

WHO IS JESUS?

JOHN 1:1-2

JESUS IS GOD'S SPOKESMAN



FIRST BYRON CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH

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INTRODUCTION

Who can we trust today? The government? Public trust in the federal government has plunged to 20% in recent years (Pew Research, 2020).

Who can we trust today? The media? 9% in US trust the media "a great deal," 31% "a fair amount," 27% "not very much," and 33% "none at all" (Gallup, 2020).

Who can we trust today? It used to be that doctors were among the most trusted, but even medicine has been politicized, resulting in a recent headline, '*Public trust in CDC, Fauci, and other top health officials is evaporating.*'

Wherever we look, trust in institutions and individuals has plummeted, creating widespread cynicism and skepticism. This distrust has been doubly dangerous during the COVID pandemic, because we've needed reliable information to keep us safe and healthy. But the lack of trust in official statistics, information, and guidance has greatly undermined these efforts and increased the deaths and divisions in the nation.

Distrust is even more dangerous when it comes to our spiritual health and welfare. If ever there's an area where we need tough trust and fierce faith, it's in the area of how to be saved, what's right and wrong, how to get to heaven, and so on. **Who can we trust with our spiritual life, our spiritual health, our spiritual future?** The Apostle John answers that question in John 1:1. He tells us the who and the why.

BACKGROUND

The Series: In recent months we've been looking at the StoryChanger, Jesus Christ, and how he changes our story with his Story. Now we want to move from the general idea to the specifics, from the theory to the practice. We will do so by studying the life of Christ in the Gospel of John. As we go through this Gospel we're going to ask one question: **Who is Jesus?** As we answer this, we will not only get to know the story of Jesus better, but change our own story better too.

The Theme: John tells us that he wrote his Gospel "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" (John 20:31). Do you see the connection between knowing Jesus' story and changing our story?

JOHN IS SO SIMPLE THAT CHILDREN MEMORIZE THEIR FIRST VERSES FROM ITS PAGES AND SO PROFOUND THAT DYING ADULTS ASK TO HEAR IT AS THEY PASS FROM THIS WORLD.



So, who can we trust and why?



1. JESUS IS AN EXPERIENCED SPOKESMAN

In the beginning was the Word (1)

President Biden's spokesperson, Jen Psaki has been criticized in recent weeks for her most common answer to journalists questions, "I'll need to circle back to you on that one." She's new in the job and hasn't yet spent enough time with Joe Biden to give his views on various subjects. President Biden has also corrected her a couple of times she's misspoke. If ever there was a position where experience is vital it's being the President's spokesperson. The longer the person has spent with the President, the better. Same goes for most jobs: the person who's been doing the job longer will be better and more reliable.

When it comes to spiritual matters, we need someone who has a ton of experience. We want someone to accurately tell us what God's views are on the most important subjects in the world: Who is God? What are God's values? What's God's plan? What does God think about sin? What can God do about sin? and so on.

That's why Jesus is such a perfect spokesman for God. John opens with these wonderful words: **In the beginning was the Word** (1). We know from John 1:14, that the Word is Jesus. Why is he called the Word? Because he is the way God speaks to us, God's chosen channel of communication, God's official spokesman, God's communicator. God speaks most clearly and eloquently in Christ. He is God's alphabet, the one who spells out God to us.

How experienced is Jesus? He's been there from the beginning because he had no beginning. When the beginning began, he was there. Whenever God was there, the Word was there. Wherever and whenever God was, so was the Word. In the beginning there was someone with no beginning. The Word was there before the world was there. Whenever God communicated to humanity it was through Christ.

CHANGE YOUR STORY WITH JESUS' STORY

Jack was raised in a Christian home and went to Christian school. In college, he took a religion class and his faith was shaken by the claims of various world religions to be older than Christianity. When he was home for Spring break, he talked to his Mom about this. She didn't have a college education but her answer was just what Jack needed. She took him to John 1:1 and read, **In the beginning was the Word**. This simple statement of truth filled in the cracks in Jack's faith, strengthening his personal spiritual confidence, and his personal evangelism his maining college years.

JESUS SPELLS OUT GOD
SO WE CAN TRUST IN GOD



How good is Jesus at this job?
He's the best because he's the closest.



2. JESUS IS AN EFFECTIVE SPOKESMAN

...and the Word was with God (1)

Whenever someone claims to be a spokesperson, we usually want to know not only how long has the person been with the leader, but how close is he/she to the leader. A President may have employed someone for decades, but they've never been that close to him. They've never been in the inner circle but only on the periphery. They are not intimately acquainted with their boss and therefore they cannot be relied upon to always speak accurately for him.

Jesus, though, was effective as a spokesman because he was intimate with his Father. He was as close as possible to him. **The Word was with God** (1) can be translated, **the Word was face-to-face with God**. He wasn't just behind him, or beside him, but *towards* him, gazing continually on his face. You can't get closer than that. He's in the inner circle of three: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. He is speaking out of the heart of God because he is the heart of God.

That kind of affinity, intimacy, and familiarity is needed, because no matter how hard it is to be spokesperson for the President, to be God's spokesperson carries with it far higher stakes. The President's spokesperson can misspeak and usually there aren't massive consequences. But if God's spokesperson misspeaks, it may be fatal. Because of his closeness with the Father, he has never miscommunicated. He's never been reprimanded or corrected because he's never misrepresented God.

Though no one has ever been under greater pressure or faced more hostile questioning from the Deep State and the Fake News of his day, yet Jesus never gave up and never resigned, no matter how much opposition. He was and is an effective spokesman.

CHANGE YOUR STORY WITH JESUS' STORY

Susan found it hard to trust pastors. Her previous pastor had fallen into sin. She had also watched a well-known pastor, whose books she'd enjoyed as a teen, fall away from the faith. She talked to her new pastor about this and confessed that she found it difficult to believe what he preached because she was always asking, "Can I trust what he says, because I don't know if he's living close to God or not." Her pastor sympathized with her, but also said, that as long as what he preached was in line with Jesus, she should trust it because no one was closer to God than Jesus and therefore he was totally reliable. He gave her John 1:1 to memorize.

JESUS VIEWS GOD'S FACE
SO WE CAN VIEW GOD'S HEART.



I'm almost persuaded to trust Jesus.
Can you give me one more reason to convince me?



3. JESUS IS AN EQUAL SPOKESMAN

The Word was God (1)

No Presidential spokesperson is ever regarded on the same level as the one they speak for. They are employed by the President and subservient to him. They never say, "I think" or "I believe," but always preface their remarks with "The President thinks...The President believes." If sometimes pressed for their own views, they'll reply, "That's irrelevant. I'm not here to promote my own views but only the President's."

This again is where Jesus is a unique spokesperson. John writes, **The Word was God** (1). He can therefore stand before us and say, "He that has seen me has seen the Father" (Jn. 14:9), and "My words are my Father's words," (John 14:10), and "I and my Father are one" (John 10:30).

Imagine if Jen Psaki said, "I am Joe Biden," or Kayleigh McEnany had said, "I'm Donald Trump." We'd dismiss them as crazy. Such a claim would undermine their credibility. But, in Jesus's case, it's true. Jesus is God, one with the Father, equal with the Father. He communicates exactly the same message as God without contradiction or correction. Even under the pressure of the cross, Jesus spelled out G-O-D in the biggest and clearest red letters the world has ever seen.

CHANGE YOUR STORY WITH GOD'S STORY

Jesus being God raises the stakes massively. It means we cannot ignore him, or, if we do, it's at our peril. When he has a 'press conference,' when he speaks through his Word, we must be present, attentive, submissive, and obedient. We dare not come to find fault, to trip him up, to aggressively question, to challenge his claims, or to debate his demands. That's why, when we come to church, we prepare to hear the Word with worship. It reminds us that we're not hearing merely human words but God's Word.

'The Word' is one of my favorite names for Jesus in the Bible. I often go back to it because it encourages me that God wants to be known and to make himself known. It reminds me that God is THE GREATEST COMMUNICATOR but he only has one channel of communication: Jesus. We cannot know God apart from Jesus, and Jesus makes God known in a way we can handle, process, and profit from.

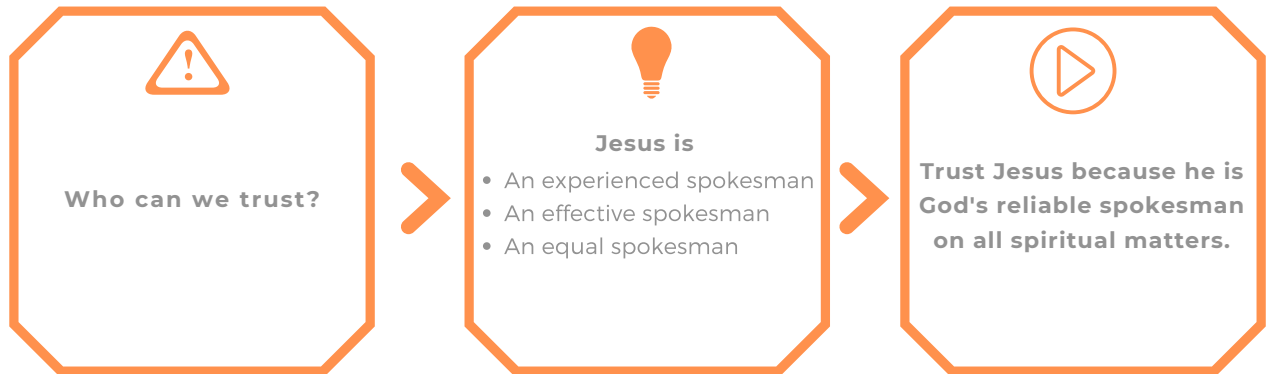
IN A WORLD OF FAKE NEWS
WE HAVE THE WORD OF GOOD NEWS.



Hear the story > Change your story > Tell the story.



SUMMARY



PRAYER: Great Communicator, thank you for speaking the truth into a world of lies and making yourself so clearly and reliably known in Jesus. Amen.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Where else in our culture do you see the crisis of trust?
2. What does this passage tell you about sin and its effects upon us?
3. Why did God call Jesus 'the Word'?
4. What do you do when you have doubts about God's Word? What should you do?
5. What does this name of 'the Word' tell us about God and how does it make you worship God?
6. Write out a prayer that God would help you to point people to the reliable Word this week.

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