

**WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT JESUS?**

John 5:30-47

Rev. John Park

Some people tell me I need to take a blind leap of faith. Don't question anything, but simply believe. I do not believe that's what the Bible offers to us as faith. In some religions and Christian denominations, this is highly praised, but I believe our genuine Christian faith is rather a step of faith. Nicky Gumble, the speaker at Alpha, compares our faith to a jury in a court case. If someone is accused of theft and he argues his innocence, the jury needs to decide whether he was going to believe him or not. Here, every decision a jury makes is an act of faith; they weren't there. They don't know. They listen to the evidence and they take a step of faith. Likewise, when you put your faith in Christ, you are taking an act of faith. But it's not a blind leap of faith; it's a step of faith based on evidence.

Jesus in fact is the one who welcomes and invites us to investigate the evidence. He will certainly push you to make a step further and deeper into faith, but he presents compelling evidence that demand a verdict. All he asks from us is an open heart to examine whether he may be indeed who he says he is or not.

Then, first we need to examine his claims. There are a number of claims Jesus makes about himself in today's reading. In verse 30, he says, "I judge only as I hear, and my judgment is just, for I seek not to please myself but him who sent me" (NIV). Here he claims he is a just judge. Now, notice he says he claims he is a just judge, not because he is fair to everyone (this is how we often define being just), but because he is sent from God and seeks to please him. This is a strong statement. Imagine I argue all my judgments are correct because I am sent from God and everything I do pleases him. My family members will be the first ones to jump out of their seats and prove I'm wrong. Or many of you will request the transfer of membership to other churches sometime this week.

If this does not upset you, he makes an even more absurd statement. Let me put it in my words, and as you listen, just imagine if this is something I say to you. "Hey, there is this fellow out in the street, who is pointing to the truth. And guess what? He's pointing to me! If you believe what he says is true, in other words, if you believe I am the truth, you are saved and have eternal life." I hope by now I have convinced everyone to agree on one thing: that he is not an ordinary man. He must be either a crook, a crazy man or

someone who he says he is. This is a famous quote from C. S. Lewis, the author of the Chronicles of Narnia.

“I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him: I’m ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don’t accept his claim to be God. That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic — on the level with the man who says he is a poached egg — or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God, or else a madman or something worse. You can shut him up for a fool, you can spit at him and kill him as a demon or you can fall at his feet and call him Lord and God, but let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about his being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to.”

As I said earlier, he didn’t intend to leave it as guess work. It’s not a blind leap of faith; it’s a step of faith based on evidence. He offers this evidence to us. In verse 36, he says, “But I have a testimony greater than John’s. The works that the Father has given me to complete, the very works that I am doing, testify on my behalf that the Father has sent me.” So what are his works?

First, he performed many miracles. He healed many sick people. We are not here talking about autosuggestion or coincidence. The people who were healed were blind from birth, crippled from birth, people with severe leprosy or hemorrhaging blood, and even someone who was dead for three days. He walked on water, calmed the sea and storms, fed thousands with a little food, turned water into wine and many more supernatural miracles. These were witnessed and recorded, not only by his followers, but even by gentiles and his haters. Someone who can perform these kinds of miracles surely deserves closer investigation and some credibility on what he says about himself.

Second, he didn’t simply demonstrate many miracles, but his life was painted with his good and wonderful character. In fact, it wasn’t his miracles, but it was his radical teachings that align with his good character that inspire people to respect and follow him. He loved and cared for the poor; he spoke against selfish leaders and empowered the weak and the outcast. He taught what it means to truly love others.

But, out of all the works he did, his resurrection was certainly one of the most amazing works that deserves our attention. You see, all people in our history eventually died. They can win our respect and become our good role models. But, when there is someone, who can do all kinds of miracles and has a good and wonderful character and

who can even conquer death, now he is no longer just a good teacher or role model. This is someone I need to follow and worship.

Even with all this evidence, however, if you think about it, even though it's a step of faith based on evidence, it's still faith; it requires that element of belief in what you do not or did not see. Because of this element of faith, Jesus offers the most powerful evidence: the Father's testimony. In verse 37 says, "The Father who sent me has himself testified on my behalf." Think about how all Christians down through the ages could have believed in Jesus. When Peter declared that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of the living God, Jesus responded, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven" (Matthew 16:17). Likewise, the Father works in the hearts of believers and increases our faith.

Another reason why many people could have faith is because this precious book, the Bible, is available to us. The Bible points to Jesus. Jesus himself claims this. In verse 39, he says to the Jews, "You study the Scriptures diligently because you think that in them you have eternal life. These are the very Scriptures that testify about me" (NIV). Here, Jesus makes two profound claims.

First, he argues the Scriptures were written to testify about him. In verse 46, he further claims that Moses wrote about him. I guess we don't have a hard time believing that the New Testament was written to testify about him. But, how can we believe that Moses' writings and the Old Testament were written about Jesus, when they never mention the name of Jesus, not even once?

It's like this. When I was in university, I was very lonely. I had many friends, but they were not my girlfriend. So, I began to talk to one of my friends to introduce her friend to me. I heard a lot about her, how she's nice and pretty. I didn't know who she was and what she actually looked like. I didn't even know her name. But, one day my friend finally decided to introduce her friend to me in person. I met her and we had a wonderful lunch together, and I knew she was a wonderful woman, exactly what my friend said about her. Moses and many of the Old Testament prophets continuously talked about this one person, who would come in the name of the Lord. There was a rising sense of expectation throughout the Old Testament that there would be this one person, who would show up and change the course of human history. Jesus fulfilled over 300 Old Testament prophecies spoken by different voices over hundreds of years, 29 of them in a single day. Many of these prophecies are pretty hard for one to imitate, because they are the things he cannot control, like birthplace, manner of his death, place of burial and more. When

Peter saw him, he recognized he was the one. Many people throughout history recognized, when they encountered the person of Jesus in their lives, that he is what he says he is.

He didn't simply argue that the Bible was written about him. Second, he also argues in verse 40 that if the one comes to him, he should have eternal life. He says, "You study the Scriptures diligently because you think that in them you have eternal life. These are the very Scriptures that testify about me, yet you refuse to come to me to have life" (NIV).

Now, how can people study the Bible so diligently and yet miss Jesus and the gift of eternal life? Sometime last year, I became very interested in a tablet pc. I have always been fond of a cool gadget and a tablet pc seems like a cool thing to have. So, I began to study it. I thought about it, read about different reviews on this gadget in magazines and online. I even joined its fan club, liked it on Facebook, followed it on twitter, pretending as if I owned one myself. I of course prayed about it, dreamed about it. I did everything I could to get more of it in my life. Only thing I didn't have was a tablet pc itself, until the last Boxing day when my wife finally said, "Go buy one." And this can sometimes happen in the life of a Christian. We could study the Bible diligently and like Jesus on Facebook and follow him on twitter and think about him and dream about him and become a member of his body, and yet we can have no relationship with him in our lives. It's one thing to know about him, but it's another matter to know him.

Someone can tell you everything about my wife, because he read about her on Facebook or biography, if there is one. But, I can tell you she is a wonderful woman, because of 10 years of my relationship with her. I can provide all this evidence about Jesus, but I can tell you he is the Messiah, the Son of the living God, because of my relationship with him; he has been always kind and gracious to me, and I know he is mighty and powerful enough to save me. All I'm saying here to you is that you should have an open heart and investigate who he is. When you deepen your faith and make that step of faith further into the closer relationship with him, you will begin to realize how he can transform your life. C. S. Lewis rightly says, "Christianity, if false, is of no importance, and if true, of infinite importance. The only thing it cannot be is moderately important." Come to him; he wants you to find him and know him – if you know him – more. May God bless your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.