

**The Light of the World – Part 1**  
**Pastor Ty Blackburn**  
**John 8:12**  
**November 25th, 2012**

Please turn with me in your Bibles to John 8. Our text this morning is going to begin to unpack the marvel of what Jesus says in John 8:12. It's a tremendous and rich passage of Scripture. I want to read that one verse, and we'll focus on that probably this Sunday, and then at least one more Sunday as well.

***John 8:12 ~ Then Jesus again spoke to them, saying, “I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life.”***

*Our Father, we come to You this morning so grateful, Lord, for the gift of Jesus Christ, and as we open Your Word, and as we hear these words, we acknowledge again our great need and dependence. Our Father, we are in a world filled with darkness. Those of us who have been redeemed have Your Light shining inside of us, but there's still so much darkness. We need You to give us Light. We thank You that Your promise is that the entrance of Your Word gives Light, and we ask that in Your Light, we might see Light, by the power of Your Spirit and for the glory of Your Son. We pray this in Jesus' Name, Amen.*

This is one of the glorious I AM sayings in John. Seven different times, John records Jesus saying, “I am,” with a predicate. We saw earlier, “I am the bread of life,” in John 6:35 and John 6:48, and here we come to the second I AM saying with a predicate, and “I am ...” and we see **“I am the Light of the world;”** We're going to see that Jesus is also the Good Shepherd. He's the door of the sheep. He is the resurrection and the life. He is the way and the truth and the life. But here we see **“I am the Light of the world;”** and here what I want us to do is spend some time looking at the setting of these words this morning. We're going to do a lot like we did with John 7. The last passage that Jesus was speaking this kind of emphatic declaration was John 7:37-38, when He said, “If any man is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. The one who believes in Me, from his belly will flow rivers of living water.” That was a declaration of Jesus, an invitation to come to Him if you're thirsty, and here you have a kind of a parallel invitation. “If you are in the dark, come to Me. I am the Light of the world.” It's that kind of decisive moment in history. For Jesus to make this declaration was a tremendous fulfillment of all the hope.

Remember the passage I read to you earlier from Isaiah 60: *Arise and shine for your light has come*. Isaiah is writing that at 720 BC or so, around the time that the Northern Kingdom was sacked by the Assyrians and carried off, almost wiped off, the face of the earth. Then the Southern Kingdom of Judah, he tells them in His prophecy of Isaiah, “You’re going to fall also. Days of darkness and gloom are coming to you, too. The Babylonians are going to cart you off and carry you away from Jerusalem, the place of God’s presence, the place where the glory dwells, and they’re going to destroy the temple, but there’s a day coming when you need to arise, and you need to be radiant, because your Light has come.” That is fulfilled at the moment Jesus speaks. I mean, it’s been fulfilled when He was conceived, when He was born, but He’s announcing this has been fulfilled. All of the hope, the Old Testament longing for God’s Light to come, and now, “I am the Light of the world.”

Seeing it in its proper setting is very important to enrich our understanding of this. So what we’re going to do this time is focus on the setting of Jesus’ words. This is *The Light of the World – Part 1: The Setting of Jesus Words*. Then next time, we’ll look at the substance, because there’s so much in those words. It’s important that we see the setting, because He chose a particular time and place to utter this glorious statement.

The three points we’re going to look at as we consider the setting this morning, to help you follow our discussion, we’re going to look at the setting from the sense of the time in history. The time in redemptive history is the first point that Jesus makes this declaration. Then we’re going to look at the time on the calendar. So we’ll look at two things pertaining to time: time in history, and secondly, the time of the year. That’s the second point, and then thirdly, we’ll look at the place, because I think John wants us to see all of these things as surrounding this declaration.

- 1) Time in History
- 2) Time of the Year
- 3) Place / Geography

1) Time in History:

Now we’ll look at the moment in redemptive history. Jesus says: “*I am the Light of the world*”; What I mean here is I want to step back and think about the panorama of God’s revelation. It’s always helpful to step back and look at the forest so you don’t get bogged down with just seeing the trees. And when you step

back and you look at that, then you can appreciate the significance of the tree more fully. You see how it fits into the whole. Well, when you step back and you look at the way that this statement fits into the whole of God's plan of redemption, it is a beautiful thing to behold, and I think John is actually really inviting us to do that.

I mentioned John of all the apostles was the oldest when he wrote. Most of the apostles from what we can tell from church history were martyred. John survived and died of old age, possibly in his 80's, and maybe even 90 years old. He died somewhere in the 90's or 100 A.D. They tried to kill him. Tradition tells us they put him in boiling oil, but he did not die. Apparently it wasn't much worse for the wear either. God protected him supernaturally, because he had some more work to do, and later in life, he writes all of his books that we have in the Bible: 1, 2, 3 John are all written by John the apostle. The Revelation of Jesus Christ is written by John the apostle, and John's Gospel is written by this same man. The disciple whom Jesus loved is how he describes himself in the book. He speaks of himself in the third person and doesn't use his name in a self-effacing way, keeping the focus on Jesus. What is he but just by God's grace a disciple that Jesus loved? That's all you need to know about me is that Jesus loves me. That's all that matters.

So he's writing his Gospel, though, in God's providence, as an older man having pondered things. The Spirit of God inspires every single word and it's all perfect, but He uses ordinary means to hit His perfect blow, and I think John, in walking with Christ all those years, by the Spirit, walking with Christ after Jesus has ascended to heaven, he's been a follower of Jesus Christ year after year, decades. He was with Jesus. He saw Him. He heard these words spoken, and he's pondered them, and the Spirit of God has worked in him to give him this rich understanding. So when he writes his Gospel, he is the most selective of all of the Gospel writers. He only tells us about seven miracles.

Remember at the end of his book, in John 20:31, he said first of all, "Jesus did many more signs in the presence of His apostles, His disciples. If they were written down, there would not be books to hold them all. But these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God, and that believing, you may have life in His Name." He basically organizes his Gospel around seven miracles. He's very selective and he lays these side by side, I think, in a chronological way, but he skips over a lot of stuff that he could tell us about, because he wants us to see these things side by side. It's like painting a landscape, and if you're painting a beautiful landscape... This is not a good illustration. I was going to say you paint out the things that you don't want there, maybe, like an old

Chevy truck is there or something like that. Sometimes you start down a road and you wish you had never started down that road. But the thing is John, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, he has a very definite message that God has put on his heart about Jesus, and what we see unfolding in John 6, 7, and 8 is he's picturing Jesus as the second Moses. We've talked about this in previous verses. He's picturing Jesus as the greater Prophet, the Prophet that was prophesied in Deuteronomy 18:15-18. A Prophet like Moses, but greater than Moses, is going to come.

Then he shows us, remember, the feeding of the 5,000. Moses gave us bread from heaven. Look what Jesus does. He doesn't give us bread that's on the ground that you've got to go pick up and it tastes not that great. Manna, what is it? He multiplies bread and fish, and feeds 5,000 men plus women and children, and probably a total of 20,000 people with five loaves and two fish. One greater than Moses is here. Then He walks on the water right after that. That's one of the other signs. Then they come and talk to Him about the bread, and Jesus says, "I am the bread of life. Moses gave you bread from heaven. I AM the bread from heaven. Do you see how much greater than Moses I am?"

Then in Chapter 7, we find Jesus. John skips over about 6 months of time to tell us about the next thing he wants us to see is Jesus at the Feast of Booths or the Feast of Tabernacles. The Feast of Booths is the common word. I don't like that word, because when I think of booths, I think about sitting down at a restaurant. "Do you want a table or a booth?" Right? It's just the way we use the word, but the booth means basically a little homemade tent kind of structure where you put branches together so that you can sleep under it. And the idea of the Feast of Booths was where the people of Israel would make booths for themselves and live in them to commemorate the time when they lived in tents or booths like that, we'll say tabernacles, when God was leading them from the Exodus in Egypt to the Promised Land. John's very careful to make sure we know the Feast of Booths, or the Feast of Tabernacles is at hand. Jesus goes to the Feast of Tabernacles and begins teaching, and we watch this unfold, and then finally, on the last great day of the feast, He testifies, "If any of you are thirsty, let him come to Me and drink."

Now, what was great about Moses? Remember, when He said this, what was the first thing they said? "Surely this is the prophet," the prophet like Moses. Why? Because Moses gave us water. Remember, that was the other great miracle Moses did is he gave thirsty people water out of a rock two different times in the wilderness wanderings. We have that recorded. It was supernatural water. Jesus said, "Like Moses gave you water, I am the One who gives you water, but not just

a stream of water out of a rock. I give you rivers of living water out of your own belly, your hollow place,” and that was to speak of the Spirit. He is One greater than Moses, though. And this Feast of Tabernacles recalls and is all associated with Moses.

I mean, of all the feasts, it is the one that would be most conducive to reflection on Moses’ ministry, because here we are remembering the time when Moses was leading them in those 40 years. We’re celebrating that. We’re celebrating not just the fact that they lived in tents. That’s not that great a thing unless you really love camping, I guess. That’s not what they were celebrating. They were celebrating the fact that God delivered them from Egypt, and that He put His presence among them. Remember, their tents surrounded the tabernacle, the tent God had them make for Him, and He camped with them for 40 years, and He was visibly manifest in a pillar of fire among them for 40 years. This was the glory day of Israel when they could see in a visible way our God is among us. We are His people and He is our God. What a tremendous time in the life of the people of Israel.

So that’s around 1445 to 1405 BC. Here we are almost 1500 years later, and the Jews are still practicing the Feast of Tabernacles, remembering the glory days, and also understand that there’s something as Scripture continues to unfold, as the Lord continues to unfold. He says that’s a type of what’s coming, because the whole picture of history is man has lost God’s presence in the fall, separated from God, and what we need is to come back to God. That was a picture of God coming back to us and we need that. At the end of Revelation, what do you see? I mentioned earlier the New Jerusalem. Remember Jerusalem is a type of the people of God? The New Jerusalem comes down out of heaven in Revelation 21, and a voice from heaven says, “Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men. They will be His people and God Himself will be their God.” All of history points to that.

So the Feast of Tabernacles in a particular way had this rich eschatology that is focused on the end times, this rich imagery, a beautiful picture pointing ahead. Now, that’s all laying out this picture that John is showing us. Look at Jesus. Look at what He chose to say at the Feast of Tabernacles. He chose to say, “I’m the One who gives water.”

Now, let’s step back for a moment and think about how in this setting He says: “***I am the Light of the world;*** Let’s think about the significance of light for a moment, the picture now again of what light means, and why He chose these words, “***I am the Light of the world;*** and how John picks up on that. Light is

essential to life. In fact, Jesus says in this verse, “You won’t walk in darkness, but you will have the light of life.” Without light there is no life. I mean, if the sun were to stop shining, the world would freeze and we would die instantly. I don’t know how many nanoseconds it would be, but it wouldn’t be long. In fact, light is the very essence of life if you think about it. I mean, all the food chain starts with plants, and how do plants develop? Photosynthesis. Light is the essence of what starts all of the food process. You may be like some people I know that are more carnivorous. We’re supposed to be omnivores as people, right? Or some people think we’re supposed to be herbivores, right? But the Bible says we can be omnivores. That means we eat everything, right? It’s not just meat and plants. Originally, though, we were all to be herbivores, just eating plants, and that was to be enough. But at the beginning even now of the food chain, you have to have light. It’s the essence of life. Sunlight is the essence of life, and so it’s at the very foundation.

So Jesus says, “I am the Light,” and in fact, it’s interesting how John uses this image. I want you to look back at John 1:1-8. Actually, we’ll read Verses 1-9. This is John’s introduction to who Jesus is:

***John 1:1 ~ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. 4 In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men. 5 The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it. 6 There came a man sent from God, whose name was John. (This is not John the apostle, the author of the book. John the Baptist it’s talking about.) 7 He came as a witness, to testify about the Light, so that all might believe through him. 8 He was not the Light, but he came to testify about the Light. 9 There was the true Light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man. 10 He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. 11 He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him. 12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name,...***

“So the Light has come into the world,” John is saying. This is the Good News, and he continues to unfold this, and Jesus in His own words continues to unfold it when He says in John 3:19:

***John 3:19 ~ This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil.***

And then in John 8:12, He makes clear that the Light is He Himself. That Light has come into the world. And what we see when we look at the Scriptures is that Light is the essence of life. In fact, it's very interesting. I was pondering this, and I'm still going to keep pondering it, because I don't really know the answer fully satisfied with what this means, but isn't it interesting when you think about the creation, when you look back at creation at Genesis 1, in the beginning, how God created the heavens and the earth?

***Genesis 1:1 ~ In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.  
2 The earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters.  
3 Then God said,...***

What did He say first? What's the first word, the first creative word of God?

***Genesis 1:3 ~ Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light.***

Now, what's interesting is He doesn't create the sun or the moon or the stars until day four. He creates light on day one. It's interesting. There's a parallelism that goes on. He creates light on day one, then He creates the expanse above and the expanse below, that is, the atmosphere and the waters on day two, the air and the waters on day two, separates them. On day three, He separates the dry land and He fills it with vegetation, but you have these three arenas: light, the atmosphere and the waters, and then dry land. Then on day four, He fills light, He forms it, into the sun and the stars. On day five, He takes the skies and the waters, and He fills them with birds and fish. On day six, He takes the dry land and He fills it with every swarming animal and then finally man.

So there's this beautiful parallelism going on as God creates the world, and people sometimes stumble at this. "Why does He create light before He creates the sun? This shows that the Bible is wrong." This is what unbelievers say. They're always looking for a way out, because men hate the light, but the reality is I think the reason God created light, I mean it isn't too hard for the Lord anyway. He doesn't need the light of the sun Himself. It wasn't like He was sitting there saying, "I can't see anything." The dark is not dark to God, Psalm 139 says.

In fact, we need to be clear on this. There is no Biblical dualism. A lot of times in philosophy and religion, there's this sense of dualism, that is, two great powers at war with one another. There are two powers, but there's only one great power in the Bible. God is the One who creates light and darkness (Isaiah 45:7). He's the One who's over all of it. It's not like the Star Wars picture, with the good side and the bad side of the force. No way. God alone is King over His world. Now, it's true there's a rebellion going on, but it's a small, tiny, little rebellion compared to God. He could end it like that, but He's manifesting His glory by allowing it to go on for His purposes, and His purposes are good and right. And because of that, if He were to do this too quickly, you and I would be in hell forever. He's allowing the time to pass to allow more people to come to repentance and faith, to save us out of this misery.

Well, people look at it too quickly and they stumble at that, but I think one of the reasons is He created light because He wants us to know this: Before anything else, you've got to have light. When the world was formless and void, when it was not all that God wanted it to be, in the mean time as He's creating the world, He lets it have this moment of formlessness and emptiness. A sense of waste is the idea of the Hebrew words there: formless and void. It was an empty waste momentarily. The first thing you do about that is you've got to have light. And I think the reason is because he's using this image to teach us, because Light is the one thing that God uses universally to testify to who He is. In 1 John 1:5, the same author John says:

***1 John 1:5 ~ ...God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all.***

***Psalm 27:1 ~ The Lord is my light and my salvation; Whom shall I fear?  
The Lord is the defense of my life; Whom shall I dread?***

He is Light. The same way that light is the foundation of everything else, it is energy, it is the source of everything else, God is that. That's just a picture of how much more it's true that He is the source of everything, and if you're cut off from Him, you have no hope. He is the Light. So he starts his narrative of scripture showing his people that. He's given this to Moses. Remember, Genesis is written by Moses around 1445 to 1405 BC, the same period of time when they're dwelling in those tents, the tabernacles. They're following the pillar of fire, and God gives them the authentic account of all that has happened up til that point in Genesis, the book of beginnings, and He teaches them, "The first thing I created was light." He's baby talking with these people who are completely in the dark about Him and don't even know it.

We were watching a *Finding Nemo* recently, that Disney movie, which is a pretty humorous little Disney movie. It's a Pixar movie, isn't it? Not too long ago we were watching it, and at one place, you have the fish swim down into this area of the ocean where it is completely dark, and they can't see anything. And I remember thinking, "Wow, there are animals there, and lots of animals live in that." There was no light. It's amazing that God can make things that can survive down there, and they do, and He can watch over them and sustain them, because the dark is not dark to Him. But imagine if you were stuck there, if you were stuck in a place of utter darkness and you could not see anything. I mean, I've been in rooms at times where it was so dark I couldn't see anything. You try to strain and get your eyes adjusted, but if you were to live in the dark, you would forget you were in the dark. It's kind of like the old saying about a fish. He doesn't know he's wet. You don't know you're in the dark.

That's the picture of all fallen men. We come into this world in the dark, spiritually. We don't know God. We don't love God. We need God. We long for Him, but we hate Him. That's the insanity of sin. We're in the dark, and what we need is Light. We need God to shine on us. We can't see, and so He uses this image, and He begins to unpack it as He continues to teach them. He tells them the story of how He called their grandfather, the great, great, great, great grandfather Abraham, and look how He pictures His presence. Remember the story of Abraham? God comes to him and calls him, and he leaves the area around Babylon, the Chaldeans, and he goes to Canaan, and he dwells in Canaan in tents. God makes a covenant with him. There's a covenant ceremony, and this is the one time Abraham has this incredible experience of God's presence, and he sees the Lord, as it were. Remember what he sees? A flaming torch represents the presence of God. What is God's presence? God's presence is light.

When God is coming to make a covenant relationship with you, what you see is light, and He continues to do that. What does Moses see that starts his ministry? Remember, Moses is tending sheep out in Midian, and he sees a bush that is burning and is not consumed. God speaks out of the bush, and He tells him, "Take off your shoes. You're on holy ground." What does that mean? "You're talking to God." God's made Himself visible in a flame of light. And then in the picture of the tabernacles, I mean, the reason they live in tabernacles is they're following the Lord, and how does the Lord appear to them? When they're on the way to Egypt, Exodus 13 tells us that the Lord, when He calls them to Himself, He leads them as a pillar of fire.

***Exodus 13:20 ~ Then they set out from Succoth and camped in Etham on the edge of the wilderness. 21 The Lord was going before them in a pillar of cloud by day to lead them on the way, and in a pillar of fire by night to give them light, that they might travel by day and by night. 22 He did not take away the pillar of cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people.***

He didn't take the pillar away until they get into the land of Canaan. So the Lord is teaching them through all of this. What is His presence? His presence is light. We need light. We need His presence. The passage I read from Isaiah earlier, "Arise and shine for your light has come," when you look at the imagery of salvation, "The Lord is my light and my salvation," light and salvation are the same thing. I need light. I need salvation. You have this picture forming throughout the Old Testament, and you start to see this theme emphasized again and again. When salvation comes, light comes. Isaiah 42:6 tells us that the Messiah, the Servant of the Lord will be a light to the nations. We're told the same thing in Isaiah 49:6. The Servant of the Lord, the Messiah, will be a Light to the nations, a Light to the Gentiles. We need Light. So that's the picture. Light is salvation. Why is it salvation? It's salvation because Light is God's presence. You and I don't need to be saved from hell. We do need to be saved from hell, but that's not the main thing we need. We need to be in the presence of God. We don't just need to be saved from hell, but we need to be saved unto God. So that's the imagery throughout the Scriptures. Light equals salvation. So in time and history, that's the point. Now let's think about the time of the year.

## 2) The Time of the Year that Jesus Says These Things:

Let's look at the time of the year, the calendar. Look with me at John 8:12.

***John 8:12 ~ Then Jesus again spoke to them, saying, "I am the Light of the world;..."***

The older NAS says, "Again, therefore, Jesus spoke to them." I really like, "Again, therefore,..." better, because I think it's a better representation of the underlying language. You have *therefore* translated *now* in this NAS. You notice how you may have an NAS, and if your NAS is 1995 or before, it'll say, "Again, therefore, Jesus spoke to them,..." Does anybody have that? Okay. Well, some of my Bibles are that old and they have that, but the one I'm reading from doesn't. It has, "Then Jesus again spoke..." because they keep tweaking the language, making it flow a little better, and essentially, both are good translations, but the word order, literally

the first word of the sentence is *again*, and the second word is *therefore*, and a lot of times, the *therefore* is translated as *then* or *so*. When you see a *so* or a *then* in your text, it may be a *therefore*. Most of the time, it is, in John.

I mentioned last time that when you look at John 7, there's this dialogue going on. Jesus speaks, and then it'll say, "Therefore, the Pharisee said..." or, "Therefore, the crowd said..." and then after what they say, it'll say, "Therefore, Jesus said this..." It goes back and forth with the *therefores*. There are so many of them. I think that's the reason they keep saying *so* and *then*. It's kind of like there'd be *therefores* everywhere. So they say *so* and *then*, and it just makes it sound a little better to the English ear, I guess. I wish it was *therefore*, though, anyway, because it's that idea of back and forth.

Well, what you have, and what we talked about last week, is an issue that I spent some time on last week, which is the issue of whether or not John 7:53 to 8:11 belongs here in the Gospel of John, and I mentioned that whole idea of text criticism, if you weren't here, and I can't go into it today. I'd encourage you to listen to last week's message, and I've got a book that Ken Temple recommended, that we're going to have in the bookstore. Probably next week it should be here. *The King James Only Controversy: Can You Trust Modern Translations?* By James R. White. The idea is he's basically saying, "Yes, you can trust modern translations. The 'King James only' folks are not thinking about things as correctly as they should, but there's a good argument about it, and this is a great book that will at least introduce you to the idea of textual transmission, and how we got the Bible that we have.

We had all the manuscripts. Let me just say one word about that. I mentioned there were about 25,000 manuscripts of the New Testament. There were 5,700 in Greek and another 19,000 in other languages, in the first few centuries after the Bible was given to us. And when you look at those, what you have is a glorious picture of the New Testament. I was reading in Dr. White's book. I mentioned that I wished that we just had a gold plate that was the authentic Bible, and that we knew nobody's messed with it. Remember I told you that? Well, he makes the point, and it's interesting how God works in His providence, because he said that the conviction of the New Testament Christians, the Spirit has been given now to everybody. Everybody has the Spirit after Pentecost, and the word of God is for everybody. It's given in Koine Greek, the language of the common people, and they don't have printing presses like we do that can reproduce a word for word perfect copy.

The way they do it is you have to write it down yourself. And the way people would do that is they would save up money, buy some vellum or some parchment, and borrow somebody's copy of the Gospel of John, or borrow somebody's copy of some chapters from one of Paul's epistles, and they would spend hour after hour writing it down at great cost and great labor, and there weren't that many copies around. They couldn't go on the internet and pull something up.

We've gotten so spoiled, haven't we? We were talking the other day, and somebody said, "Hey, what happened to that guy?" and so we just started googling it. Remember the old days? "Whatever happened to..." You'd have to keep asking people. "Do you know what happened to him?" *No*. "Hey, have you heard anything about that guy?" *No*. "I guess we'll never find out." But then you'd be thrilled when you finally ran into somebody who knew about it. It made your day. Now it's just a matter of fact. Google Search: Boom. Done. There's good and bad with that. I really like it overall, but you know it does kill the suspense a little bit. But the idea is that they didn't have the ability to make the perfect copies with a printing press until the 1500's, and in God's providence, He gave His word at a time when it had to be hand copied. But there's the very fact that people thought they owned the Scriptures, which is true and the way God intended it to be.

The word of God is our life. Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. They wrote it down, and the people were writing it down, and some of the manuscripts we have will be a copy of Jude and a copy of Peter, and then there'll be something else that's not even scriptural, because somebody's just taken a piece of paper and written it down for their own edification. This is their treasure they carry with them. It's all the word they have. But why I was mentioning it was if we thought we had the one authentic translation all the way through time, people could raise the question: How do you know? How do you know somewhere along the way somebody didn't pervert that and change it? You weren't there throughout history. How do you know that that's really what God said in the New Testament? The way that you and I know is there are 25,000 copies of it, and if you take those 25,000 copies of it and you compare them side by side, they are 98.5% the same thing.

We've got 150 people in this room. If I were to say to you, "I want you to copy something," and I gave you a piece of paper that you could look at to copy it, and I could make copies in my office, but I want to do it the old fashioned way now, and so apparently I've made copies, but I want you to make a copy, so anyway, work with me here. You reproduce it, and I want you to turn them all in. What would we find? We'd find all kinds of errors, wouldn't we? As you're writing, you might

misspell that word that you always misspell, like I misspell some words that I always misspell. It's *i* before *e*, except after *c*. There would be all kinds of copying errors, like where you're copying something and you see a word, and then you look away to write it, and you look back and you see that same word, but you've actually looked two lines down, and you start copying from there.

These are the kinds of things that have happened in textual transmission, but if I took the 150 copies that we made in this room, I'd find everybody's got some errors, but if we put them together, do you know what we'd have? We could reproduce the perfect copy of what I originally gave you, with certainty. That's what God has done. People started copying so quickly before there was any opportunity for people to pervert the text they were making copies from. God doesn't do it the way we wish. He does it in a better way. He does it in a way that glorifies His Name far better and far more wonderfully than we do. But again, He leaves room for unbelief. The unbeliever looks at that, and they say, "Look at all the textual variance. Look at all that. You can't have any confidence in that." But in reality, just look a little longer. Just keep looking at it. Keep studying it, and if you keep studying it, you'll find that the textual variances are so small. They're totally insignificant to the thrust of the Bible, not changing the doctrine, not changing any essential doctrine in any way, but testifying to the fact that we have one book that is from God, given in our language by human authors, but divinely inspired by the Holy Spirit, unique in style from book to book to book, and yet one message.

So this book explains a little more about that, and there are some debates still about different passages, but for right now, we're moving on with John 8:12, and I'm pointing out to you the fact that one of the things I think is the reason that I think it's inserted here and doesn't really belong in this place is it messes up the flow, too, because let me remind you that the earliest manuscripts didn't have this text. The earliest ones we have don't have John 7:53 to 8:11 in them, and it occurs other places in the Bible, and then it's just kind of put in here. There are questions about that.

Let me just say I'm going to have a Wednesday night in December where we're going to talk about textual criticism more. So I'm recommending the book, and then Wednesday night, probably Wednesday after next, we'll have some textual discussion. I've had some fellowship with some of the brothers in the church already about this, talking about this, and we're continuing to study. The elders, we've had some discussion. It's all a learning process, but the good news is, the thing I love about the Gospel and the Bible is it can stand scrutiny. I've learned

that. It can stand scrutiny. It can stand the test of an honest inquiry. If you come and you're willing to look at it honestly, and you're not already deciding against it because you don't want to obey God, or you don't want to see God, if you will just open your mind, you will be convinced. There's no doubt about it. They don't believe because they will not believe, but we'll talk about that in a few weeks. If you want to come join us on that Wednesday night we'd love to discuss that fuller.

Now, let's go back to the point here in the passage, which is I'm asking: When in the calendar? And the idea is that if that passage isn't there, He's talking immediately after what He said earlier in John 7:37 and 7:38. He had made the declaration, "If anybody is thirsty, come to Me," and then we have this discussion by the Pharisees in the crowd, and then the Pharisees and Nicodemus responding to Jesus. Next we have Jesus again speaking, and he said, "Again therefore..." The *therefore* is there to say He's responding to what they just said in John 7:52. And what did they say then in Verse 52?

***John 7:52 ~ They answered him, "You are not also from Galilee, are you? Search, and see that no prophet arises out of Galilee."***

So Jesus is partly answering that, just as He has previously. Even though He may not be in ear shot of what's being said, He, in His omniscience, knows, and He's responding to it. And what does He do? He says "***I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life.***" He's alluding to us as I said last week, Isaiah 9:1-6, where Isaiah says, "There will be no more gloom for those who live in the land of Naphtali and Zebulun, that is, Galilee of the Gentiles. No more gloom. No more misery. Why? Because a light will shine on you. A great light is going to dawn on you.

***Isaiah 9:6 ~ For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.***

So He's answering. He said, "You guys don't remember Isaiah 9. I'm going to shine in Galilee," and that's primarily where Jesus ministered. So that's part of it, but *Again also...* is added as well. *Again, therefore...* He said. Think about the last thing Jesus said before this. "If any man is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink." Now He's saying, "I am the Light of the world." When is He talking? He's talking at the end of the Feast of Tabernacles, the last day of the feast. I mentioned to you earlier that the Feast of Tabernacles was commemorating the time when they had the pillar of fire in their midst, God's presence, His glory visibly manifest. They

could see it with their eyes, the glory of God. This feast commemorates that time, and I've told you about one main tradition that grew up around the Feast of Tabernacles, the Feast of Water Drawing. Remember how they would go and get the water out of the pool of Siloam and process back with great joy? They would pour out the water on the altar. There was such joy, that it was written in the Mishnah that if anyone has never seen the Feast of Water Drawing, if you have not seen that, you have not known joy in your life. Such was the joy of this commemoration.

We talked about how water symbolized life, and this feast was associated with that, the Feast of Ingathering, the pulling in of the crops. You've got to have water to have life. Jesus says you've got to have the Spirit to have life. The water represents the Spirit. Then He says, "I'm the Light of the world." There was a second tradition that was practiced each day of the feast. In addition to the water drawing rite, a little bit later in the evening after the water drawing rite, as it began to get dark, they would light four golden lamps. In fact, it's in the Mishnah as well. I'll read to you directly from it. The Mishnah is the tradition that's grown up around the Hebrew faith of how they are to apply and practice their faith. It says this:

*Towards the end of the day of the Feast of Tabernacles, people went down into the Court of Women. Golden lamps were there, four in number, and four golden bowls were on each of them, and four ladders were by each. Four young men from the priestly group of youths had jugs of oil in their hands, and they poured the oil from them into the individual bowls.*

These were huge lamps filled with a huge amount of oil, four of them, and the wicks were really big. We're talking about huge lamps with huge wicks, and they would light them, and it says in the Mishnah:

*There was no court in Jerusalem that was not bright from the light of the place of drawing.*

It lit up all of Jerusalem, these four lamps. In that environment, Jesus says, "You've been pouring out the water. If any man's thirsty, come to Me. You've been celebrating." They would dance all night in a sense of holy dance before the Lord. The holy and righteous men would dance, and they would try to stay up all night in the light of those lamps, rejoicing. "Remember when God was here with us? He's going to come again." And as the Scripture continues to unfold, there's a day coming when we'll see His glory. It's in that kind of rich setting that Jesus utters these words.

In fact, I want to show you a passage that was read during that time each day as a part of these rituals – the Feast of Water Drawing and the Feast of Lights. It's in Zechariah near the end of the Old Testament, right before Malachi, the next to last book in the Old Testament, in Zechariah 14. This was a passage that was read as a part of the regular worship during the Feast of Tabernacles. In Verses 16 to 19 of this Chapter, you see the mention of the Feast of Booths three different times. This is the prophet Zechariah writing around 520 BC. He's talking about the end of time when God brings salvation. He says:

***Zechariah 14:16 ~ Then it will come about that any who are left of all the nations that went against Jerusalem will go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to celebrate the Feast of Booths. 17 And it will be that whichever of the families of the earth does not go up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, there will be no rain on them.***

Do you see that association with water again? Rain. We need rain.

***Zechariah 14:18 ~ If the family of Egypt does not go up or enter, then no rain will fall on them; it will be the plague with which the Lord smites the nations who do not go up to celebrate the Feast of Booths. 19 This will be the punishment of Egypt, and the punishment of all the nations who do not go up to celebrate the Feast of Booths.***

Why that feast, of all of them? It's tying that in with the eschaton, the end of time, this feast, because it's the big picture. Remember, the picture of all of salvation is paradise lost and paradise regained. We lost the presence of God. We need the presence of God. This feast pictures that so richly. Now in that same Chapter, look with me at a few verses before this. Look at, first of all, Verse 1 of Chapter 14:

***Zechariah 14:1 ~ Behold, a day is coming...***

This is something that throughout the prophets, you have the idea that a day is coming, the day of the Lord, the day when God brings judgment and salvation. A day is coming. Look with me at verse 6 now:

***Zechariah 14:6 ~ In that day there will be no light; the luminaries will dwindle.***

Now remember, this is read at the Feast of Tabernacles every day.

***Zechariah 14:6 ~ In that day there will be no light; the luminaries will dwindle. 7 For it will be a unique day which is known to the Lord, neither day nor night, but it will come about that at evening time there will be light.***

There's going to be darkness come when it should be light but the good news is, that's part of God's judgment. The day of the Lord has judgment and blessing in it. There's darkness when there should be light. When did that happen? The Bible says that Jesus was hung on the cross at 9:00 AM, but at 12 noon, the sky went completely dark. That was God's judgment falling. Praise God is was God's judgment falling upon His own dear Son for us. The sky went dark when it should have been light. The brightest time of day became dark. Remember what Jesus cried out? "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" The sin bearer was quoting Psalm 22:1. He knows why. He's testifying to the Lord. In His humanity, though, in anguish, He's testifying to us that, "I've been abandoned. I am the sin bearer. I have become sin, and the Father has had to turn away from Me. God is light, and in Him there is no darkness at all, and so now I am dwelling in the dark as the sin bearer." When it should have been light, now it's dark. Look at what this verse says after that:

***Zechariah 14:6 ~ In that day there will be no light; the luminaries will dwindle. 7 For it will be a unique day which is known to the Lord, neither day nor night, but it will come about that at evening time there will be light.***

When it should be dark, there will be light. Over those who dwell in darkness, a light is going to dawn. That's what He's saying. You and I used to be sons of darkness, but now we've been made children of light. The Light has dawned upon us. In fact, it's connecting again this imagery of light. What does Paul say when he tries to describe the miracle of salvation? He says, "People are in the dark." Why? "People are in the dark, because the God of this age (2 Corinthians 4:4) has blinded the eyes of unbelievers." They're in the dark. They're groping around.

***2 Corinthians 4:6 ~ For God, who said, "Light shall shine out of darkness," is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.***

What he's saying is darkness used to dwell in your heart in the same way it was over the surface of the deep, but the same God who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," said that to you. You were darkness and misery, and God said, "Let

there be light in your heart,” and at that moment, you became alive, and this promise was fulfilled. It could only happen because Jesus who was Light entered the darkness. He took the full measure of darkness.

Remember when they were arresting Him? Remember so many times they tried to grab Him and seize Him and He loosed their grasp? It happens again, and again, and again in John’s Gospel. In Luke 19, when they come to arrest Him, He says to those that arrest Him, “Now is your time and the hour of darkness.” Basically, “This is the time the darkness reigns. This is what I’ve come to do. I’ve come to enter in and to embrace God’s mission, the Father’s mission for Me to become the sin bearer, and to take and swallow up all of the punishment, every drop of the wrath of God against everyone who would ever believe,” and He drank the dregs of that cup on the cross. The darkness symbolized it, but then the wonderful words of triumph, when He says, “It is finished!” and then He breathes His last, and the victory is won.

Remember, the veil is torn from top to bottom. The veil that separated the place of God’s presence, the Holy of Holies, from the outer part of the temple was torn from top to bottom. It was a huge, thick veil torn miraculously by the power of God, saying, “The way is now open. Come on into the light.” That’s what He’s saying. He’s the Light of the world. I love that part of the song, I can’t remember the title of the song, but anyway, when it says, “There in the ground His body lay, Light of the world by darkness slain.” The victory is won, but we don’t know it between Friday and Sunday, because the Lord chose to let His body dwell in the ground so we would know for sure He died. But then on Sunday, what happened? “Light of the world by darkness slain, then bursting forth in glorious day, up from the ground He rose again, and as He stands in victory, sin’s curse has lost its grip on me. For I am His and He is mine, bought with the precious blood of Christ.”

Jesus is announcing, “I am the Light of the world. All that you have longed for, you who dwell in darkness, all of the gloom and anguish and misery that you have been shrouded in can be erased if you will just merely come to Me. I am the Light of the world.” It’s interesting, too, He doesn’t say, “He who believes in Me.” He certainly could have said that. That’s what normally He says is, “He who believes in Me…” but what does He say here? It’s the Feast of Tabernacles celebrating the time when the tabernacle of God was among men and they followed after the pillar of fire. He says, “I am the Light of the world. He who follows me will not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.” He’s saying, “Follow Me the same way you followed the pillar. The pillar of fire led you from Egyptian bondage, through the Red Sea, provided manna from heaven, and water from the rock. The fire led

you from the misery, and darkness, and slavery of Egypt all the way into the glory of Canaan.”

So the message is that in the same way they put their eyes upon the pillar, when the pillar got up and moved, they didn't sit around and hang around. They got up and moved. They stayed with the presence of God. Jesus says, “I am the Light of the world. Now follow Me like that.” That's the invitation. It's open to anyone. He's done everything necessary. No matter how dark you are, no matter how dark your life is, all of us were darkness. Isn't it amazing? It doesn't matter how dark it is. You take light down into that darkness, you take light down into the bottom of the ocean, and you put that light there, and darkness flees. That's what happens when Jesus comes into your life. Darkness flees. He is everything that you long for, and He will change everything. Everything that was death, and misery, and gloom will become life, joy, and peace. All of those things are fruits of having the Light of life, and the question is how do we respond to that?

### 3) Place / Geography:

This invitation, this glorious and beautiful invitation, is being made in the temple. That's the place. He says it in the temple. The irony is that in the place where man meets God, Jesus is now saying, “I am the place where man meets God. Come to Me. If you want to be right with God, come to Me. The way is open.” And the question is how do we respond? How do you respond? Have you repented? Have you looked to Christ in faith? If you have not, why have you not? Why would you stand listening to One who can meet all of your needs, satisfy every thirst that you have, satisfy every need of your heart, and who can illuminate your life and change everything, why would you say no to Him? Today is the day of salvation. Don't let another day pass without coming to Jesus.

Let's go to Him in prayer...

*Our Father, we marvel at the glory that You have made known in Your word, the glory that is who You are, that You dwell in unapproachable light, it says. You are Light, and yet because of Christ, You have made it where we can come and sit at Your feet. We can know the Light of life. We can have it. Father, we pray for those that are here today that have not come to You, who may have heard a lot about Jesus, and may even intellectually have accepted these things, but have not given themselves to Christ. May today You grant them grace to truly place their faith, their trust, in Jesus Christ personally, not theoretically, but in a real and experiential way.*

*Father, we're thankful that You're able to save to the uttermost the one whose hope is in Your Son. No matter how dark our sins are, He is mighty to save. We pray that You would help anyone who is looking at their own misery, and their own darkness, and is so consumed with that, that they think there's no hope for me, to stop looking at themselves, and to stop looking at how dark things are, and to start looking at the Light of Christ. For when we see Him, we see the beauty and radiance, the uniqueness and supremacy of the Living God who is able to speak light into our lives.*

Father, we pray for those that are here that have repented and believed, and those of us who know Christ, that we would glory more and more in Jesus, and that we would follow Him more closely, that we would not be forgetful and wander, but that we would keep our eyes more and more fixed to the radiance of Your glory. We pray that You would be pleased, Lord, in what happens in every heart, and we pray this in Jesus' Name, Amen.

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