



Blackfoot Church of Christ

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"I Believe in God"

By Jefferson David Tant

Often, when conversing with people I have just met, such as one who serves my table in a restaurant, in the course of the conversation I will ask "Do you believe in God?" Nearly 100% of the time the response will be in the affirmative. Now, my question is, "What does it mean to believe in God?" There may be a marked difference in "I believe in God," and "I believe God." I then may ask "Where do you go to church?" And the reply may be, "Oh, I don't go to church. I have my own faith." Here is where the difference begins to appear. They believe that God exists, but evidently, they don't believe what he says through the inspired writer in Hebrews 10:25, which says, "Do not forsake the assembling of yourselves together, as the habit of some is." And similarly, the apostle Paul, in writing about the weekly observance of the Lord's Supper, quoted Christ in these words:

"This is My body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of Me.' In the same way He took the cup also, after supper, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in My blood; do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me'" (1 Corinthians 11:24-25).

Clear evidence shows that the early church, guided by the inspired apostles, partook of the Supper every first day of the week. But today, many denominations, claiming they believe in the Lord, do not believe what he taught. Some groups take the Supper once a month, once every three months, once a year, or some do not observe it at all. Why? Evidently, they do not believe the teaching of Christ, though they claim to believe in Him. Do you see the inconsistency? This calls to mind the words of Christ in Matthew 7:21-23:

"Not everyone who says to Me, "Lord, Lord," will enter the kingdom of heaven; but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven. Many will say to Me on that day, "Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name

perform many miracles?" And then I will declare to them, "I never knew you; depart from me, you who practice lawlessness."

What was the problem? They believed in the Lord, but they did not believe him, inasmuch as they wanted to do what seemed good to them, rather than do what the Lord had authorized. They were practicing "lawlessness," that which was without authority.

Consider Colossians 3:17: "And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father."

What is the message in this passage? What we do in word (our teaching) or deed (our actions) must be "in the name of the Lord Jesus" (by his authority). And where do we go to find what God has authorized? Isaiah dealt with a wayward people who were looking for answers in the wrong places. His response? "To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because they have no dawn" (Isaiah 8:20). What is "the law and testimony?" It's the Bible, God's revelation to us!

Consider what Paul wrote about this matter.

"Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God, which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words" (1 Corinthians 2:12-13).

This is in keeping with the promise Christ made to the apostles:

"But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come" (John 16:13).

Consider the implications of what Christ told his disciples after his resurrection.

"And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, 'All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.'" (Matthew 28:18)

In the end, what does it matter if we choose just to believe in Christ as opposed to believing him? We will let Christ explain this in His own words.

"He who rejects Me, and does not receive My sayings, has one who judges him; the word I spoke is what will judge him at the last day." (John 12:48)

What will judge us? God's Word!

Jesus emphasized this in his conversation with Satan:

"It is written, 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God'" (Matthew 4:4).

Dear reader, it is not up to us to determine what part of the Bible is believable, or which is not to be believed. God has not given us that liberty. How can our finite minds determine which parts of God's revelation are true and which are false? We do not have that liberty, or that ability. It is either all true, or it is all false. And while it is not the purpose of this writing to prove the inspiration and infallibility of the Bible, there is abundant and absolute evidence that the Bible is true!

Let me illustrate a perfect example of "belief" vs. "believe in." In a conversation with a friend some time ago, we were discussing a Bible teaching, and I mentioned a Bible verse that was contrary to his views on a certain matter. As soon as I mentioned the passage, he said, "I don't believe that." What was it he didn't believe? It wasn't what I said, but what the Bible said. Does he believe in God? Yes, as he is a faithful member of a denomination. But he didn't believe what God said. The words I quoted were not literally spoken by God, but were written by the apostle Paul, one of God's spokesmen to whom the mind of God was revealed.

Paul further emphasizes this in his letter to the church at Thessalonica.

"For this reason we also constantly thank God that when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but for what it really is, the word of God, which also performs its work in you who believe" (1 Thessalonians 2:13).

This is a problem I see in many in the denominational world, as they choose which parts of the Bible they like, and are willing to follow, and which parts they don't like, and thus refuse to follow. I'm afraid there will be a rude awakening at the Judgment Day.

"You shall not add to the word which I am commanding you, nor take away from it, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you" (Deuteronomy 4:2)."

"I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues which are written in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his part from the tree of life and from the holy city, which are written in this book" (Revelation 22:18-19).

On that final Judgment Day, when you stand before the Judge of all the earth, and you are asked to defend yourself, are you willing to risk eternity by saying, "I'm sorry, Lord. I didn't believe what you said through your inspired apostles and prophets"?

Prayer Requests & Announcements

- Juanita, Brenda's aunt is recovering from a head injury from a fall.
- Shirley Torres, Seattle WA (Torres' have visited our congregation) is fighting cancer. Chemo treatments have not been successful. They have decided to stop the Chemo and pursue other treatments to help enhance her quality of life.
- Kass' Grandmother has been diagnosed with Lung Cancer.
- Keep April in your prayers as she deals with health issues
- The Christians in the Philippines.
- Bible class tomorrow night 7:00pm at Chad and Kass' on evangelism

For prayer requests, call or text

Chad @ (208) 221-2587 or Ross @ (208) 680-6590

Assignments

<u>Today</u> Bible Study – Ross Ward Song Leader – Tom Mitchell Lord's Table – David Porter Sermon – Ross Ward	<u>Wednesday</u> Bible Study – Ross Ward Song Leader – David Porter Invitation – Ross Ward
<u>Next Sunday</u> Bible Study – Ross Ward Song Leader – David Porter Lord's Table – Tom Mitchell Sermon – Ross Ward	<u>Next Wednesday</u> Bible Study – Ross Ward Song Leader – Tom Mitchell Invitation – Ross Ward

Blackfoot Church of Christ
370 North Shilling Ave.
Blackfoot, Idaho 83221

Meeting Times:

Sunday Morning Classes 10:00AM
Sunday Morning Worship 11:00AM
Wednesday Evening 7:30PM



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