

# Can Darkness and Light Coexist?

## Ephesians 5:8-14

*For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light, for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness, and truth. Try to learn what is pleasing to the Lord, and do not participate in fruitless deeds of darkness. Instead, expose them. For it is shameful even to mention the things that are done by people in secret. But everything exposed by the light becomes visible, for it is light that makes things visible. Therefore it is said, "Awake, sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you."*

Good and evil both exist in our world. Oftentimes light and darkness are symbols of good and evil, morality and immorality. Since they both exist, the human mind rationalizes that these two must somehow coexist in the world. The yin-yang is one such philosophy. The yin-yang philosophy says that the universe is composed of competing and complementary forces of dark and light, sun and moon, male and female, good and evil. While the world is composed of many different, sometimes opposing, forces, these can coexist and even complement each other.

A more modern philosophy of light and darkness and its coexistence influences the world of Star Wars. I'm not an expert in Star Wars by any means, but it seems to be kind of like this: You have the dark side of the force and the light side of the force. While the dark side only strives for power and dominance, the light side seems to strive more for balance. I read in an article that George Lucas, the creator of Star Wars, spoke about balancing of the force. According to him that balance is the removal of the dark side's toxicity. Eliminating whatever is causing light and dark, good and evil, to go out of whack, the Force is kept in balance. As a result the light side is kept pure and free of the dark side. So somehow they coexist in the universe.

God's Word often uses that picture of light and darkness too, but usually in the context of our relationship with God. Darkness signifies immorality as the way of life for those separated from God in unbelief. Light on the other hand stands for truth, knowledge, and now holiness, all of which come from God. Light and darkness, good and evil, morality and immorality are indeed both present in the world, but can light and darkness really coexist in the life of a believer? Paul tells us simply...no and why they cannot. He presents a contrast of what you and I were at one point, side by side with what we are now in the crucified and risen Lord Jesus - the Light of the World. **(read vs. 8)**

To be in the darkness is not a pleasant sensation. Already in infancy many children are afraid of the dark. The thought of a criminal or a monster lurking in the dark evokes feelings of terror. Metaphorically one is "in the dark" when he lacks understanding. It isn't pleasant to want to know what is happening or seek to understand something but you know nothing.

Paul speaks about what the Ephesians had been before Jesus and what they were in Jesus. Before they were in spiritual darkness. In fact he says they were darkness. They were totally ignorant of divine truth. Their spiritual ignorance guided them into acts of ungodliness and immorality. They were people whose "darkness" was evident in their behavior and speech with hearts that did evil before God.

That darkness was also ours without Christ. By nature we were born in spiritual darkness. We were directed by the darkening power of sin ignorant of truth and instead guided into immorality. The darkness of our hearts was evident in our sinful thoughts, words, and actions which are evil before God. Yes, we were at one time darkness. Yet darkness wasn't what the Ephesians were as the Apostle Paul wrote this letter. Neither is that true of us anymore. Contrasting our former state with our present state, Paul says that now we are no longer darkness.

Instead connected with Jesus, we are light in the Lord. As a light switch brings light to the eye pushing out the darkness so you can see clearly, so the light of the gospel brings the light of Jesus to our hearts. Jesus was crucified in the darkness of Calvary so that you and I would no longer be in the dark, but have the light of life. The Holy Spirit who brought the Ephesian Christians to faith has brought us to faith in Jesus enlightening our hearts. The Spirit has led us to the truth recognizing our sins, our need for forgiveness, and who the source of that forgiveness is - Jesus and his cross. He's done that through the powerful Word of God.

The Holy Spirit uses the Word as a bright torch to direct us in the way of truth. It penetrates the deepest darkness of night and exposes the works of darkness. It reveals the priceless treasure of Jesus which never could have been found in the dark. Yet that same Word also directs us as we now live who we are walking as children of the light.

When I was in high school I had the opportunity to serve as a camp counselor for a week in the summer at a state park near Mississippi River. At night when all the campers were in bed and our duties were done for the day, some of us would go hiking on the trails in the woods "exploring". It seemed like a fun thing to do at the time, but honestly looking back on it, it was pretty dumb. Yes, we had good flashlights. However it was against the rules. That's a whole different discussion, and not the reason I'm telling you about this. One night my batteries died. I was walking in the dark. I could see some things because of the moon, but I couldn't see what exactly was on the path in front of me. Perhaps there was a rock, a root, or just a change in path that I just couldn't see. Well, as you might guess, I tripped and fell into a patch of nettles and nearly rolled down a slope. In the darkness, as long as I had a light I could see, but when that light wasn't there, I fell.

In order to walk as a child of the light, we need the guiding light of God's powerful Word through the darkness. Otherwise we stumble into the nettles of sin and fall down the dark hill of living in the darkness again. The Word directs our every word, every thought, every action so that we are conducting our life consistent with our calling in the crucified Jesus, walking as a child of the light evidenced by the fruit which light bears. **(read vs. 9-13)**

Goodness, righteousness, and truth. Goodness is that uprightness and a genuine moral excellence. Those who are righteous before God through faith in Jesus are now light in the Lord. They do not desire to live by what the world establishes as right, but what is right in the eyes of God. Truth. There is a great lie out there that there is no absolute truth and truth is really only what you determine to be true. Yet, here is the truth. God is truth and his Word guides us in all truth so that the fruit of light is seen in us. As children of light, we put everything to the test on the basis of the truth not participating in the fruitless deeds of darkness. We were once darkness and now we are light in the Lord.

Again I ask...can light and darkness coexist at the same time in a believer? No. There is no room for both at the same time. When it is day, the darkness of night is not present. When the lights are turned on in a room, the darkness is pushed out. Light and darkness are incompatible. Therefore it is impossible to claim to be living in the light with its resulting fruit and then at the same time adopt a lifestyle of those who are still in the darkness of unbelief. The child of light will have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness. Instead the light of the Gospel shines through believers exposing deeds for what they are. It exposes them all while avoiding even a speculative interest in them. When a deed of darkness is subjected to the light, one is able to see the sin for what it is understanding what pleases the Lord.

Darkness and light cannot coexist. Yes they both exist in our world. There is morality and immorality. There is good and evil, but they cannot coexist in the life of a believer, one who has been brought out of the

darkness of sin, unbelief and spiritual ignorance into the light of forgiveness, life, and salvation all in the Lord Jesus through the cross he bore for us.

The man we heard about in the Gospel today, you could say he was in the darkness both visually and spiritually. Jesus opened his eyes. He could see. His world was no longer in darkness, but then Jesus led him out of spiritual darkness too as the Holy Spirit brought him to faith seeing Jesus as the Light of the World. This man who once was darkness, after seeing Jesus he was now light in the Lord. You and I are no different. We were once darkness, but now we are light in the Lord as Christ, the Light of the World, shines on us. **(read vs. 14)**

These words Paul quotes seem to be part of an early Christian hymn associated with baptism. The call to wake up and rise from the dead refers to our conversion. For many of us, it was at our baptism that the Holy Spirit woke us up chasing away the darkness of sin and unbelief with the light of Jesus. Through water and God's powerful Word we are connected to Jesus and his saving work on the cross. Our sins are washed away as Christ shines on us. We were once darkness, but now we are light in the Lord.

The yin-yang and the force are worldly philosophies which really, at least from my limited understanding, avoid the question of why evil exists. They just accept that it does, that there is light and darkness, good and evil. And so as a result, those two opposing forces must find a way to coexist in the world. Yes there is evil in the world because of sin and we are in the world, but we are not of the world, are we? We have been brought out of the darkness into God's wonderful light. We are light in the Lord Jesus who want to walk as children of light where the darkness of sin has no place. Amen

