Faith

In the English language, when it comes to God and religion, the words "faith" and "belief" are exactly the same. In the dictionary, one word will often be used to define the other. But that only tells us they are the same, not what they mean. To say "Faith is a belief in…something," is like saying X=X. Sorry, but I'm an old mathematician, and it's just meaningless to use the word you are defining in your definition. It's no help to define "faith" as "belief."

A more helpful word is "trust" or "confidence." It's interesting that most dictionaries define faith as trust, except in the area of religion, and then they define faith as belief. For example, the "New Oxford American Dictionary" defines faith this way:

faith |fāTH| noun **1** complete trust or confidence in someone or something: this restores one's faith in politicians. **2** strong belief in God or in the doctrines of a religion, based on spiritual apprehension rather than proof.

Notice that in the first definition we have a meaningful statement. Faith is "trust or confidence." That gives us something to go on. The words "trust" and "confidence" give us a description, which allows us to understand and illustrate the word "faith." But now look at the second definition. It says faith is "a strong belief in God or in doctrines of a religion." So when it comes to God and religion, the definition changes to "belief" (whatever that means).

That's like saying, when it comes to God or religion, faith is a strong faith. But what possible sense does that make? X=X, or X= a strong X

Huh? Faith is a strong faith? What does that tell me? Nothing! Surely, we need a better definition of "faith" than "belief." When defined outside the realm of God and religion, "faith" gets a better definition.

It is the view of this author that biblical Christian faith is not different from secular faith. Of course, the objects of biblical faith and secular faith are different. But the definition of faith is not. There is no need to use meaningless statements [X= a strong X, or X=Xs] to define biblical Christian faith.

Biblical faith is the same as faith in math, science, history, or any rational study based on evidence.

Many great theologians of the church, evangelists and Bible teachers saw faith as trusting the evidence for the Bible–internally, externally, exegetically, archeologically, and historically. The Protestant Reformation was a back-to-the-Bible movement. But in doing so, the Protestants moved back to the rational faith of the apostles and abandoned the unverifiable faith which had developed in the Middle Ages.