

## *The Struggle Between Faith & Doubt*

### **The Nature of Faith**

#### I. Introduction

- A. Mark 9:20-24 (NAS) <sup>20</sup>They brought the boy to Him. When he saw Him, immediately the spirit threw him into a convulsion, and falling to the ground, he began rolling around and foaming at the mouth. <sup>21</sup>And He asked his father, "How long has this been happening to him?" And he said, "From childhood." <sup>22</sup>It has often thrown him both into the fire and into the water to destroy him. But if You can do anything, take pity on us and help us!" <sup>23</sup>And Jesus said to him, "If You can? All things are possible to him who believes." <sup>24</sup>Immediately the boy's father cried out and said, "I do believe; help my unbelief."

#### II. Observations About the Nature of Faith

- A. There are many ways to look at faith. But, there is a fundamental distinction between two aspects of faith that are quite different: Belief and Commitment.
1. Belief is a statement about something I think to be true.
  2. Commitment is a decision of the will.
  3. "Trying to believe what you know ain't so." (Mark Twain)
- B. Sometimes I have to make a 100% commitment to something, even though I do not have 100% certainty in my beliefs about it.
- C. I can expect the sense of certainty in my beliefs to ebb and flow. That is part of the human condition.
1. The "leap of faith" is a "leap" because it involves making a total commitment, but for good reasons!
  2. The most important decisions in life require 100% commitment, but do not give 100% guarantees!

#### III. The Story of the Transfiguration

- A. Exodus 24:16 (NAS) *The glory of the LORD rested on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it for six days; and on the seventh day He called to Moses from the midst of the cloud.*
- B. Exodus 34:29-30 (NAS) <sup>29</sup>It came about when Moses was coming down from Mount Sinai (and the two tablets of the testimony were in Moses' hand as he was coming down from the mountain), that Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone because of his speaking with Him. <sup>30</sup>So when Aaron and all the sons of Israel saw Moses, behold, the skin of his face shone, and they were afraid to come near him.
- C. Mark 9:2-3 (NAS) <sup>2</sup>Six days later, Jesus took with Him Peter and James and John, and brought them up on a high mountain by themselves. And He was transfigured before them; <sup>3</sup>and His garments became radiant and exceedingly white, as no launderer on earth can whiten them.
- D. Mark 9:7 (NAS) *Then a cloud formed, overshadowing them, and a voice came out of the cloud, "This is My beloved Son, listen to Him!"*
- E. "The Principle of Analogy"
1. No event can be unique. There can be no radically new event introduced into the system.
- F. Genesis 1:1 (NAS) *In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.*
- G. John 1:1 (NAS) *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*
- H. John 1:14 (NAS) *And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.*
- I. II Corinthians 5:17 (NAS) *Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.*
- J. Mark 9:5-6 (NAS) <sup>5</sup>Peter said to Jesus, "Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; let us make three tabernacles, one for You, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah." <sup>6</sup>For he did not know what to answer; for they became terrified.

1. A “mountaintop” experience is that moment when you suddenly find yourself able to believe! You suddenly see it.
  2. Jesus always says, “It’s time to leave the mountain now. It’s time to go down.”
- K. Mark 9:19 (NAS) *And He answered them and said, “O unbelieving generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring him to Me!”*
- L. Mark 9:20-22 (NAS) <sup>20</sup>*They brought the boy to Him. When he saw Him, immediately the spirit threw him into a convulsion, and falling to the ground, he began rolling around and foaming at the mouth. <sup>21</sup>And He asked his father, “How long has this been happening to him?” And he said, “From childhood. <sup>22</sup>It has often thrown him both into the fire and into the water to destroy him. But if You can do anything, take pity on us and help us!”*
- M. Mark 9:23 (NAS) *And Jesus said to him, “If You can?’ All things are possible to him who believes.”*
- N. Mark 9:24 (NAS) *Immediately the boy’s father cried out and said, “I do believe; help my unbelief.”*

#### IV. Conclusion