

SEED & BREAD

FOR THE SOWER ISA. 55:10 FOR THE EATER
BRIEF BIBLICAL MESSAGES FROM

THE WORD OF TRUTH MINISTRY

Otis Q. Sellers, Bible Teacher

THE GLORY OF BELIEVING

Of all the words to be found in the Word of God there is none that is more important than the word *believe*. This one word represents all that a sinner must do, all that he can do, and all that he is expected to do in order to be saved. This is a truth that is easily demonstrated by the Word of God. In it we are told: **"He that believeth on Him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God"** (John 3:18). In the time period in which we live, and under the administration of God that establishes His present gracious method of dealing with us, there is no act that we can do in relationship to Him that is greater or more important than the act which is indicated by the word *believe*.

If we desire complete forgiveness, if we would lay hold of the blessing of redemption and justification, if we would possess the guarantee of a life in the eon to come and a place and portion in the kingdom of God, then the one thing we must do is believe. If we have not done this and if we are not continuing to do it, we may as well forget about ever being a member of God's redeemed family and enjoying the many blessings that come as the result of being so positioned.

In view of these facts it is a tragedy indeed that throughout Christendom, in all its multifarious branches, the word *believe* and the act of believing is misunderstood, misinterpreted, misused, and abused. Any little religious act or ritual is equated with believing, and no one seems to be making any serious attempt to expose, denounce, or correct all the errors that have arisen out of this.

One of the chief errors that has come out of the misuse and abuse of this word is exhibited in the practices of those who call themselves evangelistic and evangelical. With them, anything and everything is equated with believing. If one has bowed his head, closed his eyes, raised his hand, walked down the aisle, shook hands with the evangelist, gone into the inquiry room, been worked on and over by some personal worker, prayed what is called "the sinners prayer," signed a card, indicated the church of his choice, been baptized, united with some church, and confessed to four points of faith - any three, four, or five of these actions are considered as "belief" in Jesus Christ, and all of them together are held to constitute him a true believer, yes, even a "born-again believer" which is supposed to be something much better than the ordinary believer.

I repudiate this entire human, fleshly ritual in its totality, so far as having anything to do with one becoming a believer is concerned. It is all orchestrated to produce visible results, and it is quite successful in doing it. All may go through it who care to do so, but they deceive themselves if they think that any of it or all of it together qualifies one as a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ.

The above words are not spoken in any spirit of carping criticism. They are spoken in order to let all readers know that this writer is no part of those practices which are now being rightfully described as being "cheap and easy believism."

Certain facts in the Word of God when carefully considered will reveal at once the great importance of believing. There was a time in the earthly ministry of the Lord Jesus when a great multitude traveled a long distance in the hope that they would again be miraculously fed as they had been the day before. They were chided by the Lord for this, and He exhorted them saying that they should not put forth such great effort for that food that perished so soon after the eating, but labor for that food which would endure unto everlasting life which He, the Son of Man, would give to them (John 6:26, 27). This caused them to ask a question that was uppermost in their minds - a question which should always be uppermost in the minds of every one of us: **"Then said they unto Him, What shall we do that we might work the works of God"** (John 6:28).

In asking this question, since they spoke of "works," they may have had in mind that He would give them a new set of ten commandments, even as

Moses had given Israel 1500 years before. Or, they may have expected He would give them a revised and shortened set of the 600 commandments that the Pharisees and scribes had laid upon the people (Matt. 23:4,5). But nothing like this happened. In one of the plainest and most direct statements to be found in the Bible, the Lord Jesus answered and said unto them: "**This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him Whom God hath sent**" (John 6:29). I can never read this passage without giving thanks to God that this question was asked, and that our Lord gave such a direct and specific answer. They had asked about the "works" of God. He told them of the "work" of God, one work that they could do and lay claim to having done "the work of God." Those who have done this have climbed the Mount Everest of God's works. There is nothing greater, and there is nothing higher. Part of the glory of believing is to know and rest in the assurance of having done that of which Jesus Christ said: "This is the work of God."

However, let no one think from anything said so far that belief is a cheap and easy matter. As a believer, I know it is not. But let it be understood that one becomes a believer by believing the truth that is at hand, the truth that God has set before him, the truth that the Spirit of God has applied to his heart and mind. This could be something as simple as the divine pronouncement that, "This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him Whom God hath sent." In fact this is an excellent truth to start with, for it brings us face to face with the fact of what must be done if we would work the work of God. The reader might do well to start with this one truth, for let him be well assured that if he denies it, rejects it, or even neglects it, he will then stand in the sight of God as an unbeliever, one who has failed to respond to a direct statement from the mouth of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Of course to believe the truth declared by Jesus Christ in John 6:29 would be only a start, but one must start with something that is out of the mouth of God. From this beginning he can continue in God's Word, and if he does continue, then he is a disciple (learner) indeed (John 8: 31). Furthermore, he shall know the truth, and the truth will make him free (John 8:32). Remember, one cannot be a believer unless he believes something, and he will never be charged with unbelief until he has rejected something that God has declared.

Exactly what it is that one must believe in order to qualify as a believer is set forth in an important declaration found in the first chapter of John's Gospel. There the beloved Apostle states: "**He came unto His own, and**

His own received Him not. But as many as received Him, to them gave He authority to become the children of God, even to them that believe on His name" (John 1: 11-12).

We have reason to rejoice here that the truth is stated in two different ways, which the Spirit of God has done so as to preclude any misinterpretation. First, the promise is **"to as many as received Him."** To all such He gives the authority to say: **"God is my Father, I am His child, and, therefore, a member of His family,"** And since the right to make these claims is based entirely on "receiving Him," we need to ask how He is received, what one does to obtain Him so as to be able to truthfully say, "He is mine!" The Spirit of God anticipated these questions and provides the answer. "Receiving Him" is explained in an appositional statement as being **"Even to them that believe on His name."**

Thus by the authority of the Word of God we can say that there is no ceremony, ordinance, or ritual that has anything to do with receiving Him. Jesus Christ is received when we "believe on His name." Men sin against God when they try to make a religious rite or ceremony of this.

But what does it mean to "believe on His name"? some are sure to ask. Is it enough to simply say, "I believe in Jesus," as some teach in their "easy believism."? No, it is not enough to say some such words as these, words which are usually placed on the lips by some prompter.

Shakespeare asked, "What's in a name?" but the question we need to ask is, "What IS a name?" We all know that a name is the distinguishing term by which a person or thing is called, and by means of which it can be distinguished or identified. However, this complex word has a host of meanings, one of which is the reputed character, that is, a good or bad reputation. Thus the name of God or the name of the Lord Jesus Christ is His character as declared in the Word of God. This is succinctly stated in 1 John 5:10 as being **"the record God gave of His Son."** This record established Who He is and What He is, and it is what we must believe if we believe in His name.

Thus it is my conviction that anyone who ever faces a group of people to present things that pertain to God should if it is at all possible get something into his words that is a definite part of the record that God has given of His Son. If he does this, what he says may be taken by the Spirit of God and used to start someone out as a believer.

The angel of the Lord instructed Joseph before the birth of our Lord that he should "**call His NAME Jesus: for He shall save His people from their sins**" (Matt. 1:21). Very few know that "Jesus" is the English spelling of the Greek word "Iesous," and that "Iesous" is the Greek form of the Hebrew word "Yeshua," which comes to us in our Bibles as "Joshua." The word "Yeshua" means "Jehovah the Savior." Many male children in Israel were given this name so that all through life they would proclaim that "Jehovah saves." But the babe born in Bethlehem was not given it for this reason. He was to be called "Jehovah the Savior" because He would save His people from their sins. Thus, the distinguishing term by which He was called becomes a part of God's record as to Who He is and What He is. I believe on this name. The Jehovah of the Old Testament is the Lord Jesus Christ of the New Testament. And to this record God added the name "**EMMANUEL**," which being interpreted means "**God with us**" (Matt. 1: 23).

ISSUE NO. SB100