Sometimes it helps us to determine what a thing is by learning what it is not. This is so concerning the faith that each person must have in order to be saved (Mark 16:15–16). Like many other Biblical words, faith has been variously misdefined:

1. Some equate faith with wishful thinking—“pie in the sky by and by.” In this misconception, “faith” has no reality upon which to rest. The existence of God, Christ, the Bible, and Heaven are all things one wishes to be real and wants to believe in so badly that one convinces himself that they exist.

2. Some completely sunder faith from knowledge. To them “faith” goes beyond knowledge, taking up where knowledge ceases. To these mis deflectors, “faith” is the proverbial “leap in the dark.”

3. Many conceive of saving “faith” as merely intellectual acceptance of certain Biblical facts (e.g., the existence of God, the Deity of Christ). Although such acknowledgement of Bible teaching is the beginning point of saving faith, it is far from its end.

4. Some view faith as believing in things which may possibly exist. Accordingly, some allege that, while we cannot prove God’s existence empirically, yet His existence is more probable than improbable. This misapprehension of faith constitutes agnosticism.

5. Others conceive of believers as those who ignore evidence with which they disagree. Skeptics often thus view Biblical faith. However, the better demonstration of this aberration of faith is the evolutionist, who defies, denies, and denigrates the huge body of evidence that validates the Bible and combats his irrational hypotheses.

While not exhaustive, the foregoing list is representative of the major misunderstandings of faith.

We must never cease to emphasize to a world of confused “believers” that saving faith is always obedient faith:

But when they believed Philip preaching good tidings concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women (Acts 8:12, emph. added).

And Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed in the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized (18:8, emph. added).

The only sort of faith that accomplishes anything religiously is one based on Biblical evidence and is a “faith which worketh by love” (Gal. 5:6).