

This chapter contains three things—[1] our Savior's first sign at the wedding in Cana (vv1-12), [2] our Savior's activity in the temple, cleansing it and promising to resurrect it (vv13-22), and [3] our Savior's distrust of man, because He knew what was in man (vv23-25)...

Central to all three sections is the theme of "believing," v11—"this beginning of signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory; and His disciples believed in Him," v22—"therefore, when He had risen from the dead, His disciples remembered that he had said this to them, and they believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had said," v23—"now when He was in Jerusalem at the passover, during the feast, many believed in His name when they saw the signs which He did. But Jesus did not commit Himself to them [He did not believe in them]..."

Thus—we learn that everything our Savior did and said—be it performing miracles, symbolic activities such as cleansing the temple, or teaching—were all intended to point sinners to Himself as the Messiah, the Son of God—this is the primary point of the gospel of John—and brethren—it's the primary point and purpose of Holy Scripture...

Now—in the passage before us, we learn an important fact—not everybody who claimed to believe upon Christ, did truly and savingly believe—that is—Christ was not so much concerned with numbers, that He excepted any kind of faith—for just as not everything that gliders is gold—so not everyone who claims to believe does...

- I. Many Jews Believed in Christ—v23
- II. Christ Didn't Believe in Them—vv24-25
- III. Applications

I. Many Jews Believed in Christ—v23

1. V23—"Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed in His name when they saw the signs which He did..."
2. From v13 we learned that Christ "went up to Jerusalem" to keep the Passover—while there He did three things...
3. [a] He cleansed the temple (vv13-17), [b] He foretold His death and resurrection (vv18-22), [c] He performed many signs (v23)...
4. Thus—John tells us—"many believed in His name when they saw the signs which He did"—notice WHAT they did and WHY...
5. [1] What they did—"they believed in His name"—they believed into His name—or they believed into His person...
6. By "His name" is meant Christ Himself—to believe in Christ's name is simply to believe in Christ Himself...
7. Now—the prepositional phrase "in His name" is literally—"into His name"—the preposition denotes direction...
8. They believed "into" or "toward" Him—taken with the word "believe" it refers to an—"entrustment of Christ..."
9. This phrase is used throughout the NT as a description of true and saving faith—faith believes in or into Christ...
10. Jn.1:12—"But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name [1Jn.5:13]..."
11. Now—it's because this phrase, elsewhere in Scripture, describes true faith—some have thought these Jews were converted...
12. But—as we shall see in a moment, while they believed certain things about Christ, they did not savingly believe...

13. Why John uses this exact phrase, I don't know, but I assume the Spirit wanted to teach us a very important lesson...
14. A person can believe many things about Jesus, and, even trust Him for certain things, and yet—remain unconverted...
15. [2] Why they did it—"many believed in His name when they saw the signs which He did"—that is—the miracles...
16. Now—I mentioned last week that it was never wrong to believe that Christ was the Messiah because of His signs...
17. This was a primary purpose behind the miracles—they were signs intended to point to Christ and His work...
18. Thus—it's important to notice that group of Jews were different from those in v18—"so the Jews answered and said to Him, What sign do you show to us, since You do these things..."
19. That is—the group of Jews in v18 demanded a sign in order to believe, those in v23 had seen the signs and believed...
20. That is—those who refused to believe Christ's word except without a sign—were rebuked by Jesus and received no sign...
21. In contrast to this—those who used signs to assist their faith in Christ's word, used signs as they were intended...
22. Now—let me simply clarify what I hope is evident—the faith of these Jews was NOT true and saving faith...
23. It appears—that their faith went no further than the signs—that is—they failed to follow the signs to Christ Himself...
24. That is—the signs were intended to verify Christ's as the Messiah—that sinners would believe on Him as Savior...
25. J.C. Ryle—"They were astonished at the miracles which they saw Him work. They were even intellectually convinced that He was the Messiah, whom they had long expected. But they were not 'disciples indeed.' They were not converted, and true believers. Their hearts were not right in the sight of God, though their feelings were excited. Their inward man was not renewed, whatever they might profess with their lips..."
26. It seems these Jews—believed that Christ was the Messiah—not to deliver them from sin—but for other reasons...
27. Now—as we keep reading through John's gospel—at least two faulty reasons for trusting Christ is provided...
28. [a] Political deliverance—that is—several Jews embraced Christ not as a deliverer from sin but from the Romans...
29. Jn.6:14-15—"Then those men, when they had seen the sign that Jesus did, said, This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world. Therefore when Jesus perceived that they were about to come and take Him by force to make Him king, He departed again to the mountain by Himself alone..."
30. [b] Physical benefits—that is—several Jews simply followed Him for physical and temporal benefits such as food...
31. Jn.6:26-27—"Jesus answered them and said, Most assuredly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw the signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled. Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set His seal on Him..."
32. Thus—let me summarize—these Jews were NOT truly converted—but they believed in Him for the wrong reasons...

II. Christ Didn't Believe in Them—vv24-25

1. Now—if all we had was v23, we would have every reason to conclude—that these Jews were true disciples...
2. Yet—v24 begins with the word "but"—"but Jesus did not commit Himself to them, because He knew all men..."

3. [1] What He did, v24—"but Jesus did not commit Himself to them"—literally—Jesus did not believe in them..."
4. In other words—these Jews claimed to believe in Him—but—He refused to believe them or to trust their profession...
5. Now—implied in this statement there is a wonderful truth—that I want to take a few minutes and point out...
6. Jn.1:12—"But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name..."
7. That is—those who receive Him—there is a sense in which God then receives them—He adopts them into His family...
8. Let me put it this way—there is a sense in which, for those who receive Christ, Christ in turn, receives them...
9. Now—we learned this in our SS class—there are two bonds to our union with Christ—the Spirit and our faith...
10. Those who embrace Christ, are embraced by Christ—there is a mutual and mysterious bond between them...
11. [2] Why He did it—"because He knew all men, and had no need that anyone should testify of man, for He knew what was in man..."
12. The reason—He did not "commit Himself to them"—was because He knew the true condition of their hearts...
13. He knew that they were looking to Him for the wrong reasons—He knew that their faith was defective and flawed...
14. In other words—we learn that our Savior could read hearts—that He, as GodMan, was omniscient—all-knowing...
15. 1Ki.8:39—"then hear in heaven Your dwelling place, and forgive, and act, and give to everyone according to all his ways, whose heart You know (for You alone know the hearts of all the sons of men)..."
16. Jn.1:47-49—"Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward Him, and said of him, Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no deceit! Nathanael said to Him, How do You know me? Jesus answered and said to him, Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you. Nathanael answered and said to Him, Rabbi,. You are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel..."
17. Jn.6:60-66—"Therefore many of His disciples, when they heard *this*, said, This is a hard saying; who can understand it? When Jesus knew in Himself that His disciples complained about this, He said to them, Does this offend you? *What* then if you should see the Son of Man ascend where He was before? It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and *they* are life. But there are some of you who do not believe. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who did not believe, and who would betray Him. And He said, Therefore I have said to you that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted to him by My Father. From that *time* many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more..."
18. Thus—John describes Jesus' omniscience in two ways—[a] it was universal, and [b] it was native or natural...
19. [a] It was universal—that is—it's inclusive and comprehensive—it includes everything about every person...
20. V24—"He knew all men"—if you notice "men" is added by the translators—literally the text reads—"He knew all..."
21. He knows all men, yes, but He also knows all or everything about all men—Christ knows everything perfectly...
22. [b] It was native, v25—"and had no need that anyone should testify of man, for He knew what was in man..."
23. This phrase underscores the fact—that the knowledge of Christ is unaided—it isn't obtained through observation...
24. Thus—we learn a wonderful and sobering fact—though hypocrites enter His church—they do so with His knowledge...
25. For example—Judas wasn't made an apostle because Jesus was somehow fooled about his true spiritual condition...

26. Paul, in 2Tim.2:18 speaks about two false teachers—"who have strayed, concerning the truth, saying that the resurrection is already past; and they overthrow the faith of some..."
27. He then says, 2Tim.2:19—"Nevertheless the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: The Lord knows those who are His..."

III. The Passage Applied

A. By way of warning

1. Here I want to instruct or remind you—that the Scriptures, and especially the NT, describe a faith that does not save...
2. In other words—not every person who believes is saved or a true Christian—many believers will end up in hell...
3. Now—it's my opinion that fewer things are more necessary in our day—then a clarification of the nature of saving faith...
4. I think many professing Christians would be surprised at learning—that many "believers" are not truly believers...
5. [1] Misguided believers—that is—these are people who look to Christ for something other than salvation for sin...
6. I've already suggested to you two false reasons why many of the Jews trusted Christ—temporary deliverance and provisions...
7. Now—no one today is trusting Christ for deliverance from Rome, but MANY are trusting Christ for wrong reasons...
8. For example—think of how the gospel is often preached—Come to Christ to have your personal needs met...
9. Do you need a better marriage—a meaningful life—happiness—purpose—physical healing—or financial blessing...
10. Now—some or many of these things may be a benefit of coming to Christ—but they are not THE reason to come...
11. True and saving faith has Christ as its object—and—primarily, Christ as the Lamb slain because of our sins...
12. But not so with the MISGUIDED believer—for he isn't primarily concerned with being saved from his sins...
13. He's willing to follow Christ providing he gets what he wants—whatever that is—but it isn't salvation from sin...
14. Acts 8:13—"Then Simon himself also believed; and when he was baptized he continued with Philip, and was amazed, seeing the miracles and signs which were done..."
15. Acts 8:18—"When Simon saw that through the laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Spirit was given, he offered them money, saying, 'Give me this power also, that anyone on whom I lay hands may receive the Holy Spirit..."
16. [2] Unfruitful believers—these are people who fail to get into Christ—they fail to have that vital union with Him...
17. Thus—because there's no union with Christ, their lives fail to show any transformation or real fruit for God...
18. Jas 2:14—"What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him..."
19. Jas.2:19-20—"You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe - and tremble! But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead..."
20. Now—here we have to go back to something we learned several weeks ago—about the ingredients of faith...
21. If you recall we learned that historically, protestant theologians have described faith as knowledge, assent, and trust...
22. That is—true and saving faith is more than merely understanding and believing the general facts of the gospel...

23. Let me illustrate this with Noah and the ark—think of Noah standing at a distance looking at the newly built ark...
24. He believed everything that God had said—Noah, I am going to destroy the world, built an ark for your salvation...
25. He believed that God was holy and just, He believed that God has merciful and gracious in providing an ark...
26. But—unless Noah himself got into the ark—He would never be saved—he must TRUST himself to what he believes...
27. So the same is true for sinners—they hear about God's wrath and mercy—and they behold His salvation in Christ...
28. They may believe these things as do the demons—but unless they personally get into Christ—they shall never be saved...
29. [3] Temporary believers—these are people who seemingly start well—they're on fire for Jesus—but don't last...
30. Lk.8:13—"But the ones on the rock are those who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, who believe for a while and in time of temptation fall away

B. By way of examination

1. In light of what we've just learned—I want to provide several marks of a true faith to aid us in examining ourselves...
2. But—before I do that—I want to first provide a couple general thoughts on the NATURE of self-examination...
3. [a] Its necessity—the necessity of self-examination arises from this simply fact—the heart of man is deceitful...
4. This of course is illustrated in the Jews of our text—these Jews truly believed—they were sincere in what they believed...
5. There are those, no doubt, who know they are hypocrites—they know that they do not truly and really believe...
6. For various reasons, perhaps to satisfy mother and father, husband, or wife—put up a good front and fake it...
7. This is NOT what we find in this passage—these Jews truly and sincerely believed—but their belief was faulty...
8. [b] Its difficulty—that is—there are several difficulties associated with self-examination that need avoiding...
9. Perhaps the greatest danger to avoid would be—setting the bar too high so as to put out the smouldering wick...
10. Thus—at this point, I want to provide three necessary and certain evidences of having true and saving faith...
11. But—I want to make clear that—I am not setting any standard in terms of the intensity of these three marks...
12. In short they are—love to Christ, submission to Christ, and perseverance in Christ—while these are always present—they are NOT always present to the same degree...
13. [1] Love to Christ—Christians love Christ for who He is and what He's done—they're thankful for salvation...
14. A person who believes they are a hell-deserving sinner and that Christ bore that hell for them—will love Him...
15. What does love look like—well for starters, those who love Christ see Christ for He is—altogether lovely....
16. Furthermore—those who love Christ, long to spend time with Christ—through His appointed means—public and private...
17. Lk.7:47—"Therefore I say to you, her sins, *which are* many, are forgiven, for she loved much. But to whom little is forgiven, the same loves little..."

18. Jn.8:42—"Jesus said to them, If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and came from God; nor have I come of Myself, but He sent Me..."
19. These words are spoken to those who "believed Him" (v31)—that is—those who had believed certain things about Him...
20. They were NOT unlike the Jews of our text—their believe did not result in seeing Christ as worthy of our love...
21. 1Pet.1:8—"whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory..."
22. [2] Obedience to Christ—Christians have embraced a whole Christ—a Priest to save us and a King to rule us...
23. Acts 16:31—"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved"—faith receives Him as Lord and Savior...
24. Thus—a truly believing soul, has submitted to Christ as Lord—they no longer rule or govern their own lives...
25. 1Jn.2:3-4—"Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. He who says, I know Him, and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him..."
26. [3] Perseverance in Christ—Christians persevere—they continue in the faith—they never go back into the world...
27. Jn.8:31—"Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed..."
28. Notice—abiding in Christ's word doesn't make us His disciples—but they prove that we are truly His disciples...
29. Brethren—it's only those who "abide"—continue or persevere in His word—that is—continue believing it...
30. [a] Continue believing what it says about ourselves, that we are natively weak, wicked, and unworthy sinners...
31. [b] Continue believing what it says about Christ—that His blood is sufficient to keep cleansing us from all sin...

C. By way of Encouragement

1. Here I want to apply the fact that Christ knows everything, including our hearts, to poor and doubtful saints...
2. Christ's omniscience is a two-edged sword—for the hypocrite its terrifying, but for the Christian it's comforting...
3. Jn.21:17—"He said to him the third time, Simon, *son* of Jonah, do you love Me? Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, Do you love Me? And he said to Him, Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You. Jesus said to him, Feed My sheep..."

Matt.13:24