

## I AM THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

### Lesson Ten: Part One

#### John 8:12-59

As a side note:

- Commentators agree that John 7:53 through 8:11, the account of the woman caught in adultery, was not an original part of John's Gospel
- Its style and vocabulary are different from the rest of his Gospel
- It is absent from virtually all early Greek manuscripts
- And none of the church fathers who wrote commentaries on John's Gospel include it
- However, many do believe that it is historically accurate
- It may originate with Luke's Gospel
- Or perhaps it is a piece of oral tradition
- But its placement here disrupts the flow of John's narrative

John 8:12

- Attaches seamlessly to 7:52

The setting remains the same

It is the Feast of Tabernacles, also known as the Feast of Booths

- According to God's instructions found in Leviticus 23, this Feast was to be celebrated for seven days beginning on a day of rest, on a Sabbath day (Leviticus 23:39-43)
- The Feast of Tabernacles is one of the Pilgrim Feasts when Jewish males were commanded to go to Jerusalem,
- It was also *the most popular of the annual feasts*
- So, there were likely tens of thousands of people in Jerusalem
- It is a Feast to rejoice and praise God for His continued provision in the current harvest
- But it is also a Feast to remember and celebrate
  - God's provision,
  - His guidance and protection,
  - And His presence *when He brought His people out from the land of Egypt*

We know from John 7:37

- That it is the last day of the Feast

The Feast of Tabernacles

- Was celebrated when the crops had all been gathered in from the land
- In the order of the Feasts, it was celebrated five days after the Day of Atonement

- *On exactly the fifteenth day of the seventh month*

On the first day of the Feast

- They built booths with *the foliage of beautiful trees, palm branches and boughs of leafy willows from the brook*
  - And they lived in these booths for the seven days of the Feast
  - *So that your generations may know that I had the sons of Israel live in booths when I brought them out of the land of Egypt* (Leviticus 23:43)
- We also learned last week that a special feature of this Feast
  - Was the water-drawing ritual that was performed each day of the Feast
- Another important ritual that had been added to the celebration of the Feast
  - Was the lamp-lighting ritual

In the 'court of women,' also known as 'the treasury'

- Stood four golden lampstands
- These lampstands stood 75 feet high and the bowls held 65 liters of oil
  - To light each lampstand, young men from the priests' families climbed a ladder and threw a lighted torch into the bowl of oil
- At the end of the first day of the Feast, these golden lampstands were lit amid great rejoicing
- The lamps continued to burn throughout every night of the Feast
- And they illuminated the temple and the entire city

These lamps blazing with light

- Commemorated the pillar of fire that led the Israelites through the wilderness as they journeyed to the Promised Land

In John 7:37-38, Jesus proclaimed:

- *If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scriptures said, 'From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.'*
- 7:43 records a division that occurred in the crowd because of Him. (7:43)
- John 8:12 continues: *Then Jesus **again** spoke to them*

In this same setting, in the treasury, under the illumination of the four golden lampstands Jesus proclaimed:

- ***I am the Light of the World! He who follows Me will not walk in darkness, but will have the Light of life.***

We know from his purpose statement that John is very deliberate about everything he includes in his Gospel account:

- *Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book;*
- *But these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name*

The setting here is important

- The Feast of Booths remembering and commemorating when the LORD their God brought them out of the land of Egypt, out of the land of slavery
- The treasury where the four lampstands stood
- And the blazing fire that flooded the temple and the city with light

Jesus chose this Feast and this setting to proclaim to the crowds:

- ***I am the Light of the World***

**Jesus, the Light of the World, is:**

- **The LORD God, the pillar of fire, who led His people through the wilderness**

Most of us will remember God leading His people out of the land of Egypt

- Exodus 13:21-22 records: *When they left the land of Egypt, the LORD went before by day in a pillar of cloud to lead them along the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, that they might travel by day and by night. The pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night **did not depart** from before the people.*
  - God's presence was with His people as they fled slavery in Egypt and His presence remained with them through forty years of wandering in the wilderness
- When the Egyptian army pursued them, the angel of God moved and went behind them; *and there was the cloud along with darkness, yet it gave light at night. Thus the one did not come near the other all night. (Exodus 14:20)*
  - In their flight the LORD God protected them from their enemies
  - Darkness covered the Egyptian camp and His light reigned over the camp of His people
- Numbers 9:15-16 records: *On the day that the tabernacle was set up (in the wilderness), the cloud covered the tabernacle. And at evening it was over the tabernacle like the appearance of fire until morning. So it was **always**: the cloud covered it by day and the appearance of fire by night.*

- The Shekinah Glory of the LORD God filled the tabernacle assuring His people that His presence was with them
- *And whenever the cloud lifted from over the tent, after that the people of Israel set out, and in the place where the cloud settled down, the people of Israel camped.*  
(Numbers 9:17)
  - He showed them when to set out and when to stay in place
  - He guided them through the vast, unknown wilderness

Imagine for a moment if they had not followed

- If they had found the night too short to pack up camp and follow the light of the LORD
- Or if they decided that they had traveled long enough or had found a better place to set up camp than the one further along, the one He was leading them to
- Or maybe if they tarried along the way and lost sight of His light
- Without His guidance and their obedience to His leading,
  - They would have been lost in the vast wilderness with no landmarks to guide the way,
  - With enemies and danger lurking before and around them,
  - With no provisions to sustain them in the barren waste of the desert

Jesus again spoke saying:

- ***I am the Light of the World;***
- ***he who follows Me will not walk in darkness, but will have the Light of life.***

**Jesus is the *Light of the World***

***He is the Light of life***

- He is the LORD God, the pillar of fire who remained with His people in the wilderness
- The God who is clothed with splendor and majesty
- The God who covers Himself with ***light*** as with a cloak (Psalm 104:1-2)

From beginning to end, **Light** is a major theme in God's Word

- It is a picture of God's goodness and holiness,
- It is the assurance of His presence among us,
- It is the comfort of His guidance and protection

In the beginning of time:

- God saw that the earth was formless and void and that darkness surrounded its surface
- And He said, '*Let there be light*' and there was light
- He saw that the light was ***good*** and He ***separated*** the light from the darkness

**Light** is a picture of the LORD God Himself

In the Psalms we read:

- *The LORD is my **light** and my salvation; whom shall I fear? (Psalm 27:1)*
- *For with You, O LORD, is the fountain of life; in Your **light** we see **light**. (Psalm 36:9)*
- *How blessed are the people who know the blast of the trumpet, the joyful sound! O LORD, they walk in the **light** of Your countenance. (Psalm 89:15)*
- *For You, O LORD, **light** my lamp; the LORD God **illuminates** my darkness. (Psalm 18:28)*

**Light** is also a sign of the Anointed One, the Coming Messiah, the Christ

The Prophets wrote:

- *The people who walk in darkness will see a great **light**; those who live in a dark land, the **light** will shine on them. (Isaiah 9:2)*
- *The LORD said, "It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will also make You a **light** of the nations so that My salvation may reach to the end of the earth." (Isaiah 49:6)*
- *Arise, shine; for your **light** has come, and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you. For behold, darkness will cover the earth and deep darkness the peoples; But the LORD will rise upon you and His glory will appear upon you. Nations will come to your **light**, and kings to the brightness of your rising. (Isaiah 60:1-3)*
- *But for you who fear My name, the **Sun of Righteousness** will rise with healing in His wings; and you will go forth and skip about like calves from the stall. (Malachi 4:2)*

**Jesus is the Light of the World**

**He is the Light, the Anointed One, of Whom the Prophets wrote**

- As John wrote in his overture: *He is the **True Light** who came into this world of darkness to **enlighten** every man*

*And He extends an invitation:*

- *Come, Follow!*
- *Leave the darkness behind*
- *Come, walk in My Light!*

**Following Jesus, walking in His Light:**

- Is cleaving to Him in believing trust and obedience
- It is abiding, it is dwelling, in His Word (8:31)

J.C. Ryle writes:

- *To follow Christ is to commit ourselves wholly and entirely to Him as our only leader and Savior and to submit ourselves to Him in every matter, both of doctrine and practice. 'Following' is only another word for 'believing.'*
- *It is the same act of soul, only seen from a different point of view, as Israel followed the pillar of cloud and fire in all their journeyings – moving whenever it moved, stopping whenever it tarried, asking no questions, marching on in faith – so must a man, or woman, deal with Christ.*
- *(We) must 'follow the Lamb' wherever He goes.'*
- *Ryle continues: He that follows Christ shall 'not walk in darkness.' He shall not be left in ignorance. He shall not grope in doubt and uncertainty but shall see the way to heaven and know where he is going.*
- *He 'shall have the Light of life.'* (pg. 142)

Those who decline His invitation:

- Stumble in the darkness
- Apart from the **light** of His guidance, they walk in dark uncertainty
- There is no peace apart from the **light** of God's presence
- *Isaiah warns: Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; who substitute darkness for light and light for darkness; who substitute bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter!* (Isaiah 5:20)
- *Jesus told Nicodemus: This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil. For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed.*
- *But he who practices the truth comes to the Light, so that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God.* (John 3:19-21)

**Jesus spoke saying:**

- ***I am the Light of the World***
- ***I am the LORD God, the pillar of fire, who led My people through the wilderness***

To the Pharisees, the religious leaders,

- Who clearly understood Jesus' claim
- And yet challenged His testimony,

Jesus declared:

- ***Unless you believe that I AM, you will die in your sins*** (8:24)
  - 'He' is added in our translations – 'I AM HE'

- John MacArthur notes that *Jesus' words here were not constructed normally but were influenced by Old Testament Hebrew usage.*
- Jesus referred to Himself as the God of the Old Testament
- As Yahweh – the LORD

***Jesus is the LORD God, the Great I AM who spoke to Moses from the burning bush***

- And, like Pharaoh who said, 'Who is the LORD that I should obey His voice?' (Exodus 5:2)
  - The Pharisees rejected His claim
  - They rejected His Lordship over their lives

And Jesus tells them

- *When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I AM*
- John MacArthur adds a sobering comment:
  - *Having refused to accept Him by faith and having nailed Him to the cross, they would one day awaken to the terrifying realization that this One whom they despised was the One whom they should have worshiped.*

*As Jesus spoke these things, many came to believe in Him. (8:30)*

Jesus now turns to those Jews who had come to believe in Him saying:

- *If you abide in My word, you are truly My disciples*
- J.C. Ryle notes: *To make a beginning in religious life is comparatively easy. It is not beginning, but 'continuing' a religious profession, that is the true test of grace.* (pg.148-149)

True disciples:

- Abide, they dwell, in His Word (8:31)
  - His Word that is *a lamp to our feet and a light to our path* (Psalm 119:105)
  - His Word that *gives light and understanding to the simple* (Psalm 119:130)
  - His Word that *enlightens our eyes and rejoices our hearts* (Psalm 19:8)
- They not only *hear* the Words of God
  - They *keep* His Words
  - They walk in the Light of His Words
  - Their eyes are enlightened to the truth and the truth leads them to true liberty

For True Liberty:

- Comes from the Son alone
- From the Great I AM, the One who existed before Abraham was born

- From Jesus, the Light of the World who invites us to follow Him
- He is the One who sets us free from sin and leads us in His Light
- Our part is to follow Him wherever He leads

Come, Follow Me

- *And you will not walk in darkness,*
- *But will have the Light of Life*

It's Decision Time! Let's consider the questions that originated with Leola:

***I Am the Bread of Life***

Are you with Me?

Or do you reject Me?

Do you want this Bread of Life that will feed you forever?

Or will you go your own way?

***I Am the Source of Living Water***

Are you with Me?

Or do you reject Me?

Do you want this Living Water that will quench your thirst forever?

Or will you go your own way?

***I Am the Light of the World***

Are you with Me?

Or do you reject Me?

Do you want to follow the Light of life?

Or will go your own way and walk in darkness?

Come, Follow!

- Leave sin and darkness behind
- Walk in the Light of His presence
- Eat freely of the Bread He provides
- Drink deeply of His Living Water
- Abide in the Light of His Word
- Rest securely in His loving protection

Come, Follow Jesus, the Light of the World!

- He leads to Life Everlasting!