

## The Providence Of God (Part 7)

Providence

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The last time that I spoke on this subject it was on Abraham, Sarah, and Isaac's faith as shown in the experience they had when God commanded Abraham to sacrifice Isaac. The issue was whether they would, by faith, be able to rise above their emotions, their feelings about this, and obey Him.

The Bible specifically expresses that Abraham loved Isaac so that we would understand that Abraham was no "paper saint" devoid of feeling. He was not one who, like an unthinking robot, would simply follow through like a machine programmed to do whatever he was commanded. That emotional element represents the pull of living by sight. It undoubtedly put a powerful tug on his mind so that it came up with all kinds of justifications as to why he should not obey what God told him to do. He might of thought "God will just have to take me as I am," or "Surely, this is outrageous—too much. Isn't He the God of the living?" He might have thought, "What kind of logic is there in doing this?"

What we are looking at here is a choice that contains much more intense feeling than the concerns we might have over losing a job because of keeping the Sabbath or of paying tithes. We are looking at this from their lives as a classic example of the exercise of free moral agency within the framework of an event that God directly provided—a catch-22 of major proportions, and Abraham's thoughts were undoubtedly, for a while, pulling him in both directions. If he chose God, he lost Isaac. If he chose to save Isaac, he lost God. Between a rock and a hard place from everything that his feelings might be able to tell.

In Matthew 26 we get a look at this from the Lamb's point of view.

**Matthew 26:36-39** Then came Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane, and said to the disciples, Sit you here while I go and pray yonder. And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and very heavy. And he said unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry you here and watch with me. And he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as you will.

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We see Jesus here struggling in the Garden of Gethsemane and when we compare the two cases we see that both Jesus and Abraham rose above the emotional pulls by faith. As Jesus stated to His Father, "Nevertheless not My will but Yours be done".

This is the same basic choice we face in our tests of faith involving moral and ethical choices. Like them, we must choose who we are going to be loyal to.

Turn with me to a scripture we used last time in Hebrews 11.

**Hebrews 11:17** By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac . . .

Notice that is in the past tense. He offered him up because by the time Abraham got to the place where he was on Mt. Moriah, he had set his will. He was going to follow through and Isaac was as good as dead.

**Hebrews 11:17-19** . . . and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall your seed be called: Accounting that God was able to raise him up even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure.

Abraham reached his decision by adding things up. He knew God's promise. He knew that Isaac was a partial fulfillment of a promise. He knew God's character. He knew, therefore, that in order for the remainder of that promise to be fulfilled God either had to resurrect Isaac or allow Isaac to continue living. Abraham's faith, his trust in God, rose above his feelings and thus he fully complied with God's command.

Our choices may not seem to take place in such a dramatic setting as involving the sacrifice of one of our beloved and cherished children. But this very fact can be a subtle trap for us because we might be led to think that the day-to-day choices that we make do not matter very much. We might think that since the stakes are so distant (I am talking about inheriting the Kingdom of God, that is the stake) and so high that this little deceit, or that little theft, or this little lust, or this little, angry, murderous thought, or this little bit of over-drinking or over-eating do not carry much weight in the overall picture and it will simply be overlooked by God. How do we know that? How does one know the answer to that?

The attitude supporting that approach is enough to lead me to a question. If you were a teacher of any subject or discipline, how would you feel toward students who could

either take it or leave it, or constantly blow hot or cold? Do you think you could trust their commitment or, in terms with our relationship with God within this creation of Himself in us, our surrender? Can God trust our surrender to His will so that that creation can be finished? Can God say of us as He did of Abraham, "Now I *know*"? I do not know if God said it that way, but I am sure that He was mighty pleased with what Abraham did for that to come out of His mouth. "Now I know!" Do you think God can trust the commitment of people who are one minute so quickly compliant and the next minute stiffly resisting?

When I was teaching at Imperial School in Pasadena, just like all teachers, I gave tests. Little pop tests right at the beginning of class. Weekly tests, monthly tests, semester tests, and finals. Every one of those tests counted to some degree. The degree may have been small, but they went into the overall picture. Big or little, they are all part of the pattern of our life.

Let us move on because we are going to learn something else from this man Abraham. We saw in that sermon that Paul used Abraham's experiences with God to conclude that justification is by faith because Abraham had righteousness imputed to him by God on the basis of his faith fourteen years before his obedient work of circumcision.

**Romans 4:1-3** What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, has found? For if Abraham were justified by works, he has whereof to glory; but not before God. For what says the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.

That scripture appears in Genesis 14. Paul quoted it verbatim. Abraham believed God and it was counted unto him for righteousness.

**Romans 4:6-8** Even as David also describes the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputes righteousness without works, saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.

So Paul asks this question:

**Romans 4:19-24** Comes this blessedness then upon the circumcision only, or upon the uncircumcision [i.e., the Gentiles] also? For we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness. And being fully persuaded that,

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what he [God] had promised, he [God] was able also to perform. And therefore it was imputed to him (Abraham) for righteousness. Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead.

There is Paul's conclusion. What God did for Abraham He will also do for us. Whether we be Israelite or Gentile, we will be justified on the basis of our faith in Jesus Christ. Now that seemingly ties justification with a nice neat knot until James appears on the scene.

**James 2:20-21** But will you know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?

Seemingly a contradiction. Paul says faith is the basis of justification. James appears to say that it is works, using the same man as the example.

**James 2:22-23** See you how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? And the scripture was fulfilled which says, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness and he was called the friend of God.

Same verse that Paul quoted as proof that we are justified by faith and here is James using it saying we are justified by works.

**James 2:24** You see then how that by works a man is justified and not by faith only.

A big clue there. There is a church that we just came out of that says "faith alone." It was this series of verses that caused Martin Luther to call the book of James "strawy." He meant "insubstantial." It cannot be trusted. You do not build a house out of straw or the big, bad wolf will blow it down. That is what he meant. The book of James cannot be trusted because it did not agree with his ideas regarding faith.

We are not getting the whole picture from either Paul or James. That is the answer to

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this. The writings are complementary, not contradictory. James' purpose is different from Paul's. James captures our need to understand that there are two kinds of faith. He calls them living and dead. We might also call them genuine or professing.

The kind of faith a person has is revealed (James is saying here), or we might say perfected or completed by the kind of works the faith produces. We are going to see more clearly later that Abraham was already obeying God when he was justified by faith, long before that in fact. What James then clarifies is the kind of faith that Abraham had that made the difference and that brought about justification.

Back to the book of Romans again because I want you to see a simple scripture in Romans 2 that Paul agrees with James.

**Romans 2:13** For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law [doing is working] shall be justified.

Living faith, the kind that James was talking about there, cannot be separated from works. Faith though does not stand alone, but it is very important.

**II Corinthians 5:6** Therefore we are always confident, . . .

The "we" directly refers to him and the other ministers who were with him, but by extension it also applies to anybody who is actually doing what Paul says.

**II Corinthians 5:6-7** . . . knowing that, while we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord, for we walk by faith, not by sight.

That is expected of a Christian. That, in a way, is what identifies a Christian. If we do not walk by faith, we are not a Christian. It is that simple. So that is what Paul is saying. We are those who walk by faith.

**II Corinthians 5:8-9** We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord. Wherefore we labor [that is working again], that whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him.

Do you see that? Paul lived by faith but Paul labored so that he would be acceptable to

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God. Is he not implying that if he did not labor he would not be acceptable to God even though he had the faith? That is exactly what he is saying. Faith and works go together. They cannot be separated. But we are going to draw this even finer.

**II Corinthians 5:9-10** Wherefore we labor, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; . . .

This is why he labored. Even though he had faith, he labored because he had to appear before the judgment seat of Christ.

**II Corinthians 5:10** . . . that everyone [including himself] may receive the things done [when you are working you are doing things and you get things done] in his body, according to that he has done, whether it be good or bad.

**Hebrews 10:38** Now the just shall live by faith, but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.

That is a command. It is also a statement of fact.

The faith that Paul is talking about is the same faith that James termed as living faith, meaning that it is active, it produces, it works. Please understand this: dead things (there is a dead faith too) are inactive. They are inert, doing nothing. But, in reference to God, dead faith is not literally inactive even though it is called in the Bible dead. We will explain this as we go along.

God considers it dead because it is inactive toward the things of God. It is a particular kind and quality of works that separates the Christian from the world, giving evidence of whom they believe in and what the person believes.

We are being created in Christ Jesus unto good works. This will become more important as we go along here. It is in whom and what the person believes, combined with one's conviction regarding these things, that is important. Faith in God, not reliance on appearance, is all important. That is the basis that will determine a person's conduct because everybody acts on what they believe. It does not matter whether you are Chinese, Japanese, Canadian, American, Hindu, Buddhist, Catholic, Protestant, new ager, atheist, agnostic, male, female, or child. Everybody acts according to what they

believe.

But it is in whom and what they believe that makes the difference in conduct. Everybody operates on some measure of faith in something. But Abraham, along with those other heroes of faith named in Hebrews 11, believed God! It was that factor that determined the works and their quality. There are an awful lot of people who profess God, but do not really believe Him.

**Joshua 24:1** And Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel to Shechem, and called for the elders of Israel, and for their heads, and for their judges, and for their officers; and they presented themselves before God.

That is what we do on the Sabbath. We present ourselves before God. For those of you who are out in telephone-land, as far as the Church of the Great God is concerned, you are in your living room but you are participating in a Sabbath service. You are fellowshiping with God. You are presenting yourself before God. It is not the size of the group that counts, it is who you are fellowshiping with and believing in that counts.

**Joshua 24:2-3** And Joshua said unto all the people, Thus says the LOORD God of Israel, Your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood in old time, even Terah, the father of Abraham, and the father of Nahor, and they served other gods. And I took your father Abraham from the other side of the flood, and led him throughout all the land of Canaan, and multiplied his seed and gave him Isaac.

I want to touch on that scripture so that you will understand that Abraham had no advantage over us. The other side of the flood simply means the other side of the Euphrates and the mention of Terah his father, Nahor his uncle, and Abraham himself all coming from that other side of the flood nails that down. He is not talking about Noah's flood there, he is simply talking about the River Euphrates. And, they were *all* idolaters, every one of them.

Abraham was not raised 'in the church.' Abraham was raised in the world and his parents were idolaters and he was an idolater. He was not raised in a godly family. He had no advantage over us, but it does seem that when God called him it was as though he never looked back. I do not mean that he lived sinlessly, but he did extremely well. God willing that we would measure up to him.

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**Hebrews 11:8-9** By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out not knowing where he went. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise.

**Hebrews 11:17** By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac, and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son.

I want you to see from verse 8 that Abraham's obedience to God began immediately. (This was fourteen years before circumcision.) His faith began to produce good works immediately. Why? Because it was the right kind of faith in the right Being. It produced the right response. It is interesting that most of the people named in this chapter have only one thing named about them. But Abraham has three things directly and he has more verses (I think it is about eight or ten) dedicated to him. He truly, as father of the faithful, set a wonderful example for those of us who are his spiritual children.

I mention this partly because I want you to understand that they are probably mentioned the way they are because God wants us to appreciate the great expanse of time in different situations through which He put Abraham, and Abraham responded in the right way. One hundred years, from the time he was seventy-five until the time that he died at one hundred seventy-five, he was faithful to God in a way that few men are. His lifelong pattern of works was based in knowledge and understanding. They were not merely a passing fancy, but things deeply held to be of the utmost importance by him—so important that he was willing to sacrifice his greatly beloved son. That is sobering.

In verse 8 Abraham left his family without even being able to tell them where he was going. Is there instruction there for us? Yes there is. God is telling us that if we are using living faith, there are going to be times that it is going to require us to not know, to not understand key elements of how, when, where, or how things will be worked out.

Using faith—faith in God—is going to make us at times look ignorant, stupid, or foolish to the uncalled. It may even make them angry in their frustration with us because they do not see God in the picture. Their faith is different. So, therefore, it cannot work the works of God. Are you willing to bear with that? Abraham was. He walked away from it proving that his faith was alive and that it was in God.

The next thing—two of the promises given Abraham were never received by him in his lifetime. The land of promise, he never owned a foot of it other than a burial plot for

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Sarah and himself. How about a mighty people as his descendants as the sands of the sea? Do these things mean anything to us in the use of our faith? Yes they do. We are going to have to live with the fact that just because God has promised does not mean we will live to see it given to us in our lifetime.

The important thing to understand here is that none of this kept Abraham from obeying. It says that he staggered not in unbelief. His faith never wavered. Because of whom the faith was in, it was not dependent on him seeing its fulfillment. He believed in God's character. The very fact that God made the promise was good enough for him.

How about when you get anointed for healing? What if God chooses not to heal even though He has promised? Or what if He delays the healing for a long period of time? What about tithing? We certainly believe that God will prosper the tithe payer. But what if He does not? What if He just supplies what we barely need? Is our faith contingent on prosperity or on healing? That is dead faith. It is not producing the right things.

I have heard people make statements that amounted to them saying, "If I have enough faith in God, God is bound to give me what I want." No brethren, that is not true. That is wrong. Nobody forces God's hand. God is wiser than all of mankind put together and He knows what is right and wise under every circumstance for everybody that is involved. He allowed the great heroes of faith to die. But will they be healed? In the resurrection, yes they will, because they believed Him. Being healed in the flesh was not something they put as a necessary item to their faith in God.

**Luke 14:26-28** If any man come to me and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. And whoever does not bear his cross and come after me, cannot be my disciple. For which of you intending to build a tower, sits not down first and counts the cost whether he have sufficient to finish it?

Brethren, our position has to be that we believe what God says. We act upon that belief and we accept all the consequences of it. Now that is faith! That is why Jesus said what He did here. We are supposed to count the cost before we are baptized. Are we not to remember that God says that He is always faithful never to test us above what we are able? If we are truly surrendered to Him and we do believe Him, that faith will produce the right works and we will patiently wait.

We are going to add something else to this, something regarding faith that I saw recently in E. W. Bullinger's commentary on Hebrews 11. That commentary is titled

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*Great Cloud of Witnesses*. I thought I would pass it on to you because I think it is significant. What he referred to appears twice in the book of Romans, once in the end and once in the beginning.

**Romans 16:26** But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith.

That is the phrase we are going to look at here. The gospel was made known for the obedience of faith.

**Romans 1:5** By whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations for his name.

The obedience to the faith and the obedience of faith are both the same phrase in the Greek. What we see here in the English is not wrong, but it does not give us as clear of a picture as Paul originally wrote. Paul used a figure of speech called 'enallage'. Here is what this figure of speech does: "By which the noun faith is changed into a superlative adjective modifying another noun (in this case obedience)."

We have these two nouns, but faith becomes an adjective in this figure of speech that Paul used. Used as such it identifies or characterizes the kind of obedience, thus changing the phrase into faith obedience. (Remember the book of James. Two kinds of faith. Now there are two kinds of obedience.) You might understand it better as faith-obedience.

As Bullinger points out there are many possible motivations for obedience. Some people obey from fear, some obey out of a sense of duty, some people from compulsion, some obey from a desire to please, some from love. This is not to say that any of these is wrong. That is not Paul's intention. He emphasizes faith-obedience because he wants us to understand that the primary driving force, the foundation, the beginning of obedience is faith. It is from faith that everything else grows.

Think of the definition of faith that Paul gave in Hebrews 11:1. Faith is the substance, or some translations say faith is the ground, the earth. Some translations say faith is the assurance, but substance to me is the easiest to understand. It means faith stands under, just like earth is under your feet. Ground stands under your feet and supports you. None of us has walked on water yet. Faith stands under things hoped for.

This begins to have very intriguing ramifications once we understand that apart from faith, all works have the nature of sin. I pause because this might just have startling ramifications.

**Romans 14:23** And he that doubts is damned if he eat, because he eats not of faith; for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.

This verse has wider application than many of us have believed in the past. It plainly says exactly what it means. "Whatever is not of faith is sin." This tells us how important faith is, how important living faith is. We have erred in the past in limiting this scripture merely to the immediate context. But it applies just as it says. *Whatever is not of faith is sin.*

What is involved in the context here in Romans 14 is obedience. It is a work. It involves a person's conviction about whether an act is right or wrong. Paul is teaching that we should not go against an understanding that a particular act is wrong. If we would feel guilty doing something then Paul says *do not* do it, because you are acting against your faith and you are in the process of introducing confusion and destroying character. Confusion to your own mind.

He is implying to wait until your understanding changes, then you can act with conviction, i.e., with faith. The application is even broader than that. It is also saying that any act that does not come from belief in God is sin.

Brethren, our lives are to be so wrapped in God that it makes this possible. I think it will help us understand if we put aside the best known definition of sin just for a moment. That definition is I John 3:4, "Sin is the transgression of the law." That is sin's *legal* definition. Instead, understand here that it is broader concept of simply being an act that falls short, that does not measure up. It misses the mark or it is a turning aside.

The broad concept of sin throughout the Bible is that it is an act that is a failure. A failure to do what? Paul makes that clear. He says all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. The glory of God in that context is the way He lives His life. Not the way He radiates, but the way that He lives. That is the whole context that Paul writes that in. Thus, in its broadest concept, we sin when we fail to act the way God would.

The world understands some of this. There is a slogan going around now "What Would Jesus Do?" That is a right concept. That is how you avoid sin. If you do pattern your life doing what Jesus would do, it is going to be almost impossible to sin and every act is

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going to be out of faith. When we fail to do this though, that is sin.

We are being created in God's image. A perfect image would be an exact reflection of Him, like looking in a mirror. We would do everything, moral and ethical, in exactly the same way He would. Jesus did. That is why He could honestly say, "If you have seen Me you have seen the Father."

I think that we can all understand that we have a long way to go. This also helps us understand why grace is an absolute must. God wants, He desires, that our every act of this life have its basis in belief in Him or we fall short of an exact reflection. We would still be operating too much on the basis of the old nature, i.e., worldliness.

We are going to add one more thing to this and we will begin to really tie it together.

The Bible shows that in the mind of God there are three kinds of works. Turn with me to Colossians 1 and the first kind of works here is wicked, or some Bibles might say, evil works.

**Colosians 1:21** And you [Christians], that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now has he reconciled.

**Titus 1:15** Unto the pure all things are pure; but [I am reading this verse because I want to include a word here] unto them that are defiled and unbelieving [faith enters into this thinking] is nothing pure.

Do you catch that? The unbelieving in the eyes of God cannot do anything pure. Brethren, are His standards high or what?

**Titus 1:15-16** But even their mind and conscience is defiled. They profess that they know God [here is that professing faith but their acts are impure]; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate.

Those two verses are bombshells in light of this subject. The second kind of works that God sees are good works. We just saw that there in verse 16.

**Ephesians 2:8-10** For by grace are you saved through faith, and that not of

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yourselves, it is the gift of God. Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God has before ordained that we should walk in them.

I will tell you that this series of verses really narrows down what good works consist of because it limits good works to the obedience of faith. This is the outcome of the creation of the divine nature within us. Remember that we just read in Titus 1:15-16 that the unbelieving *cannot* do good works. Good works do not begin, as far as God is concerned, until something happens. They are works of obedience done after conversion. Once we have started believing in Him, the true God and His Son, Jesus Christ, by the power of God's Holy Spirit in us, good works consist only of those things we are ordained or prepared to do.

Since we are created for good works there cannot have been any good works before conversion, i.e., before genuine faith in Christ came, before God worked His miracle by His Spirit in our minds.

There is another type of works and that is dead works.

**Hebrews 6:1** Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God.

These are the works of human nature. They are not the product or outcome of God's Holy Spirit in us. There is, as I said earlier, activity there, but God does not recognize it as good because of its source and of the spirit motivating it.

Let us add another nail to this.

**Ephesians 2:1** And you has he quickened . . .

Do you know what that means? Made alive! In the mind of God, before conversion, we are *dead*. Dead men cannot produce good works.

**Ephesians 2:1-3** And you has he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; wherein in time past you walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now

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works in the children of disobedience; among whom also we all had our conduct in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

How can God possibly call anything produced by dead people as good? Now they may seem good to man and men may call them good and speak highly of those who do these things, but God pronounces them dead because they were not produced by His life giving Spirit.

Turn with me to Romans 3 as we continue to draw a noose on this. Look at this indictment from God's point of view.

**Romans 3:10-12** As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one. There is none that understands, there is none that seeks after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that does good, no, not one.

But then there were people like Abel and Enoch and Noah and Shem and Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and Samuel and David and Moses and Joshua whom God converted and they believed Him. They did good works. Now the ball is in our corner. But they, just like these people being described in Romans 3:10-12 were just like them, just like us, until God by His grace opened our minds so that He could impute righteousness to us, give us His Spirit, and enable us to do good.

It is God who defines what is good. He is the one who holds the plummet in His hands and He says that whatever is not of faith is sin. Whatever is not of faith falls short of His glory. Is this giving us any kind of idea of what must be done during this scattering of the church? We must recapture our faith in God. Brethren, what was it in the very beginning that caused the split between Adam and Eve and God? They did not believe Him!

That is the cause of all separations from God and the separations in His church. We lost our faith. It was shattered through false doctrine, but it was weakening even before that.

We are going to go back to an earlier thought of God perceiving those who do not have His Spirit as dead and their works as being dead works. We are going to see how, right from the very beginning, God laid the foundation in a parallel for our understanding.

Let us go back to Genesis 2. Even as Adam and Eve were a fundamental example of

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what causes separation, we find here that Adam is a pattern for something that is spiritual.

**Genesis 2:7** And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.

Adam was nothing but a lifeless body. He was dead until God breathed into him the breath of life. While he was without the breath of life he could produce nothing, nothing that could please God. It was only after he was given the spirit. That is what that verse says. Look it up in the Hebrew. It means puff of wind, angry or vital breath, divine inspiration, intellect, blast, breath, inspiration, soul, spirit. These are all translations of that word.

What we see here is a physical parallel of what happens spiritually. Adam was a lifeless body until God breathed into him the breath of life.

**James 2:26** For as the body without the spirit is dead [just like Adam], so faith without works is dead also.

Here we see the physical parallel confirmed and then connected to another subject in which the principle applies. Without the spirit, without wind/breath, we are physically dead. In like manner, faith without works is dead. Genuine faith is alive and living and it will produce the right works. In like manner, works without the Holy Spirit are dead works. There is dead faith and dead works. In like manner, there is living faith and there are good works, but there are only good works where there is living faith. Living faith is the spirit that gives life to the works and makes them good in God's eyes.

We are going to go to one of the more beautiful chapters in all the Bible in II Corinthians 3. Here we find that Paul used this same principle to describe the difference between the Old Covenant and the New Covenant. We find that much of the beauty that arises from understanding this wonderful chapter is derived from the application of this same principle.

**II Corinthians 3:3-10** Forasmuch as you are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart. And such trust have we through Christ to God-ward; not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of God; who

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has made us [Paul and the ministry] able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit; for the letter kills [it is dead], but the spirit gives life [so that it can work]. But if the ministration of death [it could not give life because it was already dead spiritually], written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not stedfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away; how shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather [or much more] glorious? [It is going to produce life and the right kind of works.] For if the ministration of the condemnation be glory, much more does the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory. For even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excels.

By comparing the two, there is no glory in the old covenant.

**II Corinthians 3:15-18** But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the veil is upon their heart. Nevertheless when it [the margin says anyone or one] shall turn to the Lord [meaning in faith; it has to be that way, it is the only way it can be once God reveals the true God], the veil shall be taken away. [Life shall be coming in.] Now the Lord is that spirit [that gives life to the New Covenant, that gives life to us]; and where the spirit of the Lord is there is liberty. [Freedom from sin, freedom from death.] But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the spirit of the Lord.

Even as Adam was changed from dead to living by having breath given, we are changed from spiritually dead to spiritually alive by receiving the Spirit of God. Christ is that spirit. Christ in you, the hope of glory. It means here everything, all that Christ represents. He Himself was missing from the Old Covenant. Forgiveness through His blood was missing. The fullness of the gospel that would lead to living faith was missing. The Holy Spirit was not yet given so it was missing. The Old Covenant was very good, but by comparison to the New Covenant, it was like Adam, dead, until God breathed life into him.

Living faith, as we just saw from James, is the spirit, the motivation, the energizer that causes our works to be considered good by God. They are good because the spirit is from Him. They are the product of the new creation and thus, as Bullinger says, it is absolutely impossible to separate good works from the living faith that produced them.