

THE FLORAL HEIGHTS INFORMER

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Faith

Faith can be viewed from a few different angles. If one were to tell you that Mount Everest is the tallest mountain in the world at an elevation of 29,028 feet above sea level you believe them not because you have actually visited the Himalayas in Asia but because you heard or read the testimony of many witnesses and believed it. Believing that Mount Everest exists is objective faith and believing that it stands as the tallest mountain in the world is subjective faith. We find these types of faith in the Bible. When John writes, "*These things are written, that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye may have life in his name*" we find Christ as the object of one's faith (Jn. 20:31). When Jude writes, "*contend earnestly for the faith*" he intends for his readers to understand that the subject of one's faith is under consideration (i.e., the gospel message) (see Jude 3).

Some people today believe that you can be saved with simple objective faith. A proof text for such belief is found at Acts 16:30. The Philippian jailor asked Paul and Silas, "*Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved, thou and thy house*" (Acts 16:30). While this verse states that all one must do to be "saved" is believe that Jesus is the Christ it is not all that is said on the subject. Those who hold to such beliefs are confused when they read James writing, "*Ye see that by works a man is justified (saved) , and not only by faith*" (James 2:24).

The Apostle Paul **joins** faith and justification together saying, "*Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ*" (Rom. 5:1 see also Rom. 3:23-28). What we begin to see is that our salvation can in no way be divided between objective or subjective faith. We cannot have one without the other. Simply put, we cannot separate Jesus Christ from his gospel message and expect to be saved. Justification occurs when one not only believes that Jesus is the Christ but also believes and obeys his message.

A simple way of understanding the cohesion that exist between objective and subjective faith is to examine the book of Acts. When Philip preached to the Samaritans, as recorded in Acts 8, we find an

Local News:

Welcome to all our visitors:

We pray that you will be edified by our service and that you will ask questions if things are not as you are accustomed to seeing. Please do come back at your every opportunity!

Announcements:

New Member:

We rejoice with **Diane Lee** due to being restored to the Lord's favor this past Sunday evening. Diane has asked to be identified as a member of our local work that she may work and serve the Lord with us. Please do welcome Diane.

Revelation Study:

This evening we will pick up our study of the book of Revelation at chapter 14.

Web Page:

Check out our web site if has been a while (Acts posted very soon)
www.floralheightschurchofchrist.org

Continue to pray for our shut-ins:

Stella Davidson
696-1030 (Home)

Calvin York
692-0489 (Home).

example of subjective and objective faith being conjoined. Luke records, "*But when **they believed** Philip preaching good tidings concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, **they were baptized**, both men and women*" (Acts 8:12). The Samaritans heard the "*good tidings*" (gospel) and believed the message. The message was about Christ and his Kingdom. They made this faith manifest in that they were baptized. Their baptism was for justification (see Acts 2:38). The fact that they were baptized illustrates that their faith went beyond a simple, "I believe that Jesus is." This objective and subjective faith is why the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:36-38), Saul of Tarsus (Acts 9:18; 22:16), Cornelius (Acts 10:48), Lydia (Acts 16:15), the Philippian jailor (Acts 16:33), the Corinthians (Acts 18:8), Crispus the ruler of the Synagogue (Acts 18:8), and the twelve disciples of John (Acts 19:5) were all baptized.

Consider the words of our Lord Jesus Christ on the subject of subjective and objective faith. Jesus said, "*He that believes on the Son hath eternal life (**objective faith**); but he that obeys not the Son shall not see life (**subjective faith**), but the wrath of God abides on him*" (Jn. 3:36). The Apostle Paul's first recorded sermon brings objective and subjective faith together in a nice concise manner. Paul states, "*Be it known unto you therefore, brethren, that through this man (Jesus Christ) is proclaimed unto you **remission of sins**: and by him every one that **believes is justified** from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the Law of Moses*" (Acts 13:38-39). Notice the equivalence between the terms "*remission of sins and justification*" and understand that such comes about by one's obedience to the gospel through baptism (see Eph. 1:7 and Acts 2:38). One is not moved to justification without hearing and believing in subjective faith (i.e., the gospel). If subjective faith is not important in man's justification then why did the Holy Spirit command Christians to live (Rom. 1:17), walk by (Hab. 2:4; Rom. 4:12; Gal. 3:11; Eph. 4:1ff), be grounded in (Col. 1:23), stand fast in (I Cor. 16:13), and to be sound in faith (Titus 1:13)? Again, why is it so dangerous to "*err*" from subjective faith if objective faith is all one needs to be justified (I Tim. 6:10, 20-21)?

Understanding the inseparable connection between objective and subjective faith will clear up much confusion when reading passages in the Bible about people believing. When the Bible tells us that Paul and Barnabas preached to the Galatians in Iconium and that they "*believed*" (Acts 14:1) we understand that they had gained both an objective and subjective faith in Jesus and his gospel message. Those that did not "*believe*" were said to be "*disobedient*" (Acts 14:2). The Galatians were thereby justified when they obeyed the gospel. Timothy is introduced to us as one who simply "*believed*" yet we know that Timothy's faith was made manifest through

obedience to subjective faith (the gospel - see Acts 16:1-2). When I read of people "believing" in the book of Acts I understand that this faith was not a simple, "I believe that Jesus is," but also an "I will obey all that Jesus teaches through his gospel message" (see Acts 16:31; 17:12, 32-34 etc.).

Hebrews chapter 11 is a great commentary on the subject of faith and its connection to man's obedience and justification. The author of Hebrews defines faith for us by saying, "*Now faith is assurance of things hoped for, a conviction of things not seen*" (Heb. 11:1). Understanding the context that this passage is written in will help us better understand faith. Hebrews chapter 10 reveals the Lord's discontentment with those who profess faith in Him yet fall away when troubles come. Conversely, the Lord is pleased and expresses His confidence in those who maintain their faith through trying times. With the idea of faith introduced, the author of Hebrews takes much space to identify precisely what faith is. Faith is identified by two terms; i.e., "*assurance of things hoped for and a conviction of things not seen.*" To be "*assured*" is to come to a realization that something is (see Moulton's Greek English word study on page 419). To have "*conviction*" in something is to see the evidence of that which is under consideration (see Lidell and Scott's Greek English Lexicon page 249 {LS}). Faith is the realization that something is based upon the evidences supplied. I believe that Mount Everest exists and I believe that it is the tallest mountain in the world based upon evidences.

God has supplied divine evidence for man to believe that He is. Man is completely without excuse when it comes to believing or not believing because the Lord reveals Himself through **creation** (that which all men see) (Gen. 1-2; Ps. 19:1; 33:6-9; Rom. 1:18-23; Heb. 11:3). God has also given divine **revelation** to uncover all things regarding who He is and what He has to offer man (see Jn. 4:39-42; 20:30-31; Rom. 10:17). One gains confidence in revelation as it is studied and found to be true through **fulfilled prophecies** (see Isa. 46:9-10). Furthermore man's **natural understanding of moral issues** is confirmed by revelation (see Rom. 1:19-20; 26; 2:14, 27; I Cor. 11:14). The result of creation, revelation, fulfilled prophecy, and one's natural understanding of moral issues is enough evidence to convince one that God is and that he is a rewarder of those who diligently seek after him (Heb. 11:6).

Let us conclude by considering the faith of our forefathers as revealed in God's word. The author of Hebrews writes, "*For therein the elders had witness borne to them*" (Heb. 11:2). The idea of having "*witness borne to them*" (*hemarturethesan*) means "to be a witness, to bear witness, give evidence, bear testimony, ... testify that a thing is" (LS 488). The construction of this verse lends evidence to the fact that the mentioned elders were not elders in the church but elder forefathers in the faith that are mentioned in the rest of this chapter. The life of these men and women such as Abraham, Sarah, etc. evidence or 'testify' that their faith was real by their obedient acts. Hebrews 11 gives a multitude of examples of men and women who by their obedience to God's word evidenced their faith in His promises. Do you believe that Jesus is? If you say yes that implies, Biblically speaking, that you have not only an objective faith but a subjective faith that is made evident by your obedience to God's divine revelation. Paul said that this is the whole reason men preach the gospel (see Rom. 1:5). Jesus said that those who do not have God's word abiding in them truly do not believe (Jn. 5:38).

