



Jesus said, 'I am... the light of the world'

John 8 v 12 – Leader's version

For an hour study, just do the starred * questions

Check in – ask everyone, including leaders, how they are and how they're feeling about studying the Bible today.

1. What do you remember from the last study we did?

Think back to 'I am... the bread of life' and encourage the group to tell you as much as they can remember.

What does the passage say and mean?

60 minutes

2. **SHOUT-OUT** Why do we need light?

Think about what would happen if there was no light – we'd get lost, fall over, not see each other, there would also be no heat if there was no sunlight so we'd all die etc.

*3. Read John 8 v 12. What do you think Jesus meant?

*Note: He didn't say that He is a light of the world, He said He is **the** light of the world and that, without Him, we are in darkness.*

This verse may be easier to understand in the NLT translation than NIV – 'Jesus spoke to the people once more and said, "I am the light of the world. If you follow me, you won't have to walk in darkness, because you will have the light that leads to life."'

4. Jesus said this during the Feast of Tabernacles, when Jerusalem was lit up by great candles which could be seen across the city. At this Feast the people looked back to when their ancestors lived in the desert. Read Exodus 13 v 21-22 to find out what light they were remembering.

The pillar of cloud and fire was a visible symbol of God's presence that stayed with the people throughout their 40 years in the desert. It showed them which way to go and when to set up camp.

*5. What do these Old Testament prophecies say about light?

- Isaiah 9 v 2 *There will be light for the people who are currently in darkness.*
- Isaiah 42 v 6 *God's servant (v1) will be a light to the Gentiles = a witness for God to the non-Jews.*
- Isaiah 49 v 6 (part of a prophecy about the Christ / Messiah to come) *The Christ will not only be a light for the Jews, but also for the Gentiles; God's salvation will reach the ends of the earth.*
- Psalm 27 v 1 *The LORD is light and salvation.*

*6. Bearing in mind the desert wandering and prophecies, what do you think Jesus' claim to be the light of the world was meant to communicate?

- Pillar of cloud and fire – *One of Jesus' claims to divinity. Jesus is God and He is with us and will lead and guide us.*
- Isaiah 9 v 2 – *Jesus is the rescuer who will bring God's people out of darkness*
- Isaiah 42 v 6 – *Jesus' message was also for the Gentiles (which may not sound much to us, but it was shocking to the Jews, who were generally trying to keep the Gentiles at a distance)*
- Isaiah 49 v 6 – *Jesus is the Christ. Remember it's a Messianic prophecy*
- Psalm 27 v 1 – *Another claim to divinity.*

7. How do you think these kinds of claims went down with Jesus' hearers, and what do you make of them yourself?

At the time, what Jesus said didn't go down well, see John 8 v 12-13. Don't worry about unpacking the Pharisee's objections. Focus your time on finding out what the group make of Jesus' claims.

8. Read John 1 v 4 (part of a description of Jesus). How is the light described?

Jesus is the source and sustainer of all physical life and He is the light in our darkness.

9. Read John 1 v 5 and 8 v 12. How have people responded to 'the light'?

1 v 5 – the light is shining but the darkness hasn't understood it.

8 v 12 – those who follow Jesus are no longer in darkness; they have the light of life. Some people do accept Jesus as their Lord and Saviour.

10. **STICKERS** What do you think the darkness is?

Brainstorm then explain that, in this context, the darkness is whatever is evil and false (Barker et al 1987, p1867 footnotes) or lack of spiritual understanding.

Questions 11-13 are **SELF-DIRECTED QUESTIONS**.

*11. **SDL** Why do people like the darkness so much?

Think about it literally first – why do we go out to party and get drunk at night, not in the daytime? Because we don't want people to see what we're doing? Why are dark alleys dangerous? Light exposes the truth of what's going on in the dark, etc. Then draw the parallel with spiritual / moral darkness.

*12. **SDL** Read John 3 v 19-20. What does Jesus say about how people feel about the darkness?

They love it. The darkness hides them from God and from God's moral character (as far as their own awareness is concerned – God sees us, whether we acknowledge Him or not).

*13. **SDL** Why is the light such a threat? (v20)

Because it exposes whatever is hidden by the darkness, and the knowledge of this causes us to fear being found out if we step into the light.

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Does John 3 v 20 ring true for you?

What do you know about Jesus that will make it safe for you to step into the light?

God already knows our sins – they can actually only be 'exposed' to ourself and to other people, not to God. When our sins are exposed to ourselves, we are forced to admit what we have done, and what effects it has had on other people as well as ourselves, and humbly repent and trust in Jesus' saving death and resurrection. Jesus has died for our sins – He has dealt with them and they no longer have power over us (although they may still have consequences). If we come into the light in repentance and belief, we will be forgiven.

Stepping into the light isn't always easy, but it's worth it.

*14. Read Colossians 1 v 13-14. What has God done for us, and how?

God has made the first move: we can be rescued from the darkness and brought into the Kingdom of God ('light'), through Jesus' death (when we repent and believe).

15. Look again at John 8 v 12. How would you explain Jesus' statement to someone else?

*16. Read Matthew 5 v 14. Who is the light of the world, according to this verse? What do you think this means?

*Jesus says that **we** (His followers) are the light of the world – **His followers** are the ones who shine the light of God's presence, we are the witnesses to other people.*

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Read Ephesians 5 v 8-10. What would living in the light look like in your life?

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If you don't already believe and trust in Jesus, do you feel like you now know what it means to be a Christian and live in the light?

What's stopping you from taking that step of faith?

Don't apply any pressure! Just let them work through the issues, and if there are none, or none that are really convincing barriers, give a gentle challenge to consider surrendering.

Check out – ask everyone, including leaders, how they found the study and if they are safe to go back to the cell.



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