

**The Word Became Flesh
(Week 24)
John 8:12-29
“The Light Of The World”**

Introduction

The people walking in darkness have seen a great light: a light has dawned on those living in the land of darkness. **Isaiah 9:2**

I never cease to be amazed at all the “so-called” *Bible* scholars out there who say that Jesus never claimed to be God. When in reality, He went around claiming equality with God all the time! In *The Old Testament*, when Moses stands before the burning bush and asks God what is His name, God replied, “I AM, That I AM.” From that day forward in time, the nation of Israel knew God by His covenant name. It was spelled with four consonant letters of the Hebrew Alphabet “*Yod, Heh, Vav, Heh*” commonly referred to as the “Tetragrammaton” (equivalent to YHVH in the English alphabet).

Because the ancient Hebrew contains only consonants (no vowels sounds were printed), and that Holy Name was spoken aloud just once a year by the High Priest upon the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur), no one knows for sure in this modern age how to properly pronounce The Name today. Many have attempted to “fill in the gaps”, as it were, in order to come up with an approximate pronunciation. The two most popular versions are pronounced “Jehovah” and “Yahweh”. As a pastor, I am quite careful in saying either of these names aloud quite frankly, for I believe the Name of God is a sacred thing not to be thrown around in casual conversation. Others may disagree, but that is how I believe.

The word YHVH carries with it the meaning of “The Existing One”, for that is exactly Who God is. He has no beginning, nor end. He is The Alpha and The Omega, The First and The Last. He always was and always will be. This is why He described Himself to Moses as “I AM”, simply because He just is! In the gospel of *John*, there are seven specific “I Am” statements made exclusively by The LORD Jesus Christ. We have already seen the first of these in **Chapter 6**:

“I Am the Bread of life, Jesus told them. No one who comes to Me will ever be hungry, and no one who believes in Me will be thirsty again.” **John 6:35**

During the second full year of His ministry, at the close of The Feast of Tabernacles, we are given another “I Am” statement of Christ. In the Temple’s court of women, near where the offerings were collected, Jesus cries out to the people:

“I AM the Light Of The World. Anyone who follows Me will never walk in darkness but will have The Light of life.” **John 8:12**

Of course, the Pharisees were furious when He said it, for He was in essences calling the people to follow Him, rather than them. How would they be able to maintain their positions of prestige and power, if no one was around to finance them? They so wanted this young upstart from Galilee to simply disappear. But even the temple guards that they had sent to arrest Him during the festival returned to them to say that Jesus was a much better teacher of God’s Word than they (**John 7:46**)! So the Jewish leaders were left with a serious dilemma. How could they kill a man Who had gained such fame with the common people? The answer: They needed to discredit Him publicly. And this is exactly what they tried to do from then on. Unfortunately, no one had ever told them that it was not prudent to engage in a battle of wits if you come to the contest unarmed. Their intellect was no match for that of God incarnate.

Today, we will examine just such a contest where Jesus utterly destroys the so-called “logic” of the Pharisees. And as a result, even more of the common people began to believe in Him. These poor religious leaders were so blinded by their worldly desires that they simply could not see Jesus, The Light, for Who He is. And if you cannot see The Light my friends, you will never see The Promised Land, and you will never see God.

If You Cannot See The Light (vs. 12-18)

Jesus spoke to them again: "I am the light of the world. Anyone who follows me will never walk in the darkness but will have The Light of life."

So the Pharisees said to him, "You are testifying about yourself. Your testimony is not valid."

"Even if I testify about myself," Jesus replied, "My testimony is true, because I know where I came from and where I'm going. But you don't know where I come from or where I'm going. You judge by human standards. I judge no one. And if I do judge, My judgment is true, because it is not I alone Who judge, but I and the Father Who sent Me. Even in your law it is written that the testimony of two witnesses is true. I am the One Who testifies about Myself, and the Father Who sent Me testifies about Me."

When Jesus spoke to the crowd that day in The Court of Women, it is important for us to understand the backdrop or setting, if you will. This event, according to the text, occurred the following day, after the Feast of Tabernacles observance had ended. There were two daily rituals that took place every year during the feast. The first, called "The Libation Ceremony", occurred every morning with a processional led by the High Priest, who carried his golden pitcher of water and then poured it into the fountain. As we have discussed previously in this study, this was to commemorate God's provision of water from the Rock, as the Israelites traveled through the wilderness. It was during this ceremony that Christ proclaimed:

"...If anyone is thirsty, let Him come to Me and drink."

John 7:37a

This, of course, was Christ once again claiming to be God. He is The Rock that followed Israel through the wilderness and provided life-giving water for their journey. The second ritual observance during the feast was the "Lamp Lighting Ceremony" that took place every evening. There was a processional of worshippers, who would carry torches into the Court of Women and light a large candelabra to light up the darkness of the celebration. They say that this huge lamp could be seen for miles as it lit up the court and its fiery radiance rose into the night sky. This lamp was a symbol of God leading His people in the wilderness with a pillar of fire by night.

After the feast had ended, there were apparently many people gathered in the court. Possibly, they were there to clean the great lamp in preparation for the next year's feast. Whatever the reason, I imagine there were many who were sad that the great feast had ended, as are many churchgoers today when a good revival comes to a close. It was at this time when Jesus cried out to them:

"I AM the Light Of The World. Anyone who follows Me will never walk in the darkness but will have The Light of life."

John 8:12

The religious leaders were offended immediately, for once again, here was this peasant from Galilee claiming to be God. So they thought they would use their "amazing spiritual knowledge" to trap Jesus with a legal argument. They accused Him of having an invalid testimony, because He was His one and only witness. This is from The Law of Moses, and it was meant to be used in a court of law. A person could not be convicted upon the testimony of one witness alone. At least two witnesses were required. This was designed to be a failsafe to keep an enemy from bearing false witness against someone that he hated. It is a very good law. But it does not really apply to this particular situation.

Just because a person tells the truth and there is no one else that knows that truth, doesn't mean that he doesn't know what he is talking about! Truth is truth, no matter how many are aware of it. Jesus countered their ridiculous argument by reminding them that He knew exactly where He came from whether they knew it or not (**vs. 14**). He accused them of judging by human wisdom. And human

wisdom does not hold a candle to what God knows! Jesus most certainly knew Who HE was, whether they did or not!

And secondly, Jesus reminded them once again that He did in fact have another witness to His testimony; His Father's! For you see, the many miracles that He had performed among them was proof that God was with Him. God would have never endorsed Him in this way, if He had been misleading the people. The Scriptures are really clear as to what God thinks about a lying tongue.

Jesus told the Pharisees that He had not come to judge them at this time, but His Father will most certainly judge those who refuse to believe in The Son. Jesus had come not to condemn the world, but rather, He came to seek and save those who are lost (**John 3:17**). He came to be the Light Of The World so that we might see The Light and believe. But make no mistake. He will most certainly come as a judge when He returns to this wicked world. The Book of *Revelation* (also written by John) shows us this reality in great detail.

When Jesus spoke of The Father, the blind religious leaders asked him, "Where is your Father?" They spoke of his earthly father, Joseph, who more than likely had been for long dead time. It appears as if the Pharisees were actually mocking Jesus at that point. In essence, they were reminding Jesus that his father was nowhere to be found. But they were completely blind as to The Light that was standing in their midst, and they would not believe, because they did not WANT to believe. Their sinful pride and ambition were the darkness in which they were doomed to wander, unless they came to see The Light for Who He is. Jesus is The Great I AM. He is the Pillar of Fire that led the Israelites by night in the wilderness. And He has come to lead us all to where He is.

You will Never See God (vs. 19-20)

Then they asked him, "Where is your Father?" "You know neither me nor my Father," Jesus answered. "If you knew me, you would also know my Father." He spoke these words by the treasury, while teaching in the temple. But no one seized Him, because His hour had not yet come.

There are many religions in this world that claim to make you right with God, but in truth, it's not about religion at all. It is about seeing Jesus for Who He is and believing in Him. To know Him IS to know The Father. John's Gospel has been written to convince the world of this important fact. If you cannot truly see Jesus, then you will never see God.

In His famous "Sermon On The Mount," Christ makes this observation:

"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God."

Matthew 5:8

Pure in heart is another way of saying righteous. To have a pure heart is to be able to stand as righteous before a spotless Holy God. The Pharisees of Jesus time felt that they had earned this right by the way that they fastidiously adhered to the Law of Moses. But their self-righteousness had blinded them to the truth. Jesus had warned His listeners in this very same sermon on the mount:

"For I tell you, unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never get into the kingdom of Heaven."

Matthew 5:20

So here is the truth of the matter. No one is that righteous. Therefore, we need to be given righteous credit in order to stand before the throne of God. Which brings me to my favorite verse in all of Scripture. The verse tells us how Abraham got saved.

"Abraham believed The LORD, and He credited it to him as righteousness."

Genesis 15:6

Do not miss the significance of this statement. Jesus is The GREAT I AM, and the only way that we can be given the righteous credit that we need is to see Him for Who He is and believe. When we do that, the very righteousness of Christ is applied to us.

“But now, apart from the law, the righteousness of God and been revealed, attested by The Law and The Prophets. The righteousness of God is THROUGH FAITH in Jesus Christ to all who believe since there is no distinction. For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” **Romans 3:21-23**

As Jesus explained perfectly to the Pharisees that day after the Feast of Tabernacles, if you do not know Him, you do not know The Father. They wanted to kill Him for it. But The Father would not allow it until his perfect time had come.

You Will Never See The Promised Land (vs. 21-29)

Then He said to them again, “I’m going away; you will look for me, and you will die in your sin. Where I’m going, you cannot come.” So the Jews said again, “He won’t kill himself, will He, since He says, ‘Where I’m going, you cannot come?’”

“You are from below,” He told them, “I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world. Therefore I told you that you will die in your sins. For if you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins.” “Who are you?” they questioned. “Exactly what I’ve been telling you from the very beginning.” Jesus told them. “I have many things to say and to judge about you, but the One Who sent Me is true, and what I have heard from Him — these things I tell the world.”

They did not know He was speaking to them about The Father. So 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 on my own. But just as The Father taught Me, I say these things. The One Who sent Me is with Me. He has not left Me alone, because I always do what pleases Him.”

At this point in the discourse, Jesus tells the spiritually blinded Pharisees, that He would soon be going away, to a place that they could not follow. In their darkened minds, they wondered, and possibly even hoped, that He was planning to commit suicide. In Jewish culture, those who killed themselves were believed to be sent into the darkest part of hell. So naturally these religious zealots believed that if he killed Himself then they, being so very pious, would never go where He would be going. What a tragedy it is when the spiritually dead actually view themselves as superior. Self-righteousness is the worst kind of sin, because it prevents us from ever realizing how wretched we truly are.

Christ warned these wicked men that they had nothing in common with Him. Yes, He would be dying soon, but He would not take His own life. He would lay it down for sinful men such as these. And He made it plain that where He was going (to heaven), they would never be able to go unless they placed their faith in Him. He told them that He was from Heaven, and they were of this world. It is impossible to enter the promised land, unless you are willing to follow The Light of The World to get there! Just as the Israelites followed the pillar of fire by night, we must follow Christ in order to find our way out of the darkness into the promised land.

Two additional times in this passage, we see the LORD refer to Himself again as The I AM.

“...For If you do not believe that I AM (He), you will die in your sins.” vs. 24b

“...When you have lifted up The Son of Man, then you will know that I AM (He) and that I do nothing on My own. But just as The Father taught Me, I say these things.” vs. 28b

You might have noticed that I put the word “he” in parenthesis in both quotes. That is because it is not in the original Greek text. It has been added by translators and should not be there, in my opinion. What Jesus told them was, if they did not believe that He was the “Ego Eimi” (I AM), then they would die in their sins. But then later, He tells them that when they lifted up the Son of Man, then they would know that He was “Ego Eimi” (I AM). So you see, there was still hope for some of those wicked men to believe and be saved. And this would happen after Christ was crucified and risen from the dead. **Acts 6:7** tells us that after Christ had risen, many of the priests believed in Him. Some of these men, who had hated Jesus enough to have Him crucified, actually came to faith in Him later on! That is called grace my friends. And no matter how lost in the darkness you have been, Jesus is willing and able to bring you into The Light.

Are you walking around in spiritual blindness this morning? Jesus wants to lead you into the light of life everlasting. Without Him, you will never see God, and you can never enter the Promised Land. See The Light for Who He is and believe upon His Name. Heed His calling for you this morning.

“I AM the Light Of The World. Anyone who follows Me will never walk in the darkness but will have The Light of life.” **John 8:12**

And let all those who are walking in The Light say... TRUTH!!!