

“I Am the Light of the World”

Lesson
15

John 7–8

Purpose To strengthen class members’ testimonies that Jesus Christ is our Savior and that by following him we can gain true freedom.

Preparation

1. Read, ponder, and pray about the following scriptures:
 - a. John 7. Jesus attends the Feast of Tabernacles and teaches in the temple. Some people believe he is the Christ, while others think he is a deceiver.
 - b. John 8:1–11. A woman taken in adultery is brought to Jesus. He treats her with compassion.
 - c. John 8:12–36. Jesus declares, “I am the light of the world.” He teaches the believing Jews that following him will free them from spiritual bondage.
2. Suggestion for teaching: Always review your lesson at least a week in advance. When you read the selected scriptures early, you will receive thoughts and impressions during the week that will help you teach the lesson. As you ponder the lesson during the week, pray for the Spirit to guide you and have faith that the Lord will bless you. (See *Teaching—No Greater Call*, 45–46.)

Suggested Lesson Development

Attention Activity As appropriate, use the following activity or one of your own to begin the lesson.

Make the room as dark as possible by turning off the lights and closing any curtains or blinds. Ask a class member to read aloud Doctrine and Covenants 93:1–2. When the class member has read (or attempted to read) these verses, ask him or her:

- Was it difficult to read these verses? What would make it easier? (More light.)

Turn on the lights and open the curtains or blinds. Ask the class member to again read Doctrine and Covenants 93:1–2. Explain that light is used throughout the scriptures as a symbol for Jesus Christ. Jesus himself used this symbol while teaching in the temple. This lesson will discuss the ways in which Jesus Christ is a light for us.

If you are unable to make the room very dark, instead draw a lighthouse on the chalkboard (or show a picture of a lighthouse). Explain that the purpose of a lighthouse is to warn ships of danger and guide them to safety. Then explain that light was one of the symbols Jesus used in teaching about his mission and his relationship to us. This lesson will discuss how Jesus is a light that shows us the way to spiritual safety.

Scripture Discussion and Application As you teach the following scripture accounts, bear testimony of Jesus Christ when you feel it is appropriate. Encourage class members also to bear testimony of Jesus Christ when they feel impressed to do so.

1. Jesus attends the Feast of Tabernacles and teaches in the temple.

Discuss John 7. Invite class members to read selected verses aloud. Explain that the Feast of Tabernacles was an annual Jewish feast held six months after the Feast of the Passover. It lasted eight days and commemorated the Lord's blessings to the children of Israel during their travels in the wilderness. It also celebrated the year's harvest and marked the end of the harvest season. The Jews considered this feast the greatest and most joyful of all their feasts. (See Bible Dictionary, "Feasts," 673; see also Leviticus 23:34–43.)

Point out that Jesus traveled from Galilee to Jerusalem to attend this feast at the temple (John 7:1–10).

- What did the people at the feast say about Jesus as they waited for him to arrive? (See John 7:12.) Why were the people amazed when Jesus began to teach? (See John 7:14–15.)
- What did Jesus tell the people in the temple about his teachings? (See John 7:16.) What did he instruct the people to do to gain a testimony of his teachings? (See John 7:17.) How can we apply this instruction in our lives?

Elder John K. Carmack of the Seventy said: "Jesus explained, 'If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself' (John 7:17). In other words, as you try it you can know it is true. This requires the faith to try, but it yields spiritual evidence. To the disciple who tries the experiment will come conviction, knowledge, and light" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1988, 32; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1988, 26).

Invite class members to tell how their testimony of a gospel principle was strengthened as they lived it (you may want to share an experience of your own). Point out that the opposite of the promise in John 7:17 is also true: if we do not live the principles of the gospel, our testimonies will weaken.

- As Jesus taught, the people continued to be divided in their opinion of him. What were some of the reasons people believed he was the Christ? (See John 7:31, 37–41.) What were some of the reasons people did not believe he was the Christ? (See John 7:27, 41–42, 52.) In what sense did the people know where Jesus was from? (They knew his family and his hometown.) In what sense did they not know where he was from? (See John 7:28–29; 8:14, 19, 23–29. They did not understand that he was sent by Heavenly Father.)
- How can we strengthen our testimonies of Jesus Christ's mission?

2. A woman taken in adultery is brought to Jesus.

Read and discuss John 8:1–11.

- Why did the scribes and Pharisees bring the adulterous woman to Jesus? (See John 8:4–6. They wanted to trap Jesus into condemning the woman to death or contradicting the law of Moses.) What did Jesus say to the scribes and Pharisees? (See John 8:7.) Why didn't they stone the woman? (See John 8:9.)
- While Jesus did not approve of the woman's sin, he did not condemn her for it (John 8:10–11). What can we learn from the Savior's example about how we should respond to people who have sinned seriously?

Elder Marvin J. Ashton explained: “The scribes and Pharisees brought before the Savior a woman taken in adultery. Their purpose was not to show love for either the woman or the Savior, but to embarrass and trick Jesus. . . . Jesus did not condone adultery; there is no doubt about His attitude toward proper moral conduct. [But] He chose to teach with love—to show the scribes and Pharisees the need of serving the individual for her best good and to show the destructive forces of trickery and embarrassment” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1981, 31–32; or *Ensign*, May 1981, 24).

3. Jesus declares, “I am the light of the world.”

Read and discuss John 8:12–36.

- During the Feast of Tabernacles, the temple in Jerusalem was illuminated by the flames from four enormous candelabra. These flames could be seen throughout the city. (See Bible Dictionary, “Feasts,” 673.) Why was this an appropriate setting for Jesus to announce, “I am the light of the world”? (John 8:12). What does it mean that Jesus is the light of the world? (See John 8:12; Alma 38:9; 3 Nephi 15:9; D&C 88:6–13.)
- As people strive to be like Jesus, they too become the light of the world, reflecting his light (Matthew 5:14; 3 Nephi 18:24). How can we help others see the light that Christ offers? (See Matthew 5:16; 28:18–20; Philippians 2:14–15.)
- Jesus told the people in the temple that he always did the things that pleased his Father (John 8:29). How can we become more committed to doing things that please Heavenly Father?
- As Jesus testified of his Father in Heaven, “many believed on him” (John 8:30). What did Jesus promise to these people if they would continue to follow him? (See John 8:31–32.) What does truth free us from? (See John 8:33–34.) How does committing sin place us in bondage? (See Alma 12:11; 34:35.) How has knowing the truth made you free?
- Jesus later called himself “the truth” (John 14:6). How does this affect your understanding of the promise in John 8:32? How does knowing the Savior make us free? How can we come to know him?

Conclusion

Testify that Jesus Christ is our Savior and that only he can free us from the bondage of sin. Encourage class members to follow Christ, “the light of the world,” so he may guide them to spiritual safety.

Additional Teaching Ideas

The following material supplements the suggested lesson outline. You may want to use one or both of these ideas as part of the lesson.

1. Living water

In one of the ceremonies conducted during the Feast of Tabernacles, a priest put water from the pool of Siloam on the altar. This offering was made to request rain and the success of the next year’s crops. As Jesus taught in the temple on the last day of the feast, he invited the people to partake of living water (John 7:37–38).

- In what other setting did Jesus mention living water? (See John 4:5–15.) What is “living water”? How can we drink of it?

2. Jesus Christ is Jehovah

Read and discuss John 8:37–59.

- Why did Jesus tell the unbelieving Jews that they were not children of Abraham? (See John 8:39–40. Although they were literal descendants of Abraham, they did not do righteous works as Abraham did.) Why did Jesus tell them they were not children of God? (See John 8:41–44.) How can we show by our actions that we are Heavenly Father’s children?
- Why were the Jews upset by the Lord’s comments about Abraham? (See John 8:51–53, 56–57. They did not realize that Jesus was referring to his ability to overcome spiritual death [verse 51] and to his premortal life [verses 56–57].) What does Jesus’ statement, “Before Abraham was, I am” (John 8:58) help us understand about him? (See footnote 58*b*; see also Exodus 3:13–14. Jesus is Jehovah, the Great “I Am,” the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.) Why is it important to know that Jesus was Jehovah before his mortal life?