

Christmas 2025 - The Sunrise of God | Sunday December 21, 2025

On Wednesday nights we have been studying the book of Ezekiel. We have seen chapter after chapter of God proclaiming the coming judgment that awaits His people.

The nation Israel, Jerusalem, and even the temple will fall. God sends Ezekiel with the same message multiple different ways and has him explain it with many different word pictures. These warnings started back in chapter **4**, and we are in chapter **20** and have more chapters to go of God explaining what is going to come. Yet even after all these explanations the people still did not understand and are shocked when Jerusalem and the temple are destroyed. I have been struck by **how clear and repeatedly God has communicated and how clueless we are**. The Christmas story is no different. This was a tremendous moment in history when God the Son stepped out of eternity and was born as an infant in Bethlehem. The **seraphim** who had spent their entire existence worshipping and shouting out the glory of God in His throne room must have been shocked when they saw the Son leave the throne room to be born in the flesh. **Just as in Ezekiel's day, God was very clear communicating what He was doing**. One example of this is the prophecy that God gives to Zechariah the priest.

Luke 1:5-13 ESV

(5) In the days of Herod, king of Judea, **there was a priest named Zechariah**, of the division of Abijah. And he had a wife from the daughters of Aaron, and **her name was Elizabeth**.

(6) And they **were both righteous before God**, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and statutes of the Lord.

(7) **But they had no child**, because Elizabeth was barren, and both were advanced in years.

(8) Now while he was serving as priest before God when his division was on duty,

(9) according to the custom of the priesthood, **he was chosen by lot to enter the temple of the Lord and burn incense**.

(10) And the whole multitude of the people were praying outside at the hour of incense.

(11) And there appeared to him **an angel of the Lord** standing on the right side of the altar of incense.

(12) And Zechariah was troubled when he saw him, and **fear fell upon him**.

(13) But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard, and **your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John**.

A priest would serve in the temple **twice a year for a week at a time**. Some estimate that there were **18,000** priests. So even when it was your turn to serve at the temple the specific jobs would be selected by the casting of lots. Burning incense was so highly valued that you could only do it once in your life, if you were ever selected. Despite all these odds, **Zechariah** is chosen to enter the temple and burn the incense. By no accident Zechariah's name means, "Jehovah remembers." God remembered the last prophecy He sent to Israel through Malachi.

Malachi 4:5-6 ESV

(5) "Behold, **I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes**.

(6) And he will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the land with a decree of utter destruction.”

Malachi prophesied about Elijah being sent to Israel before the great and awesome day of the Lord. Then God is silent for over 400 years. This is the gap between the Old Testament and New Testament. In this time Israel has been conquered by Greece, regained its independence, and then conquered by Rome. Generation has come and gone, and everyone wonders what God is going to do next. Then God reaches out to a man name **Zechariah** “Jehovah remembers.” God is showing His people that He remembers them and His promises. God sends an angel to declare to **Zechariah** that He and his wife Elizabeth will have a son and they are to name him John. This child is the beginning of the fulfillment of God’s 400-year-old promise and so many others.

Luke 1:14-17 ESV

(14) And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth,
(15) for he will be great before the Lord. And he must not drink wine or strong drink, and **he will be filled with the Holy Spirit**, even from his mother's womb.
(16) And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God,
(17) and **he will go before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children**, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, **to make ready for the Lord a people prepared.”**

John is set apart for a very important ministry and is to take the Nazarite vow to show this distinction. He will have the Holy Spirit, and will minister in the spirit and power of Elijah. The angel even quotes from Malachi to make sure we understand the connection. John is not the focus, but is the one who is to get the people ready before **He** comes. **The long-promised messiah!** After years of silence God is not only speaking but is about to do something incredible. Zechariah is not sure if he can trust this message.

Luke 1:18-20 ESV

(18) And Zechariah said to the angel, “**How shall I know this?** For I am an old man, and my wife is advanced in years.”
(19) And the angel answered him, “**I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I was sent** to speak to you and to bring you this good news.
(20) And behold, **you will be silent and unable to speak** until the day that these things take place, because you did not believe my words, **which will be fulfilled in their time.”**

The angel Gabriel stood in the presence of God. He was asked to leave God’s throne room to send this message to Zechariah. This was not Gabriel’s decision or plan but He was sent directly by God to share God’s message. Years and years of prophecy were going to be fulfilled in their perfect timing. After years of waiting, it was time. Because Zechariah did not believe the message, **he will be unable to speak until his son John is born.** Everything happened just as Gabriel said, His wife, Elizabeth became pregnant. Then, Gabriel was then sent to Mary (Luke 1:26-38) to tell her she would give birth to Jesus. When John was born, Zechariah, who still could not speak, wrote down for his son was called John just as Gabriel told him to. It was this act of obedience that cause Him to be able to speak again.

Luke 1:64; 67-79 ESV

(64) And immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue loosed, **and he spoke, blessing God.**

(67) And his father Zechariah was **filled with the Holy Spirit** and prophesied, saying,
(68) “Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, **for He has visited and redeemed His people**
(69) **and has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant**
David,
(70) **as He spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from of old,**
(71) that we should be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us;
(72) to show the mercy promised to our fathers **and to remember His holy covenant,**
(73) the oath that He swore to our father Abraham, to grant us
(74) that we, being delivered from the hand of our enemies, might serve Him without fear,
(75) in holiness and righteousness before Him all our days.
(76) And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; **for you will go before**
the Lord to prepare His ways,
(77) to give knowledge of salvation to His people in the forgiveness of their sins,
(78) because of the tender mercy of our God, whereby **the sunrise shall visit us from on**
high (79) to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to
guide our feet into the way of peace.”

Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and started to prophecy. After such a long gap God keeps communicating. It is not a new message but one that was spoken of **from the prophets from of old**. God was providing a Messiah, a **horn of salvation** from the blood line of king David. Zechariah fully understood that his son John was not that horn, but the prophet who was to prepare the way. John was to go out and to declare to all who was coming next, Jesus the promised messiah! **God was causing the sunrise to visit Israel**. The sun was about to rise for those who had been in the darkness. Israel had **settled into**, and were **residing in a state of darkness**. “Jehovah remembers” (Zechariah) was declaring to all that the darkness they were experiencing was not permanent. God’s light was going to shine out. **Jesus is the sunrise that has visited us on high**. Wherever He went in His ministry He brought the light with Him.

Matthew 4:12-16 ESV

(12) Now when He heard that John had been arrested, He withdrew into Galilee.
(13) And leaving Nazareth He went and **lived in Capernaum by the sea, in the**
territory of Zebulun and Naphtali, (14) so that what was spoken by the prophet
Isaiah might be fulfilled: (15) “The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, the way of
the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles—
(16) **the people dwelling in darkness have seen a great light,** and for those dwelling
in the region and shadow of death, **on them a light has dawned.”**

Jesus’ chose to go to Zebulun and Naphtali after John the Baptist was murdered. His presence was a great light to the people. **He is the sunrise wherever He goes and brings God’s light into this dark world**. Isaiah prophesied about this moment 700 years before it ever happened. Israel was terrified of the coming Assyrian Invasion and King Ahaz was turning to anything he could for comfort. It was a time of uncertainty, looming war, and conspiracies abounded. The people even tried to have Isaiah consult other spirits.

Isaiah 8:19-22 ESV

(19) And when they say to you, “**Inquire of the mediums and the necromancers** who chirp and mutter,” **should not a people inquire of their God?** Should they inquire of the dead on behalf of the living?

(20) To the teaching and to the testimony! If they will not speak according to this word, **it is because they have no dawn.**

(21) They will pass through the land, **greatly distressed and hungry.** And when they are hungry, they will be enraged and will speak contemptuously against their king and their God, and turn their faces upward.

(22) **And they will look to the earth, but behold, distress and darkness,** the gloom of anguish. **And they will be thrust into thick darkness.**

The people were turning to anything but God. They had no dawn, no sunrise. They looked to the earth and all they found was distress, darkness, gloom and anguish. The world can only offer us a thick darkness.

Ephesians 6:12 ESV

(12) For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, **against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.**

The darkness of the world is not accidental but is fueled and led by the cosmic powers, spiritual forces of evil, demons. Their aim is to keep people from seeing the light and though they have no answers keep people coming to the darkness. It was in this darkness that Isaiah was given this tremendous prophecy.

Isaiah 9:1-2; 6-7 ESV

(1) But there will be no gloom for her who was in anguish. In the former time he brought into contempt **the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali,** but in the latter time he has made glorious the way of the sea, **the land beyond the Jordan,** Galilee of the nations.

(2) The people who walked in darkness **have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shone.**

(6) For to us **a child is born,** to us **a son is given;** and **the government** shall be upon his shoulder, and His name shall be called **Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.**

(7) Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. **The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.**

It is in the darkness that God promises to send the sunrise. God promises to send a great light to conquer the deep darkness. God will accomplish this by having “**a child is born, to us a son is given.**” **God the Son existed from eternity past so He was given to us, but a child had to be born for the son to take on human flesh.** The eternal God was promised to be born. He will be the king of kings and the entire world government will rest on His shoulders as His royal robe. In Isaiah’s day the politicians were incompetent and terrified for what came next. Isaiah was looking forward to the perfect king. Jesus is the wonderful, amazing counselor who always gives perfect advice. He is fully God and from everlasting. He will bring in a lasting peace that will never end. **All of this will not be accomplished by His followers, or by His angels, but by the zeal, jealousy of the Lord of Hosts.** God will be faithful to His promises and jealously prove to the World who Jesus is.

Ephesians 1:9-10 NLT

(9) God has now revealed to us His mysterious will regarding Christ—which is to fulfill His own good plan. (10) And **this is the plan: At the right time He will bring everything together under the authority of Christ**—everything in heaven and on earth.

God revealed His plan in Jesus. God the Father desires to bring all things together under Jesus. The world and all it contains and all its darkness will be brought under the authority of Christ. Through His death on the cross He can bring everything under His authority. As believers when this happens it will be a glorious day.

Colossians 1:13-14 ESV

(13) He has delivered us **from the domain of darkness** and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, (14) in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

Jesus is the sunrise who went to the cross and died. He let Himself be overcome by darkness so that He could conquer it and bring us into His Kingdom of light. It is in Jesus that we have redemption. Our sins are fully covered by His blood. We are in His light, that the world refuses.

John 3:19-20 ESV

(19) And this is the judgment: **the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil.**

(20) For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, **lest his works should be exposed.**

This is heartbreaking, and yet when we look around us we know it to be true. People love the darkness and would rather be left alone in their evil actions than come to the light. We must be honest that it is not just people, **but our sinful nature still loves the darkness.** There is a piece of everyone of us that wants to ignore what Jesus has done for us and His light and go back to the darkness. I am so thankful that Jesus is the Sunrise, He is the one who will be able to set all things right. **He is the one who will enable all believers to one day perfectly walk in His light.**

Isaiah 60:1-2; 18-22 ESV

(1) Arise, shine, **for your light has come,** and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you.

(2) For behold, **darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples; but the LORD will arise upon you, and His glory will be seen upon you.**

(18) Violence shall no more be heard in your land, devastation or destruction within your borders; you shall call your walls Salvation, and your gates Praise.

(19) **The sun shall be no more your light by day, nor for brightness shall the moon give you light; but the LORD will be your everlasting light, and your God will be your glory.**

(20) **Your sun shall no more go down, nor your moon withdraw itself; for the LORD will be your everlasting light, and your days of mourning shall be ended.**

(21) **Your people shall all be righteous;** they shall possess the land forever, the branch of My planting, the work of My hands, that I might be glorified.

(22) The least one shall become a clan, and the smallest one a mighty nation; I am the LORD; **in its time I will hasten it.**

Jesus came to be born in a physical body as God's sunrise and died on the cross to defeat sin and the darkness of this world. **Now we look forward to His amazing future. A future with no darkness, no mourning, and no sin nature.** All believers will be righteous and we will all walk

in His light. God has promised to hasten, hurry to fulfill these promises In His perfect time.

Romans 13:11-12 ESV

(11) Besides this you know the time, that the hour has come for you to wake from sleep.

For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed.

(12) The night is far gone; the day is at hand. **So then let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light.**
