

BIBLE FAITH

Int.

1. Aim: To give an accurate description of biblical faith and exhort us to be faithful to Christ.
2. Heb. 11:6 - Why is faith important?
 - A. We cannot please God without faith
 - B. The just shall live by faith - Heb. 10:38 **"Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him."**
3. The word faith as used by men today is different than the word faith as it is used in the Bible. Man's use of faith is misleading and implies false doctrine. We need to learn what the Bible teaches!
5. These things will be discussed:
 - a. The Biblical meaning of faith
 - b. Man's definition of faith is wrong
 - c. We can have faith and knowledge

Discussion

I. THE BIBLICAL MEANING OF "FAITH"

A. Definition

1. Heb. 11:1 **"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."** (ASV) **Now faith is assurance of [things] hoped for, a conviction of things not seen."**
2. **Substance** = assurance [ASV], ground, basis, support --- confidence in the thing for which we hope
3. **Evidence**
 - a. Proof that our hopes really do exist
 - b. We have never seen God but there is satisfactory evidence to show that He does exist.

4. The evidence is in the Bible : Rm. 10:17 **"So then faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God."**

- a. Faith is formed by a proper understanding of God's word.
- b. We can be assured that God will keep His word!
- c. This trust is based on the evidence given in the Bible

B. Faith means that we TRUST God

1. The Greek word for faith means to rely on, to trust, to believe.
2. Faith comes as a result of examination of the data, evidences, proofs that is so clear and convincing that the mind of a rational human being is convinced that it is so.
3. Bible faith is a conviction based upon evidence!

II. MAN'S DEFINITION OF FAITH IS WRONG

A. Incorrect or wrong definitions are often made by men

1. The word baptize is defined in the dictionary to mean "dip into water or sprinkle with water." [Thorndike - Barnhart p.92]
2. The Bible defines baptism as a burial in water - **Rm. 6:4**
3. A mistake is also made in the definition of this word FAITH
 - a. Webster P.300 "belief, trust, firm belief in something for which there is no proof."
 - b. Funk & Wagnalls P.228 "belief without need of certain proof"
 - c. Thorndike - Barnhart p.94 "A believing without proof;"
 - d. Academic American Dictionary - Compuserve "(2) Belief that does not rest on logical proof or material evidence."

- e. Mark Twain said, "Faith is believing what you know ain't so."
- 4. Dictionaries define words as they are commonly used by men of their day. The Bible is our standard of authority in religion.

B. What is wrong with man's definition of faith?

- 1. It teaches that faith is not based on evidence
 - a. No proof required or needed
 - b. A blind acceptance
 - c. Believing without proof
 - d. Probability [See P.6 "Faith and Probability"] - That implies that our faith may not be true - It could be wrong !
- 2. The Bible says there is evidence for faith - Heb.11:1
 - a. Faith is not trust without proper evidence.
 - b. Faith is not self delusion
- 3. **The Leap of Faith hypothesis**¹
 - a. There is a wall that is between the mind of man and God.
 - b. This is the view that the evidence only goes part of the way.
 - c. The object of our faith is then gained only by this leap of faith.
 - d. This kind of faith is divorced from knowledge.
 - e. There is no real knowledge that this is true, but it called faith because you trust in something for which there is no proof !
 - f. A person may speak of the Christian's leap of faith as being shorter than the leap of faith required by an atheist.

¹Faith and Reason by Dick Sztanyo p. 12

- g. Thus we hear people say: It takes more faith to be an atheist than it does to be a believer in God! Illustration from an Atheist !
- h. This is absolutely false and confusing. But it is because of this misunderstanding of the definition of the word FAITH.

C. Implications of this false idea about faith

1. It implies that there is an element of Doubt in faith
 - a. Is our faith in God just our opinion that does not have proof and could be wrong?
 - b. Is belief in God just a high probability? Is so, then there is a possibility that he might not exist.
 - c. II Tim. 1:12 Paul knew and believed **"For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day."**
 - d. There was no doubt in Paul's faith - it was not a probability !
2. It implies that the evidence only goes part of the way
 - a. This man-made idea of faith teaches that faith involves a leap into the dark.
 - b. The dangerous implication of this view is that one person may leap into Buddhism, and another into Hinduism and another into Christianity. How do we know who leaped in the right direction if we have no evidence to guide us?
 - c. Jn. 14:6 **"Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."**

D. Here is The Faith as described in the Bible

1. Romans 10:17 Knowledge must precede faith.
2. Man uses his intellect to reason and look at all the evidence.
3. This leads to the conclusion that Heaven exists
4. And that God exists.
5. The evidence goes all the way. There is no wall between us and the object of our faith.
6. In order to live by faith you must trust in some things you know!

E. Summary

1. Biblical meaning of faith - based on evidence
2. Man's definition is wrong - it is believing without proof

III. WE CAN HAVE FAITH AND KNOWLEDGE

A. It is not uncommon to hear someone say, in regard to a belief that cannot be proven true, "It's just a matter of faith."

1. Or, if someone is being advised about a particular course of action, the recommendation might be, "Just launch out on faith."
2. How many times has the comment been made that something is just "a leap of faith"?

B. Can we have faith and knowledge ? ²

1. Yes !

²Faith and Knowledge by Bert Thompson p. 3ff

2. In the New Testament, the noun "faith" (Greek, pistis) is defined as: "primarily firm persuasion, a conviction based upon hearing...used in the New Testament always of faith in God or Christ, or things spiritual" (Vine, 1940,2:71).
3. The verb "believe" (Greek, pisteuo) is defined as: "...to be persuaded of, and hence, to place confidence in, to trust...reliance upon, not mere credence" (Vine, 1940, 1:116).
4. Thus, biblical faith is a conviction based upon evidence, and is not a mere concept as a "leap of faith," because biblical faith is always evidence- or knowledge-based.

C. Does faith somehow rule out "Knowing" ?

1. Can we both "Know" and "have faith" at the same time, or is it an either/or proposition?
2. Notice these verses in the Bible:
 - a. John 6:69 Peter said to the Lord **"And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God."**
 - b. Paul wrote in 2 Tim. 1:12 b **"for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day."**
 - c. In John 4:42 we read that the Samaritans told the woman who brought Christ to them: **"Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world."**
3. Faith is directly linked to knowledge
4. Without knowledge - evidence - it is impossible to produce faith !

D. People who had Faith -Heb. 11 - Hall of fame of Faith

1. Each person acted out of obedient faith to God's commands

- a. "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain.." v. 4
 - b. Noah " **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;** V. 7
 - c. "...by faith Abraham, - Heb. 11:8ff
 - d. "By faith Moses..." - Heb. 11:23 ff
2. What does "by faith" mean in these verses?
- a. Were they acting without evidence?
 - b. Did they not have any knowledge of what they were doing, or why they were doing it?
 - c. Were they taking a leap of faith?
3. In every case the people involved acted because they had knowledge upon which to base their faith.³
- a. Cain and able were instructed on what would be a more excellent sacrifice
 - b. Noah had the dimensions and directions for the ark given to him by God
 - c. Abraham did not set out on a journey with no destination; he traveled by directions provided by God.
 - d. Moses was directed by God in what he should do in taking the children of Israel from captivity to the Land of Promise !
4. These people acted because their knowledge produced biblical faith !

E. We can have FAI TH and KNOWLEDGE at the same time.

- 1. We Trust the message of God

³Faith and Knowledge by Bert Thompson p. 7 ff

2. To live a life of faith is to live a life of taking God at His word. Rm. 10:17
3. Gal. 5:5-6 **"For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith. 6 For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love."**

F. We walk by Faith not by sight

1. 2 Cor. 5:7 **"(For we walk by faith, not by sight:)"**
2. Someone might try to argue that this agrees with man's definition of faith.
3. Notice:
 - a. Walk by faith - live by faith - how does faith come? Rom. 10:17 says it comes by hearing the word.
 - b. The evidence is presented and when we examine the evidence it produces faith in our hearts. We trust God!
 - c. Not by Sight - we have not seen God, nor Christ, nor Heaven. But we have faith, trust, confidence in these things because it is based on evidence.
4. Illustration - I have faith that there is a city called Jerusalem.
 - a. I have never personally been to the city of Jerusalem.
 - b. I have read about it in books and encyclopedias.
 - c. I have seen pictures and films and videos.
 - d. I know there is a city called Jerusalem. How? By the evidence.
 - e. My Faith is produced by the evidence.
5. I have Faith that there is a Heavenly Jerusalem !
 - a. I have Never seen it
 - b. I have read about it in a book called the Bible!
 - c. I have examined the evidence presented in this book.

- d. This is proof - assurance - that the heavenly Jerusalem is a place where I want to go.
- e. My faith in the heavenly Jerusalem is real - it is based on evidence.

Conclusion

1. Faith is certainty, it is not something which is filled with doubts or uncertainties.
2. Knowledge or evidence must precede faith.
 - a. The Bible was written to produce faith - John 20:30-31 **"And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: 31 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."**
 - b. 1 John 5:13 **"These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God."**
3. Biblical faith is certainty based on testimony.
4. Our faith offers us no possibility or probability but certainty
5. Heb.11:1 **"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."**
Assurance, proof of things hoped for - heaven, eternal life with God
6. The things we believe in a Biblical sense we know by faith.
 - a. God exists
 - b. Christ is the Son of God
 - c. There will be a heaven for those who are obedient, and a hell for those who disobey.
7. The plan of Salvation includes Faith, Repentance, Confession and Baptism.

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