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### **GOD WILL NEVER FORSAKE YOU**

Most of us have been in God's Church for many years. Many of us have lived through Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong's time (he died over 30 years ago), and we've also lived through the time of Joseph W. Tkach leading the Church (he died over 20 years ago). Since then the other well-known leaders in the Church from Mr. Armstrong's era have also died.

It seems that all of the old guard from Mr. Armstrong's time have gone. And today almost nobody in the world recognizes the name Herbert Armstrong. In a sense it is somewhat like it was for Israel in Egypt, when "**there arose a new king over Egypt which knew not Joseph**" (Exodus 1:8). Today, outside of long-time members of God's Church, nobody knows anything at all about Mr. Armstrong or about God's Church during his time.

But you and I, **we are still here**. And we are still trying to live our lives in integrity before God. The laws of God are still the most important criteria for how we conduct our lives.

We are all getting older. Back 40 or 50 years ago we had hoped that by now, by the year 2018, we would surely be in God's Kingdom. But it didn't work out that way. Instead, we find ourselves still continuing to face tests and trials in this life. Many of the trials we face today are of a **health** nature, or they are of a **financial** nature, or we face serious **family problems**.

And on top of that we are now extremely scattered and divided, with only very few people, if any, with whom we can fellowship. Most of our old friends are gone. Many have gone back to Sunday-keeping churches. And some have left religion completely. Where once we had been many, now we are few in number.

Furthermore, the second coming of Jesus Christ doesn't really look any closer today than it did many years ago. That may be why many people have become discouraged over the past 30+ years, since the time when Mr. Armstrong died. Since then many have indeed "left their first love" (like the situation in Revelation 2:4).

#### **This is not what we expected when we first came into God's Church!**

When you heard that first "WORLD TOMORROW" broadcast, or you read that first PLAIN TRUTH Magazine, or you received that very first booklet from the Church ... you didn't think that in the year 2018 you would still be living in your own home, that you would still be struggling with your daily challenges, did you?

None of the prophecies regarding the end-time that we quoted and expounded back then, have thus far turned out the way people asserted they would turn out. So far none of the Church's end-time prophetic speculations have come to pass. So far our speculations have always been wrong.

So what has happened? **Has God let us down?** Or were our prophetic interpretations foolish and misinformed? Were our expectations unjustified? Yes, as far as the timing is concerned, our interpretations and our expectations were foolish and misinformed and unjustified! God most assuredly did not let us down. Our desire to see things fulfilled in our time mislead us into accepting wishful speculations, as far as the timing of prophetic events is concerned.

It reminds me of one man about 20 years ago who, in response to my statement that the second coming might be further away than we had hoped, told me : "well, **I would rather believe** that Christ's return is sooner rather than later", and implied in his statement was the thought "**even if the facts seem to indicate otherwise**".

It is always a problem if we choose to "rather believe something" because that something happens to appeal to us. We don't really have a choice regarding what we are to believe. We are expected by God to believe the truth!

And the truth has nothing to do with what we would "rather believe". It is the truth that sets us free (John 8:32). By contrast, **the things we would "rather believe" invariably end up enslaving us.**

For over 20 years Jeremiah had to preach that Jerusalem would be destroyed by the Babylonians. That's not something Jeremiah would "rather have believed". Jeremiah would "rather have believed" that Jerusalem would be spared and blessed. Jeremiah could quietly **wish** that things might work out well for Jerusalem, but God required him to **believe** that Jerusalem would be destroyed. If Jeremiah had not been willing to believe what God told him would happen to Jerusalem, then God could not have used Jeremiah as a prophet, because without faith it is impossible to please God (Hebrews 11:6). Jeremiah had to believe what God told him would happen, even if privately he might have wished otherwise.

We must believe the truth, even when the truth doesn't really appeal to us.

And so we today find ourselves scattered and divided, and Christ's second coming is seemingly no closer than it was 50 years ago, though it obviously is 50 years closer. But there are no signs to indicate this, which we might readily appeal to.

This is something that many people in the Church have never understood correctly. I tried to explain this in my 2016 article "This Is Not Yet The Time Of The End". We need to grasp that until that final three and one-half year period before Christ's return actually starts, **it will be impossible to predict the time for Jesus Christ's return**, no matter what "signs" people might believe they are witnessing.

We are to "watch" for those last three-and-one-half-years to start. And that period of time will only start when the two witnesses start their ministry. Until they start their ministry, there is no way to predict even the approximate timing for Christ's second coming. By "approximate timing" I mean that we can't even predict "within 10-20 years" for Christ's return until those two witnesses start their ministry. All other "signs" are only secondary to the start of the ministry of the two witnesses.

Our convictions and our commitment **should not be based on** the actual time when Jesus Christ will return to set up the Government of God. We are to be committed to obey God regardless of when Jesus Christ will return.

And we need to always keep in mind that **God will never leave us nor forsake us**, that God has in fact put **enormous power at our disposal!** We must never lose sight of the fact that God is on our side!

We all have to face problems! Mostly those problems have nothing to do with what's going on in the Church, whether the Church is scattered or united. Mostly those problems are of a personal nature. It is when our tests seem especially great, that we need to focus our minds on God and on **God's promises.**

So let's take a look at some of those promises.

## **HEBREWS 13:5-6**

Let your conduct *be* without covetousness; *and be* content with such things as you have: for He has said, **I will never leave you, nor forsake you**. So that we may boldly say, The Lord *is* my helper, and **I will not fear** what man shall do unto me.

As long as we are faithful, as long as we live in integrity before God, and greed and covetousness do not become our motivations, this is an absolute promise. God will not forsake you, no matter what trials you may be enduring. **Claim this promise from God and don't fear**. Don't let trials shake your faith in God. It doesn't matter whether Jesus Christ returns in your lifetime, or whether you may die before Jesus Christ returns, but God's promise to always be there for you to approach for help is absolute. Never cease appealing to God for help with your trials.

## **MATTHEW 28:18**

And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, **All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth**.

That is the power that is available to help us in our trials. That power is supreme (under God the Father obviously), and we have the privilege to be able to appeal to that power. Accept it and believe in that power, because the world denies it and ignores it. We must have faith, and then that power will provide help with our tests and trials.

## **2 TIMOTHY 1:7**

For God hath not given us **the spirit** of fear; but **of power**, and of love, and of a sound mind.

When we received God's spirit, then we received direct access to that power. The lives of most people on earth are ruled by fear. The spirit of fear is Satan's spirit. Satan rules over people by instilling fear in them. The fears Satan seeks to impose on mankind are mankind's slave-master.

The Bible tells us repeatedly that we must overcome. **What we have to overcome first and foremost is Satan's spirit of fear**. We overcome that spirit of fear by appealing to God's power when we face dangers, threats, and possibly even death.

Consider the example of King Hezekiah, who was "sick unto death" (2 Kings 20:1). Hezekiah appealed fervently to God. Notice what Hezekiah actually said to God:

I beseech You, O LORD, remember now how **I have walked before You in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done *that which is good* in Your sight**. And Hezekiah wept sore. (2 Kings 20:3)

This is an example of approaching God boldly. Would you ever pray like Hezekiah? Would you ever say to God "I have walked before You in truth and with a perfect heart"? Would you say to God "I have done that which is good in Your sight"? If you do pray like this, then God will also answer your prayer, even as God answered Hezekiah's prayer. The key here is that **the things we say to God must obviously be true and correct**.

We ourselves know very well whether or not we are living before God in truth, whether or not we live in full integrity before God, and whether or not we are whole-heartedly seeking to do those things that are

good in God's sight. And if all these things are true for us, even as they were for King Hezekiah, then we need to approach God for help just as boldly as did King Hezekiah. God's spirit of power is available to help us in our trials.

### **HEBREWS 4:14-16**

Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast *our* profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as *we are*, yet without sin. **Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace**, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

Hezekiah had certainly come boldly before God's throne of grace. The Apostle Paul is urging us to do the same. God wants us to seek His help. And God is willing to help us with our trials, no matter what they may be. When our attitude is right before God, then **boldness is a powerful expression of faith**.

When our attitude is not right before God, then any boldness may be an expression of arrogance and presumptuousness. That is obviously something we must avoid. That type of situation applies, for example, to the man who wanted to be "at the wedding" without a wedding garment (see Matthew 22:11-12). That's the wrong type of boldness.

But if we are in integrity seeking to please God in how we live our lives, as did people like Hezekiah and the Apostle Paul, then we need to approach God boldly when we desire God's help in any way.

### **1 PETER 5:6-7**

Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time: **Casting all your care upon Him; for He cares for you.**

Do you ever do this ... cast your cares upon God? **Most people don't.** Most people cling very tenaciously to their own problems. Most people refuse to let go of their problems. We need to understand that when we refuse to let go of our problems, then that is because we have a spirit of fear. **A spirit of fear prevents people from letting go of their own problems.**

As the Apostle Peter said, we need to cast our cares upon God, because God will then take care of us. Casting our cares upon God requires that we ourselves then let go of those cares. If we can't let go of our cares, then we are assuredly not casting them on God. So be bold!

### **1 PETER 5:8-10**

Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walks about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world. But the God of all grace, who has called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, **after that you have suffered a while, make you perfect, establish, strengthen, settle you.**

Why did Peter say these things? What was he trying to achieve? In addition to warning us to always be

on guard, Peter was really trying to help us to see all our trials **in their correct perspective**. That correct perspective is that we need to see whatever trials may come our way as a part of being tested by God. So while we are enduring a trial, God is observing how we deal with that trial.

Godly character can never be developed in the absence of the "ABC". "A" stands for actions, "B" stands for behavior, and "C" stands for conduct. Nobody has ever developed any godly character without actually doing something. There is no such thing as theoretical character, or academic character. As long as people are not doing anything, no actions or behavior or conduct, they are also not developing any character.

Our actions, behavior and conduct, especially in challenging and provoking circumstances, reveal our hand to God. When Abraham raised his hand with the knife in it to kill Isaac, that action revealed Abraham's character to God. Every test and trial we endure does exactly the same thing for us ... reveal our character to God.

That is the perspective we need to have when our trials are the greatest, when they seem to push us to our limits. And if we are able to maintain that perspective, then we will also be established and settled, just like Peter said.

The crown of immortal life that God holds out to us is so staggeringly valuable and important that it absolutely demands some serious testing for every single individual to whom God offers that crown. The road to eternal life was never meant to be a walk in the park. And when the going really becomes stressful, that's when we must cast our cares upon God.

### **ROMANS 8:26-28, 31**

Likewise the Spirit also helps our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searches the hearts knows what *is* the mind of the Spirit, because he makes intercession for the saints according to *the will of* God. And **we know that all things work together for good to them that love God**, to them who are the called according to *his* purpose.

What shall we then say to these things? **If God *be* for us, who *can be* against us?**

These are promises we easily forget when great trials confront us. But faith means that we see the proof after we have been faithful, and not before we act in faith. **Any proof we see before we take action does not require any faith.**

We must never forget that God is on our side, and as long as we do our part God will always see to it that things work out right for us. They always do! The key is always that we approach God with a clear conscience and in integrity. If we do that, then we will always be okay. I don't have a gun, but I do have God on my side! So how could anyone who opposes us possibly be important or significant?

That's what Paul was telling the Romans.

### **PHILIPPIANS 1:6**

Being confident of this very thing, that **He which has begun a good work in you will perform *it*** until

the day of Jesus Christ:

So how about it? Are you confident that God Himself will do everything in His power, which power is immense, to make it possible for you to live for ever in His Family? God is always in control, even when He allows Satan to tempt us and to provoke us. Or have your trials blinded you to this reality?

God will always do His part. Because of the sacrifice which Jesus Christ has already brought on our behalf, therefore God's part is today assured. The difficult aspect in this process is whether or not we will fulfill our part, whether or not we will stay faithful to God. But God's part in this process is assured.

The fact that you can understand God's plan and God's purposes, which things are a mystery to people in the world, is proof positive that God is working with your mind, that God is working with you. And as long as we remain faithful to God, success is guaranteed.

### **PSALM 23:1-6**

The LORD *is* my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me to lie down in green pastures: he leads me beside the still waters. He restores my soul: he leads me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Yea, **though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil:** for You *are* with me; Your rod and Your staff they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies: You anoint my head with oil; my cup runs over. **Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life:** and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.

The things in this psalm apply to every single one of God's people. Has death ever cast its shadow over us? That is when we need to have faith like David did, that God will indeed take care of us. Yes, certainly, that is easier said than done. But that is our part in the whole process ... that we have faith that God will indeed finish the good work He has started in us.

The lives of most people are dominated by fears. This is evidenced by the endless worries that consume their lives. We must become free of those fears. And it is the power of God that will set us free of fears, if we have faith in God, and we then act in faith.

### **MATTHEW 6:34**

**Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day *is* the evil thereof.**

Some people are always worrying about tomorrow. They never seem to learn that most of the things they worry about never come to pass. Such people have to learn to cast their cares on God and to let go of those worries.

Understand that Jesus Christ said these words for you! We need to learn to deal with tomorrow's problems tomorrow. We should certainly prudently look ahead to avoid potential problems. But having done that, we then need to stop worrying.

One of the reasons why Jesus Christ said these words is that worrying about the future is one specific manifestation of Satan's spirit of fear. As long as we continue worrying about the future, so long we have not yet rejected the spirit of fear.

### **JOHN 14:13-14**

And **whatsoever ye shall ask in my name**, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. **If ye shall ask any thing in my name**, I will do *it*.

When your trials are greatest, have you ever tried asking God for help by quoting these verses to God? When we are faced with dangers and with people who want to harm us, then these are the verses that should come to our minds first. Don't fear in those situations. **It is the people who intend to harm us that need to fear**. Boldly claim these verses in dangerous situations, and God will surely be on your side.

### **JOHN 15:7**

If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, **you shall ask what you will, and it shall be done unto you**.

This is what was on Jesus Christ's mind before He was tortured and killed for our sins. And Christ meant every word! It could not have been said in plainer terms. Christ said these words at the commencement of the greatest trial during His earthly existence. Christ meant for us to appeal to these words when we face our greatest trials.

We must be sure of our integrity before God, and then we must be bold in claiming these promises of help.

### **JOHN 15:16**

You have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that you should go and bring forth fruit, and *that* your fruit should remain: that **whatsoever you shall ask of the Father in my name, He may give it you**.

Jesus Christ was assuring us that God the Father will help us with all our trials, if we approach the Father in Jesus Christ's name. We need to have faith in these promises of God's help.

### **JOHN 16:23-24**

And in that day you shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, **Whatsoever you shall ask the Father in my name, He will give it you**. Hitherto have you asked nothing in my name: **ask, and you shall receive**, that your joy may be full.

This is now the fourth time in the context of Jesus Christ's last observance of the Passover that He has urged us to approach God the Father for help with our trials. This is something that was clearly very important to Jesus Christ, that we would in faith look to God the Father for help with all aspects of our lives.

## **2 KINGS 6:16**

And he answered, **Fear not: for they that *be* with us *are* more than they that *be* with them.**

This is always true for God's people, that those who are with us are far more than those who are against God's people, as far as power is concerned. God is always available for help for His people. We need to remember this verse the next time the odds against us seem to be overwhelming. And let's keep in mind that it is not the numbers that count; it is the power that is vested in those who are "with us" that is the important thing.

## **PSALM 91:1-10**

He that dwells in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the LORD, *He is* my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust. Surely he shall deliver you from the snare of the fowler, *and* from the noisome pestilence. He shall cover you with his feathers, and under his wings shalt you trust: his truth *shall be your* shield and buckler. You shall not be afraid for the terror by night; *nor* for the arrow *that* flies by day; *Nor* for the pestilence *that* walks in darkness; *nor* for the destruction *that* wastes at noonday. **A thousand shall fall at your side, and ten thousand at your right hand; *but* it shall not come near you.** Only with your eyes shall you behold and see the reward of the wicked. Because you have made the LORD, *which is* my refuge, *even* the most High, your habitation; There shall no evil befall you, **neither shall any plague come near your dwelling.**

This is a description of how God will look after you and me if we are faithful to God and committed to God. These statements speak for themselves. These statements also highlight how extremely important it is for us to have faith in God's concern for us.

## **MATTHEW 7:7-12**

**Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For every one that asks receives and he that seeks finds; and to him that knocks it shall be opened. Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father who is in heaven give good things to them that ask Him? Therefore all things whatsoever you would that men should do to you, do you even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.**

When we need God's help, then we need to be specific in asking God for help. At the same time we also need to "seek", i.e. search for answers ourselves. And we need to "knock", i.e. try to do our part so that things will work out for us. When we do this in sincerity and truth, then God the Father will also "give good things" to us.

## **MATTHEW 21:18-22**

Now in the morning as he returned into the city, he hungered. And when he saw a fig tree in the way, he came to it, and found nothing thereon, but leaves only, and said unto it, Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever. And presently the fig tree withered away. And when the disciples saw *it*, they



marvelled, saying, How soon is the fig tree withered away! Jesus answered and said unto them, Verily I say unto you, **If ye have faith, and doubt not**, ye shall not only do this *which is done* to the fig tree, but also if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; it shall be done. And **all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive**.

God has given us access to a staggering degree of power. Time and again Jesus Christ encourages us to ask God in faith for whatever we may need. In these verses Jesus Christ gives us enormous scope for the things we can ask for.

For example: **Elijah** asked God for fire from heaven to destroy those sent to harm him. **Elijah** asked God to bring a drought on the nation. **Elisha** asked God to blind a hostile army (2 Kings 6:18). **Elisha** pronounced a curse on a group of rebellious teenagers who were taunting him, and two bears killed 42 of those rebellious youngsters. **Paul** asked God to strike a pagan who opposed Paul with blindness "for a season", i.e. for a year (Acts 13:11). **Peter** in effect asked God to take the lives of Ananias and his wife Sapphira for lying about an offering they were giving to the Church (Acts 5:9).

### **None of these things were scripted in advance!**

All of these things are examples of "whatsoever you shall ask in prayer, believing". It is always a case of people having the faith that God would do the things they were asking God to do. What God did for people like Elijah and Elisha and Peter and Paul and Hezekiah, God will also do for you, if you approach God in faith.

### **GALATIANS 6:16**

And as many as walk according to this rule, peace *be* on them, and mercy, and upon **the Israel of God**.

Every member of God's true Church is a part of "the Israel of God". The main meaning of the word Israel is "**to have power with God**" (see Genesis 32:28). And so "the Israel of God" are all those who will have "power with God". And the access to that power with God starts when we receive God's holy spirit, in response to our repentance (and baptism and the laying on of hands). If you have God's spirit within you right now, then you also right now have access to the same power that Elijah and Elisha and all of God's other servants had access to. It is up to you to approach God and to make use of that power. God will not let you down. He will help you when you ask Him for help. But God requires you to ask.

### **MATTHEW 10:28-31**

And **fear not them which kill the body**, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear you not therefore, **you are of more value than many sparrows**.

When upon your repentance God gave you His spirit, you became a very valuable investment for God. Nothing ever escapes God's awareness. So when you are facing major trials, then God is extremely aware of your trials, right down to the number of hairs on your head at that specific point in time. And God also very carefully nurtures every single investment that God has made. God is at this very time leading you towards immortal life in His Family.

The trials you face are a part of that process. And Jesus Christ has told us time and again "ask God for help". Understand the great value that you represent to God ... "you are of more value than many sparrows", and God takes care of all of those sparrows. So God will take care of you, and all those who have God's spirit, to a far greater degree than God takes care of any animals or any other human beings.

### **MATTHEW 17:18-21**

And Jesus rebuked the devil; and he departed out of him: and the child was cured from that very hour. Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could not we cast him out? And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, **If you have faith as a grain of mustard seed, you shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you.** Howbeit this kind goes not out but **by prayer and fasting.**

Do you believe this promise or not? Do you grasp the enormity of the statement "**nothing shall be impossible unto you**"? The only condition God sets is that we establish and maintain regular contact with God through prayer and fasting. That is not an impossible or unreasonable request from God, is it? It requires our time and our commitment, but **it is within our power to commit to God in this way.**

The sad truth is that the overwhelming majority of people who have attended the Church of God over the past eighty years or so have never been willing to make this kind of commitment to God for any length of time.

### **THAT'S WHY WE ARE NOW SO SCATTERED!**

Praying and fasting are not rituals. They are supposed to be an expression of an unshakable commitment we have made to God. As I said earlier, no godly character is ever developed without ABC ... right actions, right behavior, and right conduct. Fasting and praying are a part of that required right conduct.

But the majority of all the people who have attended God's Church since the 1930's never did commit to praying to God on their knees (health permitting) every morning and every evening. No, in the mornings most people go to work and about their day's activities without first praying to God. And in the evenings they are in very many cases too tired or too distracted to pray to God before going to sleep. But they think of themselves as committed to God. If we don't give God of our time, then we are also not really committed to God.

And most people have never really made a regular habit of studying the Bible for reproof, correction and instruction, at least not beyond their first few years in the Church. After those initial years most people at best do **a little Bible reading here and there**, like a spiritual tranquilizer, kind of like people in the world's churches do. But serious Bible study for correction ...?

Obviously such people are not going to have any faith when the chips are down. Faith is generated by doing serious Bible study and by fasting and by praying regularly on a daily basis.

You need to make sure that the above description, which applies to the majority of people who have been involved with God's Church in this age, does not apply to you. The more regularly you pray on your knees, the more faith you are going to have. Add Bible study and occasional fasting to that.

### **JEREMIAH 17:7-8**

**Blessed is the man that trusts in the LORD, and whose hope the LORD is. For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and *that* spreads out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat comes, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit.**

Whatever tests and trials come our way, things always go better for us when we trust God to help us. Trusting God includes acting on all the Scriptures we have already discussed in this article. We must always keep the knowledge that God is on our side in the forefront of our minds.

### **EXODUS 14:13-16**

And Moses said unto the people, **Fear you not**, stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which he will shew to you to day: for the Egyptians whom you have seen to day, you shall see them again no more for ever. **The LORD shall fight for you**, and you shall hold your peace. And the LORD said unto Moses, Wherefore cry you unto me? speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward: But lift you up your rod, and **stretch out your hand over the sea, and divide it**: and the children of Israel shall go on dry *ground* through the midst of the sea.

In that situation it was the Egyptians who needed to fear, because they would all be dead a few hours later. But at that moment that is not what it looked like to the Israelites. One principle we can draw from God dividing the sea for the Israelites is that God will often divide our big problems into small pieces, with which we can then cope.

Notice that the people were to start going forward even before God had started to divide the sea. Obviously, they couldn't go very far forward, just right up to the shore. But they had to take those first steps, and then God divided the sea.

Likewise, when we desire God's help, then we must take those first steps in faith. God will never forsake you.

### **GENESIS 28:15**

And, behold, I *am* with you, and will keep you in all *places* where you will go, and will bring you again into this land; for **I will not leave you, until I have done *that* which I have spoken to you of.**

If you at this point have God's spirit, then God says to you: **I will not leave you until I have brought you into My Family!** Those are God's words to every single person who comes to a real repentance and then receives God's spirit. It is always up to us to hold up our side of the agreement, to have faith in God, to trust God, to study and pray and fast, and to maintain a humble attitude. If we do these things, then God will always be on our side, ready to help us through every trial.

### **GENESIS 31:3**

And the LORD said unto Jacob, **Return** unto the land of your fathers, and to your kindred; **and I will be**

**with you.**

What God said to Jacob, and what God says to all of us, is: do what I am telling you to do, and then I will be with you.

God's message is always the same, isn't it? Trust Me, obey Me, have faith in Me, and then I will take care of you. That is what God tells us in all of these Scriptures.

### **GENESIS 31:23-24**

And he (Laban) took his brethren with him, and pursued after him (Jacob) seven days' journey; and they overtook him in the mount Gilead. And **God came to Laban the Syrian in a dream by night, and said unto him, Take heed that you speak not to Jacob either good or bad.**

Here God intervened and put the fear of God into Laban. That was all that was needed to ensure that Laban would not harm Jacob. And at times this is what God will also do for you ... without you even being aware of God's intervention on your behalf. And you only see that you are receiving help or favor from people whom you didn't expect to be on your side.

God will always help us if we rely on Him. What God did for Jacob, God will do for you and for me.

### **GENESIS 32:3-7, 9-12**

And Jacob sent messengers before him to Esau his brother unto the land of Seir, the country of Edom. And he commanded them, saying, Thus shall you speak unto my lord Esau; your servant Jacob says thus, I have sojourned with Laban, and stayed there until now: And I have oxen, and asses, flocks, and menservants, and womenservants: and I have sent to tell my lord, that I may find grace in your sight. And the messengers returned to Jacob, saying, We came to your brother Esau, and also he comes to meet you, and four hundred men with him. **Then Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed:** and he divided the people that was with him, and the flocks, and herds, and the camels, into two bands;

And Jacob said, O God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac, the LORD which said unto me, Return unto your country, and to your kindred, and I will deal well with you: I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which You hast showed unto Your servant; for with my staff I passed over this Jordan; and now I am become two bands. Deliver me, I pray You, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau: **for I fear him**, lest he will come and smite me, *and* the mother with the children. And You said, I will surely do you good, and make your seed as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude.

Jacob freely admitted his fears to God. But at the same time Jacob also boldly claimed God's promises of protection. And having done that, he left things in God's hands, and **moved forward!** That is exactly what you and I must also do: acknowledge our fears to God, and then move forward in faith, boldly claiming God's promises for help and protection. You know ... appealing to all the Scriptures we have already covered in this article. God will always help us!

## **DEUTERONOMY 31:6-7, 23**

**Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them: for the LORD your God, He *it is* that does go with you; He will not fail you, nor forsake you. And Moses called unto Joshua, and said unto him in the sight of all Israel, Be strong and of a good courage: for you must go with this people unto the land which the LORD hath sworn unto their fathers to give them; and you shalt cause them to inherit it.**

And he gave Joshua the son of Nun a charge, and said, Be strong and of a good courage: for you shall bring the children of Israel into the land which I sware unto them: and **I will be with you.**

This is something that God always requires from us, that we are strong and courageous. God will always, always help those who are courageous. For God's people courage is an expression of faith in God. God says to you and to me: I will be with you. God is always with those who willingly submit their lives to God. Never doubt God's commitment to doing everything possible to have you become a part of those in the first resurrection. God is on your side with every trial that you face. So be bold.

## **JOSHUA 1:5-6**

**There shall not any man be able to stand before you all the days of your life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with you: I will not fail you, nor forsake you. Be strong and of a good courage: for unto this people shalt you divide for an inheritance the land, which I sware unto their fathers to give them.**

Would you ever ask God to apply this statement to you? If you are indeed faithful to God, then no ungodly person will be able to oppose you and overcome you. Once again God urges us to be courageous and bold.

## **JOSHUA 1:9**

**Have not I commanded you? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be you dismayed: for the LORD your God *is* with you whithersoever you go.**

God has likewise commanded all of us to be strong and courageous. And if we do that, then God will surely be with us. Courage is the ultimate proof of real faith in God.

We have now looked at a random selection of over two dozen Scriptures from both the Old Testament and the New Testament. Time and time and time again God urges us to be bold and confident and courageous, and to confidently approach God for help with all our trials. And when we have certain fears, we need to acknowledge those fears to God, even as the man Jacob did. But in spite of any fears, **we must go forward.** We must in faith take the right actions.

Without doubt there are more trials ahead for all of us. God is surely testing His Church, His people. At the Passover every year we read the words of Jesus Christ: "**every branch that bears fruit God purges, so that it may bring forth more fruit**" (John 15:2). We are those branches (John 15:5). Being purged by God involves a certain amount of stress. And when that happens to us, when we experience various trials, then all of these Scriptures need to be in our minds, and we need to claim these promises from God. God is always faithful, and God will help us through all our trials.

God will help you and me in the same ways that God helped His servants in biblical times. Whatever

your trials may be, if you are faithful, then God will always be on your side. And God will never forsake you.

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