

I AM the Light of the World

Message 2 of 5 in the series: "I AM"

A. God revealed to Moses that His name is "I AM."

"Moses said to God, 'Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, "The God of your fathers has sent me to you," and they ask me, "What is his name?" Then what shall I tell them?' 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.'"" Exodus 3:13-14 (NIV)

1. God is self-existent and doesn't depend on anyone or anything else. His plans don't depend on any circumstances. He is all-powerful, all-knowing, always present everywhere, unchangeable, and completely self-sufficient to do whatever He wills. He is the source and creator of all that is.

2. God is the creator of physical light and the source of all spiritual light.

"...God said, 'Let there be light,' and there was light." Genesis 1:3 (NLT)

"...God is light, and there is no darkness in him at all." 1 John 1:5b (NLT)

Life Application: "The Lord is my light and my salvation—whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life—of whom shall I be afraid?" Psalm 27:1 (NIV)

B. Because of sin, the human race is fallen and trapped in spiritual darkness.

Spiritual darkness = confusion, deception, foolishness, rebellion, evil, death, separation from God

"'You won't die!' the serpent replied to the woman. 'God knows that your eyes will be opened as soon as you eat it, and you will be like God, knowing both good and evil.' The woman was convinced. She saw that the tree was beautiful and its fruit looked delicious, and she wanted the wisdom it would give her. So she took some of the fruit and ate it. Then she gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it, too. **At that moment their eyes were opened, and they suddenly felt shame at their nakedness.**"

Genesis 3:4-7a (NLT)

"For ever since the world was created, people have seen the earth and sky. Through everything God made, they can clearly see his invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature. So they have no excuse for not knowing God. Yes, they knew God, but they wouldn't worship him as God or even give him thanks. And they began to think up foolish ideas of what God was like. As a result, **their minds became dark and confused**. Claiming to be wise, they instead became utter fools." Romans 1:20-22 (NLT)

C. Jesus came to bring light into our world, lead us out of spiritual darkness, and bring us back into a right relationship with God.

"I am the light of the world. **If you follow me**, you won't have to walk in darkness, because you will have the light that leads to life." John 8:12b (NLT)

Important background information: Jesus said this while standing in the temple in Jerusalem during the feast of shelters. The temple was brightly illuminated every night of the feast via a number of huge candelabras. This was done to remind everyone of the pillar of cloud/fire that had guided the Israelites through the wilderness to the Promised Land. "**The Lord went ahead of them. He guided them** during the day with a pillar of cloud, and he provided light at night with a pillar of fire. This allowed them to travel by day or by night." Exodus 13:21(NLT)

1. Light dispels darkness. "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness can never extinguish it." John 1:5 (NLT)
2. Light illuminates. "For the word of God is alive and powerful. It is sharper than the sharpest two-edged sword, cutting between soul and spirit, between joint and marrow. **It exposes our innermost thoughts and desires. Nothing in all creation is hidden from God.** Everything is naked and exposed before his eyes, and he is the one to whom we are accountable." Hebrews 4:12 (NLT)
3. Light purifies and cleanses. "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, **purifies us** from all sin. If we claim to be without sin, we

deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.” 1 John 1:7-9 (NIV)

Life Application: We need to come into the light by putting our trust in Jesus and following Him.

“Those who walk in the darkness cannot see where they are going. **Put your trust in the light** while there is still time; then you will become children of the light... If you trust me, you are trusting not only me, but also God who sent me. For when you see me, you are seeing the one who sent me. I have come as a light to shine in this dark world, so that **all who put their trust in me** will no longer remain in the dark.”

John 12:35b-36 & 44-46 (NLT)

D. Those who do not trust in Jesus and follow Him remain in darkness.

1. Satan is actively blinding people to the truth in order to keep them in the dark.

“Satan, who is the god of this world, has blinded the minds of those who don’t believe. They are unable to see the glorious light of the Good News. They don’t understand this message about the glory of Christ, who is the exact likeness of God.” 2 Corinthians 4:4 (NLT)

2. Many people choose to remain in spiritual darkness because they don’t want to repent of their sins.

“...God’s light came into the world, but people loved the darkness more than the light, for their actions were evil. All who do evil hate the light and refuse to go near it for fear their sins will be exposed.”

John 3:19-20 (NLT)

Life Application: We need to live as people of light in front of our unbelieving friends and neighbors.

“For once you were full of darkness, but now you have light from the Lord. **So live as people of light!** For this light within you produces only what is good and right and true. Carefully determine what pleases the Lord. **Take no part in the worthless deeds of evil and darkness;** instead, expose them. It is shameful even to talk about the things that ungodly people do in secret. But their evil intentions will be exposed when the light shines on them, for the light makes everything visible. This is why it is said, ‘**Awake, O sleeper**, rise up from the dead, and Christ will give you light.’” Ephesians 5:8-14 (NLT) (*Romans 13:11*)

“**You are the light of the world**—like a city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden. No one lights a lamp and then puts it under a basket. Instead, a lamp is placed on a stand, where it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, **let your good deeds shine out for all to see**, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father.” Matthew 5:14-16 (NLT)

Life Application: We need to tell others the Good News of Jesus so they can come into the light.

“I am sending you to the Gentiles **to open their eyes, so they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God**. Then they will receive forgiveness for their sins and be given a place among God’s people, who are set apart by faith in me.” Acts 26:17b-18 (NLT)

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Connect Group Questions

1. Describe a time in your life when you had to spend extended time in darkness (following a storm, in a cave, in the woods, etc.) How did you feel? What did you do?
2. Discuss the following explanation of why God told Moses His name is “**I AM WHO I AM.**” (Exodus 3:13-14) “*God is self-existent and doesn’t depend on anyone or anything else. His plans don’t depend on any circumstances. He is all-powerful, all-knowing, always present everywhere, unchangeable, and completely self-sufficient to do whatever He wills. He is the source and creator of all that is.*” Do you think of God this way?
3. Jesus said, “I am the light of the world. If you follow me, you won’t have to walk in darkness, because you will have the light that leads to life.” John 8:12 (NLT) What does this mean to you?
4. What does it look like to “walk in darkness”? (Romans 1:20-22, Proverbs 4:19, Ephesians 4:17-19)
5. John talks about light and darkness often in his writings. Discuss how the following verses apply to all of us:
 - John 1:1-14
 - John 3:19-21

- John 12:35-46
 - 1 John 1:5-9
6. Brainstorm ways your connect group can live as “children of light” individually and as a group. (Ephesians 5:8-14, Matthew 5:14-16, Acts 26:17-18) How urgent is this?
 7. Why is the devil often referred to as the “Prince of Darkness”? (2 Corinthians 4:4, 11:14; Ephesians 6:10-12)
 8. Discuss the following quotations:

“If spiritual things seem dark and hidden to me, then I can be sure that there is a point of disobedience somewhere in my life. Intellectual darkness is the result of ignorance, but spiritual darkness is the result of something that I do not intend to obey.” Oswald Chambers

“For you are the fountain of life, the light by which we see.” David in Psalm 36:9