
JOHN: THAT YOU MAY BELIEVE

THE SAVIOR WHO HAS NO BEGINNING

A message presented by Pastor Marc Minter
to First Baptist Church of Diana, TX on January 1, 2017

INTRODUCTION

Who is Jesus Christ? And, why is this question so important? Well, one may consider questions like these less than critical, but the Gospel of John places them at the center of everything. There is much to be learned from the Gospel of John, but the writers major point is worth noting. Jesus Christ is presented as equal with God and yet distinct from the Father. Jesus is the giver of life and the creator of everything; and He is also subordinate to the Father as well as sent from Him. The opening verses of John's Gospel are spectacular in their description of this unique man, Jesus Christ, who is the divine Savior of sinners.

JOHN 1:1-5

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made through 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 The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

THE POINT I'M AIMING AT TODAY:

Life is found only in Christ, precisely because He is God the Son; therefore, He is the victorious light in the midst of darkness.

MESSAGE OUTLINE:

- (1) LIFE IS FOUND ONLY IN CHRIST**
- (2) THE BIBLE OVERTLY CLAIMS THAT JESUS IS GOD**
- (3) A BRIEF NOTE ON MULTIPLE USES FOR SUCH BRILLIANT TRUTH**
- (4) CHRIST IS THE VICTORIOUS LIGHT IN THE MIDST OF DARKNESS**

(1) LIFE IS FOUND ONLY IN CHRIST

“In him was life...” (v4)

- John’s emphasis: Life is especially found in/through Christ, and life is given by the Father, Son, and Spirit.
 - Belief in Christ equals **“eternal life”** (Jn. 3:15).
 - God sent Christ into the world in order that the believing ones would have **“eternal life”** (Jn. 3:16).
 - Those who disbelieve and disobey God’s **“Son”** will not **“see life,”** but have **“the wrath of God remaining on them”** (Jn. 3:36).
 - Whoever **“drinks of the water”** Christ gives will have **“eternal life”** **“welling up”** within (Jn. 4:14).
 - **Both the Father and the Son give “life” to whom they will (Jn. 5:21).**
 - Jesus said, **“Truly, truly... whoever hears My word and believes Him who sent Me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life”** (Jn. 5:24).
 - **Both the Father and the Son have “life in himself” (Jn. 5:26).**
 - **Jesus said, “It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is no help at all” (Jn. 6:63).**
 - Jesus said to some of the people listening to Him, **“you refuse to come to Me that you may have life”** (Jn. 5:40).
 - See also John 6:27, 33, 35, 40, 47, 48, 51, 53, 54, 68; 8:12; 10:10, 28; 11:25; 14:6; 17:2
 - In direct contrast to such “refusal,” John says that the whole purpose of his Gospel is: **“these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name”** (Jn. 20:31).
 - In fact, Jesus said in His High Priestly prayer, **“this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent”** (Jn. 17:3).

Major Point: *Life is found only in Christ...*

- This means that there is no life apart from Christ.
 - He is not one voice among many in competition for your attention
 - He is not just another king who demands something of you
- This means that death is the only possible result from any rejection of Christ.
 - If you reject His Lordship... death!
 - If you reject His claims of absolute truth... death!
 - If you reject His incredible offer of gracious salvation... death!
- This means that life... true life... real and lasting life... is yours in Christ Jesus!
 - Oh, what joy there is in this!
 - Have you settled for temporary life? Fleeting life? Unfulfilling life?
 - Come and drink from the fountain of eternal life!
 - Dine on the nourishment Christ gives to the starving soul!
 - Bask in the warmth and serenity Christ possesses in ample supply!

Major Point: Life is found only in Christ, **precisely because *He is God the Son...***

(2) THE BIBLE OVERTLY CLAIMS THAT JESUS IS GOD

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (v1).

- Pre-existence and the use of ‘Beginning’
 - The opening of John’s Gospel sounds much like the opening of **Genesis**: “*In the beginning, God created...*” (Gen. 1:1).
 - Mark’s Gospel also starts with a reference to the “*beginning*,” but Mark starts with Jesus’ earthly ministry.
 - D.A. Carson said, “Since Mark begins his Gospel with the same word, ‘The beginning of the gospel about Jesus Christ’, it is also possible that John is making an allusion to his

colleague's work, saying in effect, 'Mark has told you about the beginning of Jesus' public ministry; I want to show you that the starting point of the gospel can be traced farther back than that, before the beginning of the entire universe.'¹

- John clearly intends to place the “**already-existing**” *Word* at the beginning of time/space/matter.
 - Notice the *contrasting use of terms*: “**was**” from *eimi* (Greek: to be or am) and “**made**” from *ginomai* (Greek: came into being)
 - “1 In the beginning **was** [*eimi*] the Word, and the Word **was** [*eimi*] with God, and the Word was God. 2 He **was** [*eimi*] in the beginning with God. 3 All things were **made** [*ginomai*] through him, and without him was not any thing **made** [*ginomai*] that was **made** [*ginomai*]” (Jn. 1:1-3).

- Incidentally, this provides us with a good opportunity to affirm what the Bible teaches about a “beginning.”
 - A
 - The Bible gives absolutely no room for an eternal universe! No, God is the only truly eternal (self-existent) being.
 - All life and existence^w_e comes from Him.
 - As we have already said, “In him was life” (v4)

- John says “the Word” is **creator-God**: “All things were made through him” (v3)
 - Just as Moses tells us “**God created the heavens and the earth**” (Gen. 1:1), so John tells us “All things were made through him [the Word]” (Jn. 1:3).
 - Paul says elsewhere, “**all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together**” (Col. 1:16-17).

¹ Carson, D. A. (1991). The Gospel according to John (p. 114). Leicester, England; Grand Rapids, MI: Inter-Varsity Press; W.B. Eerdmans.

- The Scriptures wholly affirm the deity of Christ.
 - Jesus *forgives sin* (Luke 7:46-39).
 - Jesus *claims equal authority with God* the Father (Mark 2:1-12).
 - Jesus *receives worship* (Hebrews 1:3-6).
 - Jesus makes multiple statements of *equality with God* (John 6:35, 8:12, 9:5, 10:7, 10:9, 10:11, 11:25, 14:6).
 - Jesus claimed to be the “**I AM**” (John 6:19-20, 8:28, 8:58).
 - There is much more that could be mentioned (such as OT references to “the Angel of the LORD” and the consistent testimony of a plurality in the God-head).

Major Point: Life is found only in Christ, precisely because He is God the Son...

(3) A BRIEF NOTE ON MULTIPLE USES FOR SUCH BRILLIANT TRUTH

“Ok... I believe Jesus is God, but *why spend much time on this?*”

- Everyone is a Theologian
 - Everyone is a theologian, but some are just less accurate than others.
 - “*Who is Jesus?*” Anything you say in answer to this question is a theological statement.
 - Whether you have ever felt the need to investigate the claims of Christianity, your kids do... or they have already decided that they aren’t worth investigating.

- Christology is a battleground
 - Jehovah’s Witnesses, Mormons, and Muslims all have a Christology that disagrees with the truth I am arguing today.
 - Do you want to be able to thoughtfully and lovingly present biblical truth to your friends who disagree?

- God has revealed Himself to us!
 - While we sometimes seem to take such a thing for granted (dusty Bibles everywhere, time invested in everything but growing in the knowledge of God, and even an unimpressed posture this morning), this is HUGE!
 - It is no secret that many people assume the existence of an underwhelming God... but this assumption can only be maintained by those who refuse to look at what God has revealed about Himself.

- Gazing upon Christ provokes worship
 - The profundity of the person and work of Christ will awaken:
 - ***Amazement***
 - The more you know about Christ, the more you will realize that He is much grander and much more astounding than you ever imagined.
 - ***Interest***
 - The more you learn about Christ, the more you will want to learn still more about Him.
 - ***Worship***
 - The more you gaze upon (behold) the triune God of creation... the eternally-loving God of your salvation... the self-existing God of your very existence, the more you will be stirred to ascribe all glory and honor to Him!

Major Point: Life is found only in Christ, precisely because He is God the Son; therefore, He is the victorious light in the midst of darkness.

(4) CHRIST IS THE VICTORIOUS LIGHT IN THE MIDST OF DARKNESS

“4 In him was life, and the life was the light of men. 5 The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it” (Jn. 1:4-5)

- Christ Himself is “light” and “life”
 - Jesus said, “***I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life***” (Jn. 8:12).
 - And again, Jesus said, “***I am the light of the world***” (Jn. 9:5).
 - Jesus said, “***I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live...***” (Jn. 11:25).
 - Jesus said, “***I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me***” (Jn. 14:6).
 - Christ is creator-God, and He is also redeemer-God.
 - John is speaking (in the context of these opening verses) in terms of creation and self-existence.
 - John’s point seems to build from here: Christ is a capable Savior ***because*** He is the sovereign God.
- Christ is capable of invading darkness and death

“The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it” (v5).

 - Let us step just over the edge of the precipice here...
 - Light/Dark and Life/Death are pregnant terms
 - Light is truth, understanding, wisdom, purity, order, etc.
 - Dark is error, ignorance, folly, perversion, chaos, etc.
 - Life is God’s blessing, nearness to God, immortality, etc.
 - Death is cursing, separation from God, etc.
 - Christ’s light invades the dark opposition.
 - Just as God spoke in Genesis, “Let there be light,” and the light overcame darkness, so too Christ (the wisdom of God [1 Cor. 1:24, 30], full of grace and truth [Jn. 1:17]) utterly dispels His foes.

Major Point: Life is found only in Christ, precisely because He is God the Son; therefore, He is the victorious light in the midst of darkness.

APPLICATION

- (1) You may be instructed by the Gospel writer's own description of Christ as Savior (it is his goal to evangelize [20:30-31]).
 - a. Notice that John engages the mind of his reader
 - b. Notice that John speaks in absolute terms
 - c. Notice that John speaks with authority
- (2) You may know that the Bible is more profound than many assume it to be.
 - a. We have only scratched the surface of these verses today.
 - b. The Greek terms here are incredibly precise and revealing.
 - c. John 1:1 is a real battleground in the defense of biblical Christianity
- (3) You may be challenged to think more deeply about God's self-revelation.
 - a. Since God has seen fit to include passages like this in the Bible, you should understand these things to be important and significant.
- (4) You may rest assured that trust in Christ as the perfect and unique Savior is well-placed.
 - a. Oh, the sinner can trust this Savior who is the creator-God!
- (5) You may find great comfort in the reality that Christ's light and life are not in any danger when darkness threatens.
 - a. What joy is here! Though darkness may bite and growl, Christ illumines without fail.
- (6) You may behold the glory of God in Christ: the unique God-man.
 - a. Come, behold the wondrous mystery...

SUGGESTED RESOURCES:

John 1:1 Meaning and Translation by James White

http://vintage.aomin.org/JOHN1_1.html

Jesus Christ, God Incarnate by P.G. Matthew

<http://www.gracevalley.org/sermon/jesus-christ-god-incarnate/>

Triumphant Light by John Piper

<http://www.desiringgod.org/messages/triumphant-light>