

## **The Speaking God: I Am the Light.**

*This light is genuine because it is universal;  
every person, all people, the entire  
world of men and women, are wholly dependent  
on this one divine light.<sup>1</sup>*

### ***Genesis 1:1-9***

<sup>1</sup> In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. <sup>2</sup> Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.

<sup>3</sup> And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. <sup>4</sup> God saw that the light was good, and He separated the light from the darkness. <sup>5</sup> God called the light "day," and the darkness he called "night." And there was evening, and there was morning—the first day.

<sup>6</sup> And God said, "Let there be an expanse between the waters to separate water from water." <sup>7</sup> So God made the expanse and separated the water under the expanse from the water above it. And it was so. <sup>8</sup> God called the expanse "sky." And there was evening, and there was morning—the second day.

<sup>9</sup> And God said, "Let the water under the sky be gathered to one place, and let dry ground appear." And it was so.

### ***John 1:1-9***

<sup>1</sup>In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup>He was with God in the beginning. <sup>3</sup>Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. <sup>4</sup>In him was life, and that life was the light of men. <sup>5</sup>The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.

<sup>6</sup>There came a man who was sent from God; his name was John. <sup>7</sup>He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all men might believe. <sup>8</sup>He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light. <sup>9</sup>The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world.



At the conclusion of our last lesson<sup>2</sup>, I asked you to read Exodus 19:1-20 and list features of the character of God that you find there. The context of the passage is that the Hebrews had been delivered from bondage by God under the leadership of Moses, and were now at Mt. Sinai, where they will receive the Ten Words (Ten Commandments).

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<sup>1</sup> R.C.H. Lenski, Interpretation of St. John's Gospel, chapter 1, verse 9.

<sup>2</sup> "The Speaking God: The Holy Mountain"

Exodus 19:1-20 revolves around God's relationship with Moses in preparation for this key event. It is one of the most important turning points in the Bible. Let's see, now what did you find concerning the character of the Almighty? I'm going to lead off with three "discoveries" about God. Note yours in the margin of the paper or on the back of the page.

➤ The dominant theme for Exodus 19:1-20 is the unutterable majesty of God. His character is that of *a noble ruler, one that cares for His people and protects them* from their enemies. Cf. vs. 16.

➤ We see that *God is love* because He "calls" the helpless (Israel) to Him to help them. Cf. vss. 4; 6.

➤ God is *honest and absolutely sincere* in what He says to His people.

➤ God *speaks directly* to a person He loves (Moses) about people He loves.

What else did you find? How can your discoveries influence your prayers?

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In the introduction to this series, we learned from Thomas Merton that *[God's life] is a speaking*. That is, **the standout characteristic of the Divine is that He communicates** what He thinks, what He is, and what He wants to His creation, especially to human beings. The Book of Genesis confirms this in its narratives of the creation: God creates by speaking. And the words used to describe His creative acts indicate that God has a purpose for His creation. The Lord did not create the universe because He had nothing else to do. Likewise, that God created you follows the same line: *God has a purpose for you in bringing you into the world*.

It is not the Lord's intention to create you and leave you dangling, but to bring you into His kingdom by guiding you during your life to its end and beyond. But I had better not get too far ahead of myself. For now let's take a look at Genesis 1, particularly at the meaning of the word "create" and the goodness of that creation. Genesis 1-3 is a brief summation of our relationship with God. Indeed, it is a summary of the human story as a whole as people searching for meaning and purpose on earth and beyond.<sup>3</sup>

The Scripture lesson above focuses our attention on the struggle between darkness and light, between the forces of chaos and evil and between God as light and goodness. Saying the earth was empty and dark (vs. 2) has **personal** meaning. The words used in the test by the Hebrew writers convey that idea: *God cares*. Therefore, and here may be something new for you, the words "empty" and "dark," some scholars say, have to do

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<sup>3</sup> The creation account speaks of our creation by the Lord, our original innocence, our temptation and fall, the consequences of our disobedience, and the Lord's intervention to help us. The Gospel story follows the same line with the central feature of the Bible added: *Jesus Christ is our Lord and Savior*.

with rejection and violence. The dark world was hostile to God and God calls it to obedience, to God as light. No wonder this creation is “good.” Instead of an existence of meaninglessness, the created order has a God-blessed purpose for being. This is a wonderful thought! **You were created to be blessed by God...to be called “good” by Him who loves you.**

It is important to remember that until we reach the writings of the Apostle Paul in the New Testament, we do not have anything resembling academic theology or philosophy in the Bible. The Hebrews were concerned with experience. They made a clear point and stuck with it! So statements made about God are first of all reports on what God thinks or does, not an analysis of them. I remember reading about a southern evangelist of another age, Sam Jones, who said: “I hate theology and botany but I love religion and flowers.” Well, he has the right idea. The Hebrews, so to speak, were more concerned with flowers. This is not dumbing-down the text but it is saying we cannot comprehend the depths of God, even with our best efforts.



Using the language of creation, St. John the Evangelist says, *God is light and in him is no darkness at all.*<sup>4</sup> In fact, the reason we Apostles proclaim the Word to you is so you may have eternal life with the Father and fellowship with us.<sup>5</sup> What does this kind of language mean? It means that the work our Lord Jesus Christ on the cross complements the original creation. God did not leave the world of Adam and Eve in disrepair; no, He “recreated” it by making men and women, boys and girls, “new creatures” (new creations) in Christ.<sup>6</sup> This includes you and me too!

In our second passage for today (John 1:1-9), darkness and light are **moral** qualities. *Darkness* or *sin* is not found in God; God is light, and our Lord said that He too is the Light. The Bible tells us that once long ago God said *Let there be light*. And the light was *good*. If that ancient manifestation of God was good, how much more the recent coming of Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God? Why did Christ come? In order that you and I might believe on Him and be made new! **This news, in and of itself, demands telling. God tells and retells this good message:** You and I can be reconciled to God! And if God tells it over and over, He must desire to communicate with you, at least as much as you want to communicate with Him! Do not fear; God is near!

From the beginning, when our first parents gave into temptation, God began reaching out to them and their ancestors, and now to us. In our quest to know God, to hear from God, to “talk” with God, we begin not in darkness but in the light. We are assured that God is, that God is powerful and loving, that God cares about you, and that God is reaching out to you in a very personal way. Are you listening?

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<sup>4</sup> See I John 1:5, NIV.

<sup>5</sup> Paraphrase of I John 1:1-4.

<sup>6</sup> See I Corinthians 5:17.

***For our next session:***

*Psalm 36 is used by the Church as a reading during Easter,*  
What is the Psalmist saying to you about the “sinfulness of the wicked”,  
on the one side, and the “upright in heart,” on the other?

The next installment of our series is entitled  
**The Speaking God: Nothing from Nothing**  
In preparation for that part of our study, please read  
Deuteronomy 4:5-31 and Isaiah 19:1-11.

--Jerry Mercer  
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