

INTRODUCTION.

TODAY, ~ WE START THE NEXT PARAGRAPH OF EPHESIANS, ~ 5:8-14.

▶▶ Paul begins, ~ in **verse 8a**, ~ by making this assertion regarding believers' status, ~ "for at one time you ~ [i.e., ~ believers] were ~ darkness, ~ but now you are light in the Lord."

▷▷ This is Paul's main point in this paragraph.

▶▶ Basically, ~ Paul is saying the same thing he says in **2 Cor. 5:17**. ~ And this will perhaps give us some idea of what's going on here in **verse 8a**.

▷▷ "Therefore, ~ if anyone is in Christ, ~ he is a new creation. ~ The old has passed away; behold, the new has come."

▶▶ To be clear, ~ Paul's primary point in **5:8-14** is that believers are new creations in Christ.

▷▷ "The old ~ [i.e., ~ the person we were before salvation] ~ has passed away, ~ behold, ~ the new ~ [i.e., ~ the new person Jesus has made us into] ~ has come."

▶▶ Then in **verses 8b-14**, ~ Paul builds on his main assertion that, ~ for believers, ~ "The old has passed away," ~ behold, ~ we are new creations in Christ.

BEFORE WE BEGIN TO DIG IN TO THIS ¶, ~ WANT TO SET IT within the wider context.

▶▶ There are definite links to Paul's main point in **verse 8a** in the wider context of the previous paragraph, ~ **5:3-7**, ~ that should be noted ~ and that are instructive for us.

▶▶ We'll first link it to **verses 6b-7**.

▷▷ As we learned from these verses, ~ because God judges sin, ~ believers are not to be partners with them, ~ i.e., ~ we're not to participate with unbelievers in their sinful conduct.

↪↪ In **verse 8a**, ~ Paul gives an additional reason to not be partners with them.

▷▷ We "were darkness," ~ basically implies, ~ now there's more to it and we'll get to that, ~ but suffice it to say at this time, ~ ¶¶

↪↪ we "were darkness" basically implies we formerly belonged to the life of unbelievers and were natural partners with them. ¶¶ 1/8

▷▷ The conjunction "but" in verse 8a introduces a contrast between "then" and "now."

↳↳ "for at one time you were ~ darkness, ~ but now you are light in the Lord."

▷▷ The phrase "were darkness," ~ past tense, ~ meaning "no longer the case," ~ and the phrase "now . . . light," ~ present tense, ~ meaning what is now the case, ~ ¶¶

↳↳ combine to demonstrate that Paul is very vividly ~ and emphatically ~ showing us why we are not to participate with unbelievers in their sinful conduct.

▷▷ No longer do we belong to the life of unbelievers.

↳↳ No longer are we natural partners with them.

→→ They are "darkness." ~ We are "light."

▷▷ The contrast between us is now literally the difference between the darkest night and the brightest day.

↳↳ So we are not to participate with unbelievers in their sinful conduct.

▶▶ And now let's very briefly link verse 8a to verses 3-4.

▷▷ Recall that we noted that sinful behaviors are totally incompatible with living a life that is filled with and governed by Christ-like love.

↳↳ And therefore we must abstain from them.

▷▷ They are also totally incompatible with our being "light."

↳↳ Recall the representative list, ~ sinful behaviors that represent all sinful behaviors, ~ from verses 3-4.

↳↳ Sexual immorality, ~ impurity, ~ greed, ~ i.e., ~ the insatiable desire to acquire more and more, ~ whatever the object, ~ and regardless of need, ~ ¶¶

→→ obscene language and stories, ~ thoughtless, ~ rash talk, ~ and quick-witted, ~ clever humor that has gone too far ~ are associated with darkness, ~ ¶¶

↳↳ and therefore are totally incompatible with our nature of being light.

↳↳ And because of this, ~ sinful behaviors of all kinds must be abstained from by believers. ¶¶ 2/8

NOW LET'S BEGIN TO DIG INTO THIS NEXT PARAGRAPH, ~ EPH. 5:8-14, ~ BY RECAPPING what's going on in this passage.

▶▶ As we noted, ~ in *verse 8a* Paul presents his main point. ~ "for at one time you ~ [believers] ~ were darkness, ~ but now you are light in the Lord."

▶▶ Essentially, ~ Paul is saying the same thing he says in *2 Cor. 5:17*. ~ And this will perhaps give us some idea of what's going on here in *verse 8a*.

▷▷ "Therefore, ~ if anyone is in Christ, ~ he is a new creation. ~ The old has passed away; ~ behold, ~ the new has come."

▶▶ To clarify, ~ Paul's primary point in *5:8-14* is that believers are new creations in Christ.

▷▷ "The old ~ [i.e., ~ the person we were before salvation] ~ has passed away, ~ ¶

↳ behold, ~ the new ~ [i.e., ~ the new person Jesus has made us into] ~ has come."

▶▶ Then in *verses 8b-14*, ~ Paul builds on his main point.

▶▶ And keeping this in the back of our minds, ~ we can begin to unpack this paragraph and examine the details.

TODAY, ~ WE'LL COVER PAUL'S MAIN POINT IN VERSE 8a.

AS WE'LL SEE, ~ PAUL'S MAIN POINT IS MADE UP OF THREE VERY IMPORTANT PHRASES THAT WE NEED TO CONSIDER.

1st, ~ "FOR AT ONE TIME YOU WERE DARKNESS."

PAUL IS REFERRING TO THE CONDITION OF OUR PRE-SALVATION LIFE, ~ TO THE person we were before we were saved.

▶▶ The person we were in our human nature prior to salvation was "darkness."

▶▶ "darkness" here symbolizes sin, ~ moral depravity, ~ spiritual ignorance, ~ separation from God, ~ and spiritual death.

WE SHOULD TAKE A SLIGHT DETOUR AND SPEND A FEW MOMENTS DISCUSSING THAT in Scripture "darkness" and "light" are used to symbolize spiritual and moral conditions.

▶▶ Of course "darkness" represents all that is evil, ~ sinful, ~ and anti-God. ¶ 3/8

▷▷ In Prov. 4:19a, ~ Solomon writes, ~ "The way of the wicked is like deep darkness."

↳↳ The Hebrew word describes not simply that which is dark, ~ but that which is utter or absolute darkness. ~ I.e., ~ "The lifestyle of unbelievers is like absolute darkness."

▷▷ And in Jn. 3:19-20, ~ Jesus said, ~ "And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed."

▶▶ Of course "light" represents all that is holy and also God Himself.

▷▷ 1 Jn. 1:5, ~ "This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all."

▷▷ Light emphasizes, ~ among other things, ~ God's glorious character, ~ His unsurpassed moral perfection, ~ His utter separateness from creation and sin, ~ and His absolute truthfulness and righteousness.

▷▷ The phrase "in him is no darkness at all" translated very literally reads, ~ "and darkness in Him not is, ~ not one bit."

↳↳ This added assertion by John stresses the absoluteness of God's nature as light. ~ In His being there is not a single trace of darkness.

▷▷ God is totally and absolutely untainted by any evil or sin. ~ With God, ~ there is no change, ~ no secrecy, ~ no hiding in the shadows.

▷▷ There is no defect in the character of God. ~ His holiness and purity and righteousness are perfect.

▷▷ And He is eternally and mercilessly opposed to sin.

↳↳ Ps. 5:4, ~ "For you are not a God who delights in wickedness ~ [the point: God is not pleased with evil; ~ evil ~ [i.e., ~ evil persons, ~ unbelievers] may not dwell with you."

↳↳ Hab. 1:13a, ~ NASB, ~ "Your ~ [i.e., ~ God's] ~ eyes are too pure to approve ~ [i.e., ~ tolerate] evil, ~ ~ ↓↓

→→ And You can not look on wickedness with favor ~ [i.e., ~ God is unable to condone sin].

▷▷ "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all." ↓↓ 4/8

OK, ~ BACK TO THE MAIN ROAD, ~ THE FIRST IMPORTANT PHRASE IN EPH. 5:8a.

▶▶ Notice that Paul does not say, ~ "you were in darkness" ~ or "you walked in darkness," ~ but rather "you were darkness."

▷▷ This was no accident. ~ It is more than likely Paul intentionally chooses this language to show us our absolute sinfulness before Jesus saved us.

↳↳ We were not essentially good people who had stumbled or strayed off the path; ~ we were in our very nature "dark."

▶▶ Speaking of his personal testimony regarding the struggle with sin in his own life, ~ Paul says in Rom. 7:18a, ~ and the NIV paraphrase brings it out quite well, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ "For I know that good itself does not dwell in me, ~ that is, ~ in my sinful nature."

▶▶ Jeremiah, ~ also speaking about our sin nature, ~ says in Jer. 17:9, ~ NIV, ~ "The heart is deceitful above all things ~ and beyond cure. ~ Who can understand it?"

▷▷ I.e., ~ who can understand just how bad our sin nature is? ~ On human level, ~ no one. ~ And it is incurable.

▶▶ Recall back in Eph. 2:1, ~ Paul said that in our pre-salvation state we were dead in our "trespasses and sins."

▶▶ And in 2:12, ~ Paul said that we were "separated from Christ," ~ that we had "no hope," ~ and that we were "without God in the world."

▶▶ And as we discussed in Ephesians, ~ chap. 2, ~ in our unsaved state we were 100% sinful, ~ sinning was a way of life for us, ~ we were following the standards of this world and Satan.

▷▷ We were enslaved to our sinful nature and its sinful desires ~ and were carrying those sinful desires out daily.

↳↳ And most tragically of all, ~ we were subject to, ~ deserving of, ~ and destined for ~ God's wrath.

→→ What a horrible condition we were in.

▶▶ All this Paul sums up by saying that the person we were prior to Jesus saving us was "darkness."

▷▷ This word sums up quite well our absolute sinfulness before Jesus saved us. ¶¶ 5/8

NOW, ~ THIS WOULD BE PRETTY DEPRESSING IF PAUL WAS EMPHASIZING OUR sinfulness here in this first part of verse 8a.

▶▶ But, ~ Praise God, ~ Paul is not emphasizing our past condition. ~ He's emphasizing that our past condition is over and done with.

▶▶ "you were" is emphatic in the phrase "for at one time you were darkness."

▷▷ I.e., ~ Paul is stressing that this is no longer, ~ emphasis on no longer, ~ the case. ~ Praise God!

▶▶ We "were darkness." ~ Past tense forever.

▷▷ The old has passed away ~ forever. ~ Behold, ~ the new has come ~ forever.

▶▶ Speaking of believers in Jn. 10:28a, ~ Jesus said, ~ "I give them eternal life, ~ and they will never perish." ~ Double negative ~ Grk., ~ double neg. const. very emph

▷▷ Basically Jesus is saying, ~ believers will certainly not, ~ never, ~ by no means ~ perish.

▶▶ "Amazing grace! how sweet the sound, That saved a wretch like me! ~ I once was lost, but now am found, ~ Was blind, but now I see."

▶▶ "My sin—oh, the bliss of this glorious tho't! ~ My sin, not in part, but the whole, Is nailed to the cross and I bear it no more, Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul!"

NOW, AS WE NOTED, ~ PAUL'S MAIN POINT IS MADE UP OF THREE VERY important phrases here in that we need to consider.

THE SECOND PHRASE: ~ "BUT NOW YOU ARE LIGHT."

▶▶ Since Jesus our Savior is light, ~ light becomes a natural symbol for salvation and our new life in Him.

▷▷ Jn. 8:12, ~ "Again Jesus spoke to them, ~ saying, ~ "I am the light of the world. ~ Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, ~ but will have the light of life."

▷▷ And Peter tells us in 1 Pet. 2:9 that God has called believers "out of darkness into his marvelous light."

▶▶ The phrase "but now you are light" in verse 8a indicates that a radical transformation has taken place. ↴ 6/8

▷▷ Our old nature is so bad ~ that God gives us a totally new nature when He saves us.

▷▷ God does not reform the old nature. ~~ It's not a remodeling or repairing of the old nature. ~~ As Jeremiah says, ~ our old sinful human nature is incurable.

▷▷ When we are born again, ~ God the Holy Spirit creates totally new life in believers, ~ enabling a life of God-centered ~ and God-honoring things.

▶▶ Believers are new persons with brand new natures.

▷▷ Once more, ~ as Paul says in [2 Cor. 5:17](#), ~ "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come."

▷▷ At the moment a person receives Jesus as their Savior and Lord, ~ God the Holy Spirit, ~ by His immeasurably great power, ~ removes our sin-hardened hearts, ~ ¶¶

↳↳ gives us "a new heart," ~ and puts "a new spirit within" us according to [Ezek. 36:26](#).

▷▷ "a new heart" and "a new spirit."

↳↳ I.e., ~ a brand new nature which by instinct wishes to please, ~ to live for, ~ and to serve God.

▶▶ And here in the 2nd important phrase of [Eph. 5:8a](#), ~ Paul identifies new nature as "light."

▷▷ Perhaps to point out the stark contrast between our old self and our new self.

↳↳ Our new self is as different from our old self as the brightest day is from the darkest night.

▶▶ Light is not associated with darkness. ~~ Paul asks in [2 Cor. 6:14b](#), ~ [LEB](#), ~ "what fellowship does light have with darkness?"

▶▶ This radical transformation from darkness to light, ~ the stark contrast to our old self, ~ and the fact that light can have no fellowship with darkness ~ ¶¶

▷▷ calls for a radical transformation in our lifestyle.

↳↳ It calls for a new lifestyle ~ that is as different from our old lifestyle ~ as the brightest day ~ is from the darkest night.

▷▷ And in [verses 8b-14](#), ~ which we'll begin to look at next week, ~ Paul spells out a little of what this radical new lifestyle looks like. ¶¶ 7/8

NOW LET'S VERY BRIEFLY TAKE UP THE THIRD AND FINAL IMPORTANT PHRASE OF verse 8a.

"IN THE LORD."

▶▶Lest we be tempted to think that we had anything to do with bringing this radical transformation from darkness to light about, ~ Paul makes it clear that it was all the Lord's doing.

▷▷It is through Jesus, ~ and Jesus alone, ~ this radical transformation has taken place.

▷▷Titus 3:4-7, ~ "But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

▶▶Once again, ~ as he has done so often in Ephesians, ~ Paul brings us back to the centrality of Christ.

▷▷Everything centers on Jesus, ~ our salvation, ~ creation, ~ God's plan for the ages, ~ God's word, ~ our faith, ~ everything!

▷▷And Jesus should be center of our lives.

▷▷And Jesus is to be the center of our testimonies

CONCLUSION.

MY BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN CHRIST, ~ ¶¶

▶▶rejoice, ~ we are new creations in Christ.

▷▷"The old ~ [i.e., ~ the person we were before salvation] ~ has passed away, ~ ¶¶

↪↪behold, ~ the new ~ [i.e., ~ the new person Jesus has made us into] ~ has come."

▶▶"To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood and made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen."

Rev. 1:5b-6

LET'S PRAY 8/8