

I AM the Light of the World

John 8:12 (9:5; 12:46)

The Second Great “I AM” statement in the Book of John is “I am the Light of the World.”

The Context: In John 7:37-53, a significant controversy arose among the people, the Pharisees, and the chief priests concerning who Jesus was. Some said He is “the Prophet” (7:40), others said He is ‘the Christ’ (Messiah) (7:41); many believed neither; so, there was a division among them concerning His identity (7:43). Ultimately, they all go home not convinced that He is either that Prophet or Christ (7:53). The next morning, Jesus goes into the temple to teach (8:1-2); and the Scribes and Pharisees bring before Him an adulterous woman in an attempt to accuse Him of inaccurate teaching (8:3-6). Jesus tells them the one who is without sin can cast the first stone at her, and they all leave, after which Jesus tells her to go and sin no more (8:7-11). After she left, the Pharisees return and Jesus spoke again unto them this second Great “I AM” statement.

Note: We are told that this conversation with the Pharisees was in the Temple “treasury” (John 8:20). The Jerusalem Temple treasury was a court area (called the court of the women) which allowed all people to come in to give offerings in 13 trumpet-shaped boxes. These 13 money boxes were designated for different types of offerings either required (expected) or voluntary for people in the Temple. Jesus evidently chose this location; thus, allowing all the people (8:1) to hear His teaching (not just men as in other parts of the Temple).

The “I AM” statement: Jesus said: “I am the Light of the World; the one following Me will not (not by any means- double negative) walk in the darkness, but will have (possess) the light of life” (8:12). This statement was made during the Feast of the Tabernacles (John 7:2) when they would light two great golden lamps on either side of the altar of burnt offering (casting bright light on the altar which could be seen out over the city). Jesus, standing in the court of the Temple, looking at those golden lamps, declared this Great “I AM.” Those possessing the Light of life will not continue to walk (to conduct life; live) in (spiritual) darkness. Rather, they will shine as lights in this world.

Application: Will you shine as a light in this world?

Note: Jesus would have likely gone on teaching about this truth, but the Pharisees immediately confronted Jesus by saying, “You witness concerning yourself; and your witness is not true” (8:13). Jesus tells them that His witness concerning Himself is true and is confirmed by His Father Who sent Him (8:14-18). Then, Jesus tells them that they don’t “know” (oida- have a conscious knowledge of; fully perceive) Him nor His Father (8:19). Jesus does not get back to declaring any further teaching concerning His “I am the light of the world” statement in this passage. Instead, He declares four other “I am” statements in John 8 which we already looked

at two weeks ago ["I am"- God the Son (8:23); the Messiah (8: 24); the Son of man (8:28); and the Preexistent, Eternal God (8:58)].

If we relied strictly on this John 8 passage to teach us about this wonderful proclamation by Jesus that "I am the Light of the World," we would only have one verse teaching this truth. However, the Scriptures speak many more times about this great truth, especially in the Book of John. Let's trace it's teaching throughout the Book of John and throughout Scripture:

- 1) In John 1:4-9, Jesus (the Word) is first proclaimed as "the Life Who is the Light of men" (1:4). He (the Light) shines in the darkness (1:5); and is the **True Light**, enlightening all mankind coming into the world (1:9). But the world knew Him not and received Him not (1:10-11). But the ones receiving Him by believing on His name will become sons of God (1:12). In summary, John 1:1-9 shows Jesus to be the True Light of the World shining in the darkness as the Living Word; God Himself.
- 2) John 3:19-21 picks up this truth of the Light when it says, "And this is the condemnation (judgment), that "The Light has come into the world" (speaking of Jesus, the only begotten Son of God- 3:16-18). "And mankind loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds (works) were evil" (3:19). For everyone doing evil things hates (detests; esteems less) the Light and does not come to the Light, lest his works are reprov'd (exposed). But the one doing (making by actions) truth comes to the Light, that his (that one's) deeds (works) will be made manifest (visible; clear) that they (the works) are wrought (accomplished) in God (3:20-21). In summary, the Light exposes the evil works of mankind; but God makes clear the works of truth of those coming to the Light.
- 3) After Jesus declared Himself as the Light of the World (8:12), He repeated that truth in John 9:5 by saying: "As long as (when) I am in the world, I am the Light of the world." This is not another "I am" in Scripture as Greek word "ego" is not included (first person singular is understood to be referring back to the one speaking). Just like Jesus did in His "I AM" the Bread of Life statement by feeding over 5000 and 4000, He demonstrates "I AM" the Light of the World by opening the eyes of the man born blind (John 9:6-7).
- 4) Jesus speaks to the people (crowds) concerning this truth again in John 12:35-36, and 46. He said: "Yet a little while (time) is the Light with you; walk while you have the Light lest darkness come upon (overtake) you... while you have the Light, believe in the Light; so that you will become sons of light... I have come 'Light' into the world, that everyone believing in Me will not remain in the darkness" (12:35-36, 46). This is the last time Jesus proclaimed this truth in the Book of John.
- 5) Paul writes of this truth in 2 Cor. 4:4-6, speaking of the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ shining in the blinded minds of unbelievers (v.4), and shining in our hearts the light of the knowledge of God's glory (v.6). Satan blinds the minds of unbelievers, but the Gospel shines the light of the knowledge of God's glory, as our hearts are illumined to the truth.
- 6) Peter writes reminding us that we are a chosen(elect) generation (family; offspring), a royal priesthood, a holy nation (race; people group), a peculiar (possessed) people: that

(purpose statement) you will show forth the praises (virtues) of Him (the One) having called you out of the darkness into **His marvelous light** (1 Pet. 2:9).

- 7) John writes again in I John 1:5-7 and 2:8-10. The message communicated is that God is light and no darkness is found in Him (1:5); so, we should walk in the light, thus, fellowshiping with God and one another (1:7). Also, “true light shines” by one’s actions: The one saying I am in the light and hating his brother is in darkness, but the one loving his brother abides in the light (2:8-10). Application: Do our actions reveal light or darkness?
- 8) Finally, John, when writing about the New Heavens and the New Earth, writes literally: “And night will be no longer; no need of a (portable) lamp of light nor a sun of light, because the Lord God will shed light on them, and they will reign unto the ages of the ages (forever)” (Rev. 22:5). No light needed in the New Heaven and on the New Earth because Jesus is the Eternal Light.

Do you remember the words of the song?

O come to the light, 'Tis shining for thee; Sweetly the light has shined upon me.

Once I was blind, but now I can see: The light of the world is Jesus!

Have you come to the Light?

Tonight, we have clearly read in the pages of Scripture that Jesus said and proved that He is the Great and True “I AM the Light of the World.” The first words spoken in Scripture by God Himself are: “Let there be light” and there was light (Gen. 1:3). In the last chapter of Scripture (Rev. 22:5) there is no longer a need for that light, because Jesus is all that is needed for light in the New Heavens and the New Earth. He is the True Light of the World!

Additional Observation (for personal study):

In the Old Testament, God (LORD Jehovah) and the “Servant of God” are revealed as the Light to the nations (Psalms 27:1; 36:9; Isa. 2:5; 10:17; 42:6-7; 49:6; 60:1-3, 19; Micah 7:8-9). Further, what is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path (Psalms 119:105)?