

What Saith the Scripture?

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How to Trust God Or, Our Necessities Are Merely Opportunities to Trust God

"How excellent is Thy lovingkindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of Thy wings"
(Psalm 36:7).

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Preface

God alone is worthy of our trust. "God is not a man, that He should lie; neither the son of man, that He should repent: hath He said, and shall He not do it? or hath He spoken, and shall He not make it good?" (Numbers 23:19). If you question the LORD's worthiness of your confidence and trust, then you are simply not putting your "trust under the shadow of [His] wings" (Psalm 36:7). The excellency of knowing and trusting Jesus Christ is worth the "loss of all things" (Philippians 3:8) to the True Christian. "Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my LORD: for Whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ" (3:8).

The True Believer does not ask why he should trust God; instead, he asks, "How can I trust God more fully?" The Apostle Paul understood that his faith was strengthened, when he approached his divinely allowed "necessities" as being for "Christ's sake" (2Corinthians 12:10). "Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong" (12:10). This indicates that Paul knew that his **necessities** were actually **opportunities** to trust God.

Confidence in the Word of God

True Christians believe the Word of God. "For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the Word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the Word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe" (1Thessalonians 2:13). Rather than looking for explanations from "philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world" (Colossians 2:8), a True Believer asks, "What saith the Scripture?" (Romans 4:3).

If we ponder the nature of Scripture, we can see that the LORD Jesus Christ, who identifies Himself as the Truth (John 14:6), is one with His Word. The Apostle John records of the LORD Jesus, "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us" (1:14). Further, John notes that the LORD Jesus Christ proclaims His name as "The Word of God" (Revelation 19:13) at His Second Coming. So, when we ask, "What saith the Scripture?" (Galatians 4:30), we are really asking, "What saith the

LORD Jesus Christ?".

God's Character and Promises

The sum of qualities and attributes that distinguish one from another is what we generally refer to as character. What we can discover from the Scriptures about the character of God will teach us what we can expect from God concerning His actions toward us in our present circumstances. "Who is like unto Thee, O LORD, among the gods? who is like Thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?" (Exodus 15:11). If we know that the Word of God is God's manifestation of Himself to us, then we can be further instructed by the character, names, offices, titles, and relations of God that the Holy Spirit divulges to us. "For I am the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed" (Malachi 3:6).

Just as character portrays to us the certainty of a particular distinguishing quality or attribute; promises vouchsafe to us the certainty of a particular event or act. "For all the Promises of God in Him [Jesus Christ] are yea, and in Him Amen, unto the glory of God by us" (2Corinthians 1:20). Because Scripture reveals to us that the LORD Jesus is immutable or unchanging, we can be sure that He intends to keep His Word concerning His Promises. "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever" (Hebrews 13:8).

Why all this business of making or keeping promises to the likes of mortal man? Unlike mere animals, God has created mankind with the Godlike capacity of making a moral choice between right and wrong, i.e., men were made in the image of God. "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness" (Genesis 1:26). God has demonstrated His desire and willingness to abide with man, e.g., He originally walked in the Garden of Eden as a Friend and Benefactor of Adam and Eve. "And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day" (Genesis 3:8). Since man's sin separated him from God-- "your iniquities have separated between you and your God" (Isaiah 59:2)-- restoring man to the originally intended walk and communion has been the LORD's goal in the salvation and sanctification of man. "And, having made peace through the blood of [Jesus'] cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself; by Him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath He reconciled" (Colossians 1:20-21).

God's Promises are intended to make His people like Himself, i.e., possessing His character as far as a created being can. "Whereby are given unto us Exceeding Great And Precious Promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the Divine Nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust" (2Peter 1:4). Since promises always demand a condition to be met before the results are received, God is able to fashion the **character** of His people through His Promises and their subsequent reward. "But without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek Him" (Hebrews 11:6).

Eliezer of Damascus: An Example of Trusting God's Mercy and Truth for His Providential Leading

The steward or manager of Abraham's household was Eliezer of Damascus (Genesis 15:2), who seems to be the faithful servant that Abraham commissioned with the **necessity** of finding a bride for Isaac. "And Abraham said unto his eldest servant of his house, that ruled over all that he had, Put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh: And I will make thee swear by the LORD, the God of Heaven, and the God of the earth, that thou shalt not take a wife unto my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell: But thou shalt go unto my country, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son Isaac" (Genesis 24:2-4). Abraham, the "Friend of God" (James 2:23), would only entrust such a mission to one who knew something of the **character** of the Living God (Joshua 3:10), i.e., that Jehovah is a God of mercy and truth. "All the paths of the LORD are mercy and truth unto such as keep His Covenant and His Testimonies" (Psalm 25:10).

Obviously, Eliezer knew that God's character was one of mercy and truth, for him to have used this **opportunity** to ask for and receive special leading to choose Rebekah. He prayed, "Let it come to pass, that the damsel to whom I shall say, Let down thy pitcher, I pray thee, that I may drink; and she shall say, Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also: let the same be she that Thou hast appointed for Thy servant Isaac; and thereby shall I know that Thou hast shewed kindness unto my master" (Genesis 24:14). This Godly servant understood the Providence of God, i.e., the circumstances or necessities that the LORD has divinely chosen for us. "Blessed be the LORD God of my master Abraham, who hath not left destitute my master of his mercy and his truth: I being in the way, the LORD led me" (Genesis 24:27). Eliezer's example shows us how the Godly are to depend upon the character of God; and consequently, "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our LORD and Saviour Jesus Christ" (2Peter 3:18).

Jehu: An Example of a Zealous Defender of a Jealous God

The son of Nimshi (1Kings 19:16) was Jehu, chosen by God to succeed Ahab "to be king over Israel" (19:16). Jehu was a man of war-- a "captain" of the hosts of Israel (2Kings 9:5). As a soldier, Jehu understood the meaning of violence. Jesus said, "And from the days of John the Baptist until now the Kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force" (Matthew 11:12). Jehu also realized his **necessity** of bringing to pass the Word of the LORD. "[Jehu said] Know now that there shall fall unto the earth nothing of the Word of the LORD, which the LORD spake concerning the house of Ahab: for the LORD hath done that which He spake by His servant Elijah. So Jehu [seized the **opportunity** and] slew all that remained of the house of Ahab in Jezreel, and all his great men, and his kinsfolks, and his priests, until he left him **none** remaining" (2Kings 10:10-11).

Did God's **character** reflect that He condoned Jehu's violent actions? Yes. Listen to the LORD's explanation to Elijah. "And Jehu the son of Nimshi shalt thou anoint to be king over Israel: and Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abelmeholah shalt thou anoint to be prophet in thy room. And it shall come to pass, that him that escapeth the sword of Hazael shall Jehu slay: and him that escapeth from the sword of Jehu shall Elisha slay" (1Kings 19:16-17). Undoubtedly, God hated the idolatry of Ahab and Jezebel, i.e., their worship of Baal, and was quite willing for Jehu to act as he did.

However, Jehu's judgment of the house of Ahab was only a footnote (in my opinion) compared to his

judgment of the worshippers of Baal. "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate Me" (Exodus 20:4-5).

Even as the LORD is a Jealous God (Exodus 20:5), Jehu was a zealous servant of God. He understood his **necessity** to fulfill the Word of the LORD. Likewise, it was recorded of the **character** of the LORD Jesus, "The zeal of Thine house hath eaten me up" (Psalms 69:9 and John 2:17). What Jehu does in the following narrative begins with the seemingly outrageous statement by Jehu, "Ahab served Baal a little; but Jehu shall serve him much" (2Kings 10:18), and is concluded by the LORD's revelation to Jehu, "Because thou hast done well in executing that which is right in Mine eyes, and hast done unto the house of Ahab according to all that was in Mine heart, thy children of the fourth generation shall sit on the throne of Israel" (2Kings 10:30).

Read what Jehu did with his **opportunity**, and why the LORD commended Jehu. "18 And Jehu gathered all the people together, and said unto them, **Ahab served Baal a little; but Jehu shall serve him much.** 19 Now therefore call unto me all the prophets of Baal, all his servants, and all his priests; let none be wanting: for I have a great sacrifice to do to Baal; whosoever shall be wanting, he shall not live. **But Jehu did it in subtilty**, to the intent that he might destroy the worshippers of Baal. 20 And Jehu said, Proclaim a solemn assembly for Baal. And they proclaimed it.

"21 And Jehu sent through all Israel: and all the worshippers of Baal came, so that there was not a man left that came not. And they came into the house of Baal; and the house of Baal was full from one end to another. 22 And he said unto him that was over the vestry, Bring forth vestments for all the worshippers of Baal. And he brought them forth vestments. 23 And Jehu went, and Jehonadab the son of Rechab, into the house of Baal, and said unto the worshippers of Baal, **Search, and look that there be here with you none of the servants of the LORD, but the worshippers of Baal only.**

"24 And when they went in to offer sacrifices and burnt offerings, Jehu appointed fourscore men without, and said, If any of the men whom I have brought into your hands escape, he that letteth him go, his life shall be for the life of him. 25 And it came to pass, **as soon as he had made an end of offering the burnt offering**, that **Jehu said to the guard and to the captains, Go in, and slay them; let none come forth.** And they smote them with the edge of the sword; and the guard and the captains cast them out, and went to the city of the house of Baal. 26 And they brought forth the images out of the house of Baal, and burned them. 27 And they brake down the image of Baal, and brake down the house of Baal, and made it a draught house unto this day. 28 **Thus Jehu destroyed Baal out of Israel**" (2Kings 10:18-28).

Rahab: An Unexpected Example of Faith in a Merciful God

Rahab was not a Jew by birth, but she became an ancestor of King David and the LORD Jesus Christ (Matthew 1:5). All, who have come by faith to the LORD Jesus, "have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23); and, we are not normally remembered by posterity for the sin that we

committed. Rahab is one of those exceptions. We are told in the New Testament that "by faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace" (Hebrews 11:31). Her exploits of faith were punctuated by the reminder, "the harlot Rahab". Why? God sometimes records sin in the Scriptures to show us the magnitude of His mercy and grace. Saul of Tarsus, one of the earliest persecutors of the Primitive Church, said of his former days of sin, "Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on Him to Life Everlasting" (1Timothy 1:16).

Like the Jewess, Queen Esther, Rahab came into the Kingdom of God and of Israel for "such a time as this" (Esther 4:14). Rahab's **opportunity** to trust under the shadow of the wings of the God of Israel came when she providentially was allowed to show mercy to the two Hebrew spies, whom she hid in her house (Joshua 2:4). She knew that the God of Israel was the True God, and she understood her **necessity**-- that destruction would befall her, not just Jericho-- if she did not make her peace with that God. "9 And she said unto the men, I know that the LORD hath given you the land, and that your terror is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you... 11 And as soon as we had heard these things, our hearts did melt, neither did there remain any more courage in any man, because of you: for the LORD your God, He is God in Heaven above, and in earth beneath" (Joshua 2:9,11).

Rahab availed herself of the **character** of the mercy of God, when she hid the spies. "12 Now therefore, I pray you, swear unto me by the LORD, since I have shewed you kindness, that ye will also shew kindness unto my father's house, and give me a true token: 13 And that ye will save alive my father, and my mother, and my brethren, and my sisters, and all that they have, and deliver our lives from death" (Joshua 2:12-13). This resulted in her receiving a **promise** from the Hebrew spies for her deliverance and the deliverance of her family. "14 And the men answered her, Our life for yours, **if** ye utter not this our business [**a condition of the promise**]. And it shall be, when the LORD hath given us the land, that we will deal kindly and truly with thee. 15 Then she let them down by a cord through the window: for her house was upon the town wall, and she dwelt upon the wall. 16 And she said unto them, Get you to the mountain, lest the pursuers meet you; and hide yourselves there three days, until the pursuers be returned: and afterward may ye go your way.

"17 And the men said unto her, We will be blameless of this thine oath which thou hast made us swear. 18 Behold, when we come into the land, thou shalt bind this line [**another condition of the promise**] of scarlet thread [**red like the saving blood of Christ**] in the window which thou didst let us down by: and thou shalt bring thy father, and thy mother, and thy brethren, and all thy father's household, home unto thee. 19 And it shall be, that whosoever shall go out of the doors of thy house into the street, his blood shall be upon his head, and we will be guiltless: and whosoever shall be with thee in the house, his blood shall be on our head, if any hand be upon him [**still, another condition of the promise**]. 20 And if thou utter this our business, then we will be quit of thine oath which thou hast made us to swear. 21 And she said, According unto your words, so be it. And she sent them away, and they departed: and she bound the scarlet line in the window [**claiming the promise by fulfilling the condition**]" (Joshua 2:14-21).

All That Are Accounted Worthy to Escape at the Pre-Tribulational Rapture: Examples of Faithfulness to the Faithful God

Unashamedly, "escape" is a familiar word to those who aspire to "be accounted worthy" to be translated from this world at the Pre- Tribulational Rapture. "Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to **escape** all these things that shall come to pass [ALL the events of the Tribulation Week], and to stand before the Son of man" (Luke 21:36). We are presently staring into the face of the **necessity** for this desirable event. The Tribulation Week events loom before us. "Deliver me in Thy righteousness, and cause me to **escape**: incline Thine ear unto me, and save me" (Psalm 71:2).

Perhaps it is strange to some ears that the LORD Jesus would enjoin His disciples to "watch" and "pray" that we would be "accounted worthy". Let us first review the record. Jesus came into the world to save sinners. "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10). We all have sinned. "As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one" (Romans 3:10). Only when we have turned away from our sins in repentance, and to the LORD Jesus in faith, are we saved. "For whosoever shall call upon the Name of the LORD shall be saved" (10:13). This whole process requires the mercy and grace of God to draw us to lay hold in faith upon the salvation offered to us through the LORD Jesus Christ. "For by **grace** [Godward] are ye saved through **faith** [manward]; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast" (Ephesians 2:8-9).

But still, what did Jesus mean to be "accounted worthy" (Luke 21:36)? I believe that the Apostle Paul answered this question in his epistle to the Philippians. "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure" (Philippians 2:13). **Whenever we do God's "good pleasure", it is God working in us "to will and to do" it.** This is the same thing that James instructs us from his epistle. "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father Of Lights, with Whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning" (James 1:17). If it is good, then it came from God.

The LORD Jesus even affirmed this concept to Pontius Pilate, when He told Pilate that all power or ability to accomplish God's will-- including the crucifixion of the Son of God-- had to come from God. "10 Then saith Pilate unto Him, Speakest Thou not unto me? knowest Thou not that I have power to crucify Thee, and have power to release Thee? 11 Jesus answered, Thou couldest have no power at all against Me, except it were given thee from Above" (John 19:10-11).

Therefore, our worthiness "to escape" (Luke 21:36) must embrace our **necessity** to perform the works of faith, i.e., to "watch... and pray", while understanding God's **opportunity** to work in us "both to will and to do of His good pleasure" (Philippians 2:13). Also, God's **character** is not to be ignored in this discussion of worthiness. Brother Paul told the Philippians, "Who [Jesus] shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to The Working whereby **He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself [this is certainly Jesus' character]**" (3:21). Hallelujah! That means that He will **make me** willing! "Thy people **shall be willing** in the day of Thy Power" (Psalm 110:3). **And if willing, then worthy!** The **Promise** is then completed. If we are "accounted worthy", then we will "escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of

man" (Luke 21:36).

Scripture speaks to us about the expectation that concerns our **necessities**. "My soul, wait thou **only** upon God; for my expectation is from Him" (Psalm 62:5). Those expectations are the **opportunities** that God has **promised** to fulfill. "For surely there is an end; and thine expectation shall not be cut off" (Proverbs 23:18). Charles G. Finney, the 19th century American evangelist, said in his *Revival Lectures*, "A revival should be **expected** whenever it is **needed**." Likewise, a Pre-Tribulational Rapture should be expected-- given the signs of the times-- when it is most needed. Then, "lift up your heads; for your Redemption draweth nigh" (Luke 21:28)!

Conclusion

Trusting God is akin to breathing for the True Christians. "For in Him we live, and move, and have our being" (Acts 17:28). Just as our earthly teachers may have instructed us to sit up straight at our chairs to breathe correctly, so do we endeavor to encourage the body to trust God more fully. The LORD Jesus Christ is worthy of our trust. "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing" (Revelation 5:12). If we would only combine the **necessities** of our circumstances with the Spirit-led discoveries of who God is and how He will fulfill our **needs**, then we would avail ourselves of the **opportunity** to trust Him more.

If we can understand, by God's Spirit, what the Apostle Paul knew about the **necessity** of our "infirmities", then we would also "glory" in the **opportunities** for His grace, i.e., His **character** and **Promises**, to supply our every need. This would only cause us to trust Him more. "And He said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for My strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the Power of Christ may rest upon me" (2Corinthians 12:9).

Maranatha!

[For more encouragement for your faith, read our article, "Exceeding Great and Precious Promises".]