

## **Bible and the Headlines: Christmas Crustacean**

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Dec 20, 2024

Hanukkah and Christmas are just around the corner. Both holidays are celebrated in lights. It is, therefore, noteworthy how much darkness is in this week's headlines

The e-magazine Oceanographic in their December 12th edition announced, "Creepy Crustacean: Meet the Deep Sea Predator Named 'Darkness'." The recently discovered creature is just under 2 inches long but is an apex predator at 24,000 feet beneath the sea. A research scientist described the new species, "Dulcibella camanchaca is a fast-swimming predator that we named after 'darkness' [in a Chilean dialect] . . . to signify the deep, dark ocean from where it predated." Despite its name, the crustacean is, "So pale [light], its . . . almost translucent."

From the Empire State on December 17th, 'ThisisCNY.com' carried, "After 2 Years of Darkness, National Grid Relights Iconic Downtown Syracuse Building." The energy company National Grid has its headquarters in a 93-year-old art deco building whose exterior has been unilluminated since its wiring system failed in 2023. This blackout was nothing like the blackout the building endured from World War II to 1999. Many things have changed since construction of the original external lights. The project manager for the illumination work stated, "This is the most efficient lighting system that we are aware of today." National Grid will use its exterior illumination ". . . to celebrate holidays, significant events, SU wins or community efforts."

The New York Times on December 17th featured, "This Brazilian Velvet Ant Is So Dark That It's Ultrablack." Spoiler alert: Velvet ants are not ants, they're wingless wasps. Females of this Brazilian wasp are also not 'black' - they're 'ultrablack.' The article noted, "Scientists found that the dark markings . . . reflected less than 1 percent of light." Female velvet ants not only create darkness from visible light, they, ". . . also absorb nearly all ultraviolet light." The ants' markings ". . . dazzle the eye. . . makes them easy to lose sight of . . . and. . . is perhaps why some Brazilians refer to them colloquially as sorcerer ants."

The Bible tells us about a time when every part of creation was in total darkness (Gen 1:2). Then God said, "Let there be light! And there was light. And looking on the light, He saw that it was good: and God made a division between the light and the dark" (Gen 1:3-4). The Gospel of John describes a different division between light and darkness, "The Word [Jesus] is the light that shines through the darkness—and the darkness can never extinguish it" (John 1:5). The explanation continues, "The true Light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. . . The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us" (John 1:9 and 1:14). Isaiah prophesied Jesus' birth in chapter 9, "The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned" (Isa 9:2). The Gospel of Luke quotes Isaiah's prophecy in the birth narrative of Jesus (Luk 1:79). These 'illuminating' verses from Isaiah, Luke and John are part of Christmas celebrations around the world.

This week's dark headlines contain more light than I thought. The light and dark parts of the velvet ant are clearly separated like God declared in Genesis 1. The National Grid, a lighting company, has finally said to their headquarters, "Let there be light!" (Gen 1:3). At 24,000 feet beneath the waves, the crustacean scientists have named 'darkness' is actually 'light' in appearance. This makes no evolutionary sense. In a dark environment, the best camouflage is dark skin. Instead of 'darkness' this little critter

should be called 'Christmas' because "The light shines through the darkness—and the darkness can never extinguish it" (John 1:5). May you all have a merry and bright Christmas.