

FAITH – INSTALLMENT III
ADDITIONAL MATERIAL
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- A. Definitions of faith
- B. Faith and obedience/works
- C. Questions and answers.
- D. Resting and trusting

A. DEFINITIONS OF FAITH – ALSO TRANSLATED “BELIEF” OR “BELIEVE” OR “BELIEVED”.

The Hebrew language is a concrete language, that is, it speaks pictures to its readers and hearers who are intended to identify with the narrative. Even much of the vocabulary, like many Far Eastern tongues, began as a symbol or picture.

Throughout the Old Testament, the word for faith (or belief) is “Amen” from which we get our phrase “Amen”. The word is simple but is used for many purposes. In the Old Testament it is a verb while in the New it is the Greek noun “pistis” which, when stated as, “I believe”, becomes a verbal form.

The root of the word in the Hebrew has to do with the “right hand”. This reflects the idea of trust and assurance. Jesus sits at the “right hand” of God, a trusted and honored position. In many ancient cultures the “right hand” also was the hand of strength and blessing. It also translates as “support”, “firmness”, “trust”, etc., but relates to the idea of a ministry of the hands. So the next picture of “faith” is that of a caregiver or supporter. This image includes a foster father, foster mother, a nurse, an adoptive father or mother, and the like.

Another picture, not far from these is the picture of a supporting structure like the pillars of a temple. This includes the idea of one carrying another or supporting another, making his steps firm, on solid ground, giving the carried or supported person the sense of trust, firmness, reliability in the other, etc.

Finally it has the meaning we are most familiar with, that of trusting, standing firm, believing, resting in - or upon - with confidence, relying upon, established upon, firm upon and so forth.¹

But even in examining the “word pictures” we are drawn to the idea of a relational model, not just a mental model of belief in a system, theology, truth, ideology, principle, philosophy, religion, model, creed and so on.

So there are several relational elements about faith. Our faith first is initiated by God who truthfully and lovingly extends His right hand to us in Christ. He does this as a loving Father seeking to adopt us into His care. He offers to us that upon which we can stand secure and backs it with evidence we can trust in and be assured of (Christ’s sacrifice verified by His resurrection). This backing is like the pillars of a temple, of a foundation of a building, or a cornerstone or rock upon which the structure is built. The flow of faith is first God to us by

¹ See “Picture of Faith” attached.

Word and by Spirit, then an invitation to consider it and make a decision to place our self into or onto the arms of God. To do this we must step from the place we are (the sand) fully onto the rock. Thus faith goes from a noun (person, place or thing) to a verb (an action). When this is done, verification occurs and growth begins in a new environment. The picture of this takes us back to Genesis 2 where God first made people and enjoyed a “fellowship” with them and they with Him.

There are many illustrations and teachings of this in the Bible. Here are a few:

Ephesians 2:19-22, “So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner *stone*, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.”

1Peter 2:1-8, “Therefore, putting aside all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander, like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation, if you have tasted the kindness of the Lord. And coming to Him as to a living stone which has been rejected by men, but is choice and precious in the sight of God, you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. For *this* is contained in Scripture: “BEHOLD, I LAY IN ZION A CHOICE STONE, A PRECIOUS CORNER *stone*, AND HE WHO BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED.” This precious value, then, is for you who believe; but for those who disbelieve, “THE STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS REJECTED, THIS BECAME THE VERY CORNER *stone*,” and, “A STONE OF STUMBLING AND A ROCK OF OFFENSE”; for they stumble because they are disobedient to the word, and to this *doom* they were also appointed.”²

The flow of faith begins or is initiated by God to us. That is why faith is “God initiates and we respond”, not “we initiate and God responds”. Any initiation we activate must be within that which God has already initiated in the first place. God has left a residual element within every person Pascal calls a “God shaped vacuum only Jesus Christ can fill”. Paul speaks of it in Romans chapter one and two; and C.S. Lewis tries to define it in, “Mere Christianity”. Whatever it is, it is a prompting within to seek God. Once this “prompting” connects with God through faith in Christ, God then reiterates in the Spirit and the new life of “faith” begins.

In the New Testament the word used for “faith” or “belief” carries even more connotations. Because it is Greek, it carries with it the idea of being persuaded, having a credence or conviction about something that causes one to find his or her own quest or search pacified.

It is difficult to reduce faith to just some concept or action we employ. The heathens do this, we don't. And here is why. Like “truth”, “faith”, in the context of God and Christ's love and sacrifice on our behalf involves a relationship. As you hopefully realize, the difference between Christianity and Religion, in the words of Bill Bright, the founder of Campus Crusade is, “Religion may be defined as man reaching out to God with his most noble deeds and sacrifices

² See also: Matthew 21:42; Mark 12:10; Luke 20:17; and Acts 4:11.

so he can be accepted, but Christianity is different. It is God reaching out to us with His love and sacrifice on our behalf.”

Jesus made it clear that truth was more than factual information. He said in John 14:6-12,

"I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me. "If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; from now on you know Him, and have seen Him." Philip said to Him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us." Jesus said to him, "Have I been so long with you, and *yet* you have not come to know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; how *can* you say, 'Show us the Father'? "Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on My own initiative, but the Father abiding in Me does His works. "Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me; otherwise believe because of the works themselves. "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do, he will do also; and greater *works* than these he will do; because I go to the Father.”

First, He noted that He was the “truth”. Truth is ultimately found in a relationship with Him, in becoming a member of God’s household, a member of His family. It is more than factual information. Second, note the relational picture Jesus gives of both truth and “belief” (or faith). Christian faith is more than just something we believe – like the fact that a chair will hold us up. It extends beyond that because a living reality touches us and transforms faith from inanimate facts to a living reality in a relationship. Philip said “show us the Father”. He wanted to have an intellectual satisfaction. Jesus noted that His request had already been met in a relationship with Him. Third, Jesus notes who does the initiating. First it is God, then Jesus responds and does likewise. So should we.

B. FAITH AND OBEDIENCE/ WORKS.

The above illustration leads us into this area. Once God touches, speaks to, convicts a person with His truth and Spirit, a person has the choice to respond or not. When he or she responds God initiates another element and the person is changed or “born again”. Then God initiates another element and the person begins to grow in the milk of the word and in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, like a baby. Our physical growth is a picture of spiritual growth. Soon, we are left to make some choices based on what we have learned. Some choices are good, some not so good. God uses both to train us up. He uses other people to do the same whether they affect us negatively, deceptively, or truthfully. We choose where to go, what to think, and what to do with all of this. Some go into ministry teaching whatever they think is beneficial either to themselves or to others. Others select a life path and go there.

God has initiated and we who believe have responded. Soon, we come to the place where we initiate actions based on choices, which in turn, are based on what God has previously initiated and taught us. It is parenting. And the children learn how to crawl and then walk in the Spirit. Soon the child feels he can make his own choices. Here’s the thing. Those independent choices can either be based on what God has already said and pictured or not. (Does this bring to mind the “garden”?) When the choices and actions are in line with God’s Word and Will, they are called choices of “faith” that are based in a relationship with God and therefore a trust in what He says. Those people are called “faithful”. The works and deeds that they do are the result of faith, not a substitute for it. Abraham is the early model. In speaking of him, Genesis 15:6 states, “Then he believed in the LORD; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness.” Then,

James puts it in 2:18, "But someone may *well* say, "You have faith and I have works; show me your faith without the works, and I will show you my faith by my works." Speaking of Abraham James says in 2:22, "You see that faith was working with his works, and as a result of the works, faith was perfected".

On the other hand, if a person's choices are not based on what God has already said and pictured, this is called "works of the flesh".³ It matters not is the person truly believes it, a deceived person's actions are not called "faith". "Works of the flesh" cannot please God. In the same way, obedience must take the form of response to what God has done or said. Obedience cannot be construed into some form of getting God to do what He has done or said. That's heathenism. It is not our commitment to Christ that makes our lives worth living, but His commitment to us. The flow is always from top to bottom. Response is a flow from bottom to top and is called "faith". But when we try to make it a means of getting God to serve us, we place ourselves above God, as Satan tries to do, twisting everything backward, and it is rejected. Remember, leadership serves, and is not served. Real faith is a response, not an initiation of the word, flesh or thought to manipulate God in our favor.

This brings us to Hebrews 11. Here are some key verses.

11:1-3, "Now faith is the assurance of *things* hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. For by it the men of old gained approval. By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible."

11:6, "And without faith it is impossible to please *Him*, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and *that* He is a rewarder of those who seek Him"

11:8, "By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed by going out to a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing where he was going."

11:13-16, "All these died in faith, without receiving the promises, but having seen them and having welcomed them from a distance, and having confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. For those who say such things make it clear that they are seeking a country of their own. And indeed if they had been thinking of that *country* from which they went out, they would have had opportunity to return. But as it is, they desire a better *country*, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for He has prepared a city for them.

11:31, "By faith Rahab the harlot did not perish along with those who were disobedient, after she had welcomed the spies in peace. And what more shall I say? For time will fail me if I tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets,..."

11:33-40, "...who by faith conquered kingdoms, performed *acts of* righteousness, obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions, quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, from weakness were made strong, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight. Women received *back* their dead by resurrection; and others were tortured, not accepting their release, so

³ In Scripture, "works of the flesh" can be one or more of three different things. 1. Those of our own will apart from the leading of His Word or Spirit; 2. The attempt to be justified, blessed, rewarded, recompensed, saved, prospered and so on by doing religious works, keeping the Law and Commandments and so on. 3. Immoral and ungodly behavior.

that they might obtain a better resurrection; and others experienced mockings and scourgings, yes, also chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were tempted, they were put to death with the sword; they went about in sheepskins, in goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, ill-treated (*men* of whom the world was not worthy), wandering in deserts and mountains and caves and holes in the ground. And all these, having gained approval through their faith, did not receive what was promised, because God had provided something better for us, so that apart from us they would not be made perfect.”

In looking carefully at these verses one can see that their faith was not in what they did or what they said or in their lineage or heritage or tradition.. Certainly not in Rahab’s case, a prostitute and heathen. The source of their faith and their dependency thereon did not come from themselves or anything they did or said. There was no incantation, confession, creed, practice or ritual that was the essence of their faith. The essence of their faith and their dependence was upon God Himself in a seeking relationship that understood that He and He alone was worthy of their commitment.

Their obedience, actions, service, and dedication was not motivated to try and get God to either reveal Himself, speak, act, or show a sign to them, but because he had already done so. He had initiated some specific action or word and they responded because they knew it was the Creator Himself who did so. Therefore as a result of their faith in Him, He continued to lead, guide, bless, care for and reassure His faithful. He Himself was the object of their faith and action, and in so doing they knew that this world would not meet the desire of their hearts and so fixed their eyes on what was to come in accordance with the promise and will of God. They didn’t reverse the flow as so many attempt to do today, and as Satan attempts to influence us all the time.

First we seek God. The seeking “prompt” he has given us. When we find Him, then He rewards us...but not according to our will or shallow thinking, but according to His...which is far higher and beyond anything we can ask or think.

Note also that faith is in that which we cannot see, manipulate or control. It trusts in God who does all things according to the counsel of His will. Paul notes in Romans 8:24-28, “For in hope we have been saved, but hope that is seen is not hope; for who hopes for what he *already* sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, with perseverance we wait eagerly for it.”

So we trust only in what God has promised or revealed as did the saints of old, and in nothing else. We do not try to manipulate God’s Word and will into something we are trying to promote or impress others with. We cannot, for example, either bend others to our will by “Jesus’ Name” including Satan, or bend God Himself to our will by using Jesus Name. In attempting to do so we use Satanic and demonic methods to achieve our will.

James makes it clear in 4:3-16:

“You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend *it* on your pleasures. You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. Or do you think that the Scripture speaks to no purpose: ‘He jealously desires the Spirit which He has made to dwell in us?’ But He gives a greater grace. Therefore *it* says, ‘GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE.’ Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Be miserable and

mourn and weep; let your laughter be turned into mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you. Do not speak against one another, brethren. He who speaks against a brother or judges his brother, speaks against the law and judges the law; but if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge *of it*. There is *only* one Lawgiver and Judge, the One who is able to save and to destroy; but who are you who judge your neighbor? Come now, you who say, 'Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, and spend a year there and engage in business and make a profit.' Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are *just* a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away. Instead, *you ought* to say, 'If the Lord wills, we will live and also do this or that.' But as it is, you boast in your arrogance; all such boasting is evil."

5:1-12, "Come now, you rich, weep and howl for your miseries which are coming upon you. Your riches have rotted and your garments have become moth-eaten. Your gold and your silver have rusted; and their rust will be a witness against you and will consume your flesh like fire. It is in the last days that you have stored up your treasure! Behold, the pay of the laborers who mowed your fields, *and* which has been withheld by you, cries out *against you*; and the outcry of those who did the harvesting has reached the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth. You have lived luxuriously on the earth and led a life of wanton pleasure; you have fattened your hearts in a day of slaughter. You have condemned and put to death the righteous *man*; he does not resist you. Therefore be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious produce of the soil, being patient about it, until it gets the early and late rains. You too be patient; strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near. Do not complain, brethren, against one another, so that you yourselves may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing right at the door. As an example, brethren, of suffering and patience, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. We count those blessed who endured. You have heard of the endurance of Job and have seen the outcome of the Lord's dealings, that the Lord is full of compassion and *is* merciful. But above all, my brethren, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or with any other oath; but your yes is to be yes, and your no, no, so that you may not fall under judgment."

Therefore our works and deeds are a reflection of His Will and Word, a response to it, not a means to get God to do something for us to bolster our faith. It is not the greatness of our faith that accomplishes things, or the loudness or repetition of our words that does it, quite the opposite, it is the greatness of our God, simple as that. That is why Jesus taught,

Matthew 6:1-8, "Beware of practicing your righteousness before men to be noticed by them; otherwise you have no reward with your Father who is in heaven. So when you give to the poor, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be honored by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full. But when you give to the poor, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving will be in secret; and your Father who sees *what is done* in secret will reward you. When you pray, you are not to be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on the street corners so that they may be seen by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full. But you, when you pray, go into your inner room, close your door and pray to your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees *what is done* in secret will reward you. And when you are praying, do not use meaningless repetition as the Gentiles do, for they suppose that they will be heard for their many words. So do not be like them; for your Father knows what you need before you ask Him."

Anything else is just a misdirected lack of “faith”. Therefore both the object of our faith and the response of our faith are outside of anything we believe, do, or think.

Again, James:

“What use is it, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but he has no works? Can that faith save him? If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, and one of you says to them, ‘Go in peace, be warmed and be filled,’ and yet you do not give them what is necessary for *their* body, what use is that? Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, *being* by itself. But someone may *well* say, ‘You have faith and I have works; show me your faith without the works, and I will show you my faith by my works.’ You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder. But are you willing to recognize, you foolish fellow, that faith without works is useless?” 2:14-26

Note the content of the works. The works described are in accordance with God’s Will. In other words, if one has faith and does not exhibit it in works God has instructed, what good is it? They can scream and yell and demand things “In Jesus’ Name” all day long, and it will hit the ceiling. In the same way, will works alone save a man? No! Not without faith first which directs and defines the works, a faith of course, which must first be in God and what He says, not in the works, tradition, teachings, and doctrine we create or in what they say.

Our faith is in God. It is impossible then, to define it in terms of a physical thing since it is a spiritual reality. We fall short, in the same way we try to define God or put Him into some box we have created. We can simply use words expressing love, graciousness and kindness, but they fall short. Paul’s great words help, but cannot tell the “everything, “But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus, so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. Ephesians 2:4-7. Then in I Corinthians 13:12 he states, “For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I will know fully just as I also have been fully known.”

Faith can not be simply defined in terms of some human effort, can it? God is not a great big dog we can get to jump to our tune if we offer a bone juicy enough. Neither does he see or treat us in the same way. We are not dogs to jump when He offers us some juicy bone. Faith is a relationship of mutual trust and love. Not a formula, method, incantation, system, liturgy, religion, creed, confession, methodology, or any other humanly contrived idea or action. It is a spiritual thing... a thing of the Spirit, not of all the earthly stuff people attempt to do. I Corinthians 2:12-14, “Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God, which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual *thoughts* with spiritual *words*. But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.”

All efforts we engage in must be a reflection and response to the truth if it is to be called “faith”. Those who humbly seek to so do, even when their efforts are not quite perfect, are called the faithful, and their reward will be great because they trust, not in themselves, but in a great God!

C. MORE QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

1. “What does it mean to ask or pronounce something in ‘Jesus’ Name’?” This is an important question since most Christians add this “tag line” on each prayer or pronouncement. There is indeed authority in the Name of Jesus. But too often the use of Jesus’ Name is outside of that authority. “In the Name of Jesus” means “In the authority of Jesus”. Jesus Name has authority over all other powers or authorities.

Philippians 2:9-11, “For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE WILL BOW, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

Ephesians 1:19-23, “These are in accordance with the working of the strength of His might which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly *places*, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.”

There are numerous verses and passages where Jesus or the apostles speak about the authority of His name. Below are a few. As you read them, replace the word name with the word “authority” and you will see that this is true. Further, to believe in Jesus’ Name is to believe in His authority, in who He is, in His deity. This is offensive to many because it places Jesus above their gods or religious practices thus invalidating them. Nothing makes people angrier. One example is Matthew 10:22.

Matthew 10:22, "You will be hated by all because of My name, but it is the one who has endured to the end who will be saved.”

Some other verses involving Jesus’ Name:

Matthew 18:5, "And whoever receives one such child in My name receives Me;...”.

Matthew 18:20, "For where two or three have gathered together in My name, I am there in their midst."

Matthew 19:29, "And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or farms for My name's sake, will receive many times as much, and will inherit eternal life.”

Mark 9:39, But Jesus said, "Do not hinder him, for there is no one who will perform a miracle in My name, and be able soon afterward to speak evil of Me.”

John 1:12, “But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, *even* to those who believe in His name,...”.

John 1:13, "... who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God."

John 2:23, "Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed in His name, observing His signs which He was doing."

John 14:13, "Whatever you ask in My name, that will I do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son."

John 14:14, "If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do *it*."

John 15:16, "You did not choose Me but I chose you, and appointed you that you would go and bear fruit, and *that* your fruit would remain, so that whatever you ask of the Father in My name He may give to you."

John 16:23, "In that day you will not question Me about anything. Truly, truly, I say to you, if you ask the Father for anything in My name, He will give it to you."

Acts 3:16, "And on the basis of faith in His name, *it is* the name of Jesus which has strengthened this man whom you see and know; and the faith which *comes* through Him has given him this perfect health in the presence of you all."

Here is an illustration about how the Name of Jesus is to be employed and when it is employed in vain.

Let's say that a King is sending a messenger to another lesser ruler in a country far away under the king's authority. The messenger is to carry instructions A, B, and C, to this other ruler. The other ruler is to comply with these instructions because of the authority of the Sovereign over him. The messenger coming to him represents that authority doesn't he? So the messenger goes on his mission and when he arrives he is immediately ushered into the ruler's presence. The messenger states, "I come with instructions in the name of the King". The messenger then takes the place of the King in the presence and mind of this lesser ruler and the ruler listens to him as if to the King himself, right? So the messenger continues, "I bring you instructions from the King in his name and they are D, E, and F. The price for these words is \$xxxxxx.xx." He presumes that because he is bearing the name of the King he can say anything he wants according to his own will rather than according to the King's. He even charges the lesser ruler for the information even though he was told, "freely you have received, freely give".

So the messenger thinks and decides that he knows best what to say and do. The lesser ruler believes these are the true words of the King and begins to comply. But something doesn't go right. The instructions simply are not working. Meanwhile, the King knows full well what the messenger has done. What does the King do? Does he honor the words and actions of his messenger because he went in the King's name? Or does he chastise him leaving the presumptive words to fail?

Meanwhile, the lesser ruler is wise enough to verify that what the messenger told him is true. So what does he do? Does he ask other unfaithful messengers? No, he checks out the charters, documents, laws the King has already written to find out what to do. Finally, he sends his own messenger to the King for confirmation. Finding out that the King's first messenger led him astray,

he asks that the King not send him again. Both the messenger and the King look foolish because of the foolishness of the messenger.

But because the messenger is unhappy and doesn't want to comply with the will of the King, he goes out and starts his own little fiefdom. People flock to hear him because he is saying what they want to hear. Their ears are being tickled. This is not a problem for the King because he only wants faithful citizens in his Kingdom anyway and so this and other unfaithful messengers are really doing his work without knowing it. Meanwhile, other wise people, who seek the truth seek after the kingdom of the King and His will knowing that if they do so, all their real needs will be taken care of and they will last.

So you see, asking or pronouncing something in "Jesus' Name" is actually invoking not only His authority but also the willingness to comply with His will and instructions. Praying in "Jesus' Name" is the same as praying according to His will. That is why when Jesus said "Ask in my name"... He meant, "according to His will as well as His authority". Other wise He could have simply said, "Whatever you ask, regardless of the content, it will be granted to you. So ask for millions of dollars, it is okay, or whatever your will insists on I will do". But He didn't say that and so the words "in My Name" must be more than that don't you agree? It is not our will He is submitting to, He is noting that we are under both His authority and His will. Look again:

John 14:13, "Whatever you ask in My name, that will I do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son."

John 14:14, "If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do *it*."

John 15:16, "You did not choose Me but I chose you, and appointed you that you would go and bear fruit, and *that* your fruit would remain, so that whatever you ask of the Father in My name He may give to you."

John 16:23, "In that day you will not question Me about anything. Truly, truly, I say to you, if you ask the Father for anything in My name, He will give it to you."

His authority and His will. To reinforce this, Paul makes a simple statement.

Ephesians 1:9-12, "He made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention which He purposed in Him with a view to an administration suitable to the fullness of the times, *that is*, the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things on the earth. In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will, to the end that we who were the first to hope in Christ would be to the praise of His glory."

Please notice that God "Works all things according to the counsel of His will". Does this include answer to prayers? Does this mean we should be sensitive to the counsel of His will before we open our mouths? I think we know the answer. Jesus said,

Matthew 7:11-24 "If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give what is good to those who ask Him! "In everything, therefore, treat people the same way you want them to treat you, for this is the Law and the Prophets. "Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that

leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. "For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it. "Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves. "You will know them by their fruits. Grapes are not gathered from thorn *bushes* nor figs from thistles, are they? "So every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit. "A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit. "Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. "So then, you will know them by their fruits. "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven *will enter*. "Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' "And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS.' "Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them, may be compared to a wise man who built his house on the rock."

2. What if we are praying in all sincerity of heart and our prayers are not quite in His will? Paul answers this in Romans 8:

Romans 8:24-28, "For in hope we have been saved, but hope that is seen is not hope; for who hopes for what he *already* sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, with perseverance we wait eagerly for it. In the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for *us* with groanings too deep for words; and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to *the will of God*. And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to *His* purpose.

We can be assured that our sincere prayers will be taken to God by His Spirit and translated into that which is in the will of God by the intercession of God's Spirit. This is the wonder of God's grace and love. We may not get the answer we expect, but God will always do what is best for His children. So we must trust Him and leave it to Him.

On the other hand, if our motives are tainted, (even if we do not realize it at the time due to a seared conscience or some other reason) God will not hear us at all. See Luke 18:9-14 for example.

"And He also told this parable to some people who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and viewed others with contempt: "Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. "The Pharisee stood and was praying this to himself: 'God, I thank You that I am not like other people: swindlers, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. 'I fast twice a week; I pay tithes of all that I get.' "But the tax collector, standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, the sinner!' "I tell you, this man went to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted."

So faith goes from what is seen to that which cannot be seen. Physical realities cannot enter there including sounds and words we utter. As the God said to Moses, "You cannot see My face, for no man can see Me and live!"⁴ That is why the Holy Spirit must intercede. He is the translator of words to spirit. That is why some pronouncements and prayers are heard and some are not. The

⁴ See also Judges 13:22; Deut. 5:26;

reason that some are heard and answered and some are not is because they have already been granted prior to the asking or pronouncement. Our future prayers and requests are already either answered or they are not. If they are in accordance with God's will then they are. If we pray with the spirit and motive in agreement with God's will, even if our words and thoughts are not, they will reach Him and be answered, albeit probably differently than we thought but with our good or the good of others in mind. God's goal is to save as many as possible.

3. "Why do we doubt and worry and does this affect our relationship with God or His willingness to bless us?" Doubt and worry seem to be common among all peoples. In this evil world, it is understandable. Though doubt and worry about what God is or is not, or may or may not do is common, it is foolish. We doubt and worry for several reasons. To begin with, we have been trained that God's blessings are in direct proportion to our obedience, and we know we screw up all the time. In fact we handle our management responsibilities so poorly that we often blame God for the mess we are in or for not bailing us out when we ask Him. What is wrong with this assumption that God's blessings toward us is a reflection of our faith or obedience is, that it is not true - none of it. Peter notes in II Peter 1:2,

"Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord; seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence. For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of *the* divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust. Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in *your* moral excellence, knowledge, and in *your* knowledge, self-control, and in *your* self-control, perseverance, and in *your* perseverance, godliness, and in *your* godliness, brotherly kindness, and in *your* brotherly kindness, love. For if these *qualities* are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For he who lacks these *qualities* is blind *or* short-sighted, having forgotten *his* purification from his former sins."

And,

I Peter 4:14, "If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you."

Peter not only makes it clear that we already have all the blessings God is intending to give us, but also teaches us what faith is to be focused on. Notice it is not on self-fulfillment with goods, money, possessions, etc. and what is best for my portfolio, but on what...? And what if a person is directed to other "things" instead of these things? "For he who lacks these *qualities* is blind *or* short-sighted, having forgotten *his* purification from his former sins."

So not only are God's blessings not what we seek after all the time, but neither is our relationship affected by our screw-ups. Even the Old Testament Psalmists knew this.

Psalm 103:2-17

- 2: Bless the LORD, O my soul, And forget none of His benefits;
- 3: Who pardons all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases;

4: Who redeems your life from the pit, Who crowns you with lovingkindness and compassion;
 5: Who satisfies your years with good things, *So that* your youth is renewed like the eagle.
 6: The LORD performs righteous deeds And judgments for all who are oppressed.
 7: He made known His ways to Moses, His acts to the sons of Israel.
 8: The LORD is compassionate and gracious, Slow to anger and abounding in lovingkindness.
 9: He will not always strive *with us*, Nor will He keep *His anger* forever.
 10: He has not dealt with us according to our sins, Nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.
 11: For as high as the heavens are above the earth, So great is His lovingkindness toward those who fear Him.
 12: As far as the east is from the west, So far has He removed our transgressions from us.
 13: Just as a father has compassion on *his* children, So the LORD has compassion on those who fear Him.
 14: For He Himself knows our frame; He is mindful that we are *but* dust.
 15: As for man, his days are like grass; As a flower of the field, so he flourishes.
 16: When the wind has passed over it, it is no more, And its place acknowledges it no longer.
 17: But the lovingkindness of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear Him, And His righteousness to children's children.

Psalm 37:1-25

1: Do not fret because of evildoers, Be not envious toward wrongdoers.
 2: For they will wither quickly like the grass And fade like the green herb.
 3: Trust in the LORD and do good; Dwell in the land and cultivate faithfulness.
 4: Delight yourself in the LORD; And He will give you the desires of your heart.
 5: Commit your way to the LORD, Trust also in Him, and He will do it.
 6: He will bring forth your righteousness as the light And your judgment as the noonday.
 7: Rest in the LORD and wait patiently for Him; Do not fret because of him who prospers in his way, Because of the man who carries out wicked schemes.
 8: Cease from anger and forsake wrath; Do not fret; *it leads* only to evildoing.
 9: For evildoers will be cut off, But those who wait for the LORD, they will inherit the land.
 10: Yet a little while and the wicked man will be no more; And you will look carefully for his place and he will not be *there*.
 11: But the humble will inherit the land And will delight themselves in abundant prosperity.
 12: The wicked plots against the righteous And gnashes at him with his teeth.
 13: The Lord laughs at him, For He sees his day is coming.
 14: The wicked have drawn the sword and bent their bow To cast down the afflicted and the needy, To slay those who are upright in conduct.
 15: Their sword will enter their own heart, And their bows will be broken.
 16: Better is the little of the righteous Than the abundance of many wicked.
 17: For the arms of the wicked will be broken, But the LORD sustains the righteous.
 18: The LORD knows the days of the blameless, And their inheritance will be forever.
 19: They will not be ashamed in the time of evil, And in the days of famine they will have abundance.

20: But the wicked will perish; And the enemies of the LORD will be like the glory of the pastures, They vanish--like smoke they vanish away.
21: The wicked borrows and does not pay back, But the righteous is gracious and gives.
22: For those blessed by Him will inherit the land, But those cursed by Him will be cut off.
23: The steps of a man are established by the LORD, And He delights in his way.
24: When he falls, he will not be hurled headlong, Because the LORD is the One who holds his hand.
25: I have been young and now I am old, Yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken Or his descendants begging bread.

In spite of the strength or weakness of my faith, in spite of the perfection or lack of perfection of my doctrines, works, relationships, deeds, income, ambitions, wealth, successes, failures, commitment, etc. I will trust in Christ alone because the rest of it is crap!

Paul said exactly these words in Philippians 3:3-15, (emphasis in blue – mine)

“...for we are the *true* circumcision, who worship in the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh, although I myself might have confidence even in the flesh. If anyone else has a mind to put confidence in the flesh, I far more: circumcised the eighth day, of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the Law, a Pharisee; as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to the righteousness which is in the Law, found blameless. But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. **More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish (the original is the word for “field paddies”) so that I may gain Christ, and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from *the* Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which *comes* from God on the basis of faith, that I may know Him (Paul’s goal and worthy of emulation) and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.** Not that I have already obtained *it* or have already become perfect, but I press on so that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus.” Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of *it* yet; but one thing *I do*: forgetting what *lies* behind and reaching forward to what *lies* ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. Let us therefore, as many as are perfect, have this attitude; and if in anything you have a different attitude, God will reveal that also to you;

D. RESTING AND TRUSTING

We rest and trust in what He has done and will do, even if it seems, right now, that it is all coming apart.

Matthew 11:28-30, "Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. "Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and YOU WILL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS. "For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."

I Corinthians 2:1-5, “And when I came to you, brethren, I did not come with superiority of speech or of wisdom, proclaiming to you the testimony of God. For I determined to know

nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling, and my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, so that your faith would not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God.”

Hebrews 4:1-3, “Therefore, let us fear if, while a promise remains of entering His rest, any one of you may seem to have come short of it. For indeed we have had good news preached to us, just as they also; but the word they heard did not profit them, because it was not united by faith in those who heard. For we who have believed enter that rest.”

Hebrews 4:10-11, “For the one who has entered His rest has himself also rested from his works, as God did from His. Therefore let us be diligent to enter that rest, so that no one will fall, through *following* the same example of disobedience.”

These last verses reflects the idea of the Sabbath, the seventh day being the day of “rest”. Biblically, this would be Friday evening from sundown to Saturday evening at sundown. But in Christ, we enter His Rest, that is we enter an eternal and fulfilled Sabbath. We no longer have to observe a “day” because we observe a “relationship” of rest in Christ, from our futile works of “righteousness”. Every “day” is the Sabbath, holy unto God. Paul wrote, “But now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how is it that you turn back again to the weak and worthless elemental things, to which you desire to be enslaved all over again? You observe days and months and seasons and years. I fear for you, that perhaps I have labored over you in vain.” Galatians 4:9-11

Paul ends nearly every one of his letters with words similar to, “Grace and peace to you in the name of Jesus Christ and God our Father”. This is truly what God wants us to experience, not: fear, insecurity, depression, discouragement, hopelessness, dismay, anxiety and spiritual distress so many Christians experience.

This study was designed to bring about this “rest” so that our lives will not be derailed, nor full of fear, but of faith, courage, perseverance and fulfillment.

ADDENDUM

A PICTURE OF FAITH

The Hebrew word translated “faith” or “believe” is “Ah-man” from which we get our term “Amen”.

It looks like this in the Hebrew: אמן

The letters in Hebrew and Phoenician from right to left are Aleph, Mem and Nun (noon). The language also reads from right to left. Egyptian can be ordered right to left, left to right or top to bottom.

The NASB uses the translation “believe” exclusively for this word. It has a variety of nuances depending on the context. But basically, it is an abstract word. That is, it is difficult to picture like the word “thought” or “truth”. But there are some ancient forms that give us some direction.

Believe it or not, the most ancient pictographs depict an Ox standing in the water calmly quenching his thirst while a deadly water serpent swims nearby. No fear. We see a complete trust that one will come to no harm in the midst of evil. Perhaps the Ox is pictured due to its strength and power of its legs.

One can begin to get the idea of “faith” here. The word evolved and many pictures came to represent “believing”. For example, the ideas of “firmness” or “steadfastness”, “un-movability” (so to speak), came into use. Then the concepts of reliability, trustworthiness, security and so on developed. The picture of “faith” also changed. One can see how it went from the ox to the doorposts or foundations or support structures for buildings.

It came to also be thought of as “that which guards”. The word Ah-man is translated in some of these terms. Note II Kings 10:1, “Now Ahab had seventy sons in Samaria. And Jehu wrote letters and sent *them* to Samaria, to the rulers of Jezreel, the elders, and to the *guardians* of the *children of Ahab*, saying...

“Guardians”, “faithful ones”, “pillars”, “without fear” all suggest an idea of what faith or believing involves.

Note II Kings 18:16 as another example, “At that time Hezekiah cut off *the gold from* the doors of the temple of the LORD, and *from* the *doorposts* which Hezekiah king of Judah had overlaid, and gave it to the king of Assyria.”

In Isaiah 22:23-25, it is used in a different way. Note the purple italics. 23: “I will drive him *like* a peg in a *firm* place, And he will become a throne of glory to his father's house. 24: “So they will hang on him all the glory of his father's house, offspring and issue, all the least of vessels, from bowls to all the jars. 25: “In that day,” declares the LORD of hosts, “the peg driven in a *firm* place will give way; it will even break off and fall, and the load hanging on it will be cut off, for the LORD has spoken.”

Little by little we begin to see the idea of the word. There are many more examples. One more interesting one will suffice. Isaiah 60:4, “Lift up your eyes round about and see; They all gather together, they come to you. Your sons will come from afar, And your daughters will be *carried* in the arms.”

Sometimes the word is used of a nurse or of a child nursing at his mother's breast. This brings us back to the idea of security and comfort without fear. And it also brings us to an important distinction lost by many which I address in my paper. "Faith" or "belief" is not something we believe in. It is not a set of doctrines or beliefs in which we place our confidence. In every case where "Aman" is used, there is an integral relationship between two parties or objects. There is a tangible relationship not just a theory, or idea, or thought or principle one "believes in".

When it comes down to it, faith is actually a relationship or intimate "knowledge" of God. It is being a part of a living organism – the "body of Christ" for example.

This is underscored by Jesus comments in Matthew 7 when He said, 21: "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven *will enter*. 22: "Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' 23: "And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS.'

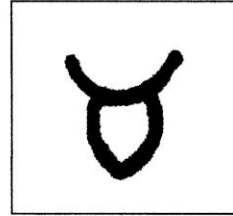
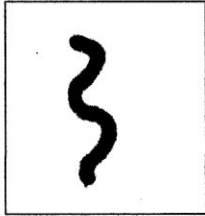
The word "know" in the Hebrew understanding is more than "head knowledge". For example, in Genesis 4:1 the KJV says, "And Adam "knew: his wife, and she conceived....". The NASB translates it, "Now the man had relations with his wife Eve, and she conceived..." The idea "to know" conveys an intimate relationship not just "head knowledge" or a passing acquaintance. In the western culture, we have it reversed. So "faith" is more understood as "head knowledge belief" rather than intimate relationship. And, this is wrong to say the least.

The symbols below are as follows:

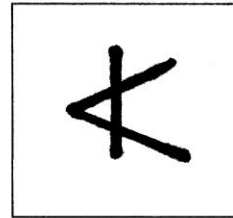
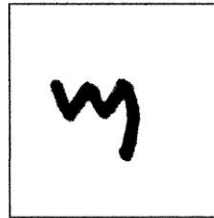
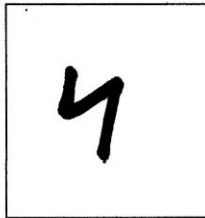
From right to left, a picture of an Ox, Water and Serpent as they evolve from Egyptian, Phoenician and to Hebrew. Hebrew is a developed language, not a primary language. It evolved from many other written and spoken forms. Among these are Egyptian, Phoenician, Babylonian (remember Abraham was a Babylonian), Canaanite, and so on. As time went by, the ancient forms began to take on additional meanings and often the ancient primitive form was abandoned.

FAITH

EGYPTIAN



PHOENICIAN



HEBREW

