

- ***READ John 20:30-31*** Imagine with me that you have been asked to explain the basics of Christianity to a person who knows little to nothing about it. This person is seeking a higher being to worship and is open to Christianity being the means by which to do so. Where would we begin? I would think that we would have to begin with an explanation of who Jesus is, and I would suggest that the Gospel of John is the perfect place to consider exactly who Jesus was as the Son of God.
- John's Gospel is different from the three synoptic Gospels because it doesn't give nearly the detailed overview of Jesus's life that is done by Matthew, Mark, & Luke. Some have even surmised that the Gospel of John only covers as few as 14-21 days within the life of Jesus. And yet, this Gospel, more than any of the other three, gives the strongest evidences that are to show that Jesus is in fact the Son of God. John makes it no secret that this was the reasoning for the writing of this Gospel account in the text that we just read together of **John 20:30,31**.
- John wrote this letter to support the claim that Jesus was in fact the Messiah, the Son of God, and over the next few weeks we are going to consider a series of lessons that looks to prove from John's Gospel exactly what John claimed concerning Jesus...that He is the Son of God. I want to begin by considering just how much such a claim matters. We will then consider Jesus's own claims, and then we will finish up with the first of the four witnesses that we will examine throughout the course of this series of studies.

I. A Claim That Matters!

A. Whether or not Jesus is the Son of God defines Him and everything He did in His life.

1. C.S. Lewis is most well known for making the argument that the Jesus of the Bible has to fit into one of three categories when it comes to the claim that He is the Son of God. He is either a knowing liar, a raving lunatic, or He is the Lord, the Son of God. If Jesus heard the claims of Him being the Son of God, and accepted Him while knowing they were untrue then He is a liar. If He made claims to be deity because He was mentally unstable then He was a lunatic. However, if He was truly the Son of God then He is worthy of our devotion.
2. From these thoughts of Lewis, we must recognize how crucial it is to examine the evidence as to whether or not Jesus is truly the Son of God. This claim matters greatly because it will determine how it is that we must view Jesus Himself.

B. Whether or not Jesus is the Son of God determines whether or not our faith in Him means anything at all.

1. Further, whether or not Jesus is the Son of God has a great impact on us in regards to the faith that we possess as His disciples. The Apostle Paul makes this point in his letter to the Corinthians when he argues in **I Corinthians 15:12-19**. *"Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say, "There is no resurrection of the dead"? If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised; and if Christ has not been raised, then our proclamation is in vain, and so is your faith. Moreover, we are found to be false witnesses about God, because we have testified wrongly about God that he raised up Christ — whom he did not raise up, if in fact the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins. Those, then, who have fallen asleep in Christ have also perished. If we have put our hope in Christ for this life only, we should be pitied more than anyone."*
2. Paul's point? If Christ has not been raised from the dead then He is not truly the Christ. If He is not truly the Christ then our faith is worthless, we are still in our sins, and there is no hope of our own resurrection through the power that supposedly raised Him up. Whatever the argument or reasoning might be against Jesus's Lordship, it is a big deal because it greatly impacts our faith.

- C. If Jesus is the Son of God and we deny His deity, then we can do nothing but also deny the Father.
1. Finally, working on the assumption that Jesus is the Son of God, John writes in his letter of **I John 2:18-23** that our acceptance or denial of such a fact will impact our standing with God the Father. John warns of antichrists that would rise up and deny that Jesus is the Christ. They would cause problems for the followers of Jesus as they tried to promote this lie, but John reminds these brethren, *"But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and all of you know the truth. I have not written to you because you don't know the truth, but because you do know it, and because no lie comes from the truth. Who is the liar, if not the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This one is the antichrist: the one who denies the Father and the Son. No one who denies the Son has the Father; he who confesses the Son has the Father as well."* (**I John 2:20-23**)
 2. The point we need to take strong notice of is what John says in the latter section of those verses. *"Who is the liar, if not the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This one is the antichrist: the one who denies the Father and the Son. No one who denies the Son has the Father; he who confesses the Son has the Father as well."* The choice and ramifications are abundantly clear. If we fail to recognize Jesus as the Christ then we have no opportunity to recognize the Father as God. The denial of Jesus is an equal denial of the Father.

As we give explain to this interested person the importance of the claims that Jesus is the Son of God, he is she might stop us and ask an all-important question, *"Did Jesus Himself ever make the actual claim that He is the Son of God."* This is a great question because that does matter! It is one thing for others to make claims about a person, but it brings about a whole new level of demanding for consideration when the person himself makes the claim. Notice the following verses where it is evident that Jesus made these claims and others understood.

II. A Claim Jesus Himself Made!

A. John 5:17-23

1. *"Jesus responded to them, "My Father is still working, and I am working also." This is why the Jews began trying all the more to kill him: Not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal to God. Jesus replied, "Truly I tell you, the Son is not able to do anything on his own, but only what he sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does, the Son likewise does these things. For the Father loves the Son and shows him everything he is doing, and he will show him greater works than these so that you will be amazed. And just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so the Son also gives life to whom he wants. The Father, in fact, judges no one but has given all judgment to the Son, so that all people may honor the Son just as they honor the Father. Anyone who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him."*
2. With Jesus's claims to be working along with His Father, the Jews concluded that Jesus was making Himself equal to God by calling God His own Father. Jesus doesn't try to change their minds on these thoughts, but He instead doubles down by speaking of Himself as God's Son. He speaks of His ability to judge as the Father judges, and He really doubles down by saying that anyone not willing to honor the Son will not honor the Father who sent Him.

B. John 8:48-59

1. *"The Jews responded to him, "Aren't we right in saying that you're a Samaritan and have a demon?" "I do not have a demon," Jesus answered. "On the contrary, I honor my Father and you dishonor me. I do not seek my own glory; there is one who seeks it and judges. Truly I tell you, if anyone keeps my word, he will never see death." Then the Jews said, "Now we know you have a demon. Abraham died and so did the prophets. You say, 'If anyone keeps my word, he will never taste death.' Are you greater than our father Abraham who died? And the prophets died. Who do you claim to be?" "If I glorify myself," Jesus answered, "my glory is*

nothing. My Father — about whom you say, 'He is our God' — he is the one who glorifies me. You do not know him, but I know him. If I were to say I don't know him, I would be a liar like you. But I do know him, and I keep his word. Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day; he saw it and was glad." The Jews replied, "You aren't fifty years old yet, and you've seen Abraham?" Jesus said to them, "Truly I tell you, before Abraham was, I am." So they picked up stones to throw at him. But Jesus was hidden and went out of the temple."

2. The point to focus on in this text is Jesus's statement that, *"before Abraham was, I am"* Such a statement surely would have taken the hearers' minds to the Exodus story where God referred to Himself as such when He was speaking to Moses about going to leading His people out of Egypt. The people obviously understood the reference since they picked stones up to kill Him.

C. John 14:1-7

1. *"Don't let your heart be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms; if not, I would have told you. I am going away to prepare a place for you. If I go away and prepare a place for you, I will come again and take you to myself, so that where I am you may be also. You know the way to where I am going." "Lord," Thomas said, "we don't know where you're going. How can we know the way?" Jesus told him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you know me, you will also know my Father. From now on you do know him and have seen him."*
2. Jesus stating that seeing Him means seeing the Father cannot mean anything else but a claim to deity. Surely the Apostles were starting to put things together with such a statement.

D. John 19:6,7

1. *"When the chief priests and the temple servants saw him, they shouted, "Crucify! Crucify!" Pilate responded, "Take him and crucify him yourselves, since I find no grounds for charging him." "We have a law," the Jews replied to him, "and according to that law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God."*

2. The chief priests were so convinced of Jesus's claims of deity that they were giving great efforts to take Him before authorities who would have the power to put Him to death over these claims.

Within these texts, we can see that it wasn't only that others made the claim of deity for Jesus, but Jesus also made such claims, as well. However, unlike others who might make great claims and leave them at that...Jesus was willing to make this great claim for deity and then quickly back it up with evidence.

Within **John 5:31-47**, we find Jesus seeking to substantiate His claims for deity by encouraging others to consider the witness who also made these great claims for His deity. The first we will consider this evening is the witness of John the Baptist.

The John 5 Witness Of John The Baptist (John 5:31-35)

III. Within John's Gospel, John The Baptist:

A. Made it well known that he himself was not the Christ but the forerunner. (John 1:19-23)

1. The Jews sent priests and Levites to approach John as he is preaching and teaching in the wilderness in order to determine who this man was. He was teaching with some level of authority and preaching a strong message of the need for repentance for the kingdom of God was at hand. This was a message that would certainly grab people's attention.
2. In **John 1:19-28**, we find John answering these questions as to whether or not he was actually the Messiah. He denies that he is such, and then he is questioned as to whether or not he is Elijah or the Prophet. He once again denies such things, but only acknowledges that He is *"a voice of one crying out in the wilderness: Make straight the way of the Lord"* (**John 1:23**)

B. Spoke humbly of himself while exalting the greatness of the Christ who was to come. (John 1:24-27)

1. With the notoriety that he was receiving, it shouldn't surprise us that this humble servant of God was more than willing to minimize his own work in order to exalt the name and the work of the One who was coming after him. Yes, John was baptizing, and he was even questioned about the reason for which he was baptizing since he claimed to be no one of note, but he responds that he was baptizing only with water for the forgiveness of sins.
2. *"I baptize with water," John answered them. "Someone stands among you, but you don't know him. He is the one coming after me, whose sandal strap I'm not worthy to untie." All this happened in Bethany across the Jordan, where John was baptizing.* It is quite obvious that John has no desire to usurp the authority or prestige of Jesus and speaks very humbly of Himself while seeing to excite the people towards the coming One who was greater than he.

C. Declared Jesus as the Lamb of God. (John 1:29-31)

1. This humble attitude of John was most great exemplified in **John 1:29** as *"John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, 'Here is the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!'"*
2. John fully understand that his work was beginning to wrap up because he declares concerning Jesus, *"This is the one I told you about: 'After me comes a man who ranks ahead of me, because He existed before me.'" (John 1:30)* This statement made by John was 100% a claim for Jesus divinity and Messiahship because it was a statement of Jesus's everlasting nature. John was actually older than Jesus by a few months, but he recognized that He was someone very special...even the very Lamb of God.

D. Was told by the Father that the One who the Spirit descended upon is the Son of God. (John 1:32-34)

1. Finally, John records of John the baptist sharing what had been shared with him concerning what he needed to be looking for with regard to who would be the Son of God. *"And John testified, 'I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and he rested on him. I didn't know him, but he who sent me to baptize with water told me, 'The one you see the Spirit descending and resting on — he is the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.' I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God."*
2. While it seems like few if any others had recognized what was happening at the baptism of Jesus, John knew that it was a sign that this man who he was baptizing was truly someone special...even special to the extent of being the Son of God.

It is completely reasonable for people to desire to have evidence that backs up the claim that Jesus is the Christ and worthy of our devotion and discipleship. Thankfully, we have plenty of evidence that we can share with others who are wanting to examine the Biblical account to show that others were also convinced of Jesus's deity. May we be a people who ourselves are convinced of who Jesus is, and may we go throughout this week living as people who are seeking to be pleasing to our King the Son of God who is sitting right at this very moment at the right hand of God.