

# Light of the World

## By Pastor Jerry Lawson

### Introduction:

*When was Jesus born? No, not on December 25. Pope Julius I authorized December 25 to be celebrated as the birthday of Jesus in A.D. 353 and Christians adopted that date by A.D. 336, Christ was born "when shepherds watched their flocks by night." In other words, most likely in the spring. And no, He wasn't born in the year A.D. 1. The Bible tells us that Herod the Great ruled Palestine when Jesus was born, and Herod died in 4 B.C.--so Jesus had to have been born not long before that. Blame Dionysius Exiguus for this one--he's the sixth century monk who came up with the idea of splitting history into A.D. and B.C. He just chose the wrong date to do so, that's all.<sup>12</sup>*

- A. There are many different hypotheses, but no one really knows exactly when Christ was born.
1. Even though this is not the day after the birthday of Christ, many people have turned their attention to Him in this season.
  2. What better time for us to look at this Christ child, who the Bible calls the "Light of the World."

*John 1:1-5 NIV*

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was with God in the beginning. 3 Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. 4 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.*

- B. Jesus is the LIGHT of the world.
1. The Word made flesh, "Logos", Creator of all things, SAVIOR of the world has come!

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<sup>1</sup> Signs of the Times, Dec. 1991, p. 6

<sup>2</sup> Brian L. Harbor, James W. Cox, The Minister's Manual: 1994, San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1993, p. 254

2. He is the brightest LIGHT the world has ever known.

C. You may wonder, “Then why are things so dark in this world?”

1. In the past month you may have witnessed anything but true “Christmas cheer” while Americans were using 28,497,464 rolls of wrapping paper & 16,826,326 packs of bows and tags & 372,430,684 greeting cards & 35,200,000 Christmas trees.<sup>3</sup>
2. Sadly, the meaning of the season is often lost in the darkness of materialism and busy schedules.

D. God’s world was never meant to be this way.

1. Mankind brought darkness into the world by sin.
2. Christ came to dispel that darkness.

*2 Cor 4:6 NIV*

*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.*

3. So you and I have a choice – we don’t have to dwell in darkness.

*John 12:46 NIV*

*46 I have come into the world as a light, so that no one who believes in me should stay in darkness.*

E. Let me encourage you to choose the light, because...

## **I. Light Reveals.**

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<sup>3</sup> *Garbage Magazine*, quoted in *Signs of the Times*, 12-1991, p. 7 (stats from 1989)

*John 3:19-20 NIV*

*19 This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. 20 Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed.*

A. Light is a point of division.

1. Jesus said you cannot serve 2 masters – you are either for me or against me.
2. Since the light has come, you and I must make a decision.

B. Light reveals the truth.

1. Truth is sometimes frightening.
2. Olivia's new dog, Snuggles – TRUTH: "You are responsible for all of the dropping Snuggles leaves behind."
3. She preferred the "fantasy world" version she had dreamed up in her mind.

*Ps 104:2 NIV*

*He wraps himself in light as with a garment;*

C. The closer you get to God, the brighter it gets.

1. This is where our mistakes/sins are exposed.
2. As long as you are in darkness you cannot see the faults that will be plain in the light.
3. Illustration: Ben's mix-matched suit!

D. Sadly, this is why many will not stay at a church like Daystar.

1. We let the LIGHT shine in this place.
2. Reactions:

***i. Repentance.***

***ii. Rage.***

3. Illustration: One person left b/c I tell people how to worship (*See Bulletin*).

4. When the light is turned on & we see our shortcomings, we have a choice to make (in or out).

E. When you get in the light, your deeds are exposed.

1. That's okay b/c it's not to condemn you, but to bless you.

*John 11:9-10 NIV*

*"(Jesus said) A man who walks by day will not stumble, for he sees by this world's light. 10 It is when he walks by night that he stumbles, for he has no light."*

2. Many in this world are stumbling & falling from one pit to the next.

F. But it doesn't have to be that way:

*John 12:46 NIV*

*46 I have come into the world as a light, so that no one who believes in me should stay in darkness.*

## **II. Light Destroys Chaos.**

A. No good decision comes from darkness.

Back in the days before electricity, a tightfisted old farmer was taking his hired man to task for carrying a lighted lantern when he went to call on his best girl. "Why," he exclaimed, "when I went a-courtin' I never carried one of them things. I always went in the dark." "Yes," the hired man said wryly, " & look what you got!"<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> [www.sermonillustrations.com](http://www.sermonillustrations.com)

*Gen 1:2-3 NIV*

*2 Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters. 3 And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light.*

B. The pre-adamic world was in Chaos:

1. "Without form" – tohuw (*to'-hoo*) – desolation, worthless, confusion.
2. "Void" – bohuw (*bo'-hoo*) – emptiness, ruin.
3. "Darkness" – choshek (*kho-shek'*) – destruction, death, sorrow, wickness.

C. This world didn't have a chance, but...

*Gen 1:3-4 NIV*

*God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. 4 God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness.*

1. Good News: The LIGHT has Come!
2. There is a separation between light and darkness.

D. Mankind doesn't have to live in desolation, sorrow, confusion, ruin.

1. There is another choice.

*Deut 30:19 NIV*

*I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live*

E. "But I can't do that!" → Yes you Can!

1. You can walk in miraculous light.
2. You can be changed!

*1 John 3:2 NIV*

*2 Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is*

### **III. Light Restores.**

*Acts 9:2-6 NIV*

*2 and asked him for letters to the synagogues in Damascus, so that if he found any there who belonged to the Way, whether men or women, he might take them as prisoners to Jerusalem. 3 As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. 4 He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" 5 "Who are you, Lord?" Saul asked. "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting," he replied. 6 "Now get up & go into the city, & you will be told what you must do."*

A. You cannot read the story of Saul without realizing that our God is a God of Restoration.

1. He's a God of 2<sup>nd</sup> chances.

B. It has been said, "You never get a 2<sup>nd</sup> chance to make a 1<sup>st</sup> impression."

1. Not so with God:

*Ps 103:12 NIV*

*12 as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us.*

2. In spite of how you feel, your sins are not an albatross hanging around you neck.

C. Others may enter the room to condemn and judge, but the LIGHT of God is there to RESTORE!

1. Many people don't really know who God is.

2. They have developed a wrong image of Him.

3. But He reveals Himself to us in Scripture:

*Isa 43:25 NIV*

*I am he who blots out your transgressions...and remembers your sins no more.*

D. He's not through with you when your sin is forgiven.

1. Restoration continues throughout your whole life.
2. Illustrations: Roger Hamm, Josh Simmons, Dave Hollis, Wes Whaley.

*Deut 30:19 NIV*

*I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses*

3. If you choose death, you get the curse.
4. But if you choose life, Blessings come with it!
  - Home, job, emotions, body, relationships, finances.
  - Illustration: ***“Whoever takes the Son”***

E. O.T. Scripture is replete with examples of God's restoration:

- 2 Sam 9:7      “I will restore *your land*”
- Isa 44:26     “I will restore *your cities*”
- Jer 30:17     “I will restore *your health*”
- Jer 30:18     “I will restore *your fortune*”
- Jer 15:19     “If you *repent* I will restore you”
- Amos 9:11    “I will restore the *house of worship*”
- Zech 10       “I will restore *your family*”
- Zech 9:12     “I will restore *TWICE what you lost*”

**THE LIGHT HAS COME – YOU CAN BE RESTORED!!!**

## **IV. Light Sets Men Free.**

*Acts 12:4-5 NIV*

*4 After arresting him, he put him in prison, handing him over to be guarded by four squads of four soldiers each. Herod intended to bring*

*him out for public trial after the Passover. 5 So Peter was kept in prison, but the church was earnestly praying to God for him.*

- A. Peter was a good man, but he was imprisoned.
  - 1. There are many people living in bondage today.
  - 2. Pastor, what is bondage?

*Rom 7:15-23 TLB*

*15 I don't understand myself at all, for I really want to do what is right, but I can't. I do what I don't want to-what I hate. 16 I know perfectly well that what I am doing is wrong, and my bad conscience proves that I agree with these laws I am breaking. 17 But I can't help myself because I'm no longer doing it. It is sin inside me that is stronger than I am that makes me do these evil things. 18 I know I am rotten through and through so far as my old sinful nature is concerned. No matter which way I turn I can't make myself do right. I want to but I can't. 19 When I want to do good, I don't; and when I try not to do wrong, I do it anyway. 20 Now if I am doing what I don't want to, it is plain where the trouble is: sin still has me in its evil grasp ... 23 but there is something else deep within me, in my lower nature, that is at war with my mind and wins the fight and makes me a slave to the sin that is still within me. In my mind I want to be God's willing servant, but instead I find myself still enslaved to sin."*

- B. Living in this bondage causes all kind or turmoil.
  - 1. It destroys the body when we live in bondage to habits like: alcoholism, smoking, drug abuse.
  - 2. Destroys homes through anger, violence, unfaithfulness.
  - 3. Destroys our spirit man as we willingly walk away from the shelter of God's protection.
- C. Pastor, there seems to be no hope!
  - 1. Paul once felt the same way: *"Oh, what a terrible predicament I am in..."* (23).

2. But there is a solution: *“Who will set me free? Thank God! It has been done by Jesus Christ our Lord. He has set me free!”* (23)

D. Don't you believe for a minute that it won't work for you.

1. God has made a pattern of setting people free.

*Acts 12:6-7 NIV*

*6 The night before Herod was to bring him to trial, Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains, and sentries stood guard at the entrance. 7 Suddenly an angel of the Lord appeared and a light shone in the cell. He struck Peter on the side and woke him up. "Quick, get up!" he said, and the chains fell off Peter's wrists.*

E. You may think you're in the darkest prison known to man, but hold on!

1. The LIGHT has come!!!!
2. I believe He's about to shine in that dark place and break those chains off your wrists!!!

## **Conclusion:**

### **Light Shines Through You!**

*Matt 5:14-16 NIV*

*14 "You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. 16 In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.*

Song & Drama: *“Light Your World”*