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Hom All
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Grace and peace be to you from our God and Father, and our Savior Jesus Christ.

Can you believe everything you see on TV? Well of course the answer is no. Just because you see something on your TV, it doesn't mean that it is the truth. You might have seen a program say "Based on true events" but even that doesn't mean that the show is 100% accurate to the real life event. Television likes to play off of people's imagination and they like to make you think what you are seeing is real. It's a lot more interesting if it is real.

One of my favorite shows growing up was Ripely's Believe it or Not. They would present these crazy, unbelievable stories about strange and weird things that actually happened. The title of the show implies that these things you are about to witness are so incredible, they are hard to believe. But they were true. Believe it or not, but what you will see is true. If they were just made up, then the show would lose its appeal.

Unfortunately, the Bible today is seen in this light. "Sure it is a great story, but it isn't to be believed completely." "We are so much smarter today than when this Bible was popular." "From what we know about science, the creation account just isn't true." These are popular statements in this day and age. Well, Believe it or not, Jesus is the only way to eternal life.

We read 1 John 5: 4-12

4 For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. 5 Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

6 This is He who came by water and blood—Jesus Christ; not only by water, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit who bears witness, because the Spirit is truth. 7 For there are three that bear witness: the Spirit, the water, and the blood; and these three agree as one.

9 If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater; for this is the witness of God which He has testified of His Son. 10 He who believes in the Son of God has the witness in himself; he who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed the testimony that God has given of His Son. 11 And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. 12 He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.

The Bible gets a special kind of spotlight. To many people and to us, we see it as God's inspired word. It is how He speaks to us, It is how we understand His will, it is how we are saved...

But to many other people, it is nothing more than a book of myths and fairy tales. They see the Bible and they laugh at you. "That's what you believe?!?" They mock you. "How can you be so ignorant to believe such an outdated book?!?"

Do these people have a point? There are some pretty incredible events in the Bible. Was there truly a world wide flood? Did Jesus truly raise the dead from the grave? Was this Jesus really more than a good teacher? Is this to be believed or not?

Well we know the answer to this question. From the perspective of the world, and the perspective of the flesh, they shout a resounding "NO" to the Bible and to Jesus. Why won't they believe? Why does the sinful man doubt the Word of God?

The world denying Jesus is nothing new. During Christ's ministry, many people would come to hear his words. A lot of people would hear and believe, but Christ's enemies would also come. Jesus would teach in parables, and many times these parables were hard to understand. Finally, His disciples asked Jesus "**Why do You speak to them in parables?**"

11 He answered and said to them, "Because it has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given. 12 For whoever has, to him more will be given, and he will have abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him. 13 Therefore I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand.

So why does the world reject the Bible? It is because mankind sees itself as something it simply isn't;.... smart. When you work from the assumption that man is the highest form of intelligence, the Bible gets thrown out the window; there is no need for it. Something like a world wide flood couldn't have happened. Evolution is much more likely than a catastrophic flood. And a resurrection? The only way to get around sickness and diseases is by modern medicine. A savior? Human's are generally good and don't need one.

This is a sad reality that people don't believe the Bible. They say that they don't believe from an educated and scientific point of view, but it is really a fleshly point of view. What it really boils down to is that the flesh of mankind hates what the Bible has to say. They hate that it condemns their way of life. It steals their so called "liberties" and "rights." They can't get around the facts the Bible presents because it doesn't make sense to them. They lack faith.

They go from a lack of understanding and end up actively attacking Jesus. People who don't believe Jesus and His message are making noise. The noise they make is referred to in verse 10 of our text. **10 He who believes in the Son of God has the witness in himself; he who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed the testimony that God has given of His Son.**

Here is where all the scoffing and denying of the Word of God has serious consequences. It's all fine and dandy to say "O, Jesus, yeah he was a good teacher, a good person to strive to be like, but he wasn't God, he was just a guy whose main message love and tolerance." But here lies the problem. When you say that, you are calling God a liar. You are saying that the words of God are incorrect, and that you are smarter than he is. You are saying that the mouth that uttered the words of creation... now is lying. This is just blindness.

It can be easy to point at the sinful world and point out all the things they are wrong about, but what about you and me. Do we ever call God a liar? Maybe not in those words, but how many times do we know what the Bible says and yet, we go the other way. How often don't we trust God to take care of the everyday things in our lives, and yet we know that the very number of hairs on our head are counted. How often have we not obeyed the great commandment in the law 'You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind' and 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' ?

But there is a difference between us and the world that is mentioned in our text. **He who believes in the Son of God has the witness in himself; he who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed the testimony that God has given of His Son. 11 And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.**

It is true that our sinful flesh drags us down daily. But while the world and flesh calls God a liar, our new man believes the witness and the testimony; that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son! When we simply believe in Jesus, we have eternal life. Our eternal life is by faith. It is not the faith in ourselves or in the power of mankind, but it is faith built on Christ work. This faith built on Jesus work gives us the confidence.

On the show Ripely's believe it or not, they would talk about something fantastic; so fantastic it was unbelievable. But then they would show you with the camera that it was true. They had the proof to back it up. You almost still couldn't believe your eyes, but there it was...

The flesh shares this same skepticism "I'll believe it when I see it." What does the Bible have to say?

6 This is He who came by water and blood—Jesus Christ; not only by water, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit who bears witness, because the Spirit is truth. 7 For there are three that bear witness: The Spirit, the water, and the blood; and these three agree as one.

What we have here is what we call apologetics. The term apologetics isn't what it sounds like. It isn't the art of apologizing. The term comes from a Greek word which means speaking in defense. Here, in first John, we have the Bible's own defense of itself. More specifically, the work of Jesus. Jesus is the one who came by water and blood. He started His ministry at his baptism (the water), and His ministry concluded at His crucifixion (the blood). The Holy Spirit is the third and the chief witness who was at the baptism of Jesus (He was in the form of the dove) and all through his ministry. These are the three that bear witness, and they agree that Jesus was the Messiah, sent here, to pay for the sins of the whole world. Believe it or not, but here is the proof.

An example of someone who needed proof was the disciple Thomas. All the other disciples had seen the resurrected Jesus, and they told him about it. But he was stubborn. Not only was he of the opinion that “seeing is believing”, he also needed to physically touch Him. **“Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe.”** Our sinful nature relates well with Thomas. But what was Christ response to Thomas after he had finally believed? **Blessed *are* those who have not seen and *yet* have believed.**

Thomas wouldn't believe the testimony of men. Usually this is enough. We accept the word of a historian as true when it comes to the political history of the world. The word of a man is good, but what's even better is the word of God. It's true; it would have been nice to touch Jesus like Thomas did, we have something more powerful than tactile proof. We have God's Holy Word. **If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater; for this is the witness of God which He has testified of His Son.**

When it all comes down to proof of Jesus, or the validity of the Bible, we have the best kind of proof. We have the water, the blood, and the Spirit, which all agree. We have the testimony of God himself, which is far superior to any testimony that man can provide. We also have faith, faith that is built on Jesus Christ and worked into us by the Holy Spirit, faith that is able to grasp the truth. Because of all of this, we have overcome the world!

4 For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. 5 Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God? 12 He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God

does not have life.

You have overcome the world. You are born of God. This process happened when the Holy Spirit worked baptism in you, and created faith in Jesus inside of you. That faith which is built on Jesus who said **Fear not I have overcome the World.** Because he overcame the world, we now overcome the world and have victory and life. That victory was secured by Jesus; living a perfect life, dying an innocent death, taking our place, and rising again. Because we have the Son we also have a perfect and eternal life.

Brothers and sisters, we have overcome the world. We have the great confidence that God has given us to believe this. The Word of God which is in your hearts by the Holy Spirit has given you this confidence. Because of that faith you know there is no reason to doubt it. Everything that Jesus did for you during Holy week is 100% true. He is the Son of God, he has paid for your sins, and you will inherit eternal life. Believe it! Amen.