Faith
and
Reason
What is Faith?

Meanings from the *Oxford English Dictionary*

(1) a set of propositions that one believes
   “The Jewish faith”

(2) a relationship to a belief
   “I believe that God exists on faith alone”

(3) a relationship to an individual
   “I have faith in Ed” (that he will keep his word, etc.)

(4) an attitude towards life
   To be willing to act in the face of uncertainty, hopeful that things will work out.
What is Faith?

Author of Hebrews
(1st c. CE)

Faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see. (Hebrews 11:1)
What is Faith?

Author of Hebrews
(1st c. CE)

Faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.

What is Faith?

Augustine of Hippo
(354-430)

Understanding is the reward of faith. Therefore, seek not to understand that you may believe, but believe that you may understand.
Author of Hebrews (1st c. CE)

Faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.

What is Faith?

Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274)

Believing something on faith means believing it to be true because God says it is true.

Augustine of Hippo (354-430)

Understanding is the reward of faith. Therefore, seek not to understand that you may believe, but believe that you may understand.
What is Faith?

Believing something on faith means believing it to be true because God says it is true.

Faith begins precisely where thinking leaves off.

What is Faith?

Augustine of Hippo
(354-430)

Understanding is the reward of faith. Therefore, seek not to understand that you may believe, but believe that you may understand.

Thomas Aquinas
(1225-1274)

Author of Hebrews
(1st c. CE)

Soren Kierkegaard
(1813-1855)

Believing something on faith means believing it to be true because God says it is true.

Faith begins precisely where thinking leaves off.

Soren Kierkegaard
(1813-1855)

Augustine of Hippo
(354-430)
What is Faith?

Fideism is the belief that truth in religion is ultimately based on faith rather than on reasoning or evidence.

We cannot know in these matters what is true or false; we must simply choose to believe and to make this belief our own. We must take a leap of faith.

Faith begins precisely where thinking leaves off.

Take the leap of faith!

Soren Kierkegaard (1813-1855)
Believing something on faith means believing it to be true because God says it is true.

Given this definition of faith, which of the following statements might one “believe on faith”?

(1) Jesus is the Son of God.
(2) The world was created in time.
(3) The *Bible* is the word of God.
(4) God exists.
How are Faith and Reason Related?

(1) Does faith correct reason? (Augustine)

or

(2) Does faith supplement reason? (Aquinas)
How are Faith and Reason Related?

Reason helps us discover credible authority but, once found, reason must submit to this authority.

Augustine of Hippo
(354-430)
How are Faith and Reason Related?

There is a two-fold truth to religious claims. Faith *supplements* human reason.

**Articles of Faith**

- Knowable only by faith; reason can elucidate, but not prove.
- Knowable through reason.

**Preambles to the Articles of Faith**

- Ex.: that the universe was created in time; that God is triune.
- Ex.: that God exists; that God is the cause of the universe.

Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274)
Revelation!
Two Kinds of Revelation

**General**: available to all.

**Special**: available to some.
General Revelation: given directly to all people, typically through nature and with the help of reason.
Special Revelation: given directly to one person or group, as found in scripture, prophecy, divine inspiration.
TYLER, Texas (Reuters) - A Texas woman who beat two of her sons to death with a rock and badly injured another because she believed God told her to do it was found not guilty by reason of insanity on Saturday.

A jury of eight men and four women deliberated for nearly seven hours before reaching their verdict.

Deanna Laney, 39, broke down in tears and shook when state judge Cynthia Kent read the jury's decision in the hushed courtroom in the eastern Texas city of Tyler.

She could have faced life in prison if convicted, but instead will go to a state mental institution until the judge decides she is well enough to be released. […]
If God should really speak to man, man could still never know that it was God speaking.

*Sacrifice of Isaac* (1603)
Caravaggio (1571-1610)

Immanuel Kant
(1724-1804)
It is quite impossible for man to apprehend the infinite with his senses, distinguish it from sensible beings, and recognize it as such.

Immanuel Kant (1724-1804)

Sacrifice of Isaac (1603)
Caravaggio (1571-1610)
It is quite impossible for man to know that it was God speaking. It is quite impossible for man to apprehend the infinite by his senses, distinguish it from sensible beings, and recognize it as such. But in some cases man can be sure that the voice he hears is not God’s. If the voice commands him to do something contrary to the moral law, then no matter how majestic the apparition may be, and no matter how it may seem to surpass the whole of nature, he must consider it an illusion.
Natural religion is the set of religious beliefs that can be known through reason alone as it reflects on the phenomena of nature.

Revealed religion is the set of religious beliefs that can be known only through God’s special revelation, either scripture or mystical insight.
Natural and Revealed Religion

**Deism**: the belief that natural religion is adequate for one’s salvation; special revelation is unnecessary or even deceptive and harmful.

**Some Famous Deists:**
- (in America) Ben Franklin, George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Thomas Paine
- (in France) Voltaire, Jean-Jacques Rousseau
- (in Germany) Leibniz, Lessing, Kant
### Three Words that Sound almost the Same

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fideism</th>
<th>Deism</th>
<th>Theism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>is the belief that truth in religion is ultimately based on faith rather than on reasoning or evidence.</td>
<td>is the belief that natural religion is adequate for salvation; rejects special revelation.</td>
<td>is the belief that God exists.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Latin: *fides* (faith), *deus* (God). Greek: *theos* (God)
Jean-Jacques Rousseau
(1712-1778)

“Discourse on the Sciences and the Arts” (1750)
“Discourse on Inequality” (1755)
“Discourse on Political Economy” (1755)
The New Heloise (1761)
The Social Contract (1762)
Émile (1762)
Confessions (1783)

“Man is born free, and everywhere is in chains.”
David Hume on Miracles

“No testimony is sufficient to establish a miracle, unless the testimony be of such a kind that its falsehood would be more miraculous than the fact which it endeavors to establish.”

*Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (1748), §10 (“Of Miracles”).

David Hume
1711-1776
Proving God’s Existence
Three Propositional Attitudes

Theism
Belief in P

Atheism
Disbelief in P

Agnosticism
Withholding judgment about P

Three Philosophical Attitudes

Philosophical Theism
The view that P can be proven

Philosophical Atheism
The view that P can be disproven

Philosophical Agnosticism
The view that P can be neither proven nor disproven

P = “God exists.”
Proving God’s Existence

*A priori* proofs [ontological]
All of the premises can be known prior to experience.

*A posteriori* proofs [cosmological, teleological/design]
At least one premise is based on experience.

Proofs of God’s Existence

**Ontological**
The meaning of the word ‘God’ includes existence.

**Cosmological**
The existence of the world requires a creator.

**Teleological/Design**
The purpose/design of the world requires a designer.