**Faith In Faith or Faith In God**

The Charismatic movement began to be strong in the 1960's; it consists of teachings of signs, wonders, "*baptism of the Holy Spirit*", etc. and it is taught throughout all denominations. Whereas, the Pentecostals embrace the Charismatic teaching but have their own doctrinal statement, the Pentecostals are a specific denomination.

One of the first things one learns in the Charismatic movement is a new vocabulary:

* Believer's Voice of Victory
* Faith Seed
* Slain in the Spirit
* Authority in the name of Jesus
* Made in the image of God - be gods
* Power of words
* Prosperity
* Word of Faith

**Biblical Faith**

(Hebrews 11:1 KJV) Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

Now faith is the **substance**...

Substance means ultimate reality that underlies all outward manifestations and change. In other words, faith is real, it is a reality not an illusion or something one makes up.

In Hebrews 11:1, faith is the substance (reality) of **things hoped for**, not things we want or desire to make our lives more pleasant. What are things hoped for? Things hoped for are the very things that God has promised us in His word *according to His revealed plan and purpose.* Hope is always based on what God has said and what God has said is reality.

Let's look at some examples of people who acted in accordance to what God has said (according to His revealed plan and purpose):

1. Abel brought a sacrifice that was acceptable to God because it was in accordance to what God had said.
2. Cain's sacrifice, on the other hand, was not acceptable to God because Cain disregarded what God had required in the sacrifice.
3. Noah obeyed God in building the Ark. Noah's hope of being delivered from the wrath of God was based on his being obedient to what God told him to do.
4. Abraham left his homeland in obedience to God's command and based his hope on God's promise, what God had told him.

The things we hope for are always based on what God has said and what God has said is a reality.

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the **evidence** of things not seen. Evidence in a courtroom is something that is physically, seen or examined, witnessed or is testimony of a reliable witness.

Hebrews 11: 3 (KJV) Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.

We know that God created the world because we have the witness of God (based on what God has said).

(Hebrews 6:13-18 KJV) For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he sware by himself,*{14}*Saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee.*{15}*And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise.*{16}*For men verily swear by the greater: and an oath for confirmation *is*to them an end of all strife.*{17}*Wherein God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed *it*by an oath:*{18}*That by two immutable things, in which *it was*impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us:

The two immutable things are:

1. God's Word
2. God's Oath

In Genesis 15, Abraham was given a promise and it was confirmed by God's Word and God's oath.

**Biblical faith is always believing what God has said.**

In Romans 4, we learn about Abraham and how he believed God and it was counted to him as righteousness.

(Romans 4:1-3 KJV) What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found?*{2}*For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath *whereof*to glory; but not before God.*{3}*For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.

**What did Abraham believe?**

(Romans 4:17-22 KJV) (As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, *even*God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were.*{18}*Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be. *{19}* And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb:*{20}*He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God;*{21}*And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform.*{22}*And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness.

Abraham believed what God had spoken would come to pass. He believed in hope according that which God had spoken. The result of Abraham believing what God had said caused righteousness to be imputed to him.

The whole point of Romans 4 is for us to get an understanding of being justified by faith, not works. Take note that Paul writes that it is for our sake that we understand the imputation of righteousness, or Abraham being justified before he was circumcised.

(Romans 4:23-5:1 KJV) Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him;*{24}*But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; *{25}* Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.

(Romans 5:1 KJV) Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:

**What are we to believe?**

We are to believe that Jesus Christ died for our offences and was raised again for our justification, then and only then, will we have Christ's righteousness imputed (put to) our account. The reason we have peace with God and are justified by faith is because of what Christ has done, not because we see a verse, any verse, in the scripture and say, "That's for me; I claim this to be mine" (a.k.a - "*Name it and claim it")*. We know we are justified by faith and have peace with God because God has said it, not because we have confessed it to be so. (See Romans 3:21-28)

It has been my experience that within certain Charismatic circles way too much emphasis is placed on verse 17 and the phrase *"calling things that were not as though they were"* when dealing with the subject of the faith of Abraham. Reference is made to the fact that Abraham's name had been changed (it used to be Abram) and so it is said that every time Abraham or someone else spoke his name that they were in effect calling things that were not as though they were. (His name means the father of many nations; so every time his name was spoken it was said that he was the father of many nations; saying his name over and over would cause the promise of God to be fulfilled.)

**What is faith?**

The problem with this is that the promise God made to Abraham is then fulfilled by man's spoken words, that is to say, Abraham's faith was defined by the words he spoke.

It is very important to keep the verse in the proper context and not take one verse on a stand alone basis to prove one's point. One only needs to read the next verse to know what was spoken in order for the promise to be fulfilled.

(Romans 4:18 KJV) Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, **So shall thy seed be**. [emphasis mine]

Who spoke the words, "So shall thy seed be?" God spoke those words and the promise would come to pass based upon what God had spoken not what man speaks. It does not say that he might become the father of many nations because his name was spoken "X" number of times.

God's promises are never fulfilled on the basis of what man says or does not say. Can man be trusted to always speak the truth?

(Psalms 116:11 KJV) I said in my haste, All men *are*liars.

(Numbers 23:19 KJV) 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?

(Isaiah 55:8 KJV) For my thoughts *are* not your thoughts, neither *are*your ways my ways, saith the LORD.

If we cannot think God's thoughts, what makes us think that we can speak God's words.

Faith is believing what God has said...

**Back to Pentecost?**

The Charismatic/Pentecostal cry of the day is, "Let's go back to Pentecost." The long for the power that was manifest on that day to be manifest in their lives today. That power was for a purpose and was in God's plan at that time but what God is doing today has nothing to do with Pentecost.

**Peter and the Day of Pentecost**

(Acts 2:14-19 KJV) But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judaea, and all *ye* that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words:*{15}*For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is *but*the third hour of the day.*{16}*But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel;*{17}*And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams:*{18}*And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy:*{19}*And I will show wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke:

One the day of Pentecost, Peter stood up and addressed the "**men of Judaea and all those that dwell in Jerusalem"** (in other words he was speaking to Jews, the nation of Israel).  He told them that what had happened was what the prophet Joel had spoken and it referred to the judgement of the Lord. The day of Pentecost was a sign to the Jews that the judgement of God was comings and for them to escape they needed to repent.

(Acts 3:19-21 KJV) Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord;*{20}*And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you:*{21}*Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.

When the lame man was healed, it was so that the leaders of the nation of Israel would be given another chance to repent. They were told that Jesus was sent back up into heaven until the times of restitution, this was all **spoken of by the prophets since the world began.**

So, it is important to take note that what happened at Pentecost was spoken by the prophets since the world began. This is different than what Paul's message is.

**Paul and What God Is Doing Today**

In the first seven chapters of Acts, it is evident that the people being spoken to a Jews (the nation of Israel). This is because God is still dealing with man according to the prophetic program, that which was spoken by the prophets concerning the nation of Israel. Paul, on the other hand, is the Apostle to and of the Gentiles.

(Romans 11:13 KJV) For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office:

(Acts 26:16-18 KJV) But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee;*{17}*Delivering thee from the people, and *from*the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee,*{18}*To open their eyes, *and*to turn *them*from darkness to light, and *from*the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.

(Romans 15:16 KJV) That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost.

Paul does not teach the same thing that the twelve taught in the early chapters of Acts, his message is different. Before the Apostle Paul, the only way a Gentile could be blessed by God was to become a Jew. Up until the Apostle Paul's writings, there is a distinction between Jew and Gentile. Paul gives us a new message as God begins to deal with man according to the mystery program.

(Ephesians 3:1-5 KJV) For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles,*{2}*If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward:*{3}*How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words,*{4}*Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ)*{5}*Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit;

(Ephesians 3:9 KJV) And to make all *men*see what *is*the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ:

The message that Paul revealed to us (Romans through Philemon) was not made known in other ages so it cannot be the same message as what Peter spoke about on the day of Pentecost. The revelation that Paul received was **hid in God from the beginning of the world.** Paul's message is to us today.

Paul was not converted until after the stoning of Stephen (we read about his conversion in Acts 9). At the time of Pentecost, Paul was the leader of the rebellion against Christ.

**Faith in God**

(Mark 11:22-25 KJV) And Jesus answering saith unto them, Have faith in God.*{23}*For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith.*{24}*Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive *them,*and ye shall have *them. {25}*And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses.

These are the verses that are often used to support the teaching that whatever you say will come to pass. Whenever something does not come to pass then the fault is placed on you, the speaker; you must not have believed what you said - you did not have enough faith to believe what you say will come to pass. The result of this is often one has faith in their faith to see the expected results.

But what did Jesus mean when He said, "Have faith in God"? And why did He say, "Have faith in God"? Again, to stress the importance of taking a verse in context look at the verses before:

(Mark 11:12-22 KJV) And on the morrow, when they were come from Bethany, he was hungry:*{13}*And seeing a fig tree afar off having leaves, he came, if haply he might find any thing thereon: and when he came to it, he found nothing but leaves; for the time of figs was not *yet. {14}*And Jesus answered and said unto it, No man eat fruit of thee hereafter for ever. And his disciples heard *it. {15}*And they come to Jerusalem: and Jesus went into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves;*{16}*And would not suffer that any man should carry *any*vessel through the temple.*{17}*And he taught, saying unto them, Is it not written, My house shall be called of all nations the house of prayer? but ye have made it a den of thieves.*{18}*And the scribes and chief priests heard *it,*and sought how they might destroy him: for they feared him, because all the people was astonished at his doctrine.*{19}*And when even was come, he went out of the city.*{20}*And in the morning, as they passed by, they saw the fig tree dried up from the roots.*{21}*And Peter calling to remembrance saith unto him, Master, behold, the fig tree which thou cursedst is withered away.*{22}*And Jesus answering saith unto them, Have faith in God.

**Bethany**

Here it is stated that they were coming back from Bethany. What is the significance of Bethany? (Read Zech 9:9, Matt 21:1-9, Luke 19:29-38, and John 12:12-19) Bethany is where Jesus came into town as King and the leaders of the nation of Israel refused to accept Him as such.

**Fig Tree**

Jesus sees a fig tree and does not find any fruit on it so He curses the fig tree and declares that from that time on no man will ever eat fruit from it. The next day, they come upon the fig tree and see that it has withered away. Peter points that out to Jesus and Jesus replies, "Have faith in God".

Why did Jesus curse the fig tree? The fig tree represents the apostate nation following a false religion system. In essence, Jesus is saying that the Israel's religion will no longer be acceptable to God because it is man trying to make himself acceptable to God through his own effort. Jesus is telling them to no longer trust in their religion but to have faith in God.

**The mountain**

Mountains in the scripture represent kingdoms. There will come a time, tribulation period, when those who have faith in God will have to say to a false religious system (that of the Antichrist), "Be thou removed", and it will be removed.

(Luke 12:31-33 KJV) But rather seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you.*{32}*Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.*{33}*Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth.

Those who will go through the tribulation will need to seek after the kingdom of God and say to the kingdom of the Antichrist, "Be thou remove," and it will be removed. God will set up His kingdom.

**All scripture needs to be read in context in order to be fully understood.**

Not everything in the Bible is to be applied to our lives today, only that which pertains to us (the body of Christ in this dispensation of grace). What God has spoken to the nation of Israel in the prophetic program is to be obeyed by those to whom God is dealing with in the prophetic program (which is in abeyance today, temporarily set aside). What God has spoken to the body of Christ in the mystery program is to be obeyed by those to whom God is dealing with in  accordance to the dispensation of grace.

There are two separate programs in which God deals with man and it is so important to know which one is in operation. God will fulfill His promises *according to His revealed plan and purpose.*

We are to place our faith in what God has spoken in accordance to His revealed plan and purpose, not faith in what we say. **Have faith in God.**

Reference used:
Charismatic Miracles, Gifts, Signs and Wonders, and the Bible
Faith in Faith or Faith in God
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