

# Doctrine of Faith

- 1) Definition and Description.
  - a) Faith is a system of thinking common to all mankind (Matt. 3:8-9):
    - i) **"and do not suppose that you can say to yourselves, 'we have Abraham for our father'..."**
    - ii) The word "**suppose**" (δοκέω- DOKEO) in the quotation refers to presumptions or thinking. The Pharisees were unbelievers and this was what they believed, their system of thought.
    - iii) The unbeliever's faith is misplaced. In other words their thinking is faulty and they do not exercise faith in the proper object. (Cp. John 5:37-40 taking particular note of what those unbelievers thought about the Scriptures; note especially verse 39).
    - iv) Examples which prove that faith is a system of thinking that is common to all mankind:
      - (a) Without ever having seen him, we believe that George Washington was the first president and the father of our country.
      - (b) Without ever having seen it we believe that Rome is a city in a country named Italy.
      - (c) As children, we accepted many things on the basis of faith when someone taught us their identity (e.g. cat, dog, fish, etc.).
  - b) The three systems of thinking common to mankind are faith, rationalism, and empiricism.
  - c) All three are documented in Scripture:
    - i) Faith (documentation to follow)
    - ii) Rationalism:
      - (1) The belief that reason and logic are the primary sources of knowledge and truth and should be relied on in searching for and testing the truth of things.
      - (2) Under this system of thinking, the Bible is held to be true only to the extent that it corresponds to man's reasoning; what does not correspond can be ignored or rejected.
        - (i) People often apply this kind of thinking on a personal level in an attempt (conscious or unconscious) to get around the clear statements of the Word of God in an attempt to justify their own thinking or actions.
        - (ii) If a given action (which violates the directive of Scripture) is deemed to be desirable or necessary, then human viewpoint reason is applied to the situation in an attempt to justify why it is okay under the circumstances.
        - (iii) Example: I have to miss Bible class because of my job, my business, my children, etc. Thus human viewpoint reasoning is set against Hebrews 10:25 **"not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more, as you see the day drawing near"**
      - (3) PROVERBS 14:12 **"There is a way which seems right to a man, But its end is the way of death."** "Seems right" reveals human viewpoint thinking, which is rationalization because it attempts to get around the

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revealed Divine viewpoint. We must be careful as this rationalization leads to death.

- iii) Empiricism:
    - (1) Empiricism is related to the scientific method (the search for knowledge by observation and experiment).
    - (2) This theory asserts that true knowledge is gained only through what one can perceive through the senses.
    - (3) In 2 Corinthians 4:18 faith and empiricism are contrasted: "**things which are seen**" are empirical; "**things which are not seen**" are the things perceived through faith. These are the things of God which really count in the Angelic Conflict and for all eternity.
    - (4) 2 Corinthians 5:7 also contrasts faith and empiricism: "**for we walk by faith, not by sight**". Walking by sight is empiricism. It is not the way of the Christian way of life.
  - d) Faith is the most basic system of perception (Mark 9:42 "...**these little ones who believe**" reveals that faith is a system of thinking common even to small children).
  - e) Faith is the only non-meritorious mode of thinking and is therefore chosen by God as the means for man to respond to His plan in both Ph1 and Ph2.
    - i) Non-meritorious: (Romans 3:27 "**...where then is boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? Of works? No, but by (the) law of faith.**")
    - ii) Ph1: (John 3:16; Ephesians 2:8-9; the phrases "**not of yourselves, it is a gift of God, not as a result of works, that no one should boast**" all stress that Ph1 faith is not meritorious on the part of the one who believes).
    - iii) Ph2: (2 Corinthians 5:7 "**walk**" emphasizes our Ph2 life- "continue to walk.").
  - f) Faith is the only system equally accessible to all men and compatible with grace (Rom. 4:16; 5:1-2; Eph. 2:8-9).
  - g) The efficacy or effectiveness of faith resides in its object:
    - i) The object of our saving faith must be the Lord Jesus Christ (John 6:29; Acts 4:12; 16:31 cp. 1 Cor. 2:1-5).
    - ii) Faith must not rest on that which is false (Matt. 24:23, 26; 2 Thess. 2:11; 1 John 4:1).
  - h) Faith has a two fold application in the experience of the individual:
    - i) Inhale faith, or faith at the point of initial perception (Galatians 3:2, 5 "**hearing with faith**"; cp. Romans 10:17 "**So faith comes from hearing and hearing by the word of Christ**").
    - ii) Exhale faith, or faith at the point of applying what was initially believed, also called faith-rest (Matthew 21:22 "**And everything you ask in prayer, believing, you shall receive**"; Hebrews 11:6 "**And without faith it is impossible to please Him for He who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him**"; James 1:5-8).
  - i) Biblical faith is not mysticism nor is it blind faith. Rather, Biblical faith is based on valid eye-witness testimony which has been revealed by means of the inspiration of God the Holy Spirit.
- 2) Greek and Hebrew vocabulary of faith.

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- a) πιστεύω (PISTEUO) A transitive verb, having a subject (stated or implied) and an object (stated or implied- 248x).
- b) πίστις (PISTIS) A noun, used for faith. It is also used as a synonym for Bible doctrine (244x).
- c) The Hiphil of אָמַן (AMAN) is used of both Ph1 and Ph2 faith (Gen. 15:6; Psa. 78:22, 32; Isa. 28:16; Jonah 3:5).
- 3) Five uses of faith in the Bible:
  - a) Misplaced faith (2 Thess. 2:11).
  - b) Saving faith (John 3:15-18; 1 John 1:1-5).
  - c) Inhale faith (faith at the point of intake of Bible doctrine; Gal. 3:5; Heb. 4:2).
  - d) Exhale faith (faith at the point of application of Bible doctrine: Heb. 13:7; James 2:17, 20, 26).
  - e) Bible doctrine as the body of what is believed (Col. 1:23; 1 Tim. 4:1).
- 4) Faith is classified as a basic or elementary doctrine (Hebrews 6:1 "**Therefore leaving the elementary teaching about Christ, let us press on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God.**").
- 5) Observations on saving (Ph1) faith.
  - a) Christ is the only legitimate object for saving faith (Acts 4:12; Rom. 3:22; 4:5; 1 Tim. 1:16).
  - b) We are commanded to believe in the name of Jesus Christ so as to be saved (1 John 3:23 cp. John 20:31).
  - c) Saving faith is called obedience (Acts 6:7; Rom. 1:5).
  - d) The amount necessary is compared to a grain of mustard seed (cp. Matt. 17:20-just a little more faith than no faith at all.).
  - e) Saving faith always results in the imputation of +R, which is called Ph1 justification (Rom. 4:3; 5:1).
  - f) Saving faith results in eternal life (John 5:24; 6:47).
  - g) Saving faith is totally apart from works. It is by grace (Acts 15:11, Rom. 9:32).
  - h) Another result of saving faith is the receipt of salvation as a free, grace gift (Eph. 2:8-9 "**For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; <sup>9</sup> not as a result of works, that no one should boast**").
  - i) The gospel supplies the content (Mark 1:15; Acts 15:7; Romans 1:16).
  - j) Abraham is the pattern (Rom. 4:9, 12; Gal. 3:9).
  - k) Old Testament salvation was the same (Gen. 15:6 cp. Rom. 4:3; Gal. 3:6; Isa. 28:16 cp. 1 Peter 2:6).
  - l) Saving faith results in sonship (John 1:12; Gal. 3:7, 26).
  - m) Saving faith is the basis for Ph3 victory over the cosmos (1 John 5:1, 4, 5).
  - n) Saving faith knows no cultural or racial barriers (Matt. 21:32)
    - i) The religious crowd rejected Him.
    - ii) He had greater response from the immoral crowd (Mark 2:15).
    - iii) From the Greeks (Acts 17:4 cp. Rom. 9:30).
  - o) Ph3 benefits are secured by saving faith alone (John 6:39-40; 1 Thess. 4:13-17).
  - p) Saving faith will not eventuate in disappointment (Rom. 10:11; 1 Peter 2:6).
  - q) The negative volition of "the many" cannot neutralize the positive volition of "the few" (Matt. 7:13-14 cp. Rom. 3:3-4).

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- r) The Acts record clearly demonstrates that salvation is by faith alone (Acts 2:44 **"all those who had believed"**; 4:4 **"who had heard the message believed"**; 6:7, **"priests were becoming obedient to the faith"**; 8:12-13; 9:42; 10:43; 11:17, 21).
- 6) Observations on Ph2 faith.
  - a) Bible doctrine is the object of Ph2 faith (Hebrews 4:2 **"the word they heard did not profit them, because it was not mixed together with faith in those who heard"**; Ephesians 3:17 **"so that Christ might dwell in your hearts through faith"**; Colossians 1:23 **"if indeed you continue in the faith."** Bible doctrine is the body of faith in which we continue).
  - b) The body of doctrine is therefore called the faith (EPHESIANS 4:5 **"one faith"**; EPHESIANS 6:16 **"the shield of (the) faith"**; 2 Tim. 4:7; Titus 1:4, 13; Jude 1:3).
  - c) We are expected to grow in faith (2 Cor. 10:15; 2 Thess. 1:3).
  - d) Jesus praised or rebuked the presence or absence of faith.
    - i) Praise: Matt. 8:10; 15:28.
    - ii) Rebuke: Mark 4:40; Luke 24:25.
  - e) God's righteousness is known by faith (Roman 1:17 **"the righteousness of God is revealed from faith (saving) to faith; as it is written, 'But the righteous man shall live by faith'"**).
  - f) Our faith is tested (James 1:3; 1 Pet. 1:7).
  - g) Abraham is the pattern (Rom. 4:16-22).
  - h) The faith-rest of others is a source of encouragement (Rom. 1:12; 1 Thess. 3:7).
  - i) Faith and love (the filling of God the Holy Spirit).
    - i) Minus love, faith to move mountains is worthless (1 Cor. 13:2).
    - ii) Faith operates through love (Gal. 5:6).
    - iii) Those who are stronger in faith are to accept the ones who are weaker (Rom. 14:1).
  - j) Faith and production:
    - i) Faith absent Divine good production is dead (James 2:14-26).
    - ii) God evaluates the local church on the basis of Divine good production (1Thess. 1:2-3 cp. 2 Thess. 1:11).
    - iii) Production of good works is the eternal purpose of God for which we are left here after we exercise saving faith. It is the plan of God from eternity past that believers produce good works (Eph. 2:10 **"For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them"**).
  - k) Super Grace heroes are examples of faith (Gen. 6:8-22; Heb. 6:11-12; 11:1-7, 23-26, 32; 2 Tim. 3:10; 4:6-8).
- 7) Faith and Ph3.
  - a) Few believers possess the proper eschatological orientation for our time in the Church Age. Many Christians do not know about the rapture, the fig tree, etc.
  - b) We are to faith rest our future (Gal. 5:5).
- 8) Prayer and faith.
  - a) Faith is a key to answered prayer (Matt. 21:22; Mark 11:24).
  - b) Prayer for doctrine; it is the muscle of faith (James 1:5, 6).

James Allen-6/25/06