

God's Faith in Us

Fred R. Coulter—February 14, 2015

Greetings, everyone! Welcome to Sabbath services. With so much going on in the world, it's easy to get depressed and disgusted with the things that they are doing, yet we have to live in the world *but not be part of the world!*

How do we do this? *We do this by faith!* Jesus even made the statement in Luke 18, 'When the Son of Man comes, will He find the true faith on the earth?' Of course, you look at the situation in the world, and the growth of the atheists and the agnostics, and all of that sort of thing, that we need to understand how we can live by faith and be able to have endurance with hope and with happiness. That's through faith.

Heb. 11 is what is called the faith chapter. We're going to learn some very important things concerning *faith*, because too many people say, 'Faith alone; you don't need any works.' They're not correct. That was a battle of the Protestants against the Catholics. When they said no works, they were referring to the works of Catholicism, but they also eliminated the good works we should do as contained in the New Testament.

This chapter is really very unusual from the point of view that wherever it says *by faith*, there was *obedience and works*.

Hebrews 11:1: "Now, **faith is the substance...** [a spiritual substance from God just like His Holy Spirit] ...of *things* hoped for..." *Faith and hope* go together. Remember, you have *faith, hope and love*, these three, but the greatest is love.

"...and the conviction of things not seen" (v 11). There are a lot of things that take place that we do not see, but we know *by faith* that it is true.

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). It tells us there in John 1 that Jesus is the Word of God and everything came into being and there was nothing that came into being that He did not create.

When you look at how complicated it is, think of the stupidity of the faith of the atheists when they say it all began with a big bang.

- Where did the big bang come from?
- Where did the energy for the big bang come from?

They don't believe in God, but as complicated as our human bodies are, the whole creation on the earth is, and the creation of the heavens around us, that could not happen by accident.

We don't see God, but *that doesn't mean that He doesn't exist*. That does not mean that God did not create it.

"...so that the things that are seen were made from *things* that are invisible" (v 3)—that is to the naked eye. With the microscopes and the high powered biological microscopes we have, they can even see genes. But here it's talking about just by visual sight.

Likewise with us. We come from a speck of dust, but look at us, trillions of times the size of our beginning. That should tell us a great deal about God and what He wants.

Notice that each one had something to do in *obedience* to God, v 4: "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.*" How is that? *Because the Word of God is living! The Word of God is upheld by the Spirit of God*, so it is still in present tense.

Verse 5: "By faith Enoch was transported... [Didn't mean he went to heaven, he was transported through the atmosphere to another place.] ...so that he would not look upon death... [at that time. But v 13 says all these died in the faith.] (Enoch died): ...and was not found because God had transported him; for before his departure it was testified of him that he pleased God. **Now without faith it is impossible to please God...**" (vs 5-6).

What's very important about that is that the laws of God work automatically. If you don't believe the simple things that you read when you read the Bible and begin wanting to do them and, in fact, do them, there's an automatic blinding that occurs and people cannot understand.

"...For it is mandatory *for* the one who comes to God to believe that He exists..." (v 6). Everything about Him that He is:

- He is Spirit
- He is perfect
- He is a God of love
- He is a God Truth
- He is Creator
- He is faithful
- He performs every promise and every word
- the Word of God is also His almighty power

What He says will be! This is the kind of faith that we need to have in coming to God.

Yes, we have our faith, because as we understand things, all human beings have a *form* of faith. The faith in what they believe. Atheists have a faith that evolution is true. Nothing you can provide to them, even all the facts that there is no evidence of fossils that are transitioned fossils, they still believe. What we are talking about as Christians is *the belief that comes from God*.

James 1:3: "Knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. But let endurance have *its* perfect work, so that you may be perfect and complete, not lacking in anything. However, if anyone lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, Who gives to everyone freely and does not reproach *the one who asks*; and it shall be given to him. But let him ask in faith, not doubting at all because the one who doubts is like a wave of *the sea* that is driven by the wind and tossed *to and fro*" (vs 3-6).

Water is the most unstable thing there is, if it isn't frozen. That's why even just carrying a bowl or a cup across the room, if it's too full, you're going to spill it because it reacts to the motion of the body.

Verse 7: "Do not let that man expect that he will receive anything from the Lord. *He is* a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways" (vs 7-8). They can't make up their mind. When you get that way, part of the problem that exists is this: 'God, I want you for blessings, but I still want to live my own way.' We have to live by faith and that faith is to believe God and to keep His commandments.

Let's see something else about faith. Here we find that you can't have preference. In other words, what he's talking about here is a political problem and a spiritual problem.

James 2:1: "My brethren, do not have the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ... [because it comes from God] ...*the Lord* of glory, with respect of persons. Now then, if a man comes into your synagogue wearing gold rings *and dressed* in splendid apparel, and *there* comes in also a poor man in lowly apparel, and you give preference to the one who is wearing the splendid apparel, and say to him, 'Seat yourself here in the best place'; and you say to the poor man, 'Stand over there,' or, 'Sit here under my footstool'" (vs 1-3). You never know. Sometimes angels appear, I would have to say probably as human beings in very poor condition, just to see what we will do.

Verse 4: "Then have you not passed judgment among yourselves, and have made yourselves judges *with evil opinions*?" You say, 'Oh, the rich man is better and the poor man is worse. Therefore, we have preference for the rich man.' Who knows? What if the rich man is a con-artist and you don't know it? What if he got his gold and silver improperly, by misrepresentation and

Ponzi schemes? And here comes a poor man, dressed poorly, and he's wanting to know about God. He should have the best seat. Let's see something else concerning that.

Verse 14: "My brethren, what good *does* it do, if anyone says *that he* has faith, and does not have works?... [faith is to move us to do the good works of God] ...Is faith able to save him?... [he gives an example] ...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?... [you haven't helped] ...In the same way also, faith, if it does not have works, is dead, by itself" (vs 14-17).

Sidebar: Read Rev. 2 and 3; what is the first thing that Jesus says in His messages to the seven churches? ***I know your works!*** Your works haven't been complete. He also says, '***The one who keeps My works to the end...***' So, the works we are to do are the ones that we find in the Word of God, which are the works of God and Jesus.

Verse 18: "But someone is going to say, 'You have faith, and I have works.' *My answer is:...*" This is a little tricky because it's a play on words, because it shows everyone has a measure of faith and it's demonstrated by their works. For example, atheists and evolutionists have faith in evolution. What are their works? *They do what they want to do and they reject God*. He's saying, 'Let's compare this with the works of God.' So, it's a play on words.

"...You prove your faith to me through your works, and I will prove my faith to you through my works" (v 18). So, there are two different kinds of works here:

1. one has *human faith* with human works
2. the other is *spiritual faith* with spiritual works

Verse 19: "Do you believe that God is one?...?" Very interesting; you come from atheists and agnostics to those who believe there is a God.

"...You do well *to believe this...*" (v 19). But should you expect a reward because you believe there is a God and don't have the faith to obey Him?

"...Even the demons believe—and tremble *in fear*. But are you willing to understand, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead?" (vs 19-20). Then he gives a very good example concerning Abraham:

Verse 21: "Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up Isaac, his own son, upon the altar? Do you not see that faith was working together with his works, and ***by works his***

faith was perfected?" (vs 21-22). You can't have perfect faith unless you also have the works to support it.

Verse 23: "And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, 'Now Abraham believed 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 23-24).

It's like having a car without gasoline. If you have a car that runs on gasoline and you don't have any gasoline, you may have a car but you aren't going anyplace. If you have the gasoline, you don't have a car, you may be able to start a fire or keep yourself warm as long as you have gasoline, but you're not going to go anyplace. In either instance you've got to have both.

Likewise *spiritually*: ***You have to have faith in Jesus Christ and God the Father and faith from God through His Spirit with the works of God, which then makes faith complete!*** Perfect could also be complete.

Someone is going to say, 'Rom. 4 says Abraham didn't do it by works; or James says he did it by works. There must be a contradiction in the Bible.' There are two different instances. We just read the one where he offered Isaac. That was something he could do, and God told him to do it. He was commended for obeying the voice of God. The other one that Paul is talking about here in Rom. 4 was Gen. 15.

Here is what happened: God came to Abraham when he was 85-years-old and said, 'You're going to have a son.' Then He took Abraham outside and showed him all the stars of heaven and said, 'Count the stars in heaven if you are able to number them.'

What *work* was necessary for that to be true on Abraham's part? He wasn't told to go someplace. He wasn't told anything else. ***It was belief, because God said so; therefore, it will be!*** That kind of faith—the *belief*—is the spiritual work; whereas to take his son was spiritual and physical. What happened when he offered up his son? ***God sent a ram for a substitute sacrifice!*** There's no contradiction. There are two different instances.

Romans 4:1: "What then shall we say *that* our father Abraham has found with respect to the flesh? For if Abraham was justified by works..." (vs 1-2). It says in James 2 he was *justified by his works*, but in this case there was no work for him to do, so ***his faith justified him.***

Just like with us. God promises eternal life. He's give us His Holy Spirit. He tells us what we are to do, but we don't have the fulfillment of eternal

life, yet. But we believe that we will receive it if we're faithful to the end. Same way here.

Verse 2: "For if Abraham was justified by works, he has a basis for boasting, but not before God. For what does the Scripture say? 'And Abraham believed God, and it was imputed to him for righteousness'" (vs 2-3)—because he believed what God said, and it did eventually come to pass. It took another 15 years before Isaac came along.

Let's look at some of the faith that we need to have. It's the same way when we go to God and we ask God to forgive us our sins. Same way when we are baptized and receive the Holy Spirit.

- God has promised it
- God cannot lie
- God will not lie
- He will give it

{Note book, *Judaism: A Revelation of Moses or a Religion of Men?* and the sermon series *Scripturalism vs Judaism* CD that goes with it} What is discussed in all of Galatians ***is not*** concerning the commandments of God but the laws of Judaism.

How important is this, the separation of the traditions of men? What did Jesus say when people have the traditions of men, which Judaism is? They claim the Bible but they follow *their* traditions. They read the Bible and that is true, but then they interpret it with *their* traditions, rather than the clear sense of what God says.

Peter was a politician, came to Antioch and was one of the leading apostles. Remember, he was an *apostle to the circumcision*, which means the Jews not to the Gentiles. Paul was the apostle to the Gentiles. What we are going to see here is an interaction of Peter and the ones who came down from Jerusalem separating themselves from eating with the Gentiles. That is not a Law of God; that is a law of Judaism.

Galatians 2:11: "But when Peter came to Antioch, I withstood him to *his* face because he was to be condemned... [a little public rebuke and correction] ...for, before certain *ones* came from James..." (vs 11-12). He didn't want to get in bad with James because James was the apostle at Jerusalem and the half-brother of Jesus.

"...he was eating with the Gentiles. However, when they came, he drew back and separated himself *from the Gentiles*, being afraid of those of *the circumcision party*" (v 12).

Why would he be afraid? Because they would go back and say, 'James, did you know that Peter is eating with the Gentiles?'

Verse 13: "And the rest of *the* Jews joined him in *this* hypocritical act, insomuch that even Barnabas.. [another apostle, a Levite] ...was carried away with their hypocrisy."

That's what Paul explained about the traditions of the Jews and what was Paul before he was called? *A Pharisee!* What was he in the religion of the Pharisees? *Blameless!* But he counted all of that but dung (Phil. 3).

Verse 14: "But when I saw that they did not walk uprightly according to the Truth of the Gospel, I said to Peter in the presence of them all, 'If you, being a Jew, are living like the Gentiles...' Living with them together. There is a *traditional law* of Judaism you cannot keep any company with Gentiles. You cannot even eat with them.

"...and not according to Judaism, why do you compel the Gentiles to Judaize?" (v 14). To make them separate. What did we read in James 1? *That if you have respect of persons you are sinning!* What do we find right here by Peter? This is an interesting one here, too.

Sidebar: Why do the Catholics say that the Apostle Peter was the apostle who founded the religion in Rome? Did the Italians practice circumcision? *No!* Remember when Peter was called to go to Cornelius, what was he? *He was the band of the Italians, uncircumcised!*

Peter went in and told them that '*God showed me I shouldn't call any man common or unclean, but God respects anyone who does righteousness.*' In order for God to prove the point that He was going to deal with the Gentiles and that they had to set aside all the laws of Judaism in separation from the Gentiles, what did God do while Peter was speaking to them? *Gave them the Holy Spirit!*

The reason God gave it first was because you know that Peter would not have baptized them without that coming first. What did he say? 'Who can forbid water or baptism.' Peter really knew better and he stayed there about four or five more days living right in Cornelius' house. All of the servants were there, uncircumcised. All of the soldiers that were there, but some of the six that were with Peter went back to Jerusalem and they said, 'Guess what? Look what Peter has done.' When he got back to Jerusalem, he was raked over the coals, so he had to explain it. This is why it's so condemning here.

Verse 14: "But when I saw that they did not walk uprightly according to the Truth of the Gospel, I said to Peter in the presence of them all, 'If you being a Jew, are living like the Gentiles, and not according to Judaism, why do you compel the Gentiles to Judaize? We who are Jews by nature—

and not sinners of *the* Gentiles—knowing that a **man is not justified by works of law...**" (vs 14-16). That means *traditions* and *sacrifices*. Has nothing to do with the other commandments and laws of God.

{Note Appendix R: *What is Meant by Works of Law*"}? in the *Faithful Version Bible*, which explains all about works of law.

"...but through *the* faith of Jesus Christ..." (v 16). This means the faith of Jesus Christ:

- you believe in Him
- you're forgiven your sins
- He is the sacrifice for the sins of the whole world

"...we also have believed in Christ Jesus in order that we might be justified by *the* faith of Christ, and not by works of law; because **by works of law shall no flesh be justified**" (v 16).

How does that work? *Works of law would be like this in Catholicism, you go to the confessional booth and you confess your sins to the priest!* One man got tired of it, and when the priest said, 'Are you here to confess your sins?' the man said, 'Yes, let's hear yours first.' You know that when you tell it to a man you never tell everything, because they would give you so many 'hail, Marys' and 'our fathers' that would never stop doing it.

He says, 'Your sins are forgiven if you do 200 'hail, Marys' and 200 'our fathers.' That's a **work of law**. The Jews have their various laws so in the book *Judaism: A Revelation of Moses or a Religion of Men?* we have a whole chapter on the laws of Judaism. I won't go any further into that.

"...but through *the* faith of Jesus Christ, we also have believed in Christ Jesus in order that we might be justified by *the* faith of Christ, and not by works of law; because by works of law shall no flesh be justified" (v 16).

Another way to answer the question is that ***the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, as God in the flesh, covers the sins of everyone in the world who repents!*** Can something you do, even the commandments of God, forgive your sins? *No!*

It's like someone murders someone. Then he says to himself, 'I'm never going to do that again.' Like this one man who killed his whole family, went to Colorado. He was a Lutheran. For 20 years they never knew where he was. He changed his name, never killed anyone else, remarried, was a good upstanding citizen in the community, an accountant.

So, the *cold case* people got it and they said, 'Let's go ahead and do this,' and they put it on *The 10 Most Wanted*. They had a man do a sketch of

what he would like today from previous photos and it came out almost identical to the very glasses. Someone in Colorado saw that on the television and said, 'That's So-and-So.' They called in, the police came out, and sure enough that was it.

How many laws did he keep to keep from getting caught all those twenty years? *A perfect citizen, but he never paid the penalty!* They came out and arrested him and he went to prison for the rest of his life.

Only the sacrifice of Jesus Christ can forgive anyone's sins before God the Father, *no other sacrifice or work will substitute for the sacrifice of Jesus Christ!* It just cannot because His work, coming in the flesh, giving up His Godhood to become a man, and then dying the brutal death that He died, *there is nothing greater than that!*

Can any man match that? *First of all, he can't become God to match it!* So, anything that a man does, unless there's repentance and forgiveness, there's no justification.

"...by works of law shall no flesh be justified.... [there has to be repentance through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ to God the Father] ...Now then, if we are seeking to be justified in Christ, *and* we ourselves are found to be sinners... [which we are. We sin because we're weak.] ...*is* Christ then *the* minister of sin? MAY IT NEVER BE! For if I build again those things that I destroyed..." (vs 16-18).

How did you destroy it? *You forsook everything that you did before you came to repentance:*

- your way of life
- the way that you think
- the way that you act
- the way that you do

"...I am making myself a transgressor" (v 18). Don't accuse Christ; Christ will never approve of any of your sins. The only way you can overcome them is repent and not do them.

Verse 19: "For I through law... [works of law] ...died to... [works of] ...law, in order that I may live to God. I have been crucified with Christ, yet, I live...." (vs 19-20). That's what it is, you are co-crucified with Christ (Rom. 6).

"...*Indeed*, it is no longer I; but Christ lives in me. For *the* life that I am now living in *the* flesh, **I live by faith**..." (v 20)—by

- keeping the commandments of God
- loving God
- loving your neighbor
- doing what is right as God has said

"...that *very faith* of the Son of God, Who loved me and gave Himself for me.... [take those words and let those words be yours] ...I do not nullify the grace of God; for if righteousness *is* through *works of* law, then Christ died in vain" (vs 20-21). There's much more to it you find in the book of Romans, but we'll leave it at that for the time being.

Let's answer one question, in Gal. 3 Paul is talking about that the Law is not contrary to the promises of God.

Galatians 3:21: "*Is* the Law... [the commandments of God] ...then contrary to the promises of God? MAY IT NEVER BE! For if a law had been given that had the power to give life, *then* righteousness would indeed have been by law."

There is no law that says, 'Do this and you'll receive eternal life.' The command is *repent and be baptized for the forgiveness of sins and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit!*

Verse 22: "But the Scriptures have shut up all things under sin, so that by *the* faith of Jesus Christ the promise might be given to those who believe. Now, before **faith** came..." (vs 22-23). The Jews had the Law. Some people keep some of the commandments of God, but *you have to have the faith unto salvation!* That's what he's talking about.

"...before **faith** came we were guarded under law..." (v 23). What does that mean? *That means that people who keep the Law in the letter of the Law, not having been converted*—there are a lot of people who have never murdered, never steal, never commit adultery—*are guarded by the Law!* They are not converted, but they're doing what is right. Doing that because there is no law that can bring the Holy Spirit. The only thing can bring the Holy Spirit is *repentance and baptism*. That's entirely separate.

Like one man said, 'What's the use of giving the Israelites the laws of God for them to keep them in the letter?' I said, 'Just look at our society today where everybody's lawless and doing whatever they want to do. What do you think the benefit would be?' You can't hire enough people to chase down lawbreakers. When *faith* came—Christ—now you understand everything, why the Law was given.

"...having been shut up unto the faith that was yet to be revealed. In this way, the law was our tutor *to lead us* to Christ..." (vs 23-24). That's exactly what happens.

When you start understanding the Word of God, you start seeing the things that God wants you to do and you start following that. That is teaching you not to sin.

Let's look at it another way. The *King James Version* says *schoolmaster* and everybody reads that

and, 'oh, that's a bad thing'—it's *tutor*. What alphabet do you use today? *The* one you learned in kindergarten. Was that not a tutor to you to learn how to read and write and all of those things? Is there anything wrong with a tutor? *No! That's good!*

But a tutor, in learning the things even of the commandments of God in the letter of the Law, is not the ultimate purpose of God. ***He wants conversion in the mind and in the heart!*** Sin is not stopped by policemen on the corner. Sin is stopped ***by stopping sinning in the mind!*** That's what receiving the Holy Spirit and justification of God I, and that comes from the *faith* of God.

(go to the next track)

I remember when we were up in Idaho and for our first Passover in 1965, I was going through studying about the last ten days of Jesus' life. I had the notes from Dr. Hoeh on one hand, and then I had the notes from someone else on the other hand and they were one day off.

So, where did that missing day go? What I did, opened one Bible to Matthew, one to Mark, one Luke, and one to John. I started out six days before Jesus' last Passover. Then you have to take from that where Jesus said, 'After two days is the Passover.' So, there's no such thing as a 'Palm Sunday,' it's actually a 'Palm' Thursday. You have that in *A Harmony of the Gospels*.

The key was right here in Mark 11. They came in after the 'Palm' Thursday, Mark 11:12: "And in the morning... [that's on a Friday] ...after they left Bethany, He became hungry. Then, seeing a fig tree afar off that had leaves, He went *to it to see* if He might possibly find something on it. But after coming to it, He found nothing except leaves because it was not yet *the* season for figs. And Jesus responded *by* saying to it, 'Let no one eat fruit from you any more forever!' And His disciples heard *it*. Then they came into Jerusalem; and after entering the temple, Jesus began to cast out those who were buying and selling in the temple..." (vs 12-15). He was cleansing it on Friday before Sabbath.

"...and He overthrew the tables of the money exchangers and the seats of those who were selling doves. Moreover, He did not allow anyone to carry a vessel through the temple. And He taught, saying to them, 'Is it not written, "My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations"? But you have made it a den of robbers.' Now the chief priests and the scribes heard *this*, and they sought how they might destroy Him; for they feared Him, because all the multitudes marveled at His teaching. And when evening came, He went out of the city" (vs 15-19)—***day one***—cursed the fig tree on that day, went out of the city.

Verse 20: "And in the morning..."—***day two***—that was the missing day, right there. But there's a lesson:

"...as they passed by, they saw the fig 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).

We have human faith; we believe certain things. We have faith in the post office that if you put a letter in, it will be delivered. They do a pretty good job overall.

Verse 23: "For truly I say to you, whoever shall say to this mountain..." This is a big task, an impossible thing. God does not give us His faith so we can go around casting mountains into the sea. Just imagine if Mohammed Ali had that power.

"... 'Be taken away and be cast into the sea,' and shall not doubt in his heart... [this shows the perfect faith from God] ...but shall believe that what he said will take place, he shall have whatever he shall say. For this reason I say to you, *all the* things that you ask *when* you are praying, believe that you will receive *them*, and *they* shall be *given* to you" (vs 23-24). You have to have that faith from God.

Also remember that not all prayers are answered instantly. I've had prayers and thoughts asking God for things and they've happened years later. I'm going along and all of a sudden DING! a light goes on—it happened! God will do it with us, too.

Here is something that is important in prayer, v 25: "But when you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive..." Forgive them *in your heart* before God. Then when you see them, let them know you've forgiven them.

"...so that... [there's a reason for it] ...your Father Who *is* in heaven may forgive you your offenses" (v 25). We can't be double-minded and pretend love toward someone, but have hate in our minds. That's double-minded as well as unstable, as James said.

Verse 26: "For if you do not forgive, neither will your Father Who *is* in heaven forgive you your offenses." Great lesson concerning faith.

Let's see what happened here with Peter. This was quite a thing. Matt. 14 is another lesson in faith. This takes a lot of faith to do. I think most of us in the circumstances that we have come out of with the Church, we had to go on faith with God with virtually nothing—just ***believe that standing for the Truth is the right thing*** and God will bless you sooner or later.

You may have to go through trials so that God knows that you really mean it. 'Oh, God, I want your Truth.' What are you going to do when you see a major error that is unrepented of and unchanged, especially if it's in the Church and in the hierarchy. You may have to stand and go it alone. Everyone of us has had to do that because of the conditions within the Church.

We have this, Matthew 14:22: "And immediately Jesus compelled His disciples to enter the ship and go before Him to the other side, while He dismissed the multitude. And after dismissing the multitude, He went up into the mountain apart to pray; and when evening came, He was there alone. But the ship was now in *the* middle of the sea... [Sea of Galilee] ...being tossed by the waves, because the wind was contrary" (vs 22-24).

How are you going to make a sailboat go in a wind that is against the sails the wrong way? *You row!* And they weren't getting hardly anyplace!

Verse 25: "Now in *the* fourth watch of the night, Jesus went to them, walking on the sea. And when the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were troubled and said, 'It is an apparition!' And they cried out in fear. But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, 'Be of good courage; *it* is I. Do not be afraid.' Then Peter answered Him *and* said, 'Lord, if it is You, bid me to come to You upon the waters.' And He said, 'Come.' And after climbing down from the ship, Peter walked upon the waters to go to Jesus. But when he saw *how* strong the wind was, he became afraid; and *as he* was beginning to sink, he cried out, saying, 'Lord, save me!' And immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and took hold of him, and said to him, '**O you of little faith, why did you doubt?**' Now when they went into the ship, the wind ceased. And those in the ship came and worshiped Him, saying, 'You are truly the Son of God.' And after passing over *the sea*, they came to the land of Gennesaret" (vs 25-34). "...you of little faith..."

Everyone can have problems with not believing the way that they should. Mark 9 is quite an example. Jesus had with Him: Peter, James and John. They were coming back, and the other disciples were down at the foot of the mountain. There was a man who brought his demon-possessed son to the disciples to have the demon cast out. When they came down from the mountain, Jesus asked them, 'What are you disputing about?'

Mark 9:17: "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! How long shall I be with you?... [talking to His disciples] ...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'" (vs 17-21).

Children can become demon possessed. How does that happen? *Because parents don't discipline them!* Now not only are children not disciplined, but a lot of them learn witchcraft over the television, in their little games and movies. ***From childhood!***

Verse 22: "'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.' And Jesus said to him, 'If you can believe... [Belief is the action of faith] ...all things are possible to the one who believes.' And the father of the little child cried out at once, saying with tears, '**Lord, I believe. Help my unbelief**'" (vs 22-24). That's how we need to tackle the problem of lack of faith. You have to ask God for it, and then practice it. ***Believe God!***

Verse 25: "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!'"

We've had occasions of casting out demons out of people and they can be cast out, without a doubt. You're not to give any room to them at all. ***They are commanded in the name of Jesus Christ to go and never come back.***

Verse 26: "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. 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 26-29). There are things that require prayer and fasting: difficult problems, difficult situations. Then God will add the faith to it.

Let's see something else about faith and how it works with us. Obviously, the disciples wanted their faith increased, so what they did, they asked Jesus to increase their faith. We all want to increase our faith. There will be times when you will have more faith than at other times. It just happens that way. But here's something to remember:

Luke 17:5: "Then the apostles said to the Lord, 'Increase our faith.' But the Lord said, 'If you had faith as a *tiny* mustard seed, you might say to this sycamine tree, "Be rooted up, and be planted in the sea," and it would obey you.'.... [then He gives another example]: ...'But which of you having a servant plowing or shepherding will immediately say *to him when he comes in from the field*, "Come and sit down *and eat*"?' (vs 5-7). The unionists don't like this part of the Scripture:

Verse 8: "Rather, will he not say to him, "Prepare what I may eat, and gird yourself, *and* serve me while I eat and drink; and afterwards you may eat and drink'?" People will say, 'That's grossly unfair.' It may seem so, but He's giving a point of Truth.

Verse 9: "Is he thankful to that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I think not." What is a servant to do? *What his master tells him to do!* What are we? *We are servants!* Who is the Master? *Jesus Christ!*

Verse 10: "Likewise you also, when you have done all *the* things that are commanded you, say, 'We are unprofitable servants, because we have done that which we were obligated to do.'" You have to go above and beyond.

Just keeping the Sabbath will not have it. Keeping the Ten Commandments is not enough. Those are all required, but loving God with all your heart, mind, soul and being is *how you build the faith* because you trust in God. They always tried to catch Jesus in some fault, but He didn't have any.

Mark 12:28: "And one of the scribes who had come up *to Him*, after hearing them reasoning together *and* perceiving that He answered them well, asked Him, 'Which is *the* first commandment of all?' Then Jesus answered him, '*The* first of all the commandments is...'" (vs 28-29 This *means the primary one*, 'protos'—the first, from which we get the word now *prototype*

"..."*Hear, O Israel... [when you read something like this, put your name there, because this is to each one of us] ...Our one God is the Lord, the Lord. And you shall love the Lord your God... [notice how full time this is] ...with all your heart... [means all your emotions; you can't have any emotion greater than loving God] ...and with all your soul... [that is with all your body; take care of your body; do the things that are right] ...and with all your mind...'"* (vs 29-30).

How do we love God with all of our mind? We'll see that when we come to Unleavened Bread—*by bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ*. Try that some time. See if you can go half a day, let's not say a whole day, that

your mind does not have any fleeting sin running through it. You might make it a day you don't watch television. That'll make it easier.

"...with all your mind, and with all your strength." This *is the* first commandment.... [this is what leads to faith, because to love God this way is by faith] ...*And the second is* like this: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." There is no other commandment greater than these'" (vs 30-31).

Notice what Jesus says, because this is very interesting. It's not a matter of *knowing* it, it's a matter of *doing* it.

Verse 32: "Then the scribe said to Him, 'Right, Master. You have spoken according to truth that God is one, and there is not another besides Him. And to love Him with all the heart and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love *one's* neighbor as oneself, is more than all burnt offerings and sacrifices'" (vs 32-33). Another way of saying it, is more than all *works of law*: all of those *physical rituals*; all of those *traditions*.

Verse 34: "And Jesus, seeing that he answered with understanding, said to him, 'You are not far from the Kingdom of God.' And no one dared to question Him anymore." Then He gave them a riddle to figure. Let's see *how faith works*:

- the faith that *we have*
- the faith that *we receive*
- the faith that *God gives*

We are to have faith that comes from God. The Greek there literally means, *have God's faith!* That's the highest level of faith.

Romans 1:16: "For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ because it is *the* power of God unto salvation to everyone who believes... [*belief* is the verb form of *faith*]...both to *the* Jew first, and to *the* Greek. For therein *the* righteousness of God is revealed **from faith unto faith**..." (vs 16-17).

This is very interesting in the Greek, because the Greek word there is the preposition 'eis', which means *into*, from faith into faith, it's circular—between us, the faith we have, our faith, plus the faith that God has given us, back to God through prayer and study. From God with His Spirit back to us; *from faith to faith*.

This is a continual operation of how faith works. It comes from God. Any human faith cannot save you. There are lot of people who believe that Jesus is the Lord, but they don't obey Him and they don't love Him. That is the key one.

Eph. 2 is a very interesting chapter and we come to this quite a few times in going through various aspects of Christian living, and so forth.

Ephesians 2:8: "For by grace..." Grace is *the status that you are under with God*. Having the Holy Spirit of God, having your sins forgiven, and having access to God the Father through prayer, study; God to you and you to God.

When you understand that, then you realize a very important thing that many churches do not understand. **You have no one between you and God!** When they have a hierarchy that you must come to the minister or the priest, or you must go through the pope, or you must go through the evangelist, *then there's a man between you and God. No man stands between you and God!* That's why all the elders and ministers are to be like coaches on the sidelines. We are to teach:

- the Word of God
- the love of God
- the doctrines of the Bible
- the things as Paul said, in season and out of season

By the way, we're getting close to the Passover, so I'm going to cover some things concerning the Passover beginning next week.

Verse 8: "For by grace you have been saved through faith..." from Satan the devil. You haven't been saved completely, inasmuch *complete salvation is finalized by the resurrection from the dead*. We're not there yet; we're working toward it.

"...and this *especially* is not of your own selves..." (v 8). No one can save himself. If you don't believe that, when you come to that and said, 'You can't save yourself,' remember the Titanic. The only ones who got into the rowboats were the ones who were saved. None of the rest of them could save themselves, not even the orchestra that was playing all during the time the ship was sinking to keep people calmed down. Have you ever heard that story? *That's quite a story!* They fiddled until they drowned.

"...*especially* is not of your own selves; it is the gift of God. Not of works... [your own works] ...so that no one may boast" (vs 8-9).

Have you read the book of Job? I've got a series on Job: *Why God Hates Religion*. Very interesting with Job, because Job even declared that *his own* righteousness was greater than God's. That answers the reason why he went through what he went through. Actually, Job himself was his own idol. So, he had another god before God. He had an idol before God, which was himself. He was doing all of these great and these good things. So, God put him through the trial to see:

- Did he have power against Satan the devil?
No!

- Did he have power against sickness and boils, and things like that? *No!*
- Did he really understand what was going on? *No!*

Finally he got so self-righteous, he said, 'Oh, I wish God would talk to me.' Picture someone with boils head to toe and the only relief he had was potsherds to scrape off the pus and put ashes on it. He was a miserable-looking man. *Terrible!*

God spoke to him—be careful what you wish for—Job 38:1: "Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said, 'Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge?... [Job, who are you?]' ...Now gird up your loins like a man; for I will demand of you, and you shall answer Me'" (vs 1-3).

Job 40:1: "And the LORD answered Job and said, 'Shall he who contends with the Almighty instruct *Him*?...'" (vs 1-2). After He told him:

- Where were you when **I** laid the foundations of the earth?
- Where were you when **I** spread out the stars?
- Where were you when **I** put the clouds in?
- If you're so great, **tell Me!**

Verse 2: "...He who reproves God... [Job was correcting God] ...let him answer it.' And Job answered the LORD and said... [finally got the point] ...'Behold, I am vile!... [repentance] ...What shall I answer You? I will lay my hand on my mouth. Once I have spoken; but I will not answer; yea, twice, but I will proceed no further'" (vs 2-5).

God was just waiting for Job to shut up, because most of the chapter was his complaint against God for what he was going through. True, no one could have had an experience worse than Job, but it has to be in the Bible for us to understand that in spite of the experiences you go through, you better turn to God and don't get angry at Him.

God told Job, showing that you can't save yourself, v 6: "And the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said, 'Gird up your loins now like a man. I will demand you, and you declare unto Me. Will you even annul My judgment? Will you condemn Me so that you may be righteous? And *have* you an arm like God? Or can you thunder with a voice like His? Deck yourself now with majesty and excellency, and array yourself with glory and beauty'" (vs 6-10). ***Come on, if you're so good and better than Me. Let's see you become like Me.*** There Job was with boils, ashes and scabs from head to toe.

Verse 11: "Cast abroad the rage of your wrath; and behold everyone who is proud, and abase him. Look on everyone *who is* proud, *and* bring him

low; and tread down the wicked in their place. Hide them in the dust together; *and* bind their faces in darkness” (vs 11-13). ***Go ahead, Job, do that. Let's see you do that.***

Verse 14: “Then I will also confess to you that your own right hand can save you.” Paul says the same thing:

Ephesians 2:9: “Not of works, so that no one may boast.” For those who are converted and really have the faith, God is working and molding and developing us with the character that we need so that when the resurrection time comes we can be raised from the dead. God wants us to develop the character *first*.

Verse:10: “For we are His workmanship... [God the Father is creating in us] ...created in Christ Jesus... [that's the mold] ...unto *the* good works... [the good works of faith (James 2)] ...that God ordained beforehand in order that we might walk in them.” So it's a way of ***faith, life and love!***

With that then, we're going to have some difficulties and problems coming along, especially living in the age we're living in. The things that men are imaging to do under the power of Satan the devil are awesome, indeed! I need to bring another one on transhumanism. It will verify everything that I said about 'as it was in the days of Noah'—in mixing genes and things like this. Absolutely amazing!

1-Thess. was the first epistle that Paul wrote; 2-Thess. was the second one. It was in the Greek city of Thessalonica and they had a lot of opposition from the pagans and from the Jews, so this first chapter, I think, is very important for us, because it's very similar to the things that we are going to face.

2-Thessalonians 1:2: “Grace and peace *be* to you from God our Father and *the* Lord Jesus Christ.” That's why we have the Sabbath:

- so we can have *peace*
- so we can have *grace*
- so we can *be refreshed*
- so we can *be renewed*

Human beings need to be renewed. What if you never slept? You need to sleep so you can be renewed. You need to eat so you can be renewed. Likewise, spiritually:

- you have to eat the spiritual food that's in the Word of God
- you have to practice it
- you have to live by it
- you have to love God

Verse 3: “We are duty-bound to thank God always for you, brethren, even as it is fitting, because your faith is increasing abundantly, and the love of each one of you is abounding toward one

another.” It says in Gal. 5:6 that *faith works by love: love of God; love of each other!*

Verse 4: “So that we ourselves are boasting about you in the churches of God because of your endurance and faith in all your persecutions, and in the tribulations that you are bearing.”

None of us have really faced anything, yet. But we can see that today there are a lot who are facing death and murders. All the fighting that's going on over there with ISIS. Has anybody repented?

There are those who believe in God and Christ, not in the way unto salvation, but they believed enough to stand and get killed. I wonder how many of us *soft* people here in America would be able to do that. Think about it! So, they were really enduring some things.

Verse 5: “*Your faith and endurance are a visible testimony of the righteous judgment of God, so that you may be counted worthy of the Kingdom of God, for which you are suffering. Since it is righteous with God to recompense tribulation to those who are persecuting you*” (vs 5-6). Put the enemy in God's hands. God can do it better than you.

Verse 7: “And to you, who are persecuted, rest with us, at the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven with His mighty angels” (v 7).

They thought Jesus was going to return in their lifetime. Jesus had a surprise for them, and He didn't tell them anything about the extended time before His return, until beginning about the first year in 60_{A.D.} Then it became evident that He wasn't returning soon. They didn't know how long it would be. Peter wrote, ‘A day with the Lord is a thousand years and a thousand years as a day.’ They were expecting Him to come and how He's going to come.

Verse 8: “Dealing out vengeance with flaming, fire upon those who do not know God, and those who do not obey the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; Who will suffer *the* penalty of eternal destruction...” (vs 8-9). That is those who commit the unpardonable sin and will be subject to the second death.

“...from *the* presence of the Lord and from the glory of His strength, when He shall come to be glorified in His saints...” (vs 9-10). Talking about the resurrection. This actually turned out to be a prophecy for our day today, for us.

“...and to be admired in that day in all those who believe (because our testimony was believed by you). For which cause also we are praying continually for you, that our God may count you

worthy of *your* calling, and may fulfill *in you* all the good pleasure of *His* goodness, and **the work of faith** with power” (vs 10-11).

For all of those who believe in faith only, tell me, what is a *work of faith*? *A work of faith is **God working in you and you responding to God!*** The work of faith with power.

Verse 12: “So that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and you in Him, according to the grace of our God and of *the* Lord Jesus Christ.”

Quite a chapter—right? *Yes, indeed!* We'll talk some more about this a little later!

FRC:lp
Transcribed: 2-23-15
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- 4) Romans 4:1-3
- 5) Galatians 2:11-21
- 6) Galatians 3:21-24
- 7) Mark 11:12-26
- 8) Matthew 14:22-34
- 9) Mark 9:17-29
- 10) Luke 17:5-10
- 11) Mark 12:28-34
- 12) Romans 1:16-17
- 13) Ephesians 2:8-9
- 14) Job 38:1-3
- 15) Job 40:1-14
- 16) Ephesians 2:9-10
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Appendix R: *What is Meant by “Works of Law”?*
(from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, a Faithful Version*)