

Spiritual Darkness seems to abound in our world today; evil acts of violence, self-abuse and abuse of others, hatred, greed, and selfishness. It can be quite overwhelming at times, but the darkness that we see reminds us of why the celebration of Christmas is so important to us.

The Message of Christmas is all about the fact that God looked into a world that was full of darkness and said for the second time, “let there be light!”

- The first time God spoke physical light into this dark planet. *Genesis 1:3 And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light.*
- But this second time God sent a light into the world, it was to drive out the darkness of evil and sin.

Jesus the Light

Matthew and Luke are the traditional Christmas stories that tell about Jesus' birth, including the account of a bright star shone bright over the manger, a sign from God that the Light of the World had come to Earth to give new hope and set mankind free from darkness.

The Gospel of John includes the story of Christmas too, but told in a different way.

It's almost as if John wanted to tell you the point of Jesus' coming rather than the story of how He came.

John 1:1-5 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was with God in the beginning. ³ Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.

John is talking about Christ Jesus, the Word, who was with God before He came to the world that He had created. What was Jesus bringing with Him? Life!

⁴ In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. This life of Jesus brings light!

Isaiah 9:2 The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep Darkness a light has dawned.

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

Darkness is only the absence of light! Light always overcomes the darkness. You can't turn the darkness up or down in a room. You can only increase or decrease the light. John is telling us in verse 5 that the good, or light, that Jesus brings will never be overcome by evil or darkness.

John the Baptist Sent from God

John 1:6-8 There was a man sent from God whose name was John. ⁷ He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all might believe. ⁸ He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light.

Isaiah 42:6-7 "I, the LORD, have called you in righteousness; I will take hold of your hand. I will keep you and will make you to be a covenant for the people and a light for the Gentiles, ⁷ to open eyes that are blind, to free captives from prison and to release from the dungeon those who sit in darkness.

The True Light

John 1:9 The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world.

John 8:12 When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

Here is our hope that we celebrate this Christmas! Jesus is our light, the light of the world.

No matter how dark of a place we find ourselves in, when we choose to follow Jesus we will NEVER walk in darkness. WE HAVE THE LIGHT OF LIFE! We CHOOSE Life and Light.

Light Not Received

John 1:10-11 He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. ¹¹ He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him.

A very sad text. Jesus created the world, He lived in the world, but not only did the world in general not recognize Him, His own Jewish people did not receive Him as their Christ, the Messiah.

- There may have been a time in your life when you didn't recognize Jesus.
- You may be here today, and you do recognize Jesus, but have you received Him?

Light Received

John 1:12-13 Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God— ¹³ children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

Peter declared in *Acts 4:11-12* Jesus is “the stone you builders rejected, which has become the cornerstone.’ 12 Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved.”

Galatians 3:26 So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith,

Jesus is the Light Full of Grace and Truth

John 1:14 The Word became flesh (born as a baby in Bethlehem) and made his dwelling among us.

Matthew 1:23 “The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel”-- which means, “God with us.” (NIV) The light saved mankind from an eternal separation from God and fulfilled the prophesy that God would now be with us.

We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.
Jesus is the Light of Christmas and He is full of GRACE AND TRUTH.

We read this, and we say, “Oh yeah, I know that.”, but to the Jewish mindset this was something totally different than what they expected out of the God they knew. They responded, “What? God became flesh and dwelt among us?”

- Not the “Behind the Temple Wall” God that they knew.
- Not the “God who’s presence dwelt in the Ark of the Covenant”
- Not the “Touch and die God.”
- Not the “You can only go into the Holy of Holies once a year God.” And as you go in we will tie a rope around your ankle to pull you out if you die in there because of your uncleanness.”

John’s message blew their minds. That God showed up and he lived among us! “God in a Body!”

John said, “We have seen His Glory and guess what? He came full of GRACE and TRUTH.

It wasn’t what we expected.

Not JUSTICE and TRUTH.

Not JUDGEMENT and TRUTH.

Not LAW and TRUTH.

Not WATCH OUT I’M GOING TO GET YOU and TRUTH.

He was not what we thought He would be...He reeked of Grace and Truth! It surprised us!

“Are you sure you’ve got the right guy? Because John the Baptist said this was the one!”

John 1:15-16 (John testified concerning him. He cried out, saying, “This is the one I spoke about when I said, ‘He who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.’”) ¹⁶ Out of his fullness we have all received grace in place of grace already given.

“Yea this is so different than what we expected. From the fullness of His grace we received one blessing after another!” “From His fullness we received Grace: Literally in the Greek it would read **GRACE UPON GRACE UPON GRACE UPON GRACE!** - Not what we expected.

John may have said, “Here are some examples of how this light brought grace and truth into darkness.”

- You know how much we all hate tax collectors. He recruited one to join our team. “Matthew”
- And then there was a woman caught in adultery, we all knew her. She was caught! Jesus forgave her and just said, Go and sin no more.

Normally when light shines on our darkness we are condemned and judged. “Justice and Truth, “Judgment and Truth”, but Jesus, the Light, brought “Grace and Truth.” Grace upon Grace.

- Jesus, the Light, taught us to pray for our enemies, to bless those who persecuted us. *Because that’s what Grace does!*
- If somebody wanted something from us unjustly, he told us to give more!
- Even on the cross he looked at a guy who was guilty and said, “Today you will be with me in paradise.”
Grace upon grace upon grace.

John 1:17 For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

“OK! We like the law. We understand the law.”

BUT ... Grace and Truth came through Jesus Christ. He never broke the law that Moses gave. He went beyond the law. He did something we could never do. He took Grace and Truth and He married them!

TRUTH He never dumbed down the law. He raised the standard. If you thought you were a sinner before, when you hung around with Him you KNEW you were a sinner.

Not only was He against murder but He said if you hate someone it’s the same as murder.

Adultery? He said if you have looked at a woman with lust you have committed adultery!

(At that point no one made eye contact.)

JESUS WAS FULL ON ABOUT TRUTH! But once He determined what we all deserved, because we were law breakers ... He offered just the opposite! He did not give us what we deserved!

Jesus is The Light and Glory of God

John 1:18 No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known.

God, the one and only, made Jesus known to us and GRACE AND TRUTH was not just a reflection of Jesus' values, but that was a reflection of God's values.

That's why Jesus taught us to pray, "OUR FATHER." Because that's how a good Father treats his children.

John 14:9 Jesus answered: "Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'?"

Hebrews 1:1-3 In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, ² but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe. ³ The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven. (NIV)

Jesus the Light has revealed God to us. The God of Grace and Truth. Beyond the law. Grace and Truth.

I'm going to forgive you and give you exactly what you don't deserve. The God of Grace.

Now through Christ Jesus, the light of God dwells with us.

The Glory, the radiate light, of God is revealed through Christ Jesus.

The question is, have you received Jesus the Light today?

Do you choose to walk in darkness or walk in light?

Don't deceive yourself into thinking that grey is ok... you are either living in darkness and despair or you are walking in the light?

Who is the true Light of Christmas?

Who or what is your Light this Christmas?

Life App Group and Family Devotional Application

1. In your own words, what do we mean when we say; Jesus is The Light of Christmas?
2. According to John 1:12, what is a divine privilege and reward for receiving Jesus as your Light?
3. What does John 1:14 mean when it states that Jesus came "full of grace and truth"? How is that different than the average person's perception of God?
4. In a world of darkness, how do you allow Jesus to be your light?