

## Faith: What Does It Mean to Believe?

### 1. Two Words in English Are the Same Word: **Belief = Faith**

Whatever "belief" (or "believe") and "faith" (or "have faith in") mean, they are **identical**, and mean the same thing. These are English synonyms used to translate the **same** Greek word:

- Verb: **pisteuo** ("to have faith," "to trust," or "to believe")
- Noun: **pistis** ("faith," "trust," or "belief")
- Adjective: **pistos** ("faithful," "trustworthy," or "believable")

It would be most consistent and less confusing if all three words were translated with different forms of the same English word rather than with different words (i.e. with "**believe**," "**belief**," and "**believable**").

### 2. A Biblical Definition of "Believe": Romans 4:20-21

<sup>20</sup> He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief [*apistia*], but was strengthened in faith [*pistis*], giving glory to God, <sup>21</sup> and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform.

- God's **Promise** or **Announcement** (God's **Claim**) – "what He had promised" – Biblical faith or belief **requires a legitimate promise of God** (believing in something God has not promised is **erroneous**, **dangerous**, and **worthless!**)
- Our **Persuasion** or **Acceptance** (Our **Confidence**)  
Verb: Lu 1:1; Rom 14:5; Col 4:12; 2 Tim 4:5,17  
Noun: Col 2:2; 1 Thes 1:5; Heb 6:11; 10:22
  - in God's **Power** (God's **Ability**) – God **can do** what He says He will do
  - in God's **Performance** (God's **Reliability**) – God **will do** what He says He will do

#### **Biblical faith (or belief), then, is:**

- Being **completely convinced** that God **can** and **will** do what He has **promised**.
- Being fully confident that God can and will keep His Word.
- Believing what God has **said** He **can** and **will** do.
- "I take God at His Word"
- "I believe that God will do what He has promised."
- Accepting God's claims as true. (Romans 4:16-25)

- <sup>16</sup> Therefore [it is] of **faith** [*pistis*] that [it might be] according to grace, so that the promise might be sure to all the seed, not only to those who are of the law, but also to those who are of the **faith** [*pistis*] of Abraham, who is the father of us all
- <sup>17</sup> (as it is written, "I have made you a father of many nations")
- in the presence of Him whom he **believed** [*pisteuo*] – God, who gives life to the dead and calls those things which do not exist as though they did;
- <sup>18</sup> who, contrary to hope, in hope **believed** [*pisteuo*], so that he became the father of many nations, according to what was spoken, "So shall your descendants be."
- <sup>19</sup> And not being weak in **faith** [*pistis*], he did not consider his own body, already dead (since he was about a hundred years old), and the deadness of Sarah's womb.
- <sup>20</sup> He did not waver at the promise of God through **unbelief** [*apistia*], but was strengthened in **faith** [*pistis*], giving glory to God, <sup>21</sup> and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform.
- <sup>22</sup> And therefore "it was accounted to him for righteousness."
- <sup>23</sup> Now it was not written for his sake alone that it was imputed to him, <sup>24</sup> but also for us. It shall be imputed to us who **believe** [*pisteuo*] in Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, <sup>25</sup> who was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification.