

Introduction: We are going back to the very beginning of the universe this morning. After God created the physical universe, darkness covered the earth. Then God spoke light into existence, saw light as good, and separated light from darkness. He called the light 'Day' and the darkness 'Night'. (*Genesis 1:1-5*) *** In the days of Noah God destroyed the original world because it was corrupt and violent. (*Genesis 6:9-13*) After eight people set foot upon the cleansed ground Yahweh told Noah, As long as earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night will never cease. (*Genesis 8:15-22*) *** So, light and darkness, day and night are enduring parts of God's Creation. *** Darkness helps Yahweh's beloved children to get necessary sleep to do the works He has assigned them. (*Psalms 127*) However, some forsake paths of righteousness to walk in the ways of darkness, rejoicing in evil. (*Proverbs 2:13-14*) The apostle John links darkness with hatred. (*1 John 2:11*) *** Our passage this morning sets out the clear contrast between darkness and light. Those who worship idols do deeds of darkness; but, those who live in The Light of The Savior become children of light bearing the fruit of God's character, living in wisdom and pleasing The Lord by knowing the will of The Lord. *** Let's now discover what we must do to escape darkness and live in God's Light:

I. Disobedience leads to idolatry and exclusion from God's Kingdom; but people of darkness can become children of light in The Lord. (Verses 3-11)

A. Sexual immorality, greed and idolatry are not proper to saints because immoral people do not inherit God's Kingdom. (*Verses 3-5*)

1. But, sexual immorality, all uncleanness and greed must not be named among you, as is proper to saints. (*Verse 3*)

Three acts of rebellion: Sexual immorality (*por-nay'-ah*) is any act of a sexual nature outside of one man and one woman joined together in a permanent, committed covenant relationship made in the presence of God.

Uncleanness is any worthless act that does not glorify The One True God. And greed results from wanting to acquire, possess and control for selfish reasons what God has created: 'I want it all, I want it now!'

NOT named: God does not even want us to listen to talk about these acts of rebellion. Once an action is discussed it is more likely to be done. The command is passive indicating that listening to talk about evil is dangerous.

So do not participate in any way!

Saints: Saints are being made holy as God is Holy by humble obedient faith IN God and Jesus.

Theme: This opening command sets the stage for the entire passage.

2. Indecent behavior, foolish talk and bawdy remarks are not fitting, but rather thanksgiving. (*Verse 4*)

Three forms of immorality: Indecent behavior is any action outside of God's will. In foolish talk a person focuses on himself rather than God. Bawdy remarks is speaking about sexual immorality.

NOT fit: These are not fitting because those who practice them do not arrive at the place God has chosen as their destination.

Thanksgiving: Those who live by the way of The Cross of Christ move others to overflow with thanksgiving to the glory of God. (*2 Corinthians 4:7-15*) Generosity even in poverty flowing from God's grace also brings thanksgiving. (*2 Corinthians 8-9*)

3. Because you have known, and are knowing, that each sexually immoral, unclean or greedy person – he is an idolater – is not having inheritance in The Kingdom of The Messiah and of God. (*Verse 5*)

Two kinds of knowledge: The first type of knowledge is what the mind can understand and retain, but this knowledge is not necessarily put into practice. The second type of knowledge is that which is primarily gained through experience, and also reflection on life, leading to changed behavior.

Three forms of idolatry: The nouns describe a person and correspond to the nouns describing behavior.

All three people are idolaters whose practice violates the second Commandment. (*Exodus 20:4-6*)

Exclusion from Kingdom: All such people are excluded from The Kingdom of God.

B. No one should lead you astray because of God's wrath; you were once darkness but now are light: good, righteous, true – pleasing The Lord. (*Verses 6-11*)

1. No one must deceive you with empty words because through these the wrath of God is coming on the disobedient. (*Verse 6*)

Hold to Truth because of wrath: We must always hold fast to Jesus who is The Truth. (*John 14:1-6*) In other words, we must realize we cannot overcome evil behavior with our own limited resources, even collectively. So, we must always seek God for freedom from evil thoughts and behavior IN Jesus. And we must live for God every day BY faith IN Him.

2. Therefore, you must not be sharers with them. (*Verse 7*)

Do NOT share life with idolater: The apostle Paul bluntly gave the same command in his letter to the saints in the churches in Corinth: all believers must come out from being yoked to unbelievers in any activity. (*2 Corinthians 6:14-18*)

3. For you were once being darkness, but now you are light IN The Lord. (*Verse 8a*)

Transferred into God's Light: Through hearing The Good News of The Savior and surrendering to Him by faith in what He has done, they are no longer living on and on in darkness, but are now light.

4. As children of light you must be walking. (*Verse 8b*)

Walk (conduct) as God's children of light: A new status results in a change in behavior. They will now conduct every part of their lives as God's children whose lives are fully in The Light of The Lord.

All who receive light from God must live in light

5. Because the fruit of the light is in all goodness and righteousness and truth. (*Verse 9*)

Fruit of light: Plants use light, through the process of photosynthesis, to make fruit.

Character: Here God wants to produce His character in His children so they become like His Son Jesus.

IN The Light of Jesus, people can truly bear His goodness, righteousness and truth.

6. Testing what is pleasing to The Lord. (*Verse 10*)

Pleasing The Lord: The goal of this is to discover how to please God, faithfully testing new behavior.

II. Bring works of darkness to the light, rise with Messiah shining on you, making the most of evil days, understanding the will of The Lord. (*Verses 12-17*)

- A. Show fruitless shameful works of darkness because The Light makes everything visible; so wake up, rise from the dead and Messiah will shine on you. (*Verses 12-14*)

1. Do not join in the fruitless works of the darkness, but rather you must also show them. (*Verse 11*)

Expose darkness: Those who live by doing works of light by living in The Light must never join in fruitless works of darkness with idolaters. Instead they must show the evil darkness of these works.

God's will is to show the fruitless deeds of darkness

2. Because the things secretly coming into being by these works are also shameless to say. (*Verse 12*)

Shame tries to hide: The evil one wants to hide himself as he secretly tries to bring shameful works into being in this world.

3. Because The Light shows all the shameful fruitless works of darkness because they are being made visible by The Light. (*Verses 13-14a*)

Light makes dark deeds visible: This is the reason Jesus came to earth, so 'the people walking in darkness would see a great Light'. (*Isaiah 9:2; Matthew 4:16*)

4. For this reason it's said, You must awake sleeping one and you must rise from the dead. (*Verses 14b-c*)

Wake up from the dead: We are all born spiritually dead, sleepwalking through life. We must ask The Risen Savior to wake us up and give us His resurrected life.

- B. Beware how you live, not as unwise but wise; make the most of the season because the days are evil, understanding the will of The Lord. (*Verses 15-17*)

1. Then you must beware that how you are walking is careful and accurate, not as unwise but wise. (*Verse 15*)

Beware: 'See to it' how you are living (walking) with Jesus.

Carefully live in wisdom: We all must be living, not as unwise, but as wise IN Christ who is wisdom. (*Colossians 2:1-4*)

And we must pay careful attention to all we do and say. When we receive Light IN Jesus, we must live IN His Light.

All who receive light from God must live in light

2. Redeeming the season because the days are evil. (*Verse 16*)

Redeem season: When Jesus redeems us out of darkness and evil, the appropriate response is to be His ambassadors of redemption and reconciliation. (*2 Corinthians 5:11-21*) The 'season' is the Church Age from Pentecost until The Second Coming of Jesus.

3. Therefore you must not be senseless, but you must understand what is the will of The Lord. (*Verse 17*)

NOT un-thinking: The word senseless is 'un-thinking'.

Understand the will of The Lord: We must seek with all that is in us, by every means possible, to understand the will of The Lord. Two ways to know His will are by prayer (talking with God) and by His Word (listening to God).

It begins by offering ourselves to Him as living sacrifices, our logical service. (*Romans 12:1-3*)

Bottom Line: Both halves of our passage end with 'The Lord'. When we surrender ourselves fully by faith to The Messiah-Savior we both please The Lord God and understand His will. Then we walk in The Light as He is in The Light and His Blood cleanses us from all sin. (*1 John 1:7*) This is how we are delivered from the darkness of idolatry so we live in The Light as we must.

All who receive light from God must live in light

Conclusion: Idolaters are excluded from God's Kingdom, but it is possible to become light IN The Lord.

Then they will expose sinful deeds of darkness with Messiah shining on them, live as wise, and redeem evil days by understanding the will of The Lord.

All who receive light from God must live in light