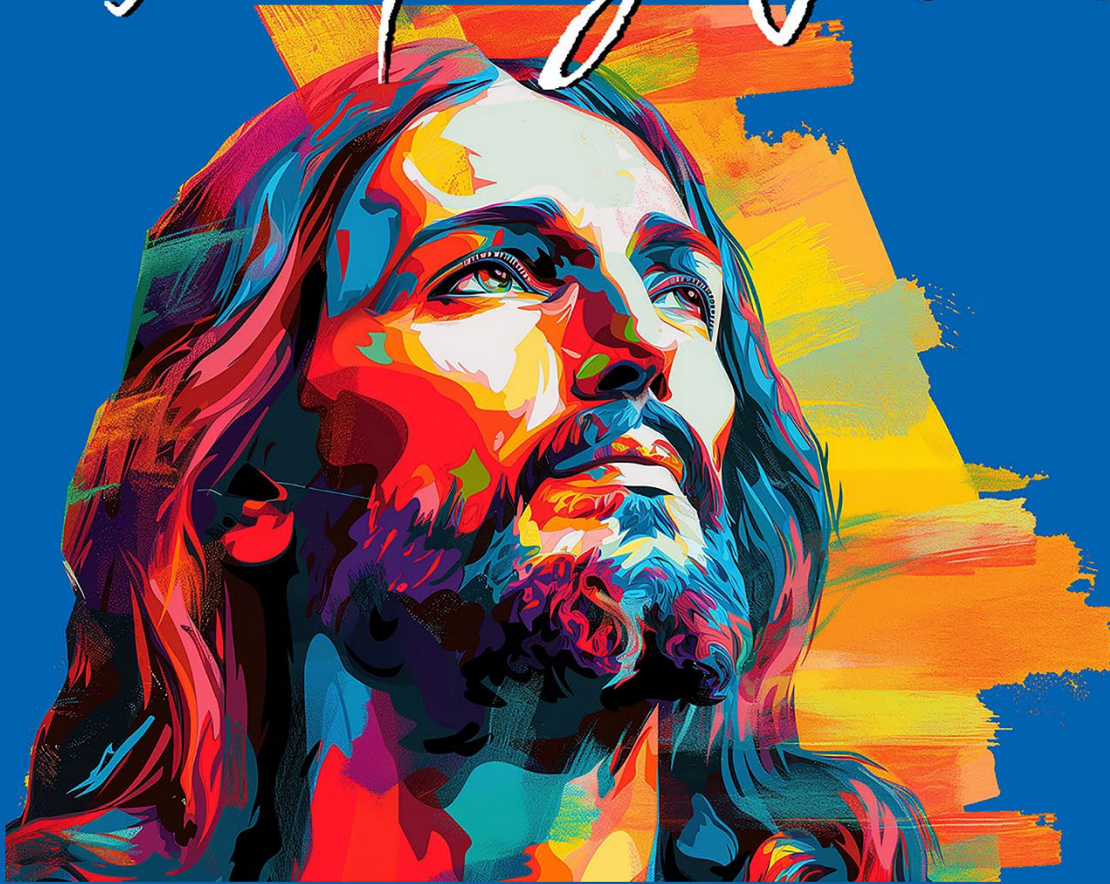


Finding Jesus



Embracing the Complete
Gospel of Jesus, the Christ.

CHARLES S. STUART

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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.

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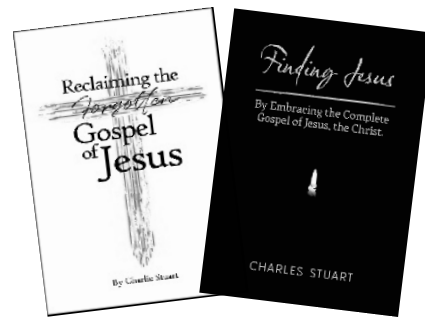
Introduction.

The Church Lost Jesus. It's Not Too Late to Find Him.

This study guide addresses the two statements above and is written primarily to pastors of Protestant churches in America — particularly those who identify with the Evangelical movement.

Secondarily, it is written to denominational leaders as well as others who offer thought-leadership on the church as it evolves toward “ushering in the Kingdom of God on Earth.”

As an author of two books, I have researched extensively why one-half of Protestant churches in America mostly ignore, or in some cases, reject, what Jesus said, taught, and did before His death — they have “lost Jesus.”



This is serious. We must recognize that what Jesus taught, commanded, said, and did before His death is as much a part of the Gospel as is salvation based on His resurrection.

The Conundrum of the Salvation Gospel of the Christ and Embracing the Gospel of Jesus.

I believe the “whole” Gospel has two parts — the Gospel of the Christ (Salvation) and the Gospel of Jesus. This why I call it The Complete Gospel of Jesus, the Christ.

The Gospel of Jesus is what Jesus said and did during His three years of teaching. It is the Way of Jesus. It lays out what Jesus expects of His followers. It is the Word of God.

Are people who claim that they are “saved” but do not follow the teachings and preachings of Jesus really “saved?” Can a person lose their salvation?

It has long been thought that those “born again” would be transformed to engage in serving others as Jesus commanded His

Introduction.

followers to do. But there is little evidence among American Protestant churches that this is the case.

It's been a mantra that "salvation is through faith (belief) and not by works (including serving others as Jesus commanded). And there is the conundrum.

"Woe to you, false preachers, and hypocrites" is how Jesus called out those who thought they were doing what God said but ignored what the Gospel of Jesus commands — love others, seek peace, establish justice, show mercy, have compassion for those in need, abused, or neglected.

Perhaps those who made a commitment to Jesus for their salvation but don't follow the Gospel of Jesus with their lives have not "lost" their salvation; perhaps they never had it.

Changing how we understand "what the Gospel is" is hard, but it is essential, and it is what Jesus said. For many this comes as a rough wakeup call. But it's not too late.

Why should we embrace the Gospel of Jesus?

Beyond the point that Jesus commanded it — I believe it can help heal the world. We live in a world where uncertainty and fear are normal, and we are frustrated by our inability to make it better.

Jesus, who came to usher in the Kingdom of God on Earth, left the fulfillment of His mission up to His followers and His church when He said...

18 ¹⁸"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

¹⁹Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son ²⁰and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

The Gospel of Matthew 28:18-20

Finding Jesus | Embracing the Complete Gospel of Jesus, the Christ.

It is up to us, His followers, to usher in the Kingdom of God on Earth, obeying everything He taught. It is the only way to heal the world.

This book offers practical ways forward toward a “whole” gospel – one that gives equal import to establishing the Kingdom of God on Earth and salvation.

In the name of the complete Gospel of Jesus, the Christ...

Charles Stuart

Charles S. Stuart

What makes you a “Christian?”

Here is my litmus test for someone calling themselves “Christian.”

Any answer that doesn’t include personal responsibility to live as Jesus taught is not Christian.

This may seem harsh and hard, but it is the Gospel of Jesus, an essential part of the complete Gospel of Jesus, the Christ.

CHARLES STUART

Finding Jesus

Embracing the Complete
Gospel of Jesus, the Christ.



**The Church Lost Jesus.
It's Not Too Late to Find Him.**

How the Church Lost Jesus.

The church has had a long history of elevating the Gospel of the Christ as the primary, even only, element of the Gospel of Jesus, the Christ.

How did this happen? There are several explanations.

For years I have looked for an answer to “when did Jesus become Christ?” in the church. At first, I thought this was just in American Evangelical Protestant churches, or after the Reformation.

Then I realized it seemed like “Jesus” was used in the Gospels and “Christ” was used in Paul’s letters. That’s when I conducted a thorough analysis of phrases that include one or both key words — Jesus and Christ — plus other titles used to refer to Jesus.

Paul introduced “Christ” as the title for the resurrected Jesus.

Paul was among the first generation of believers. After his conversion, a few years after the death and resurrection of Jesus, and early in his ministry, Saul began to use his Roman name Paulus, or Paul as we know it.

He spent a few years thinking about what his vision on the way to Damascus meant for himself and the world and spending time building trust with the Apostles. Paul then embarked on missionary trips which, in time, produced letters written in koine Greek (ca. 49-64CE).

These letters added to the oral tradition of stories passed along generation to generation about Jesus and slowly were viewed by many as the first written Christian scripture.

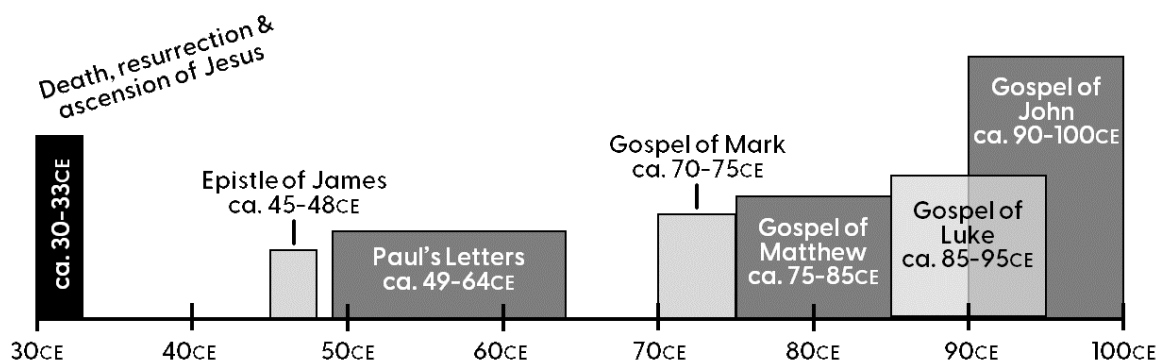
It’s my belief that Paul conflated into “Christ,” a single word for meaning the resurrected Jesus, the Messiah, the Son of God, and the Son of Man. That explains why the usage of “Christ” increased so dramatically in Paul’s letters, while the Gospels focused on the pre-crucified “Jesus.”

The Church Lost Jesus. It's Not Too Late to Find Him.

With this, Paul's understanding of who Jesus was became the first and prevailing understanding of who Jesus was by the many new believers around the world, particularly the Gentiles who had limited knowledge of Jesus since they were removed from where Jesus lived, died, and was resurrected.

So, "Jesus" became "Christ" before the Gospels were written, thanks to Paul and his letters. Here's how.

Timeline of Availability of Gospels & Paul's Letters



This chart shows the earliest church (ca. 30–100CE) resources that are included in the New Testament. The dates are estimates by biblical historians of when they were written. It is important to remember that they were not read broadly by church leaders for many years because there was no effective method to copy and distribute them. At best they may have been passed from one church to another.

Biblical scholars are confident that Paul's circular letters were the earliest New Testament writings, preceding the Gospels. As such, they were the earliest versions of written Christian scriptures most churches had available upon which to build their spiritual foundations.

Because of the arrangement of the books in the New Testament, with the four Gospels first and the Book of Revelation last, it appeared to me and many others that this was the order in which they were written.

In reality — and this is a significant point related to use of names and titles of Jesus in Paul's letters — it was Paul's letters that were the first written "scriptures" that eventually made it into the New Testament.

And, with the number of Gentile churches expanding, they quickly became the largest segment of Christians before the Gospel of Mark was written. It appears that very quickly the only written Gospel they knew was the one Paul had taught and written.

Comparing how the Gospels and Paul's letters referred to Jesus, the Christ.

In researching the use of the words "Jesus" and "Christ," I looked at the words most used to refer to the living Jesus and the resurrected Christ as found in the Gospels and Paul's letters. The following page shows the results drawn from the New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition (NRSVUE) bible.

<i>Titles</i>	<i>Gospels</i>	<i>Paul's Letters</i>
Jesus*	620	99
Son of Man.....	82	0
Good News.....	35	11
Messiah	41	0
Son of God	15	9
Christ*	2.....	437
Gospel*	1.....	117
Jesus Christ	3.....	58

* These words are used alone and not with other names.

<i>Titles</i>	<i>Paul's Letters</i>
Christ Jesus	129
Lord Jesus Christ	96
Christ Jesus our Lord	15
Gospel of Christ	11
God in Christ Jesus.....	10
Gospel of God.....	10
Jesus Christ our Lord	9
Good News of Christ.....	6
God through Jesus Christ.....	2
Christ Jesus our Savior.....	1
Gospel of Jesus Christ.....	1
Jesus Christ our Savior.....	1

The Church Lost Jesus. It's Not Too Late to Find Him.

Paul uses "Christ" 776 times. The Gospels use it just 5 times.

Here we see that "Christ," in all its versions, was used just 5 times in the Gospels as compared with 776 times in Paul's letters. That is 155 times more in the letters than in the Gospels.

The Gospels use "Messiah, Son of God, Son of Man & Jesus" 775 times. Paul uses them 108 times.

In the Gospels, Messiah, Son of Man, Son of God, and Jesus (alone), taken together, were used 8 times more than in Paul's letters. These words or phrases were only used in Paul's letters 108 times as compared to 775 times in the Gospels.

In addition, the data shows that Paul's letters emphasized "Christ" over "Jesus" by a factor of 4.4 to 1 (Christ 437 times/Jesus 99 times).

The Gospels are mostly about the Life of Jesus.

A close examination of the Gospels of Mark, Matthew, Luke, and John reveals they are mostly about the life of Jesus with little to say about the salvation aspect of His death and resurrection.

Over 90 percent of the events recorded in the Gospels are narrative of what Jesus said, did, or taught during His life. This is the Gospel of Jesus. Less than 10 percent of the events are about Jesus's resurrection, appearances, and ascension. This is the beginning of the Gospel of the Christ.

It is clear the Gospels contain far more events and verses about Jesus before His death than after His resurrection.

It's not hard to see that the story of Jesus's life was destined by timing and uncontrollable events to be eclipsed by the power and imagery of the resurrected Christ.

 The church "losing" Jesus — the elevation of the Gospel of the Christ over the Gospel of Jesus — did not begin recently. No one stood up and said, "What Jesus said and did is to be ignored." What was said was, "Salvation is the only way to heaven and is the only meaning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ."

Early Church Fathers.

By the middle of the 2nd century five things had become evident. First, all those who were witnesses of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus were gone from the scene.

Second, while the first generation of witnesses and followers were convinced of Jesus's return to set all things right and carry them home, it now was becoming evident that preparations should be made for His return at an unknown date in the future.

Third, there was a rapid expansion of churches based on Paul's missionary journeys and the diaspora of Jewish Christians across the empire, including into the heart of the empire, Rome itself.

Fourth, there was a realization for the need to replace the oral tradition of the stories about Jesus's life and death with a written scripture collection built around Paul's letters and, perhaps, early versions of Mark's Gospel and others.

And fifth, leaders began to emerge, slowly at first, who were giving thought to what "the Way" movement should be and how it should be developed into a religion. One that could compete in the crowded litany of gods in the Gentile culture, which was where the early churches were most rapidly growing and spreading.

These thought leaders and influencers would become known as "Early Church Fathers" by the Roman Catholic Church in the fourth through ninth centuries.

These writers, thinkers, and martyrs communicated by written essays and letters sharing what they thought and heard with others eager to know the latest versions of the developing scripture.

As would happen in any wide-ranging group trying to develop a cohesive statement of history, purpose, and mission, they grappled with distinctive and important issues like the nature of Jesus, the relationship

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of Jesus the Christ with God and the Holy Spirit, and a rising tide of new and unusual ideas.

These ideas would become known by names like the “trinity” that competed for primacy. But because churches were independent of each other, and there was not a person or place to make decisions about disputes, this bubbling tension would continue until the culture crossed paths with the church in 313CE in, of all places, the Roman Empire.

In 313CE, Roman Emperors Constantine and Licinius granted liberty to all religions in the Empire, with special mention of Christianity, by issuing the Edict of Milan. This edict endeavored to quiet unrest and persecutions across the Empire and reflects Constantine's recent conversion to Christianity.

But it did not quiet the theological debates within Christian communities. It took another 12 years of simmering upheaval before Constantine summoned church leaders to the Council of Nicaea (325CE). The outcome of this council gave the church a unity of theological thought for a brief time.

An English translation of the original Nicene Creed of 325CE is shown below and on the next page.

Nicene Creed (325CE)

We believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God begotten from the Father, only-begotten, that is, from the substance of the Father, God from God, light from light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one substance with the Father, through Whom all things came into being, things in heaven and things on earth,

Who for us men, and for our salvation, came down, and was incarnate and was made man;

He suffered, and rose again on the third day, and ascended into heaven;

From thence He shall come to judge the living and dead.

And in the Holy Spirit.

But as for those who say, There was when He was not, and, Before being born He was not, and that He came into existence out of nothing, or who assert that the Son of God is of a different hypostasis or substance, or created, or is subject to alteration or change — these the Catholic and apostolic Church anathematizes.

Now, re-read it looking for any mention of the life and teachings of Jesus — feed the hungry, care for the orphan and widowed, give justice to the marginalized.

It is startling to note the absence of Jesus's teachings in favor of the divinity of the resurrected Christ.

It would seem that very early in the development of the church the shift had already been made from "Jesus" to "Christ" by the church leaders.

In 381CE the Nicene Creed was confirmed and strengthened by the First Council of Constantinople summoned by Emperor Theodosius I.

With many other changes over the years, it continues today in the following form.

The Episcopal Church Nicene Creed (1979)

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from

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Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father.

Through Him all things were made.

For us and for our salvation He came down from heaven: by the power of the Holy Spirit, He became incarnate from the Virgin Mary and was made man.

For our sake He was crucified under Pontius Pilate; He suffered death and was buried.

On the third day He rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and His kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son.

With the Father and the Son, He is worshiped and glorified.

He has spoken through the Prophets.

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.

We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.

We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come.

Amen.

Notice that the creed is still silent on the life and teachings of Jesus, making it difficult to claim this as part of the essence statement of Christianity because it ignores the Gospel of Jesus.

As with all institutions, the church and its belief systems evolved over time. Like early church leaders before them, Protestants in America in the 20th century also affected the religious and moral fabric of the culture.

Benefiting from the post-World War II economic boom where “bigger was better,” and the promise of the “American Dream,” the leaders of Protestant religious institutions continued to move towards a gospel that was salvation-only.

When this happened, the need to teach what Jesus said and did before His death, the Gospel of Jesus, largely diminished, and even disappeared in the fastest growing “born-again” Evangelical churches beginning in the 1950s.

The portion of churches self-identified as “Evangelical,” led by The Southern Baptist Convention, the largest Protestant denomination in America, moved the preaching, teaching, bible studies, and theology toward the Gospel of the Christ as the entire Gospel.

What Jesus said and did was repurposed as prophetic of the Gospel of the Christ — and with that, Christianity in Protestant America became a simple, easy, and free-to-join path to eternal salvation, without any obligation to live according to the Gospel of Jesus.

It was believed that salvation would ignite a passion to live like Jesus. But without teaching, encouragement, and emphasis, this did not happen.

Evangelical churches were after growth in baptisms, and it worked. The “born-again” themes of the salvation-only Gospel drove double digit membership growth from 1945-2000.

But what was gained by “more souls saved” came at a cost of neglecting the teaching and preaching of the life and words of the Gospel of Jesus. Consequently, these churches reduced the living-on-Earth Jesus to nice, moral stories, instead of the living Word of the Son of God.

So, while these Evangelical churches grew, their congregants turned away from influencing the world as the Gospel of Jesus teaches.

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Another explanation for why the church has lost Jesus is people don't read the Bible or think for themselves. Today anyone can read the Gospel of Jesus, in printed or digital form, and at no or little cost.

But it isn't read, really read. Instead, people relegated their understanding of what scripture means to the interpretation provided by their pastors and the church.

This is ironic since the 16th century Reformation's primary thesis was for open and free access to scripture. In 1517, Martin Luther published his "Ninety-Five Theses."

He concluded that direct reading of the Bible allowed individual believers to make up their own minds without interpretation by the church.

Luther wasn't challenging the Bible or theological understandings of it. He was directly challenging the church's applications that produced interpretations far, in his opinion, from what the Bible, and Jesus, actually said.

And yet, this still happens today. Pastors will say, "Let's read this passage of scripture for today's message." Then the pastor will say, "Now, here's what it means." And then the meaning will be presented most often through the Gospel of the Christ lens.

Understandably, Evangelical Protestant pastors today are recipients of the teachings they received from seminaries and are influenced by the pastors under whom they "came of age," who usually emphasized salvation more than Jesus's life and teachings.

Most of today's pastors first served congregations that already believed the church's highest purpose was to "save souls," not to "usher in the Kingdom of God on Earth."

The church “lost” Jesus by elevating the salvation-only Gospel and ignoring the Gospel of Jesus.

The shift was slow, subtle, and insidious.

No one stood up and said, “What Jesus said and did is to be ignored.”

Rather, what was said was, “Salvation is only possible through the Gospel of Christ.”

CHARLES STUART

Where do you stand?

Do you believe the church lost Jesus?

If not, how do you explain the lack of following what Jesus said, did, and taught?

If you do agree, what thoughts or ideas do you have to find Him?

Finding Jesus

Embracing the Complete
Gospel of Jesus, the Christ.



Who is this Jesus of Nazareth?

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.

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, , Yeshua (Yeh'/shoo/ah). The Gospels were written in Koine Greek, so Yeshua became Ἰησοῦς, or Iésous (ē'/soos), and later in Latin, it became IESVS (pronounced ē'/yā'/soos).

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.

Who is this Jesus of Nazareth?

The Messiah.

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

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.

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

Who is this Jesus of Nazareth?

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.

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.

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?

Finding Jesus

Embracing the Complete
Gospel of Jesus, the Christ.



The Gospel of
Jesus Christ.
, the

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.

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.”

The Gospel of Jesus^{, the} Christ.

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.

The Gospel of
Jesus[^] Christ.
^{, the}

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.

The Gospel of the Christ is the Anointed One who died, then rose from the dead, securing, through faith, eternal salvation for His followers.

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

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.

2:⁸ "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.

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,

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.

The Gospel of Jesus^{, the} Christ.

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.

2:²⁴ You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith. ~~alone.~~ James 2:24

and

2:⁸ 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.

2:^{9b} ~~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 2:9b-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.

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.

The Gospel of Jesus^{, the} Christ.

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!”

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.

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

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?

Finding Jesus

Embracing the Complete
Gospel of Jesus, the Christ.



Foundational Truths from
the Gospel of Jesus.

Ten Foundational Truths from the Gospel of Jesus.

- I. Jesus is the Son of God.
- II. Jesus Came to Establish the Kingdom of God on Earth.
- III. Jesus Established 'Love God and Love Others' as a New Priority for God's Law.
- IV. Faith, Mountains & Mustard Seeds.
- V. Embrace 'Sermon on the Mount' Character Traits.
- VI. Every. One. Matters.
- VII. Woe to you...
- VIII. Seek and Serve the 'Least of These.'
- IX. Jesus Rejects those who Claim to be His Followers but Don't Follow the Gospel of Jesus.
- X. With His last words, Jesus commands His Followers to teach others the Gospel of Jesus.

Foundational Truths from the Gospel of Jesus.

The Foundational Truths of the Gospel of Jesus.

As the Son of God, Jesus had the power and authority to do as He saw fit. He could have removed all who stood against Him — but He didn't. He could have established the Kingdom of God on Earth by “executive order” — but He didn't. He could have cured all diseases, ceased all war, imposed justice for all, and re-planted the Garden of Eden — but He didn't.

Rather, Jesus taught the “Way of Jesus” to those He met and knew. He taught what His Followers needed to know and left a living manual for establishing the Kingdom of God on Earth with His Followers, with instructions to teach everyone, everywhere what He said and did.

He put the keys to unlocking the Kingdom of God on Earth into the hands of His Followers. He gave examples of what He meant by the “Kingdom of God on Earth” through the healings, miracles, prophecies, and parables.

Many of the Foundational Truths of the Gospel of Jesus are overarching in their application. They apply to all situations and should be embraced by His Followers as essential to their role in ushering in the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth.

By applying a Gospel-of-Jesus lens to these scriptures, we seek to know and follow what Jesus intended when He first spoke to them.

Christianity without full faith and belief in the Gospel of Jesus is not Christian. As Jesus said, “I never knew you, depart from Me...”

Jesus said it, not me.

The church a long time ago, and still today, chose Paul over Jesus as the author of “The Gospel.” It’s not Paul’s fault; he wrote what he believed.

It’s pastors who ignore the divinity of the living Jesus and give priority to Paul’s teaching over the Gospel of Jesus.

There is only the Complete Gospel of Jesus, the Christ. Anything less is not Christian.

CHARLES 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

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