

# THE GOSPEL LESSON 5 – BELIEVE IN JESUS – PART 4

## **INTRODUCTION**

Ephesians 1:13: “In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise.”

The Gospel is the message of truth that is from God that announces His grace to the world and offers eternal life through the person, work, and promise of Jesus Christ. We have concluded what this gospel is.

The gospel is not a call to a better life (to being moral), a religious system, or a vague hope. It is the announcement of good news centered on a Person. We have looked at three essential aspects:

1. Who Jesus Is – the identity of Jesus Christ. To believe in Jesus one must believe in who He is. We saw that Jesus is the eternal Word who is God, the Creator, the Only Begotten God who explains the Father, the “I AM” – YHWH in the flesh, the Promised Messiah, the Son of God. Everything that follows rests upon the truth of His identity. This is the identity of the One who brings salvation.
2. What Jesus Has Done – The Scriptures present His work as the most remarkable act of love and grace creation will ever know. Jesus left His glory behind and became a man, the Word became flesh; He lived a sinless life. He died as a substitutionary atonement for our sins, His life for ours; He was resurrected after being buried for three days demonstrating power over sin and death. Death could not hold the sinless One. Because He lives, we know the transaction is complete. Without the resurrection, everything about Jesus Christ is pointless. This is the finished work that secures our redemption.
3. What Jesus Promises – The Gospel of John in particular, with the Epistles of Paul as support, explain the of promise of Jesus Christ, our God, in that eternal life (salvation, reconciliation) is a free gift and received immediately when one believes. The promise is secure and assured because of the character and faithfulness of Jesus Christ. No additional conditions are attached. Jesus does not say, “The believer who lives a good life,” or “the believer who does not sin,” or “the believer who is baptized.” The promise stands on the person and finished work of Jesus Christ. When a person believes in Jesus (who Jesus is, what He has done, and what He promises) that person receives the benefit immediately and irrevocably.

Next, we need to talk about the prescribed human response.

## **BELIEVE THE GOSPEL – THE REQUIRED RESPONSE**

The Gospel of John is unique. John tells us exactly why he wrote it:

“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.” (John 20:30-31)

## THE GOSPEL LESSON 5 – BELIEVE IN JESUS – PART 4

John's purpose is clear and singular: he recorded the signs, teachings, "I AM" statements, the cross, and the resurrection so that people would believe in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God, and through that belief receive eternal life.

John does not present believing as one option among many. He presents it as *the* God-given response to the Gospel. From the first chapter to the last, John repeatedly and consistently shows that the Biblical response to the message about Jesus is to believe in Him.

### **1. Receiving Jesus Is Defined as Believing in His Name**

"But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name." (John 1:12)

John explains what it means to receive Jesus. It is not vague feeling. It is to believe in His name, to believe in Jesus Christ. Those who believe become children of God.

### **2. Believing in the Lifted-Up Son Brings Eternal Life**

Jesus told Nicodemus that just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness so that whoever looked would live, so the Son of Man must be lifted up:

"And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life." (John 3:14-15)

John then gave the clearest statement of God's love and the condition for life:

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that the believer in Him would not perish but have everlasting life." (John 3:16)

The result of believing is explicit: escape from perishing and condemnation while possessing everlasting life. Jesus continued:

"He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him." (John 3:18, 36)

The dividing line between life and death, between escaping wrath and remaining under it, is believing in the Son.

### **3. Hearing and Believing Moves a Person from Death to Life**

"Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life." (John 5:24)

### **4. The "Work" God Requires Is to Believe in Jesus**

When the crowd asked what they must do to do the works of God, Jesus answered directly:

"This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent." (John 6:29)

## THE GOSPEL LESSON 5 – BELIEVE IN JESUS – PART 4

God does not require a list of religious deeds. The one thing He requires (the “work” He accepts) is to believe in Him whom He sent.

Jesus reinforced this repeatedly in the same chapter:

“And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day.” (John 6:40)

“Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me has everlasting life.” (John 6:47)

### **5. Believing in Jesus as the Resurrection and the Life Overcomes Death**

Standing at the tomb of Lazarus, Jesus said to Martha:

“I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?” (John 11:25-26)

Jesus claims to be the source of resurrection life itself. The one who believes in Him possesses this life now. Physical death cannot take it away. Jesus then asked the direct question every person must answer: “Do you believe this?”

### **The Clear, Consistent Biblical Response**

From John 1 through John 20, the message is unified and unmistakable:

- The Gospel of John was written so that you may believe.
- Those who believe in Him receive the right to become children of God.
- Those who believe in Him have everlasting life, have passed from death to life, are not condemned, and will be raised up at the last day.
- Those who do not believe remain under wrath, die in their sins, and do not see life.

John never adds another condition. He does not say “believe and be baptized,” “believe and repent,” “believe and confess publicly,” or “believe and commit your life.” He simply and repeatedly says: believe in Him.

This is the Biblical response to the Gospel according to the book written for that very purpose.

There are 98 uses of the verb *believe*, about 15 speak directly to having eternal life while 80+ uses of believe in John refer to the same overall context of signs, teaching, and responses.

Acts and the Epistles share this conclusion as well.

- Acts 10:43 – “...whoever believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins.”
- Acts 13:48 – “...as many as believed were ordained to eternal life.”
- Acts 16:31 – “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household.”
- Romans 3:22, 4:5, 11, 25 – believe to have the righteousness of God

## THE GOSPEL LESSON 5 – BELIEVE IN JESUS – PART 4

- 1 Corinthians 1:21 – “...it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe.”
- Galatians 2:16, 3:22 – believe for justification/righteousness
- Ephesians 1:13 – “...after you heard the word of truth... having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit...”
- 2 Thessalonians 1:10 – “...when He comes... to be glorified in His saints and to be admired among all those who believe...”
- Hebrews 4:3 – “For we who have believed do enter that rest...”
- 1 Peter 1:8 – “...whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible...”
- 1 John 5:1, 5, 10, 13 – “Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God... these things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life.”

### **DEFINITION OF “BELIEVE IN JESUS”**

To believe in Jesus is to be persuaded by the testimony and evidence that Jesus is who He claimed to be (the Christ, the Son of God), that He did what He said He would do (give His life as the Savior), and that His promise of eternal life is true — and therefore to receive that eternal life from Him on the basis of who He is and what He has done.

This is the consistent response John presents throughout his Gospel. The book was written “that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name” (John 20:31). The condition is singular and clear: believe in Him. The result is stated repeatedly as possessing everlasting life, passing from death to life, becoming children of God, and not perishing.

### **Root and Cognates of the Greek Verb**

The Greek verb translated “believe” is *pisteuō* (πιστεύω).

- Root idea: the verb comes from *peithō* (πείθω), which means “to persuade,” “to convince,” or “to win over.” The core sense is being persuaded or convinced of something on the basis of evidence or testimony.
- Cognates (related words):
  - *pistis* (πίστις) — the noun “faith” or “conviction” (John deliberately avoids this word). This is used as a reflection of a believer’s history.

In John’s usage, “*pisteuō*” carries the idea of being persuaded by the signs and words about Jesus and responding to that persuasion by believing in Him and thus receiving the life He offers. The common construction “believe in Him” (*pisteuō eis* + person) directs that persuaded response toward Jesus personally. It is not merely agreeing that certain

## THE GOSPEL LESSON 5 – BELIEVE IN JESUS – PART 4

statements are stated in Scripture or that they are understood; it is being convinced of the truth about Jesus and that He will grant eternal life.

### Distinction from Common Misconceptions

The text of John keeps the response simple and singular. Many teachings in Christendom, however, either reduce or expand “believe” beyond what the word means. Here are the key distinctions:

1. **Not mere verbal ascent to undefined facts.** Some reduce “believe” to agreeing with a pastor, repeating a phrase, signing a card. A person cannot believe something they do not know or understand.
2. **Not a multi-step process.** Many add an additional step or mechanic to the process. The main one is repent (typically understood as a turning from sin or being fully sorry for moral failures). The other main “next step” language is trust. This is very popular term in evangelicals.

In everyday English, the word “trust” often carries the idea of an emotional feeling, a personal decision, or a separate act of reliance that comes after someone has agreed that certain facts are true. When this English sense is brought into the condition of believe in Jesus, it can unintentionally make the simple message confusing. Listeners may begin to think that believing the truth about Jesus’ identity, His work, and His promise is only the first step, and that they must then do something additional called “trusting” in order to actually receive eternal life.

Yet Scripture never presents believing in Jesus as a two-part process. He consistently shows that to believe in Jesus is to be persuaded that He is the Christ, the Son of God, who gives eternal life, and to receive that life from Him on that basis. Introducing the word “trust” as something extra can blur this clarity and lead people to look for a second response beyond what the Bible actually states.

3. **Believe is not a work.** When the crowd asked what they must *do* to do the works of God, Jesus answered, “This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent” (John 6:29). *Work* is used “tongue in cheek.” Romans 4:4-5 makes this clear that the idea of works and believe are antithetical to one another (Romans 11:6).
4. **Not an emotional experience or feeling.** John grounds belief in the objective testimony — the signs, the words of Jesus, and the Scriptures. One does not feel it, nor is there any external verification.
5. **Believing is not a choice in the sense of a raw act of will that can be exercised independently of conviction.**

Belief requires being persuaded or convinced that something is true. You cannot simply decide to believe a claim if you are not convinced of its truth. For example, no matter how strongly you might want to, you cannot make yourself believe that 2 + 2 equals 5 if all the

## THE GOSPEL LESSON 5 – BELIEVE IN JESUS – PART 4

evidence and reasoning you have access to tells you it equals 4. Belief, by its nature, involves the mind being won over to accept something as true.

John presents believing in Jesus in exactly this way. People believe when they are persuaded by the evidence and testimony he provides, the signs Jesus performed, His words, and the Scriptures.

John does not describe anyone as simply choosing to believe without being convinced. Instead, he shows people responding to the light and testimony given to them.

### **The Volitional Element**

There *is* a volitional (will-related) aspect to belief, but it is not the direct choice to believe something you are unconvinced of. The choice lies in:

- Whether you will seriously consider the evidence and testimony.
- Whether you will be open to it or suppress and reject it.

In the Bible, the call is to believe on the basis of the testimony he has written. The persuasion comes through what has been revealed about Jesus. The response of believing is to accept that testimony as true and receive the life Jesus gives.

### **CONCLUSION**

The Gospel of John and the supporting verses in Acts and the Epistles make the human response unmistakably clear. From beginning to end, John presents believing in Jesus as the single, God-given response to the Gospel of your salvation. To believe is to be persuaded by the testimony that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God gave His life as the Savior and that His promise of eternal life is true. John never adds further conditions. He does not say believe and repent, believe and be baptized, believe and commit your life, or believe and trust. He simply and repeatedly says: believe in Him, and you have eternal life.

This is why John wrote his Gospel. The signs, the teachings, the “I AM” statements, the cross, and the resurrection are all recorded “that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name” (John 20:31). The question every person must answer is the one Jesus Himself asked Martha: “Do you believe this?”

# The Gospel: Understanding the Biblical Response

## The Three Pillars of the Gospel

### Who Jesus Is: His Identity

Jesus is the eternal Word, the Creator, the 'I AM,' and the Promised Messiah; all salvation rests on the truth of His identity.

### What Jesus Has Done: His Work

He lived a sinless life, died as a substitutionary atonement for sins, and was resurrected, proving the transaction for redemption is complete.

### What Jesus Promises: The Gift

Jesus offers eternal life as a free, irrevocable gift received immediately upon believing, with no additional conditions like baptism or moral performance.

## Defining 'Believe' (Pisteuō)



### The Greek Root: Persuasion

The verb pisteuō comes from peithō, meaning 'to be persuaded' or 'convinced' by testimony or evidence.

### A Singular Condition

In the Gospel of John, believing is the only requirement; conditions like 'believe and repent' or 'believe and be baptized' are never added.



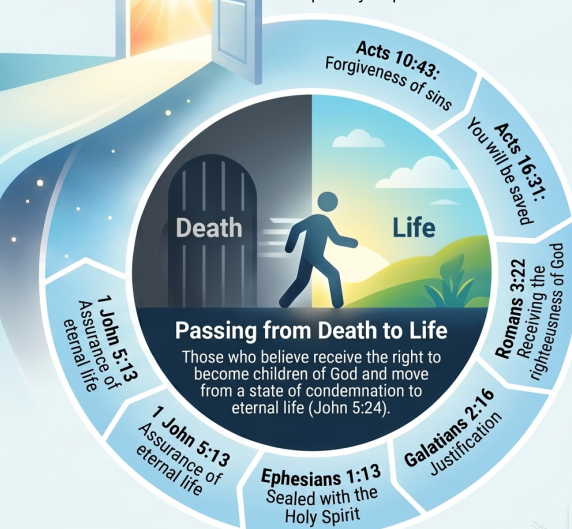
### The Role of the Will

While you cannot 'will' yourself to believe something you aren't convinced of, you choose whether to seriously consider the evidence or suppress it.

## The Results of Believing

### 98 Uses of 'Believe'

The Gospel of John uses the verb 'believe' 98 times to emphasize it as the primary response to Jesus.



## What Believing Is NOT



### Not a Multi-Step Process

Believing is not the 'first step' followed by a second act of 'trusting' or 'repenting'; it is the complete response in itself.



### Not a Religious Work

Romans 4:4-5 shows that believing and 'works' are antithetical; Jesus calls belief a 'work' only in a 'tongue-in-cheek' manner to the crowds.



### Not an Emotional Feeling

Belief is grounded in objective testimony—signs, words, and scripture—rather than internal feelings or external verification.