

## Walking by Faith, Not by Sight

### I. Questions.

1. Have you ever doubted the claims or existence of God or Jesus Christ?
2. Have you ever been in a trial or affliction and began to question your faith - things you once knew to be true?
3. Have you ever wondered if great men of faith have ever had the same struggles with doubt or unbelief as you?
4. Have you ever thought it would be nice to have God do a miraculous sign to prove His existence or His truth?
5. Have you ever wished that you could have been among Jesus' disciples when He walked the earth and personally met Him?

### II. The example of John the Baptist.

1. John the Baptist knew that Jesus, of whom he was the forerunner, was the Christ from O.T. prophecies (**Joh 1:23** c/w **Isa 40:3-5**).
2. John was told by God that he would know that Jesus was the Messiah by the Spirit descending on Him (**Joh 1:33**).
  - A. John knew certainly that Jesus was the Christ the first time he saw Him (**Joh 1:29**).
  - B. After Jesus' baptism, there was no doubt in John's mind that Jesus was the Messiah of promise (**Mat 3:13-17**), so much so that John bore record that Jesus was the Son of God (**Joh 1:29-34**).
3. The knowledge that John had of Jesus.
  - A. John knew that Jesus was the bridegroom (**Joh 3:29** c/w **Eph 5:25**).
  - B. He knew that Jesus was God who came from heaven (**Joh 3:31**).
  - C. He knew that Jesus was above all (**Joh 3:31** c/w **Eph 4:6** c/w **1Ti 6:15-16**).
  - D. He knew that Jesus was a prophet who would deliver the word of God (**Joh 3:34** c/w **Deu 18:15, 18-19** c/w **Act 3:22-23** c/w **Heb 1:1-2**).
  - E. He knew that God had given Jesus the fullness of the Spirit (**Joh 3:34** c/w **Rev 3:1** c/w **Isa 11:2** c/w **Col 1:19, 2:9**).
  - F. He knew that God had given all things into Jesus' hand (**Joh 3:35** c/w **Joh 13:3; Eph 1:20-23; Mat 28:18**).
  - G. He knew that belief on Jesus Christ was a chief evidence that one has eternal life (**Joh 3:36** c/w **Joh 5:24; 1Jo 5:1**).
  - H. John the Baptist was as sure as could be that Jesus was the Messiah, both by divine revelation and by personal experience.
4. After rebuking Herod, John was shut up in prison (**Luk 3:19-20**).
  - A. Despite all that John both knew and had seen; he doubted that Jesus was the Christ and he sent disciples to ask Jesus if He was who they had been looking for (**Mat 11:2-3**).
  - B. Notice that Jesus did not personally visit him and confirm that He was Christ.

- C. Notice that Jesus did not go and perform a miracle for him.
  - D. Notice that God did not again speak from heaven saying "This is my beloved Son..."
  - E. To confirm to John that He was Christ, Jesus rather pointed to the works that he performed in fulfillment of prophesy (**Mat 11:5**).
  - F. John could then compare what Jesus did with what was prophesied that the Messiah would do and find that:
    - i. The blind receive sight (**Mat 11:5 c/w Isa 35:5; Isa 61:1 c/w Luk 4:18**).
    - ii. The lame walk (**Mat 11:5 c/w Isa 35:6**).
    - iii. The deaf hear (**Mat 11:5 c/w Isa 35:5**).
    - iv. The poor have the gospel preached unto them (**Mat 11:5 c/w Isa 61:1 c/w Luk 4:18**).
  - G. Jesus said to believe him, if for no other reason, for the works' sake (**Joh 10:37-38**).
5. Jesus didn't even personally, or by revelation, tell those things to John.
- A. He rather sent the disciples to tell John what they heard and saw (**Mat 11:4 c/w Joh 18:21**).
  - B. John was given exactly what we are given to be able to reasonably believe in Jesus: the evidence that his disciples saw and heard, which they wrote down for us to read.
  - C. So much so was this the case that Paul could write the Galatians and say "...before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you..." (**Gal 3:1**).
  - D. Evidently - 1. So as to be distinctly visible or perceptible; with perfect clearness, conspicuously. Hence in active sense, with vbs. of perceiving, knowing, explaining, etc.: Without possibility of mistake or misunderstanding; clearly, distinctly.

### III. Jesus expects his followers to believe the testimony of His apostles.

1. Jesus upbraided his disciples for their unbelief because they did not believe the testimony of them who personally saw Jesus risen from the dead (**Mar 16:14**).
 

Upbraid (v). **1. trans.** To bring forward, adduce, or allege (a matter), as a ground for censure or reproach.
2. The gospels and epistles were written by men who were eyewitnesses to the risen Jesus.
  - A. Matthew (**Mat 9:9**).
  - B. Luke (**Luk 1:1-4**).
  - C. John (**1Jo 1:1-4**).
  - D. Paul (**1Co 15:8**).
  - E. Peter (**2Pe 1:16-18**).
3. The apostles' word is a more sure word of prophesy (**2Pe 1:19**).

4. All things are to be tested and tried by the apostles' words (**1Jo 4:1,6; 1Co 14:37; Isa 8:20**).

#### IV. Wishing for a sign, vision, encounter, or direct revelation.

1. Many of us at one time or another has probably wished that God would just give us a sign.
  - A. Jesus' generation did (**Mat 12:38-39**).
  - B. Jesus said the only sign they would get was the fulfillment of what Jonah being in the belly of whale for 3 days and 3 nights typified (**Mat 12:39-40**).
2. Consider all the miracles the apostles and the people of His day beheld and they still had little to no faith at times (**Mar 4:40; Mat 17:14-20; Joh 12:37**).
  - A. Thomas personally walked with Jesus and yet would not believe until he could physically touch Him (**Joh 20:24-28**).
  - B. Jesus said that those that have not seen and still believe are blessed (**Joh 20:29; 1Pe 1:8**).

#### V. Wishing that we could have lived with Jesus.

1. Many of us have probably wished that we could have been among the disciples that walked with Jesus.
2. Consider that while Jesus was here, the Holy Ghost was not (**Joh 7:39; Joh 14:16-17**).
  - A. The disciples were largely without understanding before the Holy Spirit was given (**Mat 15:15-20**).
  - B. Miracles didn't aid much in their understanding (**Mat 16:5-12**).
  - C. They couldn't even understand plain things (**Mar 9:31-32**).
3. The ministry of the Holy Ghost was to bring things to their remembrance and teach them (**Joh 14:26; Joh 16:12-15**), and to testify of Jesus (**Joh 15:26**).
4. Jesus actually said that it was expedient for the apostles that He would go so the Holy Spirit would come (**Joh 16:7**).

Expedient - II. 2. Conducive to advantage in general, or to a definite purpose; fit, proper, or suitable to the circumstances of the case.

5. By means of repentance, faith, and baptism, those who have been added to the church have been given the gift of the Holy Ghost and been made to drink into one Spirit (**Act 2:38-42; 1Co 12:13**) and therefore are more blessed in many ways than people who got to behold Jesus with their natural eyes only.
6. "For we walk by faith, not by sight" (**2Co 5:7**).