

BELIEVING BENODUUGH?

by Kim Josephson

Jesus said:

“Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.” Matt. 7:21-23

Can you imagine? You can prophesy, cast out devils, and do wonderful works all in the name of Jesus and **still go to hell**? I guess that means you can go to church, sing in the choir, speak in tongues, dance in the aisle, beat a tambourine, give in the offering and even take communion and **still go to hell**! I know it's hard to believe that a person could do all these things and go to hell but Jesus sure said it!

“But Brother Kim, I thought all you have to do is believe in Jesus to make heaven your eternal home?” That's true but that being said; we'd better make sure that our **believing** means the same thing that Jesus means when he says **believe**!

Frankly, this is a frightening passage of scripture for two reasons. First, it shows that people can be sincere and be sincerely wrong and second, that “missing the mark” on this point has eternal consequences!

This is not the only place where Jesus spoke of deceived believers. In Luke 13:24-28. Jesus said:

Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able. When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are: Then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets. But he shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence ye are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out.

In this passage again people cry out to Him “Lord, Lord - we ate with You, drank with You and even listened to You teach” but Jesus says “*Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity!*” Again these are frightening words because they demonstrate that there are many who **believe** they are saved but alas, they are **deceived believers**!

Can you imagine? How many casual church-goers, casual pray-ers, occasional Bible readers and such will ultimately hear the words they never dreamed would be addressed to them:

“Depart from me, all ye that work iniquity.” I guarantee that every last person in these passages of scripture thought that they were saved. They thought they had a relationship with God.

These passages deal with people who were at least “trying” to be in the kingdom. It doesn't even pertain to the careless “believers” who maybe said a prayer sometime, somewhere but who live their lives like they could care less! It doesn't even mention the thousands, who joined a church and perhaps were even baptized, but only show up at Easter, at weddings or at the occasional funeral. Can you imagine? If the ones Jesus spoke about were trying and yet were sadly deceived, **what will be the end of these careless hypocrites?**

I've been told most of my life that these casual believers or “carnal christians” don't have a thing to worry about. I've heard preachers say “Well, he made a decision for Jesus, and even though, since then, he's lived in rebellion to God and His Word his whole life, he might not have any rewards up in heaven, but at least we know he'll be there.” HOGWASH! **YOU'VE GOT TO BE JOKING!** Jesus said *“Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.”* The apostle Peter said in 1 Peter 4:18: *“And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?”*

No folks, the fact is **our believing** is a far cry from what Jesus meant when He said **believe**. Our believing has been minimized to creeds, and facts, and behaviors that say to folks around us that we are Christians. It has virtually become a simple ritual, that if we make our way down an aisle and repeat the sinner's prayer at the front of some church somewhere that

we will be accepted in the beloved (Jesus) forever and ever.

Unfortunately, it's not that easy. Jesus doesn't accept a belief that can be reduced to facts and creeds about Him. He doesn't accept mere words and promises. He demands acceptance of who He is in all His offices. **If He is to be your Savior, He must be your Lord!** The belief that Jesus accepts as saving faith, is not one that

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can be demonstrated by exterior shows of righteousness. Church-going, prayers, fasting, tending to the poor, all those things are as “filthy rags” to Him if our relationship is wrong. (Isa 64:6)

Jesus demands a faith that believes in, trusts in, relies upon and acts out a complete commitment to Him and Him alone. When you see your utter helplessness and you, by the grace of God, become willing to abandon your will, your way and your life to Him, then and only then will He commit himself to you.

In John 2:23-25 the Bible says: *“Now when he was in Jerusalem at the passover, in the feast day, many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did. But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men, And needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man”*

Notice it says in vs 23 that they believed in His name, then in vs 24 that Jesus did not commit (same word translated believe in vs 23) to them.

Why? Vs 25 says because He knew what was in their hearts. Apparently, the belief they had, lacked the purity, simplicity and abandonment that is necessary for the reality of the new birth. They believed, but they didn't believe enough for a real relationship to begin - not enough to be saved.

A great **many** people are like that today. They say they believe but they don't believe enough to be converted.

In fact, they'll fight you for the “right” to stay “just as they are” and still claim to be saved. No they won't take up their cross and follow Jesus. No they won't stop their rebellion against God. No they won't fear God. They won't stop their idolatry, covetousness or a host of other sins that cost the blood of Jesus. Yet they say they believe. But they don't believe enough - not enough to

be born again. Why, the demons have that kind of faith. The Bible says that they believe and tremble. (James 2:19)

I tell you, you can believe every word of the Bible, from cover to cover and still go to hell! The kind of believing that Jesus demands can never be reduced to facts and formulas.

I close with one last proof. In Mark 10:17 a rich young ruler came running to Jesus. He knelt down and asked Him, “What shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?” He didn't ask to be one of the apostles. He didn't ask for miracle-working power or prosperity or any special favor at all. He simply wanted to be saved! Jesus took him to the law. The rich young ruler said that he had kept it from his youth. **Still Jesus said that was not enough.** Notice vs 21: *“Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said” - “One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me.”*

The Bible says that when the rich man heard these words, he was sad and went away **grieved** for he had great possessions.

Did the rich young ruler believe? Yes, but he didn't believe enough. **He didn't believe enough to forsake all that he had, take up his cross and follow Jesus.**

Notice that when he walked away, Jesus didn't stop him. Jesus didn't make it easier and say, "That was just a test, I thought you wanted to be a super-Christian. I was giving you the rules for being a spirit-filled, deeper life, individual." **No, He didn't say that!**

Why didn't Jesus just ask him to say the sinner's prayer? Do you believe the rich young ruler would have said it? I do. If he'd come to one of our churches that's what he'd do and then we'd applaud while he went back to a counseling room to fill out some forms for our records. God Have

Mercy!

Folks, the simple truth is this: if Jesus could have led him to salvation with a simple prayer and yet let him walk away lost, then Jesus cheated that man. If the rich young ruler could have been saved some easier way than Jesus said, then Jesus was unfair. But you know and I know that Jesus didn't cheat him and He wasn't unfair. Jesus knew what was in his heart! And the one thing lacking was a belief in Jesus that would allow him to forsake all that he had to follow Him. The requirements for salvation are the same for every man, woman, boy or girl. **We've just been cheated of what it really means to believe.**

When one believes enough there is only one answer to the King of Kings. It is this: **"YES LORD!"** There is no "I trust you but..." There can be no qualified surrender to the Lord of Lords. There is no such thing as a half-surrender. To accept Jesus, is

to accept Him as Lord and Savior. You see, the rich young ruler knew He was a great teacher, he knew Jesus was a miracle worker. I believe he knew that Jesus was the Son of God, but knowing all this didn't, and couldn't save him. He had to know Jesus as Lord and that meant he would have to yield himself to Jesus completely.

Have you done that? Have you committed yourself to Jesus as your Lord, your Master, your King and your Boss? Have you yielded yourself to Jesus - All that you are, all that you have, all that you will have? O reader, don't wait another moment. Don't walk away from the King of Kings with this business undone. Yield yourself to Him in Jesus Name today!



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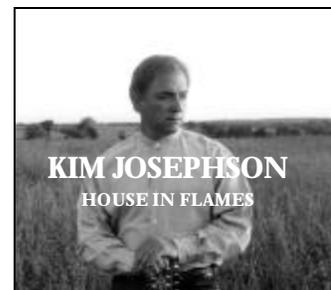
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The Red Letters

by Ben Nelson

If you have read our literature for any length of time, you probably have noticed Kim's emphasis on the "red letters" (Jesus' own words). We have received comments from readers noting that since the entire Bible is the Word of God, why do we put more emphasis on the words that Jesus spoke while He was here on earth.

Let me start by saying that Jesus is the Word of God made flesh. Every word of the Bible is most certainly His word. As Kim likes to say, "we believe the Bible, cover to cover, including the cover - Holy Bible!"

So why does Kim put such and emphasis on the red letters? This is actually a huge issue and it runs to the heart of problem with the Church at large today. The book of Jude warns of "certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ." (Jude vs 4) There is a lot of doctrine that is preached from pulpits across the nation today that denies the Lord Jesus Christ.

The problem is not with the Scriptures quoted, but rather, with the fact that the preachers have pulled the scriptures out of context. Many ministers today teach doctrines from the writings of Paul that are in stark contrast to the words of Jesus. Paul does not contradict Jesus, but rather amplifies and agrees, and restates what Jesus says. But if you are not willing to take the whole council of God, you can get carried away into dangerous doctrines, "doctrines of devils."

The standard must be Jesus. The words He spoke are critical to the interpretation of all other scripture. They are the clearest declaration of God's heart. There are a number of places in scripture that point us to this fact.

Hebrews 1: 1,2 *"God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;"*

John 6:63 *"It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life."*

1Timothy 6:3 *"If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness;"*

Do you remember the scene on what we call the mount of transfiguration when Jesus took Peter, James and John up on the mountain alone. Who should appear but Moses and Elijah. Peter was so excited, he said "Master, it is good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias." (Mark 9:5) Bring it forward 2000 years, and what Peter was saying is, "Lets have a Conference. Moses can do the morning sessions, Elijah after lunch, and Jesus, you can preach in the evening services."

But God the Father had something to say about the matter. In fact, this is one of the few times that the Father speaks to man in an audible voice. And this is what God had to say: *"This is my beloved Son: hear him."* (Mark 9:8)

So the issue is not whether the whole Bible is or is not the Word of God, it most certainly is. The issue is simply that the Bible itself points to the words and life of Jesus as the clearest picture we can get of God, and **His words are those by which we should measure all doctrine and teachings.**

Kim Josephson Ministries • PO Box 521 • Vinita • OK • 74301

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