

*He Loved Me . . .*

*He Loves Me Lots*

*The Gospel of John*

Text

John 5:30-47

Topic

The Jewish religious authorities diligently searched the Scriptures but they were not looking for Jesus

Title

***"Searchin', Searchin',  
We Gotta Keep Jesus Searchin' "***

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### **Is Google Making Us Stupid?**

In the book, *The Shallows: What the Internet is Doing to Our Brains*, which was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize, Nicholas Carr makes the case that technology is inducing an intellectual decay in our brains.

*When you read a book, you take a thimble of information from your working memory and fill your bathtub of long-term memory. Yet when you read on the Internet, we transfer a jumble of drops from different faucets, not a continuous, coherent stream from one source. Our brains don't assimilate the information in a rich and meaningful way, creating fewer connections between our other memories. We become mindless consumers of data.*

**There was a search engine in Bible times.**

Jesus mentioned it, saying in verse thirty-nine, "You **search** the Scriptures." He was addressing the Jewish religious authorities - Scribes, Doctors of the Law of Moses, Pharisees, and the like.

Respectfully, their search habits were making them stupid. Jesus' full quote was, "You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me. **But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life.**"

They kept searchin', searchin', but it wasn't drawing them closer to God.

**We "search the Scriptures," placing a high priority on the Word of God.**

It is all too possible to search the Scriptures and miss its main subject.

I'll organize my comments around two questions, **#1 Are You Searching For Jesus In Your Bible Reading?**, and **#2 Are You Satisfied With Jesus In Your Bible Reading?**

**#1 - Are You Searching For Jesus In Your Bible Reading? (v30-42)**

**What is the world's most deadly book?**

A strong case could be made for *Catcher in the Rye* by J.D. Salinger. Law Enforcement labels it "The Serial Killer's Book." One article noted, "Conspiracy theorists have jumped on several ideas including that the book is used by the FBI or by other government organizations to trigger 'sleeper assassins.' The book has been associated with the murder of John Lennon and the attempted assassination of then-President Ronald Reagan. Lee Harvey Oswald had a copy. It's not the book; it's the readers. They brought all the crazy with them.

We don't bring the crazy, but we do tend to interpret the Bible through our own biases and preconceptions. The most common example is called Confirmation Bias. Experts define it as "The tendency to selectively search for or interpret information in a way that confirms one's preconceptions or

hypotheses." Information that challenges the bias is more apt to be ignored or rejected outright.

Jesus is a Person, not a proof text. It will be easier to overcome Confirmation Bias and other biases if we are looking for the Lord.

Jesus had just revealed that He was equal with His Father. He will call witnesses to attest to His claim.

Joh 5:30 I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me.

Jesus kept making it clear that although He was God, He had voluntarily set aside the use of His deity to do "nothing" except "the will of the Father" who sent Him. Commenting on this sublime truth, A.W. Tozer writes, "The Man who walked among us was a demonstration, not of unveiled deity, but of perfect humanity."

Since Jesus only, always, did what the Father told Him, the Jews should have trusted that His works were *exactly* what God wanted done.

Joh 5:31 "If I bear witness of Myself, My witness is not true.

This verse makes sense if you remember that the Mosaic Law required *two* or *three* witnesses to resolve a matter. Jesus' testimony by itself, though true, would need corroboration from other witnesses.

Joh 5:32 There is another who bears witness of Me, and I know that the witness which He witnesses of Me is true.

Joh 5:33 You have sent to John, and he has borne witness to the truth.

John the Baptist did more than introduce Jesus as the Messiah. He came in fulfillment of prophecy in the spirit and power of Elijah. His was a powerful witness to Jesus' deity.

Joh 5:34 Yet I do not receive testimony from man, but I say these things that you may be saved.

John's witness was important but it is ultimately insufficient in itself since it is "from [another] man."

Jesus did not need to produce witnesses. He was God. He submitted Himself to it hoping it would help lead to salvation. The Lord is always reminding us that He is not willing that any should perish, but that they would come to eternal life.

Joh 5:35 He was the burning and shining lamp, and you were willing for a time to rejoice in his light.

There is a distinctly Jewish meaning to this saying. Adam Clarke writes, "The expression of *lamp* our Lord took from the ordinary custom of the Jews, who termed their eminent [religious authorities] *the lamps of Israel*."

These guys fancied themselves "lamps." They were in the dark, blind leaders of the blind.

If you want to see a real "lamp," look at John. He was all about Jesus. While these guys were in it for their glory, John gave all glory to Jesus.

They didn't condemn John, but they didn't embrace him either. They checked him out but left him alone. They hoped he would fade so they could get their glow back.

What if these guys had believed John?

Joh 5:36 But I have a greater witness than John's; for the works which the Father has given Me to finish - the very works that I do - bear witness of Me, that the Father has sent Me.

The Jewish Scriptures, what we call the Old Testament, predicted that the Messiah would prove Himself by many signs, wonders, and miracles:

- When John the Baptist's disciples asked Jesus, "Are you the coming One, or do we look for another?", Jesus answered, "Go and tell John the things you have seen and heard: that *the* blind see, *the* lame walk, *the* lepers are cleansed, *the* deaf hear, *the* dead are raised, *the* poor have the gospel preached to them" (Luke 7:22).
- In the Nazareth Synagogue, Jesus preached from the passage in Isaiah that reads, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me; he has anointed me to tell the good news to the poor. He has sent me to announce release to the prisoners and recovery of sight to the blind, to set oppressed people free." Then Jesus proclaimed, "Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing" (Luke 4:21), claiming that His works identified Him as Messiah.

The massive accumulation of signs, wonders, healings, and exorcisms surrounding the ministry of Jesus was unprecedented. It was His proof.

Joh 5:37 And the Father Himself, who sent Me, has testified of Me. You have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen His form.

Immediately we think of the Father's speaking from Heaven at Jesus' baptism. Except it says they had never "heard His voice.

The opening verses of the Book of Hebrews provide us with a commentary on verse thirty-seven. "God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by *His Son*" (1:1-2).

### **The Old Testament is God "speaking" in different ways to various people about Jesus.**

Jesus made the Father visible to those who have "neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen His form." Hearing Jesus, seeing Jesus, was hearing and seeing God the Father.

Joh 5:38 But you do not have His word abiding in you, because whom He sent, Him you do not believe.

You cannot reject Jesus and say you believe in God. Reject the Son, and you reject the Father who sent Him.

These guys knew the Scriptures backwards and forwards. They dotted every 'i' and crossed every 't.'

Note to self: The Word without Jesus as its main subject makes a person worse, not better. It encourages self-righteous.

I can almost hear a Scribe shouting, "You're so vain! I bet You think this Book is about you!" **It is.**

Joh 5:39 You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me.

The Scribes, Doctors of the Law, the Pharisees were attempting to receive "eternal life" from their own study and subsequent obedience to "the Scriptures."

I want to list a few of the of ways the Scriptures "testify" of Jesus:

- Immediately after they sinned in Eden, God promised Adam and Eve that He would be born of a woman to redeem them and their offspring while simultaneously restoring Creation.
- In Deuteronomy, Moses, talking about Jesus, wrote, "The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your midst, from your brethren. Him you shall hear" (18:15).
- Jesus was typified in the rock that gave Israel water in the wilderness (Numbers 20:8-12). The apostle Paul said, "That rock was Christ" (First Corinthians 10:4).
- The ministry of Jesus was shown in the seven different offerings that God commanded Israel to bring (Leviticus 1-7).
- Jesus and His ministry were shown in the Tabernacle and its service. One place where the New Testament makes this connection is with the word *propitiation*, which speaks of the mercy seat on the Ark of the Covenant (Romans 3:25).

- The Lord's ministry on Earth parallels the seven Feasts on the Jewish calendar. He fulfilled four of them in His first coming, and He will fulfill the remaining three.

My absolute favorite "Finding Jesus" Scripture is the near sacrifice of father Abraham's only begotten son, Isaac. It was on that same spot where, centuries later, God the Father would not spare His only begotten Son, Jesus. I was weeks old in the Lord when I heard it taught and it positively blew my mind.

It is no wonder Jesus could say, "Behold, I come; in the scroll of the Book it is written of Me" (Psalm 40:7).

Joh 5:40 But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life.

You might say that they were worshipping the Scriptures. Or that the Scriptures had become their idol.

One commentator noted, *"The Jewish Scribes sought to know the Word of God, but they did not know the God of the Word!"*

Novelist Ken Kesey famously hated the film version of *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*. He was disappointed with the director's decision not to have the film narrated - as the book was - from the point of view of Chief Bromden, a Native American character thought to be deaf and mute. Kesey said something like, "I wrote about the plight of the Indian, and they made it a story about Hollywood and Jack Nicholson." Kesey thought that they had missed the subject of his words.

The religious authorities most certainly missed the subject of Scripture. They were content to argue about what constituted work on the Sabbath while the Lord of the Sabbath was in their midst, offering them their Kingdom.

Notice that their unbelief was a matter of their free will. It isn't that they *could* not believe; they *would* not believe. They "were not willing." They resisted the grace of God in Jesus.

O, yes; grace is resistible, to your own peril.

Joh 5:41 "I do not receive honor from men.

Think of a court trial in which, despite overwhelming evidence to a person's innocence, they were nonetheless convicted on account of the bias of the jury. *To Kill a Mockingbird* comes to mind.

The witnesses Jesus called upon were overwhelming proof He was the Messiah, the Son of God, the God-man, God in human flesh, the One who was promised. He did not, however, "receive honor from men."

Shakespeare wrote, "The devil can cite Scripture for his purpose."

Joh 5:42 But I know you, that you do not have the love of God in you.

Ouch. But as much as it is a rebuke, Jesus was sent to resolve this deficiency by manifesting the love of God for them. No one, not Jews or Gentiles, is born loving God. We all must be born a second time, born spiritually, born again. We can be reborn and regenerated on account of Jesus being sent by the Father to save us. Then we will have His love in us.

If you are a nonbeliever, "you do not have the love of God in you." You can if you will believe on the Lord, Jesus Christ.

**W**ere you the mean person who would ditch others? The religious authorities wanted the Scriptures, but they were ditching Jesus. You can't have one without the other.

Every Bible exposure ought to have an element of Jesus on the road to Emmaus.

Walking with two disciples, but keeping His identity hidden from them, the resurrected Lord taught a Bible study where "beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself" (Luke 24:27).



I've heard it said, and I've said, that it would be wonderful to have that study on tape. But that's the exact wrong way to think. We have the One who taught that study. It is Jesus. We hear it through the Word, with the help of God the Holy Spirit, if we keep Jesus the main subject.

## **#2 - Are You Satisfied With Jesus In Your Bible Reading? (v43-47)**

### **How many Bengals hats do you have?**

Bill Wilder has more. His impressive array of Bengals memorabilia contains no fewer than 130 Bengals hats. It's obvious where his loyalties lie.

There were no memorabilia to display, but spend a few minutes with the religious authorities, and you'd know that they were obsessed with Moses. Jesus concluded by telling them that Moses would be extremely unhappy with them.

Joh 5:43 I have come in My Father's name, and you do not receive Me; if another comes in his own name, him you will receive.

Think of Jesus as the Father's ambassador. Reject the ambassador, and you reject the sender.

"Another" might look ahead to the ultimate "another," the antichrist of the Revelation. In context, it seems to mean that these guys prefer to listen to one another expound minutiae from the Scriptures.

Joh 5:44 How can you believe, who receive honor from one another, and do not seek the honor that *comes* from the only God?

They desired "honor" from each other, not from God. Their attitude is exposed in The Book of Acts when they called Peter and John "ordinary men and not well educated" (4:13). They noted that they had been with Jesus.

That is it in a nutshell. It isn't how many letters you have after your name. It is about being with Jesus.

I use *Grammarly* to check my transcripts. It tells me I am writing at a seventh-grade level. Exactly where I want to be.

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

These guys were looking for a way to murder Jesus (v18). But Jesus wasn't their problem. Moses was their problem.

Joh 5:46 For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote about Me.

**For all their claims to honor Moses, especially by their meticulous attempts to keep the Mosaic Law, they did not believe Moses.**

Moses is the author of the first five books of the Bible, called the Pentateuch. We listed a few of the ways Moses presented Jesus in the Pentateuch. Moses made Jesus the main subject, but they were missing Him entirely.

Joh 5:47 But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?"

There was an original series *Star Trek* episode, *The Omega Glory*, in which the crew of the USS Enterprise discovered the Yangs and the Coms. They were involved in a terrible conflict. Turns out they were misinterpreting a document that turned out to be the Constitution of the United States. The natives read the document as sacred words, saying, "E plab neesta" instead of "We the people."

The Scribes, Doctors of the Law, and Pharisees were an "E plab neesta" crowd. They were obscuring, rather than uncovering, the Scriptures.

**N**ext time you are looking for a great Christian read, check out A.W. Tozer. I quote him a lot, and here is another gem: *"The modern scientist has lost God amid the wonders of His world; we Christians are in real danger of losing God amid the wonders of His Word."*

Merchandise websites allow you to refine your searches. You can choose minimum and maximum pricing, buying format, sizes, colors, brands, etc.

**Refine your searching of God's Word by keeping Jesus the main subject.**

Don Stewart offers the following summary:

- The Old Testament records the preparation for the Christ.
- The Gospels record the manifestation of the Christ.
- The Book of Acts gives us the propagation of the message of the Christ.
- The New Testament letters provide the explanation of the two comings of Christ.
- The Book of Revelation documents the consummation of all things in Christ.

Jesus came in the scroll of the book. Don't miss Him in it.