Sept 1966

AMBASSADOR COLLEGE

BIBLE CORRESPONDENCE COURSE

FAITH — in a Materialistic World?

LESSON 43

What our STUDENTS SAY

After 42 Lessons . . .

"Having completed Lesson Forty-Two, I have yet to find one lesson based on human inspiration! And in forty-two years, I have yet to study any subject that could be compared to this Course in human workmanship. The Eternal certainly is directing this work."

—Mr. R.L.R., Omaha, Nebraska

"Like a Dry Sponge"

"It is indeed a pleasure and a joy to receive any and all the new or old knowledge that Jesus Christ reveals to His prophets at this end-time. I hunger and thirst with a true desire to obtain and live by every Word of God. And how can I know God's Word unless it is revealed and expounded by His ministers? I am like a dry sponge being dipped in the waters of truth. Or even a century plant that is soaked in life-giving water, just bursting forth with new, revived, precious life."

—B.W., Springfield, New York

From the Beginning

"How I want to thank you for the Correspondence Course. I have been taking it ever since you first put it out. . . . Each lesson is much better than the last. Thank you for all your wonderful help in making the Bible a living book, just as we know God is living, active, and very much aware of our individual lives."

—Mrs. H.S., Olathe, Kansas

Finds Work of God

"Since I have been listening to you, reading your magazine and booklets, studying your Correspondence Course, and comparing them with the Bible, I have found out that you are truly doing the Work of God. You preach the good news of the Kingdom of God to all nations as a witness; you are the Church of God in the time of the end. You do not interpret the Bible after the manner of men—you let it interpret itself.

That's why I have decided to follow God's way. I want to pay my tithes because they belong to God, so that His Work may continue in this end-time, and that the whole world may hear the Gospel of the Kingdom."

—Man, Corme-Royal, France

AMBASSADOR COLLEGE
BIBLE
CORRESPONDENCE COURSE
LESSON 43

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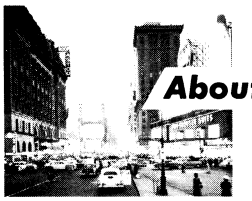


About Our Cover . . .

Spectacular view of Times Square, New York City, with glittering electric signs and theater marquees. Amid the hustle and bustle of modern cities, the average person sees only what man's creative genius has done. Little or no thought is given to the supreme creative mind and power of Almighty God! No wonder many find it impossible to have faith in God today!

Wide World Photo 366

WHAT IT MEANS TO "*LIVE* BY FAITH"

YOU live in a *materialistic* world—a world which has lost the *knowledge* of the TRUE GOD. This world is totally ignorant of God's Truth, His Way of life, His POWER and His glorious *promises!*

Consequently you live in a FAITHLESS generation!

Why God Is Forgotten

No wonder you hear people say, "*My* faith isn't very strong"—or, "I just can't seem to *work up* the faith." People today don't really know what faith IS, or *why* they do not possess it.

The apostle Paul was inspired to write: "But WITHOUT FAITH, IT IS *IMPOSSIBLE* TO PLEASE HIM: for he that cometh to God MUST BELIEVE THAT HE *IS*, and that He is a REWARDER of them that *diligently seek Him*" (Heb. 11:6). And so, "the just shall *LIVE* BY FAITH" (Heb. 10:38).

It takes *living* faith to obey—to receive God's gift of eternal life. None can be born into the glorious Kingdom of God and rule with Jesus Christ without active, LIVING faith!

Only the Overcomers

Today God is calling the "firstfruits" of His great Master Plan—to prepare them for positions of rulership in His Kingdom. Yet, only to a *few* of the millions who have heard the true message, has God granted a conscious *convicting knowledge* of the Truth.

By these Bible lessons God is calling *you*. He is calling YOU to a life of *separation*—to a new and different, spirit-filled and spirit-led life. Will you open your ears to hear?

God purposes that you GROW in spiritual grace and knowledge so you will be prepared, trained and fitted for a position of responsibility in His ruling Kingdom!

Only those who QUALIFY by the training, the overcoming, the spiritual development and growth—DURING THIS PRESENT LIFE—will rule in the World Tomorrow with Jesus Christ!

So the Christian life is a new and different life—an OVERCOMING life. Sin must be torn out root and branch! And it must all be done *through faith!*

Just what is *faith?*

What KIND of faith do we need to please God—to live the *obedient*, overcoming Christian life outlined in the Bible?

But first, let's be sure we understand what faith is *not!*

What Faith Is NOT!

Faith is *not* the "power of positive thinking"! This is man's method of *self*-deception—deceiving himself into believing he is getting "better and better, in every way, every day."

You may have heard this type of thinking called "bootstrapism"—trying to pull yourself up by your own bootstraps. In other words, trying to improve and overcome *by your* OWN *power.*

This method builds confidence in *self*. The wisest man who ever lived knew the difference between confidence in the self and the *right kind* of confidence. King Solomon called the person who trusts in his OWN heart a "*fool*"! (Prov. 28:26.)

Many people often make the mistake of confusing faith with *emotions*. They try to "work up faith," which to them means an emotional feeling.

Wide World Photo

Many assume they can "work up" faith through emotionalism. Here is a common pseudo-spiritual meeting.

Sanctimonious sentimentality, feelings and emotions ARE OF THE FLESH—not of the Spirit of God which is from *above!* These feelings are not the *evidence* of having faith. They are in the class of what can be seen, heard, tasted, smelled, or felt.

Faith is a SPIRITUAL matter—*not physical!*

Then to LIVE *by faith* certainly does *not* mean that you go around with some sentimental *feeling*, act in a sanctimonious manner which most people call "spiritual," or follow after physical or mental signs!

In this lesson of the Ambassador College Bible Correspondence Course, you will learn exactly what KIND of faith God wants you to have—*why* you need it, *how* to receive it, and how to LIVE by it!

For *without* LIVING FAITH, you'll never be born into God's glorious Kingdom as a powerful, *ruling* Son of God!

LESSON 43

God Defines Faith

The eleventh chapter of Hebrews is often referred to as the "faith" chapter of the Bible. In it the apostle Paul reminds us of the many inspiring examples of *living* faith displayed by men of God in Old Testament times.

And in this chapter is contained *God's definition* of faith. Let's begin to understand what faith really is.

1. Is "faith toward God" one of the foundational principles—one of the elementary truths or doctrines—of the Bible? Heb. 6:1.

2. Does God also tell us it is IMPOSSIBLE to please Him *without* faith? Heb. 11:6.

3. Then do spirit-begotten Christians "walk" —*live* their lives—by faith? Rom. 1:17 and II Cor. 5:7. Do they seek and look forward to promises and rewards which are *not seen?* Col. 3:1-4.

4. Did Paul elsewhere verify the fact that Christians seek after the *real*, but "unseen" rewards and promises of God? II Cor. 4:18.

COMMENT: True Christians look forward to blessings and rewards which are real and tangible, but *spiritual*—"unseen"!

5. Do the above scriptures confirm God's *definition* of faith? Heb. 11:1.

COMMENT: Faith is the "*substance*"—more accurately rendered *assurance*, or CONFIDENCE—"of things *hoped* for." You do not *hope* for that which you already *have*. So faith comes *before* possession. Before you receive what you hope for, you already have it in substance, and that *substance*—that ASSURANCE, or confidence that you *shall* possess it—is FAITH!

Then again, faith is an EVIDENCE—"the evidence of things *not seen*." Faith *precedes* the actual receiving of what you hope for. And faith is the EVIDENCE you *shall* have it, *before* you even SEE it. It is the EVIDENCE of things *yet unseen*. You do not *have* it. You do not *see* it, or *feel* it—yet faith is your EVIDENCE that you shall have it.

Having the thing hoped for—*seeing* it—is not faith. Faith *precedes* possession, whether physical or spiritual, because faith is *absolute confidence*—ASSURANCE—you *shall* possess it!

6. Does having faith toward God mean we BELIEVE God exists and that He *rewards* us both in this life and in the life to come—as long as we sincerely serve and *obey* Him? Heb. 11:6.

COMMENT: Faith is not something you try to make yourself *think* you have when you really don't have it.

Faith is expressed in ABSOLUTE RECOGNITION that God exists and that He blesses us for our *obedience* to His laws. This faith is *acquired*. You cannot *hypnotize* yourself into receiving that kind of faith.

7. Did Noah have this kind of faith when he built the ark God had commanded? Heb. 11:7. Did he have any *physical evidence* that a flood would come? Same verse. Notice the words "things not seen as yet."

COMMENT: Faith is a trust and confidence in the invisible God to perform what He has *not yet* done, and which mortal flesh *cannot* do!

8. How does this kind of believing faith *begin* to come into our hearts and minds? Rom. 10:17 and Eph. 5:17.

COMMENT: Faith is the *assurance* that what God promises in His Word He will perform. But before you can *know* what God will perform, you first need to know WHAT *God promises!*

Here is one reason why so many lack faith today. They are not familiar with the many examples of living faith contained in the Bible. They're ignorant of God's PROMISES—and they're ignorant of His great POWER to intervene in their lives!

The first step, then, is to search the Scriptures to *learn* what is God's will.

9. How can we be *absolutely certain* God will perform His promises given in the Bible? Heb. 6:18.

COMMENT: God is perfect, holy and righteous character. God *cannot* lie because He has WILLED NOT TO! Therefore, you can KNOW God will perform what He promises since He will not lie! God will *never break* a promise!

We can have absolute confidence—POSITIVE FAITH—that God will always do whatever He has promised.

And so we might sum up God's definition of faith in this way: Faith is assurance that God's Word is *true*, that His promises are SURE, and that it is *IMPOSSIBLE* FOR GOD TO LIE! This assurance, this *reliance* on GOD'S WORD—this *confidence*—is FAITH!

Abraham—"Father" of the Faithful

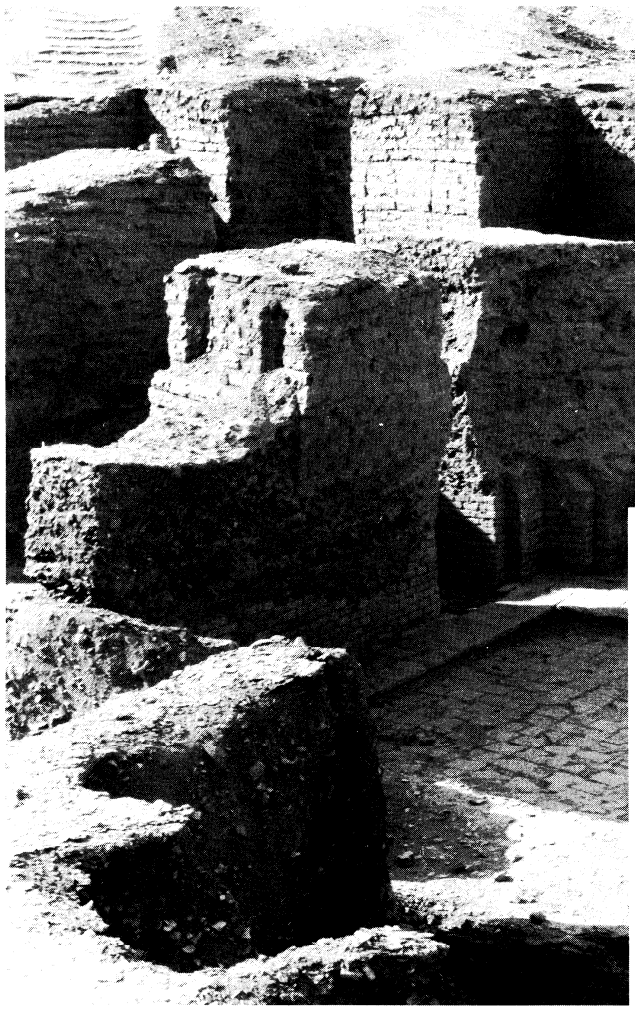
Of all the examples of *living* faith recorded in the Bible, Abraham's life is one of the most outstanding.

Abraham has *already* qualified to fill one of the very top positions in God's Kingdom immediately under Jesus Christ, when he is resurrected at Christ's return. He qualified by having *unquestioning, active faith* in the promises of God.

Let's begin to learn how Abraham became known as the "*father*"—the forerunner—of all the faithful.

1. Did God call Abraham out of the land in which he was residing? Gen. 12:1. Did Abraham *argue* with God about leaving? Or did he, in *faith*, simply DO as God commanded him? Heb. 11:8 and Gen. 12:4-5. (Canaan was the land known as Palestine today.)

2. Did God promise to make of Abraham a *great nation*, and to bless him exceedingly? Gen. 12:2. Did he *believe* God? Gen. 15:5-6.



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Above, well-preserved ruins of the southern "Ur of the Chaldees," named after Ur, the birthplace of faithful Abraham in northern Mesopotamia. Right, God speaks to Abram, telling him to leave Haran and go to the land of Canaan.

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3. Did God also promise Abraham the land of Canaan, or Palestine, as an inheritance? Gen. 12:7. Upon what *condition?* Gen. 17:1-2. Notice the words, "*walk* before me, and be thou *perfect*," in verse 1. Was this promise later to expand and spread until it ultimately included inheritance of the *whole* earth? Gen. 22:17 and Rom. 4:13.

COMMENT: In making His original promise to Abraham, God conditioned it upon OBEDIENCE. And Abraham obeyed! He left his native land, his friends and relatives, his old ways of life—he *forsook all* and followed where God led.

But God did not stop here in testing Abraham before making the promise *unconditional.*

4. Did God promise Abraham and his wife, Sarah, a son *through whom* his family would grow great? Gen. 17:15-16, 19. How old were they then? Verse 17.

5. Did both Abraham and Sarah *trust* God in FAITH for the son which He had promised, despite their old age? Rom. 4:18-21 and Heb. 11:11-12. How old was Abraham when Isaac was born? Gen. 21:5. Notice that Sarah was well past the age of child-bearing, which made this a *miracle* in itself!

COMMENT: Abraham was 75 years old when he was called into the land of promise (Gen. 12:4). He waited patiently and *faithfully*—25 long, *long* years—for the son through whom his family would grow as numerous as the sand by the sea.

During those 25 long years, Abraham demonstrated faith in God by his *obedience.* This faith grew and grew. It was fortified through years of testing. And finally the fruit of that faith was the beginning of the great nation of Israel through his son Isaac.

Would YOU have grown discouraged and disheartened waiting all those years? Not Abraham! He didn't even consider the outward circumstances. Physically speaking, the birth of Isaac would have been IMPOSSIBLE! But Abraham knew GOD HAD PROMISED to provide a son—and HE *BELIEVED* GOD! (Gen. 15:6.)

What an inspiring *example* of LIVING FAITH! There was NO DOUBT in Abraham's mind—no fear or anxiety about the outcome. In his heart, he *knew* God had PROMISED, and that He *could* NOT *break a promise!*

We need to ask ourselves whether *we* really BELIEVE God. Do we really *claim* His promises like Abraham?

Abraham's Supreme Test

God did not stop in testing Abraham with Isaac's birth. He wanted to be absolutely certain Abraham had *unquestioning, faithful obedience!*

Notice how Abraham reacted to one of the greatest tests ever placed on a human being.

1. Did God tell Abraham to actually *sacrifice* Isaac—the son whom he loved and had waited for so long? Gen. 22:1-2.

COMMENT: The word "tempt" in verse 1 means to *try* or *test.* God tempts no man to make him fall. When the King James translation was made in 1611, the word "tempt" meant to try, or test.

2. Did Abraham *obediently* follow God's orders concerning Isaac? Gen. 22:3.

COMMENT: Abraham did not hesitate and begin to *reason* within himself. He didn't allow negative and rebellious carnal thoughts to flow through his mind to prevent him from following through with God's orders.

Abraham did not question God's command! He didn't ask WHY—he did not try to remind God this was the son He had given him, after waiting for so many long years. He simply OBEYED! He simply gathered the necessary material, and began the three-day journey to Mt. Moriah where he was to sacrifice Isaac.

3. Why did Abraham obey God *without question?* James 2:23; Rom. 4:21 and Heb. 11:17-19.

COMMENT: Abraham had COMPLETE CONFIDENCE! But NOT in himself. He had absolute *trust*—absolute FAITH—in the Eternal Creator God!

God had PROMISED to give Abraham many multiple millions of sons. Abraham knew *immediately* that God could either *raise* Isaac from the dead or bless him with other sons according to His promises. Abraham was FULLY PERSUADED that whatsoever God had promised, He was *able to perform!*

4. With knife in hand and arm stretched forth, was Abraham ready to slay his beloved son? Gen. 22:10.

COMMENT: It was at this moment that Abraham, in his own heart and will, actually *slew* his son! (Heb. 11:19.) He had already started the downward plunge of the knife!

5. But did God halt Abraham *before* he actually would have killed Isaac? Gen. 22:11-12.

COMMENT: God now knew for certain, because of Abraham's actions—his *unquestioning obedience*—that he would withhold NOTHING from Him! Abraham had passed his supreme test of faith without faltering. He did not break under the pressure!

6. Did God prove Abraham to be "faithful"? Neh. 9:7-8. Is this why he is referred to as the "father" of the faithful? Rom. 4:16.

COMMENT: God had tested Abraham's willingness to obey in and through *faith*. Because Abraham was faithful *full of faith in God*—the Bible refers to him as the *symbolic* spiritual "father" of all Christians who are also full of faith in this same sense.

7. After Abraham had been put to the supreme test and found faithful, did God's promise then become *unconditional?* Gen. 22:15-18. Underline heavily in your Bible the words "*because thou hast done this thing*," in verse 16, and the words "*because thou hast obeyed my voice*," in verse 18.

COMMENT: After God had tested Abraham to the fullest extent possible, His promise to Abraham and his seed was made *unconditional*. Abraham had already performed *his part* of the covenant, or agreement.

8. Did Abraham faithfully obey God in every way? Gen. 26:5. Do those who "walk," or live by faith today, *follow* Abraham's example of faithful obedience? Rom. 4:12.

COMMENT: Abraham had the kind of faithful obedience God requires of all Christians. But what a sad lack of that kind of *living faith* there is today! People do not believe God WILL keep His Word! They don't *fear* God or want to OBEY Him!

Do *you?*

Noah Built in Faith

Another very inspiring example of *living faith* is the life of righteous Noah, who "walked with God" over four thousand years ago.

1. Was the world in Noah's day full of heinous wickedness and crimes? Gen. 6:5, 11-12.

2. What punishment did God pronounce upon the world for its grievous sins? Gen. 6:7. By what means of destruction? Verse 17.

3. But who in this world of rampant sin found grace, or *favor*, in God's sight? Gen. 6:8. Why did God especially show mercy to Noah? Was it because Noah "walked with God"— obeyed Him implicitly? Verse 9 and II Pet. 2:5.

4. God instructed Noah to build an enormous ship in which he and his family were to *escape* the great flood (Gen. 6:14-16). How did Noah *demonstrate* FAITH in God's promise of physical *salvation* from the penalty of the world's sins? Gen. 6:22 and Heb. 11:7.

COMMENT: Notice that Noah DID something! He *performed* ALL that God commanded him. Noah had *his part* to PERFORM before he could receive God's promise of *physical salvation* from the flood. Faith and actions — *obedience* — go hand in hand!

For upwards of 120 long years Noah and his workmen labored to complete the ark (Genesis 6:3). This was a project unprecedented in the history of that world. The *entire* earth eventually heard about it! For 120 years God gave the world a *witness* against its sins through Noah's faithful obedience (Heb. 11:7).

5. Was there any *physical evidence* such a destructive flood would—or could—come upon the earth? Heb. 11:7. Notice the words "not seen as yet." Nevertheless, did Noah do *all* that God commanded him in absolute trusting, *unquestioning* FAITH? Same verse.

COMMENT: Despite physical circumstances and appearances, Noah OBEYED God in faith. He built the ark, although there was *no obvious reason* for doing so!

For 120 years Noah suffered the scorn, the abuse and ridicule—the persecution—of all the taunting skeptics around him. But Noah continued to believe God. In *absolute faith*, he trusted the Eternal Creator God whom he knew *could not lie!*

And so God *tested* Noah for 120 long years. Noah proved he had faith in God by ACTING on it—by his unceasing obedience to God. Noah had *saving* faith! This is the *same* kind of LIVING FAITH God wants us to have today—if we desire to be born into His Family as ruling Sons of God!

Faith to OBEY!

One of the most thrilling examples of living faith is recorded in the book of Daniel.

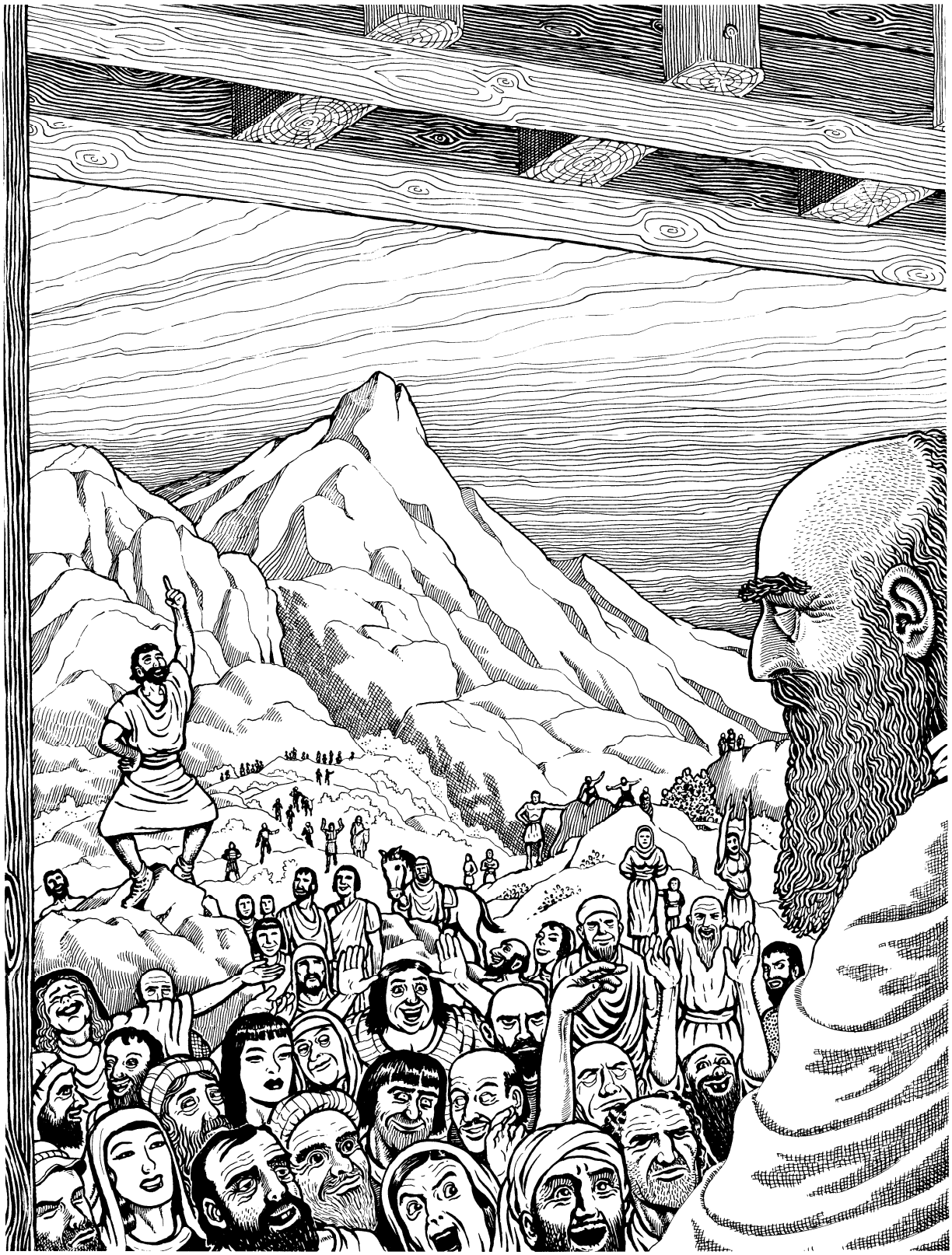
Set over the affairs of the province of Babylon were Daniel's three young friends, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. The *focal story* of their lives has been hackneyed and rerun so many times, most people probably feel they already understand what happened. But there is *much more* to it than the "stories" about them tell!

Notice it now in the third chapter of Daniel:

1. Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, had erected a great golden image. Did he command all the people to worship this idol at certain times? Dan. 3:4-5. What was to happen to those who *disobeyed* the king's command? Verse 6.

COMMENT: One of the commandments of God's eternal, spiritual law *forbids* such worship of images (Ex. 20:4-5).

2. Was the king informed that Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego refused to worship his golden idol? Verses 8, 12. What did Nebuchadnezzar then do? Verses 13-15.



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Doubting skeptics jeering Noah just before the rains began. Noah's FAITHFUL OBEDIENCE to God saved him from the great worldwide flood which destroyed sinful mankind.

COMMENT: King Nebuchadnezzar was without doubt the most powerful and *impressive* Gentile king who ever lived. His very presence was no doubt much more *fear*some and AWEsome than that of any man alive today! His very word or nod meant life or death! This was the man before whom these three men came.

And as the heathen custom still is today, he had planned a fanfare of cacophonic music before attempting to force the three lads to bow down before the golden image—muttering dire threats of excruciating death in a burning, fiery furnace if they refused to obey.

What would you have done had you been in their place? Would you have said, "Well, I *have* to bow down to this image—I have to do it or be killed!" And perhaps you would have excused yourself by reasoning thus: "I don't think God would be fair if He punished me for this, when He knows I am FORCED to do it. Anyway, He tells us to be subject to the power of the state!"

Yes, it's easy to use human reasoning to excuse disobedience to God. But God isn't looking for chances to punish us—but rather for opportunities to SAVE us *through faith* in His power!

These three young men knew that we should *obey God*, rather than men (Acts 5:29). They knew through FAITH that *God makes it possible!*

3. Were they hesitant or overcautious in answering the king's threats? Dan. 3:16. Were they *confident* that God was able to deliver them even from the fiery furnace? Verse 17.

COMMENT: These courageous young men had the answer on the tip of their tongues. They KNEW what they believed and there was *no question about it!* They were absolutely adamant in their display of faith. They firmly BELIEVED God was able to *deliver* them from the trial!

4. Did they still have faith in God even though they voiced the idea God *might* NOT choose to deliver them? Verse 18.

COMMENT: These men refused to break God's commandment against idolatry. Even if obeying God's law meant death, they chose to die rather than disobey! Their *eternal* salvation meant more to them than their *temporary* physical lives!

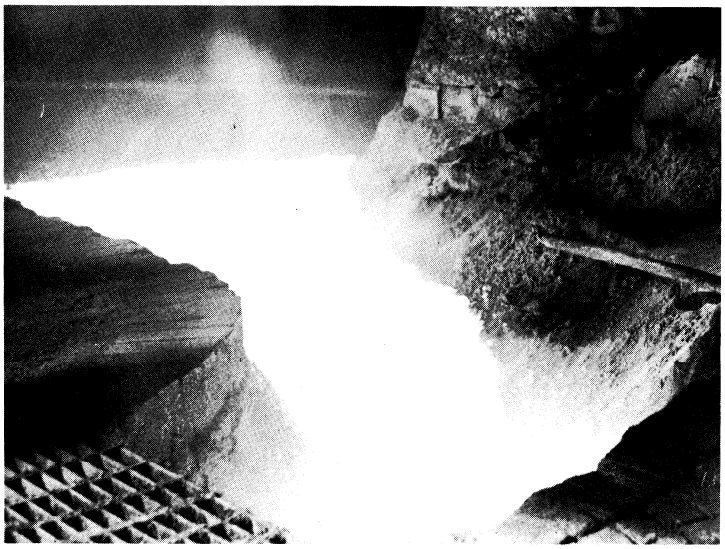
5. Then what did the king have done to these men? Verses 19-20.

COMMENT: God made these three men face all the fury and *livid* rage that King Nebuchadnezzar could muster. This was not easy! The furnace was heated SEVEN times over! They were immediately bound tightly—still willing to go all the way—and carried to the furnace. Here is where many would finally falter. They were now absolutely helpless and staring into the flaming mouth of the fiery furnace!

God did not rescue them even at *this* crucial stage, but *made them go beyond the point of human help!* No ONE could help now, but *God!* He had to see that they would not only be willing to SAY they would go all the way, but He *made* them GO all the way before He saved them from the trial!

6. Were they actually thrown into the furnace? Verses 21, 23.

COMMENT: Surely the God whom they trusted would have them released before *now*. But no—there was *no physical evidence* whatever that God so much as heard—they were *thrown in!*



Bethlehem Steel Co. Photo

Would you trust God to save you from the equivalent of a modern 2650° F. blast furnace? Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego did!

Was God unmindful of those who trusted in Him to make possible the keeping of His commandments? Not God! But He expected them to go that one step further—to back up their words by their *actions!*

Sometimes God allows a *trial* of faith. He did in their case. Some might think He failed them, but He only permitted them to be *tried* and TESTED!

When Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego went into the burning, fiery furnace, they *knew* God was for them. They had no doubt but that He was ever present, intensely *observing* what was taking place in Nebuchadnezzar's court — and that if they did their part, God *would not fail them!*

7. To his amazement, what did the king find when he looked into the furnace? Verse 25. What did Nebuchadnezzar say to the three men as they and God's angel walked around in the *midst* of the fire? Verses 26-28. Notice the words,

"*DELIVERED* HIS SERVANTS THAT *TRUSTED* IN HIM," in verse 28.

COMMENT: This is an astounding example of *living* faith! A faith that trusted God to make it possible to *obey* His law!

But it would seem that if anybody ever came to the breaking point, these men did! Yet they never even broached their "breaking point" in this trial because they had *absolute faith* in God. And the God they faithfully obeyed did *intervene* to SAVE them!

Yes, *with God* it IS possible to keep all of His commandments—and don't let any man deceive you to the contrary!

Jesus Had LIVING FAITH

Now let's look at the example of Jesus Christ. When Jesus walked the earth in human flesh, He *possessed tremendous faith!* He had *more* faith than any man who ever lived!

Few realize that what He did—His obedience to God's laws and the miracles He performed—was not done by any supernatural power of His *own*. *Everything* He did was done literally THROUGH FAITH in God's *power*, setting for us a marvellous example.

1. Did Jesus plainly say He came as a Messenger into this world, bringing a message directly from God the Father to mankind? John 8:38, 42.

2. As God's Divine Messenger of the New Covenant, what was Jesus' teaching concerning the Father's *requirements* for becoming a member of His Family? Mat. 19:16-17. Was Jesus talking about the Ten Commandments? Verses 18-19.

COMMENT: Jesus mentioned several of the *Ten Commandments!* There is no question as to which law we must keep in order to inherit eternal life.

3. Did Jesus keep God's commandments? John 15:10. Did He keep them *perfectly?* Heb. 4:15.

4. Did Jesus say He could *of Himself* do absolutely NOTHING? John 5:30.

COMMENT: Think of it! Even the very Son of God said He could do NOTHING by Himself!! Christ had absolutely NO *self-confidence* — NO *faith in Himself!* How much LESS, then, can you and I accomplish *by trusting in ourselves?*

5. Then HOW was Jesus able to *obey* God perfectly and perform great miracles—what was the *source* of Christ's dynamic faith? John 14:10.

COMMENT: The FATHER who lived *in* Jesus through His Holy Spirit did the mighty works which Christ performed, and made His obedience possible! *Christ did not have one iota of self-confidence*, but HE HAD ALL CONFIDENCE — *ABSOLUTE FAITH* — IN GOD'S POWER! JESUS HAD THE *FAITH OF GOD!*

Obeying by the Faith of Christ

Most professing Christians believe in a *dead* faith of mere *belief* in the FACTS of Christ's existence and His sacrifice for the sins of mankind. They don't believe there is anything *more* for them to DO.

Is this the kind of *dead faith* you've been trusting in all these years?

Think for a moment! Could a just God command men to do what is IMPOSSIBLE? Or can we conceive of Jesus as a smart aleck young man who knew more than His Father and therefore *did away* with His Father's commandments? How absurd! Yet this is the popular teaching today!

But the no-law deceiver will continue to argue, "No man can keep the commandments. Since *faith* has come, we keep no law—faith has made it VOID!"

1. Are these no-law deceivers actually ministers of Satan the devil? II Cor. 11:13-15.

COMMENT: The *false* teaching being spread by professing Christianity today is that Jesus kept God's holy spiritual law in our *stead*—that WE *don't have to keep it!* And so millions today believe God *imputes* Jesus' righteousness to us, counting us as righteous—when we are *not!*

This is another CLEVER LIE of Satan the Devil to deceive mankind into *disobeying* God's spiritual law!

No, Jesus didn't live a good life *for* you—in your *stead!* You are not excused from keeping God's Commandments—from living a righteous, holy life. You're not excused from overcoming, growing in spiritual character, and enduring in spite of all opposition, persecution, trial and test unto the end. You and I must actually DO *these things* in order to inherit eternal life!

This is a great mystery to those who don't understand! Since we *must do* these things to be saved, yet are utterly unable to do them of *ourselves*, it is natural to conclude either that God sent Jesus to do it for us and excuse us from accomplishing it, or else to become discouraged and be tempted to quit even trying!

The true answer is the KEY to salvation! And the true answer is FAITH! *Faith* in God's POWER —the same kind of LIVING FAITH Jesus had!

2. Did the apostle Paul really say the law of God is made *void*—done away, or rendered unnecessary to keep—through faith? Rom. 3:31. Is faith *without obedience* a DEAD FAITH? Jas. 2:20-22.

COMMENT: Faith *establishes* the law! By keeping it, faith is made perfect!

Yet, *can* we keep the commandments? Is it really possible? Here's the PLAIN TRUTH!

3. Are we "justified"—*forgiven* our past sins—reconciled to God—through *our* faith in the sacrifice of Christ? Rom. 3:24-26, 28.

4. Will only those who OBEY God's spiritual law be justified? Rom. 2:13.

COMMENT: Jesus saves us *from* our sins, not *in* our sins. Then there are prior conditions. We must believe, repent, and be willing to obey.

We are justified, or *forgiven* our past sins, by our faith in the shed blood of Jesus Christ—*not* by keeping God's law! (Rom. 3:20.) But this justification will be given only on the CONDITION that we *repent* of our transgressions of God's spiritual law, and then begin OBEYING it!

5. Must those who are "justified" live their lives of obedience by *faith?* Heb. 10:38 and Rom. 1:17. By *whose* faith is a Christian's righteousness—obedience to God's spiritual law—made possible? Phil. 3:9 and Rom. 3:22.

6. Whose faith does the collective True Church of God have today? Rev. 14:12.

COMMENT: The spirit-begotten members of God's True Church have the very "FAITH *of Jesus.*" It's not just *our* faith in Him, but *His* faith—the very spiritual faith through which He performed His miracles and obeyed God's laws—placed *in us* and ACTING *in us!*

7. Does the Bible call Jesus the "author" and "finisher" of our faith? Heb. 12:2. What does this mean?

COMMENT: A more accurate translation of the words "author" and "finisher" is *pioneer* and *perfecter.* And so Jesus led the way, setting us the supreme *example* of living faith. But Jesus also *perfects* His faith IN us! Here's how:

8. Did the apostle Paul plainly state that Christ lived in him? Gal. 2:20. How did Christ live in him? Phil. 2:5 and Rom. 8:9-10. Then did Paul live his life by *Christ's faith?* Gal. 2:20.

COMMENT: Paul didn't live by his *own* faith. Jesus Christ dwelt in Paul through the Holy Spirit. And the Spirit of God implanted in Paul's mind the *same kind* of faith that can be in *your* mind! This faith—the very faith of Jesus Christ living in you—will enable you to live a righteous life, obeying all of God's Commandments, as did the apostle Paul.

But exactly *how* does having the faith of Christ enable us to obey God? Let's understand.

9. Does *love* fulfill God's law? Rom. 13:10. What kind of love? Rom. 5:5. Does God's Holy Spirit impart the love we need to fulfill, or *obey,* the law? Same verse.

COMMENT: Too many "commandment keepers" are struggling along, trying to keep God's commandments by their own power and strength—thinking it is *their own* personal human love that fulfills God's spiritual Law! These "commandment keepers" have only been converted to the ARGUMENT of keeping God's commandments—*never* having received His Spirit!

We do *not of ourselves have* the kind of love that fulfills God's law and makes us righteous! LOVE is of God, for God IS love (I John 4:16).

The Law is *spiritual* (Rom. 7:14). But we are carnal by nature (Rom. 8:7). And so it takes a *spiritual* love to fulfill a spiritual law. The Holy Spirit placed within us is GOD'S LAW IN ACTION! And since God alone can supply the love that makes us righteous, it becomes GOD'S righteousness, not ours.

10. What does having Christ's faith in us have to do with this kind of loving obedience? Notice again Phil. 3:9.

COMMENT: God's love by which we fulfill His law comes by the FAITH of Christ. His faith in us *trusts* God to give us the LOVE of the Holy Spirit which *fulfills* God's law—thus enabling us to be righteous!

If *we* were able to supply the faith which brings everything spiritual, then we, ourselves, would earn our own salvation by *our works!* It would be the kind of righteousness that is as FILTHY RAGS to God!

The scripture above speaks only of "THE FAITH OF *CHRIST*"! Yes, CHRIST'S faith—*not your faith.* Jesus had REAL FAITH—*God's faith!* And Christ in us gives—imparts—HIS strong faith to you and me which TRUSTS GOD TO MAKE OUR SPIRITUAL OBEDIENCE AND OVERCOMING POSSIBLE.

How to Receive Christ's Faith

1. Is the very faith of Jesus Christ, by which we receive eternal salvation, a *gift* of God? Eph. 2:8-9. Is this faith one of the attributes of the Holy Spirit? Gal. 5:22. Does it enable you to do "good works"—to *obey* God's spiritual law? Eph. 2:10 and 1:4.

COMMENT: God wants you to have the living faith that was in Jesus Christ—the kind that overcomes sin in your life and enables you to *obey* God's spiritual law. But you weren't born with that kind of faith! It is a GIFT *of God* imparted by His Holy Spirit.

2. Then how can you receive this kind of faith — the very faith of Jesus Christ? Acts 2:38. Must you be *willing* to obey God? Acts 5:32. And must *you* also supply your *own faith,* or belief, in something? Acts 20:21 and I Cor. 5:7.

COMMENT: God will give His Holy Spirit and the resulting faith of Christ only to those who meet these *prior conditions*.

Repentance is toward God and means that our whole self has been CRUSHED! We *utterly abhor* not only our old sinful way of life, but also *what we* ARE—realizing our whole human nature is *evil* (Jer. 17:9; Rom. 8:7). We must *quit sinning* and SINCERELY DESIRE to begin living by all of God's Commandments!

Then we must show our *own* firm faith, or belief, in the sacrifice of the blood of Jesus Christ to pay the death penalty which our past sins have incurred. Upon *our* implicit faith in the fact of His death—our acceptance of Him as our personal Savior from our sins—and then our baptism in water, God is *bound by His Word* to GIVE us His Holy Spirit!

Yes, it does take *our own faith* to believe in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ for our sins. But when the Holy Spirit comes into us, then we have the *faith of Christ* implanted within us. This is SAVING FAITH! And it all comes as a *free* GIFT from God!

3. How must we present ourselves to God every day to assure our *continued* receipt of His Holy Spirit and the *faith* of Jesus Christ? Rom. 12:1-2.

COMMENT: God's way to faith and power is the direct *opposite* of the *false* ways of this world! God's way is the way of GETTING RID OF SELF, of *throwing away* the rebellious, cast-iron human will that is *contrary* to God—of CONTINUALLY CRUCIFYING THE OLD SELF WITH CHRIST!

4. Was the apostle Paul a "living sacrifice"? Gal. 2:20. Was he crucified with Christ through *baptism?* Rom. 6:3-6.

COMMENT: Paul was crucified with Christ—buried *symbolically* in the watery grave of baptism. The "old Paul" DIED! He then came up out of the water a new *spiritual man*, now having received the Spirit of God and the faith of Jesus Christ. Christ then lived in Paul—guided, helped and inspired him through the power of the Holy Spirit. He was able to live a different, *obedient* life by the FAITH of Christ. Paul was the *instrument* through which Christ worked!

Jesus Christ does not change (Mal. 3:6). He is the same today as when He lived in Paul (Heb. 13:8). Christ will live in you just as He did in the apostle Paul if you actually *give* your very SELF—your will, your desires and your complete MIND—into God's hands!

Then you can have the same positive attitude as the apostle Paul and say, "I can do all things THROUGH CHRIST *which strengtheneth me*" (Phil. 4:13).

Faith Must Be Alive and Growing!

1. Once we receive God's Holy Spirit, must the faith that it imparts GROW? II Thes. 1:3.

COMMENT: Faith is *not* implanted whole and complete when we receive the Spirit of God. Faith must *grow*. It needs to be nourished in order to develop into complete and perfect faith.

We might compare faith to a grain of mustard seed. Faith must *continuously grow* to maturity. It has to be ALIVE! It starts small, just like the grain of mustard seed, but it must *grow* into perfection.

Here's how it must be developed.

2. Contrary to what professing "Christianity" believes today, what must be *added* to faith to make it alive and perfect? Jas. 2:14-20, 26.

COMMENT: But how can that be? Can faith grow to perfection by works?

Yes, because faith must be *practiced!* Faith needs EXERCISE, just as the mustard plant needs sunlight, moisture and soil to grow!

3. Let's re-examine the example of Abraham—the "Father" of the faithful. How did God *perfect* faith in Abraham? Jas. 2:21-24, especially verse 22.

COMMENT: When God put Abraham to the test, did Abraham just sit back and say, "I have faith" and yet do nothing about it? No! Abraham simply *obeyed* God by ACTING ON FAITH. He offered up his only son as the *proof* of his faith. Abraham had active, *dynamic*, LIVING FAITH!

And so faith needs to grow to maturity *by experience!* You must *use* Christ's faith—ACT ON IT—to *increase* and *perfect* it!

Specific Applications of Faith

Since faith must be acted upon by *works*, we can now see why the apostle John said: "And whatsoever we ask, we receive of Him *because we* KEEP *His commandments*, and DO those things that are *pleasing in His sight*" (I John 3:22).

It not only takes faith to know that we will receive what we ask for in prayer, but it also takes *our obedience to God* to PROVE that our faith is active and living.

Let's take tithing as an example.

1. Does God *promise* to bless the faithful tithe payer? Mal. 3:8-10.

COMMENT: How often have people said: "Sure, I know that God can prosper me IF I tithe"— and then do *nothing* about it! That's the kind of *dead* faith most people have today. We must *prove* our faith in God's promise to prosper those who honestly pay Him His tithe

by putting it to practice—by stepping out on faith and *begin tithing!*

Remember, God does PROMISE to *bless* the faithful tithe payer. But you must BELIEVE! You must continue to *obey* His laws. It takes *active*, living faith to please God! (Heb. 11:6.)

Not only is tithing a good test to see whether we will trust God for our every need, it is also indicative of where our heart really is. For where our treasure is, there will our heart be also (Mat. 6:19-21).

By giving your treasure to God—toward His Kingdom—you are seeking *first* the Kingdom of God and His righteousness. And the promise of Jesus, you remember, is that if we seek these FIRST, all the other things that we need in this life will be *added* (Mat. 6:33).

2. Physical healing by faith in God's power is another promise God gives us in the Bible. Where do we find the first historical account of this promise of direct divine healing? Ex. 15:25-26.

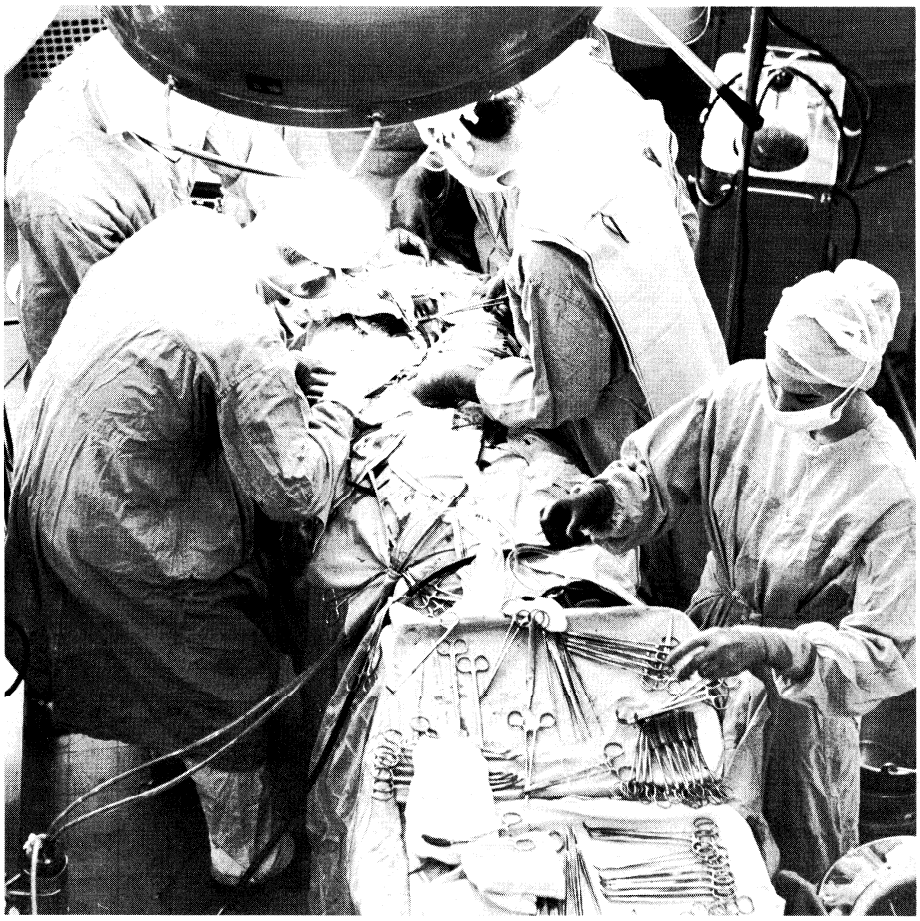
COMMENT: For centuries, Israel's only means of healing was through the power of Almighty God. He was their *healer!* There were no doctors or physicians in Israel. That is, not until they began to turn to the pagan ways of the heathen nations around them.

The same conditions of obedience to God's commandments and not looking to other gods for our healing apply today. Because of not abiding by these conditions, a lot of people who have a little understanding about divine healing, and actually believe in it, are *not being healed!*

3. What are we instructed to do today when we're sick? Jas. 5:14. Are we healed through *faith?* Verse 15. Faith in what? I Pet. 2:21, 24 and Isa. 53:5.

COMMENT: As we learned in the Passover lesson, Jesus Christ's body was cut open and mutilated for our physical healing. Jesus suffered tremendous *physical pain* when he was scourged in order to pay the PENALTY—the pain and the suffering—of our physical transgressions *in our stead!*

When you are sick, do you completely TRUST God to heal you by the power of His Holy Spirit? Or do you trust in costly, *painful* and sometimes FATAL methods of doctors with their knives and drugs? (Send for Mr. Armstrong's



Patients often face costly doctor and hospital bills, painful suffering and sometimes premature death because they lack faith in the God Who reveals Himself as our Healer.

Wide World Photo

free booklet, *Does God Heal Today?*, to learn all about God's promise of physical healing, and the origin of modern medicine.)

So whether it's tithing or healing, keeping God's weekly or annual Sabbaths and other commandments, remember; "Faith without works is *dead*" (Jas. 2:20). God expects us to do *our part* by ACTING on the faith of Jesus Christ! God will then do *His part* by giving us His power and His promised blessings.

This WORK a Living Example of Faith

This very Work of God, directed by Jesus Christ through His *human instrument*, Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong, is a direct result of living faith!

The WORLD TOMORROW broadcast, *The* PLAIN TRUTH magazine, the Ambassador Colleges—which have grown to national and international scope and influence—all began as small as any work could begin—literally from NOTHING!

It has been from the start 100% a *Work of* FAITH! This lesson of faith had to be learned before this work had even started. Listen to Mr. Armstrong's own words as he relates one of his many experiences of trusting in God's power to *intervene* for this Work.

"Always remember that appearances, circumstances, evidences of the physical senses, have absolutely NOTHING to do with the performance of a miracle by God. Several years ago, every physical evidence literally shouted at us that there was absolutely NOTHING that could save the college and this Work of God. Nothing could have APPEARED more impossible.

"The amount of money we had to have to save God's college was just too great. No such sums ever had come to us in so short a time. But I knew God had PROMISED to provide every need —had PROMISED to deliver His servants out of every trouble—*and I knew these promises of God were stronger than all appearances, or all things seen, heard, or felt!*

"No matter how impossible it appeared, I knew God's PROMISES were stronger and mightier than appearances or circumstances. I knew that and believed it. I trusted in it, implicitly. I couldn't see HOW it was possible for God to do it, but I didn't need to see how. Others said, 'I can't see how it's possible' and *quit believing*. But not all others, for some believed as I did.

"Meanwhile, I did everything in my power to do *my part*. I was literally 'on my toes,' alert, tense, trying to overlook nothing—and all the while wondering whether God would use ANY of the lines of activity I was employing, or provide the need some altogether different way.

"Well, the way He did it was totally UNEXPECTED—but He did it! That's all that matters, isn't it? I didn't do it, HE DID IT! He kept His promise—He always does!"

A WARNING for Us Today!

No people upon the face of the earth have witnessed the POWER of God as did the nation of Israel. God performed tremendous miracles for the children of Israel just *before* and *after* He brought them out of Egypt. On top of all that, God even *spoke* to them!

You would *think* that after witnessing all of these astounding miracles, they would have unquestioningly believed in and obeyed the God who rescued them from slavery. But notice what happened.

1. How did those who had seen all these mighty miracles of God *react?* Num. 14:1-4, 11. Did they *harden* their hearts against God? Heb. 3:8-10.

2. Did God therefore *prevent* Israel (those above 20 years of age) from entering the promised land of Palestine? Heb. 3:11 and Num. 14:22-23. Then was it specifically because of their UNBELIEF, or faithlessness and consequent disobedience, that God prevented them from entering? Heb. 3:19.

COMMENT: The Israelite's *basic problem* was that regardless of the miracles the Almighty Creator performed on their behalf, they LACKED FAITH in God and DISOBEYED His commandments. *Lack* of faith and disobedience go hand in hand!

3. Was the truth about the gospel of Christ preached to those Israelites? Heb. 4:2. *Why* didn't it profit them? Same verse. Notice the words "Not being mixed *with faith*."

4. Was their total lack of faith due to the fact God did *not generally* offer His Holy Spirit to them as He does to us today? Eph. 3:4-5 and John 7:38-39. Did God *permit* Caleb and Joshua to enter the promised land because they had the Spirit and resultant *faith* of Christ? Num. 14:24, 38; Deut. 34:9 and I Pet. 1:10-11. Can you see the *lesson* in the Israelites' lack of faith?

COMMENT: The Israelites apparently thought that since God was with them, they would have an EASY time leaving Egypt. They thought the journey through the wilderness would be comfortable and pleasurable. Therefore, when TRIALS struck, they were completely caught off guard. They were shocked — overwhelmed — surprised beyond belief!

"If God is with us," they may have wondered, "why would He permit us to go without water?"

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God miraculously appeared to faithless Israel as a pillar of fire by night, and a cloud by day—forty long years!

"If God is love," they mused in their total carnality, "then WHY does He continually give us this same manna to eat every day?"

Their *carnal minds* could not understand *why* God let them have trials and troubles. That was not what they wanted. They wanted the BLESSINGS God promised, but not the trials God permitted them to experience!

But how does all this apply to us today?

5. Are the experiences and examples of Old Testament Israel recorded in the Bible for *our* edification and WARNING? Rom. 15:4 and I Cor. 10:11.

6. Are spirit-begotten Christians who do *possess* the faith of Christ WARNED to take heed and not commit the same mistake the Israelites did, lest they *fail* to receive God's promised "rest" —the inheritance of eternal life and rulership in God's glorious kingdom—about which you have learned so much in previous lessons? Heb. 4:1.

COMMENT: Too few realize the DIRECT PARALLEL between the example of the ancient Israelites and true Christians today. It is inescapable!

True Christians are those who have been delivered — not from physical bondage — but from SPIRITUAL SLAVERY. We have been delivered from bondage to SIN!

The Israelites going through the waters of the Red Sea was a *type* of baptism (I Cor. 10:1). The Christian baptism, however, is a *spiritual* matter. Through baptism and receiving the Holy Spirit, we are set apart as God's people. We become His spiritual nation (I Pet. 2:9-10).

And like ancient Israel, God has given *us* certain wonderful, glorious PROMISES! Like then, there are also prior *conditions* to receiving these spiritual promises—the *twin conditions* of FAITH and OBEDIENCE!

But unlike ancient Israel, we today can have the *Holy Spirit* and the FAITH to obey!

The TRIAL of Our Faith

1. Why did God try and test Israel in the wilderness forty long years? Deut. 8:2. Is this the same reason He tests Christians today?

COMMENT: God, to see if we really BELIEVE Him—if we really have FAITH in His Word and His promises—puts us through trials and tests. The questions in God's mind are: "Will we remain faithful? Do we really believe Him? Are we willing to OBEY Him *regardless* of circumstances?"

Therefore, just as with ancient Israel, God puts true Christians through *trials* and *tests* to reveal their true character.

REACTION to *trials* reveals the answer to God!

Consider this fact the next time YOU are undergoing a *severe test* of faith!

2. Are we to rejoice when God allows us to experience various trials? I Pet. 4:12-13 and Jas. 1:2-4. Do trials produce patience? Verse 3. Is the trial of our faith *more precious* than gold? I Pet. 1:7. What does God *promise* concerning all our trials, afflictions and persecution? Psa. 34:19.

COMMENT: Sometimes God does NOT deliver us immediately from our trials. Sometimes He *tests* our willingness to rely upon Him in FAITH by allowing the trial to *remain* for some time.

Are you WILLING to trust God in simple FAITH —trusting Him to deliver you, protect you, heal you, and provide His promised blessing?

Are you, therefore, willing to *endure* and OBEY in *believing faith?*

What is YOUR biggest trial? Stop and think about it for a moment. What has your attitude been toward it?

Is your trial teaching you to TRUST IN GOD and rely on Him—*all the way?* Is it perfecting FAITH? Is it teaching you PATIENCE?

Or does doubt begin to creep in, does discouragement sneak in, do self-pity and remorse take over? Remember, the doubter is actually calling God a *liar!* And no *unbeliever* will ever enter the Kingdom of God! (Rev. 21:8.)

Remember always that God *knows* YOUR problem. It is not hidden from His eyes! He wants you to commit it to Him and trust Him to shoulder it *for* you. He wants you to learn to RELY on Him in patient, LIVING FAITH!

At the same time, God wants you to continue growing spiritually, doing YOUR PART in *overcoming* yourself, yielding to Him and obeying His commandments.

In due time, God WILL DELIVER YOU! That is His Word—His promise—*and it cannot be broken* (John 10:35; Titus 1:2). But you must patiently and perseveringly *trust* in Him with thankful JOY, gratitude and humility!

Remember the Israelites of old! Don't follow them in *faithless*, sour, disgruntled rebellion!

How to Receive More Faith

Since our receiving of God's promises is based on the living, active faith of Jesus Christ in our lives, how do we go about getting *more* of Christ's faith?

Simply by *yielding*—submitting our desires, our purposes and wills—to God, and then *asking* Him in real, earnest, persevering PRAYER to give us the faith to trust and obey Him.

Here are the details.

1. Does James tell us to *submit* to God and RESIST the devil? Jas. 4:7.

COMMENT: Submit! Resist! This takes *our* effort!! This is something WE must do.

2. And does Peter tell us to be *vigilant?* I Pet. 5:8-9. But does it also take *faith* to overcome the devil and his demons? Eph. 6:11-12, 16.

COMMENT: The devil and his demons are walking about, watching for the chance to *tempt* us when we are off our guard. We are therefore to *resist* Satan by the FAITH of Christ—but how?

Part of the key is to "BE VIGILANT." Be on your *guard!* Be ever watchful! Be prepared! That's where we can fall down. It takes constant, continual, vigilant effort—never letting down!

Unless we, ourselves, had to put forth some *effort*, we could not be OVERCOMERS! But if we had the power and faith to do it all, we would not need God.

So it requires our effort — our continuous, watchful, ever VIGILANT effort—*empowered by* GOD'S SPIRIT!

3. What does James further instruct us about our part? Jas. 4:8. Are we therefore to *pray* every day? I Thes. 5:17 and Col. 4:2.

COMMENT: When the devil casts temptation in our path, we sometimes find ourselves *too far from God.* Then we are unable, on the spur of the moment, to get *close enough* for the help and deliverance we need!

It sometimes takes TIME to get *close* to God—into that intimate contact with Him so that we can draw on Him for the power we suddenly need!

In other words, when temptation unexpectedly comes, we sometimes find ourselves caught off guard —"out of prayer"— out of contact with God—OUT OF SPIRITUAL TRAINING!

You were entering a CONTEST with Satan. You tried to wrestle with him, but you were OUT OF TRAINING—out of spiritual condition.

We can not win these *spiritual* battles when out of *spiritual* training. All spiritual power, strength and faith must come from God. We can drink it in from Him only when we are IN CONTACT with Him—close to Him—*in communion with Him!*

Spiritual training—to get and to KEEP in constant vigilant condition to meet the foe of temptation and sin—requires *continual, earnest, persistent* PRAYER! That is why WE ARE COMMANDED so often to "*PRAY* WITHOUT CEASING"! To KEEP IT UP EVERY DAY!

If we "draw nigh to God," and then *stay* close to Him, we will then have the FAITH to meet all trials and temptations. We will THEN BE CONTINUALLY FILLED WITH HIS HOLY SPIRIT—His power to overcome in our lives!