A SHORT BIBLE STUDY

Who Jesus Really Is

Starting Out with Christ · Book 4



The Son of God who came to save us

Andrew Dominguez

Trinfinity Enterprises

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A Note on the Bible Translation Used in This Book

My preferred Bible for personal study, teaching, and research is the Steadfast Literal Bible (SLB). I chose it because it is a word-for-word translation in today's language, built on the ancient Scripture sources: the Hebrew and Aramaic of the Old Testament and the Greek of the New Testament. I prepared the SLB myself, and the Scripture in this book is taken from it.

Where a literal phrase would mislead an English reader, the SLB gives the writer's meaning in plain words. Words added for sense are set in bold italics so you can see what is in the original and what is not.

The complete Steadfast Literal Bible is free to read, search, download, and print at trinfinityenterprises.com/slb. If you want to check a verse in its full setting or read the translation's preface and principles, that is the place to go.

Above all, my desire is not to promote one translation over another, but to faithfully teach the Word of God, encourage careful examination of the Scriptures, and help readers grow in their knowledge, understanding, and relationship with the Lord.

May every page of this book direct attention not to the translation itself, but to the truth of God's Word and the One whom it reveals.

Introduction

Almost everyone has an opinion about Jesus. Some say He was a good teacher. Some say He was a prophet. Some say He was a legend that grew over time. Jesus Himself asked His disciples the question that matters most: "But you, who do you say Me to be?" (Matthew 16:15, SLB).

I have believed in God as long as I can remember, and I was baptized on October 19, 1995. I have led many Bible study groups, served as a lay pastor and preached, and I translated the Steadfast Literal Bible. Again and again, I met people who knew religious phrases about Jesus but were not sure who He really is. I wrote this book for anyone who wants a clear, Scripture-based look at the Son of God.

This book looks at what the Bible says about who Jesus is, what He came to do, and why the answer to His question changes everything. If you are searching, I hope you will read the Gospel of John alongside it and meet Him for yourself.

1 The question Jesus asked

Jesus once asked His disciples what people were saying about Him. They gave Him the popular answers. Some said John the Baptist, others Elijah or one of the prophets. Then He made it personal.

> *He says to them, "But you, who do you say Me to be?" And Simon Peter, answering, said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."*
> **Matthew 16:15-16 (SLB)**

The word Christ is the Greek form of the Hebrew word Messiah. It means the Anointed One, the King God promised to send. Peter was saying that Jesus was not just another prophet in a long line. He was the One the whole line had been pointing to.

You might ask, why not just call Him a good teacher and leave it there? It boils down to what He claimed. A man who says the things Jesus said is either telling the truth or He is not. A good teacher does not claim to be God unless He is.

Growing up in Victorville, I believed in God, and Pastor Jimmy Carter took me to church and led me to Christ. Even so, I drifted from Him more than once. Each time I came back, I had to answer Jesus' question for myself instead of relying on what others said about Him. Every person eventually has to answer who Jesus is.

2 God who became a man

John opens his Gospel by going back before creation.

> *In **the** beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*
> **John 1:1 (SLB)**

The Word was with God, and the Word was God. Then John tells us who the Word is: "the Word became flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1:14, SLB). Jesus did not begin in Bethlehem. "All things have been created through Him and for Him" (Colossians 1:16, SLB). Jesus told the religious leaders, "before Abraham came into being, I am" (John 8:58, SLB), using the

name God gave Himself at the burning bush. They understood what He meant and picked up stones.

Paul wrote that "in Him dwells all the fullness of the Deity bodily" (Colossians 2:9, SLB). When doubting Thomas finally saw the risen Jesus, he did not call Him his teacher. He said, "My Lord and my God!" (John 20:28, SLB). Jesus did not correct him.

Christians believe in one God who exists as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Jesus told His followers to make disciples, "baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19, SLB). One name, three persons. It is more than our minds can hold, and I would expect nothing less from God.

When I was a boy in Victorville, Pastor Jimmy Carter lived down our street. I mowed his lawn, and he took me to church and pointed me to Christ. He did not talk about God from a distance. He showed up in my everyday life. That is a small picture of what God did when He stepped into our world.

3 Promised long before He came

Hundreds of years before Jesus was born, the prophets described Him. Micah named the town. From Bethlehem would come a ruler, and "His goings out are from of old, from the days of antiquity" (Micah 5:2, SLB).

> *For a child has been born to us, a son has been given to us; and the dominion is on His shoulder; and **one** has called His name Wonder, Counselor, Mighty God, Father of Eternity, Prince of Peace.*
> **Isaiah 9:6 (SLB)**

Isaiah also saw that this King would suffer. "He was pierced for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities" (Isaiah 53:5, SLB). Those words were written centuries before the cross. When Jesus came, He fit both pictures: the King who reigns and the servant who suffers in our place.

Translating the Steadfast Literal Bible word for word, the Old Testament promises stood out to me in a fresh way. Read the prophets next to the Gospels, and you see specific details written centuries before Bethlehem. Jesus did not appear out of nowhere. He fulfilled promises God made long before.

4 Fully God and fully man

Jesus was not God pretending to be human. He was born, grew up, got tired, got hungry, and wept at the tomb of a friend. Hebrews says He "has been tempted in all things according to likeness, without sin" (Hebrews 4:15, SLB). That means He understands what you are going through.

> *who, existing in **the** form of God, did not consider being equal with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, having taken **the** form of a slave, having come to be in **the** likeness of men; and having been found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself, having become obedient as far as death, even death of a cross.*
>
> **Philippians 2:6-8 (SLB)**

Because He is God, He can show us what God is like. Jesus told Philip, "The one who has seen Me has seen the Father" (John 14:9, SLB). Because He is man, He can stand in our place. There is "one God, and one mediator of God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (1 Timothy 2:5, SLB).

5 Why He came

Jesus told us in His own words why He came.

> *For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life **as** a ransom for many.*
>
> **Mark 10:45 (SLB)**

A ransom is the price paid to set a captive free. Our sin holds us captive, and we cannot pay our own way out. Jesus paid it with His life. Hebrews says that Jesus, "having made purification of our sins through Himself, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high" (Hebrews 1:3, SLB). The work was finished.

Then He rose. The resurrection is God's stamp on everything Jesus claimed. If He had stayed in the grave, He would be one more teacher who died. He did not stay there. He showed His disciples His hands

and His feet and said, "touch Me and see" (Luke 24:39, SLB).

On May 29, 2020, my wife caught me drinking, confronted me with the truth and took me to my first 12-step meeting that same day. She loved me enough to rescue me from myself. That is a small picture of why Jesus came: to seek and save the lost (Luke 19:10).

6 What your salvation depends on

Who Jesus is matters because your salvation depends on Him. Not on your goodness, your church, or your family's faith. On Him.

> *For God so loved the world, that He gave His Son, the only begotten, so that everyone who believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.*
> **John 3:16 (SLB)**

Believing in Him is more than agreeing that He existed. It is trusting Him with your life and your eternity. When the jailer in Philippi asked what he must do to be saved, Paul and Silas answered, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved" (Acts 16:31, SLB).

If you have never done that, you can do it today. Tell God you know you have sinned. Tell Him you believe Jesus is His Son, that He died for you and rose again. Ask Him to forgive you and to be your Lord. Jesus promised, "the one coming to Me I will certainly not cast out" (John 6:37, SLB).

I wrote New Beginnings, a Scripture-based 12-step course, because I know the trap of trying to clean up your life before coming to God. I tried to carry my own failures on my own strength. Salvation rests on what Jesus finished, not our track record. When a person stops trusting his own effort and trusts Christ alone, everything changes.

Who Jesus Really Is

✦ ✦ ✦

Good teacher, prophet, or legend? Jesus asked His disciples who they said He was. This book looks at what the Bible says about who He is, how the prophets promised Him, why He came, and why your salvation depends on Him.

But you, who do you say Me to be?

MATTHEW 16:15 (SLB)

Book 4 of 11 in the collection Starting Out with Christ

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