

Saving Faith

By H. A. (Buster) Dobbs

I. Introduction.

A. The word "faith" is a New Testament word. It is found 231 times in the King James translation, and occurs only twice in the Old Testament.

B. The words "believe, believing, believeth, belief" occur 179 times in the King James translation 21 times in the Old Testament and 158 times in the New Testament.

C. The importance of faith.

1. Faith saves (Heb. 11:6; John 3:16; John 3:36; Eph. 2:8).

II. How Does Faith Come?

A. Some say faith comes by direct, immediate operation of the Holy Spirit, separate from the Bible, in an incomprehensible experience.

B. The New Testament tells us faith is the result of knowledge.

1. "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom 10:17 KJV). The American Standard translates the verse, "So then belief cometh by hearing" "Belief" and "faith" are interchangeable in Bible usage.

2. "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word" (John 17:20 KJV).

3. "And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up, and said unto them, Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe" (Acts 15:7 KJV).

4. "Many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized" (Acts 18:8 KJV).

5. "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! But they have not all obeyed the gospel.

For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report?" (Rom. 10:13~16 KJV).

Note: You cannot call on God without believing in God.

Note: You cannot believe in God without hearing, i.e., receiving information.

Note: You cannot hear without a preacher.

Note: They cannot preach except they be sent.

Note: "It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe" (1 Cor.1:21).

C. Faith therefore is not a leap in the dark. It comes from knowing facts and having considered evidence.

III. What is Saving Faith?

A. Misconceptions.

1. All faith is saving faith.

2. The New Testament speaks of different kinds of faith. There is a faith that will save, and there is a faith that will not save. Note: Many Jewish rulers believed on Jesus but would not confess him because they feared the Pharisees and being put out of the synagogue (John 12:42,43).

Note: Demons believe and shudder, but demons will not be saved (James 2:19).

B. Saving faith is conviction based on facts and manifested by obedience.

1. "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Heb. 11:1 KJV) The American Standard says, "Now faith is assurance of things hoped for, a conviction of things not seen."

Note: Saving faith is substance, evidence, conviction, assurance. We must not believe because of convenience and prejudice. Faith is conviction based on evidence. The word translated "evidence" or "conviction" in Hebrews 11:1 means "reproof," denoting a proof, proving, test (See Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words).

2. At Pentecost the people were presented with proof that Jesus is Lord, and were then told to believe it absolutely. "Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly, that God hath made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom ye crucified" (Acts 2:36).

Note: Faith does not end with sight!

Note: Paul saw the risen Jesus and said, "That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection" (Phil. 3:10). "I know him whom I have believed" (2 Tim. 1:12).

Note: Paul had knowledge born of sight, but he believed on Jesus. "That life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith which is in the Son of God" (Gal. 2:20).

3. Saving faith illustrated in Hebrews chapter eleven. Note: Abel "offered" (v. 4); Noah "moved with Godly fear" (v. 7); Abraham "obeyed" (v. 8); The walls of Jericho after them were "compassed about seven days" (v. 30).

Note: In the Bible, no person was ever blessed because of his faith until that faith manifested itself in an overt act of obedience.

4. James 2:14-26 defines the faith principle as inclusive of obedience to God works of righteousness.

Note: Faith without works is dead (James 2:17).

Note: Cannot show faith apart from works (James 2:18).

Note: Demons believe and shudder (James 2:19).

Note: Faith without works is barren (James 2:20).

Note: Abraham was justified by faith because of what he did (offered Isaac upon the altar) (James 2:21).

Note: Abraham's faith produced works and works made his faith perfect (complete) (James 2:22).

Note: We are not justified by faith only (James 2:24).

Note: Faith without works is as dead and useless as a body without a spirit (James 2:26).

C. Saving faith must do something (obey). The faith that makes us acceptable to God is a conviction that grows out of knowledge and that compels absolute obedience to rules, principles, and standards.

1. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:16; See also Gal. 3:26,27).

2. Be faithful at all cost, even death, and receive a crown (Rev. 2:10).

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