

Facts, Phenomena, Faith, and Fiction

Phenomena —An occurrence, a circumstance, or a fact that is perceptible by the senses.

I. Introduction

- A. We live in an age that places a premium on feelings, phenomena, and experience
- B. There is much debate about the relationship between feelings and faith, facts and faith, phenomena and faith, experience and faith
- C. By faith, I mean a saving, obedient faith
- D. Much emphasis today is placed upon experiences and feelings
- E. What is accepted as fact is often based on feelings or phenomena, experience
- F. Feelings often have no basis in fact whatsoever
- G. People may even say things like, “I don’t care what the Bible says, I know what I felt or experienced”
- H. Today I want to look at the examples of conversion in Scripture and examine the relationship between facts, phenomena, faith, and fiction
- I. Let’s see what the Bible shows us about their connection

II. Pentecost, Acts 2:1-40

- A. Here was an amazing phenomena
- B. But Peter does not emphasize it, he emphasizes facts
 - 1. This phenomena was prophesied, 16-21
 - 2. Jesus was attested by God with miracles, 22
 - 3. He was crucified, raised from the dead, and ascended to heaven, 23-24,31-33
 - 4. David prophesied of this, 25-31,34-35
 - 5. Jesus is at the right hand of God and has poured out the Spirit which is what you see and hear, 33,36
- C. From these facts he rightly concludes that Jesus is both Lord and Christ
- D. This cut them to the heart and caused them to respond to his invitation
- E. Facts produced the following:
 - 1. Right conclusions
 - 2. Right convictions
 - 3. Right feelings
 - 4. Right actions
 - 5. Right destination
- F. In short, it produced faith, a saving faith
- G. But the tongues alone caused them to conclude the apostles were drunk
- H. Phenomena produced the following:, 7-8,12-13
 - 1. Wrong assumptions
 - 2. Wrong conclusions
 - 3. Wrong actions
 - 4. Wrong destination
- I. In short, it produced fiction, a losing proposition
- J. Let’s see if this pattern follows through Scripture

III. Solomon’s Porch, Acts 3:1-4:4

- A. The result of the lame man being healed was wonder and amazement, 3:10
- B. Again Peter emphasizes facts, not phenomena in his sermon
- C. The result is faith, 4:4

IV. Samaritans, Acts 8:1-25

- A. The miracles of Philip along with his preaching of Christ brought joy to them, 8:5-8
- B. But it was their belief of the facts that produced a saving faith, 8:12-13
- C. When Simon focused on the phenomena, he lost his faith for fiction, 8:18-24
- D. The apostles preached the Word and the Gospel, 8:25

V. Eunuch, Acts 8:26-40

- A. Here there is no phenomena that the Eunuch saw
- B. Yet the facts caused saving faith, 8:35-39

VI. Saul, Acts 9:1-22

- A. The phenomena brought questions, 9:3-6
 - 1. "Who are you Lord?"
 - 2. "Lord, what do you want me to do?"
- B. But the facts brought saving faith, 9:6, 17-18, 22:14-16

VII. Cornelius, Acts 10:1-11:18

- A. The phenomena caused pondering, wondering, a perplexing, 10:4,17,21
- B. But the facts brought saving faith, 11:13-14
- C. A further phenomena told Peter, a believer, that Cornelius could be saved, 10:44-48,11:15-18
- D. The phenomena did not produce saving faith, the facts did

VIII. Proconsul, Acts 13:6-12

- A. The facts Paul presented is what he sought, 13:7
- B. The phenomena was only to stop the opposition to the facts, 13:8-11
- C. The facts are what astonished him and produced the faith, 13:12

IX. Iconium, Acts 14:1-3

- A. Phenomena only as a confirmation of the facts preached, Mark 16:15-20
- B. But facts were taught and believed producing faith

X. Lystra, Acts 14:8-22

- A. The phenomena produced much fiction, 11-13
 - 1. The gods have come down in the likeness of men
 - 2. Barnabas was Zeus and Paul was Hermes
 - 3. They intended to sacrifice and worship wrongly
- B. But the facts restrained them, 14-18
- C. Finally the facts produced saving faith in some, 21-22

XI. Acts 16:12-15

- A. Again there is no mention of phenomena here
- B. But the facts were presented and believed producing faith, 16:14-15

XII. Jailer, Acts 16:23-34

- A. The phenomena produced fiction again
 - 1. He thought the prisoners had escaped, 16:27
 - 2. He feared for his life, 16:29-30

3. Was about to kill himself, wrong actions
- B. But the facts produced faith, 16:31-34

XIII. Corinth, Acts 18:4-8

- A. Again there is no mention of phenomena
- B. But the facts were taught, reasoned from and believed producing a saving faith

XIV. Ephesus, Acts 19:1-8

- A. No phenomena until after they had and responded to a saving faith
- B. No phenomena to “prove” the existence of the Holy Spirit, just facts
- C. The facts produced such faith
- D. Phenomena came only after the salvation

XV. Melita (Malta), Acts 28:1-10

- A. The phenomena again produced confusion
 1. He is a murderer
 2. He is a god
 3. See the wild extremes you rush to when relying on phenomena
- B. No mention of facts being presented here, but it’s a reasonable conclusion
- C. Also no mention of any saving faith here, but probably was some
- D. Perhaps neither is mentioned to show that you don’t get the one without the other

XVI. Corinthian epistle, I Cor. 14:22-25

- A. The Biblical principle that we saw carried out in Acts is stated here
- B. Phenomena without facts produces the fiction that they are all crazy, 14:23
- C. But facts without phenomena produces the following:
 1. Convincing – belief
 2. Conviction
 3. Revelation and realization of sin
 4. Worship
 5. Right conclusions – God is truly among you
- D. That is, facts produce saving faith

XVII. Conclusion

- A. Phenomena accompanied with facts produces faith
 1. Pentecost
 2. Solomon’s Porch
 3. Samaritans
 4. Saul
 5. Cornelius
 6. Proconsul
 7. Lystra
 8. Jailer
 9. Corinthian epistle
- B. Phenomena without facts produces fiction
 1. Pentecost
 2. Lystra
 3. Jailer

4. Corinthian epistle
 5. Melita
- C. Facts without phenomena produces faith
1. Eunuch
 2. Iconium
 3. Lydia
 4. Ephesus
 5. Corinth
- D. Therefore, facts are sufficient to produce saving faith
- E. However, phenomena is not sufficient to produce faith
- F. Facts are necessary to produce faith, without it you have only fiction
- G. Rest your faith on facts, not phenomena they are the only firm foundation
- H. Otherwise, you may be resting on fiction
- I. The preaching of the Word is both necessary and sufficient for conversion, Luke 16:27-31, Rom. 10:17