



"...a net...cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind." Matthew 13:47

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SOME SHOCKING NEWS ABOUT DECEMBER—When I think of this season of the year, it brings sadness to my heart to see the commercialization. However, I try to enjoy it in ways that keep me with a Christian balance. One of the things that I really like is the lights. Since first reading my Bible and finding out that God is light, and then seeing the beauty of lights throughout His creation, it makes me stand back in awe. Man's artificial lights (although I enjoy them) are no match with those of the heavenly Designer and Creator. I cannot imagine what Heaven will be like! The lights of the city of Revelation 21 (read it), I'm sure will take our breath! Now back to our article "Some Shocking News..."

Since I am always geared to the nautical, we must find some "fish" lights. It took mankind many centuries to discover electricity and many more years to put it to use. Even so, where it is available, elaborate wiring systems and power plants are required before a factory or home can use it, and then it is not always dependable.

In contrast, consider another wonder in God's creation. He gave certain fish throughout the world the ability to make and use their own electricity. Deep in the Caribbean Sea there is a fish only three inches long names the *flashlight fish*, having a light as strong as a small flashlight. Its electricity comes from pouches below its eyes and can be turned on and off at will. A large fish pursuing it in dark waters gives up when it swims swiftly in one direction all lit up, then turns the light off and swims in another direction.

There are some fish that have rows of lights along both sides of their bodies and in the dark look like toy ocean liners with lights shining through the windows. They can turn them on and off as they please. Others, such as the deep sea *viper fish*, *dragonfish* and more, carry torches on the end of fleshy rods which they can turn in any direction, and there are still others which have bright red taillights. The *gulper eel*, almost five feet long, is one of these. Still others have headlights sending out two beams with reflectors behind them, like a little car finding its way in the dark waters.

But not all use their electricity for lights. For some it is a weapon. Certain species of *catfish* use an electric shocking system to steal food from larger fish and to keep them away. Touching the stomach of a large fish with its fin is just like plugging in an electric cord. When the bigger one is stunned or knocked out; the catfish escapes or helps itself to the food the larger one had intended to eat. *Electric rays*, *torpedoes* and *numbfish* can all give severe shocks many times a minute. The six

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to eight foot *electric eel* of the Amazon River and other waters of Central and South America is the most powerful of all and can disable large animals with as much as 500 volts of electricity.

So with our electricity we light up our homes and towns, but the author of true light has had the lights on from the beginning, especially the light that shined brightly from Calvary's tree some two thousand years ago. Has this light shined in your heart? John 1:1-4, 9, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men. That was the true **Light**, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world."

FISHFUL THINKING—A lot of wishful thinking goes on during the holidays by both the young and old. The soldier wishes he was home, Grandpa wishes for good weather, a little girl wishes for a new doll, the farm boy wishes for a brown horse, a father wishes for a bigger Christmas bonus, a mother wishes all the kids could spend the night, a teenager wishes he could drive the car, and the merchant wishes for a lot of sales. On and on we could go with our wishes. For some those wishes come true, but mostly it is only "fishful" thinking.

Some of the saddest times of the year come following December 25. I am determined not to let this happen to me. I do not think it is wrong to wish. The word means "to eagerly and ardently have a desire for, to long for." The problem comes when we misdirect our wishes. Some are so foolish as to bring their wishes to a man (Santa—another spelling of Satan). Others direct them higher, like "wishing upon a star." Your wishes must go higher than that. Why not let's take our wishes to the giver of all good gifts—God, the Father? For years men wished for peace. When God sent to earth His greatest gift, the Lord Jesus Christ, the possibility of this wish coming true was perfected. We all want peace on earth, but it is only wishful thinking until the Prince of Peace comes to rule and reign. The peace mankind needs most is inward peace, peace for the heart and soul. That not only can be wished for, but obtained, "...peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Romans 5:1). I do wish that for you.

The word "wish" is used in the Scriptures. Let me present a few places. In Acts 27:29 they are wishing for daylight. Jonah was wishing to die in Jonah 4:8 (shame on him). Paul, in Romans 9:3, was wishing his own people would get saved. In 2 Corinthians 13:9, Paul was wishing that believers would grow. Then in 3 John 2,

John was wishing good health for a friend. How deeply rooted are your wishes in the things of God? Plans and wishes that exclude God may seem to come to pass, but only partially. I want my wishes to reach out further than this life, so I choose to direct my hope, faith, and wishes to One who can bring to pass the greatest of my dreams. God is greater than the genie in the bottle or the old man in the North. He has blessed me beyond what I could have envisioned. I wish for you the same. Wishing that is rooted in this world alone is only “fishful” thinking (the big one always gets away). This year let’s direct some wishes into more than just the shallows of this life. I bring my wishes unto the very throne room of God and seek to bring Him pleasure during the Christmas season.

BEAUTIFUL, BUT DEADLY—Sea anemones, like the flowers after which they are named, are usually extremely beautiful in their many colors. However, they are not flowers but marine animals, although lacking most features of the animals with which we are familiar. Usually they anchor themselves to a spot on the ocean floor, sometimes alone, sometimes in great numbers. The “flowers” are actually tentacles that usually rise upward to make the colorful display but in some species hang downward or spread out flatly.

The sea anemone is really a living electric battery. The tentacles that sprout from its main body and wave about gently in the waters to attract small fish are pretty but contain poisonous darts. When a fish touches one of these, the darts shoot out, exploding like a bomb, injecting their poison into the fish so it cannot escape. It is then placed by the tentacle into the anemone’s mouth and devoured.

Descriptive names have been given to many of the anemones. The aggregated anemone is common along the Pacific coast, and large numbers anchor close together on bottom rocks, looking like a choice garden with their many colors. The snakelocks, is colored either pinkish brown or apple green. Its snaky tentacles spread out in every direction. Since it prefers shallow water, they are often exposed to the air at low tide.

Another one in deep water is called the dahlia. It has a round golden base and short white tentacles, similar to the dahlia flower. Some varieties have a brown base and brilliant red tentacles. Either way they are very pretty. The varieties are too numerous to mention here, but illustrations of many are available in most libraries for those interested.

In spite of the beauty of the sea anemones, they do remind us of Satan and how he deceives. Beauty is not always to be considered a priority in our decision-making, and yet it is. We pick the pretty car, house, furniture, clothes. We want beauty to surround us, and yet never suspecting a trap laid not only by the business world, but maybe by Satan. Did you ever read about “his” appearance? No, he is not a snake in the grass, nor a demon with a forked tail and spear. How about Ezekiel 28:12-17, especially verse 17, *“Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou has corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness: I will cast thee to the ground, I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee.”* Beauty could be deadly. Never be tricked

by beauty as the fishes of the sea. The sea anemones are deadly residents of the sea that appear attractive, but conceal their deadly poison. So Satan, in order to beguile, trick, and seduce, may appear as an angel of light. *“And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light”* 2 Corinthians 11:14. Maybe the old adage is correct after all, “pretty is as pretty does.”

THE LORD’S FLEET—A fleet is usually a large group of ships, but it can be any group of vessels like planes or cars that operate as a unit. A naval fleet is the largest formation of warships, and at sea is like an army is on land. One meaning of “fleet” comes from the old English *fleot*, meaning ship, raft, or floating vessel. Below are some Bible “ships” that it would be well to acquaint yourself with this holiday season.

--Ownership—Psalm 100:3—we are His people
--Authorship—2 Timothy 3:16—inspiration of God
--Citizenship—Ephesians 2:19—fellow citizens
--Workmanship—Ephesians 2:10—His workmanship
--Discipleship—Matthew 4:19—follow me
--Leadership—Psalm 23:1—my shepherd
--Fellowship--1 John 1:7—we have fellowship
--Stewardship—Luke 16:2—account of stewardship
--Partnership—1 Corinthians 3:9—laborers together
--Hardship—2 Timothy 2:3—endure hardness
These vessels will keep you “ship shape”.

DOCTOR’S APPOINTMENT—It was a busy morning, around 8:30 AM when an elderly gentleman in his 80s arrived to have stitches removed from his thumb. He stated he was in a hurry as he had an appointment at 9 AM. I took his vital signs and had him take a seat, knowing it would be over an hour before someone would be able to see him. He looked at his watch, and I decided since I was not busy with another patient, I would evaluate his wound.

On exam it was well healed, so I talked to one of the doctors, got the needed supplies to remove his sutures and redress his wound. While taking care of his wound, we began to engage in conversation. I asked him if he had another appointment this morning, as he was in a hurry. The gentleman told me no, that he needed to go to the nursing home to eat breakfast with his wife. I then inquired as to her health. He told me that she had been there for a while, and that she was a victim of Alzheimer’s disease. As we talked, I asked if she would be upset if he was a bit late. He replied that she no longer knew who he was, that she had not recognized him in five years now. I was surprised, and asked him, “And you still go every morning, even though she doesn’t know who you are?”

He smiled as he patted my hand and said, “She doesn’t know me, but **I still know who she is.**” That’s the kind of love God shows to His children! 1 John 4:8

Sam met the preacher on the street one day, and during their conversation told him all the trouble he had been going through. He said, “Preacher, it is enough to make a man **lose** his religion.” The preacher replied, “It should be enough to make a man **use** his religion! (if his religion is usable)

DROP US A LINE; WE WILL BITE!-----“Fisher” Mund