

INFORMAZIONE

informazione – formazione – azione

68
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DOES JESUS... BELIEVE IN YOU?

We are used to asking ourselves and others if we believe in Jesus... but perhaps we have never thought about the reverse question. Yet, it is a legitimate question, arising from the biblical passage of John 2:23-25.

Here we read that Jesus performed various miraculous signs in Jerusalem, and that "many believed in his name." But it's not all as good as it seems, because we also read that "Jesus did not entrust himself to them," being able to see deeply into their hearts. Now, in the Greek text, there is a play on words: in the two sentences, the same verb is used, *pisteuo*, translated once as "believe," and once as "entrust." In fact, this term has a fairly broad semantic field, which includes "believing", "having faith", "trusting", "relying". Furthermore, it has the same root as the noun *pistis*, "faith". Therefore, we could grasp this play on words by rendering these two sentences as "many believed in Jesus," but "Jesus did not believe in them"; or, "many had faith in Jesus," but "Jesus did not have faith in them."

In fact, in the Bible, believing in God

goes far beyond intellectual assent to a truth, it is profoundly relational. One cannot truly believe in Jesus and not trust Him, or better yet, entrust oneself to Him. Clearly, the belief of the many in Jerusalem was a superficial, partial, unconvinced belief, and indeed Jesus himself was not convinced by this apparent evangelistic "success." In the Gospel of John, we find two other episodes where we see a "belief" of this kind. The first, when Jesus tells the Jews who had believed: "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples," and later he dialogues with the same Jews even calling them "children of the devil" (John 8:31, 44). The second, when after Jesus' last public discourse, many of the leaders "believed in him... but because of the Pharisees they would not openly acknowledge their faith for fear they would be put out of the synagogue" (John 12:42-43). It is evident that there are different kinds of belief. Moreover, Jesus had foretold this in the parable of the sower (Matthew 13:3-23), and his brother James had denounced it by affirming that faith without works is dead (James 2:14-26). True belief is a belief that manifests concretely and

coherently, with desires, thoughts, words, and actions. Therefore, when we use the word "believe," directed at ourselves or someone else, we should always put it to the test and replace it with "trust" and "entrust."

Remember the story of Charles Blondin, the great tightrope walker who crossed Niagara Falls walking on a rope? The audience was thrilled: what a great acrobat! But when Blondin asked, "Do you think I can carry a person in this wheelbarrow across the falls, balancing on the rope?" everyone replied, "Yes, of course, you're the best!" "Then," the tightrope walker asked, "who wants to get in the wheelbarrow?" No one stepped forward.

If you truly believe in Jesus, then you will trust Him and entrust yourself to Him, in the small daily choices as well as the larger ones, despite the challenges and risks that this faith will entail. And even if your faith is sometimes small, weak, and timid, in Jesus' hands, in His "wheelbarrow," you will be safe because Jesus is trustworthy and capable of keeping you secure, and because, seeing your heart... "He believes in you!"

DANIELE P. PASQUALE

Mission Trip Report

From April 4th to 8th, with the students of the Residential School, we were again on a mission trip, accompanied by Daniele Lorefice, a missionary who has accompanied us on various trips in recent years and is the president of the new association SaleLuce. We returned to the **AVC Father's Heart center in Athens**, led by Farzad and Parisa Daniel, where missionaries and volunteers for about 10 years have been reaching out with the love of the Father to migrants from Asian and African nations, many of which are "closed" countries. However, the Lord is not only working where we cannot go but is also bringing these people here to Europe, many of whom are open to the Gospel and in need of practical and spiritual help. In these few days,

we tried to help the missionaries in their work: a program for children, a time of evangelization in the square, sharing in worship at a Filipino church, and practical assistance in the warehouse. We were also enriched by listening to the testimonies of some of the guests at the center, refugees who have converted to Christ, and by getting to know some of the missionaries working there: men and women dedicated to the Lord who serve amidst many risks and dangers. Naomi, a third-year student, says: "The beautiful thing was seeing how these brothers and sisters are a light of the Lord in the midst of so much darkness and how God uses them to bear fruit." Let us pray for God's work in Athens and among the migrants also in Italy!



Philippine church meeting; Warehouse work; Square evangelism; Program with children.

NEW:

Reprint

How to Interpret the Bible

by **Alfred Kuen**

"Kuen's book is a classic in the Italian evangelical academic world... it tackles the complex and broad topic of biblical interpretation with sobriety, precision, and completeness." Chris Zito, Professor of Hermeneutics at IBEI

The Book of Acts

by **Rinaldo Diprose**

"I can't think of a more suitable text to take the first steps in studying Acts." Francesco Grassi, Professor of Exegesis and New Testament at IBEI



HELP!

COUPLE WANTED for the Casale

We are looking for a couple who can live at the IBEI Casale in Rome, helping with the pastoral care of the students of the Residential School and assisting in various practical tasks. If you are interested or know someone who fits this profile, let us know by writing to amministrazione@ibei.it

Why Study at the Residential School?

Some former students tell us about their experience and give us valid reasons that are still relevant today!



Marco Demo, 1996-1999: "The studies at IBEI were fundamental for my subsequent studies and for the ministry carried out over the years because they gave me a foundation on which I built over time, serving among adolescents, in preaching, in Christian literature, and now in cross-cultural mission. Furthermore, attending the resi-

dential school allowed me to meet believers from other denominations and nations, and this gave me a global vision of the Kingdom of God. Finally, community life highlighted some character aspects that needed to be changed."

– Marco serves the Lord with his wife Sarita in Turin with WEC.

Davide Carritiello, 2016-2019:

"In the three years of the residential school, I was able to immerse myself completely in the study of the Word of God. Having deepened theology in a systematic and biblical way and having studied together with brothers and sisters from different denominations, my faith has grown a lot. I discovered that God is even greater than I imagined."

Debora Boncompagni, 2018-19: "I enrolled in the Bible school to have specific time to devote to reading and studying the Bible; during the year spent in the residential school, I had the opportunity to experience not only a study path but also introspective, relational, and knowledge-based (many people, realities, and points of view that I did not know). Above all, I had the opportunity to spend what I could describe as a wonderful honeymoon with God."

– Davide and Debora serve the Lord in the "Nuova Vita" church in the province of Varese.



Registrations are open for the Residential School with a **discount for those who enrol before May 31st**. Scholarships are also available.

LUX BIBLICA N° 69 Outlines of Biblical Eschatology: Understanding the Future to Live Faithfully in the Present

"Begin with the end in mind", wrote Stephen Covey, author of the best-seller "The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People." Thinking about what memory, impact, and legacy we would like to leave at the end of our lives helps us to live from today in a functional and consistent manner with

this goal. This principle is valid not only for us as human beings but also for us as disciples of Jesus: knowing how the Great Story in which we all are placed will end should deeply influence our daily walk. Lux Biblica 69 "Outlines of Biblical Eschatology: Understanding the Future to Live Faithfully in



the Present" analyses the relationship between eschatology and some particularly current aspects:

- the current state of widespread anxiety in our society,
- conspiracy theories,
- individual and collective ethics,
- the anthropology of the new creation,
- the mission of the church.

Enjoy reading!

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