

Is Belief in God Rational?

Written by K B Napier

Wednesday, 11 February 2015 15:18

Most Christians, if pushed, would admit that their belief in God is vague and tenuous. Their grip on belief is more like the frantic digging-in of nails on a cliff edge than a deep assurance that what they believe in actually exists. That is, in ordinary circumstances and on ordinary days, they can shine forth confidently as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. But, when put to the real test – when a loved one dies, say, of an awful disease, or when everything in life comes crashing down – their faith is shown to be very weak and hanging on by a thread.

What's the problem? The problem is that the person has never come to a realistic and concrete understanding of his own beliefs. For example, it is easy to believe in a car, because we can see it, sit in it, drive it, and even get knocked down by it. There it is, for all to see. But, God? Is He there for all to see? (Romans 1 says 'yes'!).

I am asking questions that most Christians find disturbing and fearful. They find it disturbing because their 'faith' is faith in something they have no real concept of. This is the trouble with most forms of Christian preaching: it is nebulous and never comes down to the ground. God is in Heaven, but He made us to be on this earth, at least initially. Therefore, whatever we have as 'belief' must have some kind of verification.

It can be pointed out that 'faith' is the trust we have in something unseen. But, in many instances, this has been taken to mean we can have no proofs whatever of God's existence. This is not so, and is not acceptable. If I had been asked to believe in a God whose existence cannot be verified, then I would not have bothered. Such a 'belief' is not a belief but a mere mythical hope! I want something far more than the word of a preacher.

And so did the early churches, which is why the apostles confirmed that what they had to say was based on real, concrete, actual facts. They had actually touched the Lord Jesus of Whom they spoke! They had witnessed his countless miracles. They heard His actual words. They actually had the Holy Spirit within, Who acted upon their own spirits dynamically and really. Their spiritual lives were as real as the car that can knock you down!

It is essential that every Christian understands and experiences this up-front and direct relationship with God, because without it their faith is not faith at all, but is a delusion.

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We must take a leaf out of the apostles' book. They taught only what they had themselves experienced. There was nothing airy-fairy about it. Jesus walked amongst them as a man and everything recorded in the New Testament actually happened. It has been said there are more historical evidences – thousands of percent more - for the existence of Jesus Christ than there are for the existence of Napoleon Bonaparte. Yet, people find it easier to accept Napoleon's existence, even if they read just one sheet in a history book. Why is this?

The answer is found in the scripture they prefer not to believe in; it comes down to their basic state of sin. Darkness hates the light, and men hate the truth. Napoleon does not expect them to repent and be saved. But, God does. That is why they will believe in Napoleon rather than in Jesus Christ. Strangely, they will accept Jesus as a mere man, but not as God-Man. Again, this is because our hearts are desperately wicked. God can be allowed to exist, so long as He does not make demands, or tell us what we are really like.

Even so, look at the actual evidences for our concrete and rational belief in God. Scripture tells us no man has seen God the Father. That is, in His spirit form. Nor do we see the Holy Spirit. But, we are told that when we saw Jesus, we saw God. When 'we' saw Him? Yes. How can that be? Well, if people who saw Napoleon say they saw him, then everyone accepts that to be true.

They saw Napoleon,

therefore we accept he was real, as though we had seen him ourselves. The same rule applies to Jesus Christ.

Jesus was a real man who lived a real life. Thousands saw Him and experienced everything about Him: His words, His miracles, His sinless life, and so on. Then they saw him crucified, buried and rising into the sky to be with His Father. These are historical facts! Paul confirmed how important it was that Jesus actually rose from the dead and was seen to do so. If Jesus had not done these things, then all our 'faith' would be meaningless! Which is why he emphasised the *actual* bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ and His *actual* bodily ascent into the sky witnessed by hundreds.

(The suggestion that they were all deluded by some kind of mass hysteria is as credible as witnesses of Napoleon being similarly deluded! It is also the argument used by pro-Nazi's who claim the death camps did not exist).

As far as I am concerned my belief is founded not on a mystical experience or a delusion, but on a real Jesus Christ Who actually lived and did everything recorded about Him. I believe it because He was an historical figure. I believe He was also God, because of what He said and did, in much the same way as I accept the reality of what Napoleon did. And, because of what Jesus said and did, I can also believe in what was said of Him in the Old Testament, too. Logic

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tells me that the Old Testament accounts are just as historical as the New. Some of it might indeed be figurative, but the poetic language in parts does not detract from the whole Testament being real and factual. If a poet writes a poem about a great war, it does not mean the war did not take place. It just means the account has been given a figurative expression.

God mingles the figurative and the literal effortlessly. There is no attempt to make everything seem literal, and no attempt to make every sentence humanly cohesive. The very fact that we cannot link this part with that part is another small proof that the whole Bible speaks of reality. Any lesser book would try to be seamless! But, no, God's word is punchy and full of reality. The record of the creation is written in such a way as to warrant instant belief. The language is literal, given without any attempt to persuade. That is a mark of something real, not of something that is myth. And yet, it is this material factuality that tends to increase my faith, which is spiritual.

It is only after we acknowledge the reality and factuality of all of scripture that we can dare to accept the reality and factuality of salvation and righteousness. If salvation appeared in a vacuum, then it could not be accepted as real. But, it is placed in the middle of history, amongst a myriad of historical accounts. There is no break in the historicity of the Bible's whole approach. I believe, then, in a very real and historical Jesus whose existence and purposes were well prophesied in the Old Testament. He said, lived, and did, what was prophesied. He actually arose in the sky and the Holy Spirit then took His place, as Christ promised. My faith is concrete and real, then, not just a faint hope that 'maybe' God exists!

That my own heart, mind and soul, *also* 'know' the reality of all this, is a bonus. How do I 'know'? I know because Jesus Christ came to this earth and was real. If He had not done and said what was recorded of Him in scripture – which is an historical book – then I would have no reason to believe in Him at all. Then, any belief I had *wo*
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be airy-fairy and mythical! My spiritual experiences are inner. There is no way I can 'prove' them to be real. On the other hand, I can prove that 'something' happens, that I claim are a *consequence*
of these experiences.

For example, the prayer for healing of a dying person that resulted in immediate life. The times God's voice has spoken to me in ways that were either delusional or real... but proven to be *real* by the results. Or, what about the way I was saved from death in a road accident, when my car and its occupants (including me) were suddenly on the other side of the mayhem but with no way to get through it physically?

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What of the way God speaks directly to us through the Holy Spirit, giving calm in times of crisis, love where there is hatred, and so on? Yes, they *could* all be delusions or self-induced states of mind. They *could* be, except, that is, in the light of history. Without that history, Christian faith is no better than any cult or false religion, for there would be no proof at all for what we believe in.

No other 'religion' can claim this actuality of facts, true miracles, and the 'otherness' of the founder. Only Christ can claim He was God, because He was prophesied to be so, and did what only God could do. He proved Himself, whereas all other founders of religions have not done so, despite claims to the contrary by deluded followers.

Our faith, then, is not mere trust in what we are told – it is founded solidly in history and in verified accounts. Belief is shorthand for 'I was there'. Archaeological discoveries continue to trickle through, article verifying this or that Biblical account. The evidences are overwhelming on all sides! Yet, evolution, which has *no proofs at all* for its reality is given total credence by a gullible people! Friends, it is time to get real about your faith. Don't hide from sceptics. Stand firm and laugh at their derision.

Also see article [A-145 Is It Rational to Believe in God?](#)

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