



DATE: November 8, 2009

TEXT: John 8: 12-30

TITLE: John XXII: The Light of the World

We continue to see our lord Jesus this morning at the Feast of the Tabernacles. As I have said in the past this was the most celebratory feast in Israel. Two weeks ago we saw the daily parade that took place during the water festival. As the water was entering Jerusalem Jesus declared **“If anyone is thirsty let him come to me to drink.”** This morning we see another act of celebration. This is described in the book The Feasts of Israel by Victor Bukbazen.....

Another central feature of the Feast of Tabernacles was the illumination of the Temple. The festive pilgrims came to the Temple, bearing lights and torches, while in the Temple itself the golden candlesticks were lighted, transforming the Temple into one brilliant focus of light which illuminated most of Jerusalem and surroundings.

When this took place there was a dance of celebration by the Priests and the entire city erupted in celebration into the night. In this setting Jesus stood.... probably at the steps of the Temple and in the midst of this ceremony of light he proclaimed... **“I am the light of the world.”**

I said before the book of John is based around the 7 “I Am” saying. Earlier we heard Jesus proclaims that he is the “bread of the world.” This is the second “I am” saying. I will share 4

lessons from our text.

Lesson # 1 Jesus is the light of the World. *John 8:12* Jesus says “**I am the Light of the world.**” The pharisees immediately knew what he was saying. They knew he was claiming divinity. Light is the symbol for God. This is clear in scripture...

Isaiah 60: 19 states... **The sun will no more be your light by day,
nor will the brightness of the moon shine on you,
for the LORD will be your everlasting light,
and your God will be your glory.**

Job 29:3 states **"How I long for the months gone by,
for the days when God watched over me,
3 when his lamp shone upon my head
and by his light I walked through darkness!**

And Micah 7:8 states... **7 But as for me, I watch in hope for the LORD,
I wait for God my Savior;
my God will hear me.
8 Do not gloat over me, my enemy!
Though I have fallen, I will rise.
Though I sit in darkness,
the LORD will be my light.**

The Pharisees were aware of these truths. God is Light. Jesus is saying “I am Light.... I am God.”

Please, please, please do not compromise the words of Jesus. You can reject his words... you can accept his words.... but please do not twist his words. He is God. He is the Light of the

World. He is Yahweh.

Lesson # 2 Jesus contrasts His light with a dark world. *John 8:12 states...*

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 8: 23-24

23But he continued, "You are from below; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world. 24I told you that you would die in your sins; if you do not believe that I am the one I claim to be, you will indeed die in your sins."

I believe one of the most difficult aspects of reading the Bible is this... the Bible is rarely politically correct. It is blunt. From Genesis to Revelation it speaks the truth in very harsh, definitive terms. Jesus is blunt. He is saying "I am from heaven... you are not... if you do not believe in me you will die.... you will be eternally separated from God." That is the biblical definition of death.... separation from God.

When I was in 5th grade my parents moved. They moved about 5 or 6 blocks into a much larger home. All of my friends lived in the old neighborhood... and they were close enough so I kept all my friends. But I remember how much I hated walking home at night. My new street was an old neighborhood with very old trees lining the street. There were a few street lights...

but most of the street was in the shadows of the trees. I remember night after night walking home from my friends wondering who was hiding behind the next tree in the shadows. As the wind blew the trees branches swayed and they cast weird moving shadows as I walked down the street. I remember how scared I was many, many nights. I knew intellectually that the fear was almost certainly irrational... it was a safe neighborhood... but I still was afraid.

Darkness is a place of fear. Darkness is a place of evil. Darkness is a place of sin. Jesus is saying the world is a place of darkness.

As I have said before... I am primarily an introvert. I much prefer watching people to talking to people. When I go to the Mall with Kim she will go from store to store to do her shopping.. And I will often find a bench in the hallway and just watch people. In some ways it can be very sad. You see parents who are battling with their children. You see teens who are just hanging on each other and you wonder what they do when they are not in public. Upon occasion you see men who are possibly homeless or close to homeless. And I could go on and on and on.

It does not take much observation of our society to see that many, many people are living in

darkness.

And let us never, never kid ourselves... darkness is eternal. If you chose to ignore the light... Jesus will never force a person to live in the light... on this earth or eternally. This is not my pronouncement. This is not my judgement... these are the words of Jesus. Do you think he was kidding when he talked to the Pharisees. Live in the light. Jesus is the light.

Lesson # 3 Jesus talks about the requirements of walking in the light. Again *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."

What is the requirement to walk in the Light? Follow Jesus. In Greek the word "follow" is defined this way... "to follow is to cleave to, to conform to." It is the word used when a slave follows his master. We are called to cleave to.. To conform to our Lord Jesus.

Allow me to, probably once again, tell the story of my spelunking experience. A number of years ago I took my Youth Group to a mission trip to the mountains of Tennessee. We were working at a very poor Christian camp. After about a week of work the Director of the camp

came and said... “You need a few hours off.... I’ll take you to a cave. This was a cave that was not a public cave. Very few people know of this cave. We went walking up a mountain in the woods looking for a mouth of a cave. After a few minutes the director stopped us and we were looking down at a hole in the ground... maybe 5 to 6 feet round. He said “here it is.” We looked at him and at each other.... it’s a hole in the ground. He then passed out the spelunking helmets... the ones with the lights on them.... he tied a rope to a tree and showed us how to put on the harness and the carabineers. Because I was the leader he attached me to the rope and told me to jump into the hole. You could not see the bottom. I asked... “The rope is long enough is it not?” He assured me it was. I had to be “cool” so I backed into the hole repelling down. After two or three feet there was nothing for my feet to touch... I was dangling in mid air. I slowly lowered myself down the rope trusting that the rope was long enough. Sure enough after about 30 to 40 yards my back hit the bottom of the hole. I unhooked myself and waited as there to the group climbed down. The Director then pointed to a horizontal cave. It was about 3 feet wide..... just enough to crawl through. I crawled through this cave for about 50 yards.... as it goes so narrow in

some places you had to squeeze through the opening.... finally, what seemed forever.. The cave opened up into a huge cavern with stalags and stalactites all over the place. When we were all gathered the Director had us turn off our head lamps. Complete and total darkness. Absolutely no light. The Director then lit a match... and by the light read this text from the bible. “Jesus said, I am the light of the world.” That one match illuminated the entire cave.

Allow me to finish the story. We then had to get out of the cave. Sliding down the rope was easy... getting back up... not so easy. The Director showed us these contraptions... a rope with two loops. The upper loop had a hand released clamp in it. You put your hands and feet in this device and release... slide up... clamp..... release other hand... slide up... clamp... slowly making your way up the rope. I'll never forget the words of the director as I stared up the rope... “never release both clamps at the same time... always stay connected to the rope.” Good advice.

Jesus is the light of the world. By following him we are in the light. Jesus is our rope.

We must always stay connected to him. At all times... in every situation let us always follow our

Lord.

I conclude with these words of Jesus

*John 12:36 Jesus says... **Put your trust in the light while you have it, so that you may become sons of light.***"

*In Matthew 5:14 Jesus says... **You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden***

Jesus is the light of the world.... but he transfers that light to you and to me. We become the lights of the world. The world is a dark place. Some times the world is as dark as that cave.... almost a total absence of light..... but we, as Christians, are the match. We light up the world. We show the truth... we show the path... we show Jesus Christ.

AMEN