

# GRACE GAZETTE

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*Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed.*

*Hebrews 12:12-13*

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## OUR FAITH

*For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.*

*1 John 5:4*

The prevailing notion of what faith is in the present day is that of a means whereby men can influence GOD to grant unto them special blessings and favors. Faith is viewed as a sort of "holy" bargaining chip, which, men can use to change GOD's mind and alter the course of destiny, even to the point of causing HIM to rework HIS purpose in order to satisfy their requests if necessary. They are not only ignorant of what faith is but have no understanding of the immutability (unchangeableness) of GOD either. (see Mal.3:6, Isa.46:10)

Those who contend that faith is the gift of GOD and not of works lest any man should boast are in the decided minority. Yet many of those who would claim to believe that faith is a gift still present its value as being what they perceive to be its purchasing power from the storehouse of GOD. Few seem to see that it is simply a gift which is the evidence of GOD's sovereign grace visited upon unworthy sinners apart from any cooperation from them..

The writer of Hebrews gives us a worthy definition of faith when he says, ***"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."*** (Heb 11:1) Faith is that substance (a real entity, i.e.; something transferred) which is (itself) the very evidence (i.e. incontrovertible proof) that those things promised to the saints of GOD in CHRIST are sure and steadfast because HE who cannot lie has established them.

The common treatment of faith in the present day, by the great scholars, prophets, and preachers of our time, is subjective in nature, (i.e.; primarily concerned with the result of faith's activity). Yet the scriptures set forth faith as primarily concerned with its OBJECT, which is JESUS CHRIST. HE is the faith of HIS elect, and apart from HIM, faith has no basis nor can true faith be exercised on any other foundation. All that the sons of GOD expect or hope for is found in CHRIST alone as Paul said, ***"CHRIST is ALL"*** (Col.3:11)

So when the Apostle John speaks of "our faith" the modern seers consider him to be speaking of a function which they can implement according to their free will to obtain peace as they exercise it, and to forfeit that peace when they fail to do so. The man who is acquainted with his own depravity and inabilities, lamenting with Paul, ***"who shall deliver me from the body of this death"*** is driven deeper into despair at the thought of trying to gain peace by some activity which is dependent on himself. What John is saying is absolutely objective in its nature because those who have been given the privilege to flee to CHRIST for refuge are only comforted by and recognize all of their "victories" as being signed sealed and delivered in the finished work of CHRIST. ***"For he is our peace."*** (Eph 2:14)

Paul emphatically says that ***"there is one faith"*** (Eph.4:5). Yet, while there is only one FAITH, there are several aspects of this "FAITH" which are spoken of in the scriptures. All aspects of this FAITH squarely rest in its OBJECT, which is CHRIST.

The gift of FAITH. ***“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.” (Eph 2:8-9)*** If a man does not see this basic truth, then all else he might speak of concerning the faith of men, will of necessity be perverted and all applications he may make of faith are going to be distorted. It’s by this gift, that GOD is pleased to manifest those who are HIS elect children in contrast to those who are merely of this world. Even as our LORD testified, ***“He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.” (John 3:18)*** Why do some believe while others do not? The answer is found in Paul’s declaration, ***“For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?” (1Cor 4:7)*** ***“all men have not faith.” (2Thess 3:2)***

The gospel is our faith. The gospel is the foundation upon which the gift of faith squarely rests. It is analogous to the role of the constitution in our Federal government. Jude says, ***“Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.” (Jude 1:3)*** The reason that we are to “contend for the faith” is set forth in the verses which follow, ***“For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.” (Jude 1:4)***

As long as there are true believers there will always be counterfeit believers who while claiming to be followers of CHRIST distort the gospel and wrest it to their own destruction and carry many with them in their deception. Those who are the called of GOD must earnestly and fervently be set ***“for the defense of the gospel” (Phil 1:17)*** against the gainsayers. This gospel is “the faith” which we declare from which many have departed having loved this present world, who are ***“Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.” (2Tim 3:7)*** because ***“they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.” (2Thess 2:10)*** even though they professed that they believed it.

Operation of faith. When GOD is pleased to do something HE always brings forth the result HE intends to produce. Paul says; ***“For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.” (Eph 2:10)*** That man who claims to have faith yet manifests no fruit of faith is deceived. James clearly says, ***“Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.” (James 2:17)*** Where the SPIRIT of GOD dwells, HE will produce a conformity to CHRIST. This is not a conformity which is always apparent unto those to whom it is given. They are often found mourning the very lack of that which they perceive in themselves to be a paucity of the example of CHRIST. But it is in their weakness that CHRIST is magnified as they confess that apart from HIS performance of righteousness in their behalf they would be without hope.

Exhortations to faith. Luke records the activity of the apostles as ***“Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.” (Act 14:22)*** ***“Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.” (2Tim 3:12)*** Therefore we ought to ***“consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works.” (Heb 10:24)*** It is through these exhortations and admonitions that the SPIRIT of GOD is often pleased to work ***“in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.” (Phi 2:13)*** These exhortations are like manna to a thirsty soul for those who believe, even though they find no ability in themselves to perform that which they are exhorted to, they rejoice ever in their PERFORMER who they know is faithful. ***“Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it.” (1Thes 5:24)***

The principle of faith. ***“But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith. And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them.” (Gal 3:11-12)*** Our hope and expectation rests completely on JESUS CHRIST and HIS righteousness which is the only basis of our faith upon which we shall hope to inherit eternal life. ***“For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.” (Gal 5:5)*** [www.gracechapelobrien.net](http://www.gracechapelobrien.net) <http://wayfarerblog.blogspot.com/> mam