

# STANDING FOR LIGHT & TRUTH

LIVING WITH INTEGRITY TO SHINE  
GOD'S LIGHT IN A WORLD GROWING DIM

ADRIAN ROGERS



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STANDING FOR LIGHT & TRUTH  
*Living with Integrity to Shine God's Light in a World Growing Dim*

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# DEDICATION

This book is warmly and gratefully dedicated to the following men who have served as deacon chairmen since I have been pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church. To be the chairman of deacons at Bellevue Baptist Church is a great honor and a tremendous responsibility. The deacons at Bellevue Baptist Church have incredible fellowship. They do not see themselves as managers of the church, nor men appointed to oversee the pastor. They present themselves with a Christ-like spirit to serve the church.

Bellevue Baptist Church is operated under this philosophy: The church is pastor-led, deacon-served, committee-operated, and congregationally approved. That works wonderfully well for us.

The following men are some of my dearest friends, and I thank God for them. Some are already in heaven but are still held in my heart. Would to God every pastor could have deacons like these:

|                    |                   |               |
|--------------------|-------------------|---------------|
| Jeff L. Arnold     | Bryan Miller      | Chuck Taylor  |
| Harry Smith        | Steve Tucker      | Gene Howard   |
| Dr. Robert Vincent | David Perdue      | Jim Glover*   |
| Charles Brand      | Roland Maddox     | Jim Angel     |
| Bob Dawkins        | Robert Fargarson* | John Crockett |
| R. L. Sorrell      | Al Childress*     | Paul Stovall* |
| Dr. Dewey Burton*  | William B. Mills* |               |

*\*Deceased*

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Also, I wish to acknowledge the membership of the dear church that received these messages with open hearts and minds. What an encouragement they continue to be to me.

# INTRODUCTION

*O send out thy light and thy truth: let them lead me; let them bring me unto thy holy hill, and to thy tabernacles. (Psalm 43:3)*

This Scripture is written boldly across the large cornice over the entrance of Bellevue Baptist Church. It represents the heartbeat of the church. This congregation that numbers over 28,000 members is celebrating 100 years of glorious history. The church, though a century old, is alive, vigorous, and growing greatly.

I have personally had the joy of pastoring Bellevue for thirty-one years. No pastor has ever had a more loving congregation and greater joy in his task. What is the secret of the dynamism of this exciting congregation?

For all of its history Bellevue has never argued or quibbled about the great doctrines of the Christian faith. For the people of Bellevue, light and truth include such convictions as:

1. The inerrant and infallible Word of God.
2. The deity of the virgin-born Son of God.
3. The saving and transforming power of the gospel.
4. The irrevocable commitment to the Great Commission.
5. The call to holy living.

These and other cherished beliefs have helped bind together this great fellowship.

The people at Crossway Books were kind enough to ask that some of the messages I have delivered at Bellevue be put into this volume. Light and truth was selected as the theme.

The reader will recognize these messages as sermons, for that is what they are. They are not literary masterpieces, but the pulpit pleadings and the passionate heart of a pastor. They were used of God when first delivered in the worship center at Bellevue. My

prayer is that they will be used of God again in your heart as you read them.

I have endeavored to give the sources of quotations and ideas where known, but these are messages prepared in the course of a pastor's week and are not scholarly dissertations. These are thoughts gathered from my notebook and ideas picked up by years of reading. I apologize if I have not always given proper credit. The preacher milks many cows to churn his own butter.

May God send forth His light and His truth into your life.

—Adrian Rogers  
Bellevue Baptist Church  
Memphis, Tennessee

**PART I:**  
**STANDING FOR LIGHT**

## CHAPTER 1

# CHRIST THE LIGHT

## JESUS—HEAVEN’S LIGHT FOR EARTH’S DARKNESS

I heard of an English professor who walked into his classroom one day and wrote these words on the blackboard: “Walk with light.” He then asked the students who wrote these words.

The students, supposing the phrase to be a profound thought from a great work of literature, guessed various authors. Some said Goethe, others Emerson, and still others guessed the poet Wordsworth. But the professor said, “No, I read these words on the traffic light on my way to the school this morning.”

“Walk with light” is a profound thought, even when it is delivered in the most ordinary circumstances. Indeed, this is what God did when He sent His precious Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, to earth to walk among men. Jesus Himself said He came as “the light of the world” (John 8:12) to save ordinary people like you and me. The apostle John declared that we should make it our ambition as Christians to “walk in the light, as he [Jesus] is in the light” (1 John 1:7).

I want us to see the profound nature of light as it is used to reveal God in all of His holiness and purity in Scripture. Light itself is so mysterious. The great physicist Albert Einstein is reported to have said, “For the rest of my life I want to reflect on what light is.”

The nature of light is nearly impossible to define. Is it a wave without a medium, or a particle without a mass? Look up the word *light* in the dictionary, and you will see that even brilliant minds struggle for words and concepts to define light. Perhaps this is why the Holy Spirit chose light as a metaphor for God throughout the Scripture. Like God, light is mysterious but glorious. Let’s learn some lessons about God’s light from the apostle John, so that we won’t be in the dark about light.

### The Unchanging Constancy of God’s Light

The opening verses of John 1 are the New Testament equivalent of the opening verses of Genesis 1, and that is not by coincidence. The apostle wants us to understand that Jesus is the eternal God, who was present at the creation of the world. John wrote: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God” (vv. 1-2).

This is one of the greatest statements of Jesus’ eternal, unchanging nature as the Second Person of the Godhead in all of the New Testament. It is very interesting that both John (vv. 4-9) and Jesus Himself refer to Jesus as the light, because light by its nature, like our Lord, is constant. The speed and the nature of light never change.

The world has marveled at Einstein’s theory of relativity, which Einstein said he was able to construct because the speed of light is the one thing in the world of nature that is unchangeable. It is the only constant in this physical universe in which we live.

Einstein came up with the famous formula  $E = MC^2$ . This means that the energy of any given object equals its mass times the speed of light squared. I am told that only twelve other men besides Einstein truly understand this. I can’t vouch for that because I do not know who the other eleven may be!

Seriously, the truth is that if you can explain Einstein's formula, I need to talk to you. But I do know that light travels at the speed of 186,282 miles per second. That speed is many times around the world in one tick of the clock, which is really beyond our ability to conceive.

We can understand the basic concept of relative speed. If I pass you at fifty miles per hour, that can be measured. A police officer with a radar gun can clock my speed. Now if we pass each other from opposite directions at fifty miles per hour, the relative speed is one hundred miles per hour. And if I am traveling at fifty miles per hour and you travel alongside me at fifty-six miles per hour, then your speed relative to mine is six miles per hour faster.

But suppose you highjack a light beam and travel at 186,282 miles per second, and I am riding another light beam headed in the opposite direction. We will pass each other, but our relative speed will not double. The rules have changed because the speed of light is constant.

It is not speed that is now altered, but time. When the speed of light is reached, time basically stands still. The nearer we come to the speed of light, the more time slows down. In other words, we must adjust our normal understanding to conform to the nature of light, because light is not going to change or vary its constancy to accommodate our limited minds.

So it is with our God. Albert Einstein demonstrated that the speed of light is unchanging, but the apostle John saw the unchangeable nature of God's light before Einstein ever saw the light of day. John understood that there is no variability with God's light. The Lord Jesus is the everlasting, unchanging light of all eternity.

The apostle James, the half-brother of Jesus, also testified to the perfect constancy of God's light: "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variability, neither shadow of turning" (James 1:17).

As is the Father, so is the Son. There is no shadow of turning with Jesus. It is always high noon with Him. His love never has a sunset so as to need a sunrise. He never stops shining, and He

cannot change. We can bask in the light of His love even when everything around us is dark.

Our need and desire for light is so ingrained in us that someone devised the ingenious system known as daylight saving time to give us more daylight during the summer. I read that the idea for daylight saving time came from an old Indian who cut off one end of his blanket and sewed it to the other end to make the blanket longer. We think we are changing time and altering the sunlight by setting our clocks ahead or back one hour for a brief period of time. But all we are doing is changing our perception of time in relation to the sunlight.

Praise God for the unchanging constancy of His light. When at last in heaven we are made like Him, we will have His nature, which is perfect light. But we must first undergo the transformation of the Rapture to stand in God's presence, for the Bible says that God is "the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting" (1 Timothy 6:15-16).

What a glory that will be when Jesus returns for us and takes us to be with Him forever. Time will stand still, and we will dwell in the perfect light of heaven. The glories of heaven make the horrors of hell even more unbearable. Jesus described hell as "outer darkness," the total absence of light. And while in heaven time will stand still, in hell time will never end.

This same apostle John said of those who are judged and sent to hell for worshiping the Antichrist in the Tribulation: "The smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name" (Revelation 14:11). Thank God for the Lord Jesus, the everlasting, unchanging Light of eternity who has delivered us from the power of darkness and transferred us into His glorious kingdom (Colossians 1:13).

Do you realize that our faith rests on the unchanging constancy of Jesus Christ? I once had an opportunity to witness for two hours to Muhammad Ali, the former heavyweight boxing champion. Ali, who is a Muslim, asked me this question: "If you say that Jesus is the

Son of God because He was born of a virgin, wouldn't that make Adam more the son of God than Jesus because Adam did not have either a father or a mother?"

I said to him, "Champ, Jesus is not the Son of God because He was born of a virgin. He was born of a virgin because He is the Son of God." Jesus never had a beginning. He is the Eternal Son, the unchanging One, "the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever" (Hebrews 13:8).

Not only does our eternal destiny depend on Jesus Christ's unchanging nature, but so does the very survival of this universe. If Jesus Christ were ever to change or for one second cease being who He is, this world would literally fly apart. "He is before all things, and by him all things consist" (Colossians 1:17). The word *consist* means "hold together." Jesus is the "glue" that holds creation together.

Isn't it wonderful to know that God never changes? A wise man once said, "You can't make God nervous." What can disturb Him? The hymn-writer expressed it so well: "Great is Thy faithfulness, O God my Father; there is no shadow of turning with Thee; Thou changest not, Thy compassions they fail not; As Thou hast been Thou forever wilt be."

## The Unfailing Vitality of This Light

In John 1 we find another characteristic of the light that is Jesus Christ. This light has life-giving power. "All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men" (vv. 3-4).

There can be no life in the physical world without light. One of the first big words I learned in school was *photosynthesis*, which literally means put together with light. It is amazing to grasp the degree to which life on this planet depends on photosynthesis, the process by which green plants and other organisms use light to convert various elements into glucose. For instance, glucose is a simple sugar that is the basic energy source for virtually all organisms on earth. In addition, the oxygen we need to breathe and stay alive is produced as a by-product of photosynthesis. Even the so-called fossil fuels such as coal and petroleum that we have come to depend on so heavily