

Unacceptable Believers (Cont. from pg. 2) world is filled with churches that claim to belong to the Lord. Undoubtedly most of those who make up their membership are sincere people who believe in the Lord to some degree. Yet, the account in the John 2:23-25 shows us that what determines who truly belongs to the Lord is not a name on a building or a personal experience of faith but the Lord's examination of the human heart. In Acts 2:47 we learn that it is the Lord who adds people to His church upon true faith and obedience. Hebrews 5:8 identifies Jesus as "...**The Author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him.**" II John 9 shows

that the one who has "**both the Father and the Son**" is "**He who abides in the doctrine of Christ.**"

Let's make certain in our own lives that we not only believe in the name of Jesus, but that we are following Him in such a way that He will "commit Himself to" (or believe in) us as well.

By Kyle Pope

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4700 Andrews Avenue Amarillo, Texas 79106
(806) 352-2809

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10:20 a.m.
6:00 p.m.
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Unacceptable Believers

In the early days of which was produced by Jesus' ministry many these miracles was not a people were quickly faith which pleased God. drawn to believe in Him The next two verses state because of the miracles - "**But Jesus did not** which they witnessed. In **commit Himself to** the second chapter of the **them, because He knew** gospel of John we are **all men, and had no** told - "**Now when He need that anyone should** **was in Jerusalem at the testify of man, for He** **Passover, during the knew all that was in** **feast, many believed in man**" (2:24,25).

His name when they An interesting point is **saw the signs which He** made in these verses **did**" (2:23 NKJV). about faith. In the Although the Bible original Greek the word makes it clear that translated "believed" in miracles in the New verse 23 is the same as Testament were to the word translated confirm belief (John 4:48 "commit" in verse 24. It & Mark 16:20), this verse is the word *pistis* refers makes it evident (πίστις) meaning - that sometimes the faith "*Faith, trust* (Cont. on pg 2)

(Cont. from pg. 1) - 1. *That which causes trust and faith, faithfulness, reliability...* 2. *Trust, confidence,* 3. *That which is believed, body of faith or belief, doctrine*” (Gingrich Ab. p. 173). In other words, some of the people “believed” in Jesus, but He did not *believe* in them. To put it another way, even though they had *committed themselves* to Jesus, He did not “commit” Himself to them. This illustrates a number of points which can teach us about the kind of faith that is pleasing to God:

1. Enthusiasm and saving faith are different things. It must have been a marvelous thing to witness a miracle performed by the Lord. One can imagine the spirit of excitement that swept over the crowds leading scores of people to believe in this Man with such great power. Yet, we could say that it is one thing to “cheer in the stands” (so to speak) and another thing to “play in the game.” We don’t know exactly what the Lord saw in the hearts of these people that led Him to reject them. But whatever it was it was enough to make their undoubted enthusiasm insufficient. It is very easy to misjudge someone’s spirituality based on how excited or

enthusiastic we perceive them to be. Following the Lord in true faithfulness will not always demonstrate itself in external displays of enthusiasm.

2. It is possible for faith alone to be displeasing to the Lord. The concept taught in much of the religious world that salvation is by faith alone is clearly refuted in this account. These people “believed in His name” but they still were unacceptable in the Lord’s sight. Another example of this is found in James 2:19 which points out - “...Even the demons believe - and tremble!” Obviously, the faith of a demon is not acceptable saving faith. Why? Because it has not been perfected by obedience. James 2:22 asks regarding the faith of Abraham - “**Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect?**” Faith is only acceptable when it is “made perfect” (or complete) by works of obedience.

3. Just because one believes, doesn’t mean that they belong to the Lord. The (Cont. on pg. 4

“That Which Is Perfect”

First Corinthians chapter thirteen makes an important declaration related to the duration of miraculous spiritual gifts. Verse 10 declares - “**But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away**” (NKJV). Just prior to this verse Paul had declared through the Holy Spirit that tongues would “cease”, prophecies would “fail” and knowledge (which seems to refer to miraculous knowledge) would “vanish away” claiming all such gifts to be given simply “in part” (vss. 8,9). The time when this would happen is given - “**When that which is perfect has come.**” The question is - *what is “that which is perfect?”* There are at least four answers often given to this question:

1. The return of Christ. If this idea were correct it would be reasonable to expect the text to say - “when *He* who is perfect has come.” In the Greek the word translated “perfect” is a neuter adjective. This is why it is translated “that which,” rather than “He who.”

2. Our state in heaven. Many lean toward this view largely due to verse twelve - “...**Then I shall know just as I also am known.**” The problem with this is the declaration of verse 8 that knowledge will “vanish away.” In what sense will knowledge *vanish away* in heaven? If it is common knowledge surely it isn’t suggesting that we will lose our ability to reason. If it is miraculous knowledge, won’t heaven be the ultimate revelation of the mind of God?

3. A mature church. This idea would

harmonize well with Ephesians 4:11-16 which speaks of different gifts being given - “**till we all come to the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ**” (vs. 13). Yet, one would have to concede that this occurred in the first century. Jude speaks of the faith - “**...Which was once for all delivered to the saints**” (vs. 3) and Peter claims of God that - “**His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness...**” (II Peter 1:3). The context of I Corinthians 13 doesn’t seem to concern the incomplete (or immature) nature of the church, but rather the incomplete nature of revelation.

4. Complete revelation. The Greek word translated “perfect” is the word *telion* (τέλειον) meaning - “*brought to its end, finished; wanting nothing necessary to completeness; perfect...*” (Thayer, pg. 618). The context of Paul’s teaching concerns partial revelation. The early church had been given miraculous spiritual gifts to confirm their message (Mark 16:20) and to complete God’s revelation to man (John 16:13 & 14:26). This partial nature of God’s revelation was fully accomplished by the time late New Testament writers composed their works (Jude 3 & II Peter 1:3). This revelation is preserved for us in the form of the written words of Scripture. Thus “**that which is perfect**” has come. Which tells us “**that which is in part**” (i.e. miraculous spiritual gifts) are “done away.”

By Kyle Pope