

## MOTIVAGE

- Jesus. The name above that separates. The name that can stir up annoyance and anger. The name that sinners have grown to adore bc He invites anyone to see He is forgiving, gentle, and focused on our greatest good aligned to God's glory.
- 4 Gospels give us a complete picture of the single greatest person ever lived. Further, they are the basis for every deep theological doctrine and every valuable Christian practice. Overall, the synoptics tell about Jesus from earth to heaven, but John tells about Jesus from heaven to earth. We need all 4 to understand the beauty and boldness of Jesus.
- 2026 40 messages Jesus Chronicles in the Gospels
  - o Encounter the real Jesus, not the pretend one promoted by media, nor the counterfeit one claimed by false religions. **Myth / Miracle Genie / Message Quotable & Agreeable / Moments** (Xmas, Easter, Marry & Bury)... The Gospels are Jesus' resume' for why Jesus qualifies as **MASTER**.
  - o Encourage deeper discipleship. If 11 apostles grew after mistakes, there's hope for us too.
  - o One day we will meet Jesus, and you don't want to look in his eyes with an empty stare but instead an expressive smile.
  - o Grab a journal.
- Jesus Chronology is challenging. In general, the Synoptics are chronological, but they are not limited to the same standard of modern biography timelines. Gospels provide a historically accurate account of Jesus' life, while also arranged topically to their intended audience. Any apparent discrepancies can be understood from viewing events through personal perspective, while maintaining doctrinal unity presenting the good news of Jesus the Christ.
  - o Mark was disciple of Peter w/ firsthand sources. He wrote to provide a straight telling of Jesus as a man of divine action. Mark opens with beginning of Jesus' public ministry.
  - o Luke was a doctor, an investigator of eyewitnesses to write an orderly account, and a traveling companion to Paul. He wrote to a Gentile audience with many unique parables reflecting Jesus' identity. Luke opens with the beginning of Jesus' birth announcement.
  - o Matthew was a Roman tax collector, along with an eyewitness of Jesus. So, accuracy with systematic structure was significantly important to him. He writes to Jewish audience with lots of OT prophecies, showing how they're fulfilled in Jesus. Matthew opens with a genealogy of Jesus' life, dating back to Abraham.
  - o John was the youngest disciple of Jesus. His Gospel is unique bc it's the latest account (after the Synoptics), and is writing to highlight the supreme deity of Jesus among those whom he lived. John introduces Jesus by relating His life all the way back to the creation of the world.
    - **John 21:25** "there are many things Jesus did, which, if every one were written down, I suppose not even the world itself could contain the books that could be written."
    - **John 20:31** "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."

## EXAMINE Before The Beginning (John 1:1-18)

In the opening chapter of John's Gospel are several identities & titles for Jesus

### 1. **The Word (John 1:1)**

- Echoes of Genesis "In the beginning." Jesus is re-creating & restoring original design.
- Jesus as the Word (λόγος=logos) is profound with meaning to at least imply origins and authority with God. The Word was with God (lit. full fellowship; cf. **1John 1:2**), and the Word was God. Notice, it doesn't say God was the Word so as to negate the personhood of the Word; and it doesn't say that the Word was *like* God as to negate the full divinity of the Word. The Word is in every way God.
- Illus. Close relationships you only need to give a look or one word and they know person's thoughts. In greater way, Jesus' Words are pregnant with meaning to create life, love, joy, purpose, hope.
- Everyone has a WORD; a sense of order - - - subjective truth but strong feelings (illogical).
- **Mt 6:33** seek first the WORD / **Jn 6:68; 14:23; 15:7** Jesus has words of peace, hope, and purpose - - > Would you trade Bible for \$1 million? /// **Jews gathering in synagogue would have Rabbi unroll**

Torah scroll and show people the words on the paper. The congregants would reach up to touch the scroll and then touch their lips to say, “God your word is sweet to me”.<sup>1</sup>

2. **God (John 1:1 “the Word was God”; cf. 1:18)**

Jesus is tolerated until identified as God.

Jesus claim of divinity caused Jewish elites to mock and murder Him

([John 5:18; 7:30; 8:59; 10:19-20, 31; 11:48-57; 19:7, 21](#))

When disciple Thomas was finally convinced that Jesus was God and he bowed in worship ([John 20:28](#))

C.S. Lewis “Christianity, if false, is of no importance, & if true, of infinite importance, the only thing it cannot be is moderately important.”

3. **Creator (John 1:3 “All things were made through him and without him was not anything made that was made.”; cf. John 1:10, 15; Colossians 1:16)**

The same God who spoke the world into existence took a first breath & cry; and later spoke to the wind & water to still the chaotic storm.

Even more, the same God who died is the one who invented the lumber to form a cross.

There was never a time when Jesus was not, yet He entered our time and space to be the ever so near His creation.

Every circumstance is part of the Creator’s plan to refine your character and ready you to face eternity.

- [Prov 6:6](#) consider creation and created beings... make a list of 10 what you learn about the Creator.  
ex. Snow is cold but fire is hot, which exist extreme temp change

4. **Light of men (John 1:4, 7, 8, 9)**

Jesus overcomes the darkness – every disappointment, downturn, and depression.

That does not mean that life with Jesus will not experience difficulties ([John 16:33](#)). However, it means that Jesus’ presence in your life redeems your perspective on all of life’s problems.

[Psalm 139:11-12](#) “If I say, ‘Surely the darkness shall cover me, and the light about me be night,’ even the darkness is not dark to you; the night is bright as the day, for darkness is as light with you.”

- When depression strikes, look at Jesus and listen to what He says about you more than the voices in your head or that you hear from those who aren’t in your corner.<sup>2</sup> That means adequate time in God’s word, especially the Psalms; and in prayer / adequate = > screen scrolling.

5. **Umpire of salvation “all who received & believed in him, he gave right to become children of God” (1:12)**

Jesus can discern devotion; He knows those who are counterfeit vs committed. No fooling God!

But note the inclusive invitation: all who believe! And the benefit is becoming chosen – wanted – adopted – belonged and provided for ([Jn 14:18 not leave as orphans](#)).

- Baseball fans know good umpires are impartial, competent, consistent, composed (not easily angry) Jesus is the ultimate umpire who knows we strike out, but still is gracious until after the 9<sup>th</sup> inning... which we never know what inning is our life!

6. **Only Son from the Father God (John 1:14; cf 1:34, 49 “Son of God”)**

John’s description of Jesus here should cause us to marvel at the mystery of the incarnation and Trinity. The Son left the Father to take on flesh to fulfill the Father’s will in complete obedience, even with a sacrificial death to express His indisputable love.

- In Jesus’ relationship to the Father, we understand **obedience is about love**, not fear or guilt ([Jn 15:10-11; 1Jn 4:18](#)). Joy, love, and identity of belonging stems from obedience to our created design; likewise disobedience results in discontent and loneliness.

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<sup>1</sup> Ray Vander Laan, Faith Lessons Vol 6 “In The Dust Of The Rabbi”.

<sup>2</sup> If depressed, here are some helpful links: <http://www.thevillagechurch.net/the-village-blog/9-ways-to-battle-depression-condemnation-and-anxiety/>; and <http://www.desiringgod.org/articles/too-depressed-to-believe-what-we-know>

7. **Full of Grace & Truth (John 1:14)**

The combination of grace and truth are incomparable (> pb & choc)! If Jesus were all grace w/o truth, then His teachings would be mere **sentimentality**. If Jesus were all truth without grace, then His teachings would be **strict** laws with **severe** consequences. However, Jesus is the perfect blend of grace and truth that forgiveness is possible; and so is a life lived with spiritual growth and integrity (Titus 2:11-14).

8. **Jesus Christ (John 1:17)**

David Brown/ Joseph Gibbs/ John Harbaugh.../ The name Jesus was given to the Son by God through the angel announced to Joseph and Mary (Mt 1:21). The name "Jesus" would indicate His life purpose to save his people from their sins. Likewise, the name "Christ" is reflective of His purpose as the Anointed One, the fulfillment of God's promises and prophecies.

➤ The name Jesus Christ points to God's faithfulness and power to save. He will not fail; and the name of the Lord is a strong tower and refuge for any challenge or crisis (Pr 18:10).

9. **Lamb of God (John 1:29, 36)**

Jesus the sacrificial lamb who takes away *your* sin, but also those of *others*.

→ Forgive others. (cf. Mat 6:14-15)

→ Witness to others as though Christ wants many to experience His grace.

10. **Spirit-filled, Spirit remains on Him (John 1:32) and will baptize others with the Holy Spirit (John 1:33)**

John describes John the Baptizer identifying Jesus as the one whom the Spirit descends. This was revolutionary bc God's Spirit only resided temporarily, but upon Jesus was permanent. And later in Jesus' ministry, He promised that His leaving would result in the Spirit indwelling (Jn 16:7). *So, the Spirit-filled presence in us is better than the idea of Jesus beside us.*<sup>3</sup>

It is by the power of the Holy Spirit that we can be assured of salvation (Jn 14:15-21; Rom 8:15), pray (Jn 15:7), understand Scripture (Jn 16:13), serve others (Jn 15:16, 1Cor 12).

Bono "Religion is what happens when the Spirit has left the building."<sup>4</sup>

→ Don't let faith turn into mere religion w/o meaningful relationship with God. That's point of the Spirit.

➔ How to walk in the Spirit ("feel God"): 1) Surrender & repent daily 2) Saturate in spiritual disciplines

11. **Rabbi – teacher worthy to be followed (John 1:38-40, 43, 49)**

Jesus as teacher and His followers were disciples or apprentices. In the first century, a Jewish man who wanted to become a disciple was expected to be joined to his rabbi from sun up to sun down – walking from place to place, learning, studying, working, and following the footsteps of the rabbi. As Jesus' followers, we are called to walk in His dust, getting dirty in the circumstances and people's lives He engaged.<sup>5</sup>

12. **Messiah/Christ (John 1:41)**

13. **Fulfillment of Law and Prophets (John 1:45)**

Jesus as the Messiah/Christ and fulfillment of Law and Prophets may not communicate as clearly to us as to an early Jew. We can catch the passion in the way John communicates the relationships between Jesus' first disciples: Andrew, Simon Peter, Philip, and Nathanael. Their excitement is evident that they cannot help but share with others. "We have found the Messiah... Come and see!"

→ Have you ever waited for something for longer than a month... a year... multiple years? How excited were you – or will you be – when it finally occurs? That's the passion the followers of Jesus have when they identify Him as the Messiah and the fulfillment of the OT.

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<sup>3</sup> J.D. Greear, statement from Jesus Continued: Why The Spirit In You Is Better Than Jesus Beside You.

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2001/februaryweb-only/43.0b.html>

<sup>5</sup> <http://ourrabbijesus.com/covered-in-the-dust-of-your-rabbi-an-urban-legend/>

#### 14. Jesus of Nazareth (John 1:45)

Identifying Jesus with the town He grew up in was interesting for many reasons. Nazareth was a dismissed and despised community by many, likely from some sort of local rivalry.<sup>6</sup> Nonetheless, Nazareth roots Jesus in a setting for us to relate; yet, we also misunderstand since Jesus was born in Bethlehem, and as John also later shows the irony is not really the son of Joseph (Jn 6:42; 7:27). Nathanael asks, “Can anything good come out of Nazareth” (Jn 1:46)? Nathanael’s mistake is one of stereotyping and making broad generalizations about a person’s character, and further also seems to be at least a hint of racism. Jesus responds to Nathanael by calling him an Israelite without deceit. In other words, Jesus realizes Nathanael does not have blind faith, but is seeking truth. Therefore, Jesus compels Nathanael by telling him that he was seen before in his actions of sitting under a fig tree. Whenever this occurred and whatever else Nathanael was doing is unknown, but Jesus’ knowledge of it convinces Nathanael enough to profess faith in Jesus as the Son of God and King of Israel.

→ Jesus the Nazarene reminds us of His humanity to suffer and is able to sympathize with our afflictions (Hebrews 4:15).

\*1<sup>st</sup> C heresy about Jesus wasn’t dismissing deity but doubting humanity (Gnosticism). So, John and all the Gospels are rooting Jesus into family, township, and ordinary life. He is just like us YET different!

#### 15. son of Joseph (John 1:45)

Jesus was the son of an adoptive father, who very likely died during Jesus’ upper teen years. Jesus understands the loss of a parent.

#### 16. King of Israel (John 1:49)

- Unlike all the other kings of Israel, Jesus was a fully righteous king yet was rejected (John 19:21).
- Kings today rule through fear, fierce military, political persuasion, but Jesus’ kingdom arrived through upside-down culture of extending undeserved grace to enemies and exhorting people to repent of heart idols of selfishness.

#### 17. Son of Man (John 1:51)

Jesus is the Son of man compared to in book of Daniel describing one with the Ancient of Days and coming in the clouds of heaven. Indeed, heaven is opened through Jesus’ arrival on earth and assassination on the cross, so that all who believe will not perish but have everlasting life.

### APPLY/THINK

Closing...

- Many people are Jesus-fans. They root on game-days (Sunday); talk the code and stats with other fans; and they are quick to criticize the church when things aren’t going to their liking – bc fans feel like they have earned the right to speak their mind.
- But fans are spectators. They don’t have any responsibility. They lack accountability or any part of the blame when things are not what they should be. They missing being on mission...
- Jesus isn’t seeking fans, He’s only recruiting followers. Followers of Jesus identify with Jesus to sacrificially serve others, to seek the lost, and share in the advancement of our Heavenly Father’s kingdom (not our own).

Are you a spectator Jesus-fan or committed Jesus-follower?

How would your closest friends describe your LOGOS?

What is something you are NOT following Jesus in yet?

Who is one person you will commit to sharing Jesus’ identity?

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<sup>6</sup> Andreas Kostenberger, The Pillar NT Commentary: John, p.160.