

I Am the Light of the World

John 8:12 - Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.

These gracious words are the Lord Jesus' reflection on the ceremony that took place each evening in the temple courts, when two giant candelabra (Menorahs-- the many-branched candlesticks), were lighted. The two illuminated the large temple court. In fact, some Bible students believe the Lord Jesus and His apostles were witnessing this ceremony when the Lord made this wonderful declaration. It is in reference to this ceremony that Jesus declares, "I am the light of the world" [not merely a light to Israel or to the future Church, but a light to the world; to each person, to anybody, anywhere] "he who follows me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."

We must take seriously these beautiful words, because Jesus means them. These are not a politician's promise that is said, but then is completely forgotten after the election. Our Lord desires and means to fulfill these words in any and each human life: "I am the light of the world; he who follows me [not just knows about me]-- he who walks with me, obeys me and stays with me-- will have light in his pathway of life."

That is a wonderful promise. There is nothing this world needs, that you need, more than light on one's life path. People, generation after generation, walk in darkness. Later on, in this very gospel, Jesus declares, "He that walks in darkness does not know where he is going." (John 12:35) How many people do not know where they are going, not only after they leave this life, but even down life's road a little way. They have no idea of what is ahead; they are running into disaster and they cannot even see it coming. But the person who has light can see what is in his pathway and can know what to do today to avoid tomorrow's calamity.

A pastor tells of his personal experience when he was in college. "Years ago, when I was driving from Dallas to Southern California, I picked up a couple of young hitchhikers. As we were driving past the entrance to the Grand Canyon, I asked them if they had ever seen the canyon. They said, "No," so we decided to spend the night there. It was late at night and pitch black when we turned off the road to find a place to throw down our sleeping bags. We could not see a thing, but we found what seemed to be an open area, rolled out our bags and crawled into them. We immediately fell asleep. When I awoke in the morning, the sun was up. I stretched while still lying in my sleeping bag. I threw out my arms, only to find that my left arm dropped down into the void that is the Grand Canyon! In the darkness

of the dead of night, we had actually made our bed on the edge of a cliff that dropped into the Grand Canyon! If we had gone two steps further, we would have fallen over the edge in the darkness. I gave grateful thanks for the light that morning.”

That is the purpose of light. The Light of the World will provide light for life and keep us from the calamity that lies ahead in eternity.