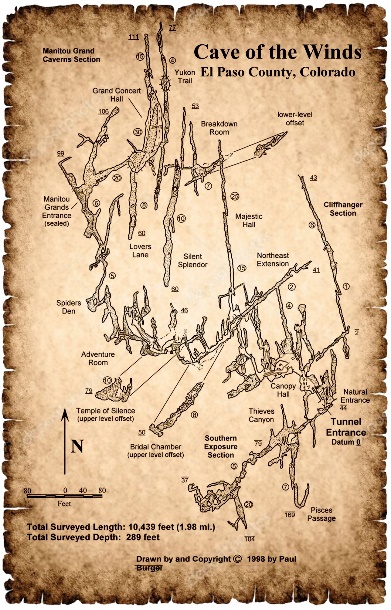
# Isaiah 9:1-2, Luke 1:26-35 – Jesus Light of God

[Have kids open doors 1-6]

Have you ever been in a truly dark place? Not just a room with the light’s off, but a place where no light reaches you? Growing up, I got to tour through the cave of the winds. As you get deep into the cave, the angles are such that it is impossible for any light to enter from the surface. At one point in the tour, in the area known as the bridal chamber, they turn off all the artificial lights. The darkness is shocking. You cannot see your hand in front of your face, and in trying to see their hands, most people smack themselves in the nose, not knowing how close their hand is. The darkness feels like a physical barrier around your body. After about 30 seconds, some people begin to see hallucinogenic flashes of color, not because any light reaches their eyes but because the nerves in their eyes are working overtime to try to see anything.

The lack of light in the cave seems hopeless. But then after about a minute the tour guide, standing nearly 20 feet away from you lights a match. Even if you are facing in the exact opposite direction, you notice the light. If you look at the match, even from 20 feet away it glows so brightly that it hurts your eyes. The light from the match is literally hard to understand after the intense darkness. By the light of that one small match you start to see details in the cave. What was hopeless in the dark, is now filled with hope as you see the light and see other things in the light. They light the match first and then later turn on the electric lights, if they turned on the electric lights without first striking the match, many people would find the light too painful to tolerate.

In the same way as the darkness of the cave is oppressive to our eyes, the darkness of the world is oppressive to our spirits. Even those who don’t believe in God despair over the things that are wrong with the world. Friedrich Nietzsche was an atheist philosopher in the late 1800s. He is most famous for his statement that “God is dead”. This statement has been terribly abused and misapplied. People today use it as a way of saying that since there is no God we can do anything we want to do. Nietzsche’s view was quite different. Even though he didn’t believe in God, he mourned the loss of God in the awareness of people. He recognized that Enlightenment thinking had eliminated both standards of morality and hope for a better future when they eliminated God from being considered a valid source of truth. Even this atheist recognized that without God there is no hope.

This lack of hope would the state of all men, but God promised hope. In this week’s passages, we see the light was predicted to give us hope. The light is evidence of God’s favor. The light is Jesus the Messiah. The Light originates from God.

## Light Predicted Isaiah 9:1-2, John 1:1-4

Nevertheless, there will be no more gloom for those who were in distress. In the past he humbled the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the future he will honor Galilee of the Gentiles, by the way of the sea, along the Jordan— **The people walking in darkness have seen a great light**; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned.

The astute among you probably noticed that when the verse from the calendar was read, it said Isaiah 9:1, but in your Bible the verse that was read is Isaiah 9:2. Was there an error in the calendar? No, but there is interesting history. The concept of the advent calendar originated in the Roman Catholic church. Nearly all lists of verses for Advent Calendars follow from that tradition. As you probably know, the chapter divisions did not get added to the Bible until about 1200 years after Jesus. The chapter divisions are a convenience, but they are not inspired by God. The Catholics use a chapter division based on the Greek Septuagint while the Protestants use a division based on the older Hebrew Masoretic Text. The calendar follows the Greek tradition while your Bible follows the Hebrew tradition.

Either way, in this verse, the text is the same. “The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned.” Just like the darkness in the cave of the winds, all of humanity, since Adam and Eve’s sin in garden, has lived in the shadow of death. The darkness is oppressive, but God lights a match. God promises a light will come and light will dawn in the land of the shadow of death. He promises a messiah. 800 years later, that promise was fulfilled. John says

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. **In him was life, and that life was the light of men.**

God’s Light promised was a match that allowed us to see hope in a dark world. The coming of Jesus is a beacon of hope that lights up the sky. But that light is far more than just a hope. Hope is an expectation of something happening in the future, the coming of Jesus is a demonstration of something happening now.

## The Light is God’s Favor Luke 1:26-31

“**26** ¶ In the sixth month, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, **27** to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin’s name was Mary. **28** The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you." **29** Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. **30** But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God. **31** You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus.

We don’t know exactly what is meant by the sixth month. It could be the sixth month of civil year, the sixth month of religious year, or the sixth month of Elizabeth’s Pregnancy. Either way, the Angel Gabriel arrived to speak to her.

Only 3 angels are named in scripture. The Archangel Michael is a warrior that serves to protect Israel against God’s enemies (Daniel 10:13,21; 12:1, Jude 1:9, Revelation 12:7). Lucifer was also known as the morning star, and was appointed to be the guardian of God’s glory (Isaiah 14:12, Ezekiel 28:13-15), but rebelled against God and is now known as Satan. Finally, Gabriel, mentioned here, is the messenger of God’s Messianic prophecies (Daniel 8:16; 9:21, Luke 1:19).

Marry was pledged to be married to Joseph. We naturally think of this as here being engaged, but in their culture, it was far more than an engagement. Many years ago I heard someone say an interesting thing to his daughter when she announced her engagement, “An engagement is designed to be broken.” He wasn’t encouraging his daughter to end her engagement, rather, he was encouraging her to use this time to verify that her fiancé was the right man, because once they were married it would not be appropriate to end, but it was acceptable to end it before they were married. In contrast, a Jewish pledge of marriage was far more permanent. The only way you could end an engagement was by getting a formal divorce. In nearly every way, except the consummation of the marriage, they were considered as already married.

Here Gabriel lets Mary know that God has chosen to favor her. Why was Mary favored. Was it anything she had done? Some churches falsely teach that Mary lived a sinless life. The Bible says in Romans 3:23 that ALL have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. So Mary was not favored for her purity. Nor was Mary favored because of her genealogy. Her genealogy is a result and culmination of God’s plan, not a cause of God favoring her. Ultimately God chose to favor Mary because of His graceful plan for the whole world.

At this Mary is troubled. She was not nervous because Gabriel told her she would have a baby, but was troubled before she knew that. It is easy to think of God’s grace as a relief, and once we have experienced it, it is a relief, but for the one who has not experienced God’s grace it is a fearful thing because true grace transforms your entire life and that transformation may not be comfortable.

For Mary, the light was a sign of God’s choosing to favor her, but more importantly to us, it is an indication that God has chosen to favor the whole earth with the possibility of grace… a light shining in the darkness, but the darkness doesn’t understand so it is troubled by the light.

## Light Is the Messiah Luke 1:32-33

**32** He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, **33** and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end."

Gabriel now explains to Mary that her child will be only in her stewardship, but in reality be the Son of God. Imagine, a poor country girl from a relatively unknown family being told that she is the mother of God’s son. Very specifically Gabriel emphasizes that he will be a king on the throne of David and in the house of Jacob forever. There can be no doubt that this king is the messiah.

There had not been a king on the throne of David, or even a Hebrew king for over 500 years. King Herod was not a Hebrew or even a descendant of Jacob, he was an Edomite and descendant of Esau. The Hasmonean kings who preceded Herod were Jewish, but were Levites, not from the tribe of Judah and thus not descendants of David. So the promise that he would sit on the throne of David in the house of Jacob could only mean a miraculous restoration of the prophesied messiah. Mary had to be overwhelmed. Her mind was denying the reality that the angel was presenting.

## Light Originates from God Luke 1:34-35

**34** "How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?" **35** The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God.” (Lu 1:26-35 NIVUS)

Mary now sees a loophole that can keep her from this overwhelming duty of being mother to the promised messiah. She can’t have kids, she’s a virgin and has never been with a man. The angel must be wrong.

But the angel is not wrong. Gabriel explains to Mary that this will be a miraculous pregnancy. When you think about it, the birth of Jesus was not miraculous, it progressed in the same way as billions of other births throughout history. The miracle was not at His birth but nine months earlier at His conception.

Obviously, God’s plan would not allow this, but imagine the horror if Marry had decided she didn’t want the child and had obtained an abortion. Rather, Mary accepts that God’s plan and grace is sufficient to get her through the difficulties she will face. People will do the math, they will know that Jesus was born less than 9 months after her wedding to Joseph. People would even accuse Jesus of being the son of a Roman soldier. She would eventually see her Son suffer and die on a cross. But she chose to accept God’s grace, knowing He would help her through.

The suffering of Jesus did not start in the Garden of Gethsemane, nor on the cross. His suffering began the moment He gave up the prerogatives of Godhead and chose to become a human. He had the same problems of any other baby. Diaper rash, croup, teething pains. Compare this to being God and you realize how much He gave up.

Christmas is about hope. It is about the light shining in the darkness. It is about God’s grace. Don’t sink the importance of Christmas to the cute little baby in the manger. Yes, Jesus was a cute little baby, but from the moment of His conception and for eternity before, He is also Lord of the Universe and Hope of the World.

# Isaiah 9:1-2, Luke 1:26-35 – Jesus Light of God

## Light \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Isaiah 9:1-2 John 1:1-4

All of humanity has lived in the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of death.

God’s Light promised was a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ that allowed us to see hope in a dark world.

The coming of Jesus is a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of hope that lights up the sky.

## The Light is God’s \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Luke 1:26-31

Ultimately God \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to favor Mary because of His graceful \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ for the whole world.

God has chosen to favor the whole earth with the possibility of grace… a light shining in the darkness, but the darkness doesn’t \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ so it is troubled by the light.

## Light Is the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Luke 1:32-33

Τhe promise that he would sit on the throne of David in the house of Jacob could only mean a miraculous \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of the prophesied messiah.

## Light \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ from God Luke 1:34-35

The miracle was not at His \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ but nine months earlier at His conception.

The \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of Jesus started the moment He became a human.

Christmas is about \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

He is also \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of the Universe and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of the World.