

Jesus, The Light of the World

John 8:12-20

John 8:12-20 - *"Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, "I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life." ¹³ The Pharisees therefore said to Him, "You bear witness of Yourself; Your witness is not true."*

¹⁴ Jesus answered and said to them, "Even if I bear witness of Myself, My witness is true, for I know where I came from and where I am going; but you do not know where I come from and where I am going. ¹⁵ You judge according to the flesh; I judge no one. ¹⁶ And yet if I do judge, My judgment is true; for I am not alone, but I am with the Father who sent Me. ¹⁷ It is also written in your law that the testimony of two men is true. ¹⁸ I am One who bears witness of Myself, and the Father who sent Me bears witness of Me."

¹⁹ Then they said to Him, "Where is Your Father?" Jesus answered, "You know neither Me nor My Father. If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also."

²⁰ These words Jesus spoke in the treasury, as He taught in the temple; and no one laid hands on Him, for His hour had not yet come."

Background Notes

In John 7 our Lord taught in the Temple area during the week-long Feast of Tabernacles. John 7:37 says, *"On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink."*

The event in John 8 took place shortly after the Feast of Tabernacles. The Lord was back in the Temple area once again, where the woman who was caught in adultery was brought to Him.

Approaching the Temple in the time of Jesus, you would first enter the outer courtyard, which was known as the Court of the Gentiles. As you moved closer to the Temple building you would enter the Court of the Women; this was as far as women were permitted to go. After the Court of the Women, you entered the Court of Israel; only Jewish men were allowed in this area. Then you came to the Court of the Priests, where the altar of burnt offering was located. Only priests were allowed to enter there. And finally, if you were a priest, you could enter the Temple itself, but not the holiest inner area of the Temple. Only the High Priest was allowed to enter the Holy of Holies – and only once a year, on the Day of Atonement.

This discussion between the Lord and the Pharisees took place when Jesus was teaching in the courtyard surrounding the Temple, in the Court of the Women, where the treasury was located. *"...Jesus spoke in the treasury, as He taught in the temple" (v20).* A number of collection boxes were situated in the women's court. Some of the boxes were for the Temple tax, and some were for free will offerings. It was here that the widow put her "two mites," two small copper coins, into the Temple collection box. (Read about that in Mark 12 and Luke 21).

From Jewish sources we learn that lamps and candles burned in the Women's Court as symbols of the pillar of fire that the Lord used to guide and protect His people as they traveled through the wilderness from Egypt to the Promised Land.

In the particular context of those lamps, the Lord said to the people who had gathered to hear His teaching, *“I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.”*

Once again we see the Lord practicing “situational evangelism.” Remember back in chapter 7, in the context of the priest pouring out the water each day by the altar, the Lord Jesus said, *“If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink.”* Once again the Lord practiced situational evangelism. In the context of the lights in the Court of Women He made this astounding claim: *“I am the light of the world.”*

Doctrinal/Teaching Points

1. Jesus is the Light of the world.

“Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, “I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life” (v12).

As you know, this is one of the **“I am”** statements in John. This statement is also found in John 9:5, *“As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.”*

What did our Lord mean when He said, “I am the Light of the World? He meant several things, and I will quickly list five:

1. The world is in darkness. It is full of evil and sin, ignorance and rebellion. The world doesn’t think of itself this way, but if Jesus is the Light of the world, then the world is in darkness.
2. As the Light of the world, Jesus Christ reveals that **everyone** falls short of God’s standards of righteousness. That was one of John’s primary ideas when he referred to Jesus as the Light in John 1.
3. As the Light of the world, Jesus is the **Light of life**. He is the One to follow! As the pillar of fire guided the people in the Old Testament, so the Lord will guide anyone who turns to Him: *“He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life”(v12).*
4. Jesus is the **Light of the world**. He is not just the Light for the Jewish people, but for the whole world.
5. The statement and claim, **“I am** the Light of the world” is a claim to deity. Who but God could make such a sweeping statement?

1 John 1:5 says, *“This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that **God is light** and in Him is no darkness at all” [emphasis added].* If Jesus is not fully God, then His statement, *“I am the light of the world”* is blasphemous. Furthermore, it was predicted in the Old Testament that the Messiah, the Christ, would be the Light to the entire world. *“Indeed He says, ‘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 give You as a light to the Gentiles, that You should be My salvation to the ends of the earth.’”(Isaiah 49:6).*

So *“I am the light of the world”* was certainly a claim to being the Messiah – and the Son of God. Jesus is the Light of the world.

2. The judgment of Christ is the judgment of God.

The Pharisees tried to dispute the Lord's claim with a legal technicality. *The Pharisees therefore said to Him, "You bear witness of Yourself; Your witness is not true" (v13).* In other words, they were saying that, according to the Law, you must have two witnesses to back up your claim.

I'll attempt to paraphrase the Lord's response: "Yes, according to the Law, which was written for mankind who judges by human standards (v15), you are to have two witnesses (v17). But you are forgetting a couple of things.

First, I **do** have another witness besides my own testimony - My heavenly Father who sent me (v18).

Second, I am not actually judging anyone (v15), because I didn't come to judge, but to save people. John 12:47 says, *"And if anyone hears My words and does not believe, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world."*

Third, if I did judge (v16), my judgment is true, because I am the Son of God. And that's the point! I am not on the same human level as you are. I am above the Law! I came from heaven to this earth, and I am going back to Heaven.

You will not recognize or acknowledge this truth (v14), but it is true. And therefore, if and when I make statements, or if and when I judge, it is the same as the judgment of God because as the Son of God, I am with the Father and the Father is with me."

Well, you can just imagine the reaction of the Pharisees! They tried to undermine the Lord's authority by sarcastically asking, *"Where is Your Father?" (v19).* How they hated Jesus and His claims! But - *"no one laid hands on Him, for His hour had not yet come."*

What is your reaction to the claims of Jesus Christ? He claimed to be the Light of the world. He claimed to come from Heaven. He claimed to be the one and only Son of God. He claimed that His judgment was the same as God's. You cannot take the position that Jesus was just a good man, because on the basis of those claims He was either much **more than a good man** - or He was a **liar!**

Some years ago I was doing interviews on a secular college campus. I used a short questionnaire designed to open people up to talk about the condition of their souls. The questions were:

1. What do you think about the moral conditions of the country today?
2. What do you think about the Bible?
3. What do you think about Jesus Christ?

I'll never forget one student's answer to the question: What do you think about Jesus Christ? He said, "I think He was the greatest 'con man' that ever lived!" I was shocked, and yet when I thought about his reply I realized that it was a more logical answer than the answers given by most of the other students. Most of them said, "I think He was a good man."

If Jesus wasn't a liar (a "con man"), there's only one reasonable conclusion to the claims of Jesus – and that conclusion is **not** that "He was a good man." No! The only reasonable conclusion is that **Jesus is God!**

The statements of Jesus Christ are the statements of God. The claims of Jesus Christ are the claims of God. The judgment of Jesus Christ is the judgment of God. And Jesus Christ will be the ultimate Judge of the destiny of every person who ever lived. The judgment of Christ is the judgment of God.

Practical Application

Is Jesus the Light of *your* world?

"I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life"(v12).

Is Jesus the Light of **your** world? This question has an application for unbelievers and believers alike.

If you are **not** a Christian, Jesus is **not** the Light of **your** world. Whether you realize it or not, you're walking in darkness! According to the Bible, you are blind to the truth, and you're living in spiritual darkness. That's a pretty bad state of affairs, by the way - blind, and in darkness!

But the good news is that if you come to Jesus Christ, you can have the Light of life, just as He promised in verse 12. You won't walk in darkness any longer, because Jesus will be the Light of your world! You can get your life straightened out, and you can find purpose in life once again. Jesus will be the Light of your world.

If you're a Christian, then Jesus should be the Light of **your** world. But maybe you're not walking with the Lord. Maybe He's not #1 in your world. Maybe accumulating material possessions is #1 in your world. Maybe success in your business or your career is #1 in your world. Maybe enjoying the maximum amount of pleasure is #1 in your world. Maybe staying entangled in a wrong relationship is #1 in your world. Maybe the Lord is no longer #1 in your personal world.

If the Lord is no longer #1 in your world, you're not experiencing the Light of life. You're heading in the wrong direction! You're stumbling along without the Light of the world to guide you. No wonder your life is messed up! Now wonder you don't have your act together. No wonder you have no joy in your personal world!

What's the solution? Turn back! Look to the Lord Jesus as the Light of your world. Follow Him! Allow Him to lead you, because He is the Light of life.

Once again: *"I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life."* **Is Jesus the Light of *your* world?**