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# The Light of the World

## JOHN 8:12

### Introduction

1. When you think of Jesus, there are several titles which might come to mind:
  - a. Christ or Messiah
  - b. Son of God
  - c. Son of Man
  - d. Lamb of God
2. Each of these indicate some aspect of his character.
3. Throughout his gospel, the apostle John also provides us with a number of terms which also describe Him:
  - a. “The bread of life” (John 6:35)
  - b. “The door of the sheep” (John 10:7)
  - c. “The good shepherd” (John 10:11, 14)
  - d. “The resurrection and the life” (John 11:25)
  - e. “The way, the truth and the life” (John 14:6)
  - f. “The true vine” (John 15:1)
4. One such term is found in John 8:12 — Jesus is in the Temple courtyard during the Feast of Tabernacles.

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5. There Jesus says, “I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in darkness, but will have the Light of life.”

6. What prompted Jesus to speak these words? What were His hearers to take from them?
8. Tonight, let's delve into this statement and the exchange which follows it.
9. I believe you and I will see a richness which perhaps we had not previously noticed.

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## **I. Light and the Feast of Tabernacles**

### **A. THE CEREMONIES OF LIGHTS**

1. At the beginning of the Feast of Tabernacles, brilliant candelabra were lit.
2. Four huge lamps rising to a height of 75 feet (five times as high as the ceiling in our auditorium) were placed in the Court of the Women.
  - a. This was the most frequented part of the temple.
  - b. It was also the place where Jesus delivered His address (cf. v. 20).
3. At the top were placed bowls large enough to contain some 12 gallons of olive oil.
4. The bowls were filled by young boys whose fathers were priests.
5. These were then lit, and kept burning throughout the Feast of Tabernacles.
7. According to one Jewish work, known as the Mishnah, "there was not a courtyard in Jerusalem that did not reflect the light" (Mishnah, *Sukkah* 5:2, 3).
8. At the same time, "countless Levites [played] on harps, lyres, cymbals and trumpets and instruments of music, on the fifteen steps leading down from the Court of the Israelites to the Court of Women" (Mishnah, *Sukkah* 5:4).
9. At the end of the Feast, the candelabra's were extinguished and the music ceased.
10. It was after all this had ended that Jesus made His declaration, "I am the Light of the world . . ." (v. 12).

**Slide 4****B. THE CONNECTION BETWEEN LIGHT AND THE FEAST**

1. The purpose of the Feast of Tabernacles was for the Israelites to remember their forty years of wandering in the wilderness.
2. It also reminded them of God's provision and protection during that time.
3. One thing which served as a constant assurance of God's presence during those forty years is described in Exodus 13:20-22.

“Then they set out from Succoth and camped in Etham on the edge of the wilderness. The Lord was going before them in a pillar of cloud by day to lead them on the way, and in a pillar of fire by night to give them light, that they might travel by day and by night. He did not take away the pillar of cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people.” (Exodus 13:20–22)

4. Once the Israelites entered the promised land, the light was no longer needed — once the Feast was over, the light was put out.

**Slide 5****II. Jesus As Light****A. THE TRUE LIGHT**

1. In 1 John 1:5, the apostle John wrote, “God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all.”
2. In the beginning of this gospel, John speaks of “the Light” (John 1:1-5).

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men. The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.” (John 1:1–5)

3. John then goes on to tell us about a man who came “as a witness, to testify about the Light” (John 1:7) — his name was also John.
4. John, the apostle, informs us that John the Baptist “was not the Light,” but that “he came to testify about the Light” (John 1:8).
5. He then added this statement, “There was the true Light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man” (John 1:9).
6. That “true Light” as we come to learn in the first chapter of John’s gospel was Jesus of Nazareth.

**Slide 6****B. JESUS, THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD**

1. Jesus proclaimed Himself to be not just the light of Israel, but the Light of the World.
2. His promise is that all who follow Him “will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life” (v. 12).
3. The “darkness” of which Jesus spoke is a reference to . . .
  - a. Satan
    - 1) On the road to Damascus, Jesus told Paul that He was being sent to the Gentiles “to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God” (Acts 26:17-18).
    - 2) In Colossians 1:13, Paul tells us that God “rescued us from the domain of darkness [Satan’s domain], and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son”
  - b. “the world”
    - 1) As Jesus said earlier in John 7:7, “the world” hates Him because He testifies that “its deeds are evil.”

- 2) In 1 John 5:19, John wrote that “the whole world lies in the power of the evil one.”
4. During the week leading up to His crucifixion, Jesus told those who had come to Jerusalem for the Passover Feast, “For a little while longer the Light is among you. Walk while you have the Light, so that darkness will not overtake you; he who walks in the darkness does not know where he goes” (John 12:35).
5. Here, in John 8:12, Jesus said that, “he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life.”
  - a. When you and I follow Jesus, we aren’t just given a fleeting glimpse of life.
  - b. No, our whole life is illuminated.
  - c. His Light in our lives transforms us permanently.

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6. In Exodus 34, we are told about something which happened to Moses as a result of him being in God’s presence on Mt. Sinai.

“It came about when Moses was coming down from Mount Sinai (and the two tablets of the testimony were in Moses’ hand as he was coming down from the mountain), that Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone because of his speaking with Him. So when Aaron and all the sons of Israel saw Moses, behold, the skin of his face shone, and they were afraid to come near him.” (Exodus 34:29–30)

7. Verse 33 tells us that “when Moses had finished speaking with them, he put a veil over his face.”

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8. This became a regular occurrence (Exodus 34:34-35).

“But whenever Moses went in before the Lord to speak with Him, he would

take off the veil until he came out; and whenever he came out and spoke to the sons of Israel what he had been commanded, the sons of Israel would see the face of Moses, that the skin of Moses' face shone. So Moses would replace the veil over his face until he went in to speak with Him." (Exodus 34:34–35)

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9. Permit me to make a connection. In 2 Corinthians 3, Paul makes a contrast between two ministries and two glories:
  - a. One he calls "the ministry of death" (v. 7), or "the ministry of condemnation" (v. 9).
  - b. The other he describes as "the ministry of the Spirit" (v. 8), and "the ministry of righteousness" (v. 9).
    - ☐ Both have their own glory, but one surpasses the other (v. 10).

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10. Notice that Paul also speaks of "a veil" which "lies over [the] heart" of certain individuals (v. 15) and which is only "removed in Christ" (v. 14).
11. Only when a person turns to the Lord is the veil taken away (v. 16).

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12. Those of us who are Christians are like Moses in the sense that we are constantly "beholding . . . the glory of the Lord" with "unveiled face" (2 Corinthians 3:18).
13. As time progresses, we "are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory" (2 Corinthians 3:18b).
14. Our glory comes from the Spirit which dwells in us (1 Corinthians 6:19).

## **Conclusion**

1. To come to Jesus in obedient faith is to have God rescue us from the domain of darkness and transfer us to the kingdom of His beloved Son (Colossians 1:13).
2. To follow Him on a daily basis is to know the Light of His presence in our lives.
3. However, in His conversation with Nicodemus, Jesus pointed to a problem which prevents many from following Him (cf. John 3:19-20).

“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.” (John 3:19–20)

4. I think we all know that it is easier to see the flaws in something when we hold it up to the light.
5. The same is true of our lives. When we are held up to “the true Light,” our sins are exposed for what they are.
6. But if we want to have our sins removed and know the joy of His presence within us, then we must come to Him.
7. Please don’t let the sin in your life keep you from coming to the only One who can save you and give you an eternal hope.