

# Philippians 2:15

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world;

## Analysis

**That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world** (ἵνα γένησθε ἄμεμπτοι καὶ ἀκέραιοι, τέκνα θεοῦ ἁμωμα μέσον γενεᾶς σκολιᾶς καὶ διεστραμμένης, ἐν οἷς φαίνεσθε ὡς φωστῆρες ἐν κόσμῳ, hina genēsthe amemptoi kai akeraioi, tekna theou amōma meson geneas skolias kai diestrammenēs, en hois phainesthe hōs phōstēres en kosmō)—Hina genēsthe ("that you may become") states purpose. Amemptoi ("blameless") means beyond reproach; akeraioi ("harmless, innocent, pure") combines a- ("without") + kerannymi ("mix")—unmixed, unadulterated. Amōma ("without blemish") is sacrificial language (Lev 1:3).

**Children of God** (τέκνα θεοῦ, tekna theou) identifies believers' status. Context: **in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation** (μέσον γενεᾶς σκολιᾶς καὶ διεστραμμένης, meson geneas skolias kai diestrammenēs)—quotes Deut 32:5 (Moses's description of Israel). Skolias ("crooked") and diestrammenēs ("twisted, perverted") describe moral corruption. Believers are countercultural. **Shine as lights** (φαίνεσθε ὡς φωστῆρες, phainesthe hōs phōstēres)—phōstēres ("luminaries") usually means heavenly bodies (Gen 1:14 LXX). Christians are cosmic lights in moral darkness.

## Historical Context

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Deuteronomy 32:5's application to Greco-Roman culture (not just Israel) universalizes moral corruption. Ancient paganism involved sexual immorality, violence, injustice—Christians' ethical rigor was conspicuous. 'Lights in the world' echoes Jesus's teaching (Matt 5:14-16). Second-century apologists (Justin Martyr, Athenagoras) defended Christians by pointing to their ethical transformation—lights in darkness.

## Related Passages

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**James 2:17** — Faith and works

**Romans 1:17** — The righteous shall live by faith

## Study Questions

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1. How are you 'blameless and harmless' in a morally 'crooked and perverse' culture?
2. What does it mean to 'shine as lights' (phōstēres)—and how is your light visible to others?
3. How does being 'children of God' (tekna theou) motivate ethical distinctiveness?

## Interlinear Text

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ἵνα	γένησθε	ἄμεμπτοι	καὶ	ἀκέραιοι	τέκνα	θεοῦ
<b>That</b>	<b>ye may be</b>	<b>blameless</b>	<b>and</b>	<b>harmless</b>	<b>the sons</b>	<b>of God</b>
G2443	G1096	G273	G2532	G185	G5043	G2316
ἀμώμητα	ἐν	μέσῳ	γενεᾷς	σκολιᾷς	καὶ	
<b>without rebuke</b>	<b>among</b>	<b>the midst</b>	<b>nation</b>	<b>of a crooked</b>	<b>and</b>	
G298	G1722	G3319	G1074	G4646	G2532	
διεστραμμένης	ἐν	οἷς	φαίνεσθε	ὥς	φωστῆρες	ἐν
<b>perverse</b>	<b>among</b>	<b>whom</b>	<b>ye shine</b>	<b>as</b>	<b>lights</b>	<b>among</b>
G1294	G1722	G3739	G5316	G5613	G5458	G1722
κόσμῳ						
<b>the world</b>						
G2889						

## Additional Cross-References

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**1 Peter 2:12** (References God): Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.

**Matthew 5:45** (Parallel theme): That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.

**Isaiah 60:1** (Light): Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee.

**Deuteronomy 32:5** (Parallel theme): They have corrupted themselves, their spot is not the spot of his children: they are a perverse and crooked generation.

**2 Peter 3:14** (Parallel theme): Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.

**1 Thessalonians 5:23** (References God): And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

**1 Corinthians 1:8** (Parallel theme): Who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

**Titus 2:10** (References God): Not purloining, but shewing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.

**Matthew 5:48** (Parallel theme): Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.

**1 Peter 2:9** (Light): But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: