

Belief—Faith—Hope

Fred R. Coulter—July 24, 2010

Greetings, everyone! Welcome to Sabbath services, glad you're here! [transcriber's note: review of the book by Philip Neal, *Judaism: Revelation of Moses, or Religion of Men?*]

Today we're going to talk about *belief, faith, and hope*. The reason that I have it that way is because that is the progression. We're going to see that the Greek words are related, one to another. And also *hope* can also likewise we translated 'trust.' So I'll save *trusting in the Lord* for another sermon.

But what was it that Jesus said concerning the end time? 'When the Son of man comes, will He find *faith* on the earth?' Well, the answer is: *a little*. We find that verified by Rev. 12:17 where the 'rest of her seed which keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus.' Then we find in Rev. 14:12 that it says, 'Here is the patience of the saints. Here are they who keep the commandments of God *and* the faith of Jesus Christ,' which is a very powerful Scripture indeed, to tell us that commandment keeping and faith go together. Commandment-keeping and the Spirit of Christ, or the testimony of Jesus then, has to do with prophecy. So this tells us commandment-keeping has a lot to do with understanding God's plan.

Now let's come back here to Psalm 111, and let's see what this tells us about understanding the Word of God. This is interesting. I was talking to a man the other day and he was saying, 'Boy, what a fantastic plan that God has.' I said, 'Yeah, it's really fantastic.' Probably much more so than we have figured from this point of view: He reveals it through His Word, which everyone has, but can't understand. And He's given the knowledge to His people through His Word, because He's given them understanding.

Psalm 111:6: "He has declared to His people the power of His works... [I want you to keep 'works' in mind as we go through this, because we know that Christianity of the world believes in no works—faith and grace and no works. But we're going to find that there is a *false faith* and there is a *true faith*, and it has to do with works.] ...in giving them the inheritance of the nations.... [of course, that's a prophecy of us and the coming Kingdom of God] ...The works of His hands are truth and justice; all His precepts are sure" (vs 6-7).

And that's what we're finding out with the world today. I'm going to do some videos on Church at Home that the most often asked question on Larry King Live when he has some religious figure there is: If there is a God, why is the world in such a mess? *The truth is that verifies that there is a God,*

because He said, 'If you don't obey Me, these things are going to happen.' So it is not a proof that God doesn't exist, rather it is a proof that God does exist. And when they ask that question, what are they really asking? 'Well, if we human beings are so perfect'—they don't quite say it that way—'why are all of these problems coming up?'

"They stand fast forever and ever; they are done in truth and uprightness..... [The question I like to ask all Protestants is this: If God is perfect, which He is; and if God is love, which He is; why then would He give a law that you would say is a curse when the Bible says it's perfect? Would not a perfect God produce a perfect law? *Of course!*] ...He sent redemption unto His people; He has commanded His covenant forever; Holy and awesome is His name. The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom... [And this is why the world can't understand God.] ...a good understanding have all those who do His commandments...." (vs 8-10). So that's how we are to understand

- *by believing* God
- *having faith* in God
- *obeying* God
- *loving* God

—all together. "...His praise endures forever" (v10).

Let's come back to the book of Jude. Now since the Truth is the truth and the people that are called of God present a powerful force against Satan the devil because we are going to inherit the world, that mankind has acquiesced to give to Satan and he's going to lose it. So there have been attacks, false teachers, encroachment, false ministers, but God always solves the problem. Those who love and believe God hold fast to the Truth. Those who don't, go their way.

Now here's what Jude wrote beginning in Jude 3: "Beloved, when personally exerting all *my* diligence to write to you concerning the common salvation, I was compelled to write to you, exhorting *you* to fervently fight for the faith... [This is what we need to do today, because it's under attack as never before.] ...which once for all *time* has been delivered to the saints." And how do we find that faith? Through

- God's Spirit
- belief in God and Jesus Christ
- faith
- hope
- love
- obedience.

We've seen this happen again, and it's currently happening again in some of the Churches of God in various places. And it will always happen, because Satan wants to try and destroy the people of God, but he's totally frustrated because he never, never can.

Verse 4: "For certain men... [Because Satan has his own ministers who appear as ministers of righteousness and he appears as an angel of light.] ...have stealthily crept in, those who long ago have been written about, condemning *them* to this judgment.... [The judgment of the ungodly.] ...*They are* ungodly men... [Isn't that interesting, coming into the church pretending that they are Godly, but they are deliberately ungodly.] ...who are perverting the grace of our God, *turning it* into licentiousness, and are personally denying the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ."

So then how do we discern the proper faith? Let's come to Hebrews 11, and let's see how it is defined here. What we are going to see is this: We are going to see that *faith requires works and obedience*. We're going to see that faith and belief are coupled together here. Let's write down the Greek word

- *faith*: 'pistis'
- *belief, to believe*: 'pisteuo'
- *hope*: 'elpizo' (the verb); 'elpis' (noun)

Notice all of them, they have what is called the 'stem.' The stem of the word in every case is 'pis': pistis, pisteuo, elpizo, elpis—all of them together. They're all related because we're going to see, after we define what faith is, which also defines what belief is, that *belief, to believe* is the first step. The next step is *faith*. The next step is *hope*.

Faith is something real. It is not an ethereal thing, just an emotion. Hebrews 11:1: "Now faith is the substance of *things* hoped for... [See how they're tied right together? *Faith and hope!*] ...and the conviction of things not seen.... [**You know for sure!**] ...For by this *kind of faith* the elders obtained a good report" (vs 1-2). Notice what this faith does, because faith, being the substance, it is a spiritual thing that occurs in the mind. All human beings have the *spirit of man*, so there's a certain faith that all people can have, but that doesn't mean they exercise it toward God. Many times the faith that they have is exercised toward something which is not true, but nevertheless the conviction of what they believe is still there.

I remember watching the Berlin Underground. How many have seen that on History Channel? They had so many tunnels and so many things underground in Berlin that until the last week of the war they were still making Focke-Wulf fighter planes in the factories there, which when they were

done could fly right out and go into combat. They had so many places there, it was unreal. There were people who had the faith that the Third Reich was going to get through it all. They even had the fellow who gave the last radio broadcast from the bunker under Berlin that went out and said, 'The war is over.' He said all of them believed to the last that it would turn around; *false belief*, because it wasn't in God. It was in a man! It was in a cause! It was in a movement! It was in evil and not in good!

Verse 3: "By faith we understand that the world were created by *the* word of God... [that's precisely where Hebrews starts out, vs 1-3] ...so that the things that are seen were made from *things* that are invisible." Is that a true scientific statement today? *Yes, it is!* They still can't figure out how a seed grows. I've mentioned that many times.

Now notice what faith *requires* and we'll see what James has to say about this in just a minute. "By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and through it, though he died, *he* is yet speaking.... [In other words, there are still lessons we're going to learn from what Abel did.] ...By faith Enoch was transported so that he would not look upon death, and was not found because God had transported him; for before his departure it was testified of him that he pleased God" (vs 4-5). So not only are we talking about *faith*, not only are we talking about *belief*, but we're talking about: What does it take to please God?

Then we come to v 6, which is a key important verse. So let's look at this one here very carefully. "**Now without faith...** [And as we'll show, belief comes before faith.] ...without faith **it is impossible to please God...** [that means in the Greek the strongest negation that *you cannot please God without faith*] ...For it is mandatory... [essentially required] ...for the one who comes to God..."—because there are many people seeking God.

- Who is God?
- Where is God?
- What is God doing?

...to believe... [the first step is *believe*] ...that He exists... [everything about Him. That

- He's God
- He's Creator
- He's lived forever
- He's made the heavens
- He made the earth
- He's created us for a purpose

and He wants to reveal it to us. "...and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him."

Now if you're diligently seeking God

- Does that not require *works*?
- Does that not require *action*?
- Does that not require *obedience*?
- *Yes, all of those.*

Let's come to the Epistle of James, and let's see what James said about *faith*. Let's see what he said about *belief*, and we find all the way through the Bible that ***faith and belief are tied together***. They're tied together in the very essence of the Greek language, too, aren't they, and also in English. ***If you have faith, you'll believe!***

James 2:14—he gives a concrete example: “My brethren, what good *does* it do, if anyone says *that he* has faith, and does not have works?... [following *belief* must be *faith* and must bring *works*. Now what does God say to all the seven churches in Rev. 2 & 3? *That He will give to us according to our works.*] ...Is faith able to save him? Now then, if there be a brother or sister who is naked and destitute of daily food, And one of you says to them, ‘Go in peace; be warmed and be filled,’ and does not give to them the things necessary for the body, what good is it? In the same way also, faith, if it does not have works, is dead, by itself” (vs 14-17).

So there's such a thing as dead faith. ‘Oh, I have faith in God, see you in church on Sunday.’ Now let's understand something else that is true. In order to keep the commandments of God it takes *belief and faith* to do it. If you believe that you are to have no other gods before you, you act upon that—don't you? If you believe you're not to make any idols, you don't do it—do you? If you believe you're not to take the name of God in vain, you don't do it. If you believe that the Sabbath is the Holy Day of God, the seventh day—you keep it. And that's the beginning separation line between those who believe God, those who have faith toward God, and those who don't. It doesn't take any faith to go to church on Sunday.

Verse 18: “But someone is going to say, ‘You have faith, and I have works.’ *My answer is...* [When I first properly translated this, when we sent out the New Testament, I got some people back answering, ‘Well, you know, this is not like the *King James*.’ Well, it's not, because we're going to learn a truism here. This is one of the first things that Dr. Dorothy pointed out to us.] ...*My answer is:* You prove your faith to me through your works, and I will prove my faith to you through my works.”

So if you have dead faith, what kind of works are you going to have? *That's your work!* If you say, ‘I have faith,’ but don't keep the commandments of God, that's your work—isn't it? So James says, ‘If you want to put the score card up here (so to speak) let's look at it.’

“...I will prove my faith to you through my works.... [works are not a substitute for faith, but works **follow** faith, the good works that God wants us to do.] ...Do you believe that God is one? You do well to *believe this*.... [There we have belief mixed in with faith—right?] ...Even the demons believe... [But what kind of belief do they have? *They have a false belief, a dead belief*, because they rebelled against God and didn't believe God and followed Lucifer—didn't they? *Yes!* So this is an empty, vain, dead belief.] ...and tremble in *fear*.... [So then he makes a statement to sum it all up]: ...But are you willing to understand, O foolish man, that **faith without works is dead?**” (vs 18-20). And he's talking here about the works that God requires us to do because we have *faith*.

Then he gives an example here, v 21: “Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up Isaac, his own son, upon the altar?” You remember the story. God said, ‘All right, take your only son, take him over here to one of the mountains of Moriah that I will show you, and offer your beloved son, your only son as a burnt offering.’ What did he do? *He went!* When God said, ‘Look to the heavens and so shall your seed be,’ there was no work for him to do because he couldn't count the stars, but ***he believed God***. So that was counted to him for righteousness. So when there is no work to do in just believing God, your belief then becomes the work to show your faith that you're trusting God.

Verse 22: “Do you not see that faith was working together with his works, and by works *his* faith was perfected? And the scripture was fulfilled which says, ‘Now Abraham believed God... [and obeyed God] ...and it was reckoned to him for righteousness’; and he was called a friend of God. You see, then, that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only” (vs 22-24). So it's just like water. Water has two elements in it: hydrogen and oxygen, H₂O. Separated, both of them are very flammable. Together they put out fire. Isn't that amazing? So likewise, when you have the right faith, coupled with the right works, then you have justification before God, because first you believed and then you obeyed.

Let's come to John 3. If you want to find something very interesting, read the entire Gospel of John and just study the word *believe*, *belief* and the various tenses of it, because that word is used 119 times in that Gospel. Amazing—isn't it?

John 3:16: “For God so loved the world... [This is what everyone wants. They want the love of God as they are without responding back to God to love Him and obey Him.] ...that He gave His only begotten Son, so that everyone who believes in Him may not perish, but may have everlasting life.” Now it's very interesting, as I've pointed out. This is the

correct translation. The *King James* says ‘should not perish,’ which is closer to shall. ‘May not’ shows there are conditions. So if you believe, then what is the condition? ***You have to obey!***

Verse 17: “For God sent not His Son into the world that He might judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him. The one who believes in Him is not judged, but the one who does not believe has already been judged because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.... [let’s see how this works.] ...And this is the judgment: that the light... [And Jesus is the Light of the world. He says, ‘I am the Light of the world.’] ...has come into the world, but men loved darkness rather than the light because their works were evil... [They don’t like to be told, ‘This is wrong, this is sin. Here’s what you need to do. Here’s what you need to believe.’] ...For everyone who practices evil hates the light... [they don’t like it] ...and does not come to the light, so that his works may not be exposed” (vs 17-20). He doesn’t want to face himself. He doesn’t want to see what God says about him, *so he does not come to God*. He will use every other means, every other thing to avoid it.

Notice v 21: “‘But the one who practices the Truth comes to the Light... [You’re constantly coming to God everyday, praying everyday—aren’t you? Studying, everyday! What does this do? With the Spirit of God what does this do? *This exposes the sin within* and that’s the whole point of conversion and overcoming, so you can repent.] ...But the one who practices the Truth comes to the Light... [constantly coming to] ...so that his works may be manifested, that they have been accomplished *by the power of God.*” So if you’re coming to the Light and Jesus is ‘the Way, the Truth, and the Life,’ and the power of God, what is going to happen in your life is because of the power of God, the Spirit of God, belief and faith in God and Christ, and the obedience that follows.

Now let’s see how this starts out, and see how this ties in where we left off over in James. The disciples were looking for Him, they didn’t understand how He got to the other side of the Sea of Galilee. They finally found Him and said, ‘How did you get here?’ John 6:26: “Jesus answered them and said, ‘Truly, truly I say to you, you do not seek Me because you saw *the* miracles, but because you ate the bread and were satisfied.... [Now here’s another thing. What is the basis of why you’re seeking God? Is it that so you can be changed and converted? or Is it for personal gain that you can have something? And, of course, if God gave everyone bread and fish without any work, can you imagine what the society would end up being?] ...Do not labor *for* the food that perishes, but *for* the food that endures unto eternal life, which the Son of man

shall give to you; for Him has God the Father sealed” (vs 26-27).

Now notice their answer. They knew that they needed to do something, but what He told them to do was not what they wanted to hear. They wanted to hear” How are we going to get this bread and fish every day? “Therefore, they said to Him, ‘What shall we do, in order that we ourselves may do the works of God?’ ... [So He gives them the first step] ...Jesus answered and said to them, ‘This is the work of God: that you believe in Him Whom He has sent” (vs 28-29). ***Believe in Jesus Christ.*** They were believing in the bread and the fish and not in Christ. They wanted to see a miracle, not have their lives changed. So they couldn’t understand it. This also shows what? ***That true belief leads to a work!*** So then they said, ‘Well, our fathers ate manna in the wilderness, and what are You going to do?’

Verse 35: “Jesus said to them, ‘I am the bread of life; the one who comes to Me shall never hunger; and the one who believes in Me shall never thirst at any time.... [We know that that’s referring to the Passover. And this shows that the only way you’re going to get eternal life is through the New Covenant. And how is the New Covenant renewed every year? *On Passover!* not Easter] ...But as I said to you, you also have seen Me, yet you do not believe” (vs 35-36)—because

- they had the *wrong action*
- they had the *wrong works*
- they had the *wrong motives*

—so that was quite a debate there. That’s really something! This also shows the beginning of *belief* and the belief that is necessary to go beyond the beginning belief and how then you can *increase your belief* or *increase your faith*. This shows us quite an example here.

Mark 9:14: “And after returning to the disciples, He saw a great multitude around them, and the scribes disputing with them. And all the people who saw Him ran to *Him* at once in great amazement and saluted Him. And He asked the scribes, ‘What are you disputing with them?’ Then one from the multitude said, ‘Master, I brought my son who has a dumb spirit to You; for wherever it seizes him it dashes him down; and he foams and gnashes his teeth, and is withering away. And I spoke to Your disciples, in order that they might cast it out, but they did not have *the* power.’ And He answered him, saying, ‘O faithless generation!.... [He was talking to His disciples. They were yet in the process of building faith at this particular time.] ...How long shall I be with you? How long shall I bear with you? Bring him to Me.’ Then they brought him to Him. But when the spirit saw Him, *it* immediately threw him into convulsions; and he fell down on the

ground *and* began rolling about *and* foaming *at the mouth*. And He asked his father, ‘How long a time has this *demon* been with him?’ And he said, ‘From childhood. For it often throws him both into the fire and into the water, that it might destroy him. But if You have the power *to do* anything, have compassion on us *and* help us’” (vs 14-22).

Now notice Jesus’ answer: “And Jesus said to him, ‘**If you can believe...** [That’s the first step.] ...all things are possible to the one who believes.’.... [After that it was difficult for them to really grasp what was being said.] ...And the father of the little child cried out at once, saying with tears, ‘Lord, I believe. **Help my unbelief**’” (vs 23-24). So what does this tell us several things here?

1. You can have belief to a certain level, but you need to grow in that belief and understanding, so you need to overcome your unbelief.

Let’s ask this of ourselves:

- What do I not believe concerning the Word of God?
- What do I not believe concerning the promises of God?

He says, ‘Help my unbelief.’ We’ll see the answer to that in just a minute. “Then Jesus, seeing that the multitude was running together, rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, ‘You deaf and dumb spirit, I command you *to* come out of him, and you are not allowed to go into him any more!’ And after crying out and throwing him into severe convulsions, it came out; and he became as dead, so much so that many said, ‘He is dead.’ But Jesus took him by the hand *and* lifted him up, and he arose” (vs 25-27).

Quite a demonstration—wasn’t it? Now notice here’s the lesson even to the disciples, which is the lesson for us. “And when He came into a house, His disciples asked Him apart, ‘Why were we not able to cast it out?’ Then He said to them, ‘This kind cannot *be made to* go out by anything except prayer and fasting’” (vs 28-29). So there’s the answer. How do you grow in faith? How do you grow in belief? Not only do you have to exercise that faith and belief, but you have to grow in it how? *Through prayer and fasting!*

So this tells us that through this way and with God’s Spirit, we can grow in faith, we can be strengthened in faith, and we can understand the Truth of God even more.

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Let’s come to Mark 5, and let’s see that a person can have faith and belief without the Spirit of God. But this is not necessarily a *faith unto salvation*. Mark 5:24: “And He departed with him;

and a great multitude followed Him, pressing around Him. Then a certain woman who had been *afflicted with* an issue of blood *for* twelve years, and had suffered greatly under *the hand of* many physicians, and had spent all that she had... [This sounds kind of like the modern medicine—doesn’t it? Nothing has changed through the years.] ...and was not benefited in any way but rather was getting worse. When she heard about Jesus, came in the multitude behind *Him and* touched His garment; for she said... [here’s her belief] ...‘If I can only touch His garments, I shall be cured’” (vs 24-28). So this is the belief that we can have with the *spirit of man*, without the Spirit of God. The true belief for conversion then, is a combining of the Spirit of God with the spirit of man. That brings us the

- true belief
- true faith
- true hope

Verse 29: “And at once the fountain of her blood was dried up, and she knew in *her* body that she was healed from the scourge. Now Jesus knew immediately within Himself *that* power had gone out of Him; and turning in the crowd, He said, ‘Who touched My garments?’ But His disciples said to Him, ‘You see the crowd pressing around You, and You ask, “Who touched Me?”’ Then He looked around to see who had done this. And the woman, frightened and trembling, knowing what had been done in her, came and fell down before Him, and told Him all the truth. Then He said to her, ‘Daughter, your faith has cured you. Go in peace, and be whole from your scourge’” (vs 29-34).

This is for *physical* healing; this is *not unto salvation*. Now let’s talk about the kind of faith which will lead not only to doing miracles like that, but also to do things beyond that. The greatest miracle of all is the belief unto receiving the Holy Spirit after you have repented and been baptized, so that you have *faith unto salvation*. That faith produces the works that God wants you to do.

This is after the disciples saw Jesus curse the fig tree after he left the temple, Mark 11:20: “And in the morning, as they passed by, they saw the fig tree dried up from *the* roots. Then Peter remembered *and* said to Him, ‘Look, Master! The fig tree that You cursed has dried up.’ And Jesus answered and said to them, ‘Have faith *from* God’” (vs 20-22). Now the Greek is even stronger. It says ‘have the faith *of* God,’ but it really means the faith *that comes from God to you*. And, of course, that’s with the Spirit of God. That kind of faith is part of the fruits of the Holy Spirit:

- love
- joy
- peace

- faith

Verse 23: “For truly I say to you, whoever shall say to this mountain, ‘Be taken away and be cast into the sea,’ and shall not doubt in his heart... [That’s the thing that we need to always work on consistently. Because our human nature is there to say, ‘Well now, but.’ Just like when you know you have to do something and you don’t do it, same way with faith.] ...and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe... [faith comes from belief; belief starts the process] ...but shall believe that what he said will take place, he shall have whatever he shall say.”

Then He gives a condition here. What are some of the conditions that we know? *When we pray we say ‘Our Father Who is in heaven, hallowed be Your name, Your will be done.’* That is a condition, ‘on earth as it is in heaven.’ But notice what else He says here:

Verse 25: “But when you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive, so that your Father Who *is* in heaven may forgive you your offenses.” This is a powerful thing for us to understand. This is a key to

- growing in faith
- to answered prayer
- to right standing with God

We come to God and say, ‘O God, forgive me for all of my sins.’ God says, ‘Okay, I forgive you.’ *‘But that guy down there, I’ll never forgive him.’* It’s like I heard in one independent group, the elder said, ‘Well, I’d like some of you men who’ve been in the church a long time to give a sermonette from time-to-time.’ After services, some of the brethren came up and said, ‘If he speaks, I’m walking out of here.’ Someone else said, ‘Well, if he speaks, I’m out of here, too.’ I couldn’t help but think of this.

- Do you say you’re brethren?
- Do you say you love God?
- Do you pray to God every day?
- Do you want your sins forgiven?
- Can you settle the matter?

That’s what you need to ask, because Jesus said this, v 26: “For if you do not forgive... [*condition*] ...neither will your Father Who *is* in heaven forgive you your offenses.” Now we read of that in several other locations, too—don’t we? *Yes, indeed!* So we need to keep this in mind.

Someone will say, ‘Well, if they come and ask me to forgive them, then I’ll forgive.’ Well, Jesus didn’t do that when He was hanging there being crucified. The first thing He said is, ‘Father, forgive them. They don’t know what they’re doing.’ Isn’t that true? *Yes!* What if they never come to you? Are you going to hold that grudge forever? What if you never go to them and say, ‘Hey, perhaps maybe

we have a little misunderstanding. Can we talk about it?’ And you might be surprised how it may work out. That’s important. So if you want *the faith that comes from God*, Jesus told us right here the condition to receive it.

Let’s tie this in a little more with belief to show that you can have a beginning belief, but if you’re not willing to act upon it, that’s as far as it will go. John 8:30: “As He spoke these things, many believed in Him.... [But let’s also notice what Jesus said.] ...Therefore, Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in Him... [So belief is a start—is it not? *Yes!* But notice there’s a condition]: ...**If**... [One of these days I’m going to go through and have every ‘if’ in the Bible capitalized. That may prove a point.] ...‘If you continue in My Word... [Now that says an awful lot—doesn’t it? Did we just read what He said back there in Mark 11? *Yes, indeed!*] ...If you continue in My Word, you are truly My disciples.’.... [So belief requires action.] ...and you shall know the Truth, and the Truth shall set you free” (vs 30-32). That’s almost identical to where we began in Psa. 111—isn’t it?

Let’s take the *opposite* of this, vs 31-32: ‘If you do not continue in My Word, you truly are not My disciples and you shall not know the Truth, and the Truth which you shall not know will not set you free.’ That’s the power of *‘if.’* Well, of course, you know the rest of the story. They said, ‘Well, we haven’t been in bondage to anyone’ (v 33)

Verse 34, Jesus answered them, after they said, ‘Well, what do you mean, we be free?’: “Jesus answered them, ‘Truly, truly I say to you, everyone who practices sin is a servant of sin.’” What does this also tell us? *Then there has to be repentance and change—doesn’t it?* This also tells us that *we have to quit sinning—doesn’t it?* *Yes!* It will be according to our work. As we go back to what James said, ‘You show me your faith by your works and I’ll show you my faith by my works.’ So if you do not have the faith you need to have toward God, but you have faith in what you are doing, your works are going to be sin—correct? If you have faith in God and doing what He says, you’re going to be living so you’re not living in sin. Yes, we do sin, because we have human nature. That’s why we repent every day, because God is changing our minds, converting our minds, writing His laws and His commandments in our heart and in our minds so that we become converted.

Verse 35: “And the servant does not live in the house forever; *but* the Son lives forever. Therefore, if... [*condition again*] ...the Son shall set you free, you shall truly be free” (vs 35-36). Then they got into the argument and Jesus accused them of being of their father the devil. Now isn’t that interesting? You stop and think about it. Here were

the Jews who heard Him speak and believed in Him, yet were not willing to continue in what He was teaching and His word, were not willing to repent, were not willing to follow Him, were not willing to continue in it, but they were the glad-handlers there—right? He said, ‘You are of your father the devil.’ So this is why the Churches of God are purged from time to time by God Himself.

Let’s see where He said this. This is something! This is what is so difficult with the world’s professing Christians. When they hear they’re not really of God, but are of Satan the devil, they get all angry. Here’s what Jesus said. Where did this occur? *This occurred at the temple!* Remember? Where was Satan the devil on Passover night? *Right at the beginning of the Passover—right?* Yes, until Jesus gave Judas the sop, Satan entered into him and left.

Verse 44: “‘You are of *your* father the devil, and the lusts of your father you desire to practice. He was a murderer from *the* beginning, and has not stood in the Truth because there is no Truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he is speaking from his own *self*; for he is a liar, and the father of it. And **because I speak the Truth, you do not believe Me**” (vs 44-45). A person can have belief to a certain extent, either for good like the woman who was healed of her 12-year affliction of flowing blood, *or* that you reject God all together because you’re not willing to follow through and do what you need to do. So that’s really quite profound, when we understand it.

Let’s come to John 14. Read through the whole book of John and note all the *ifs*; all the *mays*—which is conditional; all the *belief*—the one who believes, etc., all the way through. And you will see that the whole Gospel of John is really the groundwork for showing the *true belief*.

Here’s what He told His disciples Passover night. This is what we need to also let rule in our lives, because we’re going to go through some traumatic things—aren’t we? *They’re just around the corner!* That night Jesus knew it was going to get real rough. So He said, John 14:1: “‘Let not your heart be troubled....”

Don’t be troubled at the problems that are coming. The physical problems that are coming, do your best to prepare with whatever means you are able to do it. Let God bless you in that. And remember this: All the prophecies of the end-time are going to happen. All the political movements, all of the religious movements are not going to stop it. If there is enough repentance by the Israelites in America, God may push it off a little. But at this point, at this time, that’s the best we can hope for. I know there are many of you out there who watch

Glenn Beck. He said this past week, ‘The republic is gone!’ because of the things that have been passed by the Congress and signed by the President. Remember, he is there because God put him there, *because of our sins as a people*. Likewise we can look at it and say, ‘And the Church of God is in not too great a shape itself either’—right? So we need to be honest there as well.

So don’t let “...your heart be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in Me. In My Father’s house are many dwelling places; if it were otherwise, I would have told you. I am going to prepare a place for you....” (vs1-2). Just like I pointed out last week, when the difficult times come, keep your focus on God, **keep your focus on**

- our purpose
- our calling
- where we are going

Do not get sidetracked by any of the things going on in the world. **We have to be strong in God, believing in Christ.** He said He was going, He’s coming back.

And remember, v 6: “Jesus said to him, ‘I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life...’” That’s what we need to **believe in, have faith in, and walk in.**

- the *way* is the way to walk
- the *truth* is what our lives need to be about
- the *life* is eternal life

“...no one comes to the Father except through Me.” And carry that out to New Jerusalem. No one is going to see God the Father face-to-face unless it’s through Christ.

Let’s come down here to v 10, after they had a hard time figuring out who the Father was. “‘Don’t you believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me?’....” After all this time, here it is the last time He’s going to speak to them in the flesh. Now He spoke to them after He was resurrected and returned and was there forty days and forty nights, and many of things that we have here in John 18, 19, and 20, Jesus had to tell them at that time. So there was a lot of teaching going on during that forty days and forty nights and prepared them for writing the Gospels.

“‘...The words that I speak to you, I do not speak from My own self; but **the Father** Himself, Who dwells in Me, **does the works**.... [we’re going to look at *works* and *belief*] ...Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me; but if not, believe Me because of the works themselves.... [When you look back, they had that full three and a half years to see everything that Jesus did.] ...Truly, truly I say to you, the one who believes in Me shall also do the works that I do... [and that they did] ...and greater works than these shall he do because I am going to the Father” (vs 10-12). And yes, the

apostles did that. And remember there in Acts 6 that the Gospel was multiplying so much. There were thousands and thousands of believers. The apostles were performing the miracles of healing, so much so that they brought the sick from everywhere, laid them in the streets, that if by the shadow of Peter passing by they were healed. That was a greater work than what Jesus did.

Now, how that fits into the end-time and what we're going to do, I don't know. But we're not going to jump up and down and say, 'Oh God, You've got to give us this, You said you would.' *No!* We have to humble ourselves and love God and serve Him, have faith in Him, and let God do, through us, what He wants to be done.

But nevertheless, v 13: "And whatever you shall ask in My name, this will I do that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask anything in My name, I will do *it*.... [qualification]: **..If** you love Me, keep the commandments—namely My commandments" (vs 13-15). Then He tells how they are going to receive the Holy Spirit. So we need to keep all of that in mind.

Now come here to John 16, read everything else in-between and see then you go from *belief* and *faith* to *hope*, to *love*, and all of those are the three greatest. John 16:31: "Jesus answered them, 'Do you now believe?... [After He told them all these things.] ...Listen, the time is coming, and has already come, that you shall be scattered each to his own... [And boy, if that doesn't describe the Church of God today, I don't know.] ...and you shall leave Me alone... [It was particularly to them at that time, because of the events which were going to happen very shortly.] ...and *yet* I am not alone because the Father is with Me. These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace....'" (vs 31-33).

That's why it is so important in the time of trouble and stress and duress

- to have *faith*
- to have *belief*
- to have *hope*

—because that is what is going to carry you through. That's going to give you the courage to do the things you need to do when you see things that are falling apart. That'll give you the courage to *stand for the Truth*, when it comes time to *stand for the Truth*—because that day is going to come!

Notice here's a guarantee, v 33: "...In the world you shall have tribulation.... [Now that's not very comforting—is it? *No!* I'd have to say we've gone through a lot of that already—haven't we? *Yes!* Not as the Great Tribulation is going to be, but nevertheless] ...But be courageous!.... [Have courage

in the face of all the things that are going to come and that comes through *belief!* That comes through *faith!* That comes through *hope!* Here's the promise:] **..I have overcome the world'**" (vs 31-33). How did He overcome the world? *By dying and being resurrected!* And who controls the world? *Satan the devil!*

Now let's talk a little bit about *faith* and *hope*, and so forth. Let's come to Romans 5. Let's see how this works, and let's see how that we have an opportunity. I remember when we first got married, Dolores and I looked at each other and we think about this quite often. We thought, 'Isn't it wonderful, we're not going to get old.' Because we thought we should have been in the place of safety 35-years ago, already in the Kingdom of God. Little did we know that there is a whole lot more to go on. So here we are and we're getting old and so is the Church. And one of the prayers to pray is this: that God will give us all, all the Churches of God, the understanding and the kind of message that is necessary to reach down into those who are younger than we are, because there must be another generation after us.

As I pointed out recently with the coming one-world currency, there's *a lot* that has to be done in prophecy. Because remember this: ***beware of false alarms!*** Things will go along and it will look like, yes, the end is near. I remember in 1969, remember all the riots and burning down of the cities. We thought, 'Oh, look, the end is here, the cities are on fire, yes, it's right, yes, yes, yes!' And then what happened? *Didn't happen!* They got things squared around a little bit. We thought that we were going to a place of safety in 1972, and still a lot of people have their heart set on going to a place of safety. But what you have to do is this: you have to ask the questions:

- What are you going to do if you die before the time God takes some to a place of safety?
- What are you going to do if you think you're going to go, and you're not chosen?
- What are you going to do then?

And don't believe anybody who says, 'I've got the ticket to Petra. We've got it all worked out with the king of Jordan. And here you can buy it, only cost you \$2500, how's that?'

Reminds me when I just got out of boot camp, on my way over to Korea, and we're in the barracks out there at Pittsburgh, California, getting ready to ship over to Korea. And here comes this guy, he came up and he had all these stripes, and medals and everything, and he came up to me, wide eyed, 16-weeks out of recruit, well maybe by that time 24-weeks, six month's out, and it shows you a

false belief and a *false hope*. He came up and said, ‘I work in the personnel department and I make out the orders where all of you are going to go.’ *Really!* ‘Did you know that Hawaii is also included in the Far East command?’ *Is that right?* ‘Yes. Well, for \$25 I can get your name to go to Hawaii, get your orders there.’ *Really!* Well, the closest I got to Hawaii was on the troop ship 700 miles north, as we were on the way to Japan. At that time I really knew I had been had. So that’s a *misplaced belief*. I also looked for him, but I couldn’t find him. I wonder how much money he got off all those young recruits expecting to go over to Hawaii. I bet that night, because it was the night we headed out, that he went over to San Francisco and had a high time on the town on us.

Let’s come over here to Romans 4:16, because this all ties together and works out. “For this reason *it is* of faith, in order that *it might be* by grace... [But remember, ***faith requires obedience.***] ...to the end that the promise might be certain to all the seed—not to the one who is of the law only, but also to the one who is of *the* faith of Abraham, who is *the* father of us all, (Exactly as it is written: ‘I have made you a father of many nations.’) before God in Whom he believed, Who gives life to the dead, and calls the things that are not as though they are. *And* who against hope believed in hope...” (vs 16-18)—***because he obeyed and he understood God!***

So regardless of what may come your way, always keep that *hope* in front of you and *believe in hope*, how they are associated together, not only in their meaning, but also in their spelling in the Greek. “...in order that he might become a father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, ‘So shall your seed be.’ And he, not being weak in the faith, considered not his own body...” (vs 18-19).

Now you’ve got to have a lot of faith if you’re a hundred years old and your wife is ninety and God says you’re going to have a son from your own loins. He laughed in Gen. 17 and Sarah laughed in Gen. 21. Go into any rest home and say, ‘All right, all you gals, come over here. Yup, yup, in spite of your age and your false teeth and your glasses and all of your artificial things that you have, you are going to get pregnant.’ The question is: Where is that man?

God did the impossible, but *you have to believe*. Now think about this. When you start thinking about that there are things that are impossible, do the dot test. I’ve asked you to do this many times. See that dot on a piece of paper? Go ahead, just wiggle it around a little bit, make it a little bigger—that’s what you were when you were conceived. Now look at you! Okay? If you’re young and strong and handsome or beautiful, you think,

‘Oh, boy, this is great!’ Wait until you’re old and gray and dilapidated and falling apart. But still nevertheless that’s where you came from—right? So if God is able to do that, why can’t we believe and trust Him in ***everything***—right?

“And he, not being weak in the faith, considered not his own body, already having become dead, being about one hundred years old, nor *did he consider* the deadness of Sarah’s womb; And he did not doubt the promise of God through unbelief; rather, he was strengthened in the faith, giving glory to God... [He said, ‘Okay, God, You said so, it will be.’] ...For he was fully persuaded that what He has promised, He **is also able to do**.... [Notice: present tense. ‘Able’ means He *has the power to do*.] ...As a result, it was also imputed to him for righteousness. But it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; rather, *it was also written* for our sakes, to whom it shall be imputed—to those who believe in Him Who raised Jesus our Lord from *the* dead” (vs 20-24). So that’s where it all goes back,

- back to God the Father
- back to Jesus Christ
- back to living faith
- back to living belief
- doing the things that God expects us to do.

Then he brings this out: “Who was delivered for our offenses... [Yes, He was the one Who bore our sins and died for them.] ...and was raised for our justification” (v 25). He had to be raised from the dead in order then that God could apply that sacrifice to those who believe. Because it wasn’t just His death, it was also His resurrection.

Now he talks about what we need to do, how we need to do it. Remember what Jesus said, ‘In the world you will have tribulation. But be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.’ Or ‘be courageous, I have overcome the world.’ Here then is how we have the courage.

Romans 5:1: “Therefore, having been justified by **faith**, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through Whom we also have access by **faith** into this grace in which we stand and we ourselves boast in *the* hope of the glory of God.... [That’s why we have the Spirit of God. That’s why we have the Sabbath services. That’s why we hear the words of God so we can obey His voice.] ...And not only *this*, but we also boast in tribulations... [You know, buck up, be ready! I don’t think any of us are going to stand on the front porch and say, ‘Hallelujah, I’ve got a big trial today!’ *No!* But we understand that these things come for a specific purpose.] ...realizing that tribulation brings forth endurance” (vs 1-3).

What did Jesus say? ‘The one who endures to the end, the same shall be saved.’ Right? Notice

what endurance does. This is why we go through these things. “And endurance brings *forth* character...” (v 4). And isn’t that the whole name of the game?

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- the *character* of God
- the *love* of God
- the *hope* of God
- the *faith* of God
- the *mercy*
- the *kindness*
- the *goodness*
- the *forgiveness*

Right?

“And the hope *of God* never makes us ashamed because the love of God has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, which has been given to us” (v 5). So that’s what we need to keep in mind.

- It begins with *belief!*
- That grows to *faith!*
- That grows to *hope!*

Now let’s close with Romans 15:13: **“May the God of hope fill you now with all joy and peace in believing that you may abound in hope and in the power of the Holy Spirit.”**

So this one verse sums everything up—doesn’t it? Puts it all together, shows what we need for today. *So let’s increase our faith, our belief, and our hope!*

Scriptural References:

- 1) Psalm 111:6-10
- 2) Jude 3-4
- 3) Hebrews 11:1-6
- 4) James 2:14-24
- 5) John 3:16-21
- 6) John 6:26-29, 35-36
- 7) Mark 9:14-29
- 8) Mark 5:24-34
- 9) Mark 11:20-23, 25-26
- 10) John 8:30-32, 34-36, 44-45
- 11) John 14:1-2, 6, 10-15
- 12) John 16:31-33
- 13) Romans 4:16-25
- 14) Romans 5:1-5
- 15) Romans 15:13

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Revelation 12:17; 14:12
- Hebrews 1:1-3
- Revelation 2, 3
- John 8:33
- John 18, 19, 20
- Acts 6
- Genesis 17, 21