

FEAST OF THE PRESENTATION OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST - FEBRUARY 2



Hundreds of years before the Saviour was born, Isaiah, living in a dark time of tyranny and cruelty, foretold the coming of a great light: The people who walked in the darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness - on them light has shined (Isaiah 9:2).

It seemed logical that when Simeon the aged prophet saw Mary and Joseph come to the temple to present the Christ Child to the Lord, he declared to God, 'Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace, according to your word; for my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel' (Luke 2: 29-32).

Whoever 'believes in me' and 'follows me' says Jesus, does not 'remain in darkness' but already 'has the light of life.' What is this light? In Christ we know who God is. This is the light. In Christ we know who we are. This is the light. In Christ we know the way of life for which human being was created. This is the light. In Christ we have the answer to the riddle of death. This is the light. All this has been revealed to us by Christ who is the Light of the World. God 'has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ' (2 Corinthians 4:6).

J. B. Phillips wrote a charming story entitled *The Visited Planet* in the second chapter of his book *New Testament Christianity*. It is a story of a veteran angel showing a young angel the vast galaxies of the heavens. As the two of them drew near to the star which we call our sun and to its circling planets, the senior angel pointed to a small and rather insignificant sphere turning very slowly on its axis. It looked as dull as a dirty tennis ball to the young angel whose mind was filled with the size and glory of what he had seen. 'What's special about that one?' 'That,' replied his senior solemnly, 'is the Visited Planet.' With great skill the senior angel spun time back and said, 'Now watch, something will happen on that little dark ball.' And, sure enough, suddenly there was a bright flash. The little angel said 'Was that the visit?' 'Yes,' said the senior angel, 'that was the visit. That was when the Son of Glory, our great Prince, went to the earth to become a man.' Quickly the light dimmed and in a short while all went black. 'What happened?' the young angel exclaimed. The older angel replied, 'They did not understand him. They refused him. So they killed him. But watch carefully now.' Suddenly a flash came, so bright that the little angel was almost blinded, and he said, 'What was that?' 'That was the resurrection. You see, he rose again from the dead, and he ascended into heaven. That is why he is here in glory now.' The veteran angel paused a moment and then continued, 'Now watch carefully, little angel, and you will see something interesting.' And sure enough another bright flash occurred. 'That was the Holy Spirit's coming at Pentecost.' Following that brief flash little lights began appearing here and there all over that little dark ball. The veteran angel said, 'That is the gospel being brought by the witnesses to the various parts of the world. Wherever people receive our Prince as their Saviour the lights come on.' 'Yes, yes,' said the little angel impatiently. 'But how does it end? Will the little lights join up with one another? Will it all be light, as it is in Heaven?' The older angel said, 'That is not for us to know. That is the Father's good knowledge; only he knows. But one day when the Prince returns to that planet again, it will all become light forever.'

No other word describes Christ as accurately as the word light. He comes as a light to those who sit in the darkness of despair. He lights candles of love, joy, forgiveness, peace, and meaning in the lives of people today.

Friends of Jesus, let the light of Christ shine forth in our lives as we continue to live the gospel message daily.