

THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST

SPREADING THE SOUL-SAVING MESSAGE OF JESUS

JOHN LESSON 1 (Introduction)

Introduction by narrator accompanied by a cappella singing:

THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST. Spreading the soul-saving message of Jesus. And now, Ben Bailey.

“Truly, Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name” (Jn. 20:30-31). Welcome to our study of the Gospel of John. This Gospel is unique, in that John has a specific purpose. John wants his readers to know that Jesus is divine. He is the Messiah Who came down from Heaven. He is God in the flesh. And everything in this book wraps itself around that grand theme. Like a lawyer presenting a case, John brings up the evidence to support the fact that Jesus is God’s Son, and that by submitting to His will and believing only in Him, men and women can have eternal life. John presents the case by showing us Who Jesus is. He shows us the claim that Jesus Himself made, that the Father made, and that others made about Jesus. He shows us Christ’s “I am” statements. Who was Christ, really? Jesus explained that. But the main piece of evidence is represented by the seven signs that John presents from Jesus’ life, which offer undeniable proof that He is the Son of God. In this lesson, we will see how John shows us that Jesus is divine and is the Son of God.

In the Gospel of John, John begins examining Jesus’ claim to deity by looking at some of the titles Jesus wears. For example, in John 1 Jesus is identified as “the Word of God.” John 1:1-3 says, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.” Who is “the Word”? John 1:14 tells us when it says, “The Word became 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.” Who is this Word, this Creator, this Almighty God? It is none other than the One Whom they had beheld, and Who had been with them—Jesus the Son of God. The idea of Jesus being “the Word” (Greek, *logos*) is very significant because we know that the Word emanates from God through the Holy Spirit. It came to men and women through the medium of the Holy Spirit, who presented His revelation to them. Matthew said in Matthew 1:19-21 that Jesus is “Immanuel,” which is translated “God with us.” How is Jesus presented? He is presented as being the Word of God—the Word that came to life at Christ’s birth. He is the Word Who gives men and women eternal life.

We know that Jesus has always existed. Genesis 1:26-27 teaches that God was a plurality even from creation. But in John we see Jesus being born, living as a man (Phil. 2:5-11) while still retaining His deity, and coming to Earth to give people the way of salvation. John 1:29 shows us one of Jesus’ claims, and what He was going to do for humankind. John the Immerser sees Jesus approaching, and then says, “Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.” Not only was Jesus the Word Who had come from God, but He also was the precious, spotless Lamb Who had come to take away sin. Take your mind back to the sacrificial system of the Old Testament. During Old Testament times, when sin occurred, God demanded a sacrifice. If a man sinned, he went out to the field, picked

out a lamb that was without spot or blemish, and sacrificed it to God. At their best, those sacrifices never could take away sin (Heb. 10:3-4). But Jesus is presented as the perfect, spotless Son of God Who made a sacrifice once for all for salvation (Heb. 10:12). Thus, Jesus is seen as the Word of God and the Lamb of God.

He also is seen as the Messiah. In John 1:41 Jesus is identified as the Messiah (or as the Christ). During Old Testament times, the people were looking for the Anointed One Who would bless all nations (Gen. 12:3), Who would bring peace (Gen. 49:10), Who would be of the seed of David, and Who would set up the eternal throne to which all nations would come (2 Sam. 7:14). Jesus is the Anointed One of God. He is the Messiah, the Christ. This proves His deity.

In John 1:49 the claim is made that Jesus is the Son of God. If you are the son of someone, you are part of them. You represent them, and have come from them. You are what they are. You are made in your father's image. Jesus, being the Son of God, was God Himself. The Father confirmed this as well. One of the most definitive passages regarding the fact that Jesus is God is found in Hebrews 1:8-11. God was speaking to the Son, and said, "Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your Kingdom." Here, God speaks to His Son, and calls Him "God." Thus, we see that Jesus is God in the flesh and is divine.

In John 10:30 Jesus said, "I and the Father are one." Jesus also made a claim in John 1:49 that proved His deity by showing that He was the King of Israel. Andrew and his brother had found the One Who was the King of Israel. Jesus truly is King. God had said to Samuel in 1 Samuel 7 and 8 that the people of Israel were not rejecting him, but were rejecting God from reigning over them. God had always been their King. It was sad that they desired an earthly king. God said, "I gave them a king in My anger, and took him away in My wrath" (Hos. 13:11). But God had always been King. The very fact that Jesus arrived as the King of Israel is further proof that He is the Son of God and is divine.

In John 4:42 Jesus is identified as being "the Savior of the world." For someone to be a savior and make an offering for sin, three things had to occur, as Paul pointed out in 1 Corinthians 1:10-13. That person had to live a perfect life. That person had to die as a sacrifice. And people had to be baptized into that person. Jesus is the only One Who has ever lived Who lived a perfect life. "He committed no sin, nor was deceit found in His mouth" (1 Pet. 2:22). He was "tempted in all points as we are, yet without sin" (Heb. 4:15). Paul said in 2 Corinthians 5:21 that God "made Christ, who knew no sin, to be sin on our behalf." Jesus thus meets the first criterion. He was the perfect, spotless Son of God. Plus, we know that Jesus died as a sacrifice for the world. In 1 Peter 2:24 we are told that Jesus Himself "bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness." He therefore meets the second criterion. He is a perfect, spotless sacrifice Who died for humankind. Then, we see Jesus saying in Matthew 28:19, "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." Jesus truly is divine because He is the Savior of the world.

But it may be Thomas who made the greatest statement of all. In John 20 we see Jesus revealing Himself to His disciples after His resurrection. Thomas comes in, sees Jesus, and says that he will not believe until he can put his hand in Jesus' side, and see the nail prints in Jesus' hand. Jesus shows him both of those things, and Thomas then says, "My Lord and My God!" That is the point John wants us to get. Jesus is our Lord, Master, and Owner. In Acts 2:36, when Peter preached the first Gospel sermon, he said, "Let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both

Lord and Christ.” But it is not enough just to call Jesus “Lord.” We must realize that Jesus is divine. He is God in the flesh. He is the Creator (Jn. 1:3). He is the Sustainer (Heb. 1:3-4). He gives life to all men by His own sacrifice (Acts 4:11-12). He is the only way we can receive salvation.

These are some pretty strong claims. So how can we prove such claims? It is not enough just to claim something. How, in the Gospel of John, does John provide undeniable proof that these claims are true? He does it by discussing the seven signs that Jesus performed throughout His earthly ministry. These seven signs were things that the Holy Spirit deemed to be the most important signs in Jesus’ life. They begin in John 2:1-11 where Jesus turned water to wine. Jesus, His mother, and His disciples had been invited to a wedding in Cana. At the wedding, the host had run out of wine (which likely was grape juice). Jesus’ mother asked Him to turn some water into wine. Jesus told the people around Him to fill the pots. They did that. He then told them to take the pots and serve what was in them to the master of the feast. The servants took the pots (which they knew had previously been filled with water), dipped a ladle into them, and gave it to the master who said, after tasting of the grape juice, that the bridegroom had saved the best until last. Look at what Jesus did. He took 120 to 180 gallons of water, and being the Master of creation, He changed that water into wine. Even the master of the feast admitted that the best had been saved until last. Jesus was able to take water, and being Master of creation, change it to something totally different. Who could do such a thing, except God in the flesh—Jesus Himself?

The second sign is found in John 4:49-53, where Jesus cured a nobleman’s son. A nobleman came to Jesus to tell Him that His Son was sick. He had come from a great distance, and said, “Lord, if you will just say the word, my son will be healed.” Jesus sees the man’s faith, and then says to him, “Go your way. Your son will be made whole.” As the man was returning home, his servants came to him to tell him that his son had been healed. Jesus is the Master of distance. Jesus simply said the words, and the young boy was healed. This shows again that Jesus is divine, and is the Son of God. Who could do such a thing except God? Only God could do that.

In John 5:1-18 we see the healing of a paralytic man who had been plagued by a disease for a long time. Jesus instantaneously healed the man of his disease, showing that He was the Master of time. It did not matter how long the man had been paralyzed. That was of no consequence to Jesus. He simply spoke the word, and the man became whole.

In John 6:1-14 we see the feeding of the 5,000. Jesus had been preaching and teaching. The people had no one to lead them, and were like sheep that had gone astray. The disciples told Jesus that if they sent the people away, they would faint from hunger. Jesus then said, “You feed them.” But the disciples said that all the food that was available consisted of only a few loaves and fish. Jesus told them to bring the food to Him, and to have everyone sit down. He then blessed the food, and the disciples passed out enough food (from just a few loaves of bread and a few fish) to feed more than 5,000 people. And, the disciples took up twelve basketsful of leftovers. How could that be possible? Who could do that except the Son of God? Who could feed 5,000 people with just a few loaves of bread and a few fish? Only God in the flesh.

In John 6:16-21 we see Jesus walking on water. Jesus sent the disciples on ahead. Later, He came to them. They were frightened at first. Jesus tells them not to be afraid. He then walks to them on the water. That is something that only God could do. This shows that God is the Master over natural laws. If a person were to try to walk on water, gravity would demand that the person would sink. Yet Jesus—as the Creator and Master of natural laws—walked on water, proving that He is divine.

In John 9 we see a blind man receiving his sight. Jesus saw the man on the Sabbath, and healed him, which the teachers did not like. The man had been born blind, which was a great misfortune. Jesus, being the Master over misfortune, caused the man to be able to see again. His sight was restored to him instantaneously.

In John 11 we see the raising of Lazarus from the dead—the most powerful of all signs. This was one sign with which the people around Jesus could not deal. After they saw Him raise Lazarus, they sought to put Him to death. Jesus' friend Lazarus had fallen ill. Jesus headed toward the town of Bethany. But before He arrived, Lazarus died. By the time Jesus got there, Lazarus had been dead several days. The people told Jesus that, and showed Jesus Lazarus' tomb. Jesus then said, "Lazarus, arise!" Can you imagine the scene? Lazarus, bound in burial clothes, comes forth. Lazarus arose from the grave. Think of the power it would take to accomplish something like that. Jesus is divine because of the miracles that He performed. The undeniable signs that He performed are undeniable proof that He is the Son of God. This gives much more credibility to the "I am" statements that He made. Listen to these "I am" statements from the Gospel of John in view of the miracles which proved that He is God's Son.

In John 6:35 Jesus said, "I am the bread of life." In John 6 Jesus had just fed the multitude with a few pieces of bread and a few small fish. The lesson there was not, "Look at what I can do, and how I can feed you." The lesson was, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me will never hunger." Jesus, being divine, knew that people needed His sacrifice and His salvation to get to Heaven. Today, we still need that same bread of life in order to be right with God. We cannot find spiritual sustenance outside of Jesus Christ. Without being granted access to Him by His blood, we will never be what God wants us to be, spiritually speaking.

In John 8:12 Jesus said, "I am the light of the world." Look at the light of Jesus Christ, and the good that He offers a world filled with darkness. Jesus' example is seen all around the globe—even by those who do not even follow the Scriptures. Just by trying to put into effect the principles of the Scriptures, such things show forth light in people's lives. Jesus is the light in a world of darkness and sin.

In John 10:7 Jesus said, "I am the door of the sheep." Jesus is the only way that people can find access to God. Jesus is presented as the door, in the sense that we must go through Him to get to the Father. We cannot get into a house without going through a door. Jesus is the entrance through which every person must go in order to become a part of the family of God.

In John 10:11 Jesus said, "I am the good shepherd." The good shepherd knows His sheep. His sheep hear his voice, and he leads them to green pastures and to flowing, smooth waters. We can always trust that Jesus, as the Good Shepherd, will lead us down the right path. There are many people in this world who will lead us down the wrong path, religiously. Jesus said that there are many who will come in looking like sheep, but actually are wolves in sheep's clothing (Mt. 7). We need to be sure that Jesus is our Good Shepherd because it is only by following His example that we can be right with God. Peter said in 1 Peter 2 that we must walk in Jesus' footsteps. Paul said in 1 Corinthians 11:1, "Imitate me as I imitate Christ." Jesus is the Chief Shepherd (1 Pet. 5:5). If we are going to be right with God, then we must step in line behind Him and follow His will.

In John 11:25 we find one of the great "I am" statements. Jesus said at the resurrection of Lazarus, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live." What makes Christianity unique is that because Jesus is divine, and was able to rise from the grave, He conquered death (1 Cor. 15:55-57). We see in Hebrews 2:14-15

how Satan had fallen and had power over Jesus, yet Jesus, “through death destroyed him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and released those who, through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage.” Jesus loosed the pangs of death, giving us the hope of eternal life through a resurrection. What would Christianity be if the grave was the end? What would it matter if a person was a Christian or not—if it all ended in 70 or 80 years and there was no hope of eternal life? Look at the hope that Christians have. Jesus provided us with the hope of one day arising from the grave. The Scriptures tell us that one day, all who are in the grave will come forth—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation. Christians have the hope of one day being raised from the grave to live with God forever.

In John 14:6 we find what probably is the most memorable “I am” statement. Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No man comes to the Father except by Me.” When Jesus said, “I am the way,” that means that without Him there is no going. When He said, “I am the truth,” that means that without Him there is no knowing. When He said, “I am the life,” that means that without Him there is no living. Jesus is the only way that a person can make his or her life right in the sight of God. Acts 4:12 says, “Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.” A person cannot be saved unless he or she commits to Jesus as the Son of God, and obeys His will. It is not enough just to say, “I believe in Jesus.” A person must do what Jesus says to do. In Matthew 7:21 Jesus said, “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven.” Those are the people who will be right with God. Jesus is the truth. Outside of Jesus Christ there is no truth that will save us. The truth regarding salvation is found only in Christ. There are no books of men that can save us. The greatest thinkers of our day cannot save us. The truth that matters for salvation can be found only in Jesus through the writings of Scripture, which is the Word of God. That is the sole truth regarding salvation. In John 17:17 Jesus said to His Father, “Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.” The Word of God is where truth is found. It will not be found in feelings, emotions, or in what religious leaders say. Truth will be found where it has always been—in the Bible. Every person is responsible for finding that truth. Psalm 119:160 says that the entirety of God’s Word is truth. We have to be responsible enough to study to show ourselves approved so that we can know we are right with God. Jesus also said, “I am the life.” Outside of Jesus as the Son of God, life is not worth living. There is not another way of life that is worth living, except the Christian life. Jesus said in John 10:10 that He came to bring life so that we could have it “more abundantly.” Jesus gives us an abundant life. But the real truth of the matter is that He is the only way to eternal life. He is the only way that we can be right before God.

In John 15:1 we find Jesus’ last “I am” statement. He said, “I am the vine; you are the branches. Unless you stay connected to Me, you will be cut off, burned in the fire, and will not be useful to the Father.” The fact that Jesus is the vine means that He is the source to which we must stay connected if we are going to be pleasing to the Father. In a plant, there is the taproot or vine that provides sustenance through minerals and vitamins to the rest of the plant. That is what Jesus is like. He is the main taproot that is to be the source of sustenance and strength for Christians. Unless we stay connected to Him, we will not be right in God’s sight. Jesus is the only way that we can be sure that we are pleasing to God.

John, in his introductory message, shows us that Jesus is the Son of God. How did he do that? He showed us the proofs of Christ’s deity through the signs that He did. Who can raise people from the dead? Only God can do that. Who can walk on water? Only God can. Who can feed 5,000 people with just a few pieces of bread and a few fish? Only the Son of God can. Who can heal people by saying the words from a distance? Only the Son of

God can. Jesus is God in the flesh. It is not enough to say that He was “a good teacher.” It is not enough to say that He is Lord—until we submit to the fact that Jesus, Who came to Earth, was born of a virgin, lived a perfect life, and died on the cross, is God Himself. We will not be saved unless we admit these things, and it is essential that we recognize that.

Are you sure today that you are living your life in submission to Jesus as the Son of God? Are you sure that you are a follower of Christ? The Bible tells us what we must do to be saved. Jesus said in John 3:5, “Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.” Have you heard the Word of God (Rom. 10:17)? Do you believe that Jesus is God’s Son (Jn. 8:24)? Have you repented of those things in your life that are not right (Lk. 13:3)? Have you confessed the name of Jesus before men (Rom. 10:10)? And have you been baptized in water for the forgiveness of your sins? In Acts 2:37 when the people who had crucified Christ cried out, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?,” the answer was, “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (vs. 38). Baptism is essential to salvation, as Jesus said in John 3, and as Peter said in Acts 2:38. If you have not been baptized, then you are not a child of God, and you will be lost. If, as a Christian, you have not lived your life as you should, here is the hope you have. Jesus said, “Where I am, there you shall be also” (Jn. 14:3). May God help us always to submit our will to the will of Jesus, the Son of God.

Narrator accompanied by a cappella singing:

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STUDY QUESTIONS FOR JOHN LESSON 1 (INTRODUCTION)

1. In John 1:1-3, how is Jesus identified?
2. According to Matthew 1:21, what would Jesus do?
3. According to John 1:29, what would Jesus do?
4. According to Hebrews 10:12, what did Jesus do?
5. Who, according to John 1:41, is Jesus?
6. In Hebrews 1:8, how did God address Jesus?
7. According to this lesson, three things had to take place in order for an individual to be considered as “savior of the world.” What were those three things?
8. What does 2 Corinthians 5:21 say about Jesus?
9. What does 1 Peter 2:24 say about Jesus?
10. What does Matthew 28:19 say about Jesus?
11. When Peter preached the first Gospel sermon (recorded in Acts 2), what did he say about Jesus (see Acts 2:36)?
12. This lesson discusses a certain number of “signs” that Jesus performed during His earthly ministry. How many of those signs does the gospel of John discuss?
13. What miraculous action of Jesus is recorded and discussed in John 2:1-11?
14. What miraculous action of Jesus is recorded and discussed in John 4:49-53?
15. What miraculous action of Jesus is recorded and discussed in John 5:1-18?
16. What miraculous action of Jesus is recorded and discussed in John 6:1-14?
17. What miraculous action of Jesus is recorded and discussed in John 6:16-21?
18. What miraculous action of Jesus is recorded and discussed in John 9?
19. What miraculous action of Jesus is recorded and discussed in John 11?
20. How many “I am” statements of Jesus are recorded in the gospel of John?
21. What did Jesus say in John 11:25?
22. What did Jesus say in John 14:6?
23. What did John have to say about Jesus in John 20:31?