

Believers in

“who through him are believers in God”

1 Peter 1:21

Believers in—While this phrase has a smoother sound in English, the Greek really says something a bit different. That difference is critical, and worth having a translation that is a bit choppy. The Greek text says “the ones through him believing into God.” Notice that our crucial phrase is a participle and a preposition (in Greek *pisteuontas eis*). The English translation is unfortunate because it converts the verb (believing) into a noun, a change that might make us think that we can be a believer without living the activity of believing. We must guard against this fallacy, especially in our culture, dominated by the Greek idea that knowledge (the collection of facts and principles) is all that is required to “believe.” “Believing” is a constant state of action, not a static collection of facts.

There is another bad translation in this phrase. The word translated “in” is the preposition *eis*. It really means “into.” This is an important difference. If we translate the word as “in” then once again we think that Peter is saying we need to have the proper “thoughts” about Christ. In our culture, “to believe in” something can be as passive as “I believe in happy times and good vacations: This kind of belief requires nothing more than mental assent to some ideal. But the preposition *eis* does not allow this kind of “belief.”

The preposition *eis* is really about “place.” It has the sense of “into”, like “he went *into* the house” or “I moved *into* a new position.” *Why is this so important?* Because the New Testament teaches us that believing is an activity that moves us from one place to another. It is not about intellectual assent to certain facts. That would be “I believe *in* Christ” that is, I believe the facts about this man. No, the New Testament says that believing is an activity of the will, not just the mind. It moves me from a world dominated by moral activity based on myself *into* a world where my moral activity is based on the character of demands of God. *Eis* tells me that I must be taken *out* of one place and put *into* another place. That is what faith is. It is a movement of my whole being, out of myself and *into* God.

In our modern religious world, we are surrounded by claims that the only thing required to be Christian is to have a certain *knowledge* of Christ. The New Testament never supports this. Believing is an act of the will that transports us into a new world where all of our living is based on a new relationship. There is no “faith” without activity just as there is no life without breathing.

If you are “believing into God”, you will breathe, move, grow, feel, think and change in this new place. Get *into* it today!