



Dear Neighbour,

During my study of the Book of Isaiah I read two true stories in a commentary by the late Bible teacher, Vernon McGee. They made such an impression on me that I have decided to share them with you.

*“When I was a boy in Oklahoma, I used to have to milk a stubborn old cow. When it grew dark early in the evenings, I would have to take a lantern out to the barn with me. When I reached the corncrib two things would happen. The rats ran for cover—I could hear them taking off—and the little birds that were roosting up in the rafters would begin to twitter around and sing. The presence of light caused one to flee and the other to sing. Now, did the light make a rat a rat? No. He was a rat before the light got there. The light only revealed that he was a rat. When the Lord Jesus came into the world, He was the Light of the world. In His presence two things happened: He caused the birds to sing and the rats to run.”*

Now I agree that this is not your traditional Christmas story, and yet it perfectly illustrates people’s response to spiritual light. Jesus came to earth and declared this about Himself: **“As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.”**

(John 9:5). After Jesus died and rose from the dead, He gave His light to all those who believe in Him:

***For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light***

(Ephesians 5:8). The other source of light in the world is the Bible:

***Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path***

(Psalm 119:105).

Now for Vernon's second story:

*"Years ago there was a big explosion in a mine in West Virginia, and many men were blocked off in the mine because of the cave-ins. After several days a rescue party dug through to the trapped men. And one of the first things they managed to get through to them was a light. After the light came on, a fine young miner said, "Why doesn't someone turn on a light?" The other miners looked at him startled, suddenly realizing that he had been blinded by the explosion. But it took a light to reveal that he was blind."*

During the Christmas season we are surrounded by Christmas lights on our trees and candles in our homes. They are reminders of Jesus Christ, the first light that came into our world. The question is how do you respond to the light? Do you run or sing? Some may need the light of God's Word to shine in their hearts to make them realise that they are spiritually blind.

***If our Message is obscure to anyone, it's not because we're holding back in any way. No, it's because these other people are looking or going the wrong way and refuse to give it serious attention. All they have eyes for is the fashionable god of darkness. They think he can give them what they want, and that they won't have to bother believing a Truth they can't see. They're stone-blind to the dayspring brightness of the Message that shines with Christ, who gives us the best picture of God we'll ever get. Remember, our Message is not about ourselves; we're proclaiming Jesus Christ, the Master. All we are is messengers, errand runners from Jesus for you. It started when God said, "Light up the darkness!" and our lives filled up with light as we saw and understood God in the face of Christ, all bright and beautiful. If you only look at us, you might well miss the brightness. We carry this precious Message around in the unadorned clay pots of our ordinary lives. That's to prevent anyone from confusing God's incomparable power with us. (2 Corinthians 4:3-7 The Message).***

As we enter the Christmas season I pray that Jesus Christ would open your spiritual eyes and

## How do you respond to the Light?

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cause you to sing like the birds sitting in the rafters. His love, peace and joy are what our world needs now – let it begin with you!

x Libby