

## I AM THE LIGHT

### JOHN 8:12 TO 20

This week we take a break from 'Emmaus Rewind'. At both the 9:00 and 11:00 service we looked at one the great statements that Jesus made about himself. It follows on from another claim in John 7:37 & 38 where Jesus talks of himself as being the place to come if anyone is thirsty. He is the source of both water and light – two key elements of human survival.

The Feast of Tabernacles (see 7:37) occurred in late autumn and celebrated the harvest of trees and vines. In addition to the water ceremonies, which recalled the need for water in a dry autumn, the calendar marked the end of the long hot summer days. There was often a light ceremony as part of the Feast of Tabernacles – when the length of day equalled the length of night (i.e. the autumn equinox). So, both statements were made at a time when water and light were celebrated. The phrase 'when Jesus spoke again' (8:12) connects the two statements on water and light together.

1. What was Jesus saying when he claimed to be the light of the world?  
What needed light and what kind of light was it?

The context for both ceremonies is Zechariah 14 where the prophet speaks of abundant water flowing from Jerusalem (14:8). Also, that day 'will be a unique day without daytime or nighttime, a day known to the Lord. When evening comes, there will be light' (14:7). The festival was known for its lights – at the end of the feast there was a ceremony to extinguish the lights.

2. Jesus claimed that his followers would 'never walk in darkness'. They will 'have the light of life'.  
How does this match up to our own experience?  
Do we always feel we are walking in the light?  
Does the light 'go out' when we hit dark times?  
So, what does it mean to walk in the light?

The Pharisees challenged Jesus. They bring up Jesus' own words. The law of Moses required multiple witnesses but the Pharisees have missed the point. Jesus is only saying what His Father wants him to say so Jesus is the witness of His Father's word. Jesus appeals to the truth of his mission – he knows where he has come from and where he is going. (v14)

3. Why would the Pharisees have been threatened by Jesus' words? He told them they didn't have a clue about where he was from and where he was going.  
Jesus had complete clarity about his origin, his purpose and his destination. How did this pressurise the Pharisees who were seen as the guardians of the truth?

Jesus then told them about their lack of spirituality – they were judging him by human standards. They simply didn't understand that, when Jesus spoke his words came with the authority of his father. They are not looking or listening for God's word in their culture and society – they are simply judging Jesus as an ordinary man.

4. When we listen to Jesus' words do we give them the authority they deserve?  
Are we ever in danger of saying – I know they are the words of Jesus but I disagree?  
Do we ever say, those sayings only work in the first century – they don't fit in the 21<sup>st</sup> century?  
Think of some of the sayings of Jesus that would ruffle a few feathers today.

There are some who say Jesus never claimed to be God's son. But here we see he claimed to speak for his father thus satisfying the OT requirement for witnesses. The Jewish religious culture of the time was in decline. The age of the prophets has long gone – there is no clear voice from God being spoken in the land until Jesus arrives and then the religious leaders reject it.

5. How important is it that God's word is spoken in our land?  
Is that just the role of preachers?  
How do each of us speak God's word into our world?

They clearly don't understand. They are confused about Jesus' father. They fail to recognise that the God whom they have worshipped through their history is standing right in front of them in human form. Here is 'God in a body' but they are looking for political emancipation not a suffering Saviour.

6. In what ways do people today misunderstand the words of God?  
How do people get Jesus wrong?  
How do we deal with people who either believe he was a myth or think that he wasn't the son of God?  
In what ways do we find modern people get Jesus all wrong?