

“THESE ARE WRITTEN, THAT”

PURPOSE FOR THE EIGHT SIGNS IN JOHN’S GOSPEL

By Arlen L. Chirwood

“And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book:

But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name” (John 20:30, 31).

All four gospels — Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John — present the SAME message to the SAME recipients. All four present a record of the offer of the kingdom of the heavens to the Jewish people, with each presenting the matter from a different perspective.

Each gospel presents different facets of a complete word picture, with the four gospels together forming the complete picture.

The Gospel of John though should be looked upon and considered *unique* among the other gospels in a particular respect. It is the ONLY one of the four gospels which provides a specifically stated purpose for particular events which the Spirit of God moved John to record a decade or so after these events occurred.

The Gospel of John is built around eight signs depicting events which occurred during Christ’s earthly ministry to the Jewish people. These signs were *Divinely designed to effect belief among the Jewish people*. And, though many Jews believed, the nation at large remained in *unbelief, climaxing this unbelief by rejecting the proffered kingdom, crucifying their Messiah, and pledging their allegiance to a pagan Gentile king*.

THEN a decade or so later — during the period covered by the Book of Acts, during the re-offer of the kingdom of the heavens to the Jewish people (which lasted from 33 A.D. to about 62 A.D.) — the Spirit of

God singled out eight signs (from among all the signs which Jesus had performed) and moved John to record them in his gospel. And the purpose for the Spirit moving John to record these eight particular signs is given near the conclusion of his gospel, in John 20:30, 31.

These eight signs, forming a framework around which John’s gospel is built, were recorded for EXACTLY the same purpose that they were originally performed:

These signs were originally performed to effect belief among the Jewish people during the offer of the kingdom of the heavens, during Christ’s earthly ministry, as recorded in the gospel accounts.

They were then recorded in John’s gospel to effect belief among the Jewish people during the re-offer of the kingdom of the heavens, during the ministry of the apostles, as recorded in the Book of Acts.

This is the reason why, in the Book of Acts — in line with Rom. 1:16; 2:9, 10 — the apostles and others always, without exception, went “to the Jew first” in every locality where the message was proclaimed.

It was ONLY AFTER the message had been proclaimed to the Jews in a particular locality (invariably followed by rejection) that those proclaiming the message were free to go to the Gentiles in that same locality with the same message concerning the kingdom, though “an offer” of the kingdom, not “a re-offer” (which, of necessity, because of the message, could ONLY have been “an offer” of the kingdom to saved Gentiles).

This is also the reason why one can know that the Gospel of John — recorded to effect belief among the Jewish people relative to Christ and the proffered kingdom — was written at a time BEFORE the close of the re-offer of the kingdom of the heavens to Israel, sometime before about 62 A.D. The Jewish people simply could NOT have been singled out in the specific manner seen in John 20:30, 31 — concerning “signs” in relation to the Messianic King and His Kingdom — had the gospel been recorded following the time of the re-offer of the kingdom to the Jewish people.

As previously seen, these verses in John chapter twenty refer back to eight signs, among numerous other signs, performed for a particular, revealed purpose during the original offer of the kingdom; and, as also previously seen, they could ONLY have been singled out and recorded for EXACTLY the SAME purpose during the re-offer of the kingdom.

“That Ye Might Believe That Jesus Is the Christ, the Son of God”

The key words in the first part of verse thirty-one are “believe,” “Christ,” and “Son.” And the manner in which all three words are used MUST be understood in the light of the introductory reference to “signs” in the previous verse, which reflects back on all the signs which Jesus performed (“And many other signs...” [v. 30a]), whether recorded or not recorded in the other three gospels.

Then, remaining within the context, the manner in which all three words are used can ONLY have to do with the Son’s previous ministry to the Jewish people in relation to His kingship and the proffered kingdom.

1) “That Ye Might Believe”

Belief among the Jewish people during both the original offer of the kingdom (recorded in the gospel accounts) and the re-offer of the kingdom (recorded in the Book of Acts) had to do with EXACTLY the SAME thing. It had to do with the One born King, Jesus the Christ, God’s Son; and it had to do with the message being proclaimed, the proffered kingdom of the heavens (Matt. 2:1, 2; 3:1, 2; 4:17).

Belief during the original offer of the kingdom had NOTHING to do with eternal salvation, for Christ came to a people who were ALREADY saved.

They, as their ancestors, going all the way back to Moses (throughout thirty-five generations, covering over fourteen centuries), had sacrificed paschal lambs year after year (though breaks in the offering of sacrifices would have occurred at times during Gentile dominance [during the time of the Judges] or during Gentile captivity [the subsequent Assyrian and Babylonian captivities]). And, as during Moses’ day (as before or after that time) there was death and shed blood, that which God has required since Adam sinned in Eden.

And, when Christ came to Israel four millenniums following man’s creation and subsequent fall, God could ONLY have looked upon the matter in EXACTLY the same manner as He had previously looked upon it during Adam’s day or during Moses’ day. The statement from Ex. 12:13, “...when I see the blood, I will pass over you...,” MUST remain true throughout ALL time.

The regenerate state of the Jewish people at Christ’s first coming ALLOWED that seen in the gospel accounts to occur — an offer of the kingdom of the heavens to the Jewish people. Otherwise, there could NOT have been an offer. The kingdom could NOT then and

it CANNOT today be offered to unregenerate individuals. A person MUST first possess spiritual life BEFORE spiritual values of this nature can enter into the picture.

And, as well, THIS is the ONLY reason that there could have been a re-offer of the kingdom to Israel, which, of necessity, had to be limited to about thirty years. The SAME saved generation living before Calvary remained on the scene following Calvary.

But when that generation began to pass off the scene via death some three decades later (replaced by Jews refusing to avail themselves of the blood of the Paschal Lamb slain in 33 A.D., which fulfilled the O.T. type introduced in Exodus chapter twelve, rendering any future slaying of paschal lambs on the Passover by the Jewish people nonefficacious), the re-offer of the kingdom, of necessity, could NO longer continue. A saved generation of Jews, to whom an offer of the kingdom could be extended, NO longer existed beyond about 62 A.D. when the re-offer of the kingdom, of necessity, came to a close.

Thus, contextually in John 20:31, belief involves the Jewish Messiah in relation to the kingdom, NOT eternal life. And this is evident from NOT ONLY that which precedes (signs) BUT that which the verse goes on to state ("that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God").

2) "That Jesus Is the Christ"

The name "Jesus" means *salvation* (Matt. 1:21). The Greek word translated "Jesus," *Iesous*, is the equivalent of the Hebrew words *Yeshuah* (meaning "salvation") or *Jehoshua* ("Joshua," a cognate form of *Yeshuah*, meaning exactly the same — "salvation").

The word *Yeshuah* is used about eighty times in the Old Testament, it is always used in the sense of "deliverance," and it is usually translated "salvation" (e.g., Gen. 49:18; II Chron. 20:17; Isa. 12:2).

Then the name "Joshua," appearing numerous times in the Old Testament, appears in the New Testament twice, in Acts 7:45 and Heb. 4:8. "Joshua" in the Greek text, as previously noted, is *Iesous*, distinguished from the name "Jesus" only through the context. And a failure to take the context into consideration apparently caused the KJV translators to erroneously translate the word as "Jesus" in both Acts 7:45 and Heb. 4:8.

"Deliverance" or "salvation" in Scripture though (both Old and New Testaments), as the use of the name *Iesous* in the New Testament (meaning "salvation"), MUST be viewed contextually to determine

which type *deliverance* or *salvation* is in view.

In the preceding respect, most of the references to "salvation" in the New Testament actually relate either directly or indirectly to the Messianic Era, NOT to eternal life. And the thought of *salvation* ("life") through the use of the name "Jesus" in John 20:31, both textually and contextually, is used in EXACTLY this SAME sense.

3) "The Son of God"

"Sonship" in Scripture implies *rulership*, for sonship is centrally for *regal purposes* in the governmental structure of God's kingdom.

"Sons of God" (angels) presently rule throughout God's kingdom, whether on this earth, other provinces throughout the galaxy, or provinces throughout all the galaxies forming the universal kingdom of God. All angels, whether fallen (as Satan and his angels) or unfallen (all the other angels) are *sons of God*, else angels (fallen or unfallen) could not rule.

Angels are *sons* because of *creation*. Unlike that which occurs in the human realm, there is no procreation in the angelic world. Each angel is a special, individual creation, providing the status of *sonship*.

Adam, because of *creation*, was a *son of God* both before and following the fall (Luke 3:38), which was completely in line with the reason for his creation, given in the opening chapter of Genesis:

"And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion... [Heb., *radah*, 'rule'; i.e., '...and let them rule...']" (Gen. 1:26a; cf. vv. 27, 28).

Then, when the Redeemer appeared, He appeared as *God's Son, the second Man, the last Adam* (Matt. 2:15; 3:17; I Cor. 15:45-47). He, like the first Adam, was tested. But, rather than being overcome by Satan, He overcame Satan, showing that He was fully qualified to take the sceptre (Matt. 4:1-11).

Thus, through the second Man, the last Adam, the purpose for man's creation and redemption (following his fall) will be realized.

"And That Believing Ye Might Have Life through His Name"

The key words in the second part of verse thirty-one are "believing" and "life." And, as in the first

part of the verse, both words MUST be understood in the light of the introductory reference to "signs" in the previous verse, which reflects back NOT ONLY on the previous eight signs in John's gospel BUT upon all the signs which Jesus had performed, whether recorded or not recorded in the other three gospels.

Then also, as in the first part of the verse, remaining within context, both words can ONLY have to do with the Son's previous ministry to the Jewish people in relation to His kingship and the proffered kingdom.

The key words throughout Scripture are "believe" and "faith"; and both, in reality, are the same word. One is a verb (Gk., *pisteuo*; "believe"), and the other is a noun (Gk., *pistis*; "faith").

And faith (or belief) is connected with the whole of man's salvation, whether that of the spirit, the soul, or the body (cf. John 3:16; Rom. 1:17; 8:13-23; Eph. 2:8, 9; Heb. 10:35-39; I Peter 1:3-9).

The reference to *believing* in the latter part of John 20:31 has to do with "life" which the Jewish people could have realized during either the offer or the re-offer of the kingdom. Thus, *believing*, with a view to "life" in this verse, has to do with *the saved and that which lay ahead for those among the saved who exercised faith*.

This verse has NOTHING to do with the unsaved, in that past day, or today.

And because *signs* (v. 30) and the offer or re-offer of the kingdom are in view, using this verse relative to the gospel of grace and the unsaved today completely removes the verse from its contextual setting, doing away with the subject and teaching at hand.

As well, attempting to use this verse in the preceding manner can ONLY corrupt the simple gospel of grace, for signs and a message to the Jewish people relative to the kingdom have NOTHING to do with the gospel of grace.

Then one final problem exists through misusing John 20:31 in the preceding manner. John's gospel is often said to be the one gospel among the four written to tell an unsaved person how to be saved. Such though places A COMPLETELY WRONG PERSPECTIVE on the overall message of this gospel, essentially removing John's gospel from its correct contextual setting among the other three.

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