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## Introduction

There was a king of the Moabites named Balak and the children of Israel had just defeated the Amorites and were on their way to Moab. And the Moabites were afraid. So, Balak, the king of Moab calls Balaam, a man who had contact with the spirit world, to curse Israel. But Balaam could not curse them even though he tried several times and from different places.

Numbers 23:16–20 (NKJV)

<sup>16</sup>Then the Lord met Balaam, and *put a word in his mouth*, and said, "Go back to Balak, and thus you shall speak."

<sup>17</sup>So he came to him, and there he was, standing by his burnt offering, and the princes of Moab were with him. And Balak said to him, "What has the Lord spoken?"

<sup>18</sup>Then he took up his oracle and said: "Rise up, Balak, and hear! Listen to me, son of Zippor!"

<sup>19</sup>"*God is not a man, that He should lie, nor a son of man, that He should repent. Has He said, and will He not do? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?*"

<sup>20</sup>Behold, I have received a command to bless; *He has blessed, and I cannot reverse it.*

What did God speak through the Balaam's mouth? That God is not like man to ever lie. Sometimes we humans lie, either on purpose to get out of a situation, or by mistake because we thought it was the truth. But God does not lie even by mistake. He doesn't say, "Hey, I've been here for so long that it slipped my mind when I said that." Not so with God at all.

A very polished way of preaching, but very subtle and false, is this: "No matter what happens, we know that God is faithful." Please, allow me tell you what is encapsulated in this statement, something that is not explicitly said, but is implicitly intended: "Whether God will do what He has promised or not, He remains faithful."

All Christians claim that God is faithful until it comes down to something specific where they need proof that it works. As long as it is spoken in general, all agree that the Word of God is true. But when we need something specific from the Word to be fulfilled in our lives, we shy away with statements like: "Well, you can never really know anything for sure." We say He is faithful because the Bible says so, and there is no way we can be born-again Christians unless we affirm it as the Bible does. But we find out if we really believe that He is faithful when we

are faced with something that He has said and has not yet manifested in our lives.

Outside the church, we know exactly what the words mean. But in the church of Christ, it's as if "the smoke and the glory of God overshadow us to such an extent" that words no longer mean anything. I hope you get the irony. For example, if someone outside the church takes a loan from the bank and, at some point, he stops paying the installments, he will be considered "unfaithful" by the bank, no matter how the economy and situations change. Why? Because that someone promised and signed a loan agreement with the bank that he would return the money regardless of changes in the country's economy and world's economy or in his financial situation.

When it comes to God, we think completely differently without realizing it: "Well, God is God, even if He doesn't do exactly what He said, He is still faithful. He doesn't have to do everything he said, but He's still faithful." And so, we shroud everything in a cloud of ungodly mystery and ambiguity, even demonic I might say. And we bring into the scheme all the pompous theological words to gain more credibility in our unbiblical claims, such as: "Well, God in His sovereignty may have decided to do something different in a certain situation than what He said in the Word." And then the common people will tend to say: "I don't really understand anything this man wants to say, but he certainly knows more than I do because he went to the seminary. So, I'll believe what he says. "

## The Definition of Faithfulness

*"God is always faithful" means that He will always do what He said He would do and He has already done what He said He would do.*



A simple definition of faithfulness would be this: *"When you speak and promise something, you also do it."* God is always true to His Word. Faithfulness is not something like: you say one thing, and then if another idea comes to you, you do something else and still remain faithful. No, that's a lie. Verse 20 of the passage above says that once God has blessed something or someone, that blessing cannot be reversed. The blessing is irreversible.

## God's Faithfulness in Salvation

God said in Psalms 103:2-3,

Psalm 103:2-3 (NKJV)

<sup>2</sup>Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits:

<sup>3</sup>Who forgives all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases.

Did God say that? Will He do that? Yes, of course.

Has He forgiven all our sins even if we have done some very bad things or are still doing them? Yeah, sure. He has forgiven all our past, present, and future sins. How do we know this? Because He said so. Did He heal all our physical ailments? Yes, of course. How do we know this? Because He just said so in the passage above. But many Christians hold back when it comes to healing.

*As long as you don't have to see something tangible (like for example in the area of forgiveness of sins), God is faithful. But when it comes to something visible (like physical healing), He is no longer faithful. We take no chances, because if nothing happens, then all eyes are on us. We are afraid.*

If someone receives Jesus in his heart, we lead him in the prayer of repentance. And if after a week that person comes and tells us: "I don't know what's happening to me, but I feel like I'm no longer saved" we probably ask him: "Well, why do you feel that way?" To which the person responds, "I just don't feel like God has forgiven me." What do we usually respond as Christians at that time? "Well, I don't know what to say, maybe He hasn't forgiven you, who knows?" NO, not at all. But we will tell him: "You don't have to live by feelings. The Bible says in Romans 10:9-10 that if we make Him Lord, we will be saved. We live by faith and not by sight or feeling. We all have these feelings from time to time, but you don't have to dwell on them. These feelings must be ignored."

But what do we do when we get to financial blessing or healing, and we don't feel healed? Instead of saying: "I don't go by what I feel, but by what the Word of God says" - we say something like: "I trust God. He knows better what is good for me." Now we are saying something different from what God said.

In Luke 5:17-26, we see Jesus again as in Psalms 103:2-3, putting the forgiveness of sins on a par with physical healing:

Luke 5:17-26 (NKJV)

<sup>17</sup>Now it happened on a certain day, as He was teaching, that there were Pharisees and teachers of the law sitting by, who had come out of every town of Galilee, Judea, and Jerusalem. And the power of the Lord was present to heal them.

<sup>18</sup>Then behold, men brought on a bed a man who was paralyzed, whom they sought to bring in and lay before Him.

<sup>19</sup>And when they could not find how they might bring him in, because of the crowd, they went up on the housetop and let him down with his bed through the tiling into the midst before Jesus.

<sup>20</sup>When He saw their faith, He said to him, "Man, your sins are forgiven you."

<sup>21</sup>And the scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, "Who is this who speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God alone?"

<sup>22</sup>But when Jesus perceived their thoughts, He answered and said to them, "Why are you reasoning in your hearts?"

<sup>23</sup>*Which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven you,' or to say, 'Rise up and walk'?*

<sup>24</sup>*But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins*—He said to the man who was paralyzed, "I say to you, arise, take up your bed, and go to your house."

<sup>25</sup>Immediately he rose up before them, took up what he had been lying on, and departed to his own house, glorifying God.

<sup>26</sup>And they were all amazed, and they glorified God and were filled with fear, saying, "We have seen strange things today!"

Basically, what Jesus is saying here is that neither forgiving sins nor healing someone is an easy thing. Both are very hard to do. But in order

to demonstrate that He has the power and authority to forgive sins (a thing that could not be tangibly proven in itself), Jesus heals the sick man (a tangible thing). In this way, Jesus shows that just as God's will for people is to forgive their sins and for this, He was going to give His life on the cross, in the same way, His will is to heal them physically. Therefore, physical healing was also included in the sacrifice on the cross along with the forgiveness of sins.

## Like Children

Jesus says in Matthew 18:3 that unless we become like little children, we will never enter the kingdom of Heaven. What is the characteristic of the children that Jesus is talking about here? A child's blind faith in what his father tells him even if he doesn't see something right away. When a father promises his children that they will go to theme park or the circus, those children are already happy, as if they are going at that moment, just because the father promised them. But if that father is a bad father, he could tell them: "Oh no, we don't go to any parks anymore. I tricked you. I just told you that as a joke to see how you react."

God is not like that at all. He never says, "Oh, did I say in My Word that I healed you? No, it's not like that. Do you really take the Bible seriously?" I know, it may seem funny. But this is exactly how we think about God and relate to Him.

## God Is Sovereign All the Time

We often hear the phrase: "God is in control. He is sovereign. God, in His infinite wisdom and sovereignty, knows that in this particular situation, something else would be better." *How many of us know that God was sovereign and had all knowledge when He made the promises as well?* God has not gained new information from the time He gave us a promise to the time we need that promise.

God didn't say something, and then later said, "Oh, I probably shouldn't have said what I said in such a libertine way. It will go to people's heads." God knew all of us when He made the promises.

## Objections and Personal Negative Experiences

"But what about that? With that man's situation? I have an aunt or an uncle who has not been healed or died, etc." We all have or have been through similar situations. But the Bible tells us to walk by faith and not by sight.

James 1:5-8 (NKJV)

<sup>5</sup>If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives (only to some??) to all liberally and without reproach (you don't have to feel bad that He gave it to you), and it (might be given if it's God's will and if He is in a good mood??) will be given to him.

<sup>6</sup>But let him ask in faith, with no doubting (don't even consider that it might not happen), for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind.

<sup>7</sup>For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord;

<sup>8</sup>he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

Notice how extreme and extravagant God is: He gives to all, generously, without rebuke or blackmail. He is absolute, clear, and pragmatic.

And, in this passage, it is not only about wisdom, but about everything we ask from God. In verses 7 and 8, James makes the transition from one specific thing (wisdom) to all things in general, using terms like “anything” and “unstable in all his ways.”

Then let’s observe the apparent redundancy: “to ask in faith, without doubting.” There are two ways of thinking that always come into conflict. Let’s say that someone is sick and has in his family an aunt Marta (fictitious name) who is also sick and has not been healed even though she prayed. And he also has an uncle John (also a fictitious name), who died even though he believed in healing. When that person wants to pray for healing, there will be two thoughts in his mind. “Lord, You said that by Your stripes I am healed and I believe (thinking number 1, full of faith), but aunt Marta was not healed, and uncle John died even if he believed (thinking number 2, with doubt).” That is why James says through the Holy Spirit to ask in faith, without doubting.

Is it easy not to doubt? The concept is simple, but not easy. When pressure comes into our lives, it is also when our very loyal logic and past negative experiences (both our own and others’) present themselves to our minds. But, *we will never gain anything by not believing God.*

Another important thing worth mentioning here is that first comes the temptation to doubt and then the actual doubt. Being tempted to doubt does not mean that we have already doubted. But only if we begin to speak and act on that temptation to doubt, that’s when we have committed the sin of doubt. The temptation to doubt, which can come at any time and to anyone, should not be confused with doubt itself.

There is another type of prayer among Christians when they pray for others, a type of prayer through which man never makes a mistake, only God does: “Whatever is Your will, Lord, with this situation, Your will be done.” And whether the man is healed or not, or whether he dies or not, that prayer will always be fulfilled. It is a very prudent and safe prayer for man, but not for God. Or we pray in the following way: “Lord, You see that this person is struggling financially, and You know better why that is. Therefore, we now pray that Your will be done.”

Jesus never prayed like this for people to get something from God. Have you noticed this? Yes, perhaps when we do not know God’s will regarding a future situation or an important decision, we can pray this way, but not when we have His will regarding that situation revealed in Scripture. But do you know why we pray like that? Because we want to stay in the boat (like the other disciples) and walk on the water (like Peter did) at the same time. And this is not possible. Jesus didn’t tell Peter to come to Him on the water, then 5 minutes later, in His sovereignty, changed His mind and let Peter sink, so that it wouldn’t go up to his head and consider himself better than the other disciples. Peter began to sink because of his doubt. He began to walk on the waters in faith, but along the way he let doubt enter, because he had probably never heard of any other man ever walking on the waters. And when he also saw the waves around him, he completely succumbed to doubt. But, the Word that Jesus gave him, would have supported him to walk on the waters all the way to Jesus.

## How Do I Build My Faith

Romans 10:17 (NKJV)

<sup>17</sup>So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

Faith does not come by hearing or meditating on cases of people who have not been delivered, healed, or helped. We cannot allow ourselves to ask ourselves all kinds of questions like: “I wonder what happened in that situation and what was the reason why the person in question did not heal.”

We also cannot command ourselves or force ourselves to have faith when faced with need and pressure. Faith is built before we face the need by regular meditation on the Word. Living by faith must be a lifestyle. You just expose yourself to the Word, and faith comes. At some point, in your mind and emotions, the Holy Spirit makes a “click” and your conviction becomes unshakable. We must acquire a tunnel-like mindset that only looks ahead at the light at the end of the tunnel (that is, what the Word says) and pays no attention to what it sees or

feels around it.

In Numbers 21:6-9 we read:

Numbers 21:6-9 (NKJV)

<sup>6</sup>So the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and many of the people of Israel died.

<sup>7</sup>Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, "We have sinned, for we have spoken against the Lord and against you; pray to the Lord that He take away the serpents from us." So Moses prayed for the people.

<sup>8</sup>Then the Lord said to Moses, "Make a fiery serpent, and set it on a pole; and it shall be that everyone who is bitten, when he looks at it, shall live."

<sup>9</sup>So Moses made a bronze serpent, and put it on a pole; and so it was, *if a serpent had bitten anyone, when he looked at the bronze serpent, he lived.*

I don't think it was that easy for the Israelites to look at the bronze serpent. Because while they had to look at that snake that Moses made, poisonous snakes were still crawling among them, coiling around them and maybe even biting them. However, God assured them that they would not die, but live, if they continued to look intently at that snake raised by Moses and not at what was happening around them.

## The Language Locates Us

Psalm 91:1-2 (NKJV)

<sup>1</sup>He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.

<sup>2</sup>*I will say of the Lord, "He is my refuge and my fortress; My God, in Him I will trust."*

Let's notice that in verse 2, the one who says about the Lord "He is my refuge" does not do it in the church, but in his personal life when he is faced with a problem. This is not about what we say or sing in a church service. It is only when we step outside the church that we realize what we really believe. We sometimes hear some Christians speaking in their daily life: "Wow, this and that happened to me and I'm done." And if we try to say something from the Word, we receive the following reply: "Yes, let's see how it will be when you end up like me and go through the same situation." This may or may not be true.

No matter how much we think about ourselves as being spiritually mature, and knowing a lot, and having had a lot of revelations, or going to seminary, *our everyday language locates us exactly where we are in our spiritual growth.*

Psalm 91:7 (NKJV)

<sup>7</sup>A thousand may fall at your side, and ten thousand at your right hand; but it shall not come near you.

The psalmist is not speaking here of people outside the church, but of people in the same church perhaps, our brothers and sisters (on our left and right), next to us, for whom the Word did not work. Maybe they got sick or died. And you remain firm in your faith and say: "it will

not come near me.”

## The Truth Is Not With the Majority

Numbers 13:1-2 (NKJV)

<sup>1</sup>And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying,

<sup>2</sup>“Send men to spy out the land of Canaan (*to see if they can take the land, or if I am going to give it to them, or if they like it and if you still want Me to give it to you???*), which I am giving to the children of Israel; from each tribe of their fathers you shall send a man, every one a leader among them.”

Notice that these spies were not ordinary people, but leaders. And God was saying one thing, and most of these spies were saying a totally different thing.

Numbers 14:2-9 (NKJV)

<sup>2</sup>And all the children of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron, and the whole congregation said to them, “If only we had died in the land of Egypt! Or if only we had died in this wilderness!

<sup>3</sup>Why has the Lord brought us to this land to fall by the sword, that our wives and children should become victims? *Would it not be better for us to return to Egypt?*” (*It was better when we were not saved and didn't know anything about this churchy stuff about faith*)

<sup>4</sup>So they said to one another, “Let us select a leader and return to Egypt.”

<sup>5</sup>Then Moses and Aaron fell on their faces before all the assembly of the congregation of the children of Israel.

<sup>6</sup>But Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, who were among those who had spied out the land, *tore their clothes; (only 2 men of all those 12 spies were different, meaning aprox. 16%)*

<sup>7</sup>and they spoke to all the congregation of the children of Israel, saying: “The land we passed through to spy out is an *exceedingly good land. (not just good)*

<sup>8</sup>If the Lord delights in us, then He will bring us into this land and give it to us, ‘a land which flows with milk and honey.’

<sup>9</sup>*Only do not rebel against the Lord, nor fear the people of the land, for they are our bread; their protection has departed from them, and the Lord is with us. Do not fear them.*”

God is not at all blessed to send Jesus to pay all this huge price and make all kinds of promises to us, and then having us not going and taking what has already been given to us. It does not bless God at all.

When the spies came back, the people said: “Most of the spies, our leaders, said that we cannot take the land. Since 10 out of 12 said it, it must be true. They know what they are talking about, because they are also leaders. Even though we've come all this long way out of Egypt and even though God said what He said. ”

*If you assume the majority is right, you will almost always be wrong.* Out of about 1.6 million Israelites only 2 entered the promised land, that is 0.000125%.

When Jesus came to earth and preached the gospel to the people and to the Pharisees and Sadducees, did most of the people believe what He was teaching? NO. But who was right? They or Him? If you believed Jesus, you received life, and if you believed them, you received death.

If we take a look at religious systems (and I mean even born-again Christians), many people in the body of Christ have education, but no revelation from the Word of God. *Only someone with revelation will say, "What God said in His Word, He wants us to have. It belongs to us."*

Numbers 14:9 (NKJV)

<sup>9</sup>Only do not rebel against the Lord, nor fear the people of the land, for they are our bread; *their protection has departed from them, and the Lord is with us.* Do not fear them."

The two faith-filled spies did not see with their natural eyes that their protection was taken from the Canaanites, but by revelation and by faith.

God waited for that whole generation to die in the wilderness. The people of Israel did not believe and because of this God turned them back into the wilderness towards the Red Sea and they wandered in the wilderness for 40 years until they died. The church is the same way today for the most part. But God us bringing the church again in these times close to Canaan and encourages us to enter the promised land. But will you enter, or will you decide to stay with the majority?

Let's also think about the pressure on the next generation of Israel. Little John has grown up and is now an adult. And he remembers how his grandfather told him about the promised land that they would enter, but his grandfather died and he was unable to enter. "Why would I succeed?" is John wondering. Father and mother also died. Aunt Martha died. *When we let doubts enter our minds, suddenly evidence is created to support our doubts.* If that generation had looked at who didn't get in, they wouldn't have gotten in either.

## Faithfulness and Speech

2 Corinthians 1:18-20 (NKJV)

<sup>18</sup>But *as God is faithful (or according to how faithful God is or the same way God is faithful), our word* to you was not Yes and No.

<sup>19</sup>For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us—by me, Silvanus, and Timothy—was not Yes and No, but in Him was Yes.

<sup>20</sup>For all the promises of God in Him are Yes, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God through us.

God's faithfulness is closely related to His Word. He is faithful to His given Word. God doesn't say, "Yeah, I said that, but I've learned a lot since then and I know all about you."

## Little by Little

In Exodus 23:30, God told Moses that He would give him the land not all at once, but LITTLE BY LITTLE:

Exodus 23:29-30 (NKJV)

<sup>29</sup>I will not drive them out from before you in one year, lest the land become desolate and the beasts of the field become too numerous for you.

<sup>30</sup>*Little by little* I will drive them out from before you, until you have increased, and you inherit the land.

*If we expect God to do everything for us in our way and we just enter the "land" without any opposition or fight of faith, we are mistaken. Little by little we enter into the great inheritance of salvation. Mind renewal doesn't happen overnight.*