

Though we celebrate gladly with lights at Christmas, the believer has the greater joy of celebrating God having become man to a light to the nations. Jesus came not only to save His people from their sins, and to shepherd His people Israel, but to be a light to the nations. Jesus is the light and we celebrate His coming to be a light to the nations for two reasons.

**I. *We celebrate God becoming man to be a light to the nations because of our great need.***

Simeon's anticipation of a Savior and his prayer (Luke 2:29–32) were probably largely influenced by such passages as Isaiah 42:6. The Servant of the Lord, the Messiah, was appointed to be a light to the nations. "Nations" can be all peoples (e.g., Matthew 28:19) or Gentile peoples in contrast to Israel. As light to the nations, God addresses both the universal need and the particular need of the Gentiles.

**1. *The universal need: the dark condition of all mankind***

**a. All mankind is born spiritually blind.**

It is a universal, personal condition, independent of circumstances, not to be confused with physical blindness, but well illustrated by it (cf. John 9:1–5). It is associated with guilt before God, and shares in common with those born physically blind the inability to recognize that blindness without being told. But God became man, Jesus, to open the eyes of the blind and give spiritual sight.

**b. All mankind is born imprisoned in darkness.**

We are born unable to see and unable to free ourselves and truly live in freedom. The power of sin binds us in darkness.

**2. *The Gentile need: absence among the Gentiles of light which Israel possessed***

On the one hand all people suffer under the same spiritual blindness and spiritual bondage. But Israel as a nation had been given light, which the Gentiles did not have. Paul answers the question of the advantage of Israel. After declaring that all people, Jew and Gentile alike are sinners. He poses the question that his opponents might ask. What advantage is there then in being a Jew?

**a. Israel had "the oracles of God" (Romans 3:1) which the Gentiles did not. The "oracles" or the written word of God is a lamp and a light Psalm 119:105); it enlightens the eyes (Psalm 19:8b).**

**b. Israel had, among other things, "the worship" (Romans 9:4), which was a God-given acceptable approach to Him and a revelation of their spiritual need, that is, of their spiritual blindness.**

Born blind we wouldn't know our loss unless light had come into the world, Jesus, God become man. Light is proclaimed now to all nations (Matthew 28:19–20; Luke 24:47).

**II. *We celebrate God becoming man to be a light to the nations because of God's wonderful, generous provision.***

**1. *By the death of Jesus the chains of darkness are broken.***

Jesus came to give His life as a ransom for many (Mark 10:45) and to provide forgiveness of sin (Hebrews 9:22). By being united with Christ in His death, the believer is freed from the bondage of sin (Romans 6:6).

**2. *By the life of Jesus we may walk free in the light.***

The believer is now alive to God (Romans 6:11) and by being made alive together with Christ can walk as children of light (Ephesians 2:5–6; 5:8). Believers walk in the light (1 John 1:7) and reveal the work of God in their lives (John 3:21). The believer's life is the life and light from Jesus (cf. John 1:4).

**3. *By the person of Jesus we may see God.***

God Himself is light (1 John 1:5) and Jesus, God become man, is light. Blind and in darkness man cannot see light, nor perceive God. But Jesus makes God visible; the Light became flesh.

God responded to our need and gave us more than forgiveness; He brought us into the light and let us see Him. Walk in the light. Confess your sin and enjoy the forgiveness. Celebrate God becoming man, Jesus, to be our light.

*Questions for further reflection:*

• Consider the account in John 9 of Jesus healing the man born blind. What evidences of spiritual blindness can you observe? Which spiritual blindness was healed and which was not? Why? What was the final result in the man born blind?

• What evidences of spiritual blindness do you see in people around you? What help do they need?

• What evidences of spiritual sight do you experience in your own life? How might these experiences help in explaining the light to the spiritually blind?