

Faith of the Patriarchs

Fred R. Coulter—March 2, 2013

Concerning *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order*, let's come to Luke 24, because here Jesus had to do something even for the disciples.

Let's realize this: ***Any of the Bible we truly understand, that understanding comes from God!*** The way that we maintain the understanding is that we continue to be faithful to what we learn. One of the most simple things in understanding the Bible is this. When you read something in it and you understand it and it gives you something to do, *if you do it* then your understanding will increase. Jesus told the disciples, when He spoke in parables, when they said, 'Why do You speak in parables?' He said, '*Because this people draws near to Me with their mouth, but their hearts are far from Me. In seeing, they see not; in hearing, they hear not.*'

When you progress along with understanding the Bible, there comes a point that God begins to deal with you and you begin to understand more based upon what little that you know. There also comes a time, if God is really calling you, then you have a great desire for the Truth. You want the Truth and you look for the Truth. When you start doing that, you're going to find out how much out there in the world is really not true.

Here's what Jesus had to do after He was resurrected and appeared to the disciples and ate some fish and honey in their presence. Luke 24:44: "And He said to them, 'These *are* the words that I spoke to you when I was yet with you, that all *the* things which were written concerning Me in the Law of Moses and *in the* Prophets and *in the* Psalms must be fulfilled.'"

Remember what Paul wrote to Timothy. He said, 'You have known the Holy Writings from a child which are able to make you wise unto salvation through faith in Jesus Christ.' I've given several sermons concerning how was it that the apostles taught Jesus Christ and how could they preach New Testament doctrine with only the Old Testament. They didn't have the New Testament. {note: *How Would You Preach Christ From the Old Testament?*}

Verse 45: "Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures." God has to open our minds to understand all of the Bible. The first three parts of the Bible are:

1. Law
2. Prophets
3. Psalms

They have to be in that order. The *King James Version* follows *Jerome's Latin Vulgate* and

everything is all mixed up. There are 22 books in the Old Testament.

- Ezra, Nehemiah—one book
- 1 and 2-Chronicles—one book
- All of the 12 minor prophets—one book
- 1 and 2-Kings—one book
- Joshua and Judges—one book

That's how you end up with 22. That's the number that God inspired to be for the Old Testament. For the New Testament, you have four divisions:

1. The Acts and the four Gospels

They are the middle division of the Bible. That consists of five books, just like the Law has five books. Since we have to go by the words of Jesus Christ, what do we find in the Gospels? *The words of Jesus Christ!* Then we have the book of Acts, how it was carried out. Just like in the Old Testament they have the book of Numbers for the travels of the tribes of Israel.

If you go by the *King James Version* or any other version that is not in the original order in the New Testament, you don't have things in the right order because you have the four Gospels and Acts. That is the center of the Bible. Isn't that interesting.

2. General Epistles

They come right after the book of Acts. Let's come to the book of Acts, the very last chapter and let's see something very interesting. James—who was he? *The half-brother of Jesus!* Peter—who was he? He was the leading apostle to those who were the circumcision, the Jews scattered abroad.

Then you have John—who was he? *The brother of James*, the sons of Zebedee. He was the one whom Jesus loved and he wrote more about love in the New Testament than any other. Then there are three other small epistles that he wrote: 1-2-3 John. Then you have the book of Jude, written by the other half-brother of Jesus. What do you have? *Jesus and His words, the preaching of the Gospel by the apostles!*

Just as a little sidebar as we come here to Acts 28. I'll let you read it. Paul arrived in Rome in 61_{A.D.} The Catholics claim that Peter came there in 42_{A.D.} But when the Jews came to hear Paul concerning Christ they said, 'We've heard this spoken against everywhere, but we don't know anything about it.'

If Peter were the first pope and he would have gone to Rome in 42_{A.D.}, guess what you have? 19 years of the Gospel being preached in Rome—

right? They would have known. You also have another thing, as I have mentioned before, since he was an apostle to the circumcision, you know the Italians were not circumcised, so he was in a wrong place. *He never was in a wrong place because he wasn't there!*

After they left, they had this special meeting and Acts 28:26 is where he talks about what Isaiah said there. He quoted this to those Jewish leaders right there, the rabbis and the leading men. He quoted Isaiah:

Acts 28:26: "Saying, 'Go to this people and say, 'In hearing you shall hear, and in no way understand; and in seeing you shall see, but in no way perceive. For the heart of this people has grown fat, and their ears are dull of hearing, and they have closed their eyes; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their hearts, and should be converted, and I should heal them'''" (vs 26-27).

What a warning! All of those Jews gathered together to learn about Christ, here is a leading ex-Pharisee—interestingly enough from the tribe of Benjamin, the very last tribe of the 12 tribes of Israel—and he gives a witness to them in saying this.

But notice what he said after that, v 28: "'Be it known to you, that the salvation of God has, therefore, been sent to the Gentiles; and they will hear.' And after he said these things, the Jews went away with much debate among themselves.' And Paul remained two whole years in his own hired house, welcoming all who came to him, Proclaiming the Kingdom of God, and teaching the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness, no man forbidding *him*" (vs 28-31).

Then you turn a couple of pages and you have the General Epistles; that's where they should be. The *King James Version* has them all mixed up. They have the book of Romans right after the book of Acts. They don't have the book of Hebrews in the correct place.

The book of Hebrews is very interesting, because it is the 22nd book in the New Testament, if it is in the right order. In the *King James Version* it is number 19. If you read the section that I have in the commentary in the front—*God's Divine Design of the Holy Bible and Its Numeric Connection*, pg 9—concerning the numerics of God and how important that numerics are, you'll understand why it's important that the book of Hebrews is number 22 in the New Testament.

Add to that, there are 22 books written in Hebrew in the Old Testament, so it is number 44 from the beginning of the Bible.

There's another very interesting thing about the number 44. Jesus' ministry was 44 months long. He was baptized four days before His 40 days' temptation. When He died He was in the grave three days and three nights and on the 4th day He ascended to the Father. So, you have 4 and then how many days did He appear to the disciples? 40!

- At the beginning of His ministry you have 44 days.
- At the end of His ministry you have 44 days.
- See the symmetry? *Yes, all the way through!*

Hebrews 11 is the *faith* chapter. What does it talk about in this chapter? *How we got from the Old Testament to the New Testament!* It's based upon faith. It's also interesting that as we go through it you will see there are two places where faith is in italics because it's referring back to the word faith in the verse before within the verse. When you take out those two words 'faith' in italics—because they weren't from the original Greek—you end up with 22 'faiths':

- by faith
- through faith
- faith is

That's 2 times 11. When you get into how the Bible is put together, the numerics are really fantastic. Same way when you get into the calendar. Same way when you get into the creation of God.

Like I have just written in the letter that's going out this coming week, men trying to devise calendars on their own look out to the heavens from the earth, and they can never get it right. They always have problems with it. Whereas God, He gives us time from heaven down to the earth, because He created the heavens and the earth and everything that there is.

We're going to do a little study through the *faith* chapter in Heb. 11. I'll refer to other Scriptures as we go along. Some of them we will turn to; some of them we won't.

What did Jesus say in Luke 18? *When He comes to the earth*, 'Will the Son of man find faith in the earth?' If we follow along with what faith is here, then we have it really very important to understand.

If you do not have the series on Hebrews where we go through—41 sermons—word-by-word through the whole book of Hebrews, you need it. You need to understand it. It will explain to you concerning why Paul wrote this.

Remember, this had to be sent to Jerusalem. Paul wrote this when he was in prison in Rome.

James died in 62_{A.D.}, I think it was, somewhere right in there. There's no mention of the death of James, so this means that the book of Hebrews had to be written before James died. Remember how Paul was treated when he was there in Jerusalem the last time. The mobs wanted to kill him. How do you think they would have received an epistle to the Hebrews with Paul's name on it? *They would probably have introduced it to the fire immediately!* He's talking about **faith**.

Hebrews 10:35: "For this *very* reason, do not cast away your confidence, which is bringing a great reward. For you need to have endurance..." (vs 35-36). That's certainly something we need today—*endurance!*

Today we are in a psychological tract, as I've mentioned. Everybody wants short summaries. Everybody wants things written in just a few things. Once you have many of those summaries, you think you know a lot, but you really don't have any depth of understanding. Therefore, you can't have the endurance that you need.

"...so that, after you have done **the will of God**, you may receive the promise" (v 36). The *will of God* is a very broad term here. What did Jesus say? *That you have to be practicing the will of the Father Who is in heaven!* This is why we need to constantly put the Bible together, rightly divide it.

Verse 37: "For *it is* but a short time *until* He Who is coming will come, and will not delay." That's before they understood how far off it was going to be. But for us today this is a prophecy. It is but a short time. Now how long is a short time? If a day is as a thousand years to God and a thousand years as a day, a short time to us can be much longer than we would figure a short time.

Verse 38 is the key; this is what is missing so much in people's lives today, even in the Churches of God. They want to talk about doctrine, which is fine. They want to talk about calendars and a lot of them don't know what they're talking about. They want to talk about, in many cases, everything but about God and everything but about the Bible, etc.

Verse 38: "Now *it is written*, '**The just shall live by faith**...' [Did not Paul quote that in Rom. 1:16-17? *Yes, indeed!*] ...but if anyone draws back, My soul does not delight in him.'" Did not Jesus say, *He who puts his hand to the plow and looks back—that is looks back wanting to give up—is not fit for the Kingdom of God?*

What happened to one woman who was told, 'Don't look back.' What happened to her when she looked back? *She turned to a pillar of salt!* Even *Josephus* wrote that to this day, in his time, you could go there and see the remains of that pillar of

salt. I don't know if I'd want to lick my finger and, 'Hello, there, Mrs. Lot.'

Verse 39: "But we are not of *those* who draw back unto destruction; rather, **we are of faith unto the saving of the soul**." Then he begins to explain what faith is.

Hebrews 11:1: "Now **faith is the substance**... [It's not the confidence. Confidence can be involved, but substance. The Greek here is 'hypostasis,' meaning that *it is a spiritual substance* that comes from the Holy Spirit.] ...of *things* hoped for... [why you believe] ...**and the conviction of things not seen**."

You have the conviction that *if God says so, it is true!* Quite contrary to one famous newscaster, Bill O'Reilly, who says, 'The Bible is allegorical.' There are allegories there, but that doesn't mean that they are not literally as well. 'There are contradictions in the Bible.' When you compare to Catholicism, you are correct. There are contradictions in the Bible. How many people watch that and say, 'Well, right on. That's really, really good.'

Conviction! When you have the conviction, **you know it is true, you know it is right, you will stick with it.** Even if you have faults and difficulties that you need to overcome, you're not going to give up on it. "...conviction of things not seen." Now we're closer to the second coming of Christ and closer to the fulfillment of man's great worldwide government and civilization at the end-time so we can see some of these things. But even Paul said, at best, 'we look through a glass darkly.' But **we have to have that conviction that if God says so, it is!**

When you do that, then when you have your own problems and difficulties and it says repent and change and do this, you know you need to.

Verse 2: "For **by this kind of faith the elders** obtained a good report. **By faith** we understand that the worlds were created by *the* Word of God..." (vs 2-3). No evolution! As we go along, you can put in your margin or in your notes, John 1, 'In the beginning was the Word. The Word was with God and the Word was God. Nothing came into being that He did not create.'

"...so that the things that are seen were made from *things* that are invisible" (v 3). That is a true, absolutely accurate scientific statement.

There are particles that come through the earth and through our bodies that are so small, you don't even know they're coming or going. Yet, men have been able to devise certain equipment so they can at least see it on a screen as it moves past and it has its creative genetic code that is able to be

registered on the device that they have made. Otherwise, they can't see it.

I think one of them is called 'quartz' and 'murons' that are invisible. The more they study, the more they understand that the scientists now can look at an individual cell. What did they use to call these? *Simple, one-cell animals!* Now they understand that they are so complex there are so many things going on within that cell that it is a reflection of what they look out and see in the universe. Absolutely an amazing thing!

Verse 4: "**By faith...**" Notice whenever it says 'by faith' there is something that must be done. ***If you do not have the works of faith, you do not have faith!*** You may have an idea, you may think you believe. But by faith Abel thought about an offering for God. *NO!*

"...Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain..." (v 4). Why? *Because he did what God said!* So the lesson here is, ***if you believe in God and if you have faith, you will do what God says!***

"...by which he obtained witness that he was righteous... [Righteousness is: *all Your commandments are righteousness*' (Psa. 119:172).] ...God testifying of his gifts; and through it, though he dies, *he is yet speaking*" (v 4). Now how is that? *Because it's in the Word of God.* What did Jesus say concerning the Word of God? *'They are spirit and they are life. The flesh profits nothing.'*

Verse 5: "**By faith Enoch** was transported so that he would not look upon death..." Later he died. But what happened? *Just like all the prophets of God, they were after him!* Remember, was it Philip or Stephen, that he baptized the Ethiopian eunuch the Spirit of God took him away and he took him to another place? That's what it's talking about. He transported him away.

"...and was not found... [Though they were looking for him.] ...because God had transported him; for before his departure it was testified of him that he pleased God" (v 5). When was that? That was in the early apostasy when everyone was going after their own thing.

Now here's one, this took a lot of action, v 7: "**By faith Noah**, after being divinely instructed by God about the things *he could* not yet see, was moved with fear *and* prepared an ark for *the* salvation of his house; through which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith." Meaning, he will be in the first resurrection.

You talk about having to do something that was contrary, that no one would believe, that you were the stupid laughing stock of the whole world.

Just like today. If God were going to have an ark built and he called someone to do it amongst all this technology and things that we have, here he's out there building an ark. 'What are you doing?' *I'm building an ark.* 'Ho, ho, ho.'

What happened to him? "**By faith...**" Remember, that faith had to continue, because how long were they in the ark before it started raining? *Seven days!* Don't you think that all the people were out there gathered around jeering and mocking, banging on the side of the ark, saying, 'Noah, are you in there? Noah, when is it going to rain? You've been here now seven days.'

Then someone said, 'Oh, oh, look at those clouds.' Someone else said, 'It's beginning to rain. Noah, open up.' *NO!* 'by faith.' Sometimes you have to do things singularly alone and trusting in God.

That's what it was with Abraham, v 8: "By faith Abraham, being called *of God* to go out into the place which he would later receive for an inheritance, **obeyed...** [Real faith *requires obedience, action!* We talked about, up here to begin with endurance.] ...and went, not knowing where he was going."

He didn't have a GPS locator to find out where he was. But what was God's requirement of Abraham? *He said, 'You leave your father's household and you go where I tell you to go!* I will make of you a great nation and I will bless you and I will bless all the families of the earth through you. Those who curse you, I will curse them.' Look what we have.

I think that Abraham is going to be utterly amazed when he sees what the promises that were given to him were fulfilled through the *spiritual* seed, through the *physical* seed. That's going to be something!

Verse 9: "**By faith...** [certain ones faith is mentioned several times] ...he sojourned in the land of promise, like a foreigner, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the joint heirs of the same promise.... [he died two years after Jacob was born] ...For he was waiting for the city with *the* foundation of which God is *the* Architect and Builder" (vs 9-10).

We're going to see a couple of things here in the book of Matthew. We will see this is exactly what Abraham had to do. There was no argument about it. They're showing a special on the History Channel about the Bible. They did a pretty good job in showing the situation of what it was like to be scourged by the Romans; they did pretty well with that. But other than that, when they showed the preview of when God asked Abraham to offer up

Isaac, the typical thing, he was mad, he beat his fist and things like this. *He didn't do it at all!*

This is how you go through and prove the Bible. There are no contradictions in the Bible. There may be some things we don't understand, but there are no contradictions in the Bible. This agrees exactly with the words of Christ and how far away from the time of Christ was Abraham? *Well over 2,000 years!*

Matthew 6:31: "Therefore, do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'With what shall we be clothed?' For the nations seek after all these things. And your heavenly Father knows that you have need of all these things. But *as for* you, seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you." (vs 31-33). What was Abraham seeking first? *The Kingdom of God, the city of God!* New Testament doctrine.

Matthew 5:48: "Therefore, you shall be perfect, even as your Father Who *is* in heaven is perfect." How about tackling that? How's that going to happen? *Jesus showed you can't do it unless you are converted!* How did He show it? *He said that 'if your eye offend you, pluck it out!'* He said, 'You have to be as perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect.' All of this has to come about through God's power and plan. You can't do it, though you pluck out your eyes, both of them, cut off both your hands, both your feet. You can still be lusting being blind, lying in your bed, and incapable of doing anything except lusting and imagining. This follows through in everything.

Even though Sarah laughed, she finally believed. Hebrews 11: "**By faith also Sarah** herself received power to conceive seed, and gave birth *when she was well* beyond the childbearing age because she esteemed Him faithful Who had personally promised *her a son.*"

She had her struggles with it. She even had her own way of fulfilling the promise of God. It shows the weakness of human beings—right? We read a promise of God and then we try and fulfill it ourselves and it doesn't work.

So what did she say to try and work it out after she heard the promise that was given to Abraham? *She said, 'Here is Hagar!'* Look at the problems we have with that. The moral of that story is: You don't help God fulfill His will. You let Him fulfill His will. She finally got the point and Isaac was born.

Verse 12: "**Because of this faith**, there came into being from one *man*—and moreover, *one* who was *reproductively* dead—*descendants* as numerous as the stars in the heavens, and as countless as the

sand on the seashore." That didn't happen in their lifetimes. They're not going to see the result of this until the resurrection.

Verse 13 tells us Enoch was not in heaven; Abel is not in heaven: "All these **died in faith**... [still believing] ...not having received the promises, but having seen them from afar, and having been persuaded of *them*, and having embraced *them*, and having confessed that they were strangers and sojourners on the earth." That's the same thing for us. We have no lasting place on this earth to live except the Kingdom of God, which is coming.

Verse 1: "For those who say such things make it manifest that they seek *their* own country, *as promised by God*. And if, on the one hand, they had let their minds dwell *fondly* on the place where they came from, they might have had opportunity to return" (vs 14-15). Always the way it is. What did Jesus say we have to do before baptism? *We have to count the cost!*. We have to know that with baptism, *there's no way going back!* That is irrevocable.

Verse 16: "But now, on the other hand, they are aspiring to a more excellent country—that is, a heavenly one...." What are we broaching here, right in this one chapter, from the beginning of the Bible to the end of the Bible, from the beginning of the New Testament to the end of the Old Testament? And what is in Rev. 21 and 22 in the New Testament? *New heavens and new earth and heavenly Jerusalem*—correct? That's what they were aspiring for.

Verse 16: "Therefore, God is not ashamed to be called their God because He has prepared a city for them.... [there are exactly 22 *faiths* minus the two that are in italics] ...**By faith Abraham**... [We've got Abraham twice, Sarah once, Abraham the third time—that's four times.] ...Abraham, when he was being tried, offered up Isaac; and he who had received the promises offered up *his* only begotten son" (vs 16-17). Isn't that interesting? He did beget Ishmael, but Ishmael is not counted as *the promise*. It says the same thing of Jacob and Esau. Esau was not of the promise.

What were the two biggest things in the family of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob? *Ishmael and Esau!* What's the two biggest things in the world today? *The sons of Jacob, and Ishmael and Esau!* How can people possibly understand anything if they don't have some understanding of the Bible?

Here's why he did it, v 18: "Of whom it was said, 'In Isaac shall your Seed be called'; *because he* reckoned... [this is the kind of faith that he had] ...that God was able to raise him even from among *the* dead, from which he also received him in a figurative way" (vs 18-19). In other words, 'if God

gave this to me in my old age, if I really do offer him up, then God is able to bring him back to life.’

Verse 20: “**By faith Isaac** blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things that were to come. By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, and worshiped God, *leaning* on the top of his staff. By faith Joseph, when he was dying, spoke of the *coming* exodus of the children of Israel, and gave a command concerning his bones. By faith Moses... [we’ll end with Moses and let you read the rest of it] ...after he was born, was hidden three months by his parents because they saw that he was a beautiful little child...” (vs 20-23).

You read the account of it. They put him in this waterproof basket at three months old, went down and the daughter of Pharaoh got him. The little girl followed to see where it was. The little girl asked the daughter of Pharaoh after she brought him out of the water and said, ‘Your name shall be Moses, that is *you’re brought out of the water*. He shall be counted as my son.’ The little girl said, ‘Do you need a nursing woman to help feed the little infant?’ She said, ‘Yes!’ The girl said, ‘I know where to get one.’ She went and brought the mother of Moses. How about a little twist of fate there?

Verse 24: “**By faith Moses**, after becoming a great *leader*... [he was] ...refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter, Choosing to suffer affliction with the people of God, rather than to enjoy *the temporary* pleasure of sin. For he esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt because he was looking intently to the reward.... [looking to God] ...**By faith** he left Egypt... [He had to run.] ...not fearing the wrath of the king; for he persevered, as *if he were* seeing the *one Who is invisible*. **By faith** he kept the Passover and the sprinkling of the blood so that the destroyer of the firstborn would not slay them. **By faith** they passed through the Red Sea as through a dry land in which the Egyptians while making the attempt, were swallowed up by the waters” (vs 24-29).

Pretty soon we’re going to partake of the Passover. We need to use these as examples and understand that we reaffirm the New Covenant every year. Every year God gives us, as it were, a fresh beginning.

We as human beings because of ‘the law of sin and death’ within us, we have different things come along during the year. We have different things that God deals with us in our lives and how we should handle them and what we should do.

We have different trials and things that we’ve gone through in this past year. You may even have some that you’re going through right now just before the Passover. That’s why *we need to keep the Passover in faith*, the way that Jesus Christ has

given it to us and with the words of Christ, the words of the New Covenant. Then whatever books may be written of the people of God, maybe perhaps we’ll be included in that sometime in the future. But nevertheless, our names right now are written in the book of Life.

We need to do the things in love and obedience and faith to make sure that we attain to the purpose of the book of Life and the resurrection. That’s what the Passover is all about!

Scriptural References:

- 1) Luke 24:44-45
- 2) Acts 28:26-31
- 3) Hebrews 10:35-39
- 4) Hebrews 11:1-5, 7-10
- 5) Matthew 6:31-33
- 6) Matthew 5:48
- 7) Hebrews 11:11-29

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Luke 18
- Romans 1:16-17
- John 1
- Psalm 119:172
- Revelation 21, 22

Also referenced:

From *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order: Commentary*, page 9, *God’s Divine Design of the Holy Bible and Its Numeric Connection*

Sermon Series:

- *How Would You Preach Christ From the Old Testament?*
- *Hebrews*

Book: *Josephus*

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