

“Believe Like Jesus”

If you would agree with me that Jesus of Nazareth lived an exemplary life, then would you consider what he believed to be as important? While Jesus certainly provides a good example of an exemplary life, his life was primarily founded upon the doctrine of God and creation. Jesus believed that God clothes the “lilies of the field” (Luke 12:27-28); and, he taught that God sends rain to fall on the just and the unjust (Matt. 5:45). The heart of his doctrine was that God is the Creator and the ruler of the universe, bringing all things to pass by counsel of his will. That view of God might frustrate you, but I trust you will recognize that it was the doctrine held by Jesus of Nazareth.

To consider the doctrine Jesus believed can be a source of comfort. “If God is for us, who can be against us?” (Rom. 8:31). Well, if death or war or evil is more powerful than God, then it seems as if many things can triumph over us. But the prophet Isaiah turns to the night sky to proclaim the power of God: “Lift up your eyes on high and see: who created these? He who brings out their host by number, calling them all by name; by the greatness of his might and because he is strong in power, not one is missing” (40:26). Jesus himself teaches us in the power of God as Creator and Ruler of creation as a great comfort to Christians. He says, “Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom” (Luke 12:32).

Christian, it is not sufficient just to know about the moral life of the man Jesus of Nazareth. Exemplary life is founded upon a doctrine. Jesus draws his followers back to the personal God who is Creator and Ruler of the world. God did not create the universe and leave it alone; instead, God continues to actively govern all things to their good end. Knowing God the Creator and Ruler over creation is a great comfort, for not a sparrow can fall to the ground apart from your Father, and “you are of more value than many sparrows” (Matt. 10:31).

For the Christian, God has graciously revealed the doctrine Jesus believed in the Scriptures. Admiring Jesus for his exemplary life is good because a life lived well should attract us. But remember that his exemplary life was founded upon a particular doctrine of God and creation. And just as a life lived well should attract us, so should the doctrines of God attract us as well, for we are drawn to beautiful truths.

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