



In The Dark Streets
SHINETH

In the Dark Streets Shineth: Week 4

December 24, 2023

*O little town of Bethlehem
How still we see thee lie
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep
The silent stars go by
Yet in thy dark streets shineth
The everlasting light
The hopes and fears of all the years
Are met in thee tonight*

- "O Little Town of Bethlehem" by Phillip Brooks

At Christmas Jesus enters our world of darkness with us

John's Christmas Story (John 1:1-14)

1 In the beginning the Word already existed.

The Word was with God,
and the Word was God.

2 He existed in the beginning with God.

3 God created everything through him,
and nothing was created except through him.

4 The Word gave life to everything that was created,
and his life brought light to everyone.

5 The light shines in the darkness,
and the darkness can never extinguish it.

6 God sent a man, John the Baptist, **7** to tell about the light so that everyone might believe because of his testimony. **8** John himself was not the light; he was simply a witness to tell about the light. **9** The one who is the true light, who gives light to everyone, was coming into the world.

10 He came into the very world he created, but the world didn't recognize him. **11** He came to his own people, and even they rejected him. **12** But to all who believed him and accepted him, he gave the right to become children of God. **13** They are reborn—not with a physical birth resulting from human passion or plan, but a birth that comes from God.

14 So the Word became human and made his home among us. He was full of unending love and faithfulness. And we have seen his glory, the glory of the Father's one and only Son.

REFLECTIONS

1. Because John's Christmas story is focused on theology instead of history, it's very different from the accounts in Matthew and Luke. What do you like about John's Christmas story? What do you miss about the classic Christmas story?
2. What is causing darkness in your life these days? Stress at work? Relationship struggles? Grief? Mental health?
3. At Christmas, God enters the world through Jesus. God promises to show up for you regardless of whatever darkness you may be experiencing in your life. What does that mean to you?
4. Because of Jesus, we know God is with us. How might God's presence help you experience peace, light, or hope this Christmas season?