

REVELATION: JESUS KNOWS ALL MEN

JOHN 02:23–25

Introduction

This is a brief passage packed full of powerful truths. Jesus revealed that He knew all men.

- I. Fact 1: many believed in Jesus (v. 23).
- II. Fact 2: Jesus did neither commit nor entrust Himself to men (vv. 24-25).

I. *John 02:23 Belief and False Profession*

First, many believed in Jesus. There are two very significant facts here.

1. Many *believed in His name*. The word *believe* (*episteusan*) is in the Greek aorist tense, which means they believed *once-for-all*. Their belief was genuine, at least the belief of some. However, the belief of others was not genuine. The fact that Jesus knew “all men” (all of those professing belief) and did not commit (entrust) Himself to them shows the inadequacy of their faith (v. 24).
2. They believed because of the *miraculous signs* (*semeia*).

JOHN 02:23 SIGNS AND MIRACLES — THE WORKS OF GOD

There are four words used in the Bible for miracles or signs. These words are used to describe the works of God, and they show why people believed in Jesus.

1. ***Teras*** means the spectacular, staggering, amazing, dazzling. Many believed in Jesus because of the spectacular signs He performed. However, such belief made a person only a spectator, not a participant in His life. The word *teras* also means the sensational; that is, it appeals to the sensations of men. Many believed and followed Jesus because it made them feel good and comfortable and secure. Such belief is weak and often fails. This word is never used by itself to initiate faith in the Lord Jesus. If a person is to have genuine faith in the Lord Jesus, he must have some basis other than the spectacular sign (*teras*).

Luke 8:6,13 *Some fell on rock, and when it came up, the plants withered because they had no moisture. Those on the rock are the ones who receive the word with joy when they hear it, but they have no root. They believe for a while, but in the time of testing they fall away.*

Luke 9:62 *Jesus replied, “No one who puts his hand to the plough and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God.”*

Heb 10:38 *But my righteous one will live by faith. And if he shrinks back, I will not be pleased with him.”*

2. ***Dunamis*** means power — unusual, extraordinary power; effective, explosive power. There were those who were attracted to Jesus because of the unusual
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power (dunamis) they witnessed. They believed because of the power. Such is a legitimate belief and leads to salvation for everyone who believes.

Rom 1:16 *I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile.*

1 Cor 1:24 *But to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.*

Mark 6:5-6 *He could not do any miracles there, except lay his hands on a few sick people and heal them. And he was amazed at their lack of faith. Then Jesus went around teaching from village to village.*

3. **Ergon** means distinctive works, deeds, and miracles. Such works come from God (Jn. 14:10) and bear witness to Christ. They point men to Christ (Jn. 5:36; 10:25). Some men look at the very special works of Christ and believe because of the works (ergon).

John 10:37-38 *Do not believe me unless I do what my Father does. But if I do it, even though you do not believe me, believe the miracles, that you may know and understand that the Father is in me, and I in the Father.”*

John 14:11 *Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the miracles themselves.*

4. **Semeion** means a sign that characterizes the person, his nature and character. A few throughout Jesus’ ministry did believe because they saw *in the miracles* exactly who He was, the very Son of God.

John 2:11 *This, the first of his miraculous signs, Jesus performed at Cana in Galilee. He thus revealed his glory, and his disciples put their faith in him.*

John 20:30-31 *Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.*

However, the word *semeion* is also used of those who believed the signs but did not have the highest or right kind of faith. Their faith was *not a faith that committed itself* (see *Believe, Commitment*, Jn. 2:24).

- a. It was a faith that arose only from...
- a mental conviction, a head knowledge, an intellectual belief.
 - a surface acceptance of the fact that Jesus was the Saviour.

John 2:23-24 *Now while he was in Jerusalem at the Passover Feast, many people saw the miraculous signs he was doing and believed in his name. But Jesus would not entrust himself to them, for he knew all men.*

- b. It was also a faith...
- that only sought Jesus for what a person could get out of Him.
 - that never gave any thought to what a person might do for Christ.
 - that was unaware of the cost of discipleship, unaware that a person had to sacrifice himself and give all he was and had to Christ in order to become a follower of His (see note, Lk. 9:23).

John 6:26 Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, you are looking for me, not because you saw miraculous signs but because you ate the loaves and had your fill." □

II. *John 02:24-25 Jesus Christ's Knowledge of Men*

Second, Jesus did neither commit nor entrust Himself to men. The word "entrust" is the very same word as "believe" in v.23. (See *Believe*, Jn. 2:24.) Jesus did not trust or believe in the people; He did not commit and entrust Himself into their lives or hands. The verb is continuous action: Jesus kept on refusing to trust men, kept on refusing to entrust Himself into their lives. Two reasons are given for this continuing attitude of Jesus.

1. Jesus knew all men. The idea is that He knew every single man personally. Not a person escaped His knowledge.
2. Jesus knew what was in a man. No one needed to tell Him about man. He knew man's nature: his depravity, evil, deception, and fickleness. He knew the men He could trust and could not trust. He knew every man who professed to believe, yet would...
 - betray Him
 - deny his faith under pressure
 - forsake Him, turning back to the world
 - slip and fall back into sin
 - be weak and easily influenced, tossed to and fro
 - prove untrustworthy
 - lack zeal and genuine commitment
 - lack courage to stand

Jesus knew all this about every man. Nothing was hid from Him. Therefore, He was not able to commit nor entrust Himself and His blessings to some men despite the fact that they professed to believe.

Thought 1. Some so called believers (those who make false professions) never receive the *indwelling presence of Christ*. Christ cannot commit nor entrust Himself to them. Tragically, this means that He...

- cannot give the assurance of salvation: the confidence that a person is really saved.
- cannot give the Holy Spirit to live within the heart of a person: the presence and knowledge of Him.

- cannot give the fullness of life: the sense of completeness and the security of God's care and of being looked after.
- cannot give the hope and certainty of eternal life.
- cannot commit nor entrust His mission into their hands.

Acts 5:32 "We are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him."

Rom 6:23 For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Rom 8:5 Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires.

Rom 8:6 The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace.

Rom 8:13 For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live.

2 Cor 6:17 "Therefore come out from them and be separate, says the Lord. Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you."

2 Cor 6:18 "I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters," says the Lord Almighty.

Thought 2. Christ knows everything about everyone. As this Scripture says: He knows "all men" and He knows what is "in man": all his thoughts and deeds — good or bad, done in the light or in the dark, in the open or behind closed doors, publicly or secretly.

Luke 12:2 "There is nothing concealed that will not be disclosed, or hidden that will not be made known."

1 Cor 3:20 And again, "The Lord knows that the thoughts of the wise are futile."

1 Cor 4:5 Therefore judge nothing before the appointed time; wait till the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of men's hearts. At that time each will receive his praise from God.

Eph 5:12 For it is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret.

Jer 17:10 "I the Lord search the heart and examine the mind, to reward a man according to his conduct, according to what his deeds deserve."

Jer 23:24 "Can anyone hide in secret places so that I cannot see him?" declares the Lord. "Do not I fill heaven and earth?" declares the Lord.

1 Sam 2:3 Do not keep talking so proudly or let your mouth speak such arrogance, for the Lord is a God who knows, and by him deeds are weighed.

Job 10:14 *If I sinned, you would be watching me and would not let my offense go unpunished.*

Job 34:21 *His eyes are on the ways of men; he sees their every step.*

Psa 1:6 *For the Lord watches over the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish.*

Psa 69:5 *You know my folly, O God; my guilt is not hidden from you.*

Psa 90:8 *You have set our iniquities before you, our secret sins in the light of your presence.*

Psa 139:2-3 *You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar. You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways.*

Prov 5:21 *For a man's ways are in full view of the Lord, and he examines all his paths.*

Eccl 12:14 *For God will bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil.*

Isa 29:15 *Woe to those who go to great depths to hide their plans from the Lord, who do their work in darkness and think, "Who sees us? Who will know?"*

Isa 40:28 *Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary, and his understanding no one can fathom.*

Jer 2:22 *"Although you wash yourself with soda and use an abundance of soap, the stain of your guilt is still before me," declares the Sovereign Lord.*

Jer 16:17 *My eyes are on all their ways; they are not hidden from me, nor is their sin concealed from my eyes.*

Jer 32:19 *Great are your purposes and mighty are your deeds. Your eyes are open to all the ways of men; you reward everyone according to his conduct and as his deeds deserve.*

Ezek 8:12 *He said to me, "Son of man, have you seen what the elders of the house of Israel are doing in the darkness, each at the shrine of his own idol? They say, 'The Lord does not see us; the Lord has forsaken the land.'" (see Eze 11:5)*

Dan 2:22 *He reveals deep and hidden things; he knows what lies in darkness, and light dwells with him. ■*

JOHN 02:24 SAVING FAITH : BELIEVE, COMMIT, ENTRUST

The word commit or entrust is the very same word "believe" (see Jn. 2:23). This gives an excellent picture of *saving faith*, of what *genuine faith* is — of the kind of faith that really saves a person.

1. Saving faith is not head knowledge, not just a mental conviction and intellectual assent. It is not just *believing the fact* that Jesus Christ is the Saviour of the world. It is not just believing history, that Jesus Christ lived upon earth as the Saviour just as A J Abdul Kalam lived upon earth as the President of India. It is not just believing the words and claims of Jesus in the same way that a person would believe the words of Abdul Kalam.
2. Saving faith is believing in Jesus, *who* and *what* He is, that He is the *Saviour* and *Lord* of life. It is a man giving and turning his life over to Jesus. It is a man casting himself upon Jesus as Saviour and Lord.
3. Saving faith is commitment — the commitment of a man's total being and life to Jesus Christ. It is a man's commitment of all he *is and has* to Jesus. It gives Jesus everything; therefore, it involves all of a man's affairs. The man trusts Jesus to take care of his past (sins), his present (welfare), and his future (destiny). He entrusts his whole life, being, and possessions into Jesus' hands. He lays himself upon Jesus' keeping, confiding in Him about his daily necessities and acknowledging Him in all the ways of life. He follows Jesus in every area and in every detail of life, seeking His instructions and leaving his welfare up to Him. It is simply commitment of a man's whole being, all he is and has, to Jesus.

There are three steps involved in faith, steps that are clearly seen in this passage.

1. There is the step of *seeing* (Jn. 2:23) or *hearing* (Rom. 10:16). A man must be willing to listen to the message of Christ, the revelation of truth.
2. There is the step of *mental assent*. A man must agree that the message is true, that the facts of the case are thus and so. But this is not enough. Mere agreement does not lead to action. Many a person knows that something is true, but he does not change his behaviour to match his knowledge. For example, a man knows that eating too much harms his body, but he may continue to eat too much. He agrees to the truth and knows the truth, but he does nothing about it. A person may believe and know that Jesus Christ is the Saviour of the world and yet do nothing about it, never make a decision to follow Christ. This man still does not have faith, not the kind of faith that the Bible talks about.
3. There is the step of *commitment*. When the New Testament speaks of faith, it speaks of *commitment*, a *personal commitment to the truth*. A man hears the truth and agrees that it is true and does something about it. He commits (entrusts) and yields his life to the truth. The truth becomes a part of his very being, a part of his behaviour and life. ■