

# Faith Is Certainty About God And His Word

Faith in general is partly described as total certainty or assurance about *absolute truths* about God as revealed in His Word. Faith is based on the written Word (see Romans 10:17). God always does whatever He promises in His Word. Isaiah 46:9-11 and 55:11 prove this. Isaiah 55:11 states: ***“So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; it shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.”***

Because God’s perfect character stands behind His Word, we can have a faith which is *certain* or *sure* that in His timing and way, He will do exactly as he has promised.

Hebrews 10:22 speaks of this New Testament concept of the ***“full assurance of faith”***: ***“Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith...”*** In the original Greek, the expression ***“full assurance”*** here is “plerophoria” which means “to be completely certain of the truth of something”.<sup>1</sup> Faith in God, Jesus Christ and God’s Word involves *absolute certainties* and not mere human opinions or subjective so-called “truths” which change according to the latest religious theory.

In Romans 4:18-24, the Apostle Paul uses Abraham as an example of someone who had this fully assured type of faith in God and His Words (in this case spoken and not written). In Greek, the expression ***“being fully convinced”*** used in Romans 4:21 about Abraham’s faith response to God’s spoken Word, is a form of the word “plerophoreo”. “Plerophoreo” means “be fully convinced, assured, certain”.<sup>2</sup>

Genesis 15:4 and 17:1-19 record God promised to provide him with a son. Abraham trusted God to perform this miracle even though Abraham was almost 100 years at the time, his body was practically dead and Sarah was past the age of child-bearing. Sarah later had this promised son at the age of 90 years.

In 2 Corinthians 10:7, Paul spoke of a believer being ***“convinced in himself he is Christ’s”***. In Greek, the word ***“convinced”*** here is a form of the word “peitho” which Bauer says in this context means “be sure, certain”.<sup>3</sup>

One element of *doubting* God is being *uncertain* He will do what He has promised about our salvation and other matters. James 1:6-7 reveals the result of having doubt or uncertainty in God: ***“But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord.”***

---

<sup>1</sup> Louw and Nida, page 371.

<sup>2</sup> Bauer, page 670.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, page 639.

## Why Christian faith is based on certainties

A Christian does not have a faith based on mere possibilities or probabilities. Instead his faith is based on certainties.<sup>4</sup> There are a number of reasons for this:

- Our God is *not a liar*, as Titus 1:2 indicates: *...God, who cannot lie...*
- Our God has *limitless power*. No one can prevent Him from doing whatever He wants. Daniel 4:34-35 states: *“...For His dominion is an everlasting dominion, and His kingdom is from generation to generation. All the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing; He does according to His will in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth. No one can restrain His hand or say to Him, ‘What have You done.’”*
- God has a *perfectly loving totally unselfish character*. 1 John 4:8 says: *“...God is love...”* Because of having such an unselfish character, God only ever seeks what is best for us. What He regards as best for us is not always what we think is best at the time.
- God is *perfectly faithful* (see 1 Corinthians 1:9, 10:13 and 1 Peter 4:19).

## Saving faith

Saving faith is focussed on certain specific absolute truths about God and Jesus Christ. Some of these truths are listed in 1 Corinthians 15:1-4: *“Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you – unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you first of all that which I also believed: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again on the third day according to the Scriptures.”*

The latter part of Romans 10:9 emphasises the importance of believing Jesus Christ rose from the dead: *“That if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus Christ and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.”*

2 Corinthians 11:3-4 shows the importance of believing in the *right Gospel* and the *right Jesus Christ* and not false versions of these. We must qualify this by saying God does not expect new converts to have a perfect understanding of all His wonderful truths in His written Word before they can have saving faith.

## “Believe that”

In the New Testament, the Greek word “pisteuo” meaning *“believe”* is sometimes followed by the conjunction “hoti” meaning *“that”*. The expression “pisteuo hoti” or *“believe that”* relates to being *certain* or *fully assured* about the *objective truth* of whatever God has revealed about Himself and Jesus Christ in the specific relevant context and/or previously. Examples of the expression *“believe that”* are found in John 8:24, 20:31, Acts 8:37, Romans 6:8, 10:9, James 2:19, 1 John 5:1 and 5:5.<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup> The only time in which faith in God and Christ does not relate to certainty is when the Word of God does not clearly reveal His will about the matter in question.

<sup>5</sup> Other New Testament usages of the expression *“believe that”* are found in Matthew 9:28, Mark 11:23, 11:24, John 11:27, 11:42, 13:19, 14:11, 16:30, 17:21, 1 Thessalonians 4:14 and Hebrews 11:6.

Verses such as John 8:24, 20:31 and Romans 10:9 show the link between believing objective truths found in God's written Word about Jesus Christ, His death and resurrection, and receiving various aspects of salvation. John 20:30-31 states: "***And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.***"<sup>6</sup>

## **But saving faith is not just a religious creed to mentally believe**

Some may wrongly teach 1 Corinthians 15:2-4 gives a complete definition of the Gospel and all people need to do to be saved is to believe the absolute truths contained in these verses. 1 Corinthians 15:2-4 was quoted earlier and records Christ died for our sins, was buried and on the third day rose again. But note many cultists such as Jehovah's Witnesses believe in the truths of these verses but are not saved. So the required response by God to be saved is more than merely believing these truths.

The Gospel of grace and of the Kingdom through Christ is not some creed that is just to be believed as a set of absolute truths. Satan and demons believe in the truths of the Gospel. They believe that Jesus died to save us from our sins, He rose from the dead and ascended into heaven. They believe He is God, performed great miracles and will return again. They believe in every truth in the Bible but are still heading towards eternal punishment. James 2:19-20 warns: "***You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe – and tremble! But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead?***"

Humans can mentally believe every absolute truth found in the written Word but remain unsaved if they do not have a faith which includes surrender to Jesus as Lord and Saviour.

King Agrippa is a classic example of an *almost Christian* – someone who believes in many of the truths found in the written Word of God but who did not have saving faith. Acts 26:27-28 records Paul's and Agrippa's words: "***King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know that you do believe. Then Agrippa said to Paul, 'You almost persuade me to become a Christian'.***" Even though Paul said Agrippa believed in the truths of the Word, Agrippa had not received Jesus as His Lord and Saviour in surrendered faith.

In John 5:38-40, Jesus criticized many Jews for seeking eternal life in the Scriptures in ways unconnected with belief in Him as a Person: "***But you do not have His word abiding in you, because whom He sent, Him you do not believe. You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me. But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life.***"

## **John Wesley on saving faith and merely believing truths**

John Wesley attacked those who preached we could be saved by a "faith" which only believed truths about Jesus Christ: "***Now let no one deceive himself. Carefully note that any faith which does not produce **repentance, love, and good works** is not a true, living faith. Instead, it is a **dead and devilish** faith. Even the devils believe that Jesus was born of a virgin. They know that He accomplished all kinds of miracles and declared himself to be God. They also know that, for our sakes,***

---

<sup>6</sup> John 2:22 records that after Jesus was resurrected, His disciples "***believed the Scripture and the Word which Jesus had said***" earlier about His resurrection.

*He suffered a most painful death to redeem us from everlasting death. They believe that He rose again on the third day, ascended into heaven, and now sits at the right hand of the Father. They know that He will come at the end of the world to judge both the quick and the dead. Yes, these articles of Christian faith the devils believe, as well as all that is written in the Bible. **Yet with all this belief – this faith – they are still devils.** They remain in their same damnable condition, lacking the very true Christian saving faith. **The right and true Christian faith is not only to believe the Scriptures and historical doctrines are true. True faith is much more than that.**”<sup>7</sup>*

#### Bible Study Questions

1. What does the expression “**full assurance of faith**” in Hebrews 10:22 mean?
2. When Romans 4:21 uses the phrase “**being fully convinced**” in relation to Abraham, to what is it referring?
3. What does James 1:6-7 teach us?
4. Why is the Christian faith based on certainties?
5. Which verses show that saving faith is focussed on certain specific absolute truths about God and Jesus Christ?
6. What does James 2:19-20 warn us of in relation to having faith in God?

---

<sup>7</sup> John Wesley, “The Holy Spirit and Power”, (as paraphrased by Clare Weakley), Logos International, Plainfield, New Jersey, 1977, page 35.