

Pay Attention to the Light

- ☆ Exposing the fables (v.16)
- ☆ Loving the glory (vv.17-18)
- ☆ Trusting the Word (vv.19-21)

In the name of Jesus Christ, our glorious Savior, dearly enlightened disciples of our Lord:

During the Epiphany season we talk about Jesus “shining forth as God,” and artists picture Him with a halo on His head. So, I wonder if little children think Jesus was always shining. But that’s not what Jesus looked like. Isaiah says, ***“He had no attractiveness and no majesty. When we saw him, nothing about his appearance made us desire him.”*** (Isaiah 53:2 EHV) Even John the Baptist said, ***“I myself did not recognize him....”*** (John 1:33) God helped John the Baptist and the crowds see this normal looking Jesus of Nazareth as the promised Messiah. The Holy Spirit dove landed on Jesus. ***And a voice out of the heavens said, “This is my Son, whom I love. I am well pleased with him.”*** (Matthew 3:17 EHV)

Jesus’ disciples listened and saw His miracles, convinced that Jesus is God. But a terrible shock was coming. Jesus arrested, condemned to death on a cross! How would their hearts survive? What about our hearts in these Last Days of this Great Tribulation? We need to **Pay Attention to the Light...**

☆ Exposing the fables (v.16)

Years later Peter looked back to that high mountain, probably Mount Hermon, snow capped most years and the only ski slopes in Israel today. But then, as we heard in today’s Gospel: ***“[Jesus] was transfigured in front of them. His face was shining like the sun. His clothing became as white as the light.”*** (Matthew 17:2 EHV) Suddenly Jesus looked like God with His face shining, and His clothes bright white like the light! Peter, James and John got to see Jesus’ glorious majesty and beauty as God!

So, Peter writes: ***“To be sure, we were not following cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the powerful appearance of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty.”*** Why did Peter have to say that? Because even in those days people said they made it up. Most seminaries today teach that the Bible is an ancient book of myths and legends. Which is just what the Lord’s Apostle Paul predicted to Pastor Timothy: ***“For there will come a time when people will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, because they have itching ears, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in line with their own desires.”*** (2 Timothy 4:3 EHV) So true today. People don’t want to hear God’s truth; they want their itching ears to be scratched by preachers who say what they want to hear.

In the end these false teachers and their itchy listeners are just **Exposing the fables** of their own minds and hearts. Flailing away at the Bible as “myth and legend,” they and their hearers blindly accept their own myths and legends. What fills the void for postmodern intellectuals is little more than warmed over Hinduism in the ideology of the New Age or the “Scientology” of Hollywood elites. They prove the adage, “He who stands for nothing falls for everything.” We need to **Pay Attention to the Light...**

☆ Loving the glory (vv.17-18)

Jesus’ inner circle of disciples – Peter with brothers James and John – needed His Transfiguration. ***For he received honor and glory from God the Father, when the voice came to him from within the Majestic Glory, saying, “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.” We heard this voice, which came out of heaven when we were with him on the holy mountain.***

If one of you children got lost in the forest on a camping trip, then a forest ranger or police officer found you, imagine how awesome it would feel if your Dad walked up and said, “This is my son,” or, “This is my daughter.” You’d get to go home to a warm house and your own bed. Glorious homecoming!

Before Jesus could go home to heaven, He had to come down that high mountain and climb the hill called Golgotha, to die on the cross. God’s **glory** was in that mission for which Jesus volunteered because no one else could do it. First, He had to live a perfect life as the substitute for us sinners. Then Jesus had to die an innocent death as the substitute for sinners. Only Jesus, God’s dearly loved Son, had the holy, precious blood to wash away the sins of all people – Jews and Gentiles; yes, for you and me.

God’s **glory** is to love the unlovable, forgive the unforgiveable, cleanse the guilty inside and out. For all the wrong we say and do, kind words and deeds we fail, **Pay Attention to the Light – Loving the glory**. Christ came *to fulfill what was spoken through Isaiah the prophet: Here is my servant whom I have chosen, the one I love, in whom I am well pleased. I will put my Spirit on him, and he will proclaim justice to the nations. He will not quarrel or cry out, and no one will hear his voice in the streets. A bruised reed he will not break. A smoldering wick he will not put out, until he leads justice to victory. And in his name the nations will hope.* (Matthew 12:17–21) **Pay Attention to the Light...**

☆ **Trusting the Word (vv.19-21)**

Do you ever wish you could tell God what to do? Peter tried that. He wanted to stay on the mountain with Jesus, Moses and Elijah. But the Father’s voice also said about Jesus, **“Listen to him!”**

Do we listen, **Trusting the Word**? I hear that some of our Church Family group leaders can’t get the volunteers needed to clean and serve in other ways. Are we lagging in zeal? Some are physically no longer able to serve in person, but Jesus, the **Word** of God incarnate, commands us: **“Pray that the Lord of the harvest will send out workers into his harvest.”** (Matthew 9:38) Are we hesitating in prayer?

The world is increasingly evil in the Last Days just as God’s **Word** predicted. The Devil liar is **full of rage, because he knows that his time is short** (Revelation 12:12) just as God’s **Word** promises. The nations of the world rage against God just as God’s **Word** said in today’s Psalm 2. Does all this make you sick at heart? Do you feel like someone crawling across a muddy barnyard; can’t help getting dirty?

Without the light of Christ, we’re all in a dark and dirty place. Only the light of God’s **Word** can cut through this thick, darkness of ignorance and unbelief to lighten our souls with God’s grace and goodness. **“If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.”** (1 John 1:7 NIV84) **Trusting the Word** we are clean!

Keep **Trusting the Word** about the innocent unborn, about gender from God who **made them male and female** (Genesis 1:27), not falling for the lies of our culture in government and media. Life begins at conception: **“I am fearfully and wonderfully made....Your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.”** (Psalm 139:14ff NIV84)

We also have the completely reliable prophetic word. You do well to pay attention to it, as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the Morning Star rises in your hearts, since we know this above all else: No prophecy of Scripture comes about from someone’s own interpretation. In fact, no prophecy ever came by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were being carried along by the Holy Spirit. It’s not just “your interpretation,” as enemies of the Gospel insist.

Keep **Trusting the Word** for the grace of God that even forgives murder; yes, even abortion; yes, even me. In the coming weeks of Lent see again the dying criminal on the cross confessing to Jesus and hearing God’s **Word** of grace and forgiveness: **“Today you will be with me in paradise.”** (Luke 23:43)

Pay Attention to the Light until the day dawns and the Morning Star rises in your hearts. You too are God’s dearly loved children for the sake of His dearly loved Son who still shines in glory. Amen.