

THE HONEST PRAYER OF FAITH
OR
AUTHENTIC BELIEVING PRAYER:
THE FAITH OF GOD
Mark 11:22-24

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PREFACE

²⁴Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.

This study of what our Lord Jesus Christ presents of The Honest Prayer of Faith is the last in the series on Honest Prayer. What now is finished has proven to be a blessing to this worthless servant. We have gained much insight into what constitutes honest prayer. Strange as it seems to us now, when first planning the series I never thought specifically of the prayer of faith.

In Seminary for my bachelor's thesis I chose to write on *James 5:13-20* from a keen interest whetted through a General Epistles' class. After some research our studies became a dissertation on The Prayer of Faith. It centered on *verse 15*,

And the prayer of faith shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.

James 5:15

We grasped the connection with James' close of his epistle that followed *verse 15* as making the prayer of faith James' major epilogue. At that time we had no deep understanding of God's origination of the faith and hence the prayer of faith. But we did understand that God's purpose for Israel was vitally dependent upon Elijah's prayer for the three and one half year drought and for its terminating and saving rain. Given James' eternal scope of the prayer of faith, as seen in the sick raised and forgiven, in its effectual power to avail much, in its effect upon Israel as corrective discipline from her God, and finally upon the ailing sinner for whom it was first prayed, the prayer of faith is the very work of God.

Therefore, it is fitting and became an absolute necessity for this series to examine the prayer of faith, at least as our Lord taught it. Jesus taught the same staggering significance of the prayer of faith

as did James. But Jesus taught it more from God's point of view. While James centered upon specific works related to the prayer of faith, Jesus emphasized its Divine effect upon the purpose and intervention of God. Jesus laid stress upon God's desire to place this faith into His children and especially into Christ's needful and continuously challenged disciples. This Christ-provided faith insured the disciples' fulfilling the commission given them by their Lord, and continues today.

We are detailing what to some might appear to be unrelated details about our background with the prayer of faith some 40 years ago. Even James' reference to the prayer of faith, and even the just mentioned emphasis of God, might seem unnecessary. But we do all this to help introduce the main point in this preface. From the very beginning of our confrontations with it we discovered that it is for God's use, God's purpose, God's glory, God's fulfillment, and not man's. We must make clear just what the prayer of faith is exactly because of the rather great misrepresentation of certain groups of professors of religion that the prayer of faith is a means for filling the desires of the flesh.

Because of the very nature of the abuse that this prayer of faith, as taught by Jesus, has received via the aforementioned groups, we must examine it thoroughly. To do this we must closely exegete it from a highly technical slant. We must determine the point of its placement in the Gospel of Mark, as well as its occurrence in the life of Christ. Its employment at a specific juncture in the preparation of the Apostles and disciples of Jesus is important. We must explore the original language closely and accurately in order to reach a conclusive thesis; and we must examine it in the light of other similar Scripture. This study, therefore, is not so much devotional. For this we might apologize but none is forthcoming from us. We have sought to honor Christ by interpreting Him to the honor and glory of God, and to the demotion and abasing of man. We praise Him for the glory and purpose for which He has created the prayer of faith. Amen!

Rogers County Oklahoma, March 2007

THE HONEST PRAYER OF FAITH
OR
AUTHENTIC BELIEVING PRAYER:
THE FAITH OF GOD

Mark 11:22-24

²²*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, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.*

Mark 11:22-24

⁷*If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.*

John 15:7

³*Commit thy works unto the Lord, and he will establish your thoughts.*

Proverbs 10:3

⁴*Delight thyself in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.*

⁵*Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass.*

Psalms 37:4-5

¹⁴*And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us:*

¹⁵*And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.*

I John 5:14-15

²²*And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.*

I John 3:22

THE PRAYER OF FAITH—INTRODUCTION

The words of Jesus recorded by Mark, being the first quoted above, are the primary text for this study. The Scriptures following Mark's three verses are to help interpret and apply correctly His meaning; this we will do in the following study. However, the best interpretation of any Scripture lies in its context, which we will attempt to emphasize and hence to profit.

Many and different are the ideas held concerning this teaching from Jesus about believing prayer as recorded by Mark and paralleled in Matthew.¹ Like a multitude of other Scripture, these precious words too often are taken out of their immediate context and the attendant teaching of Scripture and interpreted alone, as if there were no other considerations for a proper understanding of them. Our intention is to come to a true grasp of Jesus' meaning in the light of contextual consideration and additional Scripture orientation. In this way our instruction will be enlightening and encouraging to us, while respectful of and glorifying to God. Scripture's transcendent truth and this section's individual context limit the use of this prayer of faith. Any use of it, or purported use of it, that ignores either the Scriptures' prayer restrictions and explanations elsewhere stated or slights the context's teachings will prove to be only self-serving and erroneous. Any interpretation and attempted use of Christ's example of and teaching concerning authentic honest believing prayer that disregard and neglect what is rationally, reasonably, and really meant by Jesus is false prayer; it is not honest prayer.

These considerations, therefore, require this study of Jesus' authentic believing prayer to cover two vital areas; they are,

PART 1: The Immediate Contextual and Exegetical Considerations that Interpret this Authentic Believing Prayer, *Mark 11:1-13:37*.

PART 2: The Parallel Transcendent Scripture² and Its Exegetical Truth that Interpret this Authentic Believing Prayer together with its Own Exegetical Truth in *Mark 11:22-24*.

¹ *Matthew 21:21-22* ² *Jn. 15:7; Prov. 16:3; Ps. 37:4-5; I Jn. 5:14-15; 3:22*

THE PRAYER OF FAITH PART 1: *Mark 11:1-13:37* THE CONTEXTUAL AND EXEGETICAL CONSIDERATIONS THAT INTERPRET THIS AUTHENTIC BELIEVING PRAYER.

For as the girdle cleaveth to the loins of a man, so have I caused to cleave unto me the whole house of Israel and the whole house of Judah, saith the Lord; that they might be unto me for a people, and for a name, and for a praise, and for a glory: but they would not hear. Jeremiah 13:11

God's lament through Jeremiah gives a picture of what confronted Jesus throughout His personal ministry. Our text in Mark's Gospel is at the end of that ministry, in fact it is part of Christ's final public ministry in Jerusalem, which ended on Tuesday the week of His crucifixion, that Tuesday being the emphasis in *Mark 11:12 – 14:11*.³ He loved Israel and desired her as His people, and He sought her and continued seeking her until this final week in Jerusalem. It is during this week, and vital to our text's correct understanding, that Jesus acts upon the difficult final words of our Jeremiah reference, *but they would not hear*.

This *but they would not hear* permeates this entire Tuesday as well as this entire final week. During this final week, Jesus as the Messiah, the Christ, finally claims His position as Messiah. Through the exhibitionism of His entry into Jerusalem, "Jesus now makes a formal challenge to the Jerusalem leaders who have so long opposed His claims."⁴ His Triumphal Entry has stated clearly and emphatically His claims as Messiah. He will during the rest of this week confirm His claim and pronounce His final condemnation of Israel and her leaders, making apparent God's utter renouncement

³ "The Synoptic Gospels give more details of the teaching of Jesus on this Tuesday in the Temple and on the Mount of Olives than for any other single day." A. T. Robertson, *A Harmony of the Gospels* (New York: Harper & Row, 1950), p. 159.

⁴ A. T. Robertson, *op. cit.*, p. 152.

and disavowal of Israel as His appointed nation. This renouncement and disavowal is of paramount importance for understanding the actions and teachings of Christ as affecting His reference to authentic believing prayer in *Mark 11:22-24*. Everything of Christ's ministry is now geared toward acknowledgement of and anticipation concerning Israel's refusal to hear, to believe, and to obey Him as their Messiah. He will accordingly adjust His teaching in order that His disciples may reflect that acknowledgement and anticipation. Our text, *Mark 11:22-24* is one such adjustment, which its being such an adjustment is key to understanding it.

Repeatedly during this final week, Christ's actions and teaching reflect the renouncement and disavowal of Israel by God; and Christ now will view the once chosen people as the opposition, the hindrance, the adversary, to God's Kingdom. Accordingly, after the procession of acclaim ended (Sunday) Jesus immediately that same day lamented Jerusalem's final renunciation as God's people,⁵

⁴¹And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it.

⁴²Saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes.

⁴³For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side,

⁴⁴And shall lay thee even with the ground and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.

Luke 19:41-44

This set the tone for the rest of that day and for the following week. Over the course of Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday, He will

⁵ For the order of events in this last week, we have relied upon our personal study of the Gospels and verified it with the documented, scholarly and widely accepted work by A. T. Robertson, op. cit.

signal this official changing of Israel's position from God's people to God's enemy with seven citations, either through actions or teaching. This is critical to understanding Jesus' reference to believing prayer and its creative properties. These references precede, compose, and follow our text on believing prayer. Each reference in analogy or parable or action or discourse will help clarify His actions and His teaching during this period of Israel's formal removal from His Kingdom's ministry.

In order to make plain our meaning and its application to believing prayer, we now list these seven referrals to the formal removal of Israel from the Kingdom Economy⁶ in their chronological order.

#1. DISCOURSE - On Sunday, Jesus announced the destruction of Jerusalem for its refusals to hear and obey her opportunity in her Messiah, *Luke 19:41-44*, q. v. supra.

#2. ACTIONS - On late Sunday, Jesus makes the final and official critical inspection of the Temple and its then ongoing ministry, *Mark 11:11*.

#3 ANALOGY - On early Monday, Jesus pronounces a prophetic prayer respecting the "braggart [and phony] fig tree,"⁷ *Mark 11:14*.

#4. ACTIONS & DISCOURSE - On Monday, Jesus cleanses the Temple and clarifies His actions as the enraged Messiah, *Mark 11:15-17*.

#5. ANALOGY - On early Tuesday, Jesus references the *mountain* [of Israel] that is only removed through possession of *the faith of God*, *Mark 11:22-24*.

#6. PARABLE - On Tuesday, Jesus illustrates the wickedness of Israel toward God's prophets, God's Son, and God, in parabolic teaching in the parables of The Two Sons, The Wicked Husbandmen, and The Marriage Feast of the King's Son, *Matthew 21:28-3; Mark 12:1-12; Matthew 22:1-14*, respectively.

⁶ Not every reference directly refers to the removal but to some aspect with reference to Israel's removal, through actions, analogy, parable, and discourse.

⁷ So named by A. Plummer, *The Gospel According To St Mark* (Cambridge: University Press, 1914), p. 260.

#7. DISCOURSE - On late Tuesday, Jesus details some of the then future events of the preciously referenced (*Luke 19:44*) and again referenced (*Mark 13:2*) destruction of the Temple, and includes much following eschatological reference, *Mark 13:1-37; Matthew 24:1-51*, ff.

The Distinct and Self-evident Analogies Discourses, Actions, and Parables of Jesus

The **discourses** are evidently referencing Israel's formal removal as Kingdom ministers. It appears plain when Jesus says, *thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, and shall lay thee even with the ground and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.*⁸ Again, Jesus is not much to be misunderstood when He charges Israel as having made the Temple into a *den of thieves* meant to be *of all nations a house of prayer*,⁹ clear references both.

Jesus' **actions** are perfectly clear also. That Jesus *wept over*¹⁰ the city leaves little for conjecture as to what such weeping meant for Jerusalem. When He drove out the merchandisers and overturned the tables of the moneychangers and dismissed the profiteers from the Temple, who would not understand that Israel was being severely condemned by her God.

Jesus gave several recorded **parables** during this final week of public ministry that were evidently aimed at Israel's removal. All are plainly and evidently dealing with the emphasis of the final week, namely, Israel's removal from the Kingdom's ranks.

Mark's Recorded Parable lays down a temporal scene very indicative of Israel's history and her final evil work against her God. The Parable of the Wicked Husbandmen relates a certain man who leased out a well-prepared vineyard to several vine-dressers or husbandmen. When it came time to receive payment

⁸ *Luke 19:43-44.* ⁹ *Mark 11:17.* ¹⁰ *Luke 19:41*

from the fruit of the vineyard, he sent a clerk to collect. The vine-dressers beat him, cast him out with nothing. The owner sent another worker, but they stoned him and sent him away with nothing. He repeated this several times until at the last the owner sent his son, thinking they will respect him. But they seized the opportunity to kill the heir so they could own the vineyard. This was a very congruous representation of Israel as Jesus finalized the parable with, *He (the owner) will come and destroy the husbandmen, and will give the vineyard to others.*¹¹ The chief priests, the scribes, and the elders, to whom Jesus spoke the parable, *knew that he had spoken the parable against them.*¹² Could any parable be plainer applied to Israel's removal as God representatives?

Matthew's Recorded Parables similarly are plainly directed toward God's rejection of Israel. One parable in Matthew clearly references Israel's refusals toward Him as contrasted with the publicans and harlots who did receive Him, *Matthew 22:28-32*. Another follows at once in *Matthew 22:1-14*. It parabolically illustrates another aspect of Israel's failure and renouncement and disavowal by Christ. A king made a marriage feast for his son. The invited guests (Israel) made excuse not to attend and made light of its importance. When some of those invited killed the king's emissaries, he responded in like fashion by slaying them, again, a clear indication of Israel's destruction by God in 70 AD. Then at the last, the feast that was supplied with guests by the king's servants' bringing in strangers and common folk, but one was found unsuitably dressed. Such occasions called for special dress by all guests. He so improperly clothed was cast outside *into outer darkness, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.*¹³ The application is apparent. Israel killed God's prophets and His Son, and was not righteously fitted to fellowship with God. They wore *their own righteousness, which is of the law and not the righteousness which is of faith.*¹⁴ Israel was naked before her God with nothing to cover her violations of the Holy Law. Christ *cast her into outer*

¹¹ Mark 12:9 ¹² Mark 12:12 ¹³ Matthew 22:13 ¹⁴ Philippians 3:9; Romans 9:30-33.

darkness, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, plain referral to what absorbed that last week of Christ's personal and public ministry.

Jesus' **analogies** during His final week are just as plain as His discourses and actions when connected with this last public ministry's tone, temper, disposition, and theme. The Christ is in the midst of formalizing His rejection of a not-hearing nation. He is at every turn confronted with the failures of God's special and closely worn girdle meant to be *for a people, and for a name, and for a praise, and for a glory: but they would not hear.*¹⁵

The Analogy of the Fruitless Fig Tree

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.

And Jesus answered and said unto it, No man eat fruit of thee hereafter for ever. And his disciples heard it.

Mark 11:13-14

God's chosen nation was a lying, hypocritical, false representative of God. She lied to the nations about God's loving character, about God's holy way, about God gracious provisions for redemption. Everything about Israel was like a "braggart fig tree," that outwardly from a distance looked to be bearing fruit, but in reality was a lie and fraud and deceiver. When closely observed—as Christ *had looked round about upon all things* of the Temple just the evening before¹⁶—Israel had shown itself to be barren of real fruit; nothing good hung from God's special fig tree, Israel. Therefore, Christ took occasion to pronounce a similar curse upon it as representative of His formal curse upon the lying and failing fig tree nation, Israel.

And he spake also this parable; A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard: and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none.

¹⁵Jeremiah 13:11 ¹⁶Mark 11:11.

Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none: cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?

And he answering said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it:

And if it bear fruit, will: and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down.

Luke 13:6-9

There are similarities in certain respects between the fruitless fig tree and Israel. Both looked good outwardly, but both were worthless. Both made promises, the one oral and the other pictorial, but both nonetheless were promise-breakers. Christ anticipates no misunderstanding. He as God doomed Israel in analogous action when He doomed the fig tree to fruitlessness, which tree had symbolized God's planting, blessing, and expecting regarding Israel as His *people, and for a name, and for a praise, and for a glory: but they would not hear.*¹⁷

The Analogy of the Obstructing Mountain

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.*

Mark 11:23

Jesus meaning and emphasis is plain in another analogy, in another partial resemblance to Israel and her position as related to Him, their Messiah, and as related to the then disciples and Apostles' ministries in His absent. Unhearing Israel had become an obstacle, an enemy, and a hindrance to her own Messiah's program. The kingdom had an enemy that was at one time to have been its support. After Israel crucified Messiah, she persecuted Messiah's servants, disciples, and apostles.¹⁸ To Jesus she had become as an obstructive *mountain*, and He anticipated her mountainous

¹⁷ *Jeremiah 13:11*

¹⁸ Repeatedly related in *The Book of Acts*, and succinctly stated by the Apostle in *I Thessalonians 2:14-16*.

hindrance for His followers. Thus the practical rationale behind His wording precisely a certain mountain moved for them by faith.

A Mountain – Several possibilities for analogy and interpretation remain in this use of a *mountain*. Use by Jesus was according to a customary “Jewish figure of speech for a very great difficulty, and would be familiar to the disciples.”¹⁹ But two possible physical mountains could have been involved in Jesus’ reference, but only one application is behind them both.

First, if, as many believe, Jesus had spent the previous night in the Gethsemane Garden,²⁰ then the Mount of Olives could have been the specific mountain referenced. The disciples knew the obstacle and difficulty of its position, etc. and Christ used it to heighten their awareness of His illustration. Second, the mount of the Temple could have been Christ’s point of reference to illustrate the deterrent to which His analogy referred. Its use would be doubly effective for illustrating Israel’s hindrance to Him and to His kingdom work. The mount itself represented a formidable hill that was early used as a protective height to lessen the Temple’s vulnerability to Israel’s enemies. With that example before them, they would identify Israel herself as the hindrance, not just in the mount of the Temple but in Israel’s unbelief and rejection of Messiah.

That leads us to consider the real meaning of Christ’s analogous use of this mountain figure of speech.

The Mountain of Israel – Jesus did indeed use this figure of speech as reference above as a then major restriction to His program. His use is not one but nearly all the above possibilities combined into the nation of Israel as the principal mountain or obstacle which by faith He removed and cast into the sea (the world of nations). Jerusalem (Israel) is the antitype, the feature, the meant fulfillment and consummation of Jesus’ analogy in a *mountain*. Jerusalem was the mountain of God up until its removal by Christ’s official disavowals,

¹⁹ A. Plummer, op. cit., p. 265. ²⁰ “Primarily, this [*mountain*] would be the Mount of Olives, which was in their sight all the way.” Ezra Gould, *St. Mark* (Edinburg: T & T Clark, 1932), p. 218. Jesus frequented it regularly, *Luke 22:30*.

O Lord, according to all thy righteousness, I beseech thee, let thine anger and thy fury be turned away from thy city Jerusalem, thy holy mountain. [Added emph.]

Daniel 9:16a

But Christ removed it as the mountain of God. Mountain is used often in the Old Testament to denote a kingdom or government;²¹ therefore its use by Christ similarly refers to Jerusalem's set apart and elevated position as God's government—economy, management—on earth. It was displaced, but will be restored for one thousand years by the Messiah Who disavowed her,

And they shall bring all your brethren for an offering unto the LORD out of all nations upon horses, and in chariots, and in litters, and upon mules, and upon swift beasts, to my holy mountain Jerusalem, saith the LORD, as the children of Israel bring an offering in a clean vessel into the house of the LORD.

[Added emph.]

Isaiah 66:20

Christ's use of this commonly used figure of speech²² refers directly and pointedly to Israel, and that understanding is essential to correctly interpreting His associate promise concerning the anticipated believing prayer of His disciples and Apostles. They too will meet a mountain in Israel and Rome's governmental opposition, as well as other kinds and extenuating hindrances. Therefore, they and we need this promise of believing prayer to serve and to glorify God as Jesus did, and for those purposes alone.

²¹ *Isaiah 2:3; 4:5; 8:18; 11:0; 30:29; Jeremiah 16:16; 17:3; 51:25; Ezekiel 20:40; 28:14, 16; Daniel 2:35, 45, et al.*

²² " 'Removing mountains' was a Jewish figure of speech for a very great difficulty, and it would be familiar to the disciples." A Plummer, op. cit., p. 265.

THE PRAYER OF FAITH PART 2: *Mark 11:22-24*
THE PARALLEL TRANSCENDENT
SCRIPTURE AND ITS EXEGETICAL TRUTH
THAT INTERPRET THIS AUTHENTIC
BELIEVING PRAYER TOGETHER WITH ITS
OWN EXEGETICAL TRUTH.

²²*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, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.*

Mark 11:22-24

Consequent to Peter's interpretive exclamation, *Master, behold, the fig tree which thou cursedst is withered away*,²³ Christ ignored his erroneous supposition of a curse and goes immediately to the real issue involved, *the faith of God*. Jesus did not curse the fig tree, though His words did result in its doom, but uttered a prayer in a form of prophecy, "May no one eat fruit of you forever."²⁴ Designating it a curse is "Peter's view; the words as recorded are a prayer rather than a curse, and in them nothing is said about withering, but only perpetual fruitlessness. Hence Peter's surprise"²⁵ at the consumed tree. Christ does not dwell upon the deadness of the tree, but will call attention to the power of prayer that issues from God's kind of faith. Christ exercised this meaningful and important miracle to display His Messianic power and judgment, even His judgmental authority over, and power to remove, Israel from God's kingdom purposes.

³ *Mark 11:21* ²⁴ Literal translation of *Mark 11:14* ²⁵ A. Plummer, loc. cit.

Jesus now teaches His disciples of the prompt fulfillment of believing prayer. Christ's humanity relied on the Holy Spirit for the faith and for the power that issues in and from such believing prayer, and will now encourage His followers to pray similarly for such power as is necessary for God's ministry, such ministry being impossible to effect alone. What He now says in *Mark 11:22-24* is what He had exercised in prayer concerning the fig tree. The fig tree represented fruitless Israel and hence represented a *mountain* of obstacles and resistance that must be removed and cast into the dissolving sea of forgotten Gentile humanity. It is what His disciples must learn also to do, both to believe and to pray to remove the obstacles that would prevent their attainment of God's purposes.

Jesus will explain His own power and judgment as first issuing from *the faith of God* (*Mark 11:22-23*), which faith will result in effectual believing prayer (*Mark 11:24*), or what is creative prayer.

Consequently, the study of our text, *Mark 11:22-24* will be under two heads:

I. The Faith of God Creates, *Mark 11:22-23*.

II. The Faith of God Creates Prayer that Creates, *Mark 11:24*.

I. THE FAITH OF GOD CREATES

Mark 11:22-23.

Jesus' answer to the "braggart fig tree" in reality was believing prayer. Jesus' believing prayer intervened into the creation with an act of the Creator, Who to the Man, Christ Jesus, was God the Father. God actually interrupted the natural law with an apparent miraculous "barging in" to fulfill His purposes of redemption precisely as Christ had believed and prayed. Jesus had spoken to the fig tree with regard to Israel, had prophesied of the fig tree with regard to Israel, had prayed concerning the fig tree with regard to Israel. This prophecy, this Word of God spoken, this prayer of faith was entirely out of or by means of *the faith of God*.

A. THE FAITH OF GOD—*Have the faith of God,*²⁶ *Mark 11:22.*

The faith of God is the faith that Jesus possesses and demonstrated with the fig tree (Israel), else His faith was only supposition, assumption, and presumption, as is the faith that all men of this fallen environment possess. Just as faith is the gift from God to enable deliverance from sin,²⁷ so faith always and in every instance of its possession is a gift from God. Hence, faith is out of God else it is short of quality and character, lacking the attribute of God's kind of faith—*the faith of God*. As God Jesus could do whatsoever omnipotence designed, but as a Man He must exercise faith. Thus, His teaching to His disciples and to us on this occasion concerns this appropriation of God's faith by us mere men. This appropriation begins with understanding just from Whom and of Whom this faith must come; therefore our study of this command, *Have the faith of God*, will begin with its ending phrase, *of God*.

1. Faith: The Genitive of Kind, Sort, Class, *Have the faith of God.*

Our study must begin with this last phrase, *of God*, because we must become convinced that this reference to faith by Jesus

²⁶ Author's distinctive and more literal translation. ²⁷ *Ephesians 1:19; 2:8-9; Philippians 1:29; Colossians 2:12; I Corinthians 13:13.*

concerns basically two persons, namely God and the Man or man who is in possession of such faith; and that this is not just faith in God, but is God's faith given to man. This gift idea is important because its vindication is assured from its philosophy—as God's program, counsel, and ordained design. By that we mean, that just because it is God's foreordained will—i.e. the object of the faith—this faith will be granted, and must be granted to accomplish whatsoever is believed. The faith of authentic believing prayer originates in God—it is God's faith—and it is possessed by, or perhaps better, it is appropriated by men in order to accomplish or fulfill God's eternal purposes. This whole concept was at work in Christ's faith concerning the fig tree (Israel) and any other *mountain* of obstruction facing Christ or His disciples. Originally in this context, this *faith of God* became the possession of Jesus, and now in His absence He makes promise that it may on occasion become appropriated by His disciples, when such a mountain of obstruction must be removed in order to fulfill God's ordained purposes.

The original phrase that Jesus prefaces His teaching this prayer of faith is ΕΧΕΤΕ ΠΙΣΤΙΝ ΘΕΟΥ, literally, "Have (the) faith of God." The word group, *of God*, is the focus of attention; it is key to understanding Jesus' following word on believing prayer. It is a Greek genitive case that relates two words to one another. "It would appear that the basal function of the genitive (case) is to set more definitely the limits of an idea as to its class or kind."²⁸ As with all truth, some controversy exists as how to translate and so understand Jesus' words. We will seek the help of scholarly Greek authorities. The Greeks themselves consider Mr. A. T. Robertson to be the foremost authority of Koine Greek, the Greek of the New Testament. Though now with his Lord, he continues much influence through his many works on New Testament Greek. Therefore, we shall quote him and other distinguished authorities

²⁸ H. E. Dana and Julius R. Mantey, A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament (New York: Macmillan, 1966), p. 73.

to help reach a conclusion concerning how this particular phrase is to be interpreted. Basically, it is either as the Authorized Version (and most other) renders it, *Have faith in God*, or it is as we translate, *Have the faith of God*. While we would readily admit the usual meaning, *in God*, as certainly contained in the Greek, it does not sufficiently convey what Jesus said and meant.

As Mr. Robertson begins to list the different usage of the genitive case that the *of God* phrase involves, he states, “For convenience it suits us to group these usages, but one must think that the Greeks themselves looked at the whole matter [of the genitive case] much more simply. After all it is **the context** that varies rather than the genitive. The resultant idea is therefore **a matter of exegesis** rather than due to any particular label to be attached [Added emph.].”²⁹ The importance of this statement resides in the distinction between the objective and the subjective genitive. As their names suggest, quite a distinction exists between them, as far as objectivism is from subjectivism. The fundamental difference between the two as involves *Mark 11:22* is the subjective, which leads to the translation *faith of God*, versus the objective, *faith in God*.

Then under the head, The Subjective Genitive and immediately before his explanation of The Objective Genitive (where he classes *Mark 11:22*), he writes, “It [the subjective genitive] can be distinguished from the objective [genitive] use **only by the context**. Sometimes the matter is not clear. This (subjective) genitive is the common possessive genitive looked at from another angle. In itself the genitive is neither subjective nor objective, but lends itself readily to either point of view. The subjective can indeed be applied to the merely possessive genitive noted above³⁰ [Added emph.].”³¹

²⁹ A. T. Robertson, A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research (Nashville: Broadman, 1934), p.496.

³⁰ From which the quote in the previous paragraph is taken under The Possessive Genitive head.

³¹ A. T. Robertson, op. cit., p. 499.

Next under the head, The Objective Genitive, when applying ΕΧΕΤΕ ΠΙΣΤΙΝ ΘΕΟΥ (*Have faith in/of God, Mark 11:22*) to that usage (and so *Have faith in God*), he concludes, “though the genitive does not mean ‘in’ **but only the God kind of faith** [Added emph.].” Therefore, we must take that understanding also **and apply it to the context and historical significance**³² surrounding *Mark 11:22* (as noted in PART I), and so rationally translated it is *of God*, according to the true sense of the genitive.

This³³ means that if we are true to the context and to spiritual exegesis we must understand this phrase and translate this phrase, *the faith of God*, and not confine it to *faith in God*. The “of,” as Mr. Robertson defines it, means the faith *of* the God kind, *of* the God sort, the God sort *of* faith; and further, it means the faith “out of” God, “from” God, and “by means of” God.

2. Faith: The Unseen Substance of God—His Will

Have the faith of God.

Jesus means to accent the source of this faith as God, which makes the faith that moves mountains a resource provided His disciples through the Word and prayer. He would have disciples possess or appropriate the same faith He displayed throughout His ministry, and especially exhibited in His power to judge Israel in the analogy of the fig tree episode. When confronted with the mountainous obstacles of authentic discipleship, disciples can expect to remove them practically and essentially as hindrances when possessed of God’s faith. This main idea of Jesus is comprehended by more quotes. “It (the genitive) is the

³² “The resultant idea (of the Genitive case) will naturally vary greatly according as the root-conception of the case is applied to different words and different contexts. But the varying element [that determines how to translate it] is not the case, but the words and different contexts.” “At every stage one needs to recall the root-idea of the case (genus or kind) and find in that and the environment and history (surrounding the particular text) the explanation.” [Added emph.] A. T. Robertson, op. cit., pp. 493, 494, respectively.

³³ I.e. the conclusive rational conclusion to all of the former technical Greek-related details and premises.

case of genus (ΓΕΝΟΣ [“kind, sort, species”]) or kind.” “The adjectival possessive pronoun...is a mere variation of the genitive case....”³⁴; and applied to *Mark 11:22*, it would be, *Have God’s faith*, meaning, *Have the faith that God possesses and can be only from His hand*.

Ultimately, the root idea of this genitive is genus, or as Mr. Robertson, ΓΕΝΟΣ, which means generation, origin, creation, “kind, sort, species.”³⁵ A definite act of creative power is meant. There exists a certain kind, sort, species, of faith that is of the God variety. That faith is what relates mutually with God. It parallels His mind’s setting, or corresponds to the Almighty’s plan and designs. The faith that comes from God harmonizes with His music and plays only in accompaniment with His leadership. That is the greater significance of this *of God* kind of faith.

Though *the faith of God* is unseen—its substance is spiritual hence it is unseen—it is not unknown. Jesus knew God’s will; therefore He believed God’s will. Since *faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God*,³⁶ one knows the will of God through His Word and has faith from the Word. God’s Word is His will signified to all who choose to know His will. The faith that God grants is through what is revealed to man in His Word. Generally, one can say that Jesus knew the Word concerning Israel, and according to the Word and will of God He simply believed it. His actions during this final week of public ministry were engaged in fulfilling what He knew to be God’s will. His prophetic prayer of the fig tree’s fruitlessness marked analogically Israel’s dismissal, which God chose to manifest that final week through this miracle. He manifested His will in other actions, discourses, and parables because it was of great importance to show the removal of Israel as God’s minister in order to verify to the church its new and essential ministry of the Gospel. Coupled with that need for the disciples to be convinced of Israel’s removal was the added resource of this faith. This illustrated and promised power of faith was to enable

³⁴ A. T. Robertson, op. cit., p. 493 ³⁵ The Analytical Greek Lexicon (New York: Harper & Bros., n.d.), p. 79. ³⁶ *Romans 10:17*

their ministries amidst the obstacles of Israel's entrenched and stubbornly claimed and attempted continuance in its supposed kingdom ministry. The disciples now knew resolutely their new ministry and the promise of the illustrated power of faith to succeed.

3. God: The Origin of Possessed and Appropriated Faith *Have the faith of God.*

Have the faith of God; the *have* is an imperative mood. This is what the Greek authorities tell us “is the mood of command or entreaty—the mood of volition. It is the genus of the imperative to express the appeal of will to will.”³⁷ Jesus used this intimately with His disciples³⁸ to express and impress His will to their will. This very Word of Jesus to all, to us, is itself the originator of faith. This Word of God is sufficient to enable all disciples to *have the faith of God*. But there is a limit also with the use of this imperative *have*. “It [the imperative] expresses neither probability nor possibility, but only intention.”³⁹ This would indicate the expressed will of Jesus for His disciples as they meet with obstacles in serving Him, in loving Him, and in glorifying God, that His intention is that they *have the faith of God*.

The key is in the “having.” *Have* is ἔχω, “to hold, to seize, possess.” “To have, possess, have ready, be furnished with.”⁴⁰ Faith is πίστις from the verb, πειθω, “to persuade, endeavor to convince, influence by persuasion.”⁴¹ The noun of *Mark 11:22* is “firm persuasion, assurance, firm conviction,”⁴² and hence here in this context would mean, “to have been influenced by persuasion” and so one fully and firmly persuaded—a firm persuasion of God's kind of persuasion.

³⁷ Dana and Mantey, op. cit., p. 174.

³⁸ The *Have* is plural; all disciples without exception can appropriate God's kind of faith.

³⁹ Dana and Mantey, loc. cit.

⁴⁰ The Analytical Greek Lexicon, p. 180.

⁴¹ Op. cit., p. 314. ⁴² Ibid.

A Major Difficult Question: “How do we seize and hold persuasion of God’s will when it comes only from God’s persuasive powers?” To some this is a dilemma, perhaps so obvious is the truth of it that it is overlooked. We have suggested its source previously. One seizes, takes hold of God’s persuasion, and becomes convinced of God’s will through the saturation of His Word. Seize the Word with the renewed mind for an increased and whole saturation of God’s will, and one in that manner will *have the faith of God*. Here is Jesus’ clear enunciation of it,

If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.

John 15:7

Two requirements are here set forth that enable disciples to *have the faith of God*. They are to abide in Christ, and to have His words abiding in oneself. Then the disciple *shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you*. To *abide in Christ* is literally to remain in Him and not to depart from Him. What is this but to hold constant communion with Christ and to be seizing His Word into one’s mind? Then with the influence of an Indwelling Christ over the activities of life and His Word’s influence over the thoughts, the desires, and the will, what is asked, though it *be what ye will*, shall become into creation for you.⁴³ This is the faith that brings the Creator into our affairs because our prayers are His will. We have *the faith of God*, and seek His will only, just as did Jesus. Here is the spiritual but practical formula for *the faith of God* and thus fruitful prayer: *Abide in me* (communion with the Divine), and *my words abide in you* (instruction by the Divine). That combination assures the faith exercised in prayer to be the God kind, the God sort, the God class, God’s faith, and what He wills.

B. THE CREATIVE POWER OF THE FAITH OF GOD, *Mark 11:23*.

²³*For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into*

⁴³ *It shall be done*, is one Greek word, γΕΝΗΘΕΤΑΙ, “to come into existence, to be created, exist by creation,” Analytical Lexicon, op. cit., p. 78.

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.
Mark 11:23

If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.

John 15:7

Delight thyself in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.

Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass.
Psalms 37:4-5

The phrase, *but shall believe*, is Jesus' qualifying rectitude that arranges creation;⁴⁴ it moves mountains. This faith, which is God's faith, is the Creator's own persuasion; it is *the faith of God*, hence it precisely follows God's own certitude that is sure of fulfillment and implementation. *Shall believe* is πιστευν, a present tense subjunctive from the verb, πειθω, "to persuade, endeavor to convince, influence by persuasion."⁴⁵ The circumstance of the moved mountain is the disciples' persuasion, *if he believes that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith*. *Shall come to pass*⁴⁶ is an allusion to a created act, concerning its persuasion was through Christ's Indwelling Presence and the Word's abiding influence upon the mind. This believing disciple is fully persuaded that what he is praying is God's persuasion also. God's persuasion refers to the Creator's mind as established in His Divine Decrees. Whatsoever God is persuaded of is being systematically worked out through constant Providential intervention and by His programming of earthly and heavenly

⁴⁴ Our prayers may seem to change things in creation; however prayers, as well as their effect, which originate from the faith of God, were from the beginning preordained by God, and hence are a part of original creation.

⁴⁵ Analytical Lexicon, op. cit., p. 314.

⁴⁶ *Shall come to pass* is one Greek word, γινεται, as *John 15:7, it shall be done, γενησεται*, both from the root, γινουμαι, "to come into existence, to be created, exist by creation," Analytical Lexicon, op. cit., p. 78. Q.v. fn.#41.

events. When a disciple possesses God's appropriated faith (persuasion) through the influences of a saturated mind from the Word, he has the same persuasion as God. In such manner he becomes engaged in a sort of procreation as he believes and speaks in prayer and to creation when God at the same time is speaking. Consequently, there is mutuality between the believing disciple and God. What the believing disciple believes through the Word is happening simultaneously with the Creator's continuous cultivation amongst His creation.

1. The Creative Power of God, verse 23a

For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea.

The power of God in prayer is for the purposes of God, to fulfill His counsels, plans, and ordained thoughts, and to grant us believing petitioners His joy by participating in His glory.

Delight thyself in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.

Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass. *Psalms 37:4-5*

The Psalmist (David) has collected short Divine statements of God's truth and the principles of God's ways on earth. But the Psalm has a reoccurring theme: God's Overruling Government in His creation's day by day affairs. David stresses the active participation of God as the righteous Judge, but One Who cares for and takes especial attention of His children on earth. The Psalm seems to encourage its reader to leave the management and governing of this life to God. Throughout the Psalm, God is referenced as personally involved in controlling everything in this life, and the Psalm has but one reference to prayer near its beginning, which is our particular reference for this lesson.

The beginning of the Psalm has a specific relation to the verses of our use (*vs. 3-4*). First, David lays down the theme of the prosperity of the wicked and their final end in *verses 1-2*. *Fret not*

thyself because of evildoers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity. For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb. Then he establishes his theme: God, the Creator and Proprietor and Governor over the earth and its affairs. And He is to be trusted and obeyed, with the promise of having a continuing place in His flock (allotted inheritance) and His Shepherding graces to us, *Trust in the Lord, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed, verse 3.*⁴⁷

The Psalm contains an unspoken, or a sort of shrouded reference to, prayer in *verses 4-5*, and leaves us mostly to trust God in His Providential Government of Love, but this one reference to prayer has as its basis a harmony with God that delights in the Almighty's delightful Person. The psalmist is in such rapport with God that his thoughts are God's thoughts and his ways are in unison with God's ways. So much so is this compatibility and unanimity that the desires of his heart are just what God will have willed to grant.

This is his prayer, *Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.* To preserve the psalm's theme of trust in God's Providential Shepherding, the Psalmist does not want to give emphasis to explicit or voiced prayer to God.⁴⁸ The reigning *desires* of eminently pious people are that they may glorify God on earth, grow in the knowledge and grace of Christ, progress in holiness (*keeping commandments*), and usefulness (*fruit*), comfort (*we abiding in love and it abiding in us*), and courage and endless *joy*. Before prayer can be uttered and while they are yet just the *desires of our hearts*, they are

⁴⁷ *thou shalt be fed, raah*, a comprehensive word denoting the ultimate care of one's sheep, "to feed a flock, including all the care of a shepherd over his flock." William Wilson, *Old Testament Word Studies* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1978), p. 171. Notice the care of our Shepherding God for us sheep throughout the psalm, *vs. 6, 9, 11, 18, 19, 23-25, 28, 34, 39-40.*

⁴⁸ *Desires* is *miwahlah* from *sahal*, "to ask." The noun here used means "prayers, petitions." The Verb is used scores of times for the prayers of God's people, *Psalms 2:8 Ask of me, and I shall give the heathen...; Psalms 122:6, Pray for the peace of Jerusalem.* The noun is used only here and in *Psalms 20:5, The Lord fulfill all thy petitions.*

granted by His Loving Providence, *Psalms 139:4, For there is not a word on my tongue, but, lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether.*

A Yielded Will

Those things that he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith, Mark 11:23c.

Delight thyself also in the Lord; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart, Psalms 37:4.

As we hold union with Christ, our lawless lusts of the flesh are subdued, and their unlawful desires will be held in check farther away from our prayer life by the grace and power of an Indwelling Christ. The communing heart finds *delight in the Lord* as His beauties are relished; consequently the desires of his heart are filled with those beauties and their expression in prayer will be granted. Communion with Christ and with His words⁴⁹ conforms the desires of one's heart and mind to His will; and in such manner what is asked in prayer is both the will of us supplicants and the will of God. And hence the limitation of John on prayer is fully understandable,

¹⁴ *And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us:*

¹⁵ *And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.*

I John 5:14-15

Christ in *John 15:7* and John in this verse solve the mystery of effective prayer—even creative prayer—originating from mortal and finite men to the sovereign and purposeful Almighty Creator.

A Delighted Will and Whatsoever Such Delighted Will Saith

He shall have whatsoever he saith.

Delight thyself in the Lord, and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.

When the Lord is the *delight* of one's *desires* then *He shall have whatsoever he saith*. The connection is readily understood. *Delight thyself*, is the Hebrew, anag, "to be delicate; to delight in

⁴⁹ *John 15:7.*

anything.”⁵⁰ The original and root meaning of anag is “to live softly and delicately.”⁵¹ The psalmist exhorts, “Be delicate in the Lord so you do not slight His sensibilities or His sensitiveness—He is Holiness and Absolute Purity.” As the cultural phrase, “Walk on eggs” and would be, “Walk on eggs in prayer,” or “Walk on eggs as to what one *saith* in prayer.” “And be so continuously thoughtful of His will as to become habitually delighted in it above all else.” *Delight*—be delicate toward and act softly in—*thyself in the Lord*. “Bend, turn, incline, and renew your heart’s desires to be as His desires and delights.” This is *the faith of God*. As this mindset settles in, your most exquisite delight is in the existence, names, titles, attributes, works, Providence, Words, and ordinances of God. He who thus delights himself in the Lord will have holy wishes, pleasing to the Most High, and *He will give thee the desires of thine heart*, that is, *he shall have whatsoever he saith*.

Delight thyself in the Lord. In the human realm, one might think to like and *delight* in another person. But his will is contrary to your will. His choices in life are ugly to your choices. His desires in this life to do this or that are not at all according to your standard. His way is contrary to your way. His habits in life are appalling and odious to your living. His habits in recreation or hobbies are corrupt and detestable, and even those that are not immoral are in areas of your particular dislike. His words are contrary to your words. He speaks with a “forked tongue.” Untruth flows freely from his mouth. He utters falsehoods deluxe. Profanities are nearly in every other utterance. His espoused proposals in business are corrupt. Can you delight in him? NO! His will and way and word is what you hate; therefore you do not delight in him, but contrariwise you abhor him because it is the will, way, and word of a person that fundamentally is what and who you are not. And thus is the man whose delight is in the Lord. Only

⁵⁰ Wilson, op. cit., p. 114.

⁵¹ William Gesenius, Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1969), p. 641.

the man whose own will, way, and word is in accord with and in harmony with the Lord's will, way, and Word can *delight in the Lord* as referenced by the inspired Psalmist. Then *whatsoever he saith* in prayer will also be in strict accord with God since his *delight is in Him*; therefore *he shall have whatsoever he saith in prayer*.

2. The Single Mind of the Faith of God *and shall not doubt in his heart.*

Our main duty in prayer is to look wholly away from self, as does real justifying faith as well as real believing prayer, and in that single-mindedness seek to glorify God in self-abandonment. *Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee; because he trusteth in thee. Isaiah 26:3.*

When one's mind is not *stayed on thee*, a doubleminded disposition results wherein lies unbelief and fleshly desires.

⁵If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.

⁶But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed.

⁷For let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord.

⁸A double minded man is unstable in all his ways.

James 1:5-8

Jesus warns of prayer instability when void of *the faith of God*. As God is the absolute stability, *Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure,*⁵² *the faith of God* partakes of that steadfastness and conclusiveness of God, *never doubting*. James makes clear what double-mindedness is by defining it as unbelief and hesitancy. The Word must have been the basis for this prayer referenced by Jesus else its instability. Christ

⁵² *Isaiah 46:10.*

authenticates prayer from real faith—the *faith of God's* production via Providence, the Word, and the Spirit—, which will know nothing of *wavering*. Jesus and James used identical Greek words, though translated differently in the Authorized Version, *doubt* and *wavereth* respectively, διακρινω. This Greek word is literally, “to judge through,” and hence, “to make a distinction or difference.” But as used of prayer and faith it means “to make a distinction mentally.”⁵³ When prayer wavers into divided possibilities or feasibilities, then the God of undivided possibilities or feasibilities will not hear that prayer.

A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways. This person who shall not receive anything of the Lord is unstable according to James (v.7 and also meant by Jesus in Mark), meaning inconsistent, unquiet, turbulent, tending to waver in opinion and showing indecision. The prayer of doubt is without sureness, and full of skepticism about God and His love and His glory with regard to the matter prayed. This inconsistency stems from double-mindedness.⁵⁴ James seems to have “coined” this word to emphasize particularly what Jesus meant with regard to *the faith of God* and its stability, touched as it is with the Father's ordained purposes. *Doubting nothing* means a God-originated, a God-ordained and a God-stable prayer and faith. This is a single mind from a single eye.

⁵³ Analytical Lexicon, op. cit., p. 92.

⁵⁴ *A double minded man is unstable in all his ways, James 1:8.* Double minded is one Gk. word, διψυχος, made up of δις, “twice,” met. “in the sense of ‘entirely, utterly’; [Just as we say, “That is twice as bad,” when we mean “entirely bad.”] [Analytical Lexicon, op. cit., pp. 108-9] prefixed to ψυχη, “soul,” one's intellect, volition, and feelings. “Soul” refers to that something of humans that is one's altogether subjective reaction to outside stimuli, e.g. self-consciousness as regards the world or environment. I.e. ψυχη (soul) with δις (“twice, entirely”) prefixed would make James' meaning, “A man who is thinking, willing, and feeling entirely subjectively. He is not much influenced by God or His Word or Spirit,” thus in accord with Jesus' truest antithetical meaning of *doubting nothing*, and entire context (vs. 22-24).

3. The Single Minded Prayer Gains Created Things of God by means of the Faith of God

But shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith.

Mark 11:23c

*Commit thy works unto the Lord, and he will establish
your thoughts.*

Proverbs 16:3

But shall believe is a commitment, a persuasion by the influences of God in His Word and by His Spirit, from πειθω, “to persuade, endeavor to convince, influence by persuasion.”⁵⁵ When God persuades, that persuasion that one has is *the faith of God* truly; therefore *those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith* because those things are God’s ordained, fixed, and stable purpose. Thusly, the single mind fixed on God gains insight into God’s persuasion so that it becomes also the fixed single mind of the supplicant. *Whatsoever he saith* in prayer has become authentic believing prayer, the prayer of faith, which is incited by possessing *the faith of God*. The *shall come to pass* is one Greek word, γινετο, “to come into existence, to be created, exist by creation.”⁵⁶ God creates not according to any man’s *saith* or prayer or will or anything else; but only from and by His own purpose and will and Sovereign exercise of Creator Authority. Consequently, it is this faith of God, this persuasion from God, this Word of God, appropriated and settled in one’s single-focused mind that is the source of this knowledgeable faith and its consequent *saith* or single-minded prayer.

Solomon’s wisdom perceived this concept of real faith, *the faith of God*, as being a single persuasion that corresponds with the foreordained and preordained purposed will of God.

*Commit thy works unto the Lord, and he will establish
your thoughts.*

Proverbs 16:3

⁵⁵ Analytical Lexicon, op. cit., p. 180.

⁵⁶ Same Greek word as in *John 15:7*, γενησεται, q.v. p. 12 with fn. #42, Analytical Lexicon, op. cit., p. 78.

The faith in Solomon's proverb is expressed, *Commit thy works unto the Lord*. *Commit* is from the Hebrew, galal, an onomatopoeic word that imitates the noise of a globe, sphere, or other round body rolled forward quickly. Hence, its meaning is to roll and used by Hebrews as to "commit, transfer, or change."⁵⁷ To galal one's works was to roll them or transfer them to another, and in this proverb's usage, *unto the Lord*. The significance of faith is a committing whatever is involved *unto the Lord*. This proverb is not suggesting these works are committed after but before executing them. This would be trusting, committing, and transferring them to the Lord in advance of planning, attempting, executing. This is precisely as our Lord means for His disciples to commit their works unto Him, before prayer and before execution.

Thy works applied to our Lord's words are those efforts in the Lord's ministry (Kingdom). This again denotes the Kingdom disciple's service at fulfilling Christ's commission left to His church in His absence. Israel has been deposed and His church will have His *works* to fulfill as Israel failed to carry out. The context for *Mark 11:22-24* is such that the *whatsoever he saith* is whatsoever obstacle any *mountain* or any pompous *fig tree* might present. Only such *works* as are His works can be honestly *committed unto the Lord*, and only in advance, and only *whatsoever* delays, encumbers, obstructs, or arrests His redemptive purposes. This narrows this *whatsoever* significantly, but the promise in the verse of *thy thoughts shall be established* narrows it more significantly.

This committing or rolling one's works *unto the Lord* is equivalent to possessing *the faith of God*, the same as *believing*, the same as *doubting not*, the same as being persuaded with the persuasion of God. In the role of God's inspired instructor, Solomon promises that *whatsoever* is transferred unto the Lord, one's *thoughts shall be established*. Need it be said (to repeat it again so to make this very clear) that what one transfers *unto the Lord*

⁵⁷ Gesenius, op. cit., p. 172.

must be of such nature and origin as to be transferable? When our anticipated and planned and needed works are transferable and are indeed transferred, our *thoughts will be established*.

Established thoughts are God's thoughts. *Thoughts* is chasac, "counsel, purpose, plan, what one meditates or has devised."⁵⁸ This references intentions, what is formed in the mind, computing, reckoning, what one plans to do, aims at, what one has in mind to be done. In other words, and as applied to our present study and as relates to Christ and His faithful disciples, these established thoughts have become prayer. For spiritual and Christ-abiding disciples, *thoughts* of what is intentioned, what one has in mind, is always the subject of prayer. But apart from that, whatsoever these thoughts are, they *shall be established*.

Established is kuwn, "set up firmly, give permanence to."⁵⁹ Its stem is niph'al, "the simple passive."⁶⁰ This means that the permanence is given from another source, God. Therefore, we might rather emphasize the passive stem by translating it, "God confirmed or ratified *thoughts*" The promised thing is a ratified or God-validated or Divinely legalized mind-set, which is given the one so committing one's *works* (prayers) *unto the Lord*. God here promises to effect one's mind (faith) to make it conformed to the Divine mind. When one rolls and transfers one's works over to the Lord in a genuine commitment of faith in Him and in His best volition, then one's whole devised program will become legalized with the authority of God. God can make valid by His formal approval because faith—the appropriated faith of God, real commitment to God—brings our mind into union with His mind. Our volition—the power of choice and decision—has also intuitively appropriated God's own volition. Again, this is the affect

⁵⁸ Wilson, op. cit., p. 444.

⁵⁹ William Holiday, A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971), p. 153.

⁶⁰ Kyle Yates, The Essentials of Biblical Hebrew (New York: Harper & Row, n.d.), p. 48.

of *the faith of God*, namely, the possession of the persuasion of God, His decrees and His from everlasting to everlasting preordained will. What Solomon's wisdom assures is the faith that absolutely commits one's endeavors (which includes prayers) to God will be effectively God-originated and thus will be His will after all. That absolute faith has to be *the faith of God*, from God, and according to God.

II. THE FAITH OF GOD CREATES PRAYER THAT CREATES, *Mark 11:24*.

A. THE FAITH OF GOD PRODUCES PRAYER THAT IS THE VOLITION OF GOD, *Mark 11:24a*, *Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire.*

Jesus' *therefore* denotes His application of both the reality of this faith of God and the creative powers available to His trusting, believing, and serving disciples. Jesus would have his disciples make a practical use of the creative faith in their prayer ministries. In an altogether pragmatic application disciples can put to the test this promised faith of God and prove its creative power in honest prayer. Such a concept as creative praying will bring disciples' volition into unison with God's volition. "Prayer is appointed to convey the blessings that God ordains to give; let us constantly use the appointed means, and may the result be ever increasing day to day."⁶¹

The Decreed Volition of God

In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the purpose of his own will. [Added emph.] *Ephesians 1:11*

God works out everything in creation according to his persuasion (purpose); therefore the power of prayer is its faith, because *the faith of God* is God's persuasion. "True prayer is the decrees of God in another form,"⁶² and God's persuasion is founded upon His decrees.⁶³

"GOD hath decreed in Himself, before the world was, concerning all things, whether necessary, accidental or voluntary, with all circumstances of them, to work, dispose, and bring about all things according to the counsel of His own will, to His glory."⁶⁴

⁶¹ Charles Haddon Spurgeon, The Metropolitan Pulpit (Pasadena: Pilgrim Publications, 1975), Vol. & p. unknown.

⁶² Spurgeon, *ibid.*

⁶³ "Though we often speak of the decrees of God in the plural, yet in its own nature the divine decree is but one single act of God." L. Berkhof, Systematic Theology (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), p. 102.

⁶⁴ The First London Confession of Faith (Rochester: Backus, 1981), p. 1.

Consequently, prayer that is from *the faith of God*, which is given by God either through His Word, His intuitive Spirit, or Providence, contains the decreed will of God—it is His volition decreed in eternity past—, since it is genuine believing prayer. Or as Christ designated it, *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*. The sureness of this prayer of faith is its accord with and origin from the volition of God as purposed in His eternal decrees.

The Decreed Volition of Faith

The God-controlled mind appropriates the power of God through believing prayer.

If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.

John 15:7

When Christ promised only His abiding disciple, *shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you*, He has limited what is asked to whatsoever His abiding Presence and words shaped. The *if* conditions this promise on, first the disciple to *abide in me*, and second, that *my words abide in you*. In one sense Christ's words to His disciple would be only what the decreed volition of God chose in eternity past. Yet, that the individual disciple's own volition is making the request of his own exercise of will is also true. This is really antinomous in so far as complete understanding may be concerned, but both are absolute truth. This is much like original faith in deliverance from sin and personal salvation. That faith is a gift from God, so declared clearly in Scripture; but each believer chose Christ, believed truly and came to Jesus from his own desire for Him and for freedom from sin and its penalty. This combination is at work in the prayer of faith also. Prayer comes from our hearts, our needs, our feelings of divine contact and divine assistance. But all those needs, feelings, and desires are at and from His Providential and intuitively active Hand. In the end and

concerning the prayer of faith, authentic believing prayer appropriates the volition of God and makes it one's own volition. *What things soever ye desire is, when one possesses the faith of God, really what things soever God desires.*

This faith of God, and the very principle of faith, is given to us to use and employ to the glory of God. In order to accomplish this, three principals are crucial. First, faith itself is a humbling and self-emptying grace, for it is the extension of one's need toward God's bounty. Second, faith is an acknowledgement of one's own insufficiency and need that leans altogether upon One Who is mighty to deliver from whatsoever. Third, faith is also an act of one's own will, whereby it surrenders to the authority of Christ and receives Him and His Sovereign will to reign over one's heart and life. These principles of faith in themselves assure God's glory as singularly displayed in every act of faith. That is the ultimate reason for man's creation—for all of creation—and certainly in accord with God's preordained and predestined volition.

Faith is an agency of God for man-to-God relations. We must not live upon faith as if faith were the source of life or love or even light. We must live upon Christ with faith only the wisely chosen vehicle for man-to-God relations. Many have attempted to fulfill *Mark 11:22-24* out of themselves. They attempt to live upon the faith that they presume to find or feel within themselves. Rather, the authentic believer is to feed upon the Word, and thereby be fed the faith of God that will find expression in this life only as he appropriates the Word's holy and blessed contents. Those contents will only be the three principals of faith just treated: humility, self-emptiness, and surrender. *According to your faith be it unto you. All things are possible to him that believeth.*⁶⁶ Faith is only an agent of the One Who alone can accomplish a *be it unto you*, and a *all things possible*. If we are constrained, bound, fettered concerning faith, the limitation it is not from God but in ourselves. God always responds to reliance in and counting upon His intervention. He

⁶⁶ *Matthew 9:29; Mark 9:23* respectively.

honors those who honor Him, who hold a firm conviction of His love, which conviction is only from the Word. Then will the agent—faith—be the means of knowing and experiencing His love, and in due course fully loving His love and thusly loving Him to His deserved proportion.

Our lack of faith is proportioned on our looking to Christ. It is true that in one sense God alone is the One Who increases faith, because it is *the faith of God!* But we must be careful not to blame Him for our own smallness of faith. Some might suggest that God has somehow and for some reason withheld from them strong faith. Instead of feeling in themselves any guilt or reproach for the feebleness of their faith, they blatantly attribute it to the Sovereignty of God. Yet the blame for unbelief is within our sin-afflicted frames, and we should honestly acknowledge it and penitently confess it before Him. When the disciples were filled with terror of the tempest and awoke their Master, saying, *Carest thou not that we perish?* He reproved them for their unbelief, saying, *Why are ye fearful? O ye of little faith!*⁶⁶ That fixes blame for an absent faith upon us. Again, Jesus charged His faithless disciples, *O fools, and slow of heart, to believe,*⁶⁷ which plainly put the blame on them for their scantiness of faith. We can change lacking faith to trusting faith when we lie soaking in Divine truth and so be filled with *the faith of God.* “It is a proof of a stronger and larger faith when the soul is more established in the Truth, when there is a steadier confidence in God, and when we make a greater use of His promises.”⁶⁸

To store up His precepts and promises and prescience is a privilege and duty that assure conduct and feed the soul. It is a privilege and duty to mix with faith every recorded sentence in His Holy Word, and in accord with its execution, faith will be nourished up into a higher state where resides His volition of ever-perfect, predestined, and foreordained love.

⁶⁶Mark 4:38 ⁶⁷Matthew 8:26

⁶⁸Arthur W. Pink, Spiritual Growth—Its Nature (Granbury: pbministries.org, n.d.), 4.

B. THE FAITH OF GOD PRODUCES PRAYER IN ACCORD WITH WHAT GOD FORMERLY PREDESTINED, *Mark 11:24b, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.*

The faith of God accomplishes prayer already assured *that ye received them*. The *receive* of the Authorized Version translates a Greek past tense. It is ελαβετε, second person, plural, aorist two, indicative active,⁶⁹ from λαμβάνω, “have given to, get, receive.”⁷⁰ Jesus makes what is asked in believing prayer due to possessing the faith (persuasion) of God a present reality, already received at the act of asking. This is genuine faith, *the faith of God* or as Mr. Robertson, “That is the test of faith, the kind that sees the fulfillment before it happens.” The predestination of God is what God has indeed decreed to be that accords with His persuasion. Not all prayer would necessarily fall into this classification, but only believing prayer—the prayer of faith—is according to God’s predestinated counsel; therefore it “had been given to” the seeker with the faith. In this allusion to a past reception or an already received affirmative answer when prayed, Christ moves from the effect of *the faith of God* on volition—both God’s and disciples’—to the effects of *the faith of God* on substance, reality, what happens in everyday life in the creation. *The faith of God produces* God’s volition in the prayerful believing disciple’s volition, and so effects prayer. Just because it has affected the will of God it must have affected the predestined and ordained will of God. The explanation of this phrase, *the faith of God*, given above,⁷¹ does not convey what is *the faith of God*. That explained the mechanics of the phrase as well as its related meaning as respects its mechanics. But now we bear down on its comprehensive reality concerning God’s predestination, preordination, and time-related fulfillment of His will.

⁶⁹ Analytical Lexicon, op. cit., p. 129.

⁷⁰ Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, A Greek-English Lexicon (London: Oxford University Press, 1968), p. 1027.

⁷¹ *Supra*, pp. 8 ff.

Jesus made clear reference to the ordained and predestined will of God—the preordination of God—in the word, *ye received—have had given to, got— them*. The preordination of God is what He as God predestined, decided, and determined to take place in creation. Mr. Spurgeon plainly spoke to these truths concerning genuine believing prayer,

“Oh! to think of this; that you a puny man may stand here and speak to God, and through God may move all the worlds. Yet when your prayer is heard, creation will not be disturbed; though the grandest ends be answered, providence will not be disarranged for a single moment. Not a leaf will fall earlier from a tree, not a star will stay in its course, nor one drop of water trickle more slowly from its fount, all will go on the same, and yet your prayer will have effected everything. It will speak to the decrees and purposes of God, as they are being daily fulfilled; and they will all shout to your prayer and cry, ‘Thou art our brother; we are decrees, and thou a prayer; but thou art thyself a decree, as old, as sure, as ancient as we are.’ Our prayers are God’s decrees in another shape. The prayers of God’s people are but God’s promises breathed out of living hearts, and those promises are the decrees, only put into another form and fashion. Do not say, ‘How can my prayers affect the decrees?’ They cannot, except in so much that your prayers are decrees, and that as they come out, every prayer that is inspired of the Holy Ghost unto your soul is as omnipotent and as eternal as that decree which said, ‘Let there be light, and there was light’; or as that decree which chose his people, and ordained their redemption by the precious blood of Christ. Thou hast power in prayer, and thou standest to-day among the most potent ministers in the universe that God has made. ... Thou hast power to make thy voice heard beyond the stars; where the thunders die out in silence, thy voice shall wake the echoes of eternity.”⁷²

⁷² Charles Haddon Spurgeon, The New Park Street Pulpit (Pasadena: Pilgrim Publications, 1975), VI, p. 336.

This is the prayer that is due to *the faith of God*, prayer that is His persuasion from eternity and was decreed just as authentic believing prayer *saith*.

With the whole truth of God as revealed in Scripture, we understand *Mark 11:22-24*.

²²*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 [is according to His Word and will] ye desire [i.e. sharing the mind of God], when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them [for God's purposes and glory].*

Mark 11:22-24

And all things, whatsoever [is according to His Word and will] ye shall ask in prayer, believing, [i.e. sharing the mind of God] ye shall receive [for God's purposes and glory].

Matthew 21:22

The God-controlled mind appropriates the power of God through believing prayer. *Commit thy works unto the Lord, and he will establish your thoughts. If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.*⁷³ The power of God in prayer is for the purposes of God, to fulfill His counsels, plans, and ordained thoughts, and to grant us believing petitioners His joy by sharing His glory. *Delight thyself in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart. Commit thy way*⁷⁴ *unto the LORD; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass.*

⁷³ *Proverbs 16:3; John 15:7* respectively. ⁷⁴ *Psalms 37:4-5*

And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us:

And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.

I John 5:14-15

And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.

I John 3:22

Therefore, our main duty in prayer is to look wholly away from self, as does real justifying faith as well as real believing prayer, and to seek to glorify God in self-abandonment. *Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee; because he trusteth in thee.*⁷⁵ A mind stayed on thee is a mind in which abides His Word, is a mind that delights in the LORD, is a mind that has established thoughts, is a mind that keeps [treasures and guards] his commandments, is a mind that is a believing mind, is a mind that is filled with the will of God, is a mind that in all things, whatsoever it shall ask in prayer, it shall receive. It is a mind full of the faith of God, being persuaded by and thereby filled by the will of God.

Final Application

*Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass.*⁷⁶

We should roll onto God all matters which, as obligations, burden us, and on account of their weight and difficulty cause us great anxiety, because nothing is too heavy or too hard for Him Who can overcome all difficulties and dissolve all perplexities. Then will our thoughts about the future of our duty, or about the course of things about us, or about our own life's course be happy; nothing will remain entangled or be a failure, but will be accomplished, and the end and aim realized. He who rolls his affairs over onto the Lord, will find Him ever ready to take charge of them all, and to carry them to a proper completion and establishment. But it must

⁷⁵ Isaiah 26:3 ⁷⁶ Psalms 37:5

be borne in mind that if I commit all to Him, I no longer choose for myself as to what the outcome should be, but say with confidence and joy, "Thy will be done." He would have every desire told out in His ear, and through believing, discover Him acting according to His love and unerring wisdom. That is the eternal persuasion of God and that is *the faith of God*. Amen!
