

THE GREAT “I AM’S” of JESUS

by

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CHAPTER TWO

I AM THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

Two of the great “**I Am’s**” of Jesus were spoken during the discourse in the court of the temple after the incident with the woman taken in adultery. Here Jesus said, “**I am the light of the world**” (John 8:12).

One of the darkest scenes of our Lord’s ministry is this one. Double-dealing religious leaders were representing a double standard of morals. Every one of the Pharisees involved in the bringing of the sinful woman before Jesus was himself guilty of sin so black as to convict him and make him walk away after Jesus said, “**He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her**” (John 8:7).

Here in the night of sin, in the darkness of a woman’s despair, in the confusion of religious forms, Jesus spoke out, “**I am the light of the world.**”

When God said, “**Let there be light**” (Genesis 1:3), He provided luster for the hills, red for the rose, sparkle for the tipling streams, rainbows against the dark clouds, and beauty for the landscape.

“**And there was light**” (Genesis 1:3) to open the eyes of God’s creatures, to lift up the heads of all who sleep, to burst open the blossoms of beautiful flowers and fill the atmosphere with the fragrance of morning.

When God made light, He showed the way to wandering feet; He revealed truth to wondering minds; and He guided homeward the prodigal son. “**And there was light**” for all who look, for all who care, and for all who will.

God said, “**Let there be light,**” and the heavens declared the glory of God; the firmament showed his handiwork. The sun, the moon, and the stars came forth to sing the praises of the giver of every good and perfect gift, the Father of lights with whom there is no variableness, neither shadow that is cast by the turning.

God said, “**Let there be light, and there was light.**”

LIGHT FOR THE ISRAELITES

Christ is seen in the pillar of cloud and fire leading and shielding the Israelites. The coming Messiah can be seen in the period of darkness which fell upon the Egyptians, as Moses was trying to deliver the children of Israel from Egypt's bondage. **"And the Lord said unto Moses, Stretch out thine hand toward heaven, that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, even darkness which may be felt. And Moses stretched forth his hand toward heaven; and there was a thick darkness in all the land of Egypt three days: They saw not one another, neither rose any from his place for three days; but all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings"** (Exodus 10:21-23).

It is indeed interesting to note the bright spot in that intense darkness which covered Egypt, **"but all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings."** As Jesus was in the creation, so He was here in Egypt giving light to God's children. The Messianic hope shone brightly in the darkness of Egypt.

As the children of Israel came to the Red Sea, they were followed by the Egyptians. What could they do? In answer to the prayer of Moses **"the angel of God, which went before the camp of Israel, removed and went behind them; and the pillar of the cloud went from before their face, and stood behind them: And it came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel; and it was a cloud and darkness to them, but it gave light by night to these: so that the one came not near the other all the night"** (Exodus 14:19, 20).

Here is the answer of God to His waiting children. He gave them a pillar of cloud which had the objective of light for the Children of Israel and darkness for the enemy.

The cloud both veiled and revealed the glory of God.

- To those who would look to God for leadership and guidance, to those who would trust in the Heavenly Father, the pillar was a light.
- To those who refused to recognize God, the pillar was a cloud engulfing in darkness.

So Christ is the light of the world to those who will believe and trust Him; the preaching of Christ becomes foolishness to those who will not believe.

The cloud was both a shelter from the scorching heat to the Israelites and a source of discomfort for the enemy. Dr. Maclaren states it this way: "The cloud was a shelter from the scorching heat, and a fire to cheer in the darkness of the night." As the cloud protected and comforted Israel, It confused and cursed the Egyptians.

The pillar led in Israel's movement when God's people were to go forward; it remained stationary above them when God meant for them to stay in camp. So Christ is the inspiration to His followers to go forward; or He is their stay when He commands them to tarry for enduement from on high.

The pillar was a guide for the children of Israel to lead them in their march by day or to give them light for an emergency march during the night. The pillar was a cloud of darkness to keep the enemy from following, whether it was day or night. Christ is the guide for His followers and will keep them day and night.

The pillar of cloud covered the tabernacle in the wilderness. When Moses, or Joshua, or Aaron served the Lord in the tabernacle, the cloud hovered over the tabernacle. Those who went in to commune with God according to the ritual sacrifice came out with the glory of God shining upon them.

Every man of Israel stood at his tent door looking toward the tabernacle and received the reflection of the glory of God from the faces of those who ministered within. So Christ is inspiration to those who speak of Him and serve Him and He is reflected light upon those who come near Him. He who said of Himself, **“I am the light of the world,”** also said to His followers, **“Ye are the light of the world.”**

THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

As Jesus said **“I am the light of the world,”** He launched His march upon the world of darkness. Light is positive. Jesus is positive and aggressive in His program for the salvation of the world. Napoleon considered himself the world’s greatest military leader even though he was spending his last days in exile. He said of Jesus that He had no armies and yet marched more men into world conquest than all the armies of history. He declared that Jesus was no military leader but was more powerful than any military general who had dominated men.

Wherever Jesus has marched in world conquest, civilization has followed in His train. The march of civilization has been measured by the march of Christianity. There is a question, of course, concerning what men call civilization. To be educated does not necessarily mean to be civilized. To have wealth and position is not a guarantee of civilization. The form of dress does not exemplify civilization or the lack of it. But wherever Jesus has gone or His gospel has been preached, men have grown in their relationships with one another and in providing for themselves a way of life that is called civilization.

Jesus is truly the light of the world as men become enlightened. When men are introduced to Jesus, they become interested in the whole world. Whatever the world has learned and has available in its libraries, Christian men seek to learn, when Christ comes into the hearts of men, they build enlightened communities. Look at the schools, the libraries, the laboratories, and the expeditions men make, and there you will find Christ, either as men have believed on Him or as they have been inspired through those who did believe on Him to enlighten the world.

Jesus is the light “which lighteth every man that cometh into the world” (John 1:9). John the Baptist introduced Jesus as having in Him life, **“and the life was the light of men.”** He declared further that **“. . . the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not”** (John 1:4, 5).

Of himself John declared that he was not the light which he represented but was sent to bear witness of one, who is the light of the world. The true light, which lights every man that comes into the world, is the life of men; and the light comes from that life within.

The light of Jesus is seen in the countenances of those who believe and follow Him. Jesus sought to teach His followers through the Sermon on the Mount that those who believe in Him become the light of the world. They are compared to candlesticks set in prominent places to give light to all who are near. Because of the reflected glory of Christ in the lives of believers, Jesus commanded, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 5:16).

Christians not only should act like it but look like it. John, in his first epistle, said all that John the Baptist had said about Jesus and all that was said in the Gospel of John, then added emphasis by declaring that **"God is light, and in him is no darkness at all"** (I John 1:5).

Not only is He the light for the Christian, but He is the absence of darkness to the Christian. John says further, **"If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another"** (I John 1:6, 7).

The Christian may walk through dark places, but he will not be in darkness if he is with Christ.

There will be times when the Christian may not be able to see his way because of the seeming darkness, but if he is with Jesus and has committed himself to the Lord, he will be walking in the light, in spite of the darkness of his surroundings. If his circumstances find him in the Lord, he will find the Lord in his circumstances.

THE LIGHT OF LIFE

Recently I turned the electric light switch in the kitchen of our home. There was a flash of light and then it was dark. I thought something was wrong with the switch and installed a new one. After turning on the light again, there was another flash, and the light went out again. The short, which made the flash, was not in the switch but in the wiring of the light fixture. When the fixture was repaired, light was restored.

Upon examining the bulb after the light blew out the first time, I found nothing in the appearance of the bulb to show that the inside filter had been damaged. It was the same with the second bulb which had been used; outwardly it showed no difference, inwardly there was a broken space in the filter. There was no light.

When John spoke of the light which was life and the life which was the light of men, he was picturing the inward glow of a Christian experience manifesting itself in an outer glow. When the life of Christ is within the human soul, the light of Christ shines in the human life. Light is life and in it is no darkness at all.

All through the teachings of Christ is the analogy of light and life versus darkness and death. Light is the reflection of the life of God in man; darkness results in death. The Ultimate goal of the light of Christ is life here and hereafter; the ultimate end of darkness is death, physical death and the second death.

Light dispels darkness. When a candle is lit, it dispels the darkness which surrounds. It may be in a large room, but when one strikes a match or lights a candle, all the darkness in the room is affected. Light destroys darkness. There may be shades and shadows, but where there is light, darkness is dispelled. The Christian's influence may be small, but it is not wasted. Wherever the Christian is, there is a light which glows in the darkness.

The light of Christ points the way down a new path. When one becomes a Christian, he has turned around and faced in the opposite direction.

He has been walking in the path of disobedience and sin; he turns around in repentance and faces toward the light. The light of Christ is the guide along the new path. When one is facing the sun, he sees no shadow; when one is looking toward Christ, if there are shadows, they are behind. If there is darkness ahead in the Christian's path, he is facing in the wrong direction. Let him turn around and face Christ. When he follows Jesus his feet are on the white way that leads in the right direction.

Jesus is the light to eternal life. When the psalmist spoke of walking through the shadows, even the shadow of death, he could say that he feared no evil because God was with him. When the Christian walks through the shadows of life and death, he need fear no evil because Christ has lighted the way.

- He has been through the shadows, He has overcome death.
- He has taken the sting out of death by the resurrection.
- He has gained the victory over sin by letting it be crucified on His person.
- He has lighted the path of those who believe on Him, and He makes life worth living here.
- He makes eternal life sure.

Believe on Him; receive Him; walk in the light as He is in the light; and heaven is at the end of the path.

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