

John 8:12: I am the Light of the World

Introduction

1. The seven "I am" statements of Jesus:
 - a. I am the bread of life (6:35)
 - b. I am the light of the world (8:12)
 - c. I am the door (10:9)
 - d. I am the good Shepherd (10:11)
 - e. I am the resurrection and the life (11:25)
 - f. I am the way, truth and life (14:6)
 - g. I am the true vine (15:1)
2. Over the last two weeks we looked at Jesus' claim to be the bread of life and the door/Good Shepherd
3. This week we look at His claim to be the Light of the world

A. Contextual Background from Matthew 7

1. We learn that it was the Feast of Booths (7:2)
2. Jesus' brothers encourage Him to go up to the feast and perform miracles for all His disciples to see suggesting that His motives were simply to build a following, but Jesus refused claiming it wasn't his time (7:3-9)
3. We then see that Jesus does go up to the feast but not publically, as his brothers wanted, but privately (7:10)
4. At the feast, there was quite a bit of debate regarding Jesus among the Jews. Some believed He was the Christ while others accused Him of leading people astray (7:10-13)
5. Sometime during the feast Jesus finally goes to the temple and begins teaching on two things: His heavenly origins and that He was sent by the father (7:14; 28-29)
6. This further divided the people, with some believing His claim and others seeking to kill him (7:30-31)
7. This leads to a confrontation with the Pharisees and ultimately his claim to be the "**Light of the world**"

B. There are a few clues to understanding what Jesus meant by this claim

1. Clue #1: The Feasts of Booths
 - a. Also called the Feast of the Harvest and Feast of the Ingathering
 - b. Instituted by God in Exodus 23:16 with more details given in Leviticus 23:33-44
 - 1) It was to begin on the 15th of the 7th month (September-October) which was harvest time
 - 2) It would begin on the Sabbath and last for a total of 8 days (ending on the next Sabbath)
 - 3) They were to harvest their crops and then bring an offering to the Lord every day for seven days
 - 4) They were to feast for those seven days as well

- 5) Finally, they were to live in booths as a way of remembering God's **deliverance** from Egypt and His provision through the wilderness
- c. By Jesus's day, this was a massive celebration in Jerusalem and revolved around two ceremonies:
- 1) **The ceremony of the water (emphasis on God's blessings and provisions):**
 - a. Beginning on the first day, then at the beginning of each day, the priest would lead a parade to the pool of Siloam carrying two golden pitchers, one for wine and one for water. He would fill the water pitcher from the pool and then lead the parade back to the temple where he would pour both the water and the wine into two silver basins as drink offerings for the Lord
 - b. This part of the feast focused on God's blessings and provision, and the offerings made each day
 - 2) **The ceremony of illumination or Illumination of the Temple (emphasis on God's Presence):**
 - a. Beginning on the second night, then at the end of every day, the priests would light four giant candelabras that were situated in the Court of Women in the Temple. Each candelabra was over 75 feet high and had four branches. Each branch held a ten gallon bowl filled with oil. When these were lit the entire temple would begin to glow and shine down on the city and could be seen for miles.
 - b. This part of the feast focused on God's presence by reminding the Israelites of the pillar of fire that led them through the wilderness and God's Shekinah glory that come down and fill the tabernacle in the wilderness
- d. Jesus made His declaration on the last night of the feast used the backdrop of these two ceremonies to make his claim that He was the light of the world
2. Clue #2: The prophecies from Isaiah:
- a. 9:1-7 – describes the Messiah coming as not only a baby, but as a “great light” who would lead His people out of darkness, and rescue and redeem Israel
 - b. 60:1-3 – Describes a time when the glory of the Lord would shine upon Israel as a light and all the nations would turn to them (something that began with Jesus first coming and will culminate with His second)
 - c. 60:16, 19 – describes the time above as a time when Israel would finally recognize and know God as their Savior and He would serve as their light (with no need for the sun or moon)
 - d. Matthew claims in 4:12-17 that Jesus is the fulfillment of these prophecies
3. Clue #3: Jesus' claim that He was sent by God:
- a. John 7:25-31
 - b. John 8:16, 29
4. Clue #4: John's declaration that Jesus is the Light and came to so that men could become children of God:
- a. 1:4-5
 - b. 1:6-13

C. So, what does it mean for Jesus to be the Light of the world?
--

1. First and foremost, when Jesus made this claim He was revealing Himself to be the one promised by Isaiah.
2. Light is used as a metaphor for many things in the Bible
 - a. When juxtaposed with darkness it often represents goodness and righteousness as opposed to evil or wickedness (2 Corinthians 6:14; Ephesians 5:8)
 - b. It's used as a metaphor for wisdom and knowledge, especially when it comes to the knowledge of God the Gospel (2 Corinthians 4:3-6)
 - c. It even represents God's presence and glory (Revelation 21:23)
3. Christ as light certainly incorporates all of these things, but His claim goes beyond that—in John 8 Jesus makes six promises to those who accept Him as the Light of the World:
 - a. Those who would follow him will be led out of darkness and into light (John 8:12b)
 - b. Those who follow Him will have life (John 8:12c)
 - c. Those who follow Him will know the Father (John 8:19)
 - d. Those who follow Him will not die in their sins (John 8:24)
 - e. Those who follow Him will know the truth and be made free (John 8:31-32)
 - f. Those who follow Him will never see death (John 8:51-52)

Conclusion

- 1) So, what does it mean for Jesus to be the Light of the world?
- 2) It means that His coming to earth, and subsequent return, are the fulfillment of what God promised as far back as Genesis 3—the God-man who would rescue and redeem all of mankind from their sin and death
- 3) The exclusive nature of the claim:
 - a. Notice that Jesus “**is**” the light: He did not simply come to preach spiritual truths or a way to salvation; He **IS** the way, the truth and the life
 - b. Notice also that Jesus is “**the**” light: He is not one light of many (i.e. one spiritual truth among many), but rather the one and only way--**READ Acts 4:12**
 - c. Notice finally that Jesus is the light “**of the world**”: He did not come to the Jews only, but to the entire world