

IS IT HARD FOR YOU TO BELIEVE?

Is it hard for you to believe? Some people say, "I have to see it to believe it." But no one can live up to that saying, can you? We believe many things that we do not see. In fact, that's what "faith" is, living in view of something we cannot see. You see, humans must believe most things because someone tells us to believe those things. That's right! In fact, because we cannot "see" everything with our own eyes or experience every event for ourselves, we must depend upon what eyewitnesses have said about those things and about those events. Do you have a hard time believing what other people say?

Hello I'm Larry Murdock. I preach for the Gandy church of Christ. Good morning and welcome to this program.

Some people are hard to believe! In other words, their credibility, their believability, has been damaged. If you know them to be liars, then you may have a hard time believing them. God has worked diligently to give credibility to His prophets. God's spokesmen were enabled to work miracles. God empowered them by showing great signs. It is interesting that miracles in the Bible are often called "signs." A sign is something that indicates something else. That is, a sign points to something beyond itself. It is no wonder then that miracles are called "signs" because the miracle always points to the credibility of the messenger and the message that the miracle worker is announcing.

In John 20:30, 31 we read that "Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; 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." John called Jesus' miracles "signs." And John tells us that Jesus performed many more signs than what John had written in his book. You see, in John's book he only wrote down seven of Jesus' signs, when Jesus had in fact worked many more. But notice the reason that John included those seven signs in his book, "that you may believe." Believe what? "That you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name." There was a great benefit in believing John's words about Jesus. When a person believes that Jesus is the Son of God he or she moves closer to obedience to the very Son of God. Jesus' signs assured people of His credibility. Those miracles that Jesus did convinced many people who saw them.

For instance, Jesus was in Jerusalem when he passed by a man who had been blind since birth. "And his disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" Jesus answered, "It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him. We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day;

night is coming, when no one can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." Having said these things, [Jesus] spit on the ground and made mud with the saliva. Then he anointed the man's eyes with the mud and said to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which means Sent). So he went and washed and came back seeing." (John 9:2-7)

When the man returned from the pool those people who knew him were amazed that he could now see. They asked him what had happened, and he told them what a man named Jesus had done. Well, his neighbors took the man to the religious leaders, the Pharisees. The religious leaders asked the healed man what had happened and the man told the Pharisees about Jesus. Did the Pharisees believe this man born blind? No. You see, this miracle indicated that Jesus was from God, and many of the Pharisees had already made up their minds that Jesus was not from God! Now "Some of the Pharisees said, "This man is **not** from God, for he does not keep the Sabbath." But others said, "How can a man who is a sinner do such signs?" And there was a division among them." (John 9:16)

Even today, there is still division among people when it comes to Jesus Christ. Who is He? Has Jesus come from God, or is He just another man? Is Jesus now dead? Or, is He still alive; was He really raised from the dead? The Pharisees asked the man "what do you say about him, since he opened your eyes?" The man answered, "He is a prophet." Well, the Pharisees would not accept that conclusion either. They distrusted this man's credibility. They did not accept the credibility of the miracle itself. The Pharisees thought that the man was lying about his blindness. So they sent someone after his parents. When the parents arrived they verified that "yes", this man was their son, and yes, he was born blind. The Pharisees tried every way they could think of to discredit the testimony of the man born blind. But the testimony was indisputable. And friends so it was with all of Jesus' miracles.

What about you? Do you believe these credible witnesses that we read about in the Bible? Will you believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God? Will your faith in Jesus make a difference in the way you live your life here on earth, and will it result in eternal life? Do you believe these credible witnesses?

Some people like to challenge the **record** of these miracles. In other words, they don't believe the Bible's record. They think the Bible is itself an unbelievable record of events that never really happened. Of course, there are fables and stories that never happened. Are the Bible stories of Jesus' miracles fables?

It is interesting that we choose to believe some things, but not believe other things that show more credibility! That's right! For instance, the same people who disbelieve in Jesus might believe in Confucius, the Chinese philosopher, when the historical record of Confucius is much less reliable than the historical testimony of the Bible. These people may believe in the

Upanishads, when the historical accuracy of those books are far less reliable than the historical record found about Jesus.

The Bible's historical record is amazing. The Bible's historical accuracy has been demonstrated over and over again. Our heavenly Father has not only broken into this world with miraculous signs to prove the credibility of His witnesses, but our Father has also rooted these events in history. And the Bible is an historical account of those events. Being history, the Bible can be measured against all other accounts that deal with the same facts. When this is done, the Bible has been proven to be historically accurate over and over again.

Peter once wrote, "We did not follow cleverly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty." (2 Peter 1:16) Yes, Peter and the others gave us an eyewitness account of historical facts. John wrote, "we have **seen** his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." (John 1:14) John also gave us a bit of sad news when he wrote, "He [Jesus] was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. But to all who did receive him, who **believed** in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but [born of the will] of God." (John 1:10-13)

Friends, prejudice is a terrible thing. What is prejudice? Prejudice is making up our opinion of something before investigation. Prejudice keeps us from making informed decisions. Prejudice causes us to make foolish choices. After we investigate we may make the same decision, but at least it will not then be prejudice. Does the Bible offer you credible information? Go investigate.

After Andrew met Jesus and heard him teach, Andrew went to find his brother, Simon, and said to him "We have found the Messiah." Andrew was convinced by hearing the words of Jesus, the teaching of Jesus. At that point, Andrew had not seen a miracle! Have you examined the teachings of Jesus? Are they credible, believable? Do they strike a chord in your heart? Jesus once said, "**My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.**" (John 10:27) Andrew must have been a "sheep", someone who was ready to listen and to follow the teachings of Jesus. Jesus also said to those sheep, "You will know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (John 8:32) Well Andrew heard the truth from the lips of Jesus and he began to follow the Lord Jesus Christ. Andrew then brought his brother Peter to Jesus who said to him, "You are Simon the son of John. You shall be called Cephas (that is Peter)." (John 1:42) Jesus knew Simon name and he knew what Simon was to become, the great apostle called Peter. Does Jesus know your name? Are you a sheep who hears this shepherd calling?

When the Samaritan woman heard Jesus talk about the worship of the one true God, she went into the city and brought a crowd out to Jesus saying, "Come, see a man who told me all that I ever did. Can this be the Christ?" (John 4:29) In this case, it wasn't a "sign" or miracle that gave Jesus credibility in the eyes of this woman, but it was because Jesus knew about her life and about her present circumstances. Jesus also knows your circumstances. He knows that you are interested in Him and His truth. And when **you** see how Jesus' teaching can change your life, then perhaps you too will think that Jesus is believable! Find a church of Christ near you so that you can hear more of the teachings of the Christ, the son of God. Or visit our website at www.voiceoftruth.us.