

WHY SHOULD I JUST BELIEVE?

by Rabbi Label Lam

A few years ago I was in a mini-mart in Lancaster Pennsylvania with one of my boys when a man walked in and having spotted me, shouted across the store, "Hey, you're a Jew!" I looked up from where I was engrossed in picking out a kosher brand of potato chips, nodded my head in agreement and went back to my business. Then the big question came flying at me across the aisles of the busy store from the same fellow, "Hey, do you believe in Jesus?" I hadn't planned on entering into a public diatribe there in the store.

I only really wanted to get a few cold drinks and something for the other kids to munch on for the ride home but since he asked me publicly I felt obligated to answer him resoundingly, "No!!"

The guy just didn't let up and he followed with a question, "Why not?"

"It's funny," I told him across the store as everyone listened in while pretending to be busy purchasing, "My son just asked me the same question when he asked me for a certain candy and I refused to buy it for him. He asked me, 'Why not?' and I told him that it is not up to me to prove to you 'why not?'. You have to demonstrate to me 'Why?'"

Then he let loose with the answer I could have predicted and I was ready. He said, "You've got to believe!"

"That's not what the Bible says." I retorted. "It says; 'You should know it today and return it to your heart that Hashem is G-d of the heavens above and the earth below and there is no other!'" (Deut. 4:39) That ended our conversation there. That is the beginning of our discussion here.

The Torah says the following amazing thing in this week's portion; "When you will inquire about the earliest days that were before you, from the time that G-d created man on the earth and from one end of the heavens to the other end of the heavens, was there anything so great as this or has anything like it been claimed!? Has a nation heard the voice of G-d speaking from the midst of the fire like you have heard, you, and survived?" (Deut. 4:32-33)

The Torah makes an outrageous claim that never in history was there or will there ever be a claim to the experience we had when we stood as a nation by Mt. Sinai. The mitzvah "know" that there is a G-d is based upon the verse that was spoken to the entire nation 600,000 adult males between the ages of 20 and 60 an estimated 3 and ½ million people, "I am Hashem your G-d that took you out from the land of Egypt!" The A-lmighty introduces Himself in the context of an historical event we all

experienced. That's how we know!

How do we know it today? Maybe we're guilty of proving the book from the book! If it happened once in history, then it could conceivably happen again. Who would feel confident to write in the same book and expect it to be true 3313 years later that nothing like it in quality or magnitude would ever happen or be claimed?

"Check out the historical record" says the Torah, as it were. Did anyone else say "you" as opposed to "I" experienced? Do any of the texts of the major faiths quote G-d speaking to anyone? Was anyone else ever there at the moment of epiphany? Elaborate doormats have been placed before the edifice of our claim, but history demonstrates nothing nearly comparable has ever been offered.

So when someone approaches me and asks me to believe in something. I need not leave my head in the parking lot and follow him blindly. If it's something I can **know** through deeper investigation, then why should I just believe?

Good Shabbos!

Text Copyright © 2000 [Rabbi Dovid Green](#) and **[Project Genesis, Inc.](#)**
