

# FAITH

## I. Some Biblical references to faith in the New Testament.

- A. Greek word *pisteuo*, which means "to believe"
  - John 3:16 - "whoever believes in Him should not perish"
  - John 11:26 - "everyone who believes in Me shall never die"
  - Acts 16:31 - "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved"
  - Rom. 1:16 - "power of God for salvation to every one who believes"
  - Eph. 1:13 - "having believed you were sealed with Holy Spirit"
  - James 2:19 - "the demons believe and shudder"
  - I John 5:1 - "whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God"
- B. Greek word *pistis*, which is translated "belief" and "faith"
  - Rom. 1:5 - "the obedience of faith"
  - Rom. 5:1 - "having been justified by faith"
  - I Cor. 15:14 - "if Christ not raised, your faith is in vain"
  - II Cor. 5:7 - "we walk by faith, not by sight"
  - Gal. 2:20 - "I live by faith in the Son of God"
  - Eph. 2:8 - "For by grace you have been saved through faith"
  - Phil. 3:9 - "righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith"
  - Heb. 11:1 - "faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen"
  - James 2:26 - "faith without works is dead"
  - I Peter 1:5 - "protected by the power of God through faith"

## II. Understanding the meaning of the Biblical words for "faith"

- A. Old Testament background.
  - 1. Hebrew language did not have a word corresponding to New Testament concept of "faith."
  - 2. Faith in old covenant was "prospective trust" in what God was going to do.
  - 3. Old Testament personages had "faith"
    - Rom. 4:9,12,16; Gal. 3:7,9,11; Heb. 11
- B. New Testament concept of "faith"
  - 1. Classical Greek words referred to "trust" and "obedience" toward men or gods.
  - 2. Distinctive New Testament and Christian usage of Greek words
    - a. Man's receptivity of God's activity.
    - b. John 1:12; Gal. 3:2; I Cor. 4:7
- C. English language hindered by having no verb form for "faith"

## III. The responsibility for faith.

- A. God's responsibility? God's gift?
  - 1. Does God grant to man the capability to exercise faith?
  - 2. Calvinistic explanation.
  - 3. Gal. 2:20; Eph. 2:8,9
- B. Man's responsibility?
  - 1. Is faith based on man's God-given ability to choose?
  - 2. Grace/faith; activity/receptivity
  - 3. Acts 16:31

**IV. Faith and reason.**

- A. Are faith and reason antithetical?
- B. Reasoned faith is precondition to genuine Christian faith.

**V. Faith and belief.**

- A. Failure to differentiate has caused much confusion.
- B. Reformers differentiated
  - 1. *fides* - credence, belief
  - 2. *fiducia* - trust, reliance
- C. Belief - mental assent and cognitive acceptance of information, truth-propositions concerning historicity and theological formulation.
- D. Faith - receptivity of the life of Jesus Christ.

**VI. Faith and works.**

- A. Does faith "do" anything?
  - 1. Not a meritorious "work" - Eph. 2:8,9
  - 2. Is God's salvation conditioned or contingent upon our faith?
  - 3. Does faith move mountains? Matt. 17:20; 21:21; I Cor. 13:2
  - 4. Should we refer to the "power of faith" or the "law of faith"?
- B. The outworking of faith.
  - 1. Danger of "easy-believism"
  - 2. Danger of partitioned faith
    - a. Receive Jesus as Savior and not as Lord
    - b. Redemption, justification, conversion apart from sanctification
  - 3. Faith without works is dead - James 2:19,26

**VII. The object of our faith.**

- A. Not faith in procedure, promise, power, product, but in Person of Jesus.
- B. Not receptivity of ideology, theology, methodology, but of Jesus and His activity.
- C. Believe "into" Jesus.

**VIII. When is faith exercised?**

- A. Initially
  - 1. Sometimes called "saving faith" or "regenerative faith"
  - 2. Eph. 2:8,9; Gal. 3:26; John 1:12
- B. Continually
  - 1. Sometimes called "Christian faith," "sanctifying faith," or "living faith."
  - 2. Acts 26:18; Rom. 1:5; Gal. 2:20; Eph. 3:17; Col. 2:6,7

**IX. Faith is dynamic rather than static.**

- A. Static - assent to a belief-system.
- B. Dynamic - receptivity of the living activity of God in Christ.