

BELIEVE, PRESENT TENSE

Sunday Morning: January 21, 2001

Text: Acts 16:30-31 "And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be **saved** (●)? 31. And they said, **Believe** (●) on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be **saved**, and thy house."

The past few Sundays we have been teaching on various subjects that require us to using an express called the present tense of the verb believe. I want to help us to understand the difference in the present tense of the verb and the aorist tense of the verb.

A LITTLE GRAMMAR

There are really two fundamental ways of viewing action. . . . as a **point** which we may call *punctiliar* action; or it may be regarded as in progress, as a **line**, and this we may call *linear* action. The perfect tense is a combination of these two ideas: it looks in perspective at the action, and regards the results of the action as continuing to exist; that is, in progress at a given point. Hence the perfect tense has both elements, linear and punctiliar. The **aorist** may be represented by a dot (●), the **present** by a line (———), and the **perfect** by the **combination** of the **two** (●———). Page 179 of Dana and Mantey's Manual Grammar.

BELIEVE, AORIST, ●

Acts 16:30-31 "And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be **saved**? 31. And they said, **Believe** on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be **saved**, and thy house."

In Acts 16:30, 31 we have a Philippian jailor, a Roman, who has imprisoned Paul and Silas and Paul and Silas are down in the prison locked in stocks. They were rejoicing in the Lord even though they had been beaten. They had been beaten against Roman law, because Paul and Silas were Romans and Romans were not to be beaten with a trial. While they were singing God sent an earthquake and there is nothing like an earthquake that will put the fear of God in every person's heart. People in an earthquake, they have a tendency to pray. They do not wait till Sunday prayers, they pray right now. We find the Philippian Jailor coming down to Paul and Silas knowing the prison doors had opened. If the doors of a prison opened in that day and time, the prisoners would have escaped. The Jailor knew that if any prisoner escaped under his jurisdiction it would be his life for theirs. So he comes down the stairs ready to commit suicide with a sword, and Paul says hold own, don't do anything. The Jailor comes in and says, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." This is the only place in the Bible where saved is in the question and saved is in the answer. If you want to know how to be saved, there is only one way of salvation and that is receiving Jesus Christ as your personal saviour.

The word "believe" in this passage of scripture is very interesting word in that it's grammar makes a very pointed fact about how to be saved. The grammar in this verb "believe" is in the aorist tense and is a command because of the imperative mod. If you want to graft the action of the aorist tense of the verb, you would graft it as a dot. This is the way the Greek expresses the aorist tense. It is an event. It's not an ongoing process. When you believe, when you receive Jesus Christ as your personal saviour, an event happens in you life. You are born from above, and being born from above you become a child of God, that can never change. When you receive Jesus Christ as your personal saviour and become his child, that can not be changed. That can not be reversed. If that process could be reversed, Paul would not have used the aorist tense of the verb. He would have used the present tense of the verb. I have included a portion of Dana and Mantey's Manual Grammar. It says there are "two fundamental way of viewing as a

point, which we may call punctiliar action; or it may be regarded as in progress, as a line, and this we may call linear action." The perfect tense is a combination of the two ideas. It looks at the action as having begun and the result of the action continues to exist. The event happened in the past and the results of the event that happened in the past continues to the present time. "Hence the perfect tense has both elements, linear and punctiliar." The aorist is represented by a dot, the present is represented by a line, and the perfect by the combination of the dot and a line. It is significant that Paul did not use the present tense of the verb which would be a line. By using the present tense of the verb in this context, when the Philippian jailor asked how to be saved, it would mean that the Philippian jailor would have had to be faithful in believing from then on. As soon as he quit believing he would be lost. That belief is alive and well in many churches today. I ran into that on Saturday in a phone conversation. The man was telling me that you could lose your salvation and that is simply not the case. Salvation is an event. When you trust Jesus Christ you are born into the family. And you become his child. For me to try to conceive in my mind of reversing that action is just contrary to common sense. Anyone born into a family, regardless of what child does, it is still your child. It can't be reversed. I do not know the name of any of my unborn children. If I had a list of their names I could show you their pictures which would be an empty folder. Once in the family of God, that can not be changed. One point that needs to be made is that no one is adopted into the family of God. Every child of God has been born from above.

ALL CAN BELIEVE, AORIST, ●

1 Timothy 2:4 "Who will have **all men** to be **saved**, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth."

I have alluded to the present tense of the verb believe, and it is well used in the New Testament. When we think about believing on the Lord Jesus Christ to be saved, we need to appreciate the fact that all can be saved. There is not a person within the sound of my voice than not received Jesus Christ as personal saviour. Not only does God want you to be born into his family, he wants you to grow in the Word of God. Spirit grows from spiritual food. All men can be saved, but there is something that is unique in believing in the present tense. Not all can do that. In John 6:64 it says "but there are some of you that believe (in the present tense) not." I use the line to indicate the present tense in the notes. We are talking about linear action.

NOT ALL BELIEVE (—)

John 6:64 "But there are some of you that **believe (—) not**. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that **believed (—) not**, and who should betray him."

He makes reference to Judas, but he is also talking about other disciples who went away from him. They did not betray Jesus but they quit following him. We all have times when we follow the Lord faithfully and there are times when we do not follow the Lord.

THEY COULD NOT BELIEVE (—)

John 12:39-40 "Therefore **they could not believe (—)**, because that Esaias said again, **40. He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart**; that they should not see with *their* eyes, nor understand with *their* heart, and be converted, and I should heal them."

Therefore they could not believe, present tense, because that Isaiah said again, He hath blinded their eyes, . . ." Here we have a reference to the nation of Israel. Jesus came preaching repentance for the kingdom of the heavens is at hand. He was preaching to some who could hear this message and see this message, but there were those in the crowds who could not see or hear this message. The message that Jesus was preaching when he came to the nation of Israel was

not how to be saved, common salvation, but how to enter into the kingdom of the heavens. It is God's will that all could be saved. When you think about what Isaiah said, "He has blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts." This not a reference to the common salvation. God blinded their eyes and hardened the hearts to the message that pertains to the entrance into the coming kingdom of our Lord. There are no contradictions in the Bible. The fact that Jesus wants everyone to be saved, common salvation, He is not going to make it impossible for some by blinding their eyes and hardening their hearts.

COMMANDED TO BELIEVE, (—)

1 John 3:23 "And this is his [the] commandment [singular], That we should **believe** [present active] on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us **commandment** [singular in number]."

"And this is his commandment." This word 'commandment' has the definite article before it, therefore a particular commandment; and it is singular in number and is not a reference to the ten commandments, but a single commandment that we should believe present active, a line, on the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment also singular in number. Believing in the present tens and loving in the present tense go together.

THAT YE MIGHT BELIEVE (—)

John 20:31 "But these are written, that ye **might believe** (—) that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that **believing** (—) ye **might have** (preferred) life (in the kingdom) through his name."

The book of John is written to encourage us to faithful. What I need to do is define what believe in the present tense is. It has to do with faithfulness on the part of the child or God. An unfaithful child of God is not pleasing God. A faithful child of God is pleasing the Father. Let me assure you it does make a difference how you live. God hates sin and want us to live clean and pure and holy lives. The book of John was written that we might believe in the present tense that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name. The life that is referred to here is kingdom life. Believing in the present tense allows us to enter into the kingdom of heaven. I Make this distinction, in John 3:3 it says 'except a man be born from above he cannot see the kingdom of God. If we continue to believe in the present tense we will get to enter into the kingdom of God. There is a difference between seeing the kingdom, that is being a subject; and entering into the kingdom, being a sovereign. If you have a ticket to the Super Bowl, do you enter the game? No, you will be an observer. We would not last ten seconds on the field if we were lined up against the defense or the offense. We are not qualified, we are not prepared. The same thing in the kingdom. If you are unfaithful now, God is not going to give you the responsibility to rule over ten cities or five cities. That's what it means to enter into the kingdom of God. If you are saved, you get to see the kingdom as a subject rather than a sovereign.

BELIEVE AND KNOW

1 John 5:13 "These things have I written unto you that **believe** (—) on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have **eternal** (preferred millennial) life, and that ye may **believe** (—) on the name of the Son of God."

What is eternal life? We need to look at the word 'eternal' briefly. First of all, there is no Greek word for eternity. This word here is a noun, and it is used as an adjective. If this word was correctly translated it would be translated age, singular. How do you take a noun, age, and make an adjective out of it. That is probably why they translated it eternal because they did not have a good word to use in translating it. There is a possibility to translate the word 'age-lasting.'

An age that last for a period of time. This age is a reference to the millennial age. So rather than translating it as a lasting life, I made a reference to it as 'preferred millennial life'. To rule and reign is preferred. What is preferred in Washington DC. Politicians want to be the President of the United States. To be in power. That is the way things will be in the kingdom. Jesus will be King of kings and Lord of lords. Jesus will have lords and kings and if you are there you are going to want to be part of that. Associated with being a lord or a king is glory, riches, power, and honor. The word 'have' is the present active of *echō* which could be translated 'esteemeth.' If you continue to believe it means that you have a high regard for the preferred life in the millennium.

BELIEVE FOR A WHILE

Luke 8:13 "They on the rock *are they*, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which **for a while** [season, Acts 13.11] **believe** (—), and in time of temptation **fall away** (—)."

I finished my degree in 1963 with a minor in Bible. I took New Testament Greek for two years but really did not learn to use the Greek grammar practically until about 20 years later. I used Greek in word studies, but did not use the grammar in a practical way.

Luke 8:13 gives a real key to understanding 'believe' in the present tense. It takes being rooted in the word of the kingdom to believe in the present tense. What I found in this verse was that believing in the present tense could be stopped. The phrase 'which for a while believe' present tense. I can believe in the aorist tense and nothing can reverse that. I can pull the trigger on a gun, but I can not stop the bullet from flying out of the muzzle. In the present tense it is different. I can begin to be faithful in believing and then I can stop it. What stops it? It is those who do not have ears to hear and eyes to see offending me so that I will believe what they believe about the word of the kingdom. When you stop believing in the present tense you 'fall away' in the present tense. Falling away is a gradual fall and not a sudden drop to the bottom or completely away from the word of the kingdom of heavens. It is a process of drifting and drifting away from the Word of God and the Lord. Again, the present tense is something you can stop, but the aorist tense of the verb you can not stop. Once you believe you can't change it.

I want to help you see that believe in the present tense, particularly a participle, is equivalent to the noun 'faith.'

BELIEVE (—) = FAITH

Romans 3:22 "Even the **righteousness** of God *which is* by **faith** of Jesus Christ **unto all** and **upon all** them that **believe** (— active participle): for there is **no difference**:"

It is the ones believing that receiving the righteousness which is of faith. It is those who are living by faith that are pleasing God. The reason I want you to associate believe in the present tense with faith is this, Hebrews 11:6.

BELIEVE (—) PLEASURES GOD

Hebrews 11:6 "But without **faith** *it is* impossible to **please** *him*: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and *that* he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."

As long as you are believing in the present tense you are pleasing God. When you stop believing in the present tense, you have stopped pleasing God. We are not talking about salvation here at all. We are talking about a child of God and his walk and fellowship with the Lord, and blessing and benefits that will be for those who will live by faith. Look at **John 6:29** "Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye **believe** (—) on **him** [Son] whom **he** [Father] hath sent." Believing in the present tense is work. It takes effort. It takes

conscientious effort to continue to be faithful to God. It is not easy. It is worth it when you think of the blessings and rewards.

WHO BELIEVES (—)

John 10:26-28 "But ye **believe** [present tense] not, because ye are not of my **sheep**, as I said unto you. 27. My **sheep hear** my voice, and I **know** them, and they **follow** me: 28. And I give unto them **eternal life**; and they shall **never perish**, neither shall any *man* pluck them out of my hand."

The ones who are believing are sheep. Do you see the words 'hear,' 'follow,' and 'know', they are verbs and are in the present tense. People who are believing in the present tense are listening all the time. Jesus is knowing them all the time, and they are following him all the time. Sheep can stop being faithful. Only sheep can believe in the present tense. Sheep are the elect that have been chosen from before the foundation of the earth. In the flock of God there are sheep and goats and both are saved.

BENEFITS OF BELIEVE (—)

DELIVERANCE FROM SIN

Acts 10:43 "To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever **believeth** (— participle) in him shall receive **remission** [liberty, deliverance, Luke 4:18] of sins."

This verse tells us that the ones believing are the ones who will receive remission of sins. The word remission is also translated liberty and deliverance in Luke 4:18. Remission carries the thought of being released from the power and addiction of sin in ones life. Hebrews 9:22 ". . . without shedding of blood is no remission [deliverance, liberty]." The ones believing are the ones who appropriate the shed blood to be delivered from bondage of sin. Romans 6:20 "For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness." We have been encouraged to become the servants of righteousness. Romans 6:18 "Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness."

JUSTIFICATION

Acts 13:39 "And by him all that **believe** (—) are **justified** from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses."

The ones who are believing in the present tense will stand approved in the presence of the Lord. The law will not provide us with approval at the Judgment Seat of Christ. Justification is by faith and believing in the present tense is faith. If we are justified there will be no charges brought against us at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

NOT CONFOUNDED OR ASHAMED

Romans 9:33 "Behold, I lay in Sion a stumbling stone and rock of offence: and whosoever **believeth** (—) on him **shall not be ashamed**."

If we are believing in the present tense, we will not be ashamed. In 1 John 2:28 "And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming." We are told that we will be ashamed from before him at his presence. Part of believing in the present tense is abiding in him. This word 'ashamed' in Romans 9:33 can be translated 'confounded.'

Romans 10:11 "For the scripture saith, Whosoever **believeth** (—) on him shall not be **ashamed**."

The thought of being ashamed is emphasized because it is repeated in the context of each other.

JOY AND PEACE

Romans 15:13 "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in **believing** (—), that ye may **abound in hope**, through the power of the Holy Ghost."

Joy and peace come with believing in the present tense. You know you are pleasing God when you have peace and joy. This is not happiness. You can get that when you receive presents for your birthday or graduation. Happiness fades but joy is sustained with the peace of God. If you are believing you are going to abound in hope. What is the hope of a Christian, it is the glory of the coming Kingdom of our Lord. Colossians 1:27.

THE PROMISE

Galatians 3:22 "But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that **the promise** by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that **believe** (— particeple)."

The promise, singular in number with the definite article identifies a particular promise. This is not promises, plural but promise singular. Notice the phrase 'might be given'. This implies that the promise may not be given. It will not be given if one quits believing in the present tense or make departs from the faith.

The promise is defined in:

PREFERRED LIFE

1 John 2:25 "And this is **the promise** that he hath promised us, *even eternal* (agelasting, millennial) **life**."

The promise is preferred life in the millennial kingdom of our Lord. This is a life of ruling and reigning in the coming kingdom of the heavens.

POWER OF IS RESURRECTION

Ephesians 1:19-20 "And what *is* the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who **believe** (—), according to the working of his mighty power, *20*. Which he wrought in Christ, when he **raised** him from the **dead**, and set *him* at his own right hand in the heavenly *places*,"

An other benefit of believing in the present tense is power in prayer. This power is given by the high priest Jesus Christ who is seated in the heavenlies. This power is know as the power of the resurrection in Philippians 3.

OUT RESURRECTION

Philippians 3:10-11 "That I may know him, and **the power of his resurrection**, and the fellowship of his **sufferings**, being made conformable unto his death; *11*. If by any means I **might attain** unto the [out] **resurrection** of the dead."

TRIBULATION

Philippians 1:29 "For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to **believe** (—) on him, but also to **suffer** (—) for his sake;"

Another benefit is the privilege of suffering for His sake. Suffering for Christ sake will make us joint heir with Christ. Romans 8:17 "And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with *him*, that we may be also glorified together." 2 Timothy 2:12 "If we suffer [endure], we shall also reign with *him*: if we deny *him*, he also will deny us:"

THE WORD OF GOD IS EFFECTUAL

1 Thessalonians 2:13 ". . ., when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received *it* not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which **effectually worketh** (—) also in you that **believe** (—)."

This benefit is very important, it has to do with how the Word of God works in our lives. If you are believing in the present tense the Word of God produces the changes in your life without resistance. Your heart is not hard as those who can not believe in John 12, but soft as to the will of God.

THE END OF YOUR FAITH

1 Peter 1:8-9 "Whom having not seen, ye **love** (—); in whom, though now ye see *him* not, yet **believing** (—), ye rejoice with **joy unspeakable** and full of glory: **9**. Receiving **the end of your faith**, *even* the salvation of *your* souls."

The salvation of our souls, or lives, is one of the benefits of believing in the present tense. This verse also gives us additional light in that believing in the present tense really needs loving in the present tense. There will be joy unspeakable and glory for those who do not quit believing and loving.

AN OVERCOMER

1 John 5:5 "Who is he that **overcometh** (—) the world, but he that **believeth** (—) that Jesus is the Son of God?"

Those who believe in the present tense are overcomers. Those who believe in the present tense will be victorious.

NO CONDEMNATION

John 5:24 "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and **believeth** (—) on him that sent me, hath **everlasting** (preferred millennial) **life**, and shall **not come into condemnation** [judgment]; but is passed from death unto life."

If you are believing in the present sense you will not be judged or come into condemnation as found in Romans 8:33.

ELECT NOT CONDEMNED

Romans 8:33-34 "Who shall lay any thing to the **charge** of God's **elect**? *It is* God that **justifieth**. **34**. Who *is* he that **condemneth**? *It is* Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us."

The ones believing will stand justified. If we stand justified we will not be charged or guilty to the point of being condemned.

BELIEVING NOT CONDEMNED

John 3:18 "He that **believeth** (—) on him is not **condemned** (—): but he that **believeth** (—) not is condemned (●—) already, because he hath not **believed** (—) in the name of the only begotten Son of God."

WILL NOT LOSE THEIR INHERITANCE

John 3:15-16 "That whosoever **believeth** (—) in him should not perish, but have eternal life. **16**. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever **believeth** (—) in him should not **perish** (as Moses and most in the wilderness), but have **everlasting** (preferred) **life** (as in the land flowing with milk and honey)."