

*The light shineth in darkness and the darkness comprehendeth it not.*

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Have you ever noticed in old paintings, and icons of the Nativity, that the Christ child seems to glow? Normally in paintings and icons the saints appear to glow, or they at least have a bright halo over their heads. But in many depictions of the Nativity, we see The Blessed Virgin Mary, St. Joseph, the shepherds and wise men all gathered around the stable at night, and the only one who glows is the infant Jesus. Everyone else, including the Virgin Mary and St. Joseph are illuminated by the light coming from Jesus. The artists create these images like this for a reason, it is not just artistic license, but because they want to portray that Jesus Christ is the Word of God and the Light that *shines in darkness and the darkness cannot comprehend* or overcome Him.

All throughout Christmas Mass we have heard repeated the theme of dawning light, we hear *a hallowed day hath dawned upon the earth...for on this day a great light hath descended upon the earth*, and this is light to see by, to see the *Salvation of our God*, and *his righteousness*. Light in the Scriptures is a symbol of Jesus' divinity, the light which dawns upon the world tonight bringing righteousness and salvation for all people. He is *the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world*. Jesus is light, He does not borrow it from somewhere else, He Himself is the source and fountain of Light. How remarkable it is that humans, the Blessed Virgin Mary and St. Joseph and every great saint of heaven reflect this light of Christ. This is the calling for every Christian, to reflect the Light and Love of Christ.

And then we look back at that picture of the Nativity, or at our crèche and see the infant Jesus, and realize that in this infant is the *salvation of our God...his righteousness...and the government shall rest upon His shoulders...and He shall be called Mighty Counsel...for the Lord hath done wonderful things*. Hundreds of prophecies from the Old Testament culminate in this infant born in the backwater town of Bethlehem. The Word and Light of God who is to enlighten every one that comes into the world is born in the margins of Jewish society. The Word and light of God, the Salvation of the world, is born in weakness needing the total care every human baby needs, and is entrusted to the care of a young girl, Mary. The Lord of all creation, the only begotten Son of God the Father Almighty, is given a human foster father through Joseph. Our Lord's earthly parents are people who in their own society were not well known, neither were they popular or wealthy, and yet they are entrusted with the Salvation of the world. For God has said elsewhere, *my*

*grace is sufficient for you, for my strength is made perfect in weakness, and God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong.*

The Light that shineth in darkness, the Word and Wisdom of God comes into our world as a delicate baby. Jesus Christ, God who for our sakes became flesh enters our world through a stable because the world had no room for Him. A little baby boy who was born to die for everyone that would not give Him room in the Inn. But this is the very same poor infant we read about in the Epistle, whom God hath appointed *heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds, who is the brightness of His glory...who sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; being made so much better than the angels...and has obtained a more excellent Name than they.*

The Light of God, the Word and Wisdom of God, His plan for salvation and the proof of His righteousness comes into our world through an infant. And for a time all of humanity's hope is placed in an infant. God stoops down to right a fallen world through the humility of being born in a stable in Bethlehem, all so that we may receive the light of Christ, that we may experience salvation and know the righteousness of God. But the Gospel reminds us *He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not, He came unto His own and His own received Him not.* There were people who witnessed the miracles of Jesus and even His death and still they did not believe. Even as an infant Jesus inspired either faith or fear. The angels and shepherds came and worshipped Him while He was still in the manger, while Herod and his court feared the overthrow of their throne and sought to put the child to death. Truly *He came unto His own, and His own received Him not.*

The Christ Child was too a big a present for the Herod's of the world to receive. *But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His Name.* We who would receive Jesus Christ, the Word and Light of God, who would have Him to be born in us, come now to the altar to receive Him in the bread and wine of Holy Communion. Believing this night of all nights, that the word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we will behold His power and glory when He comes again. Amen.