

Focus Scripture:

I am the light of the world (text: John 8:12; 9:5; context: John 8:12-20; 9:1-41)

Theme: Christians believe that it is only when we acknowledge the absence of light in our lives and actively seek the light that we finally come to the light.

“DRAWN TO THE LIGHT”

Ironically, it is only when we acknowledge the absence of light in our lives that we finally come into the light. When Jesus says, “I am the light of the world,” He means that He is both the source of salvation and the beacon that draws us to salvation. He is “the light of life.”

In John 8:12-20, a dispute breaks out over the validity of Jesus’ testimony about Himself as the light of the world. The Pharisees ignore the question of whether His testimony is true. Instead, they want to argue over a legal point. Is His testimony valid? In other words, is Jesus’ testimony admissible into a court of law? The Pharisees believed that only the testimony of at least two witnesses is valid in a court of law. Jesus was not in a court of law, but He took up their challenge anyway.

Jesus knows God the Father. He came from the Father, and He is going back to the Father. Although Jesus does not come to judge or condemn anyone, His judgment would be valid if He did, because it is both He and the Father who judges. It is also both He and the Father who bears witness that Jesus is the light of the world. The problem is not the absence of a second witness; the problem is that the Pharisees do not know the Father. They must now receive that light that Jesus gives.

In John 9:1-41 Jesus further shows why He is the light of the world. He opens our eyes to the works of God being accomplished in Him. As long as He is doing this we live in the time described as “day.” He invites us to join in the works of God while it is day; night is coming when no one can work. When this happens it will be too late to join in the works of God. We must not make the mistake of believing that “we see” when in fact we do not see. Jesus summons us to open our eyes and see the light before it is too late.

It takes humility to see the light of Jesus. We first have to confess that we are devoid of the light; that we are without salvation; and that we do not know God. It is only then that we realize our neediness and become open to the revelation that Jesus brings. This is a difficult transition. We live in a “knowledge explosion.” We have amazing technologies at our fingertips. We have developed skills never seen before. We know more than ever before. People are proud of what they know, and of what they can do. We know so much that many are of the opinion that they no longer need God, that is to say, if they have ever needed Him at all. And if there is no need for God there is no need for the One who shows us God. There is no need for the light. Therefore, to a large extent, we have entered a world without light. People are living lives without light. Do we not see the evidence of unlighted lives in our world? It is a tragedy. But we are people of the light, are we not? We have seen Jesus, and He has showed us God. That makes each of us a vessel of transformation in an unlighted world. Because the light of salvation is available to us, it is also available to others through us.

FOCUS QUESTIONS - John 8:12

1. What occurs to you as you read this? What questions arise for you?
2. What is light? What is the darkness?
3. Does the light shine on all even if someone doesn't acknowledge Jesus?
4. How do you see the light in yourself?
5. The light of Christ penetrates into the deepest places in our hearts. Are we interested in what his light might reveal within us? Are we willing to receive his healing, freedom, and forgiveness?
6. How do others see the light in you?
7. What is the reason or purpose for which Jesus is the light?
8. Explore the question of how Jesus is the light of the world with reference to how education illuminates.
9. What implications does this passage have for us today?
10. Is light evident in my work? Is the produce of my labor a reflection of His light?
11. What is the role of the teacher/staff member in facilitating the student's search for the light?
12. What do we as teachers do about students who want to stay in the darkness?
13. Christ's light opened the beggar's eyes and revealed the blindness of the Pharisees—which could have seemed surprising based on their appearances. Have you ever misjudged a person based on their appearance and later realized that they carried the light of Christ with them?
14. Even with the explosion of knowledge and information, we are still lost on its meaning. Without meaning we live in darkness. And we fill that "darkness" the same ways as has been done throughout time – with our work, honor/greatness, wealth, power, and possessions. Jesus is the light because only He can give meaning to our lives in the eternal perspective of His kingdom. What areas of your life are filled with darkness at this moment?
15. How can you live out trust that Jesus will fill these areas with light and meaning?

Additional Print Resources:

- Fuquay, Rob. *The God We Can Know: Exploring the "I AM" Sayings of Jesus*. Nashville: Upper Room Books, 2014.
- Harris, W. Hall III. *Commentary on the Gospel of John*. <https://bible.org>. 2009.
- Marrow, Tim. *Before Abraham "I AM!" The Claims of Christ from the Gospel of John*. Bloomington, IN., CrossBooks/Lifeway, 2010.
- Okorie, A.M. "The Self-Revelation of Jesus in the "I AM" Sayings of John's Gospels." *Currents in Theology and Mission* 28/5 (2001): 486-490.
- Simmons, Billy. "A Christology of the "I Am" Sayings in the Gospel of John." *The Theological Educator* 38/1 (1988): 94-103.
- Whitacre, Rodney A. *Commentaries for the Book of John (IVP New Testament Commentaries)*. www.biblegateway.com. 2010.
- Wiersbe, Warren W. *Jesus in the Present Tense: The I AM Statements of Christ*. Colorado Springs, Co., David C. Cook, Publisher, 2011.