

GOSPEL OF JOHN

Encounter Jesus – The Son of the Living God

Walking in the Son's Light

Before anyone can believe in Jesus they must know who He is. One of the ways to know Him is to understand the seven *I Am* statements He made in the gospel of **John**. Today, we will examine His declaration of ***I am the light of the world***. Light is often used as a metaphor for God. ***Psalm 27:1 (ESV)*** ¹ *The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The LORD is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?* Jesus' claim to be the *Light of the world* is His claim to be God. The *I Am* portion of the statement substantiates this amazing claim since the eternal designation of *I Am* began in the Old Testament as the revealed name of God.

The four-letter Hebrew word YHWH was the name by which God revealed Himself to Moses at the burning bush. In English we pronounce YHWH as Yahweh or Jehovah in Greek. ***Exodus 3:13-14 (ESV)*** ¹³ *Then Moses said to God, "If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' what shall I say to them?"* ¹⁴ *God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM."* *And he said, "Say this to the people of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.'"* In ancient days, someone's name not only designated who the person was, but suggested the traits of the person. For instance, the name Adam comes from the Hebrew word that means ground. For the Creator of the universe to describe Himself as *I Am*, He was telling Moses to tell the people that He is constant – continuous. – not I Was – or I Want To Be or I Will Be – but ***I AM***. While living in a fearful pandemic infested world, we can find stability and security in our unchanging God. In the New Testament, the Great ***I Am*** reveals Himself as Jesus. ***Hebrews 13:8 (ESV)*** ⁸ *Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.*

Read John 8:12 (ESV) ¹² *Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."*

The Jewish Feast of Tabernacles had just ended. During this feast, there was a great ceremony called the 'Illumination of the Temple', which involved the ritual lighting of four golden oil-fed lamps in the Court of Women. These lamps were huge menorahs/candelabras (75 feet high) lighted in the Temple at night to remind the people of the pillar of fire that had guided Israel in the darkness of their wilderness journey.

JewishRoots.net explains, "In celebration and anticipation, the holiest of Israel's men danced and sang psalms of joy and praise, before the Lord. This festival was a reminder that God had promised to send a light, the Light, to a sin-darkened world. God promised to send the Messiah to renew Israel's glory, release them from bondage, and restore their joy. Imagine that you are in ancient Jerusalem during the Feast of Tabernacles. Visualize seeing these massive menorahs giving a tremendous amount of light. Now imagine the impact of the words said by Jesus in the Temple courtyard when He announced, *I am the Light of the world*. Jesus is the Light, the source of illumination to bring the lost out of darkness."

Isaiah predicted the coming of the Light. **Isaiah 60:19-20 (ESV)** ¹⁹ *The sun shall be no more your light by day, nor for brightness shall the moon give you light; but the LORD will be your everlasting light, and your God will be your glory.* ²⁰ *Your sun shall no more go down, nor your moon withdraw itself; for the LORD will be your everlasting light, and your days of mourning shall be ended.*

Isaiah's prediction is fulfilled in Jesus in **Revelation 21:23-24 (ESV)** ²³ *And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb.* ²⁴ *By its light will the nations walk, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it,*

Yes, the final fulfillment of Jesus as the Light is in the future. However, we can live in His Light now. It is easy to allow fear to control our lives. If we are not careful, the fear of tomorrow can destroy the joys of today. Modern technology has developed night vision equipment that allows the wearers to see clearly in the darkness. You may not have realized it but you have night vision equipment – it is the Light of Jesus. Believers have a Savior who lights our way! However, some prefer to walk in darkness. The wrong response to Jesus' claim is to reject Him based on superficial reasons.

Read John 8:13-18 (ESV) ¹³ *So the Pharisees said to him, "You are bearing witness about yourself; your testimony is not true."* ¹⁴ *Jesus answered, "Even if I do bear witness about myself, my testimony is true, for I know where I came from and where I am going, but you do not know where I come from or where I am going."* ¹⁵ *You judge according to the flesh; I judge no one.* ¹⁶ *Yet even if I do judge, my judgment is true, for it is not I alone who judge, but I and the Father who sent me.* ¹⁷ *In your Law it is written that the testimony of two people is true.* ¹⁸ *I am the one who bears witness about myself, and the Father who sent me bears witness about me."*

The Pharisees decided that Jesus' testimony was untrue based on **Deuteronomy 19:15 (ESV)** ¹⁵ *"A single witness shall not suffice against a person for any crime or for any wrong... Only on the evidence of two witnesses or of three witnesses shall a charge be established.* Jesus and the Pharisees had pretty much had this same conversation before back in **John 5:31 (ESV)** ³¹ *If I alone bear witness about myself, my testimony is not true.* At that time Jesus told them they had gone to John the Baptist to hear the Baptizer's witness. Then, Jesus went on to tell them that His greater witness was the works the Father had given Him. Next, Jesus mentioned the Father Himself and finally He pointed out how the scriptures pointed to Him. Now, the Pharisees were back at it again – doing their best to discredit Jesus.

The Pharisees did not want to believe Jesus was who He said He was. They were desperately looking for any excuse they could find to reject Jesus' claims. They wanted to be in charge. They did not want to answer to a Messiah. The Pharisees preferred to believe Jesus was either a lunatic or a liar. No matter what they believed, the Father, the miracles and the prophecies told the truth that confirmed Jesus is the Light sent from God.

These experts in the Law claimed to know the Law of God, but they did not know the God of the Law. They did not know the Father, and therefore did not know the Son.

Read John 8:19-20 (ESV) ¹⁹ They said to him therefore, “Where is your Father?” Jesus answered, “You know neither me nor my Father. If you knew me, you would know my Father also.” ²⁰ These words he spoke in the treasury, as he taught in the temple; but no one arrested him, because his hour had not yet come.

Some think the Pharisees were asking about Jesus’ human father, and may have been questioning His paternity based on rumors of His mother’s pregnancy before she was married. I personally think they knew exactly the Father Jesus meant. The idea of God being the Israelites’ father is taught in the Old Testament. For example: **Isaiah 63:16 (ESV)** ¹⁶ For you are our Father, though Abraham does not know us, and Israel does not acknowledge us; you, O LORD, are our Father, our Redeemer from of old is your name. From Jesus’ reply, we realize that some questions people ask are just not worth answering as was the case with these arguing Pharisees. The Temple Treasury was located in the Court of Women. This is where the lighting ceremony would have taken place. These folks finding fault with the Light of the World were choosing to remain in spiritual darkness.

Here we have another mention concerning Jesus’ hour having not come reminding us of the sovereignty of God. One of our problems with the sovereignty of God is we sometimes conclude that God is not in control of the circumstances of our lives. Reading *no one arrested him, because his hour had not yet come*, reminds us that God is in control of every situation. You may want to argue – ‘well, that was Jesus’. Yes, God was directing the footsteps of Jesus but He directs our as well. Our God has the ability to arrange human actions to fulfill His purposes in our lives. Follow the Light!

Read John 8:21-24 (ESV) ²¹ So he said to them again, “I am going away, and you will seek me, and you will die in your sin. Where I am going, you cannot come.” ²² So the Jews said, “Will he kill himself, since he says, ‘Where I am going, you cannot come?’” ²³ He said to them, “You are from below; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world.” ²⁴ I told you that you would die in your sins, for unless you believe that I am he you will die in your sins.”

This was the third time during the Feast of Tabernacles that Jesus had said He was going away (*John 7:33; 8:14, 21*). For some reason they thought Jesus might be considering suicide. I am sure they would have loved that. At the beginning of the Feast His opponents had been looking for him with evil intent and they found Him although they were unable to arrest Him. Now, Jesus says, *Where I am going, you cannot come*. Jesus was from above – this earth was not His home. When we accept Christ, we are born into an ‘out of this world’ family and home. I think this is mostly the reason that no matter how good our days here on earth may be at the moment, there is always that lingering knowledge that tells us “You are not home yet.” The way we prepare to ‘go home’ is to believe in Jesus. These folks – these ‘religious’ temple goers never made it. And here they go again with their questioning.

To go to heaven, believe the truth about yourself and the truth about Jesus while there is still time. –

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Read John 8:25-28 (ESV) ²⁵ So they said to him, “Who are you?” Jesus said to them, “Just what I have been telling you from the beginning.” ²⁶ I have much to say about you and much to judge, but he who sent me

is true, and I declare to the world what I have heard from him.”²⁷ They did not understand that he had been speaking to them about the Father.²⁸ So Jesus said to them, “When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am he, and that I do nothing on my own authority, but speak just as the Father taught me.

The crucial question in all of life is Jesus’ question to the twelve in **Matthew 16:15 (ESV)**¹⁵ *He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?”* How each of us answers this question is a matter of our own life and death. When the Pharisees asked “*Who are You?*” they were not asking with a ‘seeker’s heart’. Their attitude was more in the vein of “Who do you think you are to tell us that we will die in our sins?” They were challenging Jesus, not seeking to know the truth about Him.

In verse 26, Jesus tell them that He had much to judge. The Jews believed that judgment belonged only to God – another way Jesus was proclaiming His deity to them. They were always asking – but never listening and Jesus knew it.

Jesus said, *When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am he.* There are two other places in the Gospel of **John** when Jesus speaks about being *lifted up*. Jesus first spoke to Nicodemus about being *lifted up*. He will bring it up again in **John 12:32**.

It is clear today that Jesus was speaking about His own death, when He would be *lifted up* on the cross. Wiersbe says, “The words translated *lifted up* have a dual meaning: lifted up in crucifixion and lifted up in exaltation and glorification... It would be in His death, burial, resurrection, and ascension that Jesus would be revealed to the Jewish nation...The early church, following the example of their Lord, would show from the Old Testament prophecies both the sufferings and the glory of the Messiah.”

Read John 8:29-30 (ESV)²⁹ *And he who sent me is with me. He has not left me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to him.”³⁰ As he was saying these things, many believed in him.*

McGee comments, “Have you ever finished a day without looking back on it and wishing that you had done some things a little differently? Our Lord never finished a day with a regret. He always did those things that pleased His Father. He is making it abundantly clear that He has come to do the Father's will.” As His children that should be our desire as well.

The negativity of the Pharisees towards the teaching of Jesus caused them to walk in spiritual darkness. But, others chose a different path. *As he was saying these things, many believed in him.* They chose to walk in the Light – two roads: one narrow – one broad. Think of those huge menorahs 75 feet tall that illuminated the temple. Then recall Jesus saying: *I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.* There is nothing to fear when we walk in Light of the Son! Let’s illuminate the Light of Jesus in the temples of our bodies.