

Look at the Lights!

One of my favorite elements of the Christmas season is seeing all of the lights on the trees and houses. I think that comes from a memorable tradition in my family, which was piling into a car to go “look at the lights.” Alongside the wonderful music, unique decorations, wrapped gifts, and amazing food, colorful lights go a long way to help put me in the Christmas spirit.

My daughter asked once the meaning of the lights at this time of the year. I explained that they are a symbol of Christ, as so many Christmas traditions are. Jesus said Himself, “I am *the Light* of the world.” In some small way, we remember who He is, why He came, and what He did by putting up lights.

Let There Be Light

We are introduced to the *theme of light and darkness* at the beginning of the Bible, at creation. “The earth was formless and void and *darkness* was over the surface of the deep... Then, God said, ‘*Let there be light*, and there was light’” (*Gen. 1:2, 3*). From the outset, *the redemptive story of the Bible is portrayed by darkness and despair being overcome by God’s marvelous light*.

Notice that light was declared on the first day; but which light was it, physical light or spiritual light? The sun and the moon were not created until the third day (*Gen. 1:16*). So then, what was providing the light in the beginning, before the sun and the moon were made? In truth, it was not a “what” but a “who,” and that “Who” was the Lord. *God was the light of man, even before He created man, even before He created physical light for man!*

John wrote that, “God is *light* and in Him there is no *darkness*” (*1 John 1:5*). James described Him as, “the *Father of lights*, in whom there is

no shadow” (*1:17*). Nebuchadnezzar even recognized that “He knows what is in the darkness and the *light dwells with Him*” (*Daniel 2:22*); and, Paul described His presence as “inapproachable *light*” (*1 Tim. 6:16*).

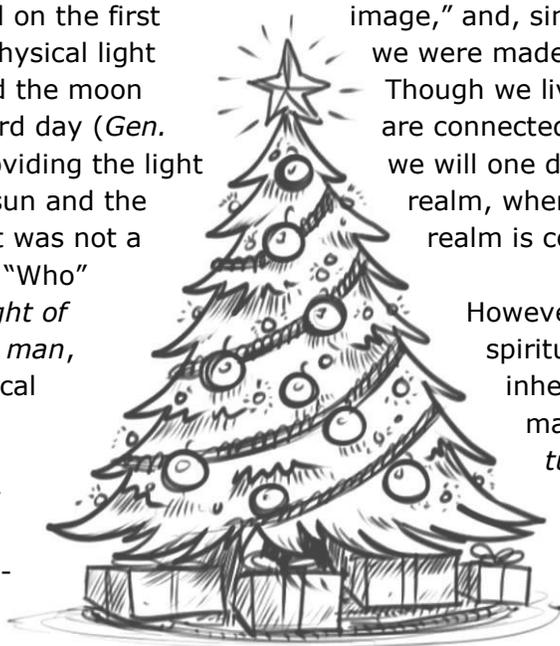
It is interesting when people in the Bible get a glimpse of the “other side” (the spiritual realm), they are typically frightened by the sight. Anytime one sees an angel, for example, he is afraid at first (*Acts 9:3*). When Jesus is transfigured before His followers, the brightness is indescribable (*Matt. 17:2; 28:3*). When Paul shared his conversion story, He described Jesus revealing Himself on the road to Damascus in a light that blinded Him with its brilliance (*Acts 22:6, 11*).

God is supernatural, spiritual light, and His radiance is powerful enough to illuminate the universe, yet we on earth cannot see it with our physical eyes, and when we do, it is too magnificent to behold. Therefore, God has chosen not to reveal to us the *spiritual* realm; the spiritual realm is hidden from our sight, for now.

Formerly of Darkness

Scripture says that God created man “in His image,” and, since God is spirit (*John 4:24*), we were made with a spiritual element. Though we live in the *physical* realm, we are connected to the *spiritual* realm; and, we will one day live in the spiritual realm, when our life in the physical realm is completed.

However, even though men have a spiritual element, because of their inherent sinful nature, all human beings are born into *spiritual darkness* (*Ps. 82:5; 107:10; Isa. 9:2; Eph. 5:8; Acts 26:23*).



Solomon said that “the way of the wicked is darkness” (*Prov. 4:19*). Men who die in their sin never escape darkness, for even in the afterlife, they will be “cast into outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth” (*Matt. 22:13; 25:30*).

The Light Has Come

Although men are born into *darkness* and are trapped, it seems, in darkness, there is hope. Isaiah wrote that “those who walk in darkness will see a great *light*” (*9:2*). Malachi foretold that though the night seems invincible, “the *sun of righteousness* would rise with healing in His wings” (*4:2*); and, David called the Lord “his *light* and his salvation” (*Psa. 27:1*). God lives in *light* but man lives in *darkness*; however, God made a way to rescue men from the night. How? By sending His Son, “the sun of righteousness,” into the world! “He is a true *light to the nations*” (*Isa. 42:6*).

“I am *the Light* of the world,” He said. He who follows Me will *no longer walk in darkness*” (*John 8:12*), for “in Me is life and *the life is the light of men*” (*John 1:4*). Paul wrote that Jesus “rescued us from the *domain of darkness*” and brought us into His *marvelous light*” (*Col. 1:13; 1 Peter 2:9*). Thanks be to God that we do not have to remain in darkness!

Shining as Lights in the Darkness

After having been rescued from the kingdom of darkness, those of us who are followers of Christ are now *lights shining in the darkness*. We are not the Light itself, but, as the moon reflects the sun, *we are to reflect the light of Christ to those around us*. As He said, “Let your *light* so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven” (*Matt. 5:16*). We are to “walk in the light, as He Himself is in the light” (*1 John 1:7*). We are now called “sons of light” (*1 Thess. 5:5*), instructed to “prove ourselves blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom *we appear as lights in the world*” (*Phil. 2:15*).

As Christ-followers, we are part of the battle between light and darkness; “for we struggle not with flesh and blood... but with forces of *darkness*” (*Eph. 6:12*). “The god of this world (Satan) has blinded the minds of the unbelieving, so that they might not see the *light of the gospel of Christ*” (*2 Cor. 4:4*). We are battling for the souls of men, called to *lead others to the light of Christ*!

Fellowship in the Light

Christ is *the light of the world*; He was at the beginning and He will be at the end. Isaiah prophesied that in heaven, we will “no longer have the sun for light by day, nor brightness by the moon at night; but, we will have the Lord for an *everlasting light*...” (*60:19*). John agreed; he said that heaven “has no need of the sun or moon to shine, for *the glory of God illumines it, and its lamp is the Lamb*” (*Rev. 21:23*).

Thanks to Christ, He has “qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in *light*” (*Col. 1:12*). Because of Jesus, we will enjoy that heavenly scene someday. Praise the Lord, “the *night* is almost gone, and the *day* is drawing near” (*Rom. 13:12*).

The Light of Christmas

There you have it. From beginning to end, the spiritual light of the Bible is Christ. The spiritual light of the world is Christ; and, the reason for our physical lights at Christmas is Christ. Is there any wonder why the news of Jesus’ birth was proclaimed to the shepherds in the midst of glorious light? Does it surprise anyone that the wise men were led to the Savior by the light of a star? He is the *light of lights*! He is *the end of all darkness*!

Therefore, *revel in the lights of Christmas*; even hang some lights yourself, if you wish. They are delightful reminders of who Christ is, why He came, and what He did for us! They are also meant to remind us that we have a significant calling on our lives – to reflect the *light of Christmas* to a world that is trapped in *darkness*!