

Faith Isn't Blind
July 7, 2013

A famous comedian, who is also an outspoken critic of religious belief raises these questions as he performs around the country: **“Why is faith good? Why is the purposeful suspension of critical thinking a good thing?”**

Look with me at his definition of faith. He defines faith as "purposeful suspension of critical thinking".

I don't think much of his definition of faith. I don't know where he got the idea that faith was a refusal to use your brain and just believe something. I don't agree with that definition of faith. I don't believe in a faith that throws thinking out the window. I don't believe Christian faith is blind. I believe there is evidence for our faith.

Look with me at the Bible and we'll examine the evidence for our faith. The writer of the book of Hebrews speaks of faith. Let's see what he says.

Hebrews 11:1 (NIV)

Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.

Now what is the writer hoping for? He says faith is being sure of what we hope for. What is he hoping for? Let's back up in this letter to see what he is hoping for.

Hebrews 1:1-3 (NIV) In the past God spoke to our forefathers ([the Israelites](#)) through the prophets ([people that God called to be His spokespersons to His people. Some were priests, farmers, shepherds, even a king.](#)) at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son ([Jesus](#)), whom he appointed heir of all things ([Lord](#)), and through whom he made the universe. The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, ([This means Jesus is like God in power, knowledge, and character.](#)) sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins ([by dying on the cross](#)), he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.

First let me point out **two points of good news in these verses.**

The first is that **God reveals Himself to mankind.** God is not an unknowable mystery. God has made Himself known. He does so in a general and limited way through creation. This revealing of Himself is given to all people. Then He reveals Himself more specifically through the prophets, and eventually through Jesus.

God is not unknowable. He has made Himself known. He is available to be known by anyone interested in seeking Him out. He wants you to know Him.

The comedian stated that if Jesus showed up in the middle of the super bowl and turned all the nachos into loaves and fishes, he would say, "Oh, look at that, I was wrong, there He is." He said nothing about a desire to know Jesus. There was no hint that he would submit to Jesus as Lord.

So if God doesn't give more evidence to these people than He does to the rest of us, why is that a surprise?

But if you really want to know God, you can. God is ready.

The second note of good news here is this: **Jesus "provided purification for sins."** I preached on this last week, that the blood of Jesus purifies us from ALL sin. That is certainly good news. It is also a promise from God. We put our hope in such a promise because we hope it is true.

So the hope starts with the possibility of purification for sins. Let's read a bit further on for some more information.

Hebrews 2:1-2 (NIV) We must pay more careful attention, therefore, to what we have heard, [\(the Good News that Jesus provided purification for sins\)](#) so that we do not drift away.

For if the message spoken by angels was binding [\(the 10 Commandments\)](#), and every violation and disobedience received its just punishment, how shall we escape if we ignore such a great salvation?

Here the purification from sins is called salvation, a word we use a lot. We speak of being saved by Jesus. Why is the word salvation used? What is it we are saved from? **We are saved from the consequences of our sins.** Jesus died in our place to save us from the eternal consequences of our sins.

This salvation, this purification for sins, this deliverance from the consequences of our sins, THIS is our hope. This is what God has promised us. This is what we are each hoping to experience.

But what evidence is there for the truthfulness, the reality, of this hope? **What evidence is there for our faith?**

1) **Jesus taught that His life would provide salvation.**

Hebrews 2:3b (NIV) This salvation, which was first announced by the Lord...
(Luke 19:10; John 12:47; Mark 10:45) NIV

Jesus spoke often about what He came to do. He announced before His death that He would die. He spoke about what the benefit of His death would be for mankind.

2) **The Apostles testified to the resurrection and salvation.**

Hebrews 2:3c (NIV) This salvation, which was first announced by the Lord, was confirmed to us by those who heard him.

The apostles, those closest followers of Jesus spread the news of His death and resurrection. They preached purification for sins based on the blood of Jesus. They put their lives on the line to share this good news.

Some have accused them of lying about the resurrection, of making it all up. That is ridiculous. Look at the facts. They did not get rich and famous for preaching Jesus. All were arrested and whipped. All were threatened with worse by the authorities. One was arrested again and soon after executed. If their message was a lie, surely they would have quit with his death. Instead they gave the rest of their lives to spreading the news about Jesus. Their courageous testimony is evidence in favor of the truthfulness of their message.

3) **Salvation was Confirmed by God**

Hebrews 2:4a (NIV) God also testified to it by signs, wonders and various miracles...
(Acts 2:43; 3:2-10; 5:12)

God is still doing miracles today. He does not do as many in one place as He did then, but He still uses His power in supernatural ways to accomplish His will. We hear occasional stories from the missionaries of God doing such miracles to move the message of salvation along. Perhaps you, like me, have experienced one or two that can only be credited to God. What I witnessed cannot be called a coincidence.

4) **The Holy Spirit confirmed salvation.**

Hebrews 2:4b (NIV) God also testified to it by signs, wonders and various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will.

The Holy Spirit gives you spiritual gifts. The Holy Spirit works through your ministry to others. When you see this happening, it is evidence of God's presence in your life. Now this occurs after salvation, after you become a Christian. But it is still evidence for continuing to have faith in God's promise of purification for sins.

This letter of Hebrews is written to people who were already Christians. The writer wants to encourage these Christians to keep their faith despite the opposition against them. He reminds them of the evidence that their faith rests upon. Then he writes...

Hebrews 3:12 (NIV) See to it, brothers, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God.

The Christians in this church were facing persecution. So he is reminding them of the evidence for their faith in Christ Jesus. Whenever we face difficulties in our faith, especially criticism or persecution, it is natural to ask ourselves, "Am I sure this is true?" These Christians were tempted to doubt their own faith. So this letter was meant to remind them of the evidence and encourage them to hang on to their faith.

So how about you? Are you doubting your faith today? Are you being tested and tempted to turn away from the living God? Are you in danger of neglecting your salvation? Hang on. Look again at the evidence for your faith. Based on all the evidence presented, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess.

Our faith is not a blind faith. Our faith is not a faith without thought. Our faith is based on the evidence for the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. And so we live in hope of the fulfillment of God's promises to us.

Once more he encourages them to hold on.

Hebrews 10:23 (NIV)

Let us hold unwaveringly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful.

Faith is choosing to believe the promise of God. Faith is putting your trust in the character of God. We choose to believe that He will keep His promises to us, that what we hope for will come to fruition.

This is the basis for our hope. So then, in chapter 11, he says...

Hebrews 11:1 (NIV) Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.

Why are we sure? Because of the evidence.

He also says we are certain of something we do not see. What he means is that no Christian who has died has come back to tell us, "It's true." We have not seen God, Jesus, or the resurrected Jesus. The promise of God is just words. But they are words that are backed up by the evidence of what God has already done to show His love for us.

Our faith is based on God's promise and the evidence (John 3:16) of God's love for us.

That should be enough evidence for us to start to believe. Most of us have already displayed that kind of faith in someone. Think about it. Why did you marry the person you married? All you had was his or her promise, backed up by the evidence of what they had already done to show their love for you. You saw evidence of their character, their faithfulness, their trustworthiness, their love.

That doesn't seem like much evidence, when you consider that you only have one life to live and give. And yet you said, "I do." You believed the evidence of his or her love and believed the promise he or she made to you and married this person. What a huge gamble. What a huge act of faith. Yet it wasn't blind faith. You made a choice based on the evidence.

That is all God is asking you to do. God expects you to put your faith in the evidence of His love, that He will keep His promises to you. This is not blind faith. Like when you got married, it should be carefully considered faith. It should be thought out faith.

But it isn't proof positive. It is a gamble. We all knew that going into marriage. But the benefits of marriage made it worth the gamble.

So faith in God is a gamble. And the benefits are worth the gamble. The question left is this: Is the evidence of God's promise and demonstrations of His love enough for you to gamble on God?

Now, I recognize that there is an element here of faith needed in the accuracy and truthfulness of the Biblical documents. If you can't trust the Bible, much of the evidence is in doubt. But I believe there is evidence for the accuracy and truthfulness of the Bible.

So, despite the questions you have about it, I urge you to examine the evidence. Don't simply make a decision without looking critically at the evidence.

Examine the fact of how many ancient copies we have, thousands more than any other ancient document. Just because it is about God and religion should not make it more questionable than those others.

Examine the evidence that they are little changed over the centuries, except in minor ways, and none of these having to do with major teachings.

Examine the evidence that these have been studied more than any other ancient documents. They have been studied by more qualified people, like archeologists, historians, theologians, and even skeptics and atheists,

Examine the evidence of predictions made hundreds of years before their fulfillment, not just a few prophecies, but dozens.

Examine the evidence for the truthfulness of the New Testament accounts of Jesus.

Examine the evidence for the resurrection of Jesus.

All of these things are evidence in favor of the reliability of these ancient documents. These things are not proof positive. But we don't have to have proof positive to make a faith decision. We don't have proof positive for the historicity of Julius Caesar, Genghis Khan, or George Washington. Yet you believe in them.

So I am asking you to believe the evidence. I am NOT asking you to suspend critical thought. I am asking you to use your critical thinking to look at the evidence for the accuracy and truthfulness of the Bible, the existence of God, and the love of God.

After your study, consider if you have enough evidence to take a gamble and pray, even if you aren't sure God is real. Give Him the time and attention necessary for Him to speak to you as He chooses to do. Don't back Him into a corner and say, "I'll only believe if you do it my way." If God is real, He is sovereign. He answers to no one. Approach Him correctly, and let Him reveal Himself to you His way.

As we go to God in individual silent prayer, what do you need to tell Him? Are you ready to put your faith in Jesus and Savior and Lord? Maybe you who already are Christians have need to share with God this morning that you have been neglecting your salvation. Maybe you are going through a difficult time and are tempted to doubt what you believe. Remember the evidence for your faith and reaffirm your faith in God today.