

# 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 <sup>NLT</sup> **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 <sup>NKJV</sup> **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** <sup>NIV</sup> **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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