

## The Light of Life

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John 8:12-30

The celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles was an annual reminder that God had led his children through the wilderness on a journey to the Promised Land. And, it was an annual reminder that we are still on a journey to the new heavens and the new earth. All along the way we need the guidance of our Lord. Just as Israel had the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night to guide them, so we have Christ revealed in the word of God.

Jesus Christ is the light of the world. Light is truth, and Jesus is the truth that we need in order to be made right with God. His perfect righteousness reveals what we need to know about ourselves as sinners without hope in this world, unless the Lord intervenes on our behalf.

As the light of the world, the Lord Jesus Christ is also light for our way after we come to faith in him. How can we live in a way that is acceptable to God? Just as we looked to Christ for salvation, so we look to Christ for guidance. He has taught us the law of God, not as the scribes, but with authority. He has taught us that keeping God's commandments is not merely an outward display but involves the attitude of the heart. He has given us his word and that word becomes our standard for life, for doctrine, and for practice.

And, Jesus is the light of the world in the sense that he is unique. There are not many ways to God. Just any religion will not do. Oh, but if we are sincere, will not everything work out alright? It is not sincerity that is the issue, but truth. Jesus is the very truth of God. To have him is to have reality; to not have him is to be hopelessly lost.

Why are these things so? It is because the Lord's testimony concerning himself is valid. It is valid because he is the only human being who has ever lived here on the earth, and also prior to this life. When he said that he knew where he had come from, he was referring to his heavenly origin. William Wordsworth said this, *Trailing clouds of glory we come from God who is our home*. But that is not so. We did not have a life before this one. Our lives begin here on the earth at conception. Christ Jesus was with the Father and the Spirit at the creation of all things. Christ was present with the Father, and the Spirit, when the eternal covenant of salvation was devised, and that was even before any human being was created.

Christ also has the witness of the Father as to his unique person and work. He is both God and man, and he has accomplished salvation by his atonement for sinners. By his blood he has redeemed his people and we shall praise him eternally for it.

To know Jesus, therefore, is to know the Father. The word of God

teaches us that we should not fashion an image in the likeness of man, or animal, and say that it represents God. There is only one image of God that will do. The apostle Paul told the Colossians that Jesus Christ is the image of the invisible God. If you want to know what God is like look to Christ!

The Lord, in this passage teaches us that to oppose the light, the truth revealed in Christ, means that one cannot go to glory with him. Whatever the reality of heaven, it is far better than this world. To go to that wondrous place, and to have fellowship with our savior, and with one another for eternity, is a prospect that all should aspire to experience. But without Christ there will be only the judgment of God. Without Christ there will be eternal suffering. With Christ there is eternal blessing. Failure to put one's faith in Christ leads only to eternal death.

In is in the death of Christ that we see the greatest revelation of the love of God. "So Jesus said to them, 'When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am *he*...' Literally this reads, "...then you will know that I Am..." To come to know Christ is to come to know the great "I Am." To come to Christ is to truly come to know God for the first time. To come to Christ is to come to the self existing God who made us, and who sent his Son to save us. It was the Lord Jesus alone who has lived in a way that is pleasing to the Father, without exception. Only he is pristine in his righteousness. Only he is without sin. Only Christ shines with light from the very throne of God.

