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#### Service Times

##### Sunday

Bible Class: 9:30 A.M.  
Worship: 10:30 A.M. & 5 P.M.  
Sonshiners: 4:45pm

##### Wednesday

Bible Study: 7 P.M.

##### Preacher:

Russ Earl

##### AM Sermon:

The Everyday Spouse – part 3 of 3  
“The Everyday Marriage” (SS 8:6-7)

##### PM Sermon

The Reality of Repentance

##### Sunday AM Bible Class:

Mark - D. Jackson

##### Wednesday Bible Class:

Summer Series – Praschnik

##### The Gospel of Christ TV Program

on Saturday @ 7:30am on Channel 53  
**BibleWayMediaMedia.org**

The Oologah church of Christ only uses the **KJV, NKJV or ASV** translation of the Bible in classes & sermons.

## The Oologah Informer

### July 26<sup>th</sup>, 2020

#### Thoughts from the Preacher

##### **“Obey God First”**

Man must always obey God.

Man is instructed by God to obey the law of the land.

Man must obey the laws of man,  
unless the laws of man break God’s law (Acts 5:29).

Let us obey God above all else (1 Peter 2:13-17).

#### **“Believing” in John 3:16**

##### **Part 2**

By Eric Lyons

#### **“BELIEVING” AND THE PURPOSE OF THE GOSPEL OF JOHN**

We certainly do not want to diminish the necessity and eternal importance of a sinner learning about Jesus and moving from (a) not knowing anything about Him, to (b) coming to understand and accept the evidence for His divinity. A sinner simply cannot be saved by the perfectly just and holy God without “considering” the sinless, loving, sacrificial Savior<sup>15</sup>—“The Lamb of God Who takes away the sin of the world” (John 1:29). Over the last 2,000 years, billions of people have tragically dismissed the fact-based, soul-saving Gospel of Christ. Yet John affirms that **Jesus is** “God,” “the word,” “the lamb,” “the bread of life,” “the light of the world,” “the door,” “the good shepherd,” “the resurrection and the life,” “the way, the truth, and the life,” “the true vine,” and “the Christ, the Son of God.”<sup>16</sup>

John doesn’t merely suggest that Jesus is divine, he writes for the stated purpose of **proving** such. “And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but 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” (20:30-31). John arranged his account of the Good News around seven of Jesus’ miracles,<sup>17</sup> including His walking on water, healing of a man born blind, and raising Lazarus from the dead. Jesus performed miracles (and John recorded them) in order **to prove** that **Jesus** was (and is) the Son of God. In response to a group of Jews who inquired about whether or not He was the Christ, Jesus replied, I told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in My Father’s name, they bear witness of Me.... If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me; but if I do, though you do not believe Me, believe the works, that you may know and believe that the Father is in Me, and I in Him (John 10:25,37-38).

On another occasion Jesus defended His deity, saying, “[T]he works which the Father has given Me to finish—the very works that I do—bear witness of Me, that the Father has sent Me” (John 5:36). While on Earth, Jesus was “attested by God...with miracles and wonders and

signs which God performed through Him” (Acts 2:22, NASB). As would be expected from the One Who claimed to be God incarnate (John 1:1-3,14; 10:30), Scripture records (and John especially so) that Jesus performed miracles throughout His ministry in an effort to provide **sufficient proof** of His divine message and nature.

For any of the billions of atheists, agnostics, skeptics, Jews, and Muslims around the world to be saved from their sins, they must first **listen** to and **learn** of (John 6:45) the powerful defense (*apologia*) John penned—that “Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God” (20:31). “He who has ears to hear, let him **hear!**” (Matthew 13:9). But not just “hear,” let him “**believe.**” But what does it mean to “believe”?

## LET THE BIBLE EXPLAIN “BELIEVING”

What do **you** think it means “to believe”? In one very real sense, it doesn’t matter what you or I think; it only matters what **God** says and what **God** means. The actual, true explanation of the text is ultimately all that matters. If there is a right interpretation, then that particular, correct explanation should be the only interpretation we seek. And such a correct understanding is far from hopeless. Similar to most everyday conversations we have with family members, coworkers, classmates, and clerks, where we generally easily understand what the words in conversations mean, we **can** properly understand the words of Scripture (especially as we diligently and carefully interpret them). But again, we must allow Scripture to interpret itself (as much as possible) and not be deceived by our own preferences and preconceived ideas.

Like most words, the noun “faith”/“belief” (from the Greek *pistis*) and the verb “to believe” (from the Greek *pisteuo*) are used in Scripture in different senses. The words “believe” and “not believe” can certainly refer merely to acknowledging something as being true (evident) or untrue. In Romans 14:2, in a discussion about liberty and matters of opinion, Paul referred to one who “**believes** he may eat all things.” This particular “faith” or “belief” was an **understanding** of the fact that Christians are not bound by the dietary laws of the Old Testament. The apostle John detailed the Pharisees’ interrogation of the blind man whom Jesus healed and noted that “the Jews did **not believe** concerning him...until they called the parents” (John 9:18). These interrogators did not **think** or **consider** that he was telling the truth or that the thing was possible. Recall that when Saul went to Jerusalem after becoming a Christian and “tried to join the disciples” that “they were all afraid of him, and did **not believe** that he was a disciple” (Acts 9:26). These individuals did not **think** that such a prominent persecutor of Christians had actually become a Christian.

James 2:19 provides perhaps the clearest example of the need to carefully consider the terms “belief” (*pistis*) and “believe” (*pisteuo*), and not to assume that a real, saving “belief” in Jesus is merely an “understanding” or “acknowledgment” of Him. James wrote: “You **believe** that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons **believe**—and tremble!” Notice that James parallels the “belief” of demons with the “faith” of some “believers.” Individuals who acknowledge the fact that “there is one God...do well,” since such recognition is the most foundational pillar of Christianity.<sup>18</sup> However, the mere intellectual recognition of the existence of the one true God is an **insufficient** faith. (A “faith alone” type of “faith” will not save.) Mark records one unclean spirit that even confessed that Jesus was “the Holy One of God” (Mark 1:24). Indeed, he **acknowledged** the truth about Jesus. He had a **type** of “faith,” but certainly **not** a **saving** faith. Therefore, as James effectively argued, any person who assents to the existence of God and Jesus “believes” in one respect—but only in the sense that “**demons** believe.” Yet demons are not saved. Thus, it logically follows, neither are those who “merely believe” (i.e., “consider” or “think”) that Jesus is the Son of God.

Recall also that many of the rulers of the Jews “**believed**” in Jesus, “but because of the Pharisees **they did not confess Him**, lest they should be put out of the synagogue; for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God” (John 12:42-43). Did these men “believe”? In one sense, yes: they **considered** Jesus to be the Messiah. But did they have a real, God-approved, saving faith? Surely not, since Jesus had earlier asked, “**How can you believe**, who receive honor from one another, and do not seek the honor that comes from the only God?” (John 5:44). “Believers” who prefer the approval and praise of men are showboating charlatans, not faithful believers in Christ (Matthew 23:5; 6:1-4). A “belief” in Jesus that is not confessed is a shallow, shameful “faith,” not the commendable faith of the saved.

– Part 3 next week