

28/08/2016

MATTHEW 5:16 = WITNESS (Let your light shine / Be a Light-bearer!..)

#SCRIPTURE READING: Isaiah 9:1-6, John 1:1-13 (4-5, 9), 8:12 & Matthew 5:14-16

#SERMON=INTRODUCTION: *A lunar eclipse* remains something special, isn't it? How/Why does it happen? *The sun is the source of light - the moon only reflects the sunlight. The moment the earth moves in-between the sun&moon, the shadow of the earth falls on the moon and reduces its "lighting ability"...* But B/S in CJ, is there something like a Spiritual eclipse? And if so - should we call it a God eclipse or a man/human eclipse?..

+**TRANSITION:** The Word constantly talks about Jesus being the Light of the world - *and that we should be Light-bearers.* Where did it all start, how does it work?..

+**EXEGESIS&APPLICATION:** Already on the first pages of the Bible we find the matter of light&darkness mentioned. In fact, God's first act as Creator was the creation of light so that life could begin. *By the way: Why was God able to create light? Because He is Light and in Him there is no darkness!* (1 JOHN 1:5).

*Shortly after creation was completed, *darkness once again covered the earth, but this time it was Spiritual, the sad story of the fall of man* (GEN 3). But because God is love (1 JOHN 4:8) - with the nett result that He hates sin, but loves the sinner (ROM 8:5) - *He decided to send his Son to save us from eternal damnation* (JOHN 3:16).

But *there had to be a lot of preparation.* Therefore we read already 900 years before his birth a prophecy to the people. ISIA 9:1-6 (2,6) = "The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, upon them a light has shined. For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given..." Immediately there is an expectation with the people.

*And then, "But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law," (GAL 4:4). Our Saviour, JC, was born! Notable is the role that all the "elements of light" play: (1) When the angel of the Lord announced the birth of the Saviour to the shepherds "... the glory of the Lord shone around them," (LUKE 9:9); (2) the wise men from the East followed *His star* (MATT 2:1-2 / see NUM 24:17); (3) with the birth of John the Baptist (a few months prior to Jesus' birth) his dad, Zacharia, prophesied the following about Jesus; "And you, child [my son, John], will be called the prophet of the Highest; For you will go before the face of the Lord to prepare His [Jesus'] ways, [For He will] To give light to those who sit in the darkness and the shadow of death," (LUKE 1:76, 79). That is also the reason JOHN 1:4-5,9 talks about Jesus' birth as the arrival of Light to the earth.

*B/S in JC, *why* do you think Jesus' life/ministry was so rough? *Why* was it coupled with so much rejection/pain? *Because Satan - the prince of darkness - hates light* (JOHN 1:9-11). Jesus' incarnation was a declaration of war against the powers/principalities of darkness! That is the reason Satan constantly tried to extinguish the Light through Jesus's own people. *This Spiritual battle manifested in the physical when, with Jesus' crucifixion, darkness covered the earth for 3 hours/12-15h00* (LUKE 23:44-45a). Momentarily Satan thought he succeeded, but *then God "switched on the Light again" through Jesus' words "It is finished" (JOHN 19:30) and through the power of his resurrection (EPHES 1:18-20).*

**What are the practical implications for us* this morning? (1) Jesus is indéed the Light for this world and there is a promise for us: "I am the light of the world. He who follows me, shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life." (JOHN 8:12) (2) We must be Light-bearers

in this dark world; and then not because we “feel” like it - but because it is an instruction from Jesus Himself: “You are the light of the world. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.” (MATT 5:14a, 16)

How do you “let your light shine”? B/S, we aren’t born with this “ability”. We receive it the moment we invite/accept the Light in our lives. Strictly speaking we can only reflect the Light. Initial illustration of the lunar eclipse: Light-bearers - *those who “align” themselves with the Light (repentance/re-birth/justification)* & then “*live in line with the Light*” (sanctification). Together with all the references to Jesus being the Light of the world - *He is also described as “the Sun of Righteousness” (MAL 4:2)*. Therefore: *When I align myself with the Son - Who also is the Sun - I reflect his Light/bring Light into this dark, sad & searching world.

Could well be that some of us are wondering “Why do I battle so much to be a Light-bearer?” 3 possible reasons: (1) Religion: I revere God, I’m involved with church activities, *but I’m not yet “aligned” with the Sun-Son = my religion hasn’t yet become a relationship*. Result is - you can’t give something that you haven’t received yet. (2) I’m “aligned”/born-again, but the world has come between me and the Source/God. Illustration: Lunar eclipse - earth moves in between sun&moon. Bride of JC, human/Spiritual eclipse occurs when “the world” moves in between me/us & the Sun-Son/God (JAMES 4:4). How does this happen? Do we really need to explain that again?.. Dear Bride of Christ, what does the Holy Spirit tell you at this moment *re* the “dark shade” on your Spiritual landscape? Please, let’s be brutally honest! **1 JOHN 1:6-7 = “If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of JC His Son cleanses us from all sin.” Adults, the world thinks intimacy takes place in the dark; God tells us through his Word true intimacy (with Him) takes place in the Light! B/S, we use the dark to hide our mistakes, fears & failures. *But in the Light we expose ourselves at the foot of the cross, and so we are forgiven/become free from any pressure - and we become the persons/move into the ID’s we were created to be (in Christ)!* (3) Personal crises dim our reflecting ability. Illustration: Total vs partial eclipse. Things like being hurt, disillusionment, rejection...*Why do these things happen to the bride? Because darkness hates Light!* (JOHN 3:19-21) Illustration: Teenage party x two youngsters secretly in a dark room. You walk in there - unaware of them - and switch on the light - their reaction?.. My dear B/S in CJ, no matter the pain - stay in line, in order to shine!.. Satan accuses you of only reflecting 40 Watts of light. But for the time being it’s fine - 40 Watts also helps to illuminate = to push back the darkness; accuses you of reflecting nothing more than the flame of a single match. But remember - all the darkness of the world can’t extinguish the light of one match!*

Bride of JC, the darkness in the world is terrible! It charges at us, overwhelms us from all sides. Has many names - poverty, (domestic) violence, molestation, brutality, war-crimes, etc. But keep good faith, because “For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.**” (2 COR 4:6)*

+CONCLUSION: Story of the 2 diggers who discovered 6 huge diamonds - priceless! Decided to keep quiet, for fear of other diggers rushing to their piece of land.. Went to their neighbouring town to buy provisions. Afterwards, as they left the town on their way back home, they noticed about a 100 diggers (with all their digging equipment) following them. Upset they asked them why they followed them? Answer: “We want to join you in digging for the other diamonds.” Surprised the brothers answered: “But we didn’t say we found diamonds?” “It wasn’t necessary,” the diggers answered, “we saw it on your faces”... Lighthouses don’t ring bells or fire canons - they just brightly shine and warn against dangerous rocks. Bride of JC, let’s be Light-bearers that illuminate the Rock of Ages (PS 18:2) Amen! (...Preke\Getuig\Mat5v16b)