

The Gospel of John Survey

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Written To Believe Jesus is God

But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name. (John 20:31)

Not a few seconds into this incredible account and we are immediately struck that there is a very certain difference between it and the other three accounts of the life of Jesus and his ministry. The Gospel of John clearly presents to us that Jesus is God. This Gospel speaks of Jesus in the most elevated form, this book truly stands alone in its telling of Christ. From the first passage in John, he clearly tells that Jesus is God.

¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² The same was in the beginning with God. ³ All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. ⁴ In him was life; and the life was the light of men.

⁵ And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not. (John 1:1-5)

You begin to read these words and immediately your heart begins to beat a little faster and your mind is elevated to think of this one known as **The Word of God, who is he?** John casts our minds back to the beginning of the Bible, in Genesis.

“In the beginning God created the heaven and the Earth” (Gen 1:1)

“in the beginning was the word and the word was with God and the word was God” (Jn 1:1)

He then writes of a man who came to the witness of the Word.

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷ The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all *men* through him might believe. (Jn 1:6-7)

And verse 14 something incredible is revealed.

¹⁴ *And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.*

From the beginning of John's account, we are confronted with what is the most important doctrine of the Bible, that Jesus is God. From the first words John tells us that “*the Word was with God and the Word was God*” and here in verse 14 he tells us that *And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us,*.

God was made flesh, God became a man? This is exactly what the text proposes to us. Not only that God became flesh, but also that he dwelt among us. In John's epistle of 1John 1:1-4 he writes;

¹ That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; ² (For the life was manifested, and we have seen *it*, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;) ³ That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship *is* with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. ⁴ And these

things write we unto you, that your joy may be full. (1 Jn 1:1-4)

They had heard, they had seen, they handled and he speaks of the life manifested and he bears witness of all concerning Jesus Christ the Son of God. Consider John 5:17-23, recall Jesus healed a man on the Sabbath day, and the Pharisees wanted to kill him for it.

¹⁷ But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work. ¹⁸ Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God.

How incredible to see that what Jesus was saying was not lost on the Jews. Truly the Jews knew exactly what Jesus was claiming, he was claiming that he was equal with God, as God and for this they were willing right there and then to stone him to death for it. Consider, if you said such a thing and knew that death would result, you might quiet the language a little, but Jesus did not do that;

¹⁹ Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise. ²⁰ For the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things that himself doeth: and he will shew him greater works than these, that ye may marvel. ²¹ For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth *them*; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will. ²² For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: ²³ That all *men* should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him.

Was Jesus claiming to be equal to God? There is only One God and not two, the Jews know this. To be equal to the infinite God is to be God and that was why they were ready to stone him. Consider John 10:24-31

²⁴ Then came the Jews round about him, and said unto him, How long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly. ²⁵ Jesus answered them, **I told you, and ye believed not:** the works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me.

Here Jesus is making the claim that, not his words but his very actions testify of him, his work is a witness of himself and he is holding the Jews accountable to bear witness of that work saying effectively "**My work is self-evident**". But then he continues saying;

²⁶ But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you. ²⁷ My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: ²⁸ And **I give** unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any *man* pluck them out of my hand. ²⁹ My Father, which gave *them* me, is greater than all; and no *man* is able to pluck *them* out of my Father's hand. ³⁰ **I and my Father are one.**

What an incredible claim! Only the sheep of the Shepherd identify the shepherd, these Jews are not the shepherd's sheep so they don't know him. Yet he makes clear his claim that **he and God are ONE!** This claim Jesus made was clear, do you think the claim was missed by the Jews? Look at what they do and listen to Jesus defense afterwards;

³¹ Then the Jews took up stones again to stone him. ³² Jesus answered them, Many good works have I shewed you from my Father; for which of those works do ye stone me? ³³ The Jews answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because **that thou, being a man, makest thyself God.**

Not difficult for the Jews to see that Jesus is a man, but infinitely more difficult it is to accept the testified claim that he is ***God manifest in the Flesh*** and standing before them. But by his actions, Jesus

demonstrated who he is. The Bible makes plain that it tells of who he is.

Who do you say that he is?

He made the claim that he is God. Time and time again the implication of what he says and what he did laid the claim. DO YOU BELIEVE what is written of him?

- You can't believe that Jesus is a good man or a good prophet, if he is a Liar can you? If Jesus claims to be God and is not, then he is neither a good man nor a prophet, he is a liar and should be rejected in FULL. (Liar)
- You can't believe he is a sane man if he **truly believes** a lie concerning himself. He could be good, but he cannot be sane if he believes he is God but isn't (Lunatic)
- But if he is to be believed as a good man and a sane man, then he must also be believed when he claims to be Lord.

These are the only three options to consider.

There are some who claim he never existed, well, these people are as foolish as those who believe the Earth is Flat today.

John's account was written to believe Jesus is God.

Written To Believe Jesus is The Christ

But these are written, that ye might believe that **Jesus is the Christ**, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name. (John 20:31)

In John 10:24 you got a hint that when the Jews asked Jesus ²⁴ ... *If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly.* There is a link between the divinity of Jesus and the Title of Jesus.

“Christ” is the Greek word translating the Hebrew word “Messiah”, both meaning **The Saviour**. BUT The Saviour in the Bible is None other than God and God ALONE. There is no Saviour BUT God

Turn with me to Isaiah

Isaiah 43:11 says “*I, even I, am the LORD; and beside me there is no saviour.*”

The latter part of **Isaiah 45:21** says “*...and there is no God else beside me; a just God and a Saviour; there is none beside me.*”

Hosea 13:4 testifies in kind saying “*Yet I am the LORD thy God from the land of Egypt, and thou shalt know no god but me: for there is no saviour beside me.*”

Paul says: *In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established* (2 Cor 13:1)

Turn to John 4:19-26

In this passage we see a wonderful account of the Lord meeting with a woman at a well and enters into a discourse with her. Each time she speaks Jesus responds with something incredibly profound as he witnesses of himself to her. Finally she discerns that he is more than just a mere man, and so she asks a question of him;

¹⁹ The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet. ²⁰ Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship. ²¹ Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. ²² Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews. ²³ But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. ²⁴ God *is* a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship *him* in spirit and in truth. ²⁵ The woman saith unto him, I know that Messias cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things. ²⁶ Jesus saith unto her, **I that speak unto thee am he.**

She, like all people, is looking for the Christ, the Messiah, the Saviour. The whole world searches for him even today, the entire world is waiting for him and they give it away with every movie they make looking for a hero, or one who will save the world. Every philosophy class that searches for truth, seeks for Christ, every cry out of wrong looks for justice, and every question ‘why’ is looking for The Answer.

Jesus is presented to us as The Christ, the Saviour of the World and the answer to our questions. Ask yourself honestly, what else has ever been presented to you as the most complete answer to the question of life?

He alone has told you all things, will you believe that Jesus is the Christ?

The account of John was written to believe that Jesus is The Christ.

Written to Believe Jesus is The Son of God

But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, **the Son of God**; and that believing ye might have life through his name. (John 20:31)

The apostle John wonderfully links the Christ with the Son of God. He does so that you might know that the Son of God is both God and Saviour. He is not alone in drawing this link.

Consider **John 11:25**

When Martha the resurrection of the Life of Lazarus in the last days, she was addressed by the Lord concerning him and he said;

“....., I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: ²⁶ And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this? ²⁷ She saith unto him, Yea, Lord: **I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world.**”

When the disciples where asked of Jesus “*Whom say ye that I am*” was it not Peter who answered “*Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God*” (Matt 16:16)?

And when he spoke of himself as the true bread that came down from heaven in John 6, and many of the disciples “*went back, and walked no more with him*”, he asked those he chose if they too will go away and again “*Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life.*” ⁶⁹ ***And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.***” John 6:68-69

And how does Mark open his own Gospel account but by proclaiming “*The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ the Son of God*” Mrk 1:1. In Matthew even the high priest asked Jesus to confirm who he is demanding ...*I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of*

God. (Matt 26:63)

Not only did those who condemn the Saviour to the Cross link Christ with the Son of God, but even the devils themselves did so. For in Luke we have many people bring to the Lord those who were sick and with diverse diseases and he laid hands on them and healed many and the text says; “*And devils also came out of many, crying out, and saying, Thou art Christ the Son of God.*” Luke 4:41

With all these identifying Jesus as The Son of God, who do YOU say that he is?
That is what is most important for you.

But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.

It's a matter of life for you personally.

Now perhaps you think this is just an interesting link of Christ but fail to comprehend its significance. The phrase “Son of God” is not common in the Old testament. In fact, though we see it presented **more than fifty times in the New Testament**, the phrase appears only once in the Old and it is spoken not by a Jew, but by a gentile king. Can you recall the event?

Daniel 3:25

²⁴ Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astonished, and rose up in haste, *and spake*, and said unto his counsellors, Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? They answered and said unto the king, True, O king. ²⁵ He answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.

But surely this could not be it?

Where had the King gotten such a notion and how can it be that the Jews in the *New Testament* linked The Christ to be the Son of God? The kings of Old were privileged with great libraries and records of even ancient people. If the King had knowledge of the Son of God, and this was not just a ‘slip of the tongue’, where could it have been gained? Remember that much history of Israel had already been spent by the time they came into captivity in Babylon. David the Sweet Psalmist of Israel, is long dead and buried...but his Psalms lived on.

Psalms 2:6-12

⁶ Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion.

⁷ I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou *art* my Son; this day have I begotten thee. ⁸ Ask of me, and I shall give *thee* the heathen *for* thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth *for* thy possession. ⁹ Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.

¹⁰ Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth. ¹¹ Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling. ¹² **Kiss the Son**, lest he be angry, and ye perish *from* the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed *are* all they that put their trust in him.

Proverbs 30:4 is an interesting passage

⁴ Who hath ascended up into heaven, or descended? who hath gathered the wind in his fists? who hath bound the waters in a garment? who hath established all the ends of the earth? what *is* his name, and what

is his son's name, if thou canst tell?

That is where the Jews understood The Son of God to be God. What is difficult to consider is why such a phrase? It's not until one other passage is considered that we can make the link, a passage where can we find both the knowledge that Christ is the Son of God, God the Son but also a man come into the world?

Can anyone guess?

Isaiah 9:6

*⁶ For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. ⁷ Of the increase of *his* government and peace *there shall be* no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.*

This is the one place in the Old testament where it all comes together in one passage.

Now, whom do you say that Jesus is?

Of all the things that have been written about Jesus in the other accounts; why are these written of Jesus in Johns account?

But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.

Believing to Have Eternal Life

Unlike most of the books in the Bible and unlike the first three Gospel accounts, the Apostle John give us the reason for his writing, he tells us specifically why he wrote what he wrote in a purpose statement found in John 20:30-31

*³⁰ And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: ³¹ **But these are written**, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.*

“but these are written....that believing ye might have life through his name”

This Life John refers to is not the life limited to living.

We are all alive physically but not all are truly alive. Jesus made that clear when a young disciple asked him if he could go and bury his father, the Lord said *“let the dead bury their dead, but go thou and preach the kingdom of God”* (Lk 9:60).

Paul makes it clear that though man seems to be alive he is in fact *“dead in trespass and sins”* (Eph 2:1, Col 2:13).

And if you do indeed die in your sins, your life today will certainly seem not only a distant memory, but a recognition that you were even dead while you lived.

When I came to Christ and submitted my will for his, I looked back and was so frightened at how close I was to the edge of that precipice.

Not only for doing the stupid things I did in my teens and twenties, but for the risk of rejecting Jesus **the last time**.

Thirteen years lapsed between my rejection of Christ the first time, and hearing of him the second time. There was no guarantee I would hear of him the third time. NB: Please understand that when I speak of hearing of Christ I don't mean only that which comes through the ear, what I mean is the recognition of opportunity to accept his sacrifice for my sins or to reject it.

There are many who hear of Christ through the ear every Sunday morning, but never given in the heart the opportunity to reject him. Because their hearts are hardened.

But the very purpose of John's Gospel is *that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.*

It is no surprise then that John gives the most famous encounter of all the Bible, the encounter between Christ and a Jewish Pharisee named Nicodemus.

John 3:1-21

¹ There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: ² The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him. ³ Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

It's as if Jesus just gets straight to the point of why Nicodemus has come to enquire of him, he completely ignores the question asked of him by Nicodemus and had the wisdom to know why it was that this man came to Jesus by night, to enquire of the kingdom of God.

Nicodemus responds the same way we all respond to such a strange statement

⁴ Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? ⁵ Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. ⁶ That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

All of us are born of the flesh, we are all born of water, but none of us are born of the Spirit of God, this was lost at the fall by choice, it must now be sought after by choice. "ye must be born again" he says.

⁷ Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. ⁸ The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit. ⁹

It is the spirit of God that is doing the work in our lives, and we don't know when it comes or when it goes. It is the spirit of God that gives opportunity for faith, the chance to accept or reject God, those that are born of the Spirit are those who have taken the opportunity to believe when the opportunity came.

This week I was privileged to witness God working in the life of a young man who was doing some work for me. He had worked for me a number of years ago and back then he was quite antagonistic to things of the Lord.

But something has changed, something incredible. His heart has begun to soften and he is becoming a humble man and desires to know the truth. He now believes God is, but who he is remains a mystery.

And the Lord has given me the privilege to witness this miraculous change and perhaps have a part to play in a dead man coming to life. He is given the opportunity to accept or to reject having life through the name of Christ. It's not an opportunity that is always there.

Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be? ¹⁰ Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things? ¹¹ Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness. ¹² If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you *of* heavenly things? ¹³ And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, *even* the Son of man which is in heaven. ¹⁴ And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: ¹⁵ That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.

This is life, true life is eternal life, true life is not affected by the sting of death, true life has assured itself eternity. As Christian In John Bunyans allegory Pilgrims Progress who fled the city of destruction crying "Life, Life, eternal life". Now the Lord tells Nicodemus of how that life is provided.

¹⁶ For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. ¹⁷ For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. ¹⁸ He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

The lord tells what will save a man and what will condemn him. and it is the same thing John tells us as the reason for his Gospel account; **But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.** Jesus continues to teach the specifics for how the ultimate condemnation comes about

¹⁹ And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. ²⁰ For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd. ²¹ But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.

Rejecting what is plain for life leads to death.

- The business man goes broke for rejecting payment.
- The worker goes hungry for rejecting employment
- The hungry will die for rejecting food.

THE LIVING WILL DIE FOR REJECTING LIFE.

If the spirit of God is working in your life right now as you listen to this sermon. Whether you are sitting in the seat here in the chapel, or listening in your cars as you travel, or wherever you are.

PLEASE, PLEASE, PLEASE, don't reject Jesus now or put it off now, we don't know when, if ever this opportunity will come again. It was thirteen years for me and anything could have happened to me in those thirteen distracted years.

Please, right now, stop and bend your knee and plead with God to save you, believe the Gospel of his dear son.

But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.