



**Hanukkah
begins the
evening of
December 15
this year.**

Blessings in this Season of Light!

Our God: A Shining Light

God is Light. The entire Bible, from beginning to end, bears witness to this glorious truth. As the Apostle John (*Yohanan*) so beautifully expresses it, "...*God is light and in Him is no darkness at all*" (1 John 1:5). The Hebrew word for light is **אור** and is pronounced "or". It is a primary root meaning to be luminous, glorious, set on fire, shine, light, bright and clean. God tells His Jewish people through the prophet Isaiah that He will be their **eternal** light: "*The sun shall no longer be your light by day, nor for brightness shall the moon give light to you, but the Lord will be to you an everlasting light, and your God your glory*" (Isaiah 60:19). In the same chapter, God's people are told that they also are to be a light. They are encouraged to SHINE!

"Arise, shine; for your light has come! And the glory of the Lord is risen upon you. For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and deep darkness the people; but the Lord will arise over you, and His glory will be seen upon you. The Gentiles shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising." (Isaiah 60:1-3)

It was also prophesied that Messiah would be a LIGHT. Referring to Galilee of the Gentiles, Isaiah proclaimed, "*The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, upon them a light has shined*" (Isaiah 9:2). This prophecy was fulfilled in Yeshua. When He was brought to the temple in Jerusalem to be dedicated to the Lord as an infant, Simeon proclaimed Him "*a light to bring revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of Your people Israel*" (Luke 2:32). When Yeshua reached manhood, He proclaimed His identity and Oneness with God, "*the Father of lights*" (James 1:17). "*I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.*" (John 8:12)

Believers Called to Shine

"... as He is, so are we in this world." (Read 1 John 4:16-18) John is referring here to love, but we do not think a believer can really "shine" without knowing **and** believing the love that God has for him or her. Love is intricately connected with abiding, boldness, and lack of fear. It is also the foundation upon which a child of God can "shine." **When we really know the unconditional love of our Heavenly Father we can be what our Messiah has called us to be: "or ha olam," "light of the world."** "*You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.*" (Matthew 5:14-16)

Yeshua said that He was the "*Or HaOlam*," and then called His *talmidim* (followers) to be the same thing. He referred to John the Immerser as a "*burning and shining lamp*" (John 5:35), but went on to say that a greater witness than John's were the works that He did in His Father's name (John 5:36). So what about us? How can we shine for Yeshua? We believe the answer is found in the "lamps" that Yeshua referred to in Matthew 5:14-16.

Oil: The Secret to Shining

Lighting in Bible times was provided by little clay lamps. We have seen many varieties of ancient lamps on our trips to Israel. The earliest varieties were small, open bowls, like saucers, with one side pinched to form a groove for a wick which was made of flax or cotton (same principle as our old-fashioned kerosene lamps). Oil, usually olive, was used in the lamps. There were no candles during Bible times, so the terms “candle” and “candlestick” found in the King James Bible are mistranslations.

Think oil and oil lamps when Yeshua is telling us to shine! **Request your very own oil lamp this month – direct from Israel!** When we visited a restored 1st century village in the city of Katzrin in northern Israel, we were impressed by how dark the interior of the homes were. There were very few windows – for reasons of safety and comfort. Small shelves built into the walls held little clay oil lamps that provided light for the entire home. Sometimes portable lampstands were used in corners or where needed. There was little light, yet it was sufficient. It only takes a little light to dispel a lot of darkness!

Lamps were kept burning because oil was readily available and cheap. In addition, it was a fairly complicated process to light a lamp in the first place (no matches, just sticks and stones). The poor, however, were still careful in their use of oil. Women seemed to be the ones entrusted with keeping the lamps burning. We read in Proverbs 31:18 that the virtuous, conscientious wife did not let her lamp go out at night (she must have gotten up and replenished the oil).

The Hebrew word for oil is “*shemen*,” pronounced SHEH-men. It is related to “shaman” which means to shine or be glossy. What happens when we rub furniture oil on wood? It shines. Oil is the secret. The Hebrew word for putting oil on something (to anoint it) is “*mashach*.” The “**anointed one**” (English: Christ) is ***Mashiach***. **The Anointed One shines! His source of light: the *Ruach HaKodesh***. We, His followers, have access to this same oil. We, too, can shine.

The Way to Keep Shining

Many of you are familiar with the Parable of the Ten Virgins found in Matthew 25:1-13. While all ten took their lamps and went forth to meet the bridegroom, the foolish virgins took no oil with them. The wise did. The foolish virgins were **really** foolish! They should have known that they would need more oil to replenish their lights. It was a customary practice to carry a “vessel” with a supply of oil. The foolish virgins were at the very least neglectful. Perhaps self-sufficient. Lazy? Proud? Distracted? To keep shining, oil must be replenished!

Oil is a symbol of the Holy Spirit in the Bible. We need to continually be anointed with fresh oil (Psalm 92:10) so that we can be a WICK for Yeshua.

The Rabbis say: Israel is a wick. Torah is oil. The Shechinah is light.

We say: Believer is a wick. Ruach HaKodesh is oil. Messiah Yeshua is The Light.

“Now He who establishes us with you in Messiah and has anointed us is God, who also has sealed us and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.” (2 Corinthians 1:21-22)

We have the oil, but we need to be refilled in order for our light to shine brightly. How? By abiding in Yeshua and absorbing His life and light-giving Word on a daily basis. *“The entrance of God’s word gives light...”* (Psalm 119:130) We need to have our gifts and our hearts stirred. We need to see our desperate need of God (be poor in spirit) and our need to be revived! (Psalm 85:6) (Isaiah 57:15) **We must ask God to fill us to overflowing with the sweet oil of His Ruach HaKodesh.** Empty vessels have nothing to share. No oil. No shine. Be filled!



Shining at the Mall

The Lord recently spoke to Jamie to begin a new ministry called SHOP AND SAVE at a huge local outlet mall here in Ft. Lauderdale that draws people from all over the world. The goal of SHOP AND SAVE is to teach women how to shine for Yeshua. As the ladies of our local congregation shop together (we encourage them to leave some shopping for the end of each month), they get to know one another and learn how to share with strangers. As believers relate to one another in love (John 13:35), others will take note and doors will open to share The Light.

Our ladies meet for prayer at the mall food court, divide into groups of 3-4 each with a leader for each group, receive Temple Aron HaKodesh business cards and encouragement to enjoy each other's company and shine for Yeshua. We are being "wise as serpents" (concerning handing out literature) since we plan on *shopping and saving* the last Saturday (7-9 PM) and Sunday (1-3 PM) of every month. We want to become known as "that smiling, loving group of women from that Temple that come here to shop together." Harmless as doves.

The weekend of October 28th-29th, was our first SHOP AND SAVE adventure. There were seven of us on Saturday night and eleven of us on Sunday afternoon. Our youngest shop 'n saver was 28. Our oldest was 92! All of us had encounters with people and many of us were led to the kiosks where young Israelis were selling Dead Sea skin care products. The fairly lengthy process of testing the products allowed ample time for sharing. We were asked many questions and gave lots of answers. Most of the Israelis said the same thing, "I don't have a problem with Jesus. I would like to visit your congregation and see what it's like." Please pray that they come. We will probably see them before Hanukkah and are considering giving them a little early Hanukkah present.

We recently received a prophecy that was given at the beginning of 2006. It applies to ministries such as SHOP AND SAVE:

*"It is a new day in which I am not only working individually, but corporately so I can display a corporate body full of Me and My glory, flowing harmoniously as one, led by My Spirit. My plan has been to bring many sons to glory (Hebrews 2:10). You are children of destiny being prepared for this great day. I am bringing you out of hiding, seclusion, rejection, and fear into the place of My glorious light. **Arise children of destiny. Now is the time for the Lord to manifest Himself through us.**"*

Consider starting a SHOP AND SAVE ministry in your congregation. It really is community-building on a few levels "...for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10).

Shining On A College Campus

When we read an article last month by Laurie Goodstein entitled "Evangelicals Fear the Loss of Their Teenagers," we were deeply concerned. To quote Goodstein, "Despite their packed megachurches, their political clout and their increasing visibility on the national stage, evangelical Christian leaders are warning one another that their teenagers are abandoning the faith in droves." It has been proposed that if current trends continue, only 4 percent of teenagers will be "Bible-believers" as adults.

But God is still God, and He is pouring the oil into high school and college students who have determined to live for Yeshua – no matter what. They are shining! After we decided on this month's topic – "shining" – we received an email from our oldest son Jonathan who attends the University of Florida in Gainesville, FL, a 30,000+ secular institution. The email included a copy of an article that Jonathan recently wrote for a local publication. We are sharing this "God-incidence" with you to encourage you that God is still raising up children of God in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation among whom they shine as lights in the world, holding fast the word of life..." (Philippians 2:12-16).

Our Duty to Shine by Jon Lash

As I drove through the University of Florida campus tonight on my way back home from dropping off a friend at his dorm room, I was met by a heartbreaking sight. Masses of college students, most of them freshly “liberated” college freshmen, drifting from Fraternity House to Fraternity House, seeking love, acceptance, and happiness in all the wrong places, wandering around “like sheep without a shepherd” (Matthew 9:36). Although it would be easy for many of us, including myself, to think thoughts like: “Don’t they see? Those things are never going to make them happy. They are never going to satisfy. Why don’t they get it?” I was reminded of a time in my own life when I was clambering around in the darkness, searching for meaning in all the wrong places. As I drove past this tragedy, I couldn’t help but feel the Father’s heart for these lost sheep! Frustrated, I cut off my CD player, and screamed out, “**God, do something!**” Quietly and calmly, I heard Him respond, “**No! You do something.**”

As followers of Jesus, we have been privileged with the ministry of reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:18), that is, we have the **privilege** of getting to help reconcile a culture of broken and lost spiritual orphans to their Heavenly Father. God’s Heart is for the lost. It is what motivated Him to send His Son to earth (John 3:16), it was the essence of Jesus’ purpose on earth (Luke 19:10), and it is our commission, duty, and life mission as disciples (talmidim) of Jesus (Matthew 28:19).

If we as humans are born into the darkness of sin, how are we ever going to see unless someone brings us the light? Jesus is the “light of the world” (John 8:12), and we are called to be the “lights of the world” (Matthew 5:14). How do we do this? By letting Christ live in us, and by living through us in our lives, pointing others toward Him – towards the light. We know that it is God’s desire “that none should perish, but that all should come to repentance,” and that His desire is that “all men be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth” (2 Peter 3:9; 1 Timothy 2:4). He could very easily just do a huge “finger painting” in the sky that reads: “**Repent!** – God,” but He hasn’t. Instead, He has chosen to use us broken, messed up, “can’t ever figure out the right words to say” – people like you and me, that when the lights finally do go on in someone’s heart, God gets all the glory. So, don’t worry about saying the right thing, or praying the right prayer. God is pretty much always working in spite of us anyway. We can never say anything good enough to make someone want to really and truly surrender their lives to a God they can’t even see. It truly is a miracle. So stop worrying and be obedient. Know that God’s Heart is for the lost, and if you are willing to step out in faith and with your inabilities to serve His Heart, He will meet you and trade your inabilities for His abilities (and He is pretty able, or if you ask Fred Hammond, “more than able”). Remember, salvation is “**of the Lord**” (Psalm 37:39). The meat of the matter is this: There is a world out there wandering around in the darkness of sin, stumbling towards the edge of a cliff, and we have been commissioned by God to bring His light. The question then lies in whether we care enough to share it, knowing very well it could cost us our friends, our reputation, our image and quite possibly, in the future, even our very lives. The answer is up to you... **so let your light shine!**

Seeking to be true Israelites, and to follow our son’s example!



Love in Yeshua, **The Light of the world.**

P.S. Jonathan wrote a paper for a Sociology of Religion class in which he calls for a “Revolution.” The professor, a young secular Jewish man, agreed to join Jonathan’s revolution. The paper – with professor’s comments – may be requested with your order or a gift of \$10 or more. You will be amazed!

P.P.S. Know a Jewish doctor? Give him **Jewish Doctors Meet the Great Physician.** Let your light shine.