

*“The Light of the World”*

April 6, 2014

Text: John 8:12-20

**You may have noticed from my text, that I am skipping over**

**John 7:53 to 8:11, & I want to briefly explain why=>**

**I don't believe it was part of John's original text.**

Without going into great detail, I'll give you 4 basic reasons for my believing that=>

- 1) These verses are not found in the oldest Gk manuscripts.
- 2) They are also missing from the Syriac (2<sup>nd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> century translations from the Gk), & Coptic Gospels (3<sup>rd</sup> century translations).
- 3) They contain a number of words/phrases/grammatical-constructions that John never used.
- 4) The early church fathers, in their commentaries of John, completely ignored/omitted any comment on this passage, as if they knew nothing of its existence.

For these reasons, I'm going to proceed directly from Jn 7:52 (where we ended last time), to Jn 8:12-20 (our text today).

**In Jn 8:12, Jesus makes another momentous declaration at the end of the Feast of Booths=> *“I am the Light of the world.”***

As we have seen, the Feast of Booths was a commemoration of God's having brought Israel through the wilderness, & into the Promised Land.

Jesus' declaration about being the Light must be understood w/i that basic biblical/historical context, but also w/i the broader literary/spiritual context of the whole canon of Scripture.

As part of the Feast of Booths, 4 giant candelabras were lit each night, to commemorate the Pillar of cloud/fire, by which God had illuminated Israel's journeys at night 1500 years earlier.

Ex 13 had said=> *"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**"* (13:21).

It must have been frightening for those Israelites to travel in the darkness of night, in a strange/hostile land.

So God had provided bright light for them from the Pillar of fire.

**Because of this historical background, both light/darkness also took on metaphorical meaning among the Jews.**

\* Darkness became associated w/ danger/doom/gloom.

E.g. in Psa 35, David prayed w/ regard to his enemies=>

*"Let their way be **dark** and slippery, With the angel of the LORD pursuing them"* (35:6).

One of the ten plagues God had inflicted on Egypt was an ominous/palpable darkness described in Ex 10, as,

*"**darkness** over the land of Egypt, even a **darkness** which may be felt"* (Ex 10:21).

Job had earlier spoken of death as=> *"the land of **darkness**"*

*and deep shadow, / The land of utter gloom as darkness itself” (Job 10:21-22).*

\* By contrast, light became associated w/ the safety/peace found in the salvation of the Lord, so that David could say in Psa 27:1=> *“The LORD is my light & my salvation; Whom shall I fear?”*

In the NT, John will take it even a step further, saying=>

*“God is Light, & in Him there is no darkness at all”*  
(I Jn 1:5).

**Throughout the Bible as a whole, spiritual darkness comes to represent the spiritual danger of evil in the moral realm, & ignorance in the intellectual realm.**

So the writer of Prov 2 can say that those who leave the paths of righteousness *“walk in the ways of darkness; / Who delight in doing evil & rejoice in the perversity of evil”* (Prov 2:13-14).

Jesus Himself described how sinful people avoid the light, in order to hide their wickedness=>

*“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”* (Jn 3:19-20).

By contrast, spiritual light in both OT/NT Scripture comes to represent righteousness morally, and revealed truth intellectually.

Eph 4 tells believers to walk no longer as unbelievers who are *“darkened in their understanding, excluded from*

*the life of God because of the **ignorance** that is in them, because of the **hardness** of their heart” (4:18).*

1 Pet 2, tells believers that God has “*called you out of **darkness** into His marvelous **light**” (I Pet 2:9).*

Paul testified (Acts 26:18) that God opens men’s spiritual eyes, enabling them to “*turn from **darkness** to **light** and from the dominion of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins & an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in [X].”*

Paul told the Colossians=> “*He [God the Father] rescued us from the domain of **darkness**, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son” (Col 1:13).*

As a result, he tells believers in I Thes 5=> “*You are all **sons of light** and sons of day. We are not of night nor of **darkness**” (5:5).*

**Jesus is the Light who rescues souls out of spiritual darkness and death, bringing us into the light of spiritual life.**

When He announced that He was the “***light** of the world,*” He was declaring the wonderful news, that God had sent Him to earth to rescue man from the perils of spiritual darkness.

According to Matthew, He had come as the fulfillment of

*Isa 9’s prophecy=> “The people who were sitting in **darkness** saw a great **Light**, And those who were sitting in the land and shadow of **death**, Upon them a **Light** dawned” (Mt 4:16).*

Jesus is also the Light who sees believers thru sickness/suffering.

He is the guiding Light, who leads His people into the paths of righteousness, & into an eternal Promised Land.

He is the Light who will someday lead us through the valley of the shadow of death like a Shepherd.

So the person who commits himself to X will always have the Light of God, & he will never walk in darkness.

**This is such a wonderful revelation by X, that you would think the people in the Temple who first heard it would have rejoiced and wholeheartedly embraced Jesus by faith.**

But instead, some quibbled & raised objections to His saying it. Jesus patiently sought to answer their objections, by teaching them some additional truths about Himself, & God the Father.

But ultimately His offer of light to the Jews wouldn't last forever. His hour had not yet come, but it would come, soon.

**\* Jesus' Great Revelation**

[John 8:12]=> *“Then Jesus **again** spoke to them, saying, ‘I am the **Light** of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the **darkness**, but will have the Light of life.’”*

**Jesus had declared before this, that He is the water of life, and now He spoke “again,” announcing that He is also the Light of the world—the Light of eternal life for those who believe in Him.**

He is the Light of God, who reveals truth to the ignorant, and radiates holiness to the evil/impure.

But in order to receive the full benefit of the Light, we must do more than look at it—we must “*follow*” it.

Just as the Israelites obediently followed the Pillar of cloud/fire in the wilderness, we must follow Jesus. Before we began to follow Him, we were spiritually blind, so we had to commit ourselves to trusting Jesus & obeying His words, in order to follow Him. And we still follow Him, knowing that we can no longer be comfortable allowing moral/spiritual darkness in our lives, as we live in His light, & our sins are exposed. To be a “follower” of Jesus means to be His true disciple, submitting to His Lordship, & following His example, even when that involves sacrifice.

Lk 9:23 (Jesus)=> *“If anyone wishes to **come after Me**, he must deny himself, and take up his **cross** daily and **follow Me**.”*

But it’s not as if X’s light has just been imposed on us outwardly.

It has become part of us inwardly, as Paul told the

Corinthians=> *“God, who said, ‘**Light** shall shine out of darkness,’ is the One who has **shone in our hearts** to give the **Light** of the **knowledge** of the glory of God in the face of Christ” (2 Cor 4:6).*

We believers want the light of Jesus’ holiness w/i us to shine on our sin, so that we can confess/repent of it, & forsake it.

### **\* The Pharisees’ First Objection**

**One might think that the religious leaders of Israel, having full knowledge of all this OT Scripture, would have welcomed Jesus with open arms.**

Instead, they objected to His making the claim for Himself that He was the Light of life.

In their ungodly minds, that was just a meaningless boast. Jesus' revelation had fallen on deaf ears, in spite of all His miracles, & His incomparable teaching that had caused even the Temple guards to come back saying, *"Never has a man spoken the way this man speaks"* (Jn 7:46).

[Verse 13]=> *"So the Pharisees said to Him, 'You are testifying about Yourself; Your testimony is not true.'"*

I.e., it wouldn't stand up in court.

**It was the Pharisees' unbelief that prevented them from accepting the fact that Jesus was God's Light to man.**

As believers, we can read Jesus' words, and not only believe them, but take delight in them, knowing that apart from Him we would be forever lost in darkness.

But the Pharisees were not believers.

They had allowed their skepticism about Jesus to solidify into hardened/impervious unbelief.

X had earlier applied the words of Isa 6 to them, saying=>

*"In their case the prophecy of Isaiah is being fulfilled, which says, 'You will keep on hearing, but will not understand; You will keep on seeing, but will not perceive; / For the heart of this people has become dull, With their ears they scarcely hear, And they have closed their eyes, Otherwise they would see with their eyes, Hear with their ears, And understand*

*with their heart and return, And I would heal them”*  
(Mt 13:14-15).

Having chosen not to believe anything X said, the Jewish leaders had rendered themselves incapable of believing in Him, & what He said.

Although one might agree that a person’s testimony about himself is less reliable than someone else’s more objective testimony about him, that didn’t apply in Jesus’ case.

Anyone of devout/godly character, who truly sought to know Jesus, quickly came to the conclusion that He had been sent from God.

E.g. Jesus was still just an infant in Lk 2, when a devout & religious man named Simeon came in the Spirit to the Temple, took the Baby in his arms, & prayed=>

*“My eyes have seen Your **salvation**, / Which You have prepared in the presence of all peoples, / A **Light of revelation to the Gentiles**, And the glory of Your people Israel”* (Lk 2:30-32).

He hadn’t heard Jesus say/do anything, and yet he knew Jesus was his Savior.

After Andrew had spent less than a day w/ Jesus, he went right to his brother Peter & said=> *“We have found the Messiah”* (Jn 1:41).

It didn’t take these godly people long to recognize who Jesus was.

People of spiritual integrity & humble love for God, always recognized Jesus for who He was, & they listened to Him. People who had become hardened/inveterate unbelievers, never did, and still don't today.

\* **Jesus' First Answer**=> “Of course I testify of Myself, because I'm the only One really capable of doing so.”

[Verse 14]=> “*Jesus answered and said to them, ‘Even if I testify about Myself, My testimony is true, for I know where I came from and where I am going; but you do not know where I come from or where I am going.’*”

**Only Jesus was fully qualified to testify about His own divine nature, because He alone had direct information about His own origins in heaven, and His ultimate destiny.**

The Pharisees who had raised the objection had no way themselves of discovering these crucial facts about Him. If they wanted to know about them, they'd have to learn them from X Himself, because He was the only One who had direct information about them.

Jesus is God, and God is absolutely true, so X's testimony about Himself, or anything else, is absolutely true.

Titus 1 says God cannot lie (Titus 1:2), and Heb 8 says it is impossible for God to lie (Heb 8:18)—Jesus is God, so He cannot lie.

Someone: “But believing in the truthfulness of Jesus' testimony that He is the Light of the world, depends on His actually being God.

“I don’t blame the Pharisees for not believing that.

“If someone told me he was God, I wouldn’t believe it either.”

\* Ans: That person prob. wouldn’t have repeatedly done miracles such as healing the sick, cleansing lepers, giving sight to the blind, raising the dead, feeding 5000 people w/ a little boy’s lunch, walking on water, and calming a storm at sea w/ a single word.

\* More importantly, if that person really were the Son of God, and your own heart was right with God, you would believe him.

It would depend upon your own heart’s spiritual condition.

\*\*In Jn 7, X said=> *“If anyone is willing to do His [God’s] will, **he will know** of the [Jesus’] teaching, whether it is of God or whether I speak from Myself” (7:17).*

The reason the Pharisees didn’t believe Jesus’ testimony about Himself was that they weren’t willing to do God’s will (i.e., it was their own spiritual condition that was the problem, not Jesus’ credibility).

If you are willing to do God’s will, X’s testimony will ring true for you.

**Because the Pharisees’ hearts were not right with God, they constantly judged Jesus by faulty human standards.**

**[Verse 15] (Jesus to the Pharisees)=> “You judge according to the flesh; I am not judging anyone.”**

X mean they were judging *Him* according to the flesh.

In Mk 2:16, there's a prime example of what Jesus meant by the Pharisees' judging according to the flesh=>

When they saw that Jesus was eating with people they disdained, they said=> *'Why is He eating and drinking with tax collectors and sinners?'*”

They judged according to their own fleshly prejudice/pride.

When Jesus said, *"I am not judging anyone,"* that's the kind of judgment He was referring to=> judgment based on the false standards of sinful/fallen man.

Having spiritual insight, believers see X for who He really is=> the Light of the world, who becomes for men who believe in Him, the Light of lie.

\* **Jesus' Second Answer**=> *"My testimony fulfills the Law's requirement for 2 witnesses."*

[Verse 16] (Jesus)=> *"But even if I do judge, My judgment is true; for I am not alone in it, but I and the Father who sent Me."*

**Jesus' judgment is perfectly correct/trustworthy, because His judgment is in union w/ the Father's judgment, who cannot lie because He's the Author of all truth.**

In Jn 5, Jesus said=> *"I can do nothing on My own initiative. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is just, because I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me"* (5:30).

When Jesus claimed to be the Light of the world, His testimony was also the testimony of the Father, & so it was guaranteed to be absolutely true.

[Verses 17-18] (Jesus)=> *“Even in your law [the law to which you hold & upon which you depend] it has been written that the testimony of two men is true. / I am He who testifies about Myself, & the Father who sent Me testifies about Me.”*

**Dt 17:6 required at least 2 corroborating witnesses to convict in the most serious legal cases (e.g. involving murder).**

Jesus’ point was that, if you can execute someone based on the testimony of 2 fallible sinners, surely the testimony of 2 Person’s of the Godhead should be considered trustworthy. Deut 19 stipulated that all witnesses had to be reliable, & that dishonest/unreliable witnesses were to be punished.

There could be no more reliable witnesses than the Son of God, who *is* the-way/the-truth/the-life (Jn 14:6), and the Father who always spoke thru Him, by virtue of both His words, & his miraculous deeds.

And Both are in agreement, that Jesus is the Light of life.

**\* The Pharisees’ Second Objection**

[Verse 19a]=> *“So they were saying to Him, ‘Where is Your Father?’”*

I.e., where’s the 2<sup>nd</sup> witness You just mentioned—your father?

**The Pharisees may have thought Jesus was referring to Joseph as the 2<sup>nd</sup> witness to the truth about Him.**

They may have been saying, If your father’s going to vouch for you, where is he?

On the other hand, in light of verse 41 of this chapter, where they will insinuate that Jesus was born of illegitimate birth, their words here may have been intended as an insult.

\* **Jesus' Third Answer** (a profound truth, not intended to hurt their feelings, but to give them the understanding they needed).

[Verse 19b]=> *“Jesus answered, ‘You know neither Me nor My Father; if you knew Me, you would know My Father also.’”*

**Here Jesus patiently explained His unique relationship w/  
God the Father, even as He bore witness to the truth,  
which they needed to understand.**

He pointed out to them the basic nature of their whole problem=>  
They hadn't recognized who Jesus was, because they were spiritually deficient, & they were spiritually deficient because they didn't know God the Father, in spite of all their study of OT Scripture.

Moreover, it was because they didn't know Jesus (who reveals the Father) that they didn't know the Father.

Jesus said (Mt 11:27)=> *“No one knows the Son except the Father; nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, & anyone to whom the Son wills to reveal Him.”*

Those who reject the Son, can never know the Father, & not knowing the Father, they'll never know the Son.

In this hopeless cycle of spiritual ignorance, the Pharisees were incapable of seeking/understanding the truth.

And until they became heart-willing to do God's will, they would never break this hopeless chain, by realizing the value of Jesus' teaching, as the words of God Himself.

\* **A Subtle Warning (to John's readers)**=>

The Pharisees made a big mistake. Don't you!

There was only so much time for the Jews to break that chain of hopelessness, & to recognize Jesus for who He is—the Light of the world.

[Verse 20]=> *“These words He spoke in the treasury, as He taught in the temple; and no one seized Him, because His hour had not yet come.”*

**1) The “*treasury*” was not a building, but a location in the outdoor structure called the Temple that seems to have been against a wall in the Court of Women.**

There were 13 large pots there shaped like ram's horns, into which people placed religious/charitable offerings/gifts.

The important point here, is, that it was placed in the Court of the Women, which was located inside the Court of the Gentiles.

This was as far as Hebrew women could go into the Temple, & Hebrew men passed through it to go farther—on into the Court of Israel.

Gentiles, by contrast, were restricted to the outermost court.

So the only people who could have heard Jesus say that He was the Light of the world, were Jews.

Notice that He didn't claim to be the Light of the Jews.

He was telling the Jews that He is the Light of the whole world, because God is concerned for all mankind, including Gentiles.

**2) Although the place where the Sanhedrin met seems to have been close by, John says, “No one seized Him.”**

Then John added this ominous note=> “*Because His hour had not yet come.*”

Until X's divinely-appointed hour had come, God wouldn't allow His enemies to touch Him w/ evil intentions.

It would come only 6 months later, and then X would say

to the Jews, “*While I was with you daily in the temple, you did not lay hands on Me; but **this hour and the power of darkness are yours***” (Lk 22:53).

At this point in Jesus' life, that hour had not come yet, but as still 6 months off.

\*\* So there was still a little time left for the Jews to listen to X, place their faith in Him, & discover Him to be the Light of life.

But only a little time.

After that, they would never see the Light again.

**The same is true for every man/woman today.**

While there is still the breath of life w/i the, they have time to find in Jesus, the Light of life.

So everyday is for them, potentially the “*day of salvation*”  
(II Cor 6:2).

But eventually their hour too will come, when their day of  
salvation will have passed.

1) Some church-people really don't want to know Jesus as the  
Light of the world, whose glory is greater than that of the  
morning sun.

They never have time of their own to spend in Scripture or  
prayer, but just want an easy-going, happy-go-lucky,  
religion.

Too much light would expose things they want to remain  
hidden, so they have no great longing for closeness to  
Jesus, the Light of the world.

If that describes you, be very suspicious of yourself,  
because hatred of light comes from love of spiritual  
darkness.

If you feel no longing for spiritual purity, ask if there is  
something you are concealing from God, & then ask  
how you're going to do that, when you actually stand  
in the brightness of His presence.

2) Some church-people attend worship services out of habit, or  
for some other artificial reason, but their hearts aren't really  
in it.

If they'd examine their hearts honestly, they'd realize that, like the Pharisees, X's message doesn't ring true for them because they really don't want to do God's will either.

They want their own will, which is shrouded in darkness. To you I would say, "Please open your eyes to the Truth, repent of your darkness, look to Jesus the Light of life, and live."

I pray that God will enable you to rejoice in the light of X.

3) Some church-people say, Thank God, His light has shone in my heart, dispelled the darkness, & I've seen His glory/light!

That's wonderful, now take that light to those who are still in darkness.

Jesus said, "*You are the light of the world,*" so don't hide your light under a basket (Mt 5:14f), but deal w/ it responsibly as a light-bearer for X, sharing the glory of its potential for everlasting life, w/ others, who need it, because they are filled w/ darkness.

If they end up being cast into "*outer darkness,*" it might be due in part to your not taking to them the light w/i you, while you still could.

Honor your Lord, & love your friends—give them X's light.

## ***“The Light of the World”***

April 6, 2014

Text: John 8:12-20

1. In Jn 8:12 Jesus makes another momentous declaration at the Feast of Booths: “*I am the [12 Light] of the world.*”

Jn 7:53-8:11; Ex 13:21; Psa 35:6; Ex 10:21; Job 10:21-22; Psa 27:1; I Jn 1:5

2. Throughout the Bible as a whole, spiritual darkness comes to represent the spiritual danger of evil in the moral realm and [20 ignorance] in the intellectual realm.

Prov 2:13-14; Jn 3:19-20; Eph 4:18; I Pet 2:9; Acts 26:18; Col 1:13; I Thes 5:5

3. Jesus is the Light who rescues souls out of spiritual darkness and death bringing us into the [12 light] of spiritual life.

Mt 4:16

### **\* Jesus’ Great Revelation**

**[John 8:12]**

4. To receive the full benefit of the Light, we must do more than look at it; we must [14 follow] it.

Lk 9:23; II Cor 4:6

### **\* The Pharisees’ First Objection**

Jn 7:46

**[Verse 13]**

5. It was the Pharisees’ unbelief that prevented them from accepting the fact that Jesus was God’s [12 Light] to man.

Mt 13:14-15; Lk 2:30-32; Jn 1:41

### **\* Jesus’ First Answer**

**[Verse 14]**

6. Only Jesus was fully qualified to testify about His own [14 divine] nature.

Titus 1:2; Heb 8:18; Jn 7:17

7. Because the Pharisees’ hearts were not right with God, they constantly judged Jesus by faulty [12 human] standards.

**[Verse 15]**

Mk 2:16

### **\* Jesus’ Second Answer**

**[Verse 16]**

Jn 5:30

**[Verses 17-18]**

8. Deut 17:6 required at least two corroborating witnesses; if you can execute someone based on the testimony of two fallible sinners, surely the testimony of two [18 Person's] of the Godhead should be considered trustworthy.

Jn 14:6

**\* The Pharisees' Second Objection**

**[Verse 19a]**

Jn 8:41

**\* Jesus' Third Answer**

**[Verse 19b]**

Mt 11:27

9. Those who reject the Son can never know the Father, and not knowing the Father, they will never [10 know] the Son.

**\* A Subtle Warning**

**[Verse 20]**

Lk 22:53

10. There was still a little time left for the Jews to listen to Christ, place their faith in Him, and discover the [12 Light] of life.

II Cor 6:2

11. Some church-people say, "Thank God, His light has shone in my heart!" That's wonderful. Now take that [12 light] to those in darkness.

Mt 5:14-15