

The people who walk in darkness
Will see a great light;
Those who live in a dark land,
The light will shine on them.

Isaiah 9:2

A Psalm of David.
The Lord is my light and my salvation;
Whom shall I fear?
The Lord is the defense of my life;
Whom shall I dread?

Psalms 27:1

AN INFORMED DEVOTION

part two

IN AN OLD STAR TREK

EPISODE, the crew of the starship

Enterprise arrives at a planet where the human inhabitants are being driven insane by a strange, alien life form that looks very much like an oversized, gelatinous amoeba. It somehow invades the body, causing profound pain, paranoia, madness, and, ultimately, death.

The life form threatens the crew of the *Enterprise*, and in the process of solving the mystery, so as to save the people of the planet, they discover that the alien

life-form prefers the shadows over areas of sun light. This eventually leads them to the method by which to kill the aliens and remove their evil presence from the human body: bathing the entire planet in brilliant light.

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This is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all.

1 John 1:5

Humans are born under the power and influence of evil—a dark evil that brings on pain, paranoia, madness, and, ultimately, death. This ancient evil hates the light and loves the shadows; the cover of darkness is where it does its best work.

God is the absence of darkness, and God is the absence of death. His cleansing light scours out the evil lurking in the shadows of our lives. Under its penetrating rays, the darkness withers and fades, replacing evil with good, sin with righteousness. Life in the shadows leads to death, but life under God's light leads only to eternal life with Him.

Receive every day as a resurrection from death, as a new enjoyment of life; meet every rising sun with such sentiments of God's goodness, as if you had seen it, and all things, new—created upon your account: and under the sense of so great a blessing, let your joyful heart praise and magnify so good and glorious a Creator.

William Law

A DISCERNING MAJESTY

"And in the greatness of Your excellence You overthrow those who rise up against You;

You send forth Your burning anger, and it consumes them as chaff."

Exodus 15:7

**And He will arise and shepherd His flock
In the strength of the Lord,
In the majesty of the name of the Lord His God.
And they will remain,
Because at that time He will be great
To the ends of the earth.**

Micah 5:4

Our God is no less discerning than He wishes His people to be. Those who imagine the Almighty to be something of a spineless milquetoast, a maudlin simp desiring only to dwell safely within a sticky-sweet loveliness—these people do not know God well at all.

When Jesus—everything of God, yet in flesh—was confronted with the base and flagrant commercialism of the Jerusalem temple, He vented His righteous anger in a most demonstrative, physical way:

Then they came to Jerusalem. And He entered the temple and began to drive out those who were buying and selling in the temple, and overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who were selling doves; and He would not permit anyone to carry merchandise through the temple. And He began to teach and say to them, "Is it not written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations'? But you have made it a robbers' den."

Mark 11:15-17

When He was challenged by the Pharisees, Jesus patiently instructed those who were eager to hear, but then turned the full force of His indignation upon those who were rejecting His message:

"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which on the outside appear beautiful, but inside they are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness."

Matthew 23:27

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The world would have us question our faith whenever it takes on a discerning

edge. It would have us believe that Christianity is to be swathed in a simpering sweetness that happily receives all blows, and blindly loves everyone—even those serving evil. But listen to the counsel Jesus gave His disciples as they were preparing to go out and preach the gospel in His name:

"As you enter the house, give it your greeting. If the house is worthy, give it your blessing of peace. But if it is not worthy, take back your blessing of peace. Whoever does

not receive you, nor heed your words, as you go out of that house or that city, shake the dust off your feet. Truly I say to you, it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city. Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves; so be shrewd as serpents and innocent as doves."

Matthew 10:12-16

The God we worship does not wink at evil, but neither does He run out of patience and compassion for those who draw near to Him.

ETERNAL "I AM"

**Before the mountains were born
Or You gave birth to the earth and the world,
Even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God.**

Psalms 90:2

**Your throne is established from of old;
You are from everlasting.**

Psalms 93:2

The knowledge of earthly history is a comfortable and useful companion to the knowledge of God. Those who have even a passing familiarity with the millennia of mankind's groanings will look upon today's tribulations—whatever they may be—from a more balanced and reasoned perspective. And those who can catalogue civilization's high points and great victories will balance today's ecstasies also within that larger context.

History means little to a teenager who knows of nothing before the time of his own birth, and eternity means little to the adult who has set his affections on the

things of this earth.

The worship of a God who exists outside of time and history gives the knowledgeable supplicant an eternal, timeless perspective that cannot be found on earth. Both tragedy and good fortune settle into the framework of a Kingdom being held safely in the hands of One who knew all events before He even created the time into which they would be set.

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The mind looks backward in time till the dim past vanishes, then turns and looks into the future till thought and imagination collapse from exhaustion; and God is at both points, unaffected by either. Time marks the beginning of created existence, and because God never began to exist it can have no application to Him. "Began" is a time-word, and can have no personal meaning for the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity.

A.W. Tozer



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