

## **Things Most Surely Believed**

There seem to be two times in most everyone's year that we have a tendency to evaluate and take a fresh look at where we are, where we've been and where we're going. Those times are New Year's Day and birthdays. As I write these words on this 68<sup>th</sup> birthday, I am looking back, looking inward and looking onward. The Bible verse that captures my heart today is Luke 1:1: "Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us." I should like to discuss things that are most surely believed by your pastor.

### **1. I BELIEVE THAT JESUS CHRIST IS THE SON OF GOD AND GOD THE SON.**

I believe this because God tells us it is so. It is recorded in Mark 1:11 that the Father spoke from Heaven: "And there came a voice from heaven, saying, Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

Hebrews 1:3: "Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." In commenting on this verse, Charles John Ellicott put it like this: "Who being the effulgence of His glory and the exact image of His substance." The Nicene Creed declares that Christ is, "God of God, Light of Light, Very God of Very God."

Colossians 1:15,19, "Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature...For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell." In John 14:9b, Jesus said, "...he that hath seen me hath seen the Father...."

### **2. I BELIEVE THAT JESUS CHRIST DIED FOR OUR SINS, WAS BURIED AND LIVES FOREVERMORE.**

I Corinthians 15:3, 4: "For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures." John Stott said, "We live and die; Christ died and lived!"

I believe Christ died the vicarious death for us. This means He exchanged places with me. He took the equivalency of my (and yours) eternal punishment in those six hours on the cross. In John 18:11b Jesus said, "...The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" In the Garden of Gethsemane John heard Jesus cry out to the Father, "...O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt" (Matthew 26:39b). I believe when John penned the words in Revelation 14:10,11a, he was reflecting on the fact that not only is this the doom that the unregenerate unbeliever must face, but this was indeed what our Lord took upon Himself as the sins of the world were poured out on His person. "The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy

angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night....”

After having paid the full penalty for our sins, He rose again and declared in Revelation 1:18, “I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.” Our Lord made us this blessed promise in John 14:19: “...because I live, ye shall live also.”

### 3. I BELIEVE THAT HELL IS REAL AND AWAITS EVERY UNBELIEVER AT THE END OF LIFE AS WE KNOW IT.

The Bible is dogmatic on this issue. An unbelieving man died and Jesus said, “And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments...” (Luke 16:23). The Bible could not be more specific than it is in Revelation 21:8: “But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.”

It is not a pleasant thing to talk about, but it would be cruel to know this truth and not warn the unbelieving rejector of Christ what the future holds in store for him.

### 4. I BELIEVE THAT HEAVEN IS REAL AND IS THE ETERNAL HOME OF THE BELIEVER.

II Corinthians 5:1 tells us, “For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.” How wonderful it is to know that when we die, we don’t really die. Jesus said, “And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die...” (John 11:26a). We do not go out of existence, neither do we go into a state of suspended animation until we get our new bodies, for the Bible says, “We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord” (II Corinthians 5:8).

We would add one other important point: not only do we believe we immediately go into the presence of the Lord at death, we believe that the redeemed of the Lord will be given a resurrection body. This was assured by Christ’s own resurrection. “If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept” (I Corinthians 15:19,20). When Jesus returns, we who are alive will be caught up following the resurrection of those who preceded us in death. “In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality” (I Corinthians 15:52, 53).

### 5. I BELIEVE THE BIBLE IS THE WORD OF GOD INSPIRED AND PRESERVED.

This is the foundational truth that divides the old-fashioned Bible-believer from the compromising modernist. We believe the entire Bible is the Word of God. “Every word of God is pure: he is a shield unto them that put their trust in

him” (Proverbs 30:5). As proponents of the faith once delivered (Jude, verse 3), we believe we have no permission to pick and choose what should be in or out of the Bible. “The words of the LORD are pure words...” (Psalm 12:6a). We accept the Bible in its entirety as verbally inerrant and inspired. Jesus said, “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away” (Matthew 24:35).

Because of the dogmatic teaching of the Scriptures on its own veracity, we hold dear every teaching on who Jesus is, morality, what justice is, and what the afterlife will be. How we view the Bible affects everything we believe and everything we do. Therefore, this is why we make a fuss if the Bible is attacked.

#### 6. I BELIEVE THE CHURCH IS THE ONE INSTITUTION THAT WILL STAND AGAINST THE VERY ONSLAUGHT OF HELL ITSELF.

Jesus said in Matthew 16:18b, “...upon this Rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” Here’s Paul’s definition of this glorious institution in I Timothy 3:15b: “...the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.” How precious is the Church to God? The Bible tells us that “...all the flock...(is)...the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood” (Acts 20:28c).

#### 7. I BELIEVE IN THE INESTIMABLE VALUE OF THE CHRISTIAN HOME.

One cannot observe these verses and come to any other conclusion that:  
a) God formed the family. b) God loves the family.

Hebrews 13:4: “Marriage is honourable in all...” Genesis 2:24: “Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.” Proverbs 18:22: “Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favour of the LORD.” Psalm 127:3: “Lo, children are an heritage of the LORD: and the fruit of the womb is his reward. As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man; so are children of the youth.”

-Pastor Pope-