

Why Believe?

"Be ready always to give an answer"

"The Miracle of Planet Earth - 1"

by Desmond Ford

Life is not always nice. Jesus, the realist, foretold that unimaginably difficult times are coming. Jesus went on to promise that we can maintain peace in our lives when we believe in God and believe in him.

Why believe?

I want a faith that will keep me steady when every cell of my mind is shrieking, "Why?" I want a faith that keeps me strong when every part of my body is resonating with pain. I want a faith that keeps me faithful when temptation sucks at me like a hurricane on a mountaintop. I want a faith that's bigger than the towering questions that plague me as I swim in the tempestuous sea of existence and in the study of history, science, philosophy, and theology.

Harsh Edges of Life

Now, I have good friends who would prefer I always speak only about nice things. They tremble when Des touches some of the harsh edges of life. But the Bible includes such books as Job, Judges, the book of Ecclesiastes, and the book of Revelation.

And some of the people I speak to have heard of Rwanda and Bosnia and Somalia and Haiti. Those people remember the tragic Oklahoma City bombing that snuffed out the lives of 170 innocent people. They remember that at the same time, two to five thousand people were murdered in Rwanda.

Some of the people to whom I speak have heard of the Ebola virus, as well as of the AIDS plague. *The New Republic* had splashed on the cover of its May 1, 1995, issue, "Be very afraid! Japan's gas attack in subways: You ain't seen nothin' yet!"

Our world has always been somewhat like this, though now trouble seems multiplied.

Ralph Waldo Emerson had only been married a year when his beautiful wife died. He could not be reconciled to her death. He had her coffin opened long after to see that she had really died. Emerson wrote of all of us, "We walk on molten lava."

Jesus a Realist

Our Lord Jesus was no pessimist. He was, however, a perfect realist. He said that in the last days people's hearts would fail them for fear for looking after those things coming on the earth. He said there will be a time of trouble such as never was, a tribulation so intense that unless God shortened the days, no flesh would be saved. (See Luke 21:26; Matthew 24:21-22 KJV.)

Jesus was a realist. Christians must be, too. If we can't identify the disease, we'll never be timely with the remedy.

Solution to Life's Problems

Here is one of the most well-known passages of Scripture:

Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. (John 14:1)

The solution to the troubles, the temptations, the doubts, and the pressures of life is here in these words of Jesus.

The word "believe" is found approximately 100 times in this single book, the Gospel of John. Almost every one of the 21 chapters in John has the word "believe."

"Let not your hearts be troubled." It's true there is an Ebola virus. It's true there is AIDS. It's true there is death on the highway. It's true there is tragedy in the home. It's true there's alcoholism and crime and political corruption—and religious scandals, too. It's all true. But "Let not your hearts be troubled."

Trouble and Peace

Believe. Believe. Notice, the King James Version says, "Ye believe in God, believe also in me." However, the Greek original is probably better translated in the imperative: "Believe in God." That's the way modern translations often render it. "Believe in God, believe also in me" (RSV).

Let's look further on in the same chapter:

Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid. (John 14:27 NIV)

Our hearts will be troubled and they will be afraid if we let them. But if we look at what we have in Christ, our hearts need not be troubled even in this trouble-filled world.

Jesus says,

I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world. (John 16:33)

In the world, trouble. In Christ, peace. And so we turn to the topic of WHY BELIEVE?

