

FOLLOW HIM, KNOW HIM

John 8:12-20 / "Yeshua" §101

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Next Week: John 8:21-30 / §102a

The theme of light and darkness is one of the most prominent themes in all the scriptures. Most of us are familiar with the very first words spoken out into the darkness in Genesis 1:3, "Let there be light". We read of the Shekinah glory of The LORD, a fire and light leading the Israelites through the wilderness during the Exodus from Egypt; coming to rest over the tabernacle; filling up the temple and later departing from the temple (Ezekiel 10). The nation of Israel had been selected by God to be a light to the world, revealing God's character to the gentile nations, and drawing them to Himself. In fact, the promised Messiah was prophesied to be the "light to the nations" (Isa. 42:6, 49:6). The apostle John begins his Gospel with a discussion about Jesus the Messiah being the "light". It is with this prominent and powerful theme in mind, that we read Jesus' words today.

In this section, we find Jesus still celebrating the feast of Sukkot (tabernacles/booths), and during this time in the feast there was an incredible ceremony called "The Illumination of the Temple". This time of celebration culminated with the lighting of four massive oil lamps that would shine all night long. A wonderful celebration and time of praising God for providing His Shekinah glory to lead the Israelites through the wilderness to the promised land, as well as a celebration of hope in God's promises to once again bring His glory back to the temple, and provide a Messiah to once again "light" Israel's way out of captivity.

THE DECLARATION (JOHN 8:12)

It was during this moment of illuminating the lamps, within the singing and praising God, that Jesus made an incredible declaration. He made the claim that he was the light of the world, and that all who followed him would not walk in darkness. What he was doing is obvious. He was taking all the rich symbolism of that portion of the feast and drawing it into himself. He was the fulfillment of the light during the Exodus, He was the fulfillment of the prophecies in Isaiah, He was the fulfillment of God's desire for Israel to be a light to the world, He was the very presence of God returned to the temple. This lighting ceremony was infused with hope about God once again saving his people through sending His Light, and that hope was fulfilled in the person of Yeshua, the Messiah King.

THE PHARISEE'S ACCUSATION (JOHN 8:13)

Jesus would have known that this self-declaration would bring a renewed assault from the Pharisees. They knew the prophecies well, and they knew what Jesus was claiming, but once again, they rejected his claim and sought a way to discredit him in front of these crowds. They landed on the accusation that it was improper and inappropriate for a person to testify about themselves without any additional witnesses. This idea came out of many of the Old Testament laws, which created a legal requirement of having an additional witness in order to establish that a claim is true. So they rejected Jesus' claim outright, claiming him to be a liar. Once again we see that they aren't interested in actually testing whether or not it is true. They have already rejected Jesus outright, and are now just looking for any way possible to discredit and dispose of him.

JESUS' DEFENSE (JOHN 8:14-18)

Jesus defended himself in a number of different ways. First he asserted that he actually was able to testify about himself because of where he had come from and where he was going. Clearly here he

Part 1.	The Coming of the King
Part 2.	The Authentication of the King
Part 3.	The Controversy over the King
Part 4.	The Training of the Twelve by the King
Part 5.	The Opposition to the King
→	Follow Him, Know Him
Part 6.	The Preparation of the Disciples by the King
Part 7.	The Official Presentation of the King
Part 8.	The Preparation for the Death of the King
Part 9.	The Trial of the King:
Part 10.	The Death of the King
Part 11.	The Resurrection and the Ascension of the King

was referring to the fact that he had come from God, and that he was going to return to God, and simply based on that fact alone he was able to bear a true and complete witness of himself. He goes even farther though, as he knew full well that they judged his claims according to their natural and earthly way of thinking, or as John puts it, “according to the flesh” (v15). Even working within their own framework, he still managed to flip their own argument on its head, by stating he does have another one who bears witness, namely his Father. In our study, we have already seen two times where God the Father explicitly bore witness to Jesus. Once at his baptism (Matt 3:16-17), and again at the transfiguration (Matt 17:5). There could be no greater two witnesses than God the Father, and Jesus His Son.

JESUS’ ACCUSATION (JOHN 8:19)

Stuck in the darkness of their fleshly mindset, the Pharisees were unable to even recognize what Jesus was saying here. They refused to attempt to understand what Jesus was telling them about himself. We see this clearly in their response about “his father” (v19). In response to this disingenuous question, Jesus leveled a scathing accusation against the Pharisees. They knew neither Jesus, nor his Father, for to know Jesus IS to know the Father. These religious Pharisees assumed they were the ones who knew God and His plan regarding the Messiah, yet they clearly were the ones walking in the darkness, failing to know Jesus OR God the Father. It is important to note that the term to know here means far more than simple mental acceptance of some theory of God and Jesus, but rather a term that describes a deep and caring relationship.

These statements by Jesus ring just as true today as they did at that moment. He is the one who brings light into the darkness, and the one by whom we can know the Father. His promises are real and true and we can see them playing out all over the world. The path of darkness always brings death, division and destruction, while the way of light brings life, peace, joy and truth. Jesus makes it clear, the decision is ours to make. Will we follow him and seek to know him?

Grace Family Needs, News and Notes

High School Snow Jam: March 29th - April 2nd

Contact Matt Smith, MATT@GCCRAMONA.COM To register

Couples Movie Night! - Feb 13th @ 6:30pm in the Sanctuary

\$10 per couple, email KIMBALL@GCCRAMONA.COM, To register