

Where are we heading?

- See → Savour → Submit to R & R → Display

This morning we are going to continue the journey on who Jesus is.

- And we are going to take a look at the first two of seven ...
- "I am" statements that he makes through the book of John.

Some CONTEXT for John and the other gospel.

Most of the Jews of Jesus time believed that ...

- The world was divided into two ages.

There was the **PRESENT AGE** ...

- That was full of misery and suffering, injustice, oppression & POVERTY

And there was the **AGE TO COME** or God's New Age ...

- Where God would put everything right by ...
- Judging evil.
- Rescuing his people from those who have enslaved them.
- Restoring his temple and living in it.
- And bringing about a new world of peace and justice.

They have been slaves for 6 centuries.

- First in Babylon for about 70 years.
- Then in Jerusalem under the rule of the Persians for almost 200.
- Then under the rule of the Greeks who tried to Helenize them. [270]

Antiochus Epiphanes (Syrians)

- Destroyed the walls of Jerusalem
- He forbade the Jews to celebrate the sabbath and feasts ...
- To offer the traditional sacrifices, and to perform circumcision ...
- And he ordered the destruction of the copies of the Torah.
- The Jews were ordered to offer up unclean sacrifices on idolatrous altars and to eat swine's flesh.

- And now under the rule of the Romans. Time Jesus ministry 90yrs.

Three key groups of People with 3 very different systems of belief.

- All hoping for the same thing → The Age to Come.
1. Pharisees → Strict observance of Torah bring about New Age
 2. Essences → Detachment from the corrupt temple system.
 3. Zealots → By force

I am the Bread of Life

John 6:25–35 ²⁵ When they found him on the other side of the lake, they asked him, "Rabbi, when did you get here?" ²⁶ Jesus answered, "Very truly I tell you, you are looking for me not because you saw the signs I performed [The healing of the sick and the feeding of the 5000 people with five loaves and two fish] but because you ate the loaves and had your fill.

Aka – you are here for the wrong reason.

- And you are looking for me and to me for the wrong reason.

You are looking for more food, you want more bread.

- Instead of "seeing" and realizing what it is ...
- That God is doing in me and through me right here and right now.

So, he says to them ... ²⁷ Do not work for [or strive for] food that spoils [now – don't focus your energies on "bread" or on the here and the now.]

Don't work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, [Food that will lead you to the age to come.] which the Son of Man will give you.

He says, you guys are working for and focusing on physical food.

- Your immediate needs for the here and now. [The present age.]
- But the son of man [Jesus] is able to give you "food" ...
- That will lead you, into the life, of the age to come.

For on him God the Father has placed his seal of approval."

²⁸ Then they asked him, "What must we do the works [plural] God requires?" [Aka – What must we do to get this food?]

This is like having a conversation about two different things.

²⁹ Jesus answered, "The work [singular, not works - plural] of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent."

To believe = Pisteuo ...

- To have a strong confidence or reliance on someone or something.

He says, the work of God is to believe [in the context of what we are speaking about]

- That he ^[Jesus] is the one who is bringing about the Age to Come.
- That is bringing about the rule and reign of God ...
- On earth as it is in heaven.

That he is the one who can forgive sins and end the "exile."

³⁰ So they asked him, "What sign then will you give that we may see it and believe you? What will you do?"

That is a little bit surprising ...

- They just saw him heal the sick.
- And feed 5000 people with five loaves of bread and two fish.

What on earth are they looking for?

³¹ Our ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written: 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.'

They are back to wanting bread.

- For they are more interested in what Jesus can give them.
- Than who Jesus is.

³² Jesus said to them, "Very truly I tell you, it is not Moses who has given you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven.

³³ For the bread of God [the true bread] is the bread that comes down from heaven and gives LIFE to the world."

The word life (Greek *zoe*) is used 36 times in John's Gospel

- And, it is never used in the sense of “natural life” or “biological life,”
- But always with the meaning of “real life” or “true life” ...
- Or the life of the age to come.

³³ For the bread of God ^[the true bread] is the bread that comes down from heaven and gives “zoe” to the world.”

³⁴ “Sir,” they said, “always give us this bread.

They are back to the here and the now and the physical.

- Always give us this bread.
- We want this endless supply of bread streaming down from heaven.

³⁵ Then Jesus declared, “I am the bread of life.

I am the true bread.

- I am the bread from heaven.
- The bread of God that gives the life of the age to come, to the world.

Whoever comes to me ^[Whoever embraces me as their greatest treasure, joy and delight] will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me ...

- Pisteuo – Whoever has a strong confidence in me ...
- Whoever joyfully and eagerly submits their lives to my rule and reign.

...will never be thirsty.

Or as he said a little bit earlier on in **John 7:37–38** ³⁷ “If anyone is thirsty, he should come to Me and drink! ³⁸ The one who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, will have streams of living water flow from deep within him.”

They were looking to him as to what he could give them.

- Not realizing that he was the one and only ...
- All-satisfying treasure of the universe.

Until we realize who Jesus really is and all that God is for us in him.

- We may be pleased with his blessings ...
- But there will always remain a deep hunger ...
- That will never be fully and finally satisfied.

I am the Light of the World – John 8:12

CONTEXT & SETTING

In the book of Isaiah (chapter 1-39) the prophet brings a message ...

- Of both Judgment & Hope to the nation of Israel.

He accused Israel's leaders of rebellion against God.

- And said that through Assyria and then Babylon ...
- Israel's kingdom would come crashing down ...
- In an act of God's judgment.

Chapter 39 concluded with predicting Jerusalem's fall to Babylon.

- And then the exile.

A hundred years after he made these predictions ...

- It all sadly came to pass.

But Isaiah's greater hope during this time ...

- Was for a New purified Jerusalem ...
- Where God's kingdom would be restored ...
- Through a future Messianic king.
- That would bring all nations to peace.

- This all happens in Isaiah 1-39

Chapter 40-55 then explores this great hope of a New Jerusalem.

- By saying that the 'physical Exile' is now over ...
- And a new era is beginning.
- And they are called to return to Jerusalem ...
- Where God himself will bring his kingdom ...
- Through his "servant" that would be a light to the nations.

Isaiah 42 ¹ "Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on him, and he will bring justice to the nations."

Speaking of "the servant" he then says, ⁶ "... I will keep you and will make you to be a covenant for the people and a light for the Gentiles ..." [or the nations]

Here is my servant, the one I have chosen.

- The one in whom I delight.
- The one on whom I will put my spirit.
- The one who will bring about justice to the nations ... [age to come language]
- The one who will bring about a new covenant.
- And be a light to the nations.

What would the purpose of this "light" be?

⁷ "to open eyes that are blind, to free captives from prison and to release from the dungeon those who sit in darkness."

So, this servant will ...

- Be a light to the nations.
- Will open the eyes of the blind. [Both physical & spiritual]
- Free captives from prison. [Both physical & spiritual]
- Release from the dungeon those who sit in darkness. [Both physical & spiritual]

Fast forward 500 years.

- The very people to whom this was promised are still living in slavery.
- Five centuries later.

They are currently celebrating the Feast of the tabernacles.

- Every evening during this seven-day feast
- The Jews had a great candle-lighting ceremony in the temple area.

In the court of the woman they had giant candle sticks, each +- 22m high ...

- With 4 golden bowls filled with wicks and +- 37L of oil on top of it.

When the bowls were lit at night it was said ...

"That there was not a court in Jerusalem that did not reflect the light of the Beth ha-

She'ubah' – (bêt-haššô'ēbâ)."

John 8:12 "I am the light of the world ...

What is he saying?

- I am "the servant" of the Lord.

I am the one who has been appointed by God to ...

- Bring about the New Jerusalem, the New Age.

I am the one who is here to establish God's kingdom on earth ...

- As it is in heaven.

I am the one who is here to ...

- Open the eyes of the blind.
- Free captives from the prison and bondage of sin.
- Release from the dungeon those who sit in darkness.

I am the light of the world ...

During the New Testament times light was equated with ...

- The power of good that was engaged in a struggle against ...
- Darkness, the power of evil.

Light was therefore symbolic for the true revelation of God.

- So, when Jesus says that he is the "Light of the world."
- The focus here is not upon physical light ...
- But upon spiritual enlightenment.

"I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

Whoever follows me ...

- And here he is not just talking about those who just tag along.
- But by those who are so taken by him and all that God is for us in him
- That they joyfully and eagerly embrace and obey his teachings ...

Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness ...

- Will never walk in the ignorance of ...
- Seeing but not seeing, hearing but not hearing and not understanding.

Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

- But will have the light of life.

What does that mean?

- What is the connection between light and life?

John gave us the answer to that earlier on in John 1:4 when he said of Jesus.

John 1:4 ⁴ In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind.

The life gives the light.

- The life Jesus has, and the life he shares with those who follow him ...
- Gives them light.

That is, we are dead and blind to the light ...

- Until the life of Jesus is imparted to us by God's Spirit, and then we see.

The eyes of our hearts are opened, and divine light streams into our living spirits.

- And thus we have the light of life.
- Giving sight to our spiritually blind souls.

I am the light of the WORLD.

- Jesus's being "the light of the world" means ...
- The world has no other light than him.
- If there is going to be a light for the world, it will be Jesus. I
- t is Jesus or darkness.
- There is no third alternative.
- No other light.

Everyone needs it, everyone needs him.

Not only does his light make sin plain and foreign and ugly.

- But it illuminates his word in order for us ...
- To see him for all that he is and all that God is for us in him.

And his light and his life transform us ...

- With an ever-increasing glory which come from the Lord who is the spirit.

And so I want to say with Jesus in **John 12:36** "While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light."

For when you embrace Jesus as your precious light and you follow him ...

- As your truth and your wisdom and your way and your beauty ...
- You will have his life and you will become "a son of light."
- Begotten into the family of light.