

## Believe The Promise

The study of religion can seem challenging and confusing at times. There is a great deal of information in the Bible to study. There are also many other books written on this subject. A simple and direct summary would be very useful. Notice the response of Jesus here:

"Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?"

Jesus replied: "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.'

This is the first and greatest commandment.

And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'

All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."<sup>1</sup>

How do we love God?

This is love for God: to obey his commands. And his commands are not burdensome, for everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith.

Who is it that overcomes the world? Only he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.<sup>2</sup>

So we see that the most important commandment is to love God and loving God is defined as obeying his commands. This emphasis on obedience only makes sense if you understand that spiritually we are all children.

At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?"

He called a little child and had him stand among them.

And he said: "I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

Therefore, whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven."<sup>3</sup>

Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children<sup>4</sup>

How can we be imitators of God? We can follow the teaching and example of Jesus Christ. Jesus made a promise to us and we like children, even though we don't completely understand, need to believe the promise.

"Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me.

In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you.

And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.

You know the way to the place where I am going."

Thomas said to him, "Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?"

Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

"...the world must learn that I love the Father and that I do exactly what my Father has commanded me... "<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Matthew 22:36-40

<sup>2</sup> 1 John 5:3-5

<sup>3</sup> Matthew 18:1-4

<sup>4</sup> Ephesians 5:1

<sup>5</sup> John 14:1-6, 31

Jesus went to prepare a place for us. If we believe the promise we will follow his teaching and example by loving God. Spiritually we are all children so to love God means to obey his commands. We also learned that Jesus is the only way to accomplish this. We learn about Jesus from the word of God contained in the Bible. John emphasizes this vital relationship here:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning.  
Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of men.  
The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.  
The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world.  
He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him.  
He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him.  
Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God--  
children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.  
The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.<sup>6</sup>

Jesus taught that it is necessary to love God and, like dearly loved children, obey his commands. Jesus taught about eternal life and the way to be with him for eternity. What is the alternative if we choose not to follow Jesus? Here is a sample of Jesus' teaching on the end of the age:

The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil.  
They will throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.  
Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear.<sup>7</sup>

Believe the promise, follow Jesus and find eternal joy. The alternative is eternal unhappiness.

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<sup>6</sup> John 1:1-5, 9-14

<sup>7</sup> Matthew 13:41-43