

**TEXT:<sup>1</sup>**

So we're continuing to move through the *book of John*, and as you see, have come to the end of this really long/on-off argument that Jesus has been having with the religious leaders ABOUT Him being divine/equal with God. And of course, we've looked at this controversy a number of times now, cuz you really can't move through John without it constantly coming up. SO, instead of rehashing it again today, I wanna do something a little different: I wanna pull back, and look at: **5 Things Jesus gives HERE, for WHY believing Him to BE God is credible.** Why Jesus as God is "***Credibly Believable.***" Cuz of course, that's John's thesis IN his Gospel - that we would, as he says in *ch. 20*, "***BELIEVE that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that BY believing have life in his name.***" AND you see - ***vv.25,26,37,38*** there - it's ALSO what JESUS continues to stress. So **5 Things!** My hope being for those of you, who are maybe new-to or exploring faith in Christ, that after you leave today, you'll simply have more facts from which to consider that faith...And then for those of you who ARE Christ-followers, that you'd both be a bit more fortified in your faith AND as ***1 Peter 3:15*** says, more equipped for giving an answer - to friends, neighbors, co-workers - for the hope that's in you. SO **5 Things Jesus gives here, for WHY it's credible to believe in Him as God. 5 Things:**

***First, The Uniqueness of Jesus!*** If you look in ***vv.22-24*** ya notice some details that set the scene for us. John telling us we're in "*winter,*" during "*the Feast of Dedication.*" So about 3 months AFTER the Feast of Booths when we LAST saw Jesus mixing it up with the Pharisees. And with it being winter Jesus is, it says, "*walking in the temple in the colonnade of Solomon.*" This sort of covered walkway that gave shelter from the cold. And what's interesting is that John says "*the Jews gathered around him and said, 'C'mon man! If you're the Christ, tell us.'*" So recall, up to this point, Jesus has, for the most part, been going out and revealing Himself TO people. But HERE people are now coming to HIM, asking if He's the Messiah. Now to be sure, the motives of this crowd are mixed. Some are, no doubt, asking to get clarity, cuz they genuinely wanna follow Jesus; while others, you see in ***vv.31-33*** simply wanna get Jesus on record, so they can then have Him killed for "blasphemy"...Now here's why all this shows ***Jesus to be Unique:*** It's BECAUSE, Jesus - despite popular opinion that He never claimed to be god, no actually DID in fact claim that. That's what this crowd wanted clarity on, wanted Him killed for, and was coming to Him about in the first place... You understand, that claim makes Jesus perhaps the most ***unique*** figure in history. The historian Huston Smith wrote a book called *The World's Religions*. And in it, says that, throughout history, there've only been 2 people who lived such remarkable/inexplicable lives that people didn't ask, "who they were," but rather "what they were." And those two people were Buddha and Jesus. And of course, with both, people naturally wanted to worship em. HOWEVER, Buddha would never accept people's worship. He'd always say, "***No! DON'T worship me. I'm not a god. What you need to do is look to my teachings/my dharma.***"

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<sup>1</sup> Works consulted:

- JOHN 10 - 4-8-2001 - Mark Driscoll - Mark Driscoll Sermon Archive
- "The Unbreakable Word" - Gospel of John, Part 1 - Sep 1, 1991 - John 10:30-42 /// "Who Is This Jesus?" - Open Forum - May 1, 1994 - John 9; Luke 1:1-3; 1 Corinthians /// "Knowing God - Part 3 - Knowing that We Know God; 1 John, Part 1 - Sep 25, 1994 - 1 John 1:3 - [Timothy Keller Sermon Archive](#) (NYC: Redeemer Church, 2013)
- "TRACTATE XLVIII - Chapter 10:22-42 - Augustine of Hippo, "Lectures or Tractates on the Gospel according to St. John," in *St. Augustine: Homilies on the Gospel of John, Homilies on the First Epistle of John, Soliloquies*, ed. Philip Schaff, trans. John Gibb and James Innes, vol. 7, A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, First Series (New York: Christian Literature Company, 1888), 266.
- "The assurance of salvation" / *Gospel #7* / 1 John 5:10-13 - J.D. Greear
- Bruce Milne, *The Message of John: Here Is Your King! With Study Guide*, The Bible Speaks Today (Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 151-56.

JESUS though, unequivocally accepted people's worship, and not even by saying, "I'm A god," but "I'm THE God." As He says there in **vv.30, 38**, "I and the Father are one...the Father's in me and I'm in the Father." That's utterly **unique** GIVEN THAT there are somewhere between, ya know, 15 and 20 people, for whom we can say have been the MOST influential people in history. Not "influencers," but people who literally changed history. In ANY grouping of those people, Jesus is at the top if not THE top...On the other hand, there's also a number of people throughout history who you know have claimed to be God, BUT who were never very influential because they never convinced more than a small group of usually slightly-off-balance people...If you took those two lists: "Most Influential" and "Claimed To Be God," the only place you find overlap...is with Jesus. He's utterly **unique** and in that way believable!

**Second**, you've got the **Miracles of Jesus** as lending credibility to His believability! Cuz look in **vv.25-26** and then **37-38**. Jesus references His miracles there **right?** Calls em "*works (He does) in His Father's name, (which) bear witness about (Him);*" "*works of my Father;*" even "*works that (prove) the Father is in (Him) and (He) in the Father.*" Those are all references to the **miracles** we've seen Jesus do throughout John like: turning water to wine, feeding the 5000, walking on water, healing people. **Miracles** you understand, which to this point, have caused SUCH a stir, that not only are the masses divided over em, since you remember last week's passage ended by saying, "*There was AGAIN division among the Jews...Many of em said, 'He has a demon...Others, 'No! Cuz can a demon open the eyes of the blind?'*" So not only are Jesus' **miracles** provoking all kinds of debate among the masses, but NOW those masses are literally coming TO Jesus asking if He's the Messiah BECAUSE of those miracles...Now, that's especially provocative given the fact that 1st century Jews are about the LAST people, you'd expect to get worked up by a supposed **miracle worker**. See, Jews are famous for having a view of God that's totally unmatched by any other culture. Ya know, in Eastern cultures, God is typically conceived of as this sort of life force that's in everyone and everything, whereas in historically Western cultures, God has always been about plurality. Lots of Gods. Ya think about Greco-Roman Mythology/even to some degree the idea of Catholic saints...JEWS however, have always conceived of God as being singular/monotheistic/utterly holy! And so consequently, they didn't even use a name for God or make images of Him/that's the Second Commandment **right?**...**The point is:** The LAST people you'd expect to get stirred up about some supposed **miracles**, much less as **v.42** shows, convinced by em, is 1st century Jews! The LAST people in the world, who'd believe that the guy down the street/the guy, who's mother and father they knew/was the Messiah, are 1st century Jews. AND YET that's exactly who was becoming increasingly convinced, and LATER, like with the Apostles, increasingly willing to die BECAUSE of being convinced. Jesus' **miracles** lend immense credibility to His believability, cuz quite frankly, you could easily investigate em. That's why Jesus says there in **v.32**, "*I've shown you many good works from the Father.*" He's saying, "*everything I've done is observable.*" These weren't things done behind closed doors. As the Apostle Paul - who was of course the OG Doubter of Jesus - as he said in **Acts 26**, "*these things were not done in a corner.*" Such that what ultimately convinced him and other 1st Century Jews like him wasn't philosophical or even logical arguments, but evidence. If you're exploring Jesus/HELPING someone explore Jesus one of the best things you can do is simply investigate His **miracles**. Cuz

if they're a sham, you can move on. But if they're not then they lend credibility to the believability of Jesus! ***His miracles!***

**Third**, you have the **Personal Experience of Countless Christ-Followers**. And by "personal," I don't mean people who've just mentally assented to Jesus being true - like say, you assent to the law of gravity - but rather, who've **PERSONALLY experienced** Jesus. In large part, that's what Jesus means there in **v.27** when He says, "*My sheep hear my voice; I know them, and they follow me.*" We discussed it at length last week, but what He's talking about is something wholly different than ritual or religion. He's talking about relationship! If you were to go over to **1 John 1:3**, you'd see John say to the church, quote, "*We proclaim to you what we've seen and heard - the Gospel - SO THAT you may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ.*" In other words, the whole purpose of why John was writing/the whole purpose of the gospel and everything Jesus said did BEFORE John wrote, is so that you might enjoy **personal**/NOT private, but **personal** relationship with God! "*Know Him and be known BY Him*" vs simply knowing ABOUT or doing things FOR Him... You understand, literally millions of people throughout history - and not crazy people - people just like you and me - THIS has been their experience - the **personal experience** of sensing God's presence/the warmth of His being coming down on your heart so that you actually feel His love shed abroad IN your heart. When you're praying, having a very real sense of connection to Him, so that you "*hear His voice,*" as it were! **Is that your experience?** Cuz later in **John 17**, JESUS'LL say, "*THIS is eternal life: that you KNOW the only true God and Jesus Christ whom He has sent!*" That's what it's all about! Which is WHY the **experience** of Christ-followers through the ages lends such credibility to Jesus - because it's **personal**! I mean, you can discount a lot of things **right?** But it's very difficult to discount a person's experience, ESPECIALLY when that experience is multiplied countless times over. **Now does that mean you gotta believe every person's experience?** No! But it does mean you oughta think twice before discounting everyone who HAS experienced Jesus in a personal way. Cuz of course, that's not the stuff of fantasy or delusion, since delusion is clinically defined as, "*a person having strong beliefs that AREN'T shared by others.*"<sup>2</sup> **The personal experience of countless Christ-followers lends credibility to the believability of Jesus.**

**Fourth**, the **Assurance We Find In Christ** ALSO lends credibility! Look in **vv.28-29**. You see Jesus gives these REALLY comforting words/says, "*I give (my sheep/my followers) eternal life, and they'll never perish, and no one'll snatch em out of my hand. My Father, who's given em to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch em out of the Father's hand.*" The reason that's so comforting is because, frankly, it puts an end to the debate about whether or not you can, as a Christian, ultimately fall out of God's love and good graces. Ya know, be "divinely canceled," or as theologians say, "lose your salvation." Jesus' words here end that debate because what He's saying is: Your salvation, while ENJOYED by you, isn't EFFECTED by you! In other words, you can't lose your salvation, because your salvation isn't actually yours! Jonah, in the OT, says it well/says, "*salvation belongs to the Lord.*" Look, I've lost a ton of things in my life.

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<sup>2</sup> BBC News article entitled "Hiding My Psychosis for 10 years from the age of 12"

***But ya know what I've never lost?*** Things that weren't mine! If your salvation is a gift/ something you can't earn, but only enjoy as you believe-in what Christ accomplished for you, ***then how can you lose it?*** It's God's! And look again at what Jesus says ABOUT God: Says, "*He's greater than all.*" Which MEANS for you to lose His love/salvation, someone would have to overpower Him. And so the question is, "*Can God be overpowered?*" If the answer's "no" - which it is - then you're secure and can be ***assured*** of your status before God... ***You see?***

And Friend, here's the thing about being ***assured*** of your status before God: When you KNOW there's nothing you can do so well as to make God love or save you more AND nothing you can do so poorly as to make Him love or save you less - which is to say, you believe as ***Romans 4:5*** says, "*that the one who doesn't work but (rather) believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, (so that) his faith is counted as righteousness.*" - when you believe that - it gives you an ***assurance*** that allows you to face ANYTHING/even death, with poise!...I remember in seminary learning about a church father named Polycarp, who died around 160 AD, at the age of 86, as was one of the last surviving people to've personally known the Apostles. And the REASON he died was because, as a prominent 2nd century Christian, he was hated by the Roman Empire for refusing to make sacrifices to the Roman gods or deny His faith in Jesus. And so the government hunted him down eventually finding him in the upper room of a small cottage. And apparently, Polycarp knew people were coming for him but opted against escaping saying, "*God's will be done.*" So when the arresting men arrived, Polycarp simply went downstairs and proceeded to not only kindly speak with them, but even feed and pray with em, to the point that the men there to arrest him were actually astounded that this is who they were having to arrest, given he was such a godly, old man. But they arrested him nonetheless and transported him to be tried in an arena in front of the Roman Proconsul and the masses. And it's recorded that when Polycarp was IN that arena, the Proconsul attempted to persuade him to renounce his faith or else be publicly burned at the stake. And it's under that pressure that Polycarp uttered these now famous words: "*80 and 6 years have I served (Jesus), and He has done me no wrong. How can I now blaspheme my King and Savior?*"...And so he was killed...But just, almost unthinkable poise ***right?*** And not cuz he was some superhero. He wasn't. He was a frail, old dude. BUT a frail, old dude who KNEW the assurance of which Jesus speaks here. That *he'd never ULTIMATELY perish, since no one could snatch him from God's hand.* "***Do you have a sense of that kind of assurance?*** Because it really does ***lend credibility to the believability of Jesus***, since where else would you get it?

***Finally***, the ***Authority of Scripture*** ALSO lends credibility to Jesus' believability. And you see this in the argument Jesus makes there in ***vv.34-36***. Cuz He's been showing and telling people that He's God ***right?*** And many are believing but others are pushing back to the point of wanting to kill Him. And so literally, in the heat of the moment/right in the middle of this highly charged situation, ***what does He do?*** He turns to the Scriptures. He does a Bible study with those who wanna murder Him, because as He says, "*Scripture can't be broken.*" So Jesus is appealing to the Scriptures, not only because that's what these Jews understood BUT because it's what Jesus understood to be ***AUTHORITATIVE!*** And so His argument is based on ***Psalms 82:6***, which says "*I've said, 'You are gods.'*" And it's a pretty obscure reference, but it refers to the OT Prophets and Judges of Israel, who were called "gods," because they represented God's word and

authority for the people. And so what Jesus is saying is, *“Let’s do a Bible Study. We both agree, right, that ALL the Scriptures are authoritative, even the obscure parts. So SINCE all Scripture is authoritative/none of it can be broken, and you religious leaders called those OT Prophets and Judges ‘gods’, shouldn’t you EVEN MORE call me “God,” given the word and authority you’ve seen me bring as the consecrated Son of God He says?”* That’s what He’s saying! And you say, *“well, how does that - Jesus’ insistence about Scriptural authority - **lend credence to Jesus?**”* It lends credence, because/**follow me here**: If Jesus is who He says He is, which is to say, you believe Jesus on anything - what He says about grace, faith, heaven, anything - if He is who He says He is - then unless you’re just being narrow-minded, you need to believe Jesus on what He says the BIBLE is too, which is authoritative. And if the BIBLE is authoritative, then JESUS is who He says He is, because, as you see here, even in obscure passages like **Psalm 82:6** the Bible is ultimately ABOUT Jesus! Later in **Luke 24:44**, Jesus makes this even more explicit when He says, quote, *“everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms - meaning the whole OT - must be fulfilled.”* **Translation?** According to Jesus the whole Bible is about Jesus! The way JESUS interpreted the Bible is through the lens of Himself! Such that AGAIN, if Jesus is in any way authoritative, then the Bible is authoritative. And if the Bible is authoritative, not only is it the standard by which we judge everything else, including all our beliefs AND our behaviors, BUT it means JESUS is authoritative and therefore believable. **You see?** You say, *“Yeah, but isn’t that sort’ve a circular argument/a vicious cycle?”* To which my answer is: No, it’s not a vicious cycle; it’s a viable cycle, like saying, “if you eat a good diet, you’ll be healthy. And if you’re healthy, you eat a good diet.” **The authority of Scripture actually lends credibility to Jesus’ believability!**

## CONCLUSION:

So 5 Things Jesus gives us here. But let me move to close with THIS: Whether you are exploring faith in Jesus this morning OR you believe in, are following, and wanna help others follow Jesus, what you have to understand is that, belief or non-belief, is never merely an intellectual process. We’re not computers. We’re flesh-and-blood human beings. Such that when you confront the claim of Jesus here to BE God, you do so/we ALL do so, not only with logic - like considering the 5 things we’ve looked at - but TOO, with a lifetime of hopes, fears, and preexisting faith commitments. And so GIVEN that, you will never TRULY be able to accept and believe-in Jesus UNTIL you see your need for God’s grace and how He’s so wonderfully MET that need IN Jesus!<sup>3</sup> Which is WHY, maybe more than anything today, you need to see what Jesus does in these final verses here/**vv.39-42**...in which after getting away from the Pharisees, John tells us that *“(Jesus) went away again across the Jordan to the place where John had been baptizing at first, and there he remained...with many coming to and believing in Him”* And it seems like an insignificant detail - that Jesus went back to where His ministry began. But IN-FACT what it tells you is that/**listen**: Here’s a man who’s being harassed, hounded, persecuted, people wanna kill him. In many ways, His life is getting/and will CONTINUE to get worse and worse, because he knows His death is imminent. And SO...He retreats. But the sense you get here is that He’s retreating NOT just to get away, but to GEAR UP! Go back to where it all began, so that He can

<sup>3</sup> Explanation adapted from Tim Keller quote on p.19 [Hope in Times of Fear: The Resurrection and the Meaning of Easter](#) (Viking, 2021)

move forward to where it all will ultimately end...the Cross! ***What does that tell you?*** That tells you that this Jesus is NOT One in whom we believe MERELY cuz it's credible - ya know, cuz of His ***uniqueness, miracles, the experience or assurance*** found in following Him, or even the ***authority*** of Scripture - You shouldn't believe in Him MERELY cuz He's credible...but because He's wonderful! He's One/the ONLY One, who allowed Himself to be truly abandoned so that YOU would only ever have to FEEL abandoned. He's One who, when true darkness was coming, didn't abandon you, but set His face toward the Cross in order to die for you! He's One who, if He didn't abandon you in HIS ultimate darkness, He'll NEVER abandon you in yours!<sup>4</sup> And so the call is: Believe Him, YES, because it's credible. But ALSO...believe and help others believe Him...because HE...IS...WONDERFUL!...***Let's Pray:*** **(STOP RECORD)**

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<sup>4</sup> Explanation adapted from Tim Keller quote on p.216 [Hope in Times of Fear: The Resurrection and the Meaning of Easter](#) (Viking, 2021)