

Candles, Flashlights, Lasers and the Sun

Neil Gerrard

This is a test of your logical thinking abilities. This is only a test.

1. If you're in an airplane and you are being approached by an armed and hostile aircraft moving at speeds exceeding mach 3, which would you rather have?

- A. A candle.
- B. A flashlight.
- C. An airborne laser capable of obliterating the approaching aircraft out of the sky while it is still many miles away.
- D. The sun (inside your airplane).

2. If you're stumbling around inside your house during a power outage, which would you most rather have if you suddenly needed to discover the source of that strange yelp that sounded just after you stepped on something soft and squishy?

- A. A candle with some matches to light it.
- B. A flashlight with fresh batteries already inside it.
- C. A laser powerful enough to pass through and even fry your poor pet that you just stepped on or, better yet, one powerful enough to open up the wall and possibly turn your neighbor's house into a drive-through as well.
- D. The sun (inside your house).

3. If you're freezing to death on a wet and cloudy day and stranded far from rescue, which would you most rather have?

- A. A candle where the few matches you have won't even begin to compete with the dampness and cold temperatures.
- B. A flashlight with fresh batteries in it.
- C. A laser that might be useful for felling large trees (if it didn't start a forest fire).
- D. The sun penetrating through the clouds from its usual place 93 million miles away.

4. If you're lost in the forest on a windy night, which would you rather have?

- A. A candle with matches.
- B. A flashlight with fresh batteries.
- C. A laser capable of felling large trees or starting a forest fire.

D. The sun (inside the forest with you).

5. A dangerous tissue is building up around a vital organ inside your body and must be surgically removed to prevent serious debilitation or even death. Which would you want your surgeon to have?

A. A candle with matches.

B. A flashlight with fresh batteries.

C. A surgical laser and years of experience using it in such procedures.

D. The sun (inside the operating room).

These questions (which no one should need to be told what the right answers are!) have been put forward in a humorous manner but they point to a most serious truth. Jesus said, "I am the light of the world." (Jn. 8:12) He also said of His disciples, "You are the light of the world." (Mt. 5:14) How can we apply these sayings to the above questions? Simply in this: some people are, in the plan of God's will, candles, some are flashlights, some are lasers and some precious few radiate like the sun.

That is to say, some people have only a small bit of the light that is Christ and these have small or limited arenas of influence. Others have more light and more influence on the people around them, probing to some extent the darkness that surrounds them. Still others are given truths and insights that have powerful ramifications. And still others simply shine like the sun with the love and presence of the Spirit and grace of Christ and God.

The beauty of God is demonstrated in that He does not judge us on the basis of which kind of light source we are or become. He judges us on the basis of whether we became the kind of light source He intended us to be. No matter what kind of light source He has made us to be, He asks only that we be that particular kind of light source and not another.

It really cannot be said strongly enough that it is not what kind of light source we are or become that matters most. What matters most is whether we are faithful to being the kind of light source the Lord made us to be. The seed that fell on good soil produced crops 30, 60 or 100 times what was planted – but no condemnation was spoken against the 30s just because they weren't 60s or 100s or vice versa. (see Mt. 13:23, Mk. 4:20, see also Mt. 25:20-23) The seed, representative of the word of God's kingdom that implants the life of God within the soul (Mt. 13:19, Mk. 4:14, Lk. 8:11, Jas. 1:21), must be fruitful but the quantity of our fruitfulness is not at issue. Condemnation and judgment are reserved only for those who do not remain alive nor produce any fruit whatsoever. (Mt. 13:19-22, Mk. 4:15-19, see also Mt. 25:24-30)

God intends to have a variety, even an arsenal of people-types at His disposal and for His usage. He may put a candle in the path of someone who is stumbling around their own house or a flashlight in front of someone lost in the woods. He may use a laser to destroy some deceptive work of the devil and the demonic or to cut away some undesirable flesh that is contaminating our ideas about following Him. Or He may wish to expose some cold or shriveled soul to an overwhelming and enlivening dose of the presence of His love and grace. But all this is His work of light and grace.

Perhaps one of the gravest problems around today is that, under the influences of social media and of mandatory public education and of spending most of our time working our lives away to meet our expenses and of weekly "church" attendance that mimics and replaces Christ's

abundant and eternal life, many people simply cannot progress beyond flashlight phase. This is not necessarily a problem if the individual is truly called to be and remain a candle or flashlight. If that is what God has called you to, you should be faithful and content and even joyous in the small circle God has you influencing and none should condemn or criticize you in that capacity in any way.

But the “church,” that counterfeit of true assembly in and with the body of Christ, particularly and especially prevents and ostracizes those who begin to exhibit laser intensity or who radiate with nuclear energy. Perhaps the latter might be tolerated in some grandmotherly or grandfatherly type whose “grasp on theology” is suspect anyway but anyone who begins to speak with laser intensity, and especially those who begin to speak with any kind of accuracy, must be ostracized and even driven off before their focused light begins to call into question all those aspects that make for good “church” business wherein one can scratch the ears of the best paying consumers of religious nonsense and spiritual deception (see 2 Tim. 4:3-4) or wherein one can be comfortable with whatever “doctrines” or “theology” that appeals most to one’s own personality traits and preferences.

Paul wrote, “But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them. For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your bondservants for Jesus’ sake. 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. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us.” (2 Cor. 4:3-7) Paul also warned, “Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.” (Rom. 8:9)

Perhaps the “church’s” worst crime is that many people are permitted, taught, and even encouraged to seek to produce their own light without the power and presence of the Spirit of Christ. These then, because they have some knowledge and affirmation from others, assume that they are walking in the light of Christ and God and then expect to receive a “Well done, good and faithful servant” at the end of all their troubles and trials in this life. But these do not preach or practice Christ in spirit and truth (Jn. 4:24) but rather serve a “Christ” who allows, even encourages, them to believe and do whatever is “right” and “good” in their own eyes – a condition and mindset the Bible calls “lawlessness,” a thing which Paul warns is the opposite or antithesis of that which is righteous in God’s judgment. (2 Cor. 6:14) These may be busy about some “church” business and even doing so in the name of Christ and God (but this busy-ness ultimately builds only the “pastor’s” or the denomination’s fiefdom and really does nothing for God’s true kingdom though God, in His transcendence, will work even this into good for those who do such things in ignorance – see Rom. 8:28), but it is merely a dead work which will require repentance because it is done apart from the leading and will of God. It is not what light we have or are that matters most. It is whether we shine with His light or our own. If all we have is our own light, we are, of all people, most to be pitied for in the end we will be exposed for the frauds that we are.

Let us no longer quibble and fight amongst ourselves simply because our kinds of light are different. If they are His light, there is no significant difference between us – it is only those who produce their own “light” out of their own darkness and flesh but still attempt to call it Christ’s light who are a counterfeit tare among the genuine wheat. (Mt. 13:38) But if the Lord somehow raises up a laser or a sun, let us not be jealous or envious or fearful of their intensity and power. The putrid contamination that has built up among those who claim the name of

Christ in this age requires the curative effects of such instruments of light. Even if the Lord sends such a one into our own life, let us not quench the work of God's Spirit (1 Ths. 5:19) simply because our light is of a different caliber than that of another. Be patient and understanding if a laser (who hasn't been one for very long or doesn't even know that's what God is shaping him into) happens to roast your pet (especially your pet doctrine!) as he zeroes in on your previously unrecognized golden calf. And be patient if the candle or flashlight the Lord has brought into our life isn't always the "brightest bulb on the tree" either. None of that really matters unless we begin to mistreat and misunderstand one another, expecting everyone else to be just like *me*.

Rather than contesting with one another for top positions, let us be discerning as to what kind of light these others are operating in and readily submit to those who are truly living according to the light of Christ and God. Simply because lawlessness, doing what is right in one's own eyes, abounds (Mt. 24:12) and just because the vast majority of people who claim to follow Christ do so in what can best and only be called carnality and deception (1 Cor. 3:1-3), does not give us the excuse to abandon all others and forge ahead as if we were the only saved person (or people) on the planet. We are not permitted by Christ to neglect or abuse any other person who genuinely has Christ's Spirit and light within – no matter how small, weak, bright, dull, powerful, intense, restrained or contained that light may be at the moment. Christ died for all and not just for any one particular individual. We would be wise to find out how Christ wants the person in front of us treated and not just blindly presume that we are the far better one than those with whom we interact. (Lk. 18:11) One day, the truth about ourselves will be known to all – the wise one will walk in that kind of light now because in God's kingdom, no darkness will be permitted to remain.

Let he who has ears hear.

Neil Girrard
Paidion Books
P.O. Box 327
Capitan, NM 88316

Website – www.paidionbooks.org
Email – paidion@paidionbooks.org
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