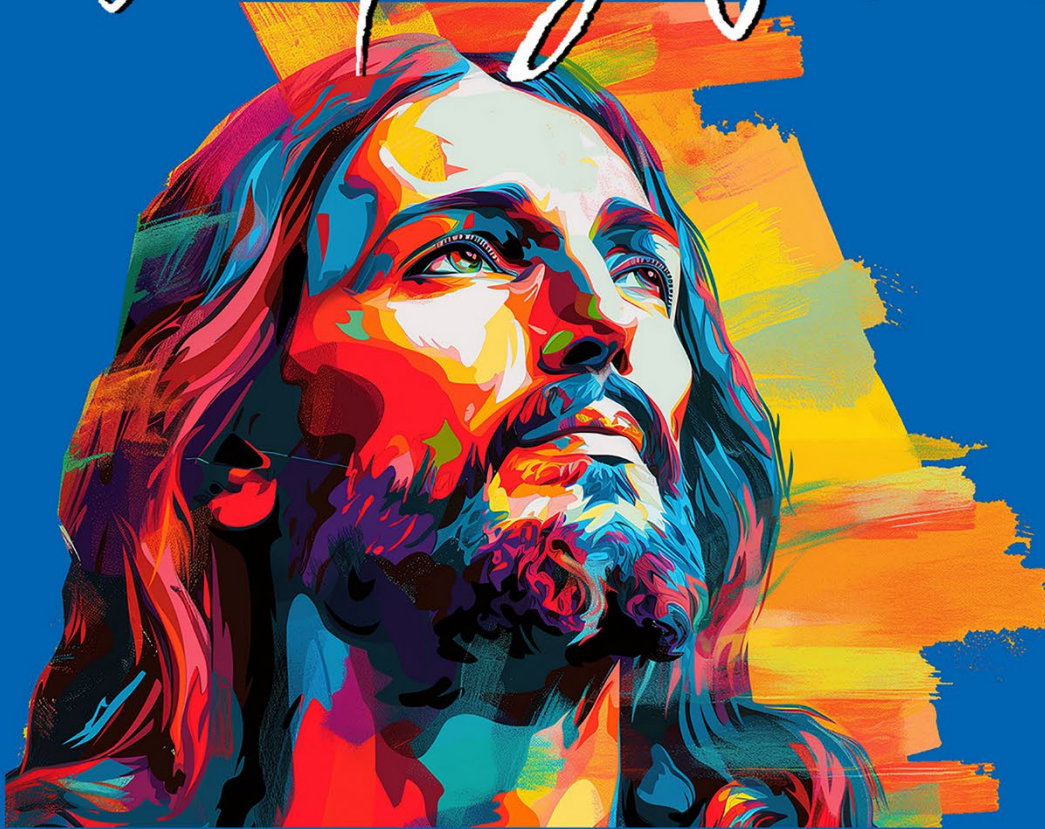


Finding Jesus



Embracing the Complete
Gospel of Jesus, the Christ.

Study Guide

CHARLES S. STUART

Let's Just Imagine!

Let's just imagine what might happen in our family, community, church, nation, and world if all believers **KINGDOM OF GOD ON EARTH!** helped usher in the

When people embrace their role in the Kingdom of God here on earth, their **EYES, EARS, MIND, HANDS, FEET & VOICE** will be used to reflect their faith.

They will use their **EYES** to look for needs that are unmet, and to watch over those in positions of authority.

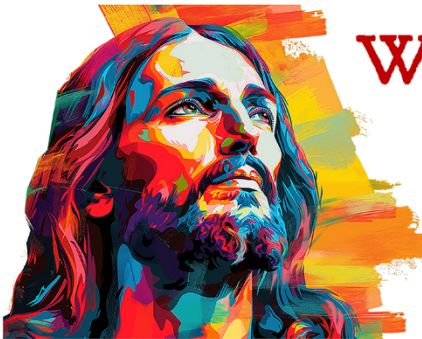
They will use their **EARS** to listen for the cries of those in pain, and to hear and address comments that demean those in need.

They will use their **MIND** to think of ways to get involved and to question for themselves what God would have them do for Him.

They will use their **HANDS** to do what is needed, remembering that it is through their hands that Jesus touches the "least of these."

They will use their **FEET** to go where needed...overseas, across the street or into the voting booth...to bring the Kingdom of God to those in need.

They will use their **VOICE** to speak up and out for those without a voice, and to hold those with power accountable to remember "the least of these" when making decisions.



**Wouldn't it be lovely to live
in a world like that!?!**

Charles Stuart

Charles S. Stuart | Charlie@TheGospelofJesustheChrist.org
(407) 230-2125 cell/text | www.TheGospelofJesustheChrist.org
523 Bryn Mawr Street | Orlando, FL 32804

ISBN 979-8-234-06662-6 \$15.00
5 1500 >
9 798234 066626



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Printed by Charles Stuart, in the United States of America.

First printing, 2026.

Charles Stuart

523 Bryn Mawr Street

Orlando, Florida 32804

(407) 230-2125

Charlie@TheGospelofJesustheChrist.org

www.TheGospelofJesustheChrist.org

About the Author.

Charlie Stuart was raised in the church by faithful, loving parents whose lives of service to “the others” inspired Charlie and his five siblings to purpose their lives to serve others, particularly the “least of these.”



Charlie has been active in the local church all his life serving as: Deacon, adult Bible study leader (20+ years), member of a pastor search committee and all the other committees in the local church.

Charlie graduated from the University of Florida in 1973 with an undergraduate degree in Marketing, with a focus on Economics. He worked in the family's office products company for 16 years and spent the following 20 years as a professional speaker, author, and consultant.

He also made time to volunteer for 25+ years with the YMCA as a local board member and on national task forces for the YMCA of the USA.

Charlie and his wife Barbara have three grown children and six grandchildren. They live in Orlando (College Park), Florida.

Charlie can be reached at:

(407) 230-2125 mobile or text

Charlie@TheGospelofJesustheChrist.org

www.TheGospelofJesustheChrist.org

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Gospel of Jesus, the Christ.



Who is this Jesus of Nazareth?

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But who do you say that I AM?

On the answer to this question hinges all we think we know about Jesus.

Most Christians say they believe that the living-on-Earth Jesus was fully human, was fully the Son of God, died a human death, was resurrected in bodily form, and is fully part of the Trinity.

If these beliefs are true, then the Earthly Jesus spoke and acted with the same authority as God the Father. His words while on Earth had the same authority as they did after His resurrection.

To deny that Jesus commanded us to live as His followers, doing what He said and doing what He did, is to deny that Jesus was the Son of God. And to deny that is to completely reverse the core belief that makes us Christian, doesn't it?

I believe that Jesus is exactly who He said He was in all aspects. Particularly, I believe what the human, pre-crucified Jesus said and did are part of the Gospel every bit as much as the death and resurrection we rely on to assure our eternal salvation.

Jesus was, and is, the Son of God.

With minds open to the Gospel of Jesus, we can explore the following justifications for believing and following it as a co-equal part of the complete Gospel of Jesus, the Christ.

Even though it is clear Jesus was and remains the Son of God and an equal part of the Trinity, a large portion of the Protestant church in America has been led to believe that Jesus was only the Son of God after He died and was resurrected.

These churches have been led to believe that the living, pre-crucified Jesus wasn't the Son of God and therefore His words aren't the Words of God. This is the crux of the problem: saying Jesus is the Son of

Who is this Jesus of Nazareth?

God for salvation but not accepting the life and teachings of Jesus as the Word of God.

Then when the church proclaimed that the Son of God died as atonement for the sins of all who believe, they relegated the life and teachings of Jesus to His human nature, suggesting that this part of Jesus did not belong to His divinity alongside the Father and Holy Spirit. It's like Jesus had to die to secure His status as the Son of God.

I know this sounds confusing, and it is.
But it doesn't have to be.

The same Jesus, born as the Son of God, spent almost three years teaching and healing, while proclaiming that He had come to usher in the Kingdom of God on Earth.

Jesus's commandments are the latest Word of God. When there appears to be conflict with Hebrew scripture, the Gospel of Jesus takes precedence and priority.

Jesus was human.

Most biblical historians believe a man was born in Judea just before the millennia changed from BCE to CE. He was born of a Jewish mother, Miriam, or as she has come to be known, Mary. Along with Joseph, her husband and the boy's stepfather, Jesus lived his early years until about the age of 30 in Nazareth, a town about 15 miles southwest of the Sea of Galilee.

His name was Jesus. And He was fully human.

Finding Jesus

Jesus was, and is, divine.

He was born of a woman in a mysterious, even hard to believe, way. For those of us who believe God was his Father, how this happened is inexplicable. Yet it happened.

His name was Jesus. And He was fully God.

Jesus was, and is, the Word of God.

Jesus, the Son of God, is the Word of God, spoken and recorded in the four Gospels. God is the Word, and the Word is Jesus.

Jesus was, and is, known by many other names.

Jesus of the Gospels was referred to by many names, both by Himself and by others. His human name was Jesus of Nazareth, son of Mary, adopted son of Joseph. His divine name was and is Jesus, the Son of Man, the Messiah (Anointed One or Christ), the Son of God.

When He spoke as the living-on-Earth Jesus, walking among the people, His followers, and His disciples, He spoke with the complete authority of the Messiah, the Son of Man, and the Son of God. Of this there should be no doubt for a believer and follower of the complete Gospel of Jesus, the Christ.

Jesus.

Eight days after He was born, at His circumcision ceremony, He was named Jesus...in Hebrew יֵשׁוּעַ, Yeshua (pronounced Yeh'/shoo/ah). The Gospels were written in Koine Greek, so Yeshua became Ἰησοῦς or Iésous (pronounced ē'/soos), and later in Latin, it became IESVS (pronounced ē'/yā'/soos).

Who is this Jesus of Nazareth?

Yeshua was the only name Jesus was known by during His lifetime. Its Old Testament meaning was “to rescue” or “to deliver” and was often used for “Joshua.” Throughout the centuries this name evolved.

The name Jesus was used throughout the Gospels of Mark, Matthew, Luke, and John, and is the name most often used to refer to Him. It was almost always used by the Gospels’ authors and narrators when referring to Him, for example: “Jesus said” or “Jesus did something.” It was not used to address Jesus directly.

Jesus referred to Himself in the Gospels as the Messiah, the Son of Man, and the Son of God.

The Messiah.

Messiah, as we know it, originated in Hebrew written as מָשִׁיחַ (Mashiach pronounced ma/she’/ ah-kh) meaning “anointed.” In Greek it’s written ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ (Khristos, pronounced krē’/stōs). In Latin it is written MESSIAS (Messiās, pronounced mess/ē’/as) and is synonymous with CHRISTUS (Chrīstus, pronounced krēs’/toos).

An important question is how the “on the ground” definition of Messiah changed from the Old Testament understanding to become a title for Jesus.

In the Old Testament the definition of Messiah was a person anointed to redeem the people. This meant a political or military leader who would defeat the prevailing conquering kingdom or empire (think Assyrian, Babylonian, Persian, Greek, and many others), creating an everlasting peace.

Jesus’s “revolt” was to usher in the light of the Kingdom of God on Earth to replace the systems that kept people in darkness. Jesus gave a new meaning to the word “Messiah.”

Finding Jesus

As a result, the ruling Jewish leaders and temple hierarchy conspired with the Romans to kill Him. PAX ROMANA was assured.

As shown on page 8, "Messiah" is used by the Gospel writers 41 times. Nine of those times Jesus declares or confirms that He is the Messiah.

It is clear to us, having the benefit of 2,000 years of hindsight, that the "Messiah" Jesus was talking about was not the warrior king come to defeat empires of kings and armies.

The "Messiah" of which He spoke lived and died to change how people thought of themselves, and their God.

The Christ.

Christ is another way to say Messiah. Since Greek was the common written language for early church writings, "Messiah" was passed down to us in English as "Christ."

Simply put, it was Mashiach (Hebrew) to Khristos (Greek) to Chrīstus (Latin) to Christus (German) to Christ (English).

The title of "Christ" was first used by Paul to identify the risen and resurrected Jesus but later gained common usage as part of His name (Jesus Christ, or just Christ), not just a title.

The Son of Man.

The Son of Man is the second title Jesus claimed for Himself. The phrase "Son of Man" is used in the Old Testament (107 times), particularly in Ezekiel (93 times) and Daniel chapter 7 (4 times). The Old Testament use of the "Son of Man" or "human being" can be interpreted in three ways.

Who is this Jesus of Nazareth?

One is to contrast mankind with God. Another is applied to the prophet Ezekiel, setting him apart as chosen by God to deliver a message to the people. The third is as messianic prophecy delivered by the prophet Daniel describing the “Son of Man” as a special and unique representative of the “Ancient of Days” (or “Ancient One”).

The introduction of the “son of man” (or “human being”) in Daniel appears below.

7 ¹³ As I watched in the night visions, I saw one like a son of man coming with the clouds of heaven. And he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. ¹⁴ To him was given dominion and glory and kingship, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that shall not pass away, and his kingship is one that shall never be destroyed.

Daniel 7:13-14

Also on page 8, you can see that Jesus declared or affirmed that He is the Son of Man 82 times in the Gospels...more than Messiah and Son of God combined. This is a clear indication that the “Son of Man” was favored by Jesus and/or the writers of the Gospels.

As with the word “Messiah,” Jesus changed the Old Testament meaning of the “Son of Man,” making it concrete that He had come to fulfill the prophecy of Daniel. In this way Jesus appropriated all these names and titles into Himself.

Finding Jesus

The Son of God.

Son of God is the third title Jesus claimed for Himself. He used or affirmed it 15 times in the Gospels, and when He proclaimed He is the Son of God, His divinity was secured.

This doesn't mean He is a son like we understand it as parents. He is God, of God, and knowing Him is knowing God. Jesus often talked of His Father and how He reflected, even embodied, who His Father is. We find in John 14 the following:

14 ⁸ Philip said to him, "Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied."

⁹ Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and you still do not know me? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? ¹⁰ Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own, but the Father who dwells in me does his works. ¹¹ Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, but if you do not, then believe because of the works themselves. ¹² Very truly, I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than these, because I am going to the Father."

The Gospel of John 14:8-12

 By declaring His status as the Son of God, Jesus confirmed that He had the divine right and authority to speak for God. In some instances, He clarified how the Mosaic Law of the Old Testament should be applied in the Kingdom of God on Earth.

Who is this Jesus of Nazareth?

Where do you stand?

Do you believe the pre-crucified Jesus was the Son of God as He claimed?

If you do, how is it that more than half of the Protestants in America don't follow His teachings?

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Embracing the Complete
Gospel of Jesus, the Christ.



One Gospel in Two Parts.

Finding Jesus

One Gospel in Two Parts.

In non-religious terms the word “gospel” is a universal concept, statement, or belief that a group holds as most important to their ethos.

- * All aspects and efforts of the organization are directly linked to its “gospel.”
- * The group’s morals, ethos, and culture are aligned and guided by its “gospel.”
- * Acceptance of the “gospel” is required of any who call themselves members of the group.

Three definitions of “Gospel” are used in the church. First, all churches and their denominations agree that the term “the Gospels” refers to the collection of the four books (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John) containing the life story and teachings of Jesus.

Second, the phrases “the Gospel,” “the Gospel of Jesus Christ,” and “the Gospel of Christ,” refer primarily to the salvation-only Gospel of Christ. It encompasses the story of the crucifixion of Jesus, the resurrection of Christ, and, by faith, the assurance that the believer is granted eternal salvation in the presence of God. This definition is also referred to as “being born again” or “being saved.” It is shared by up to one-half of the Protestants in America.

Third, for almost half of these Protestants the definition of Gospel is some combination of the Gospel of Jesus and the Gospel of the Christ.

A New Name. A New Beginning.

One thing I've learned in a career of marketing is that when a word or phrase takes on a meaning that doesn't reflect the full or desired context, changing the perceived *meaning* is difficult and likely impossible.

One Gospel in Two Parts.

For example, over the last few decades, the word “evangelical” has come to mean the extreme conservative, political right-wing radicals striving for their definition of “moral christianity.”

To return its meaning to its original context is unlikely. So, I propose a new name for the complete Gospel.

The Gospel of Jesus, **the** Christ.

I suggest using the words “Gospel of Jesus, the Christ,” to replace ‘the Gospel,’ ‘the Gospel of Jesus Christ,’ and ‘the Gospel of Christ.’

While my suggestion may seem like the others — the difference is subtle, but it is significant. It stresses the co-equal parts that make up the complete Gospel of Jesus, the Christ.

Adding “, **the**” after Jesus and before Christ allows the dual elements of the Gospel of Jesus and the Gospel of the Christ to receive emphasis indicating they are different, and yet the same.

“, **the**” also reminds us of the responsibility we must live like Jesus showed us while resting in the assurance of eternal salvation.

Here’s how it reads, including the implied understanding. The Gospel of Jesus, the Christ, is the combination of the Gospel of Jesus and the Gospel of the Christ.

One gospel. Two parts. It’s not either/or. It’s both/and.

The Gospel of Jesus is . . .

...the Son of God who came to show humankind what the “Kingdom of God on Earth” could be, and our role in helping usher it into reality.

Finding Jesus



The Gospel of the Christ is...

...the Anointed One who died, then rose from the dead, securing, through faith, eternal salvation for His followers.

Typically, a person seeking answers approaches the church with questions about living or dying, or both. The Gospel of Jesus addresses the living questions, and the Gospel of the Christ addresses the dying questions.

One wonders how one-half of the Protestants in America think they are Christian, yet believe and obey only one part (Gospel of the Christ) and ignore the other part (Gospel of Jesus).



Since there is no way to see into the heart and mind of a believer, the only way to determine that believers have accepted the Gospel of the Christ is by observing how they live out the Gospel of Jesus.

It takes belief and revelation to accept the complete Gospel of Jesus,

“Faith” has two meanings in the New Testament.

Another example of how one word can hold several meanings is the word “faith.” The word “faith” has at least two meanings.

Often, but not always, Paul and other New Testament writers used “faith” in the context of salvation. For instance, in the Gospel of the Christ, Ephesians 2:8, “faith” is used in the context of salvation, and it is clearly speaking about the Gospel of the Christ —

“For by grace you have been saved (salvation) through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God.”

The full context is found in Ephesians 2:8-10.

One Gospel in Two Parts.

In Mark, Matthew, Luke, and John, the word “faith” is not used by Jesus in the same way it is used in the other New Testament books. Jesus often uses “faith” to mean “believe” as in Mark 5:34,

“He said to her, ‘Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace and be healed of your disease.’”

The full context is found in Mark 5:24-34.

Context Matters.

Words can take on different meanings when preachers, teachers, and readers truncate words or phrases, placing a period before the full context is completed. In the examples below the ~~line-throughs~~ indicate the words that are often left out.

2²⁴ You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith.

~~alone.~~

James 2:24

and

2⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God — ⁹ not the result of works. ~~so that no one may boast.~~ ¹⁰ ~~For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life.~~

Ephesians 2:8-10

With enough repetition of the truncated verses, it becomes “gospel,” and is nearly impossible to replace with a single correction.

Note that Paul didn’t stop after “*it is the gift of God – not the result of works,*” he went on in verse 10, to finish his complete definition of faith.

Finding Jesus

2 ^{9b}~~so that no one may boast.~~ ¹⁰For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life.

Ephesians 2:9b-10

Here, in verses 9 & 10, Paul brings together the Gospel of Jesus and the Gospel of the Christ.

Paul's definition for "faith" included "faith through the Gospel of the Christ that leads to living out the Gospel of Jesus." It is important to note that Paul's "works" that did not secure salvation were the strict, legalistic, Mosaic Laws such as circumcision, and achieving righteousness by obeying them.

And that brings us to James.

A couple of thousand years ago a man named James wrote a letter. This James, generally accepted as the younger half-brother of Jesus, another son of Mary, knew the man Jesus longer and better than any of His disciples. As His younger brother, James watched Jesus grow up. He participated in the "growing up" as younger brothers do – playing games, getting in fights, teasing, and testing each other.

By the time Jesus embarked on His ministry at age 30, James had perhaps 20 years of up-close, personal, day-to-day observation of what Jesus did, who He was, and how He acted. Even with this intimate relationship, James did not believe that his older brother was the Son of God, at least not until Jesus rose and appeared to the disciples, and to him.

We can see in James's letter, written and circulated to Jewish followers of "the Way" in Jerusalem and scattered abroad, that "faith vs. works" was an important and debated issue.

One Gospel in Two Parts.

James's main theme in his letter is "living faith." In James 2:17, he wrote, *"So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead."* And in verse 24 he said, *"You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone."* The full context is found in James 2:14-26.

Why did James make this point?

I believe it is because he was related to Jesus, knew Him well, and knew His heart. James knew that Jesus "did what he said" because he (James) saw Him do it.

James knew that Jesus's life and words were consistent. And in his letter, James – perhaps knowing he only had this one chance to share his understanding of his brother and his God – made sure that the theme was simple, powerful, and without ambiguity.

In this passage James gave a clear definition that faith in the Gospel of the Christ is what assures eternal salvation. He also says that faith must move beyond an intellectual position, or "thoughts and prayers" – it must involve "works" that reflect the teaching of, and examples from, the life of Jesus to be true and pure.

James's definition for "faith" included "faith through the Gospel of the Christ" and the works found in the Gospel of Jesus defined as providing for the needs of a "brother or sister," whether they are a fellow believer or not.

Paul and James were saying the same thing.

Paul preached the complete Gospel of Jesus, the Christ. Any Gospel definition that does not include the Gospel of Jesus is not from Paul.

James preached the complete Gospel of Jesus, the Christ. Any Gospel definition that does not include the Gospel of the Christ is not from James.

If the question is, "Is salvation attained by faith or works?" my answer is "Yes!"

Finding Jesus

Following the Gospel of Jesus without following the Gospel of the Christ does not secure a person's salvation.

Rejecting the Gospel of Jesus calls into question a person's genuine faith in the Gospel of the Christ.

This book is not about changing the salvation Gospel of the Christ. It is about embracing the living Gospel of Jesus, along with the Gospel of the Christ, so that, together, we become fully functioning followers of Jesus, ushering in the Kingdom of God on Earth for ourselves and all those we touch with our lives. We become followers of the complete Gospel of Jesus, the Christ.

Where do you stand?

Do you agree there are two parts to the complete Gospel of Jesus, the Christ?

If you do, what can be done to elevate the Gospel of Jesus to its co-equal status with the Gospel of the Christ?

It seems clear that Jesus and Christ are different, yet they are joined through the mystery and love of God into the Complete Gospel of Jesus, the Christ.

CHARLES STUART