



Yeshua is the Light

Holiday Greetings in The Light of the World!

"Let there be Light!"

We hear the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob pronouncing these words by His Spirit this month as He did in the beginning as recorded in Genesis 1:3-4. *"Then God said, 'Let there be light; and there was light. God saw that the light was good, and God divided the light from the darkness.'" Light, God and good are intricately bound together in the Word of God. In fact, God is even called "Light" in I John 1:5. Yeshua, having come from God, and being one with God, must also therefore be Light. He affirmed this by declaring Himself to be "The Light of the world" in John 8:12. If God is Light, and Yeshua is the Light of the world, then we, the children of God, must also be "lights." We sense the desire of our Father's heart to be best expressed in Philippians 2:15: "That ye may become blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without fault, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as **lights in the world**; holding fast the word of life..."*

We thank God for the privilege of holding forth the word of life to millions of people during 2001 via the powerful vehicle of television. We are awed that our Father has allowed us to penetrate apartment and condominium walls, prison walls, orphanages, businesses, and thousands of private homes throughout the U.S., Europe and Australia with the Great News of Messiah Yeshua. He has used us as His candlestick to bring the knowledge of Himself and the reality of His love to hungry hearts. **Thank you** for making this possible. It is a privilege to co-labor with you in being a "light" to the Jew first, and also to the non-Jews (Romans 1:16).

The Temple Candlestick (Menorah)

We read in the Book of Exodus that God instructed Moses to build a golden lampstand as part of the sanctuary that the Lord requested so that He might "live among them." (Ex. 25:8) This candlestick or lampstand was called a **menorah** in Hebrew. *"And thou shalt make a candlestick of pure gold: of beaten work shall the candlestick be made: his shaft, and his branches, his bowls, his knops, and his flowers, shall be of the same. And six branches shall come out of the sides of it; three branches of the candlestick out of the one side, and three branches of the candlestick out of the other side: Three bowls made like unto almonds, with a knop and a flower in one branch; and three bowls made like almonds in the other branch, with a knop and a flower; so in the six branches that come out of the candlestick... And thou shalt make the seven lamps thereof; and they shall light the lamps thereof..."* (Ex. 25: 31-33;37)

This menorah was made from a 66 pound piece of pure gold. (Pure gold was refined seven

times. Purity is a prerequisite for God's light to shine.) The middle shaft of the candlestick had a name, the *Ner Elohim* (Lamp of God). It was also called the *Shamash* or servant lamp. Each morning a priest serviced the lamps and relit any that were extinguished. It has been told by ancient rabbis that the Shamash burned for as much as a day longer on the same amount of oil. They called this "the miracle of the Menorah." According to Yoma 43:3 in the Jerusalem Talmud, this miracle ceased about 40 years before the Romans burned the Temple. The Servant Lamp refused to burn. In Messianic Jewish thinking, the servant branch represents the Messiah Yeshua, whose Light is central to all other light. This appears to have been God's intended design. If Yeshua was the fulfillment of the "Servant Lamp" in the Temple Menorah, then His coming as a "light to lighten the Gentiles" and the glory of God's people Israel would replace the temporary servant light. (See **The Mystery of the Menorah** by J.R. Church and Gary Stearman for a connection with "Simeon the Righteous".)

One of the new insights that we gleaned this year about the Temple Menorah is that the Hebrew word for almond (*luz*) became a root for the word "light" in other languages. Almonds were the major decoration on the menorah as commanded by God. The true light, even in our vocabularies, is always connected with the true God!

Some Menorah Jewels

In **Living Emblems, Ancient Symbols of Faith**, Dr. John D. Garr presents some fascinating facts about the 7 branched menorah. Among them are the following:

1. The **menorah** is the only emblem in Jewish or Christian worship designed by God Himself.
2. The **menorah** is the only sacred symbol that has not been polluted by use for pagan purposes.
3. The **menorah** is "God's lamp" (1Samuel 3:1-3) just as the "Feasts of the Lord" are "God's feasts." Therefore, it belongs to all of God's people, both Jews and Christians.
4. The **menorah** symbolizes the salvation of God (Isaiah 62:1).
5. The vision the apostle John saw of Yeshua in His resurrected glory included Yeshua in the midst of seven golden lampstands. This may have been 1 **menorah** with 7 lamps. (Rev.1:12-13)
6. The **menorah** is a portrait of Messiah. The seven lamps of fire of Daniel 10:6 represent the eyes of the Messiah.
7. The *shamash* lamp of the **menorah** that burned continuously became the source of the *ner tamid* or "eternal light" that shines in synagogues around the world today.

The Hanukkah Menorah

We are often asked why some menorahs have seven branches and others have nine. As we have just explained, the menorah that God instructed Moses to build had seven branches. Today it is used as the symbol for the State of Israel. The official seal or "Coat of Arms" of Israel includes a seven-branched menorah surrounded by two olive branches based on the vision of Zechariah in Chapter 4: "...*What are these two olive trees upon the right side of the candlestick and upon the left side thereof?*..."

The Hanukkah menorah has nine branches, four on each side and a central shaft or *shamash* just like the seven branch menorah. This menorah however, was not commanded by God in the Scriptures. It evolved out of an event in Israel's history. A miracle is entwined with this menorah as well as with the seven branch menorah. In short: A Syrian-Greek ruler, Antiochus Epiphanes, was determined to destroy the Jews in 165 B.C. With a huge army at his command, and a determination to eradicate the Jewish religion, Antiochus outlawed Torah study, infant circumcision, Temple worship and every aspect of Jewish life. A righteous remnant full of faith and courage rose up against this tyrant. Led by the "Maccabees," with the supernatural intervention of God, this tiny band of Jewish men defeated the entire Syrian army. They recaptured and rededicated the Temple in Jerusalem and finding only enough consecrated oil for one day, lit the menorah in faith. Miraculously, the oil lasted for eight days until new oil could be obtained. That's why the Hanukkah menorah has 9 branches, 8 for the 8 days and one servant candle which lights the other eight.

To us as Messianic Jews, Yeshua, the Divine Servant, is represented by the "shamash." In Him, we have a new beginning (8 is the Biblical number of new beginnings).

Hanukkah begins on the eve of December 9 this year. Let this be a **new** beginning for you!

The Lord lights our candles

David said in Psalm 18 verse 28: *"For thou wilt light my candle; the Lord my God will enlighten my darkness."* Our candles are lit when the Light of the world comes and lives in our hearts. Our spirit comes alive. Our understanding is enlightened. This is God's desire for His Jewish people, and **all** people. He wants to use each one of us to call souls out of darkness into His marvelous light. God will judge the wicked. Vengeance is His. The Bible clearly states that the candle of the wicked will be snuffed out (Job 18:5, Job 21:17; Prov. 24:20). We need to be concerned with keeping our own flames burning brightly for God's glory.

Candles and Bushels

Did you know that the imagery of a lamp being placed on a lampstand rather than hidden under a bushel is found four times in the New Covenant Scriptures? Each time it is in a slightly different context. (See Matthew 5:14-17, Mark 4:21-22, Luke 8:16-17, Luke 11:33.) The context of the Matthew verse is very important from a Messianic Jewish point of view:

"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. Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill."

The meaning of this passage is clear. Our light is not shining if our faith is not accompanied by good works. While salvation is not through "works," the life of a believer **after** salvation must be characterized by deeds of righteousness...deeds of love. And love, according to Romans 13:10 is the fulfilling of the Law.

Light is meant to be shared, not hidden under a bushel or under a bed (Mark 4:21). Some Bible scholars have said that the bushel represents the affairs of this world, one's job or business affairs that so consume a person that his or her light is eclipsed. The bed represents man's laziness, and love of ease and pleasure which have the same negative effect on a believer's

light. The bed, we believe, might also represent one's home. Sometimes the hardest place to walk our talk, to let our light shine, is in our relationships with those with whom we live day in and day out. Women believers, in particular, are exhorted to be lights at all times like the virtuous woman of Prov. 31:18 *"whose candles goeth not out by night."* May all our candles burn brightly on the home front in 2002, *"Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the LORD of hosts."* (Zech. 4:6)

Candles in danger

As we approach the end of the year 2001, the sobering thought comes to us that we have not done all we might do to be the lights that God has called us to be. Consider Revelation 2:5: *"Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent."*

The "first works" referred to in this verse was the "first love" of the believers at Ephesus. Passion for the Lord, leading to Spirit-led activity in His Name was lacking. Is it lacking in us?

A group of ministers in Scotland in 1651 sensing that Revelation 2:5 might apply to them, compiled a list of their shortcomings and confessed them publicly in honesty and humility. The list, taken from **Words to Winners of Souls** by Horatius Bonar, is as appropriate for God's candlestick (His Body) today as it was then.

1. We have been unfaithful...to our own souls. To our families, to our brothers and sisters in the Lord, in discipling, in visiting the sick, in healing the brokenhearted, in our daily walk and conversation... .
2. We have been carnal and unspiritual...compromising with the world on many occasions, lowering our standards, lacking godly fear.
3. We have been selfish...seeking to please ourselves instead of obeying Romans 15:2, not bearing one another's burdens (Galatians 6:2), not presenting ourselves to God as "living sacrifices." (Romans 12:1) We have lost sight of the self-sacrificing principle on which we as believers are to base our lives.
4. We have been slothful...not enduring hardness as good soldiers of Yeshua HaMashiach. We have wasted precious hours and days in unprofitable, idle, self-indulgent ways. We have grown "weary in well-doing."
5. We have been cold...wanting in deep love, love strong as death, love like that which made Jeremiah weep in secret places for the pride of Israel.
6. We have been timid...fearing man, rather than God.
7. We have not duly studied and honored the Word of God...We have held more communion with man than with God.
8. We have not been men and women of prayer... even though in order to grow in grace, we must be much alone (with God!).
9. We have not honored the Spirit of God...grieving Him by our inconsistent walk and lack of personal holiness.

10. We have had little of the mind of Messiah...showing little of the grace, the compassion, the meekness, the love of the Son of God...not "seeking the lost" as He showed us to do...nor following Him in His days of fasting and nights of watchfulness and prayer... counting our lives dear unto us rather than losing them that we might finish the work which our Lord has given us to do.

"Father, please forgive us for falling short of Your glory in 2001. We repent of our sin and ask for Your divine strength and help to keep our candles burning brightly as we approach the midnight hour of history. Ignite the flame of love in our hearts for our Messiah Yeshua. Let us not be lukewarm, but passionately in love with the Lover of our soul. Conform us to the image of the Divine Shamash (Servant) so that as we serve, others will see **Your light.**"

A Candlestick in Your Home

We don't have any pure gold candlesticks, but we do have a lovely seven branch solid brass one (see top of front page) that you could purchase and display in your home as a reminder of Yeshua, the Messiah, the Light of the world.

We'd like to close with a big, heartfelt Thank You! To all of you who prayed and gave to help us out of our recent financial shortfall. The Lord moved miraculously and all but \$7,000 of the debt has been paid. If you could help us move into 2002 with NO debt, we would be very blessed. Your best "Year End" gift would be greatly appreciated!!

With much love this holiday season,

Neil and Jamie