

THE RIGHT KIND OF FAITH (*John, The Gospel of BELIEF*)

The Gospel of John is the ONE book in the Bible in which the author expressly says that his PURPOSE in writing is so that people might BELIEVE in Christ, and thus BELIEVING, have eternal LIFE (cf. **John. 20:30-31**). This is the essential purpose of the WHOLE BOOK. If something more is involved in what we must do to be saved, then John is a false apostle! The issue is not baptism, sacraments, or any good work that we do! Rather, to have eternal life, one must BELIEVE on the Lord Jesus Christ, BUT it must be the right kind of faith!

The nature of saving faith as seen in John

1. Believe – a verb. To believe means to accept something as TRUE. The word “believe” is always a **VERB** in John. It is an action word. This shows us that saving faith is not merely passive intellectual assent. Even the demons “believe” in that sense (cf. Ja. 2:19). In contrast, a saving faith actively applies and appropriates the TRUTH of the Lord Jesus Christ.

2. Believe in/on. In the Gospel of John, the emphasis is not merely believing ABOUT Jesus. Rather the emphasis is believing **IN or ON** Him (cf. Jn. 1:12, 3:16, 18, 36, 6:29, 35, 40, 47, 69, 7:38, 8:24, 58, 9:35, 38, 11:25-27, 12:46, 17:20, 20:30-31). These are prepositions of position. It means to position your faith properly in relation to Him for WHO He is revealed to be.

3. Believe in His name. The emphasis in John is to believe on the NAME of Jesus. His NAME is His PERSON. It is to believe in Him for WHO He is revealed to be (cf. Jn. 1:12, 3:18, 20:31).

WHO is Jesus according to John?

John begins by saying that Jesus is GOD (Jn. 1:1). John concludes with doubting Thomas’ enlightened confession of faith, “*My Lord and my God!*” (Jn. 20:28), which is followed up by “these are written that you may believe that **Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God**, and that believing you may have life in His **name**.” (Jn. 20:31).

Between the bookends of Jn. 1:1 and 20:31, the main body of the book presents seven major SIGNS that demonstrate that Jesus is God (cf. 2:1-11; 4:46-54; 5:1-18; 6:5-14; 6:16-21; 9:1-7; 11:1-45). There are also seven "I AM" statements incorporated into the main body of the book.

This title, "I AM", stresses the deity of Christ. Back in Exodus 3:14-15, God told Moses that His name forever is, "I AM THAT I AM."

When Jesus claimed to be "I AM", the Jews immediately recognized that as God's eternally sacred NAME. Therefore they considered Jesus' claim to be "I AM" as BLASPHEMY and went about to kill Him (cf. Jn. 8:58-59).

The truth of WHO Jesus is as eternal God intersects with the reality that He also became MAN (cf. Jn. 1:14). As the God-Man, He is qualified to be THE LAMB OF GOD WHO takes away the sin of the world (Jn. 1:29, 4:42, 6:53-56). Only the reality of WHO He is gives His life the kind of value that would be an acceptable sacrifice for the sin of mankind (cf. Isa. 53; Rev. 5). The reality of WHO He is gives meaning to the climactic reality of WHAT He did on the cross as our Savior (Jn. 19:30).

The Crux of the Issue in John's Gospel

To believe that Jesus is "**the Christ**" is to accept the reality that He is the prophesied divine/human Savior who was to come into the world (cf. Isa. 9:6-7, 53, etc.) To believe that Jesus is "**the Son of God**" is to recognize Him as GOD. It must be personal as expressed by Thomas "*My Lord and my God!*" These are the core realities involved in believing in His NAME. He is God (Jn. 1:1). He came to earth as a Man (Jn. 1:14). He came to be our Savior (Jn. 1:29). Saving faith PERSONALLY appropriates the truth of WHO He is. It is why John wrote the gospel of John! Have you believed IN HIS NAME?

In order to be Savior, Jesus had to be Lord. To all true believers, He is Savior and Lord!