

PART 26: LEARNING HOW TO BELIEVE, 6:45-56. #1. "Then He got into the boat with them, and the wind stopped; and they were utterly astonished, for they had not gained any insight from the incident of the loaves, but their heart was hardened", 6:51, 52. #2. It is common to focus on the issue of what to believe. Less common is it to pursue the issue of how to believe. Jesus makes the case in this text that one cannot determine what to believe unless one has learned how to believe. #3. The Lord was disappointed and disturbed regarding the reaction of the disciples to His walking on the water. That proves that the disciples did not know what to believe. #4. What they could have and should have believed: In this universe everything contracts back upon Jesus! Everything! The Lord had overpowered unclean spirits (1:23-28), healed every manner of physical pathology (1:30-33), cleansed leprosy (1:40-41), reversed paralysis (2:1-13), restored atrophied limbs (3:1-5), stilled the sea (4:37-41), challenged the demonic forces (5:1-20), raised the dead (5:21-23, 41-43), sealed a hemorrhage (5:25-34), fed five thousand (6:33-44), and then walked on water, 6:45-52. The disciples should neither have been "astonished" nor "afraid", 6:50, 51. But they did not know how to believe. #5. Quite often people are instructed only (indoctrination) in precisely what is to be believed. However, accepting what to believe does not secure that faith from the problem of doubt. "...but their heart was hardened", 6:52.

PART 27: LEARNING HOW TO BELIEVE. #1. The generation of faith and thus of what to believe is the result of a particular continuum. The continuum: One begins with the word of God and the power of God. Many things had been preached by Jesus and many miracles performed. #2. Yet the disciples "...had not gained any insight from the incident of the loaves...", 6:52. On the foundation of the word of God and the power of God the disciples should have generalized to the proposition that all things contract back upon Jesus ("insight"). The continuum of belief moves from the word of God and the power of God-->to the act of generalization. That is, one must generalize from revealed truth to material consequences. #3. Then expectations take shape founded upon the preceding part of the continuum of belief. The expectations of the disciples were not formulated by revelation but by human lived experience; consequently, they were deficient. They never expected Jesus to come to them by walking on the water. Expectations are a large part of belief. Personal expectations are generated by generalization from revelation. The continuum of belief moves from the word of God and the power of God-->to generalization-->to parallel expectations. #4. In consequence, the disciples would have had to conclude that all things contract back upon the personage of Jesus. The continuum of belief moves from the word of God and the power of God-->to the act of generalization-->to parallel expectations-->to what is to be believed. #5. Necessarily then, what to believe contracts back upon expectations, which contract back upon biblical generalization, which contracts back upon the word of God and the power of God. Biblical belief is the fruit of the powers of contraction. #6. True biblical faith is always anti-nature and anti-experience.

PART 28: LEARNING HOW TO BELIEVE, 6:45-56. #1. The greatest obstacle to learning how to believe is the preference for human wisdom. This we call rationalism. #2. The disciples could have "...gained insight..." from the loaves and fishes (6:33-44) and all of the other wonders Jesus performed. "...but their heart was hardened", 6:52. #3. It has been said that one must listen with the heart and not only with the mind. But in this text, those two quiesce into one piece. That singularity is the organ of belief. #4. The disciples failed to generalize from the power of God to material conditions. This relation between God and time the Lord called "insight". When Jesus stated this, He established the purpose of revealed truth. Among other things, revelation changes the rules of human understanding and perception of the material/temporal realm. #5. To believe is to displace human wisdom by that which the Lord calls "insight". However, that kind of exchange did not immediately take place in the disciples; their hearts being hardened. They refused to displace rationalism for "insight". #6. "Insight" establishes two particular facts. (One): The temporal/material realm exists because of and in an indissoluble bond with the Eternal. The universe of things is not a closed system. (Two): All temporal things and circumstances irresistibly contract back upon the word of God and the power of God. #7. Others, however, like those who met Jesus upon His landing at Gennesaret, did gain "insight", 6:53-56. Many had learned to believe and therefore knew what to believe. Their behavior was proof: "and ran about that whole country and began to carry here and there on their pallets those who were sick, to the place they heard He was", 6:55. #8. There is a kind of belief and a kind of reading of scripture devoid of "insight". The human predilection for relying on human wisdom often truncates learning how to believe and, with that, what to believe. Rationalism hardens the heart.

PART 29: THE ANTI-CONTRACTION, 7:1-13. #1. Jesus preached a language manifold that was in full contraction upon the will of God. The miracles He performed proved that the temporal/material realm exists in a state of perpetual contraction back upon the power of God. #2. But the Lord came into conflict with the leadership structure ("Pharisees" and "scribes" 7:1) of the Jews; and it was committed to the anti-contraction! #3. Revealed religion, given to the Jews by God, was diluted by what came to be recognized as "the traditions of the elders", 7:3. Rationally, purposefully conceived and developed by men, those traditions came, in many ways, to supersede even scripture. #4. "...This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far away from Me. But in vain do they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the precepts of men", 7:6, 7 (Isaiah 29:13). #5. This amounted to the anti-contraction! The generation of those human "precepts" was a way of "Neglecting the commandment of God" in order to "hold to the tradition of men", 7:8. #6. The inherent meaning of the word of God was consciously nullified; the anti-contraction. This was not Paul Tillich's idea (German thinker) of the historical development of doctrine. "...You are experts at setting aside the commandment of God in order to keep your tradition", 7:9. This was a studied effort with a precise purpose: the anti-contraction. #7. Those traditions were nothing more nor less than human rationalizations. And the truth is that human rationalizations (like "Corban", the washings), when applied or added to scripture, have the countervailing force of "...invalidating the word of God..." (7:13), even the Ten Commandments, 7:10-12,

Exodus 20:12, 17. #8. Jesus forbids reading the Bible and rationalizing its inherent meaning. Today, progressive Christianity is devoted to the rationalization of revealed truth. Yet by such measures, anyone can invalidate the word of God!

PART 30: UNCONTRACTED MIND and THE DESCENT INTO HELL, 7:14-23. #1. Personal contraction is a conscious way of reasoning and an explicitly conscious way of life. #2. The Lord is quite clear in this text that negligence about personal contraction back upon the word of God holds an inherent result: personal defilement! "there is nothing outside the man which can defile him if it goes into him; but the things which proceed out of the man are what defile the man", 7:15. He means personal behavior. #3. Therefore, failure to execute contraction back upon the supernatural is the precedent condition for personal defilement. Jesus' disciples did "...not understand that whatever goes into the man from outside cannot defile him", 7:18. #4. The Lord fixes the understanding of defilement. It is neither ceremonial nor superficial. Defilement is a way of life; a calculated pursuit of everything God abhors. #5. "...That which proceeds out of the man, that is what defiles the man", 7:20. A defiled mind conduces to defiled behavior. #6. Spiritual understanding, available only from revealed truth, is of the most extraordinary importance because it is the fault line between the practice of contraction and that of defiled behavior! #7. The term "defile" means "to make common". This is the cheapening of human existence. And it creates a universe of victims. #8. The list of exemplifications (7:21-23) is a potent warning about what men are capable of in the absence of spiritual understanding. #9. Contraction back upon the word of God and the power of God establishes the only viable guarantee of preventing such hell-inspired behaviors. Otherwise chaos and dissolution command circumstance. #10. Without the powers of contraction, we all exist in a state of self-imposed defilement.