

THE BEREANS

ACTS 17:11

2 Peter 1:1
Lesson #1
Faith as God's gift
09/12/2021

2 Peter

**Finding our way
in a Confused World**

Salutation	Three aspects of staying on track.		
Faith and the faith	Cultivate a mature faith in sync with Scripture.	Count the cost of worldly alternatives.	Clarify true and false hope.
1:1-3	1:4-15 1:16-21	2:1-22	3:1-18

Holiness

Heresy

Hope



- 1 Peter addresses stress and trials from outside the Christian community.
- 2 Peter addresses stress and trials from within the Christian community.

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2 Peter 1:1

"Simon Peter, a bond-servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who have **received** a **faith** of the **same kind** as ours, **by the righteousness of our God** and Savior, Jesus Christ:"

"received" (obtained)

"faith" (a corpus of doctrine)

"same kind" (a common phenomena)

"righteousness" (a just work of God)

2

Verbing

(words that can be both a noun or a verb)

- I had to **xerox** 10 copies.
- He opened a family **trust**.
- She **tabled** the proposal.

• **FAITH**



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Observation #1

"FAITH" is a gift as both a verb and a noun.

1.

Faith (**VERB** - the act of believing) is a gift of God that comes with God's Image in us equipping us to respond to Him.

2.

Faith (**NOUN** - a corpus of doctrine) based on God's acts in Christ and passed down as a gift to us.

Implications:

The question is not, "do we believe", but rather what do we believe in.

Faith, as a corpus of doctrine, can be received or rejected by all who have God's image.

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Observation #2

Christian FAITH (verb) has complex roots.

- The **creation** AROUND US bears witness to God's presence and power. (Rom.1:18-23)
- The **image of God** IN US giving us eyes to see and respond to God. (Acts 17:22-31)
- The **Gospel** FOR US reveals the heart and plan of God in Christ. (Rom.10:16-18)
- The **Holy Spirit** WITH US opening our eyes to see the truth of the Gospel. (John 3:3-8)

When was the faith (verb) given?

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Two views of FAITH (verb) as God's gift.

1.
All who are created in God's image have been given the capacity to seek after and trust God.

2.
Only the "elect" (chosen of God) are given life through the regenerating gift of the Holy Spirit.

Implications:

The question is not, "do we believe", but rather WHAT do we choose to believe.

Saving faith is the first expression of that life and cannot be resisted.

This is the position of many Christians.

This is the position of "Reformed theology"

Bereans need to check it out.

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"It is the Godfather, not God the Father, who makes you an offer you can't refuse."

Peter Kreeft

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The nature of Faith (verb)

- **Faith is universal** - We all have faith presuppositions in something. It is the object of faith that is critical.
- **The roots of faith are complex** - Many things (natural and supernatural) work together to shape the direction of our faith.
- **God's Word and Spirit can enlighten us** to see the truth but ultimately we must choose what to believe.
- **Faith is not meritorious** - It is not a "good work" based on our virtue and strength but is simply our reception to a gift (The Gospel Message).
- **We must abide in faith** - Christian faith can be neglected, wither, and die or be misdirected.

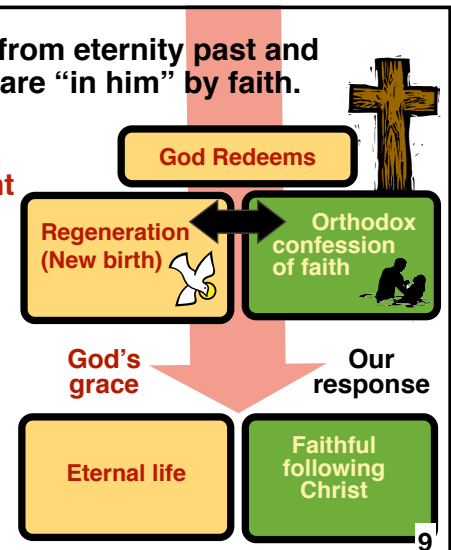
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God elects Jesus from eternity past and includes all who are "in him" by faith.

Regeneration takes place at the moment of saving faith.

Saving faith is a free response to God's grace in the Gospel.

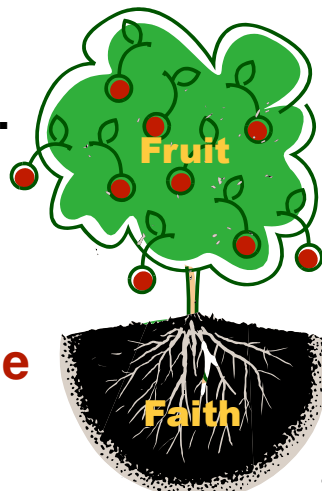
Saving faith is available to all who bear the image of God.



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Good works are fruit of justifying faith.

Faith is not a good work but a gift via God's Image or His Spirit



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Observation #3

Saving faith is most often pictured in Scripture as a free human response.



If there is no real freedom can there be any real meaning to love, ethics, justice, etc.?

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- Why did Christ bother to **persuade** the non-elect? He would certainly know who was elect (Jn.10:14 "I know my own and they know me.")
- Why should Paul bother to use persuasion at all? (Acts 17:3-4,17; 18:4; 19:8-9). Note that in Acts 14:1 the Apostles "spoke **in such a manner that** a great multitude believed."
- Why did Christ **marvel at** unbelief?
- How can unbelief be justly **condemned**?
- How can we explain **degrees** of unbelief being judged more severely?

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- How can demonic activity **hinder** a direct work of the Spirit? Lk.8:12; 2 Cor.4:4.
- Why are some **classes of people** harder to win than others? Titus 1:12-13
- Why does God "give the gift of faith" to so many **Americans** and to so few Libyans, Mongolians, Tibetans, Afghans, Tunisians, Turks, etc?
- In Scripture, faith is always ascribed to man, not God. Lk.7:50 "**Your** faith has saved you", Matt.9:22 "**Your** faith has made you well", Matt.9:28-29 "it shall be done to you according to **your** faith."

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Many texts that seem to support faith as a gift are misunderstood.

Romans 12

"4. . . **God has allotted to each a measure of faith.** For just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same function, ⁵ so we, who are many are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. ⁶ Since we have gifts that differ **according to the grace given to us**, each or us is to exercise them accordingly; if prophecy, **according to the proportion of his faith**; . . ."

This "faith" refers to **confidence** in ministry through God's gifts to us in Christ.

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Ephesians 1

"4 just as He **chose us in him** before the foundation of the world,"

- "**In Christ**" is used 13 times in Eph.1
- **We are chosen (elect) as we are united with Christ through our faith.**
- **This system was a part of God's eternal plan.** Christ was the center of God's plan and we participate through our being "**in him**" by faith.

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John 6:37

"all that **the Father gives Me** shall come to Me,"

John 10:27

"**My sheep hear my voice**, and I know them, and they follow me;"

These verses probably speak of the (already) believing remnant within Israel who will **recognize** the Messiah and follow him when they hear his voice.

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Ephesians 2:8-9

"we are saved by grace through **faith** and **that** not of yourselves, **it** is the **gift of God** not as a result of works, so that no one may boast."

The "gift of God" refers to **salvation not faith.**

Rom. 6:23 "but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

The Greek "that" (neuter) does not link to "faith" (feminine) suggesting that the whole of salvation is in view.

"For by grace you have been saved through faith, **that is to say**, not of yourselves, it (**salvation**) is the gift of God."

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Philippians 1:29

“For to you **it has been granted for Christ’s sake, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake.**”

The word translated “**granted**” has the idea of “**graciously permitted.**”

Galatians 3:18

“God has granted it (inheritance) to Abraham by means of a promise”

Faith is a gift just as suffering is a gift.

The point has to do with the beneficial effects more than the origin.

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Romans 9

“¹⁴ What shall we say then? There is no injustice with God, is there? May it never be! ¹⁵ For He says to Moses, “*I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.*” ¹⁶ So then **it does not depend on the man who wills or the man who runs, but on God who has mercy.** ¹⁷ For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, “*For this very purpose I raised you up, to demonstrate My power in you and that My name might be proclaimed throughout the whole earth.*” ¹⁸ So then **He has mercy on whom He desires, and He hardens whom He desires.**”

The context of Rom.9-11 is the relationship of **Jews and Gentiles with respect to the promised blessings of God through Abram. This is an example of Rom.8:28.**

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Philippians 2

“¹² So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling; ¹³ **for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.**”

Saving faith is best understood as a reaction from **God’s image in us responding to **God’s call of us** respecting **Christ’s work for us.****

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Observation #4

A full explanation of God’s Grace and our free faith response lies above our spiritual pay-grade.

Deuteronomy 29:29

“The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our sons forever, that we may observe all the words of this law.”

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Lessons

- **As humans we chose** with no sense of being coerced against our will.
- **Faith is not a meritorious work** any more than the receiving any other gift would be.
- **God’s sovereignty** does not require micromanagement to work all things together for His will.
- **God’s Image in all humans** includes a spiritual dimension that is not removed by the Fall of Adam.
- **Abiding in faith** is dependent on continuing in faith, which we cannot take for granted.
- **Our security** is contingent on our abiding faith.
- **Our perspective is limited** and calls for humility on this and many other theological issues.

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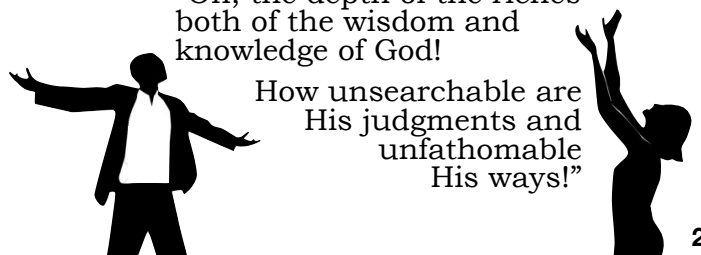
Observation #5

God’s Grace should inspire awe and worship not passivity and fatalism or pride and fear.

Romans 11:33

“Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!

How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways!”



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