

Lesson 15: “I Am the Light of the World”

**Class Member Reading:** John 7-8

<sup>7</sup>After this Jesus went about in Galilee. He did not wish to go about in Judea because the Jews were looking for an opportunity to kill him (This does not fit the historical context for several reasons, including the fact that the Jews were never seeking to kill Jesus, and the Jews were not considered a separate group while Jesus was alive). <sup>2</sup>Now the Jewish festival of Booths was near. <sup>3</sup>So his brothers said to him, “Leave here and go to Judea so that your disciples also may see the works you are doing; <sup>4</sup>for no one who wants to be widely known acts in secret. If you do these things, show yourself to the world.” <sup>5</sup>(For not even his brothers believed in him. This detail seems to be historical.) <sup>6</sup>Jesus said to them, “My time has not yet come, but your time is always here. <sup>7</sup>The world cannot hate you, but it hates me because I testify against it that its works are evil. <sup>8</sup>Go to the festival yourselves. I am not going to this festival, for my time has not yet fully come.” <sup>9</sup>After saying this, he remained in Galilee. <sup>10</sup>But after his brothers had gone to the festival, then he also went, not publicly but as it were in secret. <sup>11</sup>The Jews were looking for him at the festival and saying, “Where is he?” <sup>12</sup>And there was considerable complaining about him among the crowds. While some were saying, “He is a good man,” others were saying, “No, he is deceiving the crowd.” <sup>13</sup>Yet no one would speak openly about him for fear of the Jews.

<sup>14</sup>About the middle of the festival Jesus went up into the temple and began to teach. <sup>15</sup>The Jews were astonished at it, saying, “How does this man have such learning, when he has never been taught?” <sup>16</sup>Then Jesus answered them, “My teaching is not mine but his who sent me. <sup>17</sup>Anyone who **resolves to do the will of God** will know whether the teaching is from God or whether I am speaking on my own (Knowing by doing is a good philosophy, as laid out so well in Alma 32). <sup>18</sup>Those who speak on their own seek their own glory; but the one who seeks the glory of him who sent him is true, and there is nothing false in him. <sup>19</sup>“Did not Moses give you the law? Yet none of you keeps the law. Why are you looking for an opportunity to kill me?” <sup>20</sup>The crowd answered, “You have a demon! Who is trying to kill you?” <sup>21</sup>Jesus answered them, “I performed one work, and all of you are astonished. <sup>22</sup>Moses gave you circumcision (it is, of course, not from Moses, but from the patriarchs), and you circumcise a man on the sabbath. <sup>23</sup>If a man receives circumcision on the sabbath in order that the law of Moses may not be broken, are you angry with me because I healed a man’s whole body on the sabbath? (Again, Jesus is teaching not to get caught up in the minutiae of religion and forget its purpose, to help and care for each other) <sup>24</sup>Do not judge by appearances, but judge with right judgment.” <sup>25</sup>Now some of the people of Jerusalem were saying, “Is not this the man whom they are trying to kill? <sup>26</sup>And here he is, speaking openly, but they say nothing to him! Can it be that the authorities really know that this is the Messiah? <sup>27</sup>Yet we know where this man is from; but when the Messiah comes, no one will know where he is from.” <sup>28</sup>Then Jesus cried out as he was

teaching in the temple, “You know me, and you know where I am from. I have not come on my own. But the one who sent me is true, and you do not know him. <sup>29</sup>I know him, because I am from him, and he sent me.” <sup>30</sup>Then they tried to arrest him, but no one laid hands on him, because his hour had not yet come. <sup>31</sup>Yet many in the crowd believed in him and were saying, “When the Messiah comes, will he do more signs than this man has done?” <sup>32</sup>The Pharisees heard the crowd muttering such things about him, and the chief priests and Pharisees sent temple police to arrest him. <sup>33</sup>Jesus then said, “I will be with you a little while longer, and then I am going to him who sent me. <sup>34</sup>You will search for me, but you will not find me; and where I am, you cannot come.” <sup>35</sup>The Jews said to one another, “Where does this man intend to go that we will not find him? Does he intend to go to the Dispersion among the Greeks and teach the Greeks? <sup>36</sup>What does he mean by saying, ‘You will search for me and you will not find me’ and ‘Where I am, you cannot come’?”

<sup>37</sup>On the last day of the festival, the great day, while Jesus was standing there, he cried out, “Let anyone who is thirsty come to me, <sup>38</sup>and **let the one who believes in me drink**. As the scripture has said, ‘Out of the believer’s heart shall flow rivers of living water.’”

<sup>39</sup>Now he said this about the **Spirit**, which believers in him were to receive; for as yet there was no Spirit, because Jesus was not yet glorified ([According to the author of John, the Spirit is not active until Jesus sends it after his resurrection. See John 14:16-18](#)).

<sup>40</sup>When they heard these words, some in the crowd said, “This is really the prophet.”

<sup>41</sup>Others said, “This is the Messiah.” But some asked, “Surely the Messiah does not come from Galilee, does he? <sup>42</sup>Has not the scripture said that the Messiah is descended from David and comes from Bethlehem, the village where David lived?” <sup>43</sup>So there was a division in the crowd because of him. <sup>44</sup>Some of them wanted to arrest him, but no one laid hands on him.

<sup>45</sup>Then the temple police went back to the chief priests and Pharisees, who asked them, “Why did you not arrest him?” <sup>46</sup>The police answered, “Never has anyone spoken like this!” <sup>47</sup>Then the Pharisees replied, “Surely you have not been deceived too, have you?

<sup>48</sup>Has any one of the authorities or of the Pharisees believed in him? <sup>49</sup>But this crowd, which does not know the law—they are accursed.” <sup>50</sup>Nicodemus, who had gone to Jesus before, and who was one of them, asked, <sup>51</sup>“Our law does not judge people without first giving them a hearing to find out what they are doing, does it?” <sup>52</sup>They replied, “Surely you are not also from Galilee, are you? Search and you will see that no prophet is to arise from Galilee.” <sup>53</sup>Then each of them went home,

**8**while Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. <sup>2</sup>Early in the morning he came again to the temple. All the people came to him and he sat down and began to teach them. <sup>3</sup>The scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery; and making her stand before all of them, <sup>4</sup>they said to him, “Teacher, this woman was caught in the very act of committing adultery. [Where is the man?](#) <sup>5</sup>Now in the law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?” <sup>6</sup>They said this to test him, so that they might have some charge to bring against him. Jesus bent down and wrote with his finger on the ground. [Inspiring teaching example. Give energy to what deserves it. Timing is](#)

also important. Realizations we come to ourselves, when we condemn ourselves, prove much more powerful than what other people tell us. <sup>7</sup>When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, “Let anyone among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her.” <sup>8</sup>And once again he bent down and wrote on the ground. <sup>9</sup>When they heard it, they went away, one by one, beginning with the elders; and Jesus was left alone with the woman standing before him. <sup>10</sup>Jesus straightened up and said to her, “Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?” <sup>11</sup>She said, “No one, sir.” And Jesus said, “Neither do I condemn you. Go your way, and from now on do not sin again.”]]

<sup>12</sup>Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, “**I am the light of the world.** Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the **light of life.**” (“light of life” what an evocative term) <sup>13</sup>Then the Pharisees said to him, “You are testifying on your own behalf; your testimony is not valid.” <sup>14</sup>Jesus answered, “Even if I testify on my own behalf, my testimony is valid because I know where I have come from and where I am going, but you do not know where I come from or where I am going. <sup>15</sup>You judge by human standards; I judge no one. <sup>16</sup>Yet even if I do judge, my judgment is valid; for it is not I alone who judge, but I and the Father who sent me. <sup>17</sup>In your law it is written that the testimony of two witnesses is valid. <sup>18</sup>I testify on my own behalf, and the Father who sent me testifies on my behalf.” <sup>19</sup>Then they said to him, “Where is your Father?” Jesus answered, “You know neither me nor my Father. If you knew me, you would know my Father also.” <sup>20</sup>He spoke these words while he was teaching in the treasury of the temple, but no one arrested him, because his hour had not yet come. Light and water both figured prominently during the Jewish Festival of Booths. This gospel is presenting Jesus as the true way to God rather than Judaism (Sukkot). (Read section from Oxford Bible Commentary)

<sup>21</sup>Again he said to them, “I am going away, and **you will search for me**, but you will die in your sin (When we try to do the right thing, but go about it the wrong way). Where I am going, you cannot come.” <sup>22</sup>Then the Jews said, “Is he going to kill himself? Is that what he means by saying, ‘Where I am going, you cannot come?’” <sup>23</sup>He said to them, “You are from below, I am from above; you are of this world, I am not of this world. <sup>24</sup>I told you that you would die in your sins, for **you will die in your sins unless you believe that I am he.**” (The Greek lacks “he” which makes this an implicit claim to be God, alluding to Ex. 3:14) <sup>25</sup>They said to him, “Who are you?” Jesus said to them, “Why do I speak to you at all? <sup>26</sup>I have much to say about you and much to condemn; but the one who sent me is true, and I declare to the world what I have heard from him.” <sup>27</sup>They did not understand that he was speaking to them about the Father. <sup>28</sup>So Jesus said, “When you have **lifted up** the Son of Man, then **you will realize that I am he** (again, “I am”), and that I do nothing on my own, but I speak these things as the Father instructed me. <sup>29</sup>And the one who sent me is with me; **he has not left me alone**, for I always do what is pleasing to him.” (As I have read this passage it made Jesus’ cry on the cross that much more poignant. In John, the Father never does leave the Son alone) <sup>30</sup>As he was saying these things, many believed in him.

<sup>31</sup>Then Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him, “If you **continue in my word**, you are truly my disciples; <sup>32</sup>and **you will know the truth, and the truth will make you**

**free.**” (Love this verse. Very worth discussing: Truth, alētheia: The Greek root suggests “hiding nothing”, thus the accurate representation of reality. Free, eleutherao: To not be constrained, the opposite of enslaved) <sup>33</sup>They answered him, “We are descendants of Abraham and have never been slaves to anyone. What do you mean by saying, ‘You will be made free?’” <sup>34</sup>Jesus answered them, “Very truly, I tell you, everyone who commits sin is a **slave to sin**. <sup>35</sup>The slave does not have a permanent place in the household; the son has a place there forever. <sup>36</sup>So if the **Son makes you free**, you will be free indeed. <sup>37</sup>I know that you are descendants of Abraham; yet you look for an opportunity to kill me, because there is no place in you for my word.

<sup>38</sup>I declare what I have seen in the Father’s presence; as for you, you should do what you have heard from the Father.” <sup>39</sup>They answered him, “Abraham is our father.” Jesus said to them, “If you were Abraham’s children, you would be doing what Abraham did, <sup>40</sup>but now you are trying to kill me, a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God. This is not what Abraham did. <sup>41</sup>You are indeed doing what your father does.” They said to him, “We are not illegitimate children; we have one father, God himself.” <sup>42</sup>Jesus said to them, “If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and now I am here. I did not come on my own, but he sent me. <sup>43</sup>Why do you not understand what I say? It is because you cannot accept my word. <sup>44</sup>You are from your father the devil, and you choose to do your father’s desires. He was a murderer from the beginning and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks according to his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies. <sup>45</sup>But because I tell the truth, you do not believe me. This is a “challenge the scriptures” passage because the consequences of these particular verses have caused terrible consequences.

<sup>46</sup>Which of you convicts me of sin? If I tell the truth, why do you not believe me?

<sup>47</sup>**Whoever is from God hears the words of God. You have to understand the dualism of the Gospel of John to understand all these statements.** The reason you do not hear them is that you are not from God.” <sup>48</sup>The Jews answered him, “Are we not right in saying that you are a Samaritan and have a demon?” <sup>49</sup>Jesus answered, “I do not have a demon; but I honor my Father, and you dishonor me. <sup>50</sup>Yet I do not seek my own glory; there is one who seeks it and he is the judge.

<sup>51</sup>Very truly, I tell you, **whoever keeps my word will never see death.**” <sup>52</sup>The Jews said to him, “Now we know that you have a demon. Abraham died, and so did the prophets; yet you say, ‘Whoever keeps my word will never taste death.’” <sup>53</sup>Are you greater than our father Abraham, who died? The prophets also died. Who do you claim to be?” <sup>54</sup>Jesus answered, “If I glorify myself, my glory is nothing. It is my Father who glorifies me, he of whom you say, ‘He is our God,’” <sup>55</sup>though you do not know him. But I know him; if I would say that I do not know him, I would be a liar like you. But I do know him and I keep his word. <sup>56</sup>Your ancestor Abraham rejoiced that he would see my day; he saw it and was glad.” <sup>57</sup>Then the Jews said to him, “You are not yet fifty years old, and have you seen Abraham?” <sup>58</sup>Jesus said to them, “Very truly, I tell you, **before Abraham was, I am.**” <sup>59</sup>So they picked up stones to throw at him, but Jesus hid himself and went out of the temple.

**Additional Reading:**

**Scripture Chain:** [John 8:12](#); [Psalm 27:1](#); [Isaiah 2:5](#); [Alma 38:9](#); [3 Nephi 15:9](#); [D&C 88:6–13](#)

[John 8:12](#)

12 ¶Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.

[Psalm 27:1](#)

1 The **Lord is my light and my salvation**; whom shall I fear? the Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?

[Isaiah 2:5](#)

5 O house of Jacob, come ye, and let us walk in the **light of the Lord**.

[Alma 38:9](#)

9 And now, my son, I have told you this that ye may learn wisdom, that ye may learn of me that there is no other way or means whereby man can be saved, only in and through Christ. Behold, **he is the life and the light of the world**. Behold, he is the word of truth and righteousness.

[3 Nephi 15:9](#)

9 Behold, I am the law, and the light. Look unto me, and endure to the end, and ye shall live; for unto him that endureth to the end will I give eternal life.

[D&C 88:6–13](#)

One of my favorite sections. I find these verses meditative and powerful.

6 He that ascended up on high, as also he descended below all things, in that he comprehended all things, that he might be in all and through all things, the light of truth; This is one of my favorite ideas in the gospel—that Jesus (and God) have experienced everything, every height, every depth, every aspect light and dark, in order to become Beings who can empathize with all of creation (Explain my < view of the Atonement)

7 Which truth shineth. This is the light of Christ. As also he is in the sun, and the light of

the sun, and the power thereof by which it was made.

8 As also he is in the moon, and is the light of the moon, and the power thereof by which it was made;

9 As also the light of the stars, and the power thereof by which they were made;

10 And the earth also, and the power thereof, even the earth upon which you stand.

11 And the light which shineth, which giveth you light, is through him who enlighteneth your eyes, which is the same light that quickeneth your understandings;

12 Which light proceedeth forth from the presence of God to fill the immensity of space—

13 The light which is in all things, which giveth life to all things, which is the law by which all things are governed, even the power of God who sitteth upon his throne, who is in the bosom of eternity, who is in the midst of all things.

I love the idea of Jesus as Atoning Savior. I love the idea of an actualized perfected, loving God Brother who chose of his own will to take upon himself everything in us short of perfection. I love the idea of One Being who gives us all strength and who, after working an Atonement out of time, lives all of our lives and deaths. I love the idea of this Dying and Rising God who binds us all together through blood, love, and covenants. I love the idea that our strength is both ours and his. We are all one Being, and he unites us. I love the idea of a perfectly compassionate Savior, someone who literally understands everything anyone has ever gone through.

The interpretation of the Atonement that makes most sense to me is that in Gethsemane and on the cross Jesus, out of time,<sup>1</sup> lived all of our lives and deaths. He IS us. The powerful aspect of this is that \*we are still in Gethsemane\*. It is like this < where Gethsemane is the point on the left and all of time is the space on the right. Because we are living through the Grace of the Savior (he is "lending us breath", Mosiah 2:21), when we sin we make him sin,

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<sup>1</sup> Taking the scriptures about the Atonement literally requires that Jesus' sacrifice transcend time. If He suffered the pains of every man, woman, and child as 2 Ne. 9:21 teaches, obviously the time spent in Gethsemane and on the cross would be inadequate. Elder Tad Callister explores this issue in *Infinite Atonement*, pp. 147-150, drawing on the idea that time exists only for humans (D&C 38:2; D&C 130:7; Alma 40:8). I believe that the concept of Jesus "lending us breath" (Mosiah 2:21) and the Participationist model of us living in Christ mesh well with the idea I have put forth of Jesus experiencing all of our lives and deaths.

as Paul explains. So through this process Jesus makes all of us One, or perhaps we are already one, but just estranged