

## INTRODUCTION

What you don't know can hurt you—or hurt others. A couple was staying at the infamous Watergate Hotel in Washington. When they entered the room, the wife was suspicious. She said, "What if the place is still bugged?" Her husband said, "Let's look for a bug." He looked behind the drapes, behind the pictures. The wife pulled back the rug on the floor and said, "Aha!" Under the rug was a metal disc with four screws. The husband took his Swiss army knife, unscrewed the screws, and threw the screws and the disc out the window. Then they replaced the rug.

The next morning, the hotel manager asked the couple, "How was your room? How was the service? How was your stay at the Watergate Hotel?" The husband was suspicious and asked, "Why are you asking me all of these questions?" The hotel manager replied, "Well, the couple in the room *under* you complained their chandelier suddenly fell on them."

What you don't know really can hurt you ... or others! And the most important thing you can know is that Jesus is God's Son and Savior. And if you don't know that, it could be hazardous to your eternal health.

Today we are completing a thirty-two-month journey studying the life of Jesus according to the Apostle John. When I started the series in May of 2018, I began by asking a Bible trivia question, and I'd like to ask the same question again: How many gospels are there?

If you said, "Four" that's incorrect. There is one Gospel, the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. There are four Gospel accounts, the Gospel according to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. The ONE Gospel can be summarized in these words, "Christ came and He died and was buried according to the scriptures. And God raised Him from the dead. And if you place your trust in Jesus, you will have eternal life."

The reason Michael and I are preaching this last message is because John provides two personal comments that explain his story about Jesus. One is in John 21 and one is in John 20. I want to start at the very end of the book and read that passage first. In John 21:24-25 we read, "This is the disciple who testifies to these things and who wrote them down. We know that his testimony is true. And there are also many other things that Jesus did, which, if every one of them were written down, I suppose not even the world itself could contain the books that would be written."

Now turn back a page to John 20:30-31. These two verses give us the summary and the theme of the entire book. "Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples that are not written in this book. But these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name."

John confessed that the reason he penned this story of Jesus was so readers would believe. And in these verses, we discover three important things that we must believe if we want to have real life.

## 1. BELIEVE IN THE SCRIPTURES.

John wrote, “These (*signs*) are WRITTEN so that you may believe.” We have a written account of the life the Jesus. But as I mentioned, we don’t just have one account, we have four accounts written down.

The only way you can have life is to believe in the veracity of this book we call the Holy Bible. Can you trust it?

Let me repeat a familiar story to you. It’s the fable of The Tortoise and the Hare. Once upon a time a rabbit made fun of a turtle because it was so slow. So the turtle challenged the rabbit to a race. The fox set the course and said, “Go!” The rabbit took off like lightning, and the turtle started out at a steady pace. The rabbit was so sure he would win that he stopped to take a nap. Meanwhile, the turtle passed the sleeping rabbit. When the rabbit woke up, the turtle was almost at the finish line. The rabbit sprinted to catch him, but the turtle won. So what’s the moral of this fable? The race doesn’t belong to the swift, but to the steady.

Throughout history, people have loved fables and fairy tales because they usually end up with someone living happy ever after, and there is a moral lesson to be learned.

Perhaps the greatest story of all time with a moral—lots of them, in fact—and a happy ending is the story in the Bible. God created the world. But the crown of that creation, men and women, choose to live their lives outside of His guidelines. As a result, they find themselves in great danger of present and eternal calamity. So God, in the person of Jesus Christ, launches an all-out rescue attempt that includes a daring strategy of death, burial and resurrection on the part of the hero. The tale concludes as people all over the world accept the lifeline of salvation and begin to experience the quality of life that God intended from the beginning and they live in heaven, happily ever after.

It’s a great story, like so many other stories of the ages. But that’s where it gets a little tricky for many of us. We grownups know we’re not supposed to take fairy tales and fables literally. There was no such thing as talking turtles and rabbits and Cinderella wasn’t real.

For some people, they consider the Bible the same way. It’s full of stories and maybe it doesn’t really matter whether Jesus walked on water or feed 5,000—there are still moral lessons to be learned. Sounds good. But there’s just one little problem with that theory: The Bible was written by real people who made references to real people and real places that can be verified by archeology.

And when he was an old man, Peter wrote in 2 Peter 1:16-18: “For we did not follow cleverly contrived myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ; instead, we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received honor and glory from God the Father when the voice came to him from the Majestic Glory, saying ‘This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased!’ We ourselves heard this voice when it came from heaven while we were with him on the holy mountain.”

During a time when our world is facing unprecedented chaos, we need to be reminded that there is one thing that will never fade or fail—and that is the Word of God. In Isaiah 40:8 we read this promise: “The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the Word of our God endures forever.” Will you repeat those last seven words with me? *The Word of our God endures forever!*

## **2. BELIEVE IN THE SIGNS.**

John added, “These (*signs*) are written so that you may BELIEVE that Jesus is the Messiah.”

We have learned that one of the most important words in John’s account of Jesus is the word “sign.” We have all seen signs on the highways and signs on the front of stores. Signs can be good, or they can just block the view of nature.

In 1971, a Canadian group, The Five Man Electrical Band, released a one-hit wonder called *SIGNS*. If you are my generation, you’ll remember the lyrics. Warning: Outdated cultural references. The chorus said: “Sign, sign, everywhere a sign. Blockin’ out the scenery; breakin’ my mind. Do this don’t do that, can’t you read the signs. And the sign said, ‘Long-haired freaky people need not apply. So I tucked my hair up under my hat; and I went in to ask him why. He said, ‘you look like a fine upstanding young man, I think you’ll do.’” So I took off my hat and said, ‘Imagine that. Huh! Me workin’ for you?’”

But at the end the song slowed down and gave a nod to the Jesus movement. It said, “And the sign said, ‘Everybody welcome. Come in, kneel down and pray.’ And when they passed around the plate at the end of it all, I didn’t have a penny to pay. So I got me a pen and a paper and I made up my own little sign. I said, ‘Thank you, Lord for thinkin’ ‘bout me. I’m alive and doin’ fine. Sign, sign everywhere a sign blockin’ out the scenery breakin’ my mind. Do this don’t do that, can’t you read the sign?’”

John’s Gospel account is different from Matthew, Mark, and Luke. Each of those three writers follows a chronological time line of the ministry of Jesus. But John organizes his story around seven signs, seven miracles. And like the song I just quoted, John asked the reader, “Signs, signs everywhere a sign; can’t you read the signs?”

Each of those seven signs teach us a practical lesson about Jesus. I’ve said many times that there is a parable in every miracle and a miracle in every parable. Let’s learn seven life lessons from the seven signs.

### **(1) Jesus is the solution to our DISAPPOINTMENT.**

The first sign was when Jesus turned water into wine. There was a wedding feast at Cana and the groom’s job was to provide food and drink for the wedding party. They had run out of wine. Jesus’ mother, Mary, asked Jesus to take care of the problem. So Jesus instructed the servants to fill six large stone jars with water. When the VIP tasted the drink that came out of the stone jars he commented that it was the best wine of the entire party. The lesson we learn is that Jesus is the solution to our disappointment. The reputation of that groom was on the line. If he

couldn't provide for the guests at his wedding, he would never be able to provide for his wife. The joy of the wedding feast would have been replaced with disappointment and rumors. And today, when things don't work out for you, and you come up short, Jesus is able to supply all your needs. He can turn disappointments into His appointments.

## **(2) Jesus is the solution to our DOUBT.**

The second sign was a long-distance miracle. A nobleman came to Jesus and asked him to heal his son who was sick at his house fifteen miles away. Jesus replied that He didn't have to go and be in the presence of the sick boy. He told the father to just go, and believe. The father displayed faith by obeying Jesus. When he arrived home, he discovered that his son had been healed the very moment Jesus had spoken the word. Jesus is the solution to our doubt. Instead of insisting that Jesus come with him, the nobleman rejected doubt and trusted the word of Jesus.

## **(3) Jesus is the solution to our DISABILITY.**

The third sign happened at the Pool of Bethesda in Jerusalem. A lame man had been there for 38 years begging. Jesus asked him if he wanted to be well. Jesus commanded the man to take up his bed and walk. And in that moment, he was healed and carried his bed home. This teaches us that Jesus is the solution to our disability.

## **(4) Jesus is the solution to our DESIRES.**

Jesus found Himself in the wilderness with 5,000 hungry people. He fed them with some muffins and minnows that a little boy gave him. This miracle reminds us that Jesus is the solution to our desires. One of our basic needs is food and Jesus taught us to trust God by saying, "Give us this day, our daily bread." Then Jesus revealed that He is the Bread from Heaven who truly satisfies our desires.

## **(5) Jesus is the solution to our DESPAIR.**

One dark and stormy night the disciples were out on the lake in a boat. Jesus came walking toward them on the water. The Bible says that they thought it was a ghost and they were terrified. Jesus came to them and calmed the storm and told them not to be afraid. This miracle teaches us that Jesus is the solution to our despair. There are many scary things in the world today that threaten to sink us. But Jesus comes to us and says over and over, "Don't be afraid. Whatever is under my feet can never be over your head."

## **(6) Jesus is the solution to our DARKNESS.**

Jesus and his disciples were in Jerusalem and encountered a man who had been born blind. They asked Jesus, "Who sinned? This man or his parents, that he should be born blind?" Jesus rebuked them for their faulty thinking. He said, "Neither, this happened so that God's power

will be seen in me." He spit in the dirt and made clay and put it on the blind man's eyes. He told him to go wash in the Pool of Siloam. The blind man trusted and obeyed Jesus and his sight was restored. This teaches us that Jesus is the solution to our darkness.

The Jewish leaders wanted to kill Jesus because He had healed the man on the Sabbath. Jesus talked about a kind of darkness that is worse than blindness; it is spiritual darkness. When someone refuses to see the truth about Jesus.

### **(7) Jesus is the solution to our DEATH.**

Finally, the seventh sign was when Jesus was summoned to Bethany by Mary and Martha to heal their sick brother. Jesus intentionally delayed and when He arrived, Lazarus had been dead for four days. Jesus went to the cemetery and wept when He saw the grief of the sisters. Then He shouted, "Lazarus, come forth!" It's a good thing Jesus said, "Lazarus" or every corpse in hearing distance would have come out and it would have been a preview of The Walking Dead. Lazarus came forth still bound by his graveclothes, and Jesus said, "Loose him, and let him go! This is a powerful message that Jesus is the solution to our death. Before Jesus called us, we were all dead in our trespasses and sins. Jesus gives us life, then He gives us liberty to serve Him in the power of His Spirit.

So these seven signs were selected by John to prove to the readers that Jesus is God's Son. I'm not asking if you believe in miracles, I'm asking if you believe in the God of miracles. But it's not enough to believe in the scriptures or to believe in the signs. Mainly, we must

### **3. BELIEVE IN THE SAVIOR.**

Now, let's read the full version of John's theme for his story in John 20:31: "These (signs) are WRITTEN so that you may BELIEVE that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and by believing you will have LIFE IN HIS NAME."

There is life in the name of Jesus. Believing in Jesus isn't believing facts *about* Jesus, it is receiving *life* in Jesus. Dr. Warren Wiersbe is one of my favorite Bible scholars. He concludes his commentary on John with these words: "John was not writing a biography to entertain or a history to enlighten. He was writing to offer men eternal life. He used the word 'life' thirty-six times. Eternal life is not 'endless time' for even sinners are going to live forever in hell. Eternal life means 'the very life of God experienced today.' It is a quality of life, not a quantity of life. It is the spiritual experience of 'heaven on earth today.' The Christian doesn't have to die to have this eternal life; he possesses it in Christ today." (*Be Transformed*, p. 140)

In John 17, Jesus gave us the most powerful definition of eternal life in all of the Bible. During His prayer in John 17:3, He said, "This is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and the one you have sent—Jesus Christ." Eternal life is knowing Jesus.

Religion is boring. We've all listened to boring sermons that seem to go on forever. When I was a kid I was amazed how long a thirty-minute sermon seemed compared to thirty-minute episode of Andy Griffith.

I heard of a man in the oil and gas business whose preacher preached boring sermons—and to make it worse they were LONG. One Sunday the oil man told him, "Son, if I'm drilling for oil and don't find oil after thirty minutes, I stop boring. You should do the same." All religion is boring. But knowing Jesus Christ is the most exciting experience that you'll ever have in this life.

Eternal life is knowing God and knowing Jesus. Do you know Jesus?

Some of you know Jesus the same way you know Abraham Lincoln. You know him as an historical character, someone who lived and died and did great things. But you can know Jesus just like you know a friend or a family member. He wants to be that real to you.

## **CONCLUSION**

We started with a Bible trivia question. So let's conclude with another one: If you know the answer raise your hand. How many miracles did Jesus perform? Actually, that's a trick question. We don't know how many miracles Jesus performed. In WEBS, we are currently studying the 38 different miracles of Jesus recorded the four gospel accounts but that's just a sliver of the total miracles Jesus performed. We know this because John finished his story by saying Jesus did so many OTHER miracles that if they were all written down all the books in the world couldn't contain them all. At the time John said that, it was estimated that there were maybe 2 million books in the world. Today, according to Google, there are 130 billion books.

So was John writing literally, or just using hyperbole? I believe he was writing literally. Someone took a calculator and figured out that if Jesus did one miracle per hour during His three-year ministry, that would equal 26,000 miracles and surely those could be contained in all the books in the world. The problem with that kind of math is that Jesus is eternal. He was there when the stars and planets were hurled into space. He has been performing marvelous deeds since the beginning of the beginning. Remember, He told the Jews that "before Abraham was, I am." Jesus has been performing trillions of miracles in this vast universe that we don't even realize. One of the joys of Heaven will be for us to learn about all the other marvelous miracles that Jesus performed. It's only when we get to Heaven that we'll get to hear what Paul Harvey used to call, "The Rest of the Story."

I want to conclude this series by asking you the most important question you'll ever answer. Do you know Jesus? Vance Havner used to tell the story of a man who came home from work and asked his wife, "How was your day?"

"Not too good. I've been upset all afternoon."

"Sit down and tell me what happened."

"This afternoon someone rang our doorbell. When I opened the door, there was a well-dressed

man there, but I didn't know him. He smiled at me and said, 'Ma'am, may I ask you a question?' 'Yes.'

'Do you know Jesus Christ?'"

"I was so surprised by the question that I didn't know what to say, so after a few moments of silence, I just closed the door and he left. And I've been unsettled since then."

Her husband got angry and said, "Sweetheart, why didn't you tell the man that you sing in the church choir every Sunday and that you are an officer in the Lady's Missionary Circle? Why didn't you tell him that you've been attending church since you were a child?"

"That's not what he asked me. He asked me if I know Jesus."

Religious activity is good, but it is no substitute for knowing Jesus. And that's what eternal life is: Knowing Jesus.

## OUTLINE

### 1. BELIEVE IN THE SCRIPTURES.

"These (*signs*) are WRITTEN so that you may believe." Vs. 31

"For we did not follow cleverly contrived myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ; instead, we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received honor and glory from God the Father when the voice came to him from the Majestic Glory, saying 'This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased!' We ourselves heard this voice when it came from heaven while we were with him on the holy mountain." *2 Peter 1:16-18 CSB*

### 2. BELIEVE IN THE SIGNS.

"These (*signs*) are written so that you may BELIEVE that Jesus is the Messiah." Vs. 31

Jesus is the solution to our

- (1) DISAPPOINTMENT.
- (2) DOUBT.
- (3) DISABILITY.
- (4) DESIRES.
- (5) DESPAIR.
- (6) DARKNESS.
- (7) DEATH.

### 3. BELIEVE IN THE SAVIOR.

"These (*signs*) are WRITTEN so that you may BELIEVE that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and by believing you will have LIFE IN HIS NAME." *John 20:31 CSB*

## ETERNAL LIFE

"This is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and the one you have sent— Jesus Christ." *John 17:3 CSB*



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For the Joy...  
Pastor David Dykes



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