

THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

John 8:12

A *Christianity Today* cover story in 1996 asked: "Who do scholars say that I am?"

It was an article about the *Jesus Seminar* & its attempts to disprove the N.T. account about Who Jesus is.

We hear lots of discussion about Who Jesus is.

Did He really claim to be God?

Or was that a concept invented by His followers years later?

Many people believe the story was exaggerated, the miracles invented, that Jesus' followers invented the claims.

JOHN'S PURPOSE FOR WRITING John 20:30-31

John wants to be sure we understand Who Jesus is!

He tells us that Jesus did many other things John didn't write down; but *"these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name."*

1. To demonstrate that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God

Christ => Messiah

Son of God => God

To be someone's "son" meant to be "a chip off the old block"

—to be *like Him*.

Jewish people claimed to be sons of Abraham (John 8:39)

Jesus responds: *"If you were Abraham's sons you'd be like Abraham"* (you would act like him => *"do the things Abraham did"*)

Jesus claims to be God's Son (John 5:17-18)

He claims God is His Father, making Himself equal with God.

To be God's Son means to be *godlike*; only God Himself is *like Him*—no one else is like Him!

Therefore, Jesus is GOD!

2. so we might (=trust Him)

3. so we might receive eternal life.

John wants to be sure we understand Who Jesus claimed to be, & the evidence

He presented to prove it.

We've been considering Jesus' affirmation of Who He is:

Jesus claims to be "I AM" Who presented Himself to Moses in the desert.

"Before Abraham was, I AM."

Jesus is "the GREAT "I AM"—He is Yahweh; He is God Himself.

[Last time we considered . . .]

1st of 7 "I am" statements:

"I am the Bread of Life."

He satisfies our thirst for God & hunger for righteousness.

[Next affirmation John records about Who Jesus says He is:]

JESUS IS THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD John 1:4, 9; 8:12; 9:5

O.T. prophets referred to the coming of the Sun of Righteousness who would bring light to people walking in darkness—to pagan Gentiles like us.

The promise of the coming of the Light of the World is a promise of Messiah—the One anointed by God to forgive the sins of His people.

He would come to bring light to people living in darkness—to *pagan nations of the world—to people like US!*

John tells us that's Who Jesus is:

1:4 *In him was life, and that life was the light of men.*

1:9 *The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world.*

1:14 *We have seen His glory, the glory of the One and Only.*

8:12 *Jesus said, "**I am the light of the world.** Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."*

When Jesus spoke these words, He was standing in the treasury, beside giant candelabra, lit every night to provide light to the city.

Jesus announces that His light isn't limited to the city.

He is the Light of THE WORLD!

9:5 *While I am in the world, I am the light of the world."*

Jesus said "I AM the light of the world."

He came to give light to everyone, so we could see God's light.

The light shines in the darkness.

1:5 *The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.*

It hasn't "taken hold of it!"

It hasn't "grasped" it!

It doesn't "get it!"

12:46 *I have come into the world as a light, so that no one **who believes in me** should stay in darkness*

—but the world in general hasn't believed in Him!

A poor boy heard S.S. teacher say Jesus is the Light of the World. Taking her remark literally, after class, he said to her, "I wish Jesus would come hang out in my alley. It's awful dark where I live." —It IS awfully dark out there!

The world is filled with darkness.

The darkness doesn't like the light.

III. => Bright flashlight in the eyes; car high beams at night on a dark road.

The bright light hurts our eyes; we don't want to look at it!

3:19-21 *This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. ²⁰Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. ²¹But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what he has done has been done through God."*

People don't come to the light.

They live in darkness—they *prefer* darkness.

**The darkness/the world doesn't accept the light
because it's deeds are evil**

**The darkness/the world tried to put out the light.
Nevertheless, **the light does what light does best:****

It shines in the dark!

8:12 *Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.*

You know what it's like to try to find your way through the house,
or through a forest in the dark?

Sometimes Helen will move something to an unusual place, when I get up in the morning and
make my way along a familiar route in the dark, BANG! Suddenly I crash into something in
an unexpected place.

We don't find our way easily in the dark. We get lost and confused.

Jesus came as the Light of the World, that we might never stumble in *spiritual* darkness again.

When we follow Him, He gives light to our path.

12:46 *I have come into the world as a light, so that no one who believes in me should stay
in darkness.*

Light isn't nearly as effective on a clear, bright, sun-lit day.

Light is most effective in the dark!

**God sent His Son to “shine in the dark” i.e., to reveal Him to people who are
walking in darkness.**

1:9 *The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world.*

In Jn 12, Jesus introduces another thought concerning the light.

He urges His listeners:

12:36 *Put your trust in the light while you have it, so that YOU may become sons of
light.”*

Jesus wants US to be characterized by light, *as HE is!*

Here's that Jewish expression “sons of” again.

When we trust in Him Who IS light, we become *like Him!*

That truth leads to a 2nd major thought about the light:]

WE ARE THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

Matt 5:14-16 *“You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden.*

The Light of the World did not go out when Jesus died on the cross! It didn't
stop shining!

Jesus said “YOU ARE the light of the world”

The Incas built a temple to the sun in Cuzco. It had 3 walls; no roof. East end was open.

Interior of west wall was covered with burnished gold. As dawn approached, worshipers
gathered on the east side and faced the golden wall. As the sun rose, its rays would fall on
the polished surface. The reflection illuminated the upturned faces of the people.

We're called to be like that wall. We are the “light of the world.” We reflect His light on those
around us. Like that polished gold wall, we have no light of our own. As we reflect His light,

we illumine those around us.

The light shines in the darkness

Matt 5:15-16 *Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. ¹⁶In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.*

Eph 5:8-14b *For you were once darkness, but now **you are light in the Lord**. Live as children of light ⁹(for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, right-eousness & truth) ¹⁰& find out what pleases the Lord. ¹¹Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them. ¹²For it is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret. ¹³But everything exposed by the light becomes visible, ¹⁴for it is light that makes everything visible. **The darkness still doesn't like the light—because it's deeds are still evil.***

The darkness still tries to put out the light.

John 15:18-21 *"If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. ¹⁹If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you.*

If the world doesn't want to come to Jesus, the more we become like Jesus, the less the world will want to come to us!

Nevertheless, the light still does what light does best:

It shines in the dark!

Light isn't nearly as effective on a clear, bright, sun-lit day.

Light is most effective in the dark!

God sent His people to "shine in the dark" i.e., to reveal Him to people who are walking in darkness.

God has called us to be His light, in the midst of the darkness.

He wants us to show the world what He's like —so they'll be drawn to Him.

Everyone is in one of 2 categories:

1) Either we're in darkness,

2) Or we're the light of the world.

If we're in the dark, it's because we've never come to the light.

Jesus' words to us are the same as He spoke 2000 years ago:

12:36 Put your trust in the light...

so YOU may become sons of light."

God invites us to come to the light, to put our trust in Him and receive His gift of eternal life.

He's calling those who've trusted Him, to "let OUR light so shine before men that they may see our works and glorify our Father—the source of Light!

If we're trusting in the Light of the World, we reflect His light, & we become the light of the world.