

# How do we know Him?

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Let us turn to **John 7: 30-31**

## **John 7: 30-31**

30 So they were seeking to seize Him; and no man laid his hand on Him, because His hour had not yet come.

31 But many of the crowd believed in Him; and they were saying, "When the Christ comes, He will not perform more signs than those which this man has, will He?"

So here in these two verses, we see a contrast of two groups of people. One group did not believe in the Lord Jesus: They were seeking to seize him and to kill Him, but they were not able to do it at that time because His hour had not yet come. There was another group – part of the crowd – who believed in Him, and they were saying: "When the Christ comes, He will not perform more signs than those which this man has, will He?"

I want to focus on this second group today and consider: How do we know who the Lord Jesus is? How do we know Him?

Here, those who believed in Him, they made this remark: "When the Christ comes, He will not perform more signs than those which this man has, will He?" So the meaning is: They believed because they saw the signs and in their opinion, it was not likely that someone else would be able to perform more signs than Him. So they believed in Him because of the signs that He performed.

As we ponder about his, we consider: How do we know the Lord Jesus? Do we look for signs that He has performed or do we know Him by other means?

We know that in life, we may have doubts, we may have questions, we may wonder: "Is there a God and is the Lord Jesus real? Is He true? Is He what we hear that He is supposed to be?"

How do we come to a conclusion?

Some people, they come to believe in God because they look at the creation and they see that it cannot have come about by chance, so there must be a Creator. So they believe in God, that there is a God who has created the universe.

Is this valid?

Yes, it is valid. We can come to believe that there is a God who has created the universe just by looking at the creation. The apostle Paul does tell us that God has left us the evidence in the world that He has created. So by looking at the creation, we can know that there is a God.

But what kind of God is He? Is He just a Creator who has created all things? How do we know?

When the Lord Jesus performed signs, in a sense we can say He manifested the power of God - the God who is the Creator of all things. So in that sense, by looking at these signs, we can recognize that the Lord Jesus was sent by God. Is that valid? Yes, we can say that that is valid. The Lord Jesus did perform many miracles which were signs of who He was: that God sent Him and these gave a testimony to who He was.

But then, if we ponder further, we consider: Is that sufficient for us to know who the Lord Jesus really is? Is that what is important to us?

With regard to powerful works, things that can be done that can be more than natural, we are conscious that Satan and the powers of evil are also able to perform many signs.

Moses performed the signs, so too the magicians. How do we tell which is which? Which one comes from God, which one comes from the powers of darkness? In the context of Moses and the magicians, we are told that the serpent that came from the rod of Aaron swallowed up the other serpents. So we can say that that was more powerful, that came from God.

In life situations, the powers of darkness can work in many areas of life that appear very powerful and many people can believe that this is from God.

So while there is a place for us to recognize who the Lord Jesus is and who God is by these signs, that should not be our primary concern.

What is the primary means by which we come to know who the Lord Jesus is?

**John 1: 14**

And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.

The apostle John saw the Lord Jesus Christ and he said: "...we saw His glory..." So what was the emphasis of that glory? He did not say: "We saw His glory: the powerful works that He did, the many people He healed miraculously, the people that He fed." But he said: "...we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth."

So we see that the primary aspect of the revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ is in the moral and spiritual realm: grace and truth – moral character, moral being, moral quality, in Him. That is what impressed the apostle John; that is what helped him to recognize who the Lord Jesus was: the perfect Man, the One sent by God, and He manifested the glory of God.

The Word became flesh. The Word was God and the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and He lived among us as the perfect Man in full submission to God. And the primary aspect that came through was the glory of His being in the moral and spiritual realm.

For ourselves, as we relate with people, as we view others, how do we know others, what do we perceive in other people, how do we make our assessment?

We all know that the general response of people is not so much along these lines.

If someone were to say: “Do you know John Tan?”

Then you say: “Which John Tan?”

“The badminton champion!”

“Oh, that John Tan! Everyone knows this John Tan, the badminton champion.”

Or: “Do you know Jennifer Teo?”

“Who is Jennifer Teo?”

“The daughter of that millionaire!”

“Oh, of course I know her! Everyone knows her.”

“But do you know John Lim?”

“And who is he?”

“He is the son of a farmer.”

“Which farmer?”

“Someone who works out in the field, somewhere remote.”

“I do not know him. He is not well known.”

“But come meet him. And after one meeting, you will never forget him.”

“Why?”

“Because of the quality of his being: When you meet him, you are so impressed by the quality of his character, the love and the meaning, and the concern in his heart, in his life, and you will never forget Him.”

Yes, the others may come and go: millionaires, badminton champions, tennis champions. They all come and go, they are all forgotten.

So what do we value? Whether it is your personal friend, whether it is marriage, whether it is family, or whether it is church life and relationships, the primary aspect that we should set our heart upon should be the moral and the spiritual: full of grace and truth.

In the same way, when we say we know God, what do we know about God?

Yes, by looking at the creation, we see God is the Creator.

But we also know that there are many people in the world who believe that God created this universe, but it makes no difference to their lives. They continue to live their lives because God is just the Creator. What significance is it to us unless like some of the Jews, they are interested in the power of God and what God can give to you? So: Many of the Jews came to the Lord Jesus, they saw Him perform the miracles; they wanted Him to provide for them not just bread but other physical, material wealth and sources of power that they could enjoy in this world.

If that is how we believe in God, then we are moving in the wrong direction, and that is why Satan can give us many of these things in order to draw us to believe in him. He can promise us and actually give to us many of the material things in this world.

But if our primary focus is on the moral and spiritual, then only God can give us that - The One and only True God of moral perfection. If that is our emphasis, then we will appreciate that.

So then, how do we recognize the Lord Jesus Christ?

To me, the most powerful testimony of who the Lord Jesus Christ is: is the cross. The cross is the testimony of the greatness of the Lord Jesus Christ: the moral and spiritual quality of His heart, the moral perfection of His life. And those who truly believe in Him and are committed to Him will be transformed to be like Him.

So when we testify, when we bear witness in this world, how do we bear witness?

It is the same principle. Are we going to bear witness by saying, "I know God because He is so very powerful, I have seen many miracles, so you also believe in Him"?

Or will they be able to see in your life a meaningfulness that cannot be attained by any other means: There is a moral and spiritual richness and meaning in you as a result of what God has done in transforming your life? And when they come to know you, they appreciate it and they want to be like that?

But of course for those who want to go their own way, who want to enjoy their own lives in a selfish way, they will not want to follow this path. They will make a choice: What is it that they want in life?

**John 14: 9**

Jesus \*said to him, "Have I been so long with you, and *yet* you have not come to know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; how *can* you say, 'Show us the Father'?"

Philip wanted to see, wanted to know, who the Father is, and the Lord Jesus told him: "He who has seen Me has seen the Father".

So, what is the meaning of that?

If we refer to the physical realm, then Philip saw the Lord Jesus in the physical realm as a man. Would that help him to know who God was?

It would not because God is spirit. The real being and character of God is spirit; it is in the realm of the spirit. The physical was just a manifestation and it was the context of the manifestation of His glory. And that is why the apostle John said: "...we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth."

The glory of the Father was grace and truth. So when the Lord Jesus said: "He who has seen Me has seen the Father", He was referring basically and primarily to the moral and spiritual – the quality of His being, the quality of His character that can be seen and recognized – and it can be transmitted and received.

So the way the Lord Jesus lived His life would manifest the moral perfection of God. So if we want to know God, we must learn to appreciate the Lord Jesus Christ, how He lived His life: His motives, His attitudes, the way He conducted Himself, His objective, His whole being and His total life. That is what will help us to know who God is.

**John 5: 36**

"But the testimony which I have is greater than *the testimony of John*; for the works which the Father has given Me to accomplish--the very works that I do--testify about Me, that the Father has sent Me..."

So while we say that the primary aspect that helps us to know who the Lord Jesus is is His moral character, here the Lord Jesus is referring to the works that testify about Him.

What does that mean? Does it mean that those outward things that He did like performing the miracles in themselves will help us to know who God is?

That is not the thrust of this passage.

When the Lord Jesus said: "...the very works that I do--testify about Me, that the Father has sent Me..." He said, "...the works which the Father has given Me to accomplish..." There is a meaning behind those works; there is a purpose behind the things that He did; there is a spirit and a reality in the things that He did.

It was not just the feeding of the five thousand in itself: What if someone else could do that - feed five thousand? Would they qualify to be the Lord Jesus Christ? The answer is obviously no. The Lord Jesus Christ fed the five thousand with a heart of compassion, of love, a spirit of dependence on God, a concern for the well-being of mankind. That is what testified as to who He was.



Likewise, when He went to the cross, it was not just a person being forced to suffer on the cross and die. There were two other criminals who were crucified, but they were not the Lord Jesus Christ. Why? It is the meaning of their death. At the cross, the Lord Jesus bore our sins. At the cross, He manifested His holiness, His love for us, His suffering on our behalf. It is the meaning of what He did. He accomplished the works which the Father gave Him to do.

So it is the meaning that will testify as to who He is; it is the meaning that will testify as to who God is. And it is also the meaning in our lives that will testify to what we are.

How does God look at us?

It is the same principle. Is God looking at the many things that we do every day in themselves – whether you have achieved great things or little things? God is not concentrating on that. He is looking at the heart. He is looking at your motive, He is looking at your attitude, He is looking at the goals that you have. God is looking at the meaning of your life. And He is not looking at just one event, just one situation. He is looking at the total life: Where is your life moving towards? What are you seeking for in this world? What are you trying to accomplish? How do you live your life each day? What is the basis upon which you make your decisions? That is how God will look at us.

And that will be the same principle in terms of how we bring the gospel to others, the message of who God is, the message of the cross, the message of sin and rebellion, and of forgiveness, of new life, of new hope. All this must come through not just in the words that we say, but in the way that we are committed to live that way.

And this can be transmitted, so that those who recognize, those who believe, will realize that believing in Christ is not an intellectual thing. It is a heart response.

Of course, it involves our recognition of the meaning of who He is, our recognition that there is a God who has created all things. We recognize all this: that God is almighty, He is sovereign, all-powerful, that we can trust Him, we can submit to Him, and we can live our lives without fear because of who He is. All this can become real only when our concentration is on that meaning.

So if we see that and appreciate that, then our approach should be: Each day, as we read the Scriptures, as we go through life situations, our concentration should be on the moral meaning of things that will help us to know who God is, that will help us to understand who we are, that will help us to understand who people are, how we should relate with them, how can we effectively help others.

Otherwise, our approach can be like other people in the world: it is just based on the physical, the immediate, the obvious, that people look for in this world.

But the approach that we take must concentrate on the moral and spiritual direction, to help others develop a quality that will be such that they will be like the Lord Jesus Christ in their character, they will be truly children of God who walk worthy of His calling.

So then, as we come before the Lord, as we ponder over what He has done for us, let us ask the Lord to help us to know Him more deeply.

And while we appreciate His almighty power, the miracles that He has done and how He can sovereignly undertake in our lives, let us realize that all this becomes meaningful when there is a moral direction in our lives, that ultimately, what we want from God is that He will help us to become like Him in His moral goodness. That is our primary concern.

If this is our central emphasis, then God will be pleased to help us, and He will sovereignly undertake in what we go through, in order to best channel us and help us to develop in that direction, as well as to contribute to the lives of others.

Our time on earth is very short. Let us not waste it, but concentrate on what really matters and what will last.