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LIGHT OF THE WORLD ??

Ever been in the dark? Your spouse or coworkers might say you're often in the dark. But what about really dark, not a photon of light in sight. That's a frightening proposition. And Jesus says that's the real situation of people who are lost in the darkness of sin and ignorance. You read about it in John 8:12-30.

Jesus makes a dramatic declaration, "***I AM the light of the world. Whoever follows Me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.***" The scene is the Feast of Tabernacles, a fall festival marking vineyard harvest and thanksgiving for rain. It also recalled God's miraculous wilderness provision for the Israelites, after being set free from slavery in Egypt. Huge lamps and torches were lit for exuberant celebration, reciting of Psalms and music by the Levite orchestra, while the people rejoiced greatly.

"I AM" - This is the word construction "*I am I am*" or "*ego eimi*" in Greek. To Jewish hearers, Jesus utters the unutterable name of God, Yahweh or Jehovah, which God revealed to Moses in Exodus 3:14 at the burning bush. "I AM WHO I AM" = the eternal self-existent, all-sufficient Creator and Redeemer.

"THE LIGHT" - Light was both a symbol and pursuit of GOD, to cast away the darkness of ignorance and sin. A common Jewish prayer was for God to lift up the light of His face upon His people. Psalm 27 proclaims, "*The LORD is my light and my salvation*" who teaches me and leads me in His ways.

"OF THE WORLD" - Numerous Old Testament passages point to the promised Messiah as "*light for the nations*" -- for Gentiles as well as Jews who believe in the Savior prophesied to come save His people.

"WHOEVER FOLLOWS ME" - Part of God's miraculous provision for the Israelites in the wilderness was the pillar of light that led them to the Promised Land. Cloud by day and fire by night, it represented the presence of God leading them in His way. The people trusted, obeyed, and followed.

"WILL NOT WALK IN DARKNESS" - Darkness represents ignorance and sin, in contrast to God's light of truth and holiness. At Christmas we read Isaiah 9:2, "*the people who walked in darkness have seen a great light*" - because of the coming of Christ, the promised Savior, who is the light of the world.

"BUT WILL HAVE THE LIGHT OF LIFE" - Psalm 56 proclaims, "*You Lord have delivered my soul from death, and my feet from falling, that I may walk before God in the light of life.*" The gospel of John opens with a declaration of Jesus as the Creator in whom was life and the life was the light of mankind. It shines in the darkness, which cannot overcome it. John 1:14 says this true light came into the world as flesh, "*and dwelt among us, and we have seen His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.*" The words "dwelt" and "glory" recall the "Shekinah glory" of God's presence in the Tabernacle, the portable temple God had the Israelites construct for their wilderness wanderings.

"I AM THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD" conveys all these Old Testament echoes -- as Jesus also confirms His divine authority for all that He taught and for all the miracles He performed. The theme of light relates to the truthfulness of His witness, and His authority as God. If they would receive Him, and come to His light and follow Him, they would know the life-changing truth of WHO He is and what He is saying.

Those who reject Him remain in the darkness of ignorance, out of God's light, lost in sin. In verse 19 Jesus says "***you will die in your sin.***" This foreshadowed the demise of the generation that rejected Him which would see the destruction of the Temple in AD 70 as God transitions the Old Covenant to the New. No more lights of religious observance, because Jesus Himself is the light. All who receive Him will LIVE, in HIS light, waiting for His return, the consummation of all things, and then, with Him forever.

2 Corinthians 4:6 says "***For God who said, let light shine out of darkness, has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.***" Jews sought light, Greeks sought knowledge, and Romans sought glory -- all found truly in the person of Jesus Christ.

It's either light or flight. Will YOU flee from His light? Or come to Him for light and life? Flee darkness! Put all your trust in Jesus. Obey the light of His word of truth, the Bible -- all by the power of the Holy Spirit!