

# Rise Up And Build

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*"So They said, 'Let us rise up and build,' Then they set their hands to do this good work," Neh. 2:18*

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## The I Am's of Jesus (No. 1)

In John 8 we read of a discussion which took place between Jesus and certain Jews who seemed to have had a case of spiritual amnesia. They prided themselves in being children of God. Yet in v. 44 of this chapter, Jesus identified them as being children of the devil! Also they were prone to regard Jesus as a mere man, and in v. 49 they even accused Him of having a demon!

However, none of His opponents could convict Jesus of sin, nor could they answer His arguments. In fact, instead of replying to the truths Jesus spoke, they resorted to taking up stones to cast at Him — which serves to illustrate how violent some religious people can become when they are charged with being in error and are unable to answer the charges.

In these verses Jesus taught truths which every accountable individual should learn. Especially is this true with reference to the Person of Jesus Christ. The importance of our knowing the truth regarding the Person of Christ is emphasized in the latter part of John 8:24 wherein Jesus said, *"For if you do not believe that **I am**, you will die in your sins."* In the KJV this verse reads, *"for if you believe not that **I am** (*he*), ye shall die in your sins."* However, the word *"he"* is placed in italics, meaning it was supplied by the translators. So if you leave out what the translators inserted, Jesus literally said, *"for if you do not believe that **I am**, you will die in your sins."* This is in keeping with the overall context, for in v. 58 Jesus said, *"Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was **I am**."*

Concerning Himself, Jesus said, *"**I am**."* Taken in its biblical perspective, Jesus thus affirmed the eternity of His being. To illustrate, we call your attention to Exodus 3:14 in which God commissioned Moses to lead His people, the Jews, out of the land of Egypt. Moses inquired of God concerning what answer he should give to the Jews when they would ask who sent him. *"God said unto Moses, **I am that I am**; and He said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, **I am** hath sent me unto you."*

Hence, when we compare Exodus 3 with John 8 we observe that the same affirmation that was made for God the Father was also made for Jesus Christ. He was not, as some unscripturally advocate, simply a created being of inferior quality. As the Father is from everlasting to everlasting, Christ is also. In fact, if He had been of a different nature, He could not serve as our sin offering and as the mediator between God and man.

### ***“I Am The Bread of Life”***

As we pursue this theme regarding the “I am’s” of Jesus, I call your attention to John 6:35 where Jesus said, *“I am **the bread of life**. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believe in Me shall never thirst.”*

It is evident that many of the Jews to whom He spoke neither understood nor appreciated what Jesus said. In fact, according to v. 41, they *“murmured against Him”* because He said *“I am the bread which came down from heaven”* They had a problem in understanding for at least three reasons: (1) they were prejudiced; (2) they were carnal minded; and (3) They insisted on giving a literal interpretation of figurative statements.

Earlier in this chapter, we note that Jesus had fed the 5,000 on five barley loaves and two small fish. Afterwards many sought Jesus, but Jesus knew what was in their hearts and said: *“Most assuredly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw the signs but because you ate of the loaves and were filled”* (John 6:26). They were concerned about physical food for the body, but Jesus sought to show the greater value of spiritual food for the soul, of which one could eat and never hunger.

Jesus is that life-giving and life-sustaining bread to Whom we must go in order to have life. But **how** do we come to Him Who is the bread of life? The rest of the chapter explains this figurative expression. In v. 45 we learn that in order to come to Him we must be taught. In v. 63 He said, *“The words that I speak to you are spirit, and (they) are life.”* And in v. 68 we learn that Peter got the message, for he said to Jesus, *“Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.”* His words, His truths constitute that spiritual food that He offered as meat to sustain men.

Christ is the bread of life, Who gives and sustains life and our means of approach to the bread of life is through learning and heeding His inspired words of life.

### ***“I Am the Light of the World”***

In John 8:12 Jesus spoke to the Pharisees and said: *“I am **the light of the world**. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.”* Then once again in John 9:5, just prior to His healing the blind man, Jesus said, *“As long as I am in the world, I am **the light of the world**.”* In fact, He said it twice — as if He intended for us to get the message. Moreover, in John 1:4,5 the apostle said of Jesus: *“In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.”*

But what is implied by Jesus’ statement, *“I am the light of the world?”* In one sense, we suggest that Christ occupies the same place in the moral and the spiritual realm that the sun occupies in the natural and physical realm. Life on earth, as we know it, would cease to be if the sun were suddenly hurled out of our solar system, leaving the earth deprived of its light and heat. Nor can there be any spiritual life outside of Christ Who is **light** and in Whom there is **life**

Light enables us to see clearly. In the Scriptures, light is put for knowledge. This is why the Psalmist could said, *“The entrance of Your words give light”* (Ps. 119:130). This is why we, in I John 1:7, are exhorted to *“walk in the light.”* He who walks in the light conducts himself according to our Lord’s teachings, as they are set forth in the New Testament

For a world in the darkness of ignorance, Christ is **the light**, and His word can erase that ignorance. For a world in the darkness of sin, Christ is **the light**, and through His blood the sinner

can be redeemed. For a world in the darkness of death, Christ is **the light**, and in Him those who are dead in trespasses and sins can be made alive. But in each case, one must learn His will, and render obedience to Christ Who is “*the author of eternal life to those who obey Him*” (Heb. 5:9),.

### **“I Am The Door”**

Please note John 10:7-9 wherein Jesus said: “*Most assuredly, I say to you, I am **the door** of the sheep. All who (ever) came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them. I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture.*”

I suggest that this also is a very simple metaphor which is full of meaning. In vs. 1-5 of this chapter, Jesus gave the parable of the sheepfold, and even in these verses we see the importance of the door. According to v. 1, we learn that the door is the means of entrance into the sheepfold, and that he that would strive to enter by some other way is a thief and a robber. This parable seems simple enough to understand; however, according to v. 6, the Pharisees to whom Jesus spoke, did not understand what He said. Their problem was not a lack of intelligence; it was a lack of sincerity. They were prejudiced — probably one of the worse diseases that can afflict the soul.

But beginning at v. 7, Jesus further explained the parable He had just spoken. And he said, “*I am the door of the sheep.*” A door presumes a “within” and a “without” relationship, and those who have not entered the door, meaning through Christ, are outside the sheepfold and outside the realm of salvation.

Jesus said “*I am **the door.***” Neither Abraham, Moses, nor any of the righteous prophets had ever made such a claim — and for good reason; there is only one door of access to the Father. Jesus is it. In a word, Jesus herein placed Himself between the whole human race and true blessedness. The one door is not some so-called “Father Divine,” or Joseph Smith, or Mohammed, or a rabbi, or a preacher or a priest. The dignity of being “***the door of the sheep***” belongs exclusively to Jesus Christ. He is “*the Door*” by which the spiritual sheep are admitted to divine pasture, divine security, and divine society,

No other figure of speech more vividly portrays man’s need for Christ, and consequently the necessity of obeying Christ so as to admitted into the family of God. Have you tried to enter the Sheepfold by some other door than Christ? If so, your efforts were in vain! For Christ is the **only** door!

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