



Jeff Sweeten

Thus Saith the Lord

SAVING FAITH

By Jeff Sweeten

I can still remember those melodious strains of praise in song wafting through the open windows of the small, rural church building in which I worshiped as a child (we had “swamp-coolers” back then that often didn’t mitigate the heat). “Faith is the victory we know, that overcomes the world” are lyrics that still elicit endearing memories. Songs such as these still stir my senses as the church raised its voice in “*psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in (our) hearts to the Lord*” (Colossians 3:16). Surely, faith is a cornerstone in Christianity and a topic worthy of the joy of giving glory to God. For “*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). But it is abundantly clear that people do not read the Bible as they should or there would not exist today such prolific dissension as to what constitutes a “saving faith” (cf. James 2:14-26). Being a vital component of the Christian religion has not rendered the concept of faith immune from contest, controversy or confusion.

As with a great many of the religious disputes through the centuries, much of the misunderstanding concerning faith has to do with definitions. In the Greek, the term *pistis* (πίστις), is defined by W. E. Vine thusly: “primarily, firm persuasion, a conviction based upon hearing (akin to *peitho*), is used in the N. T. always of faith in God or Christ, or things spiritual” (Vine, p. 401; emp. JDS). Both “belief” and “faith” are interchangeably translated from this term. This definition is succinctly expressed in Romans 10:17, “*So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*” The “*so then*” is a conclusion drawn from the preceding text dealing with the necessity of preaching the Word. Verse seventeen reveals both the receptacle of faith (those “*hearing*”) and the source of faith (“*the Word of God,*” the revealed will of God, the Bible). Therefore, in Christian love, I would suggest that those receiving their faith from some other source (voices, visions, “spiritual nudges,” latter-day prophets, et al.) are not receiving their “faith” from God.

The deluded conviction that God gives us faith directly, personally and singularly either makes God a respecter of persons (unjustly partial, since He must favor you or me to the exclusion of others with such direct revelations) or a liar (since He said the Bible furnishes us completely, cf. 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:3; what could possibly be added to that?). He is neither a respecter or persons or a liar (e.g. Acts 10:34; Titus 1:2). Therefore, the only true source of faith originates with God via a what one might call “a book, chapter and verse,” or what God calls a “**thus saith the Lord.**”

Thus Saith the Lord
is presented by the

Park Heights Church of Christ

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Hamilton
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Schedule of Services

SUNDAY

9:30 a.m. Bible Class
10:25 a.m. Morning Worship
1:30 p.m. Afternoon Worship

WEDNESDAY

7:00 p.m. Bible Study

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