

Series: **Christmas 2022**  
Today's Title: "**Christmas Light**"

December 25, 2022 – *Selected passages*

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**Objective:** To help people know Jesus is the promised Messiah and Light in the darkness.

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*Opening prayer*

Part of the wonder and beauty of Christmas are all the beautiful lights.

The lights on the tree that shimmer.

The houses / entire neighborhoods that are decorated with thousands of lights brings a smile to everyone's face.

The candlelight in our Christmas Eve services last night...

The lights on the tree this morning as we began to celebrate Christmas before this service.

Light is something we're used to in modern life.

It's difficult for us to understand or imagine what it must have been like to live before electricity.

To live before you were able to light an entire room with the flip of a switch.

When candles and the glow from the fireplace was the only light available in the darkness of night.

We know from science that light is not a static thing.

Light is energy.

Light is luminous energy, radiant energy.

Light moves at a speed of 186,282 miles per second.

It is anything but static.

It is anything but fixed.

It is considered as a wave,

In the 1860's, the Scottish Physicist, James Clerk Maxwell (1831-1879), described light *“as a propagating wave of electric and magnetic fields.”*

(<https://www.britannica.com/science/light/Light-as-electromagnetic-radiation>)

More recently, with the discovery and invention of focusing the waves of light into a narrow beam – with many beams of light running in parallel streams – producing an extremely narrow beam of light - a laser beam – has many uses – and some lasers can even slice through metal.

(<https://www.electronicproducts.com/15-fascinating-facts-about-lasers/>)

Light is one small part of our world – but there is so much more to light than meets the eye!

**We often think of the opposite of light as darkness.**

We walk into a room that is dark and flip a switch to turn on the lights – and the darkness is gone.

Other than the darkness of nighttime...or the absence of light...

**What is darkness?**

The Bible uses the word ‘darkness’ as a metaphor of sin / evil / spiritual darkness – spiritual death.

The Bible uses the word ‘light’ for the opposite – a metaphor of goodness / spiritual life / righteousness / holiness / joy.

This morning – on Christmas morning – I want us to consider the birth of Jesus – the incarnation of God – in the Biblical terminology of “The Light (which) shines in the darkness...” of the world. (John 1:5a)

To do that we’re going to look at one of the well-known prophecies in the O.T. about the future Messiah.

Then we’ll look at what the Apostle John – and some of the other Apostles – wrote about Jesus as the “light of the world”.

**Turn to Isaiah 8:19.**

Some context before we read the passage.

Israel had walked away from God.

They were embracing idol worship – demonic forms of worship.

**Psalm 106** lays out the charges against Israel of their habitual unbelief and unfaithfulness to God – and their embrace of idol and demonic worship. They turned away from God to witches and those who engage with the spiritual forces of darkness and evil. Those who speak to the spirits of the dead – those who involve themselves with the occult.

They even sacrificed their children to demons.

Needless to say – Israel had plummeted to spiritual darkness and depravity.

Because of their sin God was judging the nation – and the prophet Isaiah was one of the prophets in this time – around

720 B.C. who was warning Israel of the coming judgment. The Assyrian army was intent on invading Israel – and they were too strong – the world power at this time. But as Isaiah proclaimed God’s judgment against Israel, he also reminded them of God’s promises of the future Messiah. Let’s begin in **Isaiah 8:19**.

**Israel’s darkness due to their wickedness.** 8:19-21

*Read vs. 19-21*

**Isaiah 8:19-21 – NLT**

19 Someone may say to you, “Let’s ask the mediums and those who consult the spirits of the dead. With their whisperings and mutterings, they will tell us what to do.”

But shouldn’t people ask God for guidance?

Should the living seek guidance from the dead?

20 Look to God’s instructions and teachings!

People who contradict His word are completely in the dark.

21 They will go from one place to another, weary and hungry.

And because they are hungry, they will rage and curse their king and their God. They will look up to heaven

22 and down at the earth, but wherever they look, there will be trouble and anguish and dark despair. They will be thrown out into the darkness.

This is God’s judgment on the nation.

Israel would be defeated – taken into exile – and they will be in (vs. 22) “trouble and anguish and dark despair.”

But God made promises – in the form of a covenant - to Abraham – and to his descendants, the nation of Israel.

The ultimate covenant promise of being a blessing to the nations of the world is not dependent on the nation's obedience – but it is solely dependent on God's faithfulness.

So, included in this judgment speech, Isaiah includes the reminder of future blessing.

After the time of “despair” and “darkness” will be a time of blessing – a time when there will be “a great light”.

**The promise of future light and peace.** 9:1-7

After the years of exile God would not forget His chosen people.

He will not abandon Israel.

He will restore them – He will bless them.

You'll recognize this familiar Christmas passage – but this morning we're covering it in its fuller context.

*Read Isaiah 9:1-7*

**Isaiah 9:1-7 – NLT**

1 Nevertheless, that time of darkness and despair will not go on forever. The land of Zebulun and Naphtali will be humbled, but there will be a time in the future when Galilee of the Gentiles, which lies along the road that runs between the Jordan and the sea, will be filled with glory.

2 The people who walk in darkness will see a great light. For those who live in a land of deep darkness, a light will shine.

3 You will enlarge the nation of Israel, and its people will rejoice. They will rejoice before You as people rejoice at the harvest and like warriors dividing the plunder.

4 For You will break the yoke of their slavery and lift the heavy burden from their shoulders. You will break the oppressor's rod, just as You did when you destroyed the army of Midian.

5 The boots of the warrior and the uniforms bloodstained by war will all be burned. They will be fuel for the fire.

6 For a child is born to us, a son is given to us. The government will rest on his shoulders. And he will be called: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

7 His government and its peace will never end. He will rule with fairness and justice from the throne of his ancestor David for all eternity. The passionate commitment of the LORD of Heaven's Armies will make this happen!"

The prophetic promise Isaiah records gave Israel hope through the years of exile as God judged their sinful and evil practices and their rejection of His commands.

***But God promises the darkness will not last forever.***

He promises a future time of blessing – of light that will shine in the darkness and bring peace and justice and joy to them and to the world.

Now...let's shift to the N.T.

700 years go by – and we now find ourselves in the 1<sup>st</sup> century world – which is ruled by Rome.

Israel is no longer in exile; they are in their homeland – but Rome is an occupying force in the land.

**Life under Roman rule is brutal and unkind.**

The people of Israel – those who are still looking to God and His commands – they live each day with the hope of Isaiah’s prophecy of a future child – this hope hangs in the air – and this is when God keeps His promise.

**Jesus is the fulfillment of Isaiah’s prophetic promises.** *John 1:4-*

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The Christmas account has its roots in the centuries before the birth of Christ.

- *The incarnation was not a stand-alone event.*
- *The birth of Jesus was not an independent work of God apart from history.*

It was the fulfillment of the many promises of God to the Israel – going all the way back to the Garden of Eden, to Moses, to Abraham, to David, and eventually to the nation through the lips and pen of the prophet Isaiah.

**John 1:4-9**

4 “In Him (Jesus) was life, and the life was the light of men.

5 The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

6 There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.

7 He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him (John’s witness – e.g., Romans 10:13).

8 He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light.

9 The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.”

Remember – Isaiah’s prophecy was not only about the birth of a child – but also about light that will shine in the darkness.

2 The people who walk in darkness will see a great light. For those who live in a land of deep darkness, a light will shine.

If you think John’s prologue is a bit vague when it comes to the fulfillment of Isaiah’s prophecy.

Let’s turn to another Gospel where the connection is more obvious – clearer.

**Matthew 4:12-16**

12 Now when He (Jesus) heard that John had been arrested, He withdrew into Galilee.

13 And leaving Nazareth He went and lived in Capernaum by the sea, in the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali,

14 so that what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled:

15 “The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles--

16 the people dwelling in darkness have seen a great light, and for those dwelling in the region and shadow of death, on them a light has dawned.”

**Matthew** makes the connection undeniable.

Jesus is the light that **Isaiah** was prophesying about.

**Jesus wasn’t silent on this topic.**

Many times, He described Himself as the “light” who has come into the world.



**John 8:12**

Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows Me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”

**John 9:5**

Jesus answered, “As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.”

**The Apostles – John, and Paul also recorded this truth.**

**1 John 1:5, 7**

5 “God is light, and there is no darkness in Him at all.

7 But if we are living in the light, as God is in the light, then we have fellowship with each other, and the blood of Jesus, His Son, cleanses us from all sin.”

**The Apostle Paul writes...**

**Ephesians 5:8-11**

8 ...for at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light

9 (for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true),

10 and try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord.

11 Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness...”

Throughout history God promised there would be a future Messiah – a future king who would rule forever.

The prophecy from Isaiah of a child who would be a great light in the darkness.

These were all taking about Jesus.

***And on Christmas, we celebrate the birth of Jesus – the child king who brings the light of life to the world.***

Read what Paul wrote:

**Colossians 1:12-14**

12 “...giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light.

13 He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son,

14 in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.”

### **The darkness of unbelief.**

Living in darkness – or in light – is a choice.

It’s a choice each of us makes.

Will you put your faith in Christ?

Will you try to live on your own?

God has kept His promise of sending a Savior – a light that shines in the darkness.

**2 Corinthians 4:4**

“In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.”

Are you blinded by the darkness of this world?

Our culture has made Christmas a time of joy – a time of giving – and receiving – a time of celebration.

But our culture leaves out the main reason why this season is full of joy and celebration.

Christmas – with so many people – is stripped of its greatest victory – its greatest joy:

**The life and light of the baby.**

**The promised child of Isaiah 9 who is greater than any person – who will be a never-ending king – bring peace, joy, and justice.**

Jesus was born to take us out of the darkness and into the light of His love and truth.

**Genesis 1:3-4**

3 And God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light.

4 And God saw that the light was good. And God separated the light from the darkness.”

Through Isaiah, God promised a future time when He would bring light into the darkness of the world.

He would bring spiritual light – not just physical light – into the lives of those who were spiritually lost – far from God.

**Isaiah 9:2**

“The people who walk in darkness will see a great light.

For those who live in a land of deep darkness, a light will shine.”

Looking back to creation – the promises of Messiah – the prophecy of Isaiah – the birth and ministry of Jesus – the Apostle Paul wrote:

**2 Corinthians 4:6**

“For God, who said, “Let light shine out of darkness” has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.”

Light has come.

**“Christmas Light”** has come into the world – and offers life – peace – joy – and justice.

This is what Christmas is about.

The kingdom of light has come into the world of darkness.

***Apply it...***

### **1. Live in the light of Christ.**

If you’re a follower of Christ – then we have a clear direction forward.

**Ephesians 5:8**

“...for at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light...”

Live your life in the light of Christ.

Live your life in love – joy – peace – obedience to God’s Word.

Don’t live like you’re still in darkness.

Live in the light of the Lord.

### **2. Enter the kingdom of light.**

Do you find yourself this Christmas day living in darkness? Spiritual darkness?

In your heart you say, *“I’d like to be a part of that kingdom – the kingdom of light.”*

Let me pull out two words out of **Isaiah 9:6** that are repeated twice. “to us” - “to us”.

“For a child is born to us, a son is given to us.”

Who’s the “us”? To whom is this child given?

To those who believe.

To those who choose the kingdom of light.

There is no Savior.

There is no hope - no peace - no everlasting life – no mighty power- no wise counsel – no forgiveness for those who do not believe in Jesus Christ.

**John 1:12-13**

12 **But** to all who did receive Him, who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God,  
13 who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.”

The Apostle Paul said it this way:

**Ephesians 1:18**

“...having the eyes of your hearts enlightened...”

Do you find yourself in spiritual darkness – but you want to be in the kingdom of light?

The choice is yours.

God is calling you – He wants you to be part of the kingdom of His Son.

It's glorious when you make that choice – when you leave the darkness and enter into the light of Christ.

Peter said:

**1 Peter 2:9**

“...that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.”

“His marvelous light.”

So, against the darkness of this world I offer you what Isaiah offered, what Matthew offered – what Jesus offered – along with the Apostles John, Peter, and Paul.

Only it's not in the future. It's in the present.

The Child is born.

The Child – who is King – Savior.

Receive Him and all that He offers to you.

*Close in prayer*