

## JESUS IS THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

**PLEASE do not read these comments until you have read the Scripture for this lesson.  
First let the Holy Spirit teach you directly from His Word**

### Summary and Historical Background

The controversy regarding Jesus' ministry continued to mount as the number of His miracles and discourses increased. John 5-12, in contrast to John 1-4, shows the development of unbelief against Him. In John 7, even His own brothers taunted Him with their unbelief and sarcastically suggested that He use His supernatural power for self-aggrandizement (7:3-5). Realizing His life was in danger, Jesus delayed His arrival at the Feast of Tabernacles in Jerusalem (7:8-10). Although the consensus of the multitudes concerning Jesus was divided (7:12), the religious leaders were quite united against Him, and they determined to kill Him (7:1, 32, 48; 8:59).

Jesus said, "I am the light of the world" (Jn 8:12). His teaching was a light to His followers as well as to His foes. His light attracted the devout, but repelled the depraved. His followers rejoiced in His teaching and wanted Him to be king. His foes resented His teaching and wanted Him to be killed. His light affected the people both ways in these two chapters, but it is most evident in exposing the darkness in the lives of His enemies.

Many marveled at His teaching, but Jesus told them that His teaching did not originate with Him, but was from His Father (7:15-16). He even disclosed an appropriate test to discern His sincerity, for He sought not His own glory but that of the Father (7:17-18). The controversy which ensued resulted in Jesus charging His accusers with superficial judgment (7:24). Jesus continued to teach, knowing His time was not at hand, and this caused a further division of the people over Him (7:43).

Jesus handled the problem of the adulterous woman with great skill. When He advised that the man without sin should cast the first stone at her, no one felt worthy. When all of her accusers left, Jesus had compassion on the woman and told her to go and sin no more (8:1-11). He claimed to be the Light of the world, but the Pharisees accused Him of bearing false witness about Himself, even though His testimony was in agreement with their Law (8:12-20). Although His sayings left the Jewish leaders bewildered, tacit points were evident. First, Jesus acknowledged His deity to them once again (8:23); second, they would die in their sins, unless they would put their faith in Him as the Son of God (8:24); and third, they were murderers and liars like their father, the devil (8:44).

### I. Jesus' Ministry at the Feast of Tabernacles — 7:1-53

#### A. His Delay — 7:1-13

##### 1. The danger — 7:1

7:1 — Jesus avoided Judea because the Jews there were seeking to kill Him (5:16).

##### 2. The time — 7:2.

7:2 — It was the time of the Feast of Tabernacles which was in remembrance of the tents that their forefathers lived in after they left Egypt (cf. Lev 23:33-43; Deut 16:13-15). It also was a time to gather the fruit of their summer harvest and rejoice in the blessings of God. It was one of the most important celebrations of the year. This was about six months before Jesus was crucified.

##### 3. The unbelief — 7:3-10

7:3-4 — Jesus' brothers (Mt 13:55) advised Him to make Himself known publicly if He were really the Messiah.

7:5 — His brothers did not believe He was the Messiah.

7:6-8 — "My time is not yet come" - Jesus knew this was not the appointed time for Him to be crucified (cf. 17:1).

7:10 — "Not openly, but as it were in secret" - Jesus went up to Jerusalem quietly without announcing His coming.

#### **4. The discussion — 7:11-13**

7:11-13 — Some believed Jesus was a good man, but others thought He was a deceiver. They were afraid to speak openly because they feared the Jewish leaders. They were afraid of being cast out of the synagogue by them (9:22).

#### **B. His Teaching — 7:14-39**

##### **1. With the Jewish leaders — 7:14-24**

7:14-15 — They marveled that an "unlearned" (untrained) man could speak with such knowledge.

7:16-18 — Jesus again stated the source of His teaching was from the Father. If any man would desire to do God's will, he would know that Jesus' teaching was of God. Jesus did not seek His own glory, but He sought to glorify His Father.

7:19 — Those who broke the law of Moses had no right to judge others. They disqualified themselves.

7:20 — The Jews were liars by denying their desire to kill Jesus (5:16), but they could not deceive Jesus.

7:21 — "I have done one work." Jesus was referring to His healing of the invalid on the Sabbath (5:1-16).

7:22-23 — Healing a man on the Sabbath is no different than circumcising a man on the Sabbath. Both are good works.

7:24 — Judgment should be according to the facts, not appearance (cf. 1 Sam 16:7).

##### **2. With the people — 7:25-31**

7:25-26a — The people were confused. They could not understand how Jesus could speak so boldly when the leaders were seeking to kill Him.

7:26b-27 — They wondered if the leaders believed that He really was the Messiah. Whatever, they believed that when the Messiah (Christ) would come, no one would know where He was from, and they were sure that Jesus was from Nazareth (they did not know He was from Heaven).

7:28a — "Cried" - denoted Jesus teaching with a loud voice in the Temple.

7:28b-29 — They had a superficial knowledge of Him, but did not know of His divine origin, because they did not believe His testimony or the testimony of John the Baptist.

7:30-31 — The response was conflicting. Some tried to seize Him, but were divinely restrained. Others believed on Him.

##### **3. With the officers — 7:32-39**

7:32 — The Pharisees were concerned because they felt Jesus' popularity would grow, so they sent officers to arrest Him. These officers were to look for some deed or word from Jesus that would give them a pretense for arresting Him.

7:33-34 — Jesus responded with a message that so astounded the officers that they simply listened. He announced that He would go back to the One Who had sent Him.

7:35-36 — Either ignorantly or intentionally, the Jewish leaders missed the spiritual point through their unbelief.

7:37-39 — Jesus invited the people to come to Him for spiritual water. The custom during the feast was for the priests to bring water each day and put it on the altar of burnt offering as a reminder of how God had supplied their needs in the wilderness. Jesus claimed to be the One Who would supply them with living water — (cf. Isa 44:3-4; Jn 4:10, 14; 1 Cor 10:4). The living water was the Holy Spirit Who would be given at Pentecost.

### **C. The Reactions — 7:40-53**

#### **1. The people — 7:40-44**

7:40-41a — Some believed He was the Prophet (Deut 18:5) or the Christ.

7:41-42 — Some were confused because they thought that Jesus had always lived in Galilee (Nazareth); they did not know that He had been born in Bethlehem.

7:44 — Some desired to seize Him.

#### **2. The rulers — 7:45-53**

7:45-49 — The officers were sent to arrest Jesus but instead He "arrested" them with His message.

7:50-53 — Nicodemus sought to defend Jesus, but they ridiculed him because they were so prejudiced.

## **II. Jesus' Mercy to the Adulterous Woman — 8:1-11**

### **A. His Predicament — 8:1-6.**

8:1-6 — The leaders were trying to trap Jesus. They thought He had only two choices, and He would be trapped either way. (1) If He ordered her to be stoned, He would be going contrary to the Roman government which alone had the authority in capital punishment. (2) If He let her go free, He would be ignoring God's law (cf. Lev 20:10; Deut 22:22), and, therefore, He could not be the Messiah.

### **B. His Answer — 8:7-9.**

8:7-9 — He said that the one who was without sin should cast the first stone. Each was convicted of sin by his own conscience and had to leave without throwing a stone. Their scheme was foiled.

### **C. His Compassion — 8:10-11**

8:10-11 — Jesus did not condemn her because He came to call sinners to repentance (Jn 3:17; Lk 5:32). However, He warned her to sin no more. Jesus saves sinners **from** their sins and not **in** their sins.

## **III. Jesus' Message to the Nation — 8:12-59**

### **A. The Light of the World — 8:12-20**

#### **1. The symbolism — 8:12.**

8:12 — Jesus used a candelabra, which was prominent in this feast, to teach another spiritual truth. During the feast a large golden candelabra was lighted to remind the people of the fiery pillar which God had used to guide Israel in the wilderness. Jesus announced that He was the light which could lead them out of the darkness of sin into the light of eternal life.

## **2. The accusation — 8: 13**

8:13 — The Pharisees claimed His testimony was not valid because He was the only witness.

## **3. The answer — 8:14-18**

8:14-18 — Jesus said His testimony was true, because it was supported by the witness of the Father, and no one needed to verify His witness.

## **4. The unbelief — 8:19-20**

8:19-20 — They still would not believe that Jesus had come from God. They wanted more proof of His Father's testimony. Their problem was not a lack of facts, but a basic unbelief in God.

# **B. The Necessity of Faith — 8:21-36**

## **1. Regarding His deity — 8:21-24**

8:21-24 — They needed to believe that Jesus was from Heaven; He is the One called, "I AM," the very One Who revealed Himself to Moses (Ex 3:14). If they did not believe this about Jesus, they would die in their sins (8:21, 24)

## **2. Regarding His message — 8:25-27**

8:24-27 — They needed to believe His message because it was from God, His Father.

## **3. Regarding His crucifixion — 8:28-30**

8:28-30 — Most of them would not believe until He was "lifted up" (crucified); however, some did believe on Him at that time, but it may not have been genuine.

## **4 Regarding His disciples — 8:31-32**

8:31-32 — Those who believed on Him were urged to live by His Word. Its truth would make them free.

## **5. Regarding His power to make men free — 8:33-36**

8:34 — Men were the slaves of sin, because they were practicing sin.

8:36 — They desperately needed to be set free from their sins by Jesus Christ.

# **C. The Children of the Devil — 8:37-59**

## **1. Jewish leaders were Abraham's seed — 8:37**

8:37 — They were physically related to Abraham, but that is all. They had none of his faith. They wanted to kill Jesus, because they refused to believe His message.

## **2. Jewish leaders were not Abraham's children — 8:38-40**

8:38 — The works of the Jewish leaders indicated who their father was.

8:39-40 — Their claim to have Abraham as their father was invalid, because Abraham loved those who told him God's truth. These Jewish leaders did not. Instead they tried to kill Jesus for telling them the truth.

## **3. Jewish leaders were not God's children — 8:41-43**

8:41 — To defend themselves, the Jewish leaders now claimed to be the children of God, a step higher than the children of Abraham.

8:42 — They were not children of God because they refused to love God's Son, Whom He had sent to them.

8:43 — Further proof - they would not receive Christ's message.

#### **4 Jewish leaders were the devil's children — 8:44-50**

8:44 — Jesus no longer hints that the devil is their father, but clearly states it. He gives two reasons: (1) Satan is a murderer, and they were trying to do the same thing by trying to murder Him (8:37, 40); and (2) Satan is a liar, and they were lying to Him (7:19-20; 8:55).

8:45 — Since they were the devil's children, they would not believe the truth that Jesus told them.

8:46-47 — If they were God's children, they would listen to the truth.

8:48 — Satan's children tried to cover up their true identity by saying Jesus had a devil.

8:49-50 — Those who dishonor Jesus, dishonor the Father, because Jesus glorifies the Father.

#### **D. The Victory over Death — 8:51-55**

8:51 — Jesus promised eternal life to those who believed His message.

8:52-53 — The Jewish leaders would not believe that Jesus had the power to conquer death. They did not believe He was greater than Abraham or the prophets who had died.

8:54-55 — Jesus did not back down from His claim, because His message was from God, Whom He knew intimately. To deny it would make Him a liar like them.

#### **E. The Eternal I Am — 8:56-59**

8:56 — Abraham saw Jesus' day, and it made him rejoice. When did he see Jesus' day? By sight he actually saw the Lord with two of His angels in the plains of Mamre (Gen 18:1 ff). When the Lord came to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah, Abraham actually talked with Him. This was Jesus in His pre-incarnate activity, the only person in the God-head to appear as a man. What a unique experience for Abraham! No wonder it caused him to rejoice.

**8:57** — The Jewish leaders scoffed at Jesus' claim because unbelief blinded their eyes to spiritual realities.

8:58 — Jesus claimed to be "I AM," the eternal, powerful, self-sufficient God (cf. Ex 3:14).

8:59 — The Jewish leaders understood Jesus' claim to be God, but they rejected it. Instead they attempted to stone Jesus and kill Him on the spot, but He escaped out of their hands.