

SABBATH THOUGHT 2023-06-10—WHO IS A BELIEVER?

May God bless you on His Sabbath day!

Have you ever heard someone say, “Believe **on** Jesus Christ and you will be saved”? I would guess that the use of “on” comes from the KJV that makes prolific use of this preposition. One such example is:

[KJV+] ACTS 16:31 And they said, **Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved**, and thy house.

It seems to be a common saying among Protestants but Scripture contains a number of statements very similar to this. In fact, those who are baptized and have received the Holy Spirit are actually called *Believers*:

ACTS 5:14 And **believers were added all the more to the Lord**, multitudes of both men and women.

But what or who is a Believer? Is it someone who believes *on* Christ? I have to admit I am not certain I understand what it means to believe *ON* Christ. How does someone believe “on” a *person*? In general, prepositions show a *relationship* with something or someone (a noun). Having faith or believing “on” someone is rather difficult to understand given the literal meaning of this particular preposition.

When the Greek preposition *eis* is translated *in* instead of *on*, then it all makes more sense. It is quite possible to believe *IN* someone. It might seem rather nitpicky, but it is an important distinction to understand what it means to be a Believer. If you are a Believer, what or whom makes you one? Perhaps the first thing that comes to mind is belief in baptism and you might think of this well-known verse¹:

ACTS 2:38 Then Peter said to them, “**Repent and be baptized each one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins**, and you yourselves shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

What does it mean to be baptized in the name of someone? Any act performed in the name of someone establishes it in accordance with, and authorized by, the one who has supremacy over the matter. Why are we baptized?

ROMANS 6:4-7 Therefore, we were buried with Him through the baptism into the death; so that, just as Christ was raised from *the* dead by the glory of the Father, in the same way, we also should walk in newness of life. 5 For if **we have been conjoined together in the likeness of His death**, so also shall we be *in the likeness* of *His* resurrection. 6 Knowing this, that **our old man was co-crucified with Him in order that the body of**

¹ Also Acts 4:10, 12; 8:12; 8:15-16; 10:48; 19:5; 22:16; Rom. 6:3-4.

sin might be destroyed, so that we might no longer be enslaved to sin; 7 Because the one who has died to sin has been justified from sin.

Being baptized in the name of Jesus Christ means the act of water immersion is a likeness of, and a conjoining with, His death, burial, and resurrection. Why do this? Because Jesus Christ died for the remission (cancellation) of the penalty of death for sin. Obviously baptism is required, along with receiving the Holy Spirit, for eternal life. However, the apostle Mark said something that you may have not noticed before:

MARK 16:16 The one **who believes and is baptized shall be saved**, but the one who does not believe shall be condemned.

Salvation requires belief AND baptism. It is not enough to be baptized; one must also BELIEVE! But what is there to believe? The answer is simple: baptism is required for salvation but those of the *ekklesia* must also believe IN Jesus Christ. Why must a Believer *believe* in Him?

ACTS 10:43 To Him all the prophets bear witness, *that* everyone who **believes in Him [Jesus Christ] receives remission of sins through His name.**

A Believer is someone who believes that remission of sins comes through baptism into the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Why? Because “He [*God the Father*] **made Him [Jesus Christ]** Who knew no sin **to be sin for us**” (2 Cor. 5:21). That singular sacrifice “takes away the sin of the world.” (John 1:29).

But believing in the remission of sins through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ is just the beginning. A Believer also²:

JOHN 20:31 But these have been written, so that you may **believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing, you may have life through His name.**

Salvation is to those who not only believe in the remission of sins through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ but also believe that He is the Son of God! It is clearly important because it is used many times in the NT. The book of Mark begins with, “The beginning of the gospel of **Jesus Christ, the Son of God**” (Mark 1:1), the demons referred to Him as the “Son of God”³ (instead of Jesus), and John the Baptist witnessed (testified) that He was the Son of God⁴. The apostle John even wrote an entire chapter that emphasizes Jesus was the Son of God⁵. Here is an excerpt:

1 JOHN 5:11-13 And this is the witness: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. 12 The one who has the Son has *eternal* life; the one who does not have the Son of God does not have *eternal* life. 13 These things I have written to you who **believe in the name of the Son of God** in order that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may *continue to* **believe in the name of the Son of God.**

² Also John 6:40, 69; 11:25-27; Acts 8:37; 1 John 5:5.

³ Luke 4:41; 8:28.

⁴ John 1:34.

⁵ 1 John 5.

Believing Jesus is the Son of God implies that God the Father SENT Him. This very fact is part of the WORK of God the Father:

JOHN 6:28-29 Therefore, they said to Him, “What shall we do, in order that we ourselves may do the works of God?” 29 Jesus answered and said to them, “**This is the work of God: that you believe in Him [Jesus Christ] Whom He has sent.**”

The fact that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and was sent by God is obvious to Believers. Those are core principles of Christian faith. But something emphasized over and over in the Bible is obviously important⁶. Why does the Bible mention it so often?

JOHN 12:44-45 Then Jesus called out and said, “The one who **believes in Me does not believe in Me, but in Him Who sent Me.** 45 And the one who sees Me sees Him Who sent Me.

Jesus said whomsoever believes in Him also believes in God the Father. This almost sounds like circular logic. So, there is belief in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, baptism, Jesus is the Son of God, and Jesus was sent by God the Father. There is nothing new with all of these connections because they are commonly held beliefs among the Christian faith. However, understanding these things is all according to a purpose:

2 TIMOTHY 1:9-10 Who has **saved us and called us** with a holy calling—not according to our works, but **according to His [God the Father’s] own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus** before the ages of time; 10 But has now been **revealed by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ,** Who has annulled death, and has brought to light *eternal* life and incorruptibility through the gospel

What is God the Father’s purpose that was revealed by Jesus Christ? Salvation through His calling. Again, this is obvious—to those living in modern times!! It is quite different from the understanding of ancient times. Read this Scripture very carefully:

ISAIAH 43:10-13 Ye *are* my witnesses, saith the LORD, and **my [God Most High’s] servant [Jesus Christ] whom I [God Most High] have chosen: that ye may know and believe me [God Most High], and understand that I [God Most High] am he: before me [God Most High] there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me [God Most High].** 11 **I, even I, am the LORD [God Most High]; and beside me [God Most High] there is no saviour.** 12 I have declared, and have saved, and I have shewed, when *there was* no strange *god* among you: therefore ye *are* my witnesses, saith the LORD, that I *am* God. 13 Yea, before the day *was* I *am* he; and *there is* none that can deliver out of my hand: I will work, and who shall [prevent] it?

There it is. The ancients knew that the God Most High would send His Servant to save Israel. They also knew He would be of the lineage of David. Mostly, however, they knew He would be the **Son of God**⁷:

⁶ John 5:24, 38-40; 11:41-42; 12:44-45; 16:27; 17:8, 21;

⁷ Also 2 Sam. 7:12-16; Ps. 89:3-4; Dan. 3:25 (KJV).

ISAIAH 9:6 For unto us **a Child is born, unto us a Son is given**: and the government shall be upon His shoulder: and **His name** shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, **The mighty God**, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

The ancients knew God Most High as their Savior and that He would send His Son the Servant. Today, Christian Believers emphasize Jesus Christ as the Savior but rarely acknowledge that God the Father is also the Savior⁸:

1 TIMOTHY 1:1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ according to *the* commandment of **God our Savior, and of the Lord Jesus Christ**, *Who is* our hope,

1 TIMOTHY 2:3-5 For this *is* good and acceptable before **God our Savior**, 4 Who desires all men to be saved and to come to *the* knowledge of *the* truth. 5 For **there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men—the man Christ Jesus**,

The reason believing Jesus was the Son of God and sent by God is so important is that **Jesus Christ fulfilled all the prophecies that God Most High would send His Servant Son to save Israel**:

LUKE 24:27 And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he [*Jesus Christ*] **expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself**.

The ancients were waiting for God to send His Son and that is why salvation requires believing Jesus was both the Son of God and sent by God! It was proof that He fulfilled ancient prophecy!

Salvation requires BOTH Saviors, a reflection of the Hebrew plural word for the Godhead—*Elohim*. One was the Sacrifice for the remission of sins and the other killed the Sacrifice⁹ and resurrected Him. The former is Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and the latter is God the Father. A Believer, therefore, is someone who believes that:

- Jesus Christ was the Passover sacrifice for the remission of sins,
- Baptism conjoins a person into the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ,
- Baptism is in the name of Jesus Christ,
- Jesus Christ is the Son of God,
- Jesus Christ was sent by God the Father,
- Jesus Christ was resurrected by God the Father,
- **God the Father and Jesus Christ are the Savior** of mankind!

May God's grace and peace be upon you!

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⁸ Also 1 Tim. 4:10; Titus 1:1-4; 3:4-5.

⁹ Isa. 53:12 and the [Sabbath Thought 2023-03-11 - Who Killed Christ](#).