

## The Foundational Truths of the Gospel – John 20: 0-31

**Main Idea:** The intent of John’s Gospel is not to be merely informational but transformational.

### **I. The Evidence | John 20:30**

In the final verses of chapter 20, John begins to close his account of the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ. There remains another chapter, which is a sort of epilogue concerning Jesus’ calling of the disciples to their future service as apostles. But with Thomas’ confession of faith (v.28), the purpose of John’s Gospel has reached its completion. John began his Gospel by asserting that “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (1.1), and from chapters 1-12 he recorded seven miraculous signs that Jesus performed attesting His deity. As he prepares to conclude his Gospel, John states that “Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book,” and gives us the purpose statement of the entire account, “But these things have been 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” (v.30-31). What John includes in verse 31 reveals that **the purpose of his Gospel account is not that people would have access to a biography of Jesus’ life, but rather be confronted by who Jesus is through the evidence to His deity revealed in the signs He performed and the Words He proclaimed. The intent of John’s Gospel is not to be merely informational but transformational.** All the miraculous signs Jesus performed attested to the truth of His deity. Miracles are called “signs” by John because of what they signify: they are significant in pointing the eyewitnesses and whoever reads John’s Gospel to God’s offer of salvation in Christ. John reminds us that the object of saving faith is Jesus Christ Himself. No one is saved by believing in a miracle or by trusting a particular church to take care of their souls, but by believing in Christ! In this respect, what John says of his own Gospel account is true of every single book in the Bible: its purpose is to lead us to “believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and by believing you may have life in His name” (v.31).

John also sets a good example for us in keeping the focus of His witness on Jesus Himself. Charles H. Spurgeon points out that many of the prominent episodes recorded in the other Gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke) but left out of John are events in which the evangelist himself was a leading participant, “John omits, as if of set purpose, those places of the history in which he would have shone.”<sup>1</sup> In this way, John lives out the words he records spoken by John the Baptist, “He must increase, but I must decrease” (John 3:30), and reminds us that the goal of our witness is always to glorify Jesus and never to advance ourselves. The final two verses in chapter 20 serve to testify that all John recorded about Jesus is true and that it proves His identity as God the Son. Therefore, the goal of our witness as believers is always to glorify Christ and never ourselves. Scripture has one purpose—to reveal who God is, and the complete revelation of Himself is found in the person and work of God the Son and nowhere else. The evidence of the Gospel (provided in Scripture) requires believers to have Christ at the center of all they do.

#### **To Ponder:**

1. How does knowing that all 66 books of the Bible are about Christ affect the way you study Scripture?
2. Is there a way to evangelize others without introducing them to the person and work of God the Son? If not, how can you practically teach others about Christ?
3. How can you make Christ evident in your relationship with your spouse, children, and friends?

### **II. The Identity | John 20:31a**

The reason why John recorded details about the miracles Jesus performed was not based on how they might satisfy people’s curiosity about Christ but that the signs would lead people into faith in Him. According to John, **what we are to believe concerns both the person and the work of Jesus.** Speaking of His person, John marshaled his testimony to show whoever reads his Gospel account that Jesus is the Son of God. The One who could turn water into wine (John 2) must be the Lord of the harvest. Jesus said that the man born blind

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<sup>1</sup> Charles H. Spurgeon, *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, 63 vols. (Pasadena, TX: Pilgrim, 1973), 27:653.

had lived in that state so “that the works of God might be displayed in him” (John 9:3), and it was Jesus who was glorified when the man was given sight. Jesus claimed His deity when He told grieving Martha, “I am the resurrection and the life” (John 11:25) right before raising Lazarus from the dead. Only God could stand before the tomb where dead Lazarus had lain for four days, call out his name, and see him emerge alive from the grave. In John’s time, just as in ours, the issue of the deity of Christ was far more than merely a theological matter. **Declaring Jesus’ deity is not merely a need to affirm a point of doctrine.** Instead, **to believe in Jesus is to commit yourself to the worship of Him alone, to the exclusion of all others (myself included).** In referring to Jesus as “The Christ,” John reminds us that “Christ” is not part of Jesus’ name but rather the title and office He fulfills. *Christos* is the Greek translation of the Hebrew word *Mashiach* (transliterated as “Messiah”), which means “The Anointed One.” **Jesus is the long-awaited Messiah, fulfilling the saving expectation of God’s Old Testament people.** This is how Jesus identified Himself when He launched His ministry in Galilee: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor” (Luke 4:18-19). The prophecy from Isaiah 61:1-2 shows that the God-anointed Messiah would come as a Savior granting liberty to those who were spiritually imprisoned.

While the office Jesus holds is that of the Christ, His identity is one and only, God the Son. As the Son of God, Jesus revealed God to the world through His words, works, and ministry. His teaching expressed God’s offer of salvation to sinners. **To see Jesus is to see God,** “Whoever has seen me has seen the Father” (John 14:9). **The Gospel does not call people to faith in a proposition, a philosophical idea, or even a way of life. The Gospel calls people to faith in a person.** To say that you believe in God without knowing and believing in the Son of God makes you an unbeliever, “Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him” (John 3:36). Unless Jesus is the Son of God, there is an end to His mediation between God and man, to His atonement which accomplished the forgiveness of sins, and to God’s work of redemption. When sharing your faith with others, do not skip the Son and His identity. Your testimony is valuable, but it is not the Gospel. **The Gospel is about the identity of One Person (the Son) who reveals God (Father, Son, and Spirit) to all who believe in Christ.**

#### **To Ponder:**

1. Knowing that your testimony is not the Gospel, what role does your testimony have in your sharing of the Gospel with others?
2. What would evangelism look like in your life if modeled after Jesus and His disciples?

### **III. The Effect | John 20:31b**

According to John, **the subject of all Scripture is Jesus.** The ultimate purpose of every book in the Bible is that people would know who God is and, by knowing Him revealed in the person and work of His Son, come to believe in His redemptive work. **Eternal life is the standard definition given to salvation in Christ.** If we understand what kind of life is offered to us in Scripture, we will urgently seek the means by which we might have eternal life for ourselves. **Eternal life comes through repentance and faith in Jesus as the Son of God.** No one can earn or secure their salvation. The God of all grace justifies people through faith in His Son so that “whoever believes in Him will not perish but have everlasting life” (John 3:16). **Eternal life has one source. To have the life that God created us to have, we must find it in the Son of God.** To believe that Jesus is God incarnate (John 1:1,14), the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world (1:29), and the resurrection and the life (11:25) is to believe the truth that provides forgiveness of sin and eternal life (3:16). **John’s purpose in writing his Gospel is not academic.** He writes so that men and women may believe the truth about God revealed in His Son. That is still the purpose of this book today.

#### **To Ponder:**

1. What were the effects of the Gospel in your life from the moment you understood and received it?
2. Knowing what you know from the Gospel of John, how would you present the Gospel to an unbeliever today?