

**April 27, 2015**

## **Faith and the Gospel**

Romans 1:16d (NASB), **“to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.”**

The fourth key word that relates to the gospel is the word **“faith.”** The sovereign power of God working through the gospel brings salvation **“to everyone who believes.”**

The Greek word for **“believes”** is *pisteuo* and it carries with it the idea of trusting in, relying on, having faith in something. When it is used in the New Testament it is for salvation. It is almost always used in the continuous form, which then means that it can be translated as “is believing.”

Daily life is filled with all kinds of acts of faith. We turn on the water faucet to get a drink of water, trusting that the water is safe to drink. We drive across a bridge, trusting it will not collapse under us. We trust airplanes to fly us safely to our destination which is what happens almost every single time we fly with a few disastrous exceptions. We could not live our lives without having implicit trust in a great many things. Virtually all of life requires a natural faith. But what Paul has in mind here is a supernatural faith, produced by God. Ephesians 2:8 says, **“faith that is not of yourselves but the gift of God.”**

Eternal life is both gained and lived by faith from God in Jesus Christ. In Ephesians 2:8 it also says, **“For by grace you have been saved through faith.”** God does not first ask us to behave but rather to believe. Our efforts at right behavior *always* fall short of God’s standard, and therefore we cannot save ourselves by our own good works. Good works we are told in Ephesians 2:10 are a *product* of salvation, but they are not the *means* to it.

Salvation is not just professing to be a Christian, nor is it baptism, moral reform, going to church, receiving sacraments, or living a life of self-discipline and sacrifice. Salvation is believing in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Salvation comes through giving up on one’s own goodness, works, knowledge, and wisdom and trusting in the finished work of Christ.

Salvation has no national, racial, or ethnic barrier but is given to every person who believes, **“to the Jew first and also to the Greek.”** It was to the “Jew first” chronologically because Jews are God’s specially chosen people, through whom He ordained salvation to come. John 4:22 says, **“You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews.”** The Messiah came first to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Matthew 15:24 says, **“I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.”**

Salvation then comes by faith in Christ alone and salvation is to be proclaimed to everyone. But salvation only comes to those who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. It does not matter whether

you are black, white, Hispanic, Jewish, or Native American. Salvation is for **“everyone who believes.”** The question is: Do you believe?