

MIDNIGHT VISION



***The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light.
Those who dwelt in the land of deep darkness, upon them has the light shined.***

Isaiah 9:2

Those shepherds were lucky.

They saw something!

There they were, out in the fields, watching over their flocks; it was quite dark. Suddenly there comes this great light! And in the light, a messenger from God, who brings them a word from God, who speaks to them; so that by the time they find the baby in Bethlehem, they know that they are looking at glory.

Those wise men were lucky.

They saw something!

They saw a bright, bright star, caused by the lining up of who knows how many stars, and they understood that it meant the birth of a king

Isaiah the prophet was lucky. Centuries before, he told us it would happen

He had his eyes opened! He went into the temple one day to worship God, and suddenly he was overwhelmed by blinding light! And there, before his eyes, was the Lord, sitting on a throne, high and lifted up! And from that day, Isaiah saw things which the natural eye cannot see.

So, what do we see? Christmas tree lights, candles. It's all very pretty, but hardly enough to inspire us to spend the rest of our days as a living sacrifice.

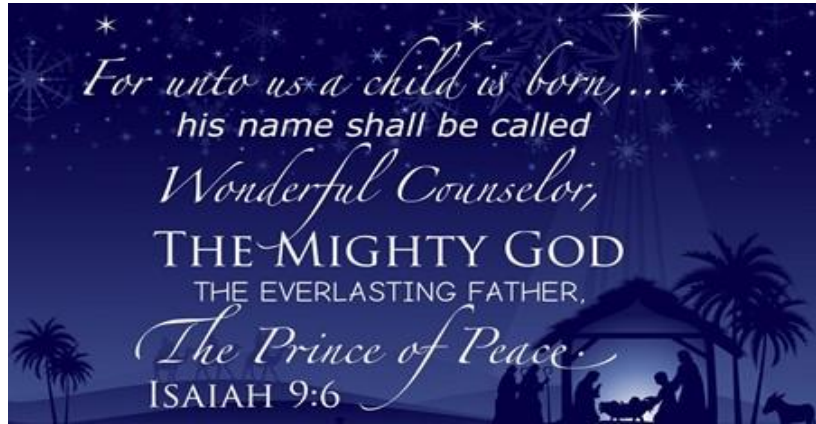
And yet, the whole point of this child's birth was to make it possible for us to see something, to open **our** eyes.

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light. Those who dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, the land of deep darkness, on them has light shined.

"To us a child is born; to us a son is given"

and not only shall the government be upon his shoulder, not only shall his name be called

"Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace"...



He comes to open our eyes---to give us vision.

The true light that enlightens every man was coming into the world, he was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world knew him not. He came to his own home, and his own people received him not. But to all who received him, who believed on his name, he gave power to become sons of God, who are born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

John 1:9

To be born of God begins with having your eyes opened.

It begins with vision.

Again Jesus spoke to them saying, "I am the light of the world. He who follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."
John 8:12

Jesus says, "For judgment I came into this world, that those who do not see, may see, and that those who see, may become blind."

John 9:39

He comes to open our eyes, so that we can see glory, and in the light of that glory, can spend the rest of our days serving the purpose of the kingdom of God.

Most of us reading these words are believers. We've committed our lives to Jesus. We can point to miraculous changes which have occurred in our lives since we made that commitment.

But most of us are still short on vision.

God longs to give us vision. To open our eyes, so that we can see Jesus so clearly, know him so truly, that all the vagueness, and hesitancy, and compromise, is swallowed up in a consuming confidence in him. The word of the Lord to the body of Christ at this hour is "I have come to open

your eyes. I have come to give you vision." And if we will respond to that word, with our lives, we will see what the shepherds saw, what the wise men saw, what Mary saw, what Isaiah saw.



There are four things we need to know about the vision that God will give us---a vision beyond any we've had so far.

1. **The vision comes to us at midnight.**
2. **The vision brings us under a word from God.**
3. **The vision offers to cleanse us from our sin.**
4. **The vision puts us under a prophetic calling.**

First of all, the vision comes to us at midnight,

at a time when all other light becomes darkness.

And in those days there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be enrolled.

And who was Caesar Augustus? He was a world dictator. You think things are bad now? Hang on! The Alpha period and the Omega period are going to match. This man was a world dictator. He was a forerunner of the anti-Christ. Things were dark in Israel in those days. And into the midst of that darkness came light. The shepherds were out there in the field, surrounded by darkness. They were without any light of their own: no flashlight, no gas lanterns, no matches. They were watching over the flock, when, all of a sudden, into this darkness came light!



"In the year King Uzziah died", says Isaiah, "I saw the Lord."

And what was the year King Uzziah died? It was a dark year, a bad year, a terrible year. And into this bad time, this dark time, comes blazing light. It's the same for us. Vision is always preceded by

darkness. First it gets dark. Dark, like the valleys we've been walking through. Dark, like the judgment of God we're seeing in our own lives, in the body of Christ, in the world around us.

Midnight means judgment.

Midnight means that God starts calling in accounts.

"And at midnight there was a cry, 'Behold the bridegroom. Go out and meet him.' And all those virgins rose, and trimmed their lamps, and those who had oil, those who had light, those who had vision, went in with him to the marriage feast, and the door was shut."

Don't be surprised, and don't be or discouraged by the darkness you've been walking through. It's midnight! It's judgment time.

God is calling us to account. But the people who walked in darkness, and who remained faithful, and who kept seeking those lost, and kept doing the will of God, who lived with integrity before God, who did not compromise---to them came light.

Our light is coming!

Secondly, the vision brings us under a word from God.

When the shepherds saw the light, they also heard a word.

***Behold I bring you good news of great joy,
which shall be to all people.***

When the people who dwelled in darkness saw the light, they also heard a living word.

***To us a child is born, to us a son is given...
the government shall be upon his shoulders.***

When Isaiah saw the light in the temple, he heard a word. He saw these magnificent creations of God proclaiming to each other,

***Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts.
The whole earth is full of his glory.***

Prior to that moment, Isaiah had seen no glory. He had seen nothing but trouble and despair. He had seen injustice and absurdity.

But now, in the midst of darkness, he begins to see the glory of God, because he's receiving a word from God.

Jesus takes Peter, James and John up on a mountain; and he is transfigured before them. His face begins to shine as the sun. His raiment becomes white as light, in preparation for the things they're going to have to go through soon after this. And with that light comes a word.

This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

Listen to him!

Whenever God opens our eyes, he also opens our ears. Whenever we receive vision, we also receive a word. That word is closer to you now than your own breath.

Thirdly, the vision offers us cleansing from our sins.

In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord, sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up. And his train filled the temple, and I said, "Woe is me for I am lost. I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips, for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts! Then flew one of the seraphim to me, having in his hand a burning coal, which he had taken with tongs from the altar. And he touched my mouth and he said, "Behold this has touched your lips. Your guilt is taken away and your sin is forgiven."



Until Isaiah receives this vision, he has no idea how much sin is dragging him down, how much self-deceit, how much compromise, how many attitudes, are holding him back. But now he sees the light, and in that light, he becomes aware of his own uncleanness.

"Woe is me, I'm undone. I'm a man of unclean lips and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips. And my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.

What's going to happen to me?" Then the seraph brings a burning coal from the altar, touches his mouth and says,

"Lo, this has touched your lips. Your guilt is removed; your sin is forgiven."

That burning coal is a symbol of the blood of the Lamb to be shed one day at Jesus' baptism of fire.

Likewise, when we see light, we discover our own uncleanness.

We start to see things in us that we didn't see before. Psalm 51 is no longer just David's psalm; it's ours.

We too, begin to cry, "Purge me with the hyssop, and I shall be clean! wash me and I shall be whiter than snow! Create in me a clean heart, O God!" "O Lord, forgive me! O Lord, cleanse me! O lord, straighten my crookedness!"

Now I'm no longer obsessed about everybody else's sin;

I see mine, and I'm terrified, and I cry out, And the Lord forgives.

Finally, the vision puts us under a prophetic calling.

After they heard all this, they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger, and when they saw it, they made known the saying that was told them concerning this child, and all who heard it, wondered at what the shepherds had told them.



The shepherds couldn't keep quiet. They couldn't contain themselves; they had to talk about it.

This was a beginning of prophetic utterance for them.

Vision always leads to prophecy.

After his sins are cleansed, Isaiah hears the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send? Who will go for us?" And Isaiah, to his own surprise, finds himself saying, "Here am I. Send me." And the Lord says, "Go."

Very soon, the light that we receive will become a prophetic word going out from us, a prophetic life lived by us; a word from God, a life lived, that becomes a message from God, not only from our mouths, but from our very lives.

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light. Those who dwelled in the land of deep darkness, on them has light shined.

Look for four things in your life, and keep watching for them in the coming days.

First, look for signs of midnight--in world events, in your own circumstances, in the atmosphere of the city where you live. But also expect light from God to come visit your darkness. Expect God to give you great light. He will.

Secondly, look for a word from God, clearer than you've ever heard it. I'm not talking about hearing voices. I'm talking about hearing God. It may be that the scriptures open up and begin speaking to you. You'll be reading something you've read many times, and suddenly it comes to life. It may be that you hear God speaking through a sister or a brother. In some way, you will begin to hear a word, that will be Spirit and Life for the Body of Christ, including you.

Thirdly, look for a time of personal cleansing. Expect God to put his finger on areas in your life that need attention: areas of compromise, or self-deceit, attitudes that you weren't even aware of. And as you confess the sin, and as the Lamb washes away the guilt with his blood, you will experience a new freedom---and with that freedom, holy joy.

Finally, look for a clarifying of your own prophetic calling. Wait for that word which came to Isaiah: "Whom shall I send? Who will go for us?" When you answer "Here am I; Send me," He will make it clear



***The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light.
Those who dwelled in the land of deep darkness, upon them has the light shined.***

We have seen that light.

We are going to see it more clearly as the days pass.

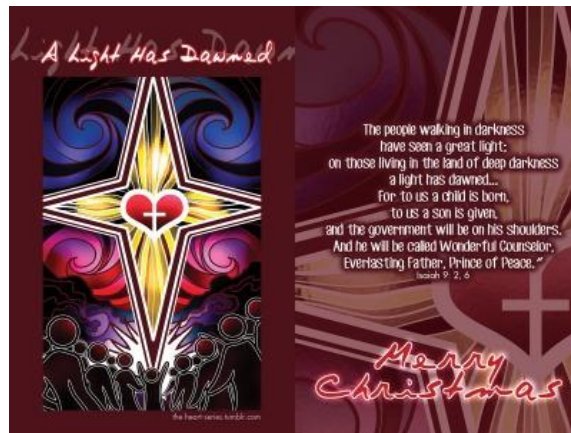
For unto us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. And of the increase of his government and peace, there will be no end.



We are his government.

We are agents of his holy peace.

It is his zeal, burning in our hearts, which will prepare the way for his glorious Kingdom which is soon to burst upon the darkness of this troubled earth.



Message REB 1986

Featured Art: Video Stills from Luke by the Bible Project. A Light has Dawned by Sarah-Rebecca (Sai)

Prayer- Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace, in the midst of midnight, in the midst of this darkness, shine your light upon us. Open our eyes so that we can see your glory and serve you with great joy. Open our ears so that we can hear a word that brings life to us and to others. Touch us with the burning coal of redemption. Wash us, forgive us, change us so we can live in your presence, in freedom, in holy joy. May the vision of how glorious you are cause our hearts to cry out... "Here we are, send us." And yes, make us agents of your holy peace with a zeal for you burning so brightly that it breaks into the darkness of the troubled world around us.

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