

## ***I AM the Light of the World***

John 8:12-39

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### **Introduction<sup>1</sup>:**

The Feast of Tabernacles has just ended (John 7:37). Leviticus 23 describes the Feasts. Through the years the ceremony was observed with a “water” ceremony in the morning and a “light” ceremony in the evening. All of the activities of the Feast were intended both for the people to remember God’s provision to their forebears in their wilderness sojourn from slavery to freedom in the Land of Rest and for the people to anticipate God’s ultimate provision in the Messianic Kingdom. It’s helpful to keep this backdrop in mind as we review Jesus’ words in John 8:12ff. Fearlessly Jesus reveals Himself so that those with eyes may be saved, and those with none may be without excuse.

### **Important notes on the text:**

- **I am** (8:12, 24, 28, 58; 9:5). Literally, "I that speak to you, I am." Jesus uses this emphatic and unusual phrase "I am" many times in John's Gospel. It is the same one used in the Greek version of the Jewish Scriptures in Exodus 3:14; Deut. 32:39; Isaiah 41:4; Isaiah 43:10; Isaiah 46:4, and other passages when God says "I am" or "I am he."
- **The light** (8:12; 9:5). Jesus is alluding to another theme of Tabernacles. Just before Zechariah prophesied the living water flowing out from Jerusalem, he predicted that the day of the Lord would be unique because there would be light in the evening (Zech. 14:6-7). Isaiah 60:19-20 explained that the Lord Himself would replace the sun and moon as the light in that day (compare Rev. 21:23-25; Rev. 22:5). Just as God provided water from a rock in the desert for Israel, and that rock typified Christ (Exodus 17:1-7; 1 Cor. 10:4), so God guided the desert wanderers in the night with a pillar of flame (Exodus 13:21). Water and light were linked symbols.
- **On the first night of Tabernacles** (and perhaps on the others) there was a ritual of lighting four golden candlesticks in the Court of the Women. Each of these had four golden bowls on top which were reached by ladders. Floating in these bowls were wicks made from the drawers and girdles of the priests; and when they were lit, it is said that all Jerusalem reflected the light that burned in the House of Water Drawing (that part of the Court of the Women through which the water procession passed). Also, light symbolized both the Law and God Himself (Psalm 36:9; Psalm 119:105).
- **The place where the offerings were put** (8:20). A section of the Court of the Women. In other words, Jesus spoke these words near where the candles that had burned during Tabernacles were now extinguished.

### **Consider these verses which speak about freedom:**

Exodus 6:2-7; Isaiah 58:6-7, 61:1; John 3:16-17, 8:32, 36; 10:10; 15:1-8; Romans 6:7, 18, 22; 8:1-4, 21; II Corinthians 3:17; Galatians 5:1, 13; II Timothy 1:7; Hebrews 2:14-15; James 1:25; I Peter 2:16

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<sup>1</sup> I'm grateful for the following *LifeChange Series*, *LifeGuide Bible Studies*, Word Search's *LessonMaker*, and for various commentaries in preparing this study guide. - GLS

### **Thought Questions about the passage:**

1. Write down what Jesus claims about Himself and His words in 8:12-8:38.

8:12

8:19

8:23

8:29

8:31-32

2. What evidence verifies that Jesus' claims are valid (8:14-18, 28)?
3. What do you think Jesus means when He calls Himself "the light of the world" (8:12; 9:4-5, 39)?
4. He says "Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." What does it mean to walk in darkness (John 8:12) or to be enslaved (8:33)? How has following Jesus brought light and freedom into your life?
5. The Pharisees challenge the validity of Jesus' claim (John 8:13; see Deut. 19:15). How does Jesus answer their challenge (John 8:14-18)?
6. Read John 8:31-59. Jesus makes a startling claim in John 8:31-32: "If you hold to my teaching . . . then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." Why does holding to Jesus' teaching lead to true knowledge and freedom? In what ways have you experienced this to be true? How can you better enjoy your freedom in the Son? From what enslaving sin will you ask God to set you free?

**Notes from the sermon:** *I AM the Light of the World*

### **Application:**

After studying the passage and pondering the message, I purpose this week to: