

## PROVIDENCE CHURCH

*Glorifying God by knowing, living and proclaiming His truth in the world*

---

### **Evidence that Demands a Verdict**

**Pastor Ty Blackburn**

**John 20:30-31**

**June 26, 2016**

I invite you to turn with me in your Bibles now to the 20<sup>th</sup> chapter of John's Gospel, John 20. We're continuing to work our way through the book of John. We come now to the very end of the 20<sup>th</sup> chapter. Our text is Verses 30 and 31 of John 20.

We come really to the purpose statement of the Gospel. John gives the most clear purpose statement of any of the Gospel-writers in his book, and he gives it in these two verses. The title of the message I borrowed from Josh McDowell's 1972 book. The title of the message this morning is 'Evidence that Demands a Verdict'. I mentioned that book a couple of weeks ago, maybe last week, we were talking about McDowell, how he had moved from doubt to faith when he examined the claims of Christ. And so, it was a young man preparing to go into law school, who started to write a paper on why Christianity was false. And in the process of researching it, became convinced that Christianity is true, that Jesus is truly the Christ, the Son of God, and gave his heart and life to Jesus.

So he wrote that book, Evidence that Demands a Verdict, and so that is the title for the message because that well sums up John's thrust in these two verses. Because in Verses 30 and 31, that we're about to read, the apostle comes to a point in his argument where he calls upon us, the readers, to render a verdict. The verdict he is seeking is two-fold. He wants to convince his readers two things, that Jesus is the Christ, and that Jesus is the Son of God. And in a sense, what we have is much like a closing argument, or a closing statement. Let me read these verses. In fact, to get the context, I want to start with Verse 26, what we looked at last week, Verses 26-29, the appearance of Jesus to Thomas, which I think leads John to sort of launch into His closing statement right off the back side of laying out this event. So let's read Verses 26-31.

***John 20:26-31 ~ After eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus \*came, the doors having been shut, and stood in their midst and said, "Peace be with you." 27 Then He \*said to Thomas, "Reach here with your finger, and see My hands; and reach here your hand and put it into My side; and do not be unbelieving, but believing." 28 Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!" 29 Jesus***

## PROVIDENCE CHURCH

*Glorifying God by knowing, living and proclaiming His truth in the world*

---

***\*said to him, “Because you have seen Me, have you believed? Blessed are they who did not see, and yet believed.”***

***30 Therefore many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; 31 but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name.***

Let's pray together.

*Father, we come to You this morning, confessing our need of grace. We ask that You might grant us the ministry of the Holy Spirit, the fullness of the Spirit in illuminating Your word for us. And we pray that the entrance of Your word might give light, and in Your light, we might see light. We pray this in Jesus' name, Amen.*

I said there is something of a closing statement, or closing argument that John is moving into in Verses 30-31, and I use that term advisedly because we've noted throughout the exposition of John's Gospel, that there is a definite and clear forensic flavor to this Gospel. There is a legal character, he uses legal terms quite often. In fact, he uses the words 'testify', 'testimony', in Greek, 'martyreo', 'martyrea', uses them more than any other book in the New Testament. In fact, those two, the verb and the noun, occur together more than 45 times. In fact, just to show you this, turn back to the beginning of the Gospel, John 1. There is a sense in which you might see the first 18 verses as an opening statement, the prologue to John's Gospel. But at Verse 6:

***John 1:6 ~ There came a man sent from God, whose name was John.***

Now this is not John, the author of the Gospel, or the apostle, this is John the Baptist he is talking about.

***John 1:6-8 ~ There came a man sent from God, whose name was John. 7 He came as a witness, to testify about the Light, so that all might believe through him. 8 He was not the Light, but he came to testify about the Light.***

You see the legal terminology? To testify, to testify, he is a witness. Verse 15, the same chapter:

## PROVIDENCE CHURCH

*Glorifying God by knowing, living and proclaiming His truth in the world*

---

***John 1:15 ~ John \*testified about Him and cried out, saying, “This was He of whom I said, ‘He who comes after me has a higher rank than I, for He existed before me.’”***

Look at 19.

***John 1:19 ~ This is the testimony of John, ...***

And he goes on and begins to describe it. Look at Verse 32.

***John 1:32 ~ John testified saying, “I have seen the Spirit descending as a dove out of heaven, and He remained upon Him.***

Verse 34.

***John 1:34 ~ I myself have seen, and have testified that this is the Son of God.”***

Look over at Chapter 4, Verse 39. This is after the encounter with the woman at the well, Jesus’ conversation with her. She goes and she talks to the people in her village, and look what they say, or look what John tells us in Verse 39.

***John 4:39 ~ From that city many of the Samaritans believed in Him because of the word of the woman who testified, “He told me all the things that I have done.”***

It goes on like this throughout the book. In fact, Jesus, in Chapter 5 says, “The testimony which I have I did not receive from man. The testimony that I have is greater than the testimony of John.” “I testify,” and, “The Father testifies,” over, and over, and over again throughout the book. So that you have this sense in which John, as we see in his closing argument, he is trying to offer evidence to compel the reader to a verdict. Now we know that God has to work by His grace, and John 3 says unless you are born again you cannot see the Kingdom of God. That God has to open the eyes of your hearts, but God uses evidence through His word to bring about that new birth. So John, in the way he structures his Gospel, it is as if he is presenting a legal case.

## PROVIDENCE CHURCH

*Glorifying God by knowing, living and proclaiming His truth in the world*

---

I had the opportunity a couple of weeks ago to serve on jury duty. You know when you get that jury summons, isn't that a happy day? And I thought surely I would be safe from being on the jury because I am a pastor, so I put that clearly on my jury summons form. Then when I was called in for the questioning, if you've been through that process, you get called in, they ask you questions, they are trying to select the jury. They talked to me about my ministry, and biblical counseling. It was actually a very difficult case; it was a human trafficking case. Two young ladies that had been mistreated, and this one man accused, and so I felt like I had pretty good odds, maybe one in ten chance I was going to get chosen, but I got chosen. The one in ten came, and so I served on that jury all week, and we heard the case. It was an eye-opening experience. I mean, I've seen some, you know, I've watched Matlock, or Perry Mason, but it is different in the actual courtroom. I was impressed with our legal system, and I was really happy that they have laws like they have now that got this guy for what he was doing. It was a new law, first time that anyone had ever been tried in Gwinnett County on this new law.

But what happens is, they make opening statements, each side, and then the state presents its case against the accused, the defense has an opportunity to present its case, and then there are closing arguments. All of that is aimed at a verdict which will come from the jury. The judge doesn't render the verdict; the judge just plays the role of basically a referee. He doesn't determine the outcome. It is on the jury. And so after hearing all of the evidence, and you hear different kinds of evidence, you hear testimonial evidence, that is witnesses get up and testify. You receive material evidence, or physical evidence, that is exhibits that they present as evidence, and offer them into evidence, then we would see them on the screen. You know, this document would be put up on the screen so that we could see it. After all the evidence is presented, and then the closing argument comes, and there is where the lawyers are trying to focus your attention on the thing they think that makes their case compelling and certain to render the verdict. And in a very real sense, this is exactly what John does in his Gospel.

I mean, if you look at the way he structures it, I mentioned the term, 45 times the words *'testify'*, *'testimony'*, *'witness'*, but then you also, you hear him, he gives you time after time quotations where people are saying things like the woman at the well. "He told me things that I've never known. We've found the Messiah." Or you have Philip, or first of all, Andrew, goes to Peter and says, "We've found the Christ," and you have that in quotation marks. So you hear Andrew tell his brother, Peter, "We have found the Christ." And then you have Philip go to Nathanael, and say, "We have found the one that Moses was talking about, and the prophets were

## PROVIDENCE CHURCH

*Glorifying God by knowing, living and proclaiming His truth in the world*

---

talking about.” And Nathanael says, “And He is from Nazareth,” and Nathanael says, “Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?” And then Nathanael comes and meets Jesus, and Jesus says, “I saw you when you were under the fig tree, before Philip had spoken to you.” Supernaturally Jesus saw him across the miles, and Nathanael says, “Rabbi, You are the Son of God.”

And so John keeps, it is like he is calling witnesses to the stand, and he does that throughout the book. In fact, we have hostile witnesses brought to the stand. In Chapter 5, Verses 17-18, when Jesus says after He has healed the man at the Pool of Bethesda, “I am working and My Father is working.” They are upset because He healed on the Sabbath, and Jesus says, “My Father is working and I am working,” and the Jews who hear Him, and who are opposed to Him, are outraged, and they say, “This man is making Himself equal to God.” What do you have? John is bringing up hostile witnesses to prove his case. The Jews knew that Jesus was claiming to be God. In John 8:58, when Jesus says, “Before Abraham was I am.” The Jews testified by picking up stones, and starting to hurl them at Him, that they understood that He was claiming to be Yahweh.

So John keeps piling up the testimonial evidence, but he also presents a lot of physical evidence, or material evidence. This is what he focuses on, and ironically, this is what he focuses on in his closing statement. Remember I mentioned the lawyer wants to focus your attention on the salient things that he thinks, he made a big case, but the ones that really make his point. So what does John do? When he comes to Verse 30?

***John 20:30 ~ Therefore many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book;***

He is focusing our eyes on the material evidence that he wants us to see, that proves his case, and it is not the testimonies. He’s given us that, he is not saying, “Forget that,” but he is saying, “Remember, you’ve heard all of it. I gave you all of the, I brought up all the witnesses. You heard from all of them. I brought up all of this material evidence. Now I want you to think again now back on material evidence, the signs.” You see the signs, the miracles that Jesus did that John selectively chose to put in his Gospel. Jesus did many more, as he says in Verse 30, “Many other signs Jesus also performed, but these are chosen to bring about the verdict.” So that is the structure of the passage, and what I want us to do, to continue to unpack that, is to consider it under three points, and the first is, *The Claims*. There is not a charge, because there is no crime, but there are some claims

## PROVIDENCE CHURCH

*Glorifying God by knowing, living and proclaiming His truth in the world*

---

that John is making. That is the first point, *The Claims*. The second point is *The Evidence*. And the third point is *The Verdict*. *The Claims*, *The Evidence*, and *The Verdict*.

### 1) The Claims:

Now what are the claims? I mentioned them earlier, it is in Verse 31.

***John 20:31 ~ but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God;...***

There are two claims. This first point has two sub-points. The claims, there are two—Jesus is the Christ, Jesus is the Son of God. John says, “All that I’ve been trying to convince you, throughout this book, is summed up in those two statements, those two claims—Jesus is the Christ, Jesus is the Son of God.”

#### A) Jesus is the Christ:

Now to say that Jesus is the Christ is the same thing as to say Jesus is the Messiah. We transliterate our English word ‘*Christ*’ from the Greek word ‘*Christos*’, which is actually the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew word ‘*Meshia*’. We translate ‘*Meshia*’ into English as ‘*Messiah*’. So we actually have two words to say exactly the same thing. ‘*Christ*’ is exactly the same as ‘*Messiah*’. It is just one comes from Hebrew, and one comes from Greek. So when he says, in our English translation, we tend to use that word more. That is why some people think Jesus’ last name is Christ sometimes, right? “I believe in Jesus Christ, it is like His last name.” It is not His last name, it is His title, and Messiah, or Christ, means ‘*anointed one*’. That is the actual meaning of both of those words, ‘*the anointed one*’. And the Old Testament had anticipated an anointed one to come, a ‘*Meshia*’, a ‘*Messiah*’, a ‘*Christ*’, to come. The whole Old Testament anticipates, and prepares the way for that coming one who will be a man, uniquely anointed, and that is empowered by God. It will be a man uniquely anointed and empowered by God who will bring in all of the blessings of God’s Kingdom.

And He will be three things. He will be a prophet, a priest, and most importantly, a king. Those are the three anointed offices in the Old Testament—the prophet, the priest, and the king. They were the men set apart by God to do particular functions in extending His reign and rule over His people. So the Messiah, as we see as the Old Testament unfolds, will have all three of those offices. He will be a prophet, a



## PROVIDENCE CHURCH

*Glorifying God by knowing, living and proclaiming His truth in the world*

---

priest, and a king. And so when John says, “My claim is that Jesus is the Christ,” what he is claiming, and remember he is writing to a largely Jewish audience. His primary focus, I believe, I follow D.A. Carson on this, is that he was writing primarily to Jews and Jewish proselytes who had not yet believed.

Now obviously, the book has powerful impact on those who had already believed too to confirm our faith. And many of us who are here today are believers. So this confirms our faith. But for those who are unbelievers here, you are in the same place that John’s target audience was. He was writing to people who may have heard a lot about the things of God, who were actually Jews who had heard a lot about the things of God, had heard about Jesus, but had to this point, rejected Him as Messiah. They were following the Jewish leadership, and the majority of the Jewish people, in rejecting Him, rather than following the minority, the apostles, that followed Him, and those, many Jews who did believe. But it was still a minority of the Jewish people.

So John’s claim is, to those who are familiar with a concept of Christ, that the anointed one of God is Jesus. That means that He is God’s Prophet. Now what is God’s prophet? God’s prophet is the one who speaks the word of God. So the Messiah is the one who uniquely, and perfectly, and fully speaks for God. He is also God’s priest. What does a priest do? A priest is an intermediary, a man who stands between God and man. That is the role of a priest, he brings two parties together, he mediates. Jesus is the supreme priest, that is what John is saying. To be the Christ means He is the supreme priest. He is, as Paul says in 1 Timothy 2, “There is one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus, the man, Jesus, the Messiah.” And to be God’s king, that is, He brings God’s reign. He breaks the power of evil, He breaks the power of sin, He brings God’s dominion, and God’s reign. So that is the claim. The claim is, “We have found the one who will be God’s prophet, God’s priest, and God’s king, and His name is Jesus.” That is the first claim.

### B) Jesus is the Son of God:

The second claim, closely related to it, but I believe clearly in the context, moving beyond it, is Jesus is the Son of God. Now the meaning, ‘Son of God’, as John uses it here, and we interpret it here, must be based on the content of the entire book. Now it is true, some people mistakenly interpret this passage and act like this was actually, some people say, this was a lower statement about Jesus than what Thomas had said just a few verses earlier when he said, “My Lord and my God.”

## PROVIDENCE CHURCH

*Glorifying God by knowing, living and proclaiming His truth in the world*

---

There are people that say that because it was true that the phrase ‘Son of God’ was used in the Old Testament, and in Jewish literature approaching the time of Jesus, as a title for the Messiah, almost as an equal term. To say Jesus is the Christ and to say Jesus is the Son of God, was almost equivalent, because they read Psalm 2.

Remember Psalm 2, where the king of Israel is told by God, “Today I have begotten you,” and so they read the king of Israel, in Psalm 2, the king of Israel is always adopted as God’s son. So when they were looking for a Messiah to say ‘Son of God’ in that term meant He is just the human Messiah. And that is true, and I think, in fact, I think that is probably what Nathanael meant when he saw Jesus, when he said, “You are the Christ, the Son of God,” in Chapter 1, when he had just met Him. I think he means, “You are the Christ. You are the one we’ve been looking for. You are the king.” I think that’s probably what Peter meant when Jesus said, “Who do men say that I am?” and Peter said, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” I mean, their understanding of Jesus was evolving and improving by God’s grace over time.

I mean, just think about, we saw how messed up they were just a few days before this. Peter denied Jesus three times. They didn’t have the whole picture. Thomas was so convinced he wasn’t going to believe unless he saw the risen Christ for himself. So there was an evolution to the process, but John, in his Gospel, has been making the point all along that, “Listen, the term ‘Son of God’ in the Old Testament, when Psalm 2 was talking about that king, it was actually talking about Jesus, the man who would also be truly the eternally begotten, eternal Son of God,” and that is what is going on here. That Jesus is the Son of God here means that He is divine, He is God Himself. When you put it in context of all John has said, it is obvious. I mean, his opening statement, I mentioned earlier in John 1, he tells you right up front what he is going to prove, and tell you. ***In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*** That is his message, that is his claim. Verse 14:

***John 1:14 ~ And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.***

You only behold glory from God. Verse 18:

***John 1:18 ~ No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has made Him known.***



## PROVIDENCE CHURCH

*Glorifying God by knowing, living and proclaiming His truth in the world*

---

So the claim is clearly Jesus is the Christ, and Jesus is the second person of the Trinity, the Son of God. Now that is the claim, or the claims, those two claims.

### 2) The Evidence:

Now, *The Evidence*. We noted earlier there is a lot of testimonial evidence in his Gospel. It is powerful and compelling, but here in his closing argument, he focuses on the material evidence. ***but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God;...*** What? The signs, that key word ‘*signs*’ in Verse 30. ***Therefore many other signs Jesus also performed...*** That is a very important word in this Gospel, the word ‘*signs*’. It is a word which can be translated ‘*sign*’, ‘*mark*’, ‘*token*’. It is a miracle that points to something beyond itself. The miracle is a token, and a distinguishing mark of something else. It is an authenticating mark. And so these signs are things which prove the identity of Jesus. That is why John is using that term. He uses it 17 times in his Gospel. In fact, to show you how he continues to, looking back at how he proves his case. Verse 11 of Chapter 2, he had just talked about the first miracle of Jesus, the changing of the water into wine. And in Verse 11 he says:

***John 2:11 ~ This beginning of His signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee,...***

This is the first of His signs, and look what it says:

***John 2:11 ~ ...and manifested His glory,...***

The sign is pointing to His glory. It is not the sign, don’t get preoccupied with the sign. I mean, the sign is wonderful, but don’t mess up and stop at the sign. It would be like you are on a journey, going a long way, and you finally see the sign that says it is 10 miles away, and so you stop at the sign, and you just sit by the sign and think, “Man, this is so great. We’re here.” No, you’ve got 10 miles to go, go beyond it to the reality. These miracles are all wonderful, but they point to something beyond it. The sign points to His glory. Chapter 4, Verse 54, after He does His second miracle that John records. It is not His second miracle, remember John is being selective. He tells us at the end of his Gospel, “If all the things that Jesus did were recorded in detail, the world wouldn’t be able to contain the books.” So he has been very selective, but in Verse 54 of Chapter 4 he says:

***John 4:54 ~ This is again a second sign that Jesus also performed...***

## PROVIDENCE CHURCH

*Glorifying God by knowing, living and proclaiming His truth in the world*

---

Chapter 6, Verse 2.

***John 6:2 ~ A large crowd followed Him, because they saw the signs which He was performing on those who were sick.***

Then He feeds 5,000 people with five loaves and two fish in Chapter 6, Verse 14.

***John 6:14 ~ Therefore when the people saw the sign which He had performed,...***

And it goes on like that through this Gospel, ending with Chapter 20:30 where John pulls it together and says, “Looking at this, and all of the signs, they have been written so that you will render the verdict that Jesus is the Christ, Jesus is the Son of God.”

Now I want us to think through those signs, and I think really John presents eight. There is a matter of some debate about this because not all of them have a number beside them. The first and second do. Chapter 2, the changing of water into wine, that is the first. The second sign, according to John, is the healing of the nobleman’s son. But then you have, I’ll say eight. Some people say seven, and I’ll tell you why I say eight in just a moment. We’ll work through them, and these are eight distinguishing marks, eight signs, eight marks of authentication which prove the two claims that Jesus of Nazareth is in fact the Christ and is in fact the Son of God.

The first is in Chapter 2 He changes water into wine. He miraculously changes the physical properties of water to save a family, apparently friends of His family, from embarrassment of running out of wine at a wedding celebration. When we looked at that a long time ago when we were in Chapter 2, we saw that that was a lot of wine. That was just way more than they needed. And so what was going on? Jesus was not encouraging drunkenness. He was fulfilling the prophecies about the Messiah in Isaiah 25, which would show that when Messiah comes, He will bring in the era of abundance and joy, and wine will be flowing. The idea is that blessing is coming. And so that’s the announcement of that, that He is the Christ.

When He heals the royal official, the second sign, in Chapter 4:46-54, He heals him from a distance. He tells the man, “Go your way. Your son lives.” He didn’t even go to see him, because He didn’t need to travel to where he was. He’s Lord over time and space. And when the man got home and found out his son had gotten

## PROVIDENCE CHURCH

*Glorifying God by knowing, living and proclaiming His truth in the world*

---

well, that the fever had broken at the exact moment that Jesus said, “Go your way, your son lives,” they had said that at the seventh hour the fever left him, and then Verse 53:

***John 4:53 ~ So the father knew that it was at that hour in which Jesus said to him, “Your son lives”; and he himself believed and his whole household.***

There again, how does he respond? He believes. The third miracle, the lame man at the pool of Bethesda, I mentioned earlier that He heals him on the Sabbath Day. A man who cannot walk and who has been lame for 37 years is suddenly healed by the Lord Jesus Christ. The fourth miracle is He feeds 5,000 people with five loaves and two fish. And these barley loaves weren't really loaves. They were more like rolls, big rolls. I think of a loaf sometimes like the big French loaf. It wouldn't really matter if we're talking about 5,000 people. Can you imagine a kid, “Here's my lunch, five French loaves and two fish”? No, it's five rolls and two fish. Jesus takes those five rolls and two fish and feeds 5,000 men plus women and children. And in doing that, what we see at this point is then He goes into a discourse in which He teaches what the sign is pointing to. The miracle of giving bread out of Heaven, out of thin air, Jesus interprets in John 6:35, when He says, “I am the bread, the living bread. I am the bread out of Heaven that God has sent down.” And so that “I Am” saying begins the process of Him revealing His glory, again, that He is the one who brings the word of God. *Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word which proceeds from the mouth of God.* Jesus is the fullness of God's word, and He gives it to God's people. We need to look nowhere else.

In fact, when you read John 6:14, when they eat the bread, and this crowd, they don't have much of a clue, but they occasionally, like the old saying, a blind squirrel finds an acorn sometimes, they make a statement that's right on the money. They eat the bread and they say, “Truly this is the prophet who was to come into the world.” This is the blind squirrel finding the acorn by God's grace. You know if a blind squirrel finds an acorn, it's only by God's grace, and that's what's happened here. He's the Prophet. What is it that bread represents? As I said, Deuteronomy 8:3 tells us that when God fed them manna from Heaven for those forty years, He did it to teach them that man doesn't live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. Bread and the word of God, as much as we need bread to eat, we need God's word to live. And so when He fed the 5,000 people, all of that bread, they had so much left over, they said, “This is the prophet.” They stumbled onto exactly what that was teaching them,” and

## PROVIDENCE CHURCH

*Glorifying God by knowing, living and proclaiming His truth in the world*

---

afterwards they showed they really didn't understand it, because they just wanted more bread.

The fifth miracle is right after that He walks on water. And remember when He was walking across the water, the storm is raging and the disciples see Him, they're scared, and He says, "It is I," in the New American Standard. But in the Greek it says, "Ego eimi," which translated literally means, "I AM." That's what He said. "It is I," we translated it, because we don't have a way of saying, "I AM," in that circumstance, but that's what He said, and they understood what He meant. It meant both, "It is I," but it also meant, "I AM," in the sense He was making a claim to be Yahweh, because remember what God's Name means? The name Jehovah or Yahweh is explained for us in Exodus 3. Remember Moses asked the Lord, when God calls him to go deliver the nation of Israel from Egypt, "When I go and they ask me who sent me, what's Your Name? What shall I say to them?" "And you shall say to them, I AM has sent you. I Am who I Am, so you shall tell them that I Am has sent you to them." And Jesus uses that phrase 20 times in John's Gospel—"Ego eimi, I am." Sometimes it's with a predicate, as in, "I am the bread of heaven. I am the Light of the world. I am the way, the truth, and the life." At other times it is just, "I am," as it was when He walked on water, as it was when He said, "Before Abraham was, I am." And then the most glorious statement where He says is like that is when the temple guards came to arrest Him with Judas. He says, "Who are you looking for," and they say, "We're looking for Jesus of Nazareth," and He says, "I am." They step back and fall on their faces as the glory of God shines out for an instant. And the most astonishing thing about that is not that that happened, but that they then got up and arrested Him. Can you imagine what that was like? They're coming to arrest Him, He says, "I am," they step back, fall down, and the force of God's glory knocks them on their faces.

It's kind of like the temple of Dagon. Remember when the Lord allowed the Ark of the Covenant to be placed in the temple to the Philistine god Dagon? The Philistine god Dagon is there basically, supposedly this is the idea, that since the Philistines won the battle, that he is now getting tribute from Yahweh. He's defeated Yahweh, and Yahweh is at his feet. That's where they put the Ark of the Covenant. The next morning they come in and 1 Samuel 6 tells us the priests opened up the door for work that morning, and this great statue, this idol, has fallen over on its face before the Ark of the Covenant. Can you imagine what that was like? "Hey, lock the doors. Don't let anybody in yet. We're not ready for business. Get some help. We've got to get this thing back up." So they stand it back up, thinking, "I don't know what that was. It must have been some crazy wind. Maybe the air

## PROVIDENCE CHURCH

*Glorifying God by knowing, living and proclaiming His truth in the world*

---

conditioning came on in the wrong way.” The next morning they come in and Dagon is face down again before the Ark of the Covenant, and this time his head has been severed and his arms have fallen off, and this is when they realize they’re in trouble.

But in the same way, when Jesus says, “I Am,” they fall on their faces, because that’s where they belong. That’s where every creature belongs before the living God, and yet in that moment, it’s just a glimpse of His glory, and then the glory is withdrawn again, and they get up off the ground, dust themselves off, “What happened? Why are we here? Oh, we’ve got to arrest Him.” And what we see in that is He’s freely laying down His life. As He told them, “No one takes it from Me. I give it freely.” So *I Am* as He walks on the water is the same thing, that fifth great sign that He gives in John 6:15-21.

The sixth great sign is when He heals a man born blind, in John 9:1-7. The man who had been born blind, Jesus heals him, and then that man becomes a great witness to Jesus. In fact, it’s really interesting to see what he says as the Jews keep hounding him because he was healed on the Sabbath and they’re just all upset about this. He says in Verse 30, they’re telling this man that’s been healed, “We know this man (they’re talking about Jesus), we know that Jesus must be not from God, and must be evil, because He healed on the Sabbath. He can’t be from God,” and the man says in Verse 30, I love this:

***John 9:30 ~ The man answered and said to them, “Well, here is an amazing thing, that you do not know where He is from, and yet He opened my eyes. 31 We know that God does not hear sinners; but if anyone is God-fearing and does His will, He hears him. 32 Since the beginning of time it has never been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind. 33 If this man were not from God, He could do nothing.”***

He great a great sermon right there, and they scoffed at him and said:

***John 9:34 ~ “You were born entirely in sins, and are you teaching us?”***

And then they forced him out of the synagogue. But the reality is there was never a blind person healed in the Old Testament, and so that when the blind see, this is something radical. This is something new. And so that’s a case where John brings that witness up. “Listen to the man that was born blind.” “I don’t know much. I know I was blind and now I see.” And Jesus connects, that miracle points to the



## PROVIDENCE CHURCH

*Glorifying God by knowing, living and proclaiming His truth in the world*

---

fact, another *I Am* saying, “I am the Light of the world. The one who believes in Me will not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.” Then the seventh great sign that John presents is the raising of Lazarus from the dead in John 11, where Jesus has them roll the stone away and says, “Lazarus, come forth!” and Lazarus the dead man walks out of the grave still wrapped in his grave clothes, though he had been in the tomb for four days. This shows what Jesus had said to Martha that day. “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me will never die.” So He had the power over death.

All of these things are distinguishing marks that prove categorically that He’s the Messiah beyond any reasonable doubt, and beyond that. With certainty they prove it. In fact, it’s interesting, do you remember I talked last week about doubt, how Thomas doubted, and we talked about John the Baptist’s doubt, which was an encouragement to me in thinking about that whole issue, is how patient God is with us, that He puts up with us when we doubt. And to think about John the Baptist’s doubt in Matthew 11 is just startling. Remember he’s the one that recognized Jesus when they were both in the womb. He recognized with such certainty that that was Jesus in Mary’s womb when he was in Elizabeth’s womb, that the Spirit came upon his mother and began to prophesy. The baby leaped in the womb and that started that whole process.

He recognized Jesus the first time he laid eyes on Him, and he said, “Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world! This is the one I’ve been telling you about that would come after me.” But then when he’s in prison for several months, and when things don’t seem to be going the way he expected, and the kingdom is not coming in the way he expected, he sends word to Jesus. He sends two of his disciples to Jesus to ask Him, “Are You the one or are we to expect another?” You would think that would have been heartbreaking words to Jesus, but of course, He’s God and He knows that we are but dust, and he doesn’t chastise John. He speaks clearly to John, though, and this is what He says. “John’s wondering if I’m the Messiah. You go and tell John that the blind see, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, and the dead are raised. Tell him that. That settles it.”

John the apostle has just told us that the lame walk, the blind see, the dead are raised. It settles it. But he has one more compelling piece of evidence. The seventh piece I mentioned is the raising of Lazarus. The eighth is the resurrection of Jesus. I said the raising of Lazarus, because Lazarus, strictly speaking, was not a resurrection. He was raised to life but he died again. Jesus is resurrected, beyond the reach of death ever again, and the reason I say it’s a sign is because of John’s



## PROVIDENCE CHURCH

*Glorifying God by knowing, living and proclaiming His truth in the world*

---

wording in John 20, when he says in Verse 30, right after Thomas had seen the risen Christ and had said, “My Lord and my God!” he says in Verse 30:

***John 20:30 ~ Therefore many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book;***

I think that context tells us he’s saying that the greatest sign was the physical appearance of the physical resurrected body of Jesus. That was the most compelling physical piece of evidence that had been brought to bear. And so John brings it for us, and he shows us in Thomas’ experience how overwhelming that was for him, because he had been a strongly resistant doubter. “Unless I put my finger in His nail prints, unless I put my hand in His side, it’s not enough for me to see. I must touch. I will not believe.” And then a week later, Jesus comes and says, “Reach here your finger. Reach here your hand into My side, and no longer be unbelieving, but believing, and Thomas’ doubt melts away into iron faith, and he says, “My Lord and my God!”

And so John as he comes to that piece of evidence, I think what actually happens, because it’s interesting that Verses 30 and 31 are like a closing argument, and I think what happens is he kind of jumps into his closing argument early. Now, I know God inspires everything to be exactly the way it is, and it’s perfect, but He still uses human beings, and look with me at Verses 30 and 31.

***John 20:30 ~ Therefore many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; 31 but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name.***

Skip down to Verse 24 of Chapter 21 and see if this doesn’t sound like this is where it belonged together maybe originally if you were planning it out.

***John 21:24 ~ This is the disciple who is testifying to these things and wrote these things, and we know that his testimony is true. 25 And there are also many other things which Jesus did, which if they \*were written in detail, I suppose that even the world itself \*would not contain the books that \*would be written.***

## PROVIDENCE CHURCH

*Glorifying God by knowing, living and proclaiming His truth in the world*

---

It's almost like he's going to tell us about the last appearance of Jesus to the disciples that he wants to tell us about, the fourth appearance where Jesus appears to them at the Sea of Galilee, and he's going to tell us about that because there's some important stuff he wants to say, but it's almost as if as he's writing and he tells about Thomas, he can't help but jump into his closing statement. "This is enough!" he seems to be saying. "Are you still doubting? How can you doubt?" And then he goes back to, "I do have some other stuff to tell." It's kind of like the lawyer saying to the judge, "I need to bring another piece of evidence up." He brings it up and then he brings the finality of his closing argument in Verses 24 and 25 of Chapter 21.

His most compelling piece of evidence is the glorious body of the risen Christ—nail prints, spear mark, and all. Having conquered death, He has proved that He is both Messiah and God. As the author of Hebrews says, He has proved His Messiahship, His eternal Priesthood, he's focusing on in that particular passage, Hebrews 7:16. He's proved that He is the Messiah, the Priest, by virtue of an indestructible life. That is unassailable, that is clenching, that is inarguable, it is perfect, and conclusive. That's the case that's been laid out. The claims and now the evidence we've looked at.

### 3) The Verdict:

Thirdly, we come to the verdict and its implications. In Verse 31:

***John 20:31 ~ but these have been written so that you may believe...***

Those two claims—the word *believe* is very important. It's not mere intellectual ascent that we're called to give. We are called to faith, that you may believe, place your trust in. In Romans 10:9-10, the apostle Paul says this is how salvation comes, that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. This is what John is calling for, the same thing. He's calling for saving faith. He's calling for a person who's been convinced now to act on what they've been convinced of. Not just intellectual ascent, but trust. To call Jesus as Lord, to confess Jesus with your mouth as Lord, is to say, "You are my Master and my God. I give myself to You." To believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, yes, to accept unequivocally the evidence Jesus is a risen Savior. His glorious resurrected body is at the right hand of the Almighty right now, and He will come again to judge the living and the dead in His glorious resurrection body.

## PROVIDENCE CHURCH

*Glorifying God by knowing, living and proclaiming His truth in the world*

---

And so John is calling on everyone who has heard this message to act on it and to render the verdict, and the verdict is faith, to believe, to stop trusting in yourself, to stop living for yourself, to stop looking at your own resume, to stop talking about the fact that you're a church member or even a church leader or a pastor. It doesn't matter. Whatever you would be looking at to commend yourself to God, stop looking to that and look only at Christ—His merits, His work. He is the Christ, the anointed Man of God, fully Man, empowered by God to be the Prophet, the Priest, and the King, to bring us to God, to break the rule of sin. He is the one, and not only fully Man, but fully God. He is the Son of God, the eternally begotten Son of God. Surrender yourself to Him. That's what we're called to do, all of us, to stop looking at anything else, and put all of our hope in Jesus.

Now, the implications of this verdict, the implication of a verdict is always significant even in a civil trial. Sometimes a great deal of money is at stake. In small claims court, even, there is money at stake. There are issues. But when it comes to a criminal case, there are tremendous implications, justice for the victim or justice for a wrongly accused person. The verdict may cause that wrongly accused person to be released and liberated, exonerated. The guilty when they are rightly convicted, their lives are changed and altered. They're put in jail, sometimes executed. So the verdict always has implications, and the verdict in this case has greater implications. In Verse 31:

***John 20:31 ~ ...that believing you may have life in His name.***

The implications of this verdict are even more profound. It's not physical life or death. It is spiritual life or death. Those who believe, those who respond to this message and surrender to Christ in faith in believing trust, they can have life in His Name. The clear and unmistakable implication is that everyone who does not believe in Jesus, does not have life. That is, everyone who is born into this world is born in a state of not being alive, that is, death, spiritual death. In Adam we died. In Ephesians 2:2, when Paul is speaking to those who have come out of death into life by believing in Jesus, he says, "Remember that you were formerly dead in trespasses and sins." John in his own Gospel, here in this Gospel in John 3:36, had said, "He who believes in the Son has eternal life, but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him." There will be no life in God's presence when you die if you don't know Jesus. There will be the wrath of God which is abiding on you.

## PROVIDENCE CHURCH

*Glorifying God by knowing, living and proclaiming His truth in the world*

---

So the verdict has the greatest implications imaginable. Our eternal destiny hangs in the balance. Are you believing in Jesus and trusting in Jesus, giving yourself to Jesus? Then you will have life. But if you do not believe in Jesus and do not give yourself unreservedly to Him in true faith, you will experience death. And so that is what's set before each one of us. Where are you? How do you see this? And not just how do you see it intellectually, but from your heart, where are you with God? The evidence is overwhelming. No good reason to reject it, and beyond that, the message is that not only is Jesus the Prophet, the Priest, and the King, but Jesus is someone who loved us enough to give Himself at Calvary. He's a loving and kind King. Why would you say no to Him?

Let's pray together...

*Father, we thank You for the gift of Your Son. We thank You for the perfection of His work, the sufficiency and adequacy of the blood of Christ to wash us. We thank You that You are mighty to save. Though our sins are as scarlet, You can make them white as snow. No matter how deep the pit we've dug ourselves into, Jesus is deeper still. Father, work in the hearts of those who need to today repent and believe. Grant them faith. Help them truly call upon Jesus as Lord, believing in Him and His resurrection. And for those of us who know Him already, help us to be people who are more firmly convinced every day, more deeply loving our Savior. And we pray this in His Name, Amen.*

"Evidence that Demands a Verdict"

Video, audio, description, and transcription are licensed under an [Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/).



Attribution:

Providence Church, Duluth, GA, USA

[www.ProvidenceDuluth.org](http://www.ProvidenceDuluth.org)

Permission for use beyond the scope of this license may be requested by contacting Providence Church, Duluth, GA through their website.