



The Light of the World

Jesus said, "I am the *light* of the world" (John 8:12)

Have any of you ever wondered how the Jews came up with Chanukah (*what they call the "festival of lights?"*) For that matter, how do the Christians come up with Christmas on December 25? Do the festivals of Chanukah and Christmas have anything in common? If so, what is their connection? If Jesus was supposed to have been born on Christmas and the Jews have nothing to do with Jesus, then why would both religions have holidays that are so closely adjacent to one another? Is there any commonality between Chanukah and Christmas? Notice on the Christian/Jewish calendar (*below*) that Saturday, December 20th is the first day of Chanukah this year (2003/5764). Notice further that Christmas falls on the sixth day of Chanukah.

Since Chanukah is the Jewish "festival of lights;" and since Jesus said, "*I am the light* of the world" (John 8:12). Perhaps it is most appropriate for us to begin is with the Biblical concept of light.

18		December		2003		December		5764		Kislev / Tevet			
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday		
	1	6 2	7 3	8 4	9 5	10 6 4:17p-5:19p 11 Ask for rain Vayeretze	7	12 8	13 9	14 10	15 11	16 12	17 13 4:17p-5:20p 18 Vayishlach
14	19 15	20 16	21 17	22 18 Tonight's Bible Study	23 19	24 20 4:19p-5:22p 25 Chanukah 1 Vayeshev		21	26 22 Chanukah 3	27 23 Chanukah 4	28 24 Chanukah 5	29 25 Chanukah 6 Rosh Chodesh 1	30 26 Chanukah 7 Rosh Chodesh 2
28	3 29	4 30	5 31	6		1 27 4:23p-5:26p 2 Chanukah 8 Miketz							

We are all familiar with how the idea of "light" first appears in God's word. On that first day of creation, "God said, Let there be *light*: and there was *light*. 4And God saw the *light*, that it was good: and God divided the *light* from the darkness. 5And God called the *light* Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day" (Gen 1:3-5). In this familiar passage, the Holy Spirit caused the word for "light" to be recorded five times; you may remember that five is symbolic of grace! If you are not familiar with this concept please download a copy of the *Rivkah Ministries* Bible Study entitled, "*Fingerprints of Grace.*" You can obtain a copy of that Bible Study from <http://www.Rivkah.org>.



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Notice that the original creation of spiritual light took place on the first day of creation. Realize that this first light preceded the events of the fourth day, "And God

said, Let there be *lights* in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years: 15 And **let them be for lights** in the firmament of the heaven **to give light upon the earth:** and it was so" (Gen 1:14-15). So, first we must get a hold of the concept that spiritual "light" was created before the sun, moon, and the stars, which produce every form of physical light known to man.

In our search for Biblical light, it is helpful if we also take a look at the creation from the perspective of the New Testament, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 The same was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. 4 In him was life; and the life was the *light* of men. 5 And the *light* shineth in darkness; **and the darkness comprehended it not.** 6 There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. 7 The same came for a witness, **to bear witness of the *Light*** (*Capital Letter is used Here*) that all men through him might believe. 8 He was not that *Light* (*Capital Letter is used Here*), but was sent to bear witness of that *Light* (*Capital Letter is used Here*). 9 That was the true *Light* (*Capital Letter is used Here*), which lighteth every man that cometh into the world" (John 1:1-9). This passage proves that Jesus was the Word from the very beginning who brought Light into the world!

In our study of light in the Bible we discover some interesting and thought provoking facts! The 25th word in the Bible is the word **light** (HEB-"owr" *illumination*). "Light is used 25 times in the Psalms; remember five Means Grace; therefore, the number twenty-five indicates, Grace Squared! In the Old Testament, "Light" (*meaning Illumination*) occurs 125 times (*Grace cubed*). The Hebrew word for "light" occurs 36 times in Torah (*first five books of OT*). It occurs **twenty-four** times in the Gospel of John, which was written to the children of the light (*the church*). Of the 25 times it is used in the book of Psalms; here are seven notable examples of the twenty-five occurrences:

Ps 18:28 "For thou wilt light my candle: the LORD my God will enlighten my darkness"	<i>God lightens our darkness</i>
Ps 27:1 "The LORD is my light and my salvation"	<i>God is our light & salvation</i>
Ps 36:9 "For with thee is the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light ."	<i>God is our light for vision</i>
Ps 43:3 "O send out thy light and thy truth: let them lead me; let them bring me unto thy holy hill, and to thy tabernacles"	<i>Light and truth lead us</i>
Ps 104:2 "Who coverest thyself with light as with a garment"	<i>God uses light as clothing</i>
Ps 119:105 "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path"	<i>God's word is our light</i>
Ps 119:130 "The entrance of thy words giveth light ; it giveth understanding unto the simple."	<i>God's word is our light</i>
Ps 56:13 "that I may walk before God in the light of the living?"	<i>God's people walk in light</i>



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Twenty-five (5²) times we find an association between the words "grace" and "sight" or "grace" and "eyes;" such as in the following two verses: "I have found *grace in your eyes*" (Gen 50:4); and "thy servant hath found *grace in thy sight*" (Gen 19:19). Ten times or (5*2) in the New Testament we find the phrase, "*the grace of our lord Jesus Christ!*" The word "life" occurs 450 times in the Bible or (90 * 5). The words "grace" and "life" appear 7 times in common verses together. It is amazing that the fifth time they appear together in the New Testament, Peter is speaking to husbands and wives as, "being heirs together of the *grace of life*; that your prayers be not hindered" (1 Peter 3:7). The concept of husbands and wives being "heirs together of the *grace of life*" is also intricately woven into the Lord's garment of written grace. Notice the 55th verse in the Bible, "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh" (Gen 2:24). Amazingly, that same concept is mentioned a second time in the fifth Epistle in chapter five! "For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh" (Eph 5:31).

It is interesting how we can recognize such amazing patterns associated with the numbers five and twenty-five in the Bible; however, notice carefully the first and foremost amazing detail; the twenty-fifth word in the Bible is "owr" the Hebrew word for light! (*You may need to become conscious of the fact that Hebrew is read from right to left.*) (*Interesting Note: Observe also the 4th word (eet); notice that it has no interpretation and notice that the letters Alef & Tav correspond to the Greek Alpha and Omega. The passage could be translated: "In the beginning created God (the Alpha and Omega) the Heaven and the earth!"*)

7 th	הָאָרֶץ:	וְאֵת	הַשָּׁמַיִם	אֵת	אֱלֹהִים	בָּרָא	בְּרֵאשִׁית	1:1
	the earth.	and	the Heaven		God	created	In the beginning	
	<u>776</u>	<u>853</u>	<u>8064</u>	<u>853</u>	<u>430</u>	<u>1254</u>	<u>7225</u>	
	haa'aarets	w ^a eet	hashaamayim	'eet	'Elohiym	baaraa'	B ^r ee'shiyt	
14 th	פְּנֵי	עַל-	וְחֹשֶׁךְ	וְבֹהוּ	תְהוֹ	הָיְתָה	וְהָאָרֶץ	2
	the face of	upon	and darkness	and void;	without form,	was	And the earth	
	<u>6440</u>	<u>5921</u>	<u>9999</u>	<u>2822</u>	<u>922</u>	<u>8414</u>	<u>1961</u>	<u>776</u>
	p ^a neey	'al-	w ^a choshek	waabohuw	tohuw	haay ^a taah	W ^a haa'aarets	
21 st	הַמַּיִם:	פְּנֵי	עַל-	מְרַחֶפֶת	אֱלֹהִים	וְרוּחַ	תְּהוֹמֹת	
	the waters.	the face of	upon	moved	God	And the Spirit of	the deep.	
	<u>4325</u>	<u>6440</u>	<u>5921</u>	<u>7363</u>	<u>430</u>	<u>7307</u>	<u>8415</u>	
	hamaayim	p ^a neey	'al-	m ^a rachepet	'Elohiym	w ^a ruwach	t ^a howm	
25 th	אֹר:	וַיְהִי-	אֹר	יְהִי	אֱלֹהִים	וַיֹּאמֶר	3	
	light.	and there was	light.	Let there be	God	And said,		
	<u>216</u>	<u>1961</u>	<u>216</u>	<u>1961</u>	<u>430</u>	<u>559</u>		
	'owr	way ^a hiy-	'owr	Y ^a hiy	'Elohiym	Way ^a omer		

Can you begin to see why twenty-five is so closely related with light? The twenty-fifth word in the Torah is the word "light!" No wonder that when we talk about Biblical light it usually has some sort of a mystical connection with the number twenty-five.

The Jews claim that God first created a special type of spiritual light. They claim that this light was extremely penetrating and revealing. However, this extraordinary light left as a

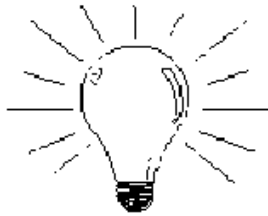


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result of human sin. The light of God therefore remained for Adam only thirty-six hours. And after thirty-six hours God took it away. (You may recall that "light" occurs 36 times in the Torah.) As long as that light was there, for those first thirty-six hours with humanity; Adam by means of that light was able to see from one end of the world to the other, and from the beginning of time to the end of time. The Jews believe that light was the light of total understanding. The Jews teach that anytime that the word "light" is used in the Torah it always means knowledge and wisdom and understanding.

Did you ever notice how cartoonists often use the concept of a light bulb (*illumination*) to



show that their subject just had a great idea? What do people say when they are trying to convey that they understand? "Oh, I see!" Some may even declare, "I see the light!" All of these expressions suggest the understanding (*illumination*) of something unknown. These universal images are common regardless of culture or language. Some Jews claim that this comes from man's primitive human memory. They believe that the minds of men hold on to that original light (*the light of total understanding*) that was evident during creation.

However, they claim that it only lasted for thirty-six hours. Therefore, as relating to Chanukah the Jews burn one candle on the first night, two on the next night, three on the night after that, four on the night after that, five on the next night, six after that, seven after that, and eight on

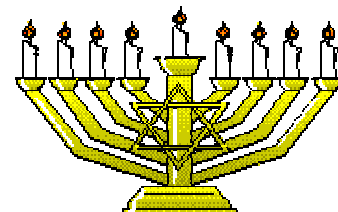
the last night for a total of thirty-six candles. They believe that these 36 candles are connected to the thirty-six hours that the light burned in the hearts of man during creation!

1	Night 1 of Chanukah
1 2	Night 2 of Chanukah
1 2 3	Night 3 of Chanukah
1 2 3 4	Night 4 of Chanukah
1 2 3 4 5	Night 5 of Chanukah
1 2 3 4 5 6	Night 6 of Chanukah
1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Night 7 of Chanukah
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8	Night 8 of Chanukah



The Chanukah Menorah

The nine-branched candelabrum used by Jews during the eight-day festival of Chanukah has taken many forms throughout the ages, but its essential feature has always been eight receptacles for oil or candles. The receptacle for the servant (*shamash or central candle which is set apart*) was used for kindling the other lights.



Since, according to the Jews, God took away the light of total human understanding after the first thirty-six hours in the human experience, the Jews employ a special method so they will never forget that total illumination existed in the first



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place. Therefore, once a year they celebrate the fact that there existed in the beginning the light of total understanding. During eight days, each year, the Jews give themselves a spiritual reminder that there is such a thing as spiritual light which is completely different from all other natural light.

The Jews use candles for light on a regular basis. For example, every Sabbath they light a symbolic candle. They put it on the table to enhance the light of the evening. However they realize that it is merely physical light! But how about the light of Chanukah? It is not used to light their homes; instead it is placed in a window for the outside world to see. For eight days the Jews light these candles to show humanity the symbolic nature of a spiritual light of total understanding.

Incidentally, the very root of the word *Chanukah* is (*Chenuk*) – means education, wisdom, and knowledge. We have studied that light means knowledge in practically every society. Besides "light," "water" is also used as a metaphor of wisdom and knowledge. We have all heard expressions such as: "I thirst for knowledge." People often speak of a "fountain" of information or "wells of wisdom." From the beginning of time the Jews were aware of the need for a holiday dedicated to the deeper light of total wisdom and understanding. They realized that it would be directly tied to the twenty-fifth of some month, (*remember that the twenty-fifth word is "light"*). Now we are ready to learn when that special 25th day representing the festival of lights came into the Jewish consciousness.

The festival that the Jews call Chanukah is related to the dedication of the second temple. In fact, the word Chanukah literally means dedication! We have already noted that the word *Chanukah* comes from the same root that means to educate. The first dedication took place in the desert when Moses dedicated the Tent of Meeting. The second dedication took place during the dedication of Solomon's Holy Temple. The third dedication is the subject of **Zechariah 2:14 - 4:9**. This passage refers to the time when the second temple was dedicated under Israel's national leader Zerubbabel, "The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house; (*The second temple!*) his hands shall also finish it; and thou shalt know that the LORD of hosts hath sent me unto you" (Zech 4:9). However, Antiochus IV Epiphanes desecrated that second temple many years after Zerubbabel in 161 BC when Antiochus sacrificed the blood of a hog on the brazen altar of the temple!

However, God intervened and the Jews experienced a major victory during that very perilous period; Chanukah came to mean the celebration of two specific miracles that took place at that time: (1) The victory of the Jews over their Syrian-Greek persecutors and (2) the amazing ability of one small flask of priestly oil to remain lit in the Menorah in the Temple for eight days! That flask of oil should have lasted for only one day! In stead, it lasted for eight days. Therefore, Chanukah became an observance commemorating the rededication (in 164 BC) of the Second Temple of Jerusalem after its desecration three years earlier by order of Antiochus IV Epiphanes!

God's message to Israel at that time was that their victory could not be explained in natural terms. In the Jewish mind, the number eight always points to the intervention of the supernatural. It reminds the Jews that the invisible hand of God is always at work in their national experience.



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As we have seen, "light" or the Hebrew word *ohr*, is the 25th word in the Torah! The light created by the Almighty on the first day of Creation was not the light of the sun, moon or stars; those heavenly bodies were not created until the fourth day.

The light of the first day was a spiritual light. That light was hidden when Adam and Eve sinned and the Jews believe that it will only be reintroduced to humanity during the Messianic Era. The Jews believe that within each Israelite is a spark of this holy and eternal light, which will ultimately be fully revealed in each of them. This will come with the revelation of *Moshiach* or as we know Him in English the Messiah (*Meaning the Christ or the Anointed One*).

It is interesting to note that the Jewish Maccabean kings who reigned during the second dedication period when Chanukah was initiated were all descended from the tribe of Levi. They were also known as Hasmoneans because they came from the city of Chashmonah, which ironically and "coincidentally" corresponds, to the *twenty-fifth* camp of the Israelites after they left the land of Egypt! The interpretation is that "They left the place of sweetness (*Mithcah*) and camped at the fruitfulness place (*Hashmonah*)." The King James version renders, "And they went from Mithcah, and pitched in Hashmonah (*camp #25*)" (Num 33:29). The point is that the 25th encampment was named *Hashmonah*. Here again we get a correlation between the name and light. The head of the family that led the revolt against the Greeks, was from Hashmonah, therefore, he was called Hasmonean.

So what does this coincidence and all of this other stuff about light have to do with Jesus and Christmas? Lets begin with a small statement in the Gospel of John, "And it was at Jerusalem *the feast of the dedication*, and *it was winter*. 23 And Jesus walked in the temple in Solomon's porch" (John 10:22). Each of the previous dedications took place at non-winter times during the year. Therefore, the New Testament records Jesus in Jerusalem during the Feast of Dedication during the winter; this could only have been Chanukah!

Further, it is clear that light, Chanukah, and creation are related topics. What is not yet clear is just *where/how* in the Chanukah light the hidden light of creation can be observed! Surely, no Jewish holiday so lends itself to the challenge of *the Age of Illumination* as does Chanukah (*the Festival of Lights!*) To the Jews, these eight days are dedicated specifically to the Inner Light, (*internal illumination*) which brightens the soul.

The Rabbi's teach that a total of 36 candles are to be lit on the eight days of Chanukah. As we have studied, they claim that this observance corresponds to the first thirty-six hours of Creation, when, according to Jewish tradition, a special unearthly radiance lit the universe. This spiritual light was quite different from any light we now know.

Why do the Jews light a total of 36 candles?

You may not realize that there is a special connection with Jacob and the number "Thirty Six!" Jacob is intimately associated with the number **thirty-six**. We find **thirty-six** in the *Gematria* (*Hebrew value of letters*) when associated with Leah who is his first wife, **vtk**, **k**- 30, **t** - 1, **v**- 5 when totaled together is 36!

Through Leah, Jacob became the father of Judah, through whom came all of the kings of Israel since David - including Jesus Christ. Leah also produced Levi, through whom came



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all of the Priests of Israel. After Jacob married Leah, he was permitted to marry his first love, Rachel who prematurely died during childbirth at the age of **thirty-six!**

In Jewish thought, **Olive Oil Shemen ina** is always the symbol of connection. Oil is the instrument of connection between the flame and the wick. We must understand this concept: oil is always a symbol of connection. Indeed, the Jewish people liken themselves to oil. We know that oil always floats above water. If oil is mixed with other liquids, it always separates itself out from that substance. Oil burns as it produces a very bright hot flame. We will all remember that oil was used for the Menorah in the Holy place. Oil is the connector of the wick to the flame. Notice this connection in more detail. (*HaShemen inav* which means oil in the Hebrew Language is formally spelled with a preceding "H."

If one were to rearrange the letters they could spell *neshama* (soul) **vnab**. In the same fashion, the soul *neshama* is the body's connection to the higher world. If one were to rearrange the letters once again they spell *shmonei vbna*, the number 8. It is interesting that "eight" is the connection between the natural world of seven and the higher mystical world. Eight always represents the miraculous. Let's study this concept a little further.

New Beginnings

Eight is the Biblical number, which signifies "new beginnings." God created the natural world so that it is replete with a pattern of seven elements, which Biblically indicate completeness. Have you ever seen a double rainbow? There are seven colors in a rainbow: red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, and violet. The repeat of the first color red indicates a new beginning. Likewise in music, there are seven notes in an octave (the term for eight notes). We commonly relate to the notes as "do," "re," "mi," "fa," "so," "la," and "ti." The repeat of the first note "do," indicates a new beginning. There are seven days in a week. We know their pagan names as Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday. The repeat of the first day, Sunday, indicates a new beginning.

We need to capture the concept of, "a higher spiritual level" being associated with the number eight. There are many interesting and profound biblical circumstances that are prescribed to take place on the eighth day. We find in Genesis chapter seventeen that the children of Israel were instructed to circumcise all male children on the eighth day.

The concept of the eighth representing a new beginning to God and where God's glory is manifest is very important. Eight souls were saved out of the flood of Noah to make a new beginning for humanity on the earth. The waters of God's flood judgment came on the eighth day, "And it came to pass after seven days, that the waters of the flood were upon the earth" (Gen 7:10). The flood Judgment of God on the earth in the days of Noah is definitely associated with eight. The most important event of mankind, the resurrection of Jesus Christ, occurred at the beginning of the eighth day. We will recall that early that Sunday morning as the High Priest lifted-up the wave sheaf, Jesus simultaneously ascended to the Father. This was most certainly a new beginning for mankind. Even through His name, Jesus represents the epitome of a new beginning. Greek numerals were identified as characters of the Greek alphabet during the writing of the New Testament. Thus, the Greek



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letter "alpha" (**a**) is always equivalent to 1, and the Greek letter "beta" (**b**) is equivalent to 2 up through "omega" (**w**) which is equivalent to 800, etc. The name Jesus appears in the Greek as follows: **lhsouj**. The numerical value of the (**l**) = 10, the numerical value of the (**h**) = 8, the numerical value of the (**s**) = 200, the numerical value of the (**o**) = 70, the numerical value of the (**u**) = 400, and the numerical value of the (**j**) = 200. Therefore $10+8+200+70+400+200 = 888$; the name Jesus, the epitome of a new beginning!

Remember that *shmonei vbna*, which means the number 8 can be rearranged to the Hebrew word (*HaShemen*) **inav** which means oil. (*HaShemen*), or oil is always the symbol of connection to a higher level. When a man reaches an exalted status relative to other men, the prophet pours oil on his head. This is symbolic of the connection to a higher world. Therefore the head is also a symbol of connection. The Anointed One (*Messiah*) means the one anointed with oil! The ultimate king has the title of the "Anointed One!" This is the Messiah! "The One who has oil poured on his head" - Mashiach! Jesus (*the Anointed One*) is the ultimate connection between humanity and the higher world.

Jesus claimed to have been the bread from above, "Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but *my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven*. 33 For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world. 34 Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread. 35 And Jesus said unto them, *I am the bread of life*" (John 6:32-35). Was it any wonder that He was born in Bethlehem? *Beth* = House; and *Lehem* = Bread! Indeed, the prophet Micah wrote, "But thou, *Bethlehem* Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet *out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel*" (Mic 5:2).

Further, the Apostle John teaches that, "the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us" (John 1:14). The word "dwelt" in that passage is really tabernacled or *succah*! The Jews have a festival season known as the Feast of Tabernacles. During that period they build temporary dwellings.

The word became flesh and tabernacled among men! Now when did this amazing occurrence take place? Eusebus (264-340) who is known in academic circles as, "the Father of Church History," ascribes Jesus' birth to the 42nd year of the reign of Augustus and the 28th year from the subjection of Egypt on the death of Anthony and Cleopatra. The 42nd year of Augustus ran from the autumn of 2 B.C. to the autumn of 1 B.C. The subjugation of Egypt into the Roman Empire occurred in the autumn of 30 B.C. The 28th year extended from the autumn of 3 B.C. to the autumn of 2 B.C. The only date that would meet both of these constraints would be the autumn of 2 B.C.

Luke sets the stage of the exact period of Jesus' ministry by identifying when John the Baptist began his ministry. "Now in **the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar**, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judaea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of Ituraea and of the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias the tetrarch of Abilene, Annas and Caiaphas being the high priests, the word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness" (Luke 3:1-2). Obviously John was ministering (*performing the priestly function of teaching the people*) at this time.



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Hippolytus, Bishop of Rome in A.D. 240 recorded that "Christ died in His 33rd year, in the 18th year of Tiberius Caesar." Luke's account matches that Christ was

crucified in his 33rd year which was the 18th year of Tiberius Caesar; the implication here is that Jesus was born in 2 B.C.E. Tertullian, who was born about 160 A.D. and is known as the early Church Father recorded that Augustus Caesar died 15 years after the birth of Jesus Christ. Again we have another historical match.

Tertullian further stated that Augustus Caesar began to rule 41 years before the birth of Jesus and died 15 years after that event. History records as is found in Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary published by Merriam, in 1977, on page 1,410 that Tiberius Caesar succeeded Augustus Caesar on the day Augustus died (August 19, A.D. 14). This would place Jesus' birth in the year 2 B.C.

Another well-respected historian, Flavius Josephus recorded that Herod the Great died in a year that there was a lunar eclipse. However, astronomical records show that several lunar eclipses occurred between 5B.C. and 1 B.C. Josephus and other historians have recorded the events that took place in Herod's life between the time of the eclipse and his death prior to Passover. The cumulative time necessary to complete all of these events was **at least 60 days**. March 13, 4 B.C. was less than a month before Passover, which is clearly an insufficient amount of time to accommodate all of the recorded events; however, the January 9, 1 B.C. eclipse preceded Passover by three months; this represents more than ample time for the recorded events of history to transpire. This evidence lends strong support to Christ's birth being in the year 2 B.C.

This short review of historical facts merely scratches the surface; but, given this great cloud of witness, it is wholly reasonable that Sir Robert Anderson accurately identified that the Crucifixion of Jesus Christ took place on April 10, 32 C.E.; this is three and one half years after his public ministry began in the fall of 29 C.E. This would also have Christ dying a age 33 with a three and ½ year ministry. John's Gospel records Christ dying on the 4th Passover of his ministry. So the year of Jesus' birth by the most credible historians in concert with the Bible would be in the year 2 B.C.

What about the month and day? There were 24 courses of priests which served in the temple for one week in the first half of the year and one week during the last half of the year. In the **Luke 1:4** John the Baptist's father was a priest during the first course. Both the Talmud and Josephus the Historian record that when the temple was destroyed by Titus on August 5, 70 A.D. that the first course had just taken office. Since the course of Abijah was the 8th course, we can track backwards to determine that Zacharias would have ended his duties on July 13, 3 B.C. If the birth of John took place the normal 280 days later, it would have been on April 19-20, 2 B.C. (*by the way, that year Passover was April 19*). It is also interesting that during Passover the Jews set an empty place setting at the Passover table for Elijah the Prophet (*Jesus claimed that John the Baptist operated in the office of Elijah, "But I say unto you, That Elias (Elijah) is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him (John the Baptist) whatsoever they listed" (Matt 17:12)!*

As we have already noted, Luke dates the important ministry of John the Baptist for us, in Luke 3:1. John began his ministry in the 15th year of Tiberius Caesar; further, the minimum age for the ministry (Priest) was 30 years of age, Num 4:3-4 say, "**From thirty**



The Light of the World

Jesus said, "I am the *light* of the world" (John 8:12)

years old and upward even until fifty years old, all that enter into the host, to do the work in the tabernacle of the congregation. 4 This shall be the service of the sons of

Kothath in the tabernacle of the congregation, about the most holy things." Since Augustus died on August 19, 14 A.D. that was the accession year for Tiberius. If John were born on April 19-20 of 2 B.C., his 30th birthday would have been April 19-20 of 29 A.D., which was the 15th year of Tiberius.

Mary went with haste after her announcement by Gabriel to visit Elizabeth who was then in the first week of her sixth month or the fourth week of December, 3 B.C. (*perhaps the 25th of Kislev!*) If Jesus was born 280 days later his birth would have taken place on, September 29 2 B.C. Which "happened" in that year to have been the first day of the Feast of Tabernacles! If Jesus would have been born on the first day of the Feast of Tabernacles, then eight days later He would also have been circumcised. That day on the Jewish calendar happens to be known as Shemeni (*eight*) Atzaret!

It is highly possible, though not completely verifiable, that Jesus was conceived in late December (*see the calendar on page one.*) Jesus was probably conceived on the 25th of Kislev (*Chanukah*) in 2 B.C. The true light was conceived in the womb of a woman on the 25th day of the Jewish month!

There is a solid connection between light and the number twenty-five! The true Light of Heaven was conceived in the womb of a Jewess on the 25th day of their month of Kislev in 2 BC; interestingly, the Pagan influenced Romans arbitrarily established the date that Jesus was born as the 25th day of December to agree with the birth of the sun! Are we beginning to get an appreciation for God's sense of irony? We should also begin to experience enlightenment concerning how Chanukah and Christmas are related to one another? Jesus the Anointed of God is the connection between our two faiths!

Twenty-five is clearly a Biblical symbol of light, "Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, ***I am the light of the world***: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (John 8:12); "While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light" (John 12:36)!

Paul wrote, "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor 4:6).

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