



Metro Calvary – Roseville CA
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The Gospel of John

Jesus: Light of the World part 3

John 8:12-30

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; “I Am”; Jesus Claims Divinity; The Hour of His Death; Pleasing the Father

We began our study of these words by looking at the theme of light through the Old Testament and into John’s Gospel. We found the first mention of this theme and concept at the beginning of the Book of Beginnings — Genesis. There (Genesis 1:3) God created light and then separated the light from the darkness. From that point forward — the theme of light — and of God separating light from darkness — becomes a metaphor through the Bible of what God does in human lives and in human history. This theme hyperlinks itself throughout the rest of the Scriptures. If you missed the first 2 studies of this passage I would encourage you to get the media resources (metrocalvary.org) for those studies to get the theological concepts wrapped up in the term LIGHT.

We saw that these words were framed against the backdrop of the the Feast of Booths — one of the three great feasts in the Jewish calendar; in particular the backdrop of the opening night of the feast. On that first night of the Feast of Booths there was a ceremony called **The Illumination of the Temple**. In that ceremony they lit a series of massive candelabras — the brilliant light they produced symbolized all of the Old Testament theology about God being light — His Word being light — walking with Him in the light.

With that ceremony still be fresh in the minds and hearts of His audience on the Temple Mount Jesus declared —

John 8:12 ...“I am the light of the world.

Jesus — in the vicinity of those massive candelabras — says *I am the light of the world*. Again — one of the seven I AM statements of Jesus in the Gospel of John. Jesus is saying that HE is — in and of Himself — the one who gives the LIGHT of the presence of God.

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

Jesus not only says that He is — in and of Himself — the source of LIGHT in this dark world; He says that the ONLY way to EXPERIENCE that Light and BE in that light is to *Follow HIM!*

We spent virtually the whole of our time together last Sunday walking around in the personal and powerful implications of that word FOLLOW. We learned that this Greek word that had five different usages.

This one Greek word 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.
- 2.) The word was also used in speaking of a slave accompanying his master. We saw how the Scriptures say 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. 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 question is** — Who is your master? Who owns you? Who possesses you?

3.) The third use of this word was to refer to a person following the counsel of a wise teacher. Its use implied that for all of our academic and scientific and technological advances — we are all lost — we are all stumbling around in darkness. Jesus says that if we *follow* Him we won't **WALK in darkness**. 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.

4.) It was also used to speak of a citizen obeying the laws of his king and his kingdom. To follow Jesus means that we recognize Jesus as King. He sits on the throne — we are his faithful subjects. 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 —The Christian is the man who has understood the meaning of the teaching of Christ.... 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.

We noted that **THAT** kind of authority totally undoes any churchy or romantic concept of claiming to follow Jesus! Do I really follow Jesus — *As king? As Master/Lord? As God? As judge? As ruler? As commander? As teacher?*

NOW WE COME TO THE RESPONSE OF THE CROWD

Everyone in this room will find themselves identifying with one of these 2 groups.

The Pharisees challenged him.

¹³So the Pharisees said to him, “You are bearing witness about yourself; your testimony is not true.”

The Pharisees didn't like **the tone of authority** in the words of Jesus — So they challenged His authority. In essence — “You're appearing as your own witness — that invalidates your testimony.” You see in the Old Testament God established the rule for valid testimony —

Deuteronomy 19:15 “A single witness shall not suffice Only on the evidence of two witnesses or of three witnesses shall a charge be established.

That's makes great sense — You wouldn't let somebody get off on his or her own testimony. *Hey, did you back into my car in the parking lot? No! Do you have any witnesses? No, just take my word for it. I'm not going to take your word for it. You have a vested interest in telling the lie.*

So these guys are saying — *You say you're the light of the world? Bring in some witnesses.*

¹⁴Jesus answered, “Even if I do bear witness 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.

Jesus says — *You know what? God doesn't need witnesses. God is THE truth teller. When God says something He doesn't need to haul in a bunch of other people to support him. I'm God — My testimony is true in and of itself — but you have no idea where I come from or where I am going.*

¹⁵You judge according to the flesh;

You judge by human standards —

I judge no one. ¹⁶Yet even if I do judge, my judgment is true, for it is not I alone who judge, but I and the Father who sent me.

Jesus now brings the Father forward as a corroborating witness — the Sent One calls on the Sender.

¹⁷In your Law it is written that the testimony of two men is true.

¹⁸I am the one who bears witness about myself, and the Father who sent me bears witness about me.”

You want a witness? How about God the Father. Let's bring Him to the bar and He can put His hand on His own book and He can make an oath that He'll tell the whole truth and nothing but the truth — so help Himself! Do you want a witness? How about God, the Father?

Jesus says — *Here's your two witnesses — Me and My Father!*

And then they try to insult Jesus.

¹⁹They said to him therefore, “Where is your Father?”

They are inferring that Jesus was illegitimate! *Where's your dad? Oh — That's right — you don't even know who your father is. Your mother was a loose woman and you don't even know who Your dad is!*

That's what people thought about Jesus and His mother throughout the course of His life. These guys thought they had just shredded on Jesus by outing Him as illegitimate. But God Incarnate has some radical words for these religious professionals!

Jesus answered, “You know neither me nor my Father. If you knew me, you would know my Father also.” ²⁰These words he spoke in the treasury, as he taught in the temple; but no one arrested him, because his hour had not yet come.

Your problem is you don't know God!

Lots of people will say — *Well I don't necessarily buy into Jesus — but I really believe in God. Jesus says that we can't say that!*

Jesus says, “If you knew me you’d know the father.” You **cannot** know the Father except through the Son.

John 14:6 Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

²⁰These words he spoke in the treasury, as he taught in the temple; but no one arrested him, because his hour had not yet come.

It wasn’t yet time for him to die. On a number of occasions John points out that human attempts to kill Jesus were thwarted because their plans did not conform to God’s timetable for the suffering and death of Jesus.

John 12:23-24; 27; 31-32 And Jesus answered them, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. ²⁴Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. . . .” ²⁷“Now is my soul troubled. And what shall I say? ‘Father, save me from this hour’? But for this purpose I have come to this hour. . . .” ³¹Now is the judgment of this world; now will the ruler of this world be cast out. ³²And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.”

²¹So he said to them again, “I am going away, and you will seek me, and you will die in your sin. Where I am going, you cannot come.”

KEY INSIGHT: The word SIN is singular.

QUOTE: D.A. Carson New Bible commentary — *this would refer to the sin of rejecting the Messiah.*

By rejecting Jesus they were rejecting the one and only remedy for your sin you are

²²So the Jews said, “Will he kill himself, since he says, ‘Where I am going, you cannot come?’”

They think he’s talking about killing himself. Jesus is talking about his death and resurrection and return to the Father.

But he continued.

²³He said to them, “You are from below; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world.

Jesus points out the infinite gulf between Himself and fallen man — even the most religious of men!

You live in the darkness. I am from above — I bring the light. You are of this world — dark. I am not of this world — light. If you will not bring your sin into my light, you will die in your sin.

²⁴I told you that you would die in your sins, for unless you believe that I am he you will die in your sins.”

QUOTE: A.T. Robertson, Word Pictures in the New Testament

*Jesus can mean either “unless you believe that I am from above” (verse 23), “unless you believe that that I am the one sent from the Father or the Messiah” (7:18, 28), “unless you believe that I am the Light of the World” (8:12), “unless you believe that I am the Deliverer from the bondage of sin” — *You will die in your sins.**

HUGE INSIGHT: The Greek text has simply — *Unless you believe that I am — period*

I am = ego eimi

A.T. Robertson notes that — The phrase [ego eimi] occurs three times in this chapter (**8:24, 28**, and especially **58**)

VERSE 58 - Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am.”

Robertson also says that the Old Testament scriptures used the language in relationship to Yahweh/Jehovah (**Deut. 32:39 Isa. 43:10**)

Jesus is asserting that He is the great *‘I am’* of the OT (**Ex. 3:14**). He is declaring that He is the Self-Existent God of Israel! **Jesus is saying to this crowd —**

Unless you recognize Me as God — And bring your sin into the light of who I am — and into the light of my nature as messiah and redeemer — you will die in your sin.

THIS IS HUGE — Unless we step into the light of God — as revealed *in the face of Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 4:6)* — we can never know our sin — and as a result we will never see our need for a savior

QUOTE: D.A. Carson, Scandalous — *...the hardest truth to get across to this generation is what the Bible says about sin.... There is so much in our culture that teaches us that we define our own sins, either individually or socially.... We live in an age where the one wrong thing to say is that somebody else is wrong.... we all have our own independent points of view, and we look at things from the perspective of our own small interpretive communities. What is sin to one group is not sin to another group. But not only does the Bible insist that there is such a thing as sin, it insists that the heart of its ugly offensiveness is its horrible odiousness to God—how it offends God.*

²⁵So they said to him, “Who are you?”

Literally — “*You, who are you?*” He had virtually claimed to be the Messiah; equal in nature with God. They want to pin him down and to charge him with blasphemy.

Jesus said to them, “Just what I have been telling you from the beginning. ²⁶I have much to say about you and much to judge,

I could sit here and judge you for a really long time — I have a lot to say about your judgment, but I’ll answer your question.

but he who sent me is true, and I declare to the world what I have heard from him.” ²⁷They did not understand that he had been speaking to them about the Father.

²⁸So Jesus said to them, “When you have lifted up the Son of Man,

Jesus is pointing to His death — being lifted up on a cross outside of the walls of Jerusalem.

then you will know that I am he, and that I do nothing on my own authority, but speak just as the Father taught me. ²⁹And he who sent me is with me. He has not left me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to him.”

What a sweet and succinct summary of the life of Jesus — *I just do what pleases him*. THAT is what living under the light of God looks like — just doing what pleases Him.

And in this moment we see that a lot of people — powerful and influential RELIGIOUS people reject this. They hate Jesus for what He has to say. They are opposing Jesus because Jesus has called them into his light so that their darkness would be exposed.

In the face of this rejection John adds these words — words that give us a glimmer of hope —

³⁰As he was saying these things, many believed in him.

While the religious movers and shakers were rejecting Jesus — There were people listening in on this whole exchange who said — *Well then, that's it. I'm making my choice right here and now — I'm going to live in the light of God. Here's my sin, here's what I've done. Here's how messed up I've been. Here is my pride. Here are all of my futile attempts at trying to be a good person and hold my life together. I'm in.*

By the way — when you are sharing Jesus with a group of people — and they are shutting down — don't limit the Lord. You never know who is listening in — the person or persons on the fringe that are drinking it in and are going to step in to the light!

So there were MANY who put their faith in him, who said — *I trust you. I don't know where this is going. I don't know what you're going to do with me — but I trust You! Whatever you say — that's what I'm going to do. You do whatever pleases the Father. I'll do whatever pleases you. That way I'll be doing whatever pleases the Father.*

It is so amazing — so incredible — to step into the light of God.

AS WE CLOSE — I want you to hear what happens to those who step **into** and **abide** in the light of God. And if I weren't reading to you from the inspired, inerrant, infallible Word of God, all of this would be unbelievable.

Acts 26:18 ¹⁸to open their eyes, so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.'

Here is what God does for you the moment you step into the light of God —

You are delivered from the power of Satan to God. Your sins are forgiven. You are cleansed, and set apart unto God — your life is transformed by the grace and the power of God and his light.

2 Corinthians 4:4 In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.... ⁶For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

When you step into the light of God and you remain in the light of God you get the privilege of seeing clearly the Gospel of Christ, what he has accomplished on your behalf. The whole world looks at Christ in the story and is blinded and does not see it, and you get the joy of seeing the Gospel and the glory of Christ who is the image of God. You see Jesus for who he is and what he has done.

2 Corinthians 4:6 For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

The light of God is not just something that operates apart from us. It is a personal and relational knowledge of God that is placed **into** the very essence of who we are.

Ephesians 5:8-9 ⁸for at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light ⁹(for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true),

As you **live in** the light of God you discover new life by God's grace. It is governed by righteousness — by that which is right by God. Truth comes so you no longer need to live in lies and in darkness. There is goodness instead of selfishness and wickedness and rebellion. **ALL** of that by living under the light of God.

Don't misunderstand me — We will not be perfect in this life — but at that same time I do believe that as we live under the light of God — we begin to discover that the darkness bothers us as much as the light used to — because even as we used to be accustomed to the dark — now in Jesus we have become **accustomed to** goodness, righteousness and truth. And though we are tempted by that darkness — we now see it for what it really is and it is distasteful to the child of God.

1 Thessalonians 5:5 For you are all children of light, children of the day. We are not of the night or of the darkness.

Following Jesus — walking in the light of life causes you to recognize that you are a son or a daughter, an adopted member of God's family, and that God is your father.

Titus 1:2-3 in hope of eternal life, which God, who never lies, promised before the ages began ³and at the proper time manifested in his word through the preaching with which I have been entrusted by the command of God our Savior;

Part of what you receive as a benefit of God's grace under his light is the preaching of his Word. As you remain in the light — God will continue to reveal himself to you through the preaching of his Word.

1 Peter 2:9 But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

This is so RADICAL — As a bi-product of living under the light of God you are a new people, part of the **work** and **family** and **plan** of the kingdom of God. In the Old Testament the priests served God in the Temple. Following Jesus, the Light of the World, brings us into the place of serving God in the House of God — the Body of Christ.

This is HUGE — If you are a follower of Jesus you have been given work to do as a priest serving your God. You now have this wonderful opportunity to give praise to His glory for those ways that His light has flooded into your life and transformed you. ALL of your darkness was forgiven. ALL of your darkness was healed. The darkness was overcome. Christ showed up. And I now get to **praise him** and **work for Jesus!**

1 John 2:9-10 Whoever says he is in the light and hates his brother is still in darkness. ¹⁰Whoever loves his brother abides in the light, and in him there is no cause for stumbling.

If you live under the light then, you love the people of God and when they sin against you — you extend the same light and grace and forgiveness of the gospel that God, in Christ, has given to you. Living like results in there being no darkness between you and others in your relationships — because now the light of God is coming through you to permeate that space that has separated you and that other person, and now you are reconciled as the light of Jesus in and through you comes into that darkness and overcomes it by God's grace. And if you don't live that way you are not exercising the beautiful power of the light that Christ has given you.

FINALLY — We're told in **2 Peter 3:10** that there is coming a day when **the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed.** There is going to be a new creation — a new heaven, a new earth, a New Jerusalem." Even as God spoke light into the first creation — God will have light in his second creation. For those who allowed the LIGHT of God expose their sin and then received the grace of Jesus who died and rose on their behalf — here is what we receive at the end.

Revelation 21:23-25 And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb. ²⁴By its light will the nations walk, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it, ²⁵and its gates will never be shut by day—and there will be no night there.

“The city” – that’s the New Jerusalem,” does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it for the glory of God gives its light and the lamb as it’s lamp.” THAT is what we — as men and women who have given our hearts to Jesus, the Light of the World, are going to walk into!

When Jesus came to this earth in His first coming — His glory was veiled in a tent of Humanity. But in that day we will see Christ face to face — and his glory will be completely unveiled for us! It is such glorious light that it will illuminate all of the new creation. There will be no darkness whatsoever. Sin is gone. Spiritual, Moral and Physical Darkness is gone.

Revelation 22:5 And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever.

God’s light permeates all of His new creation — and we become lamps through which His light shines to all of His new creation. And we reign with him. And there is no darkness **in us**. There is no darkness **around us**, nor will there ever be — forever and ever and ever. THAT is what we were MADE for! THAT is why we should hate the darkness — because it works against everything that we were created for. It works against the ultimate plan and purpose of God.

We want to RESPOND now to the Word of God.

We’ll respond in **giving** — in **communion** — in **song** and in **prayer**.

We’ll respond by seeking to address the darkness within us — **so that we can go out** into the world — and the light of Christ can shine through us into the darkness that is out there.

HUGE — The Christian life is a life defined by **MOVEMENT**. It begins with a man or woman **moving** away from darkness into the Light of Jesus. Then there is a **movement back** towards the world of darkness with the light of the Gospel —

Even as Jesus left His throne of glory to shine into this lost world *the light of the knowledge of the glory of God*