

That You May Believe



Studies In The Gospel Of John

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The main idea and many of the points in this series were taken from the book
"**That You May Believe**", by Homer Hailey

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The outlines were developed in the course of my ministry as a preacher of the gospel. Feel free to use them as they are, or adapt them to suit your own personal style. To God be the glory!

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Introduction And Prologue

INTRODUCTION

1. John's purpose in writing his gospel is clearly stated in **Jn 20:30-31**...
 - a. To create faith in Jesus
 - b. That we might have life in His name
2. How does John create faith in his gospel?
 - a. Stating claims about Jesus in his prologue - **Jn 1:1-18**
 - b. Surveying the life of Jesus, with emphasis on claims made by Jesus Himself
 - c. Presenting evidence to sustain such claims
3. With this lesson we begin a series of studies on the gospel of John, with the goal...
 - a. To strengthen our own faith
 - b. To create faith in others who have yet to believe
4. In this lesson we shall consider **the prologue** and **the claims** made by John about Jesus...
 - a. For those who already accept Jesus as the Christ, this should help increase our understanding and appreciation for who Jesus really is
 - b. For those who may not yet believe in Him, this lesson should set the stage for studies to come
5. Let's begin by reading **Jn 1:1-18**...
 - a. Jesus is not mentioned by name until verse **17**
 - b. But it is clear that the "Word" is none other than Jesus Christ!

[Throughout this prologue, John makes several claims about Jesus. These claims illustrate Jesus' relation to various things...]

I. THE RELATION OF JESUS TO DEITY (1-2)

A. JESUS EXISTED BEFORE THE CREATION...

1. "In the beginning **was** the Word"
2. The word **was** suggests His being **eternal**

B. JESUS HAD A "FACE-TO-FACE" RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD...

1. "the Word was **with** God"
2. The word with implies a personal communion with God

C. JESUS POSSESSED THE FULNESS OF DEITY...

1. "the Word was **God**"
2. He possessed divine being, power, and attributes; i.e., Jesus was **deity!**

[When you sum up these attributes (eternal, personal, deity), then **in relation to deity** Jesus is "**the essence of God**", or "express image of God" (cf. **He 1:3**). We next note...]

II. THE RELATION OF JESUS TO THE PHYSICAL WORLD (3)

A. JESUS WAS THE ACTIVE AGENT OF CREATION...

1. "all things were made through Him"
2. "without Him nothing was made that was made"

B. JESUS MADE ALL THINGS...

1. "by Him all things were created..." - **Co 1:16**
2. "through whom (the Son) also He (the Father) made the worlds" - **He 1:2**

[**In relation to the physical world**, John (and others) proclaim Jesus to be "**the Creator**". What an amazing claim! But the claims regarding Jesus continue...]

III. THE RELATION OF JESUS TO THE MORAL WORLD (4)

A. JESUS IS THE GIVER OF LIFE...

1. "in Him was life"
2. In the moral or spiritual realm, Jesus came to offer life - cf. **Jn 10:10**

B. JESUS IS THE SOURCE OF LIGHT...

1. "and the life was the light of men"
2. As the giver of life, He is the source of "light" to men in a morally dark world - cf. **Jn 8:12**

[**In relation to the moral world**, then, John proclaims Jesus to be "**the life and the light**". The impact of Jesus on the moral world is described even further...]

IV. THE RELATION OF JESUS TO DARKNESS (5,9)

A. JESUS CHALLENGES MORAL DARKNESS...

1. "the light shines in the darkness"
2. As true spiritual light, Jesus came to challenge the moral darkness in this world

B. JESUS WAS VICTORIOUS OVER THE DARKNESS...

1. "the darkness did not comprehend it"
2. That is, the darkness could not overpower the light
3. By believing in Jesus, those in darkness were able to escape - cf. **Jn 12:46**
4. Thus Jesus is the "true Light" who gives light to all - **Jn 1:9**

[So **in relation to darkness**, John makes the claim that Jesus is "**the challenger and victor**". Next, he describes...]

V. THE RELATION OF JESUS TO HUMANITY (10-13)

A. JESUS WAS THE CREATOR...

1. "the world was made through Him"
2. Here the "world" refers to humankind

B. JESUS WAS THE BENEFACTOR...

1. Who was "in the world...the world did not know Him"
 - a. "He came to His own" - that is, to His own nation, people (Israel)
 - b. "His own did not receive Him" - rejected by His nation, even members of His own family were skeptical (until after the resurrection) - cf. **Jn 7:5; Mk 3:21; Ac 1:14**
2. "But as many as received Him"
 - a. I.e., "to those who believe in His name"
 - b. "To them He gave the right to become children of God"
 - c. They were blessed to be "born...of God" - cf. **Jn 3:5-7**

[Therefore **in relation to humanity**, Jesus is presented as "**the creator and benefactor**". John then reveals...]

VI. THE RELATION OF JESUS TO THE FATHER (14,18)

A. JESUS BECAME FLESH...

1. As the Word, Jesus "became flesh"
 - a. He "dwelt among us"
 - b. John and others "beheld His glory"
2. He was "the only begotten of the Father"

B. JESUS ALONE HAS SEEN AND CAN REVEAL THE FATHER...

1. "No one has seen God at any time" - cf. **Exo 33:20; Jn 6:46; 1 Jn 4:12**
2. But "He has declared Him" - cf. **Jn 14:9; Mt 11:27**

[**In relation to the Father**, Jesus is the ultimate "**revelation**" one can have of God in this life! Finally, John makes mention of...]

VII. THE RELATION OF JESUS TO GRACE AND TRUTH (14,16-17)

A. JESUS WAS ITS FULNESS...

1. "full of grace and truth"
2. Because His "glory as of the only begotten of the Father"

B. JESUS GAVE ITS FULNESS...

1. "of His fulness we have all received, and grace for grace"
2. **pleroma** (fulness) - "that which is completed, i.e., the complement, the full tale, the entire number or quantity, the plenitude, the perfection" - Lightfoot
3. In Jesus, then, is the fullness of God's grace and truth for mankind - cf. **Jn 14:6; Co 1:19-22**

CONCLUSION

1. Such are the claims made by John in the prologue of his gospel...
 - a. In relation to deity, Jesus is the essence of God
 - b. In relation to the physical world, Jesus is the creator
 - c. In relation to the moral world, Jesus is the life and light
 - d. In relation to darkness, Jesus is challenger and victor
 - e. In relation to humanity, Jesus is creator and benefactor
 - f. In relation to the Father, Jesus is revelation
 - g. In relation to grace and truth, Jesus is fulness

2. In our next three lessons, we shall consider the claims made by Jesus Himself, involving...
 - a. His relation to God
 - b. His relation to the Messianic hope
 - c. His relation to human needs

3. Then, in three lessons we shall consider the evidence...
 - a. Presented by John in his gospel
 - b. Intended to support these claims

4. Finally, a lesson to note why many did not believe in Jesus even when He lived among them

In view of the magnitude of these claims, do we dare ignore them? If they are true, then we must believe on Him if we are to truly find eternal life...!

That You May Believe

Jesus' Claims In Relation To God

INTRODUCTION

1. In John's prologue (**Jn 1:1-18**), we noted the claims he made regarding Jesus; that in relation to:
 - a. **Deity**, Jesus is **the essence of God**
 - b. **The physical world**, Jesus is **the creator**
 - c. **The moral world**, Jesus is **the life** and **the light**
 - d. **The darkness**, Jesus is **the challenger** and **the victor**
 - e. **Humanity**, Jesus is **the creator** and **the benefactor**
 - f. **The Father**, Jesus is **the revelation**
 - g. **Grace and truth**, Jesus is **the fulness**
2. At this point in our study, we begin a closer look at **claims made by Jesus** Himself...
 - a. In particular, His claims regarding His relationship to God
 - b. Which should help us appreciate John's claim: *"No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him."* - **Jn 1:18**

[First we note that on least two occasions Jesus claimed...]

I. HE CAME FROM GOD

A. AFTER FEEDING THE FIVE THOUSAND...

1. He claimed to be "the bread of life" sent from the Father - **Jn 6:32-35**
2. His claim is stated more clearly - **Jn 6:38**
3. In connection with this claim...
 - a. Those who heard Him had problems with this claim - **Jn 6:41,42**
 - b. He said people must accept Him as "the bread sent from heaven" - **Jn 6:57-58**
 - c. Many found it hard to accept - cf. **Jn 6:60,66**

B. IN THE TEMPLE, AT THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES...

1. Again He claims to have come from God - **Jn 7:28-29**
2. Causing some to try to seize Him - **Jn 7:30-32**
3. Yet He continued to speak this way of Himself - **Jn 8:23,42**

[If such a claim was difficult for some to accept, imagine their difficulty as Jesus made another claim in relation to God...]

II. HE ALONE HAS SEEN GOD

A. HIS CLAIM TO HAVE SEEN GOD...

1. He alone has seen the Father - cf. **Jn 6:46**
2. The same claim stated by John in **Jn 1:18**

B. WHAT ABOUT REFERENCES TO THOSE WHO SAW GOD...?

1. For example, when the Lord appeared to:
 - a. Abraham - **Gen 17:1**
 - b. Isaac and Jacob - cf. **Exo 6:3**
 - c. Moses - cf. **Num 12:8; Deu 34:10**
2. Such "visions" of God explained:
 - a. The same Scriptures declared that one could not see God and live - cf. **Exo 33:17-23**
 - b. What they saw were representations of God
 - 1) E.g., the Angel of His presence (whom some think was Jesus in pre-incarnate form) - cf. **Exo 13:21; 14:19**
 - 2) E.g., the burning bush, the pillar of fire, cloud of smoke, bright glory, etc.

[Jesus' claim to have seen God is very unique, that He alone has seen God as He truly is! Closely connected to this claim is another one...]

III. HE KNOWS GOD

A. THE GREEK WORDS FOR "KNOW" DEFINED...

1. **ginosko** - "knowing which is the result of discernment and which may be enlarged"
2. **oida** - "implies absolute knowledge: the knowledge of intuition and of satisfied conviction"

B. JESUS USED BOTH TO DESCRIBE HIS KNOWLEDGE OF GOD...

1. "I know (ginosko) the Father" - **Jn 10:14,15**
 - a. Knowledge which comes through experience
 - b. By which we also can know the Father
2. "I know (oida) Him" - **Jn 7:29**
 - a. This is absolute knowledge
 - b. Which comes from having been with the Father, and having seen Him
 - c. This knowledge of God only Jesus can rightly claim to possess - cf. **Jn 8:55**

[Having claimed to come from God, that He alone has seen God and truly knows God, we should not be surprised to note Jesus also claimed that...]

IV. HE REVEALS GOD

A. HE OFFERS A COMPLETE REVELATION OF GOD...

1. As John stated in his prologue - **Jn 1:18**
2. As Jesus claimed on at least two separate occasions
 - a. To the Pharisees - **Jn 12:44-45**
 - b. To His disciples - **Jn 14:7-10**

B. THE IMPLICATION OF THIS CLAIM...

1. To reject Jesus is to reject the only full revelation of God made known to man!
2. Thus to reject Jesus is to reject God! - cf. **Jn 15:23**

[Finally, we note the claim that caused great irritation among the Jews...]

V. HE IS EQUAL TO GOD

A. THIS CLAIM IRRITATED HIS JEWISH BRETHREN...

1. For this claim they tried to kill Him - e.g., **Jn 5:16-18**
2. They viewed it as blasphemy - cf. **Jn 10:30-33**

B. JESUS EVEN TOOK UPON HIMSELF GOD'S SPECIAL NAME...

1. The Name revealed to Moses at the burning bush - cf. **Exo 3:13-14**
2. Calling Himself the "I AM" - cf. **Jn 8:56-59**
3. Teaching others that it was necessary to believe in Him as such - **Jn 8:24**

CONCLUSION

1. In relation to God, Jesus therefore claimed:
 - a. He came from God
 - b. He alone has seen God
 - c. He knows God
 - d. He reveals God
 - e. He is equal to God-- **Certainly these are claims difficult to accept from someone who was simply "a great man"**
2. Jesus was either a liar, a lunatic, or everything He claimed to be: **the fullest revelation of God made known to man, and the only way to God - cf. Jn 14:6**

Before we consider the evidence John presents in his gospel to substantiate such claims, we want to look at even more claims made by Jesus in our next study...

That You May Believe

Jesus' Claims In Relation To The Messianic Hope

INTRODUCTION

1. Who was Jesus? What did He claim to be?
2. In our previous study, we noticed how Jesus claimed...
 - a. That He came from God
 - b. That He alone has seen God
 - c. That He knows God
 - d. That He reveals God
 - e. That He is equal to God-- **These claims all pertain to His relation to God**
3. Jesus also made claims **in relation to the Messianic hope**...
 - a. A hope cherished by many Jews at that time
 - b. A hope Jesus claimed to have fulfilled - cf. **Jn 4:25-26**
4. In this lesson our purpose is to...
 - a. Look closer at the Old Testament concept of the Messiah
 - b. Notice how Jesus claimed to the fulfillment of the Messianic hope

[In the Old Testament we find promises concerning the coming of a Messiah. Let's consider...]

I. THE OLD TESTAMENT CONCEPT OF THE MESSIAH

A. THE TERM "MESSIAH" DEFINED...

1. In Hebrew, it means "**anointed one**"
2. The Greek counterpart to "Messiah" is "**Christ**"
3. In the Old Testament, it is used as...
 - a. An **adjective** in regards to the **priests** ("the anointed priest") who were anointed with oil when consecrated - cf. **Lev 4:3; 8:12**
 - b. A noun in regards to kings ("the LORD's anointed") who likewise were anointed with oil - cf. **1 Sam 24:6; 2 Sam 2:4**

B. THE MESSIANIC CONCEPT DEVELOPED...

1. It began with **Moses**
 - a. He said God would raise up a **prophet** - cf. **Deu 18:15,17-19**
 - b. In Jesus' day, people were anticipating a prophet - cf. **Jn 1:19-21**
2. It continued with **David**
 - a. Who spoke of "the anointed one" as **God** and an **everlasting king** - **Psa 45:6-7**
 - b. Who spoke of One who would be both **king** and **priest** - **Psa 110:1-4**
3. It was expounded upon by **the prophets**

- a. **Isaiah** spoke of One who would be **Mighty God**, and a **king forever** - **Isa 9:6-7**
- b. **Micah** wrote of One who would be a **preexistent king** and **shepherd** - **Mic 5:2-4**
- c. **Jeremiah** foretold of One who would be a **king** and **savior** - **Jer 23:5,6**
- d. **Zechariah** told of One who be a **priest on His throne** - **Zec 6:12-13**

[With great expectation, the people of Jesus' day were looking for the coming of this "Messiah" (cf. **Jn 4:25**). As revealed in **Jn 4:26**, Jesus did not hesitate to claim to be the Messiah...]

II. JESUS' CLAIMS TO BE THE MESSIAH

A. HE CLAIMED TO BE "PROPHET" ...

1. A spokesman for the Father - **Jn 8:26,28**
 2. One who speaks only the things of the Father - **Jn 12:49-50**
- **Fulfilling the anticipation sparked by Moses**

B. HE CLAIMED TO BE "GOD" ...

1. As examined in our previous lesson
 2. For example, recall **Jn 5:18; 10:33**
- **Fulfilling the anticipation sparked by David and Isaiah**

C. HE CLAIMED TO BE "KING" ...

1. When questioned by Pilate - **Jn 18:37**
 2. Whose kingdom was not of this world - **Jn 18:36**
- **Fulfilling the anticipation sparked by David, Isaiah, Micah, Jeremiah, and Zechariah**

D. HE CLAIMED TO BE "SHEPHERD" ...

1. The good shepherd who gives His life for His sheep - **Jn 10:11**
 2. The good shepherd who knows His sheep - **Jn 10:14**
- **Fulfilling the anticipation sparked by Micah**

E. HE CLAIMED TO BE "SAVIOR" ...

1. In one of His last public speeches - **Jn 12:44-47**
 2. As recorded in the other gospels - **Mt 18:11; Lk 9:56; 19:10**
- **Fulfilling the anticipation sparked by Jeremiah**

F. HE CLAIMED TO FUNCTION AS "PRIEST" ...

1. In saying that one must go through Him to go to the Father - **Jn 14:6**
 2. As later taught by His disciples - cf. **He 4:14-16**
- **Fulfilling the anticipation sparked by David and Zechariah**

CONCLUSION

1. In this way Jesus claimed to fulfill the Messianic expectations...
 - a. Later we shall consider the evidence John presents to sustain such claims
 - b. They were claims that certainly prompted the people to wonder - cf. **Jn 7:26**

2. But a closing thought for those of us who profess Jesus to be the Messiah: **Do we demonstrate by our lives that we really believe Jesus is our Messiah?**

As our **Prophet**...to whom we are to listen as God's spokesman and obey?

As our **God**...to whom we are to humbly submit and reverently worship?

As our **King**...to whom we grant absolute authority and rule in our lives?

As our **Shepherd**...in whom we place our complete trust and find our greatest source of comfort?

As our **Savior**...in whom we depend for the salvation of our souls?

As our **Priest**...through whom we approach our Heavenly Father in prayer?

Unless we allow Jesus to be **all** these things in our lives, can we really say that we believe Him to be **the Christ, the Messiah, God's anointed one** ?

That You May Believe

Jesus' Claims In Relation To Human Needs

INTRODUCTION

1. We have considered claims made by Jesus...
 - a. In relation to God
 - b. In relation to the Messianic hope
 - Indeed, they are great claims!
2. Jesus made claims that were not only great, but relate to basic personal needs common to all
3. In this study we shall consider...
 - a. These human needs
 - b. The claims Jesus made in relation to them

[One basic need of man is...]

I. THE NEED TO HAVE FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD

A. CONCERNING THIS NEED...

1. Many may deny they have this need
2. Yet a simple look at the history of mankind reveals otherwise
 - a. Every civilization bears record of man's search for God
 - b. While concepts of God may vary, man is united in the need to know God
3. Paul explained that this "need" is innate with man - cf. **Ac 17:24-28**
 - a. God created man with an inner desire to seek the Lord
 - b. Though often suppressed, this desire prompts one to "grope for Him"
4. Those who deny this need go through life never finding full satisfaction
 - a. Like Solomon in his search for meaning, they explore material things (riches, fame, drugs, sex, etc.)
 - b. If permitted enough time to exhaust their search, like Solomon they often conclude as did he: "All is vanity and grasping for wind" - cf. **Ecc 1:12-14**
5. It is only when we come to have fellowship with God that life can be complete
 - a. Material things alone do not satisfy this longing
 - b. Solomon concluded that man's purpose is to fear God and keep His commandments - **Ecc 12:13-14**
 - c. Jesus said that "man does not live by bread alone" - **Mt 4:4**

B. JESUS CLAIMS TO FULFILL THIS NEED...

1. To be the complete revelation of God - **Jn 14:7-9**
2. To provide the only avenue for fellowship with Him - **Jn 14:6**

[Closely aligned with this need to know God and have fellowship with Him is...]

II. THE NEED FOR SALVATION FROM SIN

A. CONCERNING THIS NEED...

1. Again, many may deny this need
2. But the sins of mankind are obvious - cf. **2 Ti 3:1-4**
 - a. The problem lies within man himself - **Mk 7:21-23**
 - b. Thus man cannot save himself
 - c. He is therefore in need of salvation from the consequences of sin
 - 1) The guilt of sin
 - 2) The power of sin
3. Fulfilling this need directly affects our being able to satisfy the need to have fellowship with God - **Isa 59:1-2**
 - a. Our sins separate us from God
 - b. Our sins prevent us from being heard by God

B. JESUS CLAIMS TO PROVIDE THE SOLUTION...

1. He offers to set one free from sin - **Jn 8:30-36**
 - a. Free from the guilt of sin
 - b. Free from the slavery of sin
2. This He does in two ways
 - a. Through His death on the cross, which deals with the guilt of sin - **Jn 3:14-18**
 - b. Through the sending of the Spirit, which addresses the power of sin - **Jn 7:37-39**; cf. **Ro 8:11-13**

[In addition to claiming to provide the way to fellowship with God and salvation from sin, we see that Jesus also claims to fulfill...]

III. THE NEED FOR GUIDANCE IN LIFE

A. CONCERNING THIS NEED...

1. That man has such a need is clearly taught in the Scriptures
 - a. It is not in man to direct his steps - **Jer 10:23**
 - b. What seems right to man can lead to death - **Pro 16:25**
2. Evidence is seen in societies which forget God
 - a. Moral chaos is often the result - e.g., **Ro 1:28-32**
 - b. Where chaos in societies (and individual lives) does not exist, it is only because:
 - 1) Such are guided by God-given principles of justice and righteousness
 - 2) Established previously when people did seek God for guidance

B. JESUS CLAIMS TO PROVIDE THIS GUIDANCE...

1. He offers Himself as "the light of the world" - **Jn 8:12**
2. He offers Himself as "the good Shepherd" - **Jn 10:11**
3. He claims to be "the king" - **Jn 18:37**

[As our **king**, **shepherd**, and **light**, Jesus claims to guide us safely through a dark and difficult world. He also claims to fulfill...]

IV. THE NEED FOR SPIRITUAL SUSTENANCE

A. CONCERNING THIS NEED...

1. Man is both a physical and spiritual being
2. We have seen that a purely materialistic world does not truly satisfy - **Mt 4:4**
3. The spiritual side of man must also be fulfilled

B. JESUS CLAIMS TO PROVIDE SPIRITUAL SUSTENANCE...

1. He offers "the water of life" - **Jn 4:13-14**
2. He claims to be "the bread of life" - **Jn 6:35**
3. He offers "fullness of joy" - **Jn 15:11**
4. He offers "peace"
 - a. A peace the world cannot give - **Jn 14:27**
 - b. A peace that overcomes tribulation - **Jn 16:33**
5. He offers "abundant life" - **Jn 10:10**

[Finally, we note how Jesus claimed to fulfill...]

V. THE NEED FOR IMMORTALITY

A. CONCERNING THIS NEED...

1. History records mankind's search and longing for immortality (e.g., the pyramids)
2. Today, we express this need through:
 - a. Our desire to prolong life
 - b. Our fear of death and dying

B. JESUS CLAIMS TO OFFER IMMORTALITY...

1. By claiming to one day raise the dead - **Jn 5:26-29**
2. By claiming to be "the resurrection and the life" - **Jn 11:25-26**

CONCLUSION

1. We have now considered the claims of Jesus...
 - a. In relation to deity
 - b. In relation to the Messianic hope
 - c. In relation to human needs
2. Whoever would make claims like these cannot be "just" a good man...
 - a. He is either a liar, a lunatic, or the Lord!
 - b. Which do you think Jesus is?

Our next three lessons shall review the evidence John presents in his gospel designed to produce faith in Jesus as Lord

That You May Believe

The Human Testimony

INTRODUCTION

1. In our study so far we have considered claims...
 - a. Made by John about Jesus in his prologue - **Jn 1:1-18**
 - b. Made by Jesus concerning Himself throughout the gospel of John
 - 1) In relation to God
 - 2) In relation to the Messianic hope
 - 3) In relation to human needs
2. The nature of these claims prevent Jesus from being simply a great man...
 - a. He must be what He claimed to be (the Son of God)
 - b. Or He was either a deceiver (liar) or a deranged man (lunatic)
3. We now begin to consider the evidence presented to sustain the claims...
 - a. Starting with the **human testimony** recorded by John
 - b. Being careful to properly define and declare the value of such testimony

I. HUMAN TESTIMONY DEFINED AND EVALUATED

A. DEFINING HUMAN TESTIMONY...

1. "...the testimony of an impression made on the witnesses by their contact with Jesus"
- **Homer Hailey, That You Might Believe, p. 88**
2. "The testimony of and within itself does not prove any claim made by Jesus" (ibid.)
3. "The evidence is circumstantial and incidental, but it is worthy of a candid and fair consideration" (ibid.)

B. EVALUATING HUMAN TESTIMONY...

1. "The force of human testimony depends upon three things..."
 - a. "First, the honesty of the witnesses"
 - b. "Second, their competency"
 - c. "Third, their number"
-- **J. W. McGarvey, Evidences Of Christianity, Book II, p. 146**
2. McGarvey goes on to explain:
 - a. "We ascertain whether they are honest, by considering their general character and their motives in the particular case..."
 - b. "Competency is determined by considering the opportunities of the witness to obtain knowledge of that to which he testifies, and his mental capacity to observe and remember the facts."
 - c. "The requisite number varies with the degree of probability attached to the facts."
-- (ibid.)

[With this brief introduction to the meaning and value of human testimony, let's now take a look at the...]

II. HUMAN TESTIMONY OFFERED BY JOHN

A. TESTIMONY OFFERED BY HIS FRIENDS...

1. John the Baptist - **Jn 1:29-34**
 - a. A cousin of Jesus
 - b. Had been told how to identify the Messiah
 - c. Declared Jesus to be:
 - 1) The Lamb of God
 - 2) The Son of God
 2. The early disciples - **Jn 1:40-49**
 - a. Andrew declared Him to be the Messiah
 - b. Philip said He was the One of whom Moses and the prophets wrote
 - c. Nathanael confessed him to be the Son of God, King of Israel
 3. Peter - **Jn 6:68-69**
 - a. Believed Jesus to have the words of eternal life
 - b. Declared Jesus as the Holy One of God
 4. Martha - **Jn 11:27**
 - a. Believed Jesus to be the Christ
 - b. Believed Jesus to be the Son of God
 5. The disciples at the last supper - **Jn 16:30**
 - a. Believed that He knew all things
 - b. Believed that He came from God
 6. Thomas - **Jn 20:24-28**
 - a. Skeptical of the other apostles' testimony
 - b. Convinced by empirical evidence that Jesus was Lord and God
- **Such testimony did not come without a price; one must wonder what their motive was to lie (if such was the case)**

B. TESTIMONY OFFERED BY THE MASSES...

1. Nicodemus - **Jn 3:1-2**
 - a. An official of the Sanhedrin council - cf. **Jn 7:50-51**
 - b. Confessed Jesus to be a teacher from God
2. The Samaritans - **Jn 4:19,42**
 - a. The woman at the well confessed Him to be a prophet
 - b. The villagers were convinced that He was the Christ, the savior of the world
3. The multitude (offering a divided opinion)
 - a. "He is a good man" vs. "He leads the multitude away" - **Jn 7:12**
 - b. "The Prophet" or "the Christ" vs. doubt concerning Him - **Jn 7:40-43**
 - c. "The King of Israel" vs. "Crucify Him!" - cf. **Jn 12:12-13; 19:15**
4. The Jews (also divided) - **Jn 10:19-21**
 - a. "He has a demon and is mad!"
 - b. "Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?"
5. The man born blind - **Jn 9:17,25**
 - a. "He is a prophet"

- b. "One thing I know: that though I was blind, now I see."
- 6. Pilate - **Jn 18:38; 19:4,6**
 - a. Roman governor who interrogated Jesus
 - b. Stated three times: "I find no fault in Him."
- **The testimony of these human witnesses varies, but it seems that the closer one got to Jesus, the more convinced they became**

C. TESTIMONY BY HIS ENEMIES...

- 1. The officers, sent to arrest Him - **Jn 7:45-46**
 - a. Sent by the chief priests and Pharisees to arrest Jesus
 - b. So moved by Jesus, they could not arrest Him ("No man ever spoke like this Man!")
- 2. The Pharisees - **Jn 11:47-48**
 - a. Acknowledged that Jesus worked many signs
 - b. Aware of His great influence
- **They may have tried to deny who He claimed to be, but they did not try to deny what He did**

CONCLUSION

- 1. Some thoughts concerning the **human testimony** recorded by John...
 - a. For one seeking to produce faith in Jesus, John demonstrates remarkable objectivity
 - 1) He does not gloss over the fact that many did not believe in Jesus
 - 2) He presents a fair representation of the human testimony concerning Jesus
 - b. Some believed in Jesus, others did not; but note carefully...
 - 1) Those who knew Him best, believed in Him
 - 2) Those who were ignorant of the facts, were quick to deny Him
 - c. Even His enemies could not deny the force of His teachings and the power of His miracles
 - 1) They could only try to attribute His power to the devil
 - 2) As a last resort, they felt they had to kill Him
- 2. What about us today? What will we do with Jesus?
 - a. Will we make the effort to learn more about Him?
 - b. Will we be like many who were quick to draw conclusions before they had all the facts?

Jesus made a powerful impression upon those who saw and heard Him. Those who knew Him best were even more impressed. Hopefully, their testimony will encourage us to consider what further testimony John presents in His gospel about Jesus, the Son of God...

That You May Believe

The Father's Testimony Through Signs

INTRODUCTION

1. In our last lesson, we considered **the human testimony** recorded in John's gospel...
 - a. Such as that offered by John the Baptist, the early disciples and others who believed
 - b. But also the testimony by the masses, including many who did not believe-- As noted, human testimony alone does not prove Jesus to be the Son of God

2. Jesus Himself did not depend upon human testimony alone as evidence - cf. **Jn 5:33-37**
 - a. He recognized human testimony, such as that offered by John the Baptist
 - b. Yet appealed to a "greater witness", that of His Father's testimony!-- Jesus encouraged people to consider **the Father's testimony** as evidenced **by the works** which He did

[In this lesson we shall define the purpose of the works or "signs" Jesus did, and note how they serve as evidence to sustain the claims Jesus made...]

I. THE PURPOSE OF SIGNS

A. DEFINITION OF "SIGN"...

1. The Greek word is **semeion**
 2. Used "of miracles and wonders by which God authenticates the men sent by Him, or by which men prove that the cause they are pleading is God's." - **Thayer**
- This word is used by John almost exclusively in his gospel (as opposed to miracle or wonder)

B. THE PURPOSE OF "SIGNS"...

1. Jesus claimed that the works, miracles or wonders He performed "bear witness of Me" - **Jn 5:36**
2. The Father bore witness through these "signs" to the validity of His claims (such as the claim "the Father has sent Me")

[What were these "signs" in which the Father bore testimony concerning Jesus? John says there were many (**Jn 20:30**), too many to record them all (**Jn 21:25**). In his gospel, John records at least seven...]

II. SEVEN SIGNS RECORDED BY JOHN

A. TURNING WATER TO WINE...

1. This sign was done in **Cana** of Galilee - **Jn 2:1-11**
2. Jesus demonstrated His power over **creation**
 - a. Proving the claim made in the prologue ("All things came into being by Him") - **Jn 1:3**
 - b. I.e., **He is the Creator!**

B. HEALING THE NOBLEMAN'S SON...

1. Also done in **Cana** of Galilee - **Jn 4:46-54**
2. Jesus demonstrated His power over **physical disease**
 - a. Supporting His claim to provide salvation from **spiritual disease** - cf. **Jn 8:34-36**
 - b. I.e., **He is the Savior!**

C. HEALING THE LAME MAN...

1. Done in **Jerusalem**, at the pool of Bethesda - **Jn 5:1-9**
2. Jesus demonstrated His power over **birth defects**
 - a. Used to show His equality with God - **Jn 5:17-21**
 - b. I.e., **He is Deity**, and capable of giving life!

D. FEEDING THE FIVE THOUSAND...

1. Done near **Bethsaida** of Galilee - **Jn 6:1-14**
2. Jesus showed His power over **food supply**
 - a. Proving His claim to provide man with his spiritual needs - **Jn 6:35**
 - b. I.e., **He is the Bread of Life!**

E. WALKING ON THE WATER...

1. On the **Sea of Galilee** - **Jn 6:16-21**
2. Jesus showed His power over **nature**
 - a. Once again confirming the claim made by John in the prologue - **Jn 1:3**
 - b. I.e., **He is the Creator!**

F. HEALING THE BLIND MAN...

1. A man in **Jerusalem** who was blind from birth - **Jn 9:1-12**
2. Jesus showed His power over **blindness**
 - a. Confirming His claim to be "the light of the world" - **Jn 8:12**
 - b. I.e., **He is the Light!**

G. RAISING LAZARUS FROM THE DEAD...

1. Done at **Bethany** - **Jn 11:39-44**
2. Jesus shows His power over **death**
 - a. Proving His claim to be "the resurrection and the life" - **Jn 11:25**
 - b. I.e., **He is the Life!**

[Through such signs as these seven, the Father bore testimony concerning Jesus of Nazareth. They were designed to impact those who saw them. Indeed they did...]

III. TESTIMONY BY WITNESSES OF THE SIGNS

A. NICODEMUS...

1. "You are a teacher come from God" - **Jn 3:2a**
2. "No one can do these signs that you do unless God is with him" - **Jn 3:2b**

B. THE MULTITUDE...

1. "When the Christ comes, will He do more signs than these which this Man has done?"
2. Prompting many to believe in Him - **Jn 7:31**

C. HIS ENEMIES...

1. "What shall we do? For this Man works many signs." - **Jn 11:47**
2. They could not deny the signs, though they refused to accept their implications

CONCLUSION

1. John stated his purpose in recording these "signs" of Jesus, including the one in which He showed Himself alive to doubting Thomas (cf. **Jn 20:26-29**)
 - a. That we might believe in Jesus as the Son of God
 - b. That we have life in His name - **Jn 20:30-31**
2. Jesus said these "signs" served as testimony from the Father - **Jn 5:36**
 - a. That the Father sent Him
 - b. That He is everything He claimed to be

The question we face is this: Do we ignore these signs, attested to even by the enemies of Jesus? Or do we accept them as testimony from the Father, that the claims of Jesus are true? The blessing of eternal life hangs in the balance...

That You May Believe

The Father's Testimony Through Scripture

INTRODUCTION

1. We saw where Jesus appealed to His Father's testimony through **signs** ...
 - a. Miracles and wonders that Jesus did (e.g., turning water to wine, healing the nobleman's son, healing the lame man, etc.)
 - b. In which the Father bore witness to Jesus as being sent by God - cf. **Jn 5:36**
2. Jesus also appealed to His Father's testimony through **scripture** ...
 - a. The same Scriptures many looked to for eternal life - cf. **Jn 5:39a**
 - b. Scriptures which themselves bore witness to Jesus - cf. **Jn 5:39b**
3. From **Lk 24:44**, we can assume that Jesus had in mind the following scriptures...
 - a. The Law of Moses
 - b. The Psalms
 - c. The Prophets-- Note Jesus' words in **Jn 5:45-47**

[In these scriptures were many prophecies concerning the Messiah. In John's gospel, he records how many of these prophecies bore witness to Jesus as the Messiah...]

I. THE PROPHECIES OF MOSES

A. THE SEED OF WOMAN...

1. Recorded in **Gen 3:15**
 2. Depicting conflict that would exist between Satan and Christ
 3. This conflict referred to by Jesus in **Jn 12:31-33; 14:30**
- Jesus' resurrection proved Him to be the fulfillment of this conflict - cf.
- He 2:14-15**

B. THE SEED OF ABRAHAM...

1. Recorded in **Gen 12:1-3; 22:18**
 2. That in his seed (Christ) all the nations would be blessed
 3. Jesus made reference to the promise made to Abraham - **Jn 8:56**
- In their gospels, Matthew and Mark reveal Jesus' genealogy from Abraham

C. THE PROPHET TO COME...

1. Recorded in **Deu 18:15,17-19**
 2. The prophet like Moses whom they were to heed
 3. Jesus claimed to be such a spokesman (prophet) from God - **Jn 12:48-49**
- His apostles later declared Jesus to be this prophet - cf.
- Ac 3:22-26**

[From the prophecies of Moses, we turn now to...]

II. THE PROPHECIES BY THE PROPHETS

A. THE FORERUNNER...

1. Recorded in **Isa 40:3**
2. A reference to one who would prepare people for the coming of the Lord
3. John the Baptist makes reference to this prophecy - **Jn 1:19-23**
-- Thus the work and testimony of John the Baptist fulfilled this prophecy

B. THE SPIRIT COMING UPON HIM...

1. Several prophecies found in **Isa 11:2; 42:1; 61:1**
2. In which the Spirit was to come upon the Messiah
3. A fulfillment to which both John the Baptist and Jesus refer - **Jn 1:32-33; 3:34**
-- Luke also records how Jesus fulfilled such prophecies - cf. **Lk 4:16-21**

C. THE REJECTED TEACHER...

1. Prophecies related to this are **Isa 53:1; 6:9,10**
2. In which many would not receive the Messiah because of dull hearts
3. John made reference to these passages - **Jn 12:37-41**
-- The Jews' rejection of Jesus and His teachings thus fulfilled Isaiah's prophecy

D. THE KING'S ENTRANCE...

1. Recorded in **Zech 9:9**
2. Israel's king would come to Jerusalem riding on a donkey
3. John records Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem - **Jn 12:12-16**
-- Later, His disciples would understand how this fulfilled what was written of the Messiah

E. THE CRUCIFIXION AND BURIAL...

1. Reference to the crucifixion of the Messiah is made in **Zech 12:10**
2. Reference to his burial is found in **Isa 53:9**
3. John describes the crucifixion in detail, and refers to Zechariah's prophecy - **Jn 19:37**
4. He also refers to Isaiah's prophecy regarding His burial - **Jn 19:38-42**

[The Father's testimony through Scripture was not limited to prophecies found in the writings of Moses and the Prophets. Let's briefly note how John also make several references to...]

III. THE PROPHECIES IN THE PSALMS

A. HIS ZEAL...

1. Recorded in **Psa 69:9**
2. Mentioned by John in regards to Jesus cleansing the temple - **Jn 2:14-17**

B. HIS FAMILIAR FRIEND...

1. Recorded in **Psa 41:9**
2. Mentioned by Jesus in regards to the betrayal by Judas - **Jn 13:18**

C. BEING HATED WITHOUT A CAUSE...

1. Recorded in **Psa 35:19; 69:4**
2. Jesus explained that the Jews' rejection of Him fulfilled these passages - **Jn 15:24-25**

D. THE PARTING OF HIS GARMENTS...

1. Recorded in **Psa 22:18**
2. John explains this was fulfilled by the soldiers during the crucifixion - **Jn 19:24**

E. THE OFFER OF GALL AND VINEGAR...

1. Recorded in **Psa 69:21**
2. This was fulfilled by Jesus while on the cross - **Jn 19:28-30**

CONCLUSION

1. Through the writings of Moses, the prophets, and the Psalms, the Father was bearing testimony...
 - a. Preparing Israel for the coming of the Messiah
 - b. Providing a way for them to be able to recognize the Messiah
 - c. Proving that Jesus was everything that He claimed to be regarding the Messiah
2. We should not underestimate the force of such testimony from the Father...
 - a. It has been estimated that over 300 prophecies were fulfilled by Jesus
 - b. The likelihood that anyone coincidentally or purposefully fulfilled all these prophecies is mathematically implausible

The apostles' depended heavily upon the testimony by the Father through Scriptures to convince people that Jesus was the Christ (cf. **Ac 3:24; 17:2-3**). Are we willing to accept the Father's testimony concerning His Son given through the Scriptures? Will we allow the Scriptures to produce faith in our hearts (cf. **Ro 10:17**)?

That You May Believe

The Testimony For Jesus' Resurrection

INTRODUCTION

1. In this study we have noted that John seeks to produce faith in Jesus...
 - a. By recording the **claims** concerning Jesus
 - 1) Made by John in his prologue to the gospel
 - 2) Made by Jesus Himself throughout His ministry
 - b. By recording **testimony** to support such claims
 - 1) The testimony of those who saw and heard Jesus
 - 2) The testimony of the Father through signs and Scripture
2. Perhaps the strongest testimony provided by John is that of Jesus' resurrection...
 - a. For if Jesus truly did rise from the dead...
 - b. ...He is everything that both Jesus and John claimed!

[What evidence is there for the resurrection of Jesus? In John's gospel, the testimony for Jesus' resurrection begins with Jesus' death; in other words, what is said about...]

I. THE CRUCIFIXION

A. THE EVIDENCE...

1. The soldiers' observation that Jesus was dead - **Jn 19:31-33**
2. Blood and water coming from Jesus' pierced side - **Jn 19:34**
 - a. Medical authorities have commented on this phenomenon as evidence that it proves Jesus died on the cross (not sometime later)
 - b. "There remains, therefore, no supposition possible to explain the recorded phenomenon except the combination of the crucifixion and rupture of the heart." - Samuel Houghton, M.D. (physiologist from the University of Dublin)
3. John's testimony of this phenomenon - **Jn 19:35**
4. The testimony of Tacitus, Roman historian (ca. 112 A.D.) - "Christus, the founder of the name, was put to death by Pontius Pilate, procurator of Judea in the reign of Tiberias."

B. THE ALTERNATIVE...

1. Jesus only swooned, to either die or be revived some time later
2. Postulated by many skeptics, trying to deny the resurrection of Jesus (e.g., The Passover Plot, by Hugh J. Schonfield)

[Which is more likely becomes apparent as we consider the evidence of...]

II. THE EMPTY TOMB

A. THE EVIDENCE...

1. The stone removed - **Jn 20:1**
 - a. First observed by Mary Magdalene, on early Sunday morning
 - b. A stone that had been sealed and guarded by Roman soldiers - **Mt 27:62-66**
2. The body gone - **Jn 20:2**
 - a. The tomb is empty!
 - b. Mary supposes that the body has been removed, and runs to tell Peter
3. The grave clothes - **Jn 20:3-9**
 - a. Peter and John see the head covering (napkin) lying neatly folded by itself
 - b. Indicating there had been no hurry to get away, or to steal the body (Hailey)

B. THE ALTERNATIVES...

1. The body stolen
 - a. The theory explained
 - 1) The disciples stole the body, then claimed He rose from the dead
 - 2) This was the "official" theory offered from the very beginning - **Mt 28:11-15**
 - b. The difficulties described
 - 1) The explanation defies logic
 - a) If the soldiers were asleep...
 - 1/ How did they know it was the disciples who took the body?
 - 2/ How could the large stone guarding the entrance be rolled away without awakening the soldiers?
 - b) The soldiers guarding the tomb were Romans - **Mt 27:62-66**
 - 1/ They were professional soldiers
 - 2/ Charged to guard the tomb with their lives
 - 3/ The punishment for falling asleep on duty was death
 - 2) This would make those who testified they saw Jesus liars and frauds
 - a) For they claimed empirical evidence - **Ac 10:39-41**
 - b) Suppose just a few disciples stole the body, unknown by others...
 - 1/ Such as Nicodemus, Joseph of Arimathea, or the women
 - 2/ Others still say they saw Jesus, ate and drank with Him
 - c) You have to explain why they were willing to lie and die knowing it was a lie
 2. The swoon hypothesis
 - a. The theory explained
 - 1) Jesus did not actually die on the cross, He only swooned
 - a) Suffering from shock, pain, and loss of blood, He fainted (swooned) from exhaustion
 - b) Thinking that He was dead, the Roman soldiers took Him down and He was buried in the tomb
 - 2) In the coolness of the tomb, Jesus revived
 - a) Somehow He left the tomb
 - b) Appeared to His disciples, then lived in obscurity to die years later
 - b. The difficulties described
 - 1) Jesus would have had to revive sufficiently enough to:
 - a) Break through the burial garments that bound Him, including a hundred pounds of spices used in preparing His body for burial - **Jn 19:38-40**
 - b) Role away the large stone that sealed the tomb

- c) Fight off the Roman guards protecting the tomb
- d) Walk the seven miles to Emmaus where He was seen by the two disciples
- e) Walk back to Jerusalem where He was seen by the apostles
- All within the same day!
- 2) Every effort was made to prove He was dead
 - a) The Roman soldiers at the cross pierced His side - **Jn 19:31-34**
 - b) Pilate made sure He was dead - **Mk 15:43-45**
 - 1/ When Joseph of Arimathea wanted the body
 - 2/ The Roman centurion confirmed that Jesus was dead
- 3) Not only would this make the apostles liars and frauds, but Jesus also for allowing a lie to spread for years!
- 3. The vision hypothesis
 - a. The theory explained
 - 1) All of Christ's post-resurrection appearances were only supposed appearances
 - 2) Those who claimed to see Jesus had hallucinations
 - b. The difficulties described
 - 1) The appearances were not just to individuals, one at a time
 - a) Ten apostles claimed to see Him - **Jn 20:19-25**
 - b) Jesus appeared to six disciples at the Sea of Galilee - **Jn 21:1-14**
 - c) He appeared to over 500 people at once - **1 Co 15:6**
 - 2) The theory contradicts laws and principles which psychiatrists say are essential to hallucinations:
 - a) Only certain kinds of people have hallucinations
 - 1/ Usually high-strung, highly imaginative, and very nervous people
 - 2/ Usually only paranoid or schizophrenic individuals have hallucinations
 - 3/ The appearances were not restricted to people of any particular psychological make up
 - b) Hallucinations are linked in an individual's subconscious
 - 1/ An individual may have an hallucination
 - 2/ But hallucinations do not appear to groups of people
 - c) They occur in people when there is a spirit of anticipation or hopeful expectation
 - 1/ The disciples had no such anticipation - **Lk 24:13-21**
 - 2/ They were prone to disbelieve even after they were told of the resurrection - **Jn 20:24-25**

[Other theories have been offered, but like these three they fail in the face of perhaps the greatest evidence for the resurrection of Jesus from the dead...]

III. THE WITNESSES

A. THE EVIDENCE...

- 1. Mary Magdalene
 - a. First person to the empty tomb - **Jn 20:1**
 - b. She at first thought someone took the body - **Jn 20:2,11-15**
 - c. But then believed when Jesus appeared to her - **Jn 20:16-18**
- 2. The disciples on the first day

- a. Who were hiding for fear of the Jews - **Jn 20:19a**
- b. When Jesus appeared to them, showing His hands and His side - **Jn 20:19b-20**
3. The disciples including Thomas
 - a. Thomas had not been with the disciples - **Jn 20:24**
 - b. Thomas doubted their testimony, refusing to believe - **Jn 20:25**
 - c. When Jesus appeared eight days later, Thomas was convinced - **Jn 20:26-28**
4. The disciples in Galilee
 - a. By the Sea of Tiberias (Galilee) - **Jn 21:1**
 - b. Jesus showed Himself to Peter, Thomas, Nathaniel, James, John, and two others - **Jn 21:2-14**
5. John in particular
 - a. Who bore witness to the death of Jesus - **Jn 19:35**
 - b. Who bore witness to the resurrection of Jesus - **Jn 21:24**

B. THE ONLY TWO ALTERNATIVES...

1. Witnesses were credible, honest, and truthful
 - a. Enhanced by the **number** of the witnesses
 - 1) Not just a few, isolated individuals
 - 2) But many, including hundreds at a time
 - b. Enhanced by the **character** of the witnesses
 - 1) Not gullible, but requiring proof (e.g., Thomas) - **Jn 20:25**
 - 2) At first fearful, but something made them fearless - **Jn 20:19; Ac 4:13,19-20**
 - 3) Who spent their lives dedicated to truth, holiness, love - **1 Jn 1:5,6; 2:15-17; 4:11**
 - c. Enhanced by the **suffering** of the witnesses
 - 1) They gladly suffered for their testimony - **Ac 5:41**
 - 2) Even after losing loved ones, like John who lost his brother James - **Ac 12:1-2**
2. Witnesses were liars, frauds and deceivers
 - a. Only alternative if the resurrection did not occur - cf. **1 Co 15:14-15**
 - b. Nature of their testimony does not permit being mistaken or misled
 - 1) They claimed to have heard, seen, and touched Jesus following His resurrection - cf. **1 Jn 1:1-4; Ac 10:39-41**
 - 2) You cannot say that they were simply mistaken, or misled; you must proclaim them liars if Jesus was not risen from the dead!
 - c. Are you willing to believe that those who wrote the New Testament were so corrupt?

CONCLUSION

1. The testimony for Jesus' resurrection is strong, enhanced by...
 - a. The evidence of the crucifixion
 - b. The evidence of the empty tomb
 - c. The evidence of the witnesses-- Alternative theories simply do not hold up in the face of such evidence
2. What is the significance of this evidence and the resurrection of Jesus from the dead?
 - a. Jesus is everything that John and Jesus Himself claimed to be!
 - 1) He is the Son of God!

- 2) He is the bread of life!
 - 3) He is the light of the world!
 - 4) He is the Good Shepherd!
 - 5) He is the resurrection and the life!
- b. Believe in Jesus, and you can...
- 1) Have the right to become a child of God - **Jn 1:12**
 - 2) Have life in His name! - **Jn 20:31**

Sadly, many people do not believe in Jesus. In our final lesson, we shall consider why such is the case, even as it was in John's day. But if you believe in Jesus as the Son of God, don't hesitate to obey the gospel of Christ - e.g., **Ac 8:35-38**

That You May Believe They Did Not Believe In Him

INTRODUCTION

1. Despite evidence to substantiate the claims of Jesus, such as...
 - a. The testimony of the Father through **signs**
 - b. The testimony of the Father through **Scripture**
 - John records that many did not believe in Jesus - cf. **Jn 12:37**

2. In all fairness, those to whom John refers did not have the **fullness of evidence** presented in the gospel itself...
 - a. They may have seen some of the signs, but not all
 - b. Some may have been ignorant of the Scriptures and their testimony concerning Jesus
 - c. They had yet to be given the witness of the resurrection of Jesus from the dead

3. But even with the fullness of evidence provided in the gospel of John...
 - a. Many still did not believe in Jesus in those days
 - b. Many do not believe in Jesus today

4. Why? The reasons are many and varied...
 - a. John mentions several in the course of his gospel
 - b. Which may help us understand why many people do not believe today

[For example, one reason many failed to believe in Jesus was ...]

I. A LACK OF SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION

A. THEIR FOCUS WAS ON MATERIAL THINGS...

1. They were impressed by His feeding of the 5000 - **Jn 6:14-15**
 - a. They wanted to make Him their king
 - b. They saw in Him someone who could meet their material needs
2. But His discourse on the Bread of Life caused many to leave - **Jn 6:60,66**
 - a. For He told them to work for the food which endures to everlasting life - **Jn 6:27**
 - b. For He spoke of Himself as the true Bread of Life

B. MANY LACK SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION TODAY...

1. They are looking for material things
 - a. They want the church to provide for their physical needs
 - b. They want the church to entertain them or their children
2. If a church offers only the Word of God, to make them disciples...
 - a. Which is the primary mission of the church - cf. **1 Ti 3:15; Mt 28:19-20**
 - b. They look elsewhere, seeking to find “the church of **their** choice”
- **Yet Jesus taught His disciples were to place their focus - cf. Mt 6:33**

[Not content with the spiritual nature of the kingdom (cf. **Ro 14:17**), they are unwilling to accept the true demands of faith in Jesus. We also read that many refused to confess Jesus because of ...]

II. FEAR AND MORAL COWARDICE

A. THEY WERE AFRAID OF WHAT OTHERS MIGHT THINK...

1. The multitude was afraid of what the Jews might think - **Jn 7:13**
2. So were the parents of the man born blind - **Jn 9:20-22**
3. Some of the rulers were afraid of the Pharisees - **Jn 12:42-43**
4. Pilate was fearful of what Caesar might hear - **Jn 19:12-13**

B. MANY FEAR WHAT OTHERS MIGHT THINK TODAY...

1. Afraid that their peers at school might ridicule them
 2. Afraid that their coworkers might ostracize them
 3. Afraid of persecution for being “politically incorrect” or “religiously intolerant”
- **Yet Jesus taught His disciples whom they should fear - Mt 10:28**

[Fearful of losing acceptance, and being outcast, has made many unwilling to believe in Jesus. Then there were those who had...]

III. A MISPLACED LOVE

A. THEIR LOVE WAS FOR THE WRONG THINGS...

1. They did not have a love for God - **Jn 5:42-43**
2. Instead, their love was in such things as:
 - a. The things of darkness (evil), which they did not want to give up - **Jn 3:19-20**
 - b. The glory of men, wanting to be praised by them - **Jn 12:42-43**
 - c. Self and material things, as in the case of Judas - **Jn 12:6**

B. MANY HAVE A MISPLACED LOVE TODAY...

1. A love for family, popularity among friends
 2. A love for wealth, hobbies
 3. A love for immoral lifestyles which they do want to give up
- **Yet Jesus taught His disciples whom they should love and serve - Mt 22:37; 6:24**

[Misplaced love often blinds one to the evidence that is capable of producing faith. There is also the problem of...]

IV. THE HARDENED AND PREJUDICED HEART

A. MANY WERE BLINDED BY PREJUDICE...

1. The Pharisees were hardened by their traditions, making them blind to the miracle Jesus performed - **Jn 9:13-16**
2. So hardened by their prejudices...
 - a. They were willing to kill Jesus despite His signs - **Jn 11:46-47,53**

- b. They even were willing to kill Lazarus - **Jn 12:9-11**

B. MANY ARE HARDENED BY THEIR PREJUDICE TODAY...

1. Their prejudice for their traditions, creeds, denominations, etc.
 2. Their prejudice for their beliefs (e.g., evolution, humanism) which justify their lifestyles
 3. Making them unwilling to study the Bible, to see whether their cherished beliefs are true
- **Yet Jesus warned about the dangers of hard hearts and blind eyes - Mt 13:15**

[Perhaps contributing to such prejudice and hardening of the heart is another reason why many did not believe...]

V. INTELLECTUAL PRIDE

A. SOME WERE AFRAID OF BEING THOUGHT FOOLISH...

1. A tactic used to persuade the soldiers not to believe - cf. **Jn 7:45-48**
2. Thus an appeal was made to the “wisdom” of the rulers

B. MANY ARE HINDERED BY INTELLECTUAL PRIDE TODAY...

1. They don't want to be thought foolish by their professors in school
 2. They are impressed by the many “wise” and “mighty” people who do not believe in Jesus
- **Yet God has purposely chosen foolish things to save man, to confound the arrogant and proud “scholars” of the world - cf. 1 Co 1:18-21,26-31**

[Many of the same people who reject Jesus out of intellectual pride are often guilty of rejecting Him for a reason that many people do...]

VI. IGNORANCE

A. SOME REJECTED CHRIST BECAUSE OF IGNORANCE...

1. They were ignorant of the facts, leading to wrong conclusions - **Jn 7:40-43**
2. They thought Jesus was born in Nazareth, not Bethlehem

B. MANY REJECT CHRIST OUT OF IGNORANCE TODAY..

1. They have not read the New Testament
 2. They have not consider evidences for the resurrection of Jesus Christ
 3. They have rejected misconceptions or caricatures of Jesus Christ and His church
- **Unlike the noble Bereans, they make little effort to get all the facts - Ac 17:11**

CONCLUSION

1. Do you believe in Jesus? If not, why not...
 - a. Could it be a lack of spiritual perception?
 - b. Could it be out of fear or moral cowardice?
 - c. Could it be a misplaced love?
 - d. Could it be a prejudiced or hardened heart?
 - e. Could it be out of intellectual pride?

- f. Could it be simply out of ignorance?

- 2. Don't you want to believe in Jesus? Remember what He offers you...
 - a. **Fellowship with God** ("No one comes to the Father except through Me.")
 - b. **Salvation from sin** ("If you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins.")
 - c. **Guidance throughout life** ("He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness.")
 - d. **Spiritual sustenance** ("He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst.")
 - e. **The abundant life** ("I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.")
 - e. **Immortality** ("I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live.")

Let the Word of God, in particular the Gospel of John, give you the evidence necessary to believe in Jesus, that you might have life through His name!

So then faith [comes] by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. - Ro 10:17

And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name. - Jn 20:30-31