

How Satan Uses Faith to Deceive

written by Tim Jennings, M.D. | August 22, 2024



When you hear the word *faith*, what do you understand it to mean?

Dictionary.com offers multiple meanings for this word; here are a few:

1. confidence or trust in a person or thing
2. belief that is not based on proof
3. belief in God or in the doctrines or teachings of religion
4. belief in anything, as a code of ethics, standards of merit, etc.
5. a system of religious belief

Does your understanding of faith incorporate all of these definitions? Do you understand faith to be confidence and trust in God, the doctrines and teachings of the Bible, God’s law, His code of conduct that results in certain religious beliefs and duties, all of which are to be believed in without proof—taken “on faith,” without evidence, because God in the Bible said so?

Sadly, this way of understanding faith is exactly how Satan deceives people with faith. Faith, many think, is believing what is contrary to evidence, what one’s better judgment says shouldn’t be believed, what we do not have evidence or proof of—often called blind faith, believing with a mind closed to evidence, facts, and truth.

I remember reading in a Bible study guide many years ago a description of faith that went like this: “We don’t need faith to believe the sky is over our head because we can look up and see the sky; we need faith to believe in the God who lives beyond the sky because we can’t see Him.”

I immediately thought, “*Well, if that is an accurate description of faith, then does that mean when Jesus comes again and we meet Him face to face, we will say to Him, ‘Jesus, before you came back, I used to have faith in you, but now that I have seen you with my own eyes, I no longer have faith in you?’*” Of course not! When we meet Jesus in person, our faith will explode exponentially as we get to know Him even better than we do now.

Genuine faith is based upon reality, upon truth, upon evidence, upon facts, and upon experience. It is the only way to have actual confidence, trust, faith. Any concepts of faith that are not based in reality are tricks that deceive.

Recently, I read the following in another Bible study guide:

An unusual characteristic of the opening scene of the Gospel of Mark is that Jesus is presented as a character with both divinity and humanity. On the side of divinity: He is the Christ, the Messiah (Mark 1:1), the Lord announced by a messenger (Mark 1:2, 3), mightier than John (Mark 1:7), the beloved Son on whom the Spirit descends (Mark 1:10, 11). But on the side of humanity, we see the following: He is baptized by John (not the other way around, Mark 1:9), He is driven by the Spirit (Mark 1:12), tempted by Satan (Mark 1:13), with wild animals (Mark 1:13), and ministered to by angels (Mark 1:13).

Why these contrasts? This points to the amazing reality of Christ, our Lord and Savior, our God, and yet also a human being, our brother and our example. **How do we fully wrap our minds around this idea? We can’t. But we accept it on faith and marvel at what this truth reveals to us about God’s love for humanity** (SDA Adult SS Guide, 3rd Q 2024, The Book of Mark p. 10, emphasis mine).

What do you understand this to be saying? What is the message? Is it, “While God is infinite and we can never fully comprehend Him, we are still expected to think, reason, and understand to the fullest extent possible, and our comprehension of and appreciation for God will grow through all eternity”? Or did you hear, “God’s ways are beyond our ability to comprehend, so we don’t think about them—we just accept them on faith without seeking to understand”?

I really dislike the merger of a truth with an action that is against God’s desire for us, against God’s methods and principles, as is done in the quoted paragraphs above.

The truth is that we cannot *fully* wrap our minds around Jesus’ incarnation—we cannot *fully* comprehend God. That is true. But that does not mean we cannot comprehend and understand many things about God, His character, methods, nature, motives, design laws, and aspects of His sacrifice, and grow in our understanding through time.

In fact, Jesus said He *wants* us to understand, that He wants us to be His friends who do

understand and not be unthinking servants who simply obey because the master said so (John 15:15).

This argument that faith is belief without thinking, without understanding, without evidence, really bothers me because it presents itself as virtuous, as righteous, as a good thing, as pious, holy, saintly, meek, and humble—but it is actually none of those things. It is a deception that keeps people from knowing the truth for themselves; it prevents people from understanding and being set free by the truth.

Satan has no truth on his side, so he must get people to accept and believe things based on “faith” without understanding, without comprehension, to believe things that are not supported by evidence, things that are irrational and unreasonable—which is why they cannot be thought about—because if thought about, one would see the lie. So people are taught, “Don’t question, don’t think; that would be a lack of faith—just believe.”

But while we cannot *fully* comprehend the things of God, we can understand much about why this contrast between Jesus’ humanity and divinity is recorded in Scripture. This contrast is there, inspired by God and written by Mark, *because our salvation requires both to be true*. Our salvation requires that Jesus be fully human in order to save the species God created in Eden. (See *Salvation and the Cleansing of Our Spirits Part 1 and Part 2*.) But Jesus also had to be fully God in order to address the lies Satan told about God that started the war in heaven, deceived angels, and then deceived Adam and Eve. Both must be fully true in order to save humanity and also bring an end to the cosmic war over God’s trustworthiness.

So, it is quite understandable why both are presented and necessary. Jesus is God who became fully human. In His humanity was the merger of two lives, or life-forces, or spirits—the breath of life, or spirit, breathed into Adam, which Adam corrupted with sin, and the Holy Spirit, who was the Father of Jesus’ humanity. In Jesus, the spirit of fear inherited from Adam was opposed, overcome, eradicated, and replaced with the spirit of love, truth, and holiness, becoming the new life source for humanity—connecting humanity back to God, the source of all life. And when we are converted, won to trust, we surrender our old life, our old spirit of fear and selfishness, and receive the indwelling Holy Spirit, who imparts in us a new spirit of love and trust that comes from Jesus (2 Timothy 1:7). We are reborn with new motives and desires and become part of the family of heaven (John 1:12, 13; Romans 8:14–17; Galatians 3:26).

But we are able to grow in the knowledge of God only when we have a living faith, a faith that is built upon the truth, a faith that requires us to think, reason, comprehend, a faith that is evidence-based—a reality-based, enlightened faith—and we reject the lie that faith is believing blindly, believing without evidence, suspending our thinking and believing based on claims, proclamations, and statements from voices of authority.

I invite you to a life of genuine faith, trust, confidence in God, which is based upon the truth, the evidence, the reality of who God is as revealed in Christ—the God who calls you to come and reason with Him and to be cleansed of sin (Isaiah 1:18), who wants every person to be fully persuaded in their own mind (Romans 14:5), which requires we think and reason and choose the truth for ourselves. Then we can grow up to be mature friends of Jesus (John 15:15) who are able to discern the right from the wrong (Hebrews 5:14) because we have the mind of Christ (1

Corinthians 2:16).

Don't be fooled! Genuine faith enlightens the mind; it never shuts down thinking.