

Jesus the Light of the World (John 8:12-30)
Kid's Lesson | The Seven I Ams of Jesus | Perfect Love Kids 2019

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Text of John 8:12-30 (NKJV)

¹² Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, “I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.”

¹³ The Pharisees therefore said to Him, “You bear witness of Yourself; Your witness is not true.”

¹⁴ Jesus answered and said to them, “Even if I bear witness of Myself, My witness is true, for I know where I came from and where I am going; but you do not know where I come from and where I am going. ¹⁵ You judge according to the flesh; I judge no one. ¹⁶ And yet if I do judge, My judgment is true; for I am not alone, but I am with the Father who sent Me. ¹⁷ It is also written in your law that the testimony of two men is true. ¹⁸ I am One who bears witness of Myself, and the Father who sent Me bears witness of Me.”

¹⁹ Then they said to Him, “Where is Your Father?”

Jesus answered, “You know neither Me nor My Father. If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also.”

²⁰ These words Jesus spoke in the treasury, as He taught in the temple; and no one laid hands on Him, for His hour had not yet come.

²¹ Then Jesus said to them again, “I am going away, and you will seek Me, and will die in your sin. Where I go you cannot come.”

²² So the Jews said, “Will He kill Himself, because He says, ‘Where I go you cannot come?’” ²³ And He said to them, “You are from beneath; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world. ²⁴ Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins.”

²⁵ Then they said to Him, “Who are You?”

And Jesus said to them, “Just what I have been saying to you from the beginning.²⁶ I have many things to say and to judge concerning you, but He who sent Me is true; and I speak to the world those things which I heard from Him.”

²⁷ *They did not understand that He spoke to them of the Father.*

²⁸ *Then Jesus said to them, “When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He, and that I do nothing of Myself; but as My Father taught Me, I speak these things.*

²⁹ *And He who sent Me is with Me. The Father has not left Me alone, for I always do those things that please Him.”³⁰ As He spoke these words, many believed in Him.*

Background Information

“Light” in the Bible

LIGHT. The word is used in connection with joy, blessing and *life in contrast to sorrow, adversity and death (*cf.* Gn. 1:3f.; Jb. 10:22; 18:5f.). At an early time it came to signify God’s presence and favour (*cf.* Ps. 27:1; Is. 9:2; 2 Cor. 4:6) in contrast to God’s judgment (Am. 5:18). From this and other sources arises an ethical dualism between light and darkness, *i.e.* good and evil, which is quite marked in the NT (*cf.* Lk. 16:8; Jn. 3:19ff.; 12:36; 2 Cor. 6:14; Col. 1:12f.; 1 Thes. 5:5; 1 Pet. 2:9). Some, *e.g.* C. H. Dodd, have regarded Hellenistic parallels to be significant in this regard, but the presence of this usage in Judaism, *e.g.* *The War of the Sons of Light and the Sons of Darkness* in dss, makes such an inference unnecessary and provides a more pertinent commentary on the NT concepts.

God’s *holiness is expressed in terms of light, *e.g.* in 1 Tim. 6:16, where he is said to dwell ‘in unapproachable light’; *cf.* 1 Jn. 1:5, where it is said that ‘God is light’, and other passages in that Epistle where the implications of this for the believer are worked out. The same thought is seen in the typically Heb. expression ‘children of light’ which is twice used by Paul (Eph. 5:8; *cf.* 1 Thes. 5:5; Jn. 12:36).

In John’s Gospel the term light refers not so much to God’s holiness as to the *revelation* of his love in Christ and the penetration of that love into lives darkened by sin. So Christ refers to himself as ‘the light of the world’ (Jn. 8:12; 9:5; *cf.* 12:46), and in the Sermon on the Mount applies this term to his disciples (Mt. 5:14–16). Similarly Paul can refer to ‘the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ’ and to God himself who ‘has shone in our hearts’ (2 Cor. 4:4–6).¹

Commentary on John 8:12-29

8:12. Jewish literature was generous with the title “light of the world,” applying it to Israel, Jerusalem, the patriarchs, the Messiah, God, famous rabbis and the law (*cf.* 1:4–5); but always it refers to something of ultimate significance. 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. That Jesus offers his light to the whole world, to all the nations, may suggest an allusion to Isaiah 42:6. Walking in darkness (*cf.* Jn 9:4; 11:9) is a natural metaphor for stumbling (Is 59:10; Jer 13:16), falling from the right way (Jer 18:15; Mal 2:8) or being destroyed (Ps 27:2; Jer 20:11).

¹ E. E. Ellis, “Light,” ed. D. R. W. Wood et al., *New Bible Dictionary* (Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 690–691. Logos Bible Software.

8:13–18. The law of Moses required two witnesses to confirm any case (Deut 19:15; cf. 17:6), and subsequent Jewish interpretation made this requirement stricter; Jesus employs the standard Jewish argument “how much more”: if the witness of two men is valid, how much more that of Father and Son?

Jews spoke of the law as “God’s law” or “our law”; rabbis presented only their pagan and heretical challengers as calling it “your law” (8:17). In John (who argues that Jesus fulfills the law), however, this expression is surely ironic: see the introduction on “the Jews.”

8:19–20. Their response is (v. 19): If he is a witness, he must appear in the court; and they complain that they have no access to the voice of God. Jesus’ reply is: I know; that is the problem. The “treasury” (v. 20) was next to the Court of Women, where the lighting ceremony (8:12) and dancing took place throughout the nights of the festival. The treasury itself may have been used only for storage, but 8:20 can be read, “near the treasury.”

8:21–22. Most Jewish pietists disapproved of suicide; they do not see Jesus as a particularly pious person here. Yet John’s irony is again at work: Jesus does return to the Father through his death on the cross.

8:23. The contrast between the realm above (God’s realm) and the realm below (where mortals lived) was common in Jewish apocalyptic literature, and its meaning should be plain to the hearers if they are open to hear his point.

8:24–25. Dying in sin was a serious matter, for at death one’s final opportunity for repentance had passed (cf. Ezek 18:21–32). (For this reason, Jewish teachers exhorted those being executed to confess their sins and believe their death would atone for their sins.) Jesus agrees that one must repent but insists that genuine repentance must include faith in him.

8:26–27. According to Jewish law, an agent must accurately represent his sender, and to the extent that he did so was backed by his sender’s full authorization.

8:28–29. “Lifting up” (cf. 3:14; 12:32) is from the Septuagint of Isaiah 52:13—which in context refers to the crucifixion (Is 52:14–53:12).²

Notes and Thoughts

What does light do? Light helps us see. Without light we would always be stumbling around, falling over things, running into each other. We’d get hurt and we wouldn’t really be able to go anywhere or see anyone. We would need help, someone to show us the way or tools to help us navigate in the darkness.

Physically, when God created the universe, at first it was filled only with darkness (Gen 1:2). Then, by only His word of power, the first thing God made was light (Gen 1:3).

Spiritually, the Gospel of John tells us that the world of humanity lives in darkness. Darkness is a symbol of sin and death. Just like how physically we stumble and fall in the darkness, spiritually we stumble over temptation and fall into sin. But into the dark world of humanity, Jesus came bringing the light of God.

The Gospel of John tells us, “In Him [Jesus] was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it” (John 1:4-5). And Hebrews tells us that

² Craig S. Keener, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), Jn 8:12–29. Logos Bible Software.

God, “has in these last days spoken to us by His Son [Jesus] ... the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person” (Heb 1:3).

Jesus is God the Son, the physical incarnation of God. He brings God’s eternal light into this dark, sinful world of sin and death. This light is Jesus’ self-revelation of salvation in Himself for all who believe. (John 3:16-21).

As followers of Jesus, Jesus shares His light with us. And He tells us to share that light with the world. Jesus explains with an example in Matthew 5:14-16. When you put a lamp in a room, do you hide it under a basket? No, that’s silly! You get a lamp to light up the room. In the same way, the dark world of humanity needs believers to share the love of Jesus with our words and actions so they can see the light of Jesus, experience His life-changing power, and believe in Him.

Videos and Craft Ideas

Live action clip: <https://youtu.be/C5dB-ONu8ZY>

Animated clip: <https://youtu.be/V88uWg6mvxA>

He Is the Light (Lifetree Kids): <https://youtu.be/fzoOmdZrx8>

Light of the World (Hillsong Kids): <https://youtu.be/Y8MNB1LAAp0>

Lantern craft: <http://flamecreativekids.blogspot.com/2013/07/light-of-world-lantern-craft.html>

Paper loop sun craft: <https://biblecraftsbyjenny.weebly.com/light-of-the-world-sun.html>