

## *“SOLA FIDE”*

So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. (Romans 10:17 NKJV)  
For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, (Ephesians 2:8 NKJV)

English has a large vocabulary. One consequence of this large selection of words is that sometimes one word in the language in which the Scriptures were written (Hebrew or Koiné Greek) is translated by two or more words in English. This is the case with the word “faith.” The word in the original language of the New Testament sometimes translated “faith” other times is translated “believe.”

During the Middle Ages, the teaching that salvation is by faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ as the atonement for our sins had all but disappeared. Whether a person went to heaven was taught to depend upon how many good works they had done. There was also the teaching that a person was sent to Purgatory after death to be punished and thereby purged of their sins before they could proceed to heaven.

In Martin Luther’s time, there was a man named Johan Tetzel. He was German, a Dominican preacher. He is best known for the couplet: “As soon as a coin in the coffer rings, the soul from Purgatory springs.” Official Roman Catholic doctrine stated that for living persons the indulgence was only for temporal punishment for a sin that had been repented of and received God’s forgiveness. Their doctrine of indulgences for souls in Purgatory, however, was much as Tetzel stated it. Two of Luther’s “95 theses” were questioning the doctrine of Purgatory:

27. They preach only human doctrine who say that as soon as the money clinks into the money chest, the soul flies out of purgatory.

28. It is certain that when the money clinks in the money chest, greed and avarice can be increased; but when the church intercedes, the result is in the hands of God alone.

1.) For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. (Ephesians 2:8-9 NKJV)

This verse applies to "*sola gratia*" but it has something important to say about faith – "you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves;" Nearly everyone has faith in something that they trust will bring them to heaven or to a better life after this life. Most of these people are trusting in what they can do or a god of their imagining can do for them. Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith; (Philippians 3:8-9 NKJV)

The Roman Catholic position on justification (being made righteous before God) is that it is obtained through faith and good works. The Protestant belief is that faith produces justification which is then followed by good works. God's Spirit comes into our hearts and replaces whatever trust we have in our own works with the gift of saving faith. Then when we hear the Gospel we respond with saving faith.

I used the word justification because that is the word most often used by the Reformers. In the Bible the word for just, justification, right, righteous, and righteousness are all the same word. They mean to be saved, born again, right with God. The Bible says Joseph was a just man and that Abraham received righteousness by faith. It is saying the same thing about both men, only the English is different.

The Roman Catholics quoted from James, "Faith without works is dead." to defend their position that both faith and good works are required for justification. Protestants believe that faith alone produces justification. Good works follow afterward. You may only have thought you received saving faith from God. Good works must follow or it wasn't from God.

2.) Behold the proud, His soul is not upright in him; But the just shall live by his faith. (Habakkuk 2:4 NKJV)

Just is the same as righteous or saved or born again believer. This verse from Habakkuk is quoted three times in the New Testament.

For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "The just shall live by faith."

(Romans 1:16-17 NKJV) believe and faith are the same word in NT Greek. But that no one is justified by the law in the sight of God is evident, for "the just shall live by faith." (Galatians 3:11 NKJV)

Now the just shall live by faith; But if anyone draws back, My soul has no pleasure in him." But we are not of those who draw back to perdition, but of those who believe to the saving of the soul. (Hebrews 10:38-39 NKJV)

The "just" or "righteous" are not only saved by faith, but they live by faith. When we accept Christ by faith it is similar to our marriage ceremony. We say, "I do." The minister says, "I now pronounce you..." Then marriage begins. Day by day we live the vows we made. When we are saved, we begin the life of faith day by day. The righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith. We continue to live by faith until our redemption is complete and we are carried into heaven.

In the desert the Israelites wandered for forty years. How could a desert feed a million people? Day by day God sent manna, "bread from heaven" but only enough each day for one day. Jesus taught us to pray, "Give us this day our daily bread."

"Encamped along the hills of light, Ye Christian soldiers rise,  
And press the battle ere the night Shall veil the glowing skies.  
Against the foe in vales below Let all our strength be hurled;  
Faith is the victory, we know, That overcomes the world.

*Chorus:* Faith is the victory! Faith is the victory!

O glorious victory, That overcomes the world.  
His banner over us is love, Our sword the Word of God;  
We tread the road the saints above With shouts of triumph trod.  
By faith they, like a whirlwind's breath, Swept on o'er every field;  
The faith by which they conquered Death Is still our shining shield"

*John H. Yates, 1919*

3.) Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints. (Jude 1:3 NKJV)

It is by faith alone that we are saved without any good works on our part, without any willing to accept or reject the Gospel on our part. It is God's gift of saving faith that moves us irresistibly to embrace Christ as our Savior and Lord. Further, it is by faith that we walk with Christ each day, obeying his commands, following where He leads us. By faith we ask and receive forgiveness when we sin.

The Bible uses the word faith in a third way. It uses faith as its name for the sum total of all God has revealed to us. His revealed truth came to us through His Word written down by prophets and apostles and through His Son who is the living Word. Jude exhorts us as believers to earnestly contend for the faith once and for all delivered to the saints. This faith is the only true faith there is, all other so called faiths are lies, deceiving dreams, philosophies; all come from Satan. Many trace their origins to antiquity, but Satan is older. He deceived Adam and Eve and he has been deceiving mankind ever since.

Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you? --unless indeed you are disqualified.

(2 Corinthians 13:5 NKJV)

Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, (1 Timothy 4:1 NKJV)

Paul mentions by name two persons who departed from the faith- But shun profane and idle babblings, for they will increase to more ungodliness. And their message will spread like cancer. Hymenaeus and Philetus are of this sort, who have strayed concerning the truth, saying that the resurrection is already past; and they overthrow the faith of some. (2 Timothy 2:16-18 NKJV)

Paul gives affirmation of his own faith- For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. (2 Timothy 4:6-7 NKJV)