

## John 8:12-30 & 9:1-7 – Light of the world

Once again, Jesus presents a picture of who he is, a metaphor to open our eyes to the mystery of his incarnation. “Metaphors are used to help us understand the unknown, because we use what we know in comparison with something we don't know to get a better understanding of the unknown.”<sup>1</sup> When we look at the context of this statement, we see Jesus in the Temple on the 8<sup>th</sup> day of the Feast of Tabernacles. “One of the most spectacular celebrations of the Feast of Tabernacles involved torches that lit up the city; this feast, along with Hanukkah (10:22), was thus known for splendid lighting.”<sup>2</sup> Jesus was teaching near “where the offerings were put” (John 8:20), this was “next to the Court of Women, where the lighting ceremony (8:12) and dancing took place throughout the nights of the festival.”<sup>3</sup>

We can imagine Jesus and the disciples watching as the flaming torches were lifted up to light the procession, dispelling the darkness as the people followed. Then he declares, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”

Open

- What difference do you think the invention of the electric light made to the way people live?

### Study

Read together : John 8:12-30

1. Where was Jesus teaching when he said “I am the light of the world” and what feast was in process? How significant is this and why? (John 8:20, John 7:2,14)
  
2. What do you think “light of the world” meant to Jesus's hearers? (John 8:12, cf Isaiah 42:6, 49:6, 60:19-22)

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1 [http://www.tnellen.com/cybereng/lit\\_terms/metaphor.htm](http://www.tnellen.com/cybereng/lit_terms/metaphor.htm)

2 Keener, C. S., & InterVarsity Press. (1993). *The IVP Bible background commentary : New Testament* (Jn 8:9–12). Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press.

3 Keener, C. S., & InterVarsity Press. (1993). *The IVP Bible background commentary : New Testament* (Jn 8:19). Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press.

## The "I am" sayings of Jesus

3. "Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." How does this statement relate to the Exodus? (John 8:12, Exodus 13:21-22, 40:36-38)

### Consider

4. What does it mean to follow Jesus as the light of the world? (John 8:12 cf 1 John 1:5-7, 2:9-10, Isaiah 2:2-5)
5. How does the debate between the Pharisees and Jesus highlight the differences between the way of light and the way of darkness? (John 8:13-30, cf John 1:1-5)
6. "When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am the one I claim to be.." What do you think was the significance of that statement to those who were listening on that day? (John 8:28 cf Isaiah 52:13) What is the significance for us? (John 12:32-36)

### Consider

7. Jesus realised that "at the heart of the Israel of his day there was a single great problem: they had forgotten who their God really was. Their behaviour, their attitudes and their ambitions indicated that they didn't know the one Jesus called 'father'"<sup>4</sup> To what extent has our relationship with the Father impacted our behaviour, attitudes and ambitions?

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<sup>4</sup> Wright, T. (2004). *John for Everyone, Part 1: Chapters 1-10* (117). London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge.

## The “I am” sayings of Jesus

Read together John 9:1-7

8. In what way does the healing of the man born blind show that Jesus was doing the work of “him who sent” him? (John 9:1-7, cf Genesis 1:1-3, John 1:1-3)

Consider

9. “While I am in the world, I am the light of the world.” How is the light to shine today and what does that mean for us? (John 9:5, cf Matthew 5:14, Eph 5:8, Acts 26:18)

### **To chew over until the next study:**

“Whoever follows me” This is a PRESENT ACTIVE PARTICIPLE. It must be remembered that Christianity is not primarily a creed or a theology; rather, it is a personal relationship followed by a lifestyle of discipleship (cf. I John 1:7).<sup>5</sup>

“A man blind from birth... who sinned, this man or his parents?”... “Neither this man nor his parents sinned...” “The chaos and misery of this present world is, it seems, the raw material out of which the loving, wise and just God is making his new creation.”<sup>6</sup>

“Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord rises upon you. (Isaiah 60:1)

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<sup>5</sup> Uteley, R. J. D. (1999). *Vol. Volume 4: The Beloved Disciple's Memoirs and Letters: The Gospel of John, I, II, and III John*. Study Guide Commentary Series (81–82). Marshall, Texas: Bible Lessons International.

<sup>6</sup> Wright, T. (2004). *John for Everyone, Part 1: Chapters 1-10* (134). London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge.