



## TEEN TREE OF LIFE

### Light of the World Part 1

December 5, 2021

**Before you begin, ask yourself a very important question: Do you believe that Jesus Christ died on The Cross for all of your sins? If you answered yes, you will need to be sure that you are filled with The Holy Spirit. How do you do this? You name your sins to God The Father in His Son's Name. This is called Rebound. As a Christian, you must rebound any time you sin. This is taught in 1 JOH 1:9: *If we confess [name] our sins [directly to God], He [God] is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.* Now, if you have never believed that Jesus Christ died on The Cross for all of your sins, all you have to do is say to yourself that you believe in Him and you are saved! The Bible verse which teaches us this is ACTS 16:31: *"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved."***

***Then Jesus again spoke to them, saying, "I am the Light of the world; the one who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life."*** (New American Standard Bible) Light is an amazing thing. Even from the standpoint of physics, it's a marvelous aspect of creation. In some ways light behaves as material particles moving very rapidly. In other ways it has all the qualities of waves – an energy force moving through a substance but not a material substance itself. Physicists now tell us that light is affected by gravity and theorize about black holes with gravitational forces so strong that even light cannot escape. They also tell us that the speed of light can vary. Light can be concentrated or diffused. It travels in straight lines, but it can also be bent.

Darkness is the opposite of light, or more accurately, the absence of light because where there is light, there can be no darkness. For those who are interested in the properties and qualities of what God has created, light is a fascinating subject. But it isn't the physical aspects of light that we're going to look at in this study; instead, we're going to work toward an understanding of spiritual truths that we can gain through the use of analogies to light. As you read in **JOHN 8:12** at the start of this study, The Lord Jesus Christ makes an analogy of Himself and light to give us a greater understanding of His Own Nature and Work.

The context for our study here is that Jesus has come down to Jerusalem sometime during the middle of the Feast of Booths (which is also called the Feast of Ingathering since it occurs at the end of the Fall harvest). This was one of three "pilgrim" festivals in which the Jewish men were supposed to gather before The Lord for religious

ceremonies and celebrations. This is taught in **EX 23:16-17 (New International Reader's Version): "Celebrate the Feast of Weeks. Bring the first share of your crops from your fields. "Celebrate the Feast of Booths. Hold it in the fall when you gather in your crops from your fields. Three times a year all your men must come to worship me. I am your Lord and King."**

The Feast of Booths was instituted by Moses to commemorate the years that the Israelites wandered in the desert after their Exodus departure from Egypt. This particular feast was a very joyful occasion with people praising God for the harvest they had just taken in and praying for His Blessing in the coming year. The Feast itself was actually a commemoration of God's Provision for the nation of Israel after they had left Egypt and entered the desert on their way to the promised land.

Many of the aspects of this celebration were directly related to what had occurred during their journey through the desert. The booths or tabernacles that they constructed and lived in during this week of celebration were reminders of the tents they had lived in during those years. **JOH 7:37 (New International Reader's Version)** mentions the special ceremony which commemorated God's provision of water at Marah: ***It was the last and most important day of the feast. Jesus stood up and spoke in a loud voice. He said, "Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink.***

The word Mara means bitterness and it's the name of the spring with bitter water which was three days travel from the crossing place of the Red Sea in the peninsula of Sinai. **JOHN 7** is a reference to what happened to the Israelites there which is found in **EX 15 23:25 (New International Reader's Version): *When they came to Marah, they couldn't drink its water. It was bitter. That's why the place is named Marah. The people told Moses they weren't happy with him. They said, "What are we supposed to drink?" Then Moses cried out to the Lord. The Lord showed him a stick. Moses threw it into the water. The water became fit to drink.***

So, in **JOHN 7**, Jesus Christ used this ceremony to show that He is The Living Water that satisfies spiritual thirst and brings Eternal Life. There were mixed responses to Our Lord's teaching during this feast. Some thought He was a good teacher and prophet, but not The Messiah. They incorrectly assumed He could not have fulfilled the prophecy to have come from Bethlehem in Judea since He sounded like a Galilean and had been raised in Nazareth. They did not bother to ask and find out where Jesus was born. Others contended that Jesus was The Messiah because of the miracles He had done. Most of the religious leaders had rejected Jesus and were plotting to kill Him, though there were exceptions such as Nicodemus. Others would have been just confused by all the debate.

When the seven days of the Feast were over, a required Sabbath followed it and Jesus had come back into the temple and was teaching again. We're told He is in the "Treasury" – a section of the Court of Women where the treasury boxes were kept. The treasury boxes were also called "trumpets" since they looked like trumpets set on end. This is where the people would leave their "temple tax" as well as free will offerings.

During the feast, this area would have been lit up at night by four very large menorahs (lampstands) as part of the festival ceremonies. It is reported that these menorahs were so large that young priests had to periodically climb up long ladders with large pitchers of olive oil to refill their bowls. The light from these large lamps would have filled the temple area. The lamps were part of the commemoration of God's guidance during the Exodus when He led them by a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night: ***By day the Lord went ahead of them in a pillar of cloud. It guided them on their way. At night he led them with a pillar of fire. It gave them light. So they could travel by day or at night.***

**(EX 13:21 New International Reader's Version)**

The pillar of fire not only led them by night but was a protection as well. Before they crossed the Red Sea, it was the pillar of cloud and fire that stood between them and the Egyptian army: ***The angel of God that had been leading the camp of Israel now shifted and got behind them. And the Pillar of Cloud that had been in front also shifted to the rear. The Cloud was now between the camp of Egypt and the camp of Israel. The Cloud enshrouded one camp in darkness and flooded the other with light. The two camps didn't come near each other all night.*** (EX 14:19-20 The Message Bible)

It is with this background in mind that we are able to understand how the people would have understood The Lord Jesus Christ's statement in **JOHN 8:12** which was made in the same area where these large menorahs stood: ***Then Jesus again spoke to them, saying, "I am the Light of the world; the one who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life."*** (JOH 8:12 New American Standard Bible) The people would have immediately thought of the Exodus and the pillar of cloud and fire. They would have understood this to be a statement related to this display of God's presence among them.

Also, Hebrew prophecy spoke of The Messiah in terms of a coming light. Look at **ISA 9:1-2 (New American Standard Bible):** ***But there will be no more gloom for her who was in anguish. In earlier times He treated the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali with contempt, but later on He will make it glorious, by the way of the sea, on the other side of the Jordan, Galilee of the [Nations] Gentiles. The people who walk in darkness Will see a great light; Those who live in a dark land, The light will shine on them.***

**MAL 4:2 (New International Reader's Version)** prophesied concerning the coming Messiah: ***But here is what will happen for you who have respect for me. The sun that brings life will rise. Its rays will bring healing to my people. You will go out and leap for joy like calves that have just been fed.***

Look at the beautiful statement about the coming Messiah in **LUK 1:78 (New International Reader' Version):** ***All of that will happen because our God is tender and caring. His kindness will bring the rising sun to us from heaven.*** This is from a section titled "Zechariah's Song" and is part of John's father Zechariah's prophecy. What a gorgeous analogy – The Lord Jesus Christ and the rising sun!

{to be continued}