

WHO IS A TRUE BELIEVER? Text: Matthew 16:21–27

‘not everyone who says unto me Lord, Lord...’

*“When people cease to believe in God, they don’t believe in nothing, they believe in anything.”
—GK Chesterton*

- 1. Humanism is the world-view lens in which most people use w/o even knowing it**
 - a. Humanism rejects anything spiritual or super-natural
 - b. Humanism is Devotion to Man, not to God—it is faith in man rather than faith in God
 - c. The worldview that “Man is the measure of all things.”
 - d. EX: Technology will save us... Science will save us... We are our own ‘Saviors’
 - 2. Humanism is the false religion of our age—but it is not new...**
 - a. The TOWER OF BABEL was an experiment in Humanism...
 - b. But even before the Tower of Babel, even before the Flood, all the way back to the Fall
 - c. A lie from the assassin in Eden — that **“you shall be like God”** (Genesis 3:4–5)
 - d. humanity rejecting God and placing itself upon His throne of sovereignty, and authority.
 - 3. Humanism is worldly wisdom that thinks in terms of the flesh instead of the spirit**

And it affects everyone—even believers (Matthew 16:13–17, 20)
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I. A HUMANIST BELIEVER

(1) THINKS THEY KNOW BETTER THAN GOD (v.21-22)

- 1. The disciples had grasped the fact that Jesus was the Messiah...
—but they hadn’t grasped what that meant.**
 - a) They were still thinking in worldly terms of a conquering King to overthrow Rome...
 - b) Israel would be the super-power of the world w/ the disciples in positions of honor.
 - c) They weren’t thinking of a suffering servant, who would die and rise again.
- 2. The time came for Jesus to explain what was going to happen in Jerusalem**
 - a) He would be rejected by the religious leaders—
 - b) He would suffer and even Die and then be raised on the 3rd day.
- 3. But Peter decides this isn’t right... NO, something has to be done...**
 - a) Jesus can’t talk like this... Jesus is obviously mistaken or confused...
 - b) Peter has to talk some sense into Jesus — as if Peter knows better than God!

(2) THINKS GOD NEEDS HELP BEING GOD (v.22b)

- 1. Peter took Jesus aside and began to rebuke Him!**
 - a) NIV: “Never, Lord!” he said. “This shall never happen to you!”
 - b) This Cannot Happen... This Must Not Happen to you.
- 2. Why? Because Peter Knows What is Best... even better than Jesus**
 - a) In other words, God needs help being God
 - b) God needs our help to change His divine plan from before time began
 - c) Because—if this continues like this—where does that leave me?
- 3. But Then came the shocking rebuke that instantly stopped Peter...**
 - a) “Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me ...

(3) DON'T REALIZE THEY ARE BEING USED BY THE ENEMY (v.23a)

1. I believe Peter was sincere... but he was sincerely wrong!

- a) He did not even realize that he was being used by Satan...
- b) Tempting Jesus with the same Temptation Satan presented in the Wilderness
 - (1) You can use your power for YOURSELF...
 - (2) You Can Show Everyone Who You Are and Exalt Your SELF
 - (3) You can have a Crown w/o the Cross...

“Satan is called the Prince of this world, because self-interest rules the world; he is called the accuser of the brethren, because he does not believe that even the sons of God have any higher motive. He is a sceptic; and his skepticism consists in determined, scornful unbelief in the reality of any chief end other than that of personal advantage. "Doth Job, or even Jesus, serve God for nothing?" – A.B. Bruce

2. How horrible would it be to discover your pride and ego was being used as a trap set by Satan

- a) Jesus said: Get behind my Satan, for you are an *offense* to me...
- b) Greek σκάνδαλον (skandalon), the trigger of a snare or trip wire for a trap.
An obstacle that causes someone to sin. (Dictionary Biblical Languages)
- c) (NLT) “Get away from me, Satan! You are a dangerous trap to me.”

3. Even Christians can let their selfish ego and pride be used by the Enemy

- a) Jesus used the same word when He said, “Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin (NIV: stumble), it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the sea. (Mt 18:6)

(4) OPPOSE GOD BY ELEVATING SELF ABOVE GOD (v.23b)

1. Not mindful of the things of God — only the things of men

- a) ESV: “you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man.”

2. This is the very definition of Humanism! – “Man is the measure of all things.”

- a) Seeing everything through human wisdom, worldly wisdom

3. This is how a sincere heart—combined with worldly thinking is a trap

- a) Peter didn't deliberately choose to reject God and embrace Satan...
- b) but he allowed his mind to fall back into SELF-CENTERED thinking—
instead of GOD CENTERED thinking — and Satan took advantage.
- c) And People make the same mistake Every Day

(5) CHOOSING HUMAN GAIN ABOVE GOD WILL COST YOUR SOUL (v.26)

1. The same temptation Satan offered Jesus in the wilderness...

- a) All these Kingdoms and their glory I will give to you—If you fall down & worship me

“How many have stood upon those Bethel heights... Age after age has poured forth its crowds of young hearts, to stand upon an exceeding high mountain, while all the kingdoms of this world, and the glory of them; are spread before them. The Tempter Whispering—Just one small act, Just One Switch of Loyalty to Serving Satan rather than God — All This Will Be Yours...

And in Self-Confidence; Eager to do the Very Best for Themselves... Prepared to Pay the Price for Success—Looked towards the plains of Sodom from afar. And, like Lot, they Tried to Make Stones into Bread; They cast themselves down from the mountain side, for angels to catch; they knelt before the tempter, Only to find his promise broken, the Vision of Power an Illusion—While the Tempter Laughs & Disappears, Leaving you Standing Alone in the Midst of a Desolate Wilderness.” (F.B. Meyer, adapted)

II. A TRUE BELIEVER

A. WILL DENY THEMSELF TO FOLLOW THE LORD (v.24)

1. **Jesus always used the failures of His disciples as a teachable moment**
 - a) We all fail and fall short of there glory of God — But we can learn from our failures
2. **Peter learned success through failure—because his failure humbled him**
 - a) And He Kept Going Back to the Lord for Forgiveness and Strength!
 - b) If we humble ourselves before God — then He will Lift us up!
3. **This is the inner-battle between the Flesh and the Spirit (Gal 5:17).**
 - Jesus never said: Be True to yourself — He said, ‘Deny Yourself’ (Mt 16:24)
 - Jesus never said Believe in Yourself — He said, ‘Believe in Me’ (Jn. 11:25)
 - Jesus never said: Follow your heart — He said ‘Follow me’ (Luke 9:59)

B. WILL GIVE UP THIER OLD SELF TO BECOME THIER NEW SELF (v.25)

1. **There was a time when we were consumed and controlled by worldly thinking**
 - a) Selfish Ambition, Selfish Gain, Selfish Hearts...
2. **But We Loose Our Old Life — to Gain Eternal Life...**
 - a) No Longer CONFORMED— But TRANSFORMED by Truth (**Romans 12:2**)
 - b) Christians have spiritually entered into the life of the world to come... but what a tragedy, then, if they conform to the perishing world they have left. (Leon Morris)
3. **Imagine a butterfly trying to go back into it's cocoon to return to a caterpillar!**
 - a) The Caterpillar had to die in the Transformation to become a butterfly!

C. REALIZES THE ETERNAL WORTH OF THIER SOUL (v.26)

1. **Your Not an Accident! —Your soul is worth more than all the world!**
 - a) Even if you Did Gain the whole world—it would not be enough to fill the God-shaped vacuum in your heart...
 - b) It is infinitely deep because it can only be filled by an infinite God!
2. **CS LEWIS: “If we find ourselves with a desire that nothing in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that we were made for a different world.”**

D. KNOWS THERE WILL BE A JUDGEMENT DAY (v.27)

1. **Do You See How Serious This is?**
 - a) God will judge the world—every single person—every single soul
 - b) And Not everyone who says Lord, Lord, will enter Heaven (**Matt 7:21–23**)
2. **Nothing Else On Earth Will Matter on that Day (**Revelation 20:12–15**)**
 - a) Your Job, Car, Bank Account, Status, Looks, Self-Esteem...
 - b) Or if You Think Your a “Good Person” or you just Blame Others as not good enough
3. **We’re not worthy to atone for our sin... But worthy is the Lamb (**Rev 1:5–8**)**

CONCLUSION:

1. **This is why we must be born again (**Jn 3:5**)** As the caterpillar had to die for the Butterfly to emerge—we must let go of our old life—to gain eternal life