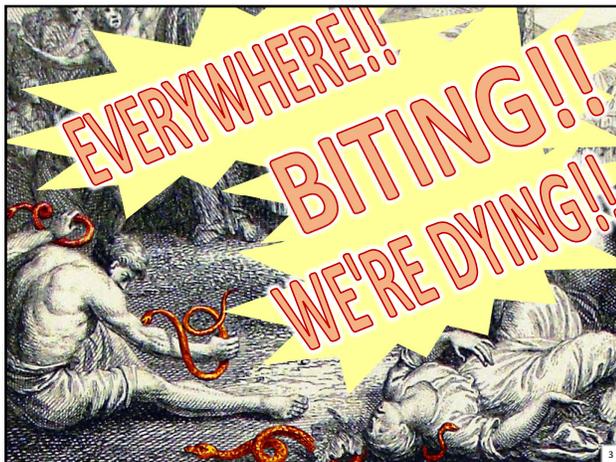
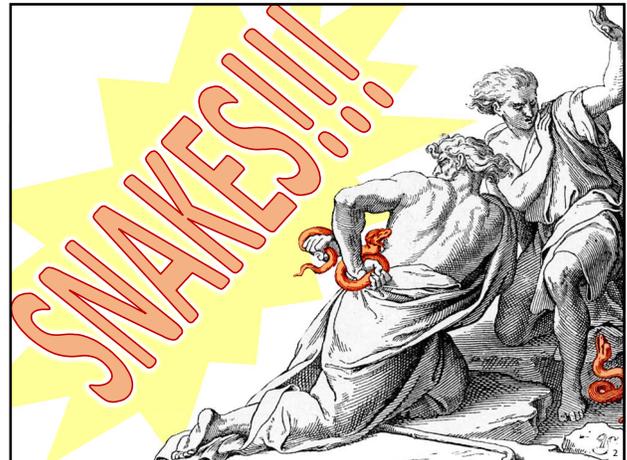




GOOD NEWS
for the unsaved
WORLD!

(#92)
Faith – "looking" to Jesus



WHAT REALLY HAPPENED?

- ✓ Israel's journey to the Promised Land took longer than they wanted.
- ✓ They got impatient and began *speaking against God and Moses*.
- ✓ → Then the LORD sent poisonous snakes among the people, and they bit them so that many Israelites died.
Numbers 21:6 (CSB)

*** WARNING: Paul tells us that this complaining is *evil*. ***

These things [that happened to Israel] have become examples for us so that we won't desire what is *evil*, as they did. We shouldn't put the Lord to the test as some of them did. *They were killed by snakes.*
1 Cor. 10:6, 9 (GW)

JESUS AND "HEBREWS 11 FAITH"

Last time, we saw that "Hebrews 11 Faith" was characterized as being...

- ✓ **Fact-based** – built on the trustworthy foundation of Scripture and what Jesus Christ did.
- ✓ **Promise-oriented** – focused on the guaranteed promises of God – our future "hope."
- ✓ **Living** – seen in how we live – our values and conduct.
- ✓ **Persevering** – not giving-up when times are difficult, or when hope seems delayed.

The "faith" that **Jesus** promoted had the same characteristics! All of these concepts can be found in the gospels, (though the word "faith" is not always in the immediate context).

13

It was: ✓ **Fact-based** – built on the trustworthy foundation of Scripture and what Jesus Christ did.

Then Jesus said to them, "How foolish you are! You're so slow to **believe everything the prophets said!** Didn't the Messiah have to suffer these things and enter into his glory?"

WHAT JESUS DID... IT WAS DESCRIBED IN PROPHETIC FACTS!

Then he began with **Moses' Teachings and the Prophets** to explain to them what was said about him throughout the Scriptures.

Luke 24:25-27 (GW)

... Jesus said to Jairus, "Don't be afraid; just **believe**, and she will be healed."

Luke 8:50b (NIV)

EVEN THE MIRACLES WERE **FACT-BASED**. THE PEOPLE HAD TO BELIEVE THE **FACT** THAT JESUS COULD DO THE HEALING.

14

It was: ✓ **Promise-oriented** – focused on the guaranteed promises of God – our future "hope."

The full significance of God's Old Testament promises wasn't understood by people until after Jesus rose from the dead. But Jesus did allude to them.

"Didn't the Messiah have to suffer these things and enter into **his glory**?"

Luke 24:26 (GW)

[= ONE OF THE FACTS MENTIONED ON THE PREVIOUS PAGE.]

Jesus said to her, "I am the **resurrection** and the life. He who **believes** in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and **believes** in me **will never die**. Do you **believe** this?"

"Yes, Lord," she told him, "I **believe** that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who was to come into the world."

John 11:25-27 (NIV)

15

It was: ✓ **Living** – seen in how we live – our values and conduct.

So Jesus said to those Jews who **believed** in him, "If you **live** by what I say, you are truly my disciples. You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

John 8:31-32 (GW)

He often warned people who thought they already had "faith."

"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord!' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the person who does what my Father in heaven wants."

Matthew 7:21 (GW)

16

It was: ✓ **Persevering** – not giving-up when times are difficult, or when hope seems delayed.

Sin will be rampant everywhere, and the love of many will grow cold. But those who **endure** to the end will be saved.

Matthew 24:12-13 (NLT)

Persevering vs. not persevering... as described in a parable. (Two of the four types of people that are mentioned.)

Those on the rock are the ones who receive the word with joy when they hear it, but they have no root. They **believe** for a while, but in the time of testing they fall away.

But the seed on good soil stands for those with a noble and good heart, who hear the word, retain it, and by **persevering** produce a crop.

Luke 8:13, 15 (NIV)

17

✍️ We can find the **same** "saving-faith" definition throughout the New Testament (and even in the Old Testament).

Its greatest expression would be in the New Testament epistles – written after the apostles understood the significance of what Jesus did.

Jesus told the apostles they would be taught by the Holy Spirit:

But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, ... will **teach you** all things and **remind you** of everything I have told you. ... he will **testify** about me.

John 14:26; 15:26b (CSB)

Paul described it this way:

... the mystery of Christ, which was not made known to men in other generations as it **has now been revealed** by the Spirit to God's holy apostles and prophets.

Ephes. 3:4b-5 (NIV)

18

SO HOW MUCH OF THIS "FAITH" DO I NEED?

I RECALL READING ABOUT FAITH THE SIZE OF A "MUSTARD SEED" ...

WHAT SIZE IS THAT?

"If your faith is the size of a mustard seed... Nothing will be impossible for you."
Matthew 17:20b (GW)

WELL, HOW MUCH FAITH DOES IT TAKE TO LOOK AT A SNAKE ON A POLE?

- The focus is not on a specific "size" of faith.
- This verse tells us that even the smallest amount of faith is sufficient to accomplish much!

HOW MUCH "FAITH" DO I NEED?

- ☞ If it is genuine "Hebrews 11" faith, **ANY amount has value!**
 - ✓ Scripture speaks well of people who have "great faith" – Matthew 8:10; Hebrews 11 examples.
 - ✓ It is commendable if our goal is to "grow" in our faith – 2 Thessalonians 1:3; 2 Corinthians 10:15.
 - ✓ But even the smallest amount of genuine faith is from God (Ephesians 2:8), so it is linked to the power of God.
- ☞ Remember that genuine faith has the characteristics that we have described as "Hebrews 11 faith."
 - ✓ It trusts God to keep his promises.
 - ✓ If we're trusting God for something not directly promised by him, we will trust him to work in accordance with his will.

I HAD FAITH THAT GOD WOULD GIVE ME A MILLION DOLLARS, BUT HE DIDN'T.

I ASKED GOD TO MOVE MOUNT EVEREST, BASED ON MATTHEW 17:20! BUT IT DIDN'T HAPPEN.

GOD PROMISED TO TAKE CARE OF YOUR NEEDS.

APPARENTLY THOSE WEREN'T ACTUAL "NEEDS."

☞ **We need to keep away from expressions of "faith" that are actually attempts to manipulate God for our own purposes!**

EXAMPLE: Jesus could have jumped off the temple, to prove (to the devil) that God would protect him. Instead, he quoted Scripture:

"It says: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'" (Luke 4:12b (NIV))

Though quoting Deut. 6:16, referring to a different situation, this is the same sin that brought the snakes!

YOUR MISSION: "Remember the snake!"

A reminder that we can trust God to keep his promise to save us!

IN SALVATION: When God says, "Trust me to save you... just look to Jesus" ⇒ **Then do it!**

Just like looking to the snake, looking to Jesus occurs within a context that includes paying attention to what God says, repentance, etc. They all work together.

IN DAILY LIVING: Trust God also to keep his promises in day-to-day aspects of life!

Even the smallest amount of genuine faith is evidence that God is at work in your life!

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