

Faith Comes By Hearing The Word Of God

'From infancy, you have known the Holy Scriptures which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith, which is in Messiah Jesus. Every Scripture is God-breathed and profitable for teaching, reproof, correction and instruction in righteousness' (2 Timothy 3:15 & 16).

The words 'wise for salvation' means by reading the Bible we will be able to understand our need for salvation and can lead us to God. The Bible is not a book of myths or legends. It is the written Words of God as He either told the prophets what to write or He inspired them to write down His thoughts. It is the true account of mankind's history going back to the time before the creation of Adam, before God created time itself. God knows the end from the beginning so people who live by faith were known to God before the foundation of the earth was created. Jesus is the Living Word of God Who came to earth to tell mankind, salvation is possible but only by accepting God's way of salvation, which is solely through the cross and blood of Jesus. 'He (Jesus) is clothed in a garment sprinkled with blood. His name is "The Word of God" (Revelation 19:13). Jesus said, "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through Me' (John 14:6).

God knows who is going to accept Him and who is going to reject Him long before they are born. 'God chose us in Jesus before the foundation of the world so we would be holy and without blemish before Him in love, having predestined us for adoption as children through Messiah Jesus to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His desire' (Ephesians 1:4 & 5). Naturally, God wants everyone everywhere to repent and turn to Him but He knows there will be millions of people who refuse to walk with Him and some even mock the concept of the resurrection that precedes eternal life. 'God commands all people everywhere to repent because He has appointed a day when He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man (Jesus) Whom He has ordained. God has given assurance to all mankind, God has raised Jesus from the dead. When they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked but others said, "We want to listen to you again to hear you concerning this' (Acts 17:30 to 32).

The Bible was written over about a 2,000 year time period by about forty different Hebrew or Jewish prophets and apostles, in the ancient Hebrew language who were all inspired to write down what was given to them by the heart of God. Millions of people recognise the Bible as the authentic Word of God written for all mankind by God Himself, Who is the Creator of the universe, mankind and absolutely everything else. There is not one thing in existence that was not created by God with the help of Jesus before He was born on earth. 'Jesus is the image of the invisible God, the Firstborn of all creation. By Him all things were created, in the heavens and on the earth, things visible and things invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers, all things have been created through Him and for Him. He existed before all things and in Him all things are held together' (Colossians 1:15 to 17). 'By faith we understand, the entire universe was formed by the spoken Word of God, so what we can see has not been made out of things that are visible' (Hebrews 11:3).

Many non-believers have tried in vain to discredit the Bible. Archaeology has proven the accuracy of the Bible countless times. No archaeological discovery has ever contradicted the written Word of God. Some finds have increased our knowledge of history as the Dead Sea Scrolls did. Prophecies written down thousands of years ago have been fulfilled in amazing detail. God knows the end from the beginning so He knew exactly what would happen many years before the events took place. "Remember the former things of old, for I am God and there is no One else. I am God and there is no One like Me, declaring the end from the beginning, from ancient times to things that have not yet happened. My counsel will stand and I will do what I please' (Isaiah 46:9 & 10). Any church based minister or leader who says the Bible is not utterly accurate does not know God as well as a church leader should.

German born Johannes Gutenberg first printed a Bible in 1456 with the newly invented printing press. From that time many millions of Bibles have been printed and distributed around the world in every written language and dialect on earth, and recorded for tribes that have no written language. Some missionaries have put written words to a native language so the natives could have a written Bible in their own tongue. As it was prophesied in Revelation, there will be some people in heaven from every tribe, language, nation and race, dating back from ancient times right up to the present and into the earth's future. 'They sang a new song saying, "You are worthy to take the Book (of Life) and to open its seals, for You were slain and bought us for God with Your blood, out of every tribe, language, people and nation" (Revelation 5:9). 'Behold, a great multitude, which no man could number, out of every nation and of all tribes, peoples and languages, standing before the Throne and before the Lamb, dressed in white robes with palm branches in their hands. They cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation be to our God, Who sits on the Throne and to the Lamb" (Revelation 7:9 & 10). 'A holy angel was flying in mid heaven, having an eternal Gospel to proclaim to those who dwell on the earth and to every nation, tribe, language and people ... Worship Him Who made the

heaven, the earth, the sea and the springs of waters" (Revelation 14:6 & 7). The Bible is the best selling Book on earth. Life may change on earth but God does not change (Malachi 3:6) and the Scriptures will never cease (Mark 13:31). For the people reading this Bible study who do not understand Who the 'Lamb' is as mentioned above, the Lamb is Jesus. He is called the Lamb of God about twelve times.

Our faith comes from learning about God, Jesus, salvation and what God expects from mankind. Faith in Jesus comes by hearing the Word of God (Romans 10:17). Some people have given their lives to God just by reading the Bible, which brought repentance. People like the Ethiopian servant of Queen Candace. 'Behold, there was a man from Ethiopia, a servant of great authority under Candace, queen of the Ethiopians. He was in charge of all her treasure and he had come to Jerusalem to worship. He was returning home and was sitting in his chariot reading the prophet Isaiah. The Holy Spirit said to Philip, "Go near and join yourself to this chariot." Philip ran to the servant and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet and asked, "Do you understand what you are reading?" The servant asked, "How can I understand unless someone explains it to me?" He invited Philip to come and sit with him. The passage of the Scripture he was reading was this, "He was led as a Lamb to the slaughter. As a Lamb before His shearers is silent so He does not open His mouth. In His humiliation and judgement He was taken away. Who will declare His generation? For His life is taken from the earth" (Isaiah 53:7 & 8). The servant asked Philip, "Who is the prophet talking about? About himself or about someone else?" Philip began from this Scripture and preached Jesus to him. As they went on the way they came to some water and the servant said, "Behold here is water. What is keeping me from being baptised?" He commanded the chariot to stop and they both went down into the water, both Philip and the servant and Philip baptised him' (Acts 8:27 to 38).

The Lord rarely uses signs and miracles to lead people to Him. If people can be led to God by miracles, they can just as easily be led astray when the miracles are not so forthcoming. Signs, wonders and miracles are for unbelievers. Jesus said, "Unless you see signs and wonders, you will never believe" (John 4:48). 'A great multitude followed Jesus because they saw His signs, which He did for those who were sick' ... "Truly I tell you, you seek Me, not because you saw signs but because you ate of the loaves and were filled" (John 6:2 & 26). Our faith needs to be based on our Rock, Jesus. 'The Lord lives! Blessed be my Rock! Exalted be God, the Rock of my salvation' (2 Samuel 22:47). Jesus said, "Everyone who hears these Words of Mine and does them, I will liken them to a wise man/woman, who built their house (salvation) on a Rock" (Matthew 7:24). 'The Children of Israel all ate the same spiritual food and all drank the same spiritual drink. They drank from a spiritual Rock that followed them and the Rock was Jesus' (1 Corinthians 10:3 & 4).

Our faith needs to be built on a stable foundation and we need to obey the Word of God, not just listen to it preached and forget what was spoken. 'Receive with humility the implanted Word, which is able to save your souls. Be doers of the Word and not only hearers, deluding your own selves. If anyone is a hearer of the Word and not a doer, he is like a man looking at his natural face in a mirror then goes away and immediately forgets what kind of man he is' (James 1:21 to 24). Jesus asked, "Why do you call Me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do the things I say? Everyone who comes to Me and hears My Words and does them ... is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid a foundation on the bedrock. When a flood arose against the house it could not shake it because the house was founded on the rock. Those who hear the Word and do not obey it is like a man who built a house on the earth without a foundation. When the flood came it immediately fell and the ruin of that house was great" (Luke 6:46 to 49).

God said, "My people know My name. They know I AM He Who does speak. Behold, it is I. How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of them who bring good news, who publish peace, who brings good news of good things, who publishes salvation, who says to Zion, your God reigns" (Isaiah 52:6 & 7). 'The Word (of God) is very near to you, in your mouth and in your heart so you may obey it' (Deuteronomy 30:14). 'What does the Bible say? "The Word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart," that is, the Word of faith which we preach. If you will confess with your mouth, Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. The Scripture says, "Whoever believes in God will not be disappointed." There is no distinction between Jew and Gentile for the same Lord is Lord of all and is rich to all who call on Him. Whoever will call on the name of the Lord (with heartfelt sincerity) will be saved. How will they call on Him in Whom they have not believed? How will they believe in Him Whom they have not heard? How will they hear without a preacher? How will they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the Gospel of peace, who bring glad tidings of good things!" ... So faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God ... Yes, most certainly, "Their voices went out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world"' (Romans 10:8 to 18).

We need to share our faith in God and in the truth of the Bible with the strength of our firm personal faith. If we try to preach from ourselves, it will not achieve the desired result, which is the salvation of the person we are preaching to. Salvation, or going to heaven is referred to as 'entering His rest'. Some people who have

heard the Scriptural Gospel will definitely enter heaven but some will be rejected because of their own disobedience. 'Let us fear (respect God) lest perhaps anyone of you should have come short of the promise of entering into His rest, for indeed we have had the Gospel preached to us even as we all did, but the Word they heard did not profit them because it was not spoken with faith. God said, "As I swore in My wrath, they will not enter into My rest." ... Some will enter (His rest) but they to whom the Gospel was preached will fail to enter in because of their disobedience' (Hebrews 4:1 to 6).

Although we should share the Gospel and teach from the Bible, the Lord Himself has put the knowledge of Himself into people's hearts by the beauty of creation so on Judgement Day they will have no excuse for their disobedience. 'What is known of God is revealed in mankind, for God revealed it to them. The invisible things of God since the creation of the world are clearly seen, being perceived through the natural world, even His everlasting power and divinity so they are without excuse. Because knowing God, they did not glorify Him as God, neither gave thanks but became vain in their reasoning and their senseless heart was darkened, professing themselves to be wise they became fools' (Romans 1:19 to 22). 'The righteousness of God has been revealed through faith in Jesus to all and on all those who believe ... we are justified freely by His grace through the redemption in Jesus Whom God set forth to be an atoning sacrifice through faith in His blood, for a demonstration of His righteousness ... He is just and the justifier of all those who have faith in Jesus' (Romans 3:22, 24 to 26). 'Jesus has reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy and without blemish and blameless before God, on condition you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast and not moved away from the hope of the Gospel you heard, which is being proclaimed in all creation under heaven' (Colossians 1:22 & 23).

Amen and God bless you.

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