

# DOCTRINE OF FAITH

August 7, 1987

## I. Definition and description.

- A. Faith is a system of thinking common to all mankind (Mt.3:9 "*and do not think that you can say to yourselves, 'we have Abraham for our father'*"; the reversionistic unbeliever's faith is in an erroneous view of salvation, cp. Jn.5:39).
- B. Faith is one of three systems of perception, along with rationalism (Rom.2:3; Prov.14:12 "*there is a way which seems right*") and empiricism (2Cor.5:7 "*for we walk by faith, not by sight*"; 2Cor.4:18).
- C. Faith is the most basic system of perception (Mk.9:42 "*these little ones who believe*"; cp. Mk.9:36).
- D. Faith is the only non-meritorious mode of thinking and is, therefore, chosen by God as the means of response to His plan, Phases 1 and 2 (Rom.3:27 "*where then is boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? Of works? No, but by [the] law of faith [δία νομοῦ πιστέως, dia nomou pisteos]*"; cp. Rom.4:14; Col.2:12 "*through faith in the working of God*"; 1Tim.1:4).
- E. Faith is the only system equally accessible to all men and compatible with grace (Rom.4:16; 5:2; Eph.2:8,9).
- F. The efficacy of faith resides in its object (1Cor.2:5 "*that your faith should not rest on the wisdom of men [human viewpoint rationalism], but on the power of God [sanctifying power based on response to doctrine]*"; 1Cor.15:14 "*and if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain, your faith also is vain*"; 1Cor.15:17; cp. Mt.24:23,26 "*do not believe [false Messiah reports]*"; 2Thess.2:11 "*that they might believe the lie*"; 1Jn.4:1 "*do not believe every spirit*"; cp. Jn.6:29 "*This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent*"; Acts.4:12; 16:31).
- G. Faith has a two-fold application in the experience of the individual.
  1. Inhale faith, or faith at the point of initial perception (Gal.3:2,5 "*hearing with faith*"; cp. Rom.10:17 "*So faith comes from hearing and hearing by the word of Christ*").
  2. Exhale faith, or faith at the point of applying what was initially believed, also called Faith-Rest (Mt.21:22 "*And everything you ask in prayer, believing, you shall receive*"; Heb.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*").

## II. Greek and Hebrew vocabulary of faith.

- A. Πιστεύω, pisteuo: a transitive verb, having a subject (stated or implied) and an object (stated or implied), used 248X.
- B. Πίστις, pistis: a fem. sing. noun, used for faith and as a synonym for Bible doctrine, used 244X.
- C. The hiphil of אָמַן, aman: used of saving and Ph2 faith (Gen.15:6; Isa.28:16; Jonah.3:5; cp. Ps.78:22,32).

## III. Five uses of faith in the Bible.

A. Misplaced faith, as in 2Thess.2:11; 1Jn.4:1.

B. Saving faith (Jn.3:15-18,36; 1Jn.5:1).

C. Inhale faith (Heb.4:2).

D. Exhale faith (Mk.9:24 "*I do believe; help my unbelief*"; Lk.8:50 "*Do not be afraid any longer; only believe*").

E. Bible Doctrine as the object of faith in Ph2 (Eph.4:5 "*one faith*"; 2Thess.3:2 "*not all have faith*"; 1Tim.1:2 "*child in the faith*"; 1Tim.4:1 "*depart from the faith*").

III. Faith is classified as a basic doctrine (Heb.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"*).

IV. Observations on saving faith.

- A. Christ is the object (Jn.1:12 *"But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name"*; Jn.3:15-18,36; 6:40,69; 7:38,39; Acts.11:17; 22:19; 24:24; Rom.3:22; 4:5; 10:11,14; Gal.3:22; Phil.1:29; 1Tim.1:16; 3:16; 1Pet.2:6; 1Jn.3:23 *"And this is His commandment, that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ"*; 1Jn.5:1,5; 5:3; cp. Jn.20:31).
- B. It is called obedience in Jn.3:36; Acts.6:7; Rom.1:5.
- C. The amount necessary is compared to a grain of mustard seed in Mt.17:20.
- D. It always results in the imputation of righteousness (Ph1 justification, Rom.3:25-31; 4:3; 5:1; Gal.2:16; 3:6,8).
- E. It results in the imputation of eternal life (Jn.3:15-18,36; 5:24; 6:47; 20:31; 1Tim.1:16).
- F. It is totally apart from works, but by grace (Rom.3:27,28; 9:32; Acts.15:11).
- G. The gospel supplies the content (Acts.15:7; Mk.1:15; Rom.1:16).
- H. Abraham is the pattern (Rom.4:9,12; Gal.3:9, quoting Gen.15:6).
- I. Old Testament salvation was the same (Gen.15:6; cp. Rom.4:3; Gal.3:6; Isa.28:16; cp. Rom.9:33; 10:11; 1Pet.2:6).
- J. It results in sonship (Jn.1:12; Gal.3:7,26).
- K. It is the basis for our victory over the cosmos (1Jn.5:1,4,5).
- L. It knows no cultural or racial barriers (Mt.21:32 [the religious crowd rejected Him; there was a greater response from the immoral crowd]; Jn.4:39 [Samaritans]; Acts.14:1 [Jews and Greeks]; Rom.3:30; 9:30-32; 1Cor.12:13; Gal.3:28; Acts.13:8,12 [proconsul Sergius Paulus]).
- M. Eternal life in a resurrection body is secured by saving faith alone (Jn.6:39,40; 1Thess.4:14ff).
- N. It will not eventuate in disappointment (Isa.28:16; cp. Rom.10:11; 1Pet.2:6).
- O. The negative volition of "the many" cannot neutralize the positive volition of "the few" (Rom.3:3,4).
- P. The Acts record clearly demonstrates that salvation is by faith alone (Acts.2:44 *"all those who had believed"*; Acts.4:4 *"who had heard the message believed"*; Acts.5:14 *"believers...were added"*; Acts.6:7 *"priests were becoming obedient to the faith"*; Acts.8:12,13; 9:42; 10:43; 11:17,21; 13:12,39,48; 14:1,23; 15:5,7,9,11; 16:31,34; 17:12,34; 18:8,27; 19:2,4,18; 21:20,25; 22:19; 24:24; 26:18; cp. those who are said to have believed throughout the course of Christ's ministry: Jn.2:23 *"at Passover...many believed in His name"*; 4:41; 7:31; 10:42; 11:42,45,48; 12:11).

V. Observations on Ph2 faith.

- A. Bible Doctrine is the object (Heb.4:2 *"the word they heard did not profit them, because it was not mixed together with faith in those who heard"*; Eph.3:17 *"so that Christ [cp. 4:20] might dwell in your hearts through faith"*; Col.1:23 *"if indeed you continue in the faith"*).
- B. The body of doctrine is, therefore, called "the faith" (Eph.4:5 "one faith"; Eph.4:13; 6:16 "the shield of faith"; 1Tim.1:2,19; 3:9,13 "the faith that is in Christ Jesus"; cp. 2Tim.1:13 "the faith...in Christ"), or doctrine as the mind of Christ (2Tim.4:1,6; 5:8,12; 6:10,21; 2Tim.3:8; 4:7; Ti.1:4,13; 2:2; Philm.6; Jd.3,20).
- C. We are expected to grow in faith (2Cor.1:24; 5:7; 10:15; Col.1:23; 2:5,7; 2Thess.1:3).
  - 1. The mustard seed analogy teaches this (Lk.17:5,6; cp. Mk.11:22,23).
  - 2. Few believers pursue Ph2 faith to maturity (Lk.17:11-19).
  - 3. Faith is a product of the filling of the Holy Spirit (Gal.5:22).
- D. Jesus praised or rebuked the presence or absence of faith.
  - 1. Praise: Mt.8:10 - the centurion; Mt.15:28 - the Canaanite woman.
  - 2. Rebuke: Mk.4:40; Lk.24:25 *"O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the"*

*prophets have spoken".*

- E. God's righteousness is known by faith (Rom.1:17 "the righteousness of God is revealed from faith [saving] to faith [Ph2]; as it is written, 'But the righteous man shall live by faith'").
- F. Our faith is tested (Jam.1:3; 1Pet.1:7).
- G. It is rewarded (Heb.6:22; 1Pet.1:9).
- H. Abraham is the pattern (Rom.4:16-22; Jam.2:21-23).
  - I. The Faith-Rest of others is a source of encouragement (Rom.1:12; 1Thess.3:2,7; Col.1:4; 2:5; Philm.5).
  - J. Faith and love (FHS).
    - 1. Faith to move mountains, minus love, is worthless (1Cor.13:2).
    - 2. Faith operates through love (Gal.5:6).
    - 3. Those who are stronger in faith should not cause the weak to stumble (Rom.14:1,22,23).
- K. Faith and production.
  - 1. Faith minus production is vain (Jam.2:14-26).
  - 2. God evaluates the local church in this regard (1Thess.1:3; 2Thess.1:11; Rev.2:13,19).
- L. Spiritually mature heroes are examples of faith (Heb.6:12; 11:3-39; 13:7; 1Tim.4:12; 2Tim.3:10; Rev.13:10).
- M. Faith and Ph3.
  - 1. Few are oriented eschatologically (Lk.18:8).
  - 2. We Faith-Rest our future (Gal.5:5).
  - 3. Faith will not be an issue in heaven (1Cor.13:12,13).
- N. Prayer and faith.
  - 1. Faith is a key to answered prayer (Mt.21:22; Mk.11:24; Jam.5:15).
  - 2. Pray for doctrine as the muscle of faith (Jam.1:5,6).

*Hab.2:4 "Behold, as for the proud one, his soul is not right within him; but the righteous will live by his faith."*

*Heb.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."*

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