

The Great I AM Part 10 "I AM the Light of the World"

Today we start a new topic in our 'Yahweh: the Great I AM' study. We are exploring the many 'I AM' statements Jesus makes in the gospel of John. The next metaphor he uses to describe one of his many attributes is 'light' and it is found in the eighth chapter where he says, "I AM the light of the world".

God clues us in right away in the gospel of Luke as to the purpose of the Christ's 1st coming, it was to bring consolation, the light of revelation and salvation to the world by enlightening mankind about God the Father's love. We read in Luke 2:25-32,

"And behold, there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon, and this man was righteous and devout, looking forward to the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he would see the Lord's Christ. And he came in the Spirit into the temple, and when the parents brought in the child Jesus so that they could do for him according to what was customary under the law, he took him in his arms and praised God and said, "Now dismiss your servant in peace, Lord, according to your word. For my eyes have seen your salvation that you have prepared in the presence of all the peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and glory to your people Israel."

Indulge me please because I love to chase rabbits; I believe that is how we get a deeper understanding of a matter. I want to point out that here is another pseudonym for the Christ, 'The Consolation of Israel'.

What is consolation? According to Webster, Consolation is: Comfort; alleviation of misery, or distress of mind; refreshment of mind or spirits; a comparative degree of happiness in distress or misfortune, springing from any circumstance that abates the evil, or supports and strengthens the mind, as hope, joy, courage and the like.

So the Christ is going to be the healing, comforting spiritual balm that Israel has been so desperately in need of because of their sin since the time of the prophets. Do you recall the question that Jeremiah asked on behalf of God in regard to an unrepentant people? He asked, "Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there? Why then isn't the health of the daughter of my people recovered?" God wanted them to come to him and repent so he could heal them but they would not, so now he is sending his son the Messiah, the Christ who is the consolation that they need.

But God will not force them to accept this healing balm the Messiah has to offer, they have to want it and accept it and make it their own. So how does the Christ impart this healing balm, his consolation to those who believe? Simeon as he held baby Jesus said the Messiah would be a 'light of revelation'.

Here's another learning moment, 'Hey Noah Webster! What's revelation? His primary entry is: "It is the act of disclosing or discovering to others what was before unknown to them; appropriately, the disclosure or communication of truth to men by God himself, or by his authorized agents, the prophets and apostles."

I love Noah Webster's dictionary because you will not find that definition of revelation as the primary entry in the American Collegiate dictionary.

So the Christ is the light of revelation to the gentiles. The O.T. points to this fact of the Christ. Listen to these verses.

Isa 42:6-7, "I, Yahweh, have called you in righteousness, and will hold your hand, and will keep you, and make you a covenant for the people, as a light for the nations; to open the blind eyes, to bring the prisoners out of the dungeon, and those who sit in darkness out of the prison."

God through Isaiah told his people the Christ would be righteous, be the testator of a new covenant with them and would give them a way out of sin, How? By delivering them spiritual enlightenment so they could see the destructive nature of sin and be released from the oppression of mind it binds on them. "...if then the Son may make you free, you will be free indeed." Likewise:

Isa 60:1-3, "Arise, shine; for your light has come, and Yahweh's glory has risen on you. For, behold, darkness will cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples; but Yahweh will arise on you, and his glory shall be seen on you. Nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising."

Psalms 43:3, "Oh, send out your light and your truth. Let them lead me. Let them bring me to your holy hill, To your tents."

Dan 2:22, "He reveals the deep and secret things. He knows what is in the darkness, and the light dwells with him."

So our Savior, Jesus Christ is the illuminating light that will reveal God's love, mercy and grace to us, he will give us enlightenment through his word, which are his teachings and those lead us to salvation if we will believe and obey him.

Jesus statement in John 8 is true but he actually is being modest because not only is he the light of the world, which is referring to he being the one who can give spiritual enlightenment, but he also created the physical light we have in the world that is essential for life as well and we'll look at that later in our study.

This is the first time Jesus makes this statement himself, but the author of this gospel, the apostle John, credits the light attribute to him back in the first chapter verses 1-14. Take note of the other unique pseudonyms he uses for the Messiah, I will discuss some of those as devotional topics on Wednesday nights. Let's take a look at John chapter one. This chapter introduces us to Jesus and his deity.

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it. A man came, sent from God, whose name was John. This one came as a witness, in order that he could testify about the light, so that all would believe through him. That one was not the light, but came in order that he could testify about the light. The true light, who gives light to every person, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world came into being through him, and the world did not recognize him. ~

~ He came to his own things, and his own people did not receive him. But as many as received him—to those who believe in his name—he gave to them authority to become children of God, who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of a husband, but of God. And the Word became flesh and took up residence among us, and we saw his glory, glory as of the one and only from the Father, full of grace and truth.”

The Word, God, Light that gives life and True Light are the names ascribed to him. And as Isaiah and some of the Old Testament writers had described the Christ, we see that is what the apostle John is saying too. The very Holy Being who created the world, and created life; chose Israel to be his people, but when he came as a man and lived among his people to offer them eternal life through spiritual enlightenment, they rejected him.

For those who do believe in him he gives authority to become his children by being born again, born of God.

Let’s look at his ‘I AM the light of the world’ statement in John. The Jews had just celebrated the Festival of Booths in chapter seven and the Pharisees and teachers of the law dragged in a woman caught in the act of adultery with which they hoped to catch Jesus in some kind of error, which proved futile.

John 8:12, “When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.” Sounds like the 1st chapter of John, specifically verse 4. ‘In him was life, and that life was the light of men.’

What follows after this verse amounts to a long argument between Jesus and the non-believers, those who were blind and in spiritual darkness and that is why they couldn't understand what he was saying. In this argument we will see another of Jesus golden 'I AM' statements. A few versions got that particular verse correct, most versions translators added the italicized word '*he*', thinking they know better than Holy Spirit. I know we're going over a lot of scripture in this lesson but remember Paul's instruction to Timothy which was to 'devote himself to the public reading of scriptures'. By doing so we are fulfilling God's desire for his people, so bear with me please. I'll be reading from the NIV to illustrate a point that I'll make when we get to verse 24.

John 8:12-59 (NIV)

12 When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

13 The Pharisees challenged him, "Here you are, appearing as your own witness; your testimony is not valid."

14 Jesus answered, "Even if I testify on my own behalf, my testimony is valid, for I know where I came from and where I am going. But you have no idea where I come from or where I am going.

15 You judge by human standards; I pass judgment on no one.

16 But if I do judge, my decisions are right, because I am not alone. I stand with the Father, who sent me.

17 In your own Law it is written that the testimony of two men is valid.

18 I am one who testifies for myself; my other witness is the Father, who sent me."

19 Then they asked him, "Where is your father?" "You do not know me or my Father," Jesus replied. "If you knew me, you would know my Father also."

20 He spoke these words while teaching in the temple area near the place where the offerings were put. Yet no one seized him, because his time had not yet come.

21 Once more Jesus said to them, "I am going away, and you will look for me, and you will die in your sin. Where I go, you cannot come."

22 This made the Jews ask, "Will he kill himself? Is that why he says, 'Where I go, you cannot come'?"

23 But he continued, "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; if you do not believe that I am [the one I claim to be], you will indeed die in your sins."

The NIV adds to God's word by putting their incorrect interpretation in brackets, "If you do not believe that I AM [the one I claim to be]" which perverts the meaning of what is said, and as I've said in past lessons regarding this complaint of mine I say it again, "Shame on the translators for diminishing what the LORD is saying here. Again in verses 28 and 58 they do the same. The best version I've read for this verse actually gives the meaning of God's name 'Yahweh' it is from the Good News Bible, listen.

(GNB) 24 "That is why I told you that you will die in your sins. And you will die in your sins if you do not believe that 'I Am Who I Am'."

That is what he told Moses who he was when speaking to Moses from the burning bush!

(TLV) has verse 24 correct as well. "Therefore I told you that you will die in your sins. If you don't believe that I am, you will die in your sins."

In this statement the Savior implies he is the Messiah, but overtly and explicitly declares that he is none other than Yahweh! I'm not just the Messiah, but Yahweh the Messiah! Back to John 8 picking up at verse 25.

25 "Who are you?" they asked. "Just what I have been claiming all along," Jesus replied.

26 "I have much to say in judgment of you. But he who sent me is reliable, and what I have heard from him I tell the world."

27 They did not understand that he was telling them about his Father.

28 So Jesus said, "When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am [the one I claim to be] and that I do nothing on my own but speak just what the Father has taught me.

29 The one who sent me is with me; he has not left me alone, for I always do what pleases him."

30 Even as he spoke, many put their faith in him.

31 To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples.

32 Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

33 They answered him, "We are Abraham's descendants and have never been slaves of anyone. How can you say that we shall be set free?"

34 Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave to sin.

35 Now a slave has no permanent place in the family, but a son belongs to it forever.

36 So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.

37 I know you are Abraham's descendants. Yet you are ready to kill me, because you have no room for my word.

38 I am telling you what I have seen in the Father's presence, and you do what you have heard from your father."

39 "Abraham is our father," they answered. "If you were Abraham's children," said Jesus, "then you would do the things Abraham did.

40 As it is, you are determined to kill me, a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God. Abraham did not do such things.

41 You are doing the things your own father does." "We are not illegitimate children," they protested. "The only Father we have is God himself."

42 Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and now am here. I have not come on my own; but he sent me.

43 Why is my language not clear to you? Because you are unable to hear what I say.

44 You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

45 Yet because I tell the truth, you do not believe me!

46 Can any of you prove me guilty of sin? If I am telling the truth, why don't you believe me?

47 He who belongs to God hears what God says. The reason you do not hear is that you do not belong to God."

48 The Jews answered him, "Aren't we right in saying that you are a Samaritan and demon-possessed?"

49 "I am not possessed by a demon," said Jesus, "but I honor my Father and you dishonor me.

50 I am not seeking glory for myself; but there is one who seeks it, and he is the judge.

51 I tell you the truth, if anyone keeps my word, he will never see death."

52 At this the Jews exclaimed, "Now we know that you are demon-possessed! Abraham died and so did the prophets, yet you say that if anyone keeps your word, he will never taste death.

53 Are you greater than our father Abraham? He died, and so did the prophets. Who do you think you are?"

54 Jesus replied, "If I glorify myself, my glory means nothing. My Father, whom you claim as your God, is the one who glorifies me.

55 Though you do not know him, I know him. If I said I did not, I would be a liar like you, but I do know him and keep his word.

56 Your father Abraham rejoiced at the thought of seeing my day; he saw it and was glad."

57 "You are not yet fifty years old," the Jews said to him, "and you have seen Abraham!"

58 "I tell you the truth," Jesus answered, "before Abraham was born, I am!"

59 At this, they picked up stones to stone him, but Jesus hid himself, slipping away from the temple grounds.

Jesus plainly and openly said that he is Yahweh, the Great I AM! Praise be to God forever and ever and to Jesus the Christ, the Great I AM for making it clear to us. Jesus declared, "If you hold to my teachings you will know the truth and the truth will make you free", that is the light he

brings to humanity, accept this truth. Part 2 tonight.
Invitation