

A Very Big Difference! I Believe? or I Assume?

as·sume: suppose to be the case, without proof.

be·lieve: accept (something) as true; feel sure of the truth of.

faith: complete trust or confidence in someone or something.

There is sometimes obvious confusion on the part of people when they say they believe something while meaning, instead, they assume (with little thought or knowledge) some statement or idea is true. And as the definitions above indicate, there is also a significant difference between the generally-accepted definitions of “believe” and “faith” (a distinction not made in the *Bible* where they are used synonymously).

There are, for example, people who say they believe in evolution when, in fact, they have thought and know little about it. As a result, this is not a thoughtful “belief.” Similarly, there are people who claim to believe in God (and Jesus Christ His Son) who really mean they assume this is correct while they have thought and know little about God, Christ and what they say and expect as detailed in the *Bible* – His only recorded word to us. If we say we believe what the *Bible* says is true, when we really assume this without much, if any, first-hand knowledge and experience, this confusing assumption (called believing) is potentially a serious and eternally significant consequential “belief” because, this nominal conviction (really just a superficial assumption) does not meet the *Bible’s* threshold of saving faith:

If you confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. ^{Ro 10:9}

This misunderstanding even includes “many” people who have assumed Jesus is real, have done “works” in His name, but not according to, as Jesus Himself warns, the *Bible* criteria of salvation benchmarks:

“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?’ Then I will tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!’” ^{Mt 7:21-23}

For the following, the *Bible’s* single clearest and most comprehensive statement about how anyone is saved, states:

As for you [everyone is a “you” before they (if they) are saved], you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath. But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive [those who meet the criteria that follows] with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions – it is by grace you [those ultimately saved] have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. ^{Eph 2:1-10}

With the last 2 sentences being the evidence of salvation based on real faith, not mere assumptions:

1. We are only saved, “through faith [a true belief – a weak assumption is not adequate] meaning this faith is,
2. “Not from yourselves, it is the gift of God” – this is a special, miraculous, strong and growing, faith with the added and necessary sign that we have been,
3. Created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do [that we have done, and are doing, in and by His Grace].

Thus, it should be clear, a mere assumption or nominal “belief” in Jesus is not going to “cut it” as Jesus makes clear at the conclusion of His great Sermon on the Mount (summarizing what He and other *Bible* writers warn us about time and time again):

“Therefore **everyone** who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice [paralleling the book of *James* warnings: “faith without deeds is useless . . . faith without deeds is dead.” Jas 2:20 – 26 – if God has prepared specific good works in advance for everyone who is saved, how can anyone be saved if they are not doing these good works?] is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. But **everyone** who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice [may or may not assume, but nothing more, Jesus is someone special] is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash.”

When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at his teaching, because he taught as one who had authority, and not as their teachers of the law.” Mt 7:24-29

Isn’t it obvious that a mere “assumption” Jesus is the Son of God is far different than really believing He is? And to use a simple (not exact or perfect) example:

If someone offered us \$25,000 (or even \$10,000) to do something wouldn’t most of us read the instructions (to see if we were interested) if they were only a couple of hundred pages long (about the length of the *New Testament*)? Isn’t it curious then that likely the majority of people who claim to “believe in Jesus” have never read even the entire *New Testament* to “hear these words of mine and . . . put them into practice”? Instead they are satisfied to **assume** what they are being told by others is true when the consequences, if wrong, are eternal and beyond the value of the whole world!

For we are told and warned:

For you have been born again [for those who have been born again], not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God. For,

“All men are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field;
the grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of the Lord stands forever.” 1Pe 1:23-25

Have we been assuming what we have heard about Jesus (and what He says) is true or can we say we both know and believe in Jesus, in the manner outlined in the *Bible*, with a true and saving faith?

This is without question the ultimate and defining question of life.