

# Barriers To Biblical Faith

Aaron Beard  
Trussville  
April 3, 2005

## Introduction:

- A. Why is it that some people have such a hard time understanding the truth?**
1. We often have religious discussions with people on a variety of Bible topics and doctrines:
  2. You show them verse after verse and they keep saying, "Well I believe... I think..."
  3. What seems so simple and clear to you is a mystery to them! It sometimes seems like some will believe anything but what the Bible plainly says!
- B. John 5 gives us great insight into the barriers some men have to Biblical faith: (vs. 37-44)**
1. Even though there was plenty of evidence, the religious leaders and others could (or better would) not see that Jesus is deity, that He is the Son of God!
    - a. Jesus had the testimony of His Father (vs. 17, 18, 23)
    - b. Jesus had the testimony of John (vs. 33-35)
    - c. Jesus had the testimony of His miracles from the God (vs. 36-38)
    - d. Jesus even had the testimony of Moses! (vs. 46-47)
  2. Why is it that they couldn't see what seems so plain and clear to us 2,000 years later?
    - a. Sometimes we read about their rejection with great mystery and even frustration
    - b. The reality is though that the same things that were hindering their faith in Jesus Christ then is the same that hinders many today in understanding the truth!
- C. Why is it that some just don't understand the gospel and the truths it teaches? What is it that hinders many from building Biblical faith? Let's notice the barriers:**

## I. Prejudicial Preconceptions Is A Barrier To Biblical Faith:

- A. One of greatest reasons why they rejected Jesus was because He was simply not what they expected! (vs. 37-38)**
1. They had built this great picture in their minds of what the Christ would be like!
    - a. They envisioned no doubt a man impressive in appearance and demeanor!
    - b. They envisioned a man who would come and lead them against Rome freeing them from their bondage to Rome – A military leader!
    - c. They envisioned a man who would come and set up an earthly kingdom on David's throne restoring Israel back to the glory it once had experienced!
  2. They had the law and the prophets but for some reason missed their point: (Is. 53:1-3)
    - a. You cannot read Isaiah 53 without walking away understanding that the Messiah, the Christ, would be a suffering servant!
    - b. His kingdom would not be an earthly kingdom but a spiritual kingdom!
    - c. He would come preaching repentance and reaching out to the lost!
  3. Their ideas of the Christ was based upon their false beliefs and doctrines (John 7:25-26)
    - a. They had the idea that when the Christ came that no one would know where He was from! Where'd they get this idea? (vs. 27)
    - b. They could not understand where Jesus intended on going (vs. 34-35)
    - c. They did not believe that any prophet could arise out of Galilee! They totally missed it here because Jonah was from Galilee and possibly others! (vs. 52)
    - d. They had judged Jesus based upon His appearance! What did they expect the Messiah to look like? Where did they expect Him to come from? (vs. 24)
  4. Why didn't they get what was so plain? Prejudicial Preconceptions!
    - a. It wasn't because they could not see and understand – They didn't want to get it!
    - b. Jesus explained how this affected men's reception of God's word (Mt. 13:14-16)

## **B. Many people are hindered from seeing the truth because of false and uninformed doctrines and ideas of men!**

1. **Illustration:** Talking to guy at gym about baptism
  - a. Asked, "What are you?" When I told him he said, "How is a person saved"
  - b. He thought I believed that baptism was like on stop event where my ticket is

- punched for getting into heaven! Thought I taught it to the neglect of faith!
- c. Where did he get such an idea? He'd no doubt been fed it by preachers for years!
  2. Many people have a difficult time seeing the plain truth of God's word because they have false beliefs and ideas so ingrained in their thinking!
    - a. They have been fed a misrepresentation of what we might believe and they have been fed misconceptions of God's word to counter what we might say!
    - b. To reach these people you have to get past the prejudicial preconceptions first!
  3. Some reject NT Christianity because it doesn't fit what they expect it to be!
    - a. N.T. Christianity is very simple! For many, its not enough! **(Acts 11:20-26)**
    - b. Many are looking for a flashy, loud, and colorful worship scene filled with exciting music, entertaining preaching, & great choreography (Disney World Religion)
    - c. Expect huge & extravagant buildings where it takes a map to find your way around
    - d. They look for lots of "programs" – Fitness, day care, recreation, financial, etc
    - e. If they don't find this they automatically rule it out as being true Christianity!
  4. There was once a man who didn't find following Christ to be what he expected and he walked away from the Lord in great sorrow! **(Luke 18:18-23)**

## **II. An Unwillingness To Submit Is A Barrier To Biblical Faith:**

### **A. This whole discussion began at the pool Bethesda when Jesus healed a lame man!**

1. Here was a man who'd been lame for 38 years until he met Jesus!
  - a. For years he had looked longingly down at the waters edge as it stirred
  - b. For years he had dreamed about what it would be like to be healed
  - c. It's likely that most everyone knew him and his condition!
2. How did the Jews respond? Rejoice with the man made whole? Marvel at the Jesus' miracle? Worship Jesus? Not hardly! **(vs. 10, 16)**
  - a. Instead of acknowledging Jesus as the Christ they tried to accuse him!
  - b. Notice, they never tried to deny a miracle had been performed! It was obvious!!!
  - c. Why respond like this? They understood what acknowledging the miracle implied!
3. Lame man on Solomon's Porch: A similar response **(Acts 4:15-16)**
  - a. They admitted a miracle had been done! Everyone saw it! They knew the man!
  - b. Their refused to accept the spiritual implications of acknowledging the miracle!
4. What's the heart of the problem?
  - a. Recognizing His miracles would have confirmed His claims as the Son of God!
  - b. They didn't want to do this because it would call for accepting Jesus as the ruler of their wills, hearts, and lives!
5. There are two fundamental causes behind such a reaction: **(John 5:39-40)**
  - a. They had long before made up their minds that the Messiah must fit the mold of how THEY read the scriptures!
  - b. Studied scriptures merely from an academical standpoint → Failing in application
  - c. Jesus shows that their problem was not one of intelligence but of wills!

### **B. Many people's reception and understanding hit a roadblock when their wills get involved!**

1. Only when the gospel of Christ brings us into a personal relationship based upon trust and obedience in promises of God's word do we receive life from them!
  - a. Like with these Jews too often people know God's words through diligent study; however, they miss the object of what they read!
  - b. A lifetime of study is only in vain if our desires and will do not line up with God's!
2. Too often what I desire & please gets in the way of God's working in & through me!

## **III. Not Truly Loving God Is A Barrier To Biblical Faith:**

### **A. Jesus issues a very blunt and piercing statement concerning their motives **(John 5:41-44)****

1. Jesus finally gets to the heart of the issue by addressing their motives!
  - a. They said religious things and did religious activities: Seemed good on the outside!
  - b. On the inside, they did not have the love of God!
  - c. What did they have? If it wasn't the love of God it was the love of themselves and

- the praises of men! (**Matthew 6:5; 23:6-7**)
2. Jesus points to their actions as proof of their motives! (**vs. 43**)
    - a. If another came in his own name they would readily receive him, but since Jesus came in the name of His Father they rejected him
    - b. Jesus' words were constantly being questioned, challenged, and rejected while the words of the leaders were welcomed, praised, and unquestionably accepted!
    - c. What the leaders said was their basis of truth! (**John 7:13, 15, 47-49**)
    - d. Their honor did not come from God but their honor came from one another!
  3. Although they studied all their lives and verbally said they sought to please God, they did not recognize Jesus as the Christ!
    - a. So Jesus issues the verdict: The love of God was not in them!
    - b. If they truly loved God they would have received Jesus because He was sent from God, approved of by God, and loved by God!

#### **B. Jesus' indictment still rings true today!**

1. There is a link between our love for God and our understanding of His will! (**Mk. 12:33**)
2. It's very possible to be very "religious" without having any real love for God!
  - a. When we serve God out of nothing more than habitual service, love is absent!
  - b. Some serve God only because it's what's convenient, love is absent!
  - c. Some serve God because it's just what's expected out of them, love is absent!
3. Great accomplishments can be made in the name of God without any real love for God!
  - ➔ People point out all the things they are doing as proof of their love for God & God's approval of them: Not always an indicator! (**I Cor. 13:1-4; Matthew 7:22**)
4. Whose praise and approval do we seek? Man's or God's?
  - a. Will what spiritual leaders in our lives say take precedence over what God says?
  - b. They based religion on what their leaders approved & were wrong! (**Jn 12:42-43**)
5. Sometimes people are willing to accept anything except what the Lord clearly says!
  - a. Evidence? They sit on the edge of their seats for the words and approval of men; however, they don't do the same for reading God's word!
  - b. Evidence? They seek the approval of men and when it shows that God says something different, they reject His truth for man's ideas!
  - c. What's the problem? The love of God is not in them!
6. If we truly love God it will be His will that we are after and His approval that we will seek!
  - We will be open to His word and the witnesses He leaves us!

#### **Conclusion:**

- A. Maybe now we can see why some have a hard time understanding what to us is so black and whitely spelled out in the Bible! Understanding the problems helps us help them!**
- B. Caution: Don't be so blind as to fail to see the application to our own faith!**
  1. When you are presented with God's word and see a change needs made in your life... how do you respond? Reason it away? Don't believe it? Ignore it?
  2. In seeking to build strong faith, the same barriers can hinder us! Will we recognize them?