be ushered into a kingdom that has no need of the sun or the moon or the stars. There will be light: brilliant, glowing illumination emanating from the person of God Himself. Night will be a thing of the past; the works of darkness will never again be seen. Until then, God has devised an incredible method of heating and lighting this place we call planet earth.

Genesis, the book of beginnings, tells us there was a beginning to what we know as night and day. In chapter 1 we read,

And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness *was* upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.

And God saw the light, that *it was* good: and God divided the light from the darkness.

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

(Genesis 1:2-5)

On the very first “day” of creation, God created light. He looked at His creation, and He said, “*That’s good.*” He divided the light from the darkness and gave them both names. The light He called “day”, and the darkness He called “night”. Then, on the fourth day we find:

And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years:

And let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth: and it was so.

And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: he made the stars also.

And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth,

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And to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness: and God saw that it was good.

And the evening and the morning were the fourth day.

(Genesis 1:14-19)

God first named that “greater light” for us in Genesis 15:12. It was called the “sun”. It is a word found 168 times in Scripture. We read of it “going down” in Genesis 15; of it “setting” in Luke 4; of it “rising” in Numbers 2; and of it “standing still” in Joshua 10. And the more we read about it, the more intriguing it becomes to see just why God chose to structure the universe with this great ball of fire at its heart, and why God chose to make planet earth so dependent upon this “sun” for its existence.

THE STORY OF THE SUN

1- The earth’s movement around the sun was appointed to create divisions in what we know as time. Life on planet earth was divided into days, years and seasons, according to Genesis 1:14, and *the sun* was to be God’s clock to determine those divisions. It was the “rising of the sun” that began the Jewish day, according to Genesis 19 and Judges 9. It was the “setting of the sun” that ended the Jewish day and caused the commencement of evening in Genesis 28 and Deuteronomy 24. God never intended for life to go on and on and on without specific interruptions and divinely appointed changes. He makes the day only so long, then calls on the sun, His heavenly timekeeper, to call “time out.” As it lays its head upon the pillows of heaven and reflects its glory through the moon, even so man is given rest from his labors and refreshment from the heat of the day so he can then begin again at the dawn of each new day. In the same way, the years and the seasons are measured by the rising and the setting of the sun as the earth travels around it.

Moving at more than 43,000 miles per hour, this incredible fiery creation, heated to approximately 12,000 degrees on its surface and some 40 million degrees at its center, follows its path through the entire heavens once a year. It is our dividing marker for every day, for every year, and for every season. It is our time clock, our calendar, and our alarm. It is one of the most fascinating examples in creation of our God’s infinite attention to detail and of the perfect orderliness of His world. It was designed to teach us how to live orderly, disciplined lives.

God never intended for His people to wander through life

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aimlessly. He has a plan for each day, and He executes that plan to perfection. His chief executive officer in that regard is none other than “the sun”. As the sun is the center, the earth’s movements around it determines the days, the seasons and the years. The sun, which remains the constant, has never failed to be on time. It is the personification of the nature of God, *who always keeps His promises*. Christians who are habitually late for appointments are not exhibiting the mind of God. God always appears on schedule. He offers as proof of that fact, the timetable He has gloriously set in the heavens. So perfect is His plan that man can set his clocks to the millisecond. He can plan a trip to the moon, or He can perfectly chronicle the days and the seasons decades in advance, knowing that they will come to pass *precisely on schedule*. The sun is God’s precious timekeeper; it is man’s priceless timepiece.

2- The sun is set in the heavens as a testimony of God’s faithfulness. Many of God’s attributes are exhibited in that ball of fire that lights our universe, but probably none is as clearly defined Scripturally as its demonstration of God’s faithfulness. Here are a few verses to consider:

They shall fear thee as long as the sun and moon endure,
throughout all generations. (Psalm 72:5)

In verse 17 of the same Psalm we read,

His name shall endure for ever: his name shall be continued
as long as the sun: and *men* shall be blessed in him: all
nations shall call him blessed. (Psalm 72:17)

Still, perhaps the most powerful passage in this regard is in Psalm 89,

My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone
out of my lips.

Once have I sworn by my holiness that I will not lie unto
David.

His seed shall endure forever, and his throne as the sun
before me.

It shall be established forever as the moon, and as a faithful
witness in heaven. Selah. (Psalm 89:34-36)

The faithfulness of God is inscribed in the heavens, eternally formed in the shape of the sun. The sun is God’s seal of His faithfulness, established forever as a faithful witness that His

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name shall be continued as long as the sun exists. Since its inception, that blazing phenomenon in the sky has never lost its brilliance. Every morning it has “risen” in the east; every evening it has “set” in the west. Every day at noontime it has cast its blazing heat upon the earth. Never has it failed. Never will it fail until God puts it to rest in that great eternity to come. Why? It is a symbol of God’s faithfulness, that’s why.

It speaks in the heavens of God’s Word, which will *always be faithful*. How does that apply to you personally? Think about that promise you’ve been clinging to from God’s Word, the one that seems to be taking an eternity to come to pass. You are beginning to lose heart. The hours have stretched into days; the days into weeks; the weeks into months; now the months have seemingly stretched interminably into years. You still cling to the promise, but nothing seems to be happening. Subtly, you begin to question: “Will it ever come to pass? Has God forgotten?”

Go outside at sunrise, Beloved, and *ask God that question*. Just as those precious rays make their daily entrance into the heavens, casting their light across the horizon, highlighting the leaves on the trees, flinging their shadows across the mountaintops, awakening all of nature as they defeat the darkness and as their beams play reveille for the world—go out and *then*—ask God if He’s faithful. Ask Him, as once again, *always on schedule*, the brilliance of God’s sun lights the skies: can your Word be counted on?

You’ll fall to your knees in utter humility and ask His forgiveness for ever doubting for one second the faithfulness of a God whose total dependability is written in the glow of a creation called “the sun”.

THE BLESSING OF SUNRISE

The blessing of sunrise
For granted we take,
And yet, when we do,
There is so much at stake.

We arise in the morning,
And e’re we begin,
With presumption, we say
“Oh, the sun’s up again!”

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But, oh, my Beloved,
Dare we children, e're
Take so for granted
God's tender care?

And, dare we ever
So ungrateful be
That God's great faithfulness
We fail to see?

No, child of God,
Heed this great warning:
God's great compassions
Are new every morning.

And at every sunrise,
God's saying to you,
"Each day of your life
I AM faithful and true."

Tomorrow, my child,
Let your heart gaze above,
Praising God for the sunrise,
The seal of His love!

THE GLORY OF GOD: REPRESENTED BY THE SUN

The brilliance of the sun, as incredible as it is, cannot even be compared with the radiance of God's glory or the glory His saints will one day share in eternity. If God's holiness were to be seen in all its splendor, for example, it would make the sun seem as the flash of a tiny firefly on a dark night—visible but temporary, discernible for only a second. Revelation 1:16 describes the countenance of Jesus, the Son of Man, for us: "his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength."

We really cannot grasp the magnitude of what it will be like to see His glory, for we do not have eyes to behold it. But one day we shall be changed, and in that day, according to I John 3:2, "we shall see Him as He is." How? Because "We shall be like Him." We will have our resurrection bodies; sin will be gone; we will have been refashioned at last into His likeness, and *then* we shall see Him as He is. Until then, we simply cannot behold all of His glory any more than Moses could.

Therefore, He has given us the blessing of the sun. Each

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morning as it bursts upon the horizon it is like the preview of a movie: you cannot know the plot in its entirety, but *from what you can see*, you know that you want to see more.

As the sun lifts its head each morning, it shouts to the believer, "Catch a glimpse of the glory of God." No, you cannot stare upon the sun directly; your eyes cannot stand it. That's why Paul said in I Corinthians 13:12: "Now we see through a glass darkly: but then face to face." Now we see the glory of God through "sunglasses". When we get to heaven, *even though the brilliance will be ten trillion times as great*, we can take off those glasses and behold Him as He is. The sun is our reminder of that truth. Donning a pair of sunglasses can be a reminder to stop and worship God for that day when *you will not need to see Him through a glass darkly, but face to face*.

Every time the sun's brilliance gets in your eyes and you are awed by its strength, stop to worship God for His glory and for the magnificence of His nature that causes His very holiness to shine as the sun.

THE GLORY WILL BE REFLECTED IN THE FACES OF BELIEVERS.

Thank Him, too, that *a part of that glory can be seen even now on planet earth in the faces of God's children*. In Exodus 34 when Moses had received the ten commandments, we see that after spending forty days on the mountain with God,

And it came to pass, when Moses came down from mount Sinai with the two tables of testimony in Moses' hand, when he came down from the mount, that Moses wist not that the skin of his face shown while he talked with him.

And when Aaron and all the children of Israel saw Moses, behold, the skin of his face shown; and they were afraid to come nigh him. (Exodus 34:29,30)

On the Mount of Transfiguration we observe how the face of Jesus appeared to Peter, James and John as "his face did shine as the sun" (Matthew 13:31).

The righteous shall "shine forth as the sun" (Matthew 13:43). One day we shall shine, because we shall "be like Him." So every time the sun comes up, think of the awesomeness of His holiness; the magnificence of His glory, and remember that one day "we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is" (I John 3:2). The

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glory of the sun is a tiny preview of the day when we shall see fully the glory of the Son and of the glory we, as *His sons*, will one day share.

Seeing a beautiful sunrise should lead to thoughts of heaven. How can you view the sun in all of its glory and not be just a tiny bit jealous of those who have already gone to be with Him? How can you see the brilliance of the sun and not long for that eternal home where His glory will be so awesome that the sun itself will be put away forever? We read in Revelation 21,

And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it; for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. (Revelation 21:23)

One day there will be no need for the symbol as we experience the light directly. Although here and now we are only privileged to behold a small fraction of the Son's glory, we can, like the moon, reflect that glory to the degree that we remain free from the contamination of sin and to the degree that we remain in His presence and His Word.

There is, however, a prerequisite to our ability to reflect the glory.

Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech:

And not as Moses, *which* put a veil over his face, that the children of Israel could not steadfastly look to the end of that which is abolished:

But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same veil untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which *veil* is done away in Christ.

But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the veil is upon their heart.

Nevertheless when it shall turn to the LORD, the veil shall be taken away. (II Corinthians 3:12-16)

The unbeliever cannot reflect the glory of God at all. Moses' veil is symbolic of the veil that covers the eyes of Israel and of the eyes of those who will not believe.

The sun, which represents the glory of God which man cannot look upon and live, also serves as a reminder that the unbeliever has a veil over his eyes even to this day; but whenever he turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. It also ought to remind us

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of the truth of verse 18 of chapter 3 that as we, *with unveiled faces*, behold God's glory we are actually *changed from one degree of glory to another*. In fact, a bit of the Son's glory will actually shine in our faces if we are faithful to behold Him day by day. Ecclesiastes 8 reminds us,

...a man's wisdom [his relationship with God] maketh his face to shine, and the boldness of his face shall be changed.

(Ecclesiastes 8:1)

That's why, as one person shared with me recently, you can walk into a nursing home or a hospital room and immediately see men and women *you just know* have a walk with Jesus. Why? Even in their pain, their *faces shine like the sun*. How is that so? Day by day, in ever increasing splendor, they have grown from glory to glory by spending time with God. Every time the clouds appear and block our view of the sun, we ought to be reminded of the times we permit the clouds of circumstances to keep us from the presence of God, allowing the glow of His glory to fade until it is not visible at all in us.

The portrait of the sun then, is the picture of the *nature* of God. Its perfection teaches us of His sovereignty, of His perfect orderliness, and of His faithfulness. And the *glory* of the sun—its brilliance and brightness—teaches us of the glory of God and of that part of His glory that is transferred into the lives of His children as they spend time absorbing the “son-shine” of His presence day by day. It further reminds us of that glory which will one day be ours when we see Him “face to face” and behold His glory, seeing Him as He is, for we will be *like Him*.

The sun's *story* and the sun's *glory* lead up to one final truth. That truth is that the sun is not just a partial portrait of God—His nature and of His glory—but it is indeed a portrait of *God Himself*. We cannot directly see God, of course.

No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.

(John 1:18)

The only way man has seen God is through Jesus Christ. As we spend time in His Word, the Son, who is the Living Word, reveals the nature of God to us and we see, in part, His glory. But as a wonderful visual aid, the entire heavens have been arranged by God as a backdrop for the sun, allowing us glimpses not only of His nature and glory, but of His power. Psalm 19 explains,

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The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handiwork.

Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge.

There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard.

Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun,

Which *is* as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, *and* rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race.

His going forth *is* from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it: and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof. (Psalm 19:1-6)

God has in the heavens created a tabernacle for the sun; a holy setting in which the sun dramatizes His Son. The sun as it rises each morning is like a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, even the Lord Jesus Christ. He moves across the heavens like an athlete running a race. He moves across the heavens without hindrance, and nothing can prevent the intensity of his heat from its chosen path. All day long the sun speaks of God. All night long, the sun's light reflected in the moon speaks of God. They are both housed in a heavenly sanctuary, and they shine with perfection because they represent perfection, even God Himself. That's what the Psalmist meant in Psalm 84,

Blessed *is* the man whose strength *is* in thee; in whose heart *are* the ways *of* them.

Who passing through the valley of Baca make it a well; the rain also filleth the pools.

They go from strength to strength, *every one of them* in Zion appeareth before God.

O LORD God of hosts, hear my prayer: give ear, O God of Jacob. Selah.

Behold, O God our shield, and look upon the face of thine anointed.

For a day in thy courts *is* better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.

For the LORD God *is* a sun and shield: the LORD will give grace and glory: no good *thing* will he withhold from them that

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walk uprightly.

O LORD of hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in thee.

(Psalm 84:5-12)

The Lord God *is a sun*. What you see in the sun speaks not only of who God is, but of what God does. He is both our sun and our shield. He delivers to us spiritually everything the sun delivers to us physically and shields us from the rays of the evil one at the same time.

The Lord God *is a sun*. That means He is the source of all light. There is no spiritual Truth that can be imparted to man apart from Him. That means He is the source of all warmth. There is no genuine comfort apart from His Spirit, who is the Comforter. That means He is the source of all life. There is no spiritual birth apart from that divine birth that takes place when man asks God to dwell in His heart. That means He is the source of all growth. The branch cannot grow except it be kissed by the sun. The Lord God *is a sun*. All that the sun does, the Son does, because the sun was created to be on planet earth what the Son is in the Kingdom of God; light, warmth, life, growth. Everything.

We are not to worship the sun. God forbid. Deuteronomy 17 tells of God's wrath upon those who do.

If there be found among you,...

And [any who] hath gone and served other gods, and worshipped them, either the sun, or moon, or any of the host of heaven, which I have not commanded;

...shalt stone them with stones, till they die.

(Deuteronomy 17:2,3,5)

But we are to worship The Son, and to enable us to better grasp His glory and appropriate His power, God has designed in the heavens a tabernacle which reveals four truths concerning Himself. The sun is never late; never does it alter its course; never does it fail to fulfill its purpose. Never. Never does it cease to shine. Sometimes clouds come between us and it, but once those clouds fade from view, the sun is there as always, and it was always there, even when it was out of sight.

Mornings are often the best times to worship. God has said,

...his compassions fail not.

They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness.

(Lamentations 3:22b,23)

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As the sun lifts its head and rises to meet us, even so we are reminded that *the Lord God is a sun*. And we are reminded of the Psalmist's assurance in Psalm 119, which paraphrased says,

And when I awaken in the morning, you are still thinking of me!
(Psalm 139:18 TLB)

God waits through the night watches for you to awaken so He can greet you and infuse you with life. You may say, "I don't feel like He's there." Then go outdoors and watch a sunrise. As that intense ball of fire casts its first rays across the horizon, simply repeat these words, "*The Lord God is a sun*." Then fall to your knees and worship Him for His faithfulness. He has not forgotten you, any more than the sun has forgotten to rise. He has not forsaken you any more than the sun has forsaken its mission to give light and life to all who will drink of its rays. He will not be late, anymore than the sun is late because it overslept. Never does it fail to greet the dawn on schedule, and never will God fail to meet your needs on schedule. *The Lord God is a sun*. He is always faithful and always on time. Because the Lord God is a sun, we can rest assured that every time we drink of the brilliance of that sun, or have to put on dark glasses to protect us from its rays, God is whispering in our ears,

But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings;
(Malachi 4:2a)

Just as the brilliance of the sun floods the world with light at noonday, so the brilliance of God's Son will one day light the heavens with such an awesome display of illumination that apart from our transformation into His likeness we could not stand it. But, ah, we will be *like Him...and thus we will see Him as He is*: in all of His glory, in all of His beauty, in all of His holiness. There will be no need of the sun on that day. Its purpose will have been fulfilled; its mission will have been accomplished. The portrait will have been withdrawn, for the person of whom the portrait speaks will be there, and there will be no need for animated illustrations.

So if you feel sorry for those who have gone on before you to heaven, think again. If you are a child of God, the moment you leave this tattered, sin-worn world, you will enter into a world of such brilliant light you will require new eyes to behold it. You will enter a world of sunlight, but there will be no sun. Of course there will be no sun. For the Lord Himself shall be the light thereof, *and the Lord God is a sun*.

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OH, LORD GOD, YOU ARE OUR SUN

Oh, Lord God, *you are our sun*;
You meet our every need.
Your rays of warmth infuse our hearts;
Our every cry you heed.

You never fail to be there,
Like the sun, your heavenly sign;
And even when we tend to doubt,
You always come on time.

You are our sun, and oh, Lord,
As each dawn writes its story,
May we but be reminded of
Those coming days of glory;

And may we long to see that hour
When life in heaven's begun,
And we will need no other light,
For you will be *our sun!*

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A Challenge to Further Study and Application

1- What do you think God meant in Genesis 1:4 when He said, “God saw that it was good”? Why was light so important to the process of creation? Why so early in the process?

2- What do you think is the spiritual significance of the sun and the moon? What spiritual principles do you think are being depicted by each?

3- Reread Psalm 89:34-36. Put it in your own words. How ought this to help you to rest daily in His faithfulness?

4- Read Revelation 10:1, and Matthew 17:1,2 again. What is God saying about Jesus, and why did He use the sun as His example?

5- Ask God for the opportunity to spend some time each day for the next week watching the sun rise or set, while meditating on the miracle of light, the concept of God’s glory, and the promises of heaven where there will be no need of light apart from God’s presence. Worship God because “the Lord God is a sun”. Learn to thank Him each morning that His compassions are “new every morning”. Thank Him for His incredible faithfulness.

6- Think this week about what the sun means to the universe. Now make the spiritual switch. Make a spiritual parallel to each of the physical things the sun does for us and stop to worship God for each one. “The Lord God is a Sun”. That means He is to us spiritually what the sun is to us physically. Praise Him.

Memorize: Psalm 84:10-12

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