

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

"Teaching the things concerning the kingdom of God..."

THE LAW OF FAITH

Part 1

One would suppose that it would be completely unnecessary to ever ask the question, "What is *faith*?" FAITH, according to Paul, is the "gift of God" through which we are saved (Eph. 2:8-9). It is no wonder that Paul pressed this point, for salvation is an ongoing work that began when we first believed, receiving the forgiveness of our sins and the washing of regeneration, and will only be full and complete when each and every child of God stands fully transformed into the image and stature of God's Christ. Recognizing the tremendous importance and power of faith, let us seek to define it with care. In defining faith we ought to come to understand it in such a way that we shall know *how* it is acquired as well as *what* it is and *how* it works.

Faith has several well-known synonyms, such as *persuasion, conviction, trust, believe, confidence,* and *assurance*. It is apparent, as we reverently examine these synonyms, that faith has to do with a *mental attitude* which RESPONDS TO ANOTHER PERSON OR THING, and furthermore, is declared openly by that which the person of faith both says and does. With this in mind let me give you a simple definition for the word "faith", which the Spirit of Truth has quickened within my heart, and which we shall follow with a careful study of scripture.

"Faith is the mental attitude of confident response which is evoked in you by what another person reveals himself to be."

The very first thing that you will surely observe about this definition is that it declares that your faith is not something that you *decided* to exercise. Rather it is a *response* produced in you by *someone other than yourself!* True faith never accrues to the praise of the one who possesses it, but rather, to the glory of the one who evokes it! Then, in the second place, the "mental attitude of confident response" known as faith is totally dependent upon *revelation*, that is, the uncovering or unveiling of another person's inner being in such a way that he may be seen as he really is. Let us go back to our first observation that faith is evoked by another, and not the result of our own determination. It is the response that is created in you or me by the revealed character or nature of being of another person.

By way of illustration, let us imagine that you meet someone for the first time. We will say that this person's name is Bill. You carry on a conversation with Bill and discover that he is what you might call "your kind of person." The more you get to know Bill the better you like him. As you become better acquainted with him you discover many things about him that others do not know, for the revelation of one's true identity (in terms of the inner man with its secret aspirations and treasures) is shared only with those who are friends. Through the crucible of experience you find Bill to be absolutely truthful, honest, and upright. His standards of speech and conduct are entirely honorable. He proves himself to be solid and stable under pressure and in time of crisis. He always jumps in and helps when help is needed, he keeps all

his promises, honors all his commitments, You are not at all shocked to discover, in the due process of time, that you have a great deal of confidence in this fellow! Your faith in him has a very logical basis in what you have discovered him to be as a person. His revelation of himself, in terms of his inner man or true character, *generates this confidence* in you. In other words...an attitude of confident response was evoked in you by what he revealed himself to be! That is the mystery.

GOD — THE ORIGINATOR OF FAITH

We have already stated that faith is produced by someone beyond oneself, therefore we need have no hesitation whatever in saying that faith in God is not something that you and I just “decide” to have. It is our Lord, Himself, who must produce faith in the apprehended ones. It is not something that originates with us as a result of our decision or determination to “have faith” in God. GOD is the *source* and *originator* of our faith! The unfailing testimony of scripture is that all faith originates in God and is imparted to men by God. There is no such thing as “our” faith apart from “God’s” faith. Our faith is simply the faith that *God has given us* — the faith that HE has evoked in us by the revelation of Himself unto us.

Thus we read in Mark 11:21-22: “And Peter calling to remembrance saith unto Him, Master, behold, the fig tree which thou cursedst is withered away. And Jesus answering saith unto them, *Have faith in God.*” That is how it reads in the King James Bible but that is not how the Greek text reads. The Greek text says, “And Jesus said to them, *Have the faith of God*” — that is, the faith that originates in God and comes from God. This is in beautiful harmony with what Paul says in Galatians 2:20: “...the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the FAITH OF THE SON OF GOD who loved me, and gave Himself on my behalf.” Can we not see by these significant words that we do not live in the spirit by virtue of *our faith* IN the Son of God, but by the faith OF the Son of God IN US. We live by HIS FAITH that has been evoked in us! It should not be difficult for any enlightened mind to comprehend that when Paul adds concerning the Son of God this precious expression, “...who loved me, and gave Himself on my behalf,” he speaks of the transcendent fact that Jesus gave Himself, poured out Himself, shedding forth out of Himself all that He is and all that He has that we may be recipients of His fullness. Oh, yes, He poured it out *for us* — *sharing His wonderful life, victory, power, faith, nature, love, wisdom, and righteousness with us!* Oh, the wonder of it!

When Jesus said, “*Have the faith of God,*” He was revealing to His footstep followers the great truth that GOD *has faith*. We must point out that not only does God have faith, but truly **GOD IS FAITH**. I’m sure the most opinionated theologian on earth would surely admit that faith is listed in I Corinthians 12:9 and Galatians 5:22 as both a *gift* of the spirit and a *fruit* of the spirit. Thus we see that faith is the principle of both God’s ALMIGHTY POWER and His INTRINSIC NATURE. Not only does God have faith as a commodity which He is able to dispense, but God’s very nature is a nature of faith. God Himself acts and moves in this divine nature and immutable principle of faith. How clearly we see this in the words of the writer to the Hebrews when he says, “*Through faith* we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear” (Heb. 11:3). People throughout the whole church age have been taught that the writer meant that *we accept by faith* that God created the worlds, but I have no hesitation in telling you that these words do not signify simply that *we accept by faith* the idea that in that long ago beginning God created all things by His word, but the words set forth the grand and glorious truth that we now understand that it was THROUGH FAITH that God created all things by His word. In other words, when God spoke the worlds into existence, He didn’t speak and then sit back to see if anything would happen. He didn’t speak and then commence to analyze the subsequent events to ascertain whether there was some indication that what He had spoken might be beginning to come to pass. Oh, no! God wasn’t experimenting, nor did He create the universes by naked power alone. God spoke in the absolute power of that faith which IS HIS NATURE. God had *unwavering confidence, total assurance, complete trust, and absolute knowledge — omnipotent faith* — that what He spoke would most surely come to pass. This conviction was rooted in God’s eternal knowledge of Himself. Seeing then that God’s nature IS FAITH, and armed with the understanding that it is in that divine nature and inherent principle of faith that God created the trillions of galaxies and swirling nebulae that make up the visible universe, with all the fullness thereof, we can now understand how vitally important it is for us to know that GOD is the SOURCE OF ALL FAITH! God’s faith is based in His own knowledge of Himself and our faith originates in God’s *revelation of Himself to us, in us, and through us*. There is, therefore, a tremendous

difference between our having and exercising faith *in God*, and our receiving, possessing, and having the very faith *of God*... God's VERY OWN FAITH raised up *in us!*

The question follows — If you were dying of cancer, which kind of faith would you rather have — *your faith in God*, or *God's faith within you?* And beyond that — which kind of faith do you suppose will bring the body of Christ to full maturity, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ?

We have previously mentioned that saving faith comes from God and is a gift. “For by grace are ye saved through faith, and that *not of yourselves*: it is the GIFT OF GOD” (Eph. 2:8). Thank God that this saving faith does not originate with us, for if it did we would never have been saved! We were indeed without God, without strength, and without hope in the world. But when the fullness of time came for each of us to be converted, FAITH CAME. It came as a divine revelation within ourselves of our desperate need and of God's great love and provision for us in Christ. At that wonderful moment faith came by God's grace as something beyond our ability, as a *gift*. God saw to it that faith was quickened within us and raised up within our heart. Our salvation, then, was not initiated by us, but by God Himself! One glad day Jesus said to His disciples, “Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you” (Jn. 15:16). The disciples did choose to follow Jesus, but their choosing was merely *their response* to HIS CHOOSING. In that blessed moment when Jesus spoke the awesome word of power into their lives, commanding each to “come, and follow me,” there flowed irresistible understanding and faith into their startled minds and hearts and suddenly they were empowered to instantly obey His word and do a thing they had never dreamed of in their wildest imagination. Their discipleship was initiated by Jesus. All the eternal purposes of God are initiated by God and nothing is initiated by our puny little natural minds and wills. And all the faith required on our part to fulfill His glorious purpose in us flows into us by the anointing of His Spirit, and nothing is generated by us. Isn't it wonderful!

LOOKING UNTO JESUS

We said above that faith is the response evoked in you or me by the revealed character or nature of being of another person. Faith in God, then, is that attitude of heart in response to what GOD reveals Himself to be! The writer to the Hebrews adds this enlightening statement: “Wherefore seeing we 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. LOOKING UNTO JESUS the *author* and *finisher of our faith*” (Heb. 12:1-2). The Amplified Bible renders it thus: “Looking away from all that will distract to Jesus, who is the *Leader* and *Source* of our faith...and is also its *Finisher*, bringing it to maturity and perfection.”

The great key that the spirit of truth would unlock for us here is just this: LOOKING UNTO JESUS! HE is the originator and perfecter of our faith. Faith is not merely something Jesus *has* or *possesses* — faith is His nature, His state of being. And you will not receive that faith which He is just by *asking for it*. No, not by asking, but by LOOKING! “looking” is from the Greek word *aphorao* meaning “to consider attentively.” Ah, what a word that is! Attentively *consider Jesus!* Beyond asking this denotes prolonged fellowship, intimate relationship, and vital union. There are, furthermore, various means by which God ministers His faith to us and we shall take a look at these in future studies, but now, understanding that our Lord Jesus is the source of our faith and also its finisher, bringing it to maturity and perfection — manifested sonship faith — let us thoroughly understand the great truth that full and complete faith shall only be ministered to our Lord's younger brethren and strengthened within each son of God through *fellowship with Jesus*. Constant fellowship. Intimate communion. Not just asking. Not by begging. Not through any self effort to conjure up faith. Not by assuming or hoping. Oh, no! Only by LOOKING, by attentively considering...HIM! In vital union with Jesus, the pattern Son, faith shall be raised up in our hearts so that the great and eternal purposes of God may be fulfilled in us and through us.

The apostle Paul did not pray in Ephesians chapter one that *faith* would be given to the Ephesian saints so that they might move in the mighty power of God. Rather, he prayed that they might be granted “the *spirit of revelation* in the *knowledge of HIM*,” so that they would be able to “*know*...the riches of His glory, and the *greatness of His power*” (Eph. 1:16-20). Now lest we should flounder forever in our search for the law of faith, let us fervently embrace the truth Paul discloses here — faith to know, experience, and demonstrate God's mighty power came via the SPIRIT OF REVELATION which unveiled the resurrected,

ascended, glorified, and exalted Jesus to the Ephesians. The truth is just this: the fuller our revelation of the Son of God, the greater our faith! The more intimate our fellowship, the more vital our relationship...the more perfect, mature, and powerful our faith. When we come to know Him in all His glorious fullness we shall, without any doubt, possess *fullness of faith* which shall release God to be fully and completely MANIFESTED IN HIS SONS! Aren't you glad!

FAITH BY THE WORD

As we are taught by the Holy Spirit we will surely discover that there is a "process" by which faith is communicated. Armed with the understanding that faith cannot be evoked apart from revelation, it then stands to spiritual reason that there can be no operation of God's faith in us unless He who is invisible chooses to disclose Himself unto us. We must point out that the scriptures proclaim indisputable truth when they declare that the *word of God* is the agent by which God ministers His faith to each of us. Paul asks the pertinent question, "But how are people to call upon Him Whom they have not believed — in Whom they have no faith, on Whom they have no reliance? And how are they to believe in Him — adhere to, trust in and rely upon Him — of Whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without a preacher? And how can men preach unless they are sent? So then FAITH COMES BY HEARING, and hearing by THE WORD OF GOD" (Rom. 10:14-15, 17, Amplified Bible and KJV). The central truth of this passage is that FAITH COMES BY THE WORD OF GOD! To understand the things written here is of eternal importance for the great truth the Holy Spirit would make real to our hearts is this: The WORD OF GOD is simply the REVELATION OF GOD. God has seen fit to reveal Himself to His creation in many ways and progressively in varying degrees. I have found that there are five primary progressive steps in the revelation of God through His Word. They are...

1. The Creative Word
2. The Spoken/Written Word
3. The Manifested Word
4. The Living Word
5. The Corporate Word

THE CREATIVE WORD

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made" (Jn. 1:1-3). The word here translated "word" is from the Greek word *logos*. "In the beginning was the *logos*...by HIM were all things made." Let us see now that the Greek word *logos* means "a thought or concept and the *expression* or *utterance* of that thought or concept." The Logos therefore was, in that long ago beginning, the utterance and expression (i.e. revelation) of the person, thought, mind, and will of God. It was by this Logos that God created all things. It is of great interest to notice *how* God created the material universe. "And God *said*, Let there be...and it was so." What enlightening words are these, "And God *said!*" The moment we grasp the meaning of this statement, at that very moment we also understand that before God spoke He first *thought*, *planned*, and *purposed*. Only after He thought, planned, and purposed did God *speak* that which He thought, planned, and purposed. Can we not see that God's *speaking* was an *utterance*, an *expression*, a *manifestation* of God's deepest personality. This expression and manifestation of God's being was His LOGOS which went forth in the power of His Spirit, *creatively producing* the very form and substance of that which before had only existed in the mind and purpose of God.

Listen more carefully as the writer to the Hebrews explains, "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed *by the Word of God*" (Heb. 11:3). This *creative word* was the very first dimension of God's revelation of Himself. That God actually has revealed Himself by means of His Creative Word (i.e. through the creation produced by that Word) is made plain in Romans 1:20 wherein we read, "For ever since the creation of the world His invisible nature and attributes, that is, His eternal power and divinity have been made intelligible and clearly discernible in and through the things that have been made — His handiworks" (Amplified Bible). This verse teaches us the great truth that every natural thing God has created is a *type*, *picture*, and *representation* of great and eternal spiritual realities which are inherent within

God Himself. This principle is constant in all of God's physical and material creation. So you see, precious friend of mine, God did not make a sun just so this planet could have natural light, warmth, and life upon it, but God made a natural sun to portray to us the spiritual truth that "*God is light* and in Him is no darkness at all."

Highly significant is the magnificent figure of speech the Lord used when He used water to symbolize incorruptible life in the spirit. Water is indeed the fit symbol of life in the spirit, as every drop of water teems with life. Whether it be the salt water in the boundless sea, the alkaline pool in the desert waste, the sweet waters of a babbling brook, or the moisture that is in the plants and trees, every drop of water is a little world that teems with LIFE. Not only does water contain life, it also sustains, extends, and confers it. It saves life as well, as many can testify who all but perished on the desert sands, and were restored to life by a few drops of this priceless liquid. And the bleaching bones of many a lost creature who failed to find water in time, will add their testimony to this, and also say that water confers and conserves life. Water, in the process of ministering life, *refreshes and invigorates*. So it is unusually significant that Jesus should say to the woman of Samaria, as they conversed by the well, "...whosoever shall drink of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst, but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water, springing up *into everlasting life*" (Jn. 4:14). And again when at the feast of tabernacles He stood in the temple and cried, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, From within him shall flow rivers of *living water*...this He spake of the SPIRIT, which they that believe on Him should receive" (Jn. 7:37-39).

So God did not create water merely to confer and conserve physical life upon this planet. He created water, and the body's need for that water, to convey to us the greater truth that HIS SPIRIT IS LIFE and man cannot have true life apart from the Spirit of God. Even as water refreshes and invigorates the natural man, so the Spirit of God refreshes and renews the inward man of the spirit. It is interesting to note that water enters the record of God's own book on the first page and on the last. In the very first chapter of Genesis, Moses introduces us to this amazingly mysterious fact of the division of the waters and the further fact that the "waters brought forth life..." The last chapter of the Bible contains this declaration: "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come...and let him that is athirst, come...and let him take of the water of life freely" (Rev. 22:17). We could heap illustration upon illustration and show that *every created thing* of the natural creation is a REVELATION OF GOD AND SPIRITUAL REALITIES. Mountains, stones, oceans, rivers, wind, trees, fire, stars, suns, yea, all of nature *reveals* the existence, power, character, and nature of God. This revelation, based on nature, the *product* of the *Creative Word*, is a wondrous and marvelous display of the omnipotent power of God and the laws of the spiritual world and blessed *assurance* that He and they REALLY EXIST.

This theme is expressed by the Psalmist when he sings, "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth His handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge. There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard. Their voice in evidence is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world" (Ps. 19:1-4). Little wonder, then, that Paul writes, "For God's holy wrath and indignation are revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who in their wickedness repress and hinder the truth and make it inoperative. For that which is known about God is evident to them and made plain in their inner consciousness, because God Himself has shown it to them. For ever since the creation of the world His invisible nature and attributes, that is, His eternal power and divinity *have been made intelligible and clearly discernible in and through the things that have been made — His handiworks*. So men are without excuse — altogether without any defense or justification; because when they knew and recognized Him as the God, they did not honor and glorify Him as God, or give Him thanks. But instead they became futile and godless in their thinking — with vain imaginings, foolish reasonings and stupid speculations (often called *science*) — and their senseless minds were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools — professing to be smart, they made simpletons of themselves" (Rom. 1:18-22, Amplified Bible).

The first step, then, that God has taken to *reveal Himself*, and thus evoke FAITH in men, came in the form of the *Creative Word*. God has both *revealed* and *proven* His existence, power, nature, and purpose through the marvels of the physical universe. It came to me so powerfully one day that "intelligent design" is the most self-evident truth in the universe. And yet multitudes of the world's so-called "smartest

people,” scientists, educators, philosophers, etc., brazenly reveal their patent ignorance and stupidity by their stubborn denial of that one self-evident truth. Yet, men of faith, discerning the incomprehensible immensity, majesty, complexity, and order of the universe, come to *believe in God* — understanding the simple truth that it is *impossible* to have a well-ordered universe, operating by specific and exact *laws*, without a great Creator! You cannot have *effect* without CAUSE! You simply cannot have an intricately designed watch on your wrist without the existence of a master-craftsman. Of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: Faith in God comes by the *Word of God*. His *Creative Word* has produced the myriads of worlds and galaxies that span the unbounded and limitless heavens, and this creation evokes in men that *first elementary degree of faith* — the ability to *believe* that there really exists a great Creator — an almighty GOD who fashions all, sustains all, fills all, and rules over all!

The truth of this is stated so beautifully by Thomas Chisholm in the words of the second stanza of his well-beloved hymn *Great is Thy Faithfulness*:

Summer and winter and springtime and harvest,
Sun, moon and stars in their courses above
Join with all nature in manifold witness
To Thy great faithfulness, mercy and love!

Refrain:

Great is Thy faithfulness! Great is Thy faithfulness!
Morning by morning new mercies I see;
All I have needed Thy hand hath provided;
Great is Thy faithfulness, Lord unto me!

I love the words of the little chorus I learned in some meetings more than fifty years ago. I have never heard anyone else sing this since that day, but both words and melody have remained with me through all these years:

God is love — heaven and earth declare it!
God is love — He wants the world to share it!
He made the rivers and the rolling seas,
He made the birds and the honey bees;
He did it all for you and me...for God is love!
God is love, I can feel Him in the air,
I can feel His tender care, I can feel Him everywhere
From the lowest ocean to the highest heaven above...
All creation tells me God is love!

THE SPOKEN/WRITTEN WORD

We can be exceedingly thankful that much more of the true person and nature of the invisible God has been given to men than that which may be deduced and known from an examination of the cosmos about us.

After the Creative Word brought forth the physical creation, the invisible God began to *speak* to men early in the history of the human family. In Genesis 3:8-9 the record states, “And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden. And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou?” God here manifested Himself unto Adam and Eve by *utterance* and through some form of His Presence from which they sought to hide. Surely the spiritual mind is able to see that this utterance of God was that same *Word* of God, the *Logos*, by which God had created all things. Beginning in the garden, and continuing for millenniums, this *Voice of God* took on a different connotation.. Rather than manifesting as a Creative Word, it became a COMMUNICATIVE WORD. Through this Word

God instructed and counseled; fellowshiped and communed with man. The Word of God manifested itself in various ways. In Exodus chapter three the Word spoke from a burning bush. In Exodus chapter nineteen the Word spoke out of a cloud. In Joshua chapter five and a number of other references the Word spoke through His manifestation as a Personage known as “The *angel* (messenger, word) of the Lord.”

Beginning with Moses and the formation of the children of Israel into a nation another means by which the Word communicated to men was through the mouths of the prophets. With this in mind the writer to the Hebrews states: “God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers *by the prophets...*” (Heb. 1:1). The ordinary Hebrew word for “prophet” is *nabi*, derived from a verb signifying “to bubble forth” like the waters of a fountain. Hence the word means one who *announces* or *pours forth* the declarations of God. The English word comes from the Greek *prophetes* which signifies in classical Greek *one who speaks for another*, specially one who speaks for a *god*, and so interprets His will to man. The usage of the Hebrew word *nabi* is illustrated in Exodus 4:15-16 and again in Exodus 7:1. In these passages it is clearly taught that Moses stands in relation to the Pharaoh as a GOD. Between Moses and the Pharaoh there is another person, an intermediary, Aaron, the brother of Moses. Aaron is to speak to the Pharaoh the words that Moses gives him. And after their departure from the land of Egypt, Aaron became Moses’ spokesman unto the children of Israel. “And he (i.e. Aaron) shall be thy *spokesman* unto the people: and he shall be, even he shall be to thee instead of a mouth, and thou shalt be to him *instead of God.*” The man who can be designated a *nabi*, then, is one through whom God speaks — a prophet.

Peter says of the prophets, “For the prophets came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God *spake as they were moved upon by the Holy Ghost*” (I Pet. 1:21). The prophet’s most essential characteristic was that they were instruments of revealing God’s will, plan, and purpose. Included in this was the foretelling of future events, especially as they related to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, the redemption effected by Him, and the resultant formation and ultimate triumph of His glorious kingdom. This Word of God through the prophets was at first spoken orally, but in due process of time was written and documented, then handed down from generation to generation. This combination of the spoken/written Word became known as the *scriptures* — the *holy writings*. These holy writings are the second step in God’s progressive revelation of Himself to mankind!

In our day there are many people, even some who profess to walk in sonship and the kingdom of God, who minimize or openly repudiate the scriptures. Some mistaken brethren have taken the Bible and thrown it out the door. They say that the Bible is no more than a history book, just a compilation of outdated and irrelevant messages that God spoke to ancient peoples long ago. These reason that since they now have the *Spirit of Truth in them*, they no longer need what God said to Moses, or Isaiah, or Peter, or Paul. They are now, they say, led *only by the Spirit* and by what the *Spirit is now saying* — not by what the Spirit one time long ago *said*. Since the same Spirit that was in Moses and Paul is now in them — they need only to hear what the Spirit *is saying*. On the surface that reasoning sounds very logical, indeed, very SPIRITUAL! But I now with all humility and sobriety bear witness to all who read these lines that in the lives of many precious brethren I have known through my lifetime such reasoning led ultimately to folly and the grossest of errors and delusions, and in the end to chaos and SHIPWRECK.

There is one great basic principle of truth that all who would be sons of God in this significant hour must consider with all diligence and prayerfulness — and we need to learn it well. Our Elder Brother, the Lord Jesus Christ, is the PATTERN SON! Oh, yes! He is the original, the archetype, the prototype, the exemplar, the model, the standard, the blueprint, the measure, the mold of what the life of sonship *is!* We can dream a thousand dreams and imagine within ourselves what sonship to God means, but in Jesus we *see* the FIRSTBORN SON — yea, the *firstborn among many brethren*. As the firstborn Jesus is our example. If you would know how a son of God conducts himself in the kingdom of the Father, then consider Jesus Christ. Truly, Jesus is our Forerunner. If Jesus is indeed the Pattern Son, then let us, my precious brother, my dear sister, in our walk of sonship *follow His example*. Jesus was a true son in all that sonship to God implies. He walked as no other man has ever walked, having received the Spirit of God *without measure*. Hear that! How would a son of God, possessing the unlimited and boundless measure of God’s Spirit, walk out His sonship? He walked in intimate fellowship and vital union with the Father; and the heavens were open to Him. He was God manifested in the flesh! He was the sinless, spotless lamb of God. And Jesus had a pure revelation STRAIGHT FROM HEAVEN! And though He walked in the fullness of the Spirit,

and permeated the fragrance of heavenly realms, and possessed a revelation that was infinite, yet, in all things He *appealed to the scriptures as proof and confirmation* of the truth which He declared! Jesus referred to, and appealed to the scriptures more than 100 times in that portion of His teaching which we have recorded in the Gospels.

That Jesus *studied* the scriptures is obvious, for being raised a Jewish boy who faithfully attended the synagogue, He would have spent many hours in biblical instruction. Not only did He study the scriptures, but He *taught* from the scriptures. The synagogue was full of people that blessed day when Jesus stood and took the scroll of Isaiah from the hand of the ruler of the synagogue, and when He had opened the scroll, He found the place where it was written, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; He hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord” (Lk. 4:18-19). Then He rolled up the scroll, and He gave it back again to the ruler of the synagogue, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fastened upon Him with rapt attention, and He began to speak to them. “Today,” He proclaimed, “while you are present and hearing *this scripture is here and now fulfilled!*”

Consider with me an actor preparing for his role in an upcoming drama. He pours over his lines. Striding back and forth in his room, he commits to memory the lines he has been assigned for the play. It is a major part; he will be the dominant actor. The action will swirl around him. He needs to get the lines memorized, know the director’s instructions about where to move each scene, and get a “feel” for how each scene is to be played. He spends hours and hours to get this drama to fit the director’s expectation. When the curtain is raised on the drama, he will be judged on how closely he stays with the script. The play will become unintelligible if he doesn’t follow the *script!* In like manner Jesus walked out every step of His ordained pathway. When at last He came to the “end game” of His journey as a man among men, on the night of His last supper with His disciples He said to them, “*The Son of man indeed goeth, as it is written of Him*” (Mk. 14:21). It was written of Him! One can reverently say that His life was scripted for Him. All the major events of His life, ministry, and redemptive accomplishment were foretold and scripted *in the scriptures*. Yes, it was written in the scriptures, but it was also written *within Him, in the inner scroll of His life*. This script, this inward knowledge, this inner revelation, together with that which was written in the scriptures, was the power that guided Him through every step of His manifested sonship on earth. Oh, the wonder of it!

To the scribes and Pharisees, to some He healed and ministered to, to His disciples, to the multitudes that followed Him by the seaside and through the burning sands of the desert places, to one and all Jesus quoted scripture, taught scripture, and questioned men about the meaning of scriptures. As the first overcoming son of God, He employed the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God. Oh, yes, my friend, Jesus *used the scriptures as His weapon* in dealing with His adversary, the devil! It is always wrong for people to think that Jesus was able to overcome the adversary just by virtue of the power of His sonship. The truth is very different. He, like us, skillfully used *weapons* in His spiritual warfare. And one of those weapons was the *scriptures!*

When the firstborn son of God encountered Satan in the high realms of the spirit He countered him with these significant words: “IT IS WRITTEN!” Isaiah admonished, “To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because THERE IS NO LIGHT IN THEM” (Isa. 8:20). And Paul adds to this, “But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them, and that from a child thou hast *known the holy scriptures*, which are able to MAKE THEE WISE UNTO SALVATION *through faith* which is in Christ Jesus. *All scripture* is given by inspiration of God, and is *profitable* for *doctrine*, for *reproof*, for *correction*, for *instruction in righteousness* that the man of God may be *perfect*, thoroughly furnished unto all good works” (II Tim. 3:14-17).

Anyone who does *not believe* that the scriptures have been given to make us wise unto salvation, or who does *not believe* that they are profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction and instruction in righteousness, is treading upon a very dangerous and perilous ground. For you see, my beloved brethren, if I say that I will be *led only by the Spirit*, then I have no *check* or *balance* for what I am hearing. I have

nothing by which to *judge* or *try* the spirit that is talking to me. The truth of what the apostle John wrote to the saints must now be made clear and powerful within each of our hearts: “Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world” (I Jn. 4:1), And it is right there that many brethren have missed the path and gone far afield from truth. Some have spawned some of the most misshapen and grotesque doctrinal and moral misunderstandings conceivable! Otherwise sound doctrine and practice have been taken to such distorted extremes so to have become gross and twisted error. If you are listening *only* to what the spirit says with no “measuring rod” by which to *try the spirit* to see if it is indeed the Spirit of God, or if it is a lying, deceiving spirit, then your ship may cast itself upon the shoals and rocks of disaster. We should never make the mistake of thinking we are *beyond* being deceived! Don’t think for one minute that there are no deceiving spirits in the high realms of the heavenlies into which God is raising us! For it was right *there*, in that high heaven of sonship to God, that Jesus, the Pattern Son, met the most subtle strategy of the devil! And it is also *there* that the great red dragon stands in this new kingdom day to devour the manchild, the manifest sons of God, as soon as they are brought to the birth!

Why should we try the spirits? Paul gives us this penetrating answer, “Satan Himself *is transformed into an angel of light*. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness: whose end shall be according to their works” (II Cor. 11:14-15). The question follows: *By what* shall we try the spirits? And Jesus Himself answered that question for us once and for all when He declared *three times* (the number of completeness) to the adversary: “It is WRITTEN!” This was the Pattern Son speaking. Never forget that! If our revelation and experience are not confirmed by the scriptures then there is one of two things — either we are right and the scriptures are wrong, or the scriptures are right and we are wrong! Again this same principle of the scriptures as a *confirmatory* word from God is found in Acts 17:11 wherein we read, “These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word (from the apostles) with all readiness of mind, and *searched the scriptures daily*, whether those things *were so*.” I do not hesitate to tell you, my beloved, that today, two thousand years after these words were written, the safest way to determine whether a word being ministered from without or within is given by the Spirit is *still* the same way of the Bereans — search the scriptures whether these things BE SO!

A gentleman sent me an article a number of years ago in which he taught that Jesus was the reincarnation of Confucius, Buddha, and a number of other great teachers and philosophers — founders of the world’s great religions. His idea was that God has been progressively revealing His Truth through the ages to various nations of people, and that the same “enlightened One” reincarnated at specific intervals in history to be the Revealer of that Truth. In his view Jesus was the *ultimate* and *final* reincarnation, at last bringing to men the highest Truth and Revelation of God. It was a beautiful and highly intellectual treatise. But that teaching comes, of course, from so-called “Metaphysical Christianity” which in various of its aspects is related to, and one spirit with, *the occult*. If you find that difficult to believe you have only to investigate one of the largest and most prominent of the Metaphysical publishing houses — Devorss & Company — and compare the broad spectrum of books they offer, a revealing mixture of Metaphysical Christianity and the Occult. Without any doubt whatever all such teachings are “doctrines of devils.” I sat down and drew a circle around the statement that Confucius, Buddha, and others were incarnations of the SAME SON OF GOD, and in the margin I penned the words of our Lord Jesus Christ where He stated, “I assure you, most solemnly I tell you, that I myself am the Door for the sheep. *All others* who came as such *before me* are thieves and robbers: but the *true sheep* did not listen and obey them. I am the Door. Anyone who enters in through me will be saved — will LIVE, will HAVE LIFE” (Jn. 10:7-9). Needless to say, I was dropped from that man’s mailing list at once!

Someone will surely ask why Jesus called all the religious leaders that came before Him “thieves and robbers.” Did he mean they were scoundrels, evil doers, unscrupulous con men, wicked liars and deceivers? Not at all! Some of them were actually good men, holy men, who taught great principles of living, righteous precepts, and commendable commandments. So why are they “thieves and robbers”? The answer is to be found in the words of Jesus: “I am the Door. Anyone who enters in through me will be saved — will LIVE, will HAVE LIFE.” That is the difference! All others taught great moral principles and righteous precepts of daily living, but they did not have life, true life, spiritual life, incorruptible life, divine life to offer men. They gave men philosophy, not life. They encumbered men with rituals, commandments,

ceremonies, and a thousand other things, but could not give them the one thing they needed to truly be saved — LIFE! Because they withheld life they were failing the people who heard and followed them, depriving them of life. They were thus “thieves and robbers.” All who came to them were cheated out of the one thing that could save them — the living, quickening, transforming power of the indwelling Christ of God! Great is the mystery!

I have been asked the question, “If we are to try all revelation by the Written Word, *by what* did the prophets who wrote that word *try their revelation*? Weren’t they speaking by the Spirit *without anything by which to judge their word*? And if they spoke purely by the Spirit apart from anything previously revealed, should we not now do the same?” The answer to the questions is an emphatic and unequivocal NO! In the days of the prophets Isaiah cried out, “To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them” (Isa. 8:20). To the LAW! The law *preceded* the prophets. In fact, the law preceded Moses! The very first thing God gave to man was HIS LAW. Away back in the book of Genesis God said of Abraham, “Because that Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, *my commandments, my statutes, and my laws...*” (Gen. 26:5). The scriptures bear out the fact that these commandments, statutes, and laws of God began with Adam and Eve. Cain and Abel, the first two offspring, were judged by that law (Gen. 4:6-15). Abraham, in his day, received and knew and kept the law — the commandments and statutes of the Lord! The law of Moses, given at Sinai, was simply the reiteration of those same eternal commandments, statutes, and laws to the Israel nation.

And so we find that every word of every prophet was tried by that LAW! In every case where God denounced the false prophets it was because they prophesied a word which *contradicted* the law, the statutes, and the commandments of the Lord, thus corrupting the ways of God among the people. Understand this and you will know a great and eternal truth — God has *never* left the ministration of His Spirit through human vessels without checks and balances. What a mighty God!

It should be interesting to note here that the Old Testament scriptures are divided into three parts: the law, the prophets, and the writings. Jesus recognized this tripartite division in the New Testament. “These are my words which I spoke to you...that everything written about me in *the law* of Moses and *the prophets* and *the psalms* must be fulfilled. Then He opened their minds to understand THE SCRIPTURES” (Lk. 24:44-45). Jesus called these three divisions of the Old Testament “the scriptures.” In addition, He implied the standard order still used in the Hebrew editions of the Bible. “And *beginning with Moses* and all the prophets, He interpreted to them in *all the scriptures* the things concerning Himself” (Lk. 24:27).

While it is not our purpose in this writing to try to prove the inspiration of the New Testament writings, we do want to note in passing that they are classified by Peter as SCRIPTURE. “...even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do *also* the OTHER SCRIPTURES, unto their own destruction” (II Peter 3:15-16).

It must now be made clear to our hearts *why* God from the beginning has given the Written Word. The Written Word is the recorded revelation of God’s plan, of God’s purpose, and of God’s will for mankind. The ways of the Lord are revealed therein. The destiny of nations is contained therein. God’s great and eternal purpose in His body is declared in that Word. Salvation, redemption, restoration, and transformation are its themes. The centrality, supremacy, and universal triumph of our Lord Jesus the Christ are the heart of its message — His victorious life, His precious atoning blood, His eternal Lordship, His triumphant Rule. The Written Word points to the unending expansion of the kingdom of God, to the manifestation of the sons of God, to their glorious work in the ages to come, and to the end when He shall have delivered up the kingdom unto the Father, having put down all rule and authority in the heavens above, in the earth below, and in all regions of the underworld until God is truly ALL-IN-ALL — everything to everyone everywhere! Think of it! And the *standards* are there — standards of righteousness and holiness, of divine nature and character, the qualifications for rulership in the kingdom. It is brimming with God’s counsel — His admonitions, rebukes, correction, instruction, and judgments. The lessons of the past, the dealings of the present, the challenges of the future, the great plan and purpose God is working out here in earth — It is ALL THERE!

Every revelation of fullness which God is now, in our day, bringing forth by the Spirit through His called and separated elect is contained in *seed form* in that Written Word. God has not left us without a witness to all these glorious things. Those who walk in the Spirit of the Lord understand the great truth that we must believe and embrace all that God *has* revealed, all that He does *now* reveal, and He testifies over and over again that He *shall yet* reveal many wonderful and glorious things concerning His kingdom and glory. That which God now reveals, and shall in the future reveal, is but the amplification, expansion, and extension of all He *has* revealed. Any present-day revelation of the Spirit may enlarge and extend beyond that which is written — but it shall never annul, change, alter, or contradict that which is written. Can we not see by this that the Written Word is the *seed plot* of all divine truth and every seed produces after its kind — the harvest is of the same nature, beauty, and expression as the elements inherent within the seed. In the final analysis it is all ONE WORD! This has ever been God's order...line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little, there a little, ever increasing, but never altering the thing that is gone out of His mouth. There is always a progression in God and His revelation, but never a re-vamping of His purpose. God has no "Plan B"! His purpose marches on! You don't finish the top of a skyscraper by removing or exchanging the foundation. The foundation remains and abideth sure while *higher things* are added thereto. Whatever is written stands! And yet the Spirit is actively unveiling mysteries which are propelling us into higher dimensions in God than we ever dared believe existed. As we soar higher and higher let us build on the eternal foundations that are revealed in the Word God has established and proven through the ages!

To be continued...

J. PRESTON EBY

If you would like to receive these studies write to:

Mark Eby
Kingdom Bible Studies
P.O. Box 371240
El Paso, TX 79937-1240

All writings are distributed on a free-will offering basis