



Metro Calvary – Roseville CA  
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# The Gospel of John

## Jesus: Light of the World - Part 2

### John 8:12

**Related Topics:** “Light” in Genesis; “Light” in Exodus; “Light” in Psalms; “Light” in Isaiah; “Light” as a metaphor for the Word of God; “Light” as a metaphor for Law of God; “Light” as a metaphor for salvation; the “Light” of God’s presence necessary for living the redeemed life; “Light” exposing sin; The “Light” of God comforting us in dark times; “Light” as a metaphor for wisdom; “Light” in the book of Isaiah; “Light” speaking of the Messiah; “Light” as a metaphor for the Justice of God; “Darkness” as a metaphor for sin; “Darkness” not comprehending the “Light”; Following Jesus

This morning we continue our study through [John 8:12-30](#). We dove into the passage by following the theme of light through the Old Testament and into John’s Gospel.

We saw the beginning of the concept in the Book of Beginnings — Genesis Creation **begins** with God making, creating light. And God **separates** the light from the darkness — and throughout the Scriptures this becomes a metaphor of what God does in human lives and in human history. In our computer vernacular we would say that this theme hyperlinks itself throughout the rest of the Scriptures.

We followed that theme through Exodus; Psalms; Ecclesiastes and Isaiah and right up into the Prologue of John’s Gospel.

We then set the immediate context for the passage. The backdrop for [John 8:12](#) was the Feast of Booths — one of the three great feasts in the Jewish calendar. [John 7](#) gives to us the record of Jesus in Jerusalem for the Feast of Booths. The Feast of Booths commemorated and celebrated how God delivered His people from bondage and slavery in Egypt and sustained them during their 40 year journey into the land of promise! They remembered that during that journey God

was with them in that pillar of fire — He was with them to LIGHT the way — to guide their journey.

On the evening of the first day of that feast there was a ceremony in the Court of the Women called **The Illumination of the Temple**.

**QUOTE: William Barclay** — *It took place in the Court of the Women. The court was surrounded with deep galleries, erected to hold the spectators. In the centre four great candelabra were prepared. When the dark came the four great candelabra were lit and, it was said, they sent such a blaze of light throughout Jerusalem that every courtyard was lit up with their brilliance. Then all night long, until cock-crow the next morning, the greatest and the wisest and the holiest men in Israel danced before the Lord and sang psalms of joy and praise while the people watched.*

This was all a celebration and recognition of the fact that God is light, and in him there is no darkness at all. It was a celebration and commemoration of how God's light had led his people out of bondage and slavery and death in Egypt. And in a secondary way these blazing candelabras signified all of the theology about God being light — and His Word being light — and walking with Him in the light — and how His light exposes sin. It takes all these concepts and brings them together.

As we pick up in **John 8:12**, the Feast of Booths is over. But that ceremony would still be fresh in the minds and hearts of His audience on the Temple Mount.

**John 8:12 Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, “I am the light of the world.**

Here is Jesus — in the vicinity of those massive candelabras — and He says ***I am the light of the world***. Jesus is saying that HE is — in and of Himself — the one who gives the LIGHT of the presence of God; the LIGHT of salvation, the LIGHT of life, the LIGHT that shows us how and where to walk, the LIGHT that exposes our sin, the LIGHT that exposes our darkness, the LIGHT that shows us God, the LIGHT that gives us God's wisdom, the LIGHT that shows us God's justice.

**QUOTE: William Barclay** — *Jesus is saying: "You have seen the blaze of the Temple illuminations piercing the darkness of the night. I am the Light of the World, and, for the man who follows me there will be light, not only for one exciting night, but*

*for all the pathway of his life. The light in the Temple is a brilliant light, but in the end it flickers and dies. I am the Light which lasts forever."*

REMEMBER **Isaiah 9** — 700 years before this moment in **John 8** God said that the Messiah will be a light to the Gentiles, not just to the Jews, but all nations of the world, all nations of the Earth. Jesus says, ***"I am the light of the world,"***

And then He declares

**John 8:12 ....Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."**

**This is HUGE!** How do you come into the light? How do you partake of the light? How do you benefit from being in the light? Jesus says it all comes down to this one issue. ***FOLLOW ME.***

In our culture we have this notion that if someone "makes a decision" for Jesus — or cries — or raises their hand or comes forward — that somehow they have relationship with God. They may or may not. The litmus test is simple: **Do they follow Jesus?** It's not a matter of a momentary understanding, but it's a habitual life practice and pattern that is following after Jesus Christ.

**QUOTE:** **A Handbook on the Gospel of John — *Whoever follows me*** must be understood in the sense of "*whoever becomes my disciple.*" It is often expressed more clearly in some languages as "*if anyone becomes my adherent*" or "*... joins himself with me.*"

Newman, B. M., & Nida, E. A. (1993). *A handbook on the Gospel of John*. Helps for translators; UBS handbook series (264–265). New York: United Bible Societies.

This one Greek word, follow, is FILLED with powerful and personal implications! It's a Greek word that had five different usages.

**1.)** It was used in speaking of a soldier following his captain. It's a military term that meant there was someone in authority over you who had the right to **command conduct** and **action** from you — **and discipline** you for disobedience. The New Testament calls Jesus the ***captain of our salvation (Hebrews)*** and refers to Christians as ***soldiers (Phil.; 2 Tim.; Philemon)***. The New Testament says that as the ***captain of our salvation*** He is ***leading many sons to glory (Hebrews)***.

**The point is** that Jesus is the general and you are a private. When He speaks and gives an order — you're supposed to do what he tells you to do. You're under authority. **The problem is** — *that* runs against the grain of lost mankind and contemporary culture. We live in an age that seeks to throw off all authority, including God's. Many professed followers of Jesus struggle with seeing Jesus as having authority over them. In modern church culture men and women love the concept of Jesus as friend — but they resist or reject Jesus as commander-in-chief. To follow means to be under his authority and follow his command.

**If you disliked** the first usage of the word — you'll really dislike the second one!

**2.)** The word was also used in speaking of a slave accompanying his master. Fallen man takes the position stated in the famous poem, "Invictus" — *My head is bloody, but unbowed.... I am the master of my fate :□ I am the captain of my soul.* Scripture does not teach that. Scripture says that everyone is a slave. You're either a slave to sin, Satan and death, or you're a slave to Jesus, grace and life. If someone wants to argue the point challenge them — *Prove your freedom — Never sin. If you can stop sinning then you are free. If you cannot stop sinning then you are a slave to sin because you cannot stop.* The common response is — *Well, no one is perfect.* That's right. That's because everyone is a slave to sin. And no one can stop sinning. We're in bondage to the lust of our flesh, the lust of our eyes, and the boastful pride of our life. So we are all in slavery. Next week we will hear Jesus say that for some people Satan is their father. They're not free. They belong to the enemy. You either belong to Satan or you belong to God. You either belong to sin or you belong to grace. You either belong to death or you belong to life. You are not free. You are a slave. **The only question is who is your master? Who owns you? Who possesses you?**

*Romans 6:19 For just as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness leading to sanctification.*

The whole concept of redemption is that Jesus has died to redeem us — buy us back — out of our slavery to Satan, sin and death so that you can live as you were intended and created to live — in God and under God and with God and by God's grace. That's freedom. **To follow Christ** means to recognize and submit to the fact that you belong to God and Christ.

*1 Corinthians 6:19-20 Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own,<sup>20</sup> for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.*

3.) The third use of this word was to refer to a person following the counsel of a wise teacher. Its use implied that we don't know what we are doing with our life, that we are lost, that we are all stumbling around in darkness. Not necessarily in regards to a profession or a career; but in relationship to God and Truth and Eternity. Jesus says that if we follow Him we won't WALK in darkness. **Walk = to go here and there — Meandering** — Walking with no purpose or direction. Paul tells us (**1 Corinthians 1:24**) that Jesus is the very wisdom of God. Following Jesus means that we are following Him as our teacher.

Today's Bible Bus — **John 13:12-14** *When he had washed their feet and put on his outer garments and resumed his place, he said to them, "Do you understand what I have done to you?"<sup>13</sup> You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am. <sup>14</sup>If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet.*

Everyone is being taught by someone — We're all following someone's lead — Who are you following? Jesus calls men and women to let Him direct our lives — sometimes it is counter intuitive!

**QUOTE: Elisabeth Elliot** — *Keep a Quiet Heart* p.56

4.) It was also used to speak of a citizen obeying the laws of their king and his kingdom. To follow Jesus means that we recognize Jesus as King. He sits on the throne — we are his faithful subjects.

*Philippians 1:27 Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ*

**Only** = Now, the important thing is — **NLT** = Above all

**Let** = Phillips Translation = "make sure that"

**(make sure that) your manner of life = "behave as citizens."**

So following Jesus means that we do what Jesus says because the King and His glory supersedes the subjects, that God's glory is more important than our own.

5.) William Barclay states the last meaning with great clarity —

**Quote: William Barclay** — It is often used of following a teacher's line of argument.... The Christian is the man who has understood the meaning of the teaching of Christ. He has not listened in dull incomprehension or with slack inattention. He takes the message into his mind and understands, receives the words into his memory and remembers, and hides them in his heart and obeys.

THAT IS WHAT IT MEANS TO FOLLOW JESUS. It means that we recognize the authority of Jesus as general — as king — as teacher.

If you are anything like me — there's something in you that is taken aback by that. We look at those terms and we think — *That's a lot of authority, that's a lot of submission!* That kind of authority assumes that if my heart takes issue with His leading that I'm always the one in the wrong!

That kind of authority totally undoes any churchy or romantic concept of claiming to follow Jesus! Do I really follow Jesus — *As king? As Lord? As God? As judge? As ruler? As commander? As teacher?* Why do we fight against that following Jesus on those terms? Because we have darkness. There is not just darkness out there. There is darkness in here (in my heart) that somehow finds the authority of God an offense to my own pride and my own glory.

Jesus said — *I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me* — we just defined that term — *will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life.*