

# Daily Bible Study Commentary by Pastor Steve

We're excited to have you digging deeper into the Word. The best way to use this study guide is to read the Bible verse(s) first, then Pastor Steve's commentary. God bless you.

John 8:12

**v12** (continued): He was comparing Himself to the pillar of fire which led Israel for forty years (Ex 13:21-22; Nu 9:19). However in this case, Jesus said He is not only Israel's light, He is the light of the world. When Israel walked through the desert that great pillar of light led them through strange, unfamiliar territory and finally brought them safely to their destination. As they walked along, it illuminated the rocky ground in front of them, so they wouldn't stumble. And its presence, hovering over their camp, assured them that God was with them (Nu 9:15-23). By making this comparison Jesus was accomplishing at least two purposes: First, He was declaring Himself to be divine, and second, He was teaching us about the way in which God guides us. Just as Israel followed the cloud and fire through the wilderness, we are to follow Him. And by saying that those who follow Him "will not walk in darkness," He was announcing that He is the One who accurately reveals the truth about God. By watching and listening to Him we are, in effect, watching and listening to the Father because everything Jesus said and did was initiated by the Father and then perfectly expressed by the Son (Jn 5:19; 8:28; 12:49-50; 14:10). Those who walk by His light will not stumble because, step-by-step, He will reveal God's truth to them. They won't walk in darkness; there will always be light on their path.

John 8:12

**v12** (continued): Jesus is the One who reveals spiritual truth, so if we follow Him we won't be deceived or confused. This is the basic meaning behind His statement, "I am the light of the world, the one who follows Me will not [at all] walk in darkness" (literal). But He didn't stop there; He added these words, "but will have the light of life" (literal). The phrase "light of life" is like "bread of life" (Jn 7:35). Just as He is the "bread" that produces spiritual life in those who "eat" that bread, He is also the "light" which produces spiritual life in those who "follow" Him. He literally said His followers will have the light of life, implying that, in some way, this light will radiate from them. I believe He is speaking about the Holy Spirit whom He would in the future place within those who come to Him. In other words, those who walk in His light will become a light for others.

John 8:13

**v13**: Apparently there was an ongoing debate between Jesus and the Pharisees about what evidence would be necessary to validate His claims to be the Son of God. The argument revolved around a requirement in the Law of Moses which was originally intended to protect the innocence of someone accused of a crime punishable by death. It says, "A single witness shall not rise up against a man on account of any iniquity or sin which he has committed; on the evidence of two or three witnesses a matter shall be confirmed" (Dt 19:15; also, Dt 17:6; Nu 35:30). Over the centuries it became a standard for testing all sorts of truth (Mt 18:16; 2Co 13:1; 1Ti 5:19; Heb 10:28). When Jesus declared Himself to be divine, the Pharisees responded by saying, "You are testifying about Yourself; Your testimony is not true." In other words, Jesus needed more witnesses to testify to that fact before it could be accepted as true. He had already responded to this same charge on another occasion by providing His accusers with a list of witnesses (Jn 5:31-47). He had listed: John the Baptist, the miracles He was performing, God the Father, the Scriptures and even Moses himself. But clearly judging from the fact that they raised this issue again, they did not consider that list to be sufficient. So this time His response was to explain to them why they were unable to receive the testimony of those witnesses.

John 8:14-15

**vs14-15**: Jesus said, "Even if I testify concerning Myself, My testimony is true because I know the place from which I came and the place to which I will go away" (paraphrase). This statement is built around the fact of His pre-existence (Jn 1:1, 14, 18). He is saying that He came to earth from heaven, and at some point in the future He would leave earth and go back to heaven. Then He confronted His opponents with their obvious inability to understand this: "But you do not know the place from which I have come or to which I will go" (paraphrase). In other words, these Pharisees had no comprehension of who He was beyond what their natural senses could perceive or their natural mind could understand.

John 8:14-15

**vs14-15** (continued): He summarized their condition this way: "You judge according to the flesh." All they saw when they looked at Him was His flesh. They saw a carpenter whom they thought had been born in Nazareth and who was trying to teach people about God without having received any formal rabbinic training. And all they brought to the process of evaluating Him were the capacities contained in their own human flesh. They accepted no input beyond their five senses and the reasonings of their brain. They were humans trying to comprehend the divine but stubbornly refusing to accept the testimony of any of the witnesses which God had provided.

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John 8:14-15

**vs14-15** (continued): These Pharisees had just placed a woman in front of Him and declared her to be guilty of adultery (vs3-11). But that event was only one of many judgments they pronounced against people. Basically they considered it to be their duty to evaluate the entire Jewish population, using their interpretation of the Law of Moses as the final standard. In that sense Jesus was simply one more victim of their harsh scrutiny. So the fact that they judged Him according to the flesh was not unusual. They judged everyone that way. To expose the ugliness of their judgmental attitude, Jesus simply contrasted their attitude with His. He said, "I do not judge anyone" (literal). In these few words He expressed a profound truth. He who came from heaven and would return to heaven (v14), He who had every right to judge, didn't exercise that right because He had been sent to earth by the Father to save people, not condemn them (Jn 3:17).

John 8:16-18

**v16:** During the years of His earthly ministry Jesus didn't condemn people, but He certainly did expose wrong attitudes and warn people that the day would come when He would sit on the judgment seat of God to determine their guilt and assign their destiny (Jn 5:22-29; also: Mt 25:31-46). So the grace He freely gave to people was not because He didn't see their sin or have the authority to judge it. The Father had already given Him such authority (Jn 5:22-27). He was giving people grace because it was the season for grace (Lk 4:17-19). **vs17-18:** Then He returned to answering their challenge about having enough witnesses to prove that He is the Son of God. He said, "Even in your law it has been written that the testimony of two men is true." So He accepted their challenge and then answered it by saying that He did have two witnesses: Himself and His Father.

**John 8:19**

**v19:** Their question is odd. They asked Jesus, "Where is your Father?" We might have expected them to ask, "Who is your father?" And if they had, it would have revealed that they were confused about who He meant when He kept referring to "My Father" or "the Father who sent Me" (vs16, 18). But by now the religious leaders in Jerusalem knew the special relationship Jesus was claiming when He called God His Father. During an earlier encounter John reported their reaction to Him this way, "The Jews were seeking all the more to kill Him, because He was calling God His own Father, making Himself equal with God" (Jn 5:18). So they weren't confused; they were offended. They were trying to mock Him. They were daring Him to show them God. In effect they were saying, "If you have such a special relationship with God, prove it! If He is the 'second witness' (v17) that will confirm that you are who you claim to be (v18), let's see Him" (A. Plummer, John Cambridge Greek Testament for Schools, Cambridge Univ. Press, 1893, p.189).

**John 8:19**

**v19** (continued): Jesus responded, "You know neither Me nor My Father. If you had known Me you would have known My Father also" (literal). He was saying they needed to stop judging Him "according to the flesh" (v15). If they really wanted an answer to their question, all they needed to do was observe the active work of God taking place through Him. Jesus was powerfully and accurately expressing the character and works of God. This was not the first time they were hearing Him teach or watching Him minister. They had seen Him many times before, and if at any point they had evaluated the situation honestly, they would have recognized the Father's wisdom, power, compassion and presence at work through Him. Jesus would not show them the Father by performing a miracle to let them peer into heaven. There was plenty of evidence right in front of them.