

John 5:45–47

<sup>45</sup> Do not think that I shall accuse you to the Father; there is one who accuses you—Moses, in whom you trust.

<sup>46</sup> For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote about Me.

<sup>47</sup> But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?"

## ***Moses and Jesus*** ***John 5:45-47***

INTRO:

In our study of **John 5**, we listened as the Lord Jesus claimed God is His own Father, making Himself equal with God. He further described how He worked in concert with His Father. Then He took on the issue of their unbelief. The Lord Jesus called three witnesses to His identity and mission. **(1)** He cited the witness of the forerunner, **(2)** the testimony of the miracles He did, **(3)** and the witness God the Father gave to His Son in the Word of God.

The last time we were here, Jesus castigated the Jewish leaders for desiring the praise of others instead of praise from God. Now as we come to this last paragraph, our Lord taught about their great scholarly interest in the Word of God. Although these men put great effort into careful study of the Bible, they had two critical problems in understanding what the Bible actually said.

- I. They Embraced a Fatal Misconception of the Truth (v. 44-45)***
- II. They Had a Problem of Unbelief (v. 46-47)***

### ***I. They Embraced a Fatal Misconception of the Truth (v. 44-45)***

***“Do not think that I shall accuse you to the Father; there is one who accuses you—Moses, in whom you trust.” John 5:45***

A. While these Jewish leaders painstakingly studied the details of Scripture, they had brought their presuppositions to the understanding of the Bible. They presupposed that Moses was the mediator of the covenant. After all, Moses brought the Law to them and Moses interceded for them in the desert. Some evidence exists to suggest that some Jews believed that Moses continued serving as a mediating intercessor in heaven. Yet, they ignored what Moses taught them.

B. In **Romans 2:17-24**, we read the words of a converted Pharisee, the Apostle Paul, describing the Jewish problem.

***“But if you call yourself a Jew and rely on the law and boast in God, and know his will and approve what is excellent, because you are instructed from the law; and if you are sure that you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of children, having in the law the embodiment of knowledge and truth—you then who teach others, do you not teach yourself? While you preach against stealing, do you steal? You who say that one must not commit adultery,***

***do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples? You who boast in the law dishonor God by breaking the law.”***

Paul then concluded ***“For, as it is written, ‘the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you.’”***

C. They also thought that at the bar of heaven the Moses in whom they trusted would be their advocate and defender. The fact is that Moses would be the prosecutor. He would bring the charges against them. These Jewish leaders, who did not understand the Law which they sought to keep, demanded complete obedience. God never meant the Law to save people. God designed it to show people their need of a Savior. The Jewish authorities persuaded themselves that God graded on a curve. Since no one was perfect, no one could actually keep the whole law. God would give them special consideration because they were Hebrews, and they sought to keep it as well as they could.

D. They banked on these misconceptions. And it was these misconceptions which would bring them into condemnation. The fact was, if they really believed Moses, they would believe in the Lord Jesus, because Moses wrote about Him. While the Lord is talking about the many references and pictures in Moses rather than any specific example, there is a reference that bears remembering. In **Deuteronomy 18:15** we find a prophecy which the Jewish people always understood to be Messianic.

***“The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your midst, from your brethren. Him you shall hear.”***

Remember, the Jewish authorities asked John the Baptist if he was ***“The Prophet.”***

## ***II. They Had a Problem of Unbelief (v. 46-47)***

***“For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote about Me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?”*** John 5:45-46

A. They could not understand what Moses said in the Bible because they brought their presuppositions to the Bible. Thus they formed fatal misconceptions. They also could not understand the Bible because they did not believe.

B. Before we can unpack this verse, we need to understand what the word ***“believing”*** means. A problem we have at times is that we do not understand what the Bible means when it speaks of believing.

1. Some say believing is simply assenting to the truth. Think about the scene in **John 2:23-25**.

***“Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed in His name when they saw the signs which He did. But Jesus did not commit Himself to them, because He knew all men, and had no need that anyone should testify of man, for He knew what was in man.”***

Obviously, the believing these people did was not acceptable to our Lord. He knew their hearts and He knew something was missing.

2. Did these Jewish leaders in **John 5** not believe in God? Surely, they did. They believed God existed. Still, they did not grasp what God revealed through Moses about His plan for the nations and the importance of faith.

C. What does true God honoring faith look like? First, faith involves knowledge. The Jews had knowledge. Second, faith involves assent. They believed that God's Word is true. Third, faith entails being committed to the Lord. The part the Jewish leaders lacked was commitment to the truth. What they said they believed made no difference in their life. It did not make them love God.

1. They really did not embrace the reality that the Torah presented. They were not committed to the God of the Word, and so they did not believe the Son who came in the name of the Father.

2. These leaders' problem was that although they claimed to believe the Word, they really did not believe. This is why Jesus said, ***"But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?"*** Moses' writings and our Lord's words are closely linked. To believe one is to believe the other and to reject one is to reject the other.

### **What does this say to us?**

1. We must be careful to not approach the Word of God with presuppositions which keep us from seeing what it actually says. This is exactly what the Jewish leaders were doing. They studied the Torah meticulously and yet completely missed what it said. They studied with preconceived notions which obscured the truth. We must not do this. Our categories must not overrule the Bible.

2. We must beware of creating a god who does not exist and not paying attention to the true and living God of the Word. They did this with Moses. They saw what Moses was. He was God's man through which the Law was given to the people of God. They then made him something he wasn't. We are prone to do this with the living God. We must understand Who He is and serve Him as He is.

3. We must understand the Bible is sufficient to bring us to Christ. And if we will not hear through the Word of God, we will not respond even if someone is raised from the dead. There is an important passage in **Luke 16:27-31**. ***"Then he said, 'I beg you therefore, father, that you would send him to my father's house, for I have five brothers, that he may testify to them, lest they also come to this place of torment.' Abraham said to him, 'They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.' And he said, 'No, father Abraham; but if one goes to them from the dead, they will repent.' But he said to him, 'If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead.'"*** Faith comes through the Word, not through miracles and visions. **Romans 10:17** ***"So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."***

4. We must know the truth. We must assent to the truth. And we must commit to the truth. The first step is recognizing that we are sinners and that the Lord Jesus Christ, God's Son, came into the world to die for our sin. Second, we must assent to the truth of who Jesus is and what He did on our behalf. Finally, we must embrace Him by faith and commit ourselves to Him alone for our salvation! ***"Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved"*** (Acts 4:12).

**Hymn #358 I am Thine, O Lord**