

tifications in terms of evidence 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 Baptist believe in Him? Why, he was the one who baptized Christ and recognized Him by the dove at His baptism! 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 messengers? 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 heard, but who did not believe. And there were thousands in Israel who had seen miracles but did not believe. It has always been this way: some who witnessed the miracles believed; some did not. It was not because the miracles were weak or ambiguous, or explicable by some simple natural law. The Jews admitted they were mighty, that they could be explained only on a supernaturalistic basis, and were things which God alone could do. The problem was not that the confirmatory evidence was weak; it was simply that faith does not arise from evidence alone, no matter how strong.

Faith and Its Means of Production

In Heb 11:1 we find a classic definition of faith. Lenski's interpretation of this verse is rich: "Faith is sure and certain confidence (ὀπισθασίς) in things hoped for; conviction (ἐλεγχος) regarding things not seen." He goes on to say, "Both 'confidence' and 'conviction' are subjective, necessarily subjective because they define 'faith,' which is subjective. But all three imply something objective; they invariably do this. Confidence is inspired in us; conviction is wrought in us; faith (trust) is produced in us. . . . Faith is never its own basis. 'Faith,' 'confidence,' 'conviction' are correlative terms; faith rests on somebody or on something outside of itself and not on itself. Somebody, something outside of me inspired faith or trust in me, otherwise I have no faith. It is this outside ground that shows whether faith is true, i.e., justified, or false, i.e., unjustified. Truth alone justifies me for believing or trusting; no lie ever does that. . . . If our faith were its own basis, it would, indeed, hang in the air. Our faith rests on the Word of God. . . . Only if this Word is false is our faith in all the unseen things of this Word mistaken. They whose faith rests on something else, they are indeed lost."

In accordance with this emphasis, we note the familiar statement in Rom 10:17 -- "So then, faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."