How can faith save you?

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Romans 15:13



Fountain of Life Booklets

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Our readers are from various Christian denominations, as well as non-believers. The booklets seek to address important biblical topics that will be helpful to the reader.

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Faith is

the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. For by it the elders obtained a good testimony. By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are seen.

Hebrews 11:1–3

THESE VERSES CONTAIN TWO DEFINITIONS OF FAITH: The first is *"the substance of things hoped for"*. We do not have an uncertain hope, because this hope is the hope that God will fulfill what He has promised. This hope is sure and not of us—it is a gift from God.

The second is *"the evidence of things not seen"*. We have a conviction that the world and life was created by a higher power that we cannot see. We do not accept that the complexity of life and the harmony of the Universe developed by mere chance. There must be a plan and a Creator behind what we see. ❑

WHAT IS FAITH? THE GREEK WORD TRANSLATED "FAITH" IN the New Testament is *"pistos"*, which means to have confidence or trust in something or someone. The Greek word can also mean to be "faithful".

There are three different aspects of believing God:

a) Believing that God exists. Demons know God exists, but this does not help them (James 2:19), because they will not surrender their will to Him.

b) Believing in God's word. Believing what God says to be true, but if it isn't followed by action, knowledge alone does not save you.

c) Believing in God. In other words when we believe God exists, accept His word as truth, trust Him and accept His will in our lives. We have repented and our life is changed through the power of the Holy Spirit. Our belief in God is clearly seen by how we live. This is an active faith and a relationship between God and us, based on mutual love and grace.

The Christian faith is both what we believe and in whom. The Christian faith describes our relationship with God and His message. This relationship has influence on how we live. We confess that we are His children, and that we are loyal to Him as to a father. We trust God and His promises and put our life in His hands, accepting His will in our lives (Matt. 6:10).

The term *"pistos"* also implies, and sometimes refers to "faithfulness". There is a mutual faith relationship between you and God. You believe in Him and He believes in you, if you allow Him to help you. If He did not believe in you, He would not have called you or opened your eyes to His message. You are His child, now and forever. ❑



Faith is a gift from God given to us through the Holy Spirit. It is Jesus' faith. It is this faith, grace and love relationship with God that saves us, not our own weak faith.



Fountain of Life booklets seek to clarify the gospel message by making it relevant for our time. It is our desire to help individuals to understand both themselves and their relationship with God, irrespective of their religious affiliation.

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"… whoever believes in him shall not perish, but have everlasting life"

John 3:16

This verse is often called "the gospel in a nutshell", because it so clearly summarises the doctrine of the Christian faith. God loves us, not because we are good or deserve His love. He loves us because we are His creation. We are His children. He loves us so much that He was willing to forgive our sins and put them and our shame, guilt and pain on His Son Jesus Christ.

But we have to choose if we want to accept and enter into this love relationship. He does not force His love or salvation on us. Our relationship with God is a mutual love relationship. He loves us and we love Him. We express this by believing His message of salvation, living a life to His honor.

Our life has only two possible endings: eternal life with God or eternal death. If we believe in God with our whole heart and accept His message, He will give us eternal life as a gift. We cannot earn eternal life. Salvation is a gift.

The main and only important question in your life is this one question: Do you desire a love relationship with God, living according to His will and standards? It is your decision, if this life is to be the beginning of an eternal existence with God, or only a short existence without meaning, ending in eternal death. ❑





"… your faith being much more precious than gold … tested by fire."

1 Peter 1:7

OUR FAITH IN GOD IS STRENGTHENED THROUGH TRIALS, JUST AS our relationships with others are strengthened when we struggle together and make it through difficult times. Every time a relationship is tested, it strengthens that relationship so that it becomes stronger than before. This is also the case in our relationship with God. He allows difficulties and trials in our lives, so that we can learn from them, but also so that we can see the difference between good and evil and thus develop as Christians.

To develop as Christians implies to surrender our will to God and live a new life with the help of His Holy Spirit, to bring our character more in line with His. Our faith is cleansed and strengthened through trials in much the same way that gold is refined through fire.

Job was a righteous man, but God allowed him to suffer a major trial, not because he had sinned, but to show Satan that he was wrong concerning Job's motives for serving God. Instead the trial resulted in Job coming closer to his Creator (Job 42:1–6).



Your faith is more valuable than all the gold in the whole world. The gold of this world will one day dissolve, but your relationship with God will last for eternity. Your future is a life together with your Creator and Savior forever. ❑



"Your faith has healed you …"

Mark 5:34 and 10:52

How can our faith have any influence on God's healing of us? God is Almighty, and can heal without our participation.

Our relationship with God is a mutual love relationship. God does not force this on us; it is by our own free will that we enter into His love. God desires this relationship with you, but it is up to you if you wish to accept it.

God is interested in how important this relationship is to you. The closer the relationship, the more you trust Him, the better you will understand His will. If we are going to have a meaningful relationship with God, we must believe that He exists and hears us (Hebrews 11:6); we must have faith in Him. In our communion with God in prayer, we can lay our requests in His hands, as well as the healing of our sickness. God heals, but our faith is essential when we ask for his intervention.

God does not always heal even though we have gone to Him in prayer. Some would say that this is a sign of little faith, making the situation for the sick person even more difficult.

God will heal, but He doesn't say when: it might not happen until this life is over, in the resurrection from the dead. God may have reasons unknown to us, why He doesn't heal now. It could be that your example is to be an inspiration to others; that although God has not healed you, you are willing to accept His will in your life despite the suffering. We have to surrender our lives to God and let His will be done, and this requires faith! ❑





"Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith"…

2. Cor. 13:5

PAUL WRITES THIS IN HIS SECOND LETTER TO THE CHURCH IN Corinth. He strongly criticizes the church in his first letter. He also wrote a third letter (1 Cor. 9:5) that has not been preserved in the Bible. Therefore we don't know all Paul is referring to, but he writes that he will soon come to Corinth and address the issues.

There were members of the church in Corinth that did not believe in the resurrection from the dead (1 Cor. 15:12). There were some that took fellow members to court (1 Cor. 6:1–7). And some were drunk when they partook of the Lord's meal (1 Cor. 11:21).

There were obviously major problems in the church already in the first century. People claimed to be Christians, but lived a life that disgraced the name of Christianity. This has been a problem in the 2000-year history of Christianity. In God's eyes there is no such thing as a passive Christian, or a nominal Christian, or an academic Christian. God desires active Christians.

Christians are not perfect; they have their faults. They are forgiven sinners who, with God's help try to avoid sinning again. They put their lives in God's hands, they examine their lives and their faith and try with His Holy Spirit to be more like Him and less like their earlier sinful self. This is only possible with the help of God's Holy Spirit. This is what Paul calls a new creation or a new being. ❑





"… faith without works is dead" …

James 2:20

FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST HAS OBLIGATIONS. WE CANNOT CLAIM to be Christian and not help a brother or sister in need (1 John 4:17). If you believe in Jesus, this will have consequences on how you live your life.

To believe in Jesus' name describes your relationship with God: You trust Him and have accepted and surrendered to His will. You now stand in His love, a love that you pass on to others.

These are the works James writes about, the works of love—that is God's own love, that you have received from Him and spread to others. God wants us to love our neighbours as Jesus loves them. This is the new commandment Jesus gave to his disciples (John 13:34). If our faith doesn't result in the works of God's love, then our faith is only inactive knowledge, which is of no use to us, or others.

James explains this again in verse 26: *For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.*

Martin Luther did not like the letter of James, because he believed that it contradicted the teachings of Paul that we are saved by faith alone. Paul writes about the relationship between faith and works in Ephesians 2:8–10. We are saved by faith, not because of works, but good works are the result of an active and living faith. Both Paul and James agree on this, there is no contradiction. ❑





Examples of faith from Hebrews chapter 11

For he who comes to God, must believe that he exists and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him (verse 6).

By faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his household (verse 7).

By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would afterwards receive, not knowing where he was going…and he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God (verses 8 and 10).

These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, they were assured of them, embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on earth (verse 13).

By faith Moses refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter. He chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt (verses 24–26).

By faith they subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions (verse 33). *Others had a trial of mocking and scourgings, and of chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, sawn in two, tempted and slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted and tormented. Of whom the world was not worthy... and all these having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise* (verses 36–39). ❑





The thief on the cross

Luke 23:39–43

IT IS NEVER TOO LATE TO COME TO GOD. TWO THIEVES WERE crucified together with Christ. One ridiculed Jesus, as did many others who were watching. But the other defended Christ and admitted that they deserved their punishment, while He had done nothing wrong to deserve His. Jesus was innocent, he said (Luke 23:41). The thief was the only person who dared to defend Jesus in his suffering. He said to Jesus: *"Lord, remember me when you come into your kingdom."*

He must have known a lot about Jesus and His message to declare Him innocent and to call Him "Lord". He understood that Jesus would receive power after He died. He almost understood more than Jesus' own disciples about what would happen after Jesus' death. Jesus and his message must have been public knowledge at that time, even among thieves!

This thief decided to support Jesus in His time of suffering. He asked Jesus for forgiveness and grace. Jesus says He will not be ashamed of those who are not ashamed of Him (Luke 9:26). The thief was more concerned about his relationship with Jesus, than what other people and the religious leaders thought of him. He decided in the last hours of his life to go to Jesus and ask for forgiveness. Make your decision to have Jesus as the Lord in your life—it is never too late, but don't delay. ❑





"The Fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, … and faith ..."

Galatians 5:22

FAITH IN GOD IS A CONSEQUENCE, OR FRUIT, OF HAVING BEEN endowed with the Holy Spirit. When we receive God's Holy Spirit this will make a major change in how we live and how we view life. We will be able to understand God's perspective and see our life from His eternal viewpoint.

Upon receiving the Holy Spirit, we can experience His joy and peace regardless of circumstances in our life, because we can see our lives from His eternal perspective—not our own. We will have a closer relationship with God. The joy we experience is not our joy but a gift from God. The same is true for peace and faith and the other fruits of the Spirit. All of these are attributes of God's character, which He gives us through the Holy Spirit. Our feeble faith in God will be strengthened by His faith, through the Holy Spirit. This is the faith that is the foundation of our salvation—not our weak faith, but His faith—His gift to us.

The word "faith" in this scripture can be understood both as God's faith and faithfulness. God's gift of faith strengthens our faith, but also gives us the strength to be faithful to Him and His word through the Holy Spirit. ❑





The righteous shall be faithful

Habakkuk 2:4

THE PROPHET DID NOT UNDERSTAND WHY GOD DID NOT punish the lawless and ungodly people in Jerusalem. The first chapter of his book finds him complaining to God, asking why He did not interfere and punish the wicked of His own people. God's answer was that He would act at the appropriate time, and the prophet concluded that he had to wait until God decided that the time was right. The prophet could not force God's hand to punish the guilty. God decides when, and the reason why He waits is not always known. He is patient with us and our enemies. It is God's desire that everyone repents (2 Peter 3:9). It is God's patience and goodness that drives us to repentance (Romans 2:4).

In chapter 2, Habakkuk writes that he will withdraw and go to his post and wait to see when God will intervene. We also do not always understand why God allows what He does, or why He doesn't intervene in a crisis when we think He should. In verse 4 Habakkuk writes: *"The just* (someone who is cleansed and clean in God's eyes) *shall live by his faith"*. The prophet writes *"by his faith"*. In other words, a righteous person must be faithful and wait on God's intervention to fulfill His promise when the time is right.



Nothing is impossible for God. But we cannot force Him to do anything. His will is *"agape"*-love and He will do what is the best in the long run. We are God's servants, not the other way around, and we must be faithful to Him, as He is faithful to us. ❑



"… the gospel is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes …"

Romans 1:16

ROMANS 1:16 AND 17 CONTAIN THE CORE TOPICS OF THE first eleven chapters in the book. These two verses changed Martin Luther's understanding and relationship with God. He thought he had to deserve God's love to be justified, to be clean in God's eyes. Luther was afraid of God and asked forgiveness for every little sin. But when Luther understood the depth of these verses, it became a revelation and great comfort to him.

These verses state that we are saved from the second and eternal death by the gospel, not by our own works. We cannot deserve salvation; it is a gift from God. Notice that Paul does not write that the gospel has power, but is the power for salvation. It is not our own works that saves us.

The gospel about God's love towards humanity, by sending His Son Jesus Christ and His vicarious sacrifice for our sins, is the power and source of our salvation. Salvation is not of our own making. God loves us and has made our salvation possible as a gift through the gospel. ❑





"For in the gospel God's righteousness is revealed, from faith to faith."

Romans 1:17

IN THE GOSPEL GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS IS REVEALED THROUGH FAITH. When Martin Luther understood that God's righteousness was not his stern judgment upon us, but that we are declared clean and righteous in his eyes, because the blood of Jesus covers our sins, Luther entered into a new relationship with God.

Jesus taking upon himself the sins and suffering of the world is an expression of God's love for humanity. Through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, God also took responsibility for allowing Satan to be in the Garden of Eden and thus allowing all the suffering caused by Satan down through the ages. This was necessary for mankind to be able to choose between good and evil. God accepts the responsibility for allowing evil and His righteousness is revealed through Jesus' sacrifice.

The next part of the verse is difficult, because it is not clear what Paul is trying to say, and that is why this section has been translated in a number of ways. But Greek grammar may help us here. The Greek text says *"from faith to faith"*. Some suggest this to mean that faith grows in our lives. But elsewhere Paul writes that this faith is a gift from God, and one Bible commentary instead suggests the following interpretation: *"from God's faith to our faith"*. God's righteousness is revealed and transferred through faith in the gospel. God is righteous because He forgives our sins, since He has let us live in a hostile environment full of sin. ❑





"The righteous will live by faith."

Romans 1:17

THIS IS A QUOTE FROM THE PROPHET HABAKKUK 2:4, BUT Paul deletes one word when he tries to explain the gospel in just a few words. Habakkuk 2:4 reads: *"The righteous shall live by his faith."* Paul omits the word "his," which is in the Hebrew text. The righteous shall not live because of our unstable faithfulness or shaky faith, but by God's faith given to us through the Holy Spirit.

The word "live" in this verse also refers to living with God in eternity. It is through God's faith that we can be saved and live eternally with God. Paul uses this Old Testament verse and elevates it to the New Covenant level.

We will live eternally because of the faith we have received from God, not because of our good deeds. We are saved through grace not our works. Paul explains that Abraham was also justified through faith (Romans 4:3, Genesis 15:6); our relationship with God resembles that of Abraham, we also believe in God and this is accredited to us as righteousness.

Paul quotes Habakkuk 2:4 elsewhere in the New Testament and uses this verse to explain that we are saved from eternal death through the gift of faith. ❑





"Abraham's faith was credited to him as righteousness."

Romans 4:3

Paul refers to Genesis 15:6 where Abraham's relationship with God was based on faith and not his works. Abraham's faith was his works.

Abraham was 75 years old when he arrived in the land of Canaan. Abraham walked with God. He believed God even when he was told that he and Sarah would have a child in their old age. When Sarah heard this she laughed, and that is why the angel told Abraham that the child's name would be Isaac, which means "laughter".

But Abraham believed. God had promised on several occasions to bless Abraham's descendants, and Abraham believed this in his heart. Abraham believed even though Sarah had been barren all through their married life and was now an old woman. Still Abraham believed.

Abraham waited at least 25 years for God to fulfill His promise. In the opening verses of Genesis 15 Abraham questions why God has not fulfilled His promise. God then asks Abraham if he could count all of the stars in the heavens that He had created (verse 5). Abraham looked up into the heavens and believed that God could do anything. *Abraham believed and God credited it to him as righteousness* (Genesis 15:6). It wasn't until many years later that Sarah gave birth to a son and named him Isaac. God keeps His promises, but He does not say when He will do so. Belief in God can be challenging, since you have to wait until the time is right for God to fulfill his promises. This is why faith is so important. ❑





"God sent his angel and saved his servants who trusted him …"

Daniel 3:28

KING NEBUCHADNEZZAR HAD MADE A STATUE OF GOLD. EVERYONE was to kneel down and worship this image; the penalty for not doing so was death. Three of Daniel's friends Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, refused to kneel. They would not worship any other god than the Creator, the Almighty God. The king became furious when he heard this, particularly since they were high officials in his government (Daniel 2:49). The king corrected them and gave them another chance to bow down to the image, or to be thrown into a blazing furnace.

In chapter three Daniel tells what then happened. The three men answered the king that they could not and would not bow down to the image. They told the king that the Almighty God was strong enough to save them from the furnace flames. But even if God choose not to save them, they would not worship the image of Nebuchadnezzar. Their faith was not dependent on whether God would save them or not. They put their lives in God's hands.

The three were then thrown into the blazing furnace, but God saved them. This turned out to be a strong witness to the king, and resulted in him praising the God of these three men. Their faith became a witness to others, and this can also be the case for us in difficult circumstances. Our faith in God in times of crisis can encourage others in their time of difficulty. In faith, our focus is on God and not our problems. We put our lives in God's hands. ❑





"… obedience to the faith among all nations …"

Romans 1:5

TWICE IN THE BOOK OF ROMANS, PAUL WRITES OF OBEDIENCE to the faith (Romans 1:5, 16:26). Romans 1:5 says: *"through whom we have received grace and apostleship for obedience to the faith among all nations for his name."*

Commentators discuss what this expression means and some suggestions are: obedience to a body of doctrines known as "faith", obedience to the authority of faith, obedience to God's faithfulness, the obedience required by faith, believing in Christ is a form of submission (obedience) to Him, and the obedience that flows forth from saving faith (see *Paul's letter to the Romans,* by Ben Witherington III, pages 34–35).

In both of these scriptures, this expression is used in connection with being obedient in spreading faith (the message of the gospel) to all nations. In both scriptures, the word "faith" in the Greek text is in the genitive tense. Paul is talking about obedience that belongs to, or comes out of "faith".

Faith and obedience go hand in hand. We obey what we believe. ❑

"… that all nations might believe and obey him …"

Romans 16:26





How can faith save you?

From the Old Testament we learn that no one is able to keep God's law perfectly; only Jesus has achieved this. Everyone has sinned. The law defines how we should live and what sin is, but the law cannot forgive. If we break a law, it doesn't help if we keep it perfectly from then on.

The animal sacrifices in the Old Testament did not actually forgive the sins (Hebrews 9:9), but rather showed that sin was serious business, and that forgiveness has a price. They pictured Jesus' sacrifice.

Neither the Law, nor the entire Old Testament contain a promise of eternal life that saves us from eternal death. We are not saved in recompense for keeping the Law of God. The Law is good and holy (Romans 7:12) because it describes how we should live, and it defines sin. But we need forgiveness from our sins to be saved, and this can only come through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

Our faith describes our understanding and relationship with God. We stand in a grace and love relationship with our Creator. *"Therefore since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand"* (Romans 5:1–2).

We are surrounded by grace. We are not saved because of our good works, but through His love for us. It is this faith, grace and love relationship with Him in which we stand, which saves us. ❑





"The children of God … believe in his name."

John 1:12

THIS VERSE DEFINES A CHRISTIAN, A CHILD OF GOD, AS ONE WHO believes in His "name". A Christian is not just someone who believes in God, but believes in His name.

What does it mean to believe in "his name"? In the Hebrew culture, a name was important, because it described significant information about a person and what that person represented. To believe in Jesus name means to believe that God's son became a human being, to believe what He taught, to believe that Jesus died for our sins and was resurrected from the dead and that He is our Creator and Savior. When we believe in His name, we believe what He taught and surrender our lives to His will.

In our culture, a name is just a label without greater purpose than to identify to which family we belong. In the Hebrew culture, the name described attributes of the individual. As we have seen Isaac means "laughter" in Hebrew. People who came in contact with "Mr. Laughter" (Isaac) would naturally ask why he was given such a name, and in this way his miraculous birth would become known. His name was a witness of God's power and intervention.

The Hebrew name for "Jesus" is "Joshua" and means "Jehovah saves" or "Jehovah is the Savior". (There is a discussion if God's name is Jehovah or Yahweh.) But Jesus' name in Hebrew explains who the Savior of mankind is. "Christ" is the Greek translation of the Hebrew "Messiah". Jesus Christ means that Jesus is the Messiah. ❑





The shield of faith

Ephesians 6:16

PAUL USES THE ARMOR OF THE ROMAN SOLDIER TO DESCRIBE THE armor of God that we need in our spiritual battles. As a soldier, we need to take on the full armor, and not just part of it, so that we can take our stand against the devil's schemes (Ephesians 6:11).

Faith is an important part of God's armor and Paul writes in verse 16: *"…take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one."* How can the shield extinguish arrows of fire?

The Greek word Paul uses for "shield" is not a small, round shield, but the bigger, full body shield a heavily-armed soldier would use in combat. This shield protected most of his body. The sharp arrowheads were dipped in a combustible fluid that would burn for some time. The burning arrow was a dangerous weapon for someone who was not protected. But the massive large shield was covered with thick animal hide, which didn't burn easily. The fire of the embedded arrow in the shield would die out, before the shield would start to burn.

This is a metaphor of how faith can stop and protect us from the attacks of our enemy. Faith protects us, and that is why it is imperative that we know what we believe, and why we believe, before we enter into a crisis situation. If not, the crisis will escalate as we begin to doubt our relationship with God. Our faith in Jesus Christ both protects and saves us.



The armor of God has only one offensive weapon, the sword—the Word of God. This is why it is so important for a Christian to have a good knowledge of the Bible, our only weapon. ❑



Faith has content

FAITH HAS CONTENT AND IT IS IMPORTANT THAT WE UNDERSTAND and know what we believe. The Apostolic Creed was developed as an effort to explain the essentials of Christian belief. It was apparently not formulated by the apostles themselves and is probably from the third century. The creed was expressed as a question for people about to be baptized to affirm their belief. The practice of using other creeds in this way goes back at least to 180 AD (Irenius of Lyon).

More detailed creeds in the fourth century and beyond became philosophical in trying to explain who Jesus was. Was Jesus God's first creation (Arius, Christian presbyter and priest in Alexandria) or was He divine? Was Jesus just a phantom who looked like a human being, since it was not believed that God could enter the material world and take on human flesh, which is inferior to spirit (Gnostic point of view)? Or was Jesus just an extraordinarily good person who became the Son of God through baptism? Several wellknown theologians like Albert Schweitzer hold to this view. This last point of view denies that Jesus was divine and the Creator. Is the story of the virgin birth true or too hard to believe? If the virgin birth is not true, then Jesus was just a human being with no preexistence. Was Jesus really resurrected?

The Bible is clear on all these issues: Jesus was not created but divine (John 1:1); He had preexistence and was the Creator (John 1:3) and he became a human being just like you and I with the pulls of the flesh. This is established in John 1:14 where it says that the Word became "flesh". The Greek



word is *"sarks"* and means the body with its lusts and desires. John could have used the neutral word *"soma"* which just means the body, e.g. the body of a dead person. If it is difficult to believe in the virgin birth, then what about God creating everything that exists? Isn't that more difficult? It is important that we do not become confused or lose heart because well-known people relate to some of these other views. The teaching of the Bible must be the basis of our faith, and not the teachings or viewpoints of men.

Our faith has content and we need to be strong in our beliefs, so that we do not waver in times of crisis. We must be prepared; just like a soldier going to war, we need to put on the full armor of God.

We need to be sure who we believe in and why. ❑

I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes; first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed that is by faith from the first to the last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith."

Romans 1:16–17





Saved by Jesus' faith

In Galatians 2:16, Paul writes that we are "*justified by faith in Jesus and not by observing the law*". In the Greek text, Christ is in genitive tense, which means that it is not our own feeble faith but the faith of Jesus that saves us. We are not saved by a faith that we have developed, but by the faith of Jesus which is given us as a gift through the Holy Spirit.

Several New Testament scriptures state that we are "in" Christ. The clearest example is in John 15:1–4, where Jesus compares himself to a tree and we are the branches. This is a metaphor of the spiritual body of Jesus. He is not just the root or the stem of the tree, but the whole tree of which we are parts. When we receive God's Holy Spirit (also called the spirit of Christ in Romans 8:9) we become a part of His spiritual body. That is why Jesus says in John that He is in us and we are in Him. Jesus is in us and we are in Him because we have the same spirit that He does. Christians are called the temple of God in the New Testament (1 Corinthians 6:19) and at the same time live in Him! An amazing and revolutionary thought!

When we receive the Holy Spirit, we become a part of Christ's spiritual body and one with Jesus and the Father (John 14:20), as long as we follow the Spirit. We are saved by Jesus' faith, not our own. ❑





Some reasons why people believe in God

Fufillment of prophecy

One third of the Old and New Testament is prophecy. Some of these are very detailed, for example, Daniel chapter 11. There are over 300 prophecies of Jesus' first coming in the Old Testament, and all are fulfilled. The Dead Sea Scrolls prove that these prophecies were written before Jesus was born.

The complexity of life

The more one learns about God's creation, the more one becomes convinced that it could not have developed by chance. How could the complex DNA molecule develop by chance? Where did the physical laws come from? Nature is in perfect balance; how could this evolve from chance and chaos? Even the Greek philosophers understood that there must have been a power behind the creation of life and the universe. They called it "logos". When John refers to the "Word" in John 1:1 he uses the Greek word "logos".

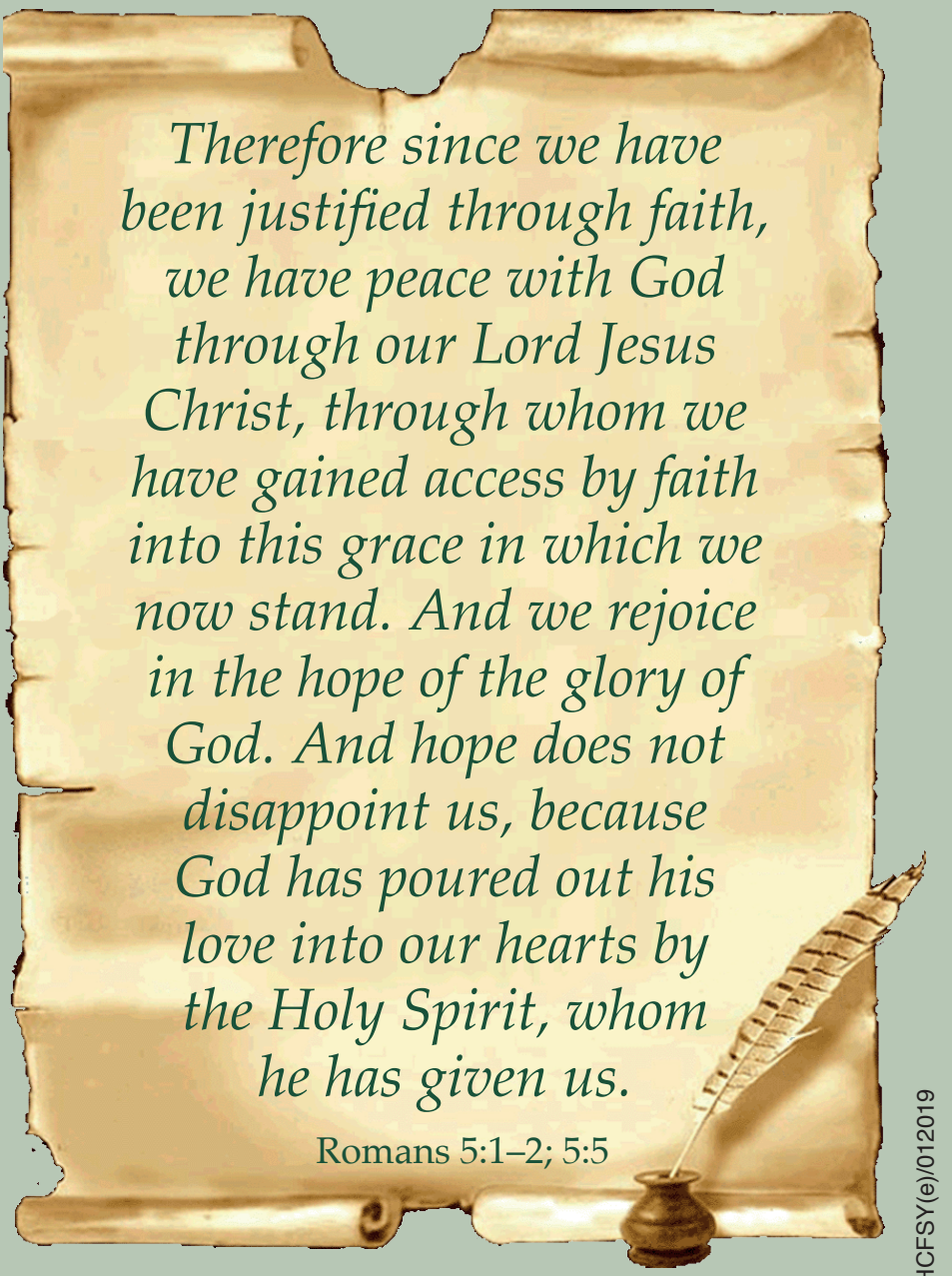
Answered prayer

Nothing gives a stronger assurance of God's existence than answered prayer.



Some have aways believed

Some people have, as long as they can remember, always had a strong belief that God exists and they believe His Word. ❑



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