



## Bèza's Syllogism; Faith Denotes Trust & Confidence in Its Object; 3 Categories of Sanctification; William Perkins's "Temporary Faith" & "Ineffectual Calling"

36. From this came the development of a syllogism:

**Baldick, Chris.** *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms.* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 218:

**Syllogism**, a form of logical argument that derives a conclusion from two propositions sharing a common term, usually in this form: all x are y (major premise); z is x (minor premise); therefore z is y (conclusion). In this deductive logic, the conclusion is of course reliable only if both premises are true.

37. In order to formalize his "solution" to the question, "How can I know that I am among the elect and therefore that my faith was efficacious for salvation?" Bèza developed a syllogism:

Major premise: All who have the effects (good works) have faith.

Minor premise: But I have the effects (good works).

Conclusion: Therefore I have faith. (See Kendall, p. 33)

38. It is important that we discredit this immediately. Both the premises are false. I will demonstrate. The word "faith" is the translation of the Greek noun, **πίστις, pistis**. The verb form is, **πιστεύω, pisteuō**, and is translated "believe." The definitions of these two words are obviously synonymous:

**Arndt, William F. and F. Wilber Gingrich.** *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament.* 2d ed. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1979), 660-62:

**πιστεύω, [pisteuo]** 1. To believe in something; to be convinced of something. The person to whom one gives credence: Jesus and God whom one believes, in that he accepts their disclosures without doubt or contradiction. (pp. 660-61)

2. Faith in the Divinity that lays special emphasis on trust in his power and his nearness to help, in addition to being convinced that he exists and that his revelations or disclosures are true. In our literature, God and Christ are objects of this faith. (p. 661)

**πίστις, [pistis]** 2. Trust and confidence directed toward God and Christ, their revelations, teachings, promises, and their power and readiness to aid. (p. 662)

39. Both the noun and the verb are transitive. The merit is found in the object not the subject. The person who believes places his confidence for salvation in an object that he is certain is qualified to accomplish the desired effect: salvation and eternal life.

40. Jesus Christ is the only Person qualified to accomplish this desired effect and this is stated repeatedly in Scripture.

41. Bèza's syllogism reveals that he was unable to find confidence in his salvation before placing confidence in his "good works." In effect, he places his faith in his works to verify his faith in Christ.

42. However, faith by its definition asserts that the one possessing it is absolutely convinced that the Word of God is true regarding Christ as Savior. Further, one is also convinced that by believing in the Person and work of Christ, he is indeed saved, among the elect, and with eternal life.



43. The definitions of **πίστις, *pistis*** and **πιστεύω, *pisteuō***, unite the concepts of faith and assurance: if you believe in Christ for salvation then you believe in the promises that are attached to salvation: forgiveness of presalvation sins, and the imputation of eternal life.
44. Bèza's system does not agree with this. In fact, he is on record saying that there are two "works of grace": (1) The "first grace" which is faith in Christ and (2) the "second grace" which is sanctification.
45. He teaches that the first grace is rendered void if it is not ratified by the second. It is the second grace which assures, for the first grace may not persevere. (See Kendall, p. 35)
46. According to Bèza, sanctification is the effect that is caused by saving faith. For Bèza, "sanctification" has to do with the performance of "good works."
47. "Sanctification" is the Greek word **ἁγιασμός, *hagiasmos*** and means "to be set apart for special service" to God, but there are three categories of sanctification in the Bible:
1. Positional sanctification which occurs at the moment of salvation by means of the baptism of the Holy Spirit.
  2. Experiential sanctification which refers to the spiritual growth of the believer all the way through the sophisticated spiritual life.
  3. Ultimate sanctification which is the perfection of the eternal state in resurrection body.
48. Biblically, the only way that experiential sanctification can have its intended results is for positional sanctification to occur first.
49. Bèza recognizes this but, instead of finding assurance from the biblical promises that salvation and eternal life are given to anyone who believes in Jesus Christ, he seeks to confirm these by the presence of "good works." He calls this sanctification but he is obviously referring to "experiential sanctification."
50. In effect the spiritual life of the hyper-Calvinist becomes an "examination" that seeks to confirm whether or not he is saved. The individual begins to observe his own life in order to discern whether he will produce good works and thus confirm his election or, on the other hand, fall away and confirm his reprobation.
51. The word "examination" is used to describe the approach of the hyper-Calvinist simply because it is the word utilized by the followers of Bèza, in particular William Perkins, a contemporary of Bèza's. Perkins's writings on the subject are mind boggling in their assertions.

#### **Kendall, *Calvin and English Calvinism to 1649*, 8:**

It is crucial to grasp Perkins's doctrine of **temporary faith** of the reprobate. In 1589 he wrote a treatise that codified this idea. [It] begins with the assumption of the **inalterable decree** of reprobation ... a warning to professing Christians to **examine themselves** lest they happen to possess but a **temporary faith**—a lofty position to which the **reprobate**, though doomed from the start, **may attain**.

The **non-elect may excel**, though damned all the while, in the certain **fruits of the elect**; this comes about by what [Perkins] calls **ineffectual calling**, a term he borrows from Bèza. The ineffectual calling of the non-elect is none the less so powerful that the subject manifests **all the appearances of the elect**: such as zeal, good works, **even sanctification**. A sincere Christian could well fear he was but reprobate.

