

Letters From a Skeptic Lesson 13: How Can I Be Sure It's All True?

*"Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ,
so that we may be justified by faith"*

Gal 3:24



*"Being a Christian isn't about doing what you don't
want to do; it's about allowing Christ to change what
you want to do."*

Correspondence 29: "How can I be sure it's all true?"

Father <pp. 223-224>

1. Back to the "I need to be certain" issue.
2. Doesn't think he can genuinely believe with the doubts he still has
 - a. *"I want to believe, but I find it difficult to genuinely do so."*

Son <pp. 224-229 >

1. Points out that no matter what people believe, belief goes beyond what the evidence requires them to believe
2. Says there's simply no "risk free" position—not even the position of having no position!
3. Points out that faith grows over time
4. Encourages his father's growth in several ways
 - a. Sends him some Christian music **tapes** and devotional **reading material**
 - b. Encourages him to **begin attending church** (a problem for the father)
 - c. Tells him to **begin talking to God**, and **offers suggestions on how to pray**
5. Lists **"the prayer which the Bible says constitutes salvation itself"** (pg. 228)
 - a. We must consider:
 - i. Where is this prayer in the Bible? Is there a pattern of this type of prayer?
 - ii. What about baptism? Why doesn't the son address this important topic?
 - iii. Key verses: Acts 2:38, Acts 22:16
 - (1) Some scholars translate these to mean "Repent and be baptized *on the basis* of the remission of sin" (2:38), and claim 22:16 teaches that baptism *follows* the "arising"
 - iv. More key verses: **Matt 28:19, Mark 16:16, Rom 6:3**
 - v. Many other examples indicate **baptism is an integral part of becoming a Christian**
 - b. But **what about Romans 10:9-13??**
 - c. Teachers must strive to teach the *whole* truth (e.g. Apollos in Acts 18:24-26)
 - d. See "*Who Is My Brother?*" by F. LaGard Smith for a very complete treatment of baptism and salvation

Epilog and Tribute

1. <Read pp. 231-232>
2. Edward "accepts Jesus as his personal savior" on January 15th, 1992, at age 73
 - a. Invitation letter sent on March 10th, 1989
 - b. Total time from "first contact" to conversion: **34 months**
3. Note the language in Edward's January 21st letter—lots of room to grow in the Lord!
4. Edward died on January 1st, 2003, at age 84

5. <Read “A Tribute,” pp. 233-235>

*“Exceptionally intelligent, intensely skeptical, very strong-willed, and 70 years old—
could a more unlikely candidate for conversion be found than my father?”*

Greg Boyd, Preface to “Letters From a Skeptic”

If time permits, consider touching on **Correspondences 26 and 27.**