

The Light of the world

MERRY CHRISTMAS!

/We live in dark times, in a dark world.\

Times of war.

Cultural darkness.

Moral darkness.

Spiritual darkness.

/The LORD was not taken by surprise about any of this. \

We are sons and daughters of the Living God. The LORD has made provision for us in His word, for these dark times, for this dark world. He has prepared us for this, so that we would not be surprised either.

/The world has always been a dark place. \

John 16:33

33 "These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world."

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Eph 6:12

12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.

/We also live in a dark time.\

2 Tim 3:1-5

But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. 2 For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, 3 unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, 4 treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, 5 holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power; Avoid such men as these.

/Christmas is all about light breaking through the darkness. \

Israel in the first century was also a dark place in a dark time. The Roman military was invincible -and oppressive. Moral darkness. Spiritual darkness.

/In the midst of this darkness, there came a marvelous Light.\

Luke 1:26-38

26 Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city in Galilee called Nazareth, 27 to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the descendants of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. 28 And coming in, he said to her, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you."

29 But she was very perplexed at this statement, and kept pondering what kind of salutation this was. 30 The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; for you have found favor with God. 31 "And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus. 32 "He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David; 33 and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end."

34 Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" 35 The angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy Child shall be called the Son of God.

Mary had relatives :Zacharias and Elizabeth. They were elderly, past the child-bearing years. But with God, all things are possible.

So Elizabeth was found to be with child. She would give birth to a son named John. John would become the herald of Jesus.

/John would prepare the hearts of the Jews for their Messiah and Lord.\

And so John's father, Zacharius, prophesied about his newborn son - John.

Luke 1:67-69,76-79

67 And his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Spirit, and prophesied, saying:

*68 "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel,
For He has visited us and accomplished redemption for His people,*

*69 And has raised up a horn of salvation for us
In the house of David His servant —*

.....

*76 "And you, child [John] , will be called the prophet of the Most High;
For you will go on BEFORE THE LORD TO PREPARE HIS WAYS;
77 To give to His people the knowledge of salvation
By the forgiveness of their sins,
78 Because of the tender mercy of our God,
With which the Sunrise from on high will visit us,
79 TO SHINE UPON THOSE WHO SIT IN DARKNESS AND THE SHADOW OF DEATH,
To guide our feet into the way of peace."*

/Now the first part of verse 79 is a quotation from the book of the prophet Isaiah.

Isa 9:1-2

1 But there will be no more gloom for her who was in anguish; in earlier times He treated the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali with contempt, but later on He shall make it glorious, by the way of the sea, on the other side of Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles.

*2 The people who walk in darkness
Will see a great light;
Those who live in a dark land,
The light will shine on them.*

/Seven hundred years after Isaiah lived, Zacharias quoted Isaiah 9:2. \

Let's continue in Isaiah 9 verse 6:

*6 For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us;
And the government will rest on His shoulders;
And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.*

*7 There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace,
On the throne of David and over his kingdom,
To establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness
From then on and forevermore.
The zeal of the Lord of hosts will accomplish this.*

A child will be born to us...

/In the fullness of time, this Holy Child, Jesus, son of David, Son of God, was born.\

Luke 2:4-14

4 Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the city of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David, 5 in order to register along with Mary, who was engaged to him, and was with child. 6 While they were there, the days were completed for her to give birth. 7 And she gave birth to her firstborn son; and she wrapped Him in cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

8 In the same region there were some shepherds staying out in the fields and keeping watch over their flock by night. 9 And an angel of the Lord suddenly stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them; and they were terribly frightened. 10 But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of great joy which will be for all the people; 11 for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.

12 "This will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." 13 And suddenly there appeared with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying,

*14 "Glory to God in the highest,
And on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased."*

/pic|

In the darkness, a Child is born.
That child is the light of the world.
The shepherds kept watch by night.
Into that night the angels sang.
And the glory of the Lord shone.

John 1:4-5

*In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men. 5 The Light shines in the darkness,
and the darkness did not comprehend it.*

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/This child grew up, and at the age of 30 He began His public ministry.\

And this is what HE said about Himself:

John 8:12

12 Then Jesus again spoke to them, saying, "I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life." /pic

And when He ended His public ministry , this is what He said:

John 12:46

46 "I have come as Light into the world, so that everyone who believes in Me will not remain in darkness.

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/And after Jesus, the Lamb of God, died for the sin of the world, God the Father raised him from the dead. So that whoever believes in His Son Jesus Christ will never perish but have eternal life.\

Acts 26:22-23

So, having obtained help from God, I stand to this day testifying both to small and great, stating nothing but what the Prophets and Moses said was going to take place; 23 that the Christ was to suffer, and that by reason of His resurrection from the dead He would be the first to proclaim light both to the Jewish people and to the Gentiles."

And after Jesus returned to His Father in heaven, the day came when He picked His apostle to go to the Gentiles. And the Lord said to him:

Acts 26:16-18

16 'But get up and stand on your feet; for this purpose I have appeared to you, to appoint you a minister and a witness not only to the things which you have seen, but also to the things in which I will appear to you; 17 rescuing you from the Jewish people and from the Gentiles, to whom I am sending you, 18 to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me.'

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/Paul took the light of the glorious gospel of our LORD Jesus Christ to the Gentiles.\

One of the places he evangelized was the city of Philippi. He wrote to believers in Philippi, and this is what he taught them:

Phil 2:14-16

14 Do all things without grumbling or disputing; 15 so that you will prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world, 16 holding fast the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I will have reason to glory because I did not run in vain nor toil in vain.

So now, not just at Christmas but at all times, let us also prove to be lights in this world. Let us hold fast the word of God.

Let's do what the LORD has commanded us to do – to love one another as He has loved us. And let us not grumble or dispute. Let us be above reproach, blameless and innocent, in the midst of the darkness of a crooked and perverse generation.

Merry Christmas everybody./pic\