

Reasons to Believe, Part 2

John 3:31-36

As we continue our worship by focusing our minds on the word of God, I would invite you to open your Bible with me to John 3 for this second part of the message entitled, "Reasons to Believe." Our text for today is John 3:31-36 and in this text we have John the Baptist's most significant teaching about the identity and significance of Jesus. Here we learn why Jesus is not a mere historical figure that you can study with interest or ignore with apathy. The reality of who Jesus is demands that we believe in him, and this passage tells us why.

We don't know enough about John the Baptist's ministry to identify precisely when it began, but we can be certain that his ministry reached its apex when he pointed his finger at Jesus and said, "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world." From then on his ministry began to fade as Jesus' popularity increased. This led to some of John's disciples getting jealous on behalf of John. We saw that in vs. 26. Much to their surprise, rather than sharing their sense of jealousy, John declared to them how it is necessary for Jesus to increase and for him to decrease. And then in vs. 31-36 he gives five reasons that his disciples, and all people, should believe in Jesus.

Follow along as I read John 3:31-36

The five reasons you and I must believe in and follow Jesus that John reveals here can be put this way: he came from God's realm, he spoke God's truth, he demonstrated God's power, he carries God's authority, and he dispenses God's judgment. We covered the first three last time, so we'll do a quick review of those before we pick up where we left off in vs. 36.

1. Believe in Jesus because he came from God's realm (vs. 31)

LOOK at vs. 31. . . .

Jesus comes from above—from heaven. This is to say that he existed before he was born. Contrary to the teaching of the false Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, otherwise known as Mormons, who teach that all souls exist in heaven and God sends souls to the earth to be united to a body when a baby is conceived, no one, except for Jesus, existed before they were born.

[[Throughout this Gospel Jesus affirms time and time again that he existed before he was born. In John 8:56 Jesus says to the Jewish leaders, “Your father Abraham rejoiced that he would see my day. He saw it and was glad.” Implied in that statement is that Jesus had personal interaction with Abraham who had lived over 2,000 years earlier. Mocking this, the Jews replied, “You are not yet fifty years old, and have you seen Abraham?” To which Jesus replied, “Truly, truly, before Abraham was, I am.” Not only did Jesus exist before he was born into this world, and not only did he exist before Abraham, he declared, “I am the self-existent one” which to say, “I am God.” The Jews were not at all confused by that. They understood him perfectly, which is why they picked up stones to kill him for what they believed was blasphemy. But it wasn’t blasphemy, it was true.]]

In John 13:3 John the apostle writes, “Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going back to God, rose from supper.” And then it goes on to describe how he washed the disciple’s feet. That he had come from God was not the apostle John’s idea, Jesus said later that evening in 16:28, “I came from the Father and have come into the world, and now I am leaving the world and going to the Father.”

So John the Baptist, John the Apostle, and Jesus himself declared that Jesus came from God—He came from above—from heaven. This means that he is superior to all people. You heard that in John 8. Jesus didn’t merely say that he existed before Abraham, he took to himself the covenant name of God, “I am who I am.”

Human beings are not eternal. We are everlasting. Human beings have a beginning, and by God’s sustaining power, we will have no end. Some will be everlastingly sustained in the glorious presence of God on the new earth; others will be everlastingly sustained in judgment in the Lake of Fire. We are everlasting.

Only God is eternal—he has no beginning, and he has no end. He is eternal. In saying there in John 8, “Before Abraham was, I am,” Jesus declares his eternality and declares himself to be God. This is why John opens this Gospel with the words, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God. The Word was in the beginning with God.”

Jesus is from above, which is to say that Jesus is eternal, which is to say that Jesus is God. So because Jesus came from God’s realm, you must believe on him.

2. Believe in Jesus because he spoke God’s truth (vs. 32-33)

Secondly, we must believe in Jesus because he spoke God’s truth. LOOK at vs. 32-34.

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Gurus and religious leaders and philosophers teach from their imagination or what they’ve been taught or observations they’ve made in life. Not Jesus. Jesus spoke God’s truth in the sense that he conveyed first-hand testimony of divine truth.

Being from heaven and being eternal, he could speak of events and individuals of Israel’s past not as biblical historian, but as the God who spoke with Moses and led Israel and fought their battles. Jesus spoke of creation not as one who received an oral tradition, but as the one through whom all things were created.

Jesus spoke of what he heard and saw as a first-hand participant of all that takes places in heaven and on earth. More than that, Jesus spoke as he was directed by the Father. In John 8:28 he says, “I speak just as the Father taught me.” And then vs. 38, “I speak of what I have seen with my Father.” Then in 12:49 he says, “I have not spoken on my own authority, but the Father who sent me has himself given me a commandment—what to say and what to speak.”

Even though Jesus could speak of his own accord—on his own authority—during his ministry on earth he spoke what the Father told him to speak and he declared what the Father directed him to say. Therefore, when you receive his words, when you believe, you’re not simply affirming the truth of Jesus, you’re agreeing with him that God is true. Those who receive the words of Jesus confess in their own heart and

testify to others that his words carry the same weight and truthfulness as anything God says.

So we must believe in Jesus because he came from God's realm, and having come from God's realm he spoke God's truth. How do we know he spoke God's truth? That's the third reason we must believe—he demonstrated God's power.

3. Believe in Jesus because he demonstrated God's power (vs. 34)

LOOK at vs. 34. . . .

John speaks of God's power not in terms of an abstract quality, but in terms of the source of God's power, namely, the Holy Spirit. In saying "he gives the Spirit without measure," John is saying that the Father gave the Spirit to the Son without measure which is how Jesus was able to do all the signs and wonders that he did.

Over the course of his 2-3 years of ministry, Jesus performed miracles beyond number. He cast out demons, healed the sick, raised the dead, restored deformed limbs, renewed leprosy bodies, gave sight to blind eyes and hearing to deaf ears. He created food for over ten thousand people at one time, he walked on water, he calmed raging storms, he directed the movement of fish in the lake.

The vast majority of the time there was no explanation as to what empowered him to do such things. But there were a few occasions where we're told what—or who—was the source of his power.

Jesus himself declares the source his power near the beginning of his ministry. In Luke 4 he's in a synagogue in his home town of Nazareth and he reads Isaiah 61, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." And then he sat down and said, "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing." In other words, he's declaring himself to be the Messiah who is empowered by the Spirit to do all that he does.

Then in Matthew 12 Jesus healed a demon-oppressed man. The Pharisees responded to this display of supernatural power by saying, “It is only by Beelzebul, the prince of demons, that this man casts out demons.” They declared that he was empowered by Satan himself. Jesus gave a longer response, but in part he said to them, “if I cast out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore they will be your judges. But if it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you. . . . Therefore I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven people, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven.” To observe the miracles of Jesus and declare them to be demonically empowered was to blaspheme the Holy Spirit who was the true source of Jesus’ power.

So the Father gave the Spirit to the Son without measure and it is by that unlimited power that Jesus performed his miracles which in turn served to validate his teaching and claims. So we must believe in Jesus because he came from God’s realm, spoke God’s words, and demonstrated God’s power. That’s where we left off last time. We come now to the fourth reason we must believe in Jesus, which is that he carries God’s authority.

4. Believe in Jesus because he carried God’s authority (vs. 35)

LOOK at vs. 35. . . .

Out of love for the Son, the Father has given all things into his hands, which is to say, the Father has placed all things under the authority of the Son. There is nothing outside of God over which Jesus does not have authority. And if Jesus has all authority, then we are duty-bound to not only believe, but to submit to him.

The words here are straightforward, but there is much to consider. Consider the first phrase, “The Father loves the Son.” The love of the Father and the Son is a note repeatedly struck by the apostle John in this Gospel. In his effort to convince us that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, John wants us to know that the relationship between God the Father and God the Son is characterized by love. Listen to this chord struck throughout the Gospel.

In 5:20 Jesus says, “For the Father loves the Son and shows him all that he himself is doing.” In 10:17 Jesus says, “For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again.” Then in 15:9, “Just as the Father has loved me, I have also loved you.” And then as he prays to the Father in 17:24 he says, “You loved me before the foundation of the world.”

That John would record this over and over again is significant because you will not find such statements in any of the other Gospels.

The other Gospels don’t give a contrary view, they just don’t give such emphasis to the relationship between the Father and the Son. So why is John so intent to have us understand that the Father loves the Son? Because it supports John’s case that Jesus is the Christ—the Messiah—the Son of God.

The relationship between God and the Messiah is not the melody in Old Testament prophecy, but it is a harmony that you hear on occasion. This tone is first heard in 2 Samuel 7 as the Lord makes his covenant with David regarding his son’s everlasting kingdom. As you listen to the Lord make this covenant, you’ll hear the Lord interweave promises to David’s intermediate descendants and David’s ultimate descendent. But listen for how the Lord describes his relationship to David’s son. The Lord says, “When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son. When he commits iniquity, I will discipline him with the rod of men, with the stripes of the sons of men, but my steadfast love will not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away from before you. And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever.”

Did you hear it? “I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son. . . . My steadfast love will not depart from him.” God’s steadfast love is his faithful determination to work for the benefit of the one he loves. And the one he loves is his Son.

Psalm 2 is a prophetic psalm about the Messiah, and in this psalm we hear from the Messiah himself who says, “The Lord said to me, ‘You are my Son; today I have begotten you. Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession.’” This declaration by the Lord to his anointed king is that their relationship is a Father-Son relationship where in love the Father generously gives to his son.

Then in Isaiah 42 the Lord speaks of the coming Messiah saying, “Behold my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights; I have put my Spirit upon him.” And he goes on to describe what the Messiah would do. This prophecy of the Messiah tells us not just what his function will be, but that the Lord delights in him as a father delights in his son.

What was prophesied in the Old Testament is then fulfilled in the New. When Jesus goes to be baptized by John, as he comes out of the water John sees the Spirit descend on Jesus and Matthew 3:17 says, “behold, a voice from heaven said, ‘This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.’” This declaration at the very start of Jesus’ public ministry was a divine proclamation of Jesus the Messiah in whom God delights.

This happens again in a more private setting. Matthew 17 tells us that Jesus took Peter, James, and John up a mountain. They saw him manifest his glory as he spoke with Moses and Elijah who appeared. But then God showed up as well and spoke out of the cloud saying, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.” So at his baptism and on this mountain God declares two things about Jesus—he is the beloved Son, and he delights in him.

The apostle John, who wants to prove that Jesus is the Messiah, takes those statements in Matthew and turns up the volume to ensure we understand that the Father loves the Son. And it is out of that love that the Father gives all things to the Son. LOOK at vs. 35 again. . . .

To give all things into his hand means to entrust the responsibility of all things into his care. And with that comes sovereign authority. Think about what John is saying

here. God the Father has granted God the Son—Jesus the Christ—sovereignty and rule and dominion over all things.

Jesus has authority over all the earth and over all the solar system and all the galaxy and all the universe and all the heavenly realm. There is nothing in all creation outside his sovereign control.

And yet there he was, the King of the universe, walking around Israel, going from town to town. As people spoke to him and asked him questions, they were speaking to Him who has infinite wisdom and knowledge. As the religious leaders tried to trap him in his words, they debated with Him who knew their hearts and innermost thoughts. When people listened to Jesus teach, they weren't hearing a prophet speak on behalf of God—they heard God himself.

The Father gave all things into his hands, and Jesus exercised his authority on the earth. He exercised authority in his teaching. In Matthew 7 when Jesus finished his sermon that we call the Sermon on the Mount, it says, “the crowds were astonished at his teaching, for he was teaching them as one who had authority, not as their scribes.”

He exercised his authority to forgive sin. In Matthew 9 Jesus forgave the sins of a paralytic, and the scribes thought him to be blaspheming. “But Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, “Why do you think evil in your hearts? For which is easier, to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Rise and walk’? But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins”—he then said to the paralytic—“Rise, pick up your bed and go home.” And it says, “When the crowds saw it, they were afraid, and they glorified God, who had given such authority to men.” Now God didn't give such authority to men—he gave such authority to Jesus, his Son.

He exercised his authority over spiritual beings. In Mark 1 as Jesus is teaching and performing miracles and casting out demons, the people, it says, “were all amazed, so that they questioned among themselves, saying, “What is this? A new teaching with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him.”

He exercised his authority over the weather. In Matthew 8 Jesus and his disciples are in a boat on the Sea of Galilee. A storm suddenly whips up around them to the point that these experienced fishermen are afraid they're going to die. But Jesus commands the storm to be still, and the disciples were fearful saying, "who is this? Even the winds and the sea obey him."

He exercised his authority over the temple. A few days before his crucifixion, Jesus walks into the temple which was the domain of the Sadducees. For the second time in his ministry he throws out all the merchants and animals and the Sadducees demanded to know, "By what authority do you do these things?" Being the Son of God he had inherent authority to regulate the temple. But knowing they would not accept his answer he refused to tell them.

Jesus has authority. His authority spans the physical and spiritual realm. Ephesians 1:21-23, "[The Father] raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all." And Hebrews 2:8 says, "Now in putting everything in subjection to him, he left nothing outside his control."

There is no authority except that which belongs to Christ. There is no domain over which Jesus does not rule. There is no kingdom except where Jesus is King. There is no government except that Jesus is in control. Kings can claim sovereign power but their authority exists when people choose to submit. Dictators can exercise sovereignty as long as no one takes their life. Rulers can enforce their will only as long as they have an army to back them up. Not Jesus—his authority does not depend on anyone else. He does not need an army to exercise his will. No one can usurp his power or position. Neither can anyone assassinate him.

He said in John 10:18, "For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Father." Jesus was not arrested, falsely tried, and

unjustly put to death because he was powerless. Jesus said when his disciples tried to defend him in the garden, “Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels?” When Pilate tried to assert his authority Jesus said, “You would have no authority over me at all unless it had been given you from above.”

There is nothing Jesus lacks the ability or authority to do. Yet he used his authority not for selfish gain, but to accomplish the purpose for which he was sent, and to empower those he commissioned. In Matthew 10 it says, “And he called to him his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every disease and every affliction.” Then before he ascended into heaven Jesus said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” My friends Jesus carries God’s authority.

Oh do you see, then, how foolish the evil one was to tempt Jesus by showing him all the kingdoms of the world and saying, “All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me.” He was as foolish as the servant who says to the king, “Bow to me and I’ll let you rule.” And yet so many today treat Jesus this way. Many people say they believe in Jesus, but only the Jesus that aligns with their agenda.

Anyone will serve the Jesus that serves them, makes them feel good, doesn’t judge their choices, and demands nothing from them. But that is not Jesus. The Jesus who lived and walked this earth carries the authority of God and he bows to no one. He submits to no one but the Father. He serves no purpose except the divine decree established before the world began. Having all authority, he rules and reigns over everything and everyone.

Whether you believe in Jesus or not, his authority stands over you. So believe in him, bow the knee, and submit to him.

We’ve seen that we must believe in Jesus because he came from God’s realm, spoke God’s truth, demonstrated God’s power, and carries God’s authority. Finally, we

must believe in Jesus because he dispenses God's judgment. As the one who has all authority, he dispenses God's judgment.

5. Believe in Jesus because he dispenses God's judgment (vs. 36)

LOOK at vs. 36. . . .

Jesus dispenses God's judgment in two ways. To those who believe he delivers from the wrath of God and grants eternal life. And those who do not believe he measures out condemnation. Now as you can see John doesn't explicitly say that it is Jesus who dispenses eternal life on the one hand and wrath on the other. But we'll see that these judgments—these determinations—are indeed handed down by Jesus.

What should strike us right away in this verse is how John describes the two responses to Jesus. When we read "whoever believes" in the first half, we would expect to read "whoever does not believe" in the second half. We would expect that not only because it's intuitive, but also because we've seen that contrast made earlier in the chapter in vs. 18. LOOK there. . . . The opposite of believing is not believing. If you believe in Christ you receive eternal life. If you do not believe in Christ, you are condemned.

So when we come to vs. 36, it should give us pause that the contrast is not believing vs. not believing, but rather believing vs. obeying. Many people think of believing as something that takes place in and is confined to the mind; that it doesn't necessarily have bearing on the will or desires. In other words, you can believe something, but it doesn't need to change your life.

There's even a doctrinal view of saving faith that says that you must believe the truth about Jesus to be saved, and doing so makes him your savior, but you don't necessarily have to submit to him as Lord—that's optional.

This is one form of what's called antinomianism, which means, "no law." *Nomos* is the Greek work for law, *anti* is the preposition "against," so antinomianism is against the law. Antinomianism holds that the Christian is not duty-bound to submit to the law. We have been freed from the law by Christ, it's suggested, so we can essentially

live without any purposeful adherence to a standard of righteousness—even the standard laid down in Scripture.

Once you believe, obedience is at best optional. Some would even go so far as to say that intentional obedience is actually a rejection of grace and an attempt to save yourself by works.

To support this view some would point to a passage like Galatians 3:3 which says, “Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?” Some influential speakers and writers have said that any attempt to purposefully obey a command in Scripture is an attempt to be perfected by the flesh. Rather than trying to obey, they say that we must simply believe, by which they mean that you must do nothing more than bask in the grace of Christ.

Now to be sure, as we were well reminded last week from 2 Corinthians 3:18, it is essential that we steep ourselves in the truth of the gospel. The glorious gospel of Christ must saturate our hearts and minds. There is transforming power in the gospel. But gospel-driven transformation is not passive. The gospel is not like fairy dust transforms from mice into royal horses, or in our case, sinners into perfected saints.

The gospel is the power of God in that we are awakened to the resplendent glory of God in Christ. Our mind is radically changed such that we see everything with new eyes, and our affections are changed such that we desire different things, and our will is changed such that we are inclined to worship. And as a result of our heart being changed through our mind and affections and will, we step forward in joyful obedience to the God who saved us and gave himself for us.

But none of this is passive. We have to expose ourselves to the truth. But not just expose ourselves, but also embrace the truth with all our heart. And not just embrace the truth, but put it into practice. It’s just as Paul said in Philippians 4:9. If you want to experience peace, you not only need to set your mind on that which is true, just, pure, lovely, and all that he describes there, but you also need to practice what you’ve been taught. And it’s then that the God of peace will be with you.

As Paul says in 2 Corinthians 5:14, “We are controlled by the love of Christ,” not in the sense that the love of Christ exerts some external control over us, but in the sense that it motivates and empowers us to live for him who died and rose again on our behalf.

All this to say, faith or belief cannot be confined to an exercise of the mind. Faith and belief, if it is real, involves our affections and our will. Belief in Christ is validated when our knee is bowed in submission to Christ and our heart is shaped by the heart of God.

This connection between faith and obedience is all over the Scripture. As he began his epistle to the Romans, the apostle Paul described the purpose of his ministry this way, “through [Christ], we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of his name among the nations.” His ministry was aimed beyond producing faith to producing faith-filled obedience.

In his first epistle, Peter writes in 4:17, “For it is time for judgment to begin at the household of God; and if it begins with us, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God?” There again we have the word “obey” where we might expect the word “believe.” To obey the gospel is first to believe, and then to submit ourselves to God in all that he says.

That obedience is essential to true salvation and not optional is seen in the confession that brings salvation. Romans 10:9, “if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.” To confess Jesus is Lord is to acknowledge him as sovereign ruler of your life. This again is seen in the great commission Jesus gave to his disciples. He told them to “make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.”

Now let’s be clear about this. The connection and even equating faith and obedience as the Scripture does in these passages and others is not to say that a person is saved by their obedience.

We do not earn forgiveness of sins through adherence to the law of God. Forgiveness of sins and reconciliation with God is a gift based on nothing more than the life, death, and resurrection of Christ. Neither faith nor faith-filled obedience is the basis of salvation; faith is the *means* by which salvation is received.

Romans 3:25 says that we are justified by grace which is to be received by faith. In the words of Ephesians 2:8, “by grace you have been saved through faith.” So neither our faith nor our obedience is the basis of salvation. Rather, faith is the channel through which we receive the salvation purchased by Christ, and faith-motivated obedience is the evidence that salvation has been received.

Coming back to our passage, those who believe refers to those who genuinely believe and thus follow Christ. And those who do not obey refers to those who live disobedient lives, whether they claim to believe or not.

Consider what happens to those who believe. Notice the present tense here. “Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life.” Remember that eternal life is not a length of life but a quality of life. Jesus defines eternal life in John 17:3, “And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.” This knowledge is not an intellectual knowledge; it is a personal knowledge, a relationship of love and trust. When you believe in Jesus, you’re not assenting to a set of historical facts. You’re embracing all of who he is and all of what he taught and seeing everything through his eyes as he has revealed it in Scripture.

To have eternal life now means that your eyes are opened to the spiritual realities around you. You can see people not as cosmic accidents, but as image bearers of God. You can see the universe not as the product of billions of years of chaotic chance, but as the direct and purposeful creation of a all-powerful God. You can see your purpose in life not in terms of self-fulfillment, but in terms of God’s glory. You can experience suffering as an opportunity to know and trust God who is in control and works all things for good.

Eternal life is opening God’s word and finding in it your source of comfort, encouragement, conviction, wisdom, and insight. It is life-giving water to your thirsty soul. Eternal life is being freed from the power of sin and empowered by the

Spirit to live as God designed life to be lived. It's facing death without fear knowing that death is the gateway to God's glorious presence. Eternal life is knowing God, knowing Christ, and therefore seeing reality as it really is.

How do you obtain eternal life? It is a gift given by Christ. Right before defining eternal life in John 17 Jesus says, "you, Father, have given [me] authority over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom you have given [me]." This only repeats what Jesus said of himself in John 10 when he described himself as the good shepherd. He said, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand."

Jesus is the one who dispenses God's judgment, if you will, of eternal life to those who believe. On the other hand, it says here in vs. 36 that "whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him." This too is not merely a future judgment, but a present reality.

Those who do not believe in Christ and therefore who do not walk in obedience to Christ are blind to spiritual realities—deceived about the nature of the world and of life. When you do not believe in Christ there is no ultimate meaning and purpose in the universe. We're all cosmic accidents and aimlessly flying around the solar system with nothing but this life to live for.

When you don't obey Christ you're hopelessly enslaved to your passions and desires. You search endlessly for fulfillment and satisfaction, but you can't find any that lasts. Suffering is compounded because it serves no ultimate purpose. When someone speaks the truth of God for your thirsty soul it's like being handed a cup of sand because it doesn't make sense to you. You're afraid of death because you don't know what's on the other side, and you're afraid that hell might actually be real. You do not see life. You're blind. Oh what a pitiful state to be in. The wrath of God abides on you and you cannot escape it. Romans 2:5 says, "because of your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed." You're not only experiencing a measure of God's wrath now, behind the scenes you're adding principle and compounding interest to your debt to God. And the day will come when your loan will be called and you will be condemned and cast into the Lake of Fire forever.

And make no mistake about who will call your loan. It will be none other than the Lord Jesus Christ whom you rejected in this life. John 5:22 says, "For the Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son." Again in vs. 27, "And he has given him authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of Man." And it's not just the future judgment Jesus dispenses. In John 9:39 Jesus says, "For judgment I came into this world, that those who do not see may see, and those who see may become blind." Jesus spoke in parables to the crowds so that they would not believe.

He says in Matthew 10:34, "Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword." That is to say that he came to bring division between those who believe and those who don't, to the end that those who do not believe will receive the final judgment from his hand.

He goes on to say in vs. 38, "And whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Whoever finds his life will lose it." In other words, when you find your life based on self-determination, you will end up losing it. Because the day will come when the giver of life will judge all people based on his judgment.

Jesus will sit on the Great White Throne on the final day, and he will have books opened before him, and Revelation 20:15 says, "if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire."

You might make a name for yourself and be able to find your name in books and newspapers and articles and on social media. But if your name is not written in his book, Jesus will hand down his verdict and you will lose your life.

Conclusion

Do you need any other reasons to believe in Jesus? He came from God's realm, he spoke God's truth, he demonstrated God's power, he carries God's authority, and he dispenses God's judgment.

Jesus is no ancient man whom you will never meet. No, you will stand before him one day and given an account for how you responded to him. Did you believe and obey? Or did you reject and rebel. Today you have heard who he is and what he has

done. And there is only one necessary response—believe! Come to the end of yourself and call out to him for forgiveness and salvation.

Why would you disobey the King of Glory who opens his arms to you and offers freedom from your life of sin and shame and condemnation? Why would you put off bowing the knee to him in some vain hope that you can find another way to life? It's been said that today is God's day, tomorrow is the devil's day. Today is the day of salvation. Believe on him today.

You who have believed, let these truths be the conviction of your soul. Take all doubts and all uncertainty and confront them with the truth of who Jesus is. Use these truths to combat the lies of the world, the flesh, and the devil who would tempt you to diminish Jesus in your mind to make sin more attractive.

Live in the freedom and joy of having received eternal life from the hands of him who loved you and gave himself for you. And do not shrink back from proclaiming his glorious gospel to others.

Discussion Questions

1. Was there anything in the message that ministered to your soul?
2. Were there any questions you had from the sermon or passage?
3. What is the significance of the Father loving the son?
4. What hope does this passage offer?
5. Why does this passage switch from believe to obedience in verse 36?
6. What does it mean that the Father has given all things into the Son's hand?
7. Read 1 John 2:1-6, How does this passage relate?
8. What does it mean for us to believe? How should that affect our daily lives?