

BIBLICAL FAITH

Faith is one of the most frequently found words and concepts in the Bible. It is also one of the most misunderstood and abused Biblical words. Without controversy, the Bible requires that all who would be saved from the condemnation of sin must possess faith:

And without faith it is impossible to be well-pleasing unto him; for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that seek after him (Heb. 11:6).

For except ye believe that I am he, ye shall die in your sins (John 8:24).

- Biblical faith is **not** mere wishful thinking, wherein one wishes for something so much he convinces himself it exists. This concept is one of “pie-in-the-sky,” “leap-in-the-dark” desire with no reason or evidence for it.
- Biblical faith is **not** mere probability that God exists, Christ is the Son of God, or the Bible is the Word of God. This approach is sheer agnosticism.
- Biblical faith is **not** belief in something (or someone) **in spite of** contrary evidence. Rather it rests upon credible evidence.
- Biblical faith is **not** distinct from knowledge, as if “faith” begins where “knowledge” ends and proceeds into an unknowable “twilight zone.”
- Biblical faith, in relation to salvation, is **not** mere acknowledgement of one or more Biblical doctrines (e.g., the Deity of Jesus). Such conviction is the **beginning** point of salvation—not its end. Saving faith is always obedient faith. Jesus said: “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned” (Mark 16:16).

Biblical faith involves belief, trust, and conviction. The nearest thing in the Bible to a definition of *faith* is the following: “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen” (Heb. 11:1). *Substance* and *evidence* are powerful words of certainty regarding our faith in God and His son, although we cannot now experience Them empirically (i.e., by one of our physical senses). Nevertheless, sufficient evidence exists to prove that the hoped-for things are real. God does not ask us to “believe” in eternal and spiritual verities merely because we **want** them to exist. God never asks anyone to believe anything He has said without providing adequate evidence to warrant the investment of our faith.

The source of this evidence is the Bible: “So belief cometh of hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ (Rom. 10:17). John pinpointed the evidence:

Many other signs there did Jesus in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written that ye may; believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye may have life in his name (John 20:30–31).

—Dub McClish
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