

October 9, 2024

Bible Study Series *"I AM": The Light of the World – A Faith That Shines Through the Darkness*

Scripture Passage: John 8:12-16 NKJV

I. Jesus Is the Light in Our Darkness (John 8:12)

Verse 12 reads, *"I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life."*

A. Jesus declares Himself as the light of the world right in the middle of the Feast of Tabernacles, a celebration where giant lamps lit up the night sky in Jerusalem.

1. This context is crucial because those lamps symbolized the pillar of fire that guided Israel in the wilderness.
2. When Jesus declares Himself as *"the light of the world"* in this setting, He is not just making a comparison to physical light; He is positioning Himself as the fulfillment of God's guidance and revelation to humanity.
3. It is worthy of note that Jesus is not simply saying that he was *"a"* light to the world or that he was **"another"** light to the world;

B. *"Light of the World"* (τὸ φῶς τοῦ κόσμου)

1. **Symbolism of Light:** Light is a common biblical symbol representing purity, truth, holiness, and the revelation of God.
2. The phrase "of the world" (τοῦ κόσμου) indicates that Jesus' role as the light is not limited to a specific group or nation but extends to all people.

Note: Consider for just a few moments the presence of the cloud and the pillar of Fire, and its importance to the children of Israel.

C. *"The Light"* symbolized God's Presence.

1. The biblical record in the book of Exodus, reveals how the two pillars which guided the people of Israel marked the presence of God in a dramatic way;
2. In [Exodus 13:21](#) we read, *"And the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so as to go by day and night.";*
3. Christ promised His disciples (Heb 13:5) that He would *"never leave them or forsake them"*, and He is, was, and still true to His word...

D. *"The Light"* symbolized God's Guidance. (v. 12b)

1. In the second part of verse twelve Jesus said, *"He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.";*
2. The pillar of cloud and pillar of fire represented God's guidance for the people of Israel while they were in the desert;

3. In **Numbers 9** we are told of the relationship of the children of Israel to the pillar of cloud and pillar of fire;
4. *“Whoever follows me”* (ὁ ἀκολουθῶν με) **Has a Discipleship Implication:** The word “follows” (ἀκολουθῶν) suggests more than just casual agreement with Jesus’ teachings.

E. *“The Light”* symbolized God’s Protection.

1. When Moses and the children of Israel found themselves trapped on the edge of the Red Sea, God not only opened a passage through the sea but he stood between them and their enemies;
2. *The cloud that had appeared on the day that Israel left Egypt, **stood between** the Israelites and the pursuing army of the Pharaoh...;*
3. Jesus is saying, *“Do you remember the pillar that came between your fathers and the Egyptians near the Red Sea, that pillar that protected them, that was me;*

F. **The Promise of Transformation:** Jesus’ promise that His followers *“will not walk in darkness”* emphasizes a radical transformation that occurs when one turns to Him.

1. This assurance implies that through Jesus, believers receive not just temporary relief from darkness but a permanent deliverance from spiritual ignorance and moral decay;
2. *“But will have the light of life”* (ἀλλὰ ἔξει τὸ φῶς τῆς ζωῆς);

G. **The Light Promises to Give Life:** The phrase *“the light of life”* points to the life-giving power of Jesus. His light brings illumination that leads to spiritual awakening and eternal life;

1. It signifies more than just moral or intellectual enlightenment; it refers to the divine presence that imparts true life to those who believe in Him.
2. This light is both a present reality and a future promise, guiding the believer throughout life and into eternity;
3. For contemporary believers, facing the complexities and hardships of life, this verse offers hope and direction;

II. Point 2: The Pharisees’ Challenge – Missing the Light (John 8:13)

Verse 13 says, *“The Pharisees challenged him, ‘Here you are, appearing as your own witness; your testimony is not valid.’”*

A. **This verse is situated within a broader passage where Jesus is teaching in the temple courts during the Feast of Tabernacles.**

1. The Pharisees, who are often in conflict with Jesus, challenge His claims.
2. In their eyes, Jesus was acting as a sole witness, which, by their standards, meant that His testimony was invalid and untrustworthy.
3. The Pharisees had eyes that could see the Scriptures but could not recognize the Messiah standing before them.

B. **Misunderstanding Jesus’ Authority:**

1. The deeper issue here is not just a technical legal argument; it’s a question of authority.
2. What they failed to realize is that Jesus, the Word made flesh (John 1:14), did not need anyone to validate His claims because He spoke with the authority of the Father.
3. The Pharisees missed the light standing right in front of them.

C. Application for Today:

1. There's a word here for someone struggling with doubt and skepticism.
2. The world will often challenge the truth of God's word in your life just like the Pharisees did to Jesus.
3. When God says, "I am with you," His word is enough! His witness is true!

III. Jesus Knows Who He Is and Where He's Going (John 8:14)

Verse 14 reads, *"Even if I testify on my own behalf, my testimony is valid, for I know where I came from and where I am going."*

A. Church, as we step into John 8:14, we see the tension rising between Jesus and the Pharisees.

1. After the Pharisees challenged the validity of Jesus' self-declaration in verse 13, Jesus doesn't back down.
2. Jesus says, "Even if I bear witness of Myself, My witness is true."
3. Here, Jesus boldly asserts the truthfulness of His own testimony.
4. Jesus is not speaking as a mere man; He is speaking as the Son of God, the Logos, the eternal Word made flesh (John 1:1, 14).
5. Jesus speaks with a confidence that comes from knowing His identity and His purpose.

B. The Pharisees' Blindness:

1. Jesus then tells them, "but you do not know where I come from and where I am going."
2. The Pharisees were so focused on their traditions, their rituals, and their self-righteousness that they missed the revelation of Jesus as the Messiah.

C. Theological Insight – The Self-Validation of Christ:

1. What we must understand, church, is that Jesus' testimony is unique because it is rooted in His divine nature.
2. Jesus speaks of His origin with divine certainty. He knows where He came from — the Father — and where He is going — back to the Father.
3. The Pharisees were judging Him by earthly standards, but Jesus' authority transcended those standards.
4. Jesus knew His purpose, and because of that, no criticism, no doubt, and no attack from the Pharisees could shake Him.

IV. Human Judgment vs. Divine Perspective (John 8:15-16)

Verses 15-16 say, *"You judge by human standards; I pass judgment on no one. But if I do judge, my decisions are true, because I am not alone. I stand with the Father, who sent me."*

A. Church, as we delve into John 8:15-16, we're stepping deeper into a confrontation between Jesus and the Pharisees.

1. Jesus is in the temple courts, speaking truth, and the Pharisees are resisting Him at every turn.
2. In these verses, Jesus exposes the flawed nature of human judgment and reveals the divine standard by which He operates.

B. Verse 15: *"You judge according to the flesh; I judge no one."*

1. Jesus begins by pointing out the Pharisees' error: "You judge according to the flesh."
2. What does this mean, church?
3. They couldn't see past the physical appearance of Jesus, the carpenter's son from Nazareth, and they missed His divine nature as the Son of God.
4. The Pharisees were making conclusions about Jesus without spiritual insight, without seeing Him through the lens of faith.

C. Then Jesus says, *"I judge no one."*

1. Now, don't misunderstand what Jesus is saying here.
2. He's not claiming that He never makes judgments.
3. What He's saying is that His mission during His earthly ministry was not to condemn but to save (John 3:17).

D. The Light That Judges Truthfully (16)

1. Jesus' statement in John 8:16 wraps up His declaration of being the light of the world with the authority of divine judgment.
2. When He declared, "*I am the light of the world,*" He was saying, "*I am the One who sees beyond what's visible to the human eye; I see into the depths of the heart.*"

E. Jesus Judges with the Father's Heart

1. But look at what else He says: "*For I am not alone, but I am with the Father who sent Me.*"
2. Church, this is where Jesus takes it to another level.
3. He's not judging on His own; He's judging with the heart of the Father.
4. The Pharisees were judging according to the flesh — they were judging based on what they could see and what they could understand.
5. But Jesus judges with the wisdom and insight that comes from the eternal perspective of the Father.

F. The Light That Guides Us to True Judgment

1. Church, the light of the world is not just a light that reveals sin; it's also a light that guides us into righteous judgment.
2. When Jesus said, "*I am the light of the world,*" He was inviting us to step out of darkness, to leave behind our false judgments, our limited perspectives, and to walk in the light of His truth.

G. Conclusion: Walking in the Light of True Judgment

1. So, as I bring this message to a close, let me remind you that the light of the world is not just a light that illuminates the path; it's a light that brings truth into every dark place of your life.
2. When Jesus says, "*My judgment is true,*" He's declaring that He sees you fully, He knows you completely, and yet, He still loves you unconditionally.
3. He judges with the Father's heart, and His light will guide you into all truth.