Paradox of Faith - Why We Believe Without Seeing

Study Guide | Finding the Ancient Path

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3JhzXijenbc

Teaching Summary

This Teaching explores the paradox that ancient Israel witnessed Yehovah's visible works yet often struggled to believe, while later followers of Yeshua trust testimony about events they did not personally witness. The speaker traces a claimed continuity in revelation from Moses and Aaron through the prophets to Yeshua, considers Scripture's coherence as a reason for trust, and examines the difference between initial belief, evidence, and maturing faith. The fellowship discussion addresses apparent divine silence, personal experience, the Holy Spirit, and the question of whether God still speaks today.

Study Notes

These materials follow the supplied Teaching, not an independent historical or statistical study. Claims about "40 authors," precise authorship counts, the uniqueness of biblical literature, mathematically impossible unity, an allegedly scorched Mount Sinai, independently verified resurrection evidence, and textual formulas used exclusively by Moses and Aaron are speaker claims not validated here. Likewise the interpretation of Hebrews 11:1 and the suggestion that the thief on the cross began with no prior evidence are interpretive. The transcript records differing participant views about whether God is silent and how the Holy Spirit guides believers.

Key Scriptures

- **Deuteronomy 1:29-33 -** Moses recalls Israel's fear and lack of trust despite Yehovah's care; the Teaching uses this to frame the paradox of seeing without believing.
- **Exodus 13:21-22 -** Yehovah leads Israel by cloud and fire, an example of visible guidance invoked by the speaker.
- **Exodus 19:16-20 -** The Sinai encounter illustrates the visible and audible revelation witnessed by Israel.
- **Exodus 20:22 -** Yehovah reminds Israel that He spoke from heaven; the speaker emphasizes Moses as mediator of divine instruction.
- **Exodus 33:18-23 -** Moses asks to see Yehovah's glory and receives a limited revelation, prompting the Teaching's question about the absence of similar experiences today.
- **Deuteronomy 4:32-36 -** Moses reminds Israel of the extraordinary experience of hearing the voice of God and living.
- **Hebrews 1:1-2 -** The writer contrasts earlier divine speech through prophets with God speaking through His Son; central to the claimed continuity of revelation.
- **John 1:14-18 -** The Son reveals the Father; the Teaching presents Yeshua as the culminating visible revelation.

- **John 20:24-31 -** Thomas believes after seeing the risen Yeshua, while later readers are blessed for believing without sight; written testimony serves belief.
- **Luke 23:39-43 -** The repentant criminal appeals to Yeshua; the speaker uses this as an example of faith despite uncertain prior knowledge.
- **Psalm 119:130 -** The entrance of Yehovah's words gives light and understanding, used to describe developing faith.
- **John 7:17 -** Yeshua associates willingness to do God's will with discernment regarding teaching; the speaker pairs willing obedience with growth in faith.
- **Psalm 19:1-4 -** Creation declares God's glory; the speaker describes it as evidence available to a person whose faith is growing.
- **Romans 1:19-20 -** Paul describes God's attributes as perceptible through creation, another part of the speaker's account of evidence.
- **Job 38:8-11 -** God asks Job about the boundaries of the sea; the Teaching uses creation to illustrate trust in divine power.
- **Psalm 34:8 -** A participant cites tasting and seeing Yehovah's goodness as an experiential confirmation of faith.
- **Isaiah 55:10-11 -** Yehovah's word accomplishes its purpose; cited in discussion of how Scripture works in believers.
- **Hebrews 11:1-3 -** The chapter defines faith in relation to hope and unseen realities; the speaker discusses possible translation choices.
- **Hebrews 11:6 -** Faith and earnest seeking of God are connected; useful to the Teaching's account of growth.
- **Luke 18:8 -** Yeshua asks whether the Son of Man will find faith; invoked near the close of the teaching.
- **Amos 8:11-12 -** A famine of hearing Yehovah's words is discussed as one proposed lens for divine silence; the link to the present is interpretive.
- **2 Kings 6:15-17 -** Elisha's servant sees previously unseen heavenly forces; participants use this to discuss divine activity beyond sight.
- **Jeremiah 44:15-19 -** Participants recall the persistence of devotion to the queen of heaven despite prophetic warning.
- **1 Corinthians 13:12 -** Partial present understanding is contrasted with fuller future knowledge, pertinent to the limitations of sight and faith.
- **2 Corinthians 5:7 -** Paul says believers walk by faith, not sight, expressing the study's central theme.
- **1 Peter 1:8-9 -** Peter addresses love for and faith in the unseen Messiah, a direct parallel to the Teaching's question.
- **Romans 10:17 -** Faith comes through hearing the message, relevant to the role of transmitted testimony.

Key Takeaways

- Ancient Israel received visible and audible signs yet still faced struggles with trust and obedience.
- The speaker views the storyline of Moses, prophets, and Yeshua as a continuous witness to Yehovah's character and purposes.
- Written testimony is presented as a foundation for faith for those who did not personally witness the biblical events.
- John 20:29-31 contrasts Thomas's direct encounter with the belief of later readers.
- The speaker describes faith as a journey from early trust toward deepened understanding through Scripture and obedience.

- Creation and personal experience are discussed as supports for a growing faith.
- Questions about perceived divine silence are taken seriously; participants offer differing explanations.
- The speaker's statistical and historical apologetic claims should be researched before being presented as verified proofs.

Discussion Questions

- What is the paradox of faith?

Teaching response: The Teaching contrasts Israel's firsthand experience of remarkable divine acts with their unbelief and the faith of believers today who rely on testimony. Scriptures: Deuteronomy 1:29-33; John 20:29-31

- Why did Israel struggle to believe after witnessing miracles?

Teaching response: The speaker emphasizes that witnessing a sign does not automatically produce lasting trust or obedience. Scriptures: Deuteronomy 1:29-33; Exodus 19:16-20

- Why do believers trust what they have not seen?

Teaching response: The Teaching points to the written witness about Yeshua, the message of Scripture, and the gradual strengthening of faith. Scriptures: John 20:29-31; Romans 10:17

- What did Yeshua say about believing without seeing?

Teaching response: Yeshua calls those who have not seen and yet believe blessed, after Thomas's encounter with Him. Scriptures: John 20:24-31

- How does written testimony support faith?

Teaching response: John states that signs were written so readers could believe Yeshua is the Messiah and have life in His name. Scriptures: John 20:30-31

- How did Yehovah reveal Himself to Israel?

Teaching response: Israel experienced His guidance by cloud and fire and His revelation at Sinai. Scriptures: Exodus 13:21-22; Exodus 19:16-20

- How does the Teaching compare Moses, the prophets, and Yeshua?

Teaching response: The speaker presents a continuity between Mosaic instruction, prophetic calls back to covenant, and God speaking through His Son. Scriptures: Exodus 20:22; Hebrews 1:1-2

- Does Hebrews 1 say God spoke through His Son?

Teaching response: Yes. Hebrews contrasts earlier speech through the prophets with revelation through the Son. Scriptures: Hebrews 1:1-2

- What does the speaker mean by divine silence?

Teaching response: He raises the difference between dramatic recorded revelations and the less visible ways believers perceive God's work today. Scriptures: Exodus 33:18-23; Hebrews 1:1-2

- Do participants agree that God is silent today?

Teaching response: No. Some describe an end to canonical revelation while still affirming the Holy Spirit's personal guidance; others challenge the idea of silence itself. Scriptures: Hebrews 1:1-2; 2 Kings 6:15-17

- Is faith the same as having no evidence?

Teaching response: The speaker distinguishes an initial act of trust from mature faith developed through testimony, obedience, and experience. Scriptures: John 20:29-31; Hebrews 11:1-3

- What can believers learn from the criminal beside Yeshua?

Teaching response: The speaker uses the criminal's appeal to Yeshua as a picture of trust, while admitting the man's prior knowledge is unknown. Scriptures: Luke 23:39-43

Reflection

Read John 20:24-31, Deuteronomy 1:29-33, and Hebrews 11:1-3. Consider where the text reports events and where the speaker draws a broader interpretation about faith, evidence, or the present experience of God.