

BELIEVING

(WHAT DOES THAT REALLY MEAN)

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The Bible teaches that to be a believer in Christ is above all the one thing (or condition) that God requires of everyone (John 6:29), so it is important that we accurately and Scripturally define what it means to believe. To have faith in or trust in, someone (or some thing, or plan), is to believe in that person, thing, or plan. Jesus wanted His followers to understand, that to be a true believer in Him, means to have faith and trust in Him, (instead of some human plan or person). Only those who trust in His Name become children of God. (John 1: 12) "But all who have received Him, to them..that is,..to those who trust in His name...He has given the privilege of becoming children of God." That is the condition or requirement that Jesus gave to His followers (which includes us) (quote) "That you should be believers in Him whom He has sent."

When we accept God's Word about His only Son (that He gave to us through His Son), then we can receive His Spirit within our heart, to inspire us to trust on Him for things in our life. (John 14:17 says), "That Spirit the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him. You know Him, because He remains by your side and is in you." Jesus said repeatedly, "The Kingdom of Heaven is within you" (meaning, within the believers heart).

So, as we sincerely commit ourselves to do God's will in our life, (which means, a consecration of the heart, and a true desire to be rid of the self-will from our heart). then the Holy Spirit will be enabled to help us understand what Jesus Christ, really accomplished for us on the Cross of Calvary. When (with the Holy Spirit's help) we do understand what that Atonement work of the Son of God has already done for us, then we can believe on the power of His Atonement Blood that was shed for us.

Most importantly,.. that is where we will automatically place our trust, not turning to human plans (or the arm of fles as the Bible says), for healing, security of financial insurance, protection from mishap, or seeking vengeance for ourselves and loved ones.

When the Holy Spirit enables us to understand what Christ's Atonement work on the Cross has done for us, we will soon realize that where our place of trust is centered,..is indeed an Eternal Life issue. (Jesus explained in advance of his crucifixion, what His Atonement Sacrifice would mean to everyone who believes on Him. (John 3:15), AAnd just as Moses lifted high the serpent in the Desert, so must the Son of Man be lifted up,..in order that.. every one who trusts in Him may have the Life of the Ages."

We will be tested in the situations we face each day, and we will have opportunities to exercise our God-given free-will choice, to place our trust in God (or in some other person, place, or thing). We must always remember that our preparation for Eternal Life is directly

involved). (John 3:16-18), "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. (Unbelievers are not mentioned). "For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. "He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the Name of the only begotten Son of God."

Believing on the power of Jesus Christ's Atonement Blood for our hope of Salvation, is the basic principle involved for the fulfillment of the true Christian's goal of Salvation. (1 Thess.5: 9), "For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain Salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Trusting on the Son of God for things in this life (as a child trusts a parent), reveals that one is really believing in the work that Christ accomplished for them on Calvary's Cross. Not to trust, would be forsaking God's offer of mercy and love that He extends through the power of the Atonement Blood of His dear Son. Everyone should seek wisdom from God, allowing Him to reveal His divine will to them, so they understand what believing on the Son of God really means. That it is the only condition that He places on receiving the benefits of being within His will. "This," replied Jesus, "is above all the thing that God requires, that you should be believers in Him whom He has sent." (John 6:29)

When we are tested in daily life situations (and everyone must be tested), we must remember that it does matter..where we place our trust. It is an Eternal Life issue as Jesus explained, .. "He who does not believe is condemned already,..because.. he has not believed."

God's wonderful promise for true believers (who make right choices when tested, and who are trusting in the Son of God instead of man's plans), is, "He who believes in Him is not condemned."

Making right choices is what God instructed His people through the prophet Jeremiah (6:16) "Thus says the Lord: Stand in the ways and see, And ask (Me) for the old paths, where the good way is, And walk in it" (the entire Bible teaches people to walk by faith on the righteous pathway). (vs.continues) "Then you will find rest for your souls. But they (rebellious people) said 'We will not walk in it.'" (Also, Jesus was inspired to query, Luke 18:8), "Yet, when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on earth? ".. (Again reminding everyone to claim the faith needed to believe on the power of the Atonement Blood of Christ, and accept into our heart what it has accomplished).

If a person is oppressed physically by the devil, and makes a free-will choice to place their trust in a doctor or medicine for healing (instead of the living God), then "He has not his trust resting on the name of God's only Son", and would not be "believing in Him whom God has sent." A wrong decision of that kind (a 'backward step of faith') should be confessed to God and forsaken. God is waiting to forgive anyone who is willing to repent of their mistake, and God's "mercy endures forever".

The same is the case in financial matters, if one is found to be

trusting in laid up treasure, such as a savings account, a welfare plan, social security, or an insurance plan of some kind for protection against financial liability, their trust would not be "resting on the name of God's only Son". A wrong decision on a place of trust regarding finances, should be corrected and confessed to God, who is waiting to forgive anyone who will return to trusting on Him financially, rather than to misplace their trust on a man-made plan for financial protection or security.

If one uses self efforts to avenge wrongs done to them, rather than trust God to right their wrongs, then he has not His trust "resting on the name of God's only Son" (Jesus said), and would not be believing "in Him whom God has sent." (to right a wrong done to them).

In regard to every example of not trusting, or not believing, or not having faith in the Son of Man, the words of Jesus agree with His Father's words through the prophet. (Jere. 17:5) says, "Cursed is the one who trusts in man, who depends on flesh for his strength, and whose heart turns away from the LORD."

The book of Daniel tells of three Hebrews who escaped the curse, for they did not compromise in their hearts by turning "away from the Lord." Their actions followed their profession of faith in God.

It would have been easy for them to bow down to the golden image and to just act like they were worshiping (to save their life), instead of remaining faithful to God. [Many issues facing us today are not life threatening issues to meet, so it is all the more reason not to misplace our trust on a wrong place or person (or to approve of a contract or agreement that would not glorify God, and which does not reject the world's way of doing things.) [When something is widely accepted by the world, that in itself should be a warning to the true believer.]

In the case of the three Hebrews it would have been showing their approval of the unscriptural law set up by a wicked government ... (signing on with the king so to speak, even though they did not agree with it, while the rest of the people of the empire did accept it). They would have been compromising with God's Word "to not worship an idol", .. (in reality), would have been "turning their heart away from the Lord" (and not believing on the "One whom God has sent").

Believing is the one condition of God's will (His New Covenant plan), to receive the Life that He promises to all who truly believe in His Son, ... (and who do not allow something or someone else to come between them and God). That is why it is so important to understand what it means to be a true believer in the Son of God and remain faithful to the end. (Acts 10:43) "To Him all the Prophets bear witness, and testify that through His name all who believe in Him receive the forgiveness of their sins." The inheritance of the true believer who is faithful to the end, is to receive the **CROWN OF LIFE** (Jesus promised).

For loved ones of ours who have passed away; (certainly, no one of us can say where they are to spend eternity, for God does not permit us to make that judgment.) God gave all of that judgment to

His Son (John 5:21-23), "For just as the Father awakens the dead and gives them life, so the Son also gives life to whom He wills. The Father indeed does not judge any one, but He has entrusted all judgment to the Son,.. that all may honor the Son even as they honor the Father."

Even though we can not say where 'loved ones' are to spend Eternity, we can and should believe the promises of God's merciful Son (our Lord and Savior), regarding those who remained faithful believers. It is part of God's requirement for us, to "believe in Him whom He has sent",... and that He will do as He promised.

The verses given John 5:28-29, should be both encouraging and admonishing for us. "Wonder not at this. For a time is coming when all who are in the graves will hear His voice and will come forth— they who have done what is right to the resurrection of Life, and they whose actions have been evil to the resurrection of judgement." (That should be encouragement for us in regard to loved ones who have left us, but, had who believed and remained faithful to God, never turning to man for help. And then for those who were tempted and may have given in to fear from the devil, we know that our merciful God is waiting to forgive anyone who is willing to repent of their lack of faith or mistake. Also know that His mercy endures forever.)

Jesus again confirmed that promise for the faithful and true believers, who, "will hear His voice and will come forth" from the graves. (Rev. 20:6) "Blessed and holy are those who share in the First Resurrection. The Second Death (the Lake of Fire) has no power over them, but they shall be priests to God and to Christ, and shall be kings with Christ for the thousand years.

Do we ever wonder why Jesus repeatedly said? "listen to my teaching"..also, "If you love me, you will obey my commandments", (John 14:15). He answered that question for all who listen (John 3:36), "He who believes in the Son has the 'Life of the Ages'" (obviously, if one believes in the Son of God, he will listen to (and follow) His teaching, because a person's faith will naturally be in what or who they truly believe in). (The verse continues) "He who disobeys the Son will not enter into Life, but God's anger remains upon him." Thus, (Heb. 2:1 admonishes the believer) "For this reason we ought to pay the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, for fear we should drift away from them."

Jesus' words emphasize the contrast between the reward for one who loves and faithfully believes in Him, and the dire results for the one who disobeys Him (if they do not repent). One can readily see from that verse of scripture, that Jesus and His apostles (like Moses and the prophets before), never separated a true believer's faith, from their obedience to God's Word.

Faith and obedience run hand-in-hand throughout the Bible, because God's Word (The Truth) does not change. (1 Peter 1:25), ABut the word of the Lord remains for ever." "And that means the Message which has been proclaimed among you in the Good News."

When Christ arose from the dead, he conquered Satan and death, so

that all true believers (those who trust in Him and follow Him in obedient faith), might also arise and follow Him to LIFE ETERNAL. However, he did not say we could (or should) stop obeying Him (and still receive our Salvation). Instead, he said, "he who disobeys the Son will not enter into Life, but God's anger remains upon him."

It is recorded that Jesus was crucified, returned to life, and ascended to Heaven around the year 32 A.D. But, He appeared around 96 A.D. (about 64 years later), to the Apostle John on the island of Patmos, to give him the Revelation for us.

Jesus said to the Apostle, "What you see, write in a book and send it to the seven churches. (Rev. 1:11). And, to the ministers of each of the seven Churches, Jesus told John to write as follows. "I turned to see who it was that was speaking to me" (John said), "When I saw Him, I fell at His feet as if I were dead. But He laid His right hand upon me and said, "Do not be afraid: I am the First and the Last, and the ever-living One. I died; but I am now alive until the 'Ages of the Ages', and I have 'the keys of the gates of Death and of Hades'!" (Rev. 1:17-18).

Nowhere in the Bible is the importance of faithful obedience stressed to the true believer more than it is in Jesus' words to the seven Churches of Asia. It is important that we understand the significance of Jesus' revelation to John (many years after He suffered on the Cross of Calvary to 'pay the price' for 'our sins', and sacrificed His life to pay for 'our forgiveness', ...so that we might be redeemed by His blood (and our life saved).

Since Jesus had paid the price to redeem our life, why did He find it so necessary to instruct John over sixty years later, and to stress faithful New Testament obedience, in His messages to the seven Churches? Jesus kept repeating to the Churches, to repent and remain faithful and obedient to His commands, and that should be heeded by every true believer. His words should be taken as a warning to those who have been deceived, and who have accepted a 'once saved, always saved' false doctrine. Jesus' words are a solemn warning not to FALL AWAY FROM THE GRACE He offers to all faithful BELIEVERS!

Jesus said repeatedly, "Repent at once" (Rev. 2:5), "Be mindful, therefore, of the height from which you have fallen. Repent at once, and act as you did at first" (meaning, don't fall back and give up your faith), "or else I will surely come and remove your lampstand out of its place.... 'unless you repent'."

And (Rev. 3:3), "Be mindful, therefore, of the lessons you have received and heard. Continually 'lay them to heart', and repent. If, however, you fail to rouse yourself and keep awake, I shall come upon you suddenly like a thief, and you will certainly not know the hour at which I shall come to judge you."

That same Spirit of Christ inspired (Hebr. 12:14-15) "Persistently strive for peace with all men, and for that growth in holiness apart from which no one will see the Lord. Be carefully on your guard lest there be any one who falls back from the grace of God."

The majority of professed Christians have accepted the ever

popular once saved, always saved delusion, which teaches that it does not matter what a person does after they make a profession of repentance, ... or, that we don't need to have spiritual growth and development in our life. "If you fail to rouse yourself, ... I will come to judge you", Jesus said. And, (Rev. 3:19), "All whom I hold dear, I reprove and chastise, therefore be in earnest and repent."

If one lays up treasures on earth, places their trust in the financial and insurance plans, uses self efforts to right their wrongs, or turns to the medical profession for health or healing, they would not be "trusting in Him whom He has sent"..."above all the thing that God requires." (John 6:29)

"Test yourselves" (2 Cor. 13:5) "to discover whether you are true believers: put your own selves under examination." It is an 'Eternal Life issue'. Jesus said (John 3:18), "He who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed."

The Promise (vs.16) "whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have Eternal Life."

It is so important to understand what it means to '**BELIEVE**'!

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The First-Century Gospel Church / Philadelphia

SOME MAIN POINTS OF AWHAT IS BELIEVING:

1. Understanding what it means to be believing in Christ.
2. Most importantly, where are we placing our trust.
3. An example is given of those who refused to compromise their place of trust, and who escaped God's curse for one who trusts in man, ... and whose heart turns away from the Lord
4. The danger of misplacing one's trust, and the results if it is not repented of.
5. And, God's promise for those who believe in the One whom God has sent.

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