Jesus Christ asked a question in Luke 18:8: “when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?” The fact that He even had to ask is a good indication that faith will be scarce at the time of His return; it always has been.

Hebrews 10:35-38 states that “the just shall live by faith.” The Bible is full of promises for this life and for eternal life in the kingdom of God. Hebrews 1:1-2 tells us that God created the worlds through Jesus Christ. In essence, Christ was asking, will I find people who believe this?

The evidence is in the Bible and in the physical creation around us. Will we have the faith to believe it? In this lesson we will study faith: what it is, how we receive it, its benefits, and some Biblical examples of it.

**WHAT IS FAITH?**

Faith is defined in the first verse of the faith chapter of the Bible, Hebrews 11: “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” The Greek word for faith is #4102 in Strong’s Concordance, which means persuasion, conviction of religious truth, conviction of the truthfulness of God, or reliance on God. It comes from #3982, meaning to convince, to assent to evidence or authority, or to rely on by inward certainty.

The word “substance” is #5287, which means a support or assurance. The word “evidence” is #1650, which also means proof or conviction.

This verse tells us that faith is assurance that we will receive the things for which we hope, and it supports the knowledge that we will receive them. The Bible has promises for blessings in this life if we obey God, and it also contains promises for eternal life in the kingdom of God. Faith is the assurance that we will receive those promises.

Faith is also the evidence or proof of what we cannot see or what we have not seen yet. By faith we know that God made the universe, although we cannot see God and we were not present at the creation. Faith is the evidence or proof that God exists, and it is also the evidence that He will keep His promises, even though we have not seen those promises yet.

This verse does not define faith in terms of the five senses: sight, hearing, touch, smell, and taste. If we could perceive the object of our faith, we would not need faith.

Romans 4:16-21 describes the relationship that the Old Testament patriarch Abraham had with God: “being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform.” Abraham had faith that God could keep His promises, and he was assured that he would receive them. He had the evidence, which is faith.
We should consider what faith is not. Faith is not merely believing in Christ. Read John 8:31 in the King James Version: “Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed.” The Interlinear Greek-English New Testament also reads “on him.” As you continue to read this chapter, you will see that the people believed in Christ but did not believe His message. Eventually the discussion became so heated that in verse 59 they tried to kill Him by stoning.

Mark 1:14-15 states, “…Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, ‘The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel.’” He did not say to believe in Him, but rather in the gospel. (For a better understanding of the true gospel, please see our Bible study “What Is the Gospel.”) Even the demons believe in Him (James 2:19), but we would not say that they have faith.

Faith is not a substitute for keeping the law of God. Read all of James 2:14-24, including “Faith without works is dead.” We want living faith; if faith without works is dead, then faith with works is living faith.

Some believe that the apostle Paul did not keep God’s law. Read what he wrote in Romans 3:28-31: “Do we then make void the law through faith? Certainly not! On the contrary, we establish the law.” This again ties faith to keeping God’s law.

**HOW DO WE RECEIVE FAITH?**

Knowing how we obtain faith helps us to understand what faith is. It is not something that we just work up or find within ourselves.

Read Romans 6:3-7 in the baptism chapter. When we are baptized, we are baptized into Christ’s death. Verses 3 and 4 show that we demonstrate our faith in His death, burial, and resurrection. This much is our own faith.

But our own faith is not sufficient. Ephesians 2:8 states, “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God.” Faith is a gift of God.

Galatians 2:16 (King James Version) tells us what we need: “knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified.” Notice that it is the faith OF Christ, not our faith IN Christ. The Interlinear Greek-English New Testament also translates it “faith of Christ.” Continue in verse 20 in the King James Version: “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me, and gave himself for me.” Again the Interlinear translates it as “of.” We are to live by Christ’s faith in us, His gift to us.
When Jesus lived as a human being, He knew that He could accomplish nothing of true value on His own. Read John 5:30. We cannot do anything spiritually on our own, either; we need God’s faith in us.

How is faith produced? It is part of the fruit of God’s Holy Spirit. Galatians 5:22-23 in the King James Version reads: “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.” If we pray for more of God’s Holy Spirit, we should receive more faith.

Romans 10:17 describes another way to receive more faith: “So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” The word of God is the Holy Bible, which helps us to develop faith. We have also seen that we can receive faith by prayer and Bible study.

**BENEFITS OF FAITH**

Christ taught, “Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them” (Mark 11:24). Two blind men asked Christ to heal them. “Then He touched their eyes, saying, ‘According to your faith let it be to you’” (Matthew 9:29). Faith is a prerequisite to having our prayers answered by God.

God might not answer our prayers immediately; if He did, we would not need faith for very long. James 1:2-4 says, “My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience.” When our faith is tested by not receiving our desires right away, patience is the result. “But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.” We must let God work with us to produce His perfect character in us, which is a benefit of faith.

Christ’s disciples were amazed at what it would take to be able to enter the kingdom of God. Matthew 19:23-26 states, “But Jesus looked at them and said to them, ‘With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.’”

We must overcome ourselves, Satan, and the world around us. The armor of God for fighting Satan the devil is listed in Ephesians 6:11-19, and that includes “the shield of faith” in verse 16.

We strive to love each other, and we need faith in order to have true love. In Philippians 3:9 the King James Version states, “and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.” Righteousness is from faith. Righteousness is defined in Psalm 119:172 as God’s commandments, that is, His spiritual law, and Romans 13:10 says that “love is the fulfillment of the law.” Putting these verses together, we see that love comes from the faith of Christ.
BIBLICAL EXAMPLES OF FAITH

We can read about Noah and the Flood in Genesis 6 through 8. In Hebrews 11:7 of the faith chapter, we read that Noah prepared the ark by faith: he saved his life and the lives of his family, thus perpetuating the human race.

Most readers of the Bible have heard of Daniel in the lion’s den, described in Daniel 6, but they might not have noticed why he was put there. The king was tricked into signing a decree stating that nobody was to petition any god or man except the king for 30 days. Daniel had the faith to pray to God as he usually did, in an obvious place. He was caught and put in the lion’s den, but God protected him and used the incident to teach the king about the true God. Daniel prospered after that and is referred to in Hebrews 11:33, which mentions those who “through faith…stopped the mouths of lions.”

FAITH IN OUR LIVES

If we have faith, we know that God is able to work miracles in our lives, that He can protect us physically and heal us. He will provide for our needs, and often He will even provide for our wants. Most importantly, by faith He will develop His holy, righteous character in us in order that we can become members of His family. Please see our Bible study entitled “Our Potential” for more information on this topic. GLCG.NET