

Jesus And The Bible

John 5:32-40

Pastor John Miller

I want you to follow with me. I'm going to read the text, John 5:32-40.

Jesus is speaking. He says, "There is another that beareth witness of Me; and I know that the witness which he witnesseth of Me is true. Ye sent unto John..."—this is a reference to John the Baptist—"...and he bare witness unto the truth. But I receive not testimony from man, but these things I say, that ye might be saved. He..."—that is, John the Baptist—"...was a burning and a shining light, and ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light. But I have greater witness than that of John, for the works which the Father hath given Me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of Me, that the Father hath sent Me. And the Father Himself, which hath sent Me, hath borne witness of Me. Ye have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen His shape. And ye have not His word abiding in you; for whom He hath sent, Him ye believe not. Search the Scriptures..."—or more literally, "You do search the Scriptures"—"...for in them..."—that is, the Scriptures—"...ye think ye have eternal life, and they..."—the Scriptures—"...are they which testify of Me. And ye will not come to Me, that ye might have life."

So the question we're asking and the question we're seeking to answer is: Why do we need the Bible? The answer to why we need the Bible is because the Bible is the Word of God, and we need God. I need God. Don't you need God? I think we all need God. I saw a sticker on a truck this week that said, "In God we trust," and my heart rejoiced to see those words. We need God. And if we're going to find God, we're going to find Him in the pages of Scripture. So we need the Bible, because God is found in the Bible and it is God's Word.

The key to discovering God in the Bible is to find Jesus in the Bible. When you find Jesus in the Bible, then you have come to know God in the Bible. John R. W. Stott said, "The Bible is the prism by which the light of Jesus Christ is broken into many beautiful colors." I love that. The Bible is like a prism, and the Holy Spirit shines through it and we see the beauty of Jesus. The Bible is given to us so it might show us Jesus and bring us to Jesus, that we might trust Him as our Lord and Savior and have eternal life.

Last time we looked at God and the Bible. The Bible comes from God in its origin and is a revelation of God. So two things. The Bible comes from God; that's the origin of the Bible. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God," or it is God breathed. And holy men wrote as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. Secondly, the Bible is the revelation of God. We cannot know God apart from Him revealing Himself.

Now I want to look at the subject of Jesus and the Bible, because the central figure of the Bible is Jesus Christ, the Son of God, Who is the Savior of the world. In this text, there are two points I want to make—two important truths. They are very simple but not simplistic. The first is that the Scriptures bear witness to Jesus. The second point I want to make is that Jesus bears witness to the Scriptures.

Let's look at the first point, that the Scriptures bear witness to Jesus. Jesus makes it very clear in verse 39. Jesus said it like this: "You do search the Scriptures..."—No question about it; the Jews search the Scriptures. Meticulously, devotedly they search the Bible, and they study the Word of God—"...for in them ye think ye have eternal life..."—that's the problem—"...and..."—Jesus points out—"...they..."—the Scriptures—"...are they which testify of Me." That's the phrase I want you to see there: "They are they which testify of Me." Jesus makes it clear that the Bible is about Him. The Bible testifies to Him. He is the main subject and focus of the Bible.

The context of this statement goes all the way back to John 5:17-18. "But Jesus answered them, 'My Father worketh hitherto, and I work...'—or "My Father works until now, and I work." Notice He makes a reference to "My Father"—"... Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill Him..."—that is, Jesus—"...because He not only had broken the Sabbath, but said also that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God." So the context of what we just read from verses 32-40 is that Jesus is defending His claim that "I am equal with God the Father." "My Father works up to now, and I work." The Jews understood that He was claiming equality with God. They actually picked up stones to try to stone Him. Jesus said, "For which of the many good works I've done are you stoning Me?"

They said, "We're not going to stone You for Your good works; we're going to stone You because You, being a man, have just made Yourself equal with God."

A lot of people say that Jesus never claimed to be God. I beg to differ with that. Right here is a very clear statement of Jesus where Jesus claims that He is equal with God the Father, because He called God His "Father." Now that's in a different sense than us being the children of God by being regenerated. Jesus was actually the Son of God. He's the eternal Son of God, and God is His Father. So Jesus claimed to be equal with God, and the Bible makes that very clear.

So what testimony can validate the claim that Jesus is, indeed, God? Jesus calls four witnesses. (I'm still just setting the context to get up to verse 39.) The first witness to testify that Jesus is God is John the Baptist. He mentions that in verses 32-35 in our text. John was that light, and he bore witness of Jesus. And they rejoiced in that light, but they didn't really come to Jesus.

The second witness is His own works, His miracles, verse 36. He says, "But I have greater witness than that of John; for the works which the Father hath given Me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of Me, that the Father hath sent Me." "My works bear witness that I am equal with the Father."

Then Jesus calls a third witness, His own Father, verse 37-38. "And the Father Himself, which hath sent Me, hath borne witness of Me. Ye have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen His shape. And ye have not His Word..."—that is, "You've never seen Him or understand Him"—"...abiding in you; for whom He hath sent, Him ye believe not." In other words, the Father sent the Son, but you've rejected Him. You don't believe in Him.

So John the Baptist pointed to Jesus. His own works pointed to Jesus, that He was the Son of God. And His own Father pointed to Jesus. Remember when the Father spoke from heaven and said, “This is My beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased” or “in whom My soul delights”? So John the Baptist bore witness to Jesus. His own works bore witness; He healed the blind, He raised the dead, He cleansed the leper and He calmed the stormy seas.

Fourthly, in verse 39, the Scriptures bear witness to Jesus. Jesus said, “You are searching the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life...”—but the problem is—“...they are they which testify of Me. And ye will not come to Me, that ye might have life.” You can study the Bible, but if you don’t come to Jesus Christ, you won’t have life. You can know facts and information about the Bible, but if you don’t come to trust in Jesus Christ, then you don’t have the life of God in your soul. Jesus is the central theme of Scripture. If you want to understand the Bible, you need to look for Jesus in it.

Let me relate how the Bible points to Jesus. Remember when Jesus rose from the dead and He appeared to His disciples? They’re called the “post-Resurrection appearances.” In Luke 24 we have the story of the two on the road to Emmaus. They believe it was Cleopas and his wife, Mary. These two, forlorn, sad, discouraged disciples had left Jerusalem and were on a seven-mile walk to Emmaus. Jesus had already been crucified and buried, and it’s Resurrection day, but they don’t know Jesus has already risen from the dead. All their hopes have been dashed. They thought He was the Savior of the world, but He’s dead in the grave, in their minds.

As they’re walking along, Jesus shows up and walks along with them. (This is so cool!) He’s messin’ with them. He’s incognito. I think Jesus likes to have fun a little bit. He’s got His dark sunglasses on, and He’s got His overcoat on and the collar turned up. He’s walking along. Actually the Bible says that their eyes were blinded, so they couldn’t tell it was Jesus. Jesus asks them, “Hey, why are you guys all sad? Why are you all bummed out?” (I’m paraphrasing.) They looked at him and said, “Haven’t you heard about the things that happened?!”

Jesus said, “What things? Tell Me about it.” So they’re telling Jesus about Jesus.

They said, “Jesus of Nazareth, a man proven to be from God—with all the miracles and the signs and wonders—we hoped He was the Messiah, but He was crucified. Now He said He would rise from the dead—and some of the women said they saw Him—but we don’t think we can really believe that, so we’re just devastated and discouraged and really sad right now.”

You know what Jesus said to them? He said in Luke 24:25, “O fools...”—it actually means “O simple ones”—“...and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken. Ought not Christ...”—or “the Messiah”—“...to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory?” And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.” Man, that’s one Bible study I wish Luke had recorded! When I get to heaven I’m going to ask, “Jesus, can You give that Bible study again?”

They're walking along and Jesus goes back to the Scriptures. "Don't you understand that the Law and the prophets said that the Messiah had to suffer and had to die? And then He would enter into His glory?" He was talking and they were listening to Him. Can you imagine Jesus teaching on Jesus from the Bible? They didn't know it was Jesus. Later on, when they realized it was Jesus, they said, "Did not our hearts burn within us as He spoke to us on the way?! No wonder why that guy knew His Bible! That was Jesus!" They're thinking, Man, this guy knows His Bible! Jesus went all the way through the Bible, pointing out where the Bible bore witness to Him.

In the Old Testament we have what I call the expectation; it's prophesying the coming of Messiah. Just take the first five books of the Bible, called the Pentateuch. In Genesis, Jesus is the promised seed, Who will bruise the head of the serpent. It's the promise of the Messiah. In Exodus, Jesus is the Passover Lamb. That lamb was taken, and its blood was shed. The blood was put on their houses, and the death angel passed over their homes. That Passover Lamb represented Jesus. In Leviticus, He's our great High Priest, Who brings us to God the Father. In Numbers, He's the lifted-up one. In Deuteronomy He's the prophet Who will be like Moses.

In the book of Psalm 23, it says, "The Lord is my shepherd. I shall not want." Jesus is the shepherd of Psalm 23.

In the prophets, from Isaiah specifically, Jesus is the suffering servant. What a clear picture we have of Jesus in Isaiah 53. "He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter...so He opened not His mouth." "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities...with His stripes we are healed." Who can read Isaiah 53 and not see clearly the reference to Jesus Christ?

Notice in this passage—if you jump down to John 5:46—Jesus said, "For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed Me; for he—that is, Moses—"...wrote of Me." Moses, in the Pentateuch, wrote about Jesus Christ.

In John 8:56, Jesus said, "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day; and he saw it and was glad." You say, "Wait a minute! Abraham lived thousands of years before Jesus. How could Abraham see the day of Jesus the Messiah?" By faith.

Remember when God told Abraham that he was going to have a son? And through that son, that seed, "all the nations of the earth will be blessed." Not "seeds," but "seed." That seed is Jesus Christ. "You're going to have a great-grandson, the Messiah. Abraham rejoiced to see that day."

In Genesis 22, we see a clear picture of Jesus Christ. God came to Abraham and said, "Now take your son, your only son, Isaac, whom thou lovest..."—Have a familiar ring to it? John 3:16: "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son...."

By the way, just a little footnote. That's the first place where you find the word "love" mentioned in the Bible. Genesis 22. You find that word "love" in the Bible in the context of the Father's love

for His only Son. God said, "I want you to offer him on a mountain that I will show you of." They journeyed together to the land of Moriah, and God showed them the mountain. I believe it was the same mountain that Jesus was crucified on.

They were walking up the mountain with the wood, the fire, and the knife, but with no sacrifice. Isaac asked his dad, "Dad, where's the sacrifice?" Can you imagine that Abraham's heart was just breaking in obedience to God? He was going to offer his only son. Abraham said these words: "God will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt offering." There's two ways to interpret that, and they're both Biblical. One way to interpret that is that God would provide the sacrifice: "God so loved the world that He gave His only Son..." The other way to interpret it is that God Himself would be the sacrifice. Both ways are true. The Bible says that "God was in Christ, reconciling Himself to the world," so God both provided His Son—and Jesus, being God, was God Himself being the sacrifice. In the mount of the Lord it was seen.

We see another picture of Jesus when they found the ram, and Isaac got off the altar and Abraham took the ram and offered it up in the place of his son. God did not spare His Son, but He died in our place. It's a picture of substitution. Jesus died in our place on the Cross for us. So Jesus is seen in the life of Abraham and through the book of Genesis.

But sadly, Jesus' own contemporaries did not see His very day. As I pointed out in John 5:39, a better rendering of that is that Jesus is saying, "You do search the Scriptures...." It wasn't a question of whether or not they searched the Scriptures; when they translated the Scriptures, they numbered every chapter and every word and every letter. They went back and counted them. They were so meticulous about every word they translated. They read and searched the Scriptures. Yet they didn't come to Jesus as their Messiah.

The same mistake could be made today. It's possible to study the Bible and to read the Bible and gather facts and information and maybe launch into Bible codes—and I don't believe God has hidden codes in His Bible. I believe God said what He meant and meant what He said. You may find some Biblical numerology there, but it's not hidden. This is not a hidden text. The youngest child can open the Bible and hear God speak through His Word. You can study maps and charts and maybe get into the Greek and Hebrew and you have all this information. That's all well and good, but if you don't come to Jesus, what good is it?

I have people come up to me all the time and try to impress me with their knowledge. They know this, and they know that, and they're talking about the Bible. "That's really great, but does it make you love your wife more?"

"Well, let's not talk about that right now."

"Does it make you a better husband, a better father? Does it make you a better parent? Does it make you a better worker on the job?"

"I came to talk about theology right now. I don't want to talk about me."

Nicodemus came to Jesus, and he was a theologian. He understood this Bible; he was a teacher of the Jews. Jesus didn't get into some debate with him. Jesus said, "You have to be born again." That's all there is; you have to be born again. His knowledge couldn't get him into heaven. Nicodemus knew the Bible probably better than anyone, but eternal life isn't in knowing the Bible. Eternal life is in knowing the Jesus of the Bible. Unless your knowledge brings you to a saving faith in Jesus Christ, it doesn't do you any good. So the Jews do search the Scriptures, and many do today, even Christians. They get into prophecy and into the study of eschatology and future things, but what about living the godly life right now?

Then you come to the New Testament. We could spend hours and weeks just looking at Jesus in the New Testament. In the New Testament, Jesus comes into clear focus. Now we have the manifestation. In the Old Testament we have the expectation, and now in the New Testament we have the manifestation. In the four Gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, Matthew presents Jesus as the King of the Jews. Mark presents Jesus as the servant of all. Luke presents Jesus as the perfect Man, and the Gospel of John presents Jesus as the eternal Son of God. So you see Jesus through each one of the Gospels.

And in the Gospels we see the virgin birth of Jesus. We see the sinless life of Jesus. We see the miracles of Jesus, and the words of Jesus. We see the death of Jesus on the Cross. We see His Resurrection and His Ascension. In Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, it's all about Jesus.

I believe in the virgin birth of Jesus Christ. The Bible teaches that Mary conceived in her womb, through the work of the Holy Spirit of God. I believe in the hypostatic union that Jesus was fully God and fully man in one person. I believe that He lived a sinless life. I believe that He healed the sick and cleansed the leper and raised the dead and calmed the storm. I actually believe in the miracles of the Bible, because God was here in the form of man.

I also believe in His substitutionary death. Jesus died on the Cross to tell us not merely that God loves us, but to actually pay the penalty for our sins. The Bible says, "The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life." So Jesus took our penalty—the wages of sin—He died, so that we, by trusting Him, could receive the eternal life that He has to give. He says, "This is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God, and He Whom Thou has sent." It's knowing God through the person of Jesus Christ.

But I believe that after Jesus was crucified for our sins, He was buried and rose from the dead. That's our hope. If Jesus didn't rise, let's all go home and goof off. Why are we even here? I mean, why would we even be in church? The Bible says, "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable." I propose to you that the Resurrection is the greatest hope the world has ever known and will ever see. Because it is a hope that goes beyond the grave, that conquers the grave and conquers sin and death. Up from the grave Jesus rose. I believe in the physical, bodily resurrection of Jesus. It wasn't a mystical, spiritual resurrection. He physically rose from the dead. And Jesus became a prototype. He became what's called in the Bible "the first fruits of those who died." Our resurrection will also be like His resurrection. We'll be resurrected to be forever with the Lord.

Then you move into the book of Acts. In Acts we have the proclamation. We have the expectation, we have the manifestation and then we have the proclamation. In Acts we see that the disciples went everywhere preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ; that He died, He arose, He lived, He forgives sin.

In Peter's sermon, at the end, the people say, "What must we do to be saved?" Repent and believe in Jesus Christ, and you'll be forgiven of your sins. Then 3,000 souls were added to the church.

Then we come to the epistles. In them we have the explanation. So we have expectation, manifestation, proclamation and now in the letters of the New Testament, we have the explanation. We must read the whole Bible, and it explains Who Jesus is; that Jesus is the eternal God Who became a man. Even though He is the likeness of God, He took on the form of man, was crucified and buried and was resurrected in the epistles.

Then you come to the last book of the Bible, the Revelation, which is the culmination. So we have the expectation, the manifestation, the proclamation, the explanation and now the culmination. We see that Jesus Christ is going to come back. Isn't that awesome? I actually believe that Jesus Christ is coming again. You go, "You can't be serious!" I'm serious. I believe with all my heart that Jesus Christ is coming again. Just as the prophets said He'd come the first time, He did. Just as the prophets said He would suffer on a cross, He did. Just as the prophets said He would rise from the dead, He did. Just as the prophets said He would ascend into heaven, He did. Guess what else the prophets said He would do? "...this same Jesus... shall so come in like manner," and He will. Jesus Christ is coming again. I believe that because that's what the Bible teaches. I believe He's coming back as King of kings and Lord of lords, and He's going to bring peace on earth. What a blessed state that will be.

The Bible testifies of Jesus Christ. We need and love the Bible because it testifies of Jesus, and we need and love Jesus. I actually love the Bible. I have more Bibles than I should. I even love to smell the Bible. I like to sniff the pages. I even like to rub my face on the pages. But I have to be careful, because it's just paper and ink. It smells good, but it's just leather. But in the pages of the Bible, I find Jesus. So we have to do more than just love the Bible; we have to love the Jesus of the Bible. It doesn't do any good to be committing bibliolatry, worshipping the Bible. Rather, the Bible should be bringing us to faith in Jesus Christ. So the Bible testifies of Jesus.

I have one more last, second point. It's so important. Jesus bears witness to the Scriptures. So, number one, the Scriptures bear witness to Jesus; and number two, Jesus bears witness to the Scriptures. What did Jesus believe about the Bible? What did Jesus say about the Bible? How did Jesus view the Scriptures? Why is this important?

One critical scholar said, "We cannot know that the Bible is without error, because only an omniscient being could know that it is accurate in every detail." I concur. You have to be omniscient to know for sure that the Bible is without error. But guess what? This critic's

problem is answered in a person: His name is Jesus Christ. Guess what Jesus is? God. And because He's God, He knows everything. God is pretty smart. He's what we call "omniscient." He knows everything. Jesus is God, He's omniscient and He knows everything.

What did Jesus believe about the Scriptures? I'm going to give you five things Jesus believed about the Bible. Number one, Jesus believed in its inspiration and authority. Jesus believed the Scriptures were given by the breath of God, they were the Word of God and He believed they were authoritative, as coming from God. Notice verse 38. Jesus said, "And ye have not His Word..." He's talking about God the Father. He's talking about the Scriptures, which He calls "His Word." "...for Whom He hath sent, Him ye believe not." So Jesus believed that the Bible—the Scriptures—was the Word of God, or the words of God.

In Matthew 4, when Jesus was tempted of the devil in the wilderness—remember when Jesus was fasting for 40 days and was hungry and He was being tempted? The first temptation the devil brought to Jesus was, "If Thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread." How did Jesus respond? Did He tell the devil, "That's not nice; you know I'm hungry. You're mean. You should leave Me alone. I'm really hungry right now, and you shouldn't do that"? No. Jesus quoted Scripture. He quoted Deuteronomy 8:3 to the devil: "...man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord." There you have it. Bread is important; it keeps you physically alive. But God's Word is your spiritual bread; it keeps you spiritually alive. Jesus believed the Scriptures came from the mouth of God.

The second thing that Jesus believed was that He believed in the Scripture's imperishability. He believed the Scriptures would not perish. In Matthew 5:17-18, Jesus said, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled." Heaven and earth will pass away, but Jesus said, "My Word will not pass."

What is a "jot" and a "tittle"? They were like little punctuation marks that we would call a comma, or an exclamation point or a period; these little marks in the Hebrew language that would be made on the page. One little jot or period or crossing the t or dotting the i or one little comma or apostrophe would not pass before His law would be completely fulfilled. He believed that God's Word was imperishable.

Thirdly, Jesus believed in the Scripture's supremacy. In Matthew 15, the religious leaders got upset with Jesus' disciples, because they didn't wash their hands before they ate. You go, "My mom gets upset with me like that too." (Don't let your kids hear this Bible story.) "Why don't they wash their hands before they eat?" It wasn't a hygienic washing because their hands were dirty; it was a ceremonial washing. The Jews had a tradition that you wash your hands downward, and you wash your hand up and you shake them and go through a little kind of hocus-pocus before eating so that your food would be clean and kosher. It was Jewish tradition.

So Jesus said these words in Matthew 15:3 and 6: "Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition?...Thus have ye made the commandment of God..."—

another affirmation that the Word is of God—"...of none effect by your tradition."

Let me tell you something that is so very important. The Bible is the authority. It trumps all human authority; whether it be the church, whether it be spiritual leadership, whether it be government. The Bible is the final rule of authority. The Bible trumps tradition. A lot of churches are so hung up on their tradition, that they forget that the Bible trumps tradition. Tradition is fine; I'm all for tradition. But the authority doesn't lie in "This is the way it's done. This is the way my mom did it. This is the way my grandparents did it. This is the way we've always done it. This is church tradition. This is the way we do it." The question is: Is it Biblical? Is it Scriptural? Does it violate Scripture? And whenever there's a conflict between man-made tradition and the Word of God, the authority lies in the Scriptures.

Let me say, as well, that your experience is not the authority. It's the Bible. Whenever you have an experience that is not substantiated by the clear teaching of the Bible, I go with the Bible over your experience. "Well, I saw it! I felt it! I experienced it! It must be God!" God would never contradict His Word. "I have a burning in my bosom; I know it's of God!" God will never contradict His Word. "I saw it! I felt it!" God will never contradict His Word.

The Bible is the authority over your intellect. God gave you a brain, and we need to use our brains, but the authority isn't in what we think or what we rationalize or it isn't our intellect. It's not tradition, it's not church history, it's not the pope, it's not a preacher, it's not the church, it's not your experience. It's the Word of God.

We stand alone on the Word of God,

The B-i-b-l-e.

Yes, that's the book for me.

That's the authority. Jesus believed in that.

Jesus also believed in the Bible's inerrancy. The Bible is inerrant; it's true. In John 17:17, this is what Jesus said when He was praying to His Father in His high-priestly prayer: "Sanctify them through Thy truth; Thy Word is truth." Jesus was praying to His Father, asking God the Father to sanctify His followers, saying the Father would sanctify them through His Word, which is truth. The Bible is true and trustworthy in all that it affirms.

Fifthly, and lastly, Jesus believed in the Bible's historic authenticity. He believed in the historicity or the historic authority or authenticity of the Bible. He believed that there was really an Adam and an Eve, Matthew 19:4. Do you know that that's important? We have a whole bunch of people calling themselves Christians today in the church who don't believe that God created the heavens and the earth. They don't believe that there was actually an Adam and an Eve and that God actually made them. They just read the story and say, "Well, that's just kind of myth. That's just a make-believe story that conveys a meaning, but it didn't really happen."

“Well, what meaning did it really convey?” If it didn’t really happen, then there’s no sin in the world, because the Bible says that sin came into the world through Adam and Eve by their disobedience. If you get rid of Adam and Eve, you get rid of sin. And if you get rid of sin, you don’t need a Savior. It’s so very important. Jesus mentioned that God made them at the beginning “male and female.”

Then Jesus also believed that there was a Noah and a flood. Matthew 24:37-39 says, “But as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark. And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away.” Jesus believed in Noah and the ark and the flood.

Thirdly, Jesus believed that Jonah was actually swallowed by a whale. I remind you Who Jesus is; He’s the Son of God. He’s omniscient. Yet there are people who mock this idea. “You actually believe that Jonah was swallowed by a big fish?!”

“Yes, I do.”

I love that story in which someone was preaching on the corner and an atheist came up and said, “You don’t really believe the Bible; do you?”

“Yes, I believe the Bible.” So the atheist was mocking him and telling him the Bible wasn’t true. The atheist asked him, “Do you really believe that Jonah was swallowed by a big fish?”

He said, “Yes, I believe that.”

The atheist asked, “Well, how can you really believe that?”

“I’ll find out when I get to heaven. I’ll ask Him.”

“How do you know you’ll get to heaven?”

“Well, if I don’t see Him in heaven, you can ask Him, because you’re going to hell right now.” [??] I believe Jonah was really swallowed by a whale. It says it in Matthew 12:40.

Jesus also believed in Lot and in Sodom and Gomorrah and the judgment upon them. Luke 17:29. He also believed in Moses and the burning bush. Luke 20:37. Jesus also believed in the story of Moses and the serpents in the wilderness. John 3:14.

That’s one of my favorites. The Bible says in the Old Testament that the children of Israel came out of Egypt in the exodus and were in the wilderness complaining and griping. God brought judgment upon them in the form of serpents or snakes coming into the congregation. I hate snakes. Even though they’re mentioned in the Bible, I don’t like snakes. I was watching this crazy, radical snake show the other day on TV where the dude in South Africa goes into people’s homes and catches snakes so he can release them into the wild. He loves snakes so

much, he wants to get them back out into the bush. I would just blow up the house. Find a new house. This dude crawled under this house and looked and felt for this snake. For a black mamba! One of the most poisonous snakes in the world. "It's here somewhere. I've got to find it."

"Dude! Run! You don't go looking for snakes. You run from snakes!"

But in this Bible story, all these serpents come into the camp and they're biting the people. They cry out to Moses, and Moses cries to God and this is what God told Moses to do: He said to take some brass, which is the metal of judgment, and carve a serpent out of it. Put the brass serpent on a pole and lift it up. True story. Whoever is bitten by the serpents and is going to die, if they just look at that brass serpent on the pole, God said they'd be healed. That's exactly what happened. So those who were bitten by the snakes, and they believed, and they looked at that brass serpent on the pole—that is the symbol of medicine today—they would be healed of their snake bites, and they would be saved.

Jesus was talking to Nicodemus, who asked Jesus, "How can I be saved?" Jesus told him, "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up. Whoever believes in Me will be saved....For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John 3:14,16. Jesus is that brass serpent, Who took our sin and our judgment, so if we look, by faith, to Jesus Christ, we can be forgiven, and we can be healed.

You know why we need the Bible? The Bible testifies of Jesus, and Jesus testifies to the Bible; that it is the Word of God. And the Bible tells us that Jesus died on the Cross to pay for our sins.

Before we close, if there is anyone who does not know for sure that they have been forgiven—if you don't know for sure that you've looked to Jesus and been saved. Maybe you know all about Jesus. Maybe you know the Bible stories. Maybe you've been reading the Bible all your life. Maybe you've heard the Bible all your life, but you've never come to Jesus Christ. Maybe you go to church. That's wonderful; I'm glad you go to church. But you can go to church every Sunday and you can get baptized, but if you don't come to Jesus Christ, you're not saved. Jesus said, "You must be born again to see the kingdom of God."

You may say, "Pastor Miller, I don't really know that if I died, I'd go to heaven. I don't know if my sins have ever been forgiven. I don't know if I'm really a child of God. I don't know if I have a real relationship with Jesus. I know about Jesus, but I don't know Jesus."

I want to give you that opportunity right now. Right now you can know that your sins are forgiven, and that if you died, you'd go to heaven and have eternal life and become a child of God. It's so important to get your heart right with God. You never know when you might die. The Bible says, "It's appointed unto everyone once to die, and then afterward the judgment." Are you ready to meet the Lord? Do you know Him as your Savior?