

**Thirty Days with Jesus  
The Controversial Jesus #1  
Why People Believed In Him**

**Intro:** In his gospel John reveals the claims that Jesus made for Himself and the legal proof Jesus gave to back up those claims. One might have imaged that such impressive claims and proofs would have resulted in virtually everyone believing in Jesus. Yet John candidly presents to us a very different picture. In his prologue he makes it quite clear that the God who came into His world was not universally welcomed.

*He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him. (John 1:10-11)*

**That is to say, Jesus was a controversial figure. People had dramatically different viewpoints about Him. In our lessons today we seek to discover why those differences existed and from it derive insight into why people respond to Jesus today as they do.**

**Those who believed and why**

*Some believed because they recognized God's voice in the teaching Jesus did.*

It is interesting to notice that many of those who initially believed in Jesus did simply on the basis of listening to Him teach!

**Andrew, after spending an evening talking with Jesus...**

*...found first his own brother Simon, and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which translated means Christ). (John 1:41)*

**Phillip likewise after follow Jesus for a time...**

*...found Nathanael and \*said to him, "We have found Him of whom Moses in the Law and also the Prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." (John 1:45)*

**The associates of the Samaritan woman in John 4 acknowledged that it was Jesus' teaching had a great impact upon them. John reports:**

*And many more believed because of His word; and they were saying to the woman, "It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves and know that this One is indeed the Savior of the world." (John 4:41-42)*

**Even those hostile to Jesus could not help but be impressed with His teaching. The officers of the temple who sent to capture Jesus came back empty-hand saying...**

*"Never did a man speak the way this man speaks." (John 7:46)*

**There was something about Jesus' teaching that caused His hearers to know instinctively that He was God. He taught with an**

authority, with an understanding, and with a manner that led his hearers to believe in Him.

*Some believed because they recognized God's power in the signs that Jesus performed.*

**Some believed because they experienced miracles or signs personally. They simply could not resist the clear evidence of divine power working in Jesus.**

**Nathanael after experiencing Jesus' insight into his whereabouts and character confidently confessed...**

*"Rabbi, You are the Son of God; You are the King of Israel."*  
*(John 1:49)*

**John says about the multitudes in Judea**

*Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed in His name, beholding His signs which He was doing. (John 2:23)*

**Later John reports about the Galileans**

*So when He came to Galilee, the Galileans received Him, having seen all the things that He did in Jerusalem at the feast; for they themselves also went to the feast. (John 4:45)*

**John says about the disciples who saw Jesus' first sign in Cana--the turning of water to wine**

*This beginning of His signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory, and His disciples believed in Him. (John 2:11)*

**Nobleman of Capernaum confirmed the healing of his son at the moment Jesus had indicated...**

*So the father knew that it was at that hour in which Jesus said to him, "Your son lives"; and he himself believed, and his whole household. (John 4:53)*

**Samaritan woman experienced Jesus' knowledge of her past though they had never met**

*"Come, see a man who told me all the things that I have done; this is not the Christ, is it?" (John 4:29)*

**The five thousand had experienced Jesus' miraculous provision for the multitudes**

*When therefore the people saw the sign which He had performed, they said, "This is of a truth the Prophet who is to come into the world." (John 6:14)*

**Jerusalem multitudes could not escape the implication of Jesus' many miracles**

*But many of the multitude believed in Him; and they were saying, "When the Christ shall come, He will not perform more signs than those which this man has, will He?" (John 7:30-31)*

**The blind man reasoned out the significance of his own cure at Jesus' hands...**

*Since the beginning of time it has never been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind. If this man were not from God, He could do nothing.” (John 9:32-33)*

*And he said, “Lord, I believe.” And he worshiped Him. (John 9:38)*

#### **Perean disciples**

*And many came to Him and were saying, “While John performed no sign, yet everything John said about this man was true.” And many believed in Him there. (John 10:41-42)*

**Clearly the people were stirred to faith through experiencing and seeing Jesus’ miracles firsthand!**

**But some also believed because they heard credible reports of the signs performed**

**The Samaritans believed due to the testimony of the woman they knew**

*And from that city many of the Samaritans believed in Him because of the word of the woman who testified, “He told me all the things that I have done.” (John 4:39)*

**Likewise people who heard of the resurrection of Lazarus came to Bethany, and seeing him were persuaded that Jesus was the Christ**

*The great multitude therefore of the Jews learned that He was there; and they came, not for Jesus’ sake only, but that they might also see Lazarus, whom He raised from the dead. But the chief priests took counsel that they might put Lazarus to death also; because on account of him many of the Jews were going away, and were believing in Jesus. (John 12:9-11)*

**And so, whether signs were experienced personally or reported by others who saw them, they served to lead people to faith in Jesus. But what can we learn from these experiences? What caused these people to believe in Jesus while others hearing and seeing the same things did not?**

#### **Two things essential to faith**

##### *A spiritual mind-set*

**One of the things that sets all these people who believed apart was an evident desire to know God and obey Him. Coupled with this desire was the willingness to be taught and corrected by Him. Jesus taught that faith was possible for those who truly sought to know God and do His will.**

*“If any man is willing to do His will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it is of God, or whether I speak from Myself. (John 7:17)*

**And thus, for those who had become familiar with God’s voice through OT revelation, it was not hard for them to recognize Him through His teaching, nor will it be for us today. Listen to Jesus’ teaching and you will know that His is the voice of God.**

*Unprejudiced objectivity*

**For those who witnessed or heard about the miracles of Jesus it was hard to deny the obvious. Jesus was doing something that only one endowed with divine power could do!**

**Today Jesus' signs will also lead men to faith if they look with unprejudiced objectivity! But one must be:**

*Free from hindering presuppositions.*

Some approach the Bible with preconceived ideas about what is possible. Since miracles cannot exist, then the stories about Jesus are fabrications made up by his apostles.

Others approach the Bible with a historical agnosticism believing it is impossible to know anything about the past.

*Willing to spend time with Jesus and understand His teaching and claims and evaluate them honestly.*

**When we do this the signs he performed will impress us with His divine power.**

**Conclusion: Is it possible for the thinking man to believe in Jesus today? Just as much so as it was in the first century! The evidence that Jesus gave is as convincing now as then, if we will read his words with spirituality and evaluate his signs objectively.**

**Do you believe?**