

THE RESPLENDENT LIGHT OF CHRIST

I. Various Scriptures

A. In the beginning, as God prepared to speak creation into existence, the Scriptures say the earth was null and void and darkness was over the face of the deep. And then God spoke and said, *"Let there be light. And there was light. And God determined that the light was good."* Then God made man and placed him in the Garden of Eden. He likewise determined that this was very good.

B. But Adam and Eve rebelled against God and sin entered the world. They were banned from the Garden and this we refer to as the fall of man. The earth was then filled with another form of darkness, this one spiritual.

C. Despite man's fall; despite the darkness that fell; despite *the god of this world*, taking over temporary custody and causing spiritual blindness, God always had a plan. The fall did not take Him by surprise. God's redemptive plan to rescue us from darkness was never a Plan B. He would send His only Son to accomplish this plan and His coming is what we celebrate. Let's let the Scriptures speak...

D. Isaiah 60:1-3 & 19 (ESV) gazes forward: **1** Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you. **2** For behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples; but the Lord will arise upon you, and His glory will be seen upon you. **3** And nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising... **19** The sun shall be no more your light by day, nor for brightness shall the moon give you light; but the Lord will be your everlasting light, and your God will be your glory.

E. John 1:1-14 (ESV) declares the Gospel, what the Messiah's coming would achieve: **1** In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. **2** He was in the beginning with God. **3** All things were made through Him, and without Him was not any thing made that was made. **4** In Him 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. **8** He was not the Light, but came to bear witness about the Light. **9** The true Light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. **10** He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, yet the world did not know Him. **11** He came to His own, and His own people did not receive Him. **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. **14** And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. **(The Word made flesh--the True Light--His name is Jesus!)**

F. John 8:12 (ESV) is Jesus in His own words: **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."

G. 1 John 1:5-7 (ESV) is the truth reiterated and its challenge to us: **5** This is the message we have heard from Him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all. **6** If we say we have fellowship with Him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. **7** But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.

H. From the fall, darkness entered the world and covered the world. But the light of the glory of God, the Messiah, who would shine upon Israel and all the nations, was foretold and promised by the prophets of old. And then He came quietly and subtly. *God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God* was born in Bethlehem of Judea where they laid Him in a manger, wrapped Him in swaddling clothes, and gave Him the name, *Jesus*.

K. In fields nearby where shepherds kept watch, their darkness was interrupted by the angel's proclamation and the worshipful presence of the heavenly host. Light broke through into the Bethlehem night, a prophetic event depicting what Jesus Christ would accomplish on a Jerusalem cross. He would quell the wrath of God, conquer sin and death. The Light of the world would vanquish the darkness.

L. Here's the question: Has He pierced your darkness? Has He flooded your soul with light? Embrace the words of the ancient song found in Ephesians 5:14: *"Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine upon you!"*

M. As we take the Bread & Cup, may the countenance of our Lord shine brightly on each of your hearts. May He manifest His presence in a special way, imparting His love, His life, and His light, abundantly.

* Pray and Serve Communion...

* Benediction Verse: Isaiah 60:1 once again: *"Arise, shine, for your Light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you."* Merry Christmas to you all!

Scriptures, Videos, & Bonus Stuff

Isaiah 60:1-3 & 19 (ESV)

1 Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you. **2** For behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples; but the Lord will arise upon you, and His glory will be seen upon you. **3** And nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising... **19** The sun shall be no more your light by day, nor for brightness shall the moon give you light; but the Lord will be your everlasting light, and your God will be your glory.

John 1:1-14 (ESV)

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. **2** He was in the beginning with God. **3** All things were made through Him, and without Him was not any thing made that was made. **4** In Him 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. **8** He was not the Light, but came to bear witness about the Light. **9** The true Light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. **10** He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, yet the world did not know Him. **11** He came to His own, and His own people did not receive Him. **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. **14** And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

John 8:12 (ESV)

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."

1 John 1:5-7 (ESV)

5 This is the message we have heard from Him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all. **6** If we say we have fellowship with Him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. **7** But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.

Ephesians 5:14 (ESV)

14 Therefore it says, "Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you."

Film Clips & Other Links

"Joy To The World (You Are My Joy)" - Rend Collective

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k7iPgWgeNsk>

Angels We Have Heard On High" - Third Day

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0K17zGHFrKU>

"O Holy Night" - Josh Groban with Scenes from The Nativity Story

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4Zh-yR0pbmU>

Knowing Christ: Very God of Very God - Stephen Unthank

<http://www.alliancenet.org/placefortruth/column/theology-on-the-go/knowng-christ-very-god-of-very-god>

Bonus Stuff

Hebrews 1:1-4 (ESV)

1 Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, **2** but in these last days He has spoken to us by His Son, whom He appointed the heir of all things, through whom also He created the world. **3** He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of His nature, and He upholds the universe by the word of His power. After making purification for sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, **4** having become as much superior to angels as the name He has inherited is more excellent than theirs.

Micah 7:7-8 (ESV)

7 But as for me, I will look to the Lord; I will wait for the God of my salvation; my God will hear me. **8** Rejoice not over me, O my enemy; when I fall, I shall rise; when I sit in darkness, the Lord will be a light to me.

John 3:16-21 (ESV)

16 "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. 17 For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through Him. 18 Whoever believes in Him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God. 19 And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. 20 For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed. 21 But whoever does what is true comes to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that his works have been carried out in God."

Matthew 5:14-16 (ESV)

14 You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. 16 In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

John 9:4-5 (ESV)

4 We must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day; night is coming, when no one can work. 5 As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world."

2 Corinthians 4:3-6 (ESV)

3 And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. 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. 5 For what we proclaim is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. 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.

Colossians 1:9-14 (ESV)

9 And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, 10 so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to Him: bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; 11 being strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy; 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.

1 Peter 2:9-10 (ESV)

9 But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for His own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light. 10 Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

Revelation 21:22-27 (ESV)

22 And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. 23 And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb. 24 By its light will the nations walk, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it, 25 and its gates will never be shut by day—and there will be no night there. 26 They will bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations. 27 But nothing unclean will ever enter it, nor anyone who does what is detestable or false, but only those who are written in the Lamb's Book of Life.

Revelation 22:1-5 (ESV)

1 Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb 2 through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. 3 No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and His servants will worship Him. 4 They will see His face, and His name will be on their foreheads. 5 And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever.