

# *The Bible Standard*

An aerial photograph of a large crowd of people walking across a multi-arched bridge. The bridge spans a body of water and is surrounded by lush green trees and grass. The scene is captured from a high angle, showing the scale of the gathering.

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# THE CROSS SEPARATES TWO CLASSES

FAITHFUL OF THE JEWISH AGE (HOUSE OF SERVANTS) — EARTHLY PROMISES,  
RESURRECTED TO THE PERFECT HUMAN NATURE

FAITHFUL OF THE GOSPEL AGE (HOUSE OF SONS) — HEAVENLY PROMISES,  
RESURRECTED TO THE DIVINE NATURE

**T**HE BIBLE puts faith before works, because no works can be acceptable to God unless produced by faith. Therefore, it is written, “Without faith it is impossible to please God.” The inspired Word brings to our attention two distinct classes of faith-induced people, both pleasing to God and both to be eventually highly rewarded by the Almighty. One of these classes preceded Jesus’ day and the other followed His day. The first class of faithful ones, the servants, are known as the Ancient Worthies, because they lived in ancient times while enduring faithfully under extreme trial. The class that followed had Jesus as their Head and Leader and are Scripturally designated the sons of God. This distinction or division of God’s peoples, although clearly marked in the Word, has been overlooked by most.

No matter how faithful or loyal the Old Testament prophets were — like Enoch, Abraham, David, and Jeremiah — they could not be recognized by God as members of the house of sons because they lived before Jesus’ day. The call to sonship and membership in the Church class had not yet gone forth — Jesus had not yet tasted “death for every man.” We read that Adam in his perfection was recognized as a son of God (Luke 3: 38). From the time that sin entered the world by Adam’s disobedience, God could not recog-

nize any of the fallen human family as His sons — all had sinned and could not measure up to the required perfection. It was not until Jesus came to earth and died on Calvary’s Cross, the just for the unjust, that He was able to bring some back to God and open the door to sonship. In harmony with this, St. Paul declares: “Moses verily was faithful in all his house [the house of servants], but Christ as a son over his own house [the house of sons]” (Heb. 3: 5, 6).

## Brethren Before and After the Cross

The distinction is clearly marked between the noble brethren who lived before the Cross, the last one of whom was John the Baptist, and the faithful believers since Jesus, the first of whom were the Apostles. That John the Baptist was the last of the Ancient Worthies is attested by the Master’s words, “There is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist: but he that is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he” (Luke 7: 28).

St. Paul makes the distinction between the Ancient Worthies who preceded the Cross and the followers of Jesus. He recites the names of the prominent ones of the past — Enoch, Abraham, David, and others. He describes their exploits of faith and says that they were pleasing to God, noble, praiseworthy. He then calls attention to the fact that they never received the promises that God had made to them.

All Scripture references are to the King James Version, unless otherwise stated.

“Lift up a standard for the people” — Isa. 62: 10

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We note that God did not promise the faithful a reward in heaven prior to Jesus' day. The promises to the Ancient Worthies, that inspired their zeal and devotion, were all earthly promises. For example, the one made to Abraham — "Lift your eyes now and look from the place where you are — northward, southward, eastward, and westward; for all the land which you see I give to you and your descendants forever" (Gen. 13: 14, 15; 17: 8, *New King James Version*).

St. Stephen calls our attention to the fact that this promise to Abraham is still secured by God's promise, though still unfulfilled. He declares that Abraham never received enough of that land to set his foot upon. This promise to Abraham and its fulfillment is the basis for the resurrection of Abraham, that in God's due time he will inherit the land along with his posterity.

On the other hand, the promises in the New Testament are only spiritual — heavenly promises, "things above." The Christian faithful of the Gospel Age are promised a share with Jesus in the heavenly kingdom which He has established at His Second Coming. They are His joint-heirs — "If so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together" (Rom. 8: 17). The promise to these is that they shall be in the heavenly kingdom of Priests (in the spirit realm); while the promise to the Ancient Worthies is that they shall be made "princes in all the earth" (1 Pet. 2: 9; Rev. 20: 6; Psa. 45: 16).

### **From Human to Divine**

The followers of Jesus, the Church, being made up of both Jews and Gentiles, were promised a change of nature — from human to Divine. This change began with the begetting of the spirit at the time of their consecration to God. Their change was completed at their resurrection — their birth to the Divine nature. This occurred after they faithfully finished their Christian course in death. In the "first resurrection" they were "changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye" — "sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body." The Ancient Worthies did not receive the begetting of the spirit to a new nature, therefore their resurrection will be to human perfection on earth.

Contrasting these two classes, the Apostle in Heb. 11: 39, 40 declares that the Ancient Worthies "having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise [the earthly rewards]: God having provided some better thing for us [the Church] that they without us should not be made perfect." In other words,

*The Apostle is a deep and forceful reasoner, for in these words he exhorts to look backwards at the list of Ancient Worthies (Heb. 11), and to consider what they endured and how faithful and loyal they were to God.*

God from the beginning arranged that Christ should be first — Jesus the Head, then the Church, His body. These special Sons at the start of their Christian experience received the begetting to the spirit nature and after their perfecting they are ready for birth as Divine beings in the "first resurrection." With the completion of the Church class and their placement in their heavenly positions of glory, honor, and the Divine nature, then God's promises to the Ancient Worthies will begin to fulfill and will ultimately extend to "all families of the earth" (Gen. 12: 3; Gal. 3: 29).

God has blessings in store for every member of the human family willing to accept them on the Divine terms. But the greatest rewards are those provided for the Church class — the "little flock," to whom it is the Father's good pleasure to give the kingdom, with the glory, honor, and office of association with Jesus in the work of blessing the world during His Millennial Reign.

The Apostle encourages them to look back to the Ancient Worthies and let their faithful example act as a stimulus for faith and zeal. He then exhorts them to look to the great Example — the Lord Jesus — and study His life, sufferings, and reward, lest they become discouraged along the way (Heb. 12: 1-3).

### **THE CHRISTIAN RACECOURSE**

*Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us — Heb. 12: 1.*

The Apostle is a deep and forceful reasoner, for in these words he exhorts to look backwards at the list of Ancient Worthies (Heb. 11), and to consider what they endured and how faithful and loyal they were to God. Then he would have us consider them as though they were as a cloud watching the Church in their daily activities of service for the Lord under the rigors of the curse. It is the Church who have been given the still

greater blessing of becoming sons of God on the Divine plane — attaining “the divine nature” (John 1: 12; 2 Pet. 1: 4). To these have fallen the role with their Lord and Head to not only give the Ancient Worthies their position in the Kingdom (Heb. 11: 40), but to do likewise for the entire human race — “whosoever will” in “the times of restitution” during Christ’s Millennial reign (Acts 3: 19-21).

It is as though St. Paul was saying: In view of the great things accomplished by these faithful characters of the past who manifested such faith and confidence in God, and seeing that we Christians are encompassed with so great a cloud of witnesses, some of whom were martyrs, let the inspiration of their example spur us to greater faithfulness in running the Christian race.

The Apostle uses the word *witness* in the sense of those whose lives testified to the Truth, some of whom were cut off from life itself, and such a witness should have a strong influence upon those running for the Gospel Age High Calling salvation. These Ancient Worthies, long dead, look down upon us *through the achievements of their lives*. That they had been dead for centuries even then need not detract from the Apostle’s figure of speech. This style of expression is commonly used today. As an illustration, we recall that on one occasion Napoleon addressed his army saying, “My men, thirty centuries look down upon you!” While centuries cannot actually look down, yet in one sense of the word they can, for we can look back into the past and realize matters that are thirty centuries old and more.

### Princes in God’s Kingdom

The Apostle desires us to recall that this “cloud of witnesses” surrounded the Church class urging them to persevere as they ran for their prize during the Gospel Age. While we recognize that the “ancients” will not obtain the prize for which the Church ran, they are, nonetheless, to have a wonderful prize — to be princes in the earthly phase of the Millennial Kingdom.

He pictures before our minds a great racecourse in which the Little Flock were at that time runners — and in principle all of God’s people have run, or will yet run — in order to qualify for their place in the Kingdom. This will also be true to a certain extent for the world of mankind on their future journey up the “highway of

holiness” (Isa. 35: 8). That symbolic road, when inaugurated, will require effort to overcome the imperfections of the flesh and gain life, and the reward for its participants will be perfection of human nature. Paul shows how Jesus ran the course of the “narrow way” and by faith looked forward to the joy that was set before Him by the Father. He relates to us how loyal Jesus was and what He endured — the Cross and its shame. He points to the Father’s faithfulness in highly rewarding Jesus, seating him at His own right hand of Divine Majesty. Then comes the exhortation, primarily for the Church, but in principle for any of God’s people running for everlasting life: “Let us lay aside every weight,” every hindrance, everything that would prevent our running grandly and successfully the race for this great prize which Jesus has obtained and to which the Lord’s Bride has been invited through the merit of His sacrifice.

The Apostle reminds us that one of the greatest hindrances to running the Christian race is sin. The Lord’s people are besieged by inherited sin in their fallen humanity. The race needs to be run, not only perseveringly, but also patiently, for whoever would reach the goal will need patience — will need to be proven and tested in all points as respects their loyalty and devotion to the Heavenly Father, to the Truth, and to the brethren. Only such as attain the character-likeness of their Head and Leader in that narrow way may hope to gain the prize. For the Church, the prize was to be with and like their Lord and share His glory. God predestinated that the Church would be conformed to the image of His Son (Rom. 8: 29), and the character requirements for the Church class — those who ran the race for the High Calling during the Gospel Age — were much more exacting than for those of the other classes of God’s people and for those of the future Restitution class seeking life in the Millennial Age.

### WHAT ARE THE WEIGHTS?

The weights that are to be set aside would probably vary in different people. One might have inherited titles or an honorable position. St. Paul was one of these. He was born a Roman citizen — an honor of distinction in his day. This station he laid aside when he entered the Christian racecourse. He did, however, refer to his Roman citizenship when the interests of the



Truth made it advantageous for him to do so. On the other hand, he never tried to follow a middle course — to benefit himself and please the world part of the time and then fellowship with the Lord's people at other times. He put his God first and let others take a back seat as he expressed himself in these words: "Brethren, I count not myself yet to have laid hold: but one thing I do, forgetting the things which are behind, and stretching forward to the things which are before, I press on toward the goal unto the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3: 13, 14, *American Standard Version*).

Another weight for some might be wealth. One possessing much money could be hindered in the race by fostering the thought that he must occupy a large house, obtain many possessions, and live as do others of his status. In so doing he could compromise his allegiance to the Lord, even though he would continue to attend services of the Lord's people. Other weights might include the talent for public speaking, a high amount of self-esteem, or the desire for the approval of others. Any who have, or will have the desire to win in the race for which they are called, must lay aside all those weights and any additional ones that they recognize, otherwise they will be so handicapped that they will not run well. Some runners (the Church) will be more than overcomers and will receive the prize. Others will barely be saved because of lack of faith or love and will receive inferior positions.

### **Earthly Possessions of Little Value**

St. Paul relates to what degree he valued earthly possessions — ambitions, honors, and so forth. He weighed them and compared them with the most valued prize of the High Calling of God in Christ. His judgment of these earthly honors was that they are but loss and dross, and he therefore cast them aside. Those who retain their hold on earthly things the Lord admonishes by declaring: "How hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God!" (Mark 10: 24). These riches are not merely of gold, but can be of honor, position, and power. All of these are likely to prove a hindrance in the Christian race. When we look back to the faithful witnesses of the past, we see that they carried very few weights along with them. They set aside their encumbrances and ran with patience the course before them.

Not all weights and hindrances should be cast aside, however. One who enters the race with a wife and children or a husband and children must not throw

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these aside. The children of the consecrated are their responsibility; they must run the race with them by their side. However, those who are unmarried and are running in this race, may do well to consider carefully whether it would be best for them to remain single. Some might be hindered with a marriage partner, while others might be hindered without a wife or a husband. Each must decide for himself what is best.

### **Inherited Weaknesses and Sins**

Let us consider the part of our text that speaks of "the sin which doth so easily beset us." One translation describes such sin as a close-girdling sin — the sin that would be illustrated by ill-fitting clothing of a long distance runner which would hamper his progress by causing over-heating, over-exertion, and a general restriction of the athlete to continue long in the way. With these hindrances the runner is obliged to stop now and again to rest, and adjust — and so lose time and the initiative to proceed.

If this sin be an inherited weakness, a result of our fallen nature, then what? We still *run* the race, not walk, nor sit, bending all our energy to the attainment of the wonderful goal — ultimately everlasting life. We thank God for the explicit information given in the Scriptures and for all the helps and encouragements of the way as well as for this great cloud of witnesses surrounding us. We thank Him for His grace that enables us to run with patience, for without this grace of the holy spirit we would soon fall by the way and lose sight of the course and the goal at its end.

### **PERSEVERANCE ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY**

It is very easy to run a short time in the race. Some who do this find all the affairs of human life hindering them and eventually realize that they must drop all non-essential weights. They begin to think that there is no

use continuing — the sacrifice is too great. Therefore, the Apostle seeks to bolster the Christian by encouraging him to have patience for all these trials and difficulties. The Lord wants true, loyal characters established in righteousness and these cannot be developed and demonstrated except by just such experiences as He gives His people. Nor will we be able, nor should we expect, that we will be able to perform all these things correctly and in righteousness, especially when starting out in the Christian journey. It will take years of mistakes and failures to gain the expertise necessary for the faithful completion of our journey to the Kingdom (Matt. 18: 21).

### Conditions of Race to be Followed

The Apostle well knew the terms and conditions of the race in which he had engaged and that it would be impossible for him to win unless he lived up to those conditions. He knew that the closest attention and most untiring vigilance would be necessary to reach the goal, and during the race there would be more or less uncertainty as to who would gain the victory of perfect life in the next age. In the Olympic Games it was always uncertain as to who would receive the coveted gold crown.

The race that the consecrated have entered, whether it was that of the Ancient Worthies, that of the Church, the race that the world will run on the future Highway of Holiness when it opens up, or the race that Christians have been invited to run today, has been and will be much greater than any earthly course could ever be — greater than a literal race such as in the sport of track and field and greater than the race for riches, power, fame, and pleasure that practically the whole world is seeking after.

We know the goal toward which we run and we have a sense of security that if we run faithfully we shall gain the prize of our calling. Our race is not merely to be strong and swift but is one of persevering effort — watching our thoughts and motives and guarding our actions that we may best serve our Master, His Truth, and His people. May we learn by careful obedience to be humble, to keep ourselves in the background, and endeavor always to keep Jesus in the limelight, remembering that the one who runs with all his soul and strength will surely gain the prize.

\* \* \*

### BY FAITH . . .

v. 4: *Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh.*

v. 5: *Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God.*

v. 7: *Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.*

v. 8-10, 17-19: *Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went . . . he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob: for he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God . . . when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called: accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure.*

v. 11: *Sarah herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised.*

v. 20: *Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come.*

v. 21: *Jacob, when he was a dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph; and worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff.*

v. 22: *Joseph, when he died, made mention of the departing of the children of Israel; and gave commandment concerning his bones.*

v. 24-28: *Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward . . . he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible . . . he kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the firstborn should touch them.*

v. 31: *Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace.*

v. 39: *These all . . . obtained a good report through faith.*

— Hebrews chapter 11 —

## THE RUNNERS OF A RACE

Nearing the goal they're pressing hard  
And cheering them is an eager crowd;  
One looks back, unfortunate, to see  
That not much distance separates his lead.  
Tripped by a stone upon the course  
He stumbles and arises when  
Another sweeps ahead with bursting heart  
To finish the race — and give his all!

I think about this time of Greece's "day,"  
Ponder for myself the goal and say:  
"Is there not a race to run — of life?  
Forerunner Jesus is the way;  
So think of Him and deeply call to mind  
The 'witnesses of old' before His time . . .  
To lighten — lay aside the weights;  
Make straight paths for the feet;  
Breathe deeply of the Spirit's power  
And run with patient zeal.  
Can height or depth or any creature  
Keep you from the goal?  
Have faith in Him —  
His Kingdom brings a crown!"

### of interest . . .

**A couple in the United Kingdom** have been given the approval to begin controversial embryo screening treatment which could save the life of their son who suffers from a fatal blood disorder called Diamond Blackfan Anaemia (DBA). The disorder can be treated by using stem cells that help the body produce healthy red blood cells. The plan would be to create up to 12 embryos through *In Vitro* Fertilization (IVF) treatment, then screen the embryos to find which has the right genes before implantation.

The go ahead by the UK's fertility watchdog, The Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority (HFEA), comes after the organization decided earlier this year to relax the rules on the creation of the so-called "designer babies" to help sick siblings. Previously they said it was acceptable to test and select embryos to prevent the birth of a baby with a genetic disease, but not to select them in order to help another child.

**An order to ban the teaching** of Charles Darwin's Theory of evolution from schools in Serbia has been dropped by the government. Serbia's Education Minister proposed that the ban should be effective for this school year until creationism could be taught alongside, but widespread criticism from scientists, teachers, and opposition parties impelled the Prime Minister, Vojislav Kostunica, to have the proposal reversed. Critics described the original ruling as "outrageous" and complained that Serbia's Orthodox Church was interfering in politics.

— *bbc.co.uk*

# FAITH — DEMONSTRATED

*I will show thee my faith by my works.*

— James 2: 18 —

**M**ANY have supposed that there is a conflict of opinion between the Apostle Paul's teachings and the teachings of the Apostle James respecting faith and works (Rom. 4; James 2). However, when rightly understood, their teachings are seen to be in fullest accord. The Jewish Law Covenant was emphatically a covenant of *works*, while the basis of acceptance under grace (Rom. 6: 14) is *faith*. The Law said, *Do* and live; the Gospel says, *Believe* and live.

## Mankind Unable to Keep God's Law

The Apostle Paul, writing to those who knew the Law and who had been trained under it to expect everlasting life as a reward of faithful performance of the requirements of the Law, was obliged to show that absolute obedience to that Law is an impossibility as respects the fallen race of Adam; and hence that "by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified in his [God's] sight" (Rom. 3: 20). If, then, justification and eternal life could not be obtained by any through the works of the Law, how could they be obtained? The Apostle proceeds to show that our Lord Jesus had kept the entire Law blamelessly, and that He had thus secured all the rewards promised to anyone "that doeth these things," namely, the rewards of everlasting life and all its Divine blessings.

The Apostle further shows that none of fallen mankind can hope for eternal life through keeping the Law, but that they may hope for it and obtain it in another way — not by doing works that would be approved as perfect under the Law Covenant, but by having a faith which would approve them under God's grace (Rom. 5: 2; Eph. 2: 8), and secure to them such measure of the covering of Christ's righteousness as would be necessary to compensate for all the deficiencies and imperfections of their fallen natures which hindered them from performing the full demands of the Law. Thus he tells us that the righteousness of the Law is fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit (Rom. 8: 4).

## Faith More Than Intellect

The Apostle Paul did not for a moment mean to say that a mere intellectual assent was sufficient. His teachings are in fullest accord with James' statement in this lesson, that a faith that produced no efforts or works toward righteousness and holiness would be a dead and valueless faith — or worse, a condemning faith.

Nor should James be understood to ignore faith, and to teach that works of the Law would be able or sufficient to justify sinners or make them heirs of eternal life. It is probable that some in the early Church, having come to realize that Christ is the end of the Law for righteousness to every one that believes (Rom. 10: 4), and that we are "justified by faith in his blood," went to the opposite extreme — as some do today — claiming that the conduct of life is immaterial, if only the faith be maintained. It is likely that James had this class of persons in mind when writing this epistle. He therefore alerts the reader on this point — not to think that a mere *belief*, that makes no impression upon the heart and the life, and that is unaccompanied by any efforts to live as would be pleasing in God's sight, would be a faith of any validity or vitality, or would do any real good. That is but the kind of belief the devils have (James 2: 19).

## Abraham's Faith Manifested by Works

Abraham is called the father of the faithful. The Apostle Paul states (Rom. 4: 2, 3), "If Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God. For what saith the Scripture? Abraham *believed* God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness." But the Apostle James says (2: 21), "Was not Abraham our father justified *by works*, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?"

On the surface, these Scriptures seem to contradict each other, but they really do not.

First we should turn to Gen. 15: 1-6, the Scripture Paul referred to, where God told Abraham (v. 4) that he would have a son and heir, and (v. 5) that his



seed, his progeny, would be as the stars of heaven. It then gives the passage (v. 6) Paul quoted, "He [Abraham] *believed* in the Lord; and he counted it to him for righteousness."

It was because of Abraham's *faith*, his *believing* God's great promise that in him and his seed all the families of the earth would be blessed (Gen. 12: 2, 3; 15: 5), that he was faith-justified, counted righteous in God's sight.

Next we consider the Apostle James' (2: 21) words quoted above. Note that it was considerably *after* the incidents of Gen. 15 and Abraham's faith being "counted unto him for righteousness" that "God did tempt [test] Abraham" by telling him to offer Isaac on the altar on Mt. Moriah (Gen. 22: 1, 2). By being willing to do so, he demonstrated under severe testing that his faith was a living faith, of the kind that brought forth fruitage of good works and obedience and therefore was acceptable to God. James asks, "Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?" (James 2: 22).

### **Faith and Works Need to Harmonize**

Faith and works must cooperate in every case, else the faith will not be acceptable. It did so also in Rahab's case. James says, "Was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way?" (v. 25; Josh. 2).

The points to be kept in mind in this lesson are:

(1) that no works which fallen men could do would be perfect works; consequently, none of these works could be acceptable to God;

(2) Christians are acceptable to God through the exercise of faith in Christ's blood-merit under the terms of God's grace arrangement; it is this faith in Christ's blood-merit that counts in our acceptance, because, being imperfect, we are unable to perform works that would be acceptable;

(3) our acceptable faith in Christ's blood-merit must be proved by our efforts to do, so far as we may be able, the Divine will;

(4) since works alone, being imperfect, could not justify, and since justifying faith *must precede* good works before they will be acceptable, and since good works, when accepted, are not accepted on account of their own perfection, but on account of the justifying faith which makes them acceptable — therefore it follows that it is the *faith* that justifies us where works could not justify us, and that the works do not set aside faith, but merely attest the genuineness of the faith.

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*It is our faith that is pleasing to Him — we at first have nothing else; but if the faith remains alone, without effort to produce fruits of righteousness and holiness, it becomes a dead thing, a putrid thing, offensive to both God and man.*

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### **Faith Precedes Works**

The fact that justifying faith *must precede* good works is shown also by the Apostle Paul's words in Eph. 2: 8-10: "By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus *unto* [but not *by*] good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." Good works are the response of a real faith.

There is a grand lesson here for all who desire to please God. It is our faith that is pleasing to Him — we at first have nothing else; but if the faith remains alone, without effort to produce fruits of righteousness and holiness, it becomes a dead thing, a putrid thing, offensive to both God and man. He whose life is one of self-gratification and sin dishonors and injures any faith which he professes.

### **The Works God Approves**

Further, it is our experience that whoever fails to live in harmony with his faith will not be permitted to maintain it very long. Many who profess to have strong faith do not have "the love of the truth" and the full devotion to God that manifest true faith by good works — the kind ordered and approved by God. It is to such as have some faith without corresponding efforts toward good works that the Lord sends "strong delusion, that they should believe a lie" (2 Thes. 2: 10, 11).

Let us remember that God's people are "living epistles known and read of all men," that it is the works that are read rather than the faith, and hence the importance of our text, which should more and more be the sentiment of every follower of Christ — "*I will show thee my faith by my works.*"

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### PSALM 45: 16 EXPLAINED

**Q** What does Psalm 45: 16 mean? — “Instead of thy fathers shall be thy children, whom thou mayest make princes in all the earth.”

**A** From Heb. 1: 8, 9 we know that Psa. 45 is a prophecy addressed to our Lord Jesus Christ. He is the One whose “fathers,” ancestors, are mentioned in verse 16 — Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David, and others. Instead of remaining His fathers they shall become His children, but how and when will this change occur?

Let us first look at our Old Testament history. The patriarchs and prophets, especially those in the genealogical line of our Lord through His mother Mary, were long honored with the title of “fathers” — progenitors of Christ. David was to be the root out of which Messiah, the righteous Branch, would spring (Jeremiah 23: 5, 6) — Messiah would be David’s son (Matt. 22: 42-45). But none of these had life in the real sense of the word for they were all members of the death-condemned race.

Jesus took on the human nature, identified with Abraham’s and David’s seed, and gave His life as the Ransom sacrifice for father Adam and all his progeny — the entire world of mankind. Jesus’ human merit will, in due time, be applied not only to the world in general, but to these, His progenitors according to the flesh. He bought all and none can obtain life (perfect and everlasting) except through Him — “He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son shall not see life” (John 3: 36). Hence, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David, and all the prophets must receive everlasting life from Christ, or not at all.

#### Christ as Father and Life-giver

Jesus as the “Second Adam” (1 Cor. 15: 45-49), will regenerate the obedient of the race in life and righteousness (Acts 3: 19-21). When the Second Adam gives His ancestors life He will thereby become their Father. But our text further says that

He will make them princes throughout the whole earth. When will that be?

As David had not yet ascended to heaven (Acts 2: 34), he and the others are in the silent grave until their resurrection. Not until Jesus becomes their Father, that is, after their resurrection, will they become princes, assistants to the King, in His thousand-year reign. Our Lord Jesus and His Bride will be the chief ones in the heavenly phase of the Kingdom, and these princes will be the chief ones in the earthly phase of that Kingdom.

### COVENANT OF THE PEOPLE

**Q** Who is it that God gives “for a covenant of the people” (Isa. 49: 8; 42: 6)?

**A** It is the Christ, primarily the Head, secondarily the Body — God’s “servant” described in Isa. 42 and 49. Isa. 42: 6, 7 and 49: 8, 9 refer to the Christ as functioning throughout the Gospel and Millennial Ages (2 Cor. 6: 1, 2). The Christ, Head and Body, will be given for (in the interests of, that is, to seal, ratify, make operative) a covenant of the people. This Messenger of the Covenant (Mal. 3: 1), will seal the covenant (the New Covenant), which will be made with Fleshly Israel — “the house of Israel” and “the house of Judah” (Jer. 31: 31-34, 32: 40; 33: 14; Ezek. 16: 60-63; Heb. 8: 7-13). This will take place during the time of Christ’s Second Advent, when the earthly phase of the Kingdom is set up. The Church, the members of His Body, are spoken of as able servants of the New Covenant (2 Cor. 3: 6), even though it has not been sealed yet, for among other things, they lay down their lives for its seal (Heb. 9: 16, 17; comp. *Diaglott*).

#### The New Covenant

This covenant of the people is the New Covenant, the Restitution Covenant through which the Seed of Abraham (Gal. 3: 8, 16, 29) will bless “all the families of the earth” (Gen. 12: 3), “to establish

the earth” in truth and righteousness (Psa. 96: 13; 98: 9), to raise them up out of long degradation and to cause them to inherit the lands so long desolated by superstition, ignorance, error, and sin, to “say to the prisoners [death’s captives, in the prison-house of death], Go forth [John 5: 28, 29; Isa. 26: 19; Dan. 12: 2]; to them that are in darkness, Show yourselves. They shall feed in the ways, and their pastures shall be in all high places . . . even by the springs of water [God’s Word] shall he guide them” (Isa. 49: 9, 10). Hallelujah! What a Savior!

### MANY CALLED, FEW CHOSEN

**Q** What is meant by Jesus’ statement, “Many are called, but few are chosen” (Matt. 22: 14)?

**A** This does not mean, as some suppose, that only an elect few will get any favor from God in the future, and that all the remainder of humankind will be eternally tortured. We must read in harmony with the context.

The Jewish nation was first called, or invited, to the Wedding and the Wedding Feast, and they failed to come, except for a few “Israelites indeed.” Then the Gospel message went out into “the highways,” to one Gentile nation after another, until many more or less heard the Gospel-Age call. Yet comparatively few heeded the call and came into the elect condition.

And of those *called* and *chosen*, not all have proven *faithful*. The Bride, or Body of Christ are the fully faithful — “they that are with him [Jesus our Lord] are called, and chosen, and faithful” (Rev. 17: 14). The “great multitude,” the secondary spiritual class, eventually proved faithful, but not to the same high degree as the Little Flock. Finally, there was a class that backslid to the extent where they became rejected entirely, and went into the Second Death — eternal annihilation — symbolized by the lake of fire (Heb. 6: 4-6; 10: 26-31, 39; Rev. 20: 15; 21: 8).

### MEMORIAL AND FULL MOON

**Q** Does the Memorial of our Lord’s death always fall on a full moon day?

*Scripture Studies*, Vol. 6, p. 481 states and I quote: “His crucifixion at the *full* of the moon, and the fact that the moon immediately began to wane, points a lesson to the effect that there Israel brought upon itself as a nation a divine rejection, or casting off for a season, symbolized by the waning of the moon, which represented their national decline.”

*And of those called and chosen, not all have proven faithful. The Bride, or Body of Christ are the fully faithful — “they that are with him [Jesus our Lord] are called, and chosen, and faithful” (Rev. 17: 14).*

This year (2004), we celebrated the Memorial after 6:00 p.m. on the evening of April 2 (which corresponds to the early part of Nisan 14). According to the above reference, the moon should have been full at 3:00 p.m. on April 3 (the time which corresponds to the death of our Lord), but the moon was not full until nearly two full days later — on the afternoon of April 5. How can this seeming discrepancy be harmonized?

**A** Your questions are indeed welcome and of great interest. The author of *Scripture Studies*, Vol. 6 was probably misled by considering as authoritative, a statement from *McClintock and Strong’s Cyclopaedia*. The statement, which is also quoted in *Scripture Studies*, Vol. 6, p. 483 says: “the year of the Jews is a lunar year and the 14th of Nisan always a *full-moon* day.” Though usually a good authority, *McClintock and Strong’s Cyclopaedia* is mistaken in this statement, for Nisan 14 *cannot* normally come at the full moon.

If there are no aberrations (a slight deviation of the moon’s movement) in the moon’s cycle of becoming new and full in the same month, there would be exactly 14¾ days between these two events (from new to full). In such cases, the moon could not become full before the afternoon of Nisan 15 — about 18 hours after the end of Nisan 14. Of course, aberrations could cause a full moon to fall on Nisan 14, and sometimes do.

\* \* \*

# Servants of God and Man

*The ninth in a series of articles on godly men and women from around the world, whose lives have shaped the cultures in which we live*

**JOHN BUNYAN**

1628-1688

**Author of *The Pilgrim's Progress***

John Bunyan is arguably the most popular and one of the most prolific religious writers in the English language. But aside from his writings, an examination of his life leads us to conclude that he was one of God's "called, and chosen, and faithful" (Rev. 17: 14).

## Family and Early Life

Bunyan was born in a tiny village just south of Bedfordshire, England, in 1628, to Thomas and Margaret Bentley Bunyan. His father was a "tinker" (a maker and mender of pots and kettles). Though the family struggled with poverty his parents managed to send him to school.

As a child his imagination and sensitivity were carried to such an extreme that he often felt guilt and depression and suffered from frequent and severe nightmares. The puritan spirit was at a high pitch in England at that time, especially in Bedfordshire, and this doubtless intensified his mental turmoil.

As a youth Bunyan took pleasure in thoughts of living an irreligious life, though the thoughts did not seem to translate into actions. On the other hand he was greatly troubled with the thought of eternal torment — an error that Bunyan was taught from childhood. The worst habit he acquired as a youth was the use of profane language, but a sharp rebuke corrected that forever.

## Influences that led to Christ

Bunyan's mother died in his sixteenth year and his father remarried within two months, an event that caused an estrangement between father and son. Bunyan left home and spent the next three years in military service in the parliamentary army. One event that had a lasting impact on him was the time when a comrade replaced him at his post, and shortly after was shot to death. Bunyan believed he had been saved from death by a special act of Divine providence.

As a young man Bunyan's mental conflicts intensified and in his search for relief he was led to consider either dropping all moral restraints, or suicide. He read books and sought out counselors but nothing gave

him comfort. On one occasion he consulted a man who had a high reputation in moral character, expressing his fear that he had committed the sin against the holy spirit. The man responded that he was afraid that Bunyan was right!

When Bunyan left the army he resumed his father's trade, and married a woman named Mary. Two sons and two daughters were born to them, the oldest, a daughter, being blind from birth. Mary died after only nine years of marriage, and John later married a woman named Elizabeth, who bore him a son and a daughter. It was Mary that had encouraged John to start reading again, and the following four years were times of intense spiritual struggles, but it was these experiences that laid the foundation for the writing of *The Pilgrim's Progress*.

## The Turning Point

The turning point in Bunyan's search for God came as he was walking to work one day. He overheard some women talking about how God had changed their lives and how their hearts had been filled with the love of Jesus. He yearned to have the heart religion he had witnessed in them. Later he often met with them to discuss religion and he marvelled at the change he began to see in himself — a softening of heart and a constant desire to meditate upon the Scriptures. It was not long before others also observed the change.

He had a tender concern for those to whom he had previously been a bad example, so the first thing he did after his conversion was to reach out to the same ones, this time to influence them to Christ.

## Preaching and Imprisonment

In 1653 Bunyan joined St. John's Church in Bedford and two years later was chosen as a deacon. He was soon recognized as having a talent for preaching and though he did not have a license to do so, began preaching in neighboring towns. In 1658 he was indicted for preaching without a license but he never went to trial.

In 1660 a warrant for his arrest was issued and he was escorted away in the middle of a sermon. Although there was no charge that could legally be made against him, he was sent to jail. An almost forgotten law was then used to try him. During his trial his accusers first attempted to make him promise that he would refrain



from preaching. When that did not succeed, they tried mockery and reviling, again to no avail. Finally they threatened banishment and physical violence if he continued to preach, but he replied, "If you let me out today, I will preach again tomorrow." John was sentenced to three months in prison, but in fact spent twelve years in custody, with only a few weeks of freedom during that time.

### **Opportunities for Service and Personal Growth**

Beside the terrible condition of being kept captive in a dungeon, Bunyan, a devout family man, had continual concern for his wife and children. While in confinement he took up a new trade — making long tagged thread laces — which helped provide financial support for his dependents.

The Lord still provided him with opportunities to preach the Gospel. He instructed his fellow-prisoners and formed a flock of whom he was the pastor. Bunyan tirelessly studied the few books he had, his two favorites being the Bible and *Fox's Book of Martyrs*. During those years his knowledge of the Bible increased to the point where he practically became a living concordance.

In 1672, when Charles II suspended all statutes against Nonconformists, his imprisonment came to an end. He received royal authority to preach and was even given his own congregation. During this time as his ministry prospered and his reputation grew, so did the crowds who gathered to hear him preach.

Bunyan's short period of freedom was short-lived. In 1675 the government again turned against the Nonconformists, many preaching licenses were revoked and the following year a warrant was issued for Bunyan's arrest on the charge that he preached out of harmony with the practice of the Church of England. He was sentenced to six months in a tiny one-room jail on the bridge over the River Ouse — but it was here that the writing of his masterpiece began.

### **Bunyan the Writer**

When Bunyan had been preaching for about a year he became embroiled in a controversy with a group of Christians who advocated that the individual conscience was the only safe guide to follow as to conduct. Believing the Word of God held that office, Bunyan, in 1656, responded with a writing entitled *Some Gospel Truths Opened*. When another writer attempted to refute Bunyan he responded with *A Vindication of Some Gospel Truths Opened*.

He continued to publish books for the next thirty years, many being in the nature of controversy. Most of his nearly sixty works seem to have been based upon his sermons.

Some other notable writings include *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners* (1666), written to extol the grace of God and to comfort those going through similar experiences as himself; *The Life and Death of Mr. Badman* (1680), an imaginary biography; and *The Holy War* (1682), an allegory.

### **"The Pilgrim's Progress"**

But Bunyan's most famous product was *The Pilgrim's Progress* which appeared in 1678. Though it was probably circulated only limitedly at first, its charm quickly made it popular. It is indisputably the most successful allegory ever written and is found in every literary language of the world.

The book speaks about the stages of Christian progress and they are compared to a pilgrimage. While writing, his imagination took over so that it is written with all the action and scenery of a fairy tale, yet the whole undertone is that of reverence for God and sympathy for man. The analogies Bunyan uses show his understanding of man's fallen nature and are most helpful to Christians, who like himself, struggle with temptations from within and without. The experiences that Pilgrim went through were the experiences that John Bunyan went through in his life. He knew the Valley of Humiliation, the Valley of the Shadow of Death, had lain in the dungeons of Doubting Castle, and had overcome Giant Despair.

### **Doing Good to the End**

In the summer of 1688 Bunyan was on a mission to try and reconcile a father and son. Although he was successful, he paid a high price. He rode home through a heavy rain, came down with a high fever, and died within a few days at the age of 59.

An unknown contemporary wrote this of John Bunyan's character:

"A person who had tried the smiles and frowns of time, not puffed up in prosperity nor shaken in adversity, always holding the golden mean."

**"In him at once did three great worthies shine  
Historian, poet, and a choice divine  
Then let him rest in undisturbed dust,  
Until the resurrection of the just."**

\* \* \*

# NATURAL ISRAEL'S SPIRITUAL PROMISES

**I**N THE SCRIPTURES the word spiritual generally refers to those who have been begotten of the holy spirit — the Lord Jesus and those who during the Gospel Age accepted Him and consecrated themselves to do the will of God. All promises and all things which appertain to these are classified as spiritual promises and spiritual things. “The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned” (1 Cor. 2: 14). So, then, if God gave anything spiritual to the Israelites before the Spiritual Dispensation, they did not fully appreciate it, since none could do so unless begotten of the spirit.

Nevertheless, God did give spiritual things to Natural Israel which they were unable to receive. The Apostle says, “The law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin” (Rom. 7: 14). The Law given at Sinai came from the Spirit Being of the highest order — God Himself. It did not take hold merely of the fleshly instincts, and control the body alone, but it took hold of the heart, the mind, the will. Though there were many with intentions toward righteousness, none of the Jews could keep that Law because they were sold under sin. It was a spiritual Law that could be kept only by a spirit-begotten person (or, looking ahead — by those who will be restored to the image of God in His coming Millennial Age Kingdom).

## SPIRITUAL LESSONS IN THE LAW

Certain of the lessons of the Law were spiritual also; for instance, the rock in the wilderness which when smitten gave forth water abundantly, and the manna — each afforded a spiritual lesson. But Israel did not know about the Spiritual Rock or the Spiritual Water of Life. The Law was to them only the outer part or shell — none could see further until the due time for the begetting of the spirit. Many spiritual things were given to Israel; but only the “Israelites indeed” (John 1: 47) who loved and longed to be in harmony with God would be able in due time to see these.

The spiritual things were in the Law all the time but were not disclosed, not seen by the Jew because of the condition of his mind. The first Israelite who was permitted to see spiritual things was Jesus Himself. After He was begotten of the spirit He was fully able to appreciate these things. The Jewish nation as a whole did not meet the required standard, but certain ones

who desired to walk in Jesus' steps received through Him a covering (Rom. 4: 7, 8), were begotten of the holy spirit, and were able to appreciate spiritual things. Thus the Apostle says that the righteousness of the Law is “fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” These cannot keep the Law in the flesh, but can do so in the heart, the mind — “with the mind I myself serve the Law of God” (Rom. 8: 4; 7: 25).

## BASIS OF SPIRITUAL INSIGHT

When God made a Covenant with Abraham, saying, “In thy Seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed,” He said that Abraham's seed should be as the stars of heaven and as the sand of the seashore. This is a spiritual Promise which the Jews at that time were not able to appreciate. When realizing that as a nation they had crucified the Son of God, many said, “What shall we do?” and St. Peter said, “Repent . . . for the promise is unto you, and to your children” (Acts 2: 37-39). It was a spiritual Promise offered only to them at first, on condition that they would take certain steps which only a comparatively few of the Jews were in the proper attitude to meet — “He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power [the privilege, the right] to become the sons of God” (John 1: 11, 12). Those who came into relationship with Christ became *spiritual* Israelites and were privileged to see the spiritual depths of the Old Testament, as well as those of the New Testament after it was written. What a privilege it was for them to recognize their Messiah.

Even though we today are not of that most highly favored class spoken of by Jesus as His “little flock,” if we have accepted Him by faith and consecrated our lives to God, we have the privilege of receiving all the truths that God gave to both His Natural and Spiritual Israelites. And we may understand them, though the Natural Israelite could not, for the Apostle says, “Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded” (Rom. 11: 7). Natural Israel was given a great privilege in being entrusted with the oracles of God and though only a few have up to now proven worthy to understand them, God is presently preparing their nation for the time when they will recognize their Messiah and appreciate all His truths. Praise God for His Plan which includes all!

\* \* \*

## THE MAIL BOX



Dear Sir: I'm writing to you about the free booklets on *Life, Death, Soul, Resurrection, etc.* — I really appreciate this offer. Thanks for the opportunity to learn more about God.

God bless you, P. J., Missouri

Dear Bro. Herzig,

Thank you very much for your letter and the Bibles. I am enclosing \_\_\_ to cover the extra cost. LHMM has been a true blessing for me. All of your books have truly helped me in my Bible study.

One of God's many servants, B.O., Minnesota

Dear Bible Standard:

As a minister of the Lord, I have found your publication most helpful and educational. I especially enjoyed your July article on the life of Toyohiko Kagawa. I understand what it is like to grow up in an unsaved household and then find the Bible. It is like finding a guiding light by which we might determine the spiritual course of our lives.

God bless your ministry!

Sincerely, R.E., Georgia

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## announcements

### GENERAL CONVENTIONS FOR 2004

#### *At-a-glance*

**France:** *(All at Barlin)* October 30, 31

**Germany:** *Altleiningen*, October 1-3

**Nigeria:** *Osusu Amukwa*, September 26; *Agbado, Lagos State*,  
November 5-7; *Aba, Abia State*, November 26-28

**United Kingdom:** *Sheffield*, October 30, 31

**United States:** *Illinois*, October 1-3; *Oklahoma*, November  
12-14

#### *Details*

#### **United States:**

#### **Chicago, Illinois, October 1-3 (Friday-Sunday)**

*Site:* Holiday Inn, 3405 Algonquin Road, Rolling Meadows, Illinois 60008; telephone: (847) 259-5000. *Rates and Reservations:* \$65 (+11% tax= \$72.15) for up to 4 per room. Reservations should be made direct with the hotel *by September 10*. Be sure to mention that you are attending the LHMM Convention to obtain the discount rate. A luncheon will be provided on Saturday, October 2. Rolling Meadows is west of Chicago and 20 minutes from O'Hare International Airport. If you need limousine service from the airport please telephone the Holiday Inn from baggage claim; hotel courtesy shuttles depart from the Bus/Shuttle Center across from terminal 2. Make all other inquiries to the class secretary: Mrs. Audrey Hammer, 1702 Highland Ave. Arlington Heights, IL 60005.  
**Tulsa, Oklahoma, November 12-14 (Friday-Sunday)**

*Site:* Sheraton Tulsa Hotel, 10918 E. 41st St., Tulsa, Oklahoma 74146; telephone: (918) 627-5000. *Rates and Reservations:* \$70 (plus tax at 13.5%). Ensure the special rate by making reservations by October 12. Complimentary airport shuttle provided by hotel. Make inquiries to the class secretary: Mrs. Laverna Shaw, 1221 E. Forest Drive, Sand Springs OK 74063.

### SERVICES BY VISITING MINISTERS

#### **The General Editor, Ralph Herzig**

Oklahoma Convention, November 12-14

#### **Richard Blaine**

Chicago, Illinois, September 19

#### **Robert Herzig**

Boston, Massachusetts, October 24

#### **John Wojnar**

Springfield, Massachusetts, October 3; Oklahoma Convention,  
November 12-14

#### **John Detzler**

Illinois Convention, October 1-3

#### **Leon Snyder**

Minneapolis, Minnesota, September 25, 26; West Frankfort,  
Illinois, September 28; Indianapolis, Indiana, September  
29; Illinois Convention, October 1-3; Oklahoma  
Convention, November 12-14; Muskegon, Michigan,  
November 21

#### **Baron Duncan**

New Haven, Connecticut, October 17

#### **Tom Cimbura**

Grand Rapids, Michigan, September 11; Muskegon,  
Michigan, September 12; Illinois Convention, October 1-3;  
Oklahoma Convention, November 12-14

#### **Don Lewis**

Illinois Convention, October 1-3; Oklahoma Convention,  
November 12-14

#### **James Shaw**

Illinois Convention, October 1-3; Independence, Kansas,  
October 17; Oklahoma Convention, November 12-14

#### **Evangelists' Services**

**Robert Branconier**, Keystone Heights, Florida,  
September 12; New York City, September 19; Pittsfield,  
Massachusetts, October 10

**Harry Hammer**, Muskegon, Michigan, October 23; Grand  
Rapids, Michigan, October 24

**Jon Hanning**, Iuka, Mississippi, September 12; Marietta,  
Georgia, September 14, 15; Cleveland, Georgia,  
September 18; Sand Ridge, West Virginia, October 31;  
Derry, Pennsylvania, November 6, 7

**Dan Herzig**, Chester Springs, Pennsylvania, September 12

**David Lounsbury**, Reidsville, North Carolina, October 3

**Robert Steenrod**, North Canton, Ohio, September 18, 19;  
Beechgrove, Tennessee, October 24

**William Sturges**, Cambridge Springs, Pennsylvania,

September 12; New Haven, Connecticut, November 14

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