

November 30th



# Advent 2025

—THE CONTRASTS OF CHRISTMAS—

*“For as the light enlightens all things by its radiance, and without its radiance nothing would be illuminated, so also the Father, as by a hand, in the Word wrought all things, and without Him makes nothing.”*

—Athanasius of Alexandria,  
*Against the Arians* (AD 4<sup>th</sup> c.)

## “DARKNESS & LIGHT”

### Introduction

‘Advent’ is the English translation of the Latin word ‘adventus,’ which means “arrival” or “coming.” Historically, it was a season of reflection that preceded a season of celebration. While our modern “Christmas Season” is focused primarily on celebration, this is a time of year when believers can reflect upon the sorrows and difficulties of life as well. This time of year is often a season of contrasts, characterized by joy and excitement, but also at times grief and discontent.

This Advent, we are going to consider the “Contrasts of Christmas” that are found in the birth narratives (Matthew 1-2, Luke 1-2): “Light & Darkness,” “The Temple & the Manger,” “Herod & the Magi,” and “Caesar & Christ.”

### Setting the Stage:

John 1:1-13

### Darkness & Light in the Old Testament

- **Associated with God’s work of \_\_\_\_\_**

Gen. 1:1-3—<sup>1</sup> In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. <sup>2</sup> The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. <sup>3</sup> And God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light.

Job 26:10,13-14—<sup>10</sup> He has inscribed a circle on the face of the waters at the boundary between light and darkness...<sup>13</sup> By his wind the heavens were made fair; his hand pierced the fleeing serpent. <sup>14</sup> Behold, these are but the outskirts of his ways, and how small a whisper do we hear of him! But the thunder of his power who can understand?”

- **Associated with His God’s works of \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_**

Exod. 10:21-23—<sup>21</sup> Then the Lord said to Moses, “Stretch out your hand toward heaven, that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, a darkness to be felt.” <sup>22</sup> So Moses stretched out his hand toward heaven, and there was pitch darkness in all the land of Egypt three days. <sup>23</sup> They did not see one another, nor did anyone rise from his place for three days, but all the people of Israel had light where they lived.

Exod. 13:21—And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead them along the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, that they might travel by day and by night.

- **Associated with God’s \_\_\_\_\_ and deliverance from \_\_\_\_\_**

Psa. 27:1—“The Lord is my light and my salvation.”

Psa. 18:28—“It is you who light my lamp; the Lord my God lightens my darkness.”

Job 24:13,17—<sup>13</sup> “There are those who rebel against the light, who are not acquainted with its ways, and do not stay in its paths...<sup>17</sup> For deep darkness is morning to all of them; for they are friends with the terrors of deep darkness.

- **Associated with Israel’s \_\_\_\_\_ and God’s promise to send a \_\_\_\_\_**

Isa. 9:1b-2—...but in the latter time he has made glorious the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations. <sup>2</sup> The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shone.

Isa. 42:5-7—<sup>5</sup> Thus says God, the Lord, who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread out the earth and what comes from it, who gives breath to the people on it and spirit to those who walk in it: <sup>6</sup> “I am the Lord; I have called you in righteousness; I will take you by the hand and keep you; I will give you as a covenant for the people, a light for the nations, <sup>7</sup> to open the eyes that are blind, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, from the prison those who sit in darkness.

**Key Points:** (1) Darkness is symbolic of the difficulty God’s people face as we live in a \_\_\_\_\_ world.

(2) Light is symbolic of God’s promised salvation in \_\_\_\_\_.

## Darkness & Light in Matthew 1

### In the Genealogy (1:1-17)

- This is a record of some of the greatest “lights” in Israel’s history.

(1) The \_\_\_\_\_ (2) The \_\_\_\_\_  
*Abraham (Gen. 15)* *David (2 Sam. 7)*

*Judah (Gen. 44)* *Hezekiah (2 Kings 19)*

- This is also a record of some of the darkest examples of Israel’s \_\_\_\_\_.

*Judah (Gen. 38)* *David (2 Sam. 11)* *Manasseh (1 Kings 21)* *Jeconiah (Jer. 22)*

### In Joseph’s Circumstances (1:18-25)

- With all of this in Joseph’s family background, he was himself a righteous man who was anticipating beginning the next season of his life.

- What should have been a time of light in his life became exceedingly dark.

Matt. 1:18b-2a—When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. <sup>19</sup> And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. <sup>20</sup> But as he considered these things...

“considered”—ἐνθυμέομαι (enthymeomai)—to process information by thinking carefully (to reflect, consider, deliberate)

⇒ Joseph determined to lay aside his right to \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ in order to protect the one who had seemingly betrayed him.

- The angel and his message brought light into the darkness of Joseph’s situation.

⇒ Mary had not betrayed him! Rather, God had acted \_\_\_\_\_ in this matter.

⇒ Joseph was to exercise his authority as a \_\_\_\_\_ and name the child in accordance with His \_\_\_\_\_.

Matt. 1:20b-21—“Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. <sup>21</sup> She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.”

“Jesus”—*Yeshua* —“YHWH \_\_\_\_\_” or “YHWH \_\_\_ salvation”

⇒ All of this was taking place in order to fulfill God’s \_\_\_\_\_ made through the prophets.

The virgin’s \_\_\_\_\_ → The \_\_\_\_\_...given → The \_\_\_\_\_ → The \_\_\_\_\_ of the Lord  
(Isa. 7:14) (Isa. 9:6-7) (Isa. 11:1-5) (Isa. 49:6)

**Key Point:** Apart from the direct \_\_\_\_\_ of the Lord into our darkness, we had no hope of the light of salvation.

## The Incarnation Brings Light into Our Darkness

1. Although we dwell in the darkness of a fallen world, that darkness cannot overcome the \_\_\_\_\_ Christ brings!
2. Although the darkness of our sin means we are worthy of death, Christ brings \_\_\_\_\_!
3. We who have been \_\_\_\_\_ again through faith in Him live by His life and can reflect His light in a dark world!

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### Setting the Stage:

John 1:1-13

### Darkness & Light in the Old Testament

- **Associated with God’s work of Creation**

Gen. 1:1-2—<sup>1</sup> In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. <sup>2</sup> The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. <sup>3</sup> And God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light.

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- **Associated with His God’s works of Judgment and Deliverance**

Exod. 10:21-23—<sup>21</sup> Then the Lord said to Moses, “Stretch out your hand toward heaven, that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, a darkness to be felt.” <sup>22</sup> So Moses stretched out his hand toward heaven, and there was pitch darkness in all the land of Egypt three days. <sup>23</sup> They did not see one another, nor did anyone rise from his place for three days, but all the people of Israel had light where they lived.

Exod. 13:21—And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead them along the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, that they might travel by day and by night.

- **Associated with God’s Salvation and deliverance from Wickedness**

Psa. 27:1—“The Lord is my light and my salvation.”

Psa. 18:28—“It is you who light my lamp; the Lord my God lightens my darkness.”

Job 24:13,17—<sup>13</sup> “There are those who rebel against the light, who are not acquainted with its ways, and do not stay in its paths...<sup>17</sup> For deep darkness is morning to all of them; for they are friends with the terrors of deep darkness.

- **Associated with Israel’s Exile and God’s promise to send a Savior**

Isa. 9:1b-2—...but in the latter time he has made glorious the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations. <sup>2</sup> The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shone.

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**Key Points:** (1) **Darkness is symbolic of the difficulty God’s people face as we live in a fallen world.**

(2) **Light is symbolic of God’s promised salvation in Messiah.**

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(1) The Patriarchs

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(2) The Kings

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“Jesus”—*Yeshua* —“YHWH saves” or “YHWH is salvation”

⇒ All of this was taking place in order to fulfill God’s promises made through the prophets.

The virgin’s son  
(Isa. 7:14)

→ The child...given  
(Isa. 9:6-7)

→ The Branch  
(Isa. 11:1-5)

→ The Servant of the Lord  
(Isa. 49:6)

**Key Point:** Apart from the direct intervention of the Lord into our darkness, we had no hope of the light of salvation.

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