

BELIEVE!

BELIEVE! This was the word given to me on the day I gave my heart and soul to Jesus. I knew this was far, far removed from belief in fairy tales, Santa Claus, the Easter Bunny, the Tooth Fairy, Leprechauns and Little Men from Outer Space. Bible belief is the most earth shattering system in the universe. It can transport a person from Hell to Heaven, turn a sinner into a saint and move us into a dimension of life that exceeds even our fondest imaginations. Mountains can be moved. Miracles are performed. The agnostic attitude can be changed into worshipful gratitude. When we believe, prayer becomes a breathing reality not a mere mental aesthetic concept. Believing is not a cross-legged yogi play-game; it is communication with the True and Living God.

Belief is something the world longs for. Educators, philosophers, authors, play-writes and movie produces try to imitate, duplicate and finally placate its substitute in ancient gnostic explanations that neither explain nor transform the human condition. Never forget, the human condition can only be changed for good by the regenerating power of the Gospel. And God has designated the entry point: BELIEVE! "...Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved..." (Acts 16:31a).

I. THE FOUNDATION OF BELIEF MUST BE ANCHORED IN THE VALIDITY OF THE ONE DEMANDING IT.

Exodus 4:1-12

In Exodus 3 God has called Moses for the specific task of getting the children of Israel from Egypt to the Land of Promise. When we arrive in Exodus 4, we see Moses asking how will they believe me? The LORD then illustrated through the serpent and leprosy that if Moses can believe God, they will believe him. When Moses complained that he was not able to lead due to his personal handicaps, the LORD then scolded Moses by informing him that God made all of us in His image, and even some with apparent handicaps. Let's be honest, all of us, due to the fall, are handicapped in one way or the other. Here is the truth God was saying: He who calls us, equips us! It is not based on our ability, but rather God's sovereign choice and the ability He provides with the accompanying call.

Matthew 9:28

Hebrews 11:6

II. BELIEF CANNOT BE FOUNDED UPON OUR DEMANDS OF PERFORMANCE.

Matthew 27:42

Mark 15:32

Matthew 16:4

Recently I preached a message with this dominating thought: God is God and we are not. To ramify a little further on this point, that means we do not dare try to “boss Him around” or make demands upon Him to “prove Himself to us.” God owes us nothing. Let me try to put this in perspective. I cannot go before the Queen of England and say, “My wife and I will be staying here at Buckingham Palace for a two week vacation; please have someone show us to our room. And furthermore, if you cannot do this, it means you are not really the queen of England.” So many things need to be said about this absurd scenario. First of all, there must be the proper protocol of being granted audience with Her Majesty. Secondly, Buckingham Palace doesn’t belong to me. It is not the Hampton Inn and most definitely it is not Motel 6. Thirdly, she is queen and I am not. And fourthly, what she does or does not do for me does not determine her royalty, her authority or power.

III. BELIEF IS INEXTRICABLY UNITED WITH GOD’S WORD.

I Thessalonians 2:13

A. God has given us a complete cannon of Scripture.

II Chronicles 20:20

John 5:46, 47

Luke 24:25

Proverbs 30:5: “Every word of God is pure: he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him.” Luke 4:4: “And Jesus answered him, saying, It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.” The inspired Word of God constitute not only the words of our Lord given while He was on earth, but also every word from Genesis to Revelation.

B. The Word of God generates belief.

Romans 10:17

Luke 8:11,12

This is why the Devil does everything he can to separate us from the Word of God. He knows the power of the Word of God. He has suffered many a blow from the Sword of the Spirit (Ephesians 6:17). Great is the failure of many a minister who substitutes his opinions and philosophies for the Bible. When the sermon is substituted for a lecture, lives are not changed and even sadder, people are not saved.

John 20:30, 31

I John 5:13

IV. EFFECTIVE BELIEF MUST DEAL WITH DETERRENTS.

Matthew 19:20

A. Paralyzing Phobias

Mark 5:36

1. Afraid your belief is not strong enough (Lamentations 3:22, 23; II Timothy 1:7; II Timothy 2:13)
2. Afraid of rejection from social frame of reference (Proverbs 29:25; Proverbs 9:10; Proverbs 1:7; I Samuel 12:24).
3. Afraid God won't come through (John 11:15). God will often place us in circumstance beyond our control that He might show that He is in control.

B. Probing Possibilities

Mark 11:23,24

Mark 9:23,24

Luke 8:50

Job 39:12

C. Precise Prerequisites

Luke 8: 4-15, "Consider the parable of the soil. Some ground is soiled, shallow or strangled, but thank God some ground is sound. This is the required ground for belief to take root and grow" (Romans 10:9, 10).

CONCLUSION:

God's glory is revealed in belief (John 11:40).

Belief is like launching the ship called faith into the sea of God's will. And in this great adventure we shall see wonderful things! (Psalm 107:23, 24).

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Johnny Pope". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.