

Gospel Power



"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ for it is the power of God unto salvation..." (Romans 1:16)

Volume VIII

May 27, 2001

No. 20

Is My Faith Mine?

Steven Harper

According to the Bible, faith is defined as *"the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."* (Hebrews 11:1) Anyone who is a student of the Bible and who professes to be one of Christ's adherents would have to naturally agree with what faith is, according to God, but such does not seem to be the case nearly so often as what we would think. Often, many who claim to be disciples of Jesus Christ have an entirely different view and definition of what faith is, and it does not match with what **God** has said about it.

It should go without saying, but we must understand the necessity of accepting what God has said about every matter, including the way He defines faith. If we accept His definition of faith, we must exclude any other definition. I firmly believe that we are saved by faith, for the Bible tells us so (Ephesians 2:8; Romans 5:1), but there is a major divide in the religious world based upon different understandings of what that faith is that saves us. So we must ask: What is real faith?

Based on Evidence. As the writer of Hebrews said, it is "the evidence of things not seen." At this point, many want to say this is where we must take a "leap of faith" and just believe in what we cannot explain. That con-

cept is based on a misunderstanding of what the writer means here. The writer is not saying that our faith must be "blind" — with no visible reason for believing other than "I just know it's right." That is not faith at all. The faith that he speaks of us is one that believes in those things "not seen" because we have seen **evidence**. Our belief in things not seen (heaven, Jesus, etc.) is based on what God has given us in the written and revealed word. When we read those things, we may come to believe that they are true and that they are real, though we have never seen many of the things that are contained within. I have never seen Abraham, David, Ezekiel, Paul, or even Jesus, but I can believe that they were real people who really lived on earth when I study the word of God and find it to be a reliable record and worthy of believing the accounts that were recorded.

For many today, "faith" in Jesus is based on hearsay, rather than on evidence. Such 'faith' would fail the test of a court trial if it were ever challenged. Maybe what is "believed" about Jesus is what is seen on TV, heard from a preacher, or even what they **think** He is like. They've got some concept of what they think Jesus should be, and that's what they believe in. It is not based on anything they've found in the Bible, for they have never studied it and have

never actually weighed the evidence to see if it was true or not. This is **not** the “faith” that saves us.

“Faith,” for many, is more a **feeling** than a conviction, and many abandon their “faith” when the feeling goes away. The reason for this oft-occurring event is that it never really was faith. To have real faith — the one found in the Bible, the one that saves us — it must have **substance** and it must be based on **evidence**, not on a feeling.

A Personal Decision. Throughout the New Testament, whenever faith is mentioned, it is seen as a personal decision one must come to and never something done by popular vote or something that was inherited from one’s ancestors. Faith was always a matter of an individual coming to an understanding that the facts were, indeed, true, and worthy of admitting **personally** that he believed them to be true. At no time was faith ever represented as a matter to be voted on, something one did because their parents did it, or anything other than personal conviction.

When Jesus said, “*unless you believe that I am He, you will die in your sins*” (John 8:24), He was talking to individuals and the decision they each must make. When Jesus said, “*He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned*” (Mark 16:16), we can see the individual responsibility in the statement, and nothing remotely like something handed down to someone from their parents. That belief was based on the disciples having gone into the world and preached the gospel to every creature (v. 15), not a matter of following what their ancestors had done for generations. If that were the case, they still would have been following the Old Law!

So here is where we must ask ourselves about our own faith. Is it real? Is it *mine*? Is the faith that I have based on the evidence found within God revealed word? Do I believe in what the Bible teaches — more than just what I’ve been doing all my life or what my parents have

done?

From having sat down with many people over several years, I have observed that many do **not** have the faith of the Bible, but are doing what they are doing and following the teachings they do, not because they have investigated the evidence and searched through the Bible to see what God would have them to do, but because it is what their parents have done all their life. I cannot tell you the number of times I have studied with individuals with an open Bible in front of us, letting them see for themselves what God’s word teaches, only to have them say at the end of the study, “I know what it says, but...”, and then they “but” the life out of any hopes of true obedience to God’s word because it would mean their parents were wrong all those years. Sadly, many do not obey the obvious teachings of the Bible because it conflicts with what their parents taught them and to obey would mean their parents were wrong. Am I willing to admit truth, even when it means admitting others dear to me are wrong?

This is a difficult situation for many, but it is a decision that will affect our eternal destination. Jesus said, “*He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me.*” (Matthew 10:37) In stronger terms, He also said, “*If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple.*” (Luke 14:26) As difficult as it may be to set aside our relationships and personal feelings, we must understand the benefits outweigh the consequences by far.

So, let’s take a look at ourselves and investigate our faith. The apostle Paul admonished the Corinthians to “*Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves.*” (2 Corinthians 13:5) I must ask myself: Is my faith mine?

~via **The Burns Park Beacon**, North Little Rock, Ark.

Come and Study God’s Word With Us.

“Him That Is Able”

Patrick Farish

“Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen” (Ephesians 3:20-21).

“Able” is a big, little word. With only four letters, it is used widely to speak of power and competence. It describes the effectiveness of our great high priest, “able to succor them that are tempted” (Hebrews 2:18), and further, as abiding forever, “able to save to the uttermost them that draw near unto God through him” (Hebrews 7:25). Paul suffered without shame because of his persuasion that God “is able to guard that which I have committed unto him...” (2 Timothy 1:12).

Our God, therefore, is “able”. The particular aspect of His power in our text, Ephesians 3:20, 21, has to do with prayer. He has repeatedly invited His children to pray (Philippians 4:6) without ceasing (1 Thessalonians 5:17) with the assurance that whatever we ask for (John 14:13, 14) according to His will (1 John 5:14) we receive of Him (1 John 3:22).

The fact that He is “able” says that there is nothing too hard for Him. Do we regulate our petitions in prayer as though there IS something too hard for Him? He does not have to work miracles to accomplish His purposes: and His instruction to us regarding prayer is **not**, “be reasonable”; **but**, express your “heart’s desire”: because, Ephesians 3:20, 21, He “is able to do...**all** that we ask or think.” In fact, He “is able to do ... **above all** that we ask or think”; why, He “is able to do ... **abundantly above all** that we ask or think”; no, look here, He “is able to do **exceedingly abundantly above all** that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us”!

We do not know the mind of God, when

He has not revealed it: so let us never doubt the **power** of God, by withholding petitions on the misguided ground of apparent impossibility.

~via *Biblical E-Sights*, Vol. 1 No. 32



Gospel Meeting

June 17-22

Mark White, Speaker

Anderson church of Christ
Highway 207
Anderson, Alabama

News & Notes

THE SICK: *Millinea Word* received a good report from her doctor this past Tuesday concerning her blood work ...*Suzette McIntyre* has been not feeling well recently...*Lou Ann Phillips* was sick and not able to be at Bible study Wednesday night...*Shelia Goode* was sick and not able to be out Wednesday night...*Larry White* was not feeling well and not able to be at Bible study Wednesday night ... Remember *Wanda Tucker's father, Billy Letson*, who is continuing to take medication for his Leukemia ...*Helen Trousdale and Gurtie Snoddy's neice, Martha Henson*, who is battling cancer ...*Sheila Goode & Lou Ann Phillips mother, Shirley Slaton*, continues treatments for her cancer... *Sandra Glass' cousin, Tina Strickland*, who is continuing her treatments for her cancer ...Also remember *Mattie Blanche Word* who continues at

home and not able to be out...**Aldeen Noles** who is not able to be out ...Also remember **Gurtie Snoddy** who is in the Mitchell-Hollingsworth Nursing Home...**Mary Best's nephew, Shannon Johnson**, who is at home ...Remember **Tisha Thomas' grandmother, Nellie Hunter**, and **Millinea Word's mother, Nola McCafferty**, who are both in the Meadow Brook Nursing Home in Pulaski.

OUT OF TOWN: The Coopers: *Curt, Marcia and Erin* have been away in Florida this past week...**The Words:** *James and Millinea* flew to Orlando, Florida this past week and be return this week...**The Bests:** *Jerry and Mary* are away this week on vacation...**Cindy Mosley** is in Florida this weekend with her sisters.

GOSPEL MEETINGS: The **Pleasant Valley church** in Limestone county will begin a meeting today and it will continue through Friday with services at 7:00 p.m. The speakers in this meeting are as follows: Sunday– *Mike Waters*; Monday – *David Cox*; Tuesday – *Norm Webb*; Wednesday – *Buc Chumbley*; Thursday– *Dwane Derrick*; Friday– *Rufus Clifford, III*...The **Carriger church** in Limestone county will begin a meeting on Friday of this week with different speakers. The speakers will be as follows: Friday – *Dan Binkley*; Saturday – *Greg Chandler*; Sunday – *Mark White*. Services on Friday and Saturday will begin at 7:00 p.m.

ANDERSON REPORTER: There is a new Reporter on the table in the vestibule. Be sure to pick-up a copy.

COMMUNICATION GROUPS: Tonight is the night for Communication group four to meet. If you are in group four, remember to meet with your group.

THE WILLIAMS: The Williams have left for Arkansas and we will miss them when they are not here. We look forward to seeing them back from time to time. Their address is as follows:

P.O. Box 416
Bryant, Arkansas 72089
(501) 407-9507

Gospel POWER

is published in interest of New Testament Christianity and to enhance the work of the Anderson church.

Schedule of Services

Sunday

Bible Classes 9:45 a.m.
Morning Worship 10:45 a.m.
Evening Worship 6:00 p.m.

Wednesday

Bible Classes 7:00 p.m.

Anderson church Home Page

Anderson-church.org

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