

God's Lamp, Man's Light

*Mysteries
of
the Menorah*

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Introduction

The menorah is *the* biblical symbol *par excellence*. The graceful symmetry of its flowing lines displays a profound beauty that is soothing, reassuring, and uplifting to the human spirit. Esthetically appealing, it is an attractive decoration for any home or sanctuary. At the same time, however, the menorah evokes powerful images of the Divine, assuring its observer that it is far more than an *objet d'art*. This is a heavenly symbol that transcends the imagination of earthly artisans.

Originally designed as the means of providing light in the holy place of the Israelites' wilderness sanctuary, the menorah has become more symbol than apparatus to the Jewish people. It has come to represent the presence of God among his people, the Eternal Light who illuminates his chosen and through them enlightens the world. When, after a nineteen-century hiatus, the nation of Israel was restored, the modern Israelis chose the menorah as the dominant symbol to grace the reborn state's national seal, a testimony to its enduring importance in the corporate Jewish consciousness. The ancient menorah still speaks to Israel of the undying and irresistible force of light.

A LOST LEGACY

Unfortunately, most Christians have not shared with the Jewish people the powerful imagery manifest in the

menorah. Relegated in Christian understanding to the status of an implement in the ancient tabernacle, it has been regarded by those Christians with knowledge of its existence as an archaic device, a material artifact that was totally replaced by the symbolism of Christian faith. Though the church has continued to use candlesticks of various designs in its sanctuaries, the menorah has been generally disregarded. It has, therefore, had little significance for most Christians.

A major factor in Christianity's ignorance of the menorah has been its lack of prominence in the New Testament. Except for an oblique reference in the Apocalypse to seven golden lampstands, the menorah is unmentioned in the Apostolic Writings. The church's focus on the New Testament to the neglect and occasionally even to the exclusion of the Hebrew Scriptures has left Christian leaders and laity largely ignorant of the purely biblical, Hebraic symbols, among which the menorah stands paramount. They not only have Christians been robbed of the beauty of the menorah's display in sanctuaries and homes, but they have also been denied understanding of the rich symbolism manifest in its design.

Christianity's continuing unawareness of the rich menorah tradition has also been exacerbated by the rabbinic prohibition against constructing replicas of the appliances in the temple after its destruction in 70 C.E. In an effort to ensure that those devices would not be corrupted and/or used for purposes other than their designed intent, the rabbinic council legislated against replication of any of the implements of temple worship, including the seven-branched menorah. A menorah of five or eight branches could be fabricated; however, the construction of a seven-branched menorah was forbidden.

The Jews understood the need for this prohibition, for they fully believed that the temple would be restored. They

were able to maintain their menorah consciousness by its detailed description both in the Hebrew Scriptures and in the oral tradition of the sages and by the use of its substitute, the eternal lamp in their synagogues. Christians, however, were not exposed to menorahs even in Jewish synagogues, homes, and businesses because this injunction precluded their construction and display. Except for a carved image of the menorah on the Arch of Titus in Rome, there was no visualization of the menorah that was accessible to Christians. Even if they happened to read the biblical text describing the menorah, they were left to imagine what appearance it may have taken.

Stripped of its biblical legacy, its heritage with and among the Jewish people, Christianity has been impoverished, severed from the Jewish roots of its faith and from their rich, nourishing sap. This fact has been further exacerbated by nineteen centuries of ecclesiastical Judaeophobia, anti-Judaism, and anti-Semitism. In a rush to define itself apart from Jews and Judaism, the post-Nicene and medieval church distanced itself from a profound portion of its Judaic heritage. Biblical festivals were replaced by holy days of often questionable origin. Biblical norms of community and congregation were replaced by politico-ecclesiastical systems patterned after secular empires. Jewish tradition was replaced by church tradition. Biblically Hebraic symbols were replaced by “Christian” symbols.

TIME FOR RESTORATION

After centuries of darkness concerning the deep Hebraic roots of Christian faith, the church is experiencing a revival of interest in things Jewish. Believers of virtually every ethnicity and denomination are rediscovering the long-lost legacy of Christianity’s Jewish connection. Biblical truths and practices long buried under the rubble of human tradition are being resurrected by those who have

determined in their hearts “to do God’s thing God’s way.” Among these renewals is the return to biblical symbols and to understanding the person and work of Jesus Christ and the ministry of the church that are readily manifest in these ancient emblems of living faith. A growing trend of Hebraic restoration is sweeping the Christian landscape, a trend that will only increase exponentially as more Christians are prompted by the Holy Spirit to embrace the Hebraic truths that are foundational to their faith.

This book is part of the Golden Key Books *Living Emblems Series*, materials designed to help Christians discover the importance of the biblically Hebraic symbols. In it, you will see the solid biblical background of the menorah, both in the Old and New Testaments. You will be assisted in understanding the menorah tradition of the sages of Israel. You will also share in the rich paradigms of light and life among the Jewish people. Finally, you will understand more than ever before the person and work of Jesus, the Messiah, the living Menorah, the light of the world. You will simply be amazed at the mysteries of divine understanding that are clearly revealed in God’s lamp, man’s light.

I am most grateful to Charles Bryant-Abraham and Judy Grehan for their careful critique of the manuscript and for their excellent suggestions regarding content.

I pray that this book will enrich your life as you claim for yourself the Jewish heritage that was biblically described as the wealth of the nations.

Fraternally in the Messiah,
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Tabernacles 2001

Chapter 1

God's Lamp

Because of the extreme attention to detail given to the design of the menorah, it is clear that it is more a symbolic form, a work of art, rather than a mere cultic apparatus.¹ Moses was instructed by God to “make a lampstand of pure gold. The lampstand and its base and its shaft are to be made of hammered work . . . 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.”²

The menorah is a concrete symbol of God himself, the source of light.³ Its central lamp is called by the Jews *ner Elohim* (the lamp of God). David exclaimed, “You are my lamp, O Lord; the Lord turns my darkness into light,”⁴ thereby identifying God with the menorah as he who illuminates the darkness. The Psalmist observed that God “wraps himself in light as with a garment.”⁵ Rather than bedeck himself in the brilliant colors associated with the pagan deities of the ancient world, God clothed himself in pure white light as a mantle.⁶ God's divine presence, the *Shekhinah*, was manifest as a “fiery light.”⁷ When Ezekiel saw the temple, the earth shone with God's glory,⁸ the same glory that had been manifested to the prophet as “fire.”⁹ God's majesty illuminated the temple as the fiery light of a golden lamp. The sages noted that the “Holy one, blessed

be he, was constrained to dwell with mortals in the light of a lamp . . . and so a 'pure menorah' came down from heaven."¹⁰

Daniel declared of the Lord: "Light dwells in him . . . he reveals deep and hidden things."¹¹ It is no coincidence that when this prophet viewed "the Ancient of Days," he observed that "his eyes were like flaming torches."¹² When John saw the throne of God and the Lamb, the apostle observed one with "seven eyes" that he identified as "flames of fire,"¹³ the "seven spirits of God."¹⁴ Zechariah declared that these seven flames of fire are the "eyes of the Lord, which run to and fro through the earth."¹⁵

God's light and life, the essence of the divine nature, are graphically displayed in the menorah, the material representation of the divine light. One of the most significant and repeated metaphors used to describe God in Scripture is light. John declares it simply and directly: "God is light."¹⁶ The pristine purity of white, transparent light is the most graphic material representation for the ultimately incomprehensible Deity. Not only do the Hebrew Scriptures continually describe God as being light, they also refer to the Messiah with metaphors of light, calling him a "Star"¹⁷ and the "Sun of righteousness."¹⁸

Another perhaps even more significant metaphor for God is fire. He was a fiery voice in the burning bush.¹⁹ He was a pillar of fire that was light to Israel and darkness to the Egyptian armies at the Reed Sea.²⁰ His fire blackened the entire summit of Mount Sinai.²¹ Both testaments assert that "our God is a consuming fire."²² The Hebrew for "consuming fire," *lk'a; vae (esh akal)*, implies a magnificent conflagration—a bonfire as it were—that draws everything around it into its flames and releases enormous amounts of energy skyward. In like manner, God is *esh akal*, the fire that draws those who approach him into the all-consuming energy stream of the Holy Spirit, where they are filled with

the fire of his presence and extend the praises heavenward.²³ The wonder of this experience, however, is that the all-consuming Fire never consumes those who are drawn into his presence. Like the burning bush in which he dwelt, he lives in them inflaming them with passion and vision so that from them radiate the fiery tongues of his divine Word.

The ancients recognized fire as one of their most important material assets because it could be maintained and exploited for personal conveniences, including light, warmth, cooking, and various crafts and trades. They also found fire to be one of the central elements of theophany.²⁴ When Daniel saw the *kise' ha-kabod*, the throne of glory, it had the appearance of a fiery flame, with wheels all ablaze.²⁵ Because fire brings both light and warmth, it reveals a God of love who enlightens the universe and warms those who come out of the darkness the world into his loving embrace of light.

The menorah's seven flames are repeatedly used in the panorama of Holy Scripture to depict God himself. Explicit biblical identification of fiery lights symbolize God's glory. Though Israel's wilderness sanctuary was the first human shrine that did not focus on the image of a pagan deity, it, nevertheless, featured a symbol, an icon that pointed beyond itself to the invisible God. The menorah, the eternal light²⁶ can clearly be seen as a representation of the *Shekhinah*, God's indwelling presence among mankind.

WHOSE LAMP IS IT?

Because the menorah has been so closely identified as a Jewish symbol—and, indeed, has come to symbolize the nation of Israel itself—it has often been called the “Jewish” menorah. Believing it to be a symbol of an antiquated religion, most Christian teachers have seen little significance in the menorah for the church and have cast it with nonchalance into obscurity. By the same token, Jewish lead-

ers have often been offended by occasional Christian use of the menorah, seeing such as a coopting of sacred symbols and elements that were clearly given to the Jews by God himself. Some even consider Christian use of menorahs as an expropriation of *sacramenta*, especially when they are used for purposes outside traditional Jewish understanding. But, is the name *Jewish menorah* wholly accurate?

The truth is that the menorah is God's lamp, as Scripture clearly declares: "The lamp of God . . . in the temple of the Lord, where the ark of God was . . ." ²⁷ The menorah is not merely the Jewish candlestick or the tabernacle lampstand or the temple candelabrum. It is "God's lamp." In that the menorah is God's lamp, it belongs to all of God's people, both Jews and Christians. Its rich symbolism is appropriate to both faith communities, representing God's light radiating into man's world, the power of vision and insight that comes to believers in God, both Jew and Gentile, through study of God's Word.

It was no coincidence that David called God's Word "a lamp to my feet, and a light unto my path."²⁸ The Hebrew word for "lamp" in David's observation is *ner*, the term used repeatedly and specifically to describe the menorah.²⁹ The word *menorah* is simply the word *ner* prefixed by the *mem*-preformative: *me-ner-ah*. That this lamp symbolizes the Word of God is further confirmed by Solomon who declared that God's commandments (*mitzvot*) are a lamp (*ner*).³⁰ It is entirely likely that the "lamp" which David and Solomon visualized was the menorah, God's lamp.

Assuring as the light of a torch along an unfamiliar trail on a moonless night, so doesthe Word of God give vision and direction to humankind, illuminating the narrow way that leads to the gates of eternal life.³¹ Without clear insight into the Word of God, people perish.³² When illumination from God's Word is not manifest, people lack prophetic vision, and when vision is not present, people

stumble down the slippery slope of deception and plunge, often irrecoverably, off the precipice of misunderstanding. Because the Word of God is not of primary value to them, masses of humanity wantonly and recklessly throw themselves into the vortex of unrestrained passion. As a result, mankind reaps the natural consequences of a lack of vision or devotion to the things of God. On the other hand, happy are they who keep God's commandments,³³ allowing God's lamp to enlighten their pathway and lead them on to eternal life.

The Word of God is like a light that shines in a dark place, clearly pointing the way. It channels the path of the just toward the "Day Star" who arises in the hearts of believers.³⁴ The Word of God dispels the darkness, the confusion, the ignorance, the fear, the superstition, and the dangers inherent in human existence. In spite of the ominous obscurity of the human situation, one small ray from the Eternal Word dispels the darkness, brings clarity of purpose, and unmistakably marks the way to the tree of life so clearly that no one who walks in that light will stumble.³⁵

The menorah comes to symbolize the very salvation of God itself, for we are told by the prophet that God will not rest until the salvation of his people is manifest as a brightly burning lamp.³⁶ Since God was referring to salvation and to his own lamp, could it have been anything other than the menorah? The menorah and the One whom it represents presents a vision of God's salvation. Indeed, it is wisdom and knowledge in God's Word that brings stability and strengthens salvation.³⁷ Without the stabilizing element of God's Word, the believer is left vulnerable to the deceptive devices of "powers and principalities" and to the ever-changing winds of human surmising.³⁸ With the Word of God's vision, the believer is well grounded upon a secure and stable foundation. Jesus declared that when one

hears and does the Word of God (“my sayings”), he wisely constructs his life on the bedrock of divine revelation and insight that will stand against every tumultuous circumstance that life may bring.³⁹

It is the Word of God that causes the path of the just to be evermore illuminated until the day of completeness.⁴⁰ The Word, as the menorah, continues to dispel the darkness along the believer’s pathway until it brings him to the light of full day in the radiance of God’s glory in the face of Jesus, the Anointed. One cannot be overcome of the prince of darkness when he follows the illumination of God’s lamp.

Upon seeing the menorah, both Jew and Christian should immediately understand that God has ordained a lamp for his anointed ones, his chosen people, to direct their paths and to keep them safely in his way.⁴¹ If God commissioned his Word to be exemplified in the menorah to lighten David’s pathway, he will certainly do likewise for all believers. God will continue to provide the light of life for his people: “The Lord will be your everlasting light, and your God will be your glory.”⁴² God’s Lamp will forever be man’s light.

¹ Carol L. Meyers, *The Tabernacle Menorah* (Missoula, Montana: Scholars Press, 1976), p. 168.

² Exodus 25:31-32, New American Standard Version.

³ Edwin R. Goodenough, *Jewish Symbols in the Greco-Roman Period* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1956), IV, p. 96. See also Lee I. Levine, *The Ancient Synagogue* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), p. 572.

⁴ 2 Samuel 22:29, New International Version.

⁵ Psalm 104:2, New International Version.

⁶ Thorlief Boman, *Hebrew Thought Compared with Greek* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1960), p. 89.

⁷ Psalm 78:14. The New Revised Standard Version correctly translates the hendiadys אֵשׁ אֶנְוֵר ('owr 'esh) as “fiery light.”

⁸ Ezekiel 43:2.

⁹ Ezekiel 1:27-28; 8:2-4.

¹⁰ Goodenough IV, p.89. (finish this note)

- ¹¹ Daniel 2:22, New International Version.
¹² Daniel 10:6, NAS.
¹³ Revelation 1:14; 2:18, KJV
¹⁴ Revelation 5:6.
¹⁵ Zechariah 4:10, KJV.
¹⁶ 1 John 1:5.
¹⁷ Numbers 24:17.
¹⁸ Malachi 4:2.
¹⁹ Exodus 3:2-4.
²⁰ Exodus 13:21-22.
²¹ Exodus 19:18.
²² Deuteronomy 4:24; Hebrews 12:29.
²³ The basis of this analysis of “consuming fire” was shared with me by Dr. Charles Bryant-Abraham.
²⁴ Edwin R. Goodenough, *Jewish Symbols in the Greco-Roman Period* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1953), p. 91.
²⁵ Daniel 7:9.
²⁶ Carol L. Meyers, *The Tabernacle Menorah* (Missoula, Montana: Scholars Press, 1976), p. 177.
²⁷ 1 Samuel 3:1-3.
²⁸ Psalm 119:105.
²⁹ Exodus 27:20; 1 Samuel 3:1-3.
³⁰ Proverbs 6:23.
³¹ Matthew 7:14.
³² Proverbs 29:18.
³³ Proverbs 29:18.
³⁴ 2 Peter 1:19.
³⁵ Isaiah 35:8.
³⁶ Isaiah 62:1.
³⁷ Isaiah 33:6.
³⁸ Ephesians 4:14.
³⁹ Luke 6:48.
⁴⁰ Proverbs 4:18.
⁴¹ Psalm 132:17.
⁴² Isaiah 60:19.

Chapter 2

Man's Light

The menorah is God's lamp and man's light because it is unique to God's character to give illumination, and it is essential to man's being that he have light. God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.¹ "The unfolding of [God's] words gives light; it imparts understanding to the simple."² The vision that God gives is so enlightening that "whoever walks the road, although a fool, shall not go astray."³ When believers walk in the light, as God is in the light, they have fellowship with one another, and their sins are forgiven.⁴ God's light removes the darkness of sin, and it produces unity among those who accept his illumination.

God's eternal will and plan for man has always been one of covenant and blessing, in which God's light illuminates man's life so that he may fully realize his destiny and continue in a face-to-face relationship with the Eternal Father. In the beginning, Adam and Eve were able to commune with God, basking in the light of his presence. He was their God and their light, much more than mere illumination: he was their peace, tranquility, repose, and joy. The primal light that existed before and outside of all creation, that unapproachable light of the Divine Glory, accompanied them in a covenantal relationship of complete blessing. God himself caused his countenance to shine upon them

and gave them peace.

God's first material creation was the very substance of life. Without light, no life—plant or animal—could exist. Light is the sole source of energy that is essential for photosynthesis, the process that allows the planet's flora to flourish. Without photosynthesis in plants, no fauna would have food to fuel its existence. Light, then, was and is the very essence of life. Parallel with this primeval manifestation of life-giving physical light was the radiance of spiritual light that provided life and insight to Edenic man. Adam and Eve were intended to walk with God in the light of his presence.

Sin, however, invaded the sanctity of that relationship and sundered the divine connection. "Your sins have separated you from me,"⁵ God declared. Since God could not look upon iniquity, Adam and Eve could no longer maintain a face-to-face relationship with their creator. They withdrew from God, leaving themselves woefully and abysmally alone in the void of the sin's darkness. The path to the tree of life, which the menorah later came to represent, was closed, and angelic sentries were posted to ensure the inaccessibility of its fruit.

When one stumbles in spiritual darkness, that darkness is gross, an all-pervasive sense of doom and gloom. Like a spelunker whose emergency light has been extinguished, the sinner is in a darkness that is tangible, and he is engrossed in abject hopelessness. Desperation gives way to the terror of darkness. When one chooses to live in spiritual darkness, it is not long before all vision fails, just as total blindness ensues when humans and other creatures are physically subjected to total physical darkness for any extended period of time. The ocular mechanisms atrophy and cannot be renewed. Likewise those who revel in spiritual darkness soon find themselves degenerate reprobates, incapable of vision.

Through the fall of Adam, all men were brought under the power of spiritual darkness.⁶ The longing outcry of every human heart since that time has been for divine illumination, a flash of insight, a spark of communication with the Creator. Every human heart in history has exclaimed the anguished cry of King Balak to the prophet Balaam: "What has the Lord said?"⁷ When God's face is hidden, when God's lamp is obscured, great is the darkness of the human heart, and void is human reason. The soul that is so darkened is capable of actions so vile that they defy description, much less understanding.

But, there is good news. God has ordained a lamp to illuminate his anointed ones.⁸ The God who withdrew because of sin has chosen to draw near to himself his loved creation who had withdrawn because of sin. Once again God permits small rays of his light to shine into human hearts. Initially this action came to men and women who sought God through repentance and prayer, causing the infallible word of prophecy, the light that shines in a dark place, to be manifest in their hearts as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.⁹ Throughout the course of history, God's Word has been a lamp to the feet of the righteous, lighting their pathway.¹⁰

There were many patriarchs and matriarchs of faith who encountered the Divine Light. Abel was given insight by the Divine to offer an acceptable sacrifice.¹¹ Enoch walked in God's light for 365 years before he was translated so as not to see death.¹² Noah found grace in God's eyes because he alone had maintained a pure family pedigree.¹³ Job walked with God and found the light of divine insight before, during, and after his fiery trial.

God entered into an intimate relationship with man when Abraham, a Babylonian by birth and a Syrian by nationality, was called by the Divine Light to leave his country and go forth in search of a land of promise and a city

whose foundations had been laid by God himself.¹⁴ On the day in which the Abrahamic covenant was established, God himself, in the form of a blazing torch (the *Shekhinah*), walked between the pieces of Abraham's sacrifice, flooding the patriarch of faith with the light of his presence.¹⁵ Perhaps that torch was a spiritual/material foreshadowing of the menorah.

In time, God determined to disclose his illuminating instructions for mankind that outlined the conditions on which he might be approached by man. First, he appeared to Moses and spoke to him in the tongues¹⁶ of fire that issued forth from the burning bush. The seven-fold Spirit of God spoke fiery words of light, bringing the hope of deliverance and liberty to Abraham's descendants. Those golden words must have seemed like a shining menorah both to Moses and to his fellow Israelites.

It is always from the fire that God speaks; therefore, it is imperative that one learns to listen to the fire in order to hear God's voice. The voice that issued forth the divine commission of Moses, however, merely reiterated and fortified the fire that had been burning in the once proud prince of Egypt since early childhood. Though he had been afforded a lofty position of privilege, wealth, erudition, and power as Pharaoh's grandson, Moses chose instead the "reproach of Christ,"¹⁷ identifying with the pain and sufferings of his own people. God had orchestrated the positioning of the infant in Pharaoh's house and had arranged that his nurse should be his own mother, so that he would be taught his own heritage. One day, the fire that burned in his bosom erupted in flaming rage and violence against an Egyptian taskmaster, and Moses was forced to flee Egypt. After forty years of preparation as a shepherd in the Sinai desert, the prophet was ready to listen to the fire that had long been his own passion as it communicated the divine strategy that would effect Israel's deliverance. The fiery words

from the burning bush resounded to Israel and have echoed across the corridors of time to all peoples enslaved in oppression's darkness. The immortal liberating light burst forth in fiery words: "Let my people go!"

Later at Sinai, with the descendants of Abraham assembled before him, God thundered ten words of instruction in tongues of fire which were also written "with the finger of God" upon tablets of stone.¹⁸ According to tradition the ten commandments resounded in seventy languages to the world's nations, the children of the seventy descendants of Noah's sons.¹⁹ These words were both heard and seen by the Israelites. Literally the Hebrew text that records this synesthetic incident translates: "And the people saw the voices [*kol*] and the flames."²⁰ How does one see voices? Philo of Alexandria, before the time of Christ, said, "From the fire . . . there sounded a voice, for the flame became articulate speech . . . so clearly were the words formed . . . that they seemed to see them rather than hear them."²¹ Perhaps recounting the Sinai incident, Jeremiah observed, "Is not [God's] word like fire . . . and like a hammer which shatters a rock?"²² God's Word took the physical appearance of tongues of fire and codified one of history's greatest documents, the Ten Commandments. With the Decalogue, men were equipped with understanding of how to love God and how to love man, thereby fulfilling both the two greatest commandments²³ and the one overarching divine instruction: "Love."²⁴

The light of the menorah corresponded to the Torah. In one rabbinic midrash, God said to Moses: "Say to thy brother aaron: Greater than the gifts of the princes is thy gift; for thou art called upon to kindle the light, and, while the sacrifices shall last only as long as the Temple lasts, thy light of the Law shall last forever."²⁵ The Torah light is the eternal flame that ever illuminates men's pathway.

The Ten Commandments were designed to make the

abhorrence of sin abundantly clear²⁶ and to elicit repentance from men who with a whole heart would seek God. The entirety of God's instruction (Torah) became man's spiritual light. Solomon summarized God's grace in giving his ten instructions to men: "For the commandment is a lamp and the teaching a light, and the reproofs of discipline are the way of life."²⁷ God's commandments are clear, "enlightening the eyes."²⁸ The fiery Sinai words, then, were a menorah in themselves, illuminating both the nation of Israel and the entire world. Even those nations that would not accept God's Torah as Israel did heard the fundamental words of thunder in their own languages and had those precepts emblazoned on their hearts so that since that time, their consciences have either condemned or exonerated them.²⁹

Finally, in the fullness of time, God made the complete disclosure of his very essence and glory when he spoke to all mankind through his only begotten Son, Jesus Messiah of Israel and the Savior of the world. The glory of God was fully revealed in Jesus.³⁰ "If you have seen me, you have seen the Father,"³¹ Jesus declared. Is it any wonder, then, that Jesus declared himself to be "the light of the world"? The first incarnation of God's Word, the eternal Torah that had been with the Father before creation and had subsequently been revealed to prophets and wise men of Israel, became incarnate in the person of Yeshua Ha-Mashiach (Jesus the Christ).

When gross spiritual darkness covered the earth, the glory of the Lord arose over Israel in the person of Jesus who uniquely became a personal light, "the light of life,"³² to all who believed in him. The sin that had separated men from the presence of God was removed through Jesus' atoning death, making it possible for God to impute the righteousness of Jesus to them.³³ At the moment that faith is released, the darkness covering the human heart is dispelled

with the same power and finality as the darkness that covered the face of the deep dissipated when God commanded, "Let there be light." The face-to-face relationship with the Divine that was lost in the first Adam is restored in the new Adam, Jesus the Messiah.³⁴ The light that had withdrawn, leaving only abject darkness, suddenly reappears, bringing a flash of illumination that overpowers the human heart and emotion with "unspeakable joy, full of glory."³⁵

From God's Lamp radiates God's Light that becomes man's light. As David declared, "For with thee is the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light."³⁶ The fountain of life that sprang from the presence of the Eternal Father in the person of the only begotten Son fully manifested the light of God's presence so that men were—and continue to be—enlightened. God's Lamp, the incarnate menorah, brought the essence of heaven down to earth. He became man's light so that men from every tribe and tongue have been illuminated and brought into the Divine Presence with the promise of being clothed with the same glory of eternal light and life that is manifest in Jesus, God's Lamp and man's light.

¹ 1 John 1:5.

² Psalm 119:130, New American Standard Version.

³ Isaiah 35:8, New King James Version.

⁴ 1 John 1:7.

⁵ Isaiah 59:2.

⁶ Romans 5:12.

⁷ Numbers 23:17, New Revised Standard Version.

⁸ Psalm 132:17.

⁹ 2 Peter 1:19.

¹⁰ Psalm 119:105.

¹¹ Genesis 4:4.

¹² Genesis 5:24.

¹³ Genesis 6:8-9.

¹⁴ Hebrews 11:10.

¹⁵ Genesis 15:17.

¹⁶ Exodus 3:2-4.

¹⁷ Hebrews 11:26.

- ¹⁸ Exodus 31:18.
¹⁹ Genesis 10.
²⁰ Exodus 20:18.
²¹ Philo, The Decalogue, F. Colson, trans., *Philo* (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1968) vol. 7, pp. 28-29.
²² Jeremiah 23:29, New American Standard.
²³ Matthew 22:40.
²⁴ Romans 13:10.
²⁵ *Tanhuma* (ed. Martin Buber), in *Jewish Encyclopedia: A Descriptive Record of the History, Religion, Literature, and Customs of the Jewish People from the Earliest Times to the Present Day*, ed. Isidore Singer, New York, 1901), I, p. 4.
²⁶ Romans 7:13.
²⁷ Proverbs 6:23, New Revised Standard.
²⁸ Psalm 19:8.
²⁹ Romans 2:14-15.
³⁰ 2 Corinthians 4:6.
³¹ John 14:9.
³² John 8:12.
³³ Romans 4:11.
³⁴ 1 Corinthians 15:22-45.
³⁵ 1 Peter 1:8.
³⁶ Psalm 36:9.