

From Dark to Different!

#3269 25 1228A post-Advent

1 AV John 1:4 “*In him was life; and the life was the light of men.*”

2 The *life* Jesus gives us is the *light* He provides so we can *walk* and *talk* in a way that speaks His Truth.

3 It is a Christlike *attitude* that shows the world a much *Different* way from the *Darkness* of this world.

4 Being a *light-bearer* is to follow Jesus AV John 8:12 “*He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness*”—but will shine *His Light*—being empowered by *His Spirit* to show a kind and respectful attitude toward all people—it is much *Different* from most attitudes.

5 The holiday can slip away—one day the lights are glowing; music playing; tables with food; people being more patient and loving—then the calendar turns; decorations put away and life moves on. *Christmas* may have ended but the *message* has *not*.

6 The angels proclaimed AV Luke 2:14 “*Glory to God in the highest,*” but *not* for *one* season; it was for *every* day all year.

7 AV Luke 2:10 “*I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people*” not just a few, and not limited to a day, a week, or a year.

8 The announcement was a *new reality*—God came *near*—the *Word* in human form and AV John 1:14 “*dwelt among us.*”

9 Christmas may be over on the *calendar*, but Christ is *with us* in the *world*.

10 He is still at work *on us* and *in us*, so the post-Christmas question is not, *What did we receive*; but *Who are we becoming?*

11 We leave the *Dark* attitudes behind us and go forward to a *Different* way.

Christmas Ends—Preparation Continues.

12 The first Christmas was *not* an ending but a beginning. The manger did *not* conclude God’s plan for us; it just *continued* it.

13 The *Child* would grow to be our *Savior*—Who would teach us; heal us; forgive us; take our place on the Cross; pay our sin debt; ascend into Heaven; and promise to return for us.

14 Now we must *prepare* because He is *coming*—AV Matthew 24:44 “*Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.*”

15 The warning is repeated NIV Luke 21:34 “*Be careful, or your hearts will be weighed down with dissipation, drunkenness and the anxieties of life, and that day will close on you unexpectedly like a trap.*”

16 Advent celebrates His *coming*; Christmas celebrates His *arrival*; and now we are called to *prepare*; be *ready*; look *up* for He is returning.

17 Preparing is not about *prediction* but *formation*. It is allowing God to *reform* how we talk, act, and decide—in a much *different* way than yesterday.

Peace Was Announced—Now It Is Lived.

18 The angels sang Luke 2:14 “*Peace and good will on earth,*” but *that* is up to *us*. NIV Romans 12:18 “*If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.*”

19 Peace in the Bible was not just the *absence* of conflict, but it meant the presence of a Prince—giving us a right relationship with God and everyone else. Peace has a *name*—**Jesus**.

20 Following Christmas has us asking—Is that peace *visible in me* and *seen* by others?

21 How am I talking when meeting a *difficult* situation?

22 How am I treating someone who is *disagreeing* with me?

23 How do I respond to a persistent and *demanding* person?

24 The peace we live out in *January* is more powerful than the peace we celebrated in *December*.

25 AV Colossians 3:15 “*Let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.*”

26 If God *rules* our hearts, then Jesus *gives* us peace—including the giving of thoughtful replies and considerate acts.

27 The Spirit will *rule* our responses—at home, in work, during school, if online, and during interactions with anyone.

Goodwill Was Proclaimed—Now It Must Continue

28 The angels proclaimed *goodwill* toward all people—not just those who agree with us; not just our friends who like us; and not just those who do nice things for us.

29 The challenge is: Will *peace and goodwill* survive after the season *ends* and the music *fades*?

30 Goodwill means we choose *generosity* over *selfishness*; *grace* over *resentment*; and *mercy* over *judgment*.

31 Goodwill means knowing that Jesus did not come to a *select few*, but for the *entire world*—inviting *everyone* to be part of His family just by *believing*, *accepting*, and *walking* in obedience to His Word. AV John 12:46 “*I am come a light into the world.*”

32 The challenge now is “*that whosoever believeth on [Jesus] should not abide in darkness.*”

33 We come *away from* the responses of the *world* and go *toward* the light of the *Lord*—refusing to remain in the *Dark*!

34 We are now **Different** so we *act* different.

35 We extend **forgiveness** instead of bitterness.

36 We **listen** to the discouraged—not ignore them.

37 We offer **help** and want no recognition.

38 We **pray** for those who dislike us instead of condemning them.

39 Such right responses are not just **seasonal virtues**; they are **Kingdom values** to be *put on* like a garment and *put into* practice every day.

The Christlike Attitude Is a Continuous Calling

40 Our post-Christmas attitude should be letting “*the same attitude be in you that was in Christ Jesus*” *Philippians 2:5*.

41 The *mind* of Christ is *humility* of spirit and showing love toward all people. It is *obedience* to God even when it is difficult.

42 Christ-like attitudes are not automatic with the turning of the calendar—They *result* from obeying God’s *Word*; They are *learned* through prayer and asking for the Holy Spirit to help us every day to act, talk, and walk with a scriptural attitude that day.

43 It is *prayer* that changes our hearts; It is *Scripture* that renews our thinking; It is a *choice* to be in harmony with Jesus—not copying the culture or being influenced by social media.

44 The return of Jesus is imminent [approaching; impending; close at hand]—it means making a difference **now**.

From Celebration to Transformation

45 It is possible to love Christmas and *miss* its *meaning*; It is possible to celebrate the holiday and *miss its purpose*—which is to *transform* us to be *different* from the world.

46 We leave the **Dark** of this culture and embrace a **Different** way of the Lord.

47 God came to our world *not* to be admired but to be *followed*; He came *not* to be celebrated but to be *trusted*—for this new attitude.

48 The shepherds did *not stay* in the fields that night, but they left as different people. They *NLT Luke 2:17* “*told everyone what had happened and what the angel had said to them about this child.*”

49 After Christmas we should ask: Am I more *patient* than I was before the holiday?

50 Am I treating my family *better* than before?

51 Am I *forgiving* them as Jesus said I must?

52 Am I more *hopeful* of greeting Jesus than I had been?

53 Am I more interested in reading God’s *Word*?

54 If God has come to *dwell* in us, then something should be *growing* in us—like faith and trust in Him.

Living Ready in an Uncertain World

55 The spiritual condition of the world is worse today than ever—and in so many other ways as well. Millions are anxious and fearful of entering a New Year. They have lost hope of any *change* or seeing any *improvement* in society.

56 The message of Christmas is that *Christ* has *come*; He is *with us* in the *Person* of His Spirit; He will come *back* as our Savior; and He has promised to make us *ready* to meet Him.

57 By *choice* we go from **Dark to Different**—and we should make a difference in the lives of others.

58 We can be *prepared* and we can *live ready* through prayer and faith in God.

59 We can be *hopeful* by keeping God’s *Word* in memory.

60 We are *NKJV Titus 2:13* “*looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ.*”

Carry Christmas Forward

61 We carry Christmas into the New Year and beyond by acting and deciding in a different way than previously.

62 *NIV Colossians 3:12* “*Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.*”

63 These are not decorations to be *stored away*—they are garments to be *worn every day*.

1. Showing *Compassion* when others are hurting.
2. Showing *Kindness* when it is easy to ignore.
3. Showing *Humility* when pride is tempting.
4. Being *Gentle* when someone is harsh.
5. Being *Patient* when delays happen.
6. Responding in *love* when hate is the norm.

The *holiday* may end, but *Hope* does not; *Peace* does not and *Love* must not, because *Jesus* is with us.

64 As we head toward 2026, may the *goodwill* proclaimed by angels continue *with us* and *in us*.

65 And may the peace announced at Bethlehem be *lived out* in our homes.

66 May our lives *testify* that we are *preparing*—not just celebrating—because Christmas may *end*, but God’s *calling continues*—every day.

67 May our *attitudes* today, tomorrow, and beyond make the *proclamation* that we are *committed* to trust God, and with His help through His Spirit, we will go **From Dark to Different** in our *ways and words and destination!*



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Post-Advent