

February 2008

## WHAT IS FAITH?

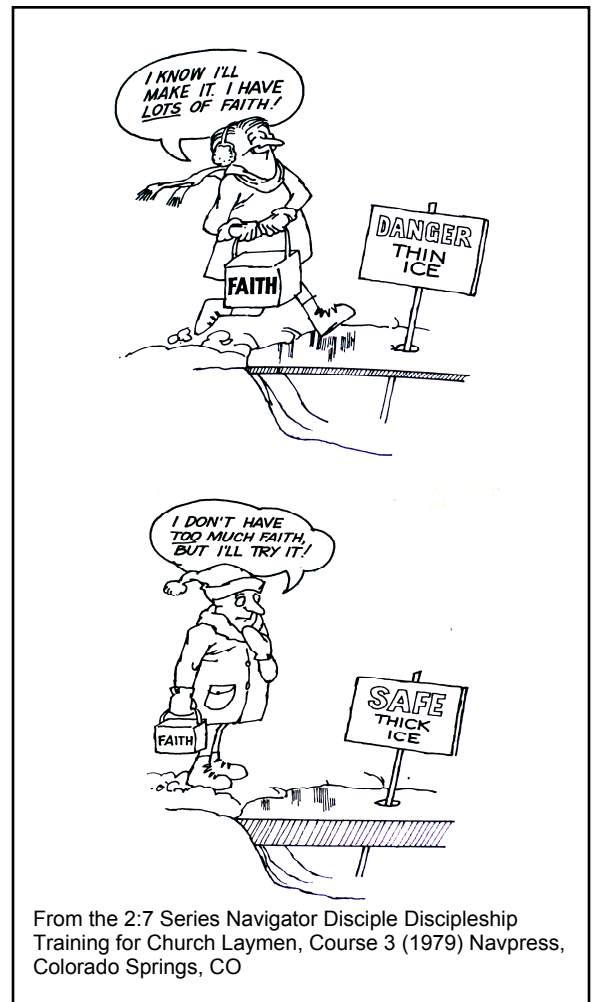
By Phillip G. Johnson, MCE

**B**ut without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. Hebrews 11:6

Faith as defined by my dictionary is as follows: 1. unquestioning belief, 2. unquestioning belief in God, religion, etc., 3. a religion or a system of religious beliefs, 4. anything believed, 5. complete trust, confidence, or reliance, 6. loyalty; allegiance to some person or thing. Almost by definition faith is excluded from logic and reality. It's value appears to be metaphysical, not something useful in the physical world we live in. Is that really all that faith encompasses?

Is faith an unquestioning belief? It definitely should not be for the Christian. While we are to have faith, we are not to be blindly naïve. In seeking answers, how do we learn apart from questioning? The Bereans "eagerly examined the scriptures every day to see whether these things were so." (Acts 17:11) They searched the Scriptures for the answers to those questions that Paul aroused in their spirits. The Scriptures also say: *But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain.* (Titus 3:9) So to balance out this reasoning it is imperative that we learn to question in a way that advances our knowledge and faith and avoid senseless or insincere questions.

Even an unquestioning belief in God is not the definition of faith for the Christian. In our society, many individuals have perverted God's character, and in their eyes God is no longer complete (or perfect) as He describes Himself in His word. Many people say that God loves everybody so much that He would never send anyone to hell. They have effectively made God into something else, and they no longer worship the God described in the Scriptures. They now worship a god they have designed, not God, who is complete in Himself. God does not want us to have faith in a religious system or in our religious beliefs, they really do not provide salvation. Faith as defined as whatever is believed is not faith, it is more a philosophy for life or action. Faith as trust, confi-



dence, reliance, loyalty, or allegiance indicates that there must be an object related to the real meaning of faith.

Can faith and science co-exist in the same real-ity? Of course, the reality of the spiritual is greater than the reality of the physical. God is Spirit, He exists apart from the created universe as He is the creator of the universe. He is not subject to the physical restraints of His creation. Time, space, and matter do not affect Him in anyway. He exists independent of creation and by the power of His right hand He holds all things together. Therefore, the spiritual realm is an even "higher reality" than is the physical universe. God's (The Creator's) existence is

greater than the created thing's existence. Science is limited to the scientific method and is not designed to deal with the study of the supernatural or philosophical. Faith should never be associated with foolish wishing or the fantasy of desire. Faith is belief, a belief based in evidence and facts, and for it to grow, it must be exercised in an appropriate manner.

How does God define faith? *Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.* (Hebrews 11:1) Faith has substance! The word "hoped" is not meant to imply a wish or a desire, but it means more a foreseen expectation or coming event that is expected just as much as the sun is expected to rise in the morning. So faith substantiates our expected outcome of eternal life through Jesus Christ, our faith through good works and obedience to Christ showing Jesus as Lord even though He is making intercession for us in Heaven. Noah through faith was obedient to God, and built an ark just as God commanded, and He and his family were saved. *For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.* (Romans 1:17)<sup>1</sup> "The scientific evidence supports that belief can heal." This statement was made by Herbert Benson, MD president of the Mind/Body Medical Institute at Beth Israel/Deaconess Medical Center in Boston. "Studies have found that those who have deep beliefs—whether they are marked by individual prayer, communal worship, or even nonreligious spirituality—generally live a longer and healthier life."<sup>2</sup> The effects of faith in the daily lives of people are becoming more important in science and are becoming more relevant for research, at least in medical arenas.

If faith by itself can generate benefits for man, can any religious belief be important? While faith is important to mankind, the object of the faith is far more important than the amount of faith. A simple illustration will show this truth. Two similar men approach a body of water and need to cross. One man has tons of faith while the other man has only a little faith. The man with lots of faith crosses where the ice is thin and will not support his weight, while the man with only a little faith crosses where the ice is thick and can support his weight. Who do you think got wet? Of course the man with lots of faith but the object of his faith was the thin ice. The object of your faith is more important than the amount of faith, because faith well founded can grow by the exercising of it. If Christ is the object of your faith then you have the correct object for your faith for: *Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under*

*heaven given among men, whereby, we must be saved.* (Acts 4:12)

Is faith only believing in something? Not really. *Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble.* (James 2:19) The devils, who are fallen angels who rebelled with Lucifer, are well aware that God exists, they know and are terrified. Faith for the believer, by Scriptural pronouncement, means more than just believing something and that being that. It requires an action on our part. First that belief must be accompanied by the action of repentance. Repenting is turning from the direction you are traveling (away from God) a hundred and eighty degrees and going toward God. Repenting is no longer doing the evil you once were doing and becoming obedient to Christ. *Who by him do believe in God, that raised him from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God.* (I Peter 1:21)

Saving faith then has as its object the only Son of God, Jesus Christ! There is no other way to God. Faith without an object is illogical, so those who have faith must be able to define what they have faith in. Even the atheist has faith in the laws of nature; the evolutionists have faith to believe their theory in the face of mounting evidence to the contrary. All men have faith in something whether it is truly helpful or harmful to them. As believers we must determine to have faith in the only true God as He revealed Himself to us through the Scriptures. Any other idea or notion of God other than who He shows Himself to be in the written Word is a god of our own making. So we must always be: *Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.* (Hebrews 12:2) ❧

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<sup>1</sup> This is written in the Old Testament in Habakkuk 2:4. See also Galatians 3:11, and Hebrews 10:38.

<sup>2</sup> Michaud E (2001) Can her touch save your life? *Prevention March*: 187

## MORE FLOOD EVIDENCES COME TO LIGHT

By David A. Plaisted, PhD

From time to time, new research results give additional insight into the Biblical flood. In fact, for one who understands the Biblical flood, many current discoveries are easy to understand. For example, a recent article in *Science* "calls for critical reappraisal of all mudstones previously interpreted as having been continuously deposited under still waters".<sup>1</sup> Because mud sediments are "the dominant sediment type on earth", this reappraisal has tremendous implications for our understanding of the entire geological column.

This article concerns fine-grained sedimentary rocks. "It is commonly assumed... that fine-grained sediment was delivered more or less continuously from buoyant plumes produced by storms and river floods... or turbidity currents before setting out of suspension as individual grains in still waters. This paradigm... is, however, at odds with observations in modern oceans and lakes ...". Now it appears that such sediments were deposited "under much higher current velocities than previously assumed." Also, the sediment layers, although they appear parallel, are really at a slight angle and deposited quickly rather than slowly. Thus "many of our preconceptions about fine-grained rocks are naive."

The layers in such sediments are often understood to represent yearly variations in climate. Now it appears that they could have been deposited quickly under rapidly moving water. Of course this understanding is much more in harmony with a short chronology of the earth and with the Biblical flood model than with conventional geological understanding of long ages of slow deposition of sediment. Other sediments, for example those containing many well-preserved fossils, also give evidence of being laid down rapidly and catastrophically. It appears that the long ages of conventional geology are finding fewer and fewer places to hide in the geological column.

Another interesting result is presented in a later article in *Science*.<sup>2</sup> There is evidence that the waters of the ocean were very warm in the Cretaceous period, conventionally dated at 90 million years ago. The sea surface temperatures are believed to have been over 35° C (95° F). However, there is also evidence of a great sheet of ice in Antarctica at the same time. How can this be? Both

the warmth of the period and the existence of ice at the same time are puzzles for conventional geology.

Both observations fit in well with our understanding of the Biblical flood. The oceans were warm because of so many undersea volcanoes erupting during the flood. The oceans had not had time to cool down yet. Also, the land was wet and drying out. The evaporation of water would have cooled the land down. With warm oceans and cold land, there would have been tremendous precipitation, leading to large accumulations of snow and glaciers in Antarctica. In fact, this appears to have been the cause of the ice age and the advance of glaciers over much of the earth after the flood.

One can hope that eventually the scientific establishment will consider such evidences and take more seriously the possibility of a rapid and recent derivation of the geological column. ☞

## COMING EVENTS

**NOTE: THE FEBRUARY MEETING OF TASC HAS BEEN MOVED FROM ITS USUAL TIME TO FEBRUARY 21.**

**Thursday, February 21, 7:00 P.M., Providence Baptist Church, 6339 Glenwood Ave., Raleigh, Room 631**

Phil Johnson will present, "What is Faith?" Does faith have a purpose in a scientific world? Is faith more important than what is believed?

<sup>1</sup> Macquaker JHS, Bohacs K (2007) On the accumulation of mud. *Science* 318(5857): 1734-1735

<sup>2</sup> Kerr RA (2008) More climate wackiness in the Cretaceous supergreenhouse? *Science* 319(5860): 145

Contributions may be mailed to: TASC, P.O. Box 12051, Research Triangle Park, NC 27709-2051

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