Why Not Believe?

John 4:43-54
9-8-2024

Introduction:

Jesus Christ is worthy of our Faith!

But so many people don't believe. Why?

I. ***For some people…***
Familiarity Breeds Contempt (v. 43-44)
(The people of Jesus' home town)

II. ***For other people…***
Seeing is Believing (v.45-48)
(The people of Judaea)

III. ***But for other people…***
Christ's Word can always be trusted (v. 49-54)
(The official of Capernaum)

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I. For some people…

Familiarity Breeds Contempt (v. 43-44)

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v. 43
"After two days" – After spending two days in Samaria and ministering to the spiritually hungry people there (v. 40), Jesus continues His journey north into the region of Galilee.

v. 44
Jesus now enters the region He grew up in.

John 4:44
For Jesus himself testified, that a prophet hath no honour in his own country.

Matthew 13:54-f has a more detailed description of the brief statement that John makes here. Note what Matthew recorded about the unbelief of Christ's native countrymen.

1. Unbelief keeps people from <u>seeing</u> Christ for who He is (v. 54-56)

V. 54
"His own country" - Nazareth, how home town, his own native town, where He grew up as a boy and worked as a young man.
"He taught them" - the imperfect tense suggests that He taught them on more than one occasion.
"Astonished" = amazed, astounded, overwhelmed.

"Whence hath this man" - Where did He get such awesome wisdom from? After all:

--He didn't go to a theological seminary
--He wasn't instructed by any big-named Rabbi
--He doesn't have the initials of a doctors degree by His name

"Wisdom" - His <u>words</u>
"Works" - His <u>miracles</u>

What Jesus <u>did</u> authenticated what He <u>said</u>.

They wouldn't even utter His name, although they knew it better than anyone else, but they just said: ***"this man"*** = lit. this one, "this fellow" used with an attitude of contempt or disrespect.

V. 55

"<u>the</u> carpenter's" - Joseph was a woodworker or builder. The definite article *"the"* indicates possibly that he was the only one in town, well known to all (Rienecker, p. 42).

Mark records them also saying *"Is not this the <u>carpenter</u>?"* (showing that they were also astonished that someone of such a humble, common trade could have such spiritual wisdom and mighty miracles).

"Is not this the carpenter's son?" - Answer: No.

Jesus was virgin-born. His birth had nothing to do with Joseph (Mt. 1:18-25).

"Is not his mother called Mary?" - Yes, her name is Mary; but she is not the mother of Jesus in the same sense as other children have mothers.

Jesus came from Heaven and miraculously entered her womb, whereas all other children have their origin in the womb of their mother.

"His brethren. . ." - they were not full brothers, but half brothers, because they did not have the same father.

V. 55-56

These two verses prove one thing for sure. And that is that Mary did not remain a perpetual virgin as the RCC teaches. She with Joseph had four other sons and at least two daughters.

Jesus, who had humble beginnings, a humble and ordinary family (Joseph a carpenter, Mary a mother and housewife), a humble trade . . . How could He be the Messiah?

These people were neighbors of Jesus' family; they saw Him as a child. Perhaps their own children played with Him.

No doubt they observed His unusual obedience to Mary and Joseph; they wondered why He never got in trouble. They may have been amazed that He was never accused of wrongdoing. Perhaps they were taken back by His love for people, His kindness and graciousness.

They Bible is clear that He as a boy had <u>favor</u> with people (Lk. 2:52).

V. 56

In comparing Jesus with his half brothers and sisters, a sharp contrast was noted by the people of Nazareth. They knew He was different, but would not believe He was who He said He was.

Many wrongly judge others by their education, social status, name, wealth, prestige, roots or heritage, fame, hometown, etc. None of which tells you anything about the personal character of the person.

Many today wrong consider a famous preacher on the radio or TV as more believable (more knowledgeable, more trustworthy) than their own pastor. Why? Because of his notoriety, fame, and because of his coming to you from a distance.

It is wrong to judge someone by appearance and circumstance.

What was the problem of the people of Nazareth?

1. They thought Jesus was merely human (they knew Him "*after the flesh"* - II Cor. 5:16)

2. They walked by sight and not by faith (II Cor. 5:7)

Examples of people who didn't recognize Jesus for who He was:

John 1:10-11 - *"He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not."*

John 4:10 - *"Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water."*

John 5:18 - *"Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God."*

John 8:19 - *"Then said they unto him, Where is thy Father? Jesus answered, Ye neither know me, nor my Father: if ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also."*

John 9:30 - *"The man answered and said unto them, Why herein is a marvelous thing, that ye knew not from whence he is, and yet he hath opened mine eyes."*

John 10:33 - *"The Jews answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not: but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God."*

John 14:9 - *"Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father, and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?"*

Luke 5:21 - *"And the scribes and Pharisees began to reason, saying, Who is this which speaketh blasphemies? Who can forgive sins, but God alone?"*

Luke 23:35 - *"And the people stood beholding. And the rulers also with them derided him, saying, He saved others: let him save himself, if he be the Christ, the chosen of God."*

Mark 15:31-32 - *"Likewise also the chief priests mocking said among themselves with the scribes, He saved others, himself he cannot save. Let Christ the King of Israel descend now from the cross. that we may see and believe. And they that were crucified with him reviled him."*

Acts 13:27 - *"For they that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets which are read every sabbath day, they have fulfilled them in condemning him."*

Cp. I Cor. 2:8 - *"Which none of the princes of this world knew; for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory."*

The most fatal mistake a person could ever made in life is to live and die without ever realizing who Jesus was!

John 8:24 - *"for if ye believe not that I am (he), ye shall die in your sins."*

2. Unbelief keeps people from <u>honoring</u> Christ with the honor He deserves (v. 57)

The word "*offended"* (imperfect, passive) indicates that they allowed the influence of people, and situations and circumstances to cause them to take offense at Him over and over again. They repeatedly refused to believe in Him.

Something stood in the way of their believing in Him.

Jesus promised blessedness to whoever would not be offended at Him (Mt. 11:6 - *"And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me."*)

"A prophet is not without honor" - Quoting a well-known saying, is the negative way of saying: "A prophet always has honor, except in his own hometown and in his own family."

"Honor" - to treat with value, respect, dignity.

Christ was to have equal honor with God the Father (John 5:23).

Unfortunately, familiarity often breeds contempt or less respect.

They wondered, "How in the world could a person from our own midst (from our inferior city - Jn. 1:46) possibly possess such wisdom and power?

Sometimes the hardest people to reach with the Gospel are those who know you best.
Jesus warned that your worst trouble will often come from your own family (Mt. 10:21, 35-36).

Let us be careful that we do not become tired of that which is familiar. Let's not get on the world's bandwagon in seeking something new; something different; Let's stick to the old fashioned faith.

II. ***For other people…***

Seeing is Believing (v.45-48)

(The people of Judaea)

v. 45

"Having <u>seen</u> all these things. . ." –

They had witnessed the many miracles Jesus performed at Jerusalem and had a certain form of faith in Him (Jn. 2:23-25).

v. 48

Except ye see signs and wonders" - The plural "ye" indicates that Jesus was referring to people other than the nobleman of Capernaum. All of the Galileans who had met Him (v. 45) due to the miracles they saw, would be included.

John 4:48 was not a rebuke of this nobleman. Rather, it was our Lord's lament at the spiritual condition of the people in general, both in Judea and Galilee.

"'Seeing is believing' has always been the 'pragmatic' philosophy of the lost world, even the religious world." (Wiersbe, p. 303).

v.48 " signs" -

A sign is basically a miracle that can be experienced by the senses. It is an objective way to validate someone or something.

Gideon showed his lack of faith (his unbelief in God's will) by throwing out a fleece of wool (Jud. 6:36-40).

The Jews sought signs (I Cor. 1:22), and Jesus gave them in abundance.

The scribes and Pharisees had on numerous occasions seen and heard about the signs Christ performed. They saw the Lord heal a palsied man (Mt. 9:1-8), they saw Him restore a dumb man possessed by a demon (9:32-34); they witnessed Him curing a man with a withered arm on the Sabbath (Mt. 12:9-13); and now recently they had heard that He cast a demon out of a man that was blind and speechless. Yet rather than believing the evidence already displayed, they demand more!

Rather than simply letting His spotless life, unselfish ministry, soul-stirring message, and indisputable miracles speak for themselves, they demand more proof, more valid evidence.

Jesus could have easily performed any sign He wanted. However, the fact that He didn't proves two things:

1) God does not have to prove Himself to anybody.

2) God does not stoop to reveal His power (by miraculous signs) to men at their choosing. (When He chooses to perform signs, He does so according to His will, not to satisfy the curiosity of agnostic men).

"Wonders" – a miracle that causes amazement

Matthew 12:39

But he answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas:

"Evil" - sinful, wicked

"Adulterous" - a worldly-minded people who forsake God and embrace the philosophies and humanistic thinking of the world. They have affection for the matters and methods of the world (Ja. 4:4).

To be worldly is to live not by faith but by sight. It is to be carnally-minded. To live life based on the 5 senses. Such a mentality reasons: "If I can't touch it, taste it, see it, smell it, or hear it, I won't believe it. It must be "sensational" for it to impact me.

Many have a "Show me" attitude! Prove it to me! Convince me with the evidence I demand.

The wicked always demand signs because to them "Seeing is believing."

The evil mob that surrounded the cross of Christ again chided Him for a sign. They demanded, *"If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross"* (Mt. 27:40; Mk. 15:30).

Note: The rich man who went to hell wrongly believed that a sign from dead Lazarus would convince his 5 brothers of their need of salvation (Luke 16:27-31).

If it is evil and spiritually adulteress people who seek after signs, should we be seeking after signs today?

Do we need authenticating signs from God for Him to prove to us that He is real, or that His Spirit is real, or that His Word is true? NO!

To demand God to prove Himself by giving a sign is "Satanic theology." Satan demanded that Christ prove His Messiahship by two spectacular signs (Mt. 4:5-7).

If it is an *"evil and adulterous generation"* that seeks after a sign, what does this tell you about people who seek after tongues? Tongues are for a *"sign"* (I Cor. 14:22). Should Christians be seeking signs?

NOTE: Signs and sign gifts were given by God's sovereign discretion, at the Holy Spirit's will (I Cor. 12:11). Such sign gifts came upon God's people without the recipient seeking such; it was automatic, uninvited, unsolicited.

If tongues were a legitimate gift today, why is it limited to "Christians" of certain Pentecostal and Charismatic churches and not given to fundamental Baptists? The fact that this "sign gift" does not come to those who are ignorant of it tells me it has ceased.

It is interesting to note that as this age draws toward a close, people will demonstrate how wicked they are by an increased desire to see "signs and wonders." Such a thirst will play right into the hands of Satan who will (via the Antichrist) performs powerful *"signs and lying wonders"* (II Thes. 2:9). These Satanic eschatological miracles will seem so real (since they are called *"great signs and wonders")* that they will deceive everyone except the elect (Mt. 24:24).

The only sign that the Scribes and Pharisees could look for was that Christ would die and then rise again on the third day.

The Word of God is sufficient! Faith cometh not by "seeing signs" but by hearing the Word of God (Ro. 10:17).

III. But for other people…
Christ's Word can always be trusted (v. 49-54)
(The official of Capernaum)

v. 49
"Nobleman" – lit. The king's officer; a man belonging to the king (perhaps a centurion).

All of us who have children can feel the plight of this nobleman.

v. 47 – his son was about to die.

He had a life-threatening virus and apparently nothing they tried could bring about his healing. So the father, with urgency, comes to Jesus.

"...One bright Sunday afternoon, a numbing telephone call brought news of a mountain-climbing accident. In his book Lament for a Son, the bereaved father reflects upon his painful feelings.

'Gone from the face of the earth. I wait for a group of students to cross the street, and suddenly I think: He is not there. I go to a ballgame and find myself singing out the twenty-five year olds; none of them is he. In all the crowds and streets and rooms and churches and schools and libraries and gatherings of friends in our world, on all the mountains, I will not find him. Only his absence.

'Silence. "Was there a letter from Eric today?" "When did Eric say he would call?" Now only silence. Absence and silence.

'When we gather now there's always someone missing, his absence as present as our presence, his silence as loud as our speech. Still five children, but one always gone.

'When we're all together, we're not all together.

'It's the neverness that is so painful. Never again to be here with us—never to sit with us at table, never to travel with us, never to laugh with us, never to cry with us, never to embrace us as he leaves for school, never to see his brothers and sister marry. All the rest of our lives we must live without him.'." (Swindoll, p. 61).

"Sir" = Lord; a term of respect.

"Come down ere my child die" – a real sense of urgency and desperation is expressed

This man didn't just want to see a sign or wonder; he was in a desperate need for help.

v. 50
He **"believed the word" –** This is the essence of true faith: trusting the word of God.

"God said it, I believe it, and that settles it."

v. 52
"Began to amend. . . the fever left him" – Note that the father thought the healing would be gradual ("began to improve"); but the servants reported a complete, instant recovery.

"The seventh hour" – one o'clock in the afternoon (by Jewish time) or seven o'clock (by Roman time). The same exact time that Jesus gave him the promise.

"Yesterday" – What is interesting is that it took the nobleman a whole day to get home. It is really not very far from Cana to Capernaum (approximately 20 miles downhill – a brisk 4 – 5 hour walk). This tells me that the nobleman rested in the promise of Jesus and didn't feel the need to rush home because he knew his boy was already healed.

v. 53
"The same hour" – the boy was healed the instant Jesus said the words

In this miracle Jesus shows us that he can do miracles <u>from a distance</u>. He doesn't have to be physically present. He can now speak from Heaven and His command gets done in NYC!

Distance does not separate Christ from your need! Distance is not barrier to the omnipotent God. Remember Psalm 139:7-10
Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? [8] If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. [9] If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; [10] Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me.

"His whole house" – His entire family believed

A cross reference to Luke 8:1-3 may indicate that this nobleman's name was Chuza. His wife Joanna would financially support Christ as He ministered.

CONCLUSION:

v. 54
"The second miracle" – the first Galilean miracle was the turning water into wine at the wedding feast of Cana (Jn. 2).

This is the second miracle from Cana in Galilee that John records.

As Warren Wiersbe notes (p. 503), the first miracle at Cana showed Christ's power over time with the instant production of wine; and this miracle shows His power over space.

John's intention is to motivate faith in Christ.

John 20:30-31
And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: [31] But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.