



# GOD

*Walks With Us*

WALKING WITH JESUS

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**Pathway**  
PRESS & RESOURCES

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## INTRODUCTION

To undertake a walk through the entire life of Christ is a daunting task. After all, how can anyone in the brief span of a lifetime, much less a few years, sift through all the nuances of a life which, as described by one eyewitness, was so filled with awe and wonder, “even the world itself could not contain the books that would be written” (John 21:25)? Yet here we are, beginning a journey through the greatest life ever lived. While this project is not an exhaustive examination of every word and deed of the Master, it is an attempt to walk, event by event, through His life. Still, there are some events and utterances which are not given full review. It is my hope the reader will be prompted to dig deep and fill in the gaps.

There are Bibles dedicated to a chronological reading of the New Testament as well as scholarly attempts to outline the life of Jesus. I am particularly indebted to one source for both the chronological alignment as well as the intermeshing stories of Jesus’ life. Leaning heavily upon the two-volume set by Mark E. Moore titled *The Chronological Life of Christ*, I give anyone seeking to follow the greatest life ever lived a hearty recommendation of his work.

To assist readers, there is both a preacher’s skeletal outline of each chapter as well as a series of study questions related to the chapter which enables adaptation for both personal reflection and a small-group discussion model.

In 1896, Charles Monroe Sheldon produced a short novel which he titled *In His Steps: What Would Jesus Do?* His work was fabulously successful and has challenged millions to ask the question about every decision in life, “What would Jesus do?” To adequately answer that question, we must first know what

Jesus did. This work launches a journey to uncover that which He did, said, and accomplished. May the Holy Spirit, who inspired the authors to write His story, illuminate your heart as well.

## “What would Jesus do?”

*Charles Monroe Sheldon*



## IN THE BEGINNING

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it (John 1:1-5).

Every journey starts at the same place—the beginning. Where they wind up is as different as the individuals taking the trip. However, whether you are going to India or Indiana, your journey starts at the beginning. That’s what John did for us. He slipped beyond the other Gospel writers into eternity past and introduced us to the beginning of the journey of Jesus Christ on our planet. Peering back into the dark vistas of previous eternal depths, John pierced the veil and shined some very important light on the person of our Lord. Indeed, his words are so vital, so enlightening, without them we would not know the full truth about the real nature of Jesus.

John selected a good place to launch our trip. We need to get a firm grasp on who this Jesus really is. If Jesus is who He claimed to be, and if He indeed is whom the Bible characters who swirled about Him claimed He was, then He is nothing less than God in the flesh—God with us. If that is true, you and I must react to that revelation. It is too profound, too earth-shaking to ignore and dismiss. If I fully invest my life and eternity in

the validity of Jesus being the Son of God, I must do whatever is required of me to develop a relationship with Him. In fact, nothing I will ever do during my sojourn here is as important as that one thing. I must know Him!

### **God Among Us**

Let's settle this issue out of the gate. Jesus is "God among us." He is the fulfillment of the prophetic statement of Isaiah 7:14, where the prophet foretold His coming and nature. John wrote in John 1:1: "*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*"

Pointing to Jesus, John made some powerful statements about Him in his opening act. In fact, John gives us three profound truths about Jesus which deeply affect our estimation of His deity.

First, John assures us Jesus was present in the beginning. He was there, active, in the creation of the cosmos. Actually, John so tightly ties Jesus with Creation, he tells us "*nothing was made*" unless He made it (v. 3).

Second, John points to Jesus and declares His divinity. He was "*with God.*" Literally, the wording tells us Jesus was "toward God." It is difficult for us to fully wrap our minds around the Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Don't sweat it. Greater minds than ours have struggled with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit being one God and at the same time distinct from each other. I cannot fully explain it. Neither can anyone else. Of course, that's a good thing because a God whom I (or any other person) can fully explain isn't much of a god!

Third, Jesus was God. He was not some emanation. He was not a thought which became reality. He was not a mystic force which took on human form. He really was God—God with us!

You may join the chorus and sing the old song, “Let’s Not Be Sensible.” Perhaps, at the beginning of this journey, you and I need to step back and ask ourselves this question: Since when has human reasoning become the measuring rod by which the truth of God is judged? Are we not told, in plain language, that the wisdom of God is so far above any wisdom of man that it creates an immeasurable span? I think that is precisely what is laid down before us in Isaiah 55:8-9:

“For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways,” says the Lord. “For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.”

God does not appear on the scene and ask us to create some calculus by which we can understand His existence. He does not demand that we create a flow chart by which we can predict His ways. Instead, at the dawn of human history, God simply steps from behind the veil of secrecy and announces His existence. Listen closely to how the Lord God revealed Himself for the first time: “*In the beginning God . . .*” (Genesis 1:1a).

He does not present us with a catalog of irrefutable proofs. He does not walk onto the scene explaining His presence in the hopes we will allow Him to stay. He simply asserts His existence and leaves us to deal with the results of His announcement.

I will never understand the deep nuances of the Trinity. I have a hard time thinking about eternity past—time immemorial in reverse. I cannot understand how God works in the mysterious ways He develops His plan. But, like I heard the late Billy Graham say, I may never understand it, but I am going to believe it. If it is in the Bible, I will accept it above any and all other sources of truth.



## **What Do You Believe About Jesus?**

Each of us must make that personal choice. We must all decide where we come down on the question of who Jesus is. Based on your choice, your line of belief, you will decide to follow Him with all your heart or dismiss Him out of hand. Stop for a moment and ask yourself, *What do I really believe about Jesus?*

If you subscribe to the idea that Jesus is a made-up figure, someone who never lived, get your head out of the sand and look at history. There is as much, if not more, historical evidence that Jesus lived as there is for George Washington. He was here, and He must be dealt with. You have to decide where you are going to put down your stakes and believe.

There are two schools of thought which make sense.

First, the modern-skeptic school says Jesus was not the Son of God, but nothing more than the illegitimate offspring of a sexual tryst between Mary and a Roman soldier. Others from this side of the fence will tell you Jesus went insane and led others with Him; that He was a self-deluded Jew who thought He could overthrow Rome and wound up getting Himself killed.

Tucked within the folds of this cynical garment are those who are not quite so hostile toward Jesus as the extremists mentioned above. Their vitriol is usually reserved for those who disagree with them. They like to point out how Jesus was a good man, a good teacher, a good philosopher, even a good man of God. Naturally, none of the brilliant minds ever met Jesus and, while they are brilliant men, I would dare say not one of them ever approached the study of the Master without some predisposition toward Him which was less than glowing.

Second, the flip side of this coin maintains Jesus was (and is) the Son of God. He was the absolute, one-of-a-kind, God-with-us Savior. That's what John declared. He was backed up by a firsthand testimony of a famous fisherman, Simon Peter, in Matthew 16:16. A Roman centurion, a brutal and hardened man, gave witness to the divinity of Jesus at His death (27:54). His proclamation carries immense weight as the mere alignment of himself with the One enduring capital punishment could bring on him a heavy penalty.

John and Peter saw Jesus and walked with Him. They knew Him better than any person living at this moment. Their declaration was clear: *Jesus is the Son of God!*

You are free to believe crusty old men and young skeptics who would not know God if He shook them out of bed. You can align yourself with the denunciations of clerics and critics who would not know Jesus if He handed them a gift on Christmas morning. But as for me, I choose to believe the testimony of the men and women who lived with Him, witnessed His ministry, watched Him die, and stood dumbfounded when He showed Himself alive with "*many infallible proofs*" (Acts 1:3).

You could choose to listen to Jesus speak for Himself. He embraced His identity and His mission with powerful eagerness. He owned who He was. He declared Himself "*the bread of life*" (John 6:35) and "*the light of the world*" (8:12). When a dispute about Abraham arose, He shocked those listening by letting them know He was around before Abraham took a step in Ur (8:58). He staked His claim as "*the door of the sheep*" (10:7).

In a stunning reversal of the entire flow of humanity toward death, Jesus announced, "*I am the resurrection and the life*" (11:25). For all who think every religion is the same and that, spiritually speaking, all roads lead to Rome, fasten your seat

belt, it's going to be a bumpy ride. Jesus went so far as to declare Himself as the singular way to the Father (14:6).

Time and time again, Jesus repeated His understanding of who He is. He knew, whether people believed it or not, that He is *“the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world”* (Revelation 13:8). He knew His purpose on earth was to become the perfect sacrifice which, once and for all, would atone for lost humanity.

So, call Him a lunatic or liar, or call Him the King of kings. Don't drag Him down to the depths of being a good teacher or great moralist. He does not fit that mold. If He is not the Son of God, come to set us free, He is the greatest self-deluded maniac to ever walk this planet. Absent being Immanuel, His ego rivals that of Hitler and His deception runs deeper than that foisted on humanity by the most hideous of politicians. If He is not the King of kings, let His name be expunged from human history.

But, if He is who He declared Himself to be—the One millions have loved and served—determine to give Him the last vestige of praise and glory your lungs can generate. Let every man and woman, indeed the entire earth, fall before Him in adulation and, as the old song declared, “Crown Him Lord of all!”

### **The Motivation Behind the Story**

Why all the folderol about Jesus and His arrival? Why did angels glorify God when He made His entrance? Why did the heavens shout for joy when a little baby was born in Bethlehem? What is going on behind all the sounds of Christmas?

The simple answer is our God is an expressive God. He is not, as some propose, hidden in the obscurity of time, shrouded in darkness, and unapproachable. Actually, He is quite the opposite. Our God is vocal, demonstrative, and self-revealing to those who seek Him.

Regardless of how you feel at the moment, I assure you God is not secreted away somewhere on a mountaintop, hiding out lest He be discovered. He is “God among us.”

“Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign:  
Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son,  
and shall call His name Immanuel” (Isaiah 7:14).

Long before Jesus ever graced this planet, the Father let us know His intentions to dwell with us. His eternal Son became the child born of a virgin.

Centuries before, we get a glimpse of God getting into the realities of our human existence. In 2 Samuel 6, King David was bringing the ark of the covenant into Jerusalem when the oxen stumbled and the cart shifted. In an effort to keep the ark (which represented the presence of God among them) from falling into the dirt of the road, Uzzah reached out to steady the ark. His actions were deadly, as the Lord killed him on the spot.

I have often wondered if God meant for the ark to fall to the ground that day. After all, God was strong enough to keep the ark from falling. He could have caused some rain to fall and fill the pothole in the road. I am convinced if God can speak through a donkey in the Hebrew tongue (Numbers 22:28, 30), He has the ability to speak to an ox telling it to watch out for the hole in the road!

No, I think there is another message in this text besides David not following the letter of the Law. I think we are being sent an early signal that God does not mind getting down into the dirt with His people. He does not mind making a difference where it counts.

## **What Difference Does It Make?**

What difference does all this make? Why all the fuss about Jesus being born of a virgin? To the modern mind, which is skeptical of anything that cannot be reduced to a sequence of numbers in computer code, everything (except certain things held dear), is just a tempest in a teapot. Why does it matter if Jesus was born of a virgin? What difference does it make what we believe about Him?

The reason is simple. You and I are a messed-up bunch who possess zero chance of knowing God unless He comes to find us. I am not the greatest shopper in the world, but I have tagged along with Diane enough to know when you enter a store with a sign which reads NO REFUNDS, NO RETURNS, NO EXCHANGES, you better be careful what you purchase. Somewhere among all the tags and amazing prices, there is something wrong with the merchandise. It may be a zipper which will not zip, a button which will not button, or a stain which you will not find until you walk out of the house wearing your new garment. But rest assured, there is a flaw somewhere in the merchandise! The sign is a warning that coming back to them whining about your purchase will do no good. You knew it wasn't perfect when you paid for it.

Do you know what Christmas is about? Simply put, not one of us belongs in the first-rate section. You read it correctly, not one of us—regardless of how well-born we were, how well-to-do we are, or the quality of our education—belongs on the rack which holds perfect merchandise. There are flaws in every one of us. Some are more noticeable at first glance, while others are latent and hidden from view; but if you dig deep enough, you will discover stains, splotches, broken things, and a vast array of mistakes lurking inside every son of Adam.

This is hard for many to take. Some of us deeply resent being told we are less than perfect. Some of us believe we are better than everyone else and get rather snippy toward anyone who points out the opposite. Still, the Word of God declares to each of us unless Jesus comes to redeem us, we are a lost cause (see 1 Peter 2:25; Romans 3:10, 23).

Jesus did not come to die so our stains might be hidden from view; He came to make us new. He is not interested in making you with your flats just good enough to be put in a sales bin. He wants to transform you into something new and perfect!

I know that sounds too good to be true. It sounds like a fairy tale. But, this time, you can believe it! John's exclamation about the light of Christ assures us it is so: "*And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it*" (John 1:5).

There are several ways the word *comprehend* can be understood. First, it can mean the darkness of Satan could not seize, or overpower, the light of Christ. In other words, the light now shines and Satan cannot stop it from having the desired effect. Darkness cannot prevail against it. A huge room filled with darkness cannot overcome the light in a single candle. Likewise, no matter how massive the forces of Satan aligned against a child of Christ, they cannot overcome the light of Jesus which shines in the believer's life.

Second, *comprehend* can be viewed in the idea that darkness cannot understand light. It may try to figure it out, but it cannot grasp how it works. We see this enacted quite often. For instance, tell me how an alcoholic comes to a Christ he cannot see and leave sober and set free? How can a man who abuses his wife and children come to an altar of prayer, become broken in repentance, and leave a new man? Such things surpass understanding, both human and demonic.

Finally, *comprehend* can also mean “extinguish.” Try as it might, darkness cannot put out the light. In fact, the worse the darkness grows, the brighter the light shines.

Satan has been trying for centuries to extinguish the light of Jesus, but still He shines today. We witness Christians being persecuted all over the world. Antagonism toward Jesus increases around the planet, and many are frightened about what the future will bring.

I cannot say what Christ’s church will look like in years to come, nor can I assure you we will have days of ease. I can, however, with full assurance, tell you the light of Jesus Christ will continue to shine since that has been the plan of God from the beginning. May you and I have His light shining victoriously through us!

**Sermon Outline:**  
**IN THE BEGINNING**

**Introduction:** Every journey starts at the same place—the beginning. John launched His Gospel with *the beginning*, giving readers a firm grip on who Jesus is.

1. God Among Us
  - a. Present in the beginning
  - b. The divine Son of God
2. What Do You Believe About Jesus?
  - a. The skeptical viewpoint
  - b. The Biblical perspective
  - c. The testimony of Jesus
3. What Difference Does It Make?
  - a. Born of a virgin
  - b. God came to us.
  - c. The incomprehensible light

**Conclusion:** The light of Jesus Christ will continue to shine—that has always been God’s plan. May His light shine through us!

**STUDY QUESTIONS**

1. How did Jesus transform the uncreated world “*in the beginning*”?
2. How did Jesus invade our dark world of sin?
3. What is the significance of the Virgin Birth?
4. Why can’t the world “comprehend” Jesus?