

## **WELCOMING THE KING: LET THERE BE LIGHT!**

Text: Luke 1:57-79 and Genesis 1:3, 4

It had been nine months since Zechariah, the father of John the Baptist had spoken a word. Gabriel told him in Luke 1:20, *"And, behold, thou shalt be dumb, and not able to speak, until the day that these things shall be performed, because thou believest not my words, which shall be fulfilled in their season."* In Luke 1:64, God gave Zechariah his speech back and he prophesied that his son, John would be the forerunner of the Messiah. Even though John's father was ecstatic that he and Elizabeth had a miracle birth, he was immediately caught up with the greater miracle birth (virgin birth) that was soon to take place and the One to whom his son was going to serve in the spirit and power of Elijah (Luke 1:17). As Zechariah prophesied of the coming of Jesus, he also spoke of the culminating effect likened to "Light" that Jesus would have on earth. John would not be the Light. Zechariah understood this when he said, *"Through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the Dayspring (the dawning light) from on high hath visited us, To give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace"* (Luke 1:78,79). The Gospel of John made this clear when it clarified, *"He (John the Baptist) was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light (Jesus)"* (John 1:8). *"In Him (Jesus) was life; and the life was the Light of men. And the Light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not"* (John 1:4,5). The Apostle John never deviated from this message. Later in life he said, *"This then is the message which we have heard of Him, and declare unto you, that God is Light, and in him is no darkness at all"* (I John 1:5). Isaiah spoke of the Light that would come in Isaiah 60:1 and Isaiah 9:1-6.

The announcement of the presence of the Lord Jesus on earth came through light: Luke 2:8, 9: *"And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid."* Matthew 2:1, 2: *"Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him."*

As we return to the speech of Zechariah, he informs us that in Jesus we have:

## **1. Light to Give Freedom from Fear**

Luke 1:67-74. The fear of God is good and is the beginning of wisdom and knowledge. The fear of man is never good. Proverbs 29:25 tells us, *"The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the LORD shall be safe."*

Zechariah rejoices, *"That we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us"* (Luke 1:71). He further delineated, *"That He would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve him without fear"* (Luke 1:74). Zechariah was explaining that Jesus was going to deliver the people of God from all those that hate God's people and those who serve God will be able to serve Him in total abandonment with no fear.

In 1941, President Roosevelt gave his famous Four Freedoms speech (Freedom of Speech, Worship, from Want and from Fear). Later, during World War II, Norman Rockwell made four paintings to commemorate the four freedoms. In the painting of "Freedom from Fear" Rockwell interprets this freedom by parents tucking their kids in at night. In the hand of the doting father is a newspaper telling of the Blitz, which was a period of sustained strategic bombing of the United Kingdom by the Nazi German Luftwaffe corps during the Second World War. Between September 7, 1940 and May 21, 1941 there were major aerial raids on 16 British cities. Starting on September 7, 1940, London was bombed by the Luftwaffe for 57 consecutive nights. More than one million London houses were destroyed or damaged, and more than 40,000 civilians were killed, almost half of them in London. The painting was supposed to say, *"Thank God, we can put our children to bed (in America) with a feeling of security, free from the fear that they would be harmed in the night."* There is a difference now in America. The war has come to our soil. The security we must have is the security promised by the Messiah, our King, i.e., *"That we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us"* (Luke 1:71). And that we might serve God *"...without fear..."* (Luke 1:74b). Let there be Light!

## **2. Light to Grant Fortitude to Obey**

There is another beacon of light that comes from this Christ-child. It is the ability to do right with power that comes only from God. The promise is that we might be granted the fortitude to serve the Lord, *"In holiness and righteousness*

*before Him, all the days of our life" (Luke 1:75). "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (II Corinthians 4:6). With the abiding presence of Christ within us, we have the edge that even the Old Testament saints did not have. This is the promise of Jesus: "...for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you" (John 14:17). "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure" (Philippians 2:13).*

Christ came to live the life we could never have lived, die the death that through His blood is the only path to redemption and then by faith live His resurrected life in our hearts and govern us in *"...paths of righteousness for His name's sake" (Psalm 23:3b). Let there be Light!*

### **3. Light to Provide Faith to See**

*Zechariah said, "Through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the Dayspring from on high hath visited us, To give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace" (Luke 1:78, 79). "Dayspring" is the springing forth of the light of the morning or dawn. Christ is the harbinger of a new day. The promise is that He will give light to those in darkness and direction to His obedient children "...to guide our feet into the way of peace" (Luke 2:79b).*

God has a goal for us. He desires us to have the Light on our journey through this life. And the light we must have cannot be provided by mere earthly light. *"For we walk by faith, not by sight" (II Corinthians 5:7). "Jesus answered, Are there not twelve hours in the day? If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the Light of this world. But if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth, because there is no Light in him" (John 11:9, 10). "Then Jesus said unto them, Yet a little while is the Light with you. Walk while ye have the Light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth" (John 12:35). Hebrews 10:32, 36-38 says, "But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions; For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry. Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him."* The writer of Hebrews shows us that although the path that God will lead us is an illuminated path, we will have trials, but we should not be worried, for the Light (Jesus) is returning to the earth one day! So whether we are taken up in the rapture at the second

coming or whether we die in Christ, we have this light-filled promise, *"But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day"* (Proverbs 4:18). Let there be Light!

Conclusion:

This wonderful Light that is in Jesus is as real and as much ours as the light that shone upon the shepherds or the light from the shining star of Bethlehem that led the wise men! Let us therefore walk in this glorious Light (Ephesians 5:8; I John 1:7). And the Light of the perfect day that Proverbs 4:18 tells us of is promised to us even after this life is over in Revelation 21:23 and 24, *"And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the Light thereof. And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the Light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it."* Let there be Light!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Johnny Pope". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.