

“Light of the World!”

I. **INTRO:**

- A. **Aeroflat Flight 593** (Russian Airlines) The voice and flight data recorders revealed a message of terror. “Daddy, can I turn this?” The cockpit tapes record a chilling scene:

The relief pilot, *Yaroslav Kudrinsky*, was taking his 2 children on their 1st international flight and they were brought to the cockpit while he was on duty. They were getting a flying lesson just before the Aeroflot jet crashed in Siberia, killing all 75 people aboard. The transcript of the desperate final minutes before the March 1994 crash reveal the captain shouting, “Get out! Get out!” More than a dozen times the pilot yelled at his son, **who was in the captain’s seat** when the plane began to plunge. The deciding act occurred when the boy’s foot “accidentally pushed the right pedal, sending the aircraft into an irreversible spin.”

With the autopilot active, Kudrinsky, against regulations, offered to let them sit at the controls. **First** his daughter **Yana** took the pilot's left front seat. Kudrinsky adjusted the autopilot's heading to give her the impression that she was turning the plane, though she actually had no control of the plane. **Next**, his son **Eldar Kudrinsky**(15) took the pilot's seat.

Unlike his sister, Eldar applied enough force to the control column to contradict the autopilot for 30 seconds. He unknowingly disabled the A310's autopilot’s control of the ailerons(Ay-le-rons), which put the aircraft into a steep bank, and then an uncontrolled dive. The pilots were not aware of the complete disconnection of the autopilot, which occurred with no audible alarm, and did not regain control of the aircraft.

1. It’s so clear, they had no right being in the pilot’s seat!!!
 2. It’s the same with our lives...why do we keep competing for the drivers seat?
- B. I’ve never understood the bumper sticker that reads, “**God is my co-pilot**”. I have one thing to say, “**Your in the Wrong Seat!**”
- C. Do you know where you are going in life? Or, What God’s direction is for your life?
1. The **religious leaders** in Jesus’ day didn’t know where **they** were going, **nor** where **Jesus’** was going...we call it being **in the dark!**
 2. **They had:** the light of **the Law**(5) & the light of **conscience**(9) **but** they did not have **the light of life!**(12)
- D. **Outline:** Jesus Gives **The Light of LIFE** & **The Light of LEADING** & **The Light of LIBERATION!**
- E. **Background:** the Jewish **Feast of Tabernacles**. **Timing:** day after, final day of the feast. **Setting:** the **Temple Treasury** (located near the **Court of the Women**, so named because the woman could enter this part of the Temple). **Backdrop:** On the 1st evening of the feast there was a ceremony called **The Illumination of the Temple**. It took place in the Court of the

Women...When the dark came...**four great candelabra were lit** and, it was said, they sent such a blaze of light throughout Jerusalem that every courtyard was lit up with their brilliance. William Barclay; Gospel of John; Vol.2, pg.11.

1. This magnificent light was a reminder of God's *pillar of fire* that **guided & protected** Israel through the wilderness.
2. It is with this **strong visual backdrop** Jesus makes this next claim, vs.12.
3. Jesus desires to **guide** His followers: His **words** being a lamp to our feet & light to our path. His **life** being a lamp to our feet & light to our path.

II. **LIGHT OF THE WORLD!**

- A. **THE LIGHT OF LIFE!** (12-20)
- B. (12) **I am the Light of the world** - The 2nd of the I Am statements.
- C. So the *verbal sword fight* between Jesus & the Pharisees begins.
 1. Jesus starts the fencing match with vs.12.
 2. Note: Jesus claims to be **the light of the world** not **a light!**
 3. Though the claim is **exclusive**, the offer is **inclusive** - an offer any and all could respond to.
- D. As the **Light of the world**, Christ claimed to be God, for **God is Light**.
 1. **God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.** 1Jn.1:5
 - a) **Darkness** speaks of death, ignorance, & sin;
Light speaks of life, knowledge, & holiness.¹
- E. Wait, how does "light" lead to "life"?
 1. Because once you **have the light**, there is **no more groping in darkness**, but **now** you can **see the right way to go!**
 - a) **Example:** Water caves in Belize. Only some had flashlights & could see the way.
- F. (13) The Pharisees thrust back with a sharp retort. *The fencing match is under way.*
- G. Jesus says his claims are validated by **2 witnesses**: The testimony of the **Son on Earth** (18a); The testimony of the **Father in Heaven** (18b).
- H. (20) Spoken from the *Temple Treasury*. (from vs.2-20)
- I. Jesus *the light of life*...**Some** people change their ways when they **see the light**, **Others** only when they **feel the heat.** :) Your choice!

¹ Warren Wiersbe; Outlines of NT; Jn.8.

- J. **THE LIGHT OF LEADING!** (21-30)
- K. There are **2 births**: **from above** (being born again by God's *Spirit*); & **from this world** (being born of the *flesh*).
- L. There are **2 ways to die**: the **sinner** dies **in his sins**; **but** the **believer** dies **in the Lord** (Rev.14:13 **Write: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on**)
- M. (23,24) Some people are offended at a physicians **bluntness**, **but here** Dr. Jesus gets right down to the diagnosis: "*Terminal Cancer. Without radical surgery, you're going to die.*"
- N. (26-29) Jesus told the Jews that He came from heaven. **The Father sent Him**(26); **The Father taught Him**(28); **The Father remained with Him**(29).
1. The only time the Father was **not** "**with Him**" was when Christ was made sin for us on the cross.
- O. (28) **Lift up** - which means of course **the crucifixion**. He already used this in 3:14-16 & will again in 12:32-34.
- P. **THE LIGHT OF LIBERATION!** (31-36)
- Q. (31) **Abide** - Jesus was saying, "**your future loyalty to my teaching will prove the reality of your present profession.**"
1. We accept folks into the body of Christ on **profession of trust in Christ**; Continuance in the word/teachings **proves** the **sincerity or insincerity** of the profession. **It is the acid test of life.**²
- R. (32) **Truth** - His teachings should be accepted as **absolute truth!**
1. **Many philosophies & ideologies** claim to be based on truth, **but** the truth Jesus is speaking of here is **not** assent to a proposition, but trust **in Jesus Himself** who said, "**I am the way, the truth, & the life.**"
 2. **The Word of God does not claim to just contain truth, but is truth; It is not simply true, but is truth itself!**
 - a) **Why is this important?** because there is **no higher standard** of truth to compare it by. The bible itself is the **final standard** of truth.
 - b) Jesus doesn't say, **thy word is true**, in Jn.17:17, **but Your word is truth.**
- S. **Note**: the **condition** on this freedom/liberation - "**if**" you **abide in My word**, you'll experience this liberation. **[You must "hold to" His teachings]**
1. **Not just know** the truth **but living** the truth!

² A.T.Robertson; Word Pictures in the NT; Vol.5, pg.149.

- T. (33) What did the Pharisees **lack**, which prevented them from recognizing the truth of Jesus' words? *They lacked...*
1. (19) **Knowing who Jesus was**, thus lacked the knowledge of the Father.
 2. (23) **The right birth** (they were **from beneath**; **of this world**. i.e. **Worldly/fleshly only**)
 3. (24) **Believing in Jesus**.
 4. (33) **Knowing** they were in **bondage**.
- U. The Jews felt they were free men because Abraham was their father.
1. Yet all **unsaved** men are *not free* **but** are **enslaved by sin**.
- V. At that time they were in bondage to **Rome**; to the **Law**; & of course to the **world the flesh & the devil**.
- W. Christ is speaking about **spiritual** *not physical or political*, **bondage & liberty**.
1. The lost sinner is in bondage to **lusts & sins**. *Read Titus 3:3-7*.
 2. The lost sinner is in bondage to **the world system & the devil**.
 - a) Eph.2:1,2 **And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air.**
 3. By receiving the truth in Christ, **spiritual slaves** are **set free!**
- X. (33) **The attitude of the Pharisees escalates from contradiction(13) to insinuation(19) to denial(33) to insult**(latter in 48) **to sarcasm(53) and, finally & climatically, to violence(59)**.
- Y. (35) The **slave** vs. **son** analogy, Jesus is probably referring to **Isaac**(son) & **Ishmael**(slave)
1. Since they quoted Abraham, Jesus talks about his 2 boys.
 - a) Like Paul did in Gal.4:21-31
- Z. **The Son makes you free** (36) so **trust Him & follow Him**.
The Truth makes you free (32) so **study it, believe it, obey it**.
- AA.**If the Son makes you free** - Do not substitute **Savior** for **Son** in this passage.
1. The **Savior** has set us free from **sin**; **but this** is the freedom that comes from being set free from **myself** by the **Son**.
 2. **It is what Paul meant in when he said, "I have been crucified with Christ . . ."**
 3. **Paul's individuality had been broken & his spirit had been united with his Lord; **not just merged into Him, but made one with Him.****
- BB.**You shall be free indeed** - free to the very core of your being; free from the inside to the outside.
- CC.**This morning, do you find yourself in the pilot's seat or in the co-pilots seat?**