



.. God so loved the world...

FAITH

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The Bible was written to give man a knowledge of God. The information it contains provides man with a basis for faith. True faith is the foundation or starting place to become a Christian. To have a real and active faith, one must learn vital facts about God, accept them as the truth, and put them into action in his life.

The Bible gives the answers to every important question concerning man's origin. It starts with the creation of man in the garden of Eden and explains the major events in man's history as he travels through time. The Bible is a panoramic view of life as a whole, written about real people. It describes the pain they suffered, the lessons they learned, and the successes and failures in dealing with sin. The Bible is the most powerful way to teach man because it is accurate and happened just as it was lived and told. Instead of writing a list of do's and don'ts for man to follow, God gave us an emotional true story of His great love and purpose for man. It teaches how to win the battle with Satan, who is the enemy of God and man. It reveals Satan's wicked plan to lure us into sin and alerts man of his schemes and devices. The Bible is filled with great hope and promise for all who come to God. It gives a glimpse of Heaven and the home that God has prepared for those who love and obey Him. It describes the reality and terror of everlasting punishment in Hell for those who reject God. The Bible was written to produce true faith. In it, God tells about the one and only plan that He offers to forgive man of sin. Salvation is not possible unless we study the Bible and learn how to get it. No one can be saved for you. Salvation is something you must come to fully understand and do for yourself. The purpose of this lesson is to

give some facts about the writing of the Bible, so as to increase your knowledge and confidence in its accuracy and to produce a true faith in God, so that you can obey Him and be saved from sin. (Work Section I)

II HOW THE BIBLE CAME TO YOU

The writing of the Bible was directed and inspired by God. It contains 66 books which were written by about 40 different men over a period of approximately 1,600 years. Man alone could not have written such a book because it would have been impossible to keep the same uninterrupted story throughout the centuries that it took to complete it. Each period of time paved the way for the next one. The parts of each story fit perfectly together with the rest. All the prophecies were fulfilled just as they were predicted. We learn that God fulfilled every promise He made to man in ages past. By this, we know that He will keep the ones He has made concerning our future.

The central message of the entire Bible is, "God's great love for man, seen through Christ."

The Old Testament was called Moses and the Prophets, identifying who wrote the books. The Old Testament was written in Hebrew, which was the language of the people at that time. Scribes carefully copied each letter by hand, allowing no mistakes. The Scriptures were preserved on long scrolls, made from animal skins and

And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to Him must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who earnestly seek Him. (Hebrews 11:6).

from papyrus plants. The Jews handled them with great care to keep the truth from being changed, or being destroyed by enemies. Many scrolls were placed in pottery jars and hidden in caves. Evidence of this method of preservation was found in 1947, when a young Arab boy playing near a cave by the Dead Sea discovered some of these scrolls which had been hidden for centuries.

As the years passed, the language of many Jews changed from Hebrew to Aramaic and Greek. The end of the first century is when the last of the 27 books of the Bible were written. These books are about the life of Christ and the history of the church. As they were written, the newly-formed churches of Christ copied and circulated them. Later, they were known as the New Testament and were added to the Old Testament writings to complete the canon of the Bible. These 27 books were written in Greek because that was the language of the people at the time. The news of what Christ did for man spread rapidly to other countries and now the gospel of Christ has been preached in all the world.

Romans 10:18. *But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily their sound went out into all the world, and their words unto the ends of the world.*

The question has been asked, "Since the Old and New Testaments were written in Hebrew and Greek, how can we know if the English versions are correct?" To help us understand the languages of each period of time, we have what are called Hebrew and Greek Lexicons, which are dictionaries of those languages. We can trace words back into the original language to help us understand customs and clarify each meaning. This is necessary because languages change with the passing of time. There are many ways to insure the correct meaning of each passage of Scripture; and God has seen to it that man can clearly know the truth in any age, in every country, regardless of the differences in the people's customs, or language. Again, God has protected His Word from being destroyed.

The 66 books that we know as the Bible are God's **complete** revelation to man. God will not give additional information, or instructions. What is written in the Bible will not be changed or anything new be added to it. Jesus made a promise in Matthew 24:35 when He said, "**Heaven and earth will pass away but my words will not pass away.**" Truth once established by God is

completely correct and will never change. We can know that the power of God has preserved His Word, and we can be assured that we have the same truth today as they had centuries ago when it was first written. (Work Section II.)

III. THE BIBLE TELLS US WHY MAN SINS

Man demands that God let him have his own way. He believes his own ideas are equal or superior to God's. What he wants is to have a foot in both worlds, enjoying the pleasures of sin and disobedience, while at the same time having God's approval and blessings. But the Bible teaches us that it is not possible.

Matthew 6:24. No man can serve two masters: for he will hate one and love the other or hold to one and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon (worldliness).

When a man does not want to obey God, he will try to change the rules and make his opinion the truth instead. As a result, there are hundreds of different religions, each claiming to be the best version of Christianity. God sees through every pitiful excuse that man offers for disobedience. He knows the real reason for all the division is that man is still trying to get his own way and doesn't want to obey the truth. A man said once, "*If all the different churches were wrong, then God would tell us so.*" God has already told us what is right in the Bible. The truth has been in there for centuries. That truth exposes all the error in religion. But if God wrote a hundred Bibles telling man the truth, man would still try to make it read his way because he doesn't want to obey.

Do you know why the truth isn't seen by everyone? Because only a few really look for it.

They hide behind excuses for not knowing it and want God to meet them on their terms. But God will never meet man on his level of thinking. Man must come to God on His terms. The only way man can know the truth is to throw out preconceived ideas and let the Bible tell him about God. For instance, some religions teach that God will not send anyone to Hell. They say that the verses which teach about Hell mean something other than an eternal punishment. They prefer their ideas; they have built a religion around it. If they believed the Bible, exactly as it was written, and left out their own

ideas, they would see God's reasoning behind what He does. God is just! He cannot say a thing is sin, establishing it as law, and then let disobedience to that law go unpunished, allowing evil to take over righteousness. He would be a liar.

The Bible is a show and tell of human emotion, revealing the challenges, victories, awful sins and mistakes, failures, disappointments, fears, grief, and pain of others. Why did God write it in this way? So that we will learn from their experiences. We don't have to commit the same sins that thousands of others did and lose our souls to Satan.

It's so simple! Study, learn and obey exactly what the Bible says.

Man invents every excuse in the world for not knowing the truth so that he can keep from doing it. If we face reality, the truth isn't hard to see. It is a very foolish man who watches someone make a serious mistake and then does the same thing himself. This is what happens when we read of the horrible mistakes in the Bible and then commit the same errors. God allowed us to see the weaknesses of others to teach us what not to do. He wants us to learn the cause and effect of sin. God knows that we will be tempted to sin and promises that He will help us through it. He won't do your work for you. Instead, He gives you the knowledge of how to overcome sin in the Bible. To the Christian, He gives His Holy Spirit to strengthen from within.

1 Corinthians 10:11-13. Now all these things happened unto them for examples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. Let him who thinks he stands, take heed lest he fall. There is no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able: but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it. (Work Section III).

IV. THE BIBLE TEACHES US ABOUT SATAN

The Bible reveals the crafty methods of Satan to undermine God's love for man and persuade him to sin. The book of Job tells about the attempts of Satan to do this. He comes into the presence of God, charging that Job only serves Him because of

the blessings God gives. He says, "**Job doesn't serve you for nothing! You make it profitable for him to do so. Take away the things you give him, and he will curse your face.**" Job 1:9-11. In simple words, Satan was telling God, "*You are not worthy of human service on the basis of who you are. Your complete truth and holiness is garbage.*" The whole challenge was a deceitful stab at God. All of Satan's maneuvers to get man to sin are really aimed at God. If he could get God to make one small compromise, to sacrifice the truth just a little, it would make God a liar, just like him. Then God would no longer be perfect. Satan's greatest desire is to lower God to his level. Job's problems demonstrate the frustrations of suffering, pain, and grief. But the greatest lesson we learn from Job is that if we surrender our wills to God, we will in the end be victorious over it all. God makes that same promise to us. The greatest news in the history of mankind is that Christ came from heaven for the purpose of destroying the power of Satan. He did this by taking on human flesh just like you and me.

Hebrews 2:14. Since then the children are sharers in flesh and blood, He also in like manner partook of the same; that through death He might bring to nought him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.

We must love the truth and be grateful that God cannot lie or tolerate any sin. In our struggle to overcome sin, each time we win the battle, it honors the truth. God was proud of Job because he didn't crumble when his faith was challenged. During Job's struggles, a battle between God and Satan was raging and Satan lost.

When Christ died on the cross, Satan thought he had won at last only to learn he had lost the greatest battle of all.

Through the Bible, God allows you to see your enemy, Satan, and to learn how to win the victory over him. Don't delude yourself into thinking he is only a figure of speech. Satan's power is very real. (Work Section IV).

V. WHAT IS FAITH AND HOW DO WE GET IT?

A true faith in God is a belief and trust in all that the Bible teaches about God and everything He promises to man. We are told how we get faith in

Romans 10:17: So then faith comes by hearing the word of God. Getting this kind of faith will involve work from us. God doesn't just put it into us; we must work to get it. Jesus tells us this in **John 6:29. "Jesus answered and said unto them: This is the work of God, that you believe on Him (Christ) whom He (God) hath sent."** To apply the teaching as Christ directs will mean that **you must learn the truth, and put it into action.** If you learn the truth but don't do it, your faith is not real. Many have defined the word faith incorrectly as a mental acceptance of a superior being. In the Scriptures quoted here, you have learned that faith involves much more.

I commend you for the efforts you are making to learn more about the Bible by taking this course. Your faith in God will grow as you learn more facts from the Bible. But remember, learning facts alone will not save you. What you learn must be acted on, or **it is considered to be a dead faith, James 2:17.** As an example of what I mean, **1 Peter 3:21 makes the statement that baptism saves.** This verse gives vital instructions for your salvation. It means that you must be baptized to be saved. If you say you believe and trust God's Word, you will do it. But if you learn the facts about baptism and don't obey them, you have a dead faith. It is called a dead faith because you didn't trust what you learned by doing it. Refusal to obey shows that you don't really believe or trust God.

Hebrews 11:6. Without faith it is impossible to be well-pleasing to Him; for he that comes to God must believe that He is the rewarder of them that seek after Him.

God will not just give you faith. He will provide the evidence and basis for belief and then expects you to build a working faith. You will either trust Him and do what the Bible says, or reject it. God will not do our homework for us. Getting faith and keeping it is our part in getting salvation. The kind of faith that God requires of us is one that goes to work on what we have learned. (Work Section V).

VI. EXAMPLES OF TRUE FAITH.

NOAH. The Bible gives us many wonderful examples of true faith. Read about Noah, who had the kind of faith that pleased God and brought reward. In Genesis 6:9-22, during the period of time when Noah lived, the people had become so wicked that God chose to destroy the earth by a flood. God had confidence in Noah, knowing that Noah was living a correct life according to His commands. God provided a way for Noah to be

saved from death. He told Noah what to do. "*Build a huge boat according to the dimensions I will tell you, using only the materials that I command.*" It took a long time to finish it, but Noah carried out every instruction of God's design, putting into the boat every animal that God told him. How the people must have laughed and called Noah strange names, as they watched the construction of such a giant ark, being built nowhere near the sea!!! Why did Noah continue to work day after day, under great hardship? What gave him the courage to finish? *Faith!* Noah trusted God. He believed that what God said was true.

Noah proved his faith by doing what God told him.

God gave Noah the reward He had promised: salvation from the flood. What do you think would have happened if Noah had not liked the instructions of God and decided to build the boat out of oak instead of gopher wood? Or, if Noah had changed the dimensions or changed the number of animals? We can be sure that God would have destroyed Noah, along with the other disobedient people in the flood. His faith saved him because it was a *working* faith. He did exactly as he was told.

ABRAHAM. Read about Abraham's faith in Genesis 22:1-18. Here is an example of a courageous faith that was willing to give the ultimate sacrifice of his only son because God asked that he do it to prove his faith. The Scriptures do not tell us what Abraham's feelings were when God commanded him to sacrifice his son as a burnt offering. He simply rose early in the morning and went as God had directed. His trust in God was so great, that he never questioned the outcome, or God's motive for asking. He did exactly what God had instructed, in the way that God told him to do. At the point of slaying Isaac, God intervened. "***And He said, lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from me.***" **Genesis 22:12.** What would it tell us about Abraham if he had said, "*Let me prove my faith in a less painful way, God. Don't ask me to give something that hurts?*" What we need to see by Abraham's example is that true faith is a trust in God's commands that is willing to obey even when it hurts. When we don't know how it's

going to turn out, we must still obey what he says and trust him with the future. God will not speak to you as He did Abraham and ask you to slay your only son to prove your faith. However, He does expect you to have the same kind of faith as Abraham: the kind of faith that obeys His will completely.

In the first century, when Christianity was new, many early Christians were persecuted and martyred (killed) in an attempt to force them to deny their faith in Christ. Some gave up Christianity because of fear and a weak faith, while others died a cruel death for the truth.

Men can kill the body
but cannot kill the soul.

It is the soul that will live forever. There will always be two kinds of believers: those who will lay their life on the line in complete trust and those who save their life and lose their soul. You have important decisions to make concerning Christianity. True faith demands complete surrender. It will mean that you must sacrifice your own desires and trust God's Word to control your life. If you are not willing to give it, you do not have a saving faith.

NAAMAN. Another example of true faith is Naaman the leper. Read about his struggles of obedience in 2 Kings 5:10-14. Naaman sought the help of Elisha the prophet to cleanse him of the horrible disease of leprosy. He was greatly angered when Elisha sent word for him to go and wash in the Jordan River seven times. It was not the instruction Naaman had expected. In his reasoning, Elisha should have come out, waved his hands over the place, and called on the name of Jehovah. Instead, word was sent to go and dip seven times in the muddy Jordan River. Naaman wanted to be cleansed on his own terms; he went away in a rage. His response is typical of many people who come to God for salvation. They say in effect, "*God, save me from sin and death but save me how I think it should be done. Don't make my sacrifice too great, God, and don't allow me to suffer. Let me practice the kind of religion I like to practice. Let me give you what feels right to me. I want to keep my own opinions and feel comfortable in everything I do. And above all, God, you must accept me just as I am without asking me to make*

any changes." Fortunately, in Naaman's case, there was a person who reasoned with him so that he could see the error in his thinking and learn the real meaning of trust. Naaman then went and obeyed the command of God, dipping seven times for complete cleansing. His skin was like that of a little child, clean and whole again. His faith was demonstrated by his obedience. What kind of faith do you have? Do you stand at the river and say, "*/// dip twice, that's all.*" Or would you, in complete trust, go down for the seventh time for total cleansing? **Partial faith is not true faith. True faith in God demands all or nothing.** (Work Section VI).

VII. IS SINCERITY ENOUGH TO SAVE A PERSON?

People who claim to be deeply sincere in religion, but are not doing what the Bible authorizes are, in reality, **insincere** to the bone. They are showing a complete disregard to Christ's commands for the New Testament church. When a person does not commit himself to finding and obeying only the truth, he defies and insults God. A person with an honest and sincere heart will not be satisfied until he has the real thing. True sincerity demands to know what is correct and will make the sacrifices necessary to get it. An intelligent mind can observe that all churches teach something different, and they all can't be right. The conclusion must be that these churches have been created by men, not God. Jesus condemned the Pharisees, calling them hypocrites, for pretending to obey the truth when they really were not.

Luke 6:46. *Why call ye me Lord, Lord and do not the things which I say?*

Matthew 7:15-16. *Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravening wolves. By their fruits you shall know them.*

Matthew 23:28. *Even so, ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but inwardly ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.*

Matthew 7:20-23. *Therefore, by their fruits ye shall know them. Not everyone who says unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he who doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in thy name, and by thy name cast out demons, and by thy name do many mighty works? and then I will profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.*

(Work Section VII).

VIII. FAITH IS A TOTAL COMMITMENT

If you believe there is a God in heaven, but have not been willing to obey Him, read James 2:19. It tells us that demons have that much faith in God. They know He exists and that He is in control because they tremble with fear in their knowledge of God. Just knowing God exists is not enough to be called true faith. Obedience to what one has learned is also necessary. There is a sad example in John 12:42-43 of some who knew all the facts about Christ, but were ashamed to confess their faith in Him, to stand up for the truth, because they were more concerned with what others thought. Having the approval of friends was more important than having the approval of God.

Real faith demands a total commitment. No one can do that for you, not even God. Christ came to earth to show you the way, but you are the only one who can lay down your life for Him and make a total commitment. What will a total commitment involve? The willingness to do what the Bible says, worship correctly by the examples in the New Testament, and leave the practices that are wrong. We cannot say we love God and refuse to obey His commandments. An important part of faith is knowing how to love God.

John 14:15. *If you love me you will keep my commandments.*

John 14:23. *If anyone loves me, he will keep my words.*

1 John 5:3. *This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments.*

(Work Section VIII).

IX. EXAMPLE OF DISOBEDIENCE

Leviticus 10:1-3 tells us the true story of Nadab and Abihu, who were the sons of Aaron, priests under the Old Law of Moses. A priest was responsible for the sacrifices by obtaining the right coals and observing all of God's instructions. Worship has always been important to God. In each period of time, He told man exactly what to give and how to do it. But the two priests disobeyed. They offered a strange fire, which was what God had warned against in Exodus 30:9. **"You shall offer no unholy incense thereon, nor burnt offering."** We don't know the reasoning behind their deliberate disobedience. They may have thought they were making an improvement on God's command. Maybe they had good intentions, like many churches today, who practice things in

worship that God did not ask for. We do not know. We know that God was insulted by their actions and the substitutions they made. God sent a fire which devoured them before the Lord. This example was recorded to teach us how God feels about adding to, or subtracting from His commands. God will not perform a miracle to punish us instantly as He did these two men, for miracles have ceased. Punishment will come after the Judgment.

T rue faith is learning what God wants and giving it!

If we claim to love God and do not obey Him, we are liars. Trust and understanding will come gradually as we grow in knowledge. Obeying shows God that we trust His wisdom, not our own.

Jeremiah 10:23. *O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.*

Isaiah 55:8-9. *For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are My ways your ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts higher than your thoughts.*

(Work Section IX).