



The Sinaitic Light

Defining True Faith

Study Article No. II

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This article uses the English terms for Elohim (God), Yah (Father) Yahoshua (Christ).

Objective and Learning Outcome

Objective:

The objective of this article is to better understand the purpose of faith and its components from a biblical perspective; while identifying how faith contributes to our journey with God.

Learning Outcome:

Upon completion of this study, the reader will:

1. Understand the definition of true faith as it is exemplified in the Bible;
2. Understand the importance of faith;
3. Understand the differences between what demonstrates faith and what does not;
4. Understand how following the commandments is essential to faith;
5. Understand how trust (belief) and faith work in unison;
6. Understand the catalyst for faithlessness and;
7. Understand how sin is averse to faith, belief, truth and righteousness

Introduction

Faith is one of the most important elements within God’s salvific framework that must be demonstrated to God in order to be accepted by Him. Without faith it is impossible to please God. The author says in Hebrews, “And it is impossible to please God without faith. Anyone who wants to come to him must believe that God exists and that he rewards those who sincerely seek him” (Heb. 11:6, NLT). Many Israelites died in the wilderness after they left Egypt because they chose to disobey the commands of God. The ones that did not die, those over 20 years of age, were not allowed entrance into the promise land. The author tells us why; “For this good news—that God has prepared this rest—has been announced to us just as it was to them. But it did them no good because they didn’t share the faith of those who listened to God (Heb. 4:2, NLT). He goes on to say: “So God’s rest is there for people to enter, but those who first heard this good news failed to enter because they disobeyed God” (Heb. 4:6, NLT). Israelites failed to enter the promise land because they lacked the faith to be obedient to God’s reasonable and attainable commands, that were designed to do them good. But what is faith and why is it so important to God? To answer this question, we need to first understand what faith is and what it is not.¹²³

Faith is the Hebrew word *āmūn'* אָמֵן (Strong’s H529) used five times in the Old Testament to represent faith, faithfulness and truth (Deut. 32:20; Prov. 13:17; 14:5; 20:6; Is. 26:2). The word derives from *'aman* אָמַן (Strong’s H539) used one hundred and eight times in the Old Testament. Forty-four times it means to believe, twenty times to be faithful, and five times to mean trust. Abraham is the representation of true faith because He heard God’s command to leave a city he was familiar with, to go to a place that was alien to him. He followed God’s command, thereby demonstrating his faith; his faith was attributed to him for righteousness. This is the same type of faith God wants us to display before Him.⁴⁵⁶ James writes the following,

What good is it, dear brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but don’t show it by your actions? Can that kind of faith save anyone? Suppose you see a brother or sister who has no food or clothing, and you say, ‘Good-bye and have a good day; stay warm and eat well’—but then you don’t give that person any food or clothing. What good does that do? So, you see, faith by itself isn’t enough. Unless it produces good deeds, it is dead and useless. Now someone may argue, ‘Some people have faith; others have good deeds.’ But I say, ‘How can you show me your faith if you don’t have good deeds? I will show you my faith by my good deeds’ (James 2:14-18, NLT).

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1. What must one possess in order to please Yah (God)?
 2. Why did so many Israelites die in the wilderness after Moses delivered them from Egypt?
 3. What happened to the Israelites over 20 years of age that did not die in the wilderness?
 4. What Hebrew word means to be faithful or faithfulness?
 5. What Hebrew word means trust?
 6. How did Abraham show Yah that he was faithful to Him?

It is not sufficient for someone to say they have faith in God or to believe in God, but not show that faith by works. God is able to identify a person's faith by what they do, not by what they say. This is James' argument which he continues to demonstrate.⁷

Don't you remember that our ancestor Abraham was shown to be right with God by his actions when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? You see, his faith and his actions worked together. His actions made his faith complete. And so, it happened just as the Scriptures say: 'Abraham believed God, and God counted him as righteous because of his faith.' He was even called the friend of God. So, you see, we are shown to be right with God by what we do, not by faith alone. Rahab the prostitute is another example. She was shown to be right with God by her actions when she hid those messengers and sent them safely away by a different road. Just as the body is dead without breath, so also faith is dead without good works (James 2:21-26, NLT).⁸

To simply say that one believes in God, but not do the things that God commands, does not demonstrate *true faith*. It demonstrates pretension. The author of Deuteronomy says:⁹

They sacrificed to demons that were no gods, to gods they had never known, to new gods that had come recently, whom your fathers had never dreaded. You were unmindful of the Rock that bore you, and you forgot the God who gave you birth. The LORD saw it and spurned them, because of the provocation of his sons and his daughters. And he said, 'I will hide my face from them; I will see what their end will be, for they are a perverse generation, children in whom is no faithfulness. (Deut. 32:17-20, ESV).

The children of Israel did not believe in Yah, therefore they lacked faith in Him. This lack of faith precipitated mistrust which lead to deviancy and transgression which ultimately destroyed many of them.

Faith is inclusive of our belief and represents what we know to be the truth. It serves as "a kind of affirmation of truth. . . and this affirmation involves the apprehension of something that can be expressed. . ." (McLeod: 208). Faith is an element within the belief matrix that requires a demonstrative act to affirm that belief, as James demonstrated earlier. One must believe that something or someone exists before it is possible to put one's faith in it; what they have established as their faith also establishes their truth. In reference to God, the question is, how much do we really *know* about this transcendent deity? Can He be known? Is there enough information about Yah to formulate a belief system about Him that begets trust and confidence demonstrated by action that illuminates our faith?¹⁰¹¹¹²

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7. What is the apostle James trying to illustrate to his readers about faith?
 8. Name two people that James uses to illustrate to his readers that faith is exemplified by a person's works?
 9. True or False. A person who believes in Yah, but does not follow His commands is an example of pretense.
 10. Faith is inclusive of our _____ and represents what we know to be the _____.
 11. Faith is an affirmation of _____.
 12. True or False. Faith requires a demonstrative act to affirm that belief.

Dr. Roger Haight, Professor of Systematic and Historical Theology at Regis College, notes that “Faith is one’s conscious being in relationship to the transcendent, to God. But this faith never exists as it were alone or isolated on this level. Faith always comes to expression in some symbolic objective form, either conceptually or linguistically. It also concretizes itself in some form of reaction, response, action, willing or doing. One may call the manifestation of faith in its objective symbolic and in some measure cognitive form ‘belief’” (Haight: 72). Haight defines faith in the verbal form. It is an action that expresses one’s belief in the unknown. As a noun, faith *represents* what one believes. As a verb, it *expresses* what one believes. Matthew 21:22 is an example of using belief in the verbal form. Yahoshua says, “And all things you ask in prayer, *believing*, you will receive” [emphasis added]. Believing, in the verbal form, is the Greek word *pisteuó πιστεύω* (Strong’s G4100), used to demonstrate faith in what one believes from its noun stem *pēstēs* (*pistis*). In this passage, one must fully believe to receive what they have asked for.¹³¹⁴¹⁵

In closing, every believer must believe in God, that is, trust in Him. This trust or belief must be exemplified by works or more accurately, deeds of righteousness. If we fail to follow the commandments of God, we are demonstrating a lack of trust in Him, His word and His system of righteousness, which promises eternal life for those who practice it as a demonstration of their faith. This is the definition of true faith as it is exemplified in the Bible. Every believer shows that belief by performing works that emulate the righteousness of God such as favorable deeds to mankind and separation from things that will tarnish one’s relationship with Him. Belief in God will force us towards Him and allow the word of God to stimulate our minds to put forth righteous works that will glorify Him. Paul says “and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness. Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another. Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and give no opportunity to the devil (Eph. 4:23-27, ESV).¹⁶¹⁷

The children of Israel, coming out of the Egyptian Exodus lost their belief in God, and thus, could not exhibit their faith in God. Their lack of belief and subsequent lack of faith created opportunities for *sin* to lure them into the weaknesses of the flesh so that it could rule over them. Sin revealed itself by different names, “pride, envy, greed, coveting, insecurity, sensitivity, anger, selfishness, obstinacy, disobedience, deceit, etc.,” all manifesting itself through the flesh. When these vices appeared, it revealed its true name, “sin” and began to rule over them. These vices were lying dormant in them, waiting for an escape (Gen. 4:6-7). Consequently, the children of Israel became *sin unto God*. They became His opponent and adversary because they allowed sin to become their master, “their god”, which caused Yah to destroy many of them. Paul affirms this position when he writes to the Romans,

13. How does Haight say one expresses their faith?

14. What does faith represent as a noun?

15. What does faith demonstrate as a verb?

16. True or False. Believing in Yah requires us to demonstrate that belief through the deeds of righteousness.

17. A person who does not practice righteousness is demonstrating to Yah that they do not trust Him.

I don't really understand myself, for I want to do what is right, but I don't do it. Instead, I do what I hate. But if I know that what I am doing is wrong, this shows that I agree that the law is good. So, I am not the one doing wrong; it is sin living in me that does it. And I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. I want to do what is right, but I can't. I want to do what is good, but I don't. I don't want to do what is wrong, but I do it anyway. But if I do what I don't want to do, I am not really the one doing wrong; it is sin living in me that does it (Rom. 7:15-20, NLT).

If we believe in God, and show that belief by following His commandments, we are then revealing a faithful disposition towards our Creator who loves us and has given us life, even when we have not deserved it. We are also rebuffing the vices that sin uses to manifest itself through our flesh to demonstrate its superiority and rule over us. Paul writes,

Don't you realize that you become the slave of whatever you choose to obey? You can be a slave to sin, which leads to death, or you can choose to obey God, which leads to righteous living. Thank God! Once you were slaves of sin, but now you wholeheartedly obey this teaching we have given you. Now you are free from your slavery to sin, and you have become slaves to righteous living. Because of the weakness of your human nature, I am using the illustration of slavery to help you understand all this. Previously, you let yourselves be slaves to impurity and lawlessness, which led ever deeper into sin. Now you must give yourselves to be slaves to righteous living so that you will become holy. When you were slaves to sin, you were free from the obligation to do right. And what was the result? You are now ashamed of the things you used to do, things that end in eternal doom. But now you are free from the power of sin and have become slaves of God. Now you do those things that lead to holiness and result in eternal life. For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord (Rom. 6:16-23, NLT).¹⁸¹⁹²⁰²¹²²

There is much more to discuss on this subject. If you have questions about this study and others feel free join us in fellowship, prayer, praise, and study every Saturday at 11:30 am, or call us for consultation pertaining to this subject, and any other you might find intriguing. We are a Messianic Judaic assembly teaching the doctrine of Messianic Sinaiticism, which means keeping God's word in the faith of Christ (Rev. 12:17; 14:12-13) and proclaiming his gospel to the world and to those who are seeking His truth without *private* interpretation or church tradition. May the blessings of the Most High be with you and thank you for reading our article.

18. True or False. One's lack of faith or belief in God will create an opportunity for sin to lure us into acts that are contrary to God's righteousness.

19. Explain how sin was waiting for an opportunity to rule over Cain.

20. What are three vices that sin uses to express itself through the human flesh?

21. True or False. Paul informs his readers that many of us want to do good but we struggle because of sin's presence.

22. True or False. If we remain faithful to Yah by practicing His commandments, then we are showing Him that we trust Him and believe in Him. Through this trust we can defeat the desire to sin.

References

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