

B. Faith and Its Ground

This brings us to another crucial point: If faith must have a rational content, and that content consists of both events and their interpretation, then we must ask: What is the ground, the basis on which we may know that these events and words are true, in order that we may believe in them? (Since unless we are convinced that they are true, we cannot, no matter how hard we try, believe in them.) This brings to our attention the question of evidence as the ground of faith.

Without question the disciples saw and heard the incarnate Son of God, saw the miracles He performed, and (with the exception of one) believed. Their faith was surely grounded upon solid evidence. Peter in 2 Pet. 1:16-18 speaks of being an eyewitness to Christ's transfiguration glory, and says that he heard the voice of God the Father bearing witness to Christ. John speaks throughout his gospel of the sign-miracles which confirmed Christ's Deity and Messiahship. In his first epistle he speaks of having heard, seen, looked upon, and handled the Word of life. We read of the ten in the upper room on the eve of the first day being suddenly confronted with indisputable evidence of Christ's resurrection; and of the unbelieving Thomas also being confronted eight days later with such evidence. We read of the many times after His resurrection when Christ appeared to His disciples, and of the many certain evidences by which He convinced them that He was alive. And we read of the marvelous conversion of Saul of Tarsus, and of the blinding light and the sound of the ascended Christ's voice which the unbelievers which were with Saul saw and heard with great fear. Thus, we are told, the disciples saw and heard, handled and experienced, and they believed.

"But," someone may object, "that may have been sufficient for the disciples, who saw and heard, handled and experienced, tested and authenticated everything; but what about us today? How can we ground our faith in the sufficiency of the evidences, when they are no longer at our disposal to scrutinize?"

What, then, is our basis for faith? If faith involves a rational content, and this rational content consists of events and interpretations which claim to be true, and the knowledge that these teachings are true depends upon authentication by means of evidence, and if the evidence is not available to us, then how shall we ever be able to exercise faith?

This brings us back to two important considerations. First, we must consider the faith of the disciples. Were these authentications in terms of evidences, sources of faith, or confirmations of faith? Did Christ's disciples believe in Him? Yes, but they needed to be confirmed and strengthened in their faith from time to time. Did John the Baptizer believe in Him? Why, he was the one who baptized Christ! Yet in prison John sent two disciples to ask, "Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?" And what did Jesus do? Did He berate John through his disciples? No! He told them to tell John what they were seeing and hearing: the Word of God being preached, and the miracles attesting the divine origin of Jesus' message. In addition, there was Judas Iscariot, who saw and who heard, but who