

## **Belief Is Not Enough**

Recently I have seen numerous posts on social media regarding “believing” in Jesus and the way scripture is misquoted to fit their narrative. This theme runs through the majority of Protestant religions and is foundational for the “sinners prayer.” One little prayer can negate the entire Bible and release “believers” from any scriptural obligations, which is so long as they’re *good* and *believe* with their whole heart. Simply confessing one’s sin’s and accepting Jesus Christ as your personal Savior and your off to Heaven.

I used the Oxford Dictionary this week to start with a simple definition of “believe.” The best way to begin is to start with the definition of “Believe.” The Oxford Dictionary defines believe as: verb, Accept (something) as true, feel sure of the truth, and they even use, “Christians believe that Jesus rose from the dead.” Some synonyms are to be convinced by, trust, have confidence in, regard as true, and “take as gospel,” just to name a few.

Our Bible studies are geared to prepare and enlighten us to the Word of God that we may have the ready answer for those God sends our way. They are not intended to bloviate on how much accumulated knowledge of God's Word we "think" we have but readily share scripture with those seeking His truth. I always think of Jack Van Impe and "Rexella" when I recall those who can spout scripture like water out of a faucet. You can know the entire Bible cover to cover but **IF** you're not **DOING** what God said to **DO** in it, your efforts and knowledge are worthless no matter how many Jesus labels you attach. Remember God is no respecter of persons (**Acts 10:34, Romans 2:11, Ephesians 6:9**).

Falling into the trap of missing true meanings within scripture is a combination of indoctrination and complacency. We are indoctrinated our whole lives by those trusted in our own families. We entrust our spiritual salvation to the man "behind the box" or the guy wearing the fish hat on the wrong day of the week. After all, they have a "degree." We remain complacent trusting in religion and "going to heaven" if we just follow along.

But **IF** we are blessed to receive that invitation from God the Father (**John 6:44, 6:65**), we cannot ignore the truth that is revealed to us. We thought we were true

believers however misinformed we were. Yet we were still blinded to God's Truth. We were raised in such traditions and never knew any better until God called us. We will try and cover a few scriptures to sharpen our witnessing skills for those God sends our way.

As "believers," what do we believe? From our own First Century our statement of faith is: We believe the Bible, both Old and New Testament, is the inspired revelation and Word of God to all of mankind. It is the true basis for all doctrine and teaching.

**2 Peter 1:20-21-** "Knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture originated as anyone's own *private* interpretation; Because prophecy was not brought at any time by human will, but the holy men of God spoke as they were moved by *the* Holy Spirit."

**2 Timothy 3:16-17-** "All Scripture *is* God-breathed and *is* profitable for doctrine, for conviction, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; So that the man of God may be complete, fully equipped for every good work."

We believe the Bible is the foundation for all truth and knowledge.

**John 17:17**- “Sanctify them in Your truth; Your Word is the truth.”

Jesus said Himself, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father except through me.”-**John 14:6**.

We not only believe in God’s Word from Genesis to Revelation, but we also live it and obey it (Matthew 4:4, Luke 4:4). This is the fundamental difference in simply “believing.” Taking scripture out of context or isolating a concept definitely keeps things effortless.

**Acts 16:30-31**- “And when he had brought them out, he said, “Sirs, what must I do, that I may be saved?” Then they said, “Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved, you and your household.”

This scripture is one of many used to establish the “saved” mindset. They seize this and forget the other thousands of scriptures that fill in the blanks of “how and what

to do to be saved.” If they just read a line or two further, they could see there is work to be done after making such a confession.

**Acts 16:33-** “And he took them in that hour of the night and washed their wounds; and he and all his household were immediately baptized.”

Even in the Book of Romans, we can see a similar scripture that causes (dare I say being wrapped around the axle?) someone to overlook other meanings. A lack of knowledge leads to the thousand year nap (**Hosea 4:6**).

**Romans 10:9-** “That if you confess with your mouth *the* Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God raised Him from *the* dead, you shall be saved.

**Romans 10:10-13-** “For with *the* heart one believes unto righteousness, and with *the* mouth one confesses unto salvation Because the scripture says, “Everyone who believes in Him shall not be ashamed.” For there is no difference between Jew and Greek because the same Lord of all *is* rich toward all who call upon Him. For everyone who calls on the name of *the* Lord shall be saved.”

They expand the “saved” theme to *all* and *everyone* without knowing why. When Paul was speaking in Rome, to whom was he speaking?

**Romans 1:7-** “To *all* those who are in Rome, **beloved by God, the called saints:** Grace and peace *be* to you from God our Father and *our* Lord Jesus Christ.”

He was speaking to the *believers* in Rome! It was not a bunch of strangers off the street. They *already had a foundation in God’s Word*, and he was enlightening them in the Gospel message. Skipping over who is speaking and to whom is why “cut and paste” Christianity is so popular. Saying a prayer and sitting back and coasting to the Kingdom is not anywhere in God’s Word! Much less “going to Heaven!” They already believed and were called by God. Belief is *not* and *will never be sufficient* to enter into God’s Kingdom.

**James 2:19-20-** “Do you believe that God is one? You do well *to believe this*. Even the demons believe—and tremble in fear. **But are you willing to understand, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead?**”

Evidently those believing in a sinner’s prayer is sufficient are definitely not willing to understand. For whatever our personal reasons are or were, we have come to this

place, and we have taken a leap of faith. We have been baptized into the family of God and chosen to follow and obey His Commandments, keep His Holy Days and live our lives following the example of His Son, Jesus our Savior.

**James 1:22-** “Then be doers of *the* Word, and not only hearers, deceiving your own selves.”

God’s Word is abounding with scripture telling us to **obey** His Commandments, **do** His Commandments and **keep** His commandments and we will be blessed if we do so.

**Deuteronomy 7:9-** “Therefore, know that the LORD your God, He *is* God, the faithful God Who keeps covenant and mercy with them that love Him and keep His commandments, to a thousand generations.”

**John 14:15-** “If you love Me, keep the commandments— namely, My commandments.”

So why do so many fail to see what is right before their own eyes?

**Proverbs 14:12-** “There is a way which seems right to a man, but the end thereof *is* the way of death.”

**Proverbs 16:25-** “There is a way that seems right to a man, but the end thereof is the way of death.”

**Proverbs 21:2-** “Every way of a man *is* right in his own eyes, but the LORD ponders the hearts.”

Ignorance will only go so far with God. Once **He makes His truth known to you, you are faced with a choice.** Accept it and strive to be a part of His First Harvest or **ignore it and roll the dice on making it after a thousand year sleep.** Lack of knowledge being what it is these days, it is not surprising little effort is made within churches to understand God’s Word. One or two lines of scripture and a heartwarming story, a homily, a doxology (I remember this from a Presbyterian church when I was a kid), saying the rosary, or a prepared statement and congregation response about covers the bases for Sunday morning services. **Nothing from the heart!** So truly little time is spent on studying what God **actually** says in His Word, much less **DO** what He requires of us. Many genuinely love God but only if they can worship Him their way.

**Matthew 15:6-9-** “And you have made void the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition. Hypocrites! Isaiah has prophesied well concerning you, saying, ‘These people have drawn near to Me with their mouths, and with their lips they honor Me; but their hearts are far away from Me. For they worship Me in vain, teaching *for* doctrine *the* commandments of men.’ ”

**Mark7:6-7-** “And He answered *and* said to them, “Well did Isaiah prophesy concerning you hypocrites, as it is written, ‘This people honors Me with their lips, but their hearts are far away from Me. But in vain do they worship Me, teaching *for* doctrine the commandments of men.’”

There are well over one hundred scriptures telling us to live, obey, keep, and do God’s Commandments. Loving God first is the biggest test, Sabbath keeping follows close behind. Choosing to keep the true Sabbath, one can actually begin to put God first.

**Exodus 31:13-** “Speak also to the children of Israel, saying, ‘Truly you shall keep My Sabbaths, for it *is* a sign between Me and you throughout your generations to know that I *am* the LORD Who sanctifies you.’”

**Isaiah 58:13-14-** “If you turn your foot away from the Sabbath, *from* doing your own desires on My holy day, and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the LORD, honorable; and shall honor Him, not doing your own ways, nor pursuing *your own* desires, nor speaking *your own* words, Then you shall delight yourself in the LORD; and I will cause you to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed you with the inheritance of Jacob your father, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken it.”

For those who have friends or acquaintances asking questions, give them a Sabbath challenge. Invite them to keep the Sabbath for four weeks and see if they notice a change. The blindfold may begin to unravel, and scripture may begin to make more sense.

**1 John 5:2-3-** “By this *standard* we know that we love the children of God: when we love God and keep His commandments. For this is the love of God: that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome.”

We have said many times in previous studies we must worship God in spirit and in truth.

**John 4:23-24-** “But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth; for the Father is indeed seeking those who worship Him in this manner. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and in truth.”

To worship God in spirit, we must love Him with **all our heart, all our soul and all our mind** (Greatest Commandment Matthew 22:37). True worship must be “in spirit,” that is, engaging the whole heart. Unless we have a sincere passion and zeal for God, ***there is no worship in spirit***. Some believers prefer to worship only “in spirit” and omit truth. This seems quite apparent as in some conversations with Sunday “churchers,” who admit they know they’re “doing it wrong” but justify their actions with good intentions. They judge the success of their worship by the thrills and chills they experience, substituting entertainment for truth. Good intentions lead right to the grave.

We believe our worship must also be “in truth.” This isn’t difficult to understand as it simply means that our worship must conform to the revelation of God in Scripture. It must be informed by who God is and what He is like and what He says for us to do and how to do it. This is an area where many take a wrong turn and worship God “in their own way.” Our worship must be rooted in and secured

to the truths of biblical revelation. The pure undefiled, undiluted Word of God. Having an open forum discussing God's Word when questions arise provides answers to questions that traditional churches may never ask or much less get answered.

Most of us here once sat in the pews on Sundays, kept "holidays," and honestly believed our conduct was righteous and our salvation assured. Satan is a clever enemy, and deception is one of his specialties (**Revelation 12:9**). Disregarding what mom and grandma taught us and what we were led to *believe* our whole life is a hurdle that is difficult to overcome. Spending one's life in a certain church or religion only to find out how far off base we were is disappointing. Rather than change, many would rather stick to their current beliefs and traditions for fear of ridicule and family conflicts.

**Mark 7:9-** "Then He said to them, "Full well do you reject the commandment of God, so that you may observe your *own* tradition."

Remember, the only judgment that *truly* matters is God's.

**Acts 5:29-** “But Peter and the apostles answered and said, “We are obligated to obey God rather than men.”

Many believe their denomination is right and other folks are wrong, that one interpretation is better or more correct than another. God is right all the time and man is wrong! If people profess to believe in God why do we have so many denominations to worship the same God and the same Jesus Christ?

**1 Corinthians 1:10-** “Now I exhort you brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; rather that you be knit together in the same mind and in the same judgment.”

Those who believe they are “right” and do not obey the Word of God will have some surprises in their future. To some, being right is more important than being righteous.

**Matthew 7:21-23-** “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but the one who *is* doing the will of My Father, Who *is* in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy through Your name? And *did we not* cast out demons through Your name? And *did we not*

perform many works of power through Your name?’ And then I will confess to them, ‘I never knew you. Depart from Me, you who work lawlessness.’”

**Luke 6:46-** “And why do you call Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ *but you do not practice what I say?*”

Many will be shocked to know their beliefs and efforts were in vain, the road to Heaven did not exist and no matter how “religious” they believed they were, grandma won’t be waiting at the gates.

I believe that God has chosen and called us out for His purpose. I am confident that if we do our part, God will always do His.

“Being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.”-**Philippians 1:6**.

We believe in the promises of God and the rewards that lie ahead to those that *keep and do His commandments*.

**Revelation 1:6-** “And has made us kings and priests to God and His Father; to Him *be* the glory and the sovereignty into the ages of eternity. Amen.”

**Revelation 5:10-** “And did make us unto our God kings and priests; **and we shall reign on the earth.**” (This is another one that amazes me how they miss “on the earth.”)

**Revelation 20:6-** “Blessed and holy is the one who has part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power. But they shall be priests of God and of Christ and shall reign with Him a thousand years.”

**Revelation 22:14-** “Blessed *are* those who keep His commandments, that they may have the right to *eat of* the tree of life, and may enter by the gates into the city.”

Plain belief dismisses us from obedience to God’s Word, just like believing the Old Testament and the Sabbath is for the Jews, if you’re good you go to Heaven when you die, the law was nailed to the Cross, to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord, and the thief on the cross went to Heaven with Jesus that very day. These are some other talking points you need to have a ready answer for.

These beliefs are an easy sell to those who choose an effortless way out, but all can be disproved from scripture.

**1 Timothy 4:1-2-** “Now the Spirit tells *us* explicitly that in *the* latter times some shall apostatize from the faith, *and* shall follow deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons; Speaking lies in hypocrisy, their consciences having been cauterized *with a hot iron;*”

To paraphrase Luke 23:34, Jesus said “Father forgive them for they know not what they do.” Looking beyond His forgiveness of those who crucified Him and forgiving the sins of all of mankind, how sad is it that “believers” willfully know and refuse to accept His truth when they receive it? Jesus Christ will still forgive them, but it may take a thousand years...

**2 Timothy 4:1-4-** “I charge you, therefore, in the sight of God, even the Lord Jesus Christ, Who is ready to judge *the* living and *the* dead at His appearing and His kingdom: Preach the Word! Be urgent in season and out of season; convict, rebuke, encourage, with all patience and doctrine. For there shall come a time when they will not tolerate sound doctrine; but according to their own lusts they shall accumulate to themselves a *great number of* teachers, having ears itching *to*

*hear what satisfies their cravings; And they shall turn away their own ears from the truth; and they shall be turned aside unto myths.”*

Each one of us **will answer** to God for what we “believe.” We’ve accepted the Word of God to be true. Our **belief** is a **conviction**. We are know that the Bible **is** the inspired Word of God given to man by His Holy Spirit through His prophets and His Son. It is inclusive of His plan of salvation for mankind and His instructions to and for us to follow. We fully trust, have faith and confidence in Him and our Savior Jesus Christ, that from Genesis to Revelation, the Alpha and the Omega is without question, Who He says He is. We believe it. Amen.