

Preface

Jesus was the greatest teacher who ever lived. His teaching was uniquely authoritative and His tenets so profound they still guide much of the world today, almost two thousand years later. No one man has influenced the course of history more than Jesus of Nazareth. Yes, these are bold statements about the impact of Jesus, the teacher, with which some may argue. However, it is undeniable that Jesus' teaching has changed the world. I imagine few would argue at least this point. But Jesus claimed to be much more than an authoritative teacher. He even laid claim to more than being a prophet of Jehovah, the God of the Jews. Jesus Christ claimed equality with Jehovah. He claimed to have been with God in the beginning when the creation was spoken into existence. Jesus Christ claimed to be of the divine nature, to be the Son of God.

Was Jesus who He claimed to be? This may be a question you have never given serious consideration. Every person, by his or her life, gives answer, albeit unknowingly. If Jesus is who He claimed to be, your answer becomes very significant to your soul's destiny. Jesus taught life after death to those who follow Him and eternal destruction to those who don't. By virtue of His claim to divinity, Jesus asks for our allegiance. Every life is a conscious answer in the affirmative, "Yes, Lord, I will follow You," or a rejection, whether conscious or not. The question is an urgent one. Was Jesus who He claimed to be? Consider the evidence yourself. Make your own decision. What can you lose? Whatever you now think of Jesus' claims, you will find benefit in considering what the apostle John had to say about Jesus, the Nazarene.

The Gospel of John is a forceful account of the miraculous power of Jesus. Its purpose is to convince men that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that those who believe in Him will have

eternal life. So says John 20:30, 31. John believed the claims of Jesus. He walked through Galilee with Jesus. He was there when Jesus purged the temple in Jerusalem of merchants who profaned the holy place of worship. John heard His teaching, and he saw the miracles that Jesus performed. Ask John if Jesus was genuine, or if His message was a lie. Ask him if the claims of Jesus were the claims of a fraud or a lunatic, or if His claims are true.

Our purpose in presenting these daily, bite-sized messages from John is no different from John's in writing his gospel. We hope all will simply consider the evidence, evidence we believe will convince those who sincerely want to know the truth. We've tried to present these Bible messages in a way that shows God's word as interesting and practical, easy for all to understand. We have no creed to sell, nor special doctrine to espouse. Our intent is to look at John's message with non-denominational eyes. Our thesis is that all one needs to know about coming to God and worshipping Him is contained in His word, the Bible, and that God spoke to every man, not just to the religious elite. It is our hope that reading through these daily messages will whet your spiritual appetite for more of the same. We hope this experience with the gospel according to John will be a catalyst moving you to greater and deeper excursions into the rich, spiritual truths contained in the pages of God's book.

Perhaps a word or two about preparation of these messages is in order. They were first written for a telephone call-in program in the United States. For those not familiar with this method of teaching, each lesson was recorded as a daily Bible message which callers could access by calling a telephone number advertised for that purpose. The continuous nature of the study, one lesson each day through the entire Gospel of John, created considerable interest motivating callers to call each day and invite their friends to do so as well. Though the messages have been edited for presentation in book form, they are still suitable for

use as recorded messages. Or, a single message can be read and considered as part of a daily period of study and devotion.

A conscious effort has been made to avoid wrangling over questions which are impossible to answer with available information. Rather we have tried to emphasize the simplicity of Bible teaching by letting the word speak for itself. Controversy for the sake of controversy has been avoided, but no effort has been made to shy from what seem to this writer clear statements of truth even though controversy may result.

Much of the dialogue in John's gospel (New King James Version unless otherwise noted) has been quoted in these messages, however, using this book as a substitute for reading the Gospel of John would be a sad mistake. Each lesson quotes dialogue in the passage being considered, but not all of the Bible text is reproduced. Even if it were, there is no substitute for God's word. Read the text of His word first, and then consider the lesson of this book at hand. It is our sincere hope that this writer's feeble efforts will fan your interest in turning to God's word, not deter you from it.

Come with us as we seek a clearer understanding and deeper appreciation for the man, Jesus Christ, who lived twenty centuries ago, yet continues to shape our lives by His words. Spend a few minutes with us each day as we explore John's account of the most influential teacher who ever lived. Read a few verses from John's Gospel each morning, consider our brief comment on the text for that day, pray about it, and then meditate upon the divine message throughout the day. You can only be better for having spent a few minutes each day with Jesus, the Master Teacher. His love will constrain you to love. His service will challenge your service for God and fellowman. His sacrifice will call you to greater self-sacrifice for the good of others and the cause of right. May God bless and enrich your study.

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