

The Object of Faith

Faith is no better than the object in which it is placed. One can have all the trust in the world in a person's promise. But if the person is a liar, faith does not magically cause the promise to be fulfilled.

Hebrews 11 demonstrates that the kind of faith that pleases God is that which rests in the Person of God concerning not what *you think* He might do but rather *what He says*. It trusts the character, ability, and faithfulness of Him and so accepts His *word* as real as if touched and seen in real substance. Faith knows that God cannot lie. Yes, "faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Heb. 11:1).

Faith believes the Word of God for what it cannot see, and is rewarded by seeing what it believes

God has spoken. What a wonderful thing. We don't have to be in the dark and take the risk of guessing—hoping that it turns out OK. We can *know* because God has told us. God has given us His Word concerning:

Creation	(Genesis 1,2)
Purpose	(Isaiah 43:7, Rom. 8:29)
Sin	(Romans 1)
Satan	(Genesis 3)
Righteousness (Justice)	(Exodus 20)
Judgment	(Revelation 6-20)
Hell	(Luke 16:22-31)
The kingdom of heaven	(Matthew)
Israel	(Daniel 9)
Jesus the Lord	(The four gospels)
Salvation	(Romans)
The Church	(Acts, 1Corinthians)
Life-style	(The epistles)
Marriage	(Eph. 5 / 1Cor. 7)
The future	(Thessalonians, Revelation)

Faith believes out of simply trusting the Person who spoke. Faith doesn't need to prove it by "scientific" observation. The Person's report is enough. Faith doesn't need to touch it to have confidence. Hearing is good enough. Faith doesn't need to understand it first in order to believe. It trusts the Person's understanding. Faith is saying "Amen" to God.

The Dynamic of Faith

The dynamic or energy of the faith that pleases God is that it *acts* because it believes. It is not mere mental assent to a fact, but logical action consistent with the truth of what it heard and claimed to believe.

"By *faith* Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, **moved** with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house." (Heb. 11:7). Noah went into action because the report of God said that the judgment of floodwaters were coming and an ark would be needed for salvation. Mental assent alone to the report of judgment would never have saved him. But trust that *acted* according to the report did save him. He built an ark.

Faith will make you act differently, for you will see and hear what others don't. Faith caused Noah to act differently than his world. Why? He heard God's report and by believing knew something the others didn't.

Faith is simply believing the report of God and acting accordingly

While faith alone saves, the faith that saves is never alone

"By *faith* Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and **he went** out, not knowing whither he went." (Heb. 11:8). Abraham heard the promise of God of a land for him and his offspring and so *moved* because he believed. Mental assent could never have put him in the land, but moving on because he believed did. Notice, Abraham obeyed "*not knowing*" where he was going. Faith does not have to understand all the details when trusting God.

For one to say they have faith but not act accordingly reveals that they don't really believe at all.

For example, a person gives you their word that they dismantled a bomb wired in your car. You thank the person and say you believe he successfully did what he claimed. If however, you then refuse to drive the car, your *actions* would prove that your faith wasn't genuine trust, but just lip service without heart.

The Scriptures show that faith is the essence of the whole Christian life. The one who believes God's report concerning sin, judgment and His Son Jesus the Lord, *will come* to Christ alone as his or her Savior (demonstrated by water baptism which doesn't secure salvation but signifies it). The believer is forgiven and is given eternal life. But that is not the only area affected by faith. Observe the following for the believer:

Saved through faith	(Eph. 2:8,9)
Received promised Spirit by faith	(Gal. 3:14)
Justified by faith	(Rom. 3:28)
Children of God by faith	(Gal. 3:26)
Stand by faith	(2Cor. 1:24)
Live by faith	(Rom. 1:17)
Kept through faith	(1Pet. 1:5)
Inherit the promises through faith	(Heb. 6:12)
Have access by faith	(Rom. 5:2)
Sanctified by faith	(Acts 26:18)
Walk by faith	(2Cor. 5:7)
Quench fiery darts of devil by faith	(Eph. 6:16)
Understand through faith	(Heb. 11:3)
Please God by faith	(Heb. 11:6)

Thus, the person with faith in God's report will *understand* things that even the most educated (who are faithless) won't. He will comprehend the unseen history of how man got here and the disclosed details of creation. He will know the purpose of our existence and have hope and meaning in life. He will understand the mysteries of what lies beyond this life for saint and sinner, and the proper preparations necessary—so he will be ready and safe as Noah was in the ark.

Faith understands the workings of God and will confidently be able to make decisions without fearing a surprise or change. For faith knows God doesn't change from His Word. Faith will understand the confusion of multi-religions and churches and will assuredly know what is right and best. Faith will absolutely know right and wrong and be preserved from the wrong by that knowledge. The person of faith will appear confident, dogmatic, assured, peaceful, knowing, and independent – not in oneself, but in the living God. This person has seen Him and believes, wants and needs nothing else.

The more one knows of God's Word the more one's faith will know the right answers for life and eternity.

We love to be taken at our word. When we aren't, we sometimes respond with the rhetorical question, "Are you calling me a liar?" for we are insulted. God, too, wants to be taken at His word. When one doesn't it is called *unbelief* and that one is classified as an unbeliever – one who has greatly sinned against God. For in the words of 1Jn. 5:10 concerning God's report, "he that believeth not God hath made him a liar."

We look at murder, stealing, sexual perversion, racial prejudice, etc. as great sins, and they are for they hurt our fellow man. But God looks at unbelief at the top of the list (Rev. 21:8). It offends and defames *Him*. Unbelief is ugly. It is stubbornness, arrogance and pride. It claims to know better than God. People who we consider "moral" in their values but who won't believe God's report have sinned greater than Sodom (Luke 10:10-16). God looks at a heart without faith and calls it "an *evil* heart of unbelief" (Heb. 3:12).

Unbelief *doesn't act* according to God's Word because it doesn't believe. Faith's dynamic is that it *does act* because it believes. "Faith without works is dead."

Faith believes the word of God Unbelief questions the certainty of the same

Faith sees the unseen promise of God Unbelief says, "How can these things be?"

Faith puts a man under grace—in Christ Unbelief keeps a man under law—in wrath

Faith makes great burdens light Unbelief makes light ones intolerably heavy

Faith is dependence upon God Unbelief is dependence upon self

Faith will help the soul wait if God delays Unbelief snuffs and throws it all away if God tarries

The Enemies of Faith

At first, faith can appear fairly simple. Just believe God's report concerning something by acting on it. But there are enemies to hinder faith, even in the Christian. These enemies must be overcome to live a life pleasing to God. These enemies are a trinity of evil. Let's look at them.

as it is written,

The Enemy of

1 SIGHT

For we walk by faith, not by sight
(2Cor. 5:7).

The Lord *promised* His ancient people, Israel, that He would bring them out of the slavery of Egypt and into a land flowing with milk and honey. Upon hearing this good news the people worshipped and believed the Lord. God by His power kept His promise and brought them out of Egypt via the Red Sea. Eventually the Israelites found themselves at the border of the promised land. First they sent spies in to evaluate the situation. The spies' report was that God was right: it was indeed a fruitful land.

But then a problem was revealed. Some spies said, "all the people that we *saw* in it are men of a great stature. And there we *saw* the giants, ... and we were in our *own sight* as grasshoppers" (Num 13:32,33).

Based on what they saw they did not have faith in God's Word and they did not go in. So sight became the enemy of faith.

Many unsaved today will not believe God's gospel because of all the suffering and problems they *see*. Never mind that these are the result of the free will of man and Satanic rebellion, they still deny God and will not trust the Lord Jesus Christ. Sight has deceived them.

Remember Eve who went against God's Word and ate of the tree because it was "pleasant to the eyes."

Many people believe in God, but not many believe God

There are many also who have trusted the saving gospel of the Lord Jesus who still succumb to sight over God's Word for their lives.

Some let truth go concerning how God wants His church to function. They look around and *see* other churches prospering numerically who do it differently. Sight convinces them it must be OK and that God's order is not all that important after all.

Some know that God says not to be unequally yoked together with unbelievers which includes a believer not marrying an unsaved person. (1Cor. 7, 2Cor. 6:14). But

The just shall live

then they look around and *see* someone who did marry wrongly and who appears to be happy and doing fine. Sight tells them it must then be OK.

Others will look at a divorce and remarriage that doesn't match God's Word and see that perhaps the adulterous couple is happy and even being used in the church of God with blessing. Sight persuades them that such things must then be OK.

In our technological society we have more to see more easily available than ever before and therefore our faith is assaulted constantly.

The Enemy of

2 REASON

Casting down imaginations [reasonings], and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;
(2Cor. 10:5)

After the children of Israel saw the giants, they said, "We be not able to go up against the people; *for* they are stronger than we" (Num. 13:31). Sight paved the way for human reasoning which told them God couldn't mean what He said. They reasoned that the one who is bigger wins. No longer believing God's promise, they concluded they would lose, and would not go in.

Many trust intellect as it attempts to explain things rather than simply standing on the naked truth of God's Word. Remember Eve was deceived when she reasoned the tree was to be desired "to make one wise." God does not ask us to "throw away our brain," but He does ask us to use it to know His Word and trust Him.

It is better to believe your beliefs, and doubt your doubts – than doubt your beliefs and believe your doubts

Beware of those that use history and literary gymnastics to teach why a passage of Scripture *doesn't* mean what it says in its logical context. One can wrest (twist) the Scriptures to their destruction, you know (2Pet. 3:16). "Trust in the Lord" and "Be not wise in thine own eyes."

by faith. Rom. 1:17

The Enemy of

3 FEELING

For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.
(2Tim. 1:7)

When the children of Israel reasoned by what they saw, they were *afraid*. They now asked, "wherefore hath the Lord brought us unto this land, to fall by the sword?" They were exhorted that "the LORD is with us: *fear* them not." (Num. 14:3, 9,12). This feeling of the fear of being hurt so overpowered them that they disobeyed God, losing total sight of His Word of promise.

Many go by their feelings of fear or love in determining if God's Word means what it says. Some, because they feel happier in churches that are unscriptural, see no problem. Some feel that God, in spite of His Word, would never expect a person to remain single (whether or not he was married before). They look at the possibility of having an emotionally painful life. And the *fear* of such a future governs their thinking.

Feelings make good servants but bad masters

Remember, Eve also saw the tree "was good for food" (feeling). Blind Isaac went by the feeling of Jacob's skin. He said, "The voice is Jacob's voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau" – and – "he discerned him not." (Gen. 27:22,23). Always put God's Word first.

Three friends went walking on a wall
Feeling, Faith and Fact.
When Feeling had an awful fall,
Which quit, he took Faith aback;
So close was Faith to Feeling,
Faith stumbled ere he knew,
But, Fact, remained and drew Faith up,
And Faith brought Feeling too. Choice Gleanings

Chronicle #4 of 'The Christian Life Series'
looks at the way a believer wins the war over sin

Mailing list - Information - Copies

R. P. Amos
c/o Northgate Gospel Fellowship
240 McGuire Rd.
Rochester NY 14616



The Chronicles of the

Christian Life

3

Faith

"Without faith it is impossible to please God," states Hebrews 11:6. So what is faith? Why is it so important to God?

All have faith. But in what? The atheist has faith. He *believes* in the rationale of his own mind and concludes that there is no God. The evolutionist has faith. He *believes* in the theory of evolution and concludes that intelligent designs have no intelligent designer. Satanic religions all have faith. They *believe* that their leaders are right and so they follow them.

The Christian says he has faith. He claims that faith is what pleases God and by which God saves him. So what's the difference? Is faith just assenting to a sterile fact intellectually? Is faith a sort of cosmic energy that if released somehow magically gets the results?

In this chronicle we want to consider three areas of faith as revealed by God in His Holy Scriptures:

- The object of faith
- The dynamic of faith
- The enemies of faith