

Come to Understanding

**They also that erred in spirit shall come to understanding,
and they that murmured shall learn doctrine. — Isaiah 29:24**

October 1, 2009

Volume 8 Number 19

Increase Our Faith

Our natural eyes see physical things. However, there is an unseen spiritual reality which those eyes cannot see. Paul describes that which is seen as being “temporal” and that which is not seen as being “eternal.” Physical things are temporary while the spiritual things are everlasting:

18 While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen *are* temporal; but the things which are not seen *are* eternal. -2 Corinthians 4

In a classic example of unseen spiritual reality, the war-
ring army of the king of Syria came in the night and sur-
rounded the city where the prophet Elisha was staying. In the early morning, Elisha’s servant looked about and saw the mighty Syrian army of horses and chariots. He cried out to Elisha, asking what they should do?

14 Therefore sent he there horses, and chariots, and a great host: and they came by night, and compassed the city about.

15 And when the servant of the man of God had risen early, and gone forth, behold, a host compassed the city both with horses and chariots. And his servant said to him, Alas, my master! how shall we do? -2 Kings 6

Elisha, however, could see something that his servant could not see. The mountain beyond the Syrian army was filled with a mighty spiritual army of Yahweh, prompting him to proclaim the reality that he saw:

16 And he answered, Fear not: for they that *are* with us *are* more than they that *are* with them. -2 Kings 6

After Elisha prayed, Yahweh showed his servant the spiritual reality that he was previously unable to see!

17 And Elisha prayed, and said, Yahweh, I pray you, open his eyes, that he may see. And Yahweh opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha. -2 Kings 6

Isaiah prophesied that a great light would shine upon the darkness among those who dwell in the shadow of death:

2 The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them has the light shined. -Isaiah 9

Yahshua (Jesus) was that spiritual light. He opened His earthly ministry by fulfilling this prophecy of Isaiah as He began preaching and calling upon people to repent:

16 The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light has sprung up.

17 From that time Yahshua began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. -Matthew 4

As Yahshua preached, He showed the power of the Spirit over physical afflictions, including blindness. Healings were accomplished by faith, as in the blind man who asked to receive his sight. Yahshua asked him:

41 Saying, What will you that I shall do to you? And he said, Lord, that I may receive my sight.

42 And Yahshua said to him, Receive your sight: your faith has saved you.

43 And immediately he received his sight, and followed him, glorifying God: and all the people, when they saw *it*, gave praise to God. -Luke 18

To see the reality of the unseen requires faith:

1 Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. -Hebrews 11

The Greek word that is translated as “substance” literally means “that which stands beneath.” It is the foundation upon which all hope is built. This foundation of faith is the evidence, or proof, that unseen things are real.

Unless we have a complete assurance of the reality of unseen things, we cannot see that which God reveals to us by His Spirit:

9 But as it is written, Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for them that love him.

10 But God has revealed *them* to us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God.

11 For what man knows the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knows no man, but the Spirit of God.

12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us by God. -1 Corinthians 2

The spiritual things of God can only be seen by faith. Without such faith, we can never please God. Faith is required

So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense,
and caused them to understand the reading. — Nehemiah 8:8

Come to Understanding

to believe that God really does exist. It is also needed to believe that He actually answers our prayers:

6 But without faith *it is* impossible to please *him*: for he that comes to God must believe that he is, and *that* he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. -Hebrews 11

God has given each of us a measure of faith:

3 For I say, through the grace given to me, to every man that is among you, not to think *of himself* more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God has dealt to every man the measure of faith. -Romans 12

However, each of us need to be careful not to think that our faith cannot be shaken. We need to know that our faith, just as our bodies, needs to be strengthened. Our bodies require food for strength while our faith is strengthened by the food of the Word of God:

4 And Yahshua answered him, saying, It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God *Yahweh*. -Luke 4

17 So then faith *comes* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. -Romans 10

Our bodies require bread. So does our faith. It requires the spiritual bread of the Word of God.

With both the physical and the spiritual, our strength increases with exercise. The Holy Spirit strengthens our faith through exercises that are called trials. Knowing that God allows our trials, Peter says that the trials of our faith should be a cause for rejoicing:

6 Wherein you greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, you are in heaviness through manifold temptations:

7 That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perishes, though it is tried with fire, might be found to praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Yahshua the Messiah: -1 Peter 1

Peter knew about trials of faith. Whenever he thought his faith was strong, it seems that he was put through another trial. For example, at Yahshua's invitation, Peter demonstrated his great faith by walking on water!

27 But immediately Yahshua spoke to them, saying, Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid.

Come to Understanding is sent out twice per month free of charge. To add someone to our list of readers, please contact us at:

Institute for Biblical and Historical Studies
P.O. Box 12, 114 East Main Street
Addison, Michigan 49220 U.S.A.
biblical@ibiblical.org

You may view this and past editions online at: www.ibiblical.org
Scriptures are from the:
Proper Name Version of the King James Bible.



©2009 Institute for Biblical and Historical Studies. All rights reserved.
You may freely copy this publication, provided you acknowledge its source and inform us of your use.

28 And Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it is you, bid me come to you on the water.

29 And he said, Come. And when Peter had come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Yahshua. -Matthew 14

Then Peter looked at his physical circumstances and was overtaken with fear and doubt:

30 But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me.

31 And immediately Yahshua stretched forth *his* hand, and caught him, and said to him, O you of little faith, why did you doubt? -Matthew 14

Again, Peter was persuaded of his great faith when he testified of the revelation that Yahshua was the Son of God:

15 He said to them, But whom say you that I am?

16 And Simon Peter answered and said, You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God. -Matthew 16

However, shortly afterward, Satan put Peter to a test as he provoked him to rebuke Yahshua:

22 Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from you, Lord: this shall not be unto you.

23 But he turned, and said to Peter, Get you behind me, Satan: you are an offense to me: for you savor not the things that are of God, but those that are of men. -Matthew 16

Yet again, Peter was confident of his strong faith when he boastfully declared that he would never deny Yahshua:

35 Peter said to him, Though I should die with you, yet will I not deny you. Likewise also said all the disciples. -Matthew 26

That's when God again allowed Satan to test Peter's faith. Yahshua told him, Satan wants to "sift you as wheat:"

31 And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has desired *to have* you, that he may sift *you* as wheat:

32 But I have prayed for you, that your faith fail not: and when you are converted, strengthen your brethren. -Luke 22

Peter failed the test by denying Yahshua, but the trial strengthened his faith. Being convicted of his sin, he wept in sorrowful repentance:

62 And Peter went out, and wept bitterly. -Luke 22

How easy it is for us to declare our faith, until we are required to put it to a test. Can we trust in the unseen work of God, rather than what we can see with our natural eyes? Few would think, for example, that our willingness to forgive others is a trial of our faith. Yahshua told His disciples:

3 Take heed to yourselves: If your brother trespasses against you, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him.

4 And if he trespasses against you seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turns again to you, saying, I repent; you shall forgive him.

5 And the apostles said unto the Lord, Increase our faith. -Luke 17

Is our faith strong enough to forgive those who have offended us? Or should we also pray, "Increase our faith?"