

## **“I Am the Light of the World”**

John 8:12-30

**Introduction:** (Read John 8:12-30) – I have a tendency to complicate matters as I study – not disconnected complication but the complications that arise out of making the many connections that the Scriptures themselves make and bringing them into each passage. I’m indebted to John Piper for helping me to stay clear in my teaching this morning.

Piper noted the obvious when he said that at the close of this section John, the gospel writer, reports that “Even as he spoke, many put their faith in him” (cf. 8:30). To set up John’s report of faith on the part of many hearers, twice earlier (8:21, 24) he said/warned that unless the Jews believed that, as Jesus said “I Am,” they would die in their sin. So in 8:30 *we are made witness to people passing from death to life.*

This is the purpose for John’s gospel (cf. 20:30-31). This is the reason Jesus came (cf. John 3:16; 10:10). This is the reason Jesus teaches and does miraculous signs. This is the reason that I preach and teach and counsel and help etc. – the reason we exist as a church. That is what I pray will happen this morning at some level – that the One who is the Light of the World will shine brightly and those who are in darkness and death will see the light of God’s glory in Jesus and believe – from death and darkness to life and light!! But I also want those who have already entered into the life that is in Jesus by faith to walk in the “light of life.”

### ***Jesus’ Declaration, “I am the light of the World” is a Profound Statement of the New Creation Jesus brings in Salvation/Redemption***

- Jesus places Himself in this statement of New Creation as the Divine Creator - who created from outside of creation - come to be the Redeemer/rescuer or the Divine source of New Creation from within Creation. This is seen in His use of what is known as the emphatic “I Am” statement – first with predicate (cf. 8:12) and then in absolute form (cf. 8:24, 28, 58). These “I Am” statements carry much of the weight of the Christology of John’s Gospel. In these statements Jesus use the emphatic form of “I Am.” These statements “...are formulaic self-revealing sayings of Jesus, which carry much of the weight of the Christology of the Gospel.” Therefore they deserve a little extra attention AND we understand that in this declaration Jesus is saying something pretty significant about Himself.

1. The *absolute* “I Am” statements of John – (cf. 4:26; 6:20; 8:24, 28, 58; 13:19; 18:5, 6, 8 – the three in chapter 18 are taken as one<sup>1</sup>). These each make their appeal to God’s self-revelation to Moses in Exodus 3:14 – “God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: ‘I AM has sent me to you.’” (NIV). Jesus is connecting Himself to Yahweh’s claim

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<sup>1</sup> Richard Buckham, “The Testimony of the Beloved Disciple,” p. 244

to be uniquely and exclusively God!! “I am He who causes to be...I am the Eternally Existing One”<sup>2</sup>

2. The “I Am” statements *with predicate* - 7 “I Am” statements with predicate are statements Jesus makes to place Himself actively within His creation for the purpose of describing His work of redemption, rescue, restoration or New Creation – (“I am the bread of life”- 6:35, 41, 48; “I am the light of the world” – 8:12; 9:5; “I am the gate for the sheep” – 10:7, 9; “I am the good shepherd” – 10:11, 14; “I am the resurrection and the life” – 11:25; “I am the way, the truth and the life” – 14:6; “I am the true vine” – 15:1).

- Jesus’ bold declaration, “I Am the Light of the World” certainly has a moral and revelatory nature to “light.” However, it is, more significantly, a reference to the New Creation He alone produces/achieves in redemption/salvation – cf. John 1:1-5, 9-13

1. The declaration Jesus makes, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life,” is understood to be Jesus announces Himself to be the One who brings in New Creation based in the references to “light” and “life.”

2. The original creation, by Adam’s sin, was plunged into darkness and death. The New Creation – a work of God – would be brought out of death and darkness into life and light by the righteous work of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Adam – Jesus – who also was the Great I Am!! The first words attributed to God in the Bible are found in Genesis 1:3 – “And God said, ‘Let there be light.’” The original Creation (cf. Genesis 1-2) and the New Creation are first linked in John’s Gospel by the language of 1:1-5, 9-13. It is there that we find John’s original reference to “life” and “light” or “life” that is “light.”

That this is a reference to the “New Creation” achieved by Jesus is made clear in John 1:9-13 when the “life” which Jesus brings – the “life” that is “light” – is seen to be life in relationship with God as our Father through faith in Jesus who is the “true light.” This is made even clearer in the “light/darkness” and “life/death” correlation in John 3:16-20, 36 and Jesus’ statement that “eternal life” is to “know God” and Jesus whom God has sent - 17:1-3.

This language of relationship is front and center in the unveiling of the “New Creation,” as seen in John’s prophetic statement made in Revelation 21:1-7. In this context, we who are the redeemed, experience the face to face dwelling of God with us, known only by the pre-incarnate Son and Adam and Eve in the original creation – in Eden (even then it was different than that enjoyed by those created anew in the image of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Adam – Jesus). In that perfect New Creation;

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<sup>2</sup> Preston, MABS Thesis Multnomah University, p. 37

**\*\*There will be no need for a Temple because “the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple.”** There is no mediation of relationship necessary because of the finished work of the Lamb. – cf. 21:22

**\*\*Moreover, there will be no need for the light of the moon or the sun because “the glory of God (the Father) gives it light, and the Lamb (Jesus) is its lamp” – there is the absence of “darkness” and all that means. This light which destroys the darkness (cf. John 1:9-13) is born of the “eternal life” given us in Jesus. – cf. 21:23**

**\*\*This is confirmed in the profound statement of 22:1-5. Notice the connection between the absence of the curse, the presence of life and light or the absence of death and darkness (cf. 21:3-7) and the nature of “face to face” life in the presence of God before His throne!**

**Transition:** This is the incredible nature of what Jesus was declaring as the “I Am” who is to us “the light of the world,” with the promise that the one who follows Him “will never walk in darkness, but will have *the light of life.*”

**Application:** The fact that this is a reference to the work of New Creation done in Jesus means that to walk in the light of life;

**First** – It is to believe that Jesus is “I Am.” As we will see next week – this is something beyond the reach of the natural mind (cf. 8:13-30). It requires the work of the Spirit to regenerate and to illuminate, to bring life and light (cf. Ephesians 2:1-5; 2 Corinthians 4:4-6).

**Second** – It is to walk in the perspective/the Light of the New Creation achieved from within by the God-Man (cf. John 14:1-6; 2 Corinthians 4:16-18; Philippians 1:20-21; 3:20-21 etc.).

**Third** – It is to be bold in our witness both in life and in words. This comes in the full knowledge that, like Jesus, we have been sent of the Father – we know things that the natural man in darkness cannot know – our witness is confirmed by the God of the gospel and the unarguable truths of the gospel

If we do not speak and declare that Jesus is “I Am” then all of those who do not believe will die in their sin (cf. 2 Corinthians 5:17-21)!!