

IS BIBLICAL FAITH BLIND?

“The way to see by faith is to shut the eye of reason.” – Benjamin Franklin

“Faith is the great cop-out, the great excuse to evade the need to think and evaluate evidence. Faith is belief in spite of, even perhaps because of, the lack of evidence.” – Richard Dawkins, atheist

“I suspect that most of the individuals who have religious faith are content with blind faith. They feel no obligation to understand what they believe. They may even wish not to have their beliefs disturbed by thought.” – Mortimer Adler

Are these men correct? **Is Biblical faith blind, based on nothing concrete?** Certainly, many seem to think so. They would contend that to have faith in the God of the Bible requires the believer to shut out all reason. Many today would say that Biblical faith is devoid of any evidence to support it, and so, to trust in it is to make a blind leap of faith. Is this true?

It may surprise you to know that man and God define faith differently. How does man define faith today? A quick internet search for the definition of faith yields the following:

Faith – Strong belief in God or in the doctrines of a religion, **based on spiritual apprehension rather than proof.** (Google Search – definition of faith)

You may be surprised to know, however, this is not how the Bible defines faith!

Faith – “Now faith is **the substance** of things hoped for, **the evidence** of things not seen”. (Hebrews 11:1)

Two very different definitions of faith. The internet definition of faith states it is not based on evidence. The biblical definition of faith states it is. Which is correct? **Is there good reason for an honest person to believe that God exists and that the Bible is His word?**

Biblically informed Christians define faith as trusting in what you have good reason to believe is true. **It is our aim to show that true Christian faith rests on knowledge, which in turn rests on reliable evidence.** The Christian faith has always been open to honest examination. As Christians, we believe that an unexamined faith is not worth believing. Furthermore, contrary to popular opinion, Christians are not supposed to “just have faith”. Christians are *commanded* to know what they believe and why they believe it. We are commanded to give answers to those who ask (1 Peter 3:15), and to demolish arguments against the Christian faith (2 Corinthians 10:4-5). Since God is reasonable (Isaiah 1:18) and wants us to use our reason, Christians do not get brownie points for having blind faith. In fact, using reason is part of the great commandment, which, according to Jesus, is to “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and *with all your mind*” (Matthew 22:37).

We contend that the atheist has to muster a lot more faith than the Christian. Why? The less evidence you have for your position, the more faith you need to believe it (and vice versa). In other words, faith covers a gap in knowledge. And we will argue that atheists have bigger gaps in knowledge because they have less evidence for their beliefs than Christians have for theirs.

In the articles that will follow over the next year, we intend to prove that the evidence strongly supports conclusions consistent with Christianity and inconsistent with atheism. Consider just a few of the following arguments:

The scientific evidence overwhelmingly confirms that the universe came into being from nothing. Either someone created something out of nothing (the Christian view), or no one

created something out of nothing (the atheistic view). Which view requires more faith? The atheistic view.

The very simplest life forms contain the information-equivalent of 1,000 encyclopedias. Christians believe only an intelligent being can create a life form containing the equivalent of 1,000 encyclopedias. Atheists believe non-intelligent natural forces can do it. Christians have evidence to support their conclusion. Since atheists don't have any such evidence, their belief requires a lot more faith.

How can an atheist explain the scientific foreknowledge that the Bible contains, which was written hundreds or even thousands of years before man discovered these things? This would include such varied subjects as the water cycle, importance of blood to life processes, quarantine, gravity, entropy, the ratio of the ark's dimensions to allow for maximum sea worthiness, and the paths of the sea, just to name a few.

Hundreds of years beforehand, ancient writings foretold the coming of a man who would actually be God. This man-God, it was foretold, would be born in a particular city from a particular bloodline, suffer in a particular way, die at a particular time, and rise from the dead to atone for the sins of the world. Multiple eyewitnesses proclaimed and later recorded that those predicted events had actually occurred. Those eyewitnesses endured persecution and death when they could have saved themselves by denying the events. Thousands of people in Jerusalem were then converted after seeing or hearing of these events, and this belief quickly swept across the ancient world. Ancient historians and writers allude to or confirm these events, and archaeology corroborates them. Having seen evidence from creation that God exists, Christians believe these multiple lines of evidence show beyond a reasonable doubt that God had a hand in these events. Atheists must have a lot more faith to explain away all these predictions, the eyewitness testimony, the willingness of the eyewitnesses to suffer and die, the origin of the Christian church, and the corroborating testimony of other writers, archeological finds, and other evidence that we'll explore later.

Perhaps these points have raised in your mind some questions and objections. They should, because we are leaving out a lot of details that we will unpack over the next year in this publication. The main point for now is that you see what we mean when we say that **every worldview – including atheism - requires some degree of faith.** There are no neutral positions when it comes to beliefs. As Phillip Johnson so aptly put it, "One who claims to be a skeptic of one set of beliefs is actually a true believer in another set of beliefs." In other words, atheists, who are naturally skeptical of Christianity, turn out to be true believers in atheism. As we shall see, if they are honest with the evidence, they need a lot more faith to maintain their atheistic beliefs than Christians need to maintain ours.

Winston Churchill once stated, "Men stumble over the truth from time to time, but most pick themselves up and hurry off as if nothing happened." We pray that this will not be the case with you!

We claim that there is strong evidence to support Christianity. **For the next year, we plan to send our monthly mailout, *Mt. Carmel Minute*, to you, presenting articles that will proceed logically through the evidence to prove that the Bible is the Word of God.** We hope that you will join us on this journey with an open mind and an honest heart. We welcome your comments, questions, or criticisms.

On November 26th we had a corresponding lesson on this topic. Check our website for sermon titled "Are We Headed into a Ditch (Hebrews 11:1-6)" from the AM service. Also, you can find our worship services on our Facebook page.