

Who Is Jesus?

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Preacher: Rev. Murdo Campbell

[0 : 0 0] Well if we could, with the Lord's help this morning, if we could turn back to that portion of scripture that we read in the Gospel according to John, John chapter 1 and if we just read from the beginning, we'll read verse 1 and then we'll read verse 14. John chapter 1 from the beginning. In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God. We're told in verse 14 and the Word became flesh and dwelt among us and we have seen his glory. Glory is of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. You know over the past few weeks since the Scottish government declared that face coverings are mandatory in shops and on public transport. I don't know about you but for me it has become very difficult to recognize people. Of course as you know it's such a strange experience to have to wear a face mask over your face all the time as you're in a shop or in public transport and for me it can be, well I personally find it very claustrophobic and I get very hot and my glasses start steaming up and I can't really see where I'm going or what I'm doing but you know what's made the shopping experience even more difficult is that you can't recognize people anymore when you're out shopping. You can't recognize other shoppers as easily because you can only see their eyes and with my glasses steaming up it's even harder to recognize people. In fact I was in a shop the other day and I kept looking at this person thinking that it was someone I knew and I was convinced it was someone I knew and although I couldn't see his face because of his face mask I was convinced I knew this person to the point that I was going to go over and speak to him but you know when it actually came to it

I came round the island I came face to face with this person two meters apart of course and with closer investigation I realized that it wasn't the person I thought it was at all and it was quite embarrassing because I didn't have a clue who he was and truth be told I got his identity wrong. I didn't recognize him because his face was covered and his face was veiled with this mask and you know in many ways that's what the Gospel of John is all about because the Gospel of John is about making sure that we get the identity of Jesus right because if we get the identity of Jesus wrong we'll misunderstand the Gospel and we'll fail to see that Jesus is the only way of salvation but as the Gospel writer John admits that it may be difficult for us to recognize Jesus as the Son of God because he's veiled in human flesh. It may be difficult for us to identify who Jesus really is because no one has ever seen God and no one has encountered God in human flesh but you know the purpose of John's Gospel is to unveil and to reveal the identity of Jesus as the Christ the Son of God but more than that John not only wants us to know that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God John wants us to believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God.

In fact in the epilogue which is at the close of his Gospel John explains why he writes this Gospel message. He explains why he has written this good news message about Jesus Christ and John writes in chapter 20 he says now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples which are not written in this book but 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. My friend John wrote his Gospel with one passion and one purpose so that you will believe in Jesus Christ for salvation but of course believing in Jesus Christ is not just about knowledge it's not just about knowing the facts about Jesus it's not just intellectual assent no believing in Jesus for salvation is about receiving Jesus for salvation because you know my friend Christianity is not a cause to join or a code to follow it's a Christ to receive Christianity is not a cause to join or a code to follow it's a Christ to receive and in order to receive Jesus Christ for salvation you need contrition confession and commitment you need contrition of sin confession of the Son and commitment to the Savior you need contrition confession and commitment but you know as we begin this study of John's Gospel John's passion and purpose is to unveil for us and to reveal the identity of Jesus as the Christ the Son of God and in the opening 18 verses John gives to us what we've called his prologue or his his foreword and he introduces us to Jesus by showing us who he is and so as we consider the prologue of John's Gospel this morning John wants us to be asking the question who is Jesus who is Jesus and John tells us he tells us that Jesus is God Jesus is gracious and Jesus is glorious who is Jesus Jesus is God Jesus is gracious and Jesus is glorious so first of all Jesus is God Jesus is God he says in verse one in the beginning was the word and the word was with God and the word was God he was in the beginning with God all things were made through him and without him was not anything made that was made the four gospel writers of

Matthew, Mark, Luke and John they all stand on the pages of scripture as four eyewitness accounts that testify to the person and work of Jesus Christ I don't like any eyewitness account the gospel writers they all present the same Jesus but from different angles which it only which only emphasizes their authenticity because if all four gospel accounts if they were all the same if they were all imitations of one another people would rightly think that the gospels were the result of conspiracy or collusion but the fact that all four gospel accounts present the same Jesus but from different angles it highlights to us that their validity and the genuineness of their testimony in fact that's what Lee Strowbull came to discover in his case for Christ Lee Strowbull was an American journalist and his story began back in the 1980s where he was this

American journalist and he was also a self-confessed atheist but when his wife became a Christian Lee Strowbull he set out to disprove Christianity by exposing all the flaws that can be found in the gospel accounts but what Lee Strowbull actually discovered was that he couldn't disprove the gospel accounts nor could he disprove the Christ of Christianity in fact Lee Strowbull became a Christian and he has now written many books and he continues to seek to explain and to defend Christianity and you know it's amazing it's an amazing story and I'd encourage you to read Lee Strowbull's testimony it's in a book called The Case for Christ or if you don't like reading if you're not a good reader you can watch the film the film is called The Case for Christ and it'll remind you it's a wonderful film it'll remind you that all four gospel writers they present the same Jesus but from different angles because Matthew's gospel it presents to us the gospel of the king for Matthew he wrote his gospel from the angle that Jesus is the promised messianic king and with him the kingdom of God has arrived but Mark Mark's gospel is the gospel of the suffering servant because Mark wrote his gospel from the perspective that Jesus came not to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many then you have Luke's gospel Luke's gospel is the gospel of the perfect son of man because for Luke he was himself a doctor and he wrote his account in order to emphasize the humanity of Jesus and that Jesus is the son of man who came to seek and to save the lost but for John John's gospel is the gospel of the eternal son of God and when John begins his gospel as we read there he doesn't begin at the ministry of Jesus like Mark does he doesn't begin with the birth of Jesus like Matthew does he doesn't even begin with the prophecies of Jesus like Luke does no John he brings us right back to the very beginning of time itself and John reminds us that Jesus is not only the prophet priest and king he's not only the suffering servant he's not only the son of man but he's also the eternal son of God because you know when John begins his gospel with the phrase in the beginning was the word you know immediately that John is echoing the opening phrase of our Bible in Genesis 1 because you know when our Bible introduces us to the one who has worked in creation and salvation it does so with the words in the beginning God and you know I always find it remarkable that from those opening words in Genesis 1 we see that the Bible never tries to prove the existence of

[11 : 02] God the Bible just asserts that God exists and that God is there and that God is real and that God has acted in creation and salvation but you know by echoing the opening words of Genesis 1 John here he wants to unveil and reveal the fact that Jesus was there in the beginning Jesus was there in the beginning but as John makes clear the Son of God wasn't there in the beginning as a man veiled in human flesh no he was there in the beginning as the eternal Son of God he was the word he was the logos and as the word of God John says he was with God and he was God he wasn't created as the Son of God and he wasn't inferior to God the Father as the Jehovah witnesses insist no he is the Son of God he's the Son of God who is equal to the Father and eternally be gotten off the Father from before the foundation of the world and as John says in verse 2 he was in the beginning with God he was in the beginning with God and you know I love that phrase because it literally means that in the beginning Jesus was face to face with God the Father he was face to face with God the Father it's a phrase that expresses the intimate and eternal relationship that exists between God the Father and God the Son but in the beginning before the world began in the beginning God the Son was face to face with God the Father and you know this unique relationship that John highlights here between the Father and the Son it's something that John repeatedly highlights throughout his gospel he repeatedly says that Jesus and the Father are one and as one they have one passion and one purpose the salvation of sinner but more than that John says in verse 3 he says all things were made through him and without him was not anything made that was made in him was life and the life was the light of men the light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it John says that in the beginning the eternal word of God was God and was with God but he was also actively working in creation as God because we're told that all things were made through him and without him there was not anything made that was made which means that in the beginning way back in the beginning when God brought form into the formlessness of creation and fullness into the emptiness of the creation we're told here that

God the Son was actively playing his part in bringing this world into being and you know we can often be guilty of thinking that well God the Father is the Creator God the Son is the Savior and God the Holy Spirit is the sanctifier we can often be guilty of separating the roles of the Trinity in both creation and salvation but you know what we must always remember is that the Trinity Father Son and Holy Spirit the Trinity is actively working in both creation and salvation and what John is revealing and unveiling about Jesus here is that as God he was with the Father at creation and all things were made through him because when God the Father spoke into the void and darkness of this world he spoke through God the Son by the power of God the Holy Spirit my friend the triune God brought this world into being and you know that's the pattern we see repeated throughout Genesis 1 we see the pattern and God said let there be and it was and God said let there be and it was and God said that's God the Father let there be light that's the word that came forth from God the Son and by the power of the Holy Spirit we're told and there was light my friend the creation was a Trinitarian act but it was through him through the word that all things were made he was the vehicle he was the means by which all things came into being because as John affirms in verse 4 in him was life and the life was the light of men and the light shined in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it you know what John's affirming to us here is that if it was true of Jesus that through him he brought life and light in creation then John is saying it is through of Jesus that through him he will bring life and light in salvation and you know my friend it's it's it's a beautiful introduction to Jesus Jesus is God Jesus is God and that's what John wants you to believe and receive John wants you to have contrition of sin and confession of the Son and commitment to the Savior because Jesus is God Jesus is God and so as we begin John's gospel

John wants us to be asking who is Jesus and John says Jesus is God then he says secondly Jesus is gracious Jesus is gracious now look at verse 6 he says there was a man sent from God whose name was John he came as a witness to bear witness about the light that all might believe through him he was not the light but came to bear witness about the light now in these verses the focus briefly shifts away from Jesus to John the Baptist who was as you know the forerunner to Jesus and that's what's actually affirmed here that John was sent from God he was apostelo from God he was literally an apostle from God he was God's sent one and you know what's remarkable is that John the Baptist was this figure who connected the Old Testament with the New Testament because as the forerunner of Christ John the Baptist he prepared the way of the Lord and we'll see more of this God willing next Lord's day as we consider John the Baptist he was John the Baptist was the last of of the prophets he was the last of of the foretellers he was the last fourth teller before the Christ came he was the last prophet who proclaimed that the Christ is coming and that sinners need to repent but you know John was not only the last Old Testament prophet he was also the first New Testament apostle because as we're told here he was sent from God he was God's sent one that's what the word apostle means sent one and John was sent as we're told in verse 7 he was sent to be a witness he was sent to bear witness about the light that all might believe through him and then it says he was not the light but came to bear witness about the light and you know there's this emphasis John puts this emphasis here that John the Baptist came to bear witness that was the plan and purpose of God's sent ones they were to bear witness John the Baptist was to bear witness he was to testify about the light he was to give testimony to the light of Jesus Christ but you know is that not what every Christian is to do as well because as Christians we're to bear witness about the light as Christians were to testify to the light of the world Jesus Christ as Christians were to give testimony we're to give testimony not about ourselves but about the one who gives life and light to dead and darkened souls were to give testimony about Jesus my friend we're not saved to promote or puff up or plug or post about ourselves because you know the word proud the word proud should never be in the vocabulary of the Christian rather we should adopt the character conduct and conversation of John the Baptist because John the Baptist says later in chapter three he must increase and I must decrease he must increase and I must decrease that's how the

Christian should live that's the witness and testimony the Christian should give that should be the character conduct and conversation of a Christian not promoting or puffing up or plugging or posting about self but that he must increase and I I must decrease but you know the focus the focus here that briefly shifts away from Jesus to John the Baptist not only to introduce John the Baptist but also because there were questions over the identity of Jesus and as we said the gospel of John is all about making sure that we get the identity of Jesus right because if we get the identity of Jesus wrong we'll misunderstand the gospel and we'll fail to see that Jesus Christ is the only way of salvation which is why John says about John the Baptist and Jesus he says in verse eight he was not the light but came to bear witness about the light the true light which gives light to everyone was coming into the world he was in the world and the world was made through him yet the world did not know him as we said God willing we'll have a closer look at John the

Baptist next week as there were questions about his identity because some thought that John the Baptist was the Christ but what's interesting here is that conversely some thought that Jesus was John the Baptist because they couldn't identify him correctly and we see that throughout John's gospel we see it with the Pharisees we see it with Nicodemus we see it with the woman of Samaria we see it with the crowds who follow Jesus they all questioned the identity of Jesus which is why Jesus later asked the question to his disciples who do you say or who do people say that I am and the disciples they confessed that there was confusion over the identity of Jesus because some claimed that he was John the Baptist others said that he was Elijah some said that he was Jeremiah or one of the prophets and you remember that Jesus at that point he turns the question on its head and he makes it more pointed and more personal by asking the disciples who do you say that I am and it's a question we should always take to ourselves it's a question you should take to yourself Jesus asking you today who do you say that I am because it was at that point that Peter stepped forward he stepped forward with contrition confession and commitment and he said to Jesus you are the

[23 : 47] Christ the Son of the living God you know there were questions over the identity of Jesus but throughout John's gospel John is repeatedly asserting and affirming the identity of Jesus and John does this and we'll see it as we go through the gospel John does this by highlighting seven signs and seven sayings because there were seven signs and we'll see them there were seven signs such as turning water into wine that's the first sign then there was the feeding of the 5000 and raising Lazarus from the dead and there were also seven sayings of Jesus the seven I am sayings of Jesus such as I am the bread of life I am the good shepherd I am the light of the world I am the way the truth and the life and John used these seven signs and seven sayings of Jesus in order to reveal and unveil the identity of Jesus as the eternal Son of God but what John makes clear in verse 11 is that even though Jesus came to his own people and even though they saw the signs and they heard the sayings John says they didn't receive him they rejected him they ridiculed him they refused him they didn't receive Jesus by believing in Jesus but as we've said John wrote his gospel with one passion and one purpose so that sinners believe in Jesus Christ for salvation because as we said Christianity is not a cause to join or a code to follow it's a Christ to receive and in order to believe you have to receive you have to receive Jesus Christ by your contrition of sin confession of the Son and commitment to the Savior and John says that even though his own people rejected Jesus maybe you're like them today maybe you're someone who has spent their life rejecting Jesus I hope that as we begin John's gospel you will not reject him anymore but that you will believe and receive this Jesus Christ for salvation because in Jesus's day there were many who rejected him but there were others who received him and when they received Jesus and this is what you'll discover too when they received Jesus they discovered how gracious he really is because

John says in March 12 but to all who did receive him who believed in his name he gave the right to become children of God who were born not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man but of God by believing and receiving John says that Jesus graciously gives to sinners the privilege the privilege to become God's children and you become a child of God my friend not by the family you're brought up in not by your own wants and desires not by following rules or regulations but by receiving Jesus Christ for salvation Christianity is not a cause to join or a code to follow it's a Christ to receive it's a Christ to receive and so as we begin John's gospel John wants us to be asking the question who is Jesus who is Jesus and John affirms to us

Jesus is God Jesus is gracious and then lastly he says Jesus is glorious Jesus is glorious look at verse 14 and the word became flesh and dwelt among us and we have seen his glory glorious of the only son from the Father full of grace and truth John bore witness about him and cried out this was he of whom I said he who comes after me ranks before me because he was before me for from his fullness we have all received grace upon grace for the law was given through Moses grace and truth came through Jesus Christ no one has ever seen God the only God who is at the Father's side he has made him known we said earlier that the opening 18 verses these opening 18 verses of John's gospel they give to us the prologue or the foreword of his gospel and in the prologue

John introduces us to Jesus by showing us who Jesus is but the prologue it's also John's way of introducing to us themes themes that are going to be repeatedly appearing throughout his gospel because the identity of Jesus as the eternal Son of God is one such theme but so is the theme of Jesus as the creator and his power over creation and healing the sick or walking on water there's also the repeated theme of light and darkness there's the theme of life and death there's John's use of the word world he uses the world in many different senses there's also the concept of the new birth and the need to be born again and then there's the theme of grace and lastly the theme of glory and it's a theme of glory which John highlights in these concluding verses of his prologue because John says that the word the word who was in the beginning with God and the word who was God and the word through whom all things were made John says it was that word which became flesh and dwelt among us also that we might behold his glory now when John says that the word became flesh he's of course speaking about the incarnation of Jesus where the eternal Son of God humbled himself by taking to himself our nature but what's even more remarkable is that John says he dwelt among us literally he says he tabernacled among us he tabernacled among us and this immediately gives to us the imagery of the Old Testament sanctuary and the tabernacle in the wilderness because for generations the Israelites they followed the laws and the commands that were given to Moses to worship God at the tabernacle and then later at the temple and they were to worship God there because that's where God dwelt among his people but you'll remember that as a holy God dwelling in dwelling in the midst of a sinful people God was separated from them God was separated from them as he dwelt behind this thick curtain in this sanctuary called the holy of holies and as you know no one was allowed to approach their holy God without bloodshed and sacrifice more so John says in verse 18 no one was allowed to see God face to face no one was allowed to look upon the glory of God in the tabernacle and in the temple but he or John says that the glory of the gospel is that God has now unveiled himself God has revealed himself in the Person of Jesus Christ and as sinners we're not only able to approach God because of the bloodshed and sacrifice of Jesus

Christ but we're also invited to come and we're able to see God face to face in the gospel we're able to behold the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ and you know my friend I don't think we appreciate the magnitude of this because for a first century Jew reading the prologue to John's gospel it would have been mind-blowing it would have absolutely blown their mind to hear that God this God who dwelt veiled inside the tabernacle for centuries he has now revealed himself and made himself known and even made himself approachable he has become bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh but more than that my friend the Jews they longed to see the glory of God they longed to see the glory of God dwell among them again and this is an important point that John is picking up on because when the city of Jerusalem was invaded by the Babylonians way back in 586 BC you remember the temple was destroyed the city was destroyed the glory of God which had dwelt in the among the

[33 : 14] Israelites for centuries it departed and the Israelites they were sent into exile in Babylon and even though nearly a hundred years later after returning from exile in Babylon and restoring the city of Jerusalem and rebuilding the temple the thing was the glory of God never returned to the temple the holy of holies lay empty the Israelites you could say they became Ichabod the glory had departed but the prophet Haggai he gave to them a glimmer of hope when he prophesied that the glory of the latter temple would be greater than the glory of the former temple but the prophecy wasn't about the place of worship the prophecy wasn't about the temple the prophecy wasn't about the place of worship but a person to worship because what John says is that the glory of the latter temple has now been revealed and unveiled in the Person of Jesus Christ and John says we have seen his glory we have seen his glory the glory is of the only begotten of the Father full of grace and truth full of steadfast love and faithfulness and John says he says in verse 16 for from his fullness we have all received grace upon grace for the law was given through Moses but grace and truth has come through Jesus Christ oh my friend who is Jesus Jesus is God Jesus is gracious and

Jesus is glorious and this gospel was written and has been preserved throughout the centuries so that today today you may believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God and that by believing you may have a life in his name my friend believing in Jesus Christ for salvation is about receiving Jesus Christ for salvation Christianity is not a cause to join or a code to follow it's a Christ to receive and in order to receive Jesus Christ for salvation you need contrition of sin confession of the Son and commitment to the Savior my friend who is Jesus Jesus is God Jesus is gracious Jesus is glorious but my friend is Jesus your Savior is Jesus your Savior you make sure he is by believing and receiving him for salvation let me the Lord bless these thoughts to us let us pray oh Lord our gracious God may give thanks to thee for the glory of the gospel that we see in the pages of scripture we see the glory of Jesus Christ we thank the Lord that he is the word and that he is the word who became flesh and dwelt among us that he became bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh in order to live the life we should have lived and to die the death we deserve to die we thank the Lord that in the gospel we are able to behold his glory and it is the glory as of the only begotten of the Father full of grace and truth and Lord help us then we pray to know his grace and to follow his truth to see that he is the one who is the way the truth and the life and that no man comes to the Father except through him Lord bless us then we pray bless the gospel to us that it would reach deep into our soul that we would know Jesus not only intellectually but that we would know him personally we would know him as a personal savior or do us good then we pray lead us and guide us by thy truth and lead us Lord into the week that lies ahead go before us for Jesus sake amen. Well we're going to bring our service to a conclusion by singing in the words of Sam 98 Sam 98 and it's from the Scottish Salter and we're singing from the beginning down to the varsh mark four and Sam 98 it's a Sam which calls us to sing to sing a new song to the Lord for the wonders that he has done and this Sam it's looking forward to the incarnation it's looking forward to the arrival of Jesus Christ and the Sam reminds us that this Jesus is the one who will win the victory he's the one who will make salvation known and he appears says the Samist he appears because the Father has been mindful of his grace and truth and that's what John says to us here it says in Sam 98 at verse 3 he mindful of his grace and truth to Israel's house hath been and the salvation of our God all ends of the earth have seen and that's fulfilled and what John says that the word became flesh and dwelt among us we have seen his

glory the only begotten of the Father full of grace and truth full of steadfast love and faithfulness so friends let's sing that new song to the Lord for wonders he hath done Sam 98 from the beginning down to the verse mark four to God's praise for wonders he hath done for wonders he hath done it is right hand and he's totally armed in victory at one the Lord God is salvation hath thought it to be known hath thought it to be known it's just it's in the beginning time he openly has shown he mindful of his grace and truth to Israel's house hath been and the salvation of our God all ends of the earth have seen let all the earth come to the Lord set forth a joyful noise wake up your voice and love to him sing praises and rejoice