

FAITH...

By: Bill Richardson Edited by: Bill Kelly

“King James Version: *“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for the evidence of things not seen”* (Hebrews 11:1) “New King James Version: *“Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen”* (Hebrews 11:1) “New American Standard Version: *“Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen”* (Hebrews 11:1).

“Faith is the belief, confidence, or trust we have in some person or thing. Jesus used the words faith and belief interchangeably—*“Be ye not faithless, but believing”* (John 20:27). All faith is based upon testimony or evidence—no evidence, no faith. God has sent His Son into the world to redeem men, and He requires men to accept Jesus as the Christ. Not, however, without ample evidence. He has preserved for and presented to the world through His word sufficient evidence to convince the world that Jesus is the Christ. *“Many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God: and that believing ye might have life through His name”* (John 20:30-31). “Since God provided the world with ample evidence to produce faith, men are required to believe that Jesus is the Christ and to submit to Him, and will be condemned if they do not. Jesus himself said, *“Except ye believe that I am He, ye shall die in your sins”* (John 8:24). *“Without faith it is impossible to please God or to come to Him...”* (Hebrews 11:6). *“He that believeth not shall be condemned”* (Mark 16:16). And furthermore, since unbelievers are to be punished, and since faith is dependent upon evidence, Jesus commanded His followers to *“Go into all the world and preach the gospel”* (Mark 16:15). The Gospel is to be *“made known to all nations: for the obedience of faith”* (Romans 16:25-26). *“How shall they believe in Him whom they have not heard, and how shall they hear without a preacher?”* Romans 10:14). *“It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe”* (1 Corinthians 1:21).

“Faith, however, is not only dependent upon evidence, but is conditioned by it. It partakes of the very essences of the testimony or evidence producing it. If the evidence is grotesque, fanatical or false, so will be the faith.—“Divine testimony, divine faith”. Like evidence, like faith. It is absolutely essential, therefore, that the gospel be preached in purity. For this cause the Apostle Paul warns against false teachers, pronouncing a curse upon anyone, man or angel, who preaches *“any other gospel...than that which we (apostles) have preached”* (Galatians 1:8-9). “It is not faith—faith in just any sort of gospel—that will save, but faith in the true and unadulterated gospel of Christ. In the final analysis, salvation is dependent not upon faith, but upon *“the faith”*. For this reason Jude (v. 3) exhorts Christians *“to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the Saints.”* (The above analysis and writing was by —Olan L. Hicks).

INSTANCES of FAITH in CHRIST: The wise men of the east, (Matthew 2:1, 2, 11) Jairus, for healing of his daughter, (Matthew 9:18, 23-25), the two blind men, (Matthew 9:29-30) Blind Bartimeus and a fellow blind man, (Matthew 20:30-34; Mark 10:46-52; Luke 17:11-19). The Samaritan leper, (Luke 17:11-19) Those who brought the paralytic to Jesus, (Luke 5:18-20) The Syrophenician woman, (Matthew 15:22-28; Mark 7:25-30) The woman who anointed Jesus' feet, (Luke 7:36-50) The Samaritans, who believed through the preaching of Jesus, (John 4:39-42) The nobleman whose child was sick, (John 4:46-53) The blind man whom Jesus healed on the Sabbath, (John 9:13-38) Mary, the sister of Martha, (Luke 10:38-42) The disciples, through the miracle at Cana of Galilee, (John 2:11) Three thousand at Pentecost, (Acts 2:41) Five thousand (Acts 4:4) Multitudes, (Acts 5:14) What then is faith? Matthew Arnold defines it as "holding fast to unseen goodness." A simpler definition makes it the hand extended to receive the blessing.

In Paul's writings, faith unites us to Christ; in the Epistle to the Hebrews, it is a faculty of the mind, by which it makes the future appear present and the unseen as though visible. The world says, "Seeing is believing"; The Gospel says, "Believing is seeing." Faith expels fear. It is the true anesthesia of the soul. Fear becomes dead to men of faith, and the knife may cut without hurting" (Maclaren).

On the other hand, nothing damns except a lack of it. "Faith is the beginning and love the end of life", as Ignatius puts it; or, "faith is the guide, and love is the road that leads to God" (Westcott). "Faith never puts the crown upon her own head; Christ crowns faith because faith covers Him" (Sturgeon).

"Faith looks over the horizon, sees the things of the future, makes them real, and brings them to one's feet; whereas hope looks over the horizon, sees things of the future, makes them real, and leaves them in the future. Faith is active; faith lifts us into fellowship with the Unseen; faith appropriates that future as an experience of the present" (Speke). By faith the perplexing providences of God are solved through faith alone can view the undeserved calamities of mankind and hold fast our beliefs in the goodness of God. "Faith brings us to the brink of the river; and even then it does not forsake. *"But now abideth faith, hope, love, and these three..."* (1 Corinthians 13:13).

Faith and hope are elements of the perfect and permanent state. New objectives of trust and desire will come into sight in the widening visions of the life eternal. The center of faith and hope is love. Love is greater than both, but not more lasting. "Faith, Hope, and Love were questioned, what they thought of future glory which religion taught: New Faith believed it firmly to be true—And Hope expected so to find it, too. Love answered, smiling, with a conscious glow, 'Believe'? 'Expect'? I know it to be so." (George L. Robinson).

We hear the expression quite regularly, "Saving Faith", and thus by having an active mind ask, what is Saving Faith? One could or should say, "Good question". Let's have a look and see if we can outline a plan and come up with a good answer.

Here now are some thoughts:

A. The Nature of Saving Faith

1. Saving Faith is more than Intellectual acknowledgement. Scripture references: Please read and study! (John 2:23-25): Jesus knows what is in man... (John 3:1-5): You must be born again/ or rededicate your life. Its relationship... (Acts 8:13-24): Conversion and repentance... (James 2:19): Faith vs. Works...

2. Saving Faith is more than emotional assent: Scripture references: Please read and study! (Psalms 106:12-13): Believe & rejoice—but soon forget and do not wait for counsel... (Matthew 13:20-21): Seed that fell on a rocky place, shallow roots... (John 8:29): Admonish to maintain faith and do good...

3. Saving Faith is a personal relationship of trust in Christ as Lord and Savior: Scripture reference: Please read and study! (Matthew 11:28-30): We each have a yoke... (John 1: 12): become a child of God... (John 4:13-14): drink the water of eternal... (John 14:1): trust in God/trust in Christ (1 John 5:5): overcoming the world... (Revelation 3:20): hear His voice; answer the knock at the door, come in and eat with Him...

B. The Object of Saving Faith

1. God is the object of saving faith (The principle or reason). In the Gospel according to John we have these red letter words *“Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me,”* (John 14:1). Faith requires belief thus belief in God the creator and Christ the Son of God. This is fundamental to settle a troubled heart. *“Peace I leave with you: My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful”* (John 14:27).

2. All true peace is His gift to those who believe in Christ through faith and walk in His ways. Christ promises a unique kind of peace that is different from the world’s peace. His peace is free to all who believe and obey. “Trust and obey, there’s no other way; to be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey.” Amen!

3. How great the declaration of saving faith when we read these words, *“Now faith is the assurance of things hope* (looking forward to) *for, the conviction of things not seen”* (Hebrews 11:1 ESV). In 1 Peter 1:21 we are given these assuring words, that through Christ we believe in God. God raised Jesus from the dead and glorified Him! Why..., here’s why, so that our faith and our hope are in God.

4. There are many scriptures which you can read and study that gives strength of faith in God and Christ as the object of “Saving Faith”. For your convenience the following scriptures are listed: Psalms 4:5; 9:10; 37:3; Mark 11:22; John 1:12; 3:16; 6:29; 12:44; Acts 8:37; 16:31; 20:21; Romans 10:9; Galatians 2:20; Ephesians 1:13; 1 Thess 4:14; 1 Timothy 1:16; 4:10; 2 Timothy 1:13; Hebrews 10:39; 1 John 3:23; 5:10-13).

With the paragraph title/subject/thought in mind please give attention and consideration to study of the scriptures referenced herein to the degree that your heart of love dictates. All scriptures are great truths’ which are needed for all of us and the blessings in them develops knowledge, wisdom, and grows faith, hope and love. What products! Another thought jumped into my mind...exercising of our mind with knowledge, and then putting it into practice (live out) will cause our light to shine brighter and the more reaching of the beam of our light. Please, let’s make this the standard philosophy in all our Bible studies, and the consecrated writings which are blessings (great rewards) to my heart and my studies. I pray constantly during the writing of these studies that you will accept them and that they will help you in study and are blessing to you also. Now, best that we get back to the lesson at hand—O.K.

C. The Source of Saving Faith

1. God Is the Source of Saving Faith (The foundation/starting place) Scripture reference: Please read and study! (Psalms 52:8) Trust in God’s unfailing love... (Matthew

16:16-17) Acknowledge Christ as the Son of God... (John 1:12-13) The right to become children of God... (Acts 11:21) ...believe and turn to the Lord... Other applicable scriptures: (Acts 13:48; 14:27; Romans 12:3; 1 Corinthians 2:4; 3:5; Ephesians 2:8; Philippians 1:29; 2 Thessalonians 2:13 1 John 4:14; 5:1, 6).

2. Christ is the source of saving Faith... Scripture reference: Please read and study! (Luke 17:5) Increase our faith... (Ephesians 6:23) Peace to brothers; love and faith from God and Christ... (1 Timothy 1:14) The grace of our Lord poured out abundantly... (Hebrews 12:2) Jesus the author and perfecter of our faith... (1 Peter 1:21) Through Christ you believe in God... (2 Peter 1:1) Through the righteousness of God and Jesus Christ we receive a faith which is perfect...

3. The Spirit is the source of Saving Faith Scripture reference: Please read and study! (1 Corinthians 12:8-9), *"To one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit..."*(Galatians 5:22), *"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness..."*

D. The Means of Saving Faith...

1. The gospel message preached/taught is a Means of Saving Faith... Scriptures referenced: Please read and study! (John 1:6-7): The Apostle, John came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light (Christ)... (John 17:20 Jesus prayed for Unity of Believers'... (John 19:34-35): Jesus' death; John's personal testimonies to the gospel truth reports... Others applicable: (John 21:24; Acts 2:38; 4:2,4; 8:12; 11:21; 14:1; 15:7; 17:32,34; 26:17-18; Romans 1:5, 6; 10:8-9, 14, 17; 16:25-26; 1 Corinthians 1:21; 15:1-2, 11; Ephesians 2:20; Philippians 2:17; Hebrews 13:7). They are all good reading and knowledge gained will be your reward. God bless this study, and forgive our sins, in Jesus name, and Amen!

2. God's written word is a Means of Saving Faith... Scriptures referenced: Please read and study! (Luke 1:3-4) *"... it seemed fitting for me as well, having investigated everything carefully from the beginning, to write it out for you in consecutive order, most excellent Theophilus; so that you may know the exact (correct/accurate/faithful) truth about the things you have been taught."* (Why was the gospel written? *"...these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God; and that believing (see John 3:15) you may have life in His name"* (John 17:2-4). Other applicable scripture to read and study: (Acts 17:2-4; Galatians 3:8; 2 Timothy 3:15; 1 John 5:13; and Jude 3).

D. Evidences of Saving Faith...

We know that any written consecrated study is done in words assembled by English Composition methodology and are selected words and principles from the Bible. This section of our lesson, as it was in the other sections, will be a series of action worded sentences referenced by cited scriptures. There will be great rewards for you when you study them using your Bible. This method will provide you a blessing of biblical thoughts into whatever depths your heart dictates. God bless you now, enjoy and do good! God loves you and I do too!

1. Demonstrating the Fruit of the Spirit is Evidence of true Saving Faith... Scripture referenced: (Galatians 5:22-23), this scripture speaks to the fruit of the Spirit by naming the fruit as, *"... joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, is*

laid out: (5:1-6) speaks to “Christian Liberty”; (5:7-15) speaks to “Love Fulfills the Law”,(5:16-26) speaks to “Walking in the Spirit.” The other listed Scriptures in this section speak to us about the fruit of the Spirit listed in Galatians (5:22-23). They too are good reading and good study. The bottom line is, these fruits must be manifested in each/all lives if Saints. There are no exceptions, no exceptions! All are a part of the Law. Here again we must refresh our thoughts of knowledge of (James 2:10). Other Scriptures: Please study these Scriptures as they relate to this paragraph D.—(Matthew 17:16ff; Ephesians 5:9; Romans 5:1-5; 1 Corinthians 13:4; Colossians 3:12). These are not all Scriptures that speak to the subject. You may desire to look-up other scriptures from your reference Bible—O. K.!

F. The relationship of Saving Faith in the Christian’s Life...

1. A true Christian will live by Faith... (Romans 1:17) declares the just live by faith. Paul, by inspiration, says it this way, “*For in it (the gospel) the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith (that is to say, Christian life begins with faith and is maintained through faith); as it is written, the just shall live by faith*” (see also Romans 4:12). Let’s now look to scripture that relate to the benefit and the blessing of them in relation to the good done, through faith, when manifested in the Christian life. The following are identified as faith needed for:

- (a). Remission of sins (Acts 13:39).
- (b). Justification (Acts 13:39)
- (c). Freedom from condemnation (John 3:18).
- (d). Salvation (Mark 16:16).
- (e). Sanctification (Acts 15:9).
- (f). Freedom from Spiritual death (John 11:25-26).
- (g). Spiritual light (John 12:36, 46).
- (h). Spiritual life (John 20:31).
- (i). Eternal life (John 3:16).
- (j). Adoption (John 1:12).
- (k). Access to God (Ephesians 3:12).
- (l). Edification (1 Timothy 1:4).
- (m). Preservation (John 10:26-29).
- (n). Inheritance (Acts 26:18).
- (o). Peace and rest (Romans 5:1). That is a total of 15, count them!

We have to give to receive. “*It is more blessed to give than to receive*” (Acts 20:35). Giving of our lives dedicated to God through Christlikeness must be our gift. Eternal life is God’s gift to us. God bless us in the knowledge of this. This study is closed with the following comments: “The scriptures and commentary that have been set forth in this study has been of great benefit to me.

The wonderful scriptures and principles that we studied together have been motivating to my conscience. It is my prayer that you have read and studied this lesson and that you will accept all truth herein and that it will be a conscience server to you also. Accepting truth and acting responsibly is truly a great blessing. It and the grace of God will get you to Heaven. “The well-trained conscience is equal to the knowledge, abiding faith, and love which we expose or submit to our mind. With confidence I say that you studied

this lesson with faith and love, and that it will be of great benefit to you. "With confidence I also say, that you desire to be blessed and to gain more knowledge. True abiding biblical knowledge is associated with responsibilities. In faith and love please seek and search diligently for responsible knowledge. It is found, in the study of God's word, the truth. Please accept it as your duty. It is your obligation, your stewardship responsibility. And it is truly a blessing! Your duty must be associated with and become an active part of your abiding faithfully in the Lord's Church until death.

"The church that I am speaking of is the church you read about in the Bible. The cost was the blood of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. The church is His Body, His Kingdom, which is His Church. Please be an obedient dedicated part of the church of the Bible. You cannot pass through Heaven's gate if you are not in Christ's Body, His Church. It surely is the Church, the only Church that you read about in the Bible. That is the truth. Note more of what is said in the Bible about truth and the church "*Buy the truth, and sell it not*" (Proverbs 23:23). Do not compromise the truth.

Where the Bible speaks definitively on a subject, we must be firm in our resolve concerning that truth. The Bible speaks clearly as to the number of churches having a scriptural right to exist. And that is ONE! Jesus promised to build His church, not "Churches" (Matthew 16:18). On the day of Pentecost, the saved were added to the church (Acts 2:47) HIS church. Paul said there is one body (Ephesians 4:4). Earlier in the same epistle Paul equated that body with the church (Ephesians 1:23). Later, Paul uses 12 nouns and pronouns to describe the church—all of them singular (Ephesians 5:23-32). This settles the matter of how many churches Jesus built and how many existed in the New Testament.

God bless you for studying with me on this great subject. God loves you...and I do too! I am your servant in the Lord!"

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P.S. I am identifying page 7 as an Enclosure. It is another good study on faith. It will get your attention and hurts to think about such happening to some who are in the "Faith". Pray that it won't happen to you and me.

Please use and advertise my Website. It is cited below and on the front cover of this writing.

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DEPARTING FROM THE FAITH

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The Apostle Paul provided direction for the work of his son in the faith, Timothy. In I Timothy 4:1-2 he warned the younger man about those that would depart from the faith. That warning provides us with a concise and clear definition of what it means to “depart from the faith.” The passage says, “*Now the Spirit speaks expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils: speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron.*” In this passage, “*departing from the faith*” consists of three things: (1) Listening to the wrong things, (2) Saying the wrong things, and (3) Becoming unwilling to tell the difference between right and wrong.

Notice that the text uses the words “*giving heed.*” This expression includes the idea of *listening, agreeing and accepting and then doing something as a result.* A person that gives heed “pays attention.” The word also has in it the concept of “turning the mind to” one thing or another.

You can see the problem with this. If we give heed or turn our minds to good things and ideas, good consequences will follow. If on the other hand we allow ourselves to listen and heed bad things, bad consequences will result. Paul spoke of seducing spirits and doctrines of devils. Some ideas are not worth listening to. If indeed we listen to foolishness, even innocently, there is the danger of being beguiled by it. In other words, bad ideas can seduce an innocent unwarned listener.

“Doctrines of devils” are bad ideas. By this I do not mean that these ideas are a little less beneficial than some other ideas. No, it is much worse than that. Bad ideas, doctrines of devils, are of a nature that they are capable of turning a mind in the direction of damnation. Such ideas ought to be rejected out of hand and not given any credence at all. For instance, to say that Jesus is not the Son of God is a doctrine of the Devil and must be rejected. If it is not rejected it will seduce its hearer.

When one ventures down this pathway, the next stop is *saying the wrong thing.* Examples of this are given in this passage. Forbidding to marry, abstaining from meats and accepting profane and old wives’ tales are three things mentioned. When a man allows his mind to be seduced by error he will end up saying all manner and sort of things. Those bad ideas will surface and manifest themselves in ridiculous statements (this is “speaking lies and hypocrisy”).

But this is not the worst component of departing from the faith. Note that the apostle says that such individuals had “*their consciences seared with a hot iron.*” Now cauterized conscience does not work too well. Indeed, it is worse than an untaught conscience. An untaught or uninformed conscience has hope of becoming properly educated and thus beneficial. This burned over and scared conscience is in tough shape. It is unable to discern the difference between right and wrong. The results of this process manifest themselves regularly in our secular culture. People who shoot at helicopters trying to rescue folks from a flood are people with seared consciences.

This passage gives precise information about the nature of the process of departing from the faith. Good Bible students will read and learn. Good Christians will determine to be faithful unto death and thus receive that crown of life (Revelation 2:10).