

## THE 'I AM'S' OF JESUS

### Part 4

# I AM THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

*Based on the book: "The Great I Am's of Jesus."*

*By Anthony Coniaris, Light and Life Publications*

There is an experiment where people are led into a room for five minutes. They are not told the nature of the experiment. The room is fully furnished... furniture, picture frames etc. and on exiting they are asked to recall as many things as they saw. Most people manage to remember the majority of things in the room, but almost all of them do not mention one thing. The light bulb. The one thing, that, had it not been there, none of the other items in the room would be visible.



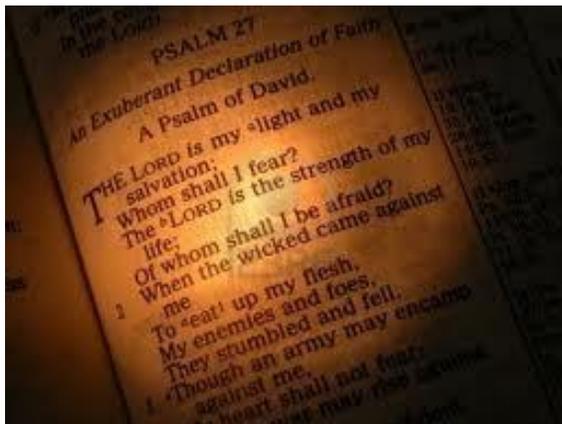
Jesus said, *"I am the light of the world; whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life"* (John 8:12). And there are more examples where Christ God is likened to light. *"As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world"* (John 9:5). *"I have come as light into the world, that whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness"* (John 14:46)

And then there is this powerful quote: *"In Him was life, and the life was the light of humanity. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it."* (John 1:4-5)



Very often in the Bible, the coming of Christ and the blessings of the Gospel are described in terms of light. Isaiah spoke of the Prince of Peace, *"...the people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, on them has shone a bright light."*

In one of the most meaningful passages in the New Testament, St Paul compares the coming of Christ to the dawn of light over darkness and chaos that existed at the creation of the world. *"For it is the God who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ."* (2 Corinthians 4:6)



David sings in Psalm 27:1, *"The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear?"*

There are a number of things that light does. Light reveals. Light guides. Light gives life and health.

Lets look at the first one. Light reveals things that were previously hidden in the darkness. There is a story of a camper who woke up hungry in the middle of the night. He was really hungry. He switched on a lamp, and reached for a biscuit, but found a worm in it and threw it away. He reached for a second biscuit, but this one also had a worm. Finally, he turned off the lamp and happily consumed the entire jar of biscuits in the darkness.

So it is that some people actually hate the light of Christ because... it exposes their life of sin. This could be each one of us. We run from it. We try to hide from it. We may have lived in darkness for so long that we become blind to the light... very much like some creatures that live in the perpetual darkness of caves and deep oceans. Some of these animals have adapted in such a way that they no longer have eyes. For these animals, there is no such thing as light as far as they are concerned. We read in the Gospel that after Judas received the morsel

of bread dipped in wine - “ he immediately went out; and *it was night.*” When someone turns their back on God it is always night.

The Bible expresses this very well. “ *...The light has come into the world, but people loved the darkness rather than light, because their deeds were cunning. For everyone who does wicked things hates the light, and does not come into the light lest their deeds would be exposed. But whoever does what is true comes to the light, that it may be clearly seen that their deeds have been done in God.*” (John 3:19-21)



The Greek philosopher Plato said “we can easily forgive a child who is afraid of the dark; the real tragedy of life is when men are afraid of... the light.”

Light also guides. Miners working deep underground have a battery-operated light attached to their helmets. The light shines only a metre or two in front of them. It does not dispel the entire darkness but only a tiny part of it. The miner takes one step forward and, as he does this the light advances with him and illuminates the next step. So it is with God. He does not remove all the mystery from life. He doesn't answer all our questions. He gives us enough light to take one step. As we take this one step, He gives us enough light for the next step.

There is a close connection between light and life. Light is a vital source of life for all living things. Some flowers follow the movement of the sun across the

sky. Some flowers only open when the sun is shining brightly and not when it is cloudy. Few plants, if any, will grow without the light of the sun. What the light of the sun does for the growth of plant life, the light of Christ does for the growth of the person.



Think about hospitals. How important it is to have bright light come through the windows. A sick person gets better faster when there is light, and is despondent where there is darkness. Scientific studies have shown that light deprivation actually causes depression.

How many institutions in this country have taken their light from Christ? Christians of the past have established hospitals, schools, universities and so many other beneficial institutions. They may have lost their Christian character now, but there is no hiding the historical fact that it was Christians who were the original driving force in their foundation.



Every time we walk into the church, we Orthodox Christians have the custom of lighting a candle. This reminds us that Christ is the light of the world and our

faith in Him is like a flame that needs to be kept alight every day of our life. We Orthodox Christians liken Christ to the sun in the sky. We call Him the *sun of righteousness* (ο ήλιος της δικαιοσύνης), the sunrise of sunrises (ανατολή ανατολών).



And I will conclude with a beautiful poetic quote from one of the famous Church Fathers, St Clement of Alexandria. Born in Athens, of Roman parents, in around 150 AD, he grew up as a pagan and was classically trained. Having embraced and converted to Christianity as an adult, he ended up teaching in the great Catechetical School of Alexandria, Egypt... This scholar had this to say; that Christ “... came to turn our sunsets into sunrises; the sunset of sin into the sunrise of forgiveness. The sunset of despair into the sunrise of hope, the sunset of death into the sunrise of eternal life.”

Amen.

*This is part 4 of a series of sermons on the I AMs of Jesus and which will run until Easter.  
The series is available on Twitter @stgeorgerosebay*

*Sermon delivered by Fr Gerasimos Koutsouras  
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