

“Claims of Jesus”

May 10, 2026

John 8:12-30

I. Introduction

Before we consider today’s Scripture, perhaps it would be good to set the scene for these verses. It’s the day after the week-long Feast of Tabernacles. Those who ventured into the Temple on this day would have seen workers—Levites and Pharisees—taking down the various decorations and items used during the festival. Some of them would be picking up the branches, the fruit, and other things left behind by those who had come and gone. In the inner court, the golden pitcher that carried water from the pool of Siloam to the altar and the silver funnel would be cleaned and then packed away carefully so that they could be used next year.

In the Women’s Court—the place where offerings were collected—as well as cleaning up, workers would be taking down four large candelabras. Each candelabra held 4 large golden bowls which could be reached only with ladders. During the seven-day festival, these bowls would be filled with oil and at night they burned so brightly that as one ancient Jewish source wrote, *“All Jerusalem was illuminated.”* They served as a reminder of the pillar of fire that the people followed through the Wilderness. During the past 7 days, the people—even the most dignified leaders—danced around the candelabras through the night, holding blazing torches in their hands and singing songs of praise to God. There were a lot of memories as well as activities going on throughout the Temple on this day following the Feast of Tabernacles. It was in the midst of all this activity that Jesus continued His teaching. In today’s Scripture, we see three different claims that Jesus made; His first claim is His second “I AM” statement.

II. Claims of Jesus

A. Jesus’ 1st Claim; “I AM the Light of the World.”

1. Jesus claimed to be God. As the workers were taking down the candelabras, Jesus made His first claim: **“I AM the Light of the world.”** Jesus’ first “I AM” claim was back in **John 6:35** when He declared, **“I AM the bread of life.”** Both of these “I AM” statements would draw Jesus’ Jewish listeners’ minds back to

the Book of Exodus—turn to Exodus 3:1-3, 13-14. By calling Himself “I AM,” (the name God called Himself), all those that heard Jesus say, “I AM,” knew that He was claiming to be God. But Jesus was also claiming to be God when He claimed to be “the Light of the world.” For the Jews, the sun and light were symbols of Jehovah God; e.g., Psalm 84:11 says, “For the LORD God is a sun and shield.” In Psalm 27:1 David wrote, “The LORD is my light and my salvation-- whom shall I fear?” Even 1 John 1:5 says that “God is light.” For our universe, there is only one sun, and it is the center and the source of physical life. In a similar manner, there is one God who is the center of all and the source of all eternal life (John 1:4).

Unlike the temporary and stationary candelabras, Jesus is a light that never goes out and a light to be followed. Jesus said, “He who follows me will never walk in darkness.” Just as Moses called Israel to follow the pillar of fire in the wilderness (Exodus 40:36-38), so Jesus called men and women to follow Him as the Light of the world. To “follow” the Lord Jesus means to believe on Him, to trust Him, and the results are life and light for the believer. As Jesus told Nicodemus in John 3, the unsaved are walking in darkness because they love the darkness. One of John’s major messages is that the spiritual light is now shining, but people cannot comprehend it—turn to John 1:1-5.

2. The Pharisees’ attack. Once again and true to form, the Pharisees attacked Jesus and His claim, as they said, “Appearing as your own witness, your testimony is not valid.” In Deuteronomy 19:15 the Law says, “One witness is not enough to convict a man accused of any crime or offense he may have committed. A matter must be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.” So, the Pharisees refused to consider the possibility that Jesus’ claim might be true. In their narrow-mindedness, He was the only witness. But actually, there were others who could testify to the truthfulness of His claims. There was John the Baptist, the 12 Apostles, the Samaritan woman, the miracles Jesus had done in the past 2 ½ years, the Jewish Scriptures themselves, and finally God the Father. Jesus was not, as the Pharisees claimed, the only witness who could verify His claims.

But no matter what the Pharisees heard or saw, they were not going to believe, as John 12:37 says, “Even after Jesus had done all these miraculous signs in their presence, they still would not believe in him.”

Turn to the story of the rich man and Lazarus—turn to Luke 16:19-31. Some people, like the Pharisees, refuse to be convinced no matter how compelling the evidence may be.

3. Jesus' Two Witnesses. But instead of throwing His hands up in the air and giving up on them, Jesus gave His enemies witnesses or proofs to support His testimony about Himself as being true. First, He said, "I know where I came from and where I am going." Jesus had tried to tell them earlier, but the Pharisees remained ignorant of both where Jesus came from and where He was going. Later in John 16:28 Jesus told them again, "I came from the Father and entered the world; now I am leaving the world and going back to the Father." Because of Jesus' divine origin and destiny, He was qualified to testify about Himself. Jesus came from heaven. *Jesus' origin from heaven made His words dependable and true.*

Jesus made it clear that that the Jewish leadership's judgment was not dependable because their judgment was faulty. They didn't know where He came from or where He was going. Jesus further exposed their ignorance when He said that "You judge by human standards," i.e., according to earthly standards as sinful men in a fallen world. They didn't understand anything about His heavenly origin—even what they thought they knew was wrong. It is kind of sad that these experts in the Law did not recognize their own Messiah as He stood there before them. They claimed to know the Law of God, but they didn't even know the God of the Law. As Jesus said earlier in John 5:38, & 42 God's Word didn't dwell in their hearts, and the love of God was absent from their hearts, as well.

Another reason that Jesus' words were dependable was based on His divine nature that was shared with the Father—in verse 16 He said, "I stand with the Father who sent me." Later in John 10:30, Jesus said, "I and the Father are one." Proverbs 30:5 says, "Every word of God is flawless." John 1:14 says that Jesus is "full of grace and truth." *Jesus' testimony was true because He and the Father have the same nature; neither God the Father nor the Son can lie.* They are both full of truth. Jesus then named another witness or proof, "My other witness is the Father who sent me." Reiterating the words that so upset His enemies earlier, to the point of their wanting to kill Him, Jesus called on "the Father who sent me" as a witness to the truth of His statements. *God the Father was a witness to the truth of Jesus' words.*

Still thinking in purely human terms, “They asked him, ‘Where is your father?’” Jesus had been over this several times with them and really didn’t answer their question this time. They weren’t really searching for the truth. The very fact that they thought like they did and argued the way they did proved that they didn’t know God the Father. In [Matthew 11:27](#) Jesus said, “All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.” Those who reject the Son give proof that they do not know the eternal Father. They walk in darkness.

B. Jesus 2nd claim: “I am going away.” Jesus then made His second claim, “I am going away.” There was also a warning in His statement that those who reject Him will die in their sin and not be with Him as He added, “Where I go, you cannot come.” Basically, these adversaries were wasting their God-given opportunities by arguing with Jesus instead of trusting Him. One day soon Jesus was going away and their opportunities would end.

The Jews, i.e., the Pharisees and scribes, once again didn’t try to understand. In their blindness, they thought He was planning to kill Himself. The Jews abhorred suicide and believed that those who killed themselves went to the blackest part of hell. For this reason, assuming that He was going to kill Himself, they could not follow Jesus when He went away.

In His reply, Jesus refused to acknowledge the Jew’s mocking suggestion that He was going to commit suicide. Instead, He repeated His warning “If you do not believe that I am the one I claim to be, you will indeed die in your sins.” Jesus pointed out that their origin, like their destiny, was altogether different than His. “You are of this world.” And so, they were going to a place of judgment. Jesus was returning to His Father in heaven, and nobody can go there who has not trusted Him as Savior. The reason Jesus and the Jewish leaders were going to different destinations was because they had different origins. Jesus came from heaven, but they belonged to the earth. Jesus was in the world, but He did not belong to the world.

Unmistakably, Jesus said that those who reject Him cannot be saved, but “you would die in your sins.” It seems unbelievable that these religious experts should then ask, “Who are you?” He had given

them every evidence that He is the Son of God, yet they chose to reject all the evidence. Jesus' answer could be summarized, "I am exactly what I said!" In other words, "Why should I teach you new things, or give you new proof, when you have not honestly considered the witness I have already given!"

Because of their hard hearts, John wrote in [verse 27](#) that **"they did not understand that he was telling them about his Father."** As Jesus said in [Luke 10:21](#), God has **"hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children."** The evidence that was all around them was unable to pierce their stubborn, willful ignorance.

C. Jesus' 3rd Claim: "I will be lifted up." Jesus then made His 3rd claim: **"I will be lifted up."** When Jesus said that He would be **"lifted up,"** He was speaking of His own death on the cross. The words translated **"lifted up"** really have two meanings: *"lifted up in crucifixion"* and *"lifted up in exaltation and glorification."* Jesus saw His crucifixion in terms of glory and not just suffering. [Hebrews 12:2](#) says, **"Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God."**

Jesus said that His death, resurrection, and ascension would verify every claim made for and about Him, the Messiah, by the prophets and apostles and would take away all doubt from any open mind as to His deity. After this, they would know who Jesus was—as the Roman soldier said at Jesus' death in [Mark 15:39](#), **"Surely this man was the Son of God!"** Even today, we show from the Old Testament the prophecies of both the sufferings and the glory of the Messiah as proof of who Jesus is.

Jesus then made 2 more stupendous claims: not only was He sent by the Father, but the Father was with Him because He always did what pleased the Father. No doubt, His enemies reacted violently to these words, too. But there were some positive results, as well. Less than 6 months before the cross; **"even as he spoke, many put their faith in him."** Some believed. Later, others, who rejected Jesus before His crucifixion and resurrection, would realize that they had been terribly mistaken about Him—on the day of Pentecost, 3000 Jews would come to receive Him as the Messiah.

III. Conclusion

Jesus knew that His time was short—He had less than 6 months left on the earth—6 months to proclaim the way of salvation. Salvation was and is a matter of life or death. People who live in their sins and reject the Savior will die in their sins. There is no alternative—no other way. **Turn to John 3:17-21.** Each person either receives salvation by grace or experiences condemnation under God’s Law. One either walks in the light and has eternal life or walks in the darkness and experiences eternal death. As **1 Timothy 1:15** puts it, **“Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.”**

To be a Christian, to be as follower of Jesus Christ and to have eternal life, **Acts 16:31** says, **“Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved.”** To believe means to believe all that the Bible says about Him: that He is the eternal second person of the Trinity; that He entered space and time as God incarnate (God in human form); that He was born of a virgin; that He lived a sinless life; that His death on the cross is the only sufficient substitutionary sacrifice for the sins of all who would ever believe in Him; that He rose from the dead and ascended to the Father in heaven; that He now intercedes for His own redeemed people; and that He will one day return in glory. These are all non-negotiable facts from the Word of God.

Considering today’s Scripture as well as the rest of the Gospels, *With whom did Jesus have the most issues, the religious people of the day or the outright sinners?* Obviously, Jesus’ major detractors were the Pharisees and teachers of the Law—the religious leadership, the very religious, and the ultra-religious people of the day. So, a follow up question then is: *Why?* Their traditions hindered their ability to hear God’s voice. They knew it all already—their hearts and minds were hardened.

We need to guard ourselves so that our traditions—our preferences, if you please—don’t keep us from hearing and obeying God’s Spirit and that we study and hear God’s Word the Bible with an open mind and a heart for God, not a closed mind and heart like the Pharisees. We need to be able to separate the negotiables from the non-negotiables.