

Faith: The Better Way ~ Part 2a

Messianic Jews 11:1-3

Letter to the Messianic Jews

In my last post, we continue in our mini-series **Exhortation to Hold Firm** by examining **The Future Reward for Those Who Endure** in **Messianic Jews 10:32-39**. In this post, we start a new mini-series on our topic of **Faith: The Better Way** by exploring the **Definition and Illustration of Trusting**. Let's start by defining **Trust (Faith)** in **Messianic Jews 11:1-3**.

"¹ Trusting is being confident of what we hope for, convinced about things we do not see. ² It was for this that Scripture attested the merit of the people of old. ³ By trusting, we understand that the universe was created through a spoken word of God so that what is seen did not come into being out of existing phenomena." ~ Messianic Jews 11:1-3 (CJB)

To the author of **Messianic Jews**, **trust** is the absolute certainty that what is believed is accurate and that what is expected will happen. It is not the hope which looks forward with wistful longing; it is the hope which looks forward with absolute conviction.

As I have frequently noted before, Stern generally translates "faith" as "trust." Well, here is why: ¹

"Trust: Greek **pistis**, "belief, trust, firm reliance, firm conviction, faith," corresponding to Hebrew **emunah**. The Jewish philosopher Martin Buber, though he honored **Yeshua** his "elder brother," tried in his book, *Two Types of Faith*, to demonstrate that the **pistis** of the New Testament and the **emunah** of the **Tanakh** are different. He claimed that **pistis** is primarily mental assent to doctrines and facts, while **emunah** is a heart attitude of trust that expresses itself in righteous acts. In fact, however, the latter is the only kind of faith God honors, in both the Old Testament and the New. True Messianic faith is not different in character from that of the **Tanakh**; it means acknowledging who God is and what He has done, believing His promises, relying on Him for power to live a holy life, and then living that life.

The *Jewish New Testament* generally uses the word "trust" instead of "faith" to translate **pistis** because "trust" more clearly signifies to English-speakers the confident reliance on God that generates holy deeds, as opposed to the mere mental acknowledgment of facts and ideas."

Being confident, Greek **upostasis** (literally, "that which stands under"), is what gives present reality to **what we hope for**.

The importance of **trusting** is that **Scripture** (here the word stands for God Himself) regards it as the sole basis for human **merit**, that is, for righteousness and thus for pleasing God (vv. 5-6). **"Avraham put his trust in God, and it was credited to his account as righteousness"** (Genesis 15:6, quoted at Romans 4:3).

In contrast to the rest of the chapter, which analyzes various "heroes of faith" chronicled in the **Tanakh**, this verse sets forth an essential function of **trusting**, namely, that **by trusting we understand**. Those who refuse to take the tiny step necessary to **trust** in God cannot understand the most fundamental truths: the benevolent consequences of faith are not only emotional but affect the realm of the mind.

What is seen did not come into being out of existing phenomena but was created through a spoken word of God. In Genesis 1:3, 6, 9, 14, 20, 26, we read that **God said** and it was! Space and time keep me from postulating on creationism versus evolution.

In my next post, we will continue in our topic of the **Definition and Illustration of Trusting** by examining the **Trust of the Early Patriarchs** in **Messianic Jews 11:4-7**.

¹ Jewish New Testament Commentary by David Stern.