

THE AVENUE OF FAITH

Why has the all-knowing and all powerful Creator chosen to remain unseen and un-felt by fleshly humans? Why did the all-powerful Creator choose to show Himself only by the "invisible things of him" that would require "faith" and not sight? Why doesn't God reveal Himself in such a manner that unbelievers have no excuse for un-belief?

It is written, "Without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him." ([Hebrews 11:6 ESV](#))

Hello I'm Larry Murdock.

"Faith" is the means, the avenue by which humans must "seek" God. Faith is a handy tool because everyone has it and knows how to use it. But unbelievers want more! They say that faith is the most unreliable thing on earth upon which to base religion, or anything else. Unbelievers say that if God is the all-knowing and all-powerful God then surely He would have chosen to **plainly** reveal Himself to the world so that unbelievers could believe! And especially since the consequence of unbelief is eternal damnation! Doesn't God love us? Why has God chosen "Faith" as the means of seeking Him?

Well truly, this is a mystery. I'm not sure that you and I can get to the bottom of this because I'm not sure that God reveals His complete thinking on this point. **But let us begin this quest by looking at two of Jesus' disciples that show the role of "faith" in God's scheme.**

Jesus' apostle John gives us some details about Jesus' conversations with His disciples the night before Jesus' crucifixion. Jesus told His disciples that He was going away to His Father's house to prepare a place for them. "**And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also. And you know the way to where I am going.**" ([John 14:3-4 ESV](#))

It was the disciple **Thomas** who replied, "Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?" ([John 14:5 ESV](#)) Jesus replied, "**I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you had known me, you would have known my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him.**" ([John 14:6-7 ESV](#)) This is an extraordinary statement. But notice Thomas' statement and question:

"Lord we do not know where you are going. **How can we know** the way?" Thomas admitted for the disciples that they did not know the location where Jesus was going. Jesus was talking about going away to the Father's house. Thomas wanted to know how to get there. He wanted to know the road, the way. Jesus replied, "I am the way." Jesus is the road to the Father's house. Thomas was probably asking a geographical question. But Jesus answered spiritually for the location is a spiritual place. It is a place where invisible spirits live. Remember, God is a spirit and they that worship Him must worship in spirit and truth." (John 4:24)

We know about **Thomas** that he was listed by Matthew, Mark, and Luke as one of Jesus' 12 disciples who were later known as "apostles." John also calls Thomas "the Twin." And it is the apostle John who tells us some sayings of Thomas. For instance, two or three weeks earlier Jesus was secluded from His enemies who wanted to kill him. He and His disciples were hidden somewhere on the eastern bank of the Jordan River, out of reach of Jesus' enemies. But then, word came that Jesus' friend Lazarus was sick and at the point of death. Lazarus' sisters were calling for Him. Jesus deliberately waited four days before crossing the Jordan and going up to Bethany where Lazarus had died. As Jesus prepared to leave His camp, it was Thomas who said to the others, "Let us also go that we may die with him." (John 11:16) Jesus was about to travel within reach of His enemies, but Thomas was willing to go into that danger.

After Jesus' crucifixion He was raised from the dead on the third day which was on the first day of the week. That evening Jesus appeared to 10 of his disciples who were gathered in one place. Thomas was missing. Shortly thereafter the excited disciples found Thomas and said "We have seen the Lord." But Thomas replied, "Unless I see in his hands the mark of the nails, and place my finger into the mark of the nails, and place my hand into his side, I will never believe." Many people are like Thomas and would like to touch Jesus, or be touched by Him, **before** they will believe!

"Eight days later, [Jesus'] disciples were... [gathered] again, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "**Peace be with you.**" Then he said to Thomas, "**Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe.**" Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus said to him, "**Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.**" (John

20:25-29 ESV)

You and I are NOT Thomases! We cannot stretch out our hands and examine the body of the resurrected Lord Jesus Christ. We are among the millions and millions and millions (and yes billions) who have NOT seen the resurrected Lord. Will you and I believe? Will we exclaim, "My Lord; My God!" "Without faith it is impossible to please Him."

Not only has the God and Father **chosen the avenue of faith**, but Jesus also! "Blessed are those who have NOT seen, but yet have believed."

But there was a **second disciple** who questioned Jesus the night before His crucifixion. When Jesus told Thomas "From now on you do know [the Father] and have seen him." That statement prompted **Philip** to bring up another matter to Jesus.

"Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us." How many people in our world would like to see God **before** they believe in Him! Jesus said to Philip, "Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own authority, but the Father who dwells in me does his works. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, or else believe on account of the works themselves. (John 14:8-11 ESV)

What an amazing answer to Philip's concern! Philip was like Thomas in that he thought that physically "seeing the Father" would be enough for him. But, Philip enjoyed something you and I do not have. Philip had actually been in the physical presence of Jesus for probably 3 or 4 years. In fact, Philip joined himself to Jesus shortly after Jesus was baptized. That's right! (John 1:43) But look more closely at Jesus' answer to Philip. "Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say 'Show us the Father'? Do you not believe....?" **Even with the physical presence of Jesus there had to be faith.** Indeed, just think of the multitudes of people that experienced the physical presence of Jesus Christ, but yet, so many of them did NOT believe! Like Philip the multitudes heard Jesus' teaching. And Jesus asked His disciple Philip, "Do you not believe?" Jesus thought Philip should believe that he had seen the Father **because Philip had heard Jesus' teaching.** "The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own authority, but the Father who dwells in me does his works. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me." Jesus wanted to be believed because of His

words. But then Jesus went further, "**or else believe on account of the works themselves.**" Surely Philip, you saw also the miracles! No one could deny Jesus' miracles! Even Jesus' enemies could only explain His miraculous works by saying that He did miracles by the power of the Devil! (Matthew 12:24; Mark 3:22; Luke 11:15) They did not attempt to deny the miracles!

How do you explain the miracles? Do you believe the testimony of these apostles who witnessed those miracles? Or perhaps you believe the explanation for them by Jesus' enemies! Oh, some of you may not believe in the written testimony about those miracles! You think the written record is a fabrication, a lie, a trick, or a myth? Well, that's the only source of information you have about those miracles! If you don't believe the written testimony then you have no WAY of believing what Philip, Thomas, and the other apostles believed! And so **the avenue of faith** is accessed only by the written testimony! "Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of Christ." (Romans 10:17, ESV)

So, how can you believe if you reject the written testimony? You cannot! You have effectively shut down faith in Christ when you reject the written testimony of actually hundreds of witnesses!

Jesus once had a conversation with some people who believed in the scripture as a way to eternal life, but they did not believe in Jesus as the Christ! Jesus said to them, "**You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me, yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life. I do not receive glory from people.** (In other words, it was NOT important to Jesus that He should be praised by his hearers.) **But I know that you do not have the love of God within you.** (Jesus recognized that even though they search the Scriptures they did not **love God**) **I have come in my Father's name, and you do not receive me. If another comes in his own name, you will receive him. How can you believe, when you receive glory from one another and do not seek the glory that comes from the only God?** (There is the question! "How can you believe?" Said in other words, "Whose praise are you seeking?" But then Jesus continued, **Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father. There is one who accuses you: Moses, on whom you have set your hope. For if you believed Moses, you would believe me; for he wrote of me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe my words?**" (John 5:39-47 ESV) (There it is again, "How will you believe?" If

you will not believe the writings of Moses you cannot believe in Jesus Christ!)

Even though those people would SAY that they believed the Scriptures and the writings of Moses, and were seeking in those scriptures eternal life, nevertheless they were not believing what those scriptures testified to because they had no love for God in their hearts! Jesus said, "Moses...wrote of me." "If you do not believe [Moses'], how will you believe my words?"

The exact same thing can be said of you and me. If we will not believe the written testimony, how can we believe Jesus' words? **We cannot.**

Have you rejected the only means, the only way, the only avenue by which you can be saved? Faith is the only street! Faith is the means that God has chosen! Faith is the only access we have to the invisible God, and the great forgiveness that He has arranged for humanity!

Indeed! "Without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him." ([Hebrews 11:6 ESV](#))

Every human being is practiced in faith. You believe something daily! Do you have the particular faith that can lead you through the valley of the shadow of death to eternal life? Friends, believe the testimony of Jesus Christ and His apostles!