

What does it mean to have faith in Jesus?

Many people speak about "having faith in Jesus," but what exactly does this mean?

The Bible uses the phrase "faith in Jesus" synonymously with belief in Jesus as Savior. Romans 3:22-23 says that "righteousness is given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference between Jew and Gentile, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." When we place our faith in Jesus, we believe in Him, and God grants His righteousness to us.

To have faith in Jesus means to trust Him. Simply. Fully. Without reservation. On one occasion, before Jesus healed two blind men, He asked them, "Do you believe that I am able to do this?" They answered, "Yes, Lord," and He healed them "according to [their] faith" (Matthew 9:28-29). The men simply trusted the power and goodness of the Lord, and they received their sight.

When a person has faith in Jesus, it means that he or she believes who Jesus is (God in human form) and trusts what Jesus has done (died and resurrected). This faith in the person and work of Christ is what saves (see Romans 10:9-10; 1 Corinthians 15:3-4). "Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God" (1 John 5:1).

John 3:16 says, "God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." The key is belief, in response to God's love. Anyone who places his or her faith in Jesus has the promise of eternal life.

Without faith in Jesus, we remain in sin and cannot be accepted into God's presence in His perfect heaven. With faith in Jesus, we are given access to the Father as God's own children (John 1:12).

To have faith in Jesus is to reject all other ways of salvation. We cannot trust in Jesus *and* anything else. We trust in Jesus *alone*. "Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). Salvation is exclusive. Jesus is the only way (John 14:6).

Are you ready to place your faith in Jesus? Do you trust Him to save you? There is no special prayer you must pray. However, you can respond right now with a prayer similar to this:

"Dear God, I realize I am a sinner and could never reach heaven by my own good deeds. Right now I place my faith in Jesus Christ as God's Son who died and rose again to give me eternal life. I trust in Jesus alone. Please forgive me of my sins and help me to live for you. Thank you for accepting me and giving me eternal life."

MOVING FROM THE MOST REASONABLE INFERENCE TO A DECISION TO TRUST

It's one thing to "believe that" Jesus rose from the dead and is who He said He was, but it's another to "believe in" Him as Savior. Every one of us, at some point in our investigation of the claims of Christianity, has to move from "belief that" to "belief in." I can remember when this happened for me. As a rebellious, self-reliant detective, I initially denied my *need* for a Savior, even though I accepted what the Gospels told me *about* that Savior. In order to take a step from "belief that" to "belief in," I needed to move from an examination of *Jesus* to an examination of *me*. As I read the Gospels for a second and third time and explored all of the New Testament Scripture, I began to focus more on what it said about *me* than what it said about *Jesus*. I didn't like what I saw. Over and over again, I recognized the truth about my own character, behavior, and need for forgiveness;

I began to understand my need for repentance. The facts about Jesus confirmed that He was the Savior; the facts about me confirmed my need to trust in Him for forgiveness. I was now ready to move from "belief that" to "belief in."

Maybe that's where you are right now—on a journey from "belief that" to "belief in." I'd like to offer a little encouragement. If Jesus rose from the dead and ascended into heaven as the eyewitnesses reported, He is alive today; He is God. As an atheist, however, I enjoyed being my own god; I liked being the only judge and jury I would ever require. I was unwilling to submit my authority to anyone or anything bigger than myself. As you examine the evidence for Christianity, ask yourself the same question I eventually had to ask of myself: "Am I rejecting this because there *isn't* enough evidence, or am I rejecting this because I don't *want* there to be enough evidence?" Are you denying the resurrection on evidential grounds or simply because you are stubbornly biased against

anything supernatural or pridefully unwilling to submit your authority? If you're fair with the answer, you'll take an important step on your journey from "belief that" to "belief in."

