

First Baptist Church Merritt Island

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Seven Miraculous Signs of Jesus from the Gospel of John

The Power and Person of Jesus

John 4:46-54

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Can you imagine living in a world where nearly everyone believed in Jesus? Just think about your neighborhood or your school or your workplace, even your family. Think about the dynamics between Israel and Iran and the United States. Imagine what the landscape of our world would look like if the vast majority of people alive today believed in Jesus. Do you think this world would be a different place?

What if I told you that we already live in a world where the vast majority of people believe in Jesus?

There are 8 billion people in the world today.

- 2.5 billion claim to be Christians.
- Nearly 2 billion Muslims believe Jesus was a prophet who worked miracles.
- More than a billion Hindus generally believe Jesus was a good man, great teacher, or even a divine figure.
- That's 5.5 billion of the 8 billion (nearly 70%).
- Many atheists and agnostics believe He lived and influenced history for good.

We live in a world where nearly everyone would say, "I believe in Jesus." But the reality is that there are vastly different ideas about what "believing in Jesus" actually means. Not everyone who believes in Jesus believes essential truths about Jesus.

And that's what our text is all about. We are continuing our summer study on the seven signs of Jesus recorded in the Gospel of John. They are central to the entire purpose with which John writes this account of the life of Jesus.

John 20:30–31

Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; 31 but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, John included these specific signs to help us believe essential truths about Jesus. Namely,

- Jesus is the Christ. He is the Messiah – sent by God the Father to save people from sin and establish His Kingdom on the earth.
- Jesus is the Son of God. What John means by that is that Jesus is the second person of the Trinity – equal with God the Father and God the Spirit.
- Jesus is the only source true Life - Eternal and Abundant Life.

The 7 signs of Jesus in the Gospel of John teach us those truths and what it looks like to genuinely believe them. With that in mind, let's look at the second sign of Christ.

John 4:43–54

After the two days he departed for Galilee. 44 (For Jesus himself had testified that a prophet has no honor in his own hometown.) 45 So when he came to Galilee, the Galileans welcomed him, having seen all that he had done in Jerusalem at the feast. For they too had gone to the feast. 46 So he came again to Cana in Galilee, where he had made the water wine. And at Capernaum there was an official whose son was ill. 47 When this man heard that Jesus had come from Judea to Galilee, he went to him and asked him to come down and heal his son, for he was at the point of death. 48 So Jesus said to him, "Unless you see signs and wonders you will not believe." 49 The official said to him, "Sir, come down before my child dies." 50 Jesus said to him, "Go; your son will live." The man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him and went on his way. 51 As he was going down, his servants met him and told him that his son was recovering. 52 So he asked them the hour when he began to get better, and they said to him, "Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him." 53 The father knew that was the hour when Jesus had said to him, "Your son will live." And he himself believed, and all his household. 54 This was now the second sign that Jesus did when he had come from Judea to Galilee.

For this second sign, Jesus has returned to the city of Cana in Galilee where He turned the water into wine back in chapter 2. In the time between that event and our text, Jesus went down to Jerusalem and performed several signs there. Verse 45 says that some of the Galileans were there in Jerusalem and saw His works and were welcoming Him when He arrived in their neck of the woods.

And at first glance that sounds like a good thing_ THE CROWDS BELIEVE IN JESUS. But look at verse 44.

John 4:44

(For Jesus himself had testified that a prophet has no honor in his own hometown.) 45 So when he came to Galilee, the Galileans welcomed him, having seen all that he had done in Jerusalem at the feast.

Jesus said that He would not be honored in His hometown. But, when He gets to His home turf, the people are welcoming Him. So, was Jesus wrong? Of course not. Listen to what John says in chapter 2.

John 2:23–25

Now when he was in Jerusalem at the Passover Feast, many believed in his name when they saw the signs that he was doing. 24 But Jesus on his part did not entrust himself to them, because he knew all people 25 and needed no one to bear witness about man, for he himself knew what was in man.

Remember, some of the people in our text are in the crowd at Jerusalem watching Him perform miracles. And they believed He was really doing them. But verse 24 says that Jesus didn't entrust Himself to them. The word translated "entrust" in v. 24 is the same word translated "believed" in verse 23. In other words, Jesus didn't believe in their belief. He knew something about their hearts. Their belief didn't honor Him. They believed He could do miracles, but they didn't believe the truth about

who He was. Jesus is more than a miracle-worker. He is God the Son, the Savior of the world, and the only Source of eternal life. Jesus knows these people 'believe' in Him but they aren't willing to believe essential truths about Him.

Now, let's jump back to our text.

John 4:46

So he came again to Cana in Galilee, where he had made the water wine. And at Capernaum there was an official whose son was ill. 47 When this man heard that Jesus had come from Judea to Galilee, he went to him and asked him to come down and heal his son, for he was at the point of death. 48 So Jesus said to him, "Unless you see signs and wonders you will not believe."

One of the people who comes to see Jesus is a government official whose son was about to die. The word for "official" is a word that describes someone who worked for a king – most Bible scholars are certain this man was a high-ranking official who worked for king Herod. He clearly believes Jesus can work a miracle, that's why he asks Jesus to make the 20 mile trip back to his home to heal his son. But Jesus resists him. He says, *"Unless you see signs and wonders you will not believe."*

You can't see it in our English translations, but in the original language the word "you" is plural. Jesus isn't just talking about this man. He's talking about all the people who have come to supposedly welcome Him. They weren't showing up for Jesus as much as they were showing up for the signs. And the deal is that they had already seen Him perform signs. He turned water into wine. He did signs in Jerusalem. He's already done signs. But they are missing the point of the signs.

We talked about it last week. The purpose of signs is to point to a reality beyond themselves. The sign that says "glazed donut" at the donut shop isn't a glazed donut. It points to the glazed donuts. So, if you try to eat the sign, not only will you be weird, you'll also be disappointed because you grabbed hold of the sign and not what it was pointing to.

And that's what's happening in our text. You've got a bunch of people who are grabbing on to the signs of Jesus. "Hey miracle-worker, give us more signs." They aren't interested in what the signs are pointing to – which is the truth about who Jesus really is and what Jesus came to do. They are completely missing the fact that Jesus is the Christ. One of the roles of the Christ is to be the great King over God's people who will rule over every other earthly King.

And that's not at all how these crowds are welcoming Jesus. He isn't their King. He's their genie in a bottle. They expect their wish to be His command. Keep that in mind. We'll come back to that before we are done.

That's where Jesus' interaction with king Herod's official comes in. Jesus is pressing into this desperate dad. He's urging him to be different than the rest of the people. He's talking about the crowds but He's looking this one man in the eye: "Don't be like them. Honor me by believing me before you see the sign."

And that's what I want to focus on in the rest of our time together. I want to show you 3 things we learn about believing in Jesus in a way that honors Him. Those three things will form our big idea from this text.

BIG IDEA: JESUS IS HONORED WHEN WE BELIEVE THE TRUTH ABOUT HIS POWER, HIS PROMISES, AND HIS PERSON.

In a world that is filled with people who say they believe in Jesus, He is only honored when we believe the truth about His power, His promises, and His person.

Now, let's walk through those one at time.

1. JESUS IS HONORED WHEN WE BELIEVE THE TRUTH ABOUT HIS POWER

John 4:49

The official said to him, "Sir, come down before my child dies."

Jesus has just rebuked this man by essentially saying all these people want is to see more and more signs. And I love how the dad responds. He looks at Jesus and says, "I don't know about all that. All I know is that I believe you can heal my son. So, come and do what only you can do."

He believes in the power of Jesus. He believes that Jesus can do what no one else can do. And while the kind of faith that honors Jesus believes He is more than just someone who works miracles, it doesn't believe He is less than someone who works miracles.

The New York Times recently profiled James Talarico, a Texas politician and seminary student. In discussing the virgin birth – which Talarico claims is a defense for abortion rights – the authors of the article reached out to his pastor for comment. His response was that the details about the virgin birth don't matter because the story is mythology rather than history. That's the result of decades of systematic work by so-called scholars, theologians and philosophers to remove the supernatural claims of Jesus from Christianity. But listen, if you don't believe in the miraculous power of Jesus, you don't believe in the Jesus of the Bible.

And be careful not to assume your heart is free from doubting the miraculous power of Jesus.

- Think about a situation in your life that feels impossible right now.
- Do you really believe Jesus has the power to do the impossible in that place?

Do you live like Jesus...

- has the power to free you from addiction...
- has the power to restore your marriage...
- has the power to provide all your needs...
- has the power to take care of your kids...
- has the power to change your heart and make you new?

While Jesus is certainly more than a miracle-worker, He certainly isn't less than one.

2. JESUS IS HONORED WHEN WE BELIEVE THE TRUTH ABOUT HIS PROMISES

John 4:50

Jesus said to him, "Go; your son will live." The man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him and went on his way.

Jesus doesn't go to Capernaum. He simply makes the dad a promise – your son will live. And the man believed the word of Jesus. That makes him different than the crowds who welcomed Jesus but didn't honor Him. He believed Jesus before He saw the sign. He didn't personally observe the miracle. He just took Jesus at His word and believed His promise and headed for home – sustained by nothing but the promise of Jesus. And that's a powerful insight. When you believe the promises of Jesus, you live like you believe the promises of Jesus.

So, do you live like you believe the promises of Jesus?

- Jesus has promised to give you His power to obey God's commands (Philippians 2:12-14). How would it change the way you live today if you really believed that promise?
- Jesus has promised to faithfully supply your needs as you walk in obedience and give to His mission (2 Corinthians 8-9). How would it change the way you live today if you really believed that promise?
- Jesus has promised to hear and answer your prayers when you abide in Him and ask according to His will (John 15:7). How would it change the way you live today if you really believed that promise?
- Jesus has promised to use your trials to make you more like Him (James 1). How would it change the way you live today if you really believed that promise?
- Jesus has promised to be with you and give you His power and authority to tell others about Him (Matthew 28:18-20). How would it change the way you live today if you really believed that promise?

What promises are you struggling most to live like you believe? Take a moment and ask the Lord to help your unbelief. Then think about what would change this week if you really believed that promise of God is true.

Jesus is honored when we believe the truth of His promises.

3. JESUS IS HONORED WHEN WE BELIEVE THE TRUTH ABOUT HIS PERSON

John 4:51

As he was going down, his servants met him and told him that his son was recovering. 52 So he asked them the hour when he began to get better, and they said to him, "Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him." 53 The father knew that was the hour when Jesus had said to him, "Your son will live." And he himself believed, and all his household.

The servants come and tell this government official that his son was better and his recovery coincided with the exact timing of Jesus' promise. And verse 53 says the father believed. Now, wait a minute. Didn't the father already believe Jesus? Yes. He believed the promise of Jesus that his son would recover.

So, what did he come to believe after he heard the news that His son was healed? Whatever he came to believe, his family came to believe, too. He had already believed in the power of Jesus, that's why he came to Jesus in the first place. He had already believed in the promise of Jesus, that's why he turned and headed for home. So, what did he and his family come to believe after Jesus healed his son? He came to believe in the person of Jesus. He came to believe Jesus was more than just a miracle working man who told the truth.

Luke 8:3 mentions Joanna, the wife of Chuza (kuza), one of Herod's officials, who followed and supported Jesus financially. This may even have been that same family.

This is really the point of this whole section. John 4 is a comparison between the people who just want to see the power of Jesus displayed in signs and people who are willing to trust in the person of Jesus as their Lord and Savior. Just before our text, on His way from Jerusalem to Galilee, Jesus went through Samaria. He stopped at a well and talked with a Samaritan woman. Jesus told her things about her life that He couldn't have possibly known unless He has special powers. So, she thought He must be a prophet. But He tells her that He is more than a prophet. He tells her He is the Christ. He is the King of Kings. He is the One who God the Father promised to send to save this world from the curse of sin and restore us to God. She goes back into town and starts telling people about Jesus.

Look at what happened in Samaria.

John 4:41–42

And many more believed because of his word. They said to the woman, "It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is indeed the Savior of the world."

Another group of people welcome Jesus to their town. They meet Jesus BUT they don't demand sign after sign like the Galileans. They just believe the truth about who He is – He's the Christ, the one and only Savior of the World.

They honor Jesus by believing the truth about who He is as a person.

This dynamic is so embedded into the Gospel of John that he includes it right before he gives the purpose statement of this book in John 20. Jesus has risen from the dead and appeared to His disciples. But Thomas wasn't there when Jesus first appeared. So, Thomas doubts that Jesus really is alive. He says he won't believe until he could see Jesus for himself and touch the nail print in His hands.

Listen to what happens next...

John 20:26–29

Eight days later, his disciples were inside again, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." 27 Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe." 28 Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" 29 Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

Thomas doesn't merely believe Jesus rose from the dead. He believes the truth about who Jesus is: "My Lord and my God." And Jesus says He will bless those who honor Him with that kind of belief even though they haven't seen Him.

And that's the dividing line between all the people of this world who say they believe in Jesus. The question isn't do you believe Jesus really existed. It isn't do you believe He was a prophet or a great teacher. The question is, "Do you believe He is your Lord, your Savior, and your God?"

Do you live like Jesus is your King or your genie in a bottle?

How do you respond when Jesus doesn't do what you think He should do?

What do you believe about Jesus when the promotion at work doesn't come through? Or, the prodigal hasn't returned home, yet? Or the doctor says the treatment didn't work?

Is Jesus really your King? Is He really your Savior? Is He really your God?

That's the point of all these signs. They point to the truth about who Jesus is. He is the Lord. He is God. He is the Savior of the world.

And there's only one way to receive the life Jesus died and rose again to give you. Believe in Him. Place your faith and trust in Him. Believe the truth about His power, His promises, and His person. And He will do what only He can do - forgive your sin, save your soul, and give you eternal life.

In a world filled with people who say they believe in Jesus, the most important question you'll ever answer is: Do you believe in Jesus like that?