

Check It Out Tracts

FAITH OR BELIEVE

CHECK IT OUT

By John W. White

The purpose of this tract is to show that the salvation experience of **Acts 16:31** is by the **orist tense** of the **verb** *believe* and not by the **noun** *faith*. To graph the action of the orist tense you would use a dot. You can make **shipwreck** of the *faith*. You can **not** make shipwreck of the **orist tense** of the verb *believe*, either you *believe* or you don't. The struggle begins when you find out that faith and works go together as shown in James 2. There is no contradiction with Romans. The conclusion is you are saved by the orist tense of the **verb** *believe* and that you please God by living by the **noun** *faith*.

THREE PASSAGES OF SCRIPTURE

Acts 16:30-31 "And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? 31. And they said, **Believe** on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house."

Ephesians 2:8 "For by **grace** are ye **saved** through **faith**; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God:"

James 2:14 "... Though a man say he hath **faith**, and **have not works**? can **faith save** him?"

ACTS 16:30-31: There should be no question as to the subject of this passage of scripture. This is the only passage in the Bible with "**saved**" in the question and "**saved**" in the answer. The answer is simple and to the point. **Acts 16:31** "...**Believe** on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be **saved**..." The verb *believe* is in the orist tense. You graph the action of this verb with a dot (•). By using the orist tense of the verb, salvation occurs at once when one believes on the Lord Jesus Christ. It is not hard to be saved. Jesus Christ made it simple and easy to be saved by His death on the cross. If the verb *believe* were in the present tense, which is graphed as a line (—), denoting continuous action, then as long as one continued to *believe* he would continue to be saved. As soon as he stopped *believing* he would then need to be saved again. After one has believed, dot (•), that act **can not** be reversed. You can change your mind but that does not reverse the fact that you *believed* and were brought into the family of God. It is like the act of murder, once it has been done, changing your mind about what you did can not reverse the murder and bring that person back to life. I am thankful that Paul used the orist tense and not the present of the verb *believe*. The only time the noun *faith* is used in Acts 16 is in verse 5, referring to the churches.

EPHESIANS 2:8?

Ephesians 2.8 "For by grace are ye **saved through faith**; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God:" This passage seems to say that we are saved by grace through faith. *Grace* and *faith* are not mentioned in **Acts 16:31**, so how are they used in this passage? **See GRACE**

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The first question is to whom is this verse written? The word *saved* will help us to determine the answer. *Saved* is a **perfect** passive nominative **participle** used as an adjective to describe the subject, *ye*, implied by the second person plural of the verb *ei jni*. The perfect tense is graphed with a combination of the orist tense and the present tense, or a (•) and a line (—) and therefore it would look like this: (•—). The perfect tense expresses the continuance of completed action in the past. Those referred to in verse 8 are those who have been saved in the

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past and are still saved at the present. Salvation is not being dealt with in this verse but His grace and what it will do for those who are saved. In **Ephesians 2:7** “That in the **ages to come** he might show the exceeding **riches of his grace** in *his kindness* toward **us** (edw) through Christ Jesus” it will be the power of Christ that will get the credit.

“YE ARE”

The verb *ye are* is a present active of *ei jni*. In the English language the verb “to be” does not have tense but in the Greek it does and the tense is reflected in the way that it is translated into English. In the parable of the sower we see how the present active of *ei jni* is translated in **Matthew 13:21** “Yet hath he not root in himself, but **dureth** [*ei jni*] for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended.” It is very significant that the action of the verb *ei jni* can continue *for a while*, then stop because of persecution. The verb *ei jni* in the present tense is translated “**dureth**.” What Ephesians 2:8 is saying is this: “Having been saved, ye endure by grace through faith.” Verses 8 and 9 of Ephesians 2 are not dealing with salvation because the perfect passive of *sozw* plainly states that salvation occurred in the past and their salvation continues to the present. The gift of God in this verse is grace and not salvation.

“BY GRACE”

What is the grace of God according to **2 Corinthians 12:9** “...My **grace** is sufficient for thee... the **power** of Christ.” How do we get the power of Christ. The answer to this question is in **Romans 5:2** “...**we have access by faith into this grace** wherein we stand...” If ye make shipwreck of the faith, then grace will not be available for us to endure in times of testing. We need the grace of God if we expect to serve Him in an acceptable manner. **Hebrews 12:28** “...Let us **have** [present active subjunctive, **may we have**] **grace**, whereby we **may serve** [present active subjunctive] God **acceptably** with reverence and godly fear:” If we can not access the grace then we can not expect to “...receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ.” **Col. 3:24** Grace must reign. **Romans 5:21** “So **might grace reign** through righteousness ...” Grace does not reign just because we are saved. The verb *might reign* is **subjunctive** and indicates that grace might not reign. Grace reigns if we continually come to the throne of grace as in **Hebrews 4:16** “Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may **obtain mercy**, and **find grace** to help in time of need.”

”FAITH”

Faith, a noun, gives substance and evidence to things not seen. **Hebrews 11:1** “Now *faith* is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” *Faith* is the substance that allows us to please God. **Hebrews 11:6** “But without faith *it is* impossible to **please him**...” Only the just, obedient, can live by faith. Faith gives substance to grace. **Romans 5:2** “...**we have access by faith into this grace** wherein we stand...” If we do not access grace by faith we will not have the power of God we need to endure.

THE PRESENT PARTICIPLE OF BELIEVE

There is a time when the **verb** *believe* and the **noun** *faith* are the same, and that is when the **verb** *believe* is used as a present active participle. A participle can be an adjective or a noun. When the participle has the definite article *the* before it, the participle is used as a noun. The following three verses are the only verses that have both the present active participle of the verb

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believe with the article and the noun *faith*.

[The following passages deal with the righteousness of God that was imputed to Abraham when he believed God in Genesis 15:1,5,6. Abraham had already been saved and walking with the Lord for over 10 years. God told Abraham about his reward and family heritage.]

Romans 3:22 “Even the righteousness of God *which is* by **faith** of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that **believe** [present active participle]: for there is no difference:”

Romans 4:11 “And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the **faith** which *he had yet* being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that **believe** [present active participle], though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also:”

Galatians 3:22 “But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by **faith** of Jesus Christ might be given to them that **believe** [present active participle].” The ones believing are the ones who are being faithful and are living by faith. You can be saved and not live by faith or not be faithful in your walk.

YOU CAN STOP BEING FAITHFUL

The ones *Believing* can stop believing just as the **one holding** [present active participle] **faith** can release that hold on faith as in **1 Timothy 1:19** “**Holding faith**, ... which **some having put away** concerning faith have **made shipwreck**.” The releasing of our hold on *faith* causes us to make shipwreck of the faith. We need to **have** or to **hold** [present active participle] on to faith. To put away, depart from, and make shipwreck of the faith is to stop having or holding to faith. The present tense of the verb *believe* can also be stopped as in **Luke 8:13** “...these have no root, which **for a while believe**, and in time of temptation fall away.” The present tense is something you can do for a while then stop. The aorist tense is something that you do and it is over and done.

FAITH TESTED

2 Corinthians 13:5 “**Examine yourselves**, whether ye be in the **faith**; **prove** your own selves. **Know ye not your own selves**, how that Jesus **Christ is in you**, except ye be **reprobates**?” How can we tell if we are living an approved life pleasing God? We have a clue in **1 Corinthians 13:2** “...though I have all **faith**, ... and have not **charity**, I am nothing.” This is “...**faith** which worketh by **love**.” **Galatians 5:6** Faith is shown by the poor widow in **Mark 12:42-44** “...she threw in two mites... into the **treasury**: **44**. ...she of her want did cast in all that she had, *even* all her living.” She forced her self to trust the Lord to fill her barns by honoring Him with her substance. **Proverbs 3:9, 10** “Honour the LORD with thy substance... so shall thy barns be filled with plenty...” This is faith when we honor His Word with our obedience when it may cost us everything. **John 14:15** “If ye love me, **keep** my commandments.” The verb *keep* is in the present tense. If we stop *loving* in the present tense, then faith will not be effective. You can not please God if you are being disobedient to Him no matter how much faith you might have.

“TRIAL OF YOUR FAITH”

When we have passed the test of faith, we receive praise, honor, and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ as found in **1 Peter 1:7-8** “That the **trial of your faith**... **might be found** unto **praise** and **honour** and **glory** at the appearing of Jesus Christ: **8**. Whom having not seen, ye

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love [present active indicative]; in whom, though now ye see *him* not, yet **believing** [present active participle], ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory:" If we have **praise, honor, and glory** at the **judgment seat** of Christ what does that mean? This is receiving the end of your faith as in verse 9 "Receiving the **end of your faith**, *even* the **salvation of your souls**."

JAMES 2:14

James 2:14 "What *doth it* profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath **faith**, and **have not works**? can **faith save** him?" We are saved by the aorist tense of the verb *believe* and not by the noun *faith*. The salvation in James is not the same salvation offered to the jailer in Acts 16:31. The salvation in the book of James has already been defined in **James 1:21** "Wherefore **lay apart** all **filthiness** and superfluity of **naughtiness**, and **receive** with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to **save your souls** [*yuch*>also *life*]." This is the praise, honor and glory of **1 Peter 1:7**.

WORKS

Works in James are works of love which makes faith **profitable**. **1 John 3:17-18** "But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels *of compassion* from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?" **1 John 4:20** "...for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?"

JUSTIFIED BY WORKS

James 2:21 "Was not Abraham our father **justified by works**, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?" Abraham's faith was tested when God told him to offer up Isaac. **Hebrews 11:17** "By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac..." Abraham loved God and was obedient in offering Isaac as a sacrifice, and this act of faith pleased God. **James 2:23** "And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham **believed God**, and it was **imputed** unto him for **righteousness**." Abraham was already saved when he believed God for this imputed righteousness. This event took place in **Genesis 15:6** long after he had left Mesopotamia. Abraham was saved in **Acts 7:2** "...The God of glory appeared unto our father **Abraham**...in **Mesopotamia**." What Abraham believed is found in **Genesis 15:1** "Fear not, Abram: I *am* thy shield, *and* thy exceeding great **reward**." and **Genesis 15:4** "...he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine **heir**." Abraham "Staggered not at the **promise** of God through unbelief; but was **strong in faith**, giving glory to God; 21. And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to **perform**. 22. And therefore **it was imputed** to him for **righteousness**." **Romans 4:20-22**

CONCLUSION

Salvation is on the basis of the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross. If anything is added, it says that what he did on the cross was not enough. **New birth** is on the basis of the aorist tense of the verb believe in **Acts 16:31** "And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved..." This salvation can never be forfeited because it is not based upon what we do after we have believed. You can not make shipwreck of the aorist tense of the verb believe. Either you believe or you don't. Soul salvation, on the other hand, is on the basis of approved faith and obedient works of love. "Praise, honor, and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ," salvation of the soul, can be lost if our faith does not pass the test. We fail the test of our faith when we make shipwreck of our faith.

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We are saved by the **verb, believe**, and we live by the **noun, faith**. **Hebrews 10:38** “Now the just shall **live by faith**: but if *any man* draw back, my soul shall have **no pleasure** in him.”
Romans 14:23 “...for whatsoever *is not of faith is sin*.”

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