

GOOD NEWS



THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST

JOHN MACARTHUR

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“Who better to write a book on the gospel than John MacArthur? This master expositor and skilled theologian has spent his entire ministry defining and defending the one, true, saving gospel of Jesus Christ. In these pages, you will discover the biblical basis for the good news of salvation that is in the person and work of the Son of God, Jesus Christ. Your heart will be thrilled as you behold the glory of God in the image of Him who is the only Savior of sinners, the Lord of heaven and earth. Here is yet another doctrinally profound yet easily accessible book by this best-selling author. Whatever MacArthur writes, read it for the good of your soul. This book is no exception.”

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President, OnePassion Ministries
Dallas

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—DR. DEREK W.H. THOMAS
Senior Minister, First Presbyterian Church
Columbia, S.C.

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LIGONIER MINISTRIES

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- Chapter One -

JESUS IS THE MESSIAH

Who is Jesus? It's a very basic question, but one that many struggle to answer. Virtually all the world's religions and philosophies attempt to identify Him: as a gentle prophet, a faithful wise man, a spiritual teacher, or a social revolutionary ahead of His time. Others position Him as a sorcerer or a demigod, with access to supernatural power but subordinate to a greater divine overseer. Still others skirt the biblical accounts, treating Jesus as a great man whose legend has grown through myth and folklore—almost like a first-century Paul Bunyan.

Even the cults attempt to identify who or what Christ was. Take Scientology, for example, the pseudo-religion popularized in recent years by several Hollywood celebrities. Scientology is a demonically informed system invented by a science-fiction writer and medium named L. Ron Hubbard. According to Hubbard, Jesus never existed as a person. Instead, Christ

is an electronic idea implanted by the true powers of the universe as a type of cosmic disinformation campaign. In a letter to his followers, dated May 5, 1980, Hubbard wrote, “Let me take the opportunity to disabuse you of some lovely myths. For instance, the historic Jesus was not nearly the sainted figure he has been made out to be. In addition to being a lover of young boys and men, he was given to uncontrollable bursts of temper and hatred that belied the general message of love.”¹

It’s difficult to imagine anything more bizarre or blasphemous than that. Yet if people reject the true Christ of Scripture, any replacement they concoct with their imaginations—while potentially less outrageous than Hubbard’s version—won’t be any less erroneous or heretical. Even if they have differing notions, everyone who rejects the biblical truth about Christ inevitably ends up in a similar place. The effect of missing the truth about the Lord is always the same, since anything other than believing in the true Christ is a damning offense.

Moreover, the right understanding of Jesus Christ is essential to understanding many other vital truths, particularly the gospel and salvation. There’s no good news apart from Christ. Jesus Himself warned His followers not to fall for “false Christs” (Mark 13:21–22). In 2 John 10–11, the Apostle of love says that anyone who departs from the true doctrine of Christ does not have God; therefore, “if anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive him into your house, and do not give him a greeting; for the one who gives him a greeting participates in his evil deeds.” Clearly, how you answer the question “Who is Jesus?” has significant and ultimately

permanent consequences. The right answer *alone* can lead to salvation. Yet one can be very close to the right answer and still miss it, resulting in eternal disaster.

What Did Jesus Say about Himself?

One way to answer the question “Who is Jesus?” is by listening to His monumental words to the scribes in the temple, recorded in Luke’s gospel:

Then He said to them, “How is it that they say the Christ is David’s son? For David himself says in the book of Psalms,

“The Lord said to my Lord,

“Sit at My right hand,

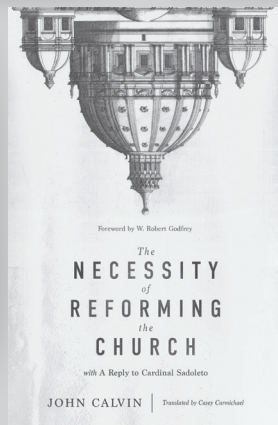
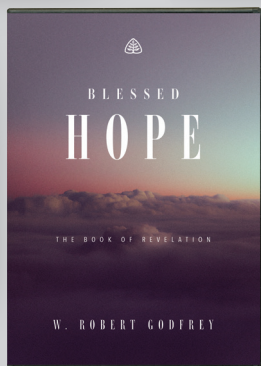
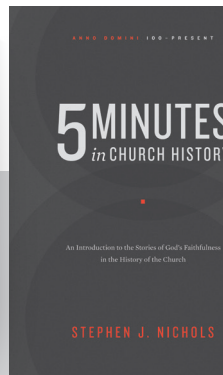
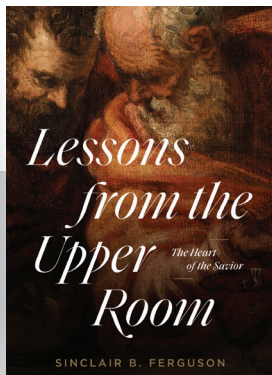
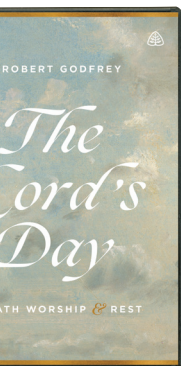
Until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet.”

Therefore David calls Him ‘Lord,’ and how is He his son?”

And while all the people were listening, He said to the disciples, “Beware of the scribes, who like to walk around in long robes, and love respectful greetings in the market places, and chief seats in the synagogues and places of honor at banquets, who devour widows’ houses, and for appearance’s sake offer long prayers. These will receive greater condemnation.”

And He looked up and saw the rich putting their gifts into the treasury. And He saw a poor widow

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