

The Bible Guys

Sept./Oct. 2008
of Yesterday and Today 175



*Flood
Warning*

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The Bible Guys is a complimentary, monthly publication of



The People of Truth
A Holy Nation

Flood Warning

By Joel McNabb

Breaking news bulletin: There is a severe storm coming!!!! Flood warnings are in effect for all who believe in Jesus Christ. As it is written in Gen. 6:17 "And, behold, I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh, wherein is the breath of life, from under heaven; and everything that is in the earth shall die."

As we look at the headlines, the nightly news, the fuel prices, the financial crisis, wars in the world, and other events, there should be an alarm going off to those of us who have received salvation in our lives. We who have breathed in new life from the born again experience, as Adam did when God breathed the breath of life into him and he became a living soul.


Looking at everything that is going on in the world today, I hear the words of Jesus, "But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." He was revealing how the world was going to be when He returns. Jesus wants us to be prepared, with our eyes open, watching for the flood of our day. In Noah's day, life went on just as usual: they ate, drank, married wives, and they were given in marriage until the day Noah entered into the ark. The flood came and destroyed them all.

Most of Christianity today is going on as usual. With their five-year, ten-year or more plans for the future, the urgency of the return of Jesus is put on the back burner. With our building programs, sports activities, and other projects, we are caught up with the cares of this world. The parable in Matthew 25 tells us that the Kingdom of heaven would be like ten virgins, and while the bridegroom tarried, they all fell asleep. As the time passed, they went about their everyday life, not realizing that the bridegroom was really going to come. When the alarm went out, they finally awoke out of their day-to-day routines to the knowledge that they were not ready for the wedding. The wise barely had enough oil in their lamps to get in, and the foolish had to go and buy from someone who had oil to sell. Even with finding oil, it was too late, and the door was shut.

A warning was sent from God to Noah, and he took action. By faith, he built an ark for the saving of his house. An alarm went off, and Noah believed the warning. He obeyed the word of God and saved not only his own life, but the lives of his family as well. He is called a preacher of righteousness in the New Testament. He was not just out there building a boat for a vacation or to take a cruise. He was warning his family and friends and anyone who would listen. As we read the rest of the story of Noah, the people who heard him preaching did not take the warning, and the door was shut. Everyone that had the breath of life died that did not get in the ark.

Are you alive in Christ Jesus today? Do you breathe the breath of the Holy Spirit in your spiritual nostrils today? Do you believe the words of Jesus? There is a flood coming in this last day and if we are not prepared, the door will be shut.

The serpent (devil) is about open the flood gates (persecution) on those who have the spiritual breath of life, to destroy Christianity from off the face of this earth. Will we hear the warning of Noah and search our souls to see if we will be in the ark, or will we be on the outside looking in? The Bridegroom is coming and we need to get our lamps out to see if they will burn or not. Is there oil enough to light our pathways to see the trouble that is upon every Christian today? "And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed." "So shall they fear the name of the Lord from the west, and his glory from the rising of the sun. When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him" (Isa. 59:19).

Take heed today, dear saints of God, and get your hearts prepared for the deluge that is upon us. There is yet time to search the Scriptures as the wise virgins, so that we do not wind up as the foolish virgins, for whom it was too late. "Seek ye the Lord, all ye meek of the earth, which have wrought his judgment; seek righteousness, seek meekness: it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the Lord's anger." Let us humble ourselves before God and pray we may be hid. We are in the days of Noah, and the flood is upon us. I pray you all will find grace in the eyes of the Lord, and that He grant you understanding. The Lord bless and keep you is my prayer. 

Ages and Ages: the End of the Grace Age

By C. Elden McNabb

We have been in the Grace Age for almost two thousand years. During that time, anyone who wanted to be born of the Spirit of God was given a warm welcome by God and His Son. Everyone who accepted the offer of “peace with God” was then free to partake of all the benefits which God has prepared for those who would believe and repent. The Grace Age, from the days of John the Baptist until now (Luke 16:16), is the third in a series of three time divisions of approximately two millennia each. God has given us mortals exactly six thousand years to see what we will do with this wonderful gift of life, and this wonderful place called Earth to live our lives.

The first division was a period of about two thousand years from the creation of Adam to the birth of Abraham. We might call it “the world without law,” for during that time, God made almost no demands on His creation. He did give one “Thou shalt.” He said unto them, “Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it, and have dominion over ... every living thing that moveth upon the Earth” (Gen. 1:28). He also gave one “thou shalt not.” You know about the fruit (Gen. 2:16-17).

God did not “execute” Cain for murdering his brother, because there was no commandment against murder. In fact, God deliberately let him live so that everyone would see the tremendously ill effect that is brought to bear on the human society when the murderer is not himself killed by the people (Num. 35:17-33). If God had given a large list of punishable deeds neither we, nor the angels in heaven (1 Cor. 4:9) would have been able to comprehend the problems which are caused by sin, which has been caused by Satan in Heaven and Earth since “iniquity was found” in him (Ezekiel 28:15).

You can be sure that it was largely because of Cain’s continued existence that the time came when God had to destroy almost all of mankind in order to save us from the corruption which had developed. It had even corrupted the descendants of Seth, Abel’s replacement, until the eventual fulfillment of the promise of a deliverer (Gen. 3:15) was so threatened that God had to destroy all but a few of even Seth’s descendants. He had to go *almost as far* as to return to the situation of the original creation of only two to “be ye fruitful, and

multiply; [and] bring forth abundantly in the earth” (Gen. 9:7).

It would have been easier on God, in a way, if he had simply created some new angels to replace that third of the angels which Satan drew with him. However, it was more important to God that the angels which did not side with Lucifer had about a seven-thousand-year object lesson to show them, and to prove to them the magnitude of the evil which Satan’s rebellion had spewed out in Heaven and in Earth.

After the flood, God chose Shem and his descendants to bear the responsibility of believing, and keeping the covenant of God alive in the earth. Even as Noah was the tenth generation from Adam, Abraham was the tenth generation from Shem. And for those ten generations, about 418 years, some of Shem’s family remained faithful to God in their appointment, until the time of Abraham’s departure from his “father’s house.” “Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.”

Idolatry had become commonplace. Even Abraham’s immediate family had their idols (Gen. 31:19), and God had to separate a man of faith, with his wife, and start again to produce a pure lineage through which to bring forth the coming Messiah. That time, He reduced the numbers back to two (Abraham and Sarah), and emphasized again the “seed of promise” in the allegory of Isaac.

By contrast, the descendants of Ham had, by the third generation, already forsaken the way of God. Their idolatry had grown and spread among all but a few of the descendants of those who had escaped the flood; once again endangering the fulfillment of the promise. It was about six-hundred-fifteen years after the flood when Jacob took his family into Egypt. By which time the idolatry of the descendants of Ham was deeply rooted in “the land of Ham.”

It is easy to see how necessary it was for Abraham to be called out to spend the last one hundred years of his life without a country, and without a people.

The second division began with Abraham, and lasted approximately two thousand years to the birth of the promised Messiah, Jesus Christ of Nazareth. Abraham was the youngest of three brothers, and was born about 452 years after the flood. Then, at seventy-five years of age God called him to leave his home and his family, and to go somewhere which the Lord God Almighty would show him after he had made his beginning move. O that we could demonstrate that kind of faith today. If we are to be able to do that, we

will surely have to determine in our hearts to believe everything that is written in the Word of God.

During that second two-thousand-year period, the Word of God placed special emphasis on the ascendancy and demise of the nation of Israel. I know that it seems as if God took a very long time to get us from Adam to Abraham, and to Jesus Christ, and to the redemption of mankind. However there was a lot to be accomplished above and beyond the actual redemption of God’s creation. God deemed all of those things which are written about in the Old Testament to be important enough that the redemption of mankind could wait 4,000 years for the beginning of the Grace Age.

We might not be able to comprehend whether that was fair, or necessary, or tragic, or whatever, but God did it, because it had to be done. It was the way of wisdom by which to make adequate preparation for the arrival of the promised seed and the redemption of mankind. However, there was a lot more going on here than the redemption of mankind. Man is here because there was a huge insurrection and disruption in Heaven, probably some eleven thousand years ago or so.

When God cast out Lucifer and those who defected with him, it decimated the body of angels in Heaven, and God is preparing to use the redeemed of mankind to replace those angels which fell. In order to do that, God created a plan by which a broad scope of people could display various degrees of faith, and qualify to be resurrected and to inherit eternal life at some level in the eternal. Those who lived before the Grace Age, though not “born again,” will be judged by their conscience, and according to how much they knew about God and His will.

The Apostle Paul said, “The law was a schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith” (Gal. 3:24). Apparently there is some kind of regimen which the people in each era are required to measure up to in order to receive eternal life at their time of judgment. There were two different kinds of regimen during the second two thousand years. All of the people who were among the descendants of Abraham were required to come under the tenets of the covenants and the laws which God gave to their forefathers. However, there was no change in requirements for the rest of humanity. Those covenants and laws were given only to the descendants of Abraham, through the lineage of Isaac, and Jacob, and Moses.

Notably, in the New Testament there is no mentioning of the Gentiles being required to keep the Law of Moses, not

even the Sabbath. In Acts 15:14-28, James, the brother of Jesus, being the Chief Apostle, said, "Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God: but that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood. For Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every Sabbath day. ... It seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, *to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things.*"

God prophesied by many witnesses to send the message of His plan to us. He set us up, so to speak, forcing us to demonstrate faith in what He had said, and thereby be able to believe in the Messiah when He should come. There is a particularly straight forward statement in Amos 3:7 which testifies to this truth. He said, "Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets."

God began to give the promises and Covenants by Abraham, but He gave The Law, and other covenants by Moses. It was the third millennium from Adam. God made the first green life-giving things on the earth on the third day of creation, and he brought forth the Word of Life in the third millennium. It was not "the breath of life" which would come later by Jesus Christ, but like the green plants of the earth, the Law of Moses created the atmosphere by which those who are born of the Spirit must believe, and live. (For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law, nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses.") (Rom. 5:8-14).

For 2,000 years Abraham and his faithful children were our example as they moved when God said move, and stayed when God said stay. In those days the children of Israel failed God many times, and were eventually rejected of God and destroyed as a nation. Still they were living prophecy of the great events which would transpire in the third two-thousand-year period.

The third division began with the lives and ministries of John the Baptist and Jesus Christ, quickly followed by the rise and spread of Christianity. The prophecies contained in the law and the prophets began to be fulfilled in John the Baptist (Matt. 11:7-14), and the plan of God, as pertains to the election of the Jews, reached its peak about seven to fourteen years after the ministry of Jesus Christ was finished.

In that short period of time, God accomplished the fulfillment of all the promises which He had given to the nation of Israel from Abraham until that time. *The Apostles of the Christ, and those who heard and believed, and were chosen, flowered into "a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing."* And they became "Members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bone. "The election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded" (Romans 11:7).

Then God turned to the Gentiles, to do with the Gentiles as He had done with the Jews, but this time the plan would all play out in the Grace Age.

The time had come for the fulfillment of the parable of "The Treasure in the Field." Almost all of us will remember that parable. "The kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field" (Matt. 13:44).

He was really after two things, the redemption of mankind, and the "the Bride." The field is the whole world, and the treasure is revealed to us in Exodus 19:4-5 to be "the Bride, the Lamb's wife." It is the Spirit and the Bride together who say, "Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (Rev. 22:17).

Paul said it well in his epistle to Titus, "The grace of God that bringeth salvation *hath appeared to all men*, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, *and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works*" (Titus 2:11-14).

In his epistle to the Church at Rome, Paul said, "Despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; who will render to every man according to his deeds: to them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life: but unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew

first, and also of the Gentile; but glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile: for there is no respect of persons with God" (Romans 2:4-11).

God brought the redeemed in the Jewish community, and the Elect, to perfection, and glory, and honor, and peace, and eternal life, in the first Century A.D. But to those of Israel who still would not obey the truth, He thrust upon them "the day of His wrath" in A.D. 70.

Paul has put us Gentiles on notice that God intends to do exactly the same thing to Gentile Christians, and Church at this end of the sixth millennium, "For there is no respect of persons with God." The natural "seed of Abraham" were given every opportunity to see and believe, but except for a remnant, they rebelled and gave Jesus up to be crucified. Therefore, just forty years from the beginning of Jesus' ministry, God poured out His wrath upon them.

We among the Gentiles who believe in Jesus have now reached the last few months of our two-thousand-year-long journey to fulfill all of God's will for us. We received the gospel of Jesus Christ in the first century, and before a hundred years had passed, certain men had crept in unawares, and polluted the gospel message (Jude 1:4; Acts 20:29). By the end of the first century after the resurrection and ascension of Jesus, the gospel had reached Rome, and perhaps most of Europe, and seemed to stagnate. However, early into the sixteenth century, God began to move the thrust of the Gospel work to America, in order to have a fertile place to "raise up the Church again" in the last days (John 6:39).


God began to pour out His Spirit on His handmaidens and servants in North Carolina, in 1896, and began to restore His Church, in Cleveland, Tennessee, in 1903. That Church arose in the fulfillment of many prophecies, and fell according to prophecy in 1980. During those years the rest of Christianity also surged and ebbed, and today stands almost altogether in rebellion against God. I do not even seem to be able to get some of the best Christians I know to believe even the simplest things which the close friends and followers of Jesus have told us that He said.

We Gentile Christians have now come very near to the end of our allotted time. It is not too complicated to discover from the Holy Scriptures almost exactly when this sixth millennium will be finished. And by the time it is finished, the Grace Age will be over, and the gospel will

cease to be preached anywhere on the earth.

The birth of Jesus was a notable event in the timing of God's work, but it was the phenomenon of Jesus' visit to the temple, when He was 12 years of age, which marked the beginning of the fifth millennium. According to that fact, carnal man's tenure of ruling the world will come to an end somewhere near the Autumnal Equinox in 2011, and the Grace Age will have come to an end.

The count-down has begun, and power has been given to the enemies of Christ Jesus that they should begin to execute the wrath of God upon His disobedient "Kingdom of Heaven." God is about to repeat, upon proud and rebellious Gentile Christianity, what He did to Israel in the first century of this era. Did not the Lord say, "Woe unto you that desire the day of the Lord! To what end is it for you? the day of the Lord is darkness, and not light. As if a man did flee from a lion, and a bear met him; or went into the house, and leaned his hand on the wall, and a serpent bit him. Shall not the day of the Lord be darkness, and not light? even very dark, and no brightness in it" (Amos 5:18-20)?

The time has come in which God will, once again, gather His Elect together, and bring them to perfection, and gather to himself a remnant from "the field" (2 Thess. 2:1). Then shall all the other Christians face His judgment and His wrath. When God has accomplished that, Jesus shall execute the wrath of God upon the nations of the world, as He begins His tenure as ruler of the world for a thousand years. 

The Gospel of the Kingdom

By Joel McNabb

"Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel" (Mark 1:14,15).

What is this **gospel of the kingdom**? When will it come? How do we know it when it comes? There are many questions that come to mind when this subject comes up in discussion.

Just before His ascension, the apostles asked Jesus if He would restore the kingdom to Israel at that time (which meant that the kingdom of God had at one time been on earth, and Israel was the kingdom

of God). Jesus told them that times and seasons was not given for them to know, which the Father hath put in His own power (Acts 1:6,7). This meant that, by the power of God, the kingdom *would* be known by those to whom He has given understanding of times and seasons. Jesus' disciples in the first century did not need to know when, because the *kingdom* was to come at the end time.

How did Israel become the kingdom of God? "Or hath God assayed to go and take him a nation from the midst of another nation, by temptations, by signs, and by wonders, and by war, and by a mighty hand, and by a stretched out arm, and by great terrors, according to all that the Lord your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes?" (Deut. 4:34). God brought the children of Israel out of Egypt and was going to give them the Promised Land, but they were not yet a kingdom. So when did they become the kingdom of God?

Under Joshua, they conquered the land of Promise. After that, came the years of the Judges, yet no king. "In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes" (Judges 21:25). God had every intention of making Israel a kingdom. Even when they wanted a king for the wrong reason, God gave them a king anyway, and they became the kingdom of God. David thought so, for though he was not old enough to fight in the army, he went up against Goliath, who had defied the armies of the living God. So, in the days of Saul, Israel was already the kingdom of God.

In order to be a kingdom, there must be king. The United States is a republic and not a kingdom, whereas England, which has a monarch, *is* a kingdom. God set up a monarchy over Israel, and Saul was the king. When he fell out of favor with God, the Kingdom was given to David and his seed, as long as they kept His commandments. As history shows, they did not keep His commandments and went into captivity. Though they were under the rule of some other government ever since, they were still the kingdom of God.

"And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you" (Luke 17: 20,21). I have heard for most of my life that, when you are born again, "the kingdom of God is in you." Let us consider to whom Jesus was speaking. It was the Pharisees. If being born again makes the kingdom of

God come inside you, why did He say it to them? They were not born again, and neither was anyone else at that time. So what did He mean by "within you"? Even though there was no king, they still had the kingdom of God. They were God's people by a covenant, and God keeps covenants. So, unless and until the covenant was dissolved, they would be His kingdom.

In Matthew 21, Jesus was asked where He had gotten His authority. He gave them a parable about a husbandman and his two sons. When they were asked by the father to work in his vineyard, one said yes, and then did not. The other said no, then repented, and did what was asked of his father. When Jesus finished the, He told them (in verse 43) that the kingdom of God would be taken from them and given to a nation, bringing forth the fruits thereof. That new nation will have what it takes to be the kingdom of God. Will we do what we are asked to do, so that the kingdom of God will be established?


The gospel of the kingdom of God is that God will restore and establish a kingdom. "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this" (Isa. 9: 6,7). This kingdom will have a government, where the laws of God will be kept. Jesus said, "If you love me keep my commandments." And this kingdom's government will look like the pattern He showed us in the Old Testament. The zeal of the Lord will move among a people, who will bring forth the fruits that will get the heavenly Father's attention.

In Dan. 2, Daniel tells us when that kingdom will be. "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever" (Dan. 2:44). When the ten are revealed, in their days, God's kingdom will be established. Today, we have ten that can be seen: the U.N. calls them the "Group of Ten" or "G10."

As Christians (if we are not asleep), we should be watching for God to set up His kingdom in righteousness for ever. Jesus said, "Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy

to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.” This kingdom will take down the kingdoms of this earth and God’s Son Jesus Christ will sit on the throne of David in the Tabernacle of David judging and executing judgment for a thousand years.

If you are a Christian today, you may have heard what Jesus said to Nicodemus, “Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” Being born again gives us the ability to see what the kingdom is all about – not that we are the kingdom. We have to bring forth fruit to be the kingdom. We then can see that God has a government and an order just as He has in heaven. Then we can pray as Jesus said, “After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.” And He said unto them, “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.” The **gospel of the kingdom** must needs be preached, and not just that you must be born again. Jesus will be King on this earth, and He will have a governing body with Him, as He promised the Twelve Apostles. Jesus said unto them, “Verily I say unto you, that ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.” There will be others that have left all to follow Jesus, and when He comes, His reward will be with Him. As Paul said, “If we suffer, we shall also reign with him.”

As a born-again Christian, I desire to see Jesus sitting and ruling in this Kingdom, and if I am faithful to keep His commandments, I, too, may enter into that kingdom. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. My prayer is that you will find yourselves in the same condition, that, together, we may share in His glorious kingdom. May God give you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him. 

The Power of Faith

By David M. McNabb

As has been seen throughout this series, the word “faith” is overused, misused, and abused on a grand scale in today’s world. It is faith’s “power” that is given preeminence by “faith” preachers, gurus, writers and teachers of many spheres, both religious and secular. It often feels like we

are encouraged to have faith because of faith’s inherent benefits, whether to our health, our relationships, or to enable us to achieve our goals.

I have placed this topic last in the series, because if we are ever to realize the power of faith, we must understand its meaning, source and importance. Adherents to the beliefs of false religions are often dedicated to go to great lengths for their gods. Like the ancient prophets of Baal, followers of Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism and others willingly separate themselves by diet, clothing and other life customs. Some show their dedication through fasting, some through self-flagellation; some even kill themselves in “service” to their god. While they may believe that they do these acts through “faith,” faith – true faith – provides power that pagans and unbelievers can never know.

This is where you might expect to hear about the power to move mountains, walk on water, survive a cobra bite, or some other miraculous supernatural manifestation. While the word of God abounds with examples where God’s intervention in the affairs of men resulted in the confounding of man’s logic to explain the event, the power of the gift of faith is neither limited to, nor defined by, these overt, supernatural manifestations.

As we saw in *The Source of Faith*, the only true faith is in God through Christ Jesus our Lord, and that faith comes from hearing the Word of God. John declared, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (John 1:1). The apostles Peter and Paul both explained that God’s word came in ancient times by the prophets as they were moved upon by the Holy Ghost, but that now He has sent unto us His Son, Jesus, for that purpose. John said it this way, “And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth” (John 1:14). Whether spoken, written, or even in the flesh, God’s word is sure!

Jesus said that God’s word will come to pass, and no other result is possible. Faith’s power, then, is wholly rooted in God’s faithfulness. Now, when we consider the actions of the faithful of old, we can better understand their motivation.

In Hebrews 11, we are given a list of several faithful men and women of old. “By faith Noah ... prepared an ark to the saving of his house ... By faith Sara ... received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age ... By faith [Moses and the children of Israel] passed through the Red sea as by

dry land: which the Egyptians assaying to do were drowned. By faith the walls of Jericho fell down ... By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not...” Paul then wraps up this list with an *et cetera*, “And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gedeon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets: Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection: And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; (Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.” (Heb. 11:32-38).

What a wonderful picture of the power of faith is painted by Paul in this chapter! When you consider this passage, together with the truth of Hebrews 13:8, “Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, 84and forever,” you can begin to rejoice in what can be accomplished still today by and for those whose faith is in the Almighty Jehovah! This is where “faith” preachers leap from the pulpits with eloquent descriptions of how you can stop the mouths of your lions and obtain your abundant harvest. (We are usually spared the promise of having the trial of mocking, scourging, imprisonment or death. The world was not worthy of those that endured such trials by faith. Is it worthy of us?)

The great power of the faith of these precious men and women was not in their **belief**, but in the **object** of their belief: the Almighty, unchangeable God. Three times, the New Testament writers refer to Abraham’s greatest testimony, “Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness” (Rom. 4:3; Gal. 3:6; Jas. 2:23). So, by faith, Abraham became the father of many nations after more than 80 years without an heir. Why? Was it merely because he confessed it with his mouth and believed that God would perform it? No. It was because God had given him His word, and

Abraham believed that God would do all that He had promised.

In each of these examples in Hebrews 11, as well as every example in the written word of God, God made promises, and the faithful rested on the blessed assurance that God is a keeper of His promises. Sarah conceived Isaac because God said she would, and she had faith in God. David “sent to flight the armies of the aliens,” because God said that he would have the victory.

Today, we are often encouraged to “believe God” for a better car, a better house, a better job, a bigger boat, etc. While God’s word speaks of the blessings of God on them that believe, is material prosperity the consummate intent of God’s promise? Jesus surely said, “And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive” (Matt. 21:22). James agreed, saying, “Ye have not because ye ask not,” but he also added, “Ye have not because ye ask amiss” (Jas. 4:1-3).

Who is serving whom? Has God somehow submitted Himself to us, that He might do our bidding? Is this idea not 180 degrees out of phase with the will of God? Nay, we must seek His will, and set our heart’s desire on what God wants for our lives, and for His people in our day. If we align our will with His, and ask Him to do His will (as Jesus taught us to say, “Thy will be done”), then He cannot but do it.

So what is the key to unlock the power of faith to receive the things for which we ask of God? Jesus said it plainly, “If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you ... Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, He may give it you” (John 15:7,16). It was never about whether we asked of Him, it was about what He said He would do. If we abide in His word, and ask according to His will, it shall be done.

What about believers who have a chronic, even terminal illness? What about when the healing never comes? This has certainly happened many times since the beginning of the Grace Age. Perhaps you find yourself troubled, knowing a friend or relative that was wholly devoted to the Lord, yet suffered and ultimately died of cancer, diabetes, or some other dreadful malady. The many prayers brought before the throne of God, both by the infirm believer himself, and by many other believing saints, sometimes seem ineffectual. Is the lack of healing a reflec-

tion on the lack of faith? Is the “prayer chain” only as strong as its weakest link? “Faith healers” would often have us believe that to be true.

This question, however, is also answered in the “faith chapter” of Hebrews. “These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for He hath prepared for them a city” (Heb. 11:13-16). Although the faithful of old often died, having not received the fulfillment of the promises in their lifetime, yet they walked before the Lord in righteousness and integrity all the days of their life, knowing that God was faithful. What God had promised, they knew He would certainly perform, and the truly faithful did not limit God to their lifetime, or to their interpretation of the promise.

So, too, are our dear loved ones. Even if they were not made whole in this life, having put their trust in God, they shall surely receive the promise in the world to come, when Jesus shall raise them to life everlasting. Hallelujah! If they died paupers in this life, they will still be princes in the kingdom of our Lord.


The Power of Faith rests solely in the promises of God’s word! When God says He is going to bring you over to the promise land, it matters not that there is a river, a mountain or a valley in your path. The river will divide asunder, the mountain will be brought low or removed and cast into the sea, and the valley will be filled in – all in obedience to the word of God! Not simply because you asked, but because you asked according to His will.

Solomon beautifully declared the truth that there is a time for everything in Ecclesiastes 3. This teaches us that, not only does God’s word tell us what He will do, but He has a time when He will do it. This, too, requires that we trust the Lord, and follow His guidance. We must trust that He will do His pleasure in the proper season.

By faith, we have access to every benefit in Christ Jesus. The Word of God cannot fail. Hope deferred makes the heart sick (Prov. 13:12), but faith cannot be deferred, as it is backed by the full faith and credit of the Almighty.

In conclusion, faith is the gift of God (Eph. 2:8), given to us through the hearing of the Word of God (Rom. 10:17). Faith substantiates our hope (Heb. 11:1), and without it, it is impossible to please God (Heb. 11:6). Because faith is rooted in the word of the immutable God, things beyond our human comprehension are able to be achieved – not by our faith, but by the faithfulness of Him who spoke the word (Titus 1:1-3; Heb. 6:17-19).

You need not wonder at the things God can do for the faithful followers of His word. Seek righteousness and meekness; do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly before God; do all things in the name of the Lord Jesus; have faith in God. For if you continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven, even though you were once alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, you are now reconciled in the body of Jesus’ flesh through death, that He might present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in His sight (Col. 1:21-23).

Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and heirs of the blessings. For as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God (John 1:12-13). Praise be to His holy name! Amen. 

THE BACK PEW - Jeff LARSON

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and the people with equity. (Psalm 98:9)

Behold, the Lord cometh
with ten thousands of saints,
To execute judgment upon all. (Jude 1:14-15)

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