



REPENT AUSTRALIA

“If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.”

2 Chronicles 7:14

Volume 12:12

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LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS A CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

So it's Christmas again! Once more we are enjoying this season of families, presents and goodwill. It's that time of the year when millions of dollars are spent on toys, Christmas trees, decorations, food and drink and countless other items which have become part of this special season. But from all this spending and splurging will we have caught the real meaning of this unique time or will we just go through the same gestures in keeping with custom and sentiment as we have always done? Whether we realise it or not this time we call Christmas is the greatest event in all history. For we are celebrating the advent, the coming to earth, of God Himself in the form of His Son, JESUS CHRIST. He was in the beginning with God and all things were made through Him. Just as at the foundation of all creation God said, "Let there be light," and the light immediately dispelled the darkness, so with the coming of Jesus, God sent His Son to shine into the lives of men and to dispel the darkness from their lives. In fact, wherever God is there is light; that is, there are joy and blessing and life which drive out sorrow, adversity and death. So Jesus came as God Incarnate. He, who was Life and Light, came to shine in the darkness of the souls of sinful mankind. But the darkness failed to either recognise or comprehend the magnificent gesture of the Great Creator in leaving His ivory palaces to dwell in this sinful world, or the great eternal love that made Him come down to us. When He came to His own chosen people Israel they rejected Him. However, to all who did receive Him, to those who yielded Him their allegiance, He gave the right to become children of God. While the divine law was given by God to Moses, grace and truth came through Jesus Christ when He came to earth to reveal the Father God and His great love for His creation. The Bible assures us: "For God so loved the world He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall have eternal life" . . . and that "they shall not come into judgment but have passed from death to life".

The Great Gulf

From the beginning of time God began to make Himself known to man through the 12 tribes of Israel whom He chose as His earthly vessels to reveal His divine plan for mankind. Yet by the time of Christ their knowledge of Him was still imperfect. The God of the Hebrews was too high, remote and set apart. They clung to certain restrictions regarding Him: He was the Giver of the Law; the God of their temple, who was to be worshipped in Jerusalem. They had trouble seeing God as big enough to embrace the whole human race. But Jesus taught that, "God is Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in Spirit and in truth". As the *Light of the World* He revealed that God made man in His own image and that He loves him however far he may have wandered away from the Father and degraded that image. In fact, the Light of Christ enables us to see the great gulf that separates sinful man from his God. He casts a searching light on all our pretence, our pride, our selfishness, our pursuit of earthly glory; our character is accurately judged and found wanting. Dr James Hastings expresses it this way: "One phase of the mystery of man is that which meets us in the mass of sin and seemingly lost life which is in the world: all the lost, broken-down lives that fester in the byways of our cities; the masses of crime; the even more hopeless baseness of those who fatten by fostering crime---whole classes, lost, lost, so lost that we cannot tell even how to try to save them." Yet for all that, God's arm is not too short to reach down and pluck the worst of sinners from the miry pit into which they have fallen. That is divine grace.

Darkness Always Resists Light

Undoubtedly, the darkness always resists and fights against the Light. When the Light of Christ came into the world, most people were unaware of Him. Wherever He went His light could be seen yet many strongly opposed Him. The religious leaders, the scribes and Pharisees, blind to the meaning of God's desired relationship with men, were constantly condemning Jesus for supposedly breaking the Sabbath and their ceremonial laws. The Romans, for all their ability to conquer men and nations and set up a mighty empire, were also of the darkness. They refused to allow the Spirit of Light to enlighten them and condemned Him to death. Even one of Jesus' disciples, Judas Iscariot, was of the darkness, betraying the very Son of God for a paltry 30 pieces of silver. The darkness tried its utmost to extinguish the Light of the World by nailing Him to a cross. But they failed--it was impossible to destroy the very essence of Life itself. Three days later He rose triumphant from the grave. Soon after, lights began to appear in Jerusalem then moved into the surrounding countryside and into other countries throughout the Roman Empire and beyond. The resurrection of Christ, *the Light of the World*, heralded the victory over darkness. The centuries since have added to His glory. The lives of Christian saints shine as lights in a dark place. Fanny Crosby was blind from the time she was a few months old. From then on, she lived in a world of darkness. Yet, years later, she was able to declare, "It was the best thing that could have happened to me. How in the world could I have lived such a helpful life had I not been blind?" The Light of the World so enlightened her that she could be a light herself in the consecrated life she lived and the 8000+ uplifting, inspiring hymns she wrote telling of the One who gave her Light and Life.

Pillar of Light

When the Israelites escaped from Egypt they were led by a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. When the light rose up they journeyed on; when it settled they encamped. They obeyed the Light for it was God leading them. Even so, if Christ is to lead us as a guiding Light in our march through the wilderness of this dark world, we too must be prepared to follow. Of course, all true following of the Light of the World involves faith--trusting without actually seeing Him. Darkness is the condition of the soul that is turned away from God. The darkness of ignorance, of unbelief, of impurity, of rebellion and of sorrow are only for those who will not follow the Light. Moreover, we not only have the divine promise that when we are led by His Spirit of Light, we shall have the light of life in us. This is the enlightenment given to everyone who follows Christ. This is the difference between the Light which is Christ and the light that led the Israelites. Theirs was an outside guidance, but the guidance of Christ Jesus comes from the inside by the power of His Holy Spirit which He gives at the new birth and that is available to all through their yielding to Him. A God on the outside might seem perfect as a guide, but a God within is the real assurance that we are on the true and narrow path.

The Light Undimmed through the Ages

The Light of Christ continues undimmed through the ages and will do so throughout eternity. Everyone who comes to Him in faith is fully assured of a personal bond with Him that is indestructible. As the Apostle Paul boldly declares: "Then what can separate us from the love of Christ? Can affliction or hardship? Can persecution, hunger, nakedness, peril, or the sword? No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Remember, Christmas means the coming of the Light to overcome the darkness and to enlighten us all. That includes *you!* Will you come to Jesus Christ the Light of the World this Christmas?

PRAYER

Eternal Father, Creator of the universe, who alone is worthy to receive all glory, honour and praise, we humbly offer our thanks for Your wonderful saving grace revealed in *JESUS CHRIST* Your Son, who conquered the devilish darkness of this world's sin--to set free all who were lost in sin and giving them eternal hope through Your free gift of grace. Thank You, gracious Father, that *JESUS CHRIST* is the *Light of the World* who accepts everyone who sincerely makes this prayer their confession of faith and will give them a victorious and abundant life: *Heavenly Father, I surrender my all to You in the name of Jesus whom You sent to die for my sins on the Cross. Forgive and cleanse me with His precious blood from all my unrighteousness. I believe in my heart and confess with my mouth that You raised Him from the dead and that He lives forevermore. Fill me with Your Holy Spirit, I pray, and enable me to obey Your Living Word to live a Spirit-filled life. I now receive Jesus Christ as my Lord and Saviour, Almighty God as my Father and the Holy Spirit as my Comforter. I am born again into the Royal Family of Faith. Thank You, Lord Jesus. Glory be to God. Hallelujah! Amen.*

RA: Led by our Lord Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit to glorify the Fatherhood of God with the Brotherhood of Man; in love and in faithfulness to bring glory and honour to His holy name.

REJOICE IN COVENANT PRAYERS FULLY IN THE HOLY SPIRIT DAILY FOR AUSTRALIA'S REVIVAL.