

## THE GOSPEL OF

## JOHN

Jesus Is the  
Light of  
the World

## INTRODUCTION

John 8:12-30

I was only 12 years old when my dad set my three brothers and me up with outdoor lighting for our basketball court. We lived on a farm in rural Newark, IL, and if we weren't playing sports outside, we were inside, creating havoc for my parents. I'm sure that's when my dad came up with the idea of stringing up a dozen 500 watt light bulbs about 25 feet above our concreted area where we had our basketball hoop cemented in. Lights and a mounted basketball hoop were pretty advanced for 1987, and it provided a significant amount of pleasure to the Chapman boys and all of their friends who enjoyed the benefit of playing into the night, though I'm not so sure the neighbors shared that enjoyment. They lived about 500 feet away, but some of that light had to peek through their shades. The only issue with the setup was how my dad plugged the lights in. The string was attached to a tree on one side, fed through a window, and fastened to a rafter on the barn's second floor. That outlet was found inside an old chicken cage. To turn off the lights each night after playing, one of the kids needed to go up the dark, scary stairs, climb over the piled-up hay, pull open the chicken cage door, walk to the middle of the room, and pull the plug. Immediately, when the plug was removed, it went from what appeared to be daylight to pure darkness. Since we didn't have access to an iPhone with its flashlight, you find yourself nearly frozen with fear as you retrace your steps to get to the exterior door of the first floor so you could get to the light provided by the moon. As the third-born, I was often nominated for this task and eventually took it on because I wanted to overcome my fear of being in the darkness.

Darkness is scary. There is darkness all around us. Not just when we ask Alexa to turn the lights off, but in that cancer diagnosis, dealing with quarantine, when you find yourself fighting for your marriage, or when your child is running away from the Savior. Ephesians 6:12 says, "For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places."<sup>1</sup> However, we find hope when we know that we can get to a place of light. Not just light provided by the moon, but the true Light given by the Son who is the Light of the World!

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<sup>1</sup> The Holy Bible, English Standard Version. ESV® Text Edition: 2016. Copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers.

## OPEN IT

1. Do you remember being scared of the dark? What was your situation, and how did you deal with it?

## READ IT

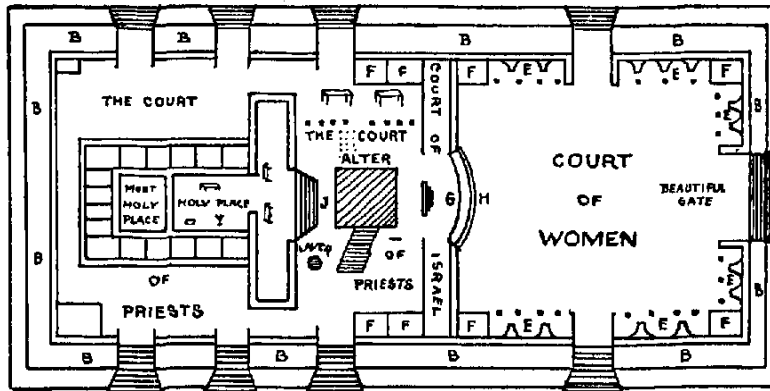
John 8:12-30

## EXPLORE IT

2. Whom was Jesus speaking to? (v.12,13)
3. Why were the Pharisees saying what Jesus was saying was false? (v.13)
4. How does Jesus rebut the Pharisees in their “requirement” for multiple witnesses? (vv.14-18)
5. Where is Jesus going? (v.21)
6. Whom is Jesus speaking for? (v.25b-29)

## APPLY IT

In John 7, we read that Jesus is at the Feast of the Tabernacle, referred to as Feast of Booths. God commanded this Feast in Leviticus 23:33-34, 42-43 saying, "... "Speak to the people of Israel, saying, On the fifteenth day of this seventh month and for seven days is the Feast of Booths to the Lord. You shall dwell in booths for seven days. All native Israelites shall dwell in booths, 43 that your generations may know that I made the people of Israel dwell in booths when I brought them out of the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God." The verses we are studying (John 8:12-30) are coming in the morning after the final day. During the Feast, four golden lamps were lit in the Court of Women (see image below<sup>2</sup>). The lamps remained lit during the duration of the Feast to represent the Light that was leading Moses and the Israelites out of Egypt. Before dawn, which would mean right before Jesus spoke to the people in these verses, the lamps would have been extinguished.



7. Jesus has helped people understand who He is by connecting them with real-time things. In our example today, Jesus refers to the light, allowing people to realize that, unlike the light from the golden lamps, Jesus' Light can never be extinguished.

What are some of the other examples we have studied in the Gospel of John up to this point?

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<sup>2</sup> Solomon's Temple. Sanctuary floor plans. (n.d.). Retrieved 2021, from [https://ancient-sda.com/future\\_dan\\_rev/sanctuary\\_plan.html](https://ancient-sda.com/future_dan_rev/sanctuary_plan.html)

John 8:12 opens up by saying that Jesus is the Light of the world. These are very similar words that the Holy Spirit led the Apostle John to pen in the opening verses of this letter (Read John 1:1-9). Understanding that the Anointed King Jesus is the Light of the world helps us understand the entire Bible more thoroughly.

The Old Testament pointed to the light as a characteristic of Yahweh many different times. When Jesus stated that He was the light of the world, He was telling the Pharisees that He was God. “Christ is the Light of the world. God is light, and Christ is the image of the invisible God. One sun enlightens the whole world; so does one Christ, and there needs no more.”<sup>3</sup>

**8. Take a few minutes using the concordance in the back of your Bible or an online resource, look up some of these biblical references to God being light.**

**What are some Old Testament verses that identify God as the Light?**

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<sup>3</sup> Henry, Matthew. *Matthew Henry Commentary on the Whole Bible (Complete)*. Vol. 1, 1706. *Bible Study Tools*, [www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/matthew-henry-complete/](http://www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/matthew-henry-complete/).

Darkness is frequently put as the opposite of Light. In verse 12, Jesus states that “Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.” The word darkness in this verse is the same Greek word used 16 other times in the New Testament. It is the word “*skotia*”. It means “used of ignorance of divine things, and its associated wickedness, and the resultant misery in hell.”<sup>4</sup>

Read Genesis 1:4. The Hebrew word darkness found in this verse is similar to the Greek word darkness used in John 8:12. This Hebrew word, “*chashak*”, means “the dark; hence (literally) darkness; figuratively, misery, destruction, death, ignorance, sorrow, wickedness -- dark(-ness), night, obscurity.”<sup>5</sup>

**9. Jesus was sharing words directly from Scriptures that the Pharisees would have been familiar with. We can already deduce that the Pharisees were angered by the fact that Jesus was claiming to be God by identifying Himself as the Light of the world.**

**However, now familiarizing ourselves with the word darkness, we can understand that Jesus said, in my paraphrase, I am God, and if you follow me, you will have life, but if you do not follow me, you will be choosing misery in hell.**

**How do Jesus’ statements of both being “I am the light of the world,” and if you don’t follow me, you will be in darkness affect the scheming of the Pharisees?**

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<sup>4</sup> Thayer and Smith. "Greek Lexicon entry for Skotia". "The NAS New Testament Greek Lexicon". . 1999.

<sup>5</sup> Strong, James. Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible. Abingdon Press, 1890.

Having multiple children in your family, you need to develop games to play in the car to pass the time. We could give everyone a device and let them drift off in their little world, but we have desired to engage when we can. So, we play a game called “Pass the Buck.” Every time someone sees anything to do with a “buck,” you shout out the phrase “Pass the Buck”. It could be a deer that you see, a picture of a deer, a dollar sign (\$), or, the most popular one in our area, a John Deere tractor. If you shout out the catchphrase before anyone else, the dollar, often donated by dad, is passed to them. As the keeper of the dollar, you are now out of the game, and everyone else is trying to steal it. Once someone else sees a “buck” and shouts out the phrase, they get the dollar, and you are back in the game.

Because of the excitement that all children have, some simple rules had to be put into place. First and foremost, we needed to make a rule that at least two people had to see the “buck” for you to get the dollar. If you were the only one to see it, you were out of luck, even if it was real.

That is precisely what the Pharisees are telling Jesus. They say to Him that it doesn’t matter what testimony He has; unless there are multiple witnesses, His testimony is worthless. Deuteronomy 19:15 says, “A single witness shall not suffice against a person for any crime or for any wrong in connection with any offense that he has committed. Only on the evidence of two witnesses or of three witnesses shall a charge be established.”<sup>6</sup>

**10. After Jesus spoke such powerful statements in the previous verse, why do you think the Pharisees object with such frivolous things as saying Jesus needed additional witnesses?**

**11. How does Jesus’ answer to the Pharisees in John 8:14 compare to His statement in John 5:31?**

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<sup>6</sup> The Holy Bible, English Standard Version. ESV® Text Edition: 2016. Copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers.

When I attended Newark Community High School in the '90s, our basketball coach was big into reminding us whom we were representing. He would always say, "Your jersey has your school name on it and your warmup jersey has your last name on it. You don't just represent yourself, you represent the entire school community and your entire family. Make sure that you play, act, and react with that in mind." Coach Thornton made his point, and we did our best to carry ourselves accordingly.

In Jesus' response to the Pharisees, we see that He resolutely knows where He came from and fully understands Whom He represents. He says in John 16:28, "I came from the Father and have come into the world, and now I am leaving the world and going to the Father."<sup>7</sup> Then, in a similar statement, Jesus says in John 17:5, "...Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed."<sup>8</sup> Jesus fully understood and understands Who He is and where He is from.

## **12. Why is it essential for a follower of Jesus Christ to know where their citizenship belongs?**

## **13. Read James 4:14, 1 Peter 5:10, Hebrews 13:14, & 1 Corinthians 7:31.**

**What are practical ways that you can represent your King, even though you will live on earth only for a moment?**

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid

<sup>8</sup> Ibid

As Jesus is responding to the Pharisees, He tells them that even though He could judge that He is judging no one. Expounding upon that idea, Jesus again connects the Father and Himself as One in the same. Verse 16, Jesus says, "Yet 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."<sup>9</sup>

Read Isaiah 11:2, Psalm 89:21, & Zechariah 6:13.

**14. Why does Jesus say that He is judging no one?**

**15. Will Jesus judge? What scriptures talk about Jesus being the Judge? If He will serve as Judge, do we know when that will be?**

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid



The idiom goes something like, "If I've told you once, I've told you a thousand times!" Isn't that what we sometimes say with our kids? We get tired of explaining the same thing repeatedly without them being able to figure it out. That is what Jesus experienced in verse 25. He responds to the Pharisee's question when they inquire who He is. Jesus says, "Just what I have been telling you from the beginning."<sup>10</sup>

Before the Pharisees chime in with the "who are you" question, Jesus shares that if you do not believe, if you possess the sin of unbelief, you will die. Ezekiel 3:19 says, "But if you warn the wicked, and he does not turn from his wickedness, or from his wicked way, he shall die for his iniquity, but you will have delivered your soul."<sup>11</sup>

**16. Why do you think the Pharisees were missing the warning that Jesus was sharing with them and all of the people gathered in the temple?**

**17. Who have you been recently witnessing to? What have you been doing to share the Good News with them? How have they responded?**

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid

<sup>11</sup> Ibid