

5 MINUTE LESSONS ON THE KINGDOM OF GOD

“Believe” — Mere Credence. That’s Hog Wash!

The following are the Greek words for “Believe,” “Faith,” & “Obey,” with their meanings and definitions. Source of information: Vine’s Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words.

BELIEF, BELIEVE, BELIEVERS

A. Verbs.

1. pisteuo (Strong’s 4100), “to believe,” also “to be persuaded of,” and hence, “to place confidence in, to trust,” signifies, in this sense of the word, **reliance upon, not mere credence**. It is most frequent in the writings of the apostle John, especially the Gospel. He does not use the noun. Of the writers of the Gospels, Matthew uses the verb ten times, Mark ten, Luke nine, John ninety-nine times.

FAITH

pistis (Strong’s 4102) The main elements in “faith” in its relation to the invisible God, as distinct from “faith” in man, are especially brought out in the use of this noun and the corresponding verb, pisteuo; they are

- 1) a firm conviction, producing a full acknowledgement of God’s revelation or truth, e. g., 2 Thessalonians 2:11-12;
- 2) a personal surrender to Him, John 1:12;
- 3) a conduct inspired by such surrender, 2 Corinthians 5:7.

Prominence is given to one or other of these elements according to the context. All this stands in contrast to belief in its purely natural exercise, which consists of an opinion held in good “faith” without necessary reference to its proof.

OBEY

“Peitho (obey) and pisteuo (believe or faith), ‘to trust,’ are closely related etymologically; the difference in meaning is that the former implies the obedience that is produced by the latter, cf. Hebrews 3:18-19, where the disobedience of the Israelites is said to be the evidence of their unbelief. Faith is of the heart, invisible to men; obedience is of the conduct and may be observed. When a man obeys God he gives the only possible evidence that in his heart he believes God. Of course it is persuasion of the truth that results in faith (we believe because we are persuaded that the thing is true, a thing does

not become true because it is believed), but peitho (obey), in NT suggests an actual and outward result of the inward persuasion and consequent faith.”

Questions

1 Read John 3:36 (New American Standard).

“He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.”

- John 3:36 (New American Standard)

Notice that the New American Standard Bible as well as some others (The New Living Translation, New Century Version, etc.) use the word “obey” instead of the King James word “believeth not.” This shows the element of obedience that is expressed by the word “believe.” This is something to think about, as Vine’s expresses, this is the obedience that is produced by faith.

Faith that has no action or works:

A. is dead (James 2:26)

“For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.” - James 2:26

B. is demons faith (James 2:19)

“Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble.” - James 2:19

C. is non-saving faith (Luke 8:13)

“They on the rock are they, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away.” - Luke 8:13

2 Read Colossians 1:23.

“If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel....” - Colossians 1:23

Saving faith is a continuing faith that endures unto the end (Matthew 10:22).

“And ye shall be hated of all men for my name’s sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved.” - Matthew 10:22

True or False

3 Read Acts 16:31.

“And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.” - Acts 16:31

Vines’s Dictionary says, “to believe,” means **reliance upon, not mere credence**. Credence is defined as “mental acceptance as true or real.” (Webster Dictionary).

Mental acceptance doesn’t lead to action but saving faith does.

True or False

4 Read John 3:16.

*“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”
- John 3:16*

The word “believeth” in John 3:16 in the Greek is a:

- A. Present Tense
- B. Aorist Tense
- C. Future Tense

We want to hear from you!

We would love to hear your feedback on these lessons and how you use them in your own study or in discipling others. If you have any thoughts, stories, testimonies, comments, or questions we would love to hear them!

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Answer Key

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True

James 2:18 says, “But someone will say, ‘You have faith; I have deeds.’ Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by what I do.” James 2:18 (NIV)

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The word “believeth” in John 3:16 in the Greek is a:

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C. Future Tense

Present Tense means it is continuous and uninterrupted action. Saving faith is continuous faith.