

That You May Continue to Believe...



AN EXPOSITION OF THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

The Light of the World John 8:12-59

^{ESV} **Zechariah 14:6**...On that day there shall be no light, cold, or frost. ⁷ And there shall be a unique day, which is known to the LORD, neither day nor night, but at evening time there shall be light. ⁸ On that day living waters shall flow out from Jerusalem, half of them to the eastern sea and half of them to the western sea. It shall continue in summer as in winter. ⁹ And the LORD will be king over all the earth. On that day the LORD will be one and his name one.

Two weeks back we talked at length about the Feast of Tabernacles and the discourse associated with it in John 7. What I tried to do what to paint for you the setting and the scene in which Jesus stood up in the Temple on the last great day of the feast and announced Himself to be the source of **“life-giving water.”** Of course, what He meant by that was the Holy Spirit.¹ The reason I wanted to do that was because I wanted to show you that John 7 was written to show its readers how Jesus continued to fulfill and replace many of the richest symbols of Judaism. Listen to what Alfred Edersheim wrote about this wonderful festival:

The whole symbolism of the Feast, beginning with the completed harvest for which it was a thanksgiving, pointed to the future. Even the Rabbis themselves

admitted this. The unusual number of sacrificial bullocks - seventy in all - referred to **“the seventy nations”** of heathendom. The ceremony of the outpouring of water, which was considered of such vital importance as to give to the whole festival the name of **“House of Outpouring,”** was symbolical of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.²

You see the Jews themselves recognized the symbolism of the ceremonies and rightfully saw, I think, their nation as the fulfillment of much of it. You see there was a sense in which Israel was in a position to sate or satisfy the thirst of the nations. It was not related to any inherent beauty in the nation itself but rather because of Israel’s relationship to the one true God.

Two weeks ago, I mentioned that there were two especially beautiful symbolic acts associated with the Feast of Tabernacles. The first was the ceremony of the outpouring, which I tried to describe in detail not because I want you to be experts on ancient Jewish customs or ceremonies but rather because it does help, I think, to “flesh out” the background in which the **“water of life”** discourse was given.

The ceremony of the outpouring was not, however, the only ceremony associated with the Feast of Tabernacles. There was also the ceremony of the illumination of the temple.³ First of all, the ceremony occurred on a day when the sun or the moon was visible all day. Here’s what I mean. If you looked up into the afternoon sky as the sun began to set you could already see the moon and the moon remained visible all night and was still visible when the sun came up the next morning. And here was the significance of that point to the Jews. Just as the sun and the moon lit the sky both day and night so God illuminated the path of

His people. In addition to the testimony of nature, the Jews also added a beautiful ceremony that spoke further to the truth of God's illumination.

At the conclusion of the first festival day of tabernacles they (that is, the priests) descended to the court of the women where they had made a great enactment. (*Enactment here is an important word.*) There were there golden candlesticks with four golden bowls on the top of each of them and four ladders to each, (The ladders were necessary because the candles with fifty cubits or 75 feet tall.)...four youths *were* drawn from the priestly stock *and assigned to carry the jars of oil containing one hundred and twenty log (14.5 gallons) up the ladders and which they then poured into the bowls.*⁴

You can imagine how the white marble temple illuminated by the golden glow of such enormous candlesticks lit up the Jerusalem sky. Raymond Brown adds this.

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 — see above, p. 327).⁵

You see at its heart the ceremony was to remind the nation that God had directed their path during their wilderness wanderings. He had provided a cloud by day and a pillar of fire at night to protect, encourage, warm and guide them.

^{ESV} **Exodus 13:21**...And the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead them along the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, that they might travel by day and by night. ²² The pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night did not depart from before the people.

Still beyond that, the ceremony was to remind the nation that it was to be a beacon to the world that it was to provide the light of God's word and God's

truth to the nations.⁶ That is why on the night of the temple illumination, the temple was open all night with music and dancing and joyous praise. Early in the morning just as the sun was about to break on the eastern horizon, priests lined up on the steps of the Court of Women and faced in reverential awe the coming of the sun. Then they did something that I think is particularly beautiful. Just as the sun broke on the distant horizon they turned their backs on the rising sun and faced the temple and sang out in unison.

“Our fathers, who were in this place, they turned their backs on the Sanctuary of Jehovah, and their faces eastward, for they worshipped eastward, the sun; but we, our eyes are towards Jehovah. We are Jehovah's - our eyes are towards Jehovah.”⁷

Do you get the point? They were saying the light of the world doesn't come from the sun. The light of the world comes from the temple because that is where God dwells. We renounce the sun as darkness compared to the incomparable light of God's face.

That is when commentators think Jesus said what He said in verse 12.

^{ESV} **John 8:12**...Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

In my mind's eye, I see the priests anxiously awaiting the coming of the sun, waiting to turn their backs on it, waiting to disdain it in favor of the light of God's face. I can see them turning their backs at it first rays and turning to see the incomparable face of the Lord Jesus standing between them and the temple. I can see them shouting out their well-intentioned words:

We are Jehovah's - our eyes are towards Jehovah."

Only to have Him respond to their faces...

^{ESV} **John 8:12**...Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

Of course, when they heard Him say that it made them angry. But their initial response was not directed toward the content of what He had said, instead it was directed toward the fact that He ought not have spoken that way about Himself. Listen to how the Pharisees argue:

^{ESV} **John 8:13**...So the Pharisees said to him, "You are bearing witness about yourself; your testimony is not true."

Now, I want you to get the full import of their response.

They are saying, **"You simply cannot make such claims about yourself. It's not right. You cannot bear witness to yourself. Others must bear witness of you."**⁸

Of course, you will remember that Jesus had argued earlier that He did in fact have other and weightier testimony. In John 5, after healing the man at the Pool of Bethesda, he had argued.

^{ESV} **John 5:36**...But the testimony that I have is greater than that of John. For the works that the Father has given me to accomplish, the very works that I am doing, bear witness about me that the Father has sent me.

Still, He argued that even if He did testify about Himself that it would be valid testimony. Of course, His testimony was not alone.

^{ESV} **John 8:14**...Jesus answered, "Even if I do bear witness about myself, my testimony is true, for I know where I came from and where I am going, but you do not know where I come from or where I am going. ¹⁵ You judge according to the flesh; I judge no one. ¹⁶ Yet even if I do judge, my judgment is true, for it is not I alone who judge, but I and the Father who sent me. ¹⁷ In your Law it is written that the testimony of two people is true. ¹⁸ I am the one who bears witness about myself, and the Father who sent me bears witness about me."

He was arguing, you see, just as He had in John 5, that the Father was a witness to His ministry, His authority and His validity. Of course, they took exception to that.⁹

^{ESV} **John 8:19**...They said to him therefore, "Where is your Father?" Jesus answered, "You know neither me nor my Father. If you knew me, you would know my Father also." ²⁰ These words he spoke in the treasury, as he taught in the temple; but no one arrested him, because his hour had not yet come.

Now the point about the being near the temple treasury is put there simply to show Jesus' lack of fear. The temple treasury was directly next to the hall where the Sanhedrin met. The Sanhedrin included the men who had sent temple guards to arrest him. I particularly like what Hendricksen writes here:

Against the wall in the Court of Women stood thirteen trumpet-shaped chests in which the people deposited their gifts for various causes. Hence, taking the part for the whole, this court was sometimes called the Treasury. Here Jesus was teaching, in the immediate proximity of the hall in which the Sanhedrin held (or: used to hold) its sessions. And, though it is possible that this august body, so thoroughly hostile to Jesus, could almost hear the echo of his voice, no one arrested him, because his hour had not yet arrived.¹⁰

^{ESV} **John 8:21**...So he said to them again, "I am going away, and you will seek me, and you will die in your sin. Where I am going, you cannot come." ²² So the Jews said, "Will he kill himself, since he says, 'Where I am going, you cannot come'?" ²³

He said to them, "You are from below; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world. ²⁴ I told you that you would die in your sins, for unless you believe that I am he you will die in your sins." ²⁵ So they said to him, "Who are you?" Jesus said to them, "Just what I have been telling you from the beginning. ²⁶ I have much to say about you and much to judge, but he who sent me is true, and I declare to the world what I have heard from him." ²⁷ They did not understand that he had been speaking to them about the Father. ²⁸ So Jesus said to them, "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 authority, but speak just as the Father taught me.

Of course, here, lifted up does not mean to exalt. Instead, it means to crucify. Still His words struck home with some.

^{ESV} **John 8:30...** As he was saying these things, many believed in him. ³¹ So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him, "If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, ³² and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

Now, think about that verse and why it is here in the text. I have been arguing from the beginning of our study in John that John's gospel was written to encourage those first century Jewish believers who had trusted in Christ to keep on trusting in Him. You can see, I think, how this verse speaks directly to that. The only problem is the word "**hold**" in "**hold to my teaching.**" The problem with "**hold**" is that it somewhat obscures the meaning of the text, The Greek word is "**μεινω**" is one of the first words a Greek student learns when he studies Greek and the meaning is generally "**to remain**" or "**to continue**". "**To hold**" gets close but "**to continue**" really hits the idea perfectly. Listen to how Leon Morris puts it.

It is best to think that John is speaking of people who had made an outward profession, but a profession that did not go very deep. Jesus' words, then, are meant to drive home to formal and casual adherents the meaning of true discipleship. If people in any sense believe in Jesus it is important that they come to see what real faith means...Since many attached themselves to Jesus, he proceeded to unfold what their attachment should mean. The key word here is "abide" (*NIV* paraphrases with "hold to my teaching"; the Greek means "abide in my word"). It is easy enough to be superficially attracted to Jesus, but the test is "abiding." It is only those who continue who are genuine disciples.¹¹

Now, of course, that should be familiar to you and it is a concept that will come up again in John. In fact, it will come up over and over again. You will see it fully in John 15 where Jesus calls Himself the vine and His disciples the branches. Here, however, His words make the unbelieving Jews really angry.

^{ESV} **John 8:33**...They answered him, "We are offspring of Abraham and have never been enslaved to anyone. How is it that you say, 'You will become free?'"

Now, I want you to think of just how ridiculous that statement was. I have been trying to think of all the times that the children of Israel were actually in bondage and it is almost beyond counting.

There was the Egyptian captivity.

There was bondage to the Canaanites,

the Ammonites,

the Amalekites,

the Midianites,

the Moabites,

the Arameans,

the Philistines,

the Amorites,

the Medes and Persians,
the Babylonians,

the Greeks,

the Seleucids,

and the Romans.

And there was always a reason for the bondage of the nation. Listen to the words of King Hezekiah.

^{NIV} 2 Chronicles 29:6..."Our fathers were unfaithful; they did evil in the eyes of the LORD our God and forsook him. They turned their faces away from the LORD's dwelling place and turned their backs on him..."⁹ This is why our fathers have fallen by the sword and why our sons and daughters and our wives are in captivity. "

Still, God had been gracious to the nation. Listen to the words of Ezra the scribe.

^{NIV} Ezra 9:7..."From the days of our forefathers until now, our guilt has been great. Because of our sins, we and our kings and our priests have been subjected to the sword and captivity, to pillage and humiliation at the hand of foreign kings, as it is today. ⁸ But now, for a brief moment, the LORD our God has been gracious in leaving us a remnant and giving us a firm place in his sanctuary, and so our God gives light to our eyes and a little relief in our bondage. ⁹ Though we are slaves, our God has not deserted us in our bondage. He has shown us kindness in the sight of the kings of Persia: He has granted us new life to rebuild the house of our God and repair its ruins, and he has given us a wall of protection in Judah and Jerusalem. "

I dearly love Augustine's response to their words...

"They ...puffed themselves up as Abraham's seed, and said, "We are Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be free?" **O inflated skin!** such is not magnanimity, but windy swelling. For even as regards freedom in this life, how was that the truth when you said, "We were never in bondage to any man"? Was not Joseph sold? Were not the holy prophets led into captivity? And again, did not that very nation, when making bricks in Egypt, also serve hard rulers, not only in gold and silver, but also in clay? If you were never in bondage to any man, ungrateful people, why is it that God is continually reminding you that He delivered you from the house of bondage? Or mean you, perchance, that your fathers were in bondage, but you who speak were never in bondage to any man? **How then...the Romans...**¹²

Still, even in their hardness Jesus tried to instruct them.

^{ESV} **John 8:34...**Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin. ³⁵ The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son remains forever. ³⁶ So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed. ³⁷ I know that you are offspring of Abraham; yet you seek to kill me because my word finds no place in you. ³⁸ I speak of what I have seen with my Father, and you do what you have heard from your father."

Morris notes that Augustine thought it was worse to be slave to sin than to be slave.¹³ Listen to what Augustine writes concerning this passage.

What can the servant of sin do? To whom can he make his demand? To whom apply for redress? Of whom require himself to be sold? And then at times a man's slave, worn out by the commands of an unfeeling master, finds rest in flight. Whither can the servant of sin flee? Himself he carries with him wherever he flees. An evil conscience cannot flee from itself; it has no place to go to; it follows itself. Such a man cannot escape from himself, for the sin he commits is within. He has committed sin to obtain some bodily pleasure. The pleasure passes away; the sin remains. What delighted is gone; the sting has remained behind. Evil bondage! ... Let us all flee to Christ, and appeal against sin to God

as our deliverer. Let us seek to get ourselves sold, that we may be redeemed by His blood.¹⁴

Along those same lines, Calvin writes:

This is an argument drawn from contrary things. They boasted they were free. He proves that they are the slaves of sin, because, being enslaved by the desires of the flesh, they continually sin. It is astonishing that men are not convinced by their own experience, so that, laying aside their pride, they may learn to be humble. And it is a very frequent occurrence in the present day, that, the greater the load of vices which weighs a man down, the more fiercely does he extol his own free-will.¹⁵

^{ESV} **John 8:39**...They answered him, "Abraham is our father." Jesus said to them, "If you were Abraham's children, you would be doing the works Abraham did,⁴⁰ but now you seek to kill me, a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God. This is not what Abraham did.⁴¹ You are doing the works your father did." They said to him, "We were not born of sexual immorality. We have one Father--even God."

A moment before they had argued that Abraham was their father. Then they switched to God being their father. However, it is the phrase "**we are not illegitimate children,**" which gets my attention. They may have been reviling Jesus. While they would not have given countenance to the Christian doctrine of the Virgin Birth, the Jews may well have known that there was something unusual about the birth of Jesus and may have chosen to allude to it in this way.¹⁶ It is possible they may have been accusing Him of being born illegitimately.¹⁷ Certainly, that was an accusation the Jews charged against Jesus often by the third or fourth century.

^{ESV} **John 8:42**...Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and I am here. I came not of my own accord, but he sent me.⁴³ Why do you not understand what I say? It is because you cannot bear to hear

my word. ⁴⁴ You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and has nothing to do with the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies. ⁴⁵ But because I tell the truth, you do not believe me. ⁴⁶ Which one of you convicts me of sin? If I tell the truth, why do you not believe me? ⁴⁷ Whoever is of God hears the words of God. The reason why you do not hear them is that you are not of God."

Jesus' logic is as always crystal clear. It goes something like this, **"Just like sheep recognize their Master's voice, God's children recognize His voice. You are filled with rage and anger towards Me and want to kill Me. The reason for that is that you live in deception and speak the language of you father, the devil. He only speaks lies and murder. Can any of you demonstrate where or how I have sinned? No, you cannot and you refuse to believe because you do not belong to God."**

Listen to their words. Their language is filled with insult and slander. Their words are the words of men desperate to win the argument against Jesus anyway they can.¹⁸

^{ESV} **John 8:48**...The Jews answered him, "Are we not right in saying that you are a Samaritan and have a demon?" ⁴⁹ Jesus answered, "I do not have a demon, but I honor my Father, and you dishonor me. ⁵⁰ Yet I do not seek my own glory; there is One who seeks it, and he is the judge. ⁵¹ Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps my word, he will never see death." ⁵² The Jews said to him, "Now we know that you have a demon! Abraham died, as did the prophets, yet you say, 'If anyone keeps my word, he will never taste death.' ⁵³ Are you greater than our father Abraham, who died? And the prophets died! Who do you make yourself out to be?"

The only focus here is that they ask not who do you think you are but who do you **"make yourself to be"** which has the underlying connotation that He is

making Himself to be someone He was not.¹⁹ Here is an excellent example of deep irony in John because while they meant such a charge to hurt Him there was a sense in which what they said was true because He had indeed made Himself to be...

^{KJV} **Philippians 2:7**...But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:

^{ESV} **John 8:54**...Jesus answered, "If I glorify myself, my glory is nothing. It is my Father who glorifies me, of whom you say, 'He is our God.'⁵⁵ But you have not known him. I know him. If I were to say that I do not know him, I would be a liar like you, but I do know him and I keep his word.⁵⁶ Your father Abraham rejoiced that he would see my day. He saw it and was glad."

By this statement, Jesus showed them that they were aliens from the seed of Abraham. This was especially true since they grieved at what he Abraham had rejoiced in. "My day," could mean the whole period of Christ's incarnation or it might mean the specifically the day of the Crucifixion, which Abraham foreshadowed typically by the offering of the ram and of Isaac.²⁰

I love in particular that imagery from Genesis 22.

^{ESV} **Genesis 22:13**...And Abraham lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, behind him was a ram, caught in a thicket by his horns. And Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up as a burnt offering instead of his son.

^{ESV} **John 8:57**...So the Jews said to him, "You are not yet fifty years old, and have you seen Abraham?"

The point here is not so much the age of Jesus. They weren't saying you are only 47 or 48. He was probably in His early to mid-thirties. The point they are making

is that He is not yet middle-aged and thus could not possibly have been around when Abraham lived.

Of course, that has nothing to do with what Jesus had said. They had gotten that wrong and had twisted His words. He didn't say He had seen Abraham (although He certainly had). He said Abraham had seen or anticipated His day and rejoiced in it. Still, Jesus seizes their words and uses them to finally and completely cut them free.

^{ESV} **John 8:58**...Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am."

The phrase Jesus uses in Greek is "ἐγώ εἰμι". It simply means "I am." Whenever it is attached to another noun, it makes a beautiful picture, a predicate nominative, directly relating Jesus to some item that metaphorically portrays Him in a special way.

^{NIV} **John 6:35**...Then Jesus declared, "**I am the bread of life.**"

^{NIV} **John 8:12**...When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "**I am the light of the world.**"

^{NIV} **John 10:7**...Therefore Jesus said again, "**I tell you the truth, I am the gate for the sheep.**"

^{NIV} **John 10:11**..."**I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.**

^{NIV} **John 11:25**...Jesus said to her, "**I am the resurrection and the life.**"

^{NIV} **John 14:6**...Jesus answered, "**I am the way and the truth and the life.**"

^{NIV} **John 15:1**..."**I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener.**"

But that is not what He meant here. You will notice that He did not connect it to any other word. Instead, He used the phrase by itself and we know how they understood His use of it by their reaction.

^{ESV} **John 8:59**...So they picked up stones to throw at him, but Jesus hid himself and went out of the temple.

Now why did they do that? They did it because they thought He was blaspheming. Imagine that.²¹ Calvin says the reason they picked up stones to stone Him was because of Leviticus 24:16.

^{ESV} **Leviticus 24:16**...Whoever blasphemes the name of the LORD shall surely be put to death. All the congregation shall stone him. The sojourner as well as the native, when he blasphemes the Name, shall be put to death.

You see, Jesus was using the phrase “εγω ειμι” in the manner it had been used in Exodus 3.

^{ESV} **Exodus 3:14**...God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." And he said, "Say this to the people of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.'"

Now here is the sad thing. Rather than hearing and believing that Jesus was the “**light of the world**” these men chased Him out of His own temple. On the one hand they were there to worship the God of creation; on the other hand, they missed the God of creation when He was right there in their face.

This whole scene, reminds me of that pitiful passage in Ezekiel 10 and 11, where the Spirit of God is forced to part from His temple because of the impending judgment of sin upon the nation. There He rises from the Holy of Holies and

passes from the temple compound stopping for a moment at the gate of the city. Then He rises farther and lingers for a moment on the mountains outside the city as if to express deep sadness and regret at the nation's unbelief. Finally, He ascended back into heaven.

How pitiful that Jesus should have been driven from His own temple by the unbelief of the nation. Listen to John Chrysostom.

There is nothing worse than a soul hardened in desperation; though it see signs and wonders, it still perseveres in retaining the same shamelessness. Thus Pharaoh, who received ten thousand strokes, was sobered only while being punished, and continued of this character until the last day of his life, pursuing those whom he had let go.²²

And then finally listen to Augustine...

For when they took up stones to cast at Him, what great thing were it had they been instantly swallowed up in the gaping earth, and found the inhabitants of hell in place of stones? It were not a great thing to God; but better was it that patience should be commended than power exerted. Therefore "He hid Himself" from them, that He might not be stoned. As man, He fled from the stones; but woe to those from whose stony hearts God has fled?²³

Now, think with me for just a minute and then I'll stop. Where does this scene take place?

It takes place in the temple.

What were they going to do to Jesus?

They were going to stone Him.

What stones would they have used?

The only stones available, that is stones that were used in the construction of the temple.

Here's the said point. They were going to stone the God of the temple, with rocks they used to make His temple. They were going to take up stones He had made against Him. They were going to take up stones against Him because He told them He was their God. Because of that, He was driven out of His own temple from His own people thus fulfilling the verse in John 1 that say...

^{ESV} **John 1:11**...He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. Brothers and sisters let us continue in belief. Let us cleave to Him. Let us not seek to drive Him away with our unbelief but let cling to Him because of His words and His deeds and His perfect love for us. Let us do even if He illumines our sins and makes it all the more visible. Let us do that for He is the **"light of the world."**

¹ F.F. Bruce, *The Gospel & Epistles of John* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1983), 182. "Some Jewish teachers, it is interesting to note, connected the water-pouring ceremony with the promised outpouring of the Spirit. So, according to one rabbinical interpretation, the ceremony was called the 'water-drawing', and why? 'Because from there they draw the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, as it is written, "With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation" (Isa.12.13). It is here made plain that the living water promised by Jesus was gift of the Spirit — a gift that could not be imparted in its fullness until Jesus was 'glorified'."

² Alfred Edershiem, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*. (Chapter 7: John 7:11-36) Internet Version.

³ D.A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1991), 337. "He who has not seen the joy of the place of water-drawing has never in his life seen joy: this extravagant claim stands just before the description of the lighting of the four huge lamps in the temple's court of women and of the exuberant celebration that took place under their light (Mishnah Sukkah 5:1-4). 'Men of piety and good works' danced through the night, holding burning torches in their hands and singing songs and praises. The Levitical orchestras cut loose, and some sources attest that this went on every night of the Feast of Tabernacles, with the light from the temple area shedding its glow all over Jerusalem. In this context, Jesus declares to the people, 'I am the light of the world.'"

⁴ Dr. Israel Slotki, (Translator) *Babylonian Talmud...Sukkah* (London: Soncino Press, 1938), 242.

⁵ Raymond E. Brown, *Gospel of John V.29* (New York: Doubleday, 1966), 344.

⁶ Edwyn Clement Hoskyns, *The Fourth Gospel V.2* (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1942), 377. "The metaphor of the water of life which flows from Jesus and which satisfies the thirst of all true believers (7.37-38) is displaced by the metaphor of the light of life by which the light of the sun is eclipsed and the darkness of sin dispersed, so that those who follow Jesus walk no longer in darkness, but are filled with the knowledge of God. The believer in Jesus shall have in himself the light of life, as he has been promised the water of life and the bread of life. He becomes one of the Sons of light (xii. 36), and walks in the Way, which is Jesus (xiv. 6). Modern commentators have endeavored to provide a non-scriptural background to the words I am the light of the world. They suggest that it was provoked by the ceremony of lighting the great candelabra in the Court of the Women on the first night of the Feast of Tabernacles (see Strack and Billerbeck, vol. II, pp. 806, 807), or by some similar ceremony in connection with the Feast of Dedication; or that the author of the gospel was moved to introduce it by the desire to attach to Jesus an honorable phrase familiar to the worshippers of Oriental deities (see Bauer). Interesting though such parallels may be, and important as they are for the student of comparative religion, the use of the metaphor of light in the earlier Christian writings and in the Old Testament is wholly sufficient to account for the manner and form in which it is employed in the Johannine writings. It is, moreover, significant that in Isaiah 53.8-13 not is the importance of witnessing associated with the divine but also the whole is directed towards the removal of the blindness of the people and for the salvation of the nations."

⁷ Edershiem, (Chapter 7: John 7:11-36) Internet Version.

⁸ Herman Ridderbos, *The Gospel of John: A Theological Commentary*. (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1997), 296. "Although it is not quoted word-for-word, "that which is written in your law" probably refers here to Dt. 19:15, which states, as a general rule of law that "only on the evidence of two or three witnesses shall a charge be sustained." This was a fixed rule in Jewish jurisprudence.'

It has been asked whether, from a formal point of view, Jesus was actually in a position to make such an appeal to the law. For, it is said, if to the Jews Jesus' testimony was invalid, then he would need at least two *other* witnesses to uphold his pronouncement. All kinds of attempts have been made to resolve this. Reference has been made to the stipulation in Jewish law that in exceptional cases the testimony of one person was sufficient (e.g., that of a father in identifying his son), which is said to apply here in the case of Jesus. That seems too far-fetched. We are dealing here, not with witnesses for the prosecution in a criminal case, of which there always had to be two (Num. 35.30, Dt. 17:6; 19:15, etc.), but with the general legal principle that a case is settled on the basis of the congruent testimony of two persons."

⁹ C.H. Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 205. "It appears that in the present passage the Jews are not supposed to understand the

statement 'I am the light of the world' as a claim to divine attributes, for they do not object, as they do in other places, that Jesus is 'making himself a god', or making himself equal with God' (cf. 10.33, 5.18). It is sufficient for the situation as dramatized by the evangelist, that they understand Him to be claiming to mediate the Word of God to men in an authoritative way. But this is Johannine irony. The reader knows well enough that He who says φως του κοσμου is Himself the φως αληθινον"

¹⁰ William Hendriksen, *Exposition of the Gospel According to John*, 2 vols. (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1953-1954), vol. 2, 44.

¹¹ Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to John (Rvd.)* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1995), 404.

¹² Aurelius Augustine, *The Gospel According to John* (Sage Digital Library) 41.4, 462.

¹³ Morris, 406.

¹⁴ Augustine, 41.4, 464.

¹⁵ John Calvin, *The Gospel According to John* (Sage Digital Library) 8:30-38, 306.

¹⁶ Morris, 409.

¹⁷ C.K. Barrett, *The Gospel According to John: An Introduction with Notes and Commentary on the Greek Text*, (London: S.P.C.K, 1967), 276. "The theme of light is related to synoptic sayings (Mark 4.21f; Matt. 4.16; 5.14; Luke 2.32). John seems again (cf. 1.13) to show knowledge of the belief that Jesus was born of a virgin. He hints at this when the Jews are made to claim (v.41) that they were not born of fornication but have God as their father. Probably slanders about the parentage of Jesus were already current."

¹⁸ Paul D. Duke, *Irony in the Fourth Gospel* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1985), 75. "A second irony entails their accusation that Jesus is a Samaritan. Some would not call this a separate charge, assuming it is equivalent to the charge of being mad. It seems more likely, however, that *Samaritan* has a nuance of its own. Scholars differ as to whether that slur means Jesus is a heretic, or has a questionable heritage himself, or is a slanderer of God's true people. Perhaps all of these charges are implied. It is important, however, not to overlook this epithet's most basic sense. It is a racial slur, accusing Jesus of metaphorical kinship with an outcast and despised people; and that is sweet irony indeed."

¹⁹ Duke, 71. "The change probably signals their misunderstanding, and again presupposes Abraham's superiority: "Have you seen *Abraham?*" Ironically, however, it sets things in even truer perspective. For though, as Jesus had said, Abraham saw Jesus and rejoiced, we know who first saw whom. Jesus shortly breathes the startling word that will complete the reversal begun by his opponents: "Before Abraham was, I AM" (vs. 58)."

²⁰ John Chrysostom, *Homilies on John's Gospel* (Sage Digital Library) 55, v.56, 453.

²¹ Rudolf Bultmann, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary*, (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1971), 328. "In the Jews' ears Jesus' saying is blasphemy—and the revelation cannot avoid calling forth this sort of reaction. They attempt to stone him (v. 59); but Jesus hides himself and leaves the temple. Again there is a lack of detail and preciseness in the account, which shows that the Revealer is beyond the reach of the world."

²² Chrysostom, 55, v.56, 453.

²³ Augustine, 43.18, 491.