

1Yr01 – Who Is Jesus Christ John 1:1-18

Pastor Dave Shepardson Calvary Chapel Nuevo / www.wordbymail.com

Open your Bibles. Title of the message this morning, “Who Is Jesus Christ?” I am always excited to start a new series, but today I am really, really excited. Because what we are starting today has the potential to accelerate your faith and your spiritual growth like few other things we could do. This series has the potential to develop your relationship with Jesus Christ like probably nothing else we could do. Today we are starting a series called “One Year With Jesus” and I am thrilled about it!

The way we teach the Bible, it’s often hard to see the big picture of God’s overall plan and purpose. We get a little myopic, looking at a verse here and there, and it’s a real problem if we miss the big picture of Scripture. Two years ago we did a “big picture survey” of the entire Bible. It was called “God’s Plan – Genesis to Revelation.” And it was a critical series to get that “big picture” look at God’s plan in the full Bible. You can get that series from Pam at the wordbymail table in the back, or at the church website, or the new Bible teaching library at wordbymail.com. We are adding other teachers to our wordbymail site and we are quickly moving toward verse by verse expositional teaching on every verse in the Bible at the new wordbymail.com site.

In that “God’s Plan” series, we surveyed the major points of the entire Bible in just fifteen messages (quite a feat!) But we basically did the life of Jesus in one message because we were moving so fast through the entire Bible. So I have always wanted to do another survey on just the Life of Jesus Christ, a survey of all four gospels together. And I was almost going to survey them in the order they are written (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John) but instead we are going to survey the Life of Jesus in chronological order, using some of all four gospels. To some extent, we are going to tie all 4 Gospels together, but telling one unified story of the Life of Jesus. And we are going to do all this in a mere 52 weeks. And that’s not a guess. I actually outlined the Life of Christ through all four Gospels and I had to combine a bunch to get it down to 52 weeks.

So, I think we’re basically going to follow the Book called “The Story of Jesus” (show) but it is only seven chapters. And this little Book is part of the larger Book called “The Story.” These books are the actual text of the NIV Bible combined to tell the entire story of either Jesus or the Bible in one flowing narrative (the Bible in just 31 chapters.) And we’ll make sure you can get either of these books if you want them. And I’ll be using some of their background and commentary info.

But here is the part I’m actually most excited about. On both the church website and the wordbymail.com website we are going to put up a one week page for each of these 52

messages on the Life of Jesus. A one week page, meaning things you can do for the week following the message to help you dig in, learn more and help you personalize and internalize the message. So, you can go to calvarynuevo.org OR wordbymail.com and look for “One Year With Jesus.” And there you will get *scripture* to meditate on, *commentary and notes* to read, *journaling suggestions* and *resource* recommendations. All those things so that you can take each week’s message and soak into it during the week. And I can promise you one thing for sure, if you will spend this year with Jesus, your life will never be the same. Never. So, are you ready?

Let’s pray. *Heavenly Father, we want to know you, Jesus. We want to know you. We want to know the power of your resurrection and the fellowship of your suffering. We want to know who you are and why you came, and what you did. We want to absorb who you are. Please Lord in this series; give us commitment to follow you. Give us commitment to dig into your Word. Give us the resources and the direction to spend time with you each week. And mostly, speak to us through your Word, by the power of the Holy Spirit and turn us into little Christ’s. Turn us into radically, following disciples. Use your Word and your Spirit to do it; we trust you will, in your name we pray, Lord, amen.*

God likes to start at the beginning. The Old Testament story starts with the three words “In the beginning” (Genesis 1:1.) and from there God created everything including mankind. And the New Testament story (in John) also begins with the same three words, “In the beginning.” We find them in John 1:1, “In the beginning” and from there we are introduced to God’s plan to recreate everything. In Genesis God created paradise on earth and he created Adam and Eve to live there with him. And as the Gospels open up the New Testament, God is making a way to re-create a Paradise where mankind can again live with him.

You see, the problem since the fall of man in Genesis Chapter 3 has been sin. Because sin separates us from God, and we cannot fix our problem of sin, only God can. And the life of Jesus Christ is God’s way – is God’s ONLY way – to fix the problem of sin that is eternally separating us from God. The problem is sin, the answer is Jesus Christ.

God has always wanted to be “in relationship” with his children. Until you get a personal relational connection with God, you are just a spectator. God walked with Adam and Eve in the Garden, prior to sin. God revealed himself to Moses (and the people) in the fire and thunder of Mt. Sinai as he gave Moses the law. And God’s presence rested over the Ark in the tabernacle and the temple. God wants a place where he can be in relationship with his people. But, since the fall of man in Genesis Chapter 3, God’s relationship with his children has always been “separated” (to a large extent) by sin. And as the Gospels open

up the New Testament, it's not that God has finally figured out what to do. It's that the time had finally come. This is the new beginning. This is the beginning of God himself purchasing our redemption from sin and saving us from the eternal separation from him that sin brings.

God was coming into the problem himself, as a man. In a mystery that you and I cannot unravel, God was coming to this earth with two full natures, fully man and fully God. God was entering all the limitations of becoming a human being. He was coming himself to fix the problem of sin. He was coming to pay the full price (himself) for the penalty of our sin, because it was the only way for the penalty of our sin to be paid and for us to be saved from that penalty.

This truth – that God became a man to pay the penalty for our sin in our place – is the absolute bedrock of the Christian faith. It is the very heart of the Bible's entire message. And this single truth causes the Bible (and Christianity) to absolutely stand alone against all other religions of the world. God is about to become a man and he is going to perfectly arrange events in order to fulfill over 300 prophecies written about the Messiah. And God is going to rock the history of mankind on this earth, so much so, that the calendar will be split in two.

The life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ turned the world “right side up” 2,000 years ago, and Jesus Christ is still turning lives “right side up” today because he is still *God with us* every day.

So, let's start in the Book of John. In the first two verses of John is one of the most compact and powerful theological statements in all of the Bible.

John 1:1-2 (NLT)

1 In the beginning the Word already existed. The Word was with God, and the Word was God.

2 He existed in the beginning with God.

In John's Gospel, Jesus Christ is referred to as The Word (in the Greek the word is **LOGOS**.) The Word (used here) most literally means “*God in Expression*” or “*God in communication*” and the NLT does a great job here conveying the meaning of verse 1. ***In the beginning the Word already existed*** In the beginning “God in expression” already existed. Before the beginning began, Jesus Christ already existed as the expression (communication) of God waiting to communicate God *to us*. Is that cool, or what?

Then verse 1 says *The Word was with God*. This term speaks of perfect oneness and unity as in “*One with God*.” And then, just to make sure the real point gets across, the end of verse 1 is very carefully written.

1 . . . and the Word was God.

There’s no mixing up language here. The Greek is written very literally and very clearly.

1 . . . the Word was God.

And then verse 2 brings back in the idea of the Trinity (which we’ll get to later)

2 He existed in the beginning with God.

Before the beginning, Jesus, who is God in Expression was God, and he existed (as one) with God. But Jesus was certainly not (in any way) a bystander.

John 1:3 (NLT)

3 God created everything through him, and nothing was created except through him.

Jesus, who (at this point) is crashing into the story of mankind, has *always been God* and he has *always been with God*. And (in addition to all that) everything that has been created has been created through him. Jesus Christ is the “agent” or the “vehicle” through whom everything has been created. And the Greek word here for “everything” means all things individually – referring to the infinite details of creation. From the phenomenal (and ever growing) size of the universe, to every atom that holds all things together. It was all created through Jesus Christ who is now going to leave his throne of creation and come to this earth to save all those who would put their faith in him.

And, not only that, not only is Jesus the Author of Creation, he is also the Author of The Life given to all creation

John 1:4 (NLT)

4 The Word gave life to everything that was created, and his life brought light to everyone.

If there is one thing an atheist wants to steer clear of, it’s the origin of life. If you Google “The Origin of Life” it is really entertaining.

Here are some of the (real) first page “hits:”

The origin of life is a set of paradoxes

Researchers may have solved the origin of life conundrum

Many modern theories on the origin of life
7 theories on the origin of life

These are all real Google first page hits.

Yet, 2,000 years ago, God told all these PhD Scientists exactly what they needed to know. ***The Word*** (Jesus) ***gave life to everything that was created***

In the ESV John 1:4 is written:

John 1:4 (ESV)

4 In him was life, and the life was the light of men.

You know, since the 1800's scientists have again and again "discovered" things that the Bible had already made perfectly clear. And someday they will also "discover" what John 1:4 says: ***4 The Word gave life to everything that was created, and his life brought light to everyone.***

Not only did he give life, but ***4 . . . HIS LIFE BROUGHT LIGHT TO EVERYONE***

That's our real point here. The giver of life was bringing the True Light into a very dark world. And John 1:5 says:

John 1:5 (NLT)

5 The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness can never extinguish it.

Once Jesus showed up here, the darkness knew it was in eternal trouble. Skipping down to verse 9 we read:

John 1:9 (NLT)

9 The one who is the true light, who gives light to everyone, was coming into the world.

And ***THAT*** is what we are going to look into for the next year.

Guys, everything we are about to dive into for the next 52 weeks must be built upon these incredible truths:

In the beginning Jesus already existed
He was One with God and he was God
He is the Word – which means God IN Expression
He is the agent (vehicle) of creation
And nothing was created except through him

He is the “Giver of Life” to all creation”
And his life brought light into this dark world

Jesus, as God in the Flesh, came to bring life and light to a world that was lost in the darkness of sin. And not merely to show us the way to life, but to BE the Way, the only Way to life. And everything else that we’ll learn about Jesus for the next year will be built on these incredible, foundational truths.

And along the way there will be plenty of opportunity for you to decide *if you* believe. And sadly the life of Jesus also makes it clear that certainly not everyone will believe.

John 1:10-11 (NLT)

10 He came into the very world he created, but the world didn’t recognize him.

11 He came to his own people, and even they rejected him.

God loves you enough to allow you to choose, even if you choose to reject his offer of life. But I promise you, he will give you all you need to not only believe, but to also receive Jesus as your won Savior and your own Lord. As John 1:12 says:

John 1:12 (NLT)

12 But to all who believed him and accepted (received) him, he gave the right to become children of God.

That’s the high point of the story for us. Jesus Christ is coming into this world to give us the right to become children of God. And it’s actually more than adopted children. It’s a new birth, it’s being born again. As verse 13 says:

John 1:13 (NLT)

13 They (those who believe & receive) are reborn—not with a physical birth resulting from human passion or plan, but a birth that comes from God.

This is what it’s all about for us. Our first birth was into the sin nature; we inherited that from Adam. But Jesus came, as God in the flesh, to offer us a new birth, a spiritual birth, to give us the right (if we’ll receive it) to become the *children of God*. That’s why we read in verse 14:

John 1:14 (NLT)

14 So the Word became human and made his home among us . . .

Jesus had to come as fully human and still fully God so that we could see his unfailing love, his faithfulness and his glory (at least his glory this side of heaven.)

Again - John 1:14 says – (NLT)

14 So the Word became human and made his home among us. He was full of unfailing love and faithfulness. And we have seen his glory, the glory of the Father's one and only Son (Jesus).

...*one and only Son* means literally “the unique one” or “the only one of his kind.” Which we see again, skipping down to verse 18.

John 1:18 (NLT)

18 No one has ever seen God. But the unique One, who is himself God, is near to the Father's heart. He has revealed God to us.

That's another great translation by the NLT.

*The unique One (Jesus), who is himself God, is near to the Father's heart – meaning He's **ONE** with the **Father** and **HE** (Jesus) – **Has REVEALED God TO US***

Jesus Christ who is himself God and is one with the Father, he has come to reveal God to us. Jesus is God in expression, come to earth in human form to make a way for us to be born again as children of God. *That is who Jesus Christ truly is!*

Let's read one more text that just has to be read with this one. Turn to Colossians 1.

Colossians 1:15–22 (NLT)

15 Christ is the visible image of the invisible God. He existed before anything was created and is supreme over all creation,

16 for through him God created everything in the heavenly realms and on earth. He made the things we can see and the things we can't see - such as thrones, kingdoms, rulers, and authorities in the unseen world. Everything was created through him and for him.

17 He existed before anything else, and he holds all creation together.

18 Christ is also the head of the church, which is his body. He is the beginning, supreme over all who rise from the dead. So he is first in everything.

19 For God in all his fullness was pleased to live in Christ,

20 (& here's why He came to earth) and through him God reconciled everything to himself. He made peace with everything in heaven and on earth by means of Christ's blood on the cross.

21 This includes you who were once far away from God. You were his enemies, separated from him by your evil thoughts and actions.

22 Yet now he has reconciled you to himself through the death of Christ in his physical

body. As a result, he has brought you into his own presence, and you are holy and blameless as you stand before him without a single fault.

Jesus Christ came as God in the flesh to reconcile you to God through his death on the cross, and as a result of you believing and receiving him into your life, he has brought you into his presence and he has made you holy and blameless by paying the full penalty for your sin in your place.

THAT is what God has done for you through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

And if you have never fully believed in who Jesus Christ is and in what he has done for you... if you have never truly received him into your life as your Savior and Lord, right now is a great time to do that.

Let's pray. Lord Jesus, there is none like you. If John Chapter 1 went on for twenty pages, it couldn't begin to describe all that you truly are. The entirety of the Bible gives us only a glimpse into your glory. But Lord it's enough to believe and receive. And so I pray that you would be the power in this place right now, that every soul here would make the choice.

(If that's you today, start this series off right. Be amazed by who Jesus Christ is. Be in wonder of what he's done. But confess your faith in him and receive him into your life right now. You can pray something like this -) Dear Jesus, I believe. I believe what your word says about you. I believe you are God and you came in human flesh to die for me, to pay for my sins. And I don't understand why, Lord, but I believe you did. And so I pray you would forgive me of all my sin. I pray that you would come into my life, that you would be my Savior, and my Lord. Fill me with your Spirit and make me a disciple. It's in your name I pray, amen.