

SCRIPTURE LESSON TEXT

JOHN 8:12 Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.

13 The Pharisees therefore said unto him, Thou bearest record of thyself; thy record is not true.

14 Jesus answered and said unto them, Though I bear record of myself, yet my record is true: for I know whence I came, and whither I go; but ye cannot tell whence I come, and whither I go.

15 Ye judge after the flesh; I judge no man.

16 And yet if I judge, my judgment is true: for I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent me.

17 It is also written in your law, that the testimony of two men is true.

18 I am one that bear witness of myself, and the Father that sent me beareth witness of me.

19 Then said they unto him, Where is thy Father? Jesus answered, Ye neither know me, nor my Father: if ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also.

20 These words spake Jesus in the treasury, as he taught in the temple: and no man laid hands on him; for his hour was not yet come.

21 Then said Jesus again unto them, I go my way, and ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins: whither I go, ye cannot come.

22 Then said the Jews, Will he kill himself? because he saith, Whither I go, ye cannot come.

23 And he said unto them, Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world.

24 I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am *he*, ye shall die in your sins.

25 Then said they unto him, Who art thou? And Jesus saith unto them, Even *the same* that I said unto you from the beginning.

26 I have many things to say and to judge of you: but he that sent me is true; and I speak to the world those things which I have heard of him.

27 They understood not that he spake to them of the Father.

NOTES

Jesus: The Light of the World

Lesson Text: John 8:12-27

Related Scriptures: John 1:1-4; 5:19-30; 12:32-36;
Matthew 5:14-16

TIME: A.D. 29

PLACE: Jerusalem

GOLDEN TEXT—"Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (John 8:12).

Lesson Exposition

THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD— John 8:12-18

Proclamation (John 8:12-13). It was the Feast of Tabernacles (7:2). Included were a water-drawing ceremony and a lighting ceremony, both reflecting back on God's care of Israel during their wilderness wanderings. During the lighting ceremony, Jesus made His second "I Am" statement recorded by John, claiming to be "the light of the world" (8:12) who frees people from spiritual darkness. Trusting Him as Lord and Saviour gives divine light, wisdom, and understanding that cannot be obtained any other way.

"He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." To follow Christ means to follow His ways as taught in the Bible. It means that His will is paramount and ours is submissive to His.

The Pharisees refused to accept this, claiming that Jesus was acting as His own witness and therefore it did not count.

Defense (John 8:14-15). Jesus maintained that His witness was valid because only He knew where He had

come from and where He was going; they could know neither.

Jesus said the Pharisees were judging solely on the basis of human reasoning, that is, "the flesh" (vs. 15). This was totally inadequate because they were limiting their thinking to what was earthly without leaving any room for spiritual truth.

Jesus was contrasting their inadequate, limited judgment with His own comprehensive understanding of spiritual truth.

Explanation (John 8:16-18). Jesus was pointing out that His judgment was on a completely different level. The law specified that more than one witness was needed for a charge to be leveled. Christ's judgment was true in that He was not alone as a witness, as they assumed. He and His Father, who had sent Him to earth, were in this together. Their charge against Him, therefore, had no validity whatsoever.

BLIND TO THE LIGHT—John 8:19-22

Ignorance (John 8:19-20). When the Pharisees asked Jesus where His Father was, He charged them with be-

ing ignorant of both Himself and His Father.

In the life Jesus lived on earth, He manifested the full attributes of God. In all His actions and attitudes it was obvious that He was not like other people. If the Jews had been observant, they could have recognized Him for who He was, but they did not want to see it.

Impending departure (John 8:21-22). Jesus had previously mentioned that He was leaving (7:34), but the Pharisees and chief priests had misunderstood, asking where He was planning to go in order to hide from them (vs. 35). They continued to think only in earthly terms. If they remained in their current spiritual condition, they would die in their sins. They could not go where He was going.

But they still could not understand what Jesus was saying. Now they reasoned, "Will he kill himself? because he saith, Whither I go, ye cannot come" (8:22). They continued to think only in earthly terms without the least flicker of spiritual understanding.

ABOVE AND BENEATH— John 8:23-27

Divergence (John 8:23-24). Here was the problem for these Pharisees. Jesus drew this contrast between them: "Ye are of this world; I am not of this world." His origin was His Father, while theirs was fallen human nature. That is why they would die in their sins, since they refused to acknowledge that He is Messiah.

"I AM" (John 8:25-27). Once again, the Pharisees interrogated Jesus about who He was. Even with all the miracles He had performed and all the teaching He had done, they still did not get it!

What really infuriated them was His application of the phrase "I AM" to Himself in verse 24 (the word "he" was

added by the KJV translators), indicating His deity. Contrary to what they had accused Him of earlier, His own testimony about Himself was indeed true. This message had originated with His Father: "He that sent me is true; and I speak to the world those things which I have heard of him" (vs. 26).

Jesus Christ is the Light of the World. Those who cannot see His light are in a realm of darkness, which is Satan's domain (II Cor. 4:4; Eph. 2:2). But John gives us plenty of reason to hope in the light that Jesus offers.

—Keith E. Eggert.

QUESTIONS

1. What made the timing of Jesus' proclamation of Himself as the Light of the World significant?
2. How can a person be delivered from darkness?
3. What does it mean to follow Christ?
4. How did Jesus prove that His own witness was indeed valid?
5. What did Jesus say about His own judgment as opposed to the Pharisees?
6. What did Jesus charge the Pharisees with when they asked where His Father was?
7. What contrast did Jesus draw between His destination and that of the Pharisees?
8. What contrast did Jesus draw between His origin and that of the Pharisees?
9. What did Jesus warn the Pharisees about their unbelief?
10. Why was it amazing that the Pharisees still asked Jesus who He was?

—Keith E. Eggert.

PRACTICAL POINTS

1. The salvation Jesus Christ offers transfers people from the path of sin to a path of righteousness (John 8:12).
2. Every word of Jesus is true and confirmed by God the Father; no argument of man can change that (vss. 13-18).
3. To know Jesus is to know God, for Jesus is God (vss. 19).
4. Because of sin, all unbelievers are separated from God and deserve eternal judgment in hell (John 8:20-24; cf. Luke 13:22-30).
5. We can speak the truth about Jesus, but we cannot make people understand it; that is the work of God (John 8:25-27).

—Brandon Byler.

RESEARCH AND DISCUSSION

1. In your own words, how would you explain what Jesus meant when He said, “I am the light of the world” (John 8:12)? In what sense are we too the light of the world (cf. Matt. 5:14)?
2. What witnesses can we call upon today to give testimony as to who Jesus is (John 8:13-19)?
3. Should we ever tell people, as Jesus did, that they will die in their sins (vs. 21)? Explain.
4. How does verse 19 give us a better perspective on theological difficulties such as the Trinity?
5. Is it possible to deny Jesus is God and still be a true believer (vs. 24)? Why or why not?

—Brandon Byler.

Golden Text Illuminated

“Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life” (John 8:12).

John’s Gospel does not record many parables. Instead, he records Jesus’ claims to deity, which are usually expressed in metaphors. These claims not only reveal that Jesus is God, but they also reveal His attributes.

John discloses seven metaphorical declarations of Jesus Christ: “I am the bread of life,” “I am the light of the world,” “I am the door,” “I am the good shepherd,” “I am the resurrection and the life,” “I am the way, the truth, and the life,” and “I am the true vine” (cf. 6:48; 8:12; 10:9; 10:11; 11:25; 14:6; 15:1).

After the Feast of Tabernacles (cf. 7:2), as the sun began to rise with the coming of a new day (8:2), Jesus makes another claim to deity in the temple. He says, “I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.” He compares Himself to the sun, which gives light for the day. Since He was in the temple, He may also have had in mind the massive candelabrum, which remained lit at night.

Jesus is the Light who gives the light of life to all who are connected to Him by faith. Disconnected from Him, man dwells in spiritual darkness. His soul is deprived, and he has no ability to conceive the meaning and purpose of life—to worship, serve, and glorify Jesus Christ (cf. Rev. 4:11; 5:12).

—Kenneth E. Ware.