

# The WildBranch Ministry

...*thou bearest not the root, but the root  
thee. Romans 11:18*

## Hebrew Words Defined

### A NOUN OR A VERB?

#### Faith Part 1

by Brad Scott

Faith, in my humble opinion, is second only to law as the most misused word in the scriptures. In many ways it has developed a meaning that incorporates almost every concept from religion to sports. Many people are now named "Faith". The word has become an every day part of our vernacular. "Keep the faith, baby!" "Ya gotta have faith." "Don't you have any faith?" "Where is your faith, man?" "What kinda faith is that?" "I have a lot of faith!" These are common sayings in our society. They are common sayings in modern Christianity, as well. "What faith are you?", we ask. "I do not think he's of our faith", we respond. This is one of those words that you say out loud over and over again, and pretty soon it sounds nonsensical and not like a real word at all. I can imagine that this would be one of the words that I would set out to redefine if I were hasatan. I mean, if I knew that "... *faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God ...*" then I would do what I could to keep everyone from hearing. I could not stop YHVH's (LORD, Adonai) people from preaching the word. But I could surely do my best to redefine His word. In Hebrew / Scriptural thought, this was called "destroying the law" (Mattityahu (Matthew) 5:17). If someone misinterpreted the words of YHVH, this was synonymous to "destroying" the words. To interpret correctly was to "fulfill" His word. This insight makes the context of Mattityahu 5 much clearer.

As we have done with many words so far, we are going to go back to the origin of this very important word. We must search out the scriptural definition of this concept, and not fall prey to modern interpretations. Since the word faith and believe are basically the same word, we will address both terms from the minds of the ones who penned the words. What did this word mean to Avraham? What do you suppose Mosheh was thinking when he used this term? When Havakuk (Habakkuk) said, "*The just shall live by **faith***" what do you suppose he meant? But, most importantly, what did YHVH mean when He breathed this word into existence? Let's go back to the beginning.

In the Hebrew language, there is one word that is the basis or foundation for several familiar terms that we frequently use. This word is, of course, a verbal root. The word is 'aman (אמן). Sound familiar? It should. 'Aman is translated as faith, faithful, believe,

assurance, nursing. It is the root for *emunah* (אֱמוּנָה) - faithfully, truth, faithfulness, steady; *emet* (אֱמֶת) - truth, true, right; and of course *amen* (אָמֵן), which is pronounced *ah-mayn*. The first occurrence of the root '*aman*' not only lays down an action to describe the word, but is very intriguing, as well. The first mention is in B<sup>e</sup>mid<sup>e</sup>bar (Numbers). Mosheh is complaining about the assignment YHVH has given him. The people are getting on his nerves a bit. So in verse 11 Mosheh says,

**B<sup>e</sup>mid<sup>e</sup>bar 11:11-12**

Wherefore hast thou afflicted thy servant? And wherefore have I not found favor in thy sight, that thou layest the burden of all this people upon me? Have I conceived all this people? Have I begotten them, that thou shouldest say unto me, Carry them in thy bosom, as a **nursing father** beareth the nursing child, unto the land which thou didst swear to give unto their fathers?

The two words, nursing father, are translated from the one word '*aman*'. This word '*aman*' is translated as faith in the Old and New Testaments. Very interesting, huh? This is what I love about the Hebrew language. It has such common everyday meaning to words that eventually produce such ambiguous conclusions. Mosheh is assigned by YHVH to be the nursing father to these rebellious children. YHVH desires for this man to be the object of total trust for these disobedient brats. True faithfulness is the complete trust that a helpless child has in his nourishing parents. The image used here is that of young children relying on a nursing father. Mosheh goes on to state that he cannot bear all of their problems and concerns. So, YHVH tells him to gather unto Him 70 elders to rule and guide the people in smaller matters. As the Hebrew people wandered their remaining years in the wilderness, they looked to the wisdom of YHVH through Mosheh and the elders. Their *faith* was expressed as a childlike reliance on the words of YHVH to lead and guide them in life, not an intellectual acknowledgment that He simply existed! They knew who YHVH was. They knew who Mosheh was. From Yah's point of view *faith* was not an admission of His existence. It was not an accumulation of facts *about* Him, but trusting in His words and doing them out of that trust. *Faith* was coming to Him every time there was a need, and not an admission of His attributes, but in total trust that He knows what He is doing. YHVH desired for Mosheh to be the earthly father figure for an unseen, heavenly Father, to teach His children what was good for them at the proper time. Many times in the past I have used the Father/Son image to describe scriptural faith, but this reveals much more than an intellectual struggle to find allegories. At the very root of faith is the reality of this nursing image.

Nearly all of my Christian life I was taught things *about* YHVH. To know Him was to accept things about Him. In the book "The Influence of Greek Ideas And Usages Upon The Christian Church " Edwin Hatch reveals the same conclusion. Hatch, who is the author of

"Concordance to the LXX", bases his conclusion on decades of research into the Greek culture from which the modern Church has much of her roots buried. He says:

"The object which I have in view in this lecture is to show the transition by which, under the influence of contemporary Greek thought, the word Faith came to be transferred from simple trust in God to mean the acceptance of a series of propositions, and these propositions, propositions in abstract metaphysics."

He also goes on to say that:

"Why do I trust God? The answer was: Because He is wise, or good or just. The propositions followed: I believe that God is wise, that He is good, that He is just. Belief in God came to mean the assent to certain propositions about God."

So, to believe in YHVH did not necessarily mean to believe YHVH. This eventually became even easier by theologically eliminating the laws and teaching of YHVH in the Tanakh (Old Testament). And to add insult to injury, this was all done in HIS name. Christians had soon become "spiritual Israel" and this placed YHVH's commands and teachings into a celestial playground. Allegorizing became the talk of the town. The games had begun. Which teacher could out-allegorize the next one. The devil had a huge victory. He had managed to redefine faith into a meaningless, spiritualized, allegorized, term.

Next time we will continue our discussion of faith. This word is so important to define that we need to spend some adequate time with it.

Shalom Alechem!

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