



## Christ, Our Light

*"I AM the Light of the world." Therefore, approach him and be enlightened, and do not let your faces be ashamed, be signed with the true Light. It is a season of new birth; let us be born again. It is a time of reformation; let us receive again the first Adam. Let us not remain what we are, but let us become what we once were. The Light shines in the darkness in this life and in the flesh. It is chased by the darkness but is not overtaken by it... But it encounters God and is defeated. Let us put away darkness so that we may draw near to the Light and may become... the children of perfect Light.*

—Gregory of Nazianzus

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## Around the Word BIBLE STUDY Eastertide, 2016

# The I AM sayings of Jesus John 8:12–30; 9:1–41

### Session 2: "I AM the Light of the World"

Light and darkness are contrasted throughout Scripture. Darkness is associated with sin, evil, wickedness, death, ignorance and unbelief; in short, anything contrary to God's will. Light, on the other hand, is associated with wisdom and faith – both gifts from God; Light is also a symbol and reminder of God's presence and power (think the burning bush or the pillar of fire in Exodus); Light is also life. Certainly we see this in our daily lives; light provides warmth, energy, and visibility for all that daily bread entails. And yet, Light is also life in our Christian life as well. *I AM the Light of the World*, Jesus declares. His Word, presence, promise, and life are light to us who dwelled in darkness and the shadow of death. Jesus truly is the Light that no darkness can overcome, for he has overcome all sin, death, and darkness for us.

#### Opening: Psalm 27

<sup>1</sup>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?

<sup>2</sup>When evildoers assail me  
to eat | up my flesh,\*  
my adversaries and foes,  
it is they who stum- | ble and fall.

<sup>3</sup>Though an army encamp against me,  
my heart | shall not fear,\*  
though war arise against me,  
yet I will be | confident.

<sup>4</sup>One thing have I asked of the LORD,  
that will I seek | after:\*

**that I may dwell in the house of the LORD  
all the days of my life,  
to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD  
and to inquire in his | temple.**

<sup>5</sup>For he will hide me in his shelter  
in the day of | trouble;\*

he will conceal me under the cover of his  
tent; he will lift me high up- | on a rock.

<sup>6</sup>And now my head shall be lifted up  
above my enemies all around me,  
and will offer in his tent  
sacrifices with | shouts of joy;\*

**I will sing and make melody | to the LORD.**

<sup>7</sup>Hear, O LORD, when I | cry aloud;\*

be gracious to me and | answer me!

<sup>8</sup>You have said, | "Seek my face."\*

**My heart says to you,  
"Your face, LORD, | do I seek."**

<sup>9</sup>Hide not your face from me.  
Turn not your servant away in | anger,\*

O you who have been my help.  
Cast me not off; forsake me not,  
O God of my sal- | vation!

<sup>10</sup>For my father and my mother have for- |  
saken me,\*  
**but the LORD will | take me in.**

<sup>11</sup>Teach me your way, | O LORD,\*  
and lead me on a level path  
because of my | enemies.

<sup>12</sup>Give me not up to the will of my adver- |  
saries;\*

**for false witnesses have risen against me,  
and they breathe out | violence.**

<sup>13</sup>I believe that I shall look upon the goodness |  
of the LORD\*  
in the land of the | living!

<sup>14</sup>Wait | for the LORD;\*

**be strong, and let your heart take courage;  
wait | for the LORD!**

**Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
and to the Holy | Spirit.  
as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

#### Read John 8:12–30

**v. 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."**

In Judaism, it was common for rabbis and prophets to be called "lights" or "lamps". The Torah (first five books of the Old Testament) was also known as the light of God's truth. What makes Jesus' claim to be the Light of the World similar

and different to the rabbis, prophets, and the Torah? What does this title Jesus give us reveal about his identity? How does Jesus give the light of life?

Read Deuteronomy 18:15-18 and Isaiah 9:1-7. Between these two Old Testament passages, how does Jesus fulfill these Messianic prophecies foretold by Moses and Isaiah? Why would this be significant in Jesus' teaching with the Pharisees in the context of John 8?

Read John 1:1-14. How do John's words about Jesus in the prologue of the Gospel come to fruition in Jesus' encounter with the Pharisees (John 8) compared to the blind man (John 9)?

**v. 19: "You know neither me nor my Father. If you knew me, you would know my Father also."**

What does this verse teach us about Jesus' unity with God? How is it similar to the wording of the Apostles' and Nicene Creed?

**v. 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.**

What is John referring to when he says that Jesus' hour had not yet come? See also John 2:4 and 12:27-33.

**v. 23-24: He said to them, "You are from below; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world. I told you that you would die in your sins, for unless you believe that I am he you will die in your sins."**

What does Jesus mean when he tells the Pharisees they are from below and he is from above? Why does Jesus declare the Law in its full sternness to the Pharisees?

In verse 24, there is another one of Jesus' I AM sayings. We are accustomed to the I AM sayings followed by a predicate (e.g. I AM the Light of the world, etc.) which reveal him as Messiah and Lord. There are also seven other I AM sayings without the predicate, where Jesus points to his divine nature as well (John 4:26; 6:20; 8:24, 28, 58; 13:19; and 18:5, 6, 8). Most English bibles translate this phrase as "I am he", but in the Greek it is similar to I AM in the Old Testament, God's personal name. Knowing this, what is Jesus saying about himself in v. 24 and again in v. 28?

**v. 29-29: 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 Fa-**

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The I AM Sayings of Jesus  
John 8:12-30; 9:1-41

**ther taught me. 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."**

How will they know that Jesus is YHWH of the Old Testament? Where does Jesus reveal who is most clearly? Why is the Father pleased at what Jesus is going to do in accomplishing the salvation of the world by being lifted up on the cross?

**Read John 9:1-41**

**v.1-2: As he passed by, he saw a man blind from birth. And his disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?"**

When illness, tragedy, or death happens, we – like the disciples – often look for someone or something to blame. According to Jesus, what is to blame for this man's blindness? How does Jesus' answer help us address other problems of pain, suffering, and evil in life?

**v. 4-6: We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming, when no one can work. As long as I am in the**

**world, I am the light of the world." Having said these things, he spit on the ground and made mud with the saliva. Then he anointed the man's eyes with the mud.** What "night" is Jesus referring to in v. 4? What's the significance in Jesus declaring "I AM the Light of the World" and then healing the blind man?

**v. 35: Jesus heard that they had cast him out, and having found him he said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" He answered, "And who is he, sir, that I may believe in him?"** How does the blind man answer Jesus? (v. 38). What is ironic about the blind man compared to the Pharisees when it comes to faith in Jesus?

**Closing: The People that in Darkness Sat (LSB, 412)**

**ABOUT THE AUTHOR** Rev. Samuel Schuldheisz ([samwise.schuldheisz@gmail.com](mailto:samwise.schuldheisz@gmail.com)) is the pastor at Redeemer Lutheran Church in Huntington Beach, CA.

