

# Jesus, the Light of the World



This Christmas hymn is a conversation between segments of the familiar carol, “Hark! The Herald Angels Sing” and a reflection on walking in the light of the newborn Messiah. When a child is born into our family, we walk differently. While the child is an infant, we walk carefully, holding the baby and all the blankets firmly, but gently, and watching each step we take. When the child becomes a toddler, we hold her hand and walk slowly, at the child’s pace. We walk to different places and at a different pace when we walk in light of a child in our midst.

The coming of Jesus as a baby changes our walk as well. We walk, now, in his light, at his pace, and according to his direction. To do otherwise is to choose to walk in darkness. The change in our walk however, is different than what is described above. The coming of Jesus has us walk differently because we become aware that we are the babes in Christ, we are the stumbling children.

To grow as a Christian is to walk like Jesus. He is our teacher. We want to walk like him and behind him on his path. There is a newborn King, and as he learned to walk as a human child, we also are learning to walk as spiritual children. Hark! There’s been a birth in Bethlehem and babies are walking around all over the place. And where the babies are, there seems to be the glow of gentleness and mercy.

So the conversation continues, in this Christmas hymn and in life: reminders of the birth of Jesus spur us on to resume our attempts at walking in the light of Jesus’ walk and way. Hopefully, over time, we become more confident in our walk, but we will never walk exactly like Jesus. That is why it is good that our Christmas carols keep coming around and encouraging us: hold Jesus’ hand and hold the hand of others who have not been walking as long as you.

There is a reason that Christmas makes even the eldest among us to feel like children again. There is a reason that children are filled with hope at Christmas. There is a reason that the giving and receiving of gifts is so much a part of Christmas. The reason is the dialogue between our walk and the newness to be found in Christ brings mercy, light, and hope.

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