

## JESUS IS MY SALVATION MESSAGE SERIES PART - 5

# THE CREDENTIALS OF THE KING OF THE ENDLESS JOY FILLED LIFE!

To begin our look at Christ's offer of endless, overflowing, joy filled life look at John 20:31.

Last century, blind Helen Lemmel wrote, "O soul are you weary and troubled? No light in the darkness you see? There's life for a look at the Savior, and life more abundant and free. Turn your eyes upon Jesus, look full in His wonderful face..." And that is what we exactly want to do this morning. Look with me at THE CREDENTIALS OF THE KING OF THE ENDLESS JOY FILLED LIFE!

Jesus is introduced as the Savior of the world, in the Gospel by John. That is the purpose the Spirit of God moved upon him to write this Book. In the 1<sup>st</sup> chapter John introduces Jesus by seven successive titles of Deity. This morning the last three have to do with the Credentials of the King. Have you considered His credentials? He has the authority and power to give exactly what He offered. Before we examine those credentials, look for a moment this morning at His offer of an overflowing, endless, joy filled life in John 10:7-11 please stand with me as we hear Christ's words:

*Therefore Jesus said again, "I tell you the truth, I am the gate for the sheep. 8 All who ever came before me were thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. 9 I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. He will come in and go out, and find pasture. 10 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full. 11 "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.*

Now the question for each of us this morning is this: If Jesus offers a life of never ending joys, and He is who He proves through His credentials that He is – why aren't we taking Him up on this life of endless joys?

Now for the credentials.

## **1<sup>ST</sup> CHRIST'S NAMES SHOW HE IS THE KING OF THE ENDLESS JOY FILLED LIFE WHEN JOHN INTRODUCES JESUS BY THE SEVEN TITLES OF CHAPTER ONE**

In a gospel written to the whole world, John presents us with the Divine Jesus. He is the Son of God - his Divinity -- the Divine nature of God is very clearly seen. We have already seen John's incredible introduction of Jesus as the Word, the Dwelling Presence and the Glory of God. John reveals Jesus as God's unique ("only begotten," KJV) Son, and refers to God as His Father more than any other book of the Bible. The Old Testament refers to God as Father only 12 times, John 120 times! But

there is one major theme that runs throughout John's Gospel: Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and if you commit yourself to Him, He will give you eternal life (John 20:31). In this first chapter, John recorded<sup>1</sup> seven names and titles of Jesus that identify Him as eternal God.

1. **Jesus is The Word (John 1:1)**
2. **Jesus is The Life and Light (John 1:4)**
3. **Jesus is the Son of God (John 1:18)**
4. **Jesus is the Lamb of God (John 1:29)**
5. **The Messiah (John 1:41):** "We have found the Messiah!" was the witness Andrew gave to Simon. *Messiah* is a Hebrew word that means "anointed," and the Greek equivalent is "Christ." In the Old Testament, prophets, priests, and kings were anointed and thereby set apart for special service. Kings were especially called "God's anointed" (1 Sam. 26:11; Ps. 89:20); so, when the Jews spoke about their Messiah, they were thinking of the king who would come to deliver them and establish the kingdom
6. **The King of Israel (John 1:43–49):** "King of Israel" would be a title similar to "Messiah, anointed One," for the kings were always God's anointed (see Ps. 2, especially vv. 2, 6–7).
7. **The Son<sup>2</sup> of Man (John 1:50–51):** "Son of man" was one of our Lord's favorite titles for Himself; it is used eighty-three times in the Gospels and at least thirteen times in John. The title speaks of both the deity and humanity of Jesus. The vision in Daniel 7:13 presents the "Son of man" in a definite messianic setting; and Jesus used the title in the same way (Matt. 26:64). As Son of man, Jesus is the "living link" between heaven and earth. Christ is God's "ladder" between heaven and earth. "No man cometh to the Father, but by Me" (John 14:6). Often in this Gospel, you will find Jesus reminding people that He came down from heaven. The Jewish people knew that "Son of man" was a name for their Messiah (John 12:34). God is here!

## **2<sup>ND</sup> CHRIST'S SIGNS JOHN RECORDS BY THE SEVEN SIGNS PROVE THAT HE IS THE KING WHO OFFERS THE ENDLESS LIFE FILLED WITH JOYS!**

The divine perfection of Jesus is reflected in the seven "Signs" John records from Christ's life. John built his whole Gospel as bridge with seven successive sign posts that transport you to the ultimate sign of chapter 20 - The resurrection of Christ. John notes the ministry of Christ in light of its impact on the hearts of those who saw these signs. What were the signs Christ performed to bring those who saw His ministry to belief? Out of the many miracles<sup>3</sup> that Christ performed, John selected seven to prove His deity. (The eighth in chapter 21 was for the disciples alone and forms a postlude to the Gospel.) These seven signs are given in a specific order (note 4:54, "This is again the second miracle"), they prove Christ's Deity, and they portray a beautiful picture of our salvation.

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<sup>1</sup> Drawn from comments written by Wiersbe, Warren W., *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books) 1997.

<sup>2</sup> Enns, Paul, *The Moody Handbook of Theology*, (Chicago, Ill.: Moody Press) 1996 says: Jesus commonly used the title "Son of Man" to refer to His mission (John 1:51; 3:13–14; 5:27; 6:27, 53, 62; 8:28; 9:35; 12:23, 34; 13:31). The origin of the term is undoubtedly Daniel 7:13 and reference to the heavenly being who receives the kingdoms of this world. The term is a complex one that seems to involve several ideas: the deity of the Son (note the equation of Son of Man with Son of God in John 5:25, 27); the royalty of the Son in that He receives dominion, glory, and a kingdom (Dan. 7:13); the humanity of the Son in that He suffers (John 3:14; 12:23, 34); the heavenly glory of the Son since He came down from heaven (John 1:51; 3:13; 6:32); and the salvation the Son came to bring (John 6:27, 53; 9:35). "The term, 'the Son of Man', then points us to Christ's conception of Himself as of heavenly origin and as the possessor of heavenly glory. At one and the same time it points us to His lowliness and His sufferings for men. The two are the same."

<sup>3</sup> Warren W. Wiersbe, *Wiersbe's Expository Outlines on the New Testament*, (Wheaton, Illinois: Victor Books) 1992.

## THE FIRST THREE SIGNS SHOW HOW SALVATION COMES TO THE SINNER:

1. **HE TURNS** water into wine (2:1–11)—salvation is Miraculous; Jesus is Lord of Time and Creation, nothings exists apart from Him.
2. **HE HEALS** the nobleman's son (4:46–54)—salvation is by faith; Jesus is Lord of Space, no distance hinders Him.
3. **HE HEALS** the paralytic (5:1–9)—salvation is by grace; Jesus is the Lord our Healer, nothing is impossible to Him.

## THE LAST FOUR SIGNS SHOW THE RESULTS OF SALVATION IN THE BELIEVER:

4. **HE FEEDS** the 5,000 (6:1–14)—salvation brings satisfaction; Jesus is the Bread of God, and the Bread of Life come down from Heaven.
5. **HE STILLS** the storm (6:16–21)—salvation brings peace; Jesus is Lord of Nature.
6. **HE HEALS** the blind man (9:1–7)—salvation brings light; Jesus is Lord of Sight.
7. **HE RAISES** Lazarus (11:38–45)—salvation brings life; Jesus is Lord of Life.

Now notice in conclusion that the Gospel of John<sup>4</sup>, unlike the other three Gospels, seeks to share the *inner meaning*—the spiritual significance—of our Lord's works, so that each miracle is a “sermon in action.” We must be careful not to “spiritualize” these events so that they lose their historical moorings; but, at the same time, we must not be so shackled to history that we are blind to (as A.T. Pierson used to say) “His story.” To begin with, the word John used in his book is not *dunamis*, which emphasizes power, but *seimeon*, which means “a sign.” What is a sign? **Something that points beyond itself to something greater.**

It was not enough for people to believe in Jesus' works; they had to believe in Him and in the Father who sent Him (John 5:14–24). This explains why Jesus often added a sermon to the miracle and in that sermon interpreted the sign.

- In John 5, the healing of the paralytic on the Sabbath opened the way for a message on His deity, “the Lord of the Sabbath.”
- The feeding of the 5,000 (John 6) led naturally into a sermon on the Bread of Life. Whereas the first three Gospels major on describing *events* of this miraculous feeding, John emphasized the *meaning* of this event. This is why although all four Gospels record the feeding of the 5,000 but only John records Jesus' sermon on “The Bread of Life” which followed that miracle. Jesus pointed to the deeper meaning of this miracle when He interpreted it for the people.
- The rejection of the healed blind man by his community in (9:34) led to the sermon on the Good Shepherd who never casts anyone out (chap. 10).
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This morning why don't we conclude by examining just the 1<sup>st</sup> of Christ's Sign Miracles<sup>5</sup>? In it we have a striking picture of the regeneration of a sinner. What would the sermon have been after our Lord turned the water into wine? What might He have said?

<sup>4</sup> Quoted from Wiersbe, Warren W., *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books) 1997.

<sup>5</sup> A. W. Pink, *The Gospel by John*, p. 98-99.

1. **JESUS OFFERS INEXHAUSTIBLE JOYS:** We don't know what if anything Jesus said as He walked around that site of His 1<sup>st</sup> sign miracle but since He has a pattern of expounding on these sign miracles, He likely would have told the people that the world's joy always runs out and cannot be regained, but the joy He gives is ever new and ever satisfying. (In the Scriptures, wine is a symbol of joy. See Jud. 9:13 and Ps. 104:15.) So Jesus compares His eternal life to an ever-flowing river of life giving water. He also says that His eternal life is more abundant than anything else in the Universe! That is quite an offer.
2. **JESUS OFFERS INDESCRIBABLE DELIGHTS:** Anyone who is honest and has looked at life apart from God soon realizes that the world's pleasures only offer the best at the first, and then, once you are "hooked," things start to get worse.

This week as I tuned to ABC news at the top of the hour I was a couple minutes early and there in my car came the voice of Roy Clark singing his 1969 hit "Yesterday", the words from, his beautiful singing voice, exactly captured the fleeting pleasures of anyone who lives apart from Jesus. Listen to these piercing words and think of any relative, neighbor, or friend you have that has never found the water of life Jesus offers:

Yesterday when I was young,  
the taste of life was sweet as rain upon my tongue.  
I teased at life as if it were a foolish game.  
The way the evening breeze may tease a candle flame.

The thousand dreams I dreamed; the splendid things I planned.  
I always built, alas, on weak and shifting sand.  
I lived by night and shunned the naked light of day,  
and only now I see how the years ran away.

Yesterday when I was young,  
so many drinking songs were waiting to be sung.  
So many wayward pleasures lay in store for me,  
and so much pain my dazzled eyes refused to see.

I ran so fast that time and youth at last ran out.  
I never stopped to think what life was all about,  
and every conversation I can now recall,  
concerned itself with me, and nothing else at all.

Yesterday the moon was blue,  
and every crazy day brought something new to do.  
I used my magic age as if it were a wand,  
and never saw the waste and emptiness beyond.

The game of love I played with arrogance and pride,  
and every flame I lit to quickly die.  
The friends I made all seemed somehow to drift away,  
and only I am left on the stage to end the play.

There are so many songs in me that won't be sung.  
I feel the bitter taste of tears upon my tongue.

The time has come for me to pay for Yesterday...  
When I Was Young<sup>6</sup>.

Unlike anything this world offers, Jesus continues to offer that which is best until we one day enjoy the finest blessings in the eternal kingdom (Luke 22:18).

3. **JESUS OFFERS INESCAPABLE PEACE:** Finally our Lord would certainly have had a special message here for His people, Israel. In the Old Testament, the nation is pictured as "married" to God and unfaithful to her marriage covenant (Isa. 54:5; Jer. 31:32; Hosea 2:2ff). The wine ran out, and all Israel had left were six empty water pots! They held water for *external* washings, but they could provide nothing for internal cleaning and joy. In this miracle, our Lord brought fullness where there was emptiness, joy where there was disappointment, and something *internal* for that which was only external (water for ceremonial washings).

How do we get all this? Jesus explains it by His Sign Sermon.

- **JESUS CAN SEE OUR EMPTINESS:** First, we see the condition of the natural man before he is born again: Jesus draws our attention to some silent objects sitting in the shadows of the wedding feast and by allusion points out that apart from Jesus any of us are like an empty water pot of stone - cold, lifeless, useless.
- **JESUS CAN REMOVE OUR WORTHLESSNESS:** Second, we see the worthlessness of man's religion to help the sinner. Those water pots were set apart "after the manner of the purifying of the Jews" -they were designed for ceremonial purgation; but their valuelessness was shown by their emptiness. Jesus uses the cold, empty, lifeless water pots to become conduits for His wondrous, life giving power. Like the blind and lame and deaf whom Christ touched would run, and hear, and see, thus declaring His goodness and grace, so we are rescued from our pitiful estate and raised to His fullness, His matchlessness, and His delights!
- **JESUS CAN OFFER HIS FULLNESS:** Note that at the command of Christ they were filled with water, and water is one of the emblems of the written Word: it is the Word which God uses in quickening dead should into newness of life. Observe, too, these water pots were filled "up to the brim" -God always gives good measure; with no grudging hand does He minister. John commanded that the jars should be filled to the brim. John mentions that point to make it clear that nothing else but water was put into them.<sup>7</sup>
- **JESUS CAN POUR OUT HIS GOODNESS:** See also that the water produced wine, "good wine" (v. 10): symbol of the Divine joy, which fills the soul of the one who has been "born of water".
- **SALVATION IS MIRACULOUS:** It says, "This beginning of miracles did Jesus". That is precisely what the new birth is - a "miracle". And not only so, it is always the "beginning of miracles" for the one newly born: regeneration is ever the initial work of grace.
- **SALVATION IS GLORIOUS:** We can observe, "This did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth His glory". It is thus, in the regeneration of dead sinners, that the "glory" of our Savior and Lord is "manifested".
- **SALVATION IS A PERSON:** Observe, "And His disciples believed on him". A dead man cannot believe. But the first movement of the newly born soul is to turn to Christ. Not that

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<sup>6</sup> Roy Clark, 1969.

<sup>7</sup>Barclay, William, *Daily Study Bible Series: The Gospel of John - Volume 1 Chapters 1-7 (Revised Edition)*, (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press) 2000, c1975.

we argue an interval of time between the two, but as cause stands to effect so the work of regeneration precedes the act of believing in Christ. When Paul wrote 2 Thess. 2:13 he notes first, "Sanctification of the Spirit", which is the new birth, then "belief of the truth".

Now we must think of the deep and permanent truth, which John is seeking to teach when he tells this story. In his entire gospel John never wrote an unnecessary or an insignificant detail. Everything means something and everything points beyond.

- **JESUS IS THE PERFECT COMPLETION OF GOD'S LAW:** John was writing his gospel for Greeks and so he explains that these jars were there to provide water for the purifying ceremonies of the Jews. Water was required for two purposes. **FIRST**, it was required for cleansing the feet on entry to the house. The roads were not surfaced. Sandals were merely a sole attached to the foot by straps. On a dry day the feet were covered by dust and on a wet day they were soiled with mud; and the water was used for cleansing them. **SECOND**, it was required for the hand washing. Strict Jews washed the hands before a meal and between each course. First the hand was held upright and the water was poured over it in such a way that it ran right to the wrist; then the hand was held pointing down and the water was poured in such a way that it ran from the wrist to the finger-tips. This was done with each hand in turn; and then each palm was cleansed by rubbing it with the fist of the other hand. The Jewish ceremonial law insisted that this should be done not only at the beginning of a meal but also between courses. If it was not done the hands were technically *unclean*. It was for this foot washing and hand washing that these great stone jars of water stood there. There were six stone water pots; and at the command of Jesus the water in them turned to wine. According to the Jews *seven* is the number, which is complete and perfect; and *six* is the number, which is unfinished and imperfect. The six stone water pots stand for all the imperfections of the Jewish law. Jesus came to do away with the imperfections of the law and to put in their place the new wine of the gospel of his grace. Jesus turned the imperfection of the law into the perfection of grace.
- **JESUS OFFERS ENDLESS JOYS:** There is another thing to note in this connection. There were six water pots; each held between twenty and thirty gallons of water; Jesus turned the water into wine. That would give anything up to one hundred and eighty gallons of wine. Simply to state that fact is to show that John did not mean the story to be taken with crude literalness. What John did mean to say is that when the grace of Jesus comes to men -- there is enough and to spare for all. No wedding party on earth could drink one hundred and eighty gallons of wine. No need on earth can exhaust the grace of Christ; there is a glorious superabundance in it.
- **JESUS IS THE REAL GOD OF PLEASURE:** Let us look at it now from the Greek point of view. It so happens that the Greeks actually possessed stories like this. Dionysus was the Greek god of wine. So the Greeks, too, had their stories like this; and it is as if John said to them: "You have your stories and your legends about your gods. They are only stories and you know that they are not really true. But Jesus has come to do what you have always dreamed that your gods could do. He has come to make the things you longed for come true." To the Jews John said: "Jesus has come to turn the imperfection of the law into the perfection of grace." To the Greeks he said: "Jesus has come really and truly to do the things you only dreamed the gods could do."
- **JESUS MAKES LIFE BACK INTO WHAT GOD INTENDED FOR IT TO BE:** Now we can see what John is teaching us. Every story tells us not of something Jesus did once and never again, but of something, which he is forever doing. John tells us not of things that Jesus once did in Palestine, but of things that he still does today. And what John wants us to see here is not that Jesus once on a day turned some water pots of water into wine; he wants us to see that whenever Jesus comes into a man's life, there comes a new quality

which is like turning water into wine. Without Jesus, life is dull and stale and flat; when Jesus comes into it, life becomes vivid and sparkling and exciting. Without Jesus, life is drab and uninteresting; with him it is thrilling and exhilarating.

For seventy years he had thought and meditated and remembered, until he saw meanings and significances that he had not seen at the time. When John told this story he was remembering what life with Jesus was like; and he said, "Wherever Jesus went and whenever he came into life it was like water turning into wine." This story is John saying to *us*: "If you want the new exhilaration, become a follower of Jesus Christ, and there will come a change in your life which will be like water turning into wine."<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>Barclay, William, *Daily Study Bible Series: The Gospel of John - Volume 1 Chapters 1-7 (Revised Edition)*, (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press) 2000, c1975.