

**Light in the Darkness
Jesus is the Light
Light for all the world**

Light in the Darkness

There is something special about the light of the dawn. Evening light is different. The dawn, regardless of the weather, has a thin softness about its growing light. It is a tentative wakening, full of hope, cautiously drawing the early chorus of the birds and stirring the whole world to a new day. It is the light of fulfilment. Once more the day has conquered the darkness.

The world will end with a morning. It is significant that a day in the scriptures is evening and morning. God made it that way. The light will always vanquish the darkness. The end is a new day. Even our dying is passing into the light.

Christ's resurrection morning was our assurance of that. The beauty and freshness of that morning heralded a whole new beginning for the world. Jesus proved that life, not death is the end. The darkness and fear of the grave have given way to hope of eternal life and heaven.

Jesus' coming as the child of the Bethlehem stable was both a birth and a resurrection. As a bright star pulsed in the overarching darkness, and angelic glory threw back the folds of night, God in all his radiant glory broke into the night. He shattered the darkness that his people had brought to the world he loved.

The light picked out the dirty corners of an inn stable, just as God's word probes the grubby moments of our humanity in order to apply his judgement and salvation. In the purity and innocence of a new-born baby the world's resurrection had begun. The darkness in human life need never be dark again. Salvation has come. Everything now ends with the morning.

Jesus is the Light

I hope Mary was there. Every mother should be present at her son's great moments. This was truly a significant moment for Jesus.

It was the festival of the Tabernacles - a whole week of feasting. There came the time for the lighting of the Temple lamps. Four great lamps stood in the women's court and their lighting marked the celebrations when men of faith danced, holding burning torches aloft. More torches were lit, until the Temple light glowed across the whole city and touched the surrounding hills with reddened gold. It was at that moment Jesus stood among his men and the religious leaders to make his startling claim, 'I am the Light of the World.' Whoever follows me will have the light of life and never walk in darkness.'

What a claim ! God is Light ! Christ is the world's light, lightening the lives of others, who in turn take the light and spread it till it penetrates every dark corner of the world.

Perhaps Mary was there. If not, she certainly would have been given an account of the event. What thoughts passed through her mind ?

Yes, he was God's Light. Light had been there from the beginning. She would recall as though it was yesterday, the glory light of Gabriel's presence when he came to tell her of her part in God's salvation plan. Of course she remembered the spiritual glow in her own heart. It had never left her. Zechariah, bowled over by the miracle of John's birth, had spoken of his son being the herald of a new dawn for the world. She had not seen the night sky filled with angel light, but she had caught a glimpse of it reflected in the faces of shepherds as they knelt amid the stable shadows. It was old Simeon's word to her in the Temple that would have come to her now. 'This child will be a light for the Gentiles.' His truth, his word, God's word, would be like a light, carried by believers, and spread the length and breadth of the world.

Already he was a light. You could see how people had caught the flame. Sinners had been set free from their own darkness. Lameness walking. The blind had received light, both in their eyes and in their hearts. They, and so many others, were radiant with a new joy they wanted to share with everyone. Yes, Jesus was the Light, and the Light was growing stronger.

The light that penetrated the darkness was not always welcome though. It showed up faults that had to be confessed. It showed up pride and hypocrisy that resisted change. Mary may have watched the Temple light glow red on the hill tops. She would fear for her son as she recalled those other words of Simeon, 'A sword of sorrow will break your heart.'

Light for all the world

Samuel turned out the lamp by which he had been reading his Bible. He sat a little longer on the verandah, watching a new African dawn. The first crack of light wakened the day. A dust-red line on the horizon was already chasing away the early coolness.

For a while now he had been aware of the bustle of activity and the growing number of oil lamps over at the clinic. There would be a queue forming already. People had walked long distances in the darkness. Sacrifices were no hardship when your sight was in question. Today, Samuel would give more people their sight again a simple operation.

He could never describe the privilege he felt at being able to restore another person's sight. He was often overwhelmed by the joyous gratitude of those to whom he gave new life. They had been delivered from a life of darkness, into freedom and new opportunities. There was sadness too, sometimes, when healing was beyond his resources, or preventative advice went unheeded.

It often seemed such an impossible task. So many people were missing the joy of light and beauty. However, Samuel reflected, that was what had brought him here, to share the life and poverty of these people. Every healed person, was a Kingdom step. You had to keep chipping away. Every healed body, every changed life was one step nearer the Light of Christ filling the world.

Some would say Samuel had a simple faith. Life had fallen apart for him when, after completing his medical training, and early in his hospital work he had succumbed to the solace of alcohol. It was only when a Christian friend had stood by him, that he had found the strength to resist his temptation through the power of Jesus Christ in him. He had passed through a dark night, but the light of Christ had come into his life.

His moment of surrender had come at a Christmas service when, by the grace of God, he felt his darkness and despair fall like scales from his eyes.

Samuel caught a vision of Christ's light spreading across the world, soul by soul. If he was ever asked how it could happen, he would simply tell his story, and say. 'It happened for me.' Jesus lit my world. I will pass on the light and those who receive it from me will pass it on to others. It will happen.' So he had given himself to bringing light to the eyes of the blind, and the message of Christ's light to their souls.

'I wish I could open the eyes of politicians and world leaders,' he would say. 'But Jesus will. The light will spread. The darkness will pass. His day will come.'