

Faith and Deeds Part 5

“20 But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? 21 Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? 22 Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? 23 And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God. 24 Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.” (James 2:20-24 KJV)

We will continue in this message to speak about the deeds and the faith that God wants us to do, as we are speaking of Abraham, and how his deeds went along his faith in God. Abraham was the first one mentioned in the Bible who gave his tithes to God as we read here, ***“17 And the king of Sodom went out to meet him after his return from the slaughter of Chedorlaomer, and of the kings that were with him, at the valley of Shaveh, which is the king's dale. 18 And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God. 19 And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth: 20 And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him tithes of all.” (Genesis 14:17-20 KJV)***

We will continue in this message to go through the Scriptures to learn more about tithing. We will speak about Jacob the grandson of Abraham of how he committed himself to God. Jacob while was on his journey to Haran to get a wife from there, in obedience to his father's instructions, the Lord God of Abraham and Isaac appeared to him in a dream and confirmed to him His promise to them. Let us read that event: ***“10 And Jacob went out from Beersheba, and went toward Haran. 11 And he lighted upon a certain place, and tarried there all night, because the sun was set; and he took of the stones of that place, and put them for his pillows, and lay down in that place to sleep. 12 And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it. 13 And, behold, the LORD stood above it, and said, I am the LORD God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed; 14 And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. 15 And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of. 16 And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, Surely the LORD is in this place; and I knew it not. 17 And he was afraid, and said, How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven. 18 And Jacob rose up early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put for his pillows, and set it up for a pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it. 19 And he called the name of that place Bethel: but the name of that city was called Luz at the first. 20 And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, 21 So that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the LORD be my God: 22 And this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house: and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee.” (Genesis 28:10-22 KJV)***

When Jacob had woken up from his dream, he committed his life to the Lord and made a vow to God. The Lordship of God over Jacob's life was evident by what he did in that place. Jacob saw and heard the Lord speak to him. Jacob was alone in that place but he expressed his worship to God. He called the place ***“Bethel”*** meaning the house of God. Jacob promised to give a tithe of everything that God would give him as long as he would be provided for and kept safe. Tithing that Jacob had committed himself to do sure was imparted and taught to him and to his father Isaac from Abraham, as God declared about Abraham, ***“19 For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him.” (Genesis 18:19 KJV)*** In the same way every one of us need to teach our children the principle of giving to God and teach them to give their tithes, their firstfruits, their offerings and their vows unto God.

Parallel to what Jacob experienced and vowed, the Church of God in the New Testament is the Bethel where true worshippers must meet God, experience Him, and fulfill their promises to Him, and as the following:

A. “Shall the LORD be my God:” (Genesis 28:21 KJV) These words express the Lordship of God over the worshipper's life. The word ***“Lord”*** means master. Hence, God should be followed and honored in every arena of the worshipper's life: education, marriage, family, work, and service. The Lord God should lead the worshipper through life, and be enthroned in his heart and everyday living. ***The Lord shall lead you and be in control over every aspect of your life. When you accept the Lordship of Christ in your life, in whatever decision and step you take the Lord shall be the one to give His decision in that.***

B. “And this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house:” (Genesis 28:22 KJV) These words express the commitment of the worshipper to be part of God's Church. The church is the family of God and the members are of God's household. When we are born again God put us in His church and that is our spiritual family. A worshipper commits his life to God and to the church where we serve God and helps build up God's people as we read here, ***“19 Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; 20 And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone.” (Ephesians 2:19-20 KJV)*** Everyone of you need to commit yourself to work with God to build His church.

C. “And of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee:” (Genesis 28:22 KJV) All the provision that a worshipper receives has to be tithed because God is the source of everything. Jacob promised a tithe of everything to acknowledge that God alone can protect him, God alone can provide for him, and God alone can prosper him. Jacob committed himself to the principle of tithing when he had nothing, and God hearkened to his vow and commitment and blessed him. In my teaching, I always say to those who lack and are in need, and in financial troubles, and to those who are looking for job opportunities to commit themselves to give their tithe to God and so experience the abundant blessing of God. I have seen many people who have made a commitment to bring their tithes even in their jobless state being blessed with opportunities for a job, employment, and income. ***Our God is faithful to what He has promised in His Word. Once you commit yourself to give your tithes to the Lord, the Lord shall open the floodgates of Heaven and bless you. Everything you have and you***

receive you need to tithe to God, acknowledging that God is the provider of all the good things for our benefits.

Now let us continue to examine the Scriptures from the life of Jacob to find out further points about tithing.

Indeed God blessed Jacob's journey. God gave him a suitable wife Leah, but he was not happy with God's choice and took Rachel, the sister, as wife in addition to Leah. Jacob served his uncle Laban, who had cheated him ten times for twenty years. Later, Jacob returned home as God had instructed him together with his big family. In his journey back home God protected him from the hands of his uncle Laban, and also when he arrived at his place, God protected him from his brother Esau who wanted revenge on him. Finally let us read where Jacob settled: *"18 And Jacob came to Shalem, a city of Shechem, which is in the land of Canaan, when he came from Padanaram; and pitched his tent before the city. 19 And he bought a parcel of a field, where he had spread his tent, at the hand of the children of Hamor, Shechem's father, for an hundred pieces of money. 20 And he erected there an altar, and called it EleloheIsrael."* (Genesis 33:18-20 KJV) Jacob set up an altar in Shechem and neglected what he had promised God that if the Lord would bless him he would return to Bethel and set up an altar there. This wavering of commitment by Jacob brought troubles in the life of his family as we can read here: *"1 And Dinah the daughter of Leah, which she bare unto Jacob, went out to see the daughters of the land. 2 And when Shechem the son of Hamor the Hivite, prince of the country, saw her, he took her, and lay with her, and defiled her. 3 And his soul clave unto Dinah the daughter of Jacob, and he loved the damsel, and spake kindly unto the damsel. 4 And Shechem spake unto his father Hamor, saying, Get me this damsel to wife. 5 And Jacob heard that he had defiled Dinah his daughter: now his sons were with his cattle in the field: and Jacob held his peace until they were come. 6 And Hamor the father of Shechem went out unto Jacob to commune with him. 7 And the sons of Jacob came out of the field when they heard it: and the men were grieved, and they were very wroth, because he had wrought folly in Israel in lying with Jacob's daughter: which thing ought not to be done. 8 And Hamor communed with them, saying, The soul of my son Shechem longeth for your daughter: I pray you give her him to wife. 9 And make ye marriages with us, and give your daughters unto us, and take our daughters unto you. 10 And ye shall dwell with us: and the land shall be before you; dwell and trade ye therein, and get you possessions therein. 11 And Shechem said unto her father and unto her brethren, Let me find grace in your eyes, and what ye shall say unto me I will give. 12 Ask me never so much dowry and gift, and I will give according as ye shall say unto me: but give me the damsel to wife. 13 And the sons of Jacob answered Shechem and Hamor his father deceitfully, and said, because he had defiled Dinah their sister: 14 And they said unto them, We cannot do this thing, to give our sister to one that is uncircumcised; for that were a reproach unto us: 15 But in this will we consent unto you: If ye will be as we be, that every male of you be circumcised; 16 Then will we give our daughters unto you, and we will take your daughters to us, and we will dwell with you, and we will become one people. 17 But if ye will not hearken unto us, to be circumcised; then will we take our daughter, and we will be gone. 18 And their words pleased Hamor, and Shechem Hamor's son. 19 And the young man deferred not to do the thing, because he had delight in Jacob's daughter: and he was more honourable than all the house of his father. 20 And Hamor and Shechem his son came unto the gate of their city, and communed with the men of their city, saying, 21 These men are peaceable with us; therefore let them dwell in the land, and trade therein; for the land, behold, it is large*

enough for them; let us take their daughters to us for wives, and let us give them our daughters. 22 Only herein will the men consent unto us for to dwell with us, to be one people, if every male among us be circumcised, as they are circumcised. 23 Shall not their cattle and their substance and every beast of their's be our's? only let us consent unto them, and they will dwell with us. 24 And unto Hamor and unto Shechem his son hearkened all that went out of the gate of his city; and every male was circumcised, all that went out of the gate of his city. 25 And it came to pass on the third day, when they were sore, that two of the sons of Jacob, Simeon and Levi, Dinah's brethren, took each man his sword, and came upon the city boldly, and slew all the males. 26 And they slew Hamor and Shechem his son with the edge of the sword, and took Dinah out of Shechem's house, and went out. 27 The sons of Jacob came upon the slain, and spoiled the city, because they had defiled their sister. 28 They took their sheep, and their oxen, and their asses, and that which was in the city, and that which was in the field, 29 And all their wealth, and all their little ones, and their wives took they captive, and spoiled even all that was in the house. 30 And Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, Ye have troubled me to make me to stink among the inhabitants of the land, among the Canaanites and the Perizzites: and I being few in number, they shall gather themselves together against me, and slay me; and I shall be destroyed, I and my house. 31 And they said, Should he deal with our sister as with an harlot?" (Genesis 34:1-31 KJV) Jacob's family faced the consequence when he wavered in his commitment toward God. Dinah, his daughter went out with the women of the land. She was introduced to a man, who finally raped her, and her two brothers Simeon and Levi avenged against the whole city of Shechem because they had treated their sister as a harlot. *"30 And Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, Ye have troubled me to make me to stink among the inhabitants of the land, among the Canaanites and the Perizzites: and I being few in number, they shall gather themselves together against me, and slay me; and I shall be destroyed, I and my house."* (Genesis 34:30 KJV) Typically, Jacob's family was the church now, but in the midst of danger. And the reason was Jacob, who had neglected his vow to God and did not go back to Bethel, the house of God to worship and pay his tithes, but he built up an altar in Shechem. Someone might say that Jacob had made his vow to God twenty years ago and so must have forgotten and that the Lord should have reminded him. The Lord did remind him about Bethel when He appeared to him and commanded him to go back from Padan Aram to his father's land. We can read that in the following Scripture:

"1 And he heard the words of Laban's sons, saying, Jacob hath taken away all that was our father's; and of that which was our father's hath he gotten all this glory. 2 And Jacob beheld the countenance of Laban, and, behold, it was not toward him as before. 3 And the LORD said unto Jacob, Return unto the land of thy fathers, and to thy kindred; and I will be with thee. 4 And Jacob sent and called Rachel and Leah to the field unto his flock, 5 And said unto them, I see your father's countenance, that it is not toward me as before; but the God of my father hath been with me. 6 And ye know that with all my power I have served your father. 7 And your father hath deceived me, and changed my wages ten times; but God suffered him not to hurt me. 8 If he said thus, The speckled shall be thy wages; then all the cattle bare speckled: and if he said thus, The ringstraked shall be thy hire; then bare all the cattle ringstraked. 9 Thus God hath taken away the cattle of your father, and given them to me. 10 And it came to pass at the time that the cattle conceived, that I lifted up mine eyes, and saw in a dream, and, behold, the rams which leaped upon the cattle were ringstraked, speckled, and grisled. 11 And the angel of God spake unto me in a dream, saying, Jacob: And I said, Here am I. 12 And he said, Lift up now thine eyes, and see, all the rams which leap

upon the cattle are ringstraked, speckled, and grisdled: for I have seen all that Laban doeth unto thee. 13 **I am the God of Bethel, where thou anointedst the pillar, and where thou vowedst a vow unto me: now arise, get thee out from this land, and return unto the land of thy kindred.**" (Genesis 31:1-13 KJV)

Now we need to notice that we need to be faithful to God and bring our tithes to the church that God had placed us in, that we are part of and where we are serving the Lord. I have seen many individuals and families destroyed and their lives unfruitful because they had failed to bring their tithes to the house of God. The portion they had failed to bring was destroyed and taken away from them by troubles, sicknesses, accidents, theft, and so on. **When you will withhold your tithes, the money will be taken from you but in sorrows and troubles**

Now Jacob, who was brokenhearted and fearful of the people in Shechem, needed to be restored. And God in His faithfulness reminded Jacob again of his commitment and covenant with God and commanded him to go back to Bethel: ***"I And God said unto Jacob, Arise, go up to Bethel, and dwell there: and make there an altar unto God, that appeared unto thee when thou fleddest from the face of Esau thy brother."*** (Genesis 35:1 KJV) Then Jacob truly repented of what he had done and recognized how his family was harmed because of his neglect of God's Word and his vow to God. ***"2 Then Jacob said unto his household, and to all that were with him, Put away the strange gods that are among you, and be clean, and change your garments: 3 And let us arise, and go up to Bethel; and I will make there an altar unto God, who answered me in the day of my distress, and was with me in the way which I went. 4 And they gave unto Jacob all the strange gods which were in their hand, and all their earrings which were in their ears; and Jacob hid them under the oak which was by Shechem. 5 And they journeyed: and the terror of God was upon the cities that were round about them, and they did not pursue after the sons of Jacob. 6 So Jacob came to Luz, which is in the land of Canaan, that is, Bethel, he and all the people that were with him. 7 And he built there an altar, and called the place Elbethel: because there God appeared unto him, when he fled from the face of his brother."*** (Genesis 35:2-7 KJV)

Some say that the amount Jacob had spent in Shechem in buying the land and in erecting the altar there is equivalent to his tithes, ***"19 And he bought a parcel of a field, where he had spread his tent, at the hand of the children of Hamor, Shechem's father, for an hundred pieces of money. 20 And he erected there an altar, and called it Elelohe-Israel."*** (Genesis 33:19-20 KJV) **It is not about money and how much he spent, but about his obedience to God and how much he needed to keep his commitment to God and to His Word. God is not after our money, but after us to keep abiding by His instructions. Someone may say that he can give his tithes in whatever church he wants. That is not correct because the pattern of the life and ministry of Jacob in Shechem as we noticed here with what his children were wearing is out of God's Word and the way that God wanted Jacob and his family to live. Jacob needed to take out his family from such a place and to cleanse them by removing from them the strange gods and the ear rings, etc, and to change their clothes. In the same way, you need to bring your tithes to the church of the sound teaching and that keep discipline and not accept idols, immoralities, mobiles and other gadgets in the hands of youth and children.**

You need to be honest with God and tithe all that you receive in the form of salary and privileges like house rent allowance, water and electricity allowance, internet allowance, transport allowance, food allowance, insurance allowance and so on as God instructed us.

"And all the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land, or of the fruit of the tree, is the LORD's: it is holy unto the LORD." (Leviticus 27:30 KJV) **Therefore, we need to be honest with God and tithe all that we receive. Also, if we neglect or withhold our tithes for a time then when we bring it back to God we need to add a fifth of its value. *"And if a man will at all redeem ought of his tithes, he shall add thereto the fifth part thereof."*** (Leviticus 27:31 KJV)

My dear and beloved: Now, come to the Lord and examine yourself and see is your life and your actions go along the true faith that you should have through Jesus Christ. Have you given your life to the Lord? Have you made your commitment to Him to serve Him in His house, and His family, the Church of God? Have you committed yourself to give your tithes to Him and to bring it to the store house in His church?

Remember the times that God was good to you and gave you victory; God is calling you today to be faithful to Him. Come to the Lord, repent from your sins and don't be afraid to commit yourself to the Lord as Jacob did. The Lord shall be gracious to you and He shall bountifully reward you.

Repent and renounce all your sins, and commit your life once again to Him and to His church and to give your tithes, your offerings and your firstfruits in full. Renounce your unfaithfulness and the sin of the lack of commitment toward God, and the lack of tithing. Renounce your wrong doing by neglecting God and moving away from Him and from His church after He had blessed you. Repent of such sin and show once again your faithfulness to God and have fellowship with Him and His church and come to Him with love and thankfulness for all the good things that He did to you.

Let us pray

My Prayer: Father God I come before you in the name of Jesus who died on the cross for my sins to give me eternal life. Lord thank you for your Word that teaches me your ways and the good works that you prepared for me and I need to do.

Confess and renounce all your sins. Confess your unfaithfulness, your bad example; renounce your worldliness, and your non willingness to discipline yourself and your children. Repent of your lack in reading God's Word, and lack of prayers. Renounce your yoke with friends and non believers. Renounce your lack of tithing and your non commitment to the church and to do the ministry.

Lord I repent, forgive me the following sins _____ .

Lord I commit myself to the principle of tithing that I learned in this message. Lord I commit myself to tithe all my incomes and to give my firstfruits, and bring to the storehouse in your church. Lord I commit myself to teach my children to tithe and to give their firstfruit and to be faithful to God's church and to the ministry.

Lord, thank you for my Brothers and Sisters who repented and had committed their lives to apply your Word and the instructions that we received in this message. Lord continue to bless them and provide all their needs to continue to serve you, and living their lives for you.

Lord help us as a church to continue apply the teaching that we had learned from you in this message and especially about tithing and giving the firstfruits. Lord we commit ourselves to continue to teach about that to our children and disciples. Lord protect us and continue to provide for us so we can continue to serve you and do the good works of you. Lord lead us by your Holy Spirit and speak to us to guide us so we will be aware to do your will. Lord refill us with the Holy Spirit and give us the spiritual gifts that we need to go and serve you. Lord lead us to go on and evangelize, and make new disciples and train new workers to go and plant more Bible studies and congregations for the church. Lord fulfill the vision of the church, 'Multiplication in peace with implementing the Whole will of God.' Lord bless us, enlarge our territory, let your hand be with us and free us from harm so that we will not feel pain. May the grace of the Lord Jesus and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all in Jesus name, Amen.

Faith and Deeds Part 5. James 2:20-24. Genesis 14:17-20. Genesis 28:10-22. Genesis 18:19. Ephesians 2:19-20. Genesis 33:18-20. Genesis 34:1-31. Genesis 31:1-13. Genesis 35:1-7. Leviticus 27:30-31.

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