

The Faith that Saves

Introduction:

1. A study of the Bible reveals that faith is a necessary requirement for salvation; apart from faith there can be no salvation. Note a few of the scriptures which connect faith to salvation.
 - a. John 3:16.
 - b. Romans 5:1.
 - c. Acts 16:30-31.
 - d. Hebrews 11:6.
 - e. John 8:24.
 - f. Mark 16:16.
2. Other Scriptures can be cited which affirm the necessity of faith, and the relationship of faith to salvation, but these are sufficient to document the fact that faith is a necessary requirement for salvation.
3. However, scripture also informs us of people who believed, yet were lost.
 - a. John 12:42-43.
 - (1) They refused to confess Him, which is tantamount to denying Him! Note Matt. 10:32-32: Luke 9:26.
 - b. James 2:19.
 - (1) Note their fate, Matt. 25:41.
4. In this study we shall:
 - a. Define faith.
 - b. Determine the source of faith.
 - c. Identify the kind of Faith that saves.

Discussion:

I. The Definition of Faith.

- A. Hebrews 11:1: *"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."*
- B. From this verse we discover that faith involves:
 1. *"Substance."* From *hupostasis* – *hupo* meaning "under," and *stasis*, meaning "to stand."
 - a. There is nothing whimsical about true faith; it involves a genuine foundation upon which to stand. The same word is also translated *"confidence"* in Heb. 3:14.
 2. Hope, which is defined as "desire coupled with expectation." We live in *"hope of eternal life,"* Titus 1:2; *"Eternal life"* is something which we both desire and expect.
 3. *Evidence*, Heb. 11:1. It is not blind trust; true faith is built on real evidence!
 - a. Illus. I believe George Washington was our first President. I have never seen him, but I believe the evidence that he was our first President is too overwhelming for me to deny the statement just made.
 - b. I believe in God; I have never seen Him with the natural eye, but I believe the evidence that He exists is too overwhelming for any rational person to deny His existence! Cf. Psalm 14:1
 4. *"Things not seen."*
 - a. I believe in many things I have *"not seen."* I believe I have a heart and a brain, but I have never seen either. I believe in germs, but I have never seen a germ with the natural eye.

II. The Source of Faith. From whence does it come?

- A. Not from.
 1. Genuine faith does not come from human feelings; one can believe something; yet what he believes may be false. Cf. Genesis 37:31-34.
 2. Genuine faith does not come through the thought processes of man. Note Acts 26:9; 2 Kings 5:10-11.
 3. The direct, or the mysterious, guidance of the Holy Spirit.
 - a. Many people claim such guidance, but they often contradict themselves, as well as the Bible!
 - b. Some read such passages as John 16:13, and apply the promise therein to themselves; however, in context, Jesus was talking to His disciples and the work they would do following His ascension into heaven. Note John 16:7-11; Luke 24:46-49; Acts 1:8; 2:1-4.
- B. Genuine faith comes from two sources.
 1. The "book" of creation, Psalm 19:1; Romans 1:20.
 - a. The evidence that God exists is so great that only a *"fool"* would deny that He exists! Psalm 14:1.

- b. However, from the material creation, we cannot learn God's will for us, or what we must do in order to be saved, or to live in such a way as to please God.
- 2. The Book of Divine Revelation – the Bible!
 - a. Romans 10:17.
 - b. John 20:30-31.
 - c. Acts 15:7.
 - d. Acts 18:8.

III. The Faith that Saves (or when does faith save?).

- A. In James 2:14-26 three kinds of faith are cited.
 - 1. A dead faith, James 2:14-17.
 - a. An intellectual faith, which is not accompanied by acts of obedience?
 - b. Can this kind of faith save a person? No! James 2:17,20,26.
 - 2. A demonic faith, James 2:18-19.
 - a. The devils "*believe and tremble*," v. 19. They have both faith and emotion, but are they saved? Note Matt. 25:41.
 - b. The demons believe:
 - (1) In the deity of Christ, Mark 3:11-12.
 - (2) In the existence of condemnation, Luke 8:27-28,31.
 - (3) That Jesus will be the judge, Matt. 8:28-29.
 - 3. An obedient faith, James 2:20-26
 - a. A dead faith involves the intellect.
 - b. Demonic faith involves both the intellect and the emotions.
 - c. Saving faith involves the intellect, the emotions, and the will.
 - (1) Abraham believed in God; he also did what God commanded, James 2:21-23.
 - (2) Rahab believed in God, and she acted upon that faith, James 2:25; Joshua 2:1-15.
- B. The Blessings wrought by faith.
 - 1. Eternal life, John 3:16.
 - 2. Justification, Romans 5:1.
 - 3. A pure heart, Acts 15:9.
 - 4. Access to God, Heb. 11:6.
 - 5. Remission of sins, Acts 10:43.
 - 6. Salvation, Eph. 2:8
- C. Note also the blessings wrought by Obedience.
 - 1. Eternal life, Heb. 5:8-9.
 - 2. Justification, James 2:24.
 - 3. A pure heart, I Peter 1:22.
 - 4. Access to God, Matt. 7:21.
 - 5. Remission of sins, Acts 2:38.
 - 6. Salvation, Mark 16:16.
- D. The principle of faith saving, when faith obeys, is clearly set forth in Hebrews 11.
 - 1. Abel, who "*offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice*," Heb. 11:4.
 - 2. Noah, who "*prepared an ark to the saving of his house*," Heb. 11:6.
 - 3. Abraham, who "*when he was called...obeyed*," Heb. 11:8. Cf. Genesis 6:22.
 - 4. Moses, who "*forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king*," Heb. 11:27.
 - 5. Countless others, both named and unnamed, Heb. 11:32-34.

Conclusion:

- 1. Many other examples could be cited to illustrate the nature of the faith that saves; perhaps they might be best summed up in Gal. 5:6, "*For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision: but **faith** which **worketh by love**.*"
- 2. All have sinned, Rom. 3:23; Hence, no person can do enough to earn salvation, Eph. 2:8-9, but obedience is, and always has been, a condition of salvation. Matt. 7:21; Rev. 22:14.

--Bobby Witherington, May 17, 2015