

# The Light of Life

*The True Light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world.*

—John 1:9 [ESV]

The twinkling star shone above Bethlehem, pointing the way to the far Greater Light below. There in a manger, wrapped in swaddling clothes, was God incarnate. But the story of the Light of the World did not begin with the angels announcing the birth of a Savior. It begins with the start of all things. From the very first words spoken in Creation, God identified Himself as the origin of Light, and He alone brings life to a world prone to darkness. As we enter the Advent season, let us take a moment to meditate on God's glorious Light.

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.* —John 1:1-5

*The story of the Light of the World did not begin with the angels announcing the birth of a Savior.*

In the beginning, God caused His light to shine into the darkness, speaking "Let there be light!" His glory and majesty still lights our way today as we look to Him for a path forward in a sinful and broken world. Our paths can become so easily obscured by sin, deception, and darkness—God alone provides the light to overcome this darkness.

From before Creation, before mankind was formed, and before we chose to sin and rebel against Him, God had a plan for our redemption. This atonement was promised at the very onset of sin, and God continued to renew this promise throughout the Old Testament.

God led His people through the wilderness by night as a pillar of fire (see Exodus 13:21), and delivered them into the Promised Land. He showed His love for His people by shining a light when they did not know the way.

David powerfully says that the Lord is "my light and my salvation" (Psalm 27:1). He states that "For it is you who light my lamp; the Lord my God lightens my darkness" (Psalm 18:28). So too, God lights the path and dispels the darkness for us today!

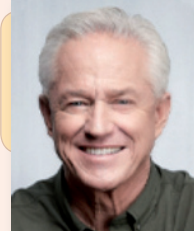
*So too, God lights the path and dispels the darkness for us today!*

When the fullness of time was come, Jesus Christ, fully God and fully man, the Light and Life of the world, was born as our Redeemer. The star illumined the spot where Christ lay that dark night 2,000 years ago, and Christ's coming promised illumination in a time of darkness and evil. His entrance was humble for a promised Messiah, or so many people thought, but through Christ, salvation from sin was bought: "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it" (John 1:5).

We celebrate Christmas to glorify Christ as the Light of Life come to man. We celebrate that we no longer have to live in darkness—Christ has brought His light to shine in our hearts.

This Christmas season, let us continue to celebrate Christ as the Light of Life, and shine His light to all those around us!

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**"PREPARE THE WAY FOR THE LORD."**

—Isaiah 40: 3, Mark 1:3

Advent season is upon us!

Anticipation, excitement, and expectations mark this season of waiting and preparing to celebrate the Lord. It is a season to anticipate His presence, to be excited over His coming, and to expect His Spirit to enter our lives in new ways.

It is a busy season, both happy and difficult for most of us. Christmas stirs emotions and memories in people—I wish they were all good, but I know that for many people their memories

and their feelings are hard.

A missionary friend of mine celebrated advent differently than most of us. She was connected to an Anglican convent in England and wrote about their advent season:

"Advent begins in sharp contrast to the Christmas carols blaring in lavishly decorated malls and swarming shoppers who buzz about in an altered state. Advent began today with a deliberate slowing down and silence...Advent is about stripping down to the essentials in preparation for Christ's coming, taking away everything that distracts."

Their decorations and celebrations don't begin until Christmas Eve.

"Advent is a time for marveling at inner mysteries, a time for watching in awed silence, and a time for getting in touch with our deepest longings for the Lord. Silencing the externals and going deeper into the stillness allows you to taste the riches of the incarnation. And what appears to be deprivation creates an expectation and space in one's soul

to contain more Christmas joy when the 24th of December arrives."

I like that.

While we can't all physically find a place apart from our busy lives, I pray that we find time in our hearts and minds to anticipate with excitement and expectation what God will do in our lives in the next few weeks.

I pray we can strip down mentally to the essentials and find comfort and peace in knowing God loves us.

If you are worried about not having enough money, time, or energy to "do Christmas right," then I pray you will realize that His riches are abundant in love, joy, and peace, and His grace is always sufficient.

His love, flowing out of you, will provide blessings to others. No matter what your financial resources are, you will "do Christmas right."

May your deepest longings for the Lord be met this advent season.

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