

I Am The Light

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[0 : 0 0] in John 8, 12, Jesus makes a claim about himself. It's not just about himself, but it's about our world and everybody in it.

And his claim is this. Again, Jesus spoke to them saying, I am the light of the world. Whoever walks in darkness, whoever follows me, sorry, let me start that again.

Jesus said, I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.

And the implication is that without him, the world is in darkness. And whoever doesn't follow him can only ever walk in darkness.

But what does it mean to walk in darkness? The other week I was walking through a dark hall with no lights on at night, and I felt like I couldn't see a thing. There were tables and chairs, and I knew that because I bumped into a few.

[1 : 0 7] But after about half a minute, my eyes adjusted, and I began to see shapes more clearly because there were a few windows high up that let some of the nightlight in.

And then I went into a cupboard in the hall, and I closed the door with no light on. And no matter how many carrots I've eaten in my life, I couldn't even see my hand in front of my face.

It didn't matter how much my eyes were trying to adjust. I couldn't see my hand in front of my face. You see, in that kind of darkness, when there is no light, you don't know where you're going.

You can't see a thing, and you don't know where you're going. The process of vision is dependent on light because the eyes use cells that are sensitive to photons in order to see.

And therefore, complete darkness and the inability to see is one of two things. Number one, the inability of our eyes to process photons. Or number two, the absence of any photons.

[2 : 1 5] And so if your eyes and the cells in your eyes cannot process light, then you cannot see. Equally, even if your eyes can process light, if there's no light there in the first place, you cannot see because vision is dependent on light.

So it doesn't matter how much your eyes want to adjust. Your pupils can go as big as they like. You can eat as many carrots as you want. If there's no light in the first place, you won't see a thing, and you won't know where you're going.

And it's not just vision that depends on light, but life itself depends on light. No light, no life. And so darkness, darkness does not lead to life.

Darkness only leads to death. And therefore, walking in darkness only leads to death. But John 8, 12, Jesus says, I am the light of the world.

Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life. In chapter 7, in verse 2, John writes that the Jews' feast of booths was at hand.

[3 : 28] This is the feast of tabernacles, where all the Jews would build booths to remember when the Israelites lived in the desert for 40 years in tents and tabernacles.

Booths, tabernacles, tents, they're all the same thing. And so during this feast, all the Jews would build booths outside their houses that they would eat in and stay in with their family and spend time and invite visitors in.

And these booths had to be open at the roof so that they could have a view of the sky. So they wouldn't completely cover it. They would weave branches for a roof so that they would have a view of the sky.

And they would be exposed to the elements. And this was a reminder of how God brought them through the desert and how God was providing for them all that time.

And so even to this day, even to this day, some people who have been to Jerusalem will know that in some of these narrow streets, they get even narrower during the Feast of Tabernacles because people are building booths outside.

[4 : 38] They're sometimes on scaffolding building these booths. And there was some times when the police had to get involved and tore it down and all that kind of nonsense. But even to this day, they build booths outside their houses during the Feast of Tabernacles.

The Feast of Tabernacles is the seventh of seven feasts. Seven feasts throughout the year. Feasts of the Lord. And the Feast of Tabernacles is the seventh.

And you'll maybe know about the menorah, how many lamps does the menorah have? Seven. And so each of these, a light pointing to something of God, a light, each of these feasts pointing to something in redemption history, they all have a meaning.

The light pointing to Christ. And so one of the major parts of this festival in Jesus' day that's different now, I mean, even to this day they build the booths, but one of the differences between now and then was a large part of the festival back in Jesus' day in the first century was the illumination of the temple.

Now, as the Israelites traveled through the wilderness after the exodus out of Egypt, not only did they dwell in tabernacles, but God dwelt with them in the tabernacle.

[6 : 00] And how did they know this? How did they know that God dwelt with them? Well, it was evident as they seen the glory of God and the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night.

This was a glorious thing. This visual, visible light was not only to show them God's presence with them, but it was to lead them through the wilderness into the promised land.

You see, they were led by the light of God's presence into the land of God's promise. And when they got into the promised land and later on Solomon built a temple for God and they brought the Ark of the Covenant in, the glory of God filled the temple in a visible, palpable, noticeable way.

In 1 Kings chapter 8 it says, When the priest came out of the holy place, a cloud filled the house of the Lord so that the priests could not even stand to minister because of the cloud for the glory of the Lord filled the house of the Lord.

This was a glorious moment. And then later, when they were exiled, the temple was destroyed. And then further on, when the Jews returned, rebuilt Jerusalem and rebuilt the temple, no glory filled the temple the second time.

[7 : 19] It was without this visible glory the second time. There was a lot of disappointment and perhaps they didn't even have the Ark of the Covenant. Were they even sure that God now dwelled with them?

And so, other things happened. There were other feasts like Hanukkah, the festival of lights. By the first century in Jesus' day, when they were celebrating this feast of tabernacles, not only did they build booths, here's one of the big differences, they also built four gigantic lights in the temple court to illuminate the temple with pillars of fire to remember how it was back in the wilderness.

Now, these things were magnificent. You want to see a light show? This was it. And this happened at the start of the festival and it lasted for a full week. And so, there were these four massive golden pillars of light in the court of the women, which was where the treasury was.

And on top of these pillars, these pillars were about 75 foot tall. 75 foot pillars of light, four of them golden candles in the temple.

And they were lit for a week. And on top of them were four bowls filled with oil. And it was said to illuminate the entire city. And they used as wicks the old worn out clothes of the priests as wicks.

[8 : 47] It was magnificent. I mean, imagine seeing, I don't even know, that's probably not 75 foot. Think of a golden pillar going up 75 foot and a blaze at the top and four of them in this courtyard of the women.

And it just blazed the temple. You know, it was this recreation of the glory of God in the tabernacle in the wilderness that just burned day and night as a visible sign of God.

It was glorious. Absolutely glorious. And this was to remember God in the pillar of fire present with them as light in the darkness and leading them to the promised land.

And it was in this very court that Jesus made this claim about himself. In chapter 7 verse 37 it's now the last day of the feast, the great day, John says.

And this is when Jesus stood up and said, if anyone thirst, let him come and drink. And he said this at the pouring out of the water in this part of the ceremony. So, at this point when he comes to say this statement, it was either on the last day of the feast or right afterwards.

[9 : 58] And Jesus in the very court where these massive lights had been lit for the whole week and perhaps they had now just been extinguished. And as these grand temple lights were put out in the very same place, Jesus calls out and says something even grander about himself.

I want to read for context what happens afterwards. Again, Jesus spoke to them saying, I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness but will have the light of life.

So, the Pharisees said to him, you are bearing witness about yourself. Your testimony is not true. Jesus answered, even if I do bear witness about myself, my testimony is true for I know where I am going.

I know where I came from and where I am going but you do not know where I came from or where I am going. You judge according to the flesh. I judge no one. Yet, even if I do judge, my judgment is true for it is not I alone who judge but I am the Father who sent me.

And your law is written that the testimony of two people is true. I am the one who bears witness about myself and the Father who sent me bears witness about me. And they said to him therefore, where is your Father?

[11 : 18] Jesus answered, you know neither me nor my Father. If you knew me you would know my Father also. These words he spoke in the treasury in that same place the court of the women where these lights were as he taught in the temple but no one arrested him because his hour had not yet come.

Now, as amazing as having four of these 75 foot golden pillars of light where they were nothing compared to the glory that filled the temple in Solomon's day.

Imagine seeing that at the dedication. And as much as people rejoiced at the glory that filled the temple in Solomon's day during the dedication, what was that compared with the glory throughout the wilderness for 40 years?

At the end of Exodus 40 it says the cloud of the Lord was on the tabernacle by day and fire was in it by night in the sight of all the house of Israel throughout all their journeys.

That's 40 years of this. 40 years not a week not a dedication day 40 years day and night of the glory of God present in front of you in the sight of everyone.

[12 : 34] Glory cloud and fire not only would this light dwell with them but it came up and it moved and it led them to the promised land.

You see this light of the glory of God's presence was a light to be followed. Imagine seeing that for 40 years every single day. It would have been amazing the light of God showing his presence and leading the way out of darkness into the land of promise.

It would have been magnificent and this is what they were remembering with these giant pillars of light during the feast of tabernacles and it's at this time that Jesus says I am the light of the world.

Whoever follows me whoever follows me like the Israelites followed the pillar of light the pillar of fire whoever follows me will not walk in darkness but will have the light of life.

You see God had dwelt with him in the tabernacle and the light of his glory was seen. God had dwelt with them in the temple and the light of his glory was seen and only a few people only a few people could ever approach that.

[13 : 44] Think of this one man from one tribe from one race in all the earth could only enter in one time a year. The access to God very limited but now Jesus in the midst of the temple God dwelling with them in flesh and the light of his glory was seen.

John said we saw his glory glory as of the only son from the father full of grace and truth. You see all these things were pointing to Christ the Christ who was to come and he's now here and he uses these very things to tell the people where the light is where is the light where is God's presence how do we follow that to the promised land Jesus says it is me it is I I am Jesus is the light of God's presence to lead people into the land of God's promise not just for Israel but for the world he is the light of the world and like Israel in the wilderness relying on the pillar of fire to lead them Jesus is a light to be followed and a light that the whole world needs for he is our exodus out of darkness but you'll see after Jesus says this great I am statement the Pharisees don't mention light they start arguing about testimony about him self-testifying and about judgment they have this conversation there's no arguments about light so it seems but if you go back to chapter 7 why are they talking about testimony why are they talking about judgment why are they talking about what is true and who your father is if you go back to chapter 7 you'll see that they were never going to accept his testimony in the first place they didn't want to give him a hearing and they would never judge it rightly anyway because they are in the dark for them it's not because they have no light that they cannot see it's a problem with their eyes and their hearts they love the darkness and they are blinded by it and so in chapter 7 people were already asking if he was the Christ you see in verse 40 of chapter 7 they heard these words some of the people said this is really the prophet others said this is the Christ but some of them said is the Christ to come from Galilee has not the scripture said that the Christ comes from the offspring of David comes from Bethlehem the village where David was and so they are already asking if Jesus is the Christ and Nicodemus from chapter 3 what happened to him well Nicodemus is defending Jesus here to the Pharisees yet they were saying that he couldn't be the Christ

Jesus was from Galilee the Christ is from Bethlehem he can't be the Christ but you'll remember from the Christmas story there was a great census if these Pharisees had any sense about them or any desire to know the truth they would have checked the records and saw that he really was from Bethlehem he was born in Bethlehem but they didn't want to know they weren't interested in the truth so the question of who Jesus is is already in the air and people are already saying he is the Christ and when the Pharisees start arguing Nicodemus says this Nicodemus says does our law judge a man without first giving him a hearing and learning what he does and then they just scoff at him they don't want to give Jesus a hearing they don't want to know about it but while they didn't want to hear it Jesus gave his testimony anyway who is Jesus what is his testimony what would Jesus say in a court of law if he was given a hearing what would he say what does Jesus do what is on his resume

Jesus says you want to know who I am you want to give me a hearing you want my testimony here it is you want to learn what I do I am the light of the world and whoever follows me will not walk in darkness but will have the light of life this is his hearing this is his testimony even if the Pharisees were never going to accept it he isn't the light of the Pharisees alone he isn't even just the light of the Jews he is the light of the world you see he isn't just saying that he's some religious guide to enlighten people he is the light of God's glory Hebrews 1:3 says he is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature Paul says he is the image of the invisible God who dwells in unapproachable light in Revelation chapter 1 John saw him Jesus' face was like the sun shining in full strength and John when he saw it fell at his feet as though dead in Revelation chapter 21 in the new

Jerusalem there is no need for the sun or moon to shine on it for the glory of God gives it light and its lamp is the lamb and by its light will the nations walk not in darkness and light and there will be no night there this is what Jesus is saying of himself if you want to be there if you want to go there feast of tabernacles pointing to the messianic age pointing to this moment in Revelation if you want to go there if you want to walk in light then follow me I am the light of the world is he the Christ when Jesus says I am the light of the world he is alluding to Isaiah 42:6 which says of the Christ I will give you as a light to the nations this is what he's alluding to in Isaiah 49:6 God through Isaiah says of the Christ

[19:56] I will make you a light for the nations that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth is that not Jesus in a nutshell the feast of tabernacles not only looks back to the exodus and the pillar of fire leading them to the promised land that was a picture of the greater exodus in Christ the Messiah it looks forward to the messianic age when all nations will walk in the light of his glory all the nations will flow into Jerusalem to worship God and so you can imagine at these feasts these scriptures being read out the prophecies of the Messiah being read out I will make you as a light for the nations that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth and these great lights in the temple and then here comes a man who opens his mouth and says I am the light of the world I am the light for the nations whoever follows me will not walk in darkness will walk in light and will have the light of life and what is his name this man well his name is

God salvation that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth Jesus name is God salvation and he declares that he is the light of the world folks this is amazing and this little argument he has with the Pharisees is wonderful and we don't have time to go into every detail but I want he knows where he came from and he knows where he is going now what other human on this planet can say that what other person knows intimately where they came from firstly I mean we're still arguing in this enlightenment age of whether we came from nothing or came from monkeys or who knows where we came from who can truly say I know where I came from no one else can say this and see

Jesus he knows where he came from because his human life wasn't his beginning he has no beginning he was with God in the beginning and he was God and all things were made through him and in him was life he's the source of all life and that life was the light of men he's the source everything that exists what other human can also say I know where I am going we might have confidence but Jesus isn't speaking about a confidence or a hope he's speaking about a knowledge of something that he knows intimately and fully who else can say truly in the face of death I know where I am going I really know where I am going not just with confidence but I know with full knowledge and experience where I am going so who are you going to follow and you're not going to follow the only person who knows where he is going don't follow someone who doesn't know where they're going follow the only person who knows where he is going that is how he is light that is how he is the light of the world so follow him secondly verses 15 and 16 he didn't come to judge but to save yet he is the man appointed as judge and when he judges his judgment is true unlike every other man you see

Jesus says this of the Pharisees you judge according to the flesh I mean what human doesn't judge according to the flesh what human has the knowledge and the righteousness and the light to be able to judge truly every time who can do that what human can truly say that his judgment is right and true not even the greatest high judge can say that like the Pharisees we judge according to the flesh and we judge with what we see on the outside we don't have the righteousness or the knowledge or the light to judge rightly or truly and so that is how he is the light of the world because he does because in him there is no darkness at all he is truly God and truly man yet he is untouched by sin fully righteous he is the source of all light and life so his judgment is true that is how he is the light of the world for he did not come to judge but to save but when he does judge because he is the judge his judgment is true and right that's how he is the light of the world so follow him and finally and thirdly verses 18 and 19 he uniquely knows the father and the father testifies about him you see nobody knows

God like him we saw that in John 1 18 no one has ever seen God but the only God who is at the father's side in the father's lap he has made God known no one knows the father like Jesus you see this statement from the Pharisees where is your father David Guzik says that this is the scandal card that they are playing they've been holding us for a long time they've been waiting to play this scandal card everyone knows about the circumstances of Jesus birth everyone knows about this claim of the virgin birth everyone knows at least that Mary was pregnant before Joseph and her were married everyone knows about the scandal of that some rumors that it was perhaps a Roman soldier whatever case this is a great insult this is what they're saying to him where is your father do you even know who your dad is can you even be the

[26 : 17] Christ because you might not even be from David where is your father we know about you Jesus we know about your mother we know about Joseph we know about your birth Jesus says no you don't you don't know where I came from you think you do you think I came from Galilee I was born in Bethlehem you can't even check the records you do not know where I came from Jesus came from the father not from Joseph not even from David yes through Mary but he came from the father God from a place where no other man has been you see Jesus is not surprised that they play the scandal card he is not bothered by it he knew it would happen but yet he says you do not know my father you don't know not even my human father you don't know God imagine saying that to a Pharisee an expert a religious leader leading the nation at the top of the top of the rung experts in the

Bible you do not know God you don't even know the father my father if you knew the father you would know me you don't even know me because if you knew me you would know the father you see nobody knows God like Jesus knows God who else can say that who else can say they know the father like Jesus and who else can say you've heard this statement God is my witness God literally is Jesus witness call into the court imagine the Pharisees you know right Jesus you're saying this statement about yourself it's like when you go for a job and they look at your qualifications oh I see here that you're the light of the world if you get any references to back that up imagine in the court with the Pharisees you can't testify about yourself have you got a witness

I call God as my witness and people say that all the time and God's like don't bring me into this God the father was the witness the witness for Jesus and that God the father testified the whole entire Old Testament as God testifying about Jesus and at many times and in many ways the father testifies about the son he is the witness for Jesus who can say that who else can say that like Jesus can because he is the son he is the unique and only son who knows the father and the father testifies about him he reveals God like no one else can reveal God and that is how he is the light of the world so follow him folks in many ways there were great lights that pointed to Christ you know whether it was the light leading the

Israelites through the desert a pillar of fire whether it was the menorah and the tabernacle and in the temple whether it's the light of the sun whether it's little Christmas lights which pale in significance pale in comparison even to the giant pillars that were in the temple in Jesus day but they everything it all pales in comparison to Jesus who is the light of the world it all points to him we know we love light we want light because we know what happens in the darkness we don't know where we're going we can't see a thing Jesus is the light of the world because he knows where he came from and he knows where he's going he's the light of the world because he didn't come to judge but to save yet when he does judge it is true and right and he is the light of the world because he knows the father like no one else and the father God testifies about him about this one man Jesus that he is indeed the light of the world and whoever follows him will not walk in darkness but will have the light of light so let us follow him amen let me pray oh

God our father in heaven we thank you for Jesus Christ your son because through him we can come to you as father we can cry out Abba father believing in him you have given us the right to become children of God we thank you for his light for without his light we would not see we would not see where we are going we would not see what we are like we would not see what darkness is doing to us and more importantly we would not see who you are God we would not truly know what you are like yet in Christ he has revealed you fully and his light has shown us you for that please would you be light to us every moment of every day that we would know your presence and that we would be able to follow you through the darkness and through every trial and that we would be able to illuminate some of that light to other people to point them to

[31 : 43] Jesus that they might know the light of the world also for the light of the world is for the world for all the nations that your salvation may be known to the end of the earth even here and now and so we thank you in Jesus name who is the light of the world Amen