

## Would We Have Believed Them?

Have you ever said, or heard someone say “If I had lived in the first century during the life of Jesus, I would have believed Jesus and the apostles”? Is that really true? If we doubt the completed revelation of God to man, would we have accepted the partial as it was being unfolded?

Consider a little of the background for the Jews during the days of Jesus. They were the established religion of the day in Jerusalem. They had been entrusted with the oracles of God (**Romans 3:2**). They claimed God as their Father (**John 8:41**). Many may have claimed that they had kept the commandments of God from their youth up (**Luke 18:18-23**).

The Jews believed that they were God’s chosen people through Abraham and that they would bless the world (**Genesis 12:1-2**). Jesus would tell them that God was able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones (**Luke 3:7-8**). They claimed to be Abraham’s descendant, yet they did not believe (**John 8:37-42**).

They claimed to trust Moses (**John 5:45-47**). They claimed to know Moses, but not Jesus (**John 9:28-29**). Did they really know Moses or his teaching (**Deuteronomy 18:15-19**)? They told Jesus that He was not yet 50 years old and you have seen Moses (**John 8:57**).

They were living in Jerusalem, the city where God caused His name to dwell (**Ezra 6:12**). They had the beautiful temple for the worship of God (**Matthew 24:1**). As in the days of Jeremiah they felt safety with the temple (**Jeremiah 7:1-4**). They kept the annual feasts in Jerusalem (**Leviticus 23**).

They had the prophets, the spokesmen for God, read to them each Sabbath day (i.e., **Acts 13:27**). Yet, down through their history they had killed the prophets and stoned those who were sent to them (**Matthew 23:37**). Jesus said that if they did not hear or believe Moses and the prophets, they would not be persuaded though one rise from the dead (**Luke 16:29-31**). They were described as being foolish and slow of heart to believe (**Luke 24:25-26**).

Jesus was born in Bethlehem (**Micah 5:2; Matthew 2:5**). He would grow up in Nazareth (**Matthew 2:23**). Yet, could anything good come from there (**John 1:46**). Now, they had one claiming to be God in the flesh (**John 1:1, 14**). Yet, instead of accepting the truth, the people sought to kill Him because He was making Himself equal with God (**John 5:18**).

Jesus did not keep their traditions of worshipping God (**Matthew 15:3-9**). He healed on the Sabbath (**Luke 13:14**). He and His disciples was accused of working on the Sabbath (**Matthew 12:1-2**). They did not keep other traditions that were common for the day (**Mark 7:1-8**). The Pharisees were offended at the teachings of Jesus (**Matthew 15:12**).

John the Baptist came preaching repentance for the Kingdom of Heaven was at hand (**Matthew 3:2**). Jesus would preach the same message (**Matthew 4:17**). Their question would be “Repent of what? We are God’s people.” They were told to repent or they would perish (**Luke 13:3, 5**).

In spite of all that Jesus did and taught, the people still had difficulty in accepting Him and His

message. They would ask Jesus “Tell us plainly if you are the Christ (**John 10:24**). Peter and the rest of the apostles would convict them on the day of Pentecost of crucifying Jesus by lawless hands (**Acts 2:23, 36**).

We have the completed message. Do we accept the truth of that message or are we looking for something else? Will we ask the same question, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?” (**Acts 2:37**). The answer is the same, “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (**Acts 2:38**). Are you obeying the truth now?

Something to think about!

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