

MAN'S NEED: THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD JOHN 8:12–20

Introduction

Man has great need. He is not always aware of it, but the need is still there. Man is in darkness.

=> He cannot see into the future nor into the next world. He cannot see God, who He is and what He is like.

=> He cannot see the real meaning, significance and purpose of life.

=> He cannot grasp perfect knowledge nor assurance of eternal life.

Therefore, man's great need is to see "the Light of the world."

I. Jesus made a great claim and promise (vv. 12-13).

II. Proof 1: Jesus' great knowledge of His origin and destiny (vv. 14).

III. Proof 2: Man's incompetence and inability to know Christ's origin and destiny (vv. 14-15).

IV. Proof 3: Jesus judges not by appearance but in the righteousness and justice of God (v. 16).

V. Proof 4: The law's testimony (vv. 17-18).

VI. Proof 5: The Father's presence within (v. 19).

VII. The tragic conclusion: Jesus was rejected in the temple (v. 20).

I. John 08:12–13 Jesus' Claim and Promise

Jesus made a great claim and promise.

1. The great claim was, "I am the Light of the world" (See *Light*, Jn. 8:12.) Note that He made the great claim of deity: "I Am." The Lord's claim to divinity was emphatic. The claim was the very first thing He said in this passage (See "*It is I*," Jn. 6:20).

2. The great promise was twofold: "Whoever follows me..."

- will never walk in darkness." (See *Darkness*, Jn. 8:12.)
- will have the light of life."

Note two critical points.

a. A man does not possess light, not within himself, not by nature. Men are in darkness by nature.

b. A man is delivered "out of darkness" by following Jesus Christ. Note the word "follows" is continuous action. A man must continue to follow in order to receive light.

Col 1:14-15 *In whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.*

3. Jesus used the term “*light of life*.” A man exists in darkness until He follows Christ. The meaning, purpose, and significance of life cannot be seen and known apart from following Christ. It is Christ who throws light upon life, revealing what life really is.
4. The religionists (Pharisees) objected to the claim of Jesus. They knew exactly what He was claiming: that He was the Messiah and that He alone could give light to the world. In their minds, only God could give light to the world. Note their charge against Him: He alone was bearing witness to His claim. He had no other witnesses; therefore, His claim was false.

A man's testimony is unacceptable and suspicious. The witness of a man has to be supported by other witnesses, and at least two witnesses are required. This is one of the most fundamental laws of society throughout the world. (See Deu. 17:6; 19:5; Mt. 18:6 ; 2 Cor 13:1; 1 Tim 5:19).

JOHN 06: 20 “IT IS I” (EIMI)

But he said to them, “It is I; don't be afraid” John 06:20

This is one word in the Greek, *eimi*, which is simply “I AM” (Jn. 18:6). Jesus was saying, “I AM” has come — fear not. He was reminding the disciples who He was: the Son of God Himself. He possessed all power; therefore, there was no need to fear. This was the same message that God gave to Moses at the burning bush, “I AM WHO I AM” (Exo. 3:13-15, esp. 14). It was the same message that Jesus used as a defence against the religionists, “Before Abraham was born, I am” (Jn. 8:58). It is the same message that Col. 1:15-17 claims for Him; and it is the same message that is proclaimed by the book of *Revelation*, He “who is and was and is to come” (Rev. 1:4, 8; 11:17; 16:5).

There are several “I Am's” claimed by Christ.

- => I Am the Messiah (Jn. 4:26).
- => I Am (It is I); don't be afraid (Jn. 6:20).
- => I Am the Bread of Life (Jn. 6:35).
- => I Am from Above (Jn. 8:23).
- => I Am the Light of the World (Jn. 8:12; 9:5; 12:46).
- => I Am before Abraham was born, I am (eternal) (Jn. 8:58).
- => I Am the Gate or Door (Jn. 10:7).
- => I Am the Good Shepherd (Jn. 10:14).
- => I Am the God's Son (Jn. 10:36).

- => I Am the Resurrection and Life (Jn. 11:25).
- => I Am the Lord and Teacher (Jn. 13:13).
- => I Am the Way, the Truth and the Life (Jn. 14:6).
- => I Am the True Vine (Jn. 15:1).
- => I Am the Alpha and the Omega (Rev. 1:8).
- => I Am the First and the Last (Rev. 1:17). □

JOHN 08:12 JESUS THE LIGHT

*When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "I am the Light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." **John 08:12***

Jesus is said to be the *Light of men* (Jn. 1:4) and the *Light of the world* (Jn. 8:12; 9:5; 12:46). It is possible for the Light, Jesus Himself, to be *in men* (Jn. 11:10; see Col. 1:27) and for men to become children of Light (Jn. 12:34-36).

Apparently, Jesus used the word *light* often. John uses the word twenty-four times. What is meant by calling Jesus the Light?

1. Jesus, the Light, is light by nature. Light is what He is within Himself, within His being. His nature, His essence, His character. Scripture says...
 - that "God is Light" (1 Jn. 1:5);
 - that Jesus is "the image of the invisible God" (Col. 1:15);
 - therefore, "Jesus is Light." He is "the Light of the world."
2. Jesus, the Light, tells us that He is holy, righteous and pure. Light is the symbol of purity and holiness. Light means the absence of darkness and blindness; it has no spots of darkness or blackness, nor of sin and shame.
3. Jesus, the Light, reveals. His light shows clearly the nature, the meaning, and the destiny of all things. His light shines in, spots, opens up, identifies, illuminates, and shows things as they really are. The light of Jesus Christ shows the truth about the world and man and God. The light of Jesus Christ reveals that He loves and cares for man and wants man to love and care for Him.
4. Jesus, the Light, guides. His light allows a man to walk out of darkness. Man no longer has to grope, grasp, and stumble about trying to find his way through life. The path of life can now be clearly seen.
5. Jesus, the Light, does away with darkness and with chaos. His light routs, wipes out, strips away, and erases the darkness. The empty chaos of creation was routed

by the light given by God (Gen. 1:3). Jesus Christ is the Light that can save man from chaos (Jn. 14:1, 17; 12:46; 16:33).

Jesus proclaimed Himself to be the Light of the world at the great Feast of Tabernacles (Jn. 7:2). The very first ceremony of the Feast holds great significance for Jesus' claim. It was called "The Illumination of the Temple" and was held in the Court of the Women. The centre of the Court was surrounded by large sections of stadium-like seats. In the open space of the Court sat four huge candelabra. When darkness fell the candelabra were lit, and the elders danced and led the people in singing psalms before the Lord all night. The brilliance and glow from the burning flames of the huge candelabra were said to be so bright that the light could be seen throughout the whole city. It was against this background that Jesus cried out, "I am the Light of the world." □

JOHN 08: 12 DARKNESS (SKOTOS, SKOTIA)

The word is used in Scripture to describe both the state and the works of man. Darkness is very real in Scripture.

1. The darkness refers to the world of the natural man who does not know Jesus Christ (Jn. 8:12). The natural man walks in ignorance...
 - of Jesus Christ
 - of God as revealed by Jesus Christ
 - of the real purpose and destiny of life as shown by Jesus Christ

The natural man stumbles and gropes about in this world. He knows nothing other than the things of this world as he sees them. His only hope is the hope of living a long life before death overtakes him. He walks in darkness, ignorant of real life now and hereafter (see Jn. 12:35, 46).

2. The darkness symbolizes unpreparedness and unwatchfulness. It symbolizes the time when evil occurs (1 Th. 5:4-8).
3. The darkness is loved by men. Sinful men do their evil deeds under the cover of darkness. Men therefore hate the light because the light uncovers their evil behaviour (Jn. 3:19-20).
4. The darkness is hostile to light. □

II. *John 08:14 Jesus' Knowledge of His Origin and Destiny*

The first proof of Jesus' claim is His great knowledge. He knew His origin and destiny. He declared, "I am the Light of the world," and He declared that His witness was enough. He said, "My testimony is valid [true]" (alethes).

=> It is not false. => It is not a lie. => It is not a deceptive claim.

=> It is not the claim of an egomaniac setting Himself up as a god.

=> It is not the claim of a man who is out to shatter men's dreams.

=> It is not the claim of a man who is set on destroying other men.

The witness of Jesus Christ was valid; it was true, and His witness was sufficient evidence for a very strong reason. Jesus knew His origin and destiny, where He had come from and where He was going. He was “*out of*” heaven, “*out of*” the spiritual dimension of being, and He was to return to heaven.

Man could not tell where Jesus had come from nor where He was going. Why? For a very simple reason: man cannot penetrate nor see the spiritual world. Physical eyes are blind to the world of the Spirit (see Jn. 1:18). If there is to be communication with the spiritual dimension, the spiritual world must come into this world, into the physical dimension. This is exactly what has happened; this is just what Jesus was saying. He had come from heaven, from the spiritual dimension of being. He had been an eyewitness of heaven. He had been in the very presence of God Himself, and God had sent Him from heaven into this world to declare the glorious message of salvation:

John 8:12 *When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”*

John 3:11 *“I tell you the truth, we speak of what we know, and we testify to what we have seen, but still you people do not accept our testimony.”*

John 8:14 *Jesus answered, “Even if I testify on my own behalf, my testimony is valid, for I know where I came from and where I am going. But you have no idea where I come from or where I am going.”*

John 18:37 *“You are a king, then!” said Pilate. Jesus answered, “You are right in saying I am a king. In fact, for this reason I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me.”*

Rev 1:5 *And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood.*

III. John 08:14–15 Man's Inability to Know Jesus' Origin and Destiny

The second proof of Jesus' claim is man's incompetence. Again, this is because of the difference between the two worlds, the difference between the physical and spiritual worlds or dimensions of being.

Men judge by human standards, that is, by appearance. Men judge by what they see and know. The only evidence they have is what they see in their world, the world of the physical. However, if men are to judge Jesus' claim, they cannot do it on the basis of

physical evidence. Why? Because Jesus is not of this world. Men have to judge Him by faith. They either accept His testimony or reject it.

John 7:24 Stop judging by mere appearances, and make a right judgment.

IV. John 08:16 Judgement of Jesus Christ is Done in God's Presence

Jesus' judgment was true. He did not judge by human standards — not by appearance — but by God's presence. This was a phenomenal claim. Jesus was saying that He was not alone. He did not speak nor act alone. The Father was *with Him* and the Father *sent Him*; therefore, what He claimed and did was of the Father. Note two points.

1. Jesus said that what He claimed was *right, true (alethes)*...
 - it was not false
 - it was not a lie
 - it was not a deceptive claim
2. Jesus called God "Father" and referred to His mission: "the Father who sent me." He had a Father-Son relationship with God. He knew God in a very personal and intimate way as "Father." He *had come* from the presence and the household of His Father, that is, from heaven or from the spiritual world and dimension of being. Therefore, He *alone* could know all the facts. He had come, being *sent* by the Father to proclaim the glorious message of salvation: "I am the Light of the world: whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life" (Jn. 8:12).

John 10:30 "I and the Father are one."

John 10:37-38 "Do not believe me unless I do what my Father does. But if I do it, even though you do not believe me, believe the miracles, that you may know and understand that the Father is in me, and I in the Father."

John 14:10 "Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you are not just my own. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work."

John 17:11 I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name — the name you gave me — so that they may be one as we are one. (see Jn.17:22)

V. John 08: 17—18 Testimony According to the Law

The third proof of Jesus' claim is the law's testimony. Jesus appealed to the law of man. The law required two witnesses to validate a claim (Dut. 19:15). Jesus met the demand of the law, for He was one witness, and "the Father who sent" Him was the second witness.

Now note two clear facts that man should see.

1. Jesus' testimony was valid, true. It is perfectly clear that He spoke and acted only for God. Everything He said and did was to glorify God and to lead men to God: to worship and praise and to honour and serve God. It is also clear that He spoke and

acted only for men. Everything He said and did was to save men, to awaken them and to show them compassion and mercy, meeting their desperate needs.

Very simply, everything Jesus said and did bore witness that His claim was true, that He was *of God* and *sent from God* to be “the Light of the world.”

John 3:34 “For the one whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God gives the Spirit without limit.” (see Jn 7.29)

John 8:42 Jesus said to them, “If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and now am here. I have not come on my own; but he sent me.”

John 14:24 “He who does not love me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me.”

John 17:8 “For I gave them the words you gave me and they accepted them. They knew with certainty that I came from you, and they believed that you sent me.”

2. God's testimony was valid, true. It is perfectly clear that God acted in and through Jesus. The life, the words, and the works of Jesus demonstrated God's presence and power. The presence and power of God were in and upon Christ “without limit” (Jn. 3:34). There is no other sensible explanation. “The Father who sent Him” bore clear, indisputable testimony that He is “the Light of the world.”

Mat 3:17 And a voice from heaven said, “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.”

Mat 17:5 While he was still speaking, a bright cloud enveloped them, and a voice from the cloud said, “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!”

John 5:32 “There is another who testifies in my favour, and I know that his testimony about me is valid.”

John 5:37 “And the Father who sent me has himself testified concerning me. You have never heard his voice nor seen his form.”

1 John 5:9-10 We accept man's testimony, but God's testimony is greater because it is the testimony of God, which he has given about his Son. Anyone who believes in the Son of God has this testimony in his heart. Anyone who does not believe God has made him out to be a liar, because he has not believed the testimony God has given about his Son.

VI. **John 08:19** *The Father's Presence*

The fourth proof of Jesus' claim was the Father's presence *within Him*. The religionists mocked Jesus. They told Him to present His Father: “Go get Him and bring Him, so He can testify of your claims.” Note how they proved Jesus' words: they judged by the human standards, by sight and appearance. They wanted physical evidence. (Of course

they had physical evidence in Christ Himself and in the working of God's power through Him, but obstinate unbelief blinded them.)

Jesus answered three things to *mocking unbelief*.

1. The unbeliever *does not know Him*. He was Man standing before them, and they could see and know Him as Man, but He was also the Son of God. If they rejected His claim and refused to accept Him as Lord, they naturally did not know Him. The only way to know Jesus is to follow Him as Lord, as "the Light of the world." (Note: no person knows any other person until he spends time with that individual — getting to know him, associating with him, and learning all about him.)

John 4:10 *Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water."*

John 8:19 *Then they asked him, "Where is your father?" "You do not know me or my Father," Jesus replied. "If you knew me, you would know my Father also."*

John 9:30 *The man answered, "Now that is remarkable! You don't know where he comes from, yet he opened my eyes."*

John 14:9 *Jesus answered: "Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'?"*

Acts 13:27 *The people of Jerusalem and their rulers did not recognize Jesus, yet in condemning him they fulfilled the words of the prophets that are read every Sabbath.*

2. The unbeliever *does not know God*. "No one has ever seen God" (Jn. 1:18). The only conceivable way a man can ever know God is for God to reveal Himself: God must come from the heavenly world, the spiritual dimension of being, and enter this world, revealing the truth about Himself to man. But note: *if God does come* and a man does not accept and believe Him, then that man will never get to know God.

John 1:18 *No one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, who is at the Father's side, has made him known.*

John 5:37 *"And the Father who sent me has himself testified concerning me. You have never heard his voice nor seen his form."*

Col 1:15 *He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.*

1 Tim 1:17 *Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.*

1 Tim 6:16 *Who alone is immortal and who lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or can see. To him be honour and might forever. Amen.*

John 15:21 *"They will treat you this way because of my name, for they do not know the One who sent me."*

John 16:3 *“They will do such things because they have not known the Father or me.”*

Jer 4:22 *“My people are fools; they do not know me. They are senseless children; they have no understanding. They are skilled in doing evil; they know not how to do good.”*

Jer 8:7 *Even the stork in the sky knows her appointed seasons, and the dove, the swift and the thrush observe the time of their migration. But my people do not know the requirements of the Lord.*

Jer 9:3 *“They make ready their tongue like a bow, to shoot lies; it is not by truth that they triumph in the land. They go from one sin to another; they do not acknowledge me,” declares the Lord.*

John 1:18 *“No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.”*

3. God is in Christ. If a man knows Christ, He knows the Father *also*. This is a phenomenal claim. Christ said that He was the revelation of God; He was “God incarnate” in human flesh.

a. He was the express “image of the invisible God” (Col. 1:15) (see Heb. 1:3). Therefore, the only way to know God is to know Christ. (Jn. 14:6.) The way to God is through Jesus Christ Himself. This is a critical verse, for Jesus said that no man could reach God unless he approached God through Jesus Himself. Jesus made three phenomenal claims: (1) I am the Way. (2) I am the Truth. (3) I am the Life.

Col 1:6 *That has come to you. All over the world this gospel is bearing fruit and growing, just as it has been doing among you since the day you heard it and understood God's grace in all its truth.*

Col 2:9 *For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form.*

John 14:6 *Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”*

b. He is the One who instructs men in the truth of God.

VII. John 08:20 Response of the Religionists

The great tragedy was that Jesus was rejected in the temple. The religionists wanted nothing to do with Him. They rejected and opposed Him, desiring to get rid of Him. And note: it was in the temple where He was rejected, yet they could not destroy Him. “His time” had not come. God protected Him.

Thought 1. How often this scene of unbelief among religionists is repeated in the church. Down through the centuries many religionists have wanted nothing to do with Christ, choosing self over Him.

Mat 7:21 *“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.*

Mark 7:6 *He replied, "Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you hypocrites; as it is written: 'These people honour me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me.'"*

Titus 1:16 *They claim to know God, but by their actions they deny him. They are detestable, disobedient and unfit for doing anything good.*

2 Tim 3:5 *Having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with them. ■*