



Bible Student's Notebook™

The Herald of His Grace

Presenting *every man* perfect in Christ Jesus. Colossians 1:28

Volume XII
Issue 284

The Faith of Jesus Christ

by – Frank Neil Pohorlak (1907-1988)

Here is a subject worthy of our careful consideration. It is crucial to our spiritual well-being, since it is vitally joined to our redemption and deliverance which are to be found in the Lord Jesus Christ. “*The faith of Jesus Christ*” is being unwittingly denied by sincere and well-meaning believers. After having been well-grounded in this subject as it is revealed in His Word and reflected in this study, may we no longer be found in that rapidly growing company of believers who are unenlightened because they are uninstructed.

JESUS IS THE AUTHOR AND FINISHER OF FAITH

Looking to Jesus the Author and Finisher of our faith (Hebrews 12:2).

The world should stand in awe of this supreme Example of trust, and should be amazed at this supreme Exemplar of faith and faithfulness.

All others pale like candlelight in the presence of the unobstructed sun when compared with the One Who never faltered in His unquestioned *obedience to God* and His implicit *confidence in God*. This One could always say,

What is pleasing to Him am I doing always
(John 8:29).

OUR QUOTATION POSES SOME PROBLEMS

Jesus Christ had *faith*? In whom would He have it? and why? What does “*Author*” (*archēgos*) mean? To what

does “*Finisher*” (*teleiotēn*) of faith refer? Whose faith needs to be finished (perfected)? What does all this have to do with the believer, and what does it have to do with the unbeliever? How can faith be perfected? Is it quantity, or quality that needs to be perfected?

Let us see whether, for anguished hearts and perplexed minds, we can find the answers to these questions by a thorough submission to the facts as found in God’s Word. He does not propound questions and then mock our search for answers. What God propounds He is able and willing to expound for those who are Berean in disposition (Acts 17:11).

THE MEANING AND USAGE OF THE WORD “AUTHOR”

The English word “*author*” is rendered from the Greek *archēgos*, which is made up of two elements: *arch* and *egos*, or ORIGIN-LEADER (*Concordant Key-word Concordance*, page 155, inaugurator).

As the originator is both first as to time and highest in authority, it denotes *chief* as to position, and *beginning* or commencement as to time (page 27, begin). The word that best seems to combine the dual thoughts of *begin* and *chief leader* is our word *Inaugurator*.

We will give the four passages where the word is found in the New Testament, and the way it is translated in our venerable *King James* or *Authorized Version*.

(see *JESUS CHRIST*, page 2615)

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This weekly publication (52 times a year) is dedicated to:

- the proclamation of the riches of God's abundant, exceeding grace (Romans 5:20; 11:6; Ephesians 1:7);
- the affirmation of God's purpose to save all mankind through the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ (I Timothy 2:3, 4; 4:10; Titus 2:11);
- the "preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began" (Romans 16:25);
- true freedom and liberty apart from law (Galatians 5:1);
- the organic nature of the church, the Body of Christ (I Corinthians 12);
- the distinct message and ministry of Paul, the apostle to the nations (Romans 11:13);
- the importance of receiving all whom Christ has received (Romans 14-15);
- the recovery of rich Biblical truth that has too long remained hidden under the veils of traditionalism, prejudice, misunderstanding, and fear (Mark 7:7, 13);
- the completeness of the believer in Christ (Colossians 2:10), with:
 - total forgiveness of sins (Colossians 1:14);
 - identity in His death, burial, and resurrection (Romans 6);
 - adult sonship position (Galatians 4).

This publication is a joint effort of a few members of the body of Christ. It is a product of our individual lives and ministries together. We do not claim infallibility for its contents. Our readers are asked to be as the Bereans and search the Scriptures (Acts 17:10-11; I Thessalonians 5:21).

This publication is not connected with any "church," "denomination," "movement," "organization," "mission," "creed," "meeting," "school," "conference" or "fellowship."

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archēgos

Acts 3:15 – killed the **Prince** of life.

Acts 5:31 – a **Prince** and a Savior.

Hebrews 2:10 – the **Captain** of their salvation.

Hebrews 12:2 – **Author** and Finisher of our faith.

In the *Concordant Literal New Testament* (CV) Hebrews 12:2 begins with the words,

Looking off to the Inaugurator and Perfecter of faith, Jesus ...

THE SOURCE OF OUR FAITH IS FROM GOD THROUGH HIS WORD

Scripture teaches that every good and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father (James 1:17); that a man can receive nothing except it be given him out of heaven (John 3:27); that all is out of Him (Romans 11:36).

In obtaining our salvation, the faith that we exercise is made possible by hearing the good tidings – the tidings through a declaration of Christ (*he de akoe dia rhematos Christou*, Romans 10:17).

NOT THE AMOUNT, BUT THE OBJECT OF FAITH SAVES

One could have faith that the seven seas would be pressed to contain, yet it would in no wise avail for salvation if placed in anyone but Jesus Christ (Acts 4:12). One could have faith no larger than a grain of mustard seed and, placing it in Christ Jesus the Lord, be instantly delivered, as Paul was, from a death of such proportions, and receive from God a salvation of such proportions (II Corinthians 1:10; Hebrews 2:3). Salvation from *inception* to *consummation* is wholly the work of God. This leaves no room for human works, fleshly boasting, or anything else (*c.f.* I Corinthians 1:26-31).

WHERE DO WE FIND DELIVERANCE?

The deliverance is in Christ Jesus. The righteousness of God has been manifested through *Jesus Christ's faith* for all, and upon all who believe (Romans 3:21-26). This crucial and precious truth has been hidden from us by some translators who, apparently, did not believe that He had faith. For centuries He Who alone should have had the first place in all things has been forced to share it with those who think that God's hands are effectually tied when it comes to salvation, unless they help Him out.

Perhaps this is why Ruskin wrote,

The reason that preaching is commonly so ineffective is that it more often calls on men to work for God than to behold God working for men.

GOD IS THE JUSTIFIER OF THE ONE WHO IS OF THE FAITH OF JESUS

But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference (dikaiosune de theou dia pisteos Iesou Christou, Romans 3:21-22, AV).

That there was here something beyond the comprehension of the translators, as rendered in the *Authorized Version*, is seen in the fact that they inserted "which is," and made the preposition *dia* read "by" while making it read "through" in other places.

That there was here something beyond the comprehension of the editors of the marginal notes is seen in the fact that they placed in the margin the words "through faith *in*," thus altering the thought implied in the translators' "by faith *of*." Yet this does not settle the problem; it merely mixes already muddy water.

Just what did God say, and mean; and what exactly did Paul write?

JUST WHAT DID GOD SAY?

In the original text it is plain to see that God says that He is just and the Justifier of the one who is *out of* ►

the faith of Jesus (ek pisteos Iesou, Romans 3:26). This plainly says that God is just and will be justifying anyone who is out of the faith of Jesus. Let us look into this with a desire to accept whatever God says on the subject. The broader context will be of help.

The structure of the Roman letter shows that these verses are part of a section running from 3:21 to 4:25. This section treats of individual justification. God tells us that we are justified gratuitously in *His* grace (3:24). In keeping with the tenor of this section God tells us that we are justified through *Jesus Christ's faith* (3:22), *i.e.*, out of the faith of Jesus (3:26).

A translation of the text which is truer to the thought of the Original will shed light on our problem.

Yet now, apart from law, a righteousness of God is manifest (being attested by the law and the prophets), yet a righteousness of God through Jesus Christ's faith, for all, and on all who are believing, for there is no distinction, for all sinned and are wanting [deficient, short] of the glory of God (Romans 3:21-23, CV).

Hence the *source* of the righteousness is God, the *ground* of the righteousness is blood, and the *channel* of the righteousness is faith – *the faith of Jesus Christ.*

The recipient of the righteousness is the one who believes into Christ. This implies no merit on the part of the one believing, nor in the faith itself, but rather in the *Object* of the trust. Here again, it is a question of God's many-splendored thing versus religion's many-splintered thing. Paul is fearfully misunderstood and shamefully mutilated by some scholars, and especially here. David Cox, in *Jung and St. Paul*, states the matter concisely and cogently.

"Justification by Faith" is, in many ways, a misleading name: because it begins to describe that to which it refers it can easily be supposed that it is an adequate description of it, whereas, as a description, it is altogether inadequate. Every word gives rise to difficulties. It is not clear what "Justification" is, nor in what sense we are to understand "faith," nor what is the precise relation meant by "by." Paul uses "through faith" and "by faith" indifferently, and the eleventh article of the Church

of England has "per" in the Latin and "by" in the English. We can begin, however, with the assertions that whatever it may be, Justification is not something which men achieve, and that whatever the relation between faith and Justification, faith is not the source and cause of Justification. Paul never writes that faith Justifies, and the whole drift of his argument is based on the assumption that it is God, and only God, Who Justifies men. God Justifies, and He Justifies by or through Jesus Christ, His death and resurrection. However we are to understand "by faith," all efficacy and initiative must be left with God.¹

THROUGH FAITH IN, OR THROUGH FAITH OF: WHICH?

The righteousness that makes us acceptable before God is nothing less than His *Own* righteousness. It is made available through but one channel, *the faith of Jesus Christ.* God says that He is the Justifier of the one who is of the faith of Jesus. It is ours to search out the matter and to see how we may obtain the faith of Jesus so that God may declare us justified and thus clothe us with His Own righteousness.

That this righteousness of God's is for our faith is plainly stated in Romans:

For in it [the evangel] God's righteousness is being revealed out of faith for faith, according as it is written: "Now the just one by faith shall be living [ho de dikaios ek pisteos zesetai]. It is out of [His] faith for [our] faith [ek pisteos eis pistin] (1:17).

Being justified gratuitously in His grace, through the deliverance which is in Christ Jesus ... Where, then, is boasting? It is debarred! Through what law? Of works? No! But through faith's law (Romans 3:24-27, CV).

Romans 3:22 and 3:26 are not the only witnesses to *the fact that Jesus Christ had faith*, and that it vitally affects our salvation. Though these two verses should be enough, yet there is more. Repetition on God's

1. *Jung and St. Paul, A Study of the Doctrine of Justification by Faith and its Relation to the Concept of Individuation* (New York: Association Press, 1959), page 81.

part does not make any one thing any more certain. God repeats things because our dull faculties and unintelligent hearts are often tardy to believe all the evidence which His lavish grace dispenses to us (c.f. Luke 24:25-27, 44-46).

GALATIANS JOINS ITS WITNESS TO THAT OF ROMANS

Galatians joins its witness to this truth of the importance of His faith in these words:

*With Christ have I been crucified,
yet I am living; no longer I,
but living in me is Christ.*

*Now that which I am now living in flesh, I am
living in **faith that is of the Son of God**, Who
loves me, and gives Himself up for me [en pistei
zo te tou huiou tou theou] (2:20; CV).*

In the original Paul begins the first sentence with *Christ* and ends it with *Christ*, around the statement “no longer I.” Thus from center to circumference *all is Christ*, and *Christ is all*.

In this same Galatian letter we have another reference to *His* faith in these words.

*But the Scripture locks up all together under sin,
that the promise **out of Jesus Christ's faith** may
be given to those who are believing [ek pisteos
Iesou Christou] (3:22; CV)*

By reading through to :26 we find where our faith enters into the transaction (c.f. 2:16 and its treatment later in this study).

EPHESIANS JOINS ROMANS AND GALATIANS

Ephesians informs us that it is Christ,

*In Whom we have boldness and access with
confidence, **through His faith** [dia tes pisteos
autou] (3:12; CV).*

PHILIPPIANS JOINS ITS WITNESS TO THAT OF ROMANS, GALATIANS AND EPHESIANS

Philippians joins its witness when Paul affirms that his chief aim is that he be found in Him, not having my righteousness, which is out of law,

*But that which is **through the faith of Christ**,
the righteousness which is out of God on this
faith [alla ten dia pisteos Christou, ten ek theou
dikaiosunen epi te pistei] (3:9; CV).*

QUESTION: HOW DO I ATTAIN TO THE FAITH OF JESUS?

Perhaps the attentive reader would like to ask this question: If God's righteousness is made available through the faith of Jesus, and I become the righteousness of God by accepting Christ and the work He accomplished on my behalf, why doesn't God say so in a verse that puts together all of these: my faith, Jesus' faith, God's righteousness?

It should not surprise us to learn that there is such a verse. He Who is all-knowing knew that there would be those of us who would ask such a question and would be in need of just such a verse. So He placed it in the epistle of spiritual mathematics. This letter is Galatians. The spiritual mathematics may be stated like this:

Christ plus something equals Nothing.

Christ plus nothing equals Everything.

THE SUM OF THE WHOLE MATTER IN ONE VERSE

Galatians 2:16 will repay many careful readings. Not that there is something hidden in it, or that there is some esoteric meaning in it for which we must diligently search, but rather something that our veiled eyes have for so long failed to see.

Here we have a summing up of all of the things asked in our questions under “Our Quotation Poses Some Problems.” The answer given here by Paul should ►

call forth from our hearts nothing but praise to Him Who alone should receive our heartfelt homage and intelligent worship.

*Having perceived that a man is not being justified out of works of law, unless [justified] **through the faith of Christ Jesus** [dia pisteos Christou Iesou] we also believe in Christ Jesus that we may be justified **out of the faith of Christ** [ek pisteos Christou] and not out of works of law, seeing, that out of works of law shall no flesh at all be justified (Galatians 2:16; CV).*

READ IT REVEL IN IT REJOICE IN ITS TRUTH

This verse tells us to believe into Christ Jesus that we may be justified *out of the faith of Christ*. This verse tells us that when we do believe into Him we are justified, not by *our* faith, but *out of His faith*.

This faith that we place in Him has nothing to do with quantity; it is the quality of the faith that is important, and God has taken care of that. It is perfect! It came through hearing the Word of God, and the Word is perfect. The Word is a gift from God, and every gift of God's is perfect (James 1:17).

The faith with which we believe into Christ comes from God, Who dispenses perfect gifts. His perfect Word generates our initial faith with which we obtain perfect salvation from God.

IS IT SO MUCH FAITH FOR SO MUCH SALVATION?

Let us take time to be very clear at this point about something that is very important. For example: Abraham's faith did not call forth God's promise. Rather, God's promise called forth Abraham's faith. Abraham's faith did not create the promise he accepted. Rather, God created the promise which Abraham's faith accepted. Faith comes out of hearing God's declaration. His declaration is to be found in the evangel of God. In this gospel God declares what He has done for all men collectively that He beseeches each man individually to appropriate. What God has done **for** all men is the gospel; what is **on**

all those who believe is salvation (Romans 3:22). His good tidings do not save until they are accepted. If the good news of God's grace is foolishness to you, if the gospel is covered, in those who are perishing is it covered. So says Paul in II Corinthians 4:3-4.

When we place our faith into Christ we place our faith in God and our Savior, Jesus Christ (Titus 2:14). When we put our trust in Christ it is not a question of so much faith for so much salvation. If it was, we in our fear and trembling would have received but a meager salvation at the cross. No! God planned much more wisely than man thinks.

We believe into Christ with an initial faith that is sufficient, of which He is the Author, the Beginner, or *Inaugurator* (Hebrews 12:2). The very moment we trust Him something quite stupendous takes place. Christ then becomes the Finisher or *Perfecter* of the faith which He began or inaugurated. He presents our initial faith *to the Father* with our yearning for salvation. Christ's perfect faith procures for us a perfect salvation. This perfect salvation is now ours, not through our initial faith but *through Christ's perfect faith*.

What does *through* Christ and *to the Father* mean? In John 3:16, do the words "*in Him*" refer to the Son, or to God? In I Peter 1:21 we find, "... *who **through Him** [the Son] are **believing in God** ... so that your faith and expectation is to be in God.*"

Luke adds to Peter's statement by recording the following correlative sentiments: "... *bringing the evangel to you to turn you back from these vain things **to the living God***" (Acts 14:15).

Again, in the record of Paul and Silas and their experience in the prison at Philippi, Luke records that they [Paul and Silas] say, "*Believe on the Lord Jesus,*" with the result that they "*believed God*" (Acts 16:31-34).

In Paul's commission are the words he makes known in his defense before Agrippa, Festus and Bernice in attendance: "... *to open their eyes, to turn them about from darkness to light and from the authority of Satan **to God***" (Acts 26:18).

So we can see that it is Jesus Christ Who *leads* us to the origin of all that our faith and confidence should be in God. Did He not say to Thomas, "No one is coming **to the Father** except through Me" (John 14:5-7)? In this manner is Christ said to be the Origin-Leader, or Inaugurator.

WHAT, THEN, SHALL WE DECLARE TO THESE THINGS?

What, then, shall we declare to these things? If God is for us, who is against us? Surely, He Who spares not His Own Son, but gives Him up for us all, how shall He not, together with Him, also, be graciously granting us all?

Who will be indicting God's chosen ones? God, the Justifier? Who is the Condemner? Christ Jesus, the One dying, yet rather being roused, Who is also at God's right hand, Who is pleading also for our sakes? (Romans 8:31-34).

In all of our dealings we have to do with but One, even God, as He mediates His grace through His Mediator, a Man, Christ Jesus (Timothy 2:5). God cannot lay any charge against any one whom He has justified. Christ Jesus will not condemn, for He manifested His attitude toward us by dying, on our behalf, pleading also for our sakes. What then, shall be separating or putting a space between us and the love of God in Christ Jesus? The magnificent answer – **NOTHING!**

WE PUT OUR FAITH INTO CHRIST: WE ARE JUSTIFIED BY HIS FAITH

Let us quote Galatians 2:16 again, as it is so tremendous.

*Having perceived that a man is not being justified out of works of law, unless [justified] through the faith of Christ Jesus, we also believe **in Christ Jesus** [eis Christon Iesoun] that we may be justified out of the faith of Christ and not out of works of law, seeing that out of works of law shall no flesh at all be justified.*

We are told to believe in (literally into [eis]) Christ Jesus that we may be *justified out of His faith*. Thus

the Inaugurator of faith is also the Perfecter of faith.

Go back and read it again. Revel in it! Believe what it says! What a glorious provision on the part of God in anticipation of our many weaknesses! How wonderful the redemption and the deliverance which are ours in Him and through His faith!

Just think of it. Our initial faith – given to us – lays hold of Christ. His perfect faith lays hold of God on our behalf, and through His faith we obtain God's righteousness. This makes us out to be right in God's sight since He has made Christ to be our Righteousness (I Corinthians 1:30).

EVERYTHING IS UNTO HIM

"God," says Richard Hooker, in his *Discourses on Justification*, "doth justify the believing man, yet not for the worthiness of his belief but for the worthiness of Him which is believed" (Chapter 33).

Our repose rests in reliance on the One in Whom we have placed our confidence. "The virtue of Faith lies in the virtue of its Object." We who believe rely not on our faith, but rely on His faithfulness, His grace, His merit, His saving power, His love.

We are justified in God's grace (Romans 3:24).

We are justified through Jesus Christ's faith (Romans 3:22).

We are justified in His blood (Romans 5:9).

We are justified because of His resurrection (Romans 4:25).

We are justified in His name (I Corinthians 6:11).

His faith, His blood, His death, His resurrection, His Name.

Underline God! Underline Jesus Christ! Underline His!

Faith is not our Savior, Christ is! Faith is not our Peace, He is!

Do not analyze the adequacy of your initial faith, but rather rely on the adequacy of the One in Whom you have placed your faith. Do not ask, Did I rely enough? but, Is Christ Jesus enough for me on which to rely? Thus faith forgets itself as the believer is taken up with the Object of faith, our Lord and Savior, Who is surpassingly great and in Whom all can rely with utmost confidence. There is no merit in our faith; all the merit is in Christ. Faith is the means to an end, not the end itself. God, through Christ Jesus, is the end.

Let us restate this tremendous truth in yet another way. Faith does not make Christ die; faith accepts the proclamation of God that Christ died. Faith does not make Christ alive from the dead; faith accepts God's declaration that He raised Him from the dead. Faith does not create the facts it accepts; faith accepts the facts God created for the exercise of faith.

God's choice of us is one of the most delectable and delightful thoughts on which the mind of man can meditate (John 15:16; Ephesians 1:4). It is not our choice of Him, but His choice of us. He set the seal of His love on us before we were ever created. All of His wooings, all of His beseechings through His ambassadors, are designed to bring us to the place where we believe this of Him. God's peace garrisons the heart and the apprehensions of all who do believe this of Him (Philippians 4:7). This is not a doctrine to prove, but a teaching to trust. The proof comes with the trust in God's declaration that it is so, with accepting the fact that we are accepted by Him.

GRASP THE RICHES OF THESE TRUTHS

Thank God that the safeguarding of those who belong to Him is not a problem with which they have to wrestle; for, what says His Word?

His power is now garrisoning us (I Peter 1:5). *He* is able to guard that which He has committed to us against that day (II Timothy 1:12). *He* is able to keep us and to present us flawless before His presence (Jude 24). *He* will perform until the day of Jesus Christ that good work which He began in us when we trusted Him for salvation (Philippians 1:6). *He* is able to save to the uttermost those coming to God through Him (Hebrews 7:25).

In God's sight we are *now* guiltless, flawless, blameless! If you are a believer, may this simple study help you to grasp the riches that you now have in Christ Jesus. If you are not a believer, may the reading of this cause you to trust Him now and become conciliated to God (II Corinthians 5:20).

The poet grasped these truths and expressed them thus:

PERFECT PEACE

A mind at perfect peace with God:
Oh, what a word is this!
A sinner reconciled through blood:
This, this indeed is peace.

By nature and by practice far,
How very far from God!
Yet now by grace brought nigh to Him
Through faith in Jesus' blood.

So nigh, so very nigh to God,
I cannot nearer be;
For in the person of His Son,
I am as near as He.

So dear, so very dear to God,
More dear I cannot be;
The love wherewith He loves the Son,
Such is His love to me.

Why should I ever anxious be
Since such a God is mine?
He watches o'er me night and day,
And tells me, "Thou art Mine."

Catesby Paget
(19th Century English Poet)

