

The LORD is my light and my salvation

(John 8.12-20 & Psalm 27.1)

One claim, three objections:

Jesus made a powerful claim: “I am the light of the world.” There is so much to unpack there. That powerful claim raised some objections from the religious leaders: witnesses and source.

1. Unpacking the objections:

A. The Witness Objection — “Who else says this?”

Academically speaking, for any evidence-based science, it's important that there are multiple **criteria** attesting to a claim to avoid bias.

For example: “Brazil is the best country in the world,” says the Brazilian preacher. There is an issue here—the issue of bias.

It sounds different if a Canadian, an American, and an Argentinian go to Brazil, and once they **visited the place**, they all claim: “Brazil is the best country in the world.”

B. The Credibility Objection — “Are your witnesses reliable?”

Academically speaking, for any evidence-based science, it's important that the multiple **factors** attesting to the claim are credible.

For example: “Brazil is the best country in the world,” says the person who traveled once. The lack of exposure diminishes the power of their claim.

It sounds different if: “Brazil is the best country in the world,” say many people who traveled the whole world on the quest to find out the best place on the planet.

In sum, the whole point is to attack Jesus' credibility, claiming that his argument is circular.

C. The Circularity Objection — “Does your claim add content?”

Academically speaking, for any evidence-based science, it's important that the multiple witnesses attesting to the claim **add meaningful content** to it.

For example: “Brazil is the best country in the world.” Why? “Because Brazil is the best country in the world.” That is a circular statement; it adds no content.

It sounds different if: “Brazil is the best country in the world.” Why? “Because of its food, beaches, culture, and people.”

Now to the text: When Jesus says, “I am the light of the world,” they attack him: (witness) “Who else says that you are the light?” (source) “Where is your Father?” (circular) “You claim to be the light because you are the light?”

Overall, their objections are important: We do have a huge problem with abstract/self-proclaimed ministers: “I am an apostle,” “I am a pastor.” And you ask them, “Where is your church?” “I don’t have one; I preach where I am invited.” Or you ask them, “What are your credentials? Where did you study?” They respond, “Online...”—and by online they mean YouTube.

2. Unpacking Jesus’ defense:

Verse 15 is key: Jesus says, “You judge according to human standards.”

It is true: evidence-based science must have different sources attesting to its truthfulness.

Nevertheless, trying to apply that method to Jesus’ claim is foolishness. Science cannot answer the question: What’s the purpose of life? Those things cannot be measured in the lab. The claim “I am the light of the world” falls under that umbrella: Jesus is the light—the meaning, the source, the hope—of our decaying world.

Moreover, “I am” statements should not rely on witnesses but on achievements. Authority is inherent to them, not extrinsic or external. The leaders twisted the meaning of the word “witness” into “endorsement.” As a matter of fact, if any claim relies on endorsement from outside, that means it has no authority at all.

Illustration: The Sun, Messi, Jordan, Gretzky don’t ask witnesses/endorsement – they just show up!

Therefore, yes—Jesus is making a claim about himself. And yes, it is true, because he has proven by his teachings and miracles to be true.

Ask the lady who was caught in adultery if he is the light of the world. Ask all the blind people he gave sight to if he is the light or not. Ask Lazarus, whom Jesus raised from the dead. They will all say the same thing: He is the light.

As Nicodemus puts it very well in John chapter 3: “Rabbi, we know you come from God because no one can do the miraculous signs you do if God is not with him...”

And though his “I am” statement should be sufficient (vv. 12, 14), he doesn’t stop there. Jesus adds the Father and the Scriptures to the equation (v. 16-19). And he will prove, on the **grounds** of his accusers, that his claim is true and credible.

By affirming his Father and the Scriptures, Jesus takes the conversation out of the abstract and grounds it in documents—the most reliable one: Scripture.

The Old Testament has 39 books, roughly 30 human authors/writers, and one spiritual author: the Father. It contains more than 300 prophecies about the Messiah—fulfilled in Jesus Christ—including at least eight events he had no control over, such as where he was born, how he was born, what he was named, his genealogy, and where he was raised.

If they want witnesses, there are more than three hundred of them pointing to Jesus! Three hundred prophecies speak louder than three hundred objections.

3. The claim:

“I am the light of the world.”

- The pronoun “I am” means he is divine, he is self-sufficient, and he is capable of saving the world.
- The article “the” means that he is the only light—hope, meaning, salvation—of the world.
- The word “world” speaks about the scope and nature of his light. He wants to save the whole world, and there is a huge contrast between the beauty of his light and the decay of this needy world. Without him, the world perishes.
- The “light” speaks about his transcendent-immanent presence in the world. He is a spiritual light—not like the pagans think of “god as the sun or moon”—he transcends this world. Nevertheless, he is present in his creation to redeem it, just like light is present and illuminates the world.

Conclusion:

First, the obvious one: Follow Jesus; follow the light. That’s what verse 12 tells all his listeners. Right after he states who he is, he attaches the invitation: “Follow me.” To put it simply, we follow Jesus by believing and trusting in him. We should not commit the mistake that these religious people

committed—and so many in our day and age do as well—by trying to take Jesus to the “lab” and investigate, argue, and debate him. People will never find the meaning of life and the hope of resurrection with such an attitude. As we follow him in a personal relationship with him, we KNOW he is the light—there’s no doubt about it.

Secondly, the not-so-obvious application: have our identity affirmed by the Father. What this section really teaches us is that Jesus knows who he is, knows his ministry, and stands by his claims—because of his unique relationship with the Father. And we all know that a Christian who knows who he is in Christ—that no one will ever separate him from the love of God; that the devil has no claim on him; that he doesn’t live for riches, fame, or worldly pursuits, but for the glory of God—that Christian is like a “dynamite” in God’s hands!