

Epistle of Paul to the Hebrews XXXV Foundation of Faith

(Chapter 11)
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We left off last time in Heb. 11:30, and it's interesting: between vs 29 and 30 the whole episode of wandering in the wilderness is deleted from here, because it shows the faithlessness of the people. Paul is concentrating on the faith. *They obeyed God!*

Hebrews 11:30: "By faith the walls of Jericho fell after being circled for seven days." Here again, you have *faith unto obedience*, and that's what God is showing all the way through.

Verse 31: "By faith Rahab the harlot did not perish with those who disobeyed *because* she had received the spies peaceably."

Then Paul gives a summary, v 32: "Now, what more can I say? For time would fail me to relate *the accounts* of Gideon, Barak also, and Samson and Jephthah, David also, and Samuel, and the prophets." In other words, what he's saying is 'go read the Old Testament, we can't reproduce it all here in the New Testament.'

Verse 33: "Who by faith were victorious over kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, shut *the* mouths of lions, quenched *the* fury of fire, escaped *the* edge of *the* sword, were strengthened from weakness, became mighty in war, *and* turned back the armies of foreigners. Women received their dead restored to life; and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a superior resurrection" (vs 33-35)—to be in the first resurrection.

Verse 36: "And others endured *the* trial of *cruel* mocking and scourging; yes, and moreover, of chains and imprisonment. They were stoned to death, they were sawed in two, they were *brutally* interrogated, *and* slaughtered by *the* sword. They went about in sheepskins *and* in goatskins, being destitute, oppressed, *and* ill-treated" (vs 36-37).

I read that and thought: Boy! What are we headed for in the future, because what do we have today? *All cushy!*

- Cold? *Turn on the heat or put on a coat!*
- Too hot? *Turn on the air-conditioner!*
- Hungry? *Go to the refrigerator or go to the store!*

When things come where there's going to be a sudden change in these things, there's going to be a rude awakening not only for the people in the

world, but the people in the Church.

If you are on the Internet, go online and look up Argentina. There are three or four very good reports which shows what happened in Argentina when their monetary system failed. Wiped out all bank accounts! Wiped out the retirement! It was just a terrible mess. People lost their homes; they had to go huddle and live in vacant warehouses and empty factories and things like that. Yes, they have since recovered somewhat.

That's why I have the sermon: *The Coming Economic Tribulation*. Which, by the way, I heard that there were two other noted preachers—one in the a Church of God and one Protestant—who gave sermons similar to that. One man who's in the business of financial counseling called and asked for 50 copies of the sermon: *The Coming Economic Tribulation* and the letter and bought 300 copies of the book *The Coming Economic Disorder* by Larry Bates.

Even today, while we speak, the dollar is still going lower and lower. We are on a collision course with a change of events in America. How quickly or how slowly it comes we don't know, but just keep your eye on two things:

1. deteriorating value of the dollar
2. rising price of gold, silver, platinum and commodities

Throughout the Old and New Testament we come along and then all of a sudden BANG! there's a crisis! We're heading for one! We've been through some crises in the Church, which didn't affect the world, but look how it affected us being in the Church. This is why it so very important that we really understand about the faith that we need to have. This is why Paul goes through and brings this out for us.

Notice, in spite of the fact that this happened, v 38: "Of whom the world was not worthy; they wandered in deserts and in mountains, *living* in caves and in holes in the earth." You read that and think: Are we not living in the Laodicean age? Right smack in the middle of it? *Rich and increased with goods!* With gadgets and remote controls and even robots now to vacuum our floors! They're even designing robots, which now look more like humans, that can run and follow directions

and do things. How far will it go? How great will it become? *We don't know!* That's why we have to *live by faith, walk by faith, believe in hope and live in love!*

Verse 39: “**But these all, though they had received a good report through faith, did not obtain the promise.**” Isn't that interesting? No heaven! Because if righteous people die and they go to heaven, isn't that the promise that is given by the religions of the world? *Yes, it is!* But it says:

They “...did not obtain the promise, *because* God had determined in advance to provide something superior for us... [as well as for them; a superior resurrection] ...so that without us they would not be made perfect” (vs 39-40). Two excellent verses to show that no one has gone to heaven, if heaven is the perfection of the reward of the saved. This backs up the resurrection rather than going to heaven.

Let's review a little bit about faith; add a little bit more to it and see what kind of faith we really need to have. Let me tell you first of all:

What Faith is Not:

1. Faith is not a blind obedience!

As in various secret societies like the Jesuit oath you will obey as if you are a cadaver having no will of your own. *That's not God's way!* That is not faith! In fact, that's the opposite of faith, because that's giving up your free choice, giving up your free will, turning your mind over to someone else.

2. Faith is not an emotion!

Just because you feel something, even feel good, does not mean that that is faith. Let me give you an example: Do people feel good when they win at the slot machine. Oh, yeah! Sure! That's not from God. You've been paid by all the other suckers who have put their money in there and lost it. *It is not an emotion.*

3. Faith is not surrendering your will!

4. Faith is not obedience to a religious leader, be it whomever he may be!

What Faith Is

Now, let's look at what faith is, and what kind of faith God wants us to have. Hebrews 11:1: “Now **faith is the substance of things hoped for...**” We know that that refers to the gift of faith that God gives with the Holy Spirit. But substance is also a foundation. We're going to look at the *foundation of faith.*

“...and **the conviction of things not seen**”

(v 1). We just read about all of those who died not having received the promises. But they saw them afar off!

Verse 3: “**By faith we understand...**” That's an important thing. God wants us to have a faith *with understanding.*

“...that the worlds were created by the Word of God...” (v 3). They're having a big argument today because they want to put into the schools today the theory of intelligent creation. You can't use the name *God*, but neither can they prove evolution. “...the worlds were created by the Word of God...” and today we have more scientific proof that that is so. What is the smallest particle that there is? *I think we will find, as one man—Joseph Newman—has postulated, the magnetic gyroscopic particle.* This is just an example of how faith will work.

Belief

If you believe God who cannot lie; if you have faith in God that His Word is true; God says that He created it—guess what's going to happen in time? *The proof will come!*

How do we get faith?

You have to grow in grace and knowledge and faith! How do we get faith? Rom. 10 shows us why this is so important concerning proper teachings on the Sabbath and why it's so important for personal Bible study *because it builds faith.*

Romans 10:14: “How then shall they call on *Him* in Whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in *Him* of Whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without preaching? And how shall they preach, unless they be sent? Accordingly, it is written, ‘How beautiful *are* the feet of those who announce the Gospel of Peace, and those who announce the good news of good things!’ But all have not obeyed the Gospel because as Isaiah said, ‘Lord, who has believed our report?’” So then, **faith comes by hearing, and hearing through the Word of God**” (vs 14-17).

Not by myths, not by traditions, but hearing the Word of God. Isn't that profound! The more that you hear and study the Word of God, the more faith your will build providing you are doing it in faith as you go along.

Another thing that is interesting, too, concerning hearing the Word of God and studying the Word of God, that God has given us His Spirit so that we can learn. With the Spirit of God in us, as we study, as we pray—and prayer is a very important part and function of Christian living; as a matter of

fact, one of the most vital—then we grow in faith. You have faith in God and not doubting what He says. Why? God doesn't want you to have *blind faith*. He wants you to have an educated, knowledgeable faith, which begins with this:

Hebrews 11:6: “Now without faith *it is* impossible to please *God*. For it is mandatory *for* the one who comes to God to **believe that He exists...**”

In seeing the panel on Larry King the other night, you could tell the only one who had a level of belief in God's existence was the Protestant minister. The Hindu didn't. The Catholic didn't. The Jew didn't. Belief that not only He exists but everything about Him that is stated in the Bible is true!

“...and *that* He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him” (v 6). There's a lot of diligence that we have to do.

Here's what's important. ***You cannot divorce faith from obedience. You cannot divorce faith from belief.***

Obedience

Romans 10:16: “But all have not obeyed the Gospel because as Isaiah said, ‘Lord, who has believed our report?’ So then, faith *comes* by hearing, and hearing through *the* Word of God. But I say, did they not hear? Yes, indeed, *for it is written*, ‘Their voices went out into all the earth; their words went out even to the ends of the habitable world.’” (vs 16-18). He was speaking of the preaching of the Gospel back then.

Matthew 24:14: “And this Gospel of the Kingdom shall be proclaimed in all the world for a witness...” If this is not only a reiteration of what was done, but also a prophecy of what is coming, then there's going to have be an awful lot of preaching of the Gospel by a lot of people that's going to reach out into the world, and God is going to have to open the door and make it possible. He promised that this Gospel shall be proclaimed to all the world ‘and then the end shall come!’ That's why it's important to really have the true faith of God.

Romans 10: 19: “Nevertheless, I say, did not Israel know? First, Moses said, ‘I will provoke you to jealousy through *those who are* not a people. I will anger you through a people without understanding.’” In other words, God is saying here: ‘Look, if you don't believe Me, I'm going to raise up someone who will!’ God can do that. Even Jesus said—when the Pharisees said to tell these people to quit saying ‘Hosanna to the Highest’ to the Son of David—that if they quit saying it even the ‘rocks

would shout!’

Here's what's important in faith: He wants us to have a *knowledgeable and provable faith* based upon:

1. God is true!
2. God cannot lie—impossible!
3. God's Word is the Truth!

Every Word of God is true. **This is the first foundation on which to base your belief: Every Word of God is true!** God wants us to base our faith and belief on the Word of God, so you can have absolute, unequivocal confidence and faith in the Word of God.

2-Timothy 3:16: “All Scripture *is* God-breathed...” God is responsible for it. Yes, He used human beings to do it that is true. Can He make human beings write and produce the Truth? *Without a doubt! No question whatsoever!* Peter wrote that ‘Holy men were moved by the Spirit of God.’ That's why we have the account of Balaam in the book of Numbers. Here's a false prophet dedicated to cursing the children of Israel, received money to curse the children of Israel, and when he went to curse them all he could do is *bless*. That's a good account to understand that the apostles and the writers of the Old and New Testament *wrote the Words of God!* You base your faith on that, not on what some man says.

This doesn't mean that we have understanding of everything, of prophecy and all this. But we do understand the things of the Word of God and the things of salvation and the knowledge of grace and forgiveness of sin. All of these things are known.

Verse 16: “All Scripture *is* God-breathed and *is* profitable for doctrine... [teaching; there are teachings involved] ...for conviction... [believe with conviction] ...for correction...” We all need to be corrected; are we not all still overcoming? *Of course, we are; yes, indeed!*

“...for instruction in righteousness; so that the man of God may be complete, fully equipped for every good work” (vs 16-17).

Let's tie in some other things with this, based upon the Word of God. How do we handle this? God does not expect us to take His Word and hand it over to an expert and have the expert—a priest, a theologian, a scholar—be the sole interpreter of the Word of God. He has given responsibility to *everyone!* Let's see how that is.

This is why is it not just a *blind faith*: you do what I do because I said to do it. ‘Why should I do

it?' *Because I said!* NO! First of all:

- you prove that God exists
- you prove that He is true
- you prove that the Word of God is true

1-Thessalonians 5:21: “**Prove all things....**” There is one thing that is very important concerning the Truth: You can prove it, reprove it, reprove it and reprove it. Why? *Because there's no lie of the Truth!* That doesn't make us anything great. We are only applying what God has told us to do. In doing that, God adds to us the faith because we are:

- proving the Word of God
- studying the Word of God
- reading the Word of God
- letting it be written in our heart and mind

That adds to and builds the faith and belief. We're to, v 21: “Prove all things. Hold fast *to that which is good*” (v 21). Note Acts 17 about the Bereans. When Paul came into the synagogue in Berea, he preached the Word. They weren't like the ones in Thessalonica. When he first started there, they threw him out of the synagogue.

NO! The Bereans sat down and said, ‘Oh, let's open the Scriptures and see whether these things be so or not.’ That's how God wants us to do it. With that you can understand Truth from error, right from wrong. Then you can base your faith on understanding and knowledge. That's how you approach the things you don't understand and cannot yet see.

FOUNDATION—building blocks—OF FAITH

Let's look at some things of the *foundation of faith*. We will see there are quite a few building blocks in *foundation of faith*. Here's a promise that God gives with faith:

Proverbs 28:20: “A faithful man shall overflow with blessings...” What are the greatest blessings that can come from faith?

- God's Spirit
- understanding His Word
- living in the grace of God

All of those things are blessings. This does not necessarily mean just physical blessings; let's make these spiritual blessings. What you prove you believe. So, you have *faith*, you have *belief*.

Trust

God's trust works both ways. We trust God through faith and belief and living His way, and He trusts us by giving us understanding of His Word and His Spirit. That's really something—isn't it? That's a tremendous gift of God, *to be entrusted*

with the understanding of the Word of God!

Verse 25: “He who is of a proud heart stirs up strife, but **he who puts his trust in the LORD shall be enriched....** [spiritually rich] ...He who trusts in his own heart is a fool...” (vs 25-26). What is that we have today? *I believe, my opinion is!* When you get down to it, it really doesn't matter what you believe or what your opinion is, especially in things referring to God, relating to God. If it isn't true, it's worthless!

“...but whoever walks wisely, he shall be delivered” (v 26).

Faith, belief, trust: all of these are the *foundation of faith*. So, when I say faith, look at that as kind of an outward foundation; like with a house, goes around the outside of the house and the house sits on that. There are other things within that foundation, which then we're looking at *trust*.

Proverbs 16:20: “He who handles a matter wisely shall find good, and whoever trusts in the LORD, happy *is* he.” In the American Constitution, what is the one thing that it promises that we can have? *Pursuit of happiness!*

Let's look at Jer. 17; don't trust in a man. That's why when you have a religion where you have a hierarchy and priests or ministers who say *I am between you and God*. There was even one minister in the Church of God who came into the front room of some of the brethren and sat down and said, ‘I am here in God's stead, and if you don't believe me then you're going to go to the Lake of Fire.’ *NO!* That's why it says, ‘Trust no man.’ Wasn't it during the Cold War between Reagan and Gorbachav that Reagan said, ‘Trust, but verify.’ *Trust, but prove!*

Jeremiah 17:5: “Thus says the LORD, ‘Cursed *is* the man who trusts in man, and makes flesh his arm, and whose heart departs from the LORD.’” **Trust no man!** Yet, our lives are based upon trust. *Yes, they are!* Love and marriage is based upon faith. *Yes, indeed!* What happens when that trust is violated? *Everything comes apart!* That's why your trust and faithfulness in all of your relationships must be based upon the Word of God and the Spirit of God so that trust is based in God and not in a man.

Let's look at it this way: You have a religious leader like the one I just talked about that said, ‘Trust me.’ or ‘I'll interpret the Scriptures for you.’ You must have a priest there or a minister there to interpret the Scriptures for you. Even some people have been told that if you read the Bible and try and justify it with the religious practices that we participate in, you will go crazy. The reason is, is

because if you read the Bible you will soon find out that all the practices are not in the Bible. If you try and justify it you will go crazy, because no lie is compatible with the Truth. We'll see it says why not to trust in man in just a little bit.

Verse 6: "For he shall be like a shrub in the desert, and shall not see when good comes. But he shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, *in* a salt land that is not inhabited.... [here's the contrast]: ...Blessed *is* the man who trusts in the LORD and whose hope is the LORD. For he shall be like a tree planted by the waters... [Psa. 1] ...*it* sends out its roots by the river, and *it* shall not fear when the heat comes, but its foliage shall be green; and he is not worried in the year of drought, nor will it cease from yielding fruit" (vs 6-8).

This is telling us that we are to grow in grace and knowledge; continually bring forth fruit—the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5).

Here's why you trust in no man and why you're cursed in trusting in a man. We will soon understand this in our currency situation.

Verse 9: "The heart *is* deceitful above all things..." That's what most politics is based upon; that's what our currency system is based upon.

I was thinking about that the other day. I had a stack of bills—you do, too—and they have to be paid. I get out my checkbook and I start writing checks. After giving the sermon that I gave on *The Coming Economic Tribulation* I'm sitting there saying, 'Hey, there's not one penny here. I've got a piece of paper that says the bank says I have so much in the bank. I've got my checkbook here and I'm allowed to write my own money based upon the figure that the bank has given me, based upon having put so much in there. What did I put in there? *I put in there another piece of paper which said, 'Value so much.'* I'm sitting here writing all of these checks and signing my name on it and thinking, 'There's no money!'

It's all deceitful! You have to use the system because you live in the world, but you can see how foolish it is, and when the day of reckoning comes it going to be just like that huge domino thing that they spent—I forget how many months doing it—and it had millions of dominos and it took an hour and a half until the last domino fell. That's why!

Verse 9: "The heart *is* deceitful above all things and desperately wicked; who can know it?" Know this: It doesn't matter who you are, where you are—righteous/sinful—it doesn't make one bit of difference. God is not way off some place. God is close at hand.

- Doesn't He say that He knows the hairs that are on your head? *Yes!*
- Doesn't He say that everything that's spoken in secret shall be shouted from the housetop? *Yes!*
- Does God try us? *Yes!*
- Test us? *Yes!*
- Does God also try and test the wicked? *Yes!*

Verse 10: "I the LORD search the heart... [He's called in the New Testament 'the heart-knowing God'] ...*I* try the reins... [What does that mean? *Trying the way that you think!*] ...even to **give to each man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his doings.**" *Good and evil!*

In that God is merciful. Many times God gives us plenty of latitude before the correction comes. What would it be if every time you made some little mistake—BAM!—God was right there to knock you down. Never works! He gives free choice. He's going to try us all, *righteous and sinners!* Let's see here is the solution of one of the things of faith. We have:

- faith
- belief
- trust

with this it does something else:

Fixed Heart—Conviction

It gives you a faith and trust and confidence and belief because of God, His Word, His Spirit, His Truth. Remember, His Spirit is called *the Spirit of Truth!* What this does, it gives you the conviction by fixing your heart.

Psalms 57:1: "Be gracious unto me, O God, be gracious unto me; for my soul trusts in You; yea, in the shadow of Your wings I will make my refuge until these great troubles pass by." Note Psa. 91. The shadow of the wings is God's unseen protection through His angels.

Verse 2: "I will cry to God Most High, to God who fulfills His purpose for me."

Verse 7: "**My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed...**" What does that mean? That doesn't mean that it's repaired necessarily, but that could fall in there, too. It means that it's steadfast; fixed; locked into God! That's the kind of faith that God wants us to have. This is what brings conviction. This is an absolute thing if your heart is fixed and locked on God. That leads to conviction. Let's see what God did to Ezekiel.

Ezek. 3 tells us how your heart and your

mind are fixed. If you want to know the prophet that had the toughest duty of all—outside of Christ—it’s Ezekiel.

Ezekiel 3:4: “And He said to me, ‘Son of man, go! Go up to the house of Israel and speak to them with My words. For you *are* not sent to a people of a strange speech and of a difficult language, *but* to the house of Israel; not to many people of a strange speech and of a difficult language, whose words you cannot understand. Surely, if I had sent you to them... [these people of strange speech] ...they would have hearkened to you. But the house of Israel will not be willing to hearken to you, for they will not be willing to hearken to Me; for all the house of Israel *are* of a hard forehead and a stubborn heart. Behold, I have made your face strong against their faces and your forehead strong against their foreheads” (vs 4-8). You talk about *fixed!*

Notice Who made it. *God did!* That’s the measure of faith Ezekiel needed for the task that he was given.

Verse 9: “I have made your forehead as an adamant stone, harder than flint. Do not be afraid of them or dismayed by their faces, for they *are* a rebellious house.’ And He said to me, ‘Son of man, receive all My words which I shall speak to you. Receive them to your heart, and hear with your ears.... [all the teaching comes from God] ...And go! Go to those of the captivity, to the children of your people, and speak to them, and tell them, “Thus says the Lord GOD;” whether they will hear or whether they will forbear” (vs 9-11). Isn’t that something?

Then you go read on what he had to do. There was even a place where God told him to go out—because there’s starvation coming—and mix up this pottage and put in human dung and you eat it in their presence; and he had to go before them naked. He had to lie on his side 390 days for the house of Israel, and when he was done with that another 70 days for the house of Judah. When God said for him to mix in human dung, he said, ‘Oh, Lord God, please!’ God said, ‘All right, cattle dung!’

God wanted to demonstrate to the children of Israel how they really were to Him. You read Ezekiel, he has the toughest, hardest, most disastrous message that anyone could give. You talk about doom, gloom, death, destruction, plague and all of those things. Note Ezek. 20. The reason that all of these things because of their rebellion, but more importantly, because they *refused* to keep the Sabbath and Holy Days of God.

There is *fixed-heart conviction!* This kind

of faith brings confidence. You don’t have to worry about what man can do to you. This kind of faith was what Christ is talking about in Matt. 10. This is the kind of faith that the Apostle Paul, in writing the book of Hebrews, was preparing for those Jewish and non-Jewish (Gentiles) Christians, that they would have to have to survive the great upheavals of the Romans wars and the destruction of the temple.

Those are just great and awesome things that happen. Whenever they happen, God gives a warning first to prepare His people. Here’s what Jesus said it’s going to be like:

Matthew 10:16: “Behold, I am sending you forth as sheep in *the* midst of wolves. Therefore, be wise as serpents and harmless as doves.” This is telling us very clearly not to get mixed up in the political affairs of this world, because it’s going to take you down. That’s what it is. Keep following God!

Verse 17: “But beware of men; for they will deliver you up to councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues.” They did that to the apostles (Acts 4-5). Yes, they didn’t scourge them, but they beat them with rods.

Verse 18: “And you shall also be brought before governors and kings for My sake, for a witness to them and to the Gentiles.”

Eventually this is going to get down right to the world leaders. This is going to involve more than just one man. Whoever it is, wherever it’s going to be, it’s going to be numbers of people that will be brought up. I don’t know if you know this, but Robert Reich—Treasury Secretary under Bill Clinton our 42nd President—said, ‘Terrorists and those who take the Scriptures literally are the most dangerous people to this society.’

So, the die is cast; they just haven’t used it yet. But you wait and see, with this 9/11 law passed and Patriot Act II passed—wait and see Patriot Act III pass. Look what they’re doing to search people going through the airports. Every time I go through—before I go through I tell them I’ve got artificial hips so I’m going to zap the thing, it’s going to beep.’ A couple of times when I’ve gotten done, I’ve said, ‘I want you to promise me something, for safety and security, please do this to every Muslim that comes through as a passenger.’

When it comes time that it is illegal to have a Bible... That may sound wild and strange, but what they’re doing in this society, they do not want you to have any public acknowledgement of God! The only place you can worship is in your home, synagogue or church... ‘Don’t bother us atheists and

us secularists and humanists out here, we don't want to be bothered with your religion and Christ and God.' Who are they challenging? *God!* Who are the ones who are going to have to give the final message? *Wherever Christians are—true Christians—they're going to be the ones who are going to have to do it!*

Brought up to councils? *That is into court!* It happened back Philadelphia. There were a group of Sunday-keeping preachers against homosexuality, went and started preaching outside on the street against homosexuality and the homosexuals came and assaulted them and had them arrested. The one man faces charges equivalent to 47 years in prison. It's there! This is realistic!

Unless you really have faith; unless you really have belief... They're always going to offer a way out. You can't do like Galileo did when the pope said, 'Say the earth is flat.' *Okay, the earth is flat!* 'All right, we'll lift the inquisition off of you.' *Thank you!* He walked out and he said, 'Nevertheless, it's still round!' Do you think that living in the end of the age, which we're living in, and

- having the whole Word of God
- understanding what we understand
- teach what we teach

—I'm including all the Churches of God everywhere, because God is going to get them all involved; that's why they're scattered—that God is going to let us lightly off the hook and not bring a witness as He wants? Who is going to tell these people if it is not those who know? We are on an inevitable collision course! This is not asking for persecution; it is already there! Get the book *Persecution* by David Limbaugh and read that. That will tell you some things!

Verse 19: "Now when they deliver you up, do not be anxious *about* how or what you should speak.... [that's why you have to *know* the Word of God; have it written in your heart and mind] ...for in that hour it shall be given to you what you shall speak. For it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father that speaks in you" (vs 19-20). You are going to be a vessel of God, whoever you are, when this event takes place. God is going to use you personally, through His Spirit, to speak.

Here's how bad it's going to get, v 21: "Then brother will deliver up brother to death; and *the* father, the child; and children will rise up against *their* parents and *have* them put to death. And you shall be hated by all for My name's sake..." (vs 21-22).

- Don't we see that now?

- What is that they don't like about Christmas?
 - ✓ It's not the word 'mass' at the end. It's the word *Christ* at the beginning.
- What do they not like about the Ten Commandments?
 - ✓ The first four
 - you should not have any other gods before Me
 - prohibition on idols
 - taking God's name in vain
 - the Sabbath

"...but the one who endures to *the* end, that one shall be saved. But when they persecute you in this city, escape into another; for truly I say to you, in no way shall you have completed *witnessing* to the cities of Israel until the Son of man has come. A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master" (vs 22-24).

- Was Christ persecuted? *Yes!*
- Was Christ martyred? *Yes!*
- Was Christ God in the flesh? *Yes!*

But we're not above Him!

Verse 25: "It is sufficient for the disciple that he become as his teacher, and the servant as his master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub... [referring to Himself] ...how much more *shall they call* those of his household? Therefore, do not fear them because there is nothing covered that shall not be uncovered, and *nothing* hidden that shall not be known. What I tell you in the darkness, speak in the light; and what you hear in the ear, proclaim upon the housetops" (vs 25-27). That is public acknowledgment of God in preaching the Gospel.

Verse 28: "Do not be afraid of those who kill the body, but do not have power to destroy the life; rather, **fear Him Who has the power to destroy both life and body in Gehenna.**" That gives you an idea of what Ezekiel was up against and what we will be confronting in the future. That's why we have to have our hearts fixed and have a conviction. That's part of the building blocks of faith.

Obedience

Obedience is all part of faith, no doubt about it! Jesus said, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.' In light of the sermon *The Administration of Death* and the veil of Moses, I'd like to do a study to show the laws of God that He gave to Moses were the veil removed and those things that Jesus fulfilled. I think that would be very interesting,

indeed!

Let's come to 1-John 2; this is all a part of the kind of faith and obedience that we need to have, so that we have:

- the conviction
- the belief
- the trust
- the confidence
- the fixed heart

This gives us the confidence in our obedience. In other words, it gets back to God does not want you to have just an *emotional* faith, or a belief because someone tells you *believe this*. NO! He wants you to know it because you know it yourself and have proved it yourself, and you come to this; here is a key, all part of faith. Remember where we started with this chapter. Here are those, referring to Christians that have the faith of Jesus Christ and keep His commandments (Rev. 14:12).

- Belief is *the mental* aspect of faith!
- Obedience is *faith in action!*

You can take that and go through and study the Bible from that point of view, too.

1-John 2:3: “And by this *standard we know that we know Him...*” This is the kind of thing that God wants us to have. *We know that we know!* That comes by:

- hearing
- studying
- living
- the Spirit of God
- the application of the Word of God
- thinking with the Word of God
- keeping the commandments of God

It's like when people are in doubt about the Sabbath—and they seem reasonable and willing to keep the Sabbath and they haven't kept it before—and they ask me: Why is the Sabbath important? I explain it to them and when I'm done I tell them this: Why don't you keep the Sabbath and study about the Sabbath and God's Word on the Sabbath for six weeks? If you do, then you'll understand how important the Sabbath is. That's the key!

You will never know if you do not have the faith to obey. You can tie that in with tithes and offerings. You will never know the blessings that God will give you if you don't prove Him. That's what it says here. This is *the standard*—the Greek is 'en toutoo'—*by this*, but it implies that *by this standard*—a measure and so forth.

Verse 3: “And by this *standard we know that we know Him:* if we keep His commandments.

The one who says, ‘I know Him,’ and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the Truth is not in him” (vs 3-4). Have we not come full circle back to the Truth, the true God, the Word of God? *Yes!*

If you have some Truth and some error, do you have *the* Truth? *No, you don't!* I thought that interview was quite good when the Protestant said that Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Life. After they had a discussion that ‘you should love your neighbor as yourself’ to humanize the teachings of Jesus, he said, ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your mind, with all your soul, with all your strength.’ *Oh, that's different!*

They all want to love their neighbors because that's humanism; that's secularism. But to love God, no ‘we can't do that.’ They said, ‘You're an exclusivist then.’ He said, ‘No, let's look at it this way: If I'm a doctor and you have a disease—we'll call that sin—and there is only one antibiotic that you can take to kill that bacteria and make you well. What would you say? Especially when you understand no other antibiotic can do it, just this one. Would you say that I'm exclusive? *or* That I'm imparting to you the knowledge of Truth so that you can get well?’

If Jesus is the only Way, the Truth and the Life' then everyone needs to know how they can be saved! That's what we're talking about here. When we have that then we can have the faith that this shows, that this gives us. This is pretty profound.

Verse 4: “The one who says, ‘I know Him,’ and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the Truth is not in him.”

1-Kings 13—I find this really quite interesting. When God sent the warning to Jeroboam—he was the one who setup the golden calves in Dan and Bethel after God split off the ten tribes. 1-Kings 13:1: “And behold, a man of God came out of Judah by the Word of the Lord, to Bethel. And Jeroboam stood by the altar to burn incense.” He had a specific message, with specific instructions from God.

Verse 2: “And he cried against the altar by the Word of the Lord and said, ‘O, altar, altar, thus says the LORD. “Behold, a son shall be born to the house of David, Josiah by name, and upon you he shall offer the priests of the high places who burn incense upon you, and men's bones shall be burned upon you.”’ And he gave a sign the same day, saying, ‘This *is* the sign which the LORD has spoken. “Behold, the altar shall be torn apart, and the ashes that *are* upon it shall be poured out.”’ Then it came to pass when King Jeroboam heard the saying of the man of God who had cried against the altar in

Bethel, he put forth his hand from the altar, saying, 'Lay hold on him!' And his hand, which he put forth against him withered up so that he could not pull it in again to himself. The altar also was split asunder and the ashes poured out from the altar according to the sign which the man of God had given by the Word of the Lord" (vs 2-5)

Verse 6: "And the king answered and said to the man of God, 'Seek now the face of the LORD your God, and pray for me, that my hand may be restored to me again.'"

Isn't that always the way? When the murderer gets caught and is surrounded by the police, what does he say? *Don't shoot! Don't shoot!* So, we have it here.

Verse 7: "And the king said to the man of God, 'Come home with me and refresh yourself, and I will give you a reward.' And the man of God said to the king, 'If you will give me half your house, I will not go in with you, nor will I eat bread nor drink water in this place, for so was it commanded me by the Word of the Lord, saying, "Eat no bread nor drink water, nor return again by the same way that you came." Then he went another way and did not return by the way he came to Bethel" (vs 7-10).

You can read the rest of it. Here comes a man out who says, 'I am a prophet of God. I am a prophet of the Lord. Come in and eat with me.' And he said, 'No, I can't'—true prophet of God.

The false prophet said, 'God has told me that you can come in and eat with me and rest yourself.' What did he do? *He took the word of the false prophet, went in and ate with him.* After he got up and left, God sent a lion to devour him on the way. Quite an instructive lesson. ***He that says I know Him and does not keep His commandments is a liar!***

1-John 2:5: "On the other hand, *if* anyone is keeping His Word, truly in this one the love of God is being perfected.... [that's what keeps faith working; *the love of God!*] ...By this *means* we know that we are in Him. Anyone who claims to dwell in Him is obligating himself also to walk even as He Himself walked" (vs 5-6). Quite a standard. That's all done by faith!

That's quite an instructive lesson with the true prophet of God and the false prophet of the Lord coming out and saying 'Well, I'm a prophet of the Lord, and God told me...' It reminds me of these ministers that get on television and say, 'God said to me...'

Galatians 5:6: "Because in Christ Jesus neither is circumcision of any force, nor

uncircumcision; rather, *it is the inner working of faith through love.*" As Paul said, 'These three remain: faith, hope and love.' As we've said: ***Walk in faith, believe in hope and live in love!*** These all work together: *faith through love*, the inner working of it.

Let's see what it's going to do for us or what it is doing for us. The more you know the Truth of God and the Way of God and the Word of God, this is what it will do. This makes people really angry.

1-John 4:4: "You are of God, little children... [Who is to say that you are of God and other people are not? *God is!*] ...and have overcome them... [the false prophets and false spirits] ...because greater is He Who *is* in you than the one who *is* in the world." Never be overwhelmed by the things in the world.

Verse 5: "They are of the world; because of this, they speak of the world, and the world listens to them." Do you think that if any true minister of God would have been on any of those panels and said, 'Hey, you have all missed the boat.' Why you'd be cut off; they'd cut off your microphone. I do when I'm watching it. Doesn't the world listen to them? *Yes!*

Verse 6: "We are of God; the one who knows God listens to us; the one who is not of God does not listen to us.... [they won't stand for the Truth; they can't tolerate it] ...By this *means* we know the Spirit of the Truth and the spirit of the deception."

There is a spirit of deception that is out there. This whole thing that they are now all clamoring about Christ and Christmas is going to bring them all together in the deception—you wait and see! {note 2-Thess. 2} because they don't have the love for the Truth, God gives them over to a powerful deception. How powerful is this deception going to be in the end-time? Religious leaders doing miracles! Calling fire down from heaven! Seeing is believing! Remember this: If you see it on television it may or may not be true, because they can digitize anything now. That's quite a thing! That's what faith does for us!

Love

- faith works through love
- hope works through love

Verse 7: "Beloved, we should love one another because love is from God; and everyone who loves has been begotten by God, and **knows** God.... [we *know* that we have the Spirit of God; we understand that] ...The one who does not love does

not know God because God is love” (vs 7-8). What is the love of God? *Keeping His commandments!* Some people come up to the Truth and they stumble over it and go on and make excuses.

A man who was in the Church of God was working out in this gym and there was a Protestant minister that he got to know and they started talking about the Bible. After many weeks of seeing each other there on the same day doing their exercises, it finally came out that the man in the Church of God kept the Sabbath. The Sunday-keeping preacher was challenged to go prove it in his Bible. So, after a couple of weeks they came back and the Sunday-keeping minister admitted that the Sabbath was what was taught in the Bible, BUT if he preached that from the pulpit he would lose his job.

He had the Truth to come out of the deception, but wasn't willing to do so because he didn't have any faith. Interesting! Had more faith in the false teaching of Sunday and people than he did in God. If you believe God and have faith in God, when God says—in the person of Christ and also—‘Man shall not live by bread alone but by every Word of God’ (Deut. 8:3). What does God mean? *Precisely that!* The minister didn't have enough faith to do it.

Here is the whole process. I won't go through this in great detail, but notice what Peter wrote. This is the last epistle that he wrote. He really puts himself into this in a very profound way.

2-Peter 1:1: “Simon Peter...” ***He was never in Rome. Peter never went to Rome!*** When Paul got there in 60_{A.D.}, what did he do? *He called for all the Jewish leaders in Rome to come to his house where he was held in captivity; he was under house arrest!*

The leaders came and he said, ‘I want to tell you about the Gospel of Jesus Christ.’ What did the Jewish leaders say? *Peter's been here a long time before, we know all about it.* NO! They said, ‘We haven't heard of this except that this sect is everywhere spoken against.’ That's 60_{A.D.} and it should have been 20 years into Peter's being the first pope in Rome. If he was, he surely didn't preach to them. Furthermore, Peter was the apostle to the circumcision, so if he had gone to Rome he should have gone to them first. It doesn't say that.

Verse 1: “Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who have obtained *the same precious faith as ours...* [faith is the substance; we just covered the building blocks] ...by *the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ: Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, according as His Divine power has given to us all things that*

pertain to life and Godliness, through the knowledge of Him Who called us by His own glory and virtue; through which... [here's the thing that's profound and important with all of this, and the faith] ...He has given to us the greatest and most precious promises...” (vs 1-4).

- promise of eternal life
- promise of glory
- promise of being in the first resurrection
- promise of being with Jesus Christ
- promise of being in New Jerusalem
- promise of living forever without sin

Great and precious promises! Not only those we receive today because of faith, but those that we receive through hope.

“...Who called us by *His own* glory and virtue; through which He has given to us the greatest and *most* precious promises, that through these you may become partakers of *the* Divine nature...” (vs 3-4). That's why God made you in His image. That you may become, through the process of conversion, like Jesus.

“...having escaped the corruption *that is in the world through lust*” (v 4).

Colossians 1:9: “For this cause we also, from the day that we heard *of it...* [of your conversion] ...do not cease to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding... [by faith, study, prayer] ...that you may walk worthily of the Lord, unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work and growing in the knowledge of God; being strengthened with all power according to the might of His glory, unto all endurance and long-suffering with joy” (vs 9-11). This is to get you through all the trials and difficulties.

Verse 12: “Giving thanks to the Father, Who has made us qualified for the share of the inheritance of the saints in the Light; Who has personally rescued us from the power of darkness and has transferred *us* unto the kingdom of the Son of His love” (vs 12-13). That's very profound! Those are tremendous and inspiring words.

- What is the end of all of this?
- What is the purpose of all of this?

Verse 26: “*Even* the mystery that has been hidden from ages...” In understanding the plan of God, realize this: ***God has made known His secret to you! And has entrusted you with it!*** The world does not know! Isn't that an amazing thing? *Yes!* The mystery; that's what mystery means.

“...and from generations, but has now been

revealed to His saints.... [not to the world; the world is in the spirit of deception] ...To whom God did will... [purposely do] ...to whom God did will to make known what *are* the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory” (vs 26-27).

That’s the whole purpose of faith! This faith is to do this: ***The people of God must be inspired!*** God is not going to drive us. God is not going to force us! He gives us free choice, and by His Spirit and by His Word to be inspired. When you are inspired to love God and have faith and do the things that He wants, you want to do these things. Which no amount of coercion, no amount of force can make you do it. Inspired, you will do it.

- that gives you the *desire*
- desire translates into *action*
- *action translates into overcoming*
- overcoming translates into *building character*
- building character translates into *Godliness*
- Godliness translates into *the love of God*

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version*

Scriptural References:

- 1) Hebrews 11:30-40, 1, 3
- 2) Romans 10:14-17
- 3) Hebrews 11:6
- 4) Romans 10:16-18
- 5) Matthew 24:14
- 6) Romans 10:19
- 7) 2 Timothy 3:16-17
- 8) 1 Thessalonians 5:21
- 9) Proverbs 28:20, 25-26
- 10) Proverbs 16:20
- 11) Jeremiah 17:5-10
- 12) Psalm 57:1-2, 7
- 13) Ezekiel 3:4-11
- 14) Matthew 10:16-28
- 15) 1 John 2:3-4
- 16) 1 Kings 13:1-10
- 17) 1 John 2:5-6
- 18) Galatians 5:6
- 19) 1 John 4:4-8
- 20) 2 Peter 1:1-4
- 21) Colossians 1:9-13, 26-27

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Matthew 24:14
- Acts 17
- Psalm 1; 91
- Ezekiel 20
- Acts 4 & 5

- Revelation 14:12
- 2 Thessalonians 2
- Deuteronomy 8:3

Also referenced:

Sermons:

- *The Coming Economic Tribulation*
- *Administration of Death*

Books:

- *The Coming Economic Disorder* by Larry Bates
- *Persecution* by David Limbaugh

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