



## I AM THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD.

“IF ANYONE THIRSTS, LET HIM COME TO ME AND DRINK. WHOEVER BELIEVES IN ME, AS THE SCRIPTURE HAS SAID, ‘OUT OF HIS HEART WILL FLOW RIVERS OF LIVING WATER.’... I AM THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD. WHOEVER FOLLOWS ME WILL NOT WALK IN DARKNESS, BUT WILL HAVE THE LIGHT OF LIFE.”

**JOHN 7:37-38; 8:12**

### BIG IDEA

Follow Jesus and experience the light.

#### I AM.

In Exodus 3, God’s people were in trouble. They were slaves in Egypt, and things were getting worse for them. There was one person who could help—Moses. He was a Jew who grew up in the palace of the King, but fled Egypt after killing an Egyptian slave driver. While he was out in the desert, God speaks to him and told him to go back to Egypt and tell Pharaoh to let his people go. Moses has an understandable question:

**Exodus 3:13-14** - “If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has send me to you,’ and they ask me, ‘What is his name?’ what shall I say to them?’ 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.’”

The name of God, Yahweh, was so sacred to the Jewish people that they would not speak it and would not even spell it fully. Even today, modern Jews will only partially write it, shortening it to YHWH. The name itself has several implications. It meant that God was declaring himself to be the self-existing creator and sustainer of all things, an active and personal God, who is faithful and unchanging.

I don’t think that I can adequately describe the shock that would have taken place when Jesus threw down the “I am” phrase. When you read Jesus saying the words, “I am” you are reading Jesus’ claim to be Yahweh’s presence on Earth. It is Jesus declaring himself to be the self-existing creator and sustainer of all things, an active and personal God, who is faithful and unchanging.

In the book of John, Jesus makes seven “I am” statements:

- I am the bread of life (6:35)
- **I am the light of the world (8:12)**
- I am the door (10:7)
- I am the good shepherd (10:11)
- I am the resurrection and the life (11:25)
- I am the way, and the truth, and the life (14:6)
- I am the true vine (15:1, 5)

#### THE FEAST OF BOOTHS.

1. Celebration of the Lord’s provision during harvest.
2. Remembered how the Lord provided for them during their wilderness wanderings.

**Deuteronomy 2:7** - “For the Lord your God has blessed you in all the work of your hands. He knows your going through this great wilderness. These forty years the Lord your God has been with you. **You have lacked nothing.**”

More specifically, they remembered the Lord’s provision of water and direction for his people.

**Nehemiah 9:19-21** - “You in your great mercies did not forsake [the Israelites] in the wilderness. The pillar of cloud to lead them in the way did not depart from them by day, nor the pillar of fire by night to light for them the way by which they should go. You gave your good Spirit to instruct them and did not withhold your manna from their mouth and gave them water for their thirst. Forty years you sustained them in the wilderness, and they lacked nothing.”

To remember their history, they would relive their history. In a sense, they would act it out again so that they would never forget how God provided for them.

During the festival, the people of Israel would live in temporary homes built in the same style that they made their homes in the wilderness. Every day for a week, they would hold a water ceremony. During this ceremony, they would draw water from a place called the Pool of Siloam and carry it back to the festival where they would sing thanks to God all together. Specifically, they would sing Psalms 113-118 about the Lord's salvation from them. Then they would sing these words from Isaiah 12:3 over themselves.

**Isaiah 12:3** – “With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation.”

This water ceremony was meant to remind the Israelites of the way the Lord had kept them safe from death by thirst in the wilderness. It reminded them that **Yahweh provides refreshment and satisfies his people.**

They would also remember the way the Lord had led them by a pillar of fire at night by lighting a section of the tabernacle with an overabundance of candelabras. According to historians, this would have been a tremendous sight. Remember, there were no street lights back then. It was dark, very dark. But historians tell us that during the festival of booths. Ancient historians “describe it as a stunning vision, like a diamond in the midst of the city of Jerusalem... every night [the candles] were lit, the temple became a flashing diamond”<sup>1</sup> as a symbol of the pillar of fire. And during this portion, the Israelites would recite the words of Isaiah 42:6 to themselves:

**Isaiah 42:6** – “I will give you as a covenant for the people, a light for the nations.”

These lights would remind the people of Israel **that those who follow the light are safe from darkness, that life is secured by following the light.**

**Illustration:** This whole thing may sound odd, but we do similar things. We do things to jog our memory and remember certain things that are important to us.

- Christmas traditions to help remember the nostalgia of the way it was as a kid. I always watch *It's a Wonderful life*, not because it's my favorite movie, but because it reminds me of being a kid and watching it with my dad. I recreate my memory every year because I don't want to forget it.
- High school reunions give people with common experiences/histories the opportunity to get together and remember.
- We eat certain foods, like certain colognes or perfume scents, or even wear certain clothes as an act of remembrance.

That's what is happening at the Feast of Booths, except there's another layer to it here. They weren't just remembering; they were hoping, waiting, and praying that this year the Messiah would come! They prayed that God would send one who would provide for them today the same way He had provided for them in the wilderness. **They prayed that a Messiah would come who would provide water to satisfy their thirst, and they prayed that God would send them one who would lead them like a pillar of fire to freedom and prosperity.**

This is Jesus' “Hello World.” moment.

Jesus takes this opportunity at the Feast of Booths to reveal his glory to the crowds as a whole. It really is his ministry made public for the first time. It had obviously been increasing in size—he'd come a long way from turning water to wine at wedding party in Labelle—but this was something different. What he said at the Festival of Booths marked the beginning of Jesus turning the world upside down. And he did it by making some super bold statements.

**FOLLOW ME.**

**1.** If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. (7:37-38)

**John 7:37-38** – “Now on the last day, the great *day* of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, “If

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<sup>1</sup> John MacArthur. “I Am the Light of the World.” *Grace to You*, 2 March 2014, Retrieved from <https://www.gty.org/library/sermons-library/43-44/i-am-the-light-of-the-world>.

anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, 'From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.'"

Jesus takes this opportunity, on the last day of the Water Ceremony-at the culmination of ceremony-to make the astounding claim that just as refreshment and satisfaction were found in the water in the wilderness, so too are true refreshment and satisfaction found in him!

Not only is his promise refreshing, but so is the sweetness of his call:

- **If anyone is thirsty** = desiring satisfaction/experiencing lack
- **let him come to Me and drink** = experience Christ through faith and repentance
- **From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water** = Jesus satisfies and then some!
  - Jesus gives us the Holy Spirit to go out and share living water with others.

Having experienced this, we can say like the Israelites, "With joy I draw water from the wells of salvation!"

But we tend to turn elsewhere...

**Q:** Why do we tend to go elsewhere?

**Q:** Where else do you have a tendency to turn for satisfaction?

## 2. I Am the Light of the World. (8:12)

**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 the midst of the light of the Festival of Booths, with the city shining like a diamond-maybe as the candles were burning out and the people were beginning to see that though the light was nice, it wasn't everlasting-Jesus speaks up and declares his deity! "I am the light of the world." In the midst of people crying out to God in prayer, asking for a Messiah to come and lead them to freedom and bondage, Jesus stands up and says, "I am he! If you follow me, you will never walk in the darkness."

But just how good is Jesus? We understand the beauty of light best when it's contrasted with darkness. So what is the darkness?

- Brokenness
- Sadness
- Pain
- Death
- Hurt
- Ignorance

What is Light?

- Holiness
- Peace
- Life
- God's presence

"The light, of course, is a magnificent metaphor. Light is the active power that dispels darkness. And Jesus Christ is the light of truth that dispels the darkness of falsehood. Jesus Christ is the light of wisdom that dispels the darkness of ignorance. Jesus Christ is the light of holiness that dispels the darkness of impurity. Jesus Christ is the light of joy that dispels the darkness of sorrow. Jesus Christ is the light of life that dispels the darkness of death."<sup>2</sup> - **John MacArthur**

How can I experience the light? Follow Jesus.

- **Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness** = continual following/wholehearted discipleship
- **but will have the light of life** = a wholeness from Jesus that must be experienced

## AIM FOR THE HEART.

1. To the one who is searching for satisfaction, drink Jesus.
2. To the one who is stuck in the darkness, follow Jesus.
3. To the one who is satisfied and in the light, bring others along. .

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<sup>2</sup> John MacArthur. "I Am the Light of the World." *Grace to You*, 2 March 2014, Retrieved from <https://www.gty.org/library/sermons-library/43-44/i-am-the-light-of-the-world>.