

CHRIST, THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

February 28, 2016

John 8:1-30

“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.” John 8:12

What is meant by the statement, Jesus Christ is the light of the world? It means that the world is illumined by Him, that the world has no light except Christ Jesus. He is the source of all light: physical light, moral light, intellectual light and spiritual light. The statement expresses the truth that there can be no physical sight, nor moral understanding, no certain, known reality and no spiritual perception apart from Him.

Ultimately, accurate understanding of everything begins with Jesus Christ. He is the one by whom all things were created, including light. And He is the one in whom all creation will find its fulfillment and consummation. He is the source of all light.

The immediate context of this statement provides its specific, specialized meaning. Jesus said, “he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life” (12). Christ is stating that He is the one who illumines the path, that those following Him will know the path they are to walk. They will not be overtaken by spiritual darkness, but will have the light which is the very essence of spiritual life.

The psalmist wrote, “Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path” (Psa. 119:105). Christ is saying the He is that lamp to the feet, that light to the path; that His words are the Word of God, and are therefore the truth that will illumine the soul and impart God’s life to it. All light and all truth come from Jesus Christ.

The religious leaders retorted that Jesus was boasting, and that His boast was not true (13). Jesus’ response affirmed His meaning further. He proceeded to speak of His unique and inseparable oneness with God.

He knew that He came from God and would return to God; that He and God were one (10:30). But, He continued, His opponents had no understanding that He had come from God, and thus they judged everything by earthly standards, i.e., in darkness (15). By contrast, He was judging no man (see 3:17-21), yet by His coming from the Father He was uniquely qualified to pass judgment, unlike those who were judging Him (15, 16).

All of these claims reaffirmed Jesus’ application of the name “I am” to himself. This was the name by which Jehovah presented himself to Moses when He called Moses to lead Israel out of her Egyptian slavery (Exodus 3:13-14). Jesus used it of himself repeatedly (6:35; 8:12, 24, 28, 58), in a claim to deity.

When Jesus said, “I am the light of the world,” He was affirming that He is one with God, who is the source of all light: physical, moral, intellectual and spiritual. Therefore, anyone who follows

Him will not stumble, but have the life and light of God, which He alone gives.