



WELCOME TO BIBLE HOUSE OF GRACE

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Faith and Knowledge.

(2019)

Bible House of Grace contains an easy to read New and Old Testament commentary full of spiritual treasures and pearls, complete with an insightful resource guide illuminating God's love and grace.



Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man, as to such I neither claim perfect knowledge or perfect understanding.

Faith and Knowledge.

Topics.

- Can people be saved by simply believing in Christ?
- The meaning of faith from the Bible.
- Saving faith goes beyond believing in knowledge.
- Blessed are those who have not seen, but believe.
- Five purposes of Bible knowledge.

CAN PEOPLE BE SAVED BY SIMPLY BELIEVING IN CHRIST?

I remember a man named Lloyd who came into the Christian faith very late in life. Lloyd understood the message of the cross and that it was only by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and by God's grace that he was saved, he had a wonderful devotion to Christ, enjoyed fellowship with others who believed and was truly committed, but one Sunday he said to me, "James I am a simple man, too much knowledge confuses me, I just simply believe" and went on to say, "I know without Jesus I am without hope, I believe he is the Son of God and my Saviour and I just want to love and serve him until he returns." Can I be saved by simply believing in Jesus without being confused with all this other teaching? I have no-doubt that many other faithful brothers and sisters in the global body of Christ feel the same way as Lloyd did.

1

This message seeks to answer Lloyd's question. The Scriptures say that faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see, I and many others go to bed each night believing God is with us, we thank Him for our day, our comfort and our salvation etc., but how do we really know He is with us? I drive the car; walk along the beach and whenever I am on my own, I believe God, is with me, but how do I know He is? Am I deceiving myself is it just a fantasy of my mind a psychological delusion? The secular world would say it is. There was a time when even I wondered if my entire faith was just a psychological delusion created in my mind by my belief.

I understand that the human mind cannot discern or tell the difference between a real mental event viewed on the imagination of the mind to a really vivid imaginary one and that the nervous system will automatically respond to the imaginary image just as though it was a real event. The following is a simplistic example that in a limited degree shows how this principle works and how human emotions are moved whether an event is real or an imaginary one. A friend told me to watch a movie in which one of the characters proposes to his girlfriend, my friend said it brought tears to her eyes, I watch it and felt my emotions being moved, yet I was fully aware that the people were only acting before a live audience, yet my emotions were still touched by the very skilful acting and clever pretence of the actors.

So how do I know my relationship with God is not the same psychological and mental delusion? Years ago I listened to a child psychologist telling a TV interviewer how she had done multitudes of experiments with children and discovered that if you give any child a doll, a mechanical pet or robot and give each of them a personality of kindness, goodness and love the child will respond to it as though it were a real human person. Another example is the classic movie ET, remember how this movie (today it would be Wally or Nemo etc.), made us all fall in love with the alien creature, yet he was not even a real animal, we respond because God has created

our mind, emotions and nervous system to all function together, they are all connected and all wired to respond to love, kindness and compassion. Added to these I watched a program on TV about phobias, which was about a woman who had an extreme fear of being hygienically unclean so much so that she wouldn't hug or touch her husband or her children unless they had come straight out of the shower. The poor woman gave away the pet dog for fear of being hygienically unclean and was filled with overwhelming anxiety, stress, fear and anger if any one touched her, because she believed she could be contaminated and become hygienically polluted simply by touching things. To heal this woman her secular counsellor told her that she had a false belief system and to be delivered and healed from her fear she needed a new belief she needed to change what she believed. The interesting thing in this story is that even though this woman had a false belief it still affected her emotions so badly she was unable to hug the very people she loved. This is because belief is powerful whether it is true or false it will not only affect our emotions, feelings and choices we make, but also affect our outward behaviour.

PONDER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS FOR A MOMENT

How many of us would be brave enough to stand alone and question our faith to examine if what we believe is true or not? Could we face for a moment laying down all we have learnt to examine our faith and be courageous enough to put aside the strongholds in our mind and open enough to question them? What gives us such confidence that the Christian faith we believe is correct, especially since within the global Christian faith itself there are some who claim they are the only true church and the only ones that have the truth and the true faith. How do we know we are in the right church or that what we believe is the truth? Even the fact there are believers within each Christian group world-wide who would be willing to die for their faith is not evidence that what they believe is true, because there are many other faiths outside of Christianity that have followers who would also die for what they believe. So, what gives us our assurance, why are we so confident about our personal faith? Do we all need to be Bible encyclopaedias and understand the Bible from Genesis to Revelation before we can have absolute assurance in our faith and our salvation.

2

THE MEANING OF FAITH FROM THE BIBLE

- **Hebrews 11:1-3:** (KJV) now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. ²For by it the elders obtained a good report. ³Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.

The word faith in these verses comes from the Greek word (pistis) and from Strong's Concordance means persuasion, assurance and belief, it carries the idea of the credibility and truthfulness of authority; of a thing; of the moral conviction of religious truth; of the truthfulness of God; of the truthfulness of the Gospel; of the truthfulness of a religious teacher and especially applies to trust and reliance upon Christ for salvation. Faith from the English dictionary is stated as being belief in, devotion to, or trust in somebody or something, especially without logical proof which means that faith is sheer belief, without proof.

From these definitions it is save to conclude that biblical faith for salvation is having total trust in and reliance on Jesus. Christian faith for salvation to eternal life is not about relying on the intellectual head knowledge we have gained over the years, but upon relying on the reality of a person which of course for Christians is the Lord Jesus Christ. The word substance is from the Greek word (hupostasis) and from Strong's Concordance means the concrete evidence, the support or assurance of a thing. Intellectual Scriptural knowledge is the substance that gives us the

concrete evidence, the support and the assurance that Jesus is who he says he is. Once we understand the message of the cross and are convinced Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God and Saviour of the world and we surrender our lives to him and trust in him for our eternal salvation, we do not need an ongoing supply of intellectual knowledge to make us more saved. Our salvation is complete in the reality of Jesus, Jesus the Christ, Jesus the Son of God, Jesus our Saviour. More knowledge may strengthen our faith and help us to live the life we are called to live, but it will not make us more saved. If we already belong to the Lord Jesus Christ we are as saved as we ever can be.

FAITH AND PROOF

Once we understand that faith is sheer belief without proof, we will realise once a person:

- Believes God exists and that they fall short of His glory.
- Believes Jesus is the Son of God and the Saviour of the world.
- Humble themselves and honestly repent before God and are water baptised.
- Believe they are saved by faith in Christ and God's grace and not by self-effort or by strictly adhering to ceremonial rites, holy days and keeping religious customs and traditions.
- Understand that in Christ they are called to do all they can to live a life that honours God and brings a good testimony to the name of Christ and the Christian faith.
- Believe Jesus will return in glory and that they will be caught up to be with him when he returns

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Whoever has faith in Christ and believes from the heart these things are saved, more knowledge will not make them more saved, but further knowledge will strengthen their faith making it even stronger and help support it in times of testing. More knowledge will give more evidence support and assurance, but it will not make a person more saved, saving faith is simply to believe message of the cross and the Good News of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

AN OVERVIEW OF THE GOSPEL

God desires to dwell in the human heart, but all humans are separated from Him because of sin (self, ego, pride, jealousies, lustful thoughts, greed and such like things) nevertheless if a person humbles themselves and honestly repent before God and believes Jesus is the Son of God who died and rose again and is baptised God will impute to them righteousness as a pure and free gift of grace and they are saved in Christ to eternal life. Providing they continue to believe and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, look forward to his return and endeavour to live according to the royal law of the Old and New Testament, love your neighbour as yourself which simply means, do not deliberately do any harm to another human, physically, financially, sexually, verbally, emotionally or spiritually (in other words do good to all people).

So, we see the answer to Lloyd's question, "Can a person be saved by simply believing the words of Jesus and surrendering their life to him?" is yes. Ponder the following thought for a moment, if God suddenly gave you total and absolute understanding of every Scripture, prophecy and message of the Bible, if you understood it as clearly as the Lord Jesus Christ did, do you think your faith would be stronger than it is now? The

answer is of course yes, obviously more understanding of the Bible will make our faith stronger, especially in times of crisis, but it will not make us more saved. You would not be more saved, but you would be better prepared when your faith is tested.

- The beauty and simplicity of the Christian faith and the wisdom of God is that saving faith needs no evidence that is why it is called faith. No-one needs a university degree or to be a double A student to be saved. The compassion and splendour of God, is that He has made salvation so simple even children can be saved.

This does not mean that there is no evidence for the Christian faith it simply means people who are repentant before God can be saved by simply believing the words of Christ, of course there is a mountain of evidence for the Christian faith, the Bible itself; archaeology; history; the multitudes of prophecies, especially those concerning Israel and that have been amazingly fulfilled in every prophetic detail and many others still to be fulfilled; the insight the Bible gives of the higher nature and lower nature of the human race; the thousands of witnesses worldwide throughout all generations and the millions of personal testimonies of Christians experiencing the love of God in their hearts.

SAVING FAITH GOES BEYOND BELIEVING IN KNOWLEDGE

Many people believe in Christ, they believe that Jesus lived; that he was a perfect man who was the Son of God, and that he died on the cross to save sinners, but the true biblical meaning of believe and faith goes beyond just having knowledge of what is true. The full meaning of believe embraces also the act of trusting and relying on another with full confidence and assurance that they will do what they have promised, it is putting one's life in the hands of another. After Jesus death and resurrection, he appeared to the disciples, and when they told Thomas that they had seen Jesus Thomas said:

- Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe (John 20:25).

Thomas needed more evidence, before he would believe. We are not all the same some need an enormous amount of knowledge and evidence before they can believe, others need very little, but once we have reached the place of repenting and believing all we need to remain saved, is faith. There was no question Lloyd believed the message of the cross, the Gospel and the words of Jesus and was a devoted and faithful servant of the Lord. To remain saved Lloyd did not need an ongoing avalanche of intellectual head knowledge, but just to continue in the faith he had worshipping and serving the Lord in his own way. Through the Good News of the Gospel Lloyd knew enough of the Bible to convince him he was undone before God and without hope and saw that Jesus loved him and died for him. Once Lloyd experienced God's love that came to him through his faith in the Lord Jesus Christ he did not need any more intellectual head knowledge to be saved, simply because he was fully confident he was saved not by works of the law or doing religious things, but by his faith in Christ and by God's grace and his loving devotional and faithful relationship to Jesus.

Sadly because of the church Lloyd attended at that time certain leaders through their teachings gave him the impression he needed to understand the Bible from Genesis to Revelation to be truly saved. Some people are like doubting Thomas and need bucket loads of Scriptural knowledge before they will believe, others (like me) will continue to gain more simply because they enjoy studying it, but neither of these two groups should try to impose what they need or enjoy onto others who the Lord is working in and who he has called for a different purpose. Lloyd had a gift of kindness he encouraged people in the congregations and showed them genuine care. We should all keep at the forefront of our minds the following words of Paul:

- If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but *have not love*, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal and if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but *have not love*, I am nothing. If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but *have not love*, I gain nothing (1 Cor. 13:1-3).

These words of Paul shine a brilliant spotlight on the truth that it is love that is on the top rung of God's list of priorities and not an abundance of intellectual legalistic and dogmatic head knowledge especially if it lacks love and grace.

BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO HAVE NOT SEEN AND YET HAVE BELIEVED

- **John 20:26-31:** Eight days later, his disciples were inside again, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." ²⁷Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side. Do not *disbelieve*, but *believe*." ²⁸Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" ²⁹Jesus said to him, "Have you *believed* because you have seen me? *Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.*" ³⁰Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; ³¹but these are written so 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 tells us that the things written about Jesus are written so that we may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing this eternal truth we may have life in Christ's name (v31). It is by believing that people are saved, not by knowledge, the purpose of Scriptural knowledge is to bring us to a place of believing in Christ. The Bible says that it is by faith those who believe in God believe the world was created by Him. This shows that if something is true a person does not need physical or intellectual proof before they can believe it? We cannot prove that the world was created by God, but we still believe it! This shows that faith without knowledge or intellectual proof is still faith! Some people need mountains of proof, others very little, some people need a ton of intellectual head knowledge before they can believe while others need very little.

I have friends I trust and have no-doubt as I share more time with them in the coming years I will find out more about them that I don't know at this present time, but gaining more knowledge about them in ten, twenty or thirty years' time does not cancel the friendship I have had with them in the previous years, in fact quite the opposite it will most likely bond us closer together. Likewise, it is with our relationship to Christ, most of us come to the Lord with just a enough knowledge to get us saved, we begin as spiritual infants in Christ. Over the years we increase in knowledge and understanding. Added to this many of us may even change certain things we believed at the beginning, but that does not mean that we have not always been saved and in a loving relationship with Christ, but rather is simply evidence that we are growing in our friendship, in our knowledge and in our understanding of the Father and Son.

SUMMARY

All who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ should have a loving and devotional relationship with the Father and the Son. They should embrace all the emotions and feelings that come from that relationship of love and fully surrender their entire being to all the comfort and warmth that comes from surrendering their lives, their emotions and their heart in faith to Christ, because the meaning of faith for salvation is not reliance upon knowledge, but reliance upon Christ. The purpose of knowledge is to bring us to that place in faith where we are totally reliant on God's grace in Christ to save us.

Following are five purposes of Bible knowledge:

1. To convict sinners of their sin and deliver them from the domain of darkness and transfer them into the kingdom of his beloved Son (Col. 1:13).
2. To strengthen the faith of those in the Kingdom.
3. To bring believers closer to God and His Son Jesus Christ and into a greater spiritual relationship of love with them.
4. To teach us about God's eternal ways, plans, purposes and about life after death and everlasting life in glory.
5. To teach those who belong to Christ how to love their neighbour as themselves especially their brothers and sisters in Christ and live a life that honours God, and brings a good testimony to the name of Christ and the Christian faith.

As the founder of Bible House of Grace, I would like to thank the many Christian scholars, commentators and theologians who have gone before me, and the many today, who have freely made available their works to enhance the knowledge of the Bible to all people worldwide. It is only with the help of these faithful writers that much of Bible House of Grace exists as it does today.

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