

One Candle

By Ronald L. Dart

It was odd when I began to think about it and realized that Jesus never spoke to the church as such. Remember what he said? I will build My church. It's future for him. And the church would be built out of individual bricks one at a time. So, while Jesus spoke to crowds, the people he was really talking to were the individuals in that crowd who would eventually form the foundation, the building blocks, the things upon which you and I have built, and later generations that we call the church. He was talking to individuals who would understand, who would hear, and who would respond.

Now, this has been on my mind in a way that it has not been before and I feel led to talk not to the church, but to you personally, because after all, you are the light of the world. You are the salt of the earth.

And these two comparisons: "salt of the earth," "light of the world," come from the Sermon on the Mount and say two different things about us. One, we are like salt scattered, not concentrated all in one place. Two, each of us is like a candle in a very dark place.

One night I was working in my study, everything was all lit up bright—you know, lights on, books scattered around. And as I worked, with no warning all of the lights went out—suddenly everything was dark. Now, the sharp contrast between bright light and the sudden darkness was really startling and disorienting at first. I waited a moment in the pitch darkness then carefully got out of my chair and felt my way to the door, opened the door, stepped out, and the garage was utterly black. I couldn't see my hand right in front of my face, so I took one step forward, and started up the steps into our kitchen. As I worked my way up, there was still no light. I got to the top of the stairs, took one or two steps across to the countertop in the kitchen, and then felt my way down to the bottom drawer, opened the bottom drawer, and got out a candle and a match. Scratched the match and lit the candle.

There it was—that one little candle making all the difference in the world at a time like that. Light one candle and your whole world changes in that moment, from pitch dark to light. And the dark cannot defeat that candle, can it? It can't quench it. A candle doesn't seem like much, but the dark cannot put it out, and that little light makes so much difference to you when you need it.

What did Jesus mean by the analogy that each of us is like a candle? How should we take it? What should we do with it? The analogy, as I said, arises from the Sermon on the Mount, chapter five of Matthew, and here's the way it goes. He said several things leading up

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Upcoming Events

Winter Family Weekend 2017

You're invited to the 21st Annual Winter Family Weekend in Lexington, Kentucky, sponsored by COG Cincinnati, and COG Lexington. The inspiring church services and insightful seminar speakers together with athletic and social events promises an exciting weekend for your family. Plan now to attend December 22-26th, 2017 at Griffin Gate Marriott Resort & Spa. Call 1-859-231-5100 for reservations. Go to www.winterfamilyweekend.com or find it on Facebook for more information.

Times of Abijah

By Ronald L. Dart

“There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judaea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the course of Abia: and his wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elisabeth” (Luke 1:5).

E. W. Bullinger calculates the two weeks of the course of Abijah to the dates in the Hebrew Calendar. Their approximate dates in our calendar are: The week of December 6-12 and the week of June 13-19. Based on other factors, he concludes that the occasion described here took place in mid June, in the year 5 B.C. There is a high degree of probability that he is right about this. It is certain that the two alternative dates are the only ones available—late June, or early December and there are important considerations that grow out of this.

“And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. And they had no child, because that Elisabeth was barren, and they both were now well stricken in years. And it came to pass, that while he executed the priest’s office before God in the order of his course, According to the custom of the priest’s office, his lot was to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord and the whole multitude of the people were praying without at the time of incense. And there appeared unto him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense. And when Zacharias saw him, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him” (Luke 1:6-12).

Ordinarily, angels appear as men, but there shouldn’t have been anyone else in there but Zacharias. One minute he was not there and the next, he was. It would certainly trouble me. “But the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John” (Luke 1:13).

It is odd in a way, but it seems he was still praying for a child for his wife—even though they were well past childbearing years. “And thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth. For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother’s womb” (Luke 1:14-15). John the Baptist would be a Nazarite from the start.

“And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God. And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers

to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord” (Luke 1:16-17). This must have been electrifying to Zacharias. He knew this Scripture well enough and he knew the Messianic implications of it all.

“And Zacharias said unto the angel, Whereby shall I know this? for I am an old man, and my wife well stricken in years. And the angel answering said unto him, I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God; and am sent to speak unto thee, and to show thee these glad tidings. And, behold, thou shalt be dumb, and not able to speak, until the day that these things shall be performed, because thou believest not my words, which shall be fulfilled in their season. And the people waited for Zacharias, and marvelled that he tarried so long in the temple. And when he came out, he could not speak unto them: and they perceived that he had seen a vision in the temple: for he beckoned unto them, and remained speechless. And it came to pass, that, as soon as the days of his ministration were accomplished, he departed to his own house. And after those days his wife Elisabeth conceived, and hid herself five months, saying, Thus hath the Lord dealt with me in the days wherein he looked on me, to take away my reproach among men” (Luke 1:18-25). It can’t have been very long after his course was over that this happened and I can’t imagine what Elisabeth thought when he first told her this. Thus, John was conceived in the 4th week of June.

Why is this important? “And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin’s name was Mary” (Luke 1:26-27). What is the sixth month after the last week of June? December. Mind you, this is not the time of Jesus’ birth, but of something else.

“And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women. And when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be. And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the

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to this statement about being the light of the world. He said in verse three, “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven.” That’s not really hard to grasp. Poor in spirit is referring to an attitude of mind. Solomon said that “the rich answer roughly, but the poor use entreaties.” The way you respond to people is what he was talking about. It describes an honest humility in a person, and it’s reflected in how we treat people. Blessed are the poor in spirit who exhibit an attitude of humility, and it shows in the way they treat people. That’s important.

Try another Beatitude in verse five, “Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.” I always look at words carefully—meek means “mild” and “gentle.” I understand those two principles quite well. It relates closely to poor in spirit. The person who is humble, who is meek, who is mild—and I love that word “gentle” in the way we treat people—has everything to do with it.

Let’s try another one, Matthew 5:7, “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.” This is a cautionary one for your file of warnings. In your judgment of other people you are often pronouncing your own sentence. Whatever it is you think should happen to that person, might wind up happening to you. So there’s an incentive for you, if you ever needed one, to be merciful. But, once again, it’s how you treat people. A merciful person is easy to be with. They are a comfort. You like to be with them. You like to see them coming.

And try another one, “Blessed are the peacemakers, they should be called the children of God.” This is not so much a matter of trying to help two friends who are at odds reconcile. That’s the way people tend to want to think about this, but they use that merely as an excuse to meddle in other people’s business. That’s not what this is about. It takes two to reconcile, and you may be one of the two. If you can make peace with people with whom you are at odds, you’re a peacemaker. That’s what it means.

The place to start making peace is between yourself and those where that peace does not exist. It has to do with your attitude—how you conduct yourself toward other people.

Now having said all that, and more, Jesus came down to Matthew 5:10, “Blessed are they who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you, when men will revile you, and persecute

you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: because you have suddenly found solidarity with the prophets,” and with every man of God in all of history who has suffered this way because of his obedience to God. You have joined a large, mighty, wonderful band of people. Good people whom you would enjoy, you would love to be with. They would be a light to their surroundings, and the people who hated them are the ones to stay away from.

Having led up to this, Jesus went on to say, “You are the salt of the earth, but if the salt has lost its savor wherewith shall it be salted? It is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out and trodden under foot of man.”

A warning right there for all of us was tossed out, but also there’s a risk that we might become good for nothing. Oh, God forbid that should happen—how does it come about? Well, I suppose it comes about by our failure to live up to the Beatitudes. Our failure to live up to the things that Christ said throughout his ministry as you page your way through those red letter versions of the Bible. You know, not the question of what would Jesus do? But, what did Jesus say that we must do? That failure to live by that, the savor is gone.

“You are the light of the world, a city that is set on a hill cannot be hid, men don’t light a candle and put it under a basket, they put it on a candle stick so you can give like to the whole house. Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven”. This seems to be the task, the responsibility of every one of us, no matter what we may think of ourselves, or of our place in God’s Kingdom. This is it— let your light shine before men.

A little self-examination, in the light of the words of Jesus, is always a good thing for those of us who claim to be his disciples. It is time to read the book, and not think about how it describes someone else, but to look at how it describes you in your life. All of us are different, but we are all the salt of the earth. We are all the light of the world. Some are like scented candles, some short, some small, some big and bulky, others are long, tapered candles; nevertheless, it’s important that you keep your candle where you can find it when the lights go out—and keep your matches dry.

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Times of Abijah
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house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end” (Luke 1:28-33).

“Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God. And, behold, thy cousin Elisabeth, she hath also conceived a son in her old age: and this is the sixth month with her, who was called barren. For with God nothing shall be impossible. And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her” (Luke 1:34-38).

If this is happening in December, when would that place the birth of Jesus? Request your own *FREE* copy of this message so you can fully understand what the WORD tells us about the birth of Christ. It is easy to understand why these Scriptures have so captivated men down through time, why songs have been written, and why it captures our imagination. Forget Christmas and all the claptrap associated with it. Forget the commercialization and cheap decorations. But never forget the day, the moment, when the Christ child took his first breath, never forget the glory, the awe, or the love of the mother who took this child to her breast for the first time. Jesus was made human. He became flesh. He came as one of us. He came to save us.

New Church Lady Women’s Conference 2018

What: New Church Lady Women’s Conference 2018—
Weightier Matters

When: Saturday, April 21, beginning at 2pm through
Sunday, April 22, at 1 pm.

Where: Church of God International, 3900 Timms
Street, Tyler, TX 75701

For registration: www.newchurchlady.org

For more information: contact Nancy White –
Nancy@DynamicChristianMinistries.org or

Sponsored by: Church of God International, CEM,
and Dynamic Christian Ministries

CEM Mission Statement

The mission of Christian Educational Ministries (CEM) founded in November 1995 is:

- First, to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the world. (Matthew 28).
- Second, to teach the disciples of Jesus Christ so that they may be “proficient and equipped for every good work.” (2 Timothy 3:17).
- Third, to teach and train this generation and the next with studies and programs focused on youth, through the Dart’s special passion, Youth Educational Adventures (YEA). (Deuteronomy 11:19, Proverbs 22:6).
- Fourth, to bring God’s people closer together, through cooperative efforts wherever they may be. (2 Corinthians 5:18).

To this end, we teach the Bible and its Truth, with a goal of helping people make their own lives work while they are a positive influence and blessing to those around them. Follow Mr. Dart and CEM at www.borntowin.net, www.oneplace.com, Facebook, YouTube, and other media.

New CEM Board Members Elected

The CEM Board of Trustees voted to fill two vacancies with Mr. Richard Crow and Mr. Larry Watkins. Mr. Crow is from the Houston area and Mr. Watkins is from East Texas.

Born to Win

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*That the man of God may be proficient
and equipped for every good work.*



2018 Scripture Writing Plan

Recently while listening to Mr. Dart's Weekend Bible Study, *Deuteronomy #9*, he discussed how God commanded the kings of Israel to hand write their own copy of the Law from what the priests had. "Also it shall be, when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write for himself a copy of this law in a book, from the one before the priests, the Levites" (Deuteronomy 17:18).

Why? "And it shall be with him, and he shall read it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the LORD his God and be careful to observe all the words of this law and these statutes, that his heart may not be lifted above his brethren, that he may not turn aside from the commandment to the right hand or to the left, and that he may prolong his days in his kingdom, he and his children in the midst of Israel" (Deuteronomy 17:19-20). The king was to do this because he would learn to respect and honor God, follow the words he had copied, be humble and be obedient. And there were benefits for the king and his children.

Handwriting scripture will benefit us as well. It makes us slow down and think about the words we are writing. We focus on the content instead of just quickly reading through it. It re-enforces the meaning of the words and helps to "write" God's WORD on our hearts. This coming year we invite you to join us in a monthly scripture writing program. Hand copying these scriptures will help us focus on the messages He has for us and to write them on our hearts and minds—to remember them.

Every month we will provide a scripture for each day. We encourage you to read that scripture and then write it down in a notebook, a journal, on index cards, in a text message or whatever method you know works best for you. If you can't write it down, consider speaking the scripture and recording it on your cell phone or voice recorder. You might be moved to pray that scripture, meditate on it, and reflect on how it applies to you and your life. Our goal is to have read and written down a minimum of 365 scriptures by the end of 2018. This was God's idea. Let's do this and see the value it brings to our lives.

January 1	Jeremiah 32:17	January 12	Revelation 1:18	January 23	James 1:17
January 2	1 Chronicles 29:11	January 13	Nahum 1:3	January 24	Numbers 23:19
January 3	Colossians 1:17	January 14	Jude 1:21	January 25	1 John 3:1
January 4	Jeremiah 10:6	January 15	Revelation 7:17	January 26	1 Samuel 12:22
January 5	Psalms 143:6	January 16	Jude 1:24–25	January 27	John 8:31–32
January 6	Daniel 4:35	January 17	Isaiah 41:4	January 28	Philippians 1:27
January 7	John 4:24	January 18	1 John 1:9	January 29	1 Peter 1:14–16
January 8	Psalms 19:1–4	January 19	Joshua 24:15	January 30	Psalms 47:2
January 9	Ephesians 1:19–20	January 20	Genesis 50:20	January 31	Nehemiah 1:5
January 10	Psalms 126:2	January 21	Daniel 2:21		
January 11	Psalms 139:7–12	January 22	Malachi 3:6		

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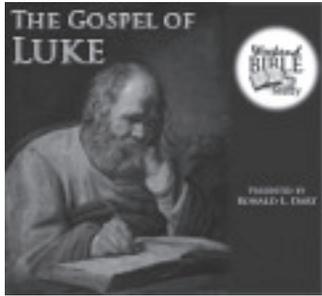
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One Candle/The Times of Abijah (CD) FREE

One Candle in a pitch dark room makes a huge difference. The darkness cannot conquer it. This parallels one Godly person in a dark world. Mr. Dart goes over the Sermon on the Mount and illustrates Christian attributes that will shine to others. Humility, gentleness, mercy, and courage all comprise a different approach to evangelism. Does our presence warm people with our beatitude approach?

The Times of Abijah: When was Jesus born? Ron Dart discusses in detail Luke's account of the events leading up to the birth of Christ. Includes the timing of the events according to the course of Abijah. It also looks at the humility of Jesus' birth, the humanity of Jesus' birth. Mr. Dart's excellent narrative style and insight make this a most interesting message.

Christian Holidays Bible Study FREE

The observance of holy days, or holidays, is deeply entrenched in every form of the Christian religion. Where do these days come from? Are Christmas and Easter mentioned in the Bible? What holy days, or festivals, if any, did the early Christian church observe? The answers may surprise you. In this *free* Bible Study lesson we will carefully examine the biblical record that has to do with the observance of days.

Thank You

We thank God for you and we pray God's blessings on you. We hope you take advantage of our FREE and value priced items. Mr. Dart's gift of teaching can help you grow in the grace and knowledge of God's Word.

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