

The “I Am” Sayings of Jesus

I Am the Light of the World

John 8:12-20

Introduction

Jesus’s second “I Am” statement takes place during the Feast of Booths (tents). This was a festival commemorating the Israelites’ journey through the wilderness during the Exodus. Both they and God (through the “Glory Cloud”) lived in tents for forty years. During that time, the fiery presence of God was the Israelites’ guiding light. In today’s lesson, we will see how Jesus is our guiding light. Are we really following him, though?

Read John 8:12-20.

- 1: What images or emotions do the experiences of “light” and “darkness” bring to mind?**

- 2: In other philosophies and religions, what does it mean to be “enlightened”?**

- 3: What do the images of darkness and light represent in the Bible? (Survey the following passages.)**
 - Genesis 1:2-5
 - Exodus 10:21; 13:21
 - Psalm 74:20
 - Psalm 27:1; Psalm 104:2; 1 Timothy 6:16
 - Isaiah 9:2
 - Joel 2:31; Matthew 24:29
 - Matthew 25:30, 27:45
 - Luke 8:17
 - Acts 26:18
 - 2 Corinthians 4:4; 6:14
 - Revelation 21:23-24; 22:5

- 4: How do you feel about bright light when you have been in the dark for a long time (for example, asleep)? How does this relate to our spiritual condition? (See John 3:19-20.)**

- 5: When Jesus says, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life,” what is Jesus saying about himself?**

- 6: What does darkness represent in this statement? What do you think it means to “walk in darkness”?**

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7: Why can it be hard to realize you are spiritually blind? What are some areas in your social or spiritual life where you think you might be blind?

8: When you feel lost, sad, or confused, what “guiding lights” do you look to? What might be the danger of having guiding lights besides Jesus? (See Luke 6:39.)

9: How do we walk in the light as He is in the light? (See 1 John 1:5-10, 2:9-10; Psalm 119:105.)

10: What is the result of walking in the light? (1 John 1:7)

Closing Thoughts

When Jesus says, “I am the light of the world,” Jesus is saying he is more than a good teacher. He is not merely *a* light in the world. He is *the* light of the world. By identifying himself with this image, Jesus is drawing our attention all the way back to the Exodus (and before that to the creation of the world). In the wilderness, God led his people by means of a flaming cloud that was their guiding light. This light never disappeared; it was constant. It stayed with God’s people throughout their whole journey. Even when they were disobedient and God punished them in the wilderness, the glorious light of God’s presence never left them. The light of the world does not forsake those who follow him.

This is why the theme of our study through these “I Am” sayings is “I AM with You.” Jesus is the glory of God, and he promises to never leave us or forsake us (Hebrews 13:5). The light of the world, the light that gives light to all, is the God-man who dwells with his people. He gives sight to the blind. He gives understanding to the dumb. He gives wisdom to the foolish. And, he gives eternal life to the sinner. This is Jesus. Jesus is committed to his people. He is committed to us.

Immediately following Jesus’s “I Am” discussion with the Jewish people in John 8, we see a miracle. In this miracle, Jesus heals a blind man. He spits in some dirt, makes mud, covers the man’s eyes in it, and tells him to go wash it off. When he does, the man suddenly regains his sight. This man had never seen before—he was blind from birth. Here’s the point of that miracle: Jesus is able to give sight to the blind. He is able to take people who are walking in darkness and give them the ability to see. This means that Jesus really is the light of the world—and that he is able to give light to you and me.

If you feel like you are stumbling around in the darkness, then turn to Jesus. He is the light, and he gives light to everyone who asks for it. He gives grace, wisdom, understanding, healing, and eternal life. We live in a crazy time right now, and we don’t know what tomorrow will hold. Look to Jesus. He is a stable, faithful guiding light. He is our north star, our lighthouse, when all around us is dark.