

" WHAT IS A BELIEVER ?

TWO YOUNG ADULTS WERE IN DEEP DISCUSSION ON THIS MATTER, THEY HAD JUST LEFT A SERVICE WHERE THE MINISTER HAD TOUCHED ON THE IMPORTANCE OF ONE BECOMING A BELIEVER. HOWEVER, AS HAPPENS SO VERY OFTEN, THE SUBJECT WAS SIMPLY TOUCHED ON AND NOT DEALT WITH IN DETAIL. I SUPPOSE THIS IS ONE OF THE MOST DISTRESSING THINGS THAT COULD HAPPEN TO ONE WHO KNEW THAT SOMETHING WAS MISSING FROM THEIR LIFE, BUT DID NOT KNOW WHAT IT WAS. SO IN THE TIME ALLOTTED WE WANT TO DEAL SPECIFICALLY WITH THE MATTER OF BEING A BELIEVER, OR BETTER STILL, BEING SAVED AND SURE OF IT.

JOHN 3:36 READS AS FOLLOWS: " HE THAT BELIEVETH ON THE SON HATH EVERLASTING LIFE; AND HE THAT BELIEVETH NOT THE SON SHALL NOT SEE LIFE; BUT THE WRATH OF GOD ABIDETH ON HIM." WHAT THEN IS THE DETERMINING FACTOR IN SALVATION ? EXACTLY WHAT DOES A PERSON HAVE TO DO TO BE SAVED ? THE BIBLE IS VERY SPECIFIC ON THIS VERY GRAVE MATTER. IN ACTS 16:30 & 31, THE PHILIPPIAN JAILOR ASKED PAUL AND SILAS, " SIR, WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED ? AND THEY SAID, BELIEVE ON THE LORD JESUS CHRIST, AND THOU SHALT BE SAVED." THE JAILOR WAS ASKING, " WHAT ONE THING IS ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY FOR MY SALVATION." AND THE BIBLE HAD THE ANSWER, " BELIEVE ON THE LORD JESUS CHRIST."

IF YOU WILL NOTE VERY CAREFULLY, JOHN 3:36 DIVIDES THE WORLD INTO TWO GROUPS: " HE THAT BELIEVETH, AND HE WHO BELIEVETH NOT." THOSE WHO BELIEVE HAVE EVERLASTING LIFE, ACCORDING TO THE PROMISES OF GOD. THE WORD EVERLASTING HAS IT'S ROOT IN THE HEBREW WORD THAT MEANS, " WITHOUT END ", OR " HAVING NO VANISHING POINT ". THIS IS THE PROMISE GOD MADE, AND IS THE PROMISE GOD KEEPS. NOW, WHAT ABOUT THE OTHER GROUP, WHAT IS THEIR PROMISE ? THEY ARE PROMISED ETERNAL LIFE ALSO, BUT IT WILL BE SO DIFFERENT FROM THE BELIEVER. IF YOU WILL NOTE THE WORDING IN JOHN 3:36, YOU WILL SEE IMMEDIATELY THAT THEIR FUTURE WILL BE VERY DIFFERENT. THE BIBLE SAYS: " THOSE WHO BELIEVE NOT, SHALL NOT SEE LIFE, BUT THE WRATH OF GOD ABIDES ON THEM." THE MEANING IS, " THEY SHALL NOT BE HAPPY IN THE LIFE TO COME, THEY SHALL NOT ENTER INTO HEAVEN."

II WHAT ABOUT THE STATEMENT, " BUT THE WRATH OF GOD ABIDETH ON HIM." THE WRATH OF GOD IS TURNED ON SIN, HE IS OPPOSED TO IT AND TO THE EFFECTS IT HAS ON INDIVIDUALS. ABIDETH ON HIM IMPLIES THAT THE WRATH OF GOD WILL CONTINUE TO REMAIN ON HIM. AS THERE IS NO ESCAPING THE WRATH OF GOD, BUT BY THE LORD JESUS CHRIST, SO THOSE WHO WILL NOT BELIEVE MUST GO INTO ETERNITY AS THEY ARE. THEY MUST BEAR ALONE AND WITHOUT PITY ALL THAT GOD CHOOSES TO INFLICT.

HOW SAD THAT SO MANY CHOOSE THIS WAY, RATHER THAT THE WAY THAT GOD HAS MADE AVAILABLE. THEY WILLINGLY CHOOSE TO FACE THE WRATH OF GOD ALONE. THEY WILL BE ALONE, FOR THE DECEIVER WILL BE NO WHERE AROUND WHEN THAT TERRIBLE DAY COMES. READING FROM JOHN 3:18, ONE WOULD FIND THESE VERY SIMILAR WORDS, " HE THAT BELIEVETH ON HIM IS NOT CONDEMNED ( NOT UNDER SENTENCE ) BUT HE WHO BELIEVETH NOT, IS CONDEMNED ALREADY," WHY ? " BECAUSE HE HATH NOT BELIEVED IN THE NAME OF THE ONLY BEGOTTEN SON OF GOD." HERE AGAIN WE FIND JESUS REFERRING TO TWO GROUPS OF PEOPLE. ONE GROUP SAVED, ONE GROUP LOST. ONE GROUP WITH THE SENTENCE LIFTED, AND THOSE WHO STILL REMAIN GUILTY.

THERE IS NO WAY THAT ALL THE SCRIPTURES CAN BE MENTIONED THAT PERTAIN TO BELIEVING. BUT IF ONE WOULD TAKE THE TIME, THEY WOULD FIND AT LEAST 153 VERSES OF SCRIPTURE IN THE BIBLE THAT MAKES BELIEVING THE DETERMINING FACTOR IN SALVATION. NOW BEFORE ONE GETS TOO FAR OUT ON THIS MATTER OF BELIEVING ALONE, THEY MUST CONSIDER THAT FAITH ENTERS THE PICTURE, IN FACT, FAITH MAKES IT POSSIBLE FOR ONE TO BELIEVE. WHAT IS FAITH ? IT IS AN ATTITUDE OF THE SOUL THROUGH WHICH JESUS SAVES.

SOMEONE HAS SAID, " FAITH IS NOT SIMPLY LOOKING AT JESUS, BUT LOOKING UNTO JESUS." FAITH IS DEPENDING ON JESUS, RELYING ON JESUS, PUTTING THE MATTER OF SALVATION IN HIS HANDS AND TRUSTING HIM TO GET YOU TO HEAVEN. ALMOST EVERYONE BELIEVES THERE WAS A MAN CALLED JESUS, BUT JUST BELIEVING THERE WAS A MAN CALLED JESUS WILL NOT SAVE A PERSON. JAMES 2:19 SAYS: " THE DEVILS ALSO BELIEVE AND TREMBLE " EVEN THE DEMONS ADMIT THE EXISTANCE OF JESUS. IN ACTS 19:15, THE EVIL SPIRIT IN THE MAN SAID, " JESUS I KNOW, PAUL I KNOW, BUT WHO ARE YE." HAVING SAID THAT, WE SAY AGAIN, FAITH IS NOT LOOKING AT JESUS, IT'S LOOKING UNTO JESUS.

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IN ROMANS 6:23, JESUS SAYS: "YOU OWE ME A DEBT. " THE WAGES OF SIN IS DEATH." AND JESUS SAYS IF WE PAY WHAT WE OWE, WE MUST DIE AND GO TO HELL AND STAY THERE FOREVER. BUT HE ADDS, DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT. YOU JUST LOOK TO ME. " BUT THE GIFT OF GOD IS ETERNAL LIFE THROUGH JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD." ISAIAH 53:6 SAYS:" THE LORD LAID ON HIM THE INIQUITY OF US ALL." TWO THOUSAND YEARS AGO GOD TOOK EVERY SIN YOU HAVE OR EVER WILL COMMIT, AND GOD LAID THOSE SINS ON JESUS CHRIST. WHILE JESUS WAS BEARING YOUR SINS IN HIS BODY, GOD PUNISHED HIM IN YOUR PLACE TO PAY THE DEBT THAT YOU OWE AS A SINNER.

JESUS UTTERED SEVEN THINGS WHILE HE HUNG ON THE CROSS. THE SIXTH UTTERANCE WAS, " IT IS FINISHED." NOTHING CAN BE ADDED TO IT, NOTHING CAN BE TAKEN FROM IT. IT IS COMPLETE. HIS DEATH MADE FULL PAYMENT FOR YOUR SINS, AND NOW HE SAYS TO EACH OF US, " LOOK UNTO ME, BELIEVE THAT I DIED ON THE CROSS FOR YOU. BELIEVE THAT I DID PAY YOUR SIN DEBT. LOOK UNTO ME, AND ALL WILL BE WELL. FAITH IS NOT LOOKING AT JESUS, IT IS LOOKING UNTO JESUS.

NOW, WE HAVE DISCUSSED BELIEVING AND FAITH, AND HAVE SAID THEY GO HAND IN HAND, BUT THERE IS ANOTHER MATTER THAT NEEDS OUR CONSIDERATION. THIS IS THE MISAPPLICATION OF GODS WORD. THERE ARE SOME WHO BELIEVE YOU CAN BUY YOUR WAY INTO HEAVEN, OTHERS BELIEVE YOU CAN WORK YOUR WAY INTO HEAVEN. NEITHER COULD BE FARTHER FROM THE TRUTH. EPHESIANS 2: 8 & 9 READS AS FOLLOWS: " FOR BY GRACE ARE YE SAVED THROUGH FAITH, AND THAT NOT OF YOURSELVES: IT IS THE GIFT OF GOD: NOT OF WORKS, LEST ANY MAN SHOULD BOAST." IF IT WERE POSSIBLE TO BE SAVED ANY OTHER WAY THAN GODS WAY, JESUS WOULD NOT HAVE HAD TO COME AND DIE ON THE CROSS.

LETS CONSIDER THE TWO WORDS MENTIONED ABPVE IN LIGHT OF WHAT HAS ALREADY BEEN SAID. GRACE