"The words of the Lord are pure words, like silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. You shall keep them, O Lord, you shall preserve them from this generation forever." (Psalm 12: 6 - 7)

"BE VERY CAREFUL WHAT AND WHO YOU BELIEVE!"

“O Corinthians! We have spoken openly to you. Our heart is wide open. You are not restricted by us, but you are restricted by your own affections.” (2 Corinthians 6:11-12)

“Then Jesus said to them: “Take heed that no one deceives you. For many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will deceive many.

Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect.” (Matthew 24:4-5, 11 & 24)

“Jesus said to him, I am the way – The Truth – And the Life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.” (John 14:6)

There are few things that have any greater impact on a person’s life than “what and who” they believe. Whatever man truly believes, will affect how he thinks, speaks and acts. His or her entire life is shaped by nothing more or less than what is truly believed. Today, I will attempt to share some insight on this most important subject, which has been gifted to me by the One from whom originates every good and perfect gift (James 1:17). As we focus on our subject of “belief”, I will concentrate on its spiritual ramifications. Please prayerfully consider what you are about to read. Where you find fruit, eat of it freely.

In the book Oak Hill Letters Volume One, the first Chapter is titled, “Why Do you Believe Whatever It Is That you Believe?” If you have a copy of the book, I highly recommend that you read chapter One, if you have not already done so. This letter, might be considered a postscript to that letter.

When it comes to life and death, what we believe spiritually, will determine our final out-come. Either we will live eternally with Jesus Christ or we will live eternally separated from Him. Either way we will live eternally. Forever and ever. Make no mistake about it, when physical death comes, what we believe in our heart, concerning God’s Word, will be the deciding factor between life in heaven or hell. All determined by what we believe.

The word believe, as used throughout God’s word, carries the following meaning in Hebrew, Strong’s # 539, Greek # 4100, and English, (Webster): “To be firmly persuaded, to consider trustworthy, to Be established
in the Lord”. “To rely upon and trust, producing submission and obedience”. “Confidence, Trust, accepting as true”.

Personal opinions, as they relate to spiritual matters, are the fruit of what we believe. These opinions or beliefs are in fact, either true or they are untrue. Just because I sincerely believe something to be true, does not make it true. This principle applies to each of us, without exception. Personally, in my spiritual walk, I have found more often than not, that something I sincerely believed to be true, was not true. If that were not bad enough, I made things worse, by passing on to others my untrue beliefs. True, I had only repeated what I had heard from a pulpit, Bible teacher or read in a book. But that is no excuse, not for me, nor anyone else. I thank my God for His correction and for accepting my repentance.

In case you may believe that it is of no great concern, what you believe, as long as you are correct in the basics such as believing in Christ, please consider the following: What we believe is what we “think”. What we think is what we “speak”. What we believe, think and speak, influences what we do. Finally, what we believe, think, speak and do, is who we are before God.

What we believe, think, say and do, is determined by who or what we choose to submit ourselves to. In other words, if I sit long enough under the teaching or preaching of a Southern Baptist Church, I will in time become an appendage or a part of that sect. This principle applies to all sects within the Christian movement. It also applies to submitting to the teaching of an individual. Once we choose to submit our “belief system” to any institution, or individual, regardless of how convincing or harmless they seem to be, we are soon taken captive by that individual (dead or alive) or institution and held in bondage.

“For by whom a person is overcome, by him also he is brought into bondage.” (2 Peter 19b)

Webster, defines the English word “bondage” as follows; “Slavery, Servitude”. Personally, I do not believe anyone, of a sound mind, would choose to be taken into spiritual bondage and be held there until death. So how do so many of us end up classified as “captives” by Christ, and at the same time be totally convinced that we are spiritually “free”? The answer – Deception! Christ Himself warned us over and over, that our greatest enemy in the latter days would be deception.

Webster, defines ‘deception’ as, “believing an untruth”. No one chooses to knowingly believe a lie. However, it becomes very easy, if not certain, to become ‘deceived’, when we ignore, set aside or reject God’s word in favor of any man, woman or institution. It also can be a spiritually fatal mistake to listen to “self”, in opposition to God’s word. I cannot imagine the horror, of learning after it is too late to do anything about it, that what I believed to be truth and spiritual light was indeed darkness.

Be warned, dear reader: “If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness!” (Matthew 6:22b)

Man’s fallen nature, causes a propensity in man to believe what he or she wants to believe. We naturally gravitate to the source of information that most appeals to our affections. This clearly limits our spiritual growth (2 Corinthians 6:11-12). It also disqualifies us from becoming one of Christ’s true disciples (John 8:31-32). Paul, writing on behalf of our Lord, clearly warned us of this danger in 2 Timothy 4:3-4. “The time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the Truth and be turned aside to fables.”
Father has clearly warned us over and over of the dangers of believing what appears to be true, as it relates to Him and His kingdom – that appears to be Light and righteousness, when in fact it is darkness, a lie and death for those who feed on it. “And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works.” (2 Corinthians 11:14-15)

So how do we know who to believe and who not to believe? When it comes down to life and death, heaven or hell, whose word do we trust? How can the professing believer be assured that they are not deceived or drifting toward deception? Finally, is God’s word all that critical to our final destination, as long as we believe in Christ?

Please bear with me a while longer as I attempt to answer these questions. I will begin by sharing a few personal observations concerning what we refer to as the church, God’s people, Christians or professing believers in Christ. I will then offer scriptural references that should provide the answers we need to the questions before us.

As I reflect back on my own experience within the Christian community, I am extremely thankful, for all that I have received from that community. I made a public profession of faith and was baptized at eleven years of age. Today, I am seventy-three years old. Over the past sixty-two years I have been active in the Baptist, Presbyterian, Independent Christian, Charismatic Full Gospel and Home Fellowship Assemblies. In addition, I have attended services in the Assembly of God, Church of God, Catholic, Methodist, Missionary Alliance, Disciples of Christ Christian, Nazarene, Episcopal and an untold number of independent charismatic fellowships. While I make no claims to be an expert on the Christian community, I have at least gained a measure of knowledge from personal experience, all of which has brought me to the following conclusion:

As a whole, the Christian community, including active and inactive members are Biblically deficient and do not believe that the Bible is God’s word and literally true from Genesis thru Revelation. In addition, there is little fear of God and virtually no reverential respect for His holiness. We are a “house divided”, without love for each other, and much less love for God. When we discuss spiritual matters, which is less and less, we speak from “personal opinions” rather than “what saith the Scripture”. For the most part, we are a spiritually powerless people who have mastered various forms of religious expression. We are walking contrary to God, openly mocking His word, all the while “believing” that we are saved, sanctified and walking before the One true God in righteousness. The following scripture comes immediately to mind:

“My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you from being priest for Me; Because you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children.” (Hosea 4:6)

“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord’ shall enter the Kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father, in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’” (Matthew 7:21-23)

“Many are called, but few are chosen.” (Matthew 22:14)
Sadly, all but a few of us sincerely believe that we are right in what we believe and do, as it relates to our practice of Christianity. Regardless of what saith the Holy scripture, most of us will walk out our days “our way”, not His. We hear or read a warning such as this one over and over, and except for the few, we go right back to drink from the same polluted or spiritually empty cup that has gotten us where we are now.

“But it has happened to them according to the true proverb: A dog returns to his own vomit, and a sow, having washed, to her wallowing in the mire.” (2 Peter 2:22)

After all of these years in the Christian community and nearly thirty years of having submitted myself to an intense study of Father’s word, under the tutorship of the Holy Spirit, my conclusion is, undeniable. We (professing believers) are who and what we are, and in our present condition, as a result of who and what we have believed. It is quite obvious, except to the intellectually dishonest or to totally deceived, that our problems are of our own making. To slow the rapidly increasing rate of destruction within our ranks and reverse our spiritual decline, we must do the following:

1. Acknowledge our guilt as charged by the Word God; and do so before God and man. 
   (Leviticus 26:40-42, Daniel 9:4-19, James 5:16)

2. Repent for having failed to heed Father’s Word, while at the same time choosing to believe man. Plead for mercy and forgiveness. 
   (Job 42:5-6, Matthew 3:1-2, Acts 2:38, Revelation 3:19)

3. Finally, we must, individually, turn back to the ancient way of following our God, by relying on His word alone, to lead, guide, and get us home safely. The first step toward the highway of Holiness (Isaiah 35:8) is to join with the Apostle Paul as he declares, “Indeed, let God be true but every man a liar.” (Romans 3:4a)

Let the reader understand, this is an individual effort. It begins with you – with me. This in not a corporate effort. You can not depend on someone else for your spiritual safety and well-being. As it is written, so it is.

“Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling;” (Philippians 2:12b)

So how do we know who to believe and who not to believe? As a spiritual child, I find the answer to be simple and easy; as it should be for all who are converted and have become as a child (Matthew 18:3). It’s a matter of choice. I choose to believe my Father alone. Christ told me that He was “the Truth” (John 14:6) and I choose to believe Him. When it comes to eternal life and death, I trust no man or woman, regardless of their rank or position within the community of believers. Regardless of their good works, miracles performed, sermons preached or books written. And I especially do not trust “self”! Indeed, I find God to be True and all other men to be liars as it is written (Romans 3:4).

Now the question of how can we be assured that we are not deceived, or drifting toward deception? My answer seems to be a paradox. John 8:31-32 reads as follows: “If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” Abiding in God’s Word is our only safe place, where we are protected from deception. As well as where we are corrected. If we are abiding in the pastors word, the prophets word or any other man’s word including your writers word, rest assured – you are already deceived. Take heed dear reader. The most deceived man or woman within our ranks, is the one most certain that they are not deceived. You might want to take a moment
to read Isaiah 66:2, Job 42:5-6, Matthew 26:33-35 and Matthew 26:69-75 Full and eternal assurance that we are completely free from deception will only come when we hear Him say as He lays His hand on us “Do not be afraid” (Revelation 1:9-18).

Finally, for those who believe that God’s word is not all that critical to our final destination, so long as we sincerely believe in Christ, I would simply say, you are in great danger. In great danger because you are clearly contradicting God’s word. You are, in the eyes of God, mocking Him (Galatians 6:7-8) and calling Him a liar (1 John 1:10 & 2:4-5). Christ Himself said: “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.” (Matthew 4:4)

If a man or woman has chosen to believe that one part of Holy writ is not relevant to their eternal salvation, how can they have faith in any part of It? Especially when God says that He is the author of all of It – every word? (2 Timothy 3:16-17, 2 Peter 1:19-21, Psalm 119:50, John 6:63, Hebrews 4:12). For those who choose to believe John 3:16, but choose not to believe Hosea 4:6, when God says He is author of both - I solemnly warn you! You have a life and death problem! Not with me, not with your preacher, not with your family, nor any other mortal. You have a problem with God. You have chosen to be at odds with Him. To openly oppose Him. You may have chosen to believe your denomination, your pastor, priest, prophet, teacher, etc, rather than to believe, as a child, the living Word of God. I beg you to think about what you have done and beg God to grant you the grace of repentance. The stakes could not be higher. I will now close with Father’s Word.

“See, I have set before you today life and good, death and evil, in that I command you today to love the Lord your God, to walk in His ways, and to keep His commandments, His statutes, and His judgments, that you may live and multiply; and the Lord your God will bless you in the land which you go to possess.” (Deuteronomy 30:15-16)

“Therefore to you who believe, He is precious; but to those who are disobedient, The stone which the builders rejected, has become the chief cornerstone and a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense. They stumble being disobedient to the Word, to which they also were appointed.” (1 Peter 2:7-8)

“And I heard another voice from heaven saying, ‘Come out of her my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues. For her sins have reached to heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities,” (Revelation 18:4)

Your Brother, ©All rights reserved

Thomas

"EVERY WORD OF GOD IS PURE; HE IS A SHIELD TO THOSE WHO PUT THEIR TRUST IN HIM. DO NOT ADD TO HIS WORDS, LEST HE REBUKE YOU, AND YOU BE FOUND A LIAR." (PROVERBS 30:5 - 6)