

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

Encounter Jesus – The Son of the Living God

Listen to The WORD!

As we currently observe ‘shutdowns’ in our nation to help curb the spread of the coronavirus, I am reminded of another time long ago in this country when blue laws, also known as Sunday laws, were in effect. These laws were designed to restrict or ban some or all Sunday activities for religious reasons, particularly to promote the observance of a day of worship or rest. Blue laws restricted shopping or banned sale of certain items on specific days, most often on Sundays in the western world. These laws caused Sundays to be different from all other days of the week. As blue laws were revoked Sunday gradually became just as every other day. Our current ‘shutdown’ has caused everyday to be different from all other days. It is no longer ‘business as usual’. A solemn ‘quietness’ has come upon our land and I am reminded of *Psalm 46:10 (ESV)*¹⁰ “*Be still, and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!*”

In many Bibles today, the words of Jesus are written in red letters. The first red-letter New Testament was published in 1899, and the first red-letter Bible followed two years later. The red letters cause the words of Jesus to stand out but we often have the tendency to see the words of Jesus and then quickly move ahead to the miracles and stories never really listening to what our Savior actually said. As we open today’s text written in red, let’s be still and know that Jesus is God and listen intently to the words He spoke.

You will notice once again that Jesus begins verses 24 and 25 with *truly, truly* statements. More than twenty times in John's Gospel Jesus uses this solemn form of address. It is as though He was saying, "**Pay attention to this! What I am about to say is important!**"

*Read John 5:24 (ESV)*²⁴ *Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.*

Those who accept Jesus Christ are accepting God, and that means accepting eternal life. Rejecting Jesus means rejecting God. As condemned sinners, we cannot save ourselves. Judgment was passed on the human race when we inherited the sin nature of Adam. But, our Creator had a plan to save us from eternal judgment from the beginning. How does this happen? When we heard His words and believe!

*Read John 5:25 (ESV)*²⁵ *“Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming, and is now here, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live.*

1. The resurrection or ‘new birth’ of our previously dead spirit. Eternal life begins when we accept Jesus Christ as Savior. At that moment, new life begins in us. Paul said in *2 Corinthians 5:17 (ESV)*¹⁷ *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.* Our salvation is a **completed transaction**. Even though we still face physical death, when Christ returns for His children, our bodies will be resurrected to **live forever**.

Read John 5:26-27 (ESV) ²⁶ *For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself.* ²⁷ *And he has given him authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of Man.*

2. The resurrection of Jesus. We are born with a sin nature. Jesus was not. Jesus is God which is why the grave could not hold Him. He was not cursed to die since He was not born with a sin nature. He came to bring life. He said in **John 10:10 (ESV)** ¹⁰ *... I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.* How did this happen? **Acts 2:24 (ESV)** ²⁴ *God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it.* God is the source and Creator of life. There is no life apart from God. The title *Son of Man* used in verse 27 refers to **Daniel 7:13-14** and is a definite messianic title. It is used twelve times in John's Gospel and over eighty times in all four Gospels. The Jews would know this title from their reading of **Daniel**; and they would know that, by using it, Jesus was claiming to be the Messiah, and the Judge.

Read John 5:28-29 (ESV) ²⁸ *Do not marvel at this, for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice* ²⁹ *and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment.*

3. The future resurrection of life. This will be when believers are raised from the dead. **1 Thessalonians 4:16 (ESV)** ¹⁶ *For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.* Resurrection is not reconstruction meaning God will not put us back together again as we were before. No! Our resurrection body will be a new and better body suited for heaven. Death is not the end for the believer but just the beginning – the best is yet to be! This resurrection of life will take place when Jesus Christ returns in the air and calls His people to Himself.

4. The resurrection of condemnation. This resurrection involves only the lost, and it will take place just before Jesus Christ ushers in the new heaven and the new earth (**Rev. 20:11-15**). Today Jesus Christ is the Savior, but one day He shall sit as the Judge. While believers will be given resurrection bodies to reign with Christ in glory, unbelievers will be given resurrection bodies for the purpose of being judged and suffering punishment in those bodies (verse 29). This is why it is so important for us to tell the lost about Jesus.

Read John 5:30 (ESV) ³⁰ *"I can do nothing on my own. As I hear, I judge, and my judgment is just, because I seek not my own will but the will of him who sent me.*

Jesus says: *I can do nothing on my own.* This was part of His self-limitation when He came down to this earth and took upon Himself our humanity. He came down as a man, not to do His own will but the Father's will. The fact that Jesus has the authority to raise the dead is proof that He is equal with the Father, and therefore He is God.

The time is coming when Jesus will pronounce judgment in accordance with the prescribed judgment of God. When He judges those who have turned from their sins to the Savior, it will be because His desire is to please God. Jesus said in **Matthew 18:3 (ESV)** ³ *... "Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.*

The Significance of Witnesses

Read John 5:31-32 (ESV) ³¹ If I alone bear witness about myself, my testimony is not true. ³² There is another who bears witness about me, and I know that the testimony that he bears about me is true.

Jesus had begun His defense that He is God by bearing witness to Himself. However, as Jesus continues His personal defense to the unbelieving Jews, He admits that His testimony alone would not be sufficient. The need of more than one witness was based on Old Testament law. *Deuteronomy 19:15 (ESV) ¹⁵ “A single witness shall not suffice against a person for any crime or for any wrong in connection with any offense that he has committed. Only on the evidence of two witnesses or of three witnesses shall a charge be established.* Hallelujah! There is more than one witness

The Witness of John the Baptist

Read John 5:33-34 (ESV) ³³ You sent to John, and he has borne witness to the truth. ³⁴ Not that the testimony that I receive is from man, but I say these things so that you may be saved. ³⁵ He was a burning and shining lamp, and you were willing to rejoice for a while in his light.

Jesus brings out His first evidence: the human testimony of John the Baptist. We studied previously how investigators from the Pharisees had approached John the Baptist and heard his profession of Jesus as the Messiah – the Lamb of God! John the Baptist served as the light he was called to be and ‘prepared the way’ for Jesus as prophesied. (*Isaiah 40:3 & Malachi 3:1*)

The Witness of Miracles

Read John 5:36 (ESV) ³⁶ But the testimony that I have is greater than that of John. For the works that the Father has given me to accomplish, the very works that I am doing, bear witness about me that the Father has sent me.

Jesus’ second witness is direct observation of miracles. Jesus notes that He has performed miracles which give evidence that He has godly power. Some of these events had even been witnessed personally by His biggest critics. Jesus comments that these signs were greater witnesses than John the Baptist.

The Witness of the Written Word

Read John 5:37-38 (ESV) ³⁷ And the Father who sent me has himself borne witness about me. His voice you have never heard, his form you have never seen, ³⁸ and you do not have his word abiding in you, for you do not believe the one whom he has sent.

Jesus’ first witness was **human testimony** (John the Baptist). His second witness was **observation of miracles** (even the critical Pharisees had seen some miracles). In this passage Jesus offers what—to the Jewish religious authorities—should be the most powerful testimony of all: **the written Word of God**. The Old Testament from *Genesis* to *Malachi* was filled with the Father’s revelations that pointed to the coming Messiah. It was like Jesus was saying, ‘Read the Book!’ You’ll see it!’

Our next passage summarizes a crucial point about the difference between faith and belief.

Read John 5:39-40 (ESV) ³⁹ *You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me,* ⁴⁰ *yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life.*

The Pharisees refused to believe and would not be convinced, no matter what evidence they are given. Sadly, this still happens today. But, do your best to help others realize that the life of Jesus is written in red – written in His blood that He gave to cover our sins.

Read John 5:41-44 (ESV) ⁴¹ *I do not receive glory from people.* ⁴² *But I know that you do not have the love of God within you.* ⁴³ *I have come in my Father's name, and you do not receive me. If another comes in his own name, you will receive him.* ⁴⁴ *How can you believe, when you receive glory from one another and do not seek the glory that comes from the only God?*

Jesus was not concerned with receiving glory from them. They acted religious but they didn't love God and Jesus knew it. The heart of Jesus wanted them to accept the salvation that He came to provide not reject Him like they did. Jesus later said in **John 12:43 (ESV)** ⁴³ *for they loved the glory that comes from man more than the glory that comes from God.* Someday another will come. He will be the Antichrist, and the world will receive him. The Antichrist will come in his own name, will have an image made of himself, and they will accept him.

Read John 5:45-47 (ESV) ⁴⁵ *Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father. There is one who accuses you: Moses, on whom you have set your hope.* ⁴⁶ *For if you believed Moses, you would believe me; for he wrote of me.* ⁴⁷ *But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe my words?"*

Jesus closed this message with a warning. He would not be their accuser. Their accuser would be Moses. They were pinning their hopes on Moses and this was not what Moses had taught. Moses somehow understood that another Redeemer was destined to come. Moses wrote in **Deuteronomy 18:15 (ESV)** ¹⁵ *"The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brothers—it is to him you shall listen—* Stephen just before he was stoned proclaimed Jesus to be that Prophet whom Moses foretold (**Acts 7:37**) and Peter made the same connection (**Acts 3:22-26**).

It is helpful that Jesus' words are written in red ink in many Bibles but it is life-changing when we understand that eternal salvation is written in the red blood that Jesus the Messiah shed for us. In this present time of desperation be still and know that Jesus is God. **Romans 8:28 (ESV)** ²⁸ *And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.*