



In Him was **Life**
and that life
was the **Light**
of all men.
John 1:4

Marion Bible Fellowship Presents

Festivals of *Light* —
The Miracle of Hanukkah
The Birth of Messiah

Festivals of Light

Prelude—

O Come All Ye Faithful

Welcome—

Today we are celebrating Light. The light God created. The Light that was with God in the beginning. The Light that has been the hope of Israel. The Light that was present in the wilderness. The Light that filled the Temple. The Light that still calls us out of darkness, and the Light that will come again to redeem the world. We read in Genesis:

*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters. **Then God said, “Let there be light”; and there was light. God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness.***

Genesis 1:1-4

Our celebration today will take us from the creation of light, through God’s use of light as a sign of His presence in the Temple (The Miracle of Hanukkah), to the representation of Messiah as the Light in His coming (The Birth of Messiah). We will be using music, which brings to mind Messiah’s birth to remind us that, throughout time, the created order was and still now longs for the Light of Messiah as its consummate hope for all to be made right. Despite God’s beautiful creation, despite His wonderful Law, despite the magnificence of the light of the Temple, the Light of Messiah is the pinnacle of it all.

Benediction—

At one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light—for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true—and try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord. Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them.

Ephesians 5:8-11

Postlude—

Joy To The World

*Joy to the world! The Lord is come;
Let earth receive her king,
Let every heart prepare him room,
And heaven and nature sing, and heaven and nature sing,
And heaven, and heaven, and nature sing.*

*Joy to the world! the Savior reigns;
Let men their songs employ;
While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains
Repeat the sounding joy, repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat, repeat the sounding joy.*

*No more let sins and sorrows grow,
Nor thorns infest the ground;
He comes to make His blessings flow
Far as the curse is found, far as the curse is found,
Far as, far as the curse is found.*

*He rules the world with truth and grace,
And makes the nations prove
The glories of his righteousness
And wonders of His love, and wonders of His love,
And wonders, wonders of His love.*

Lighting Candles by Passing the Light—

Silent Night

*Silent night! Holy night!
All is calm all is bright
Round yon virgin mother and Child,
Holy Infant so tender and mild,
Sleep in heavenly peace,
Sleep in heavenly peace.*

*Silent night! Holy night!
Shepherds quake at the sight,
Glories stream from heaven afar,
Heavenly hosts sing Hallelujah;
Christ the Savior is born,
Christ the Savior is born.*

*Silent night! Holy night!
Son of God love's pure light,
Radiant beams from Thy holy face,
With the dawn of redeeming grace.
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth,
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth.*



This special Sabbath is also an intersection of two traditional holidays: Hanukkah and Christmas. In Scripture and song, we hope to capture the essence of both and go further in remembering how light rightly accompanies each holiday. From our Genesis text above to the appearance of Messiah in the Temple during Hanukkah long ago, we see light being emblematic of the Hope of mankind:

At that time the Feast of the Dedication [Hanukkah] took place at Jerusalem; it was winter, and Jesus was walking in the temple in the portico of Solomon. The Jews then gathered around Him, and were saying to Him, "How long will You keep us in suspense? If You are the Christ, tell us plainly." Jesus answered them, "I told you, and you do not believe; the works that I do in My Father's name, these testify of Me. But you do not believe because you are not of My sheep. My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. I and the Father are one."

John 10:22-30

Then Jesus again spoke to them, saying, "I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life."

John 8:12

So, as the lights of Sabbath candles shines today with the lights of the hanukkah and Christmas trees, let us lift our hearts thankfully and give ourselves even more completely to the One who provides and sustains those who look to Him for salvation and deliverance.

Opening Prayer—

Hanukkah

Ken Spiegel and Steve Kirkham

The Promise of Light and Restoration—

As God chose and established the people of Israel, His intent was to dwell among them, most notably in the Temple. Disobedience darkened this plan, evil kings turned the people from God's light, and His presence among them waxed and waned because of it. As it is written:

Then you shall make a lampstand of pure gold. The lampstand and its base and its shaft are to be made of hammered work; its cups, its bulbs and its flowers shall be of one piece with it. Six branches shall go out from its sides; three branches of the lampstand from its one side and three branches of the lampstand from its other side ... You shall charge the sons of Israel, that they bring you clear oil of beaten olives for the light, to make a lamp burn continually. In the tent of meeting, outside the veil which is before the testimony, Aaron and his sons shall keep it in order from evening to morning before the Lord; it shall be a perpetual statute throughout their generations for the sons of Israel.

Exodus 25:31-32; 27:20-21

And word from the Lord was rare in those days, visions were infrequent. It happened at that time as Eli was lying down in his place (now his eyesight had begun to grow dim and he could not see well), and the lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down in the temple of the Lord where the ark of God was.

1 Samuel 3:1-3

O Come, O Come Emanuel

Sarah Konvalinka and Ken Spiegel

Dwelling in Light Eternal—

At the end of the age Messiah, who is Light and who as the First Fruits rose from the dead, will “hand over the Kingdom to God and the Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power.” Then those who have believed and have walked in the faithfulness of the Messiah Yeshua will dwell in Light Eternal:

No longer will you have the sun for light by day, nor for brightness will the moon give you light; But you will have the Lord for an everlasting light, and your God for your glory. Your sun will no longer set, nor will your moon wane; for you will have the Lord for an everlasting light, and the days of your mourning will be over.”

Isaiah 60:19-20

I saw no temple in the city, for the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. And the city has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God has illumined it, and its lamp is the Lamb. The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it. In the daytime (for there will be no night there) its gates will never be closed; and they will bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it; and nothing unclean, and no one who practices abomination and lying, shall ever come into it, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.

Revelation 21:22-27

So the crowd answered Him, “We have heard from the Law that the Messiah remains forever. How can you say that the Son of Man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of Man?” So Jesus said to them, “The Light is among you for a little while longer. Walk while you have the light, lest darkness overtake you. The one who walks in the darkness does not know where he is going. While you have the light, believe in the Light, that you may become sons of light.”

John 12:34-36

Promise of Light for You—

The promise of Light is available to you. The promise of restoration is for all who repent and believe. Turn to the Light, for your deliverance awaits. The newborn King holds all creation in His hand. Salvation comes to those who put their hope in the Child of Bethlehem. Your enemy is the darkness—even death. Your restoration is the Light—even Messiah, who divides the kingdom of darkness from the Kingdom of Light. His coming and His work make a clear distinction between the people of God and the hosts of the Deceiver.

For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him. He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the Light because their works were evil. For everyone who does wicked things hates the Light and does not come to the Light, lest his works should be exposed. But whoever does what is true comes to the Light, so that it may be clearly seen that his works have been carried out in God.

John 3:16-21

Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, “Behold, I will tear the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon and give you ten tribes ... because they have forsaken Me, and have worshiped Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, Chemosh the god of Moab, and Milcom the god of the sons of Ammon; and they have not walked in My ways, doing what is right in My sight and observing My statutes and My ordinances, as his father David. Nevertheless I will not take the whole kingdom out of his hand, but I will make him ruler all the days of his life, for the sake of My servant David whom I chose, who observed My commandments and My statutes ... that My servant David may have a lamp always before Me in Jerusalem, the city where I have chosen for Myself to put My name ... then it will be, that if you listen to all that I command you and walk in My ways, and do what is right in My sight by observing My statutes and My commandments, as My servant David did, then I will be with you and build you an enduring house as I built for David, and I will give Israel to you. Thus I will afflict the descendants of David for this, but not always.”

1 Kings 11:31-39

The Light Restored—

In spite of the darkness overshadowing the Land and the people, a hope of restoration remained. Sin had not won, and darkness had not overshadowed the Light. God provided prophecy—a prophecy of restoration. There was a time when the Gentiles temporarily prevailed over a disobedient people of God, but as the people cried out to Him, He was willing to deliver and restore.

Meditations:

God Preserves His People and the Miracle of Light
Pastor Steven Lancaster

Lighting of the Lights of Hanukkah—

Blessed are you, O Lord our God, King of the universe, who has sanctified us by His commandments, and who we honor by kindling the lights of Hanukkah.

Blessed are you, O Lord our God, King of the universe, who wrought miracles for our fathers in days of old, at this season.

Blessed are you, O Lord our God, King of the universe, who has kept us alive, and has preserved us, and enabled us to reach this season. [Used only on the first night of Hanukkah]

Ma'oz Tzur [Mighty Stronghold]

Steven and Mona Lancaster

*Rock of ages, let our song, Praise Your saving power;
You, amidst our raging foes, Were our sheltering tower.
Furious they assailed us, But Your arm availed us,
And Your word, Broke their sword,
When our own strength failed us.*

מְעוֹז צוּר יְשׁוּעָתִי	Ma'oz tzur yeshu'ati,
לְךָ נִאְחָה לְשִׁבְחֵךָ	lecha na'eh leshabe'ach,
תִּכּוֹן בַּיִת תְּפִלָּתִי	tikon beit tefilati,
וְשֵׁם תִּדְוָה נִזְבַּח	vesham todah nezabe'ach.
לַעֲת תִּכְיִן מִטְבַּח	Le'et tachin matbe'ach
מִצָּר הַמִּנְבַּח	mitzar hamenabe'ach.
אַז אֶגְמוֹר בְּשִׁיר מִזְמוֹר	Az egmor beshir mizmor
חֲנֻכַּת הַמִּזְבֵּחַ	chanukat hamizbe'ach

*Rock of ages, let our song, Praise Your saving power;
You, amidst our raging foes, Were our sheltering tower.
Furious they assailed us, But Your arm availed us,
And Your word, Broke their sword,
When our own strength failed us.
You send Your Word, O' righteous Lord,
To those who seek deliverance.*

have seen your salvation that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to your people Israel.”

Luke 2:25-32

Away In a Manger

Sara Konvalinka

The One Who is the Light—

The theme of light ends up where it began: With Messiah, the Light of the World, who is from the foundations of the world and is coming again to redeem the children of Light from the curse of darkness. Knowing the King brings us from darkness to Light, and walking with Him brings us back into God's saving presence. The Apostle John recounts:

Then Jesus again spoke to them, saying, "I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life."... In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men. The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. There came a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness, to testify about the Light, so that all might believe through him. He was not the Light, but he came to testify about the Light. There was the true Light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man. He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name.

John 8:12 and John 1:1-12

Promise of Light for the Nations—

It is written, “Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself.” Salvation and the promise of Light are for all: the Child in the manger is for all nations. The LORD declares through His prophet:

I am the LORD; I have called you in righteousness. I will take you by the hand and keep you. I will give you as a covenant for the people, a light for the nations, to open the eyes that are blind, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, from the prison those who sit in darkness.

Isaiah 42:6-7

[The LORD] says: “It is too light a thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to bring back the preserved of Israel. I will make you as a light for the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth.” Thus says the LORD, the Redeemer of Israel and his Holy One, to one deeply despised, abhorred by the nation, the servant of rulers: “Kings shall see and arise; princes, and they shall prostrate themselves; because of the LORD, who is faithful, the Holy One of Israel, who has chosen you.”

Isaiah 49:6-7

Now there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon, and this man was righteous and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord’s Christ. And he came in the Spirit into the temple, and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him according to the custom of the Law, he took him up in his arms and blessed God and said, “Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace, according to your word, for my eyes

The Light and The Coming King—

The consummation of God’s light would present in the birth of Messiah. Reconciliation and the permanent presence of God with man would be made possible in the birth, life, death and resurrection of His Son. The Light of the World had come to defeat the enemy that had overtaken man from the time of Adam’s Fall in the Garden. Satan’s power was blotted out for those who turn to God through Messiah. A humble Child would establish the Kingdom of Light:

But there will be no gloom for her who was in anguish. In the former time he brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the latter time he has made glorious the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations. The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shone. For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us, and the government will rest on His shoulders. His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness from then on and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will accomplish this.

Isaiah 9:1-2, 6-7



