**Bible Lesson: National Christmas Lights Day**

This observance occurs on the first of December. It is the day for stringing colored lights on trees and houses, to begin the Christmas cheer. Advent is underway, and we are less than four weeks from the night we celebrate the light that shone in Bethlehem over two thousand years ago. Messiah was that light. The wise men followed His star and found the baby Christ who would become the Savior of the world: God’s only Son. His coming was proclaimed in the Old Testament and fulfilled in the New Testament. God’s Holy Spirit spoke through the Bible and through His Word which became a man. Thus, the spectacular light of life is found in all three persons of the Holy Trinity.

* PSA 119:105 ~ God’s Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.
* ISA 60:1–2 ~ Arise and shine, for your light has come; yes, the glory of God has come to you. Darkness covers the earth and great darkness covers its people. But the Lord will arise and come to you, and you will see His glory. And the Gentiles will come to His light, and kings will come to the brightness of His rising.
* MAT 2:9 ~ The wise men departed after visiting King Herod. And the star that they had followed all the way from the east shone before them, pointing the way to Bethlehem. Finally, they stood directly under the star. There they found the young Christ child. When they saw the child, they rejoiced with great enthusiasm.
* LUK 1:79 ~ The baby Jesus was born to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, and to guide their feet into the way of peace.
* JOH 3:19 ~ The light came into the world, but men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. Those practicing evil hate the light and avoid the light which exposes their evil deeds. But those who enter the light will show their deeds to be from God.
* EPH 1:13 ~ You were included with Christ when you listened to the words of truth and believed the good news of salvation, being marked by the Holy Spirit who has guaranteed your inheritance in God’s kingdom.

There is a continuum of light from complete darkness to eternal light; the former reflects total separation from God and the latter represents living in the presence of God. Light can consume darkness, but darkness cannot consume light. Therefore, there is no darkness in heaven where the light of the Lord shines forever; similarly, there is no light in hell.

* GEN 1:2–5 ~ Darkness covered the earth and God commanded there to be light, and He saw that the light was good, and He separated the light from the darkness.
* MAT 6:22–23 ~ Jesus said, “The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eye is sound, your whole body will be full of light. If your eye is not sound, your whole body will be full of darkness. So, if the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness.”
* LUK 11:35–36 ~ Be careful, so that the light in you does not become darkness. If your whole body is full of light and has no darkness, it will be wholly bright as when a lamp with its rays gives light.
* JOH 12:35 ~ Jesus said, “The light will be with you a little longer. Walk while you have the light, before the darkness overtakes you; those who walk in darkness do not know where they are going.”
* 1 CO 4:5 ~ Judge nothing before the Lord returns, for He will bring to light all that is hidden in darkness, and will reveal the motivations of the heart. Then everyone will praise God.
* 1 JO 1:5 ~ God is light; in Him is no darkness at all.
* 1 JO 2:10–11 ~ Those who love others abide in the light and will not stumble. Those who hate others abide in darkness and do not know where they are going because the darkness has blinded their eyes.

The tradition of attaching candles to Christmas trees began centuries ago; in fact, Martin Luther was known for this. Of course, they had to ensure the evergreen tree didn’t catch fire, but I bet it looked beautiful. Stringed electrical lights were invented in the early 1880s by Edison’s colleague Edward Johnson. General Electric marketed them quite profitably by the early 1900s. Nowadays there are contests to see who can produce the most elaborate display of lights, which only adds to the materialism and commercialism that pervades the holiday season.

However, lights do add tremendously to the Christmas Spirit. Where there is light there is life. But nothing can live in darkness. The colorful display of lights reminds us of the life that was given to die for us, whose light shined on Christmas day, but was snuffed out on the cross. But His light returned with His Spirit, and shines forever in those who invite Christ to live inside them. If you have the light of life, you have eternal life.

* JOH 8:12 ~ Jesus said, “I am the light of the world; those who follow me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”
* ROM 13:12 ~ The night is gone and the day is at hand. Let us cast away the works of darkness and put on the armor of light.
* 2 CO 4:4–6 ~ The god of this world has blinded the eyes of unbelievers so they cannot see the light of the Gospel of the glory of Christ who is the image of God. We proclaim Christ as Lord to draw people to Him. God commanded light to shine out of darkness. This same light shines in our hearts and radiates His glory through the knowledge of Jesus Christ.
* EPH 5:8–14 ~ You were once in darkness, but now you are in the light of the Lord. Live as children of light and discover what pleases the Lord, for the fruit of the light consists of goodness, righteousness, and truth. Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them. For it is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret. But everything exposed by the light becomes visible for all to see, for it is light that makes things visible. This is what is meant by the saying, “Wake up you sleepers; rise from the dead and Christ will shine on you.”

The light of life through God’s Messiah was shown to Abraham, with the appearance of Melchizedek, King of Salem (translated “King of Peace” from the Hebrew). Melchizedek was God’s High Priest, who is the Holy Spirit. Christ is the Prince of Peace, begotten of the Holy Spirit; He is the only other priest from the priestly order of Melchizedek. Christ proclaimed that meeting, recorded in the book of Genesis, by saying, “Abraham rejoiced to see my day.” He was referring to this amazing occurrence foreshadowing the coming of Messiah, and making known to Abraham God’s plan of salvation through one of his descendants. Melchizedek shared bread and wine with Abraham, literally a type of Holy Communion; in return, Abraham gave Him tithes of all he owned, being the first reference to tithing.

* GEN 14:18–20 ~ Melchizedek, King of Salem, meaning Peace, brought wine and bread to dine with Abraham. Melchizedek was the priest of the most-high God. He blessed Abraham, and Abraham gave him a tenth of all he owned.
* GEN 18:1–3 ~ The Lord appeared to Abraham along the plains of Mamre as he sat in his tent. Abraham looked up and saw three men standing there at the tent door. When Abraham saw them, he bowed before them and said, “My Lord, if I have found favor in your sight, please promise, I pray, that you would never leave me.”
* PSA 110:1, 4 ~ The Lord said to my Lord, “Sit at my right hand and I will make your enemies your footstool. He is priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek.”
* JOH 8:56–58 ~ Jesus said, “Abraham saw my day and rejoiced.” The Jews replied, “You are not even fifty years old and you claim to have seen Abraham.” Jesus declared, “I tell you the truth, before Abraham was, I AM.”
* GAL 3:8–13, 21–24 ~ The scriptures foretold that God would justify sinners through faith, announcing the Gospel in advance to Abraham, and promising him many descendants, one of whom would be a blessing to all nations. Those who live by faith will be blessed as Abraham was. But nobody is justified in God’s sight by works of the Law, for it is written that the just will live by faith. Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the Law, being made a curse in our place, for it is written that cursed is he who is crucified on a cross. Is the Law, therefore, in opposition to God’s promise? Absolutely not! For no law was given that could bring life. The scriptures tell us that the world is a slave to sin, and that the promise of life is given to all believers in Jesus Christ. Before faith in Christ came, everyone was a prisoner to the Law, kept there until faith was revealed in Christ. Hence, the Law is our teacher to bring us to faith in Christ, so that we might be justified by that faith.
* HEB 5:9–10 ~ God made Christ perfect and the author of eternal salvation for all who obey Him. He was called by God to be the high priest after the order of Melchizedek.
* HEB 7:1–28 ~ Melchizedek was the first King of Righteousness, and the King of Salem, meaning peace. Melchizedek had no parents or ancestors, no beginning or end. Melchizedek was made like the Son of God, being a priest and king continually. Consider how great He was, for Abraham paid tithes to Him, and always counted on His promises. Under the Levitical priesthood, the people received the Law. But the priesthood was changed, and this required a change in the Law. The new priesthood was fashioned by the power of eternal life, not the Law over sinful man. The Law made nothing perfect, but the bringing of a better hope did; that hope draws us to God through the testament of Jesus Christ, who is priest forever after the order of Melchizedek. Since Christ lives forever, the priesthood will never again change, for He is the holy, pure, and perfect high priest. The daily sacrifice of the Levitical priesthood has been replaced with the sacrifice of Christ, once and for all.

Father of Light, we pray that your light which lives in us will never be extinguished, and that we would never stray down a path unless it is illuminated by your love, life, and light. Though we have moments of doubt, ensure we always see the way out of trouble by looking for your light, and listening to your Spirit who is with us. Help us to recognize the darkness in our way and expose dark spirits of the evil one, his evil minions, and his evil followers. Let your light shine brightly in our hearts to repel those spirits of darkness; let our light consume that darkness so it cannot enter our homes. In the name of Jesus, whose life we celebrate by shining pretty lights outside our homes and inside our homes in order to remind us of the reason for the season, Amen.

By Andrew V. Barber (posted 12/01/2023)