

Doctrine of Christ

I Am the Light of the World

1. The second “I Am” in Scripture is record in the gospel of John.
 - *John 8:12 Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.*
2. In some ancient manuscripts, this specific text does not occur here, but is placed in a different context.
3. The statement of Christ is given following the story of the woman being dragged before Christ for condemnation. After she is dismissed, Jesus spoke to those who remained.
4. The term light is an important term in the gospel of John. It is a metaphor for the truth of the gospel, the ministry of Christ, and what happens to people who are converted to the Lord.
5. Light is a term that is contrasted with darkness. Individuals are described naturally as being children of darkness.
 - *Ephesians 5:8 For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light:*
6. Darkness refers to a moral deficiency leading to moral darkness. Joseph Conrad’s novel, *The Heart of Darkness*, explores the depths of total depravity. The heart of darkness is a heart that lives in a state of corruption.
7. There are works that are done in darkness.
 - *John 3:19 And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.*
8. Those who engage in works of virtue are not inclined to work in darkness.
9. Isaiah spoke of a day that would come when people who walk in darkness would see a great light.
 - *Isaiah 9:2 The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.*
10. There is an antithesis in Scripture between light and darkness. Jesus is the light of the world that radiates the effulgent glory of God who is seen as being light. God is viewed as dwelling in light inaccessible.

- *1 Timothy 6:16 Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen.*

11. When God manifest Himself in Scripture, He does so with overpower expressions of light.

- Jesus appeared in glory on the Mount of Transfiguration. *Matthew 17:1 And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart, 2 And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light.*

Christ did not reflect light, but emanated it. The light of Christ came from within Him, and radiated outwardly, unlike Moses, whose face radiated the reflected glory he enjoyed by being with God. There was a reflected glory, not an inherent, or intrinsic glory.

Exodus 34:35 And the children of Israel saw the face of Moses, that the skin of Moses' face shone: and Moses put the vail upon his face again, until he went in to speak with him.

- Jesus appeared to Saul in a glory of light. *Acts 9:3 And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven:*

12. The importance of light is seen in the fact that it gives color to objects. Without light an orange, a shirt, the universe has no color. It is the light that gives color to an item.

13. Certain substances will refract certain colors of the light spectrum while others are absorbed. Without the source of light, everything is black. There is no color.

14. In Christ there is color, and there is glory, and His disciples were eye witnesses to it.

- *John 1:14 And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.*

15. Prior to John 8, Jesus had been spoken of by John as light.

- *John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 The same was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. 4 In him was life; and the life was the light of men. 5 And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.*

16. The metaphor of light and darkness is not unique to Christian literature. It was a favorite metaphor of the Greek philosopher Plato.

Special Note.

In *The Republic*, Plato tells the story of slaves who are confined to the quarters in a cave. There is a little fire in the cave which reflects shadows on the walls in the cave. The slaves have no clear view of reality. Plato calls the shadows “opinion”. He sees this as being less than true knowledge. In order to have true knowledge individuals have to get out of the cave, out of the shadows, out of the darkness and into the noonday brightness of light. In the shining of the sun the slaves can behold objects as they are. It is only in the context of light that reality be known in order to have knowledge.

17. In the second century, Justin Martyr argued that knowledge of God comes not only in the Bible, but through nature.
 - *Psalms 19:1 To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David. 19 The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork.*
18. Because of the light of nature many truths are revealed, even to the ungodly, that benefit humanity. Individuals can be philosophers, geologist, scientist, and mathematicians without believing in God, but ultimately, they operate within the limiting shadows of their unbelief.
19. What John argued, what Christians today contend for, is that the Supreme Author of all knowledge and truth is Christ. In Christ is the fullness of the godhead bodily expressed. Christ is the one who imparts whatever light individuals have who come into the world.
20. Even when the Light is rejected, there are benefits that are enjoyed by the unbeliever.
21. In the beginning, the universe was nothing but formlessness, emptiness, and darkness. Then God said, “Let there be light”, and the angels sang in wonder and joy. The first act of God in creation was to bring light to a universe that was in darkness without it.
 - *Genesis 1:1 In the beginning God created the Heaven and the earth. 2 And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. 3 And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. 4 And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness.*
22. The end of biblical revelation contains the vivid relation of a new heaven, and a new earth, bathed, not in natural light, but with the light of the glory of God.
 - *Revelation 22:5 And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever.*
23. When a person becomes a Christian, new sight is given to see Christ in all of His splendor and glory.

- *John 8:12 Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life. 13 The Pharisees therefore said unto him, Thou bearest record of thyself; thy record is not true. 14 Jesus answered and said unto them, Though I bear record of myself, yet my record is true: for I know whence I came, and whither I go; but ye cannot tell whence I come, and whither I go. 15 Ye judge after the flesh; I judge no man. 16 And yet if I judge, my judgment is true: for I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent me. 17 It is also written in your law, that the testimony of two men is true. 18 I am one that bear witness of myself, and the Father that sent me beareth witness of me. 19 Then said they unto him, Where is thy Father? Jesus answered, Ye neither know me, nor my Father: if ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also.*

24. When the Pharisees protested Jesus declaring Himself to be the Light of the world, the Lord declared, that legally, He had a witness, His Father. When God speaks, there is no need for human collaboration.

25. At the baptism of Jesus, the Father confirmed Jesus to be His Son, in whom He was pleased.

- *Matthew 3:17 And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.*

26. Some of the Pharisees, such as Nicodemus, acknowledged the claims that Jesus did come from God.

- *John 3:1 There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: 2 The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.*