

# **John – The Radical Jesus**

## **Mosaic series**

**by Chris Famisaran**

Father, as we begin the Mosaic series, lead and guide us in Jesus' name, amen.

It was 15 years ago and a few days, it was May of 2009. I was driving eastbound in Redlands. Have you ever been driving and you realize something's about to happen? As I was heading towards a particular street, I had a pit in my stomach. I saw two cars, one heading towards me. We had the green. And on the right, there was a car that was going rather fast. And it's almost like, you know, this train wreck is going to happen. There's nothing you can do except watch it play out. As I was getting close to the light, I was, I realized I wanted to go straight. But just as I was getting to the light, the car that was facing me went through the light and the car on the right heading northbound slammed into the other car. Both of them, as you can obviously surmise, spun. They didn't flip over, thank God. As a first responder, I served as a lifeguard and taught lifeguarding for a long time, CPR and everything. I could not go straight because the cars were in the way. I had to turn left and immediately I got out of the car, made sure I checked the scene so I wouldn't get ran off by another car. And I got to the first car. And the car was his SUV. The horn was blaring. And inside I saw a younger man. He was probably late 20s, early 30s. Guess what was in his hand? His phone. And I remember him looking around really groggy. He was in shock. He was in his seatbelt. He wanted to try to get out. And of course, I don't know what his situation is, if he has head trauma or not. The airbags had deployed, and he just was really, really out of it. I told him, sit back, sir, please. Stay in your seat, don't get out. And then I went to the other car, a smaller car. I think it was a RAV4, older man. And all he could do was shake because of the shock. Totally blindsided, didn't expect it. Thankfully enough, I wasn't the only responder. Just by chance, two Orange County Fire Authority firefighters were on their day off. They were going for a run, they were training together. They popped up onto the scene, thank God. They were to help secure and stabilize. I called 911, requested an ambulance and everything, and they got there rather quick. I could hear the sirens coming, not just the fire, but

the police. They got there, they cut the horn. Thank God, that was really annoying. And they were able to stabilize and make sure that the individuals in the cars would be okay, at least to the best. I know, I believe the older men, I'm pretty sure he went to the hospital, actually both of them, I'm pretty sure they did. After that, the police asked me to give a report of what I saw. So I did my best. recount everything that I saw and observed. Well, I got my car, went on. Several months later, I got a call. Somebody wanted to sue the other because of the case, and so I best relayed my experience of what I saw. Now, it was a very, very profound moment in my life to see something. To my knowledge, I believe they did get better, but it would have consequences. The thing though is, as I look back on that incident just over 15 years ago, even now, I'm now having to try to remember the exact details because it was so long ago.

When we look to scripture, when we look at the life of Jesus, They didn't write everything down as Jesus was going about doing all of these things. They remembered and then they would share it with others. Not everybody had the ability even to write things down, period. Some of them didn't even really know how to read or write. But they shared stories. Jesus did this, Jesus did that. And so they would share these stories with their children. The older believers started to pass away. And all of a sudden they realized, wait, we need to document these stories. And so Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, our testaments, our gospels, of writing the actions of the things that Jesus did. And also, they were written in a way intentionally because they had intent of what they wanted to share with the people to pass on.

And John's account, today we're going to look at the gospel of John. John's account is different than the other three, the synoptic gospels, Matthew, Mark, and Luke. Those are known as the synoptic gospels. Because those three share similar stories, similar parables, similar teachings. Not that John doesn't, John shares things that are similar, but he approaches his gospel differently. There's some things though, for instance, where Jesus goes into the temple and tells them to get out. They share a meal at the end. There's some similarities, but John goes with different stories. He's unique. Most scholars believe as well that John the Disciple, also known as he refers to himself as the Beloved, it's a firsthand account of him watching and seeing. And John was a dear friend of Jesus. And so although John portrays Jesus a little differently, it's not bad, it's just he has a purpose to his

gospel. As John 20 verse 31 says, but these are written so that you may, what? Oh, come on. Believe, thank you. May believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name. Jesus is the Son of God, amen. but he is also divine, he is God in flesh.

Now I'd like to go to the first chapter of John. Some of this will be a little old hat because we recently did a series on the names of God and we did touch on the word, but let's just go back to remind ourselves. Alright, John 1 verse 1, we there? He was, sorry, in the beginning was the what? The Word, the Legos. And the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. And through him all things were what? Made. Without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and the life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

Now there's a theme here. Can anybody kind of figure out what is John? Why is John starting out, for instance, in the beginning was the word. Now we know in the beginning refers to what? Creation. The very first words of the Bible in Genesis 1, in the beginning, God created. And there's this sense, there's this theme of creation. Who created us? God. God is our creator. And I love this passage too. It's basically John is coming straight out, ready to go. Jesus is referred to the word. The word was from the very beginning. The word helped to create everything. And Jesus is also, Jesus is God.

Now, how many of you have perhaps stayed up late at night to watch infomercials? Kids, do you even know what that is? Are you too young? Oh, mercy. You just hurt my feelings right now. So back in the day, before the internet and everything, you would stay up late. After 10 o'clock, people would try to sell you. Particularly, there is one show dedicated. Is it still around QVC? How many of you have actually bought something from QVC? One person. You're brave in that. I remember one time I was with my roommates, this was just before Lisa and I got married, and we were sitting down, I think it was a Sunday. There's always that infomercial that always says, but wait, there's what? More. And actually it's something like this, it's very true. In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God, okay? That's explaining Jesus divinity from the very beginning. But there's more. He was with God in the beginning through him, all things were made, nothing was made that has been made. But wait, there

is more. In him was life and that life was the light of mankind. Like then again, wait, there is more. The light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it. Just these four very, sorry, these very five first verses has so much depth, so much that we could just we could spend a whole month just on these first five verses. There is so much depth. There's so much that we can study. And John is being intentional about this.

But wait, there's just, there is also more. When we look at the book of John, there are four parts to the book of John, by the way as well. Your handouts. Look on the back. What does it say besides the normal stuff you can write in? There's what? There's more resources. So, whether on your phone or when you get home on your tablet or your computer, go to the website and you can download some of the stuff we're going to talk about. Okay, there's an outline and also some key themes in the various books that we're going to be looking at. So make sure this is not the end. There is more. to you, literally. There is more information that can help you understand the book of John. And it is free, right? It is free. Stuff that's actually good, that is free.

Within the gospel of John, there are four distinct parts of the book of John. Number one is the prologue. The very first chapter, the very first, I think is it 19 verses, is a prologue. It's a primer to be able to help set you up for what's to come of what to expect. And then chapter one verses 19 through basically chapter 12, it talks about the earthly ministry of Jesus here. We see the beginning of Jesus' ministry and then also from Canaan to Galilee. And then there's also the Jewish Jesus and the Jewish feast. And then from chapter... 11 to all the way through 12, Jesus is moving towards his impending death. And then at the end of chapter 12 is a summation of Jesus's ministry. The third part, chapters 13 through 20, focus on Jesus impending death. From 13, I think through 17, Jesus meets with his disciples and he prepares them for what to expect after he dies. And so in the upper room, he shares and prepares them for what's to come. And then in chapters 18 through 20, it talks about the death and resurrection of Jesus. And then finally, I love this part too, because it's not in the other gospels. It's kind of like an epilogue. You had a prologue and now an epilogue. of basically there's a couple parts where it says that there was so much more that Jesus did, but there was what? Not enough space to write it all out. We read all of these wonderful stories, miracles, and everything, and there's so much more that happened that we don't even know

about. So yet another bucket list item. What else did Jesus do that we don't know about?

Within the Gospel of John, there are a number of key themes that we also can look at. We just read it earlier. The word believe occurs over a hundred times. Believe. Why does John regularly use this word, believe? Those of you who've heard me talk about John know that John's gospel was written to who? Not the first generation of believers, not the people who hung out with Jesus, but the second and the third generation of believers, people who would never have the opportunity to shake Jesus' hand, to look into his eyes, to hear the very words that Jesus spoke. Much like who? Us. Have you ever shaken Jesus' hand? Have you ever directly seen the eyes of God tell you that you are loved? Not yet. And so we can identify, especially with the Gospel of John's audience because it was written to people again who had never directly dealt with Jesus.

And if there's ever a gospel that probably the first gospel of what should be written [\*read], I would start with John. You also see that it's dealing with the identity of Jesus. We'll talk about that in a little bit, okay? You see also the death of Jesus. Another key theme is miracles. Jesus performed several miracles that are signs that Jesus is God. We'll also see the theme of the Holy Spirit or the Paraclete or the Advocate. And then within John, there are seven I Am statements. And what's also unique too is that John, when you read John, you don't really see as many parables, you see more riddles. Jesus asks a lot of questions.

So the first chapter of John is a primer of what's to come. And in that as well, we see that one of the things that's also important is that Jesus is the incarnation of God becomes what? Flesh in the book of John. Verse 14 of chapter one says, the word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only son who came from the father full of grace and truth. I love that passage because it says, or basically the way that I take it is that God who did not have to leave heaven, God could have just started all over, right? But God loved us so much that God, risked everything and came into this world to be among God's people. And didn't just come to this world, but came as a human being, although still divine. Again, another bucket list question I have for God. How does that happen? How does that work? But also comes with grace and truth. It says Jesus' intention from the very beginning to save and redeem us.

Now what's also interesting, and I don't know how I didn't pick up on this before, but there's also seven titles of divinity in chapter one and also seven I am statements of Jesus. If you read through the rest of John one, you'll see that Jesus is referred to as the Lamb of God, Rabbi, the Son of Man, Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth, and the King of Israel. We also having read, studied them before, are seven I AM statements, beginning with, I am the bread of life. I'm the light of the. I am the door or the gate to the sheep. I am the good shepherd. I am the resurrection and the I am the way, the truth and the and I am the true vine. Seven titles of divinity, seven I am statements. And then there are also seven miracles that are signs. Either signs of pointing back where it was already prophetic in nature as signs, or also showing that God, Jesus, is God. Who else could turn water into wine? Who else could cleanse the temple with such authority? And at the same time, too, desire a lot of retribution on the other half of the bad side. Who else can heal a nobleman's son? Who else can heal a lame man? Who else can feed the multitude? Who else can also heal the blind man? Who else can raise Lazarus? And before he did so, what did he tell Martha? I am the resurrection and the life. What's the theme around all these, the miracles, the titles of divinity and the seven I am statements? Seven. And when we look to scripture, what does seven represent? Completion.

Another thought. And there's something I really, I'm saving this special sermon that's in the book of John tied to Jesus changing the water into wine and also his death. Okay, but I have to spend a whole day on that or a whole sermon on that.

There's so many good things that when you read through the book of John. John is being very intentional. He's not just writing and dictating everything that Jesus did. There is purpose when you read the gospel of John.

Now, several years ago, there was a little sheep who was stuck. at the base of a cliff. Caitlin O'Kane reported on, quote, Britain's loneliest sheep, a sheep that was very lonely for two years, finally rescued after two years. Now, Britain's so-called lonely sheep was, she was stuck at the foot of a tall cliff over 800 feet and had been stuck there for over two years. There was still food to be able to be eaten and water to drink, but barely any shelter. Now, Cammie Wilson is the one who led this great perilous rescue and said, yes, it was a risky one. And that's why this sheep had been stuck there for so long. Now, the sheep had been discovered in

2021 by a kayaker by the name of Gillian Turner, who could see that this sheep was stuck there because there was this steep rock all around. this sheep. And then Turner kept an eye, having kayaked past and could see over time, the sheep was still stuck there. Now, there's a website on Facebook, I think it was the sheep game that chronicles the life of Wilson and dealing with sheep. And so he had an exciting update for his followers. I think it was 2023. There was a group of people who somehow they got a winch, somebody stayed at the top, and then three or four others literally went 820 feet down a cliff to go and rescue this sheep. And word finally came out that the sheep, who they named Fiona, Fiona was actually in good health, save for the fact she needed to be sheared very much so, because her hair had... grown deeply. But imagine being stuck, if you were a little Fiona, being stuck on the side of a cliff for over two years. You could have food, maybe some water, but you're just stuck there. How would you feel? How many of you would love to be Fiona? I wouldn't want to be Fiona. But when I look to see Jesus in the book of John, Jesus, who is God, came down to earth, didn't need a winch. And at the very beginning, as it says, the word became flesh and comes with grace and truth.

The intent of the book of John is to show that Jesus is God. Jesus is the incarnation who has come to earth and ultimately come to save us. That is the picture, the mosaic, of the book of John. And if we go to chapter 20, verses 30 and 31. It says, Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may what? Believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in his name.

My question to you, who is Jesus to you? Is Jesus even important to you? This week, I want you to write down and share with your family and your loved ones what Jesus means to you. If you're only going to take one thing away from today, it's that Jesus is the Son of God incarnate. The Word became flesh, and Jesus desires to save and redeem you. All you have to say is, Jesus, come into my life and help me. That's all we have to do and pray. May you seek God and not just invite God into your life, but desire to be changed and to live a fulfilling life with God, to be faithful to God. And just one day, God will take us home.

Father in heaven, Lord, you have left with us a beautiful story. in the book of John of how you love us so much that you will be willing to radically risk your life,

everything for us and redeem us. Lord, we come to you in faith. Lord, for those who are perhaps questioning, I don't know about this Jesus. Lord, we're here to answer questions, but press upon their hearts your love for them. For those Lord who are in the journey, who are struggling, do know you, but unsure about you. Calm their heart, tend to their needs. Give Jesus another chance. Lord, for those who are faithful, help us to continue to be faithful. Give us wisdom and courage. Help us to know how to love better. And Lord, we look to you in all things. Be with us. In Jesus' name, amen.

Grace and peace, everybody.