

THE NATURE OF SAVING FAITH'... are you really saved?

**Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.
And without faith it is impossible to please God... Hebrews 1:1, 6a**

We live in a sin-cursed world. Everywhere we look, we can see the results of man's sin. Scripture reveals that sickness, death, every kind of pain; sorrow and destruction are the results of man's rebellion against God. Because of sin, our bodies are born with weaknesses, and we are prone to sickness. Adam's sin brought death; and all of us, as Adam's descendants, will face physical death.

"Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned..." Romans 5:12

The Bible does not say that God punished the human race for one man's (Adams) sin, rather that the nature of sin, namely, my claim to my right to myself—self-centeredness, entered into the human race through one man.

However, it also says that another Man (Jesus) took upon Himself the sin of the human race and put it away—a wonderfully profound revelation...

"But now he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself. Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment, so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people..." Hebrews 9:26b-28a

Sin is something we are born with and cannot touch—only God touches sin through redemption.

- It is through the Cross of Christ that God redeemed the entire human race from the possibility of damnation through the heredity of sin.

Faith... the master key that unlocks salvation

The Bible says...

- God saves us from judgment for sin, not on the basis of how good we are, but through his grace on the basis of *faith*.
- Not a blind *faith*, but a *faith* that is built on the facts found in the Bible, through the work of the Holy Spirit.
- Not *faith in faith*, but *faith* in God's **grace** to save us from sin—a faith called "saving faith".¹

From God's Word we learn that folks with "saving faith" are *believers*... Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son. John 3:18-19

Believers have *saving faith*... For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves. It is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast.

Ephesians 2:8-9

¹ Please see Ephesians 2:8-9, Acts 4:12, Romans 5:1-2

Believers as defined by the Word of God: (Saved, born-again, child of God, have eternal life)

- Those who are saved... confess with their mouth that, “Jesus is Lord,” and “believe in their hearts that God raised Jesus from the dead.” Romans 10:9-10
- Those who are born again... In reply Jesus declared, “I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again.” John 3:3
- Those who are children of God... Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to be called children of God—children not born of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God. John 1:12-13
- Those who have eternal life... Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?” John 11:25

Selected verses showing what the Bible says about Saving Faith:

Saving Faith Is More Than “Intellectual Acknowledgement”... (not just believing about)

- The apostle James wrote, “You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that—and shudder.” James 2:19

Saving Faith Is More Than “Emotional Assent”... (not dependent on feelings)

- The one who received the seed that fell on rocky places is the man who hears the word and at once receives it with joy. But since he has no root, he lasts only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, he quickly falls away. Mathew 13:20-21

Saving Faith Is a Personal Relationship of Trust in Christ as Lord and Savior...

- “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.” Matthew 11:29-30

The Means, Object, and Source of Saving Faith

The means of Saving Faith (Gospel and Bible)

The Gospel Message Preached is a Means of Saving Faith...

- I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile.
Romans 1:16
- Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ. Romans 10:17

God's Written Word Is a Means of Saving Faith...

- But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name. [John 20:31]
- I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life. [John 5:24]

The object of *Saving Faith* (God/Christ)

God Is the Object of Saving Faith...

- Through him you believe in God, who raised him from the dead and glorified him, and so your faith and hope are in God. [1 Peter 1:21]
- And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone that comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him. [Hebrews 11.6b]

Christ is the Object of Saving Faith...

- And you were also included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit. [Ephesians 1:13]

The source of *Saving Faith* (God, Christ and the Holy Spirit)

God is the Source of Saving Faith

- For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not of yourselves, it is the gift of God. [Ephesians 2:8]

Christ is the Source of Saving Faith

- Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. [Hebrews 12:2]

The Holy Spirit is the Source of Saving Faith

- To the one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit... [1 Corinthians 12:8-9]

Evidences of Saving Faith

Here are some biblical standards that can give you confidence that your faith is “saving faith:”

- Demonstrating the “fruit of the Spirit” is evidence of faith...Galatians 5:22
- Doing good works is evidence of faith... James 2:14-26
- Encouraging others in the faith is evidence of faith... Jude 20-21
- Fearing God is evidence of faith... Exodus 14:31
- Growing spiritually is evidence of faith... 2 Peter 1:5-7
- Humbling oneself before God is evidence of faith... Jonah 3:5
- Living according to faith is evidence of faith... 1 Thessalonians 1:3
- Loving others is evidence of faith... 1 Timothy 1:5
- Worshiping and praising God is evidence of faith... Psalm 28:7

Study each of these verses in your Bible and ask the Holy Spirit to teach and counsel you as you consider the “state of your faith?” Is there biblical evidence of “*saving faith*”?

Proclaiming God’s message to others is evidence of faith...

It is written: “I believed; therefore I have spoken.” With that same Spirit of faith we also believe and therefore speak... Acts 20:21

Obedience to the Great Commission given us by Jesus after his resurrection...

“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” [Matthew 28:19-20]

Faith without deeds is dead²

How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!” [Romans 10:14-15]

BENEFITS OF FAITH

Eternal Benefits of *Saving Faith* (Adoption, assurance, eternal life)

1. Adoption into God’s Family

- Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God... [John 1:12]

2. A Benefit of Faith is Assurance

- ...let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water. [Hebrews 10:22]

3. A Benefit of Faith is Eternal Life.

- Keep yourselves in God’s love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life. [Jude 21]

Eternal benefits also include... *Forgiveness of Sins* [Acts 10:43] *Inheriting God’s Promises* [Galatians 3:22] *Justification* [Galatians 2:16] *Not Being Condemned* [John 3:18] *Righteousness From God* [Romans 3:21-22] *Salvation* [2 Thessalonians 2:13] *Sanctification* [Acts 26:18] *Glorification* [1John 3:2 & Romans 8:30]

Believers have the life of Jesus Christ in them,³ and he has overcome the world.⁴ In Christ, we have the power to resist worldly ways and to live godly lives—pleasing to God no matter how others treat us. In Christ, we can, daily, enjoy the divine benefits of faith:

- Divine blessings [Jeremiah 17:7]
- Divine empowering [John 14:12-14]
- Divine guidance [John 12:46]
- Divine protection [Psalm 115:9-11]

Access to God, Christ’s indwelling, God’s love, grace, joy, pardon of sin, peace, new birth... names just a few of the countless, limitless blessings of *faith*. I like what this writer says... “Faith sees the invisible, believes the incredible and receives the impossible.”

“Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see. And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.” Hebrews 11:1,6

¹ From *Baker Topical Guide To The Bible—NIV*

² James 2:14

⁴ Ephesians 3:16-17

⁵ John 16:33