

The Difference Between “That” and “In”

INTRO: “Thank you” to our two lawyers, who are actually lawyers. I asked them to help out in sharing the proofs of the resurrection for us and I think they did a wonderful job!

TRAN: Now that you know the proofs of the resurrection, I want to talk to you about the difference between belief that, and belief in. Despite sounding very similar, the two could not be further apart. So to do this, I will start with some definitions, and then move to a very convincing proof for the resurrection I just discovered in studying for this message.

I. Belief THAT...

- A. Our two, fine, good looking lawyers just helped us understand belief that
 - 1. We can now say, with reasonable certainty that we believe THAT the resurrection took place
 - 2. We have the proofs that help us understand THAT it happened
 - 3. While you can never prove 100% by scientific methods that the resurrection occurred (which is the wrong test for knowing if it happened anyway) by the legal/historical method, there is no other way to explain the resurrection than that Jesus came back to life - that a miracle occurred
- B. So that means, we may have actually convinced some of you and you can walk out of here today with a solid belief THAT the resurrection occurred
 - 1. That is a good thing
 - 2. That is a right thing - you are not wrong in believing THAT it happened
 - 3. But that is a far cry from believing IN the resurrection
- C. And before I continue, allow me to say this
 - 1. Many times pastors craft their messages for Easter Sunday morning with visitors to the church in mind
 - a) We know that there are usually many people that come for this wonderful holiday that may not come at other times of the year
 - b) We know that some want to be here for Easter
 - (1) Some come for the sake of duty
 - (2) Others as a reminder of church when they were a kid
 - (3) Still others because grandma, mom, dad, or someone dragged them out of bed by their ears said, “Get dressed! You need some Jesus in your life”
 - c) I’ll be honest, yes, I crafted the message with many of you folks in mind
 - 2. That said, I cannot skip over the other population in the room - those that go to church regularly

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- a) Some of you may call this church your home
- b) Some of you sit in these pews every week
- c) Some of you may even be members of the church
- d) I will say this to you, this message may very well be for you too
 - (1) You may be fully convinced THAT the resurrection happened
 - (2) But the question still stands for you, do you believe IN the resurrection

II. Belief IN...

A. Belief IN is different because it takes the belief one step farther

- 1. It goes from understanding the resurrection and the things that prove that it did happen, to understanding why it is so significant
 - a) Understanding why it had to happen
 - b) AND trusting in (and when I use the word “trust” I mean full faith - a faith that changes your lifestyle and how you behave), so trusting in what Christ has done for you.
- 2. Belief IN is very different from belief THAT

B. Allow me to show you someone in the Bible that went from complete DISbelief to belief IN

- 1. Start by turning to Mark 3:20-21 (p. 1004)
 - a) Jesus family tried to take control of him because they thought He was nuts
 - b) Does not sound like believers
- 2. Now turn to John 7:2-5 (p. 1070)
 - a) So basically they are saying, “Hey Jesus! If you are this popular guy that everyone is supposed to follow, show yourself to the world. Quit hiding out with little tiny groups and let the world see you.”
 - b) They said it because they did not believe in Jesus
- 3. Before we go to our final passage, think about this for a minute: what would you think if you heard rumors of your brother, your sister performing miracles, yet you never saw them, and people all over are calling your sibling a savior?
 - a) If people said, “Tammy (that’s my sister) is the savior we have been waiting for!” the first thing I would do is laugh in your face!
 - (1) My sister?
 - (2) The one that had spaghetti face and sauce in her ears from burying her face in the plate?
 - (3) The one that used to sit on the baby potty, pull the head off her doll and say “King Nebuchadnezzar!”
 - (4) But that would be my reaction - laughing in your face

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- b) And when I heard it enough, and I was getting sick of it, I’d start to get angry
 - (1) She is NOT a savior of anything!
 - (2) So quite saying she is - she is just my sister!
- C. Turn to the last passage - 1 Corinthians 15:1-7 (p. 1154)
 - 1. Paul is a master here because he knows what great thinkers throughout history have known, and what you and I know: all of Christianity rests on the resurrection
 - a) If you disprove the resurrection you disprove Christianity
 - b) Look at verse 17 for a moment - “If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile...”
 - (1) The word for futile means useless, worthless, empty
 - (2) There is NOTHING to it!
 - (3) And Paul knew this way back then - but let’s look at what Paul says - Read vv. 3-7
 - 2. This is an early formula for Christians - Christ died, was buried and rose again
 - 3. Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures (Isaiah 53 - “all we like sheep have gone astray...”)
 - a) Christ died - this is basic
 - (1) But it proves that He was really dead
 - (2) It also disproves an ancient heresy that Jesus was only spirit and seemed to be human
 - 4. Christ was buried
 - a) Again, showing He really died
 - b) And this was all common knowledge of the day, because it was recent history - this facts are not in dispute
 - c) All the people that received the letter could check the facts for themselves
 - 5. Christ was raised on the third day - and here is where it begins
 - a) Paul basically says, “You don’t believe me, ask Cephas (Peter)”
 - (1) Peter saw Him
 - b) Ask the disciples - Jesus appeared to them
 - c) Ask the 500 He appeared to at the same time
 - (1) And most of these people are still alive
 - (2) They can testify to what they saw
 - d) And next comes the most convincing proof to the resurrection that I never saw - James
 - (1) It would not make sense that Paul is singling out James the apostle when his next phrase is “then to all the apostles”

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- (2) Besides that, when checking the biblical timeline, James the apostle died before 44 AD, and 1 Corinthians is written around 55 AD - so James the apostle was dead
- (3) The most likely explanation is this is James, Jesus brother
 - (a) He became the leader of the church in Jerusalem
 - (b) So when Paul says “James” everyone knows who he is talking about because Jerusalem is where Christianity began
6. So think about what we said about Jesus family before - they thought he was a nut
 - a) They were coming to take control of Jesus
 - b) “Yes, Jesus, it’s okay. We will play jacks when we get home. Just stop telling people you are the Messiah”
7. This would include James
 - a) Can you imagine what James thought?
 - b) I told you my feelings about my sister being the Messiah, and maybe that is easier to understand because we have all been told in America that Jesus is the Messiah since we were born
 - (1) So of course your sister is nuts if she says that now
 - (2) But James and company had been waiting for the Messiah for hundreds of years - there were plenty that claimed it, and all were discredited or died and never came back
 - c) So James, COULD HAVE felt that Jesus got what He deserved when He was crucified
 - (1) Most likely he was at the crucifixion
 - (2) Hey, you pushed it too far buddy
 - (3) I hated feeling like I had to make excuses for you when you would go into the Messiah spiel, and now it came back around to bite you
8. But here we have James listed as one Jesus appeared to
 - a) He certainly would have known about the resurrection
 - (1) Maybe he puzzled over it
 - (2) Maybe he thought, in error about one of the things our two lawyers capably showed to be false - who knows
 - b) Doubtless, when Jesus showed Himself to James, that took James from
 - (1) Any disbelief he had
 - (2) Shot right through belief that the resurrection was true
 - (3) To belief IN the resurrection
9. And what did that do for James?
 - a) We already said James became the leader of the church in Jerusalem

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- b) James wrote a book - a popular one at that, it's in the back of the Bible, called, “James”
 - c) This in itself is a giant transformation
 - (1) From thinking your brother is nuts
 - (2) To being a champion of the gospel in Jerusalem and writing a book that would eventually be included in the Bible
 - d) How James story ends
 - (1) There are two versions of his death, one says the high priest ordered him stoned to death
 - (2) The other version says he was thrown from the Temple wall
 - (a) The fall did not kill him
 - (b) So they took a large club and smashed his head
 - (3) That is a massive turn around
 - (4) That is going from disbelief or maybe a belief that to a belief in
 - (a) It became something James was willing to die for
 - (b) It became so important to him it turned his whole life around
 - i) From thinking Jesus was nuts
 - ii) To singing praises to Jesus
- III. The reality is each of us come face to face with a turning point
- A. Will we stop only at a belief THAT the resurrection is true
 - B. Or will we move forward to a belief IN the resurrection
 - 1. Belief IN Jesus death on the cross for
 - a) Not just OUR sins are forgiven
 - b) But MY sins are forgiven
 - 2. Belief IN makes it personal
 - 3. Belief IN means we are ready to stop trying to do it our way, and willing to let God lead us
 - C. And this may be that point for you today
 - D. We are going to sing to end our service
 - 1. Myself, and a few other people are going to be up front to pray with anyone that wants to pray
 - 2. This may be that moment that Jesus is making Himself real to you like He did to James
 - 3. The moment that takes you from belief THAT to belief IN
 - 4. So as we sing, don't be shy
 - a) No one will make you come
 - b) This is a choice you have to make