

Pens from the Past

The Proof of Faith

“What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him? If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit? Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works.” (James 2:14-18)

From these verses we learn that genuine faith, a saving faith, will not suffer us to be silent and inactive. When genuine faith becomes a part of man, he is compelled to speak and act under its direction. And since God does not allow anyone to hide his faith (**Matthew 5:16**), we must manifest our faith to the world. As James teaches in the above verses, we actually prove our faith by doing the works of God. Let us notice a few Bible examples to illustrate our point.

Noah

Noah manifested his faith in a remarkable way. The Hebrew writer says of him, “*By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house ...*” (**Hebrews 11:7**). Now, what was it that caused Noah to build that ark? Were there threatening thunderclouds on the horizon which warned of a coming torrential storm? Had Noah ever experienced ravaging flood waters during his life upon this earth? Had any one of his acquaintance ever known of such an event? No, none of these things caused Noah to build the ark. Neither was there any natural sign to point to the coming destruction of the flood, but God had said to him, “*Behold, I, even I do bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh, wherein is the breath of life, from under heaven; and everything that is in the earth shall die*” (**Genesis 6:17**). God, Himself, warned of the coming flood and commanded Noah to build the ark and that was enough for Noah. Now, watch him prove his faith. As soon as God had spoken, Noah went to work doing as God directed him. No arguing with God on Noah’s part. No doubt. Just faith in God’s revelation concerning the flood and work to carry out God’s will. The ignorant and unbelievers, no doubt laughed at him, but he worked on, content to do as God had instructed. Perhaps, high in the hills he was felling trees. He said he was preparing to build a great boat. There was no large body of water near by where he might launch the vessel, but he made it clear that he intended to build it right there. They mocked him. They ridiculed him. They called him crazy. He worked on, trusting in God. He stuck to his story that a great flood was coming—one so great that it would cover the highest hills. He exhorts them to repent. He builds, he preaches. They mock and turn away.

Noah’s faith gave him the courage and determination to build and preach, perhaps, for as long as 120 years. And then one day the ark was finished, built exactly to God’s specifications, “*And Noah went in, and his sons, and his wife, and his sons’ wives with him, into the ark, because of the waters of the flood. And the waters prevailed exceedingly upon the earth; and all the high hills, that were under the whole heaven, were covered. And every living substance was destroyed which was upon the face of the ground, both man, and cattle, and the creeping things, and fowl of the heaven; and they*

were destroyed from the earth: and only Noah remained alive, and they that were with him in the ark” (**Genesis 7:7,19,23**).

Yes, Noah proved his faith by believing and obeying God. And Noah was saved from the flood because of his faith!

Abraham

Abraham was also a man of tremendous faith. And on one occasion he was called upon to prove his faith in a most trying manner. At that time God commanded him, “*Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of*” (**Genesis 22:2**). What a test of faith! God had commanded Abraham to sacrifice a son upon the altar! The burden would have been easier, the load lighter, had God required an animal sacrifice, or the son of another, or even a daughter. But God had asked for Abraham’s son! Not only that, but his only son—the son of Sarah, Abraham’s wife! Oh, how severe was that test of faith! With a father’s warmest affection Abraham loved his son, Isaac. Must he now offer him as a burnt offering? It was morally wrong to kill. Should he, could he, slay his own son? What about the promise which God had made, that through Isaac God would establish His covenant (**Genesis 17:19**)? Did Abraham reason in such a manner? Did he hesitate to obey God? Not for a moment! The record says, “*Abraham rose up early in the morning*” (**Genesis 22:3**) to carry out God’s command. God had spoken! Jehovah had commanded! That which had been commanded must be done! There was nothing left for Abraham to do but to obey God. Read the remaining verses of Genesis, chapter 22, to learn the details of Abraham’s obedience. James asks, “*Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?*” (**James 2:21-22**). James simply uses the case of Abraham to show that we prove our faith by believing and obeying God.

People Today

Yes, we, too, are called upon to prove our faith by works. Now, God doesn’t command us to build an ark as He did Noah. Neither does He command us to sacrifice a son upon the altar as He did Abraham. Still, there are certain commands which we must obey, if we are to please God and save our souls. What are the commands of Christ? What are the conditions of salvation? After a careful study of the teachings of Christ and His apostles, I submit the following: First, you are required to believe, with all your heart, on the Lord Jesus Christ (**John 8:24; Acts 8:37**). Second, you are required to repent of all your sins (**Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30-31**). Third, you are required to confess with your mouth the faith of your heart (**Matthew 10:32; Romans 10:9-10**). Fourth, you are required to be baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit for the remission of your sins (**Matthew 28:19; Acts 2:38**). And, fifth, and last, you are required to be faithful and zealous in God’s service, even unto death (**1Corinthians 15:58; Revelation 2:10**).

Do not argue with God about any of the above terms of salvation. Prove your faith! Be as Noah and Abraham. Believe God and obey each one of His commands! The same God who foretold the deluge of the flood and told Noah to preach, now foretells the coming deluge of fire (**2Peter 3:10-12; Revelation 21:8**) and invites you to come into the Ark of Safety. That Ark is Christ. The way to Him is open unto you. He invites you to come (**Matthew 11:28-30; Revelation 22:17**). Who will prove his faith? Who will enter in and be saved? Will you enjoy the eternal joys of Heaven because you believed God and obeyed?