

The Light of the World Christmas 2024

Thesis: May the light of Jesus shine so brightly in this Christmas season that it shatters darkness and despair, breaks the bondage of demonic oppression, and cuts through the dullness and blinders over eyes and hearts. And, may the light of Christ especially burst into the lives of children, youth, and young adults.

Text: Isaiah 9:2; John 1:4-9, 8:12; 2 Corinthians 4:3-6; Ephesians 5:8-11a

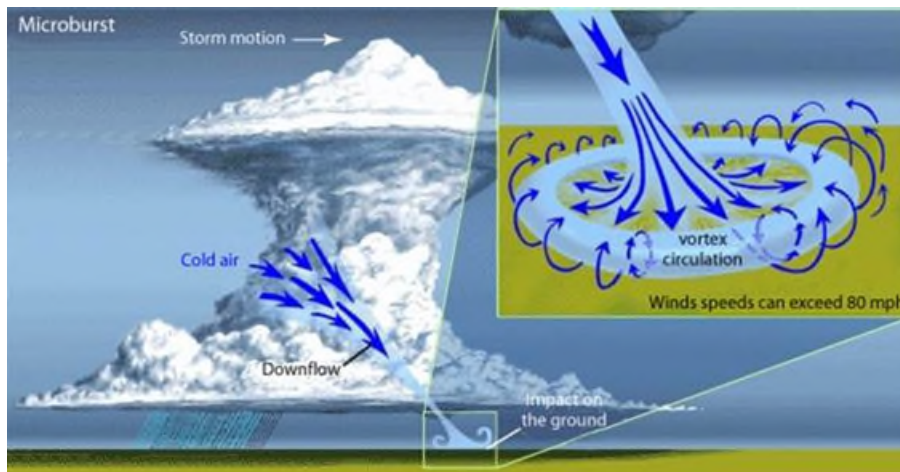
At Monday night prayer on 12'2'24, I was captured by the beauty, power, and piercing glory of the light of the Lord Jesus.

The light of Christ has broken into our darkness. The people living in darkness have seen a great light.

I am praying for a fresh revelation of the light of the Lord Jesus by the Holy Spirit this season.

The best way that I can illustrate what I sensed is a microburst over Greater Houston.

Illustration: The impression I got reminded me of a downward explosion of the light of the Lord breaking into Greater Houston like a microburst storm. "Microbursts, also called downbursts, are powerful, localized columns of wind that occur when cooled air drops from the base of a thunderstorm at incredible speeds. They are small, less than 4 km across, and short-lived, lasting only five to 10 minutes, with maximum windspeeds sometimes exceeding 100 mph." ([What is a Microburst? National Weather Service.](#))



Picture with me, if you will, a microburst of the light of the glory of God in the face of Christ Jesus, bursting forth upon Greater Houston.

That is what I am praying for in this Christmas season.



Prayer: We declare this reality-- Jesus, you are the light of the world.

1. You radiate life and light, touching every person, giving light to all, shattering our darkness, despair, and gloom.
2. We bless your power, life, and brilliance to transform lives this season.
3. We pray that men, women, boys, and girls will have encounter with the God of light.
4. We pray for the revelation of your radiant, glorious light to all.
5. We bless the seeds that have been planted. May those seeds come to life by the glorious life-giving light of God.
6. We bless the witness you have given to each person. May the grip of darkness, deception, and defeat be broken today in lives all across greater Houston.

7. May blinders be removed so that we can see the glory of God in Christ Jesus.
8. May your radiant ones live as children of the light, as the light of the world, and as a city set on a hill with resplendent and radiant glory... the glory of the Great King in his holy city.
9. May we arise and shine because your glory has risen upon us (Isaiah 60:1-3).
10. May the light of Jesus shine so brightly in this Christmas season that it shatters darkness and despair, breaks the bondage of demonic oppression, and cuts through the dullness and blinders over eyes and hearts. And, may the light of Christ especially burst into the lives of children, youth, and young adults.

Jesus is the light of the world.

*Isaiah 9:2 (NIV84): **The people walking in darkness have seen a great light;** on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned.*

1. Christmas is a message of good news.
 - a. Jesus came to make things right with God and with people.
 - b. Jesus has broken into our darkness with his glorious life, love, and presence.
 - c. Jesus shows us how humans were meant to live in right relationship with God and one another.
2. From the beginning, instead of walking by the light of the Lord, we chose to walk in darkness, trying to make our own light. That hasn't worked so well for humankind (Genesis 3:1-24).
 - a. All of us have chosen to go our own way, to walk in darkness, and to build our own kingdom, just like Adam and Eve did in the Garden of Eden.
 - b. We chose the wrong path, and it led out of Eden.
3. How did we get into this mess?
 - a. The truth is that we don't do so well on our tests.
4. During our tests, our tendency is to listen to the wrong voice (Matthew 6:13; Genesis 3:1-8).
 - a. Jesus teaches us to pray in the Lord's prayer: *And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one (Matthew 6:13).*
 - i. A better translation here of the word "temptation" is "test."
 - ii. The test becomes a temptation when we listen to the wrong voice, like in Genesis 3:1-8.
 - iii. *Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?" 2 The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, 3 but God did say, 'You must not eat fruit from the*

tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.' ” 4 “You will not surely die,” the serpent said to the woman. 5 “For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” 6 When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. 7 Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves. 8 Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden (Genesis 3:1-8).

- iv. Adam and Eve were created for partnership with God and to live by the wisdom, power, and presence of union with God.
 - v. And, the enemy wanted to hinder, defraud, and vandalize what God desired for us.
 - vi. That is the story behind Genesis 3.
 1. We who were created in the image of God, to be temples or dwelling places for God in this earth, made a bad choice, gave up our birthright, and decided to build our own kingdoms according to our own wisdom and desires.
 - b. The truth is, we often desire the wrong thing.
 - c. That’s why Jesus prays: *And lead us not into a test, but deliver us from the evil one (Matthew 6:13).*
 - d. Jesus knows our human character, our propensity to listen to the wrong voice, and our tendency to fail our tests.
 - e. Jesus did not fail the test, whether it was in the wilderness temptation at the beginning of his ministry or in the Garden of Gethsemane on the Mount of Olives prior to his death on the cross and his resurrection from the grave.
 - f. Because of Jesus, we can have our desires changed into alignment with the desires of God by the power of the Holy Spirit.
 - g. Because of Jesus, we can be transformed in our desires so that we desire what God desires.
 - h. And, when we fail the test, we get to try again... and again... and again (James 1:2-5; Philippians 1:6).
5. *Isaiah 9:2 (NIV84): The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned.*

- a. This light is a person, not religion or ritual, like we are trying to earn God's love or prove we are worthy of acceptance.
- b. When we could do nothing about our condition, God gave us his Son so that we might live in wholeness and right relationship with God and one another.

John 8:12 (NIV84): 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."

1. Jesus declares: "I am the light of the world" (John 8:12).
 - a. You and I can't live without light.
 - b. This world can't live without light.
 - c. More than we need the light of the Sun of our solar system, we need the light of the Son of God.
2. Jesus promises that those who follow him walk out of darkness and into his glorious life, the light of life (John 8:12).
3. Jesus is "the true light that gives light to every person" (John 1:9).
 - a. The Father is at work and Jesus is at work to this very day in the lives of everyone on this planet.
 - b. There is no one in whom Jesus fails to work and make himself known.
 - c. And, we get to partner with Jesus on his mission in the lives of people so that they might know the light of life.
4. Jesus is the light of the world.

John 1:4–5 (NIV84): In him was life, and that life was the light of men. 5 The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it [cannot conquer it].

1. Jesus is God; so he shares in the life of God.
 - a. *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God (John 1:1).*
 - b. *For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son to have life in himself (John 5:26).*
 - c. "Because the Word shares in deity, he shares in the life of God" (John 5:26). (Kruse, Colin G. *John: An Introduction and Commentary. Vol. 4. Tyndale New Testament Commentaries.* Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003.)
2. Jesus is life, and his life illumines and infuses light and life to people.
3. And, the darkness of this world's systems cannot comprehend nor conquer the light of Jesus, whether it is the work of the devil, governments, or religious leaders throughout generations.

John 1:6–9 (NIV84): There came a man who was sent from God; his name was John. 7 He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all men might believe. 8 He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light. 9 The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world.

1. John the Baptist had the privilege and mission from God to testify concerning Jesus and his coming as light and life into this world.
2. As a witness, John had the joy of giving testimony about Jesus so that people living in darkness could believe in Jesus, the light of the world.
3. His testimony was profound: *The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world (John 1:9).*
4. You and I have the same privilege, joy, and mission.
 - a. We get to share the testimony of Jesus in our lives and in this world so that others can experience the life and light of Jesus for themselves.
 - b. We who have experienced the transforming power of the light and life of Jesus get to share with others what God has done and is doing in our lives.
 - c. We get to help others become aware of the voice of the Lord in their lives so that they can have the opportunity to listen to the right voice. “Here is what the voice of the Lord sounds like.”

2 Corinthians 4:3–6 (NIV84): And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. 4 The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. 5 For we do not preach ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus’ sake. 6 For God, who said, “Let light shine out of darkness,” made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.

1. There is a spiritual battle for the lives of people: our families, our neighbors, our communities, and the nations.
2. The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers to the glorious life and light in Jesus.
3. The good news we share is to help people **see the glory of the Messiah**, the Sent One.
4. The good news we share is that **Jesus is Lord**; Jesus is the one who makes all things right and new. Jesus is King of the universe. Jesus has all authority in heaven and on earth.
5. The good news we share is that we get to partner (as servants) with Jesus together for the sake of Jesus and his life, mission, and purposes in the earth.
6. The good news we share is that God has given us the revelation of his glorious light and love in the face of Christ Jesus.

7. The good news we share is that God is for us, that God comes after us in our darkness, dullness, and defeat, and that his face towards us radiates light and love rather than condemnation and judgment.

What does all of this mean for us?

Ephesians 5:8–21 (NIV84): For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light 9 (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) 10 and find out what pleases the Lord. 11 Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them [by your example]. 12 For it is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret. 13 But everything exposed by the light becomes visible, 14 for it is light that makes everything visible. This is why it is said:

*“Wake up, O sleeper,
rise from the dead,
and Christ will shine on you.”*

15 Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, 16 making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. 17 Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord’s will is. 18 Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit. 19 Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, 20 always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. 21 Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

1. **We have been changed** by the glorious life and light of Jesus (Ephesians 5:8).
 - a. *For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord (Ephesians 1:8).*
2. **We are being changed** as we walk with God and as God conforms us to the image of Jesus by the work of the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:28-29).
 - a. *And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. 29 For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers (Romans 8:28-29).*
3. By God’s grace, **we have new capacity to live differently** by the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives.
 - a. *Live as children of light 9 (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) 10 and find out what pleases the Lord. 11 Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them [by your example] (Ephesians 5:8-11).*

- b. We can live as people of the light (Ephesians 5:8).
- c. We get to discover through practice what pleases the Lord (Ephesians 5:9).
- d. We bear fruit as people of the light: goodness, righteousness, and truth (Ephesians 6:10).
- e. We have the choice, capacity, and courage to say “no” to the ways of darkness which are fruitless-- empty ways and false promises (Ephesians 5:11).
- f. We get to expose the empty ways and false promises of darkness by our example of walking in the light and living differently, living as children of the light (Ephesians 5:11).
 - i. By looking at our lives, people have an opportunity to see another way to live other than a way that is fruitless and dark.

Summary:

May the light of Jesus shine so brightly in this Christmas season that it shatters darkness and despair, breaks the bondage of demonic oppression, and cuts through the dullness and blinders over eyes and hearts. And, may the light of Christ especially burst into the lives of children, youth, and young adults.

May each of us be captured by the beauty, power, and piercing glory of the light of the Lord Jesus.

Praise the Lord that the light of Christ has broken into our darkness. The people living in darkness have seen a great light.

Join me in praying for a fresh revelation of the light of the Lord Jesus by the Holy Spirit this season.

May we be a people who live as children of the light, who say “no” to darkness and who say “yes” to the light of God in the face of Christ Jesus our Lord.