



Evidence for Faith Class

North Lanier Baptist Church
Six Sunday mornings at 9:30 am
August 13 through October 1, 2017

Travis Echols, Teacher

Evidence for Faith Class

Arguing for the Bible

- Does truth exist? How can we know it?
- Does God exist?
- What is the historical evidence for Christianity?

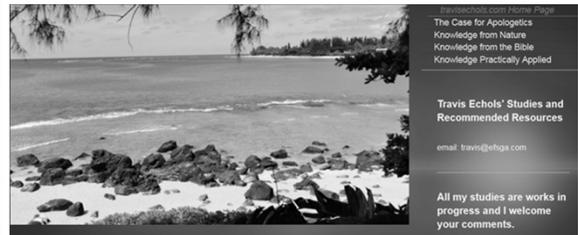
Arguing from the Bible

- How should we interpret the Bible?
- Why do Christians have different interpretations?
- What does the Bible teach?

Evidence for Faith Class

- **Faith and reason** (faith and evidence, faith and sight, faith and logic, God's gift and man's choice, aspects of faith, objections to faith)
- **Truth and knowledge** (three false views of truth, the undeniable correspondence view, can we know truth, how we know truth)
- **The Existence of God** (eight arguments for God's existence from nature) and the Problem of Evil (How can an all-knowing, all-powerful, all-loving God exist if evil exists?)
- **The historical reliability of the New Testament documents and earlier creeds** (authentic? true?) and Jesus of Nazareth (Liar, Lunatic, or Lord)
- **The Bible as the Word of God** (inspiration, inerrancy, preservation, problem texts, translations: textual and translational differences)
- **How to interpret the Bible** (History of interpretation, objectivity, hermeneutics, exegesis, and application)

Resources www.travisechols.com



Evidence for Faith Class

This class is not about how to witness

It's about understanding the objective evidence and sound reasoning for biblical Christianity

Evidence for Faith Class

This understanding can be used for:

- 1. Strengthening your own faith***
- 2. Strengthening the faith of other Christians***
- 3. Leading people to and toward Christ (helping them overcome their intellectual objections or showing them their issue is not intellectual)***
- 4. Helping the church be a stronger cultural influence***

Evidence for Faith Class



J. Gresham Machen (1881-1937), American Presbyterian theologian and professor of New Testament at Princeton Seminary between 1906 and 1929

"False ideas are the greatest obstacles to the reception of the gospel. We may preach with all the fervor of a reformer and yet succeed only in winning a straggler here and there, if we permit the whole collective thought of a nation or of the world to be controlled by ideas which, by the resistless force of logic, prevent Christianity from being regarded as anything more than a harmless delusion. Under such circumstances, what God desires us to do is to destroy the obstacle at its root."

Evidence for Faith Class



William Lane Craig (born 1949), American philosopher and Christian apologist

"Christians need to see beyond their immediate evangelistic contact to grasp a wider picture of Western thought and culture....A person raised in a cultural milieu in which Christianity is still seen as an intellectually viable option will display an openness to the gospel which a person who is secularized will not. For the secular person you may as well tell him to believe in fairies or leprechauns as in Jesus Christ!"

Evidence for Faith Class

Defending the faith is what Jesus and the apostles would do if they were here today

That is what they did when they ministered centuries ago!

- They defended the faith
- They contended for the faith
- They demolished arguments that opposed the faith
- And they commanded us to do the same

See www.bethinking.org/apologetics/the-need-for-apologetics

Evidence for Faith Class



For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ (2Cor 10:4-5)

Evidence for Faith Class



rational argument

Argument as a means of rational persuasion



emotional argument

Evidence for Faith Class

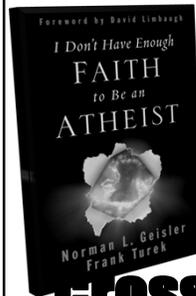
If there are good, objective reasons for believing Christianity is true, wouldn't it be good for Christians to know them?

Evidence for Faith Class

Warning:

- We'll go over a lot of material in a short span of time
- If you've not been studying philosophy or apologetics, it will challenge you intellectually (and perhaps emotionally)
- I encourage questions and discussion. The purpose of the class is that we learn from each other
- We will critique each other's ideas; let's be Christ-like in open and honest exchange. Benefit: Iron sharpens iron.

Helps for the Class:

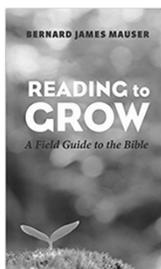


- Book or Audio Version
- 10-part DVD Series From TV
- Study Guide by Geisler and Jason Jeminez

Other resources at

CrossExamined.org

Helps for the Class:



Short, introductory book on how to interpret the Bible

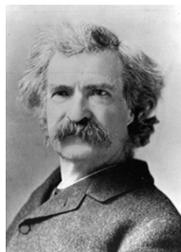
Evidence for Faith Class

Eight-week course outline

- Faith and Reason
- Truth and Knowledge
- God's existence and the problem of evil
- The Reliability of the New Testament and Jesus of Nazareth
- The Bible as God's Word
- Bible Interpretation

Faith and Reason

The word "faith" means different things to different people



"Faith is believing what you know ain't so."

Mark Twain

Faith and Reason

The word "faith" means different things to different people

"Every faith in the world is based on fabrication. That is the definition of faith—acceptance of that which we imagine to be true, that which we cannot prove. Every religion describes God through metaphor, allegory, and exaggeration, from the early Egyptians through modern Sunday school. Metaphors are a way to help our minds process the unprocessable. The problems arise when we begin to believe literally in our own metaphors." Dan Brown, The Da Vinci Code

Faith and Reason



Biblically, the concept of faith is simple enough for a small child to grasp (faith is simply belief, trust, and/or confidence in something or someone).

Yet a more in-depth study shows the many facets and layers of faith. See *Faith* at www.travisechols.com

Faith and Reason

Biblically, faith is not a blind leap into the irrational realm.

Faith does not disregard facts.

Believing something does not make it true.

Rather, faith is believing in a proposition or person for good reasons.

Faith and Reason

Biblically, in most usages, “faith” and “belief” have the same meaning.

To believe is to have faith.¹ To not believe is to lack faith.² The same Greek word in one of its various forms is used primarily for the English noun ‘faith’ (πίστις pronounced ‘pistis’) and the corresponding verb ‘believe’ (πιστεύω pronounced ‘pisteuo’).

¹Matt 17:20; Mk 11:22; Jn 20:27; Acts 14:22; Rom 4:5, 11, 20; 9:30-10:4; 11:20; 2Cor 4:13; Heb 11:6.

² Matt 17:20; Jn 20:27; Rom 9:30-10:4

Faith and Reason

Biblically, it is the object of faith that determines its worth.

The power of effectual, spiritual faith is in its object, God, not the person who has the faith. God is pleased when we have faith in him and his word (Rom 10:17; Acts 14:27; Heb 12:2; 2Pet 1:1). The object of saving faith is Jesus (Jn 3:16, 18, 36). It is possible to have a useless faith that is not grounded in objective truth (1Cor 15:14). Some examples: Faith in one's faith is merely faith in man; faith in a lie is deception; and faith in a god who does not exist is idolatry.

Faith and Reason

Biblically, in most usages, “faith” and “belief” have the same meaning.

The scriptures state repeatedly that the requirement to receive salvation is faith (or to believe)

Faith: Acts 15:9; Rom 3:22, 25, 28; 3:30; 4:5, 9, 11, 13, 16; 5:1, 2; 9:30 10:6; 11:20; Gal 2:16; 3:2, 7, 8, 9, 11, 14; 22, 24, 26; Eph 2:8; Phil 3:9; 2Tim 3:15; 1Pet 1:9

Believe: Luke 8:12; John 1:7, 12; 3:15, 16, 18, 36; 5:24; 6:35, 40, 47; 4:39, 41; 7:31, 38, 39; 8:24, 30; 10:42; 11:25, 26, 45; 12:37, 46; 20:31; Acts 8:37; 9:42; 10:43; 11:17; 13:39; 14:1; 16:31; 18:8; Rom 1:16; 3:22, 26; 4:3, 5, 11, 24; 10:9, 10; 1Cor 15:1-4; Gal 2:16; 3:6, 22; Eph 1:13; 2Thes 1:10; 2:12; 1Tim 1:16; Heb 10:39; 1Pet 2:6; 1John 5:1, 5, 10, 13; 20:31

Faith and Reason

Salvation is by grace through faith

Faith is not the ground or basis of salvation; the grace of God exhibited in the life, death, and resurrection of Christ is. God ordained that the eternal benefits of Christ's gracious work be received by faith (2Thes 2:13). In accordance with this divine plan, God gave spiritual blessings to the believing elect in Christ *before the world began* (Eph 1:1-4; 2Tim 1:9). They receive these benefits and are saved *in time after* hearing and believing the gospel (Jn 5:24; Eph 1:13; 2:11-13; Col 1:21; Gal 3:26-28; Eph 1:13).

Faith and Reason

Biblically, faith is a gift of God

God purposed to save sinners before the world began. Jesus, God's precious, elect One, was foreordained to be a lamb slain before the world began (1Pet 1:18-2:6; Rev 13:8). God ordained spiritual blessings to be in Christ and through Christ (Eph 1:4-7). God also ordained that the eternal benefits of Christ's gracious work be received by faith in Christ (2Thes 2:13). God chose the elect in Christ before the world began (Eph 1:4; 2Tim 1:9; Matt 25:34). Election is in accordance with God's foreknowledge of the elect believers (Rom 8:29-33; 1Pet 1:2). God founded and nurtured a nation, Israel, through which His Son would come (Galatians 3-4). Many promises in figures and explicit predictions were given to this nation, pointing to better things to come in Christ (Romans 15:8; Colossians 2:17; Hebrews 9:9, 23; 10:1). In the fullness of time, God's Son came to the world and lived a sinless life, died for the sins of the world, and rose again from the dead. After Jesus' ascension, God sent the Holy Spirit to testify of Christ and build His church (John 15:26; Matt 16:18). God calls (1Pet 5:10), reproves (John 16:8), invites (Rev 22:17), draws (John 6:44; 12:32-33), leads (Rom 2:4), guides (Acts 8:31), reasons with (Isa 1:18; Acts 17:2; 18:4; 18:19; 24:25), preaches to (Rom 10:13-15; 1Cor 1:21), exhorts (Acts 2:40), testifies (1Jn 4:14), teaches (Col 1:28), persuades (Acts 28:23; 2Cor 5:11), beseeches (2Cor 5:20), convinces (Titus 1:9), and warns (Ezek 3:18-19; 33:7-8; Col 1:28) sinners. God hereby gives repentance and faith through His goodness, His word, His Spirit and His children, revealing who Jesus is, opening sinners' hearts to Christ (2Tim 2:25; Rev 2:21; Heb 12:2; Acts 14:27; 16:14; Matt 16:16-17; Acts 16:14). No sinner can have faith in God without God. God is the author and finisher of spiritually effectual faith (Rom 10:17; Acts 14:27; Heb 12:2; 2Pet 1:1).

Faith and Reason

Biblically, faith is man's choice

God ordained spiritual blessings to be in Christ and through Christ (Eph 1:4-7). God also ordained that the eternal benefits of Christ's gracious work be received by faith in Christ (2Thes 2:13). In accordance with this divine plan, God gave spiritual blessings to the believing elect in Christ before the world began (Eph 1:4-7; 2Tim 1:9). They receive these benefits and are saved in time after hearing and believing the gospel (Jn 5:24; Eph 1:13; 2:11-13; Col 1:21; Gal 3:26-28; Eph 1:13). Before faith, they are described as being in Adam, enemies of God, dead in trespasses and sins, by nature the children of wrath, without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, without God in the world, and afar off (Rom 5:10; 1Cor 15:22; Eph 2:1-13; Col 1:21). God so loved the world he gave His only-begotten Son to be the propitiation for the sins of the whole world (Jn 3:16; 1Jn 2:2; Heb 2:9). God offers salvation to all people, commanding them to repent toward God and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ (Matt 28:19-20; Mk 16:16; Acts 17:30; 20:21). God holds sinners responsible for having faith in Christ, since faith is the only acceptable response to His grace (Rom 4:16). God does not believe for sinners. God does not force faith or the desire for faith upon sinners against their wills (Gen 4:6-7; Joshua 24:15; 1Kings 18:21; Eze 18:20-32; Matt 11:20; 23:37; Luke 7:36; 12:48; Acts 7:51; 17:30; Rev 22:17). God calls sinners to believe and is angry with them and condemns them for their lack of repentance and faith (Matt 11:20-22; Mk 11:22; 16:16; Jn 3:16, 18, 36; Jn 4:4-29; 16:9; Rom 1:18-2:8; 3:3-18; 9:30-33; 1Pet 4:17-18; 2Thes 1:4-9; 2:9-12; Heb 2:1-4; 3:7-13; 10:22-31). God desires for all people to believe and be saved (Isa 5:1-4; Eze 18:32; 33:11; Jn 3:16; 2Pet 3:9; 1Tim 2:4).

Faith and Reason

Three essential components of saving faith

1. **Understanding**—the content of faith, the data, that must be grasped
2. **Assent**—the conviction that a certain proposition is true
3. **Trust**—the positive disposition of the soul or mind

Faith and Reason

Three essential components of saving faith

- | | | |
|-------------------------------|---|--|
| More cognitive | { | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Understanding—the content of faith, the data, that must be grasped 2. Assent—the conviction that a certain proposition is true |
| More volitional and affective | | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Trust—the positive disposition of the soul or mind |

Faith and Reason

Choice in the three essential components of saving faith

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| We must choose to expose and open our minds to understand it | ➡ | 1. Understanding —the content of faith, the data, that must be grasped |
| We must choose to open our minds to accept it to be true | ➡ | 2. Assent —the conviction that a certain proposition is true |
| We must choose to commit ourselves to it | ➡ | 3. Trust —the positive disposition of the soul or mind |

Faith and Reason

Three essential components of faith



- Understanding
- Assent
- Trust

As a person responds to the Holy Spirit's influence by being open to understand and believe, and deciding to trust and obey, a deeper understanding is gained, which makes a deeper trust possible, resulting in a beautiful cycle of spiritual growth .

Faith and Reason
Assent and Trust

Heb 11:6 But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and ← Assent—belief *that that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.* ← Trust—belief *in Him.*

Faith and Reason

Biblical *faith* involves the whole person (Prov 3:5; Joel 2:12; etc)

Mind: Faith without works deceives us and is dead (James 1-2) and knowledge without love puffs up (1Cor 8:1)

Will: Will worship, self discipline, and good works without the right motive doesn't please God (Col 2:23; Matt 7:23)

Emotion: Zeal without knowledge can be easily misguided, leading to confusion and error (Rom 10:2; 1Cor 14:32-33)

Faith and Reason

Three types of objections to faith

- Intellectual: problem of evil, science
- Emotional: exclusivity, hell
- Volitional: autonomy, love of sin

Faith and Reason

Emotional doubt



Os Guinness, author, social critic, and Christian apologist

"The problem is not that reason attacks faith but that the emotions overwhelm reason as well as faith, and it is impossible for reason to dissuade them...vivid imagination, changing moods, erratic feelings, intense reactions rise up and overpower the understanding of faith. Out-voted, out-gunned, faith is pressed back and hemmed in by the unruly mob of raging emotions that only a while earlier were quiet, orderly citizens of the personality."

Faith and Reason

Faith can be without physical sight

But faith is not without reason

Faith and Reason

Faith can be without physical sight

Generally, spiritual faith is believing what cannot be physically seen. While seeing leads to believing, there can be good reasons for having faith without seeing. The apostles had faith in Jesus whom they saw (Jn 20:29; Acts 1:3; 4:20; 9:27; 13:31; 1Cor 9:1; 1Cor 15:7-8; 1Jn 1:1). Christians since that time have faith in Jesus whom they have not seen (Jn 20:29; 1Pet 1:8; 2Cor 5:7), based on the eye-witness testimony of those who did see. Because eternal verities are largely invisible to the physical senses, faith in God's word is described as the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things *not seen* (Heb 11:1). Until we see him face to face (1Cor 13:12; 1Jn 3:2; Heb 12:14; Rev 22:4), we walk by faith, not by sight (2Cor 5:7).

Faith and Reason

But faith is not without reason

Faith and reason work together. God has given convincing reasons for people to have faith in him: natural revelation (i.e., nature and conscience) (Psalm 19:1; Rom 1:18-22; 2:14-15), historical evidences (Acts 1:1-3; 2:32; 3:15; 5:30-32; 10:39-41; 1Cor 15:3-8), confirming miracles (Isa 7:14; Jn 2:18-21; 20:30-31; Acts 2:22; 2Cor 12:12; Heb 2:4), and fulfilled prophecies (Isa 53; Dan 9:26; Luke 21:6; Jn 2:18-21; 1Cor 15:3-4). God uses reasoning to persuade people to have faith in him (Isa 1:18; Mark 11:22; Acts 17:2; 18:4, 19, 28; 19:26; 27:25; 1Cor 14:24; 2Cor 5:11; Titus 1:9).

Faith and Reason

But faith is not without reason

"Come now, and let us reason together," Says the LORD, "Though your sins are like scarlet, They shall be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, They shall be as wool." (Isa 1:18)

And he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks (Acts 18:4)

Faith and Reason

Paul's account to King Agrippa of Jesus' words to him

Acts 26:15 "So I said, 'Who are You, Lord?'" And He said, 'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting.
16 'But rise and stand on your feet; for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to make you a minister and a witness both of the things which you have seen and of the things which I will yet reveal to you.
17 'I will deliver you from the Jewish people, as well as from the Gentiles, to whom I now send you,
18 'to open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me.'
19 "Therefore, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision..."

Faith and Reason



From the book *Come Let Us Reason*

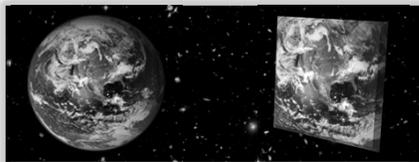
"God is rational, and has created us as rational beings."

"Logic really means putting your thoughts in order."

"Logic is the study of right reason or valid inferences and the attending fallacies, formal and informal."

THE LAW OF NON-CONTRADICTION HELPS US DISCOVER WHAT IS FALSE

Opposite ideas cannot both be true at the same time and in the same sense.



THE EARTH IS
ROUND

THE EARTH IS
NOT ROUND

THE LAW OF NON-CONTRADICTION



Oxford Professor
John Lennox

God Exists!



THEY CAN'T
BOTH
BE RIGHT!



Oxford Professor
Richard Dawkins

**God Does
NOT Exist!**

THE LAW OF NON-CONTRADICTION



The Law Of
Non-
contradiction Is
Undeniable

Even those who
deny it... use it.

THE LAW OF NON-CONTRADICTION

"Anyone who denies the law of non-contradiction should be beaten and burned until he admits that to be beaten is not the same as not to be beaten, and to be burned is not the same as not to be burned."

(Avicenna, a great Islamic Philosopher)

Faith and Reason

Faith is supported by evidence

God gives sufficient evidence for people to have faith in him. Faith in God from general revelation (the creation) can lead us to have faith in God's special revelation (Christ and the Bible). If God exists, miracles are possible.

Faith and Reason

Faith is supported by evidence



GENERAL
REVELATION

SPECIAL
REVELATION

Faith and Reason

General Revelation is God's revelation of Himself in nature to everyone



For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: (Rom 1:20)

Faith and Reason

Some things from general revelation we must first accept in order to understand the Bible



- The reality of the physical world outside of our minds
- That our senses are generally reliable (even to see/hear the words of the Bible)
- The difference between things (e.g., earth, man, tree, stars)
- The basic laws of logic
- A correct concept of God (e.g., Does God literally have wings and feathers [Ps 91:4]?)
- That the Bible has an objective meaning the author(s) intended
- That the Bible was written/translated in a language we can understand
- The correct use of history and language
- The correct starting method of interpreting the Bible (this cannot come from the Bible)

Faith and Reason

Faith is supported by evidence

The historical evidence regarding Jesus

the cross,
the empty tomb,
and the post-mortem appearances,

can lead us to believe in Jesus' miraculous resurrection (1Cor 15:1-9).

Faith and Reason

Faith is supported by evidence

Jn 20:27 Then He said to Thomas, "Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing."
28 And Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!"
29 Jesus said to him, "Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

[Wait, is Jesus saying that believing "without evidence" is better than believing based on evidence? The very next verse shows us the answer is no.]

30 And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book;

Faith and Reason

Faith is supported by evidence

Acts 1:1 The former account I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach,
2 until the day in which He was taken up, after He through the Holy Spirit had given commandments to the apostles whom He had chosen,
3 to whom He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.

Faith and Reason

Faith is supported by evidence

Jn 10:37 "If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me;
38 but if I do, though you do not believe Me, believe the works, that you may know and believe that the Father is in Me, and I in Him."

Faith and Reason

The gospel itself is laden with evidence

1Cor 15:1 MOREOVER, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you have received, and wherein you stand; 2 By which also you are saved, if you keep in memory what I preached to you, unless you have believed in vain.
3 For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures;
4 And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures;
5 And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve:
6 After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain to this present, but some are fallen asleep. 7 After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles. 8 And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time.

Burial is evidence that he died



Post-mortem appearances are evidence that he rose

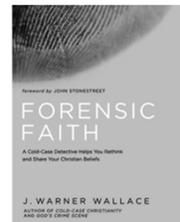


Faith and Reason

Faith is supported by evidence



James "Jim" Warner Wallace is an American homicide detective and Christian apologist



Faith and Reason

1. Truth corresponds to reality and is objective, universal and knowable.
2. There are many good reasons from nature to believe that God exists.
3. If God exists, miracles are possible.
4. The New Testament documents are historically reliable.
5. The best explanation of the historically-established facts regarding Jesus of Nazareth is that he miraculously rose from the dead as he promised, verifying that he was the unique Son of God from heaven as he claimed to be.
6. If Jesus is the Son of God from heaven, his high view of scripture as the Word of God is correct and should be accepted.

Faith and Reason



We investigated Hinduism and Christianity and we found that...

Hindusim = fake

and

Christianity = real

Sri Ganesh

Faith and Reason



Nabeel Qureshi is the author of the *New York Times* bestselling *No God but One: Allah or Jesus?*, the follow-up to his bestseller *Seeking Allah, Finding Jesus*, the only book ever to win Christian Book Awards for both "Best New Author" and "Best Nonfiction."

"After studying the historical origins of the Christian faith, I came to these conclusions: that Jesus died on the cross is as certain as anything historical can be; that he rose from the dead is by far the best explanation of the events surrounding his death; and that Jesus claimed to be God is the best explanation for the immediate Christian proclamation of Jesus' deity. Putting it all together: Jesus claimed to be God, and he proved it by rising from the dead. The case for Christianity is powerful. Despite my ardent desire to believe in Islam, I had to admit that history was in favor of Christian claims, and even more reluctantly, that it challenged Islamic teachings."

Faith and Reason



Christianity is incomparable as an intellectually rich and robust faith. Why would Christians want to dumb it down?

Mr 12:30 And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.