

## Chapter 3

### Faith Toward God

The next step up the staircase is “Faith Toward God”. Notice it is not faith IN God, but faith TOWARD God. Since repentance is the changing of the mind, faith toward God is turning to Him from whom we expect to receive cleansing, forgiveness, and the fulfillment of His promises. Please ‘note the difference between faith IN God and faith TOWARD God. Faith IN God is to have confidence in His ability and the truthfulness of His Word. Faith TOWARD God is to EXPECT something from the God we believe in. It is to believe that God IS and is a rewarder of those who seek. (Hebrew 11:6). After repentance one turns to God for deliverance. Faith IN God is to believe that He IS. Faith TOWARD God is to expect to receive the things HE has promised.

**FAI'T'H: The expectancy one has to receive something from God (forgiveness of *sins*, power to live above sin), a faith that is rooted and established in God only. The Gospel directs us to Jesus from whom we are to receive this expectancy. (Note: Acts 3:19 / Acts 5:31 / Acts 10:43 / Acts 13:38 / Acts 26:18).**

**BELIEF: To accept someone or something (God's word) as being true and/or trustworthy. To be persuaded or convinced by the testimony of things not observed.**

**Let me quote part of a paragraph from Eld. R. F. Tobin's book "*The Principles of the Doctrine of Christ*":**

*"The first step toward salvation is faith toward God. No man can come to God until he believes that God is and is a rewarder of them that seek Him. No one is going to seek a thing they do not believe exists. After one repents, he next turns to God for deliverance, as Jesus said, "Repent and believe the gospel" (Mark 1:15). But how can they believe on Him of whom they have not heard? By hearing the gospel they learn of the true God and their confidence is built in Him. When their confidence is built in Him, they begin to look to God for salvation."*

Faith must have an object. It is not some abstract belief gathered from the imagination but is based on the Word of God. The object of faith is Jesus Christ. It is to Him one looks to receive the promises made by God. Faith toward God in this place is not expecting the Holy Ghost as a primary focus, but the promise of the remission of sin, a clear record by virtue of the shed blood of *Jesus*, the sacrificial Lamb of God. The purpose for Jesus coming into the world was to "*Save His people from their sins*". (Matt.1:21) Jesus taught that "*Except you believe that I am HE, ye shall die in your sins*" (John 8:24) Following repentance, the expectation is the forgiveness or remission of sins. This forgiveness comes through the blood of Jesus. Without the shedding of Blood there is no remission of sins. The Old Testament system of sacrificing bulls, goats and lambs did not remove sin, but only covered them until the real sacrifice, Jesus the Lamb of God, came on the scene. (Heb. 10:4) On the day of Atonement, the eyes of all Israel were on the High Priest as he entered into the Holy of Holies with the blood of the goat to obtain an atonement for their sins.

Once every year the High Priest had to go through the same procedure and Israel's expectation or faith (if indeed that is what they had) was toward God who would give them a reprieve for another year. The High Priest for today is Jesus Christ. He entered in ONCE into the Holy Place, Heaven itself, carrying His own blood as the sacrificial lamb of God, presented it to Himself as God and was satisfied. The price had been paid for all mankind and it was now man's responsibility to have faith in this blood to receive forgiveness of sins. (Isa. 53:10-11 / Heb. 9:6-14) It is the blood of Jesus that purges one's conscience from 'dead works'. (Heb. 9:14)

This sacrificial plan was devised by God, not as an emergency solution for an unexpected event in the Garden of Eden, but a planned remedy for the fall of man, God foresaw before it happened. The remedy was in place before the foundation of the World, for Jesus was the Lamb slain 'before the foundation of the world' (1 Pet. 18-21 / Rev. 5:9 / Rev. 13:8)

TO HAVE FAITH TOWARD GOD IS TO EXPECT SOMETHING. WHAT IS ONE TO EXPECT? FORGIVENESS AND REMISSION OF SIN. FOR THIS, ONE

MUST LOOK TO JESUS AND THE BLOOD HE SHED AND HAVE FAITH IN HIM.  
FAITH TOWARD GOD IS LOOKING TO JESUS CHRIST.

Israel was looking for their Messiah, but with the wrong purpose. They expected a restored Kingdom. Since Jesus did not bring that hope, their faith in Christ was destroyed. If they had only known the purpose of the Messiah, to provide a way for sins to be remitted, they would not have rejected Him as they did. If one does not set their faith in Jesus now, all other efforts to be saved will be for naught.

Peter's sermon before Cornelius pointed him toward Jesus, directing his faith toward Jesus for the remission of sins. Cornelius believed the message to be true and his expectation (faith) was to receive from Jesus the promise Peter declared was his to have. (Acts 10:43) Paul preached to the Jew and Gentile, "*That through this man (Jesus) is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins and by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses*". (Acts 13:38-39) Again, faith toward God is focused in Jesus.

*"Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law (dead works) but by the FAITH OF JESUS CHRIST, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: For by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified"*. (Gal. 2:16) What is the expectancy? Justification! Justification is the privilege to stand in God's presence without being *rejected*. How can this be? It must be through faith in Jesus Christ and the price paid (the blood of Jesus) for man's guilt of sin. Eph.1:6-7 provides another expectancy. "*Wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace*". (See also Co1.1:13-14) How is one accepted before God? By faith toward Jesus Christ. (Acts 20:21) "*Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ*". Reconciliation and peace with God is made possible by the blood of the cross. Man who was estranged and separated from *God, even His enemy*, can now be reconciled with Him through the work of Calvary.

It is God's design that one believes in God through His Son, *"Who being in the brightness of his glory, and the EXPRESS IMAGE OF HIS PERSON, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high"*. (Heb. 1:3) Jesus sat down, indicating His work was finished. All that remains is for one to exercise faith toward God through Jesus.

To summarize:

Faith must have an object on which to focus.

That object of Faith is Jesus Christ

1. His shed blood
2. His words
3. His works
4. The Scriptures

Note the following scriptures:

Galatians 3:22      All under sin., but the promise is given to those that believe.

Hebrew 11:6      Believe God is and is a rewarder of those that seek Him

Romans 10:13-20    How can they call on him whom they do not know exists?

Acts 20:21      Faith toward the Lord Jesus Christ

Acts 14: 15, 27    The door of faith opened to the Gentiles. How? The gospel is preached to them.

Acts 15: 7-11      Purified their hearts by faith, gave the Holy Ghost.

The preaching of the gospel is the key for FAITH TOWARD GOD. It points our expectancy to Jesus Christ who did the will of God for our deliverance. Having confidence IN GOD through Jesus Christ, (because we believe God's word to be trustworthy) we look for something from Him.

Hebrews 10:22	A heart in full assurance of faith.
Acts 26:18	Turn men from the power of Satan toward God. <i>(note the work of John Baptist: Isaiah 40:3 / Malachi 3:1 / Luke 1:16 whose responsibility was to introduce Jesus to Israel)</i>
Matthew 8:5-10	Not found this faith this faith in Israel. (He expected something by action).
Romans 3:20-27	Justified by faith in Jesus Christ.
Romans 10:2-3	They trusted (Israel) in themselves, and not God.
Titus 2:10	Showing all good fidelity (Faith).

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Note these additional scriptures: Gal. 2:6 / Eph 3:12 / Phil. 3:9

We hear something to believe and when we believe that thing, we expect to receive it on the premise of what we have heard.

- Rom. 4:19-21 Abraham not weak in faith expected something.
- Gal. 1:23-25 The law was a schoolmaster to bring them (Jews) to Christ.

Christ, who is the object of our faith, eliminates any further need for the ordinances of the law to be practiced to receive anything from God. He requires just faith in the plan He has established through Christ.

One is not ready for water baptism *until* they have a knowledge of whom we look toward for forgiveness.

Now that Faith Toward God has been established one is ready for the next step on this ascending stair-case, The Doctrine of Baptism.