

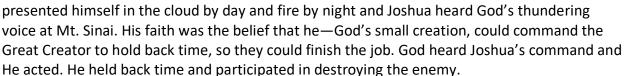
"Now **FAITH IS THE ASSURANCE OF THINGS HOPED FOR**, the conviction of things not seen" (Hebrews 11:1).

"For we walk by faith, not by sight" (II Corinthians 5:7)

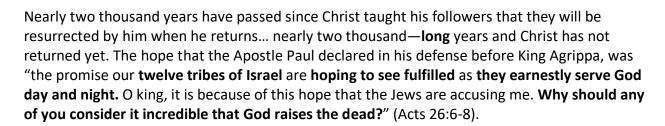
The story of Joshua is the assurance of things hoped for and he had the conviction of things not seen. The battles he led against powerful forces beyond their strength were successful, because he had faith.

"So, the sun stood still and the moon stopped until the nation took vengeance upon its enemies. Is this not written in the Book of Jashar? So, the sun stopped in the middle of the sky and delayed going down almost a full day. There has never been a day like it before or since, a day WHEN THE LORD LISTENED TO MAN. Surely the LORD was fighting for Israel" (Joshua 10:13-14).

Joshua's faith was not about whether God existed—that was fully known to him and the Israelites because God



Such is the power of faith.



Into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the earnest hope of the promises that the twelve tribes of Israel in Apostle Paul's time have faded, during the long two-thousand year wait. Faith for many of the Judo-Christians has waned: **belief** in God has been reduced to a casual nod, **trust** in God has



been replaced with self-reliance, **power** from faith is considered an impossibility, **humility** with faith has been displaced with arrogance and self-assurance, **relentless and enduring** faith has been replaced by self-determination, **serving** faith has been discarded by me-first priorities, and **living-in-Christ** faith has been usurped with living-in-self.

Judo-Christians have fallen short! Waste no time to return to the faith of the ancients who knew God, understood His great encompassing power and His enduring love. They understood mortal weaknesses and put their trust in God because they earnestly sought the path to righteousness knowing that on their own, they cannot find it.

# The salvation faith believes that Jesus is the Son of God with power from God to heal, hence forgive sins.

The book of Matthew records **Jesus healing the blind by faith**. Jesus asked them, "Believe ye that I am able to do this?" And they responded, "Yea, Lord. Then touched he their eyes, saying, **according to your faith** be it unto you. And their eyes were opened" (Matthew 9:28–30).

The teachers of the law did not approve of Jesus claiming to have the authority to forgive sins. "Who can forgive sins but God alone?" thought some of the teachers of the law. "Immediately Jesus knew in his spirit that this was what they were thinking in their hearts, and he said to them, '... Which is easier: to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven' or to say, 'Get up, take your mat and walk?' But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins" (Mark 1:7b, 8b-10).

This must have been a surprise for the teachers of the law for they knew that illness was a direct result of disobedience to God. They knew Deuteronomy 28. They witnessed Jesus healing many, many people, which confirmed that God had given authority to Jesus to forgive sins on earth. These teachers have not witnessed events in the heavens. Battles have been fought, conquests made and now Jesus has been awarded authority on earth to forgive sins by God. The teachers of the law did well to question Jesus. However, with all the legal evidence they witnessed, how is it that they would still not believe him?

### The living-in-Christ faith surrenders self.

Choosing wicked ways is not limited to mortals. Man's enemy is not flesh and blood but rogue heavenly rulers, powers and authorities (Ephesians 6:12). Wicked heavenly beings are unredeemable, but mankind is redeemable because they have a redemption plan. God wants to preserve righteousness in His future resurrected eternal children, so He has provided a well-tested Savior, a Son that mortals will truly respect and value when they fully understand his sacrifice, the same Son who will never fail to correctly guide God's new eternal children in the ways of righteousness. He is the living Word of God—our example—our **eternal** cornerstone. So, begin the development of faith by allowing Christ to live in you.

"I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but **Christ who lives in me**. And **the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God**, who loved me and gave himself for me" (Galatians 2:20 ESV).

"Yet we know that a person is **not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus**Christ, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law, because by works of the law no one will be justified" (Galatians 2:16).

"Now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian. You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ" (Galatians 3:25-27).

#### The believing faith knows Almighty God.

Judo-Christians believe in the Almighty God—the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, but do they know Him? What has become of their relationship with the Great Creator? Have they forgotten that by God's command, the universe was formed out of nothing? (Hebrews 11:1) This God of our fathers is the Supreme God who "made all things, who **alone** stretched out the heavens, who **spread out the earth by myself**, who foils the signs of false prophets and makes fools of diviners, who overthrows the learning of the wise and turns it into nonsense" (Isaiah 44:24-25).

"He sits enthroned above the circle of the earth; its dwellers are like grasshoppers. He stretches out the heavens like a curtain, and spreads them out like a tent to live in" (Isaiah 40:22).

Our God is BIG-VERY BIG.

"By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith" (Hebrews 11:7). Noah believed God and acted.

"By faith Moses' parents hid him for three months after he was born, because they saw he was no ordinary child, and they were not afraid of the king's edict" (Hebrews 11:23). Moses' parents recognized an extraordinary anomaly and believed God had a special role for their son.

"By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh's daughter. He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a short time. He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as a greater value than the treasures of Egypt, not fearing the king's anger; he persevered because he saw him who is invisible" (Hebrews 11:24-27). Moses came to know God. He heard Him in the burning bush and believed that He is the Almighty God—the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob during the time, when the gods ruling over the nations, all claimed to be the Supreme God.

The supremacy of God may seem irrelevant in the 21<sup>st</sup> century now that the ancient gods have been subdued, but a time still resting on our near horizon will come, when gods return and

then, 21<sup>st</sup> century mankind will see why God, that is, the Almighty God—the God of Israel continually claims to be the Supreme God and Creator. "You are My witnesses," declares the LORD, "and My servant whom I have chosen, so that **you may know** and **believe Me** and **understand** that I am He. Before Me, no god was formed, and none will come after Me" (Isaiah 43:10).

#### The trusting faith believes regardless of the obstacles.

Abraham listened to God and believed him even when the promises were physically impossible for man. "By faith Abraham, even though he was past age—and Sarah herself was barren—was enabled to become a father because he considered him faithful who had made the promise. And so, from this one man, and he was as good as dead, came descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as countless as the sand on the seashore" (Hebrews 11:11-12).

Joseph trusted that God would remember him long after his death, when it was time for the Israelites to exit Egypt. He wanted to travel with his people into the Promised Land. "By faith Joseph, when his end was near, he spoke about the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt and gave instructions about his bones" (Hebrews 11:22).

#### The honoring faith acknowledges that God will honor blessings given by man.

"By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each of Joseph's sons, and worshiped as he leaned on the top of his staff" (Hebrews 21). Jacob demonstrated honoring faith; he believed that God would honor his decision to give Joseph the first-born blessing—the double portion by adopting Joseph's two sons as his own and blessing them. He believed that God would accept his blessing and weave this change seamlessly into His grand plan. The meaning of number twelve is all about a perfect government. That is the reason why Jacob had no more than twelve sons. God has honored Jacob's blessing. There still will be a perfect future new government in Israel—144,000 (12x12x1000) and twelve gates into the New Jerusalem, and twelve foundations. A close study of scriptures will reveal how God wove the additional son into his grand plan—seamlessly.

## The saving faith acts selflessly to thwart the actions of the wicked.

In saving faith, Queen Esther provided the means for the Jews to defend themselves against the king's decree for the destruction of the Jews. With the advice of her wise Uncle Mordecai, she did not seek to save herself, but carefully won the favor of the king who said, "Queen Esther, what is your petition? It will be given you. What is your request? Even up to half the kingdom, it will be granted." She replied, "If I have found favor with you, O king, and if it pleases your majesty, grant me my life—this is my petition. And spare my people—this is my request. For I and my people have been sold for destruction and slaughter and annihilation. If we had merely been sold as male and female slaves, I would have kept quiet, because no such distress would justify disturbing the king" (Esther 7:2b-4).

When the king learned that it was Haman who falsely accused the Jews of disobeying the king's laws, he had Haman hung. But, Haman's death did not prevent the decree for the destruction

of the Jews. "Esther again pleaded with the king, falling at his feet and weeping. She begged him to put an end to the evil plan of Haman the Agagite, which he had devised against the Jews. Then the king extended the gold scepter to Esther and she arose and stood before him... King Xerxes replied, "Now write another decree in the king's name in behalf of the Jews as seems best to you, and seal it with the king's signet ring—for **no document written in the king's name and sealed with his ring can be revoked**... The king's edict granted the Jews in every city the right to assemble and protect themselves; to destroy, kill and annihilate any armed force of any nationality or province that might attack them and their women and children; and plunder the property of their enemies" (Esther 8:11).

Queen Esther and her Uncle Mordecai believed that God would intervene for them and provide a way of escape. The silver thread in their story was God actively bringing quick justice for the Jews and judgment against vile Haman and the saving-faith that God remembered His people even after He had sent them into captivity because of their sins.

#### The pleasing faith gives God great joy.

"And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that HE REWARDS THOSE WHO SEEK HIM" (Hebrews 11:6).

This pleasing faith is beyond belief in God, but encapsulates the understanding of God's love for mankind and how He longs to bless those who obey Him. Law-pounding obedience is not the key, but a willing heart that understands the importance of law and order—LOVING ONE ANOTHER and LOVING GOD and willingly living the word of God knowing with absolute surety that it is God's good pleasure to give to those who obey Him.

"By faith Enoch was taken from this life, so that he did not experience death; he could not be found, because God had taken him away. For **before he was taken**, **he was commended as one who pleased God**" (Hebrews 11:5). He understood God's love for His creation and felt God's pain and grief during a very dark and wicked time. He was loyal to God when nearly all of mankind had turned their back on their Creator. Enoch walked with God believing that God would still fulfill his salvation plan for mankind, despite the widespread wickedness and that a time would come—in the future—a distant future, mankind would repent and seek their Creator and obey Him.

### The humble faith melts the heart of Almighty God and Jesus Christ.

"A Canaanite woman from that vicinity came to him, crying out, 'Lord, Son of David, have mercy on me! My daughter is suffering terribly from demon-possession.' Jesus did not answer a word. So, his disciples came to him and urged him, 'Send her away, for she keeps crying out after us.' **He answered, 'I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel.**' The woman came and knelt before him. 'Lord, help me!' she said. He replied, 'It is not right to take the children's bread and toss it to their dogs.' 'Yes, Lord,' she said, 'but even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table.' Then Jesus answered, 'Woman, you have great faith! Your request is granted.'" (Matthew 15:22-28).

Jesus' initial response to the woman's cry may seem heartless, but he was telling her that he was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel—the ten tribes who he was bringing back into the covenant family. There is an order in God's saving plan, but her humble faith melt his heart instantly and he stepped out of the order of God's saving plan and healed the Gentile girl. That is the great power of having humility.

#### The selfless-serving faith provides and protects.

A poor widow and her son faced certain death from famine, having only a little oil and flour for a meal. The prophet Elijah promised the Lord's help if she would feed him first. In faith, "she went and did according to the saying of Elijah: and she, and he, and her house, did eat many days. And the barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail, according to the word of the Lord, which he spoke by Elijah" (1 Kings 17:15–16). This widow gave everything she had to Elijah believing and trusting him. She held nothing back for herself. She believed that God—the God of Elijah would provide and He did.

#### The obedience faith is righteousness in God.

"What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and filled," without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? So also, faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. But someone will say, "You have faith and I have works." Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works" (James 2:14-26).

God needs to spell out every concept to the babes in Christ who struggle to understand the full meaning of righteousness. Is it works or faith many continually ask? It is by GRACE we are saved, but we must BELIEVE—have FAITH that God will fulfill his promise of salvation and because we LOVE Him, we obey His commandments because they are the laws of LOVE.

"For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast" (Ephesians 2:8-9 ESV).

The ten commandments can be summed up in two: love God with all your heart, mind, soul and strength and love each other as yourself.

Loving God is believing that He exists and obeying Him. Brotherly love is "clothing yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity" (Colossians 3:12-14).

Obedience faith is obeying the law of God because you love Him and know that He will fulfill His promise of our salvation. Christ's resurrection is the only evidence today of that promise, as Christ is the first of the first to be resurrected, but obedience faith knows our resurrection is on the near horizon for our God is faithful and true.

#### The relentless faith endures all obstacles all the way to the end.

"By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac as a sacrifice. He who had received the promises was about to sacrifice his one and only son, even though God had said to him, 'It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned.' He reasoned that God could raise the dead, and figuratively speaking, he did receive Isaac back from the dead" (Hebrews 11:17-19).

There are times when it is important to hold fast to what you know and trust in God when things appear illogical. Abraham knew God and nothing is too big for Him; he reasoned that God would resurrect Isaac. The purpose and meaning of tests are not usually known ahead of time. The sacrifice of Isaac would have imaged the sacrifice of Christ. God is telling us that He has only one heir, though there are other sons in heaven, only one qualified as heir and he is very, very special to God. The giving of **that son** as a sacrifice for the payment of our sins, was a painful sacrifice for God to bare, one that He kept from Abraham.

**By faith Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego** escaped a fiery death. They declared: "If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up" (Daniel 3:17–18).

"Then Nebuchadnezzar was furious with Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego and his attitude toward them changed. He ordered the furnace heated seven times hotter than usual and commanded some of the strongest soldiers in his army to tie up Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego and throw them in the blazing furnace. The king's command was so urgent and the furnace so hot that the flames of the fire killed the men who took up Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego... Then King Nebuchadnezzar leaped to his feet in amazement and asked his advisers, 'Wasn't it three men that we tied up and threw into the fire?'... 'Look! I see four men walking around in the fire, unbound and unharmed, and the fourth looks like a son of the gods'" (Daniel 3:19-25).

On a side point, how did King Nebuchadnezzar identify the fourth man walking in the furnace as one **who looks like a son of the gods**? What were the identifying characteristics that were specific to being a son of the gods that **he knew then**? How did he know that and why don't we know it today? The everyday interactions with the gods in ancient times is completely void in the 21<sup>st</sup> century because the ancient gods have been subdued. 21<sup>st</sup> century mankind will get their day with the gods in the last days, when the beast rises out of the sea.

Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were relentless in remaining faithful to God Almighty like the Apostle Paul who wrote to Timothy, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I HAVE KEPT THE FAITH" (II Timothy 4:7).

#### The eternal faith energizes loyal sons of God.

"Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: who, being in the very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness, and being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross! Therefore, God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father" (Philippians 2:5-11).

In faith, Jesus Christ put his trust in God to resurrect him and transform him back into his original, eternal body after he was made mortal and died. Jesus Christ put both his eternal life and mortal life on the line for mankind. If he had sinned, his sacrifice would not have paid the penalty for our sins and he would have also come into judgment and lose his eternal life.

On a side point, Philippians 2:10 lists the **THREE places** where all life resides: in heaven, on earth and under the earth. Many Judo-Christians look past the location under the earth; it exists and it is referred to as "the pit" in Ezekiel and the "abyss" in Revelation.

"Wherefore in all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people" (Hebrews 2:17).

# The power of faith empowers mortal man to achieve superhuman feats beyond the imagination of mankind.

"And Jesus answered them, 'Have faith in God. Truly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be taken up and thrown into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says will come to pass, it will be done for him. Therefore, I tell you, whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours" (Mark 11:22-24 ESV).

This is where many Judo-Christians in the 21<sup>st</sup> century crumble into fine dust. Their relationship with God is so distant that they have reduced Him into a myth until they are desperate and destitute. God is not their daily guiding force; He is on the farthermost back burner.

They have forgotten the power of faith the ancients called upon that won battles against enemies significantly more powerful. The power of faith is the belief that little and frail mankind can ask the all-powerful God for His help and God will intervene for them. Our enemies are not flesh and blood; we fight daily against rogue heavenly forces and we need

God's power to subdue them. The ancient leaders of Israel called on God's power regularly and confidently, believing that He would give them power to subdue and provide superhuman strength to endure until the battle is won.



https://livinginfaithtogether.files.wordpress.com/2012/04/david goliath b

#### In the power of faith David killed Goliath.

"David said to the Philistine, 'You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the LORD Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. THIS DAY THE LORD WILL HAND YOU OVER TO ME, and I'll strike you down and cut off your head. Today I will give the carcasses of the Philistine army to the birds of the air and the beasts of the earth, and the whole world will know that there is a God in Israel. All those gathered here will know that it is not by sword or spear that the LORD saves; for the battle is the LORD's and he will give all of you into our hand'" (I Samuel 17:45-47).

# In the power of faith, the walls of Jericho came tumbling down.

"March around the city once with all the armed men. Do this for six days. Have seven priests carry trumpets of rams' horns in front of the ark. On the seventh day, march around

the city seven times, with the priests blowing the trumpets. When you hear them sound a long blast on the trumpets, have the whole army give a loud shout; then the wall of the city will collapse and the army will go up, everyone straight in" (Joshua 6:3-5).



In the power of faith, Joshua's army won the battle against the five kings of the Amorites. "After an all-night march from Gilgal, Joshua took them by surprise. The Lord threw them into confusion before Israel, so Joshua and the Israelites defeated them completely at Gibeon. Israel pursued them along the road going up to Beth Horon and cut them down all the way to Azekah and Makkedah. As they fled before Israel on the road down from Beth Horon to Azekah, the Lord hurled large hailstones down on them, and more of them died from the hail than were killed by the swords of the Israelites. On the day the Lord gave the Amorites over to Israel, Joshua said to the Lord in the presence of Israel:

"Sun, stand still over Gibeon, and you, moon, over the Valley of Aijalon. So, the sun stood still and the moon stopped, till the nation avenged itself on[b] its enemies, as it is written in the Book of Jashar. The sun stopped in the middle of the sky and delayed going down about a full day. There has never been a day like it before or since, A DAY WHEN THE LORD LISTENED TO A HUMAN BEING. Surely the Lord was fighting for Israel!" (Joshua 10:1-14).

God obeyed the command of Joshua and together with the army of Israel, they fought against a wicked people—people whose names have not been written in the book of life because they are not descendants of Adam and Eve. Inhabitants have lived on earth in the past and will come again in the future, who are not descendants of Adam and Eve. Apostle John wrote in Revelation 17:8b, "the inhabitants of the earth whose names have not been written in the book of life from the creation of the world will be astonished when they see the beast..."

#### In the power of faith, a remnant people will be victorious over the beast.

All of the nations of the world during the Great Tribulation will be taken captive by the beast and forced to worship Satan. They will say, "Who is like the beast? Who can make war against the beast?" (Revelation 13:4b) Yet, a remnant people will be given victory by God, for they in the power of faith will fight with God, Jesus Christ, the saints and the heavenly army to overthrow the beast.

"Though I scatter them among the peoples, yet in distant lands they will remember me... I will strengthen the house of Judah and save the house of Joseph. I will restore them... The Ephraimites will become like mighty men, and their hearts will be glad as with wine... I will bend Judah as I bend my bow and fill it with Ephraim. I will rouse your sons, O Zion, against your sons, O Greece, and make you like a warrior's sword. Then the LORD will appear over them; his arrow will flash like lightning. The Sovereign LORD will sound the trumpet; He will march in the storms of the south and the LORD ALMIGHTY WILL SHIELD THEM. They will destroy and overcome with slingstones... The LORD their God will save them on that day as the flock of his people. (Zechariah 10:9, 6,7, Zechariah 9:13-16).

This future battle will display the raw power of Almighty God as He joins with the remnant of the people of Judah and the ten tribes of Israel who finally come together, at the same time in repentance and allegiance to their God. God will grant them forgiveness and together, they will battle against wicked heavenly forces that have captured the nations on earth.

"And I saw what looked like a sea of glass mixed with fire and, standing beside the sea, **those** who had been victorious over the beast and his image and over the number of his name. They held harps given them by God and sang the song of Moses the servant of God and the song of the Lamb..." (Revelation 15:2-3a).

#### The building of faith brings salvation.

Ask and you will receive. The disciples said to the Lord, "Increase our faith!" (Luke 17:5 ESV) When asking, do not doubt. God is real and God is really all-powerful. If God be for us, who can be against us? The real question is whether you believe that God exists? Take another look at nature all around you.

Job recorded, "But ask the animals, and they will teach you, or the birds in the sky, and they will tell you; or speak to the earth, and it will teach you, or let the fish in the sea inform you. Which of all these does not know that the hand of the Lord has done this? In his hand is the life of every creature and the breath of all mankind" (Job 12:7-10).

The Psalmist said, "The heavens proclaim the glory of God. The skies display his craftsmanship" (Psalm 19:1).

God's quantum engineering and phenomenal architecture all direct us to intelligent design. We truly are without excuse, "For since the creation of the world **God's invisible qualities**, **His eternal power and divine nature**, have been **clearly seen**, being understood from **His workmanship**, so that men are without excuse" (Romans 1:20).

Stop listening to Satan, the prince of the airways. Simply look around you. God's handicraft is everywhere.

But, do not stop at building faith for there lies one that is greatest of all. "So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but **the greatest of these is love**" (1 Corinthians 13:13 ESV). Love is greatest because a time is coming when both faith and hope will be fulfilled, but love will never end.

Until then, we live in an evil age where science and technology reign. Now is the time to ask for faith, grow close to God and know Him. Jesus said, "If you have **faith as small as a mustard seed**, you can say to this mulberry tree, 'Be uprooted and planted in the sea,' and **IT WILL OBEY YOU**" (Luke 17:6).

A time is coming when rogue heavenly forces will conquer this earth, then you will need a full **arsenal of faith** to stand strong in allegiance to God. Don't delay.

Compiled by Janette Andrejowich.