Do you suffer a

Conflict of Faith?



Or more accurately, perhaps, a vacillation of faith?

Matthew 14:25-31 GW Between three and six o'clock in the morning, he [Jesus] came to them. He was walking on the sea. (26) When the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified. They said, "It's a ghost!" and began to scream because they were afraid. (27) Immediately, Jesus said, "Calm down! It's me. Don't be afraid!" (28) Peter answered, "Lord, if it is you, order me to come to you on the water." (29) Jesus said, "Come!" So Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water toward Jesus. (30) But when he noticed how strong the wind was, he became afraid and started to sink. He shouted, "Lord, save me!" (31) Immediately, Jesus reached out, caught hold of him, and said, "You have so little faith! Why did you give way to] doubt?"

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If I were going to say just one thing about God, I

suppose it might be this: "I talk to him on a regular basis." Fact is, I should probably say, "I talk to him nearly all the time." An old friend I spent a large portion of my tour of duty in Vietnam with (when we were young – Visit: VietnamJC.com), recently confided he believes in God and the Bible; but that he doesn't read it (much). He said, however, he talks to God "on a regular basis." Saying he "talks to God" resonates with me and is partly responsible for this letter. Or maybe, his statement helps me in thinking about what I now attempt to organize on paper. My effort is Bible study. My asking him the questions that prompted his response, which then results in my writing this, is simply to arrange my thoughts during that study: To write in logical order what I was just thinking out loud to him about. So... My need is to better understand the questions of faith I am still just "thinking out loud" about; while I at the same time wonder (and again out loud), if other people share this blessing, or curse. Understanding what it is, I hope, will also define which it is.

What is a conflict of faith? And/or, would my problem (or my gift) be more accurately described as a "vacillation" or a "wavering" of faith?

This, then, is my effort to both reveal and understand scripturally my lifelong ongoing phenomenon: Since I can remember, even as a small child, the focus of my thinking has centered around God and whether He exists; as well as on how to know him and to understand why He doesn't openly answer me. Why doesn't He make himself plainly known? So... That thinking has caused my whole life to amount to running a sort of continuous mental loop. To help explain, I can remember shop lifting (stealing) a pack of gum as a little boy. It was the first time I ever remember stealing something and it was just so easy; the thought popped into mind

and I put the gum in my pocket. My problem was, I had been hearing about God from my family since before I could walk and talk. Believing in God, then, had to mean He was watching when I stole the Gum. That left me wondering if He was angry. Would He forgive? While that worried me, I can't say it immediately stopped me. Over the next few years I stole other things. They were all petty crimes, model car kits, a watermelon from in front of a grocery store, and at around 12 or 13, I stole a case of beer from a neighbor's garage. (I'd never tasted beer and wanted to see what all the fuss was about. Years later, as an adult, I paid that neighbor and apologized.) Every time I stole anything, however, or told a lie for that matter, it left me with a bad conscience. What I mean is it left me wondering, when something bad happened as it occasionally does to everyone, if it happened as a punishment from God for the bad I had done. By the time I was a teenager, then, I had stopped stealing and tried to always tell the truth. It had become obvious it was better to be honest than to alienate myself from God. By that time my pattern of circular thinking had been pretty well established. It went something like this: Does God exist? The answer for me was and is yes. Even as a little boy I realized the elaborate creation we witness demands the existence of a Creator. (Rom 1:19-20; Heb 3:4) My very life demands a Creator! How, then, would this God that simply must exist, communicate with us? After talking with people from several different religions (those conversations happened more during my 20's and 30's), and from the background my family gave me from infancy, the Bible became the most obvious form of God's speaking to us. It's the only religious book I ever read that makes sense. And, speaking now after gaining some knowledge of what it says, the Bible does make perfect sense, beginning to end. So, then, even in my youth, I sort of nonchalantly tried to learn about the Bible. What "learning about the Bible" mostly meant in those early days was visiting different churches and listening to their preachers. All the churches I attended proclaimed faith in the Bible, so, they must be teaching what it says, right? Wrong! That thinking, believing a Bible in hand or quoting a few verses means

the person is teaching what the Bible says is ignorant and wrong and very dangerous. (Mat 7:15) And then it would begin again: After developing some doubts because God didn't do something the way I wanted or thought He should, I was back to asking myself, does he even really exist.

While that beaten path of circular thinking was becoming established, at nineteen years of age, my nation drafted me for two years service in the U.S. Army. They spent the first year training me, and then, sent me to Vietnam for the second of my two years. That's where I met and spent a few months with the friend guoted above. We had a harsh tour of duty! Over six out of every ten men in our Company (over sixty percent) were killed or wounded, a few at a time, over the course of our year. (VietnamJC.com) During that Vietnam tour, I also saw I don't know how many North Vietnamese Army soldiers killed. Vietnam gave me a whole new appreciation of my need for God, and I prayed (talked) to him a lot during that year. My prayers were to be set free of that place, of course, but my tour in Vietnam persisted. So, then, did the fact I was still there mean God didn't hear my prayers or care about them? Or, did the fact I continued among those alive mean He did? A friend I made during our year of training received a bullet wound that shattered the femur in his leg. He spent a few months in a Japanese hospital but made it home to a reasonably normal life. He told me God had a plan for him...

My circular pattern of thinking was set long before Vietnam, of course, but it accompanied me through the Nam and persists yet today: Does God even really and truly exist? And then, yes, He must, because the wonders of his Creation could not be an accident. How, then, does he speak to us? Why doesn't he speak openly, the way He did to Moses out of the burning bush, (Ex 3:1-10) or to Christ Jesus from a cloud? (Mat 17:5) And then: Since He doesn't physically appear to or openly communicate with us, it's back to does he really and truly exist at all? Now, finally, I

get to the reason I drone on about this: It's my attempt to understand (as well as to know if others share my same vacillation) why I persist in this thinking? The easy answer for me is, "I can't stop!" My faith won't let me. I just know there has to be a God who is good. (Heb 11:6) And, it also seems, Bible truth is the only real choice there is. (John 6:47-69)

Some people have said the definition of insanity is continuing to do the same thing over and over, expecting different results... I keep praying to God, and, I keep expecting him to answer; never having had any open and documentable response from him. (I do believe I have seen his wink of help in my life, of course, but never an obvious spectacle like the Bible example of the healing of a grown man who had been lame from his youth. - John 5:1-9) And, I must also realize, I might (probably) have been receiving his answers all along; from the Bible and maybe even from the manipulation of my life and surroundings. I also understand that knowing him requires faith. (John 20:24-29; Rom 3:23-4:8) If He were visible to me, what faith would then be required? Maybe it just takes a little time to really get to know our Creator. Faith is an important part of God's method of letting us know him. (Gal 3:23-25) More importantly, since our coming to know him also requires his help, (John 6:44) maybe we can't truly know him until he first gets to know us. (2 Chron 16:9) And, maybe, He can't know us until we decide who we are; not until, that is, we have taken time and made effort to resolve and fully define who we actually are in the secret person of our heart. (1 Pet 3:2-4) As an example: Was the little boy of earlier consideration made righteous and a friend of God because his conscience plagued him when the stole the gum? Of course not, he remained a thief. (Mat 7:21-23) Was he made righteous when he stopped stealing but still had problems with integrity? Of course not, he remained a liar. (Rev 21:5-8) While God loves us all, we can only be made righteous in God's sight by our personal faith in Christ. (Rom 3:20-26) Doesn't building true faith take time? God takes a private interest in each person who will listen: (2 Chron 16:9) He

then draws each righteously inclined person to hear his son. (John 6:44; Mat 17:5)

My mental loop is building faith and character.

That's my hope, and it's why I continue in the "blessing" of running that same path; to build and strengthen my faith and character. If Peter, for example, could have had a second chance to join Christ in walking on water, his faith would probably have been stronger that second time... (Mat 14:25-31) These loops I trace in my mind's eye, then, I believe to be God giving me us many chances to strengthen our faith. As I experience these periods of pondering (meditation), I often find myself dealing with questions or issues that assault my faith. The mental repeating or rehashing of my basic tenets of faith, then, is affording me the opportunity to decide and become who I want to be in my heart, and, to abandon who I have been drawn or forced to be in my ignorant past; it is my chance to decide to be a better person. That allows for God to then know me as well. Who I am is my choice! It is your choice also. The instant we have completed the decision of who we are in our own heart, God does then know, of course! A Bible example of God's desire and/or need to get to know each of us can be seen in ancient Abraham. In his youth, faithful Abraham received a very special promise from God. Deeply consider that prophecy because it also extends to you! In Gen 22:18, God told Abraham all the nations of earth would be blessed by one of Abraham's descendants. That promise to Abraham was a clarification or reaffirmation of an earlier promise God made to the unborn children of Adam and Eve, when God told Eve at Gen 3:15 one of her seed would destroy Satan. (1 John 3:8) So... Ever since God promised Eve one of her descendants would become mankind's deliverer, righteous persons like Abraham have been in expectation of that Messiah. Seeing it from God's view of the whole, about 2000 years after that promise to Eve, God made a second promise to Abraham that the Messiah He has promised Eve would also be one of Abraham's seed. Another 2000 years from that promise to Abraham, and

Jesus was born as a descendent of Abraham (both Jesus's mother Mary and his adoptive father Joseph were descended from Abraham). Yet a third 2000 years has passed since Jesus's birth, now bringing us to the end of three 2000 year periods (or about 6000 years since Adam and Eve) in human history; and, it's finally time for the return and/or final Revelation of the Messiah. Ignorance is washed away in the mind of all who hear Christ's words. (Acts 17:29-31) Having that knowledge should help you realize it is the best time in human history to be alive! Back, though, to God's desire to know Abraham; to know him intimately and completely. Abraham had loved and been faithfully obedient to God all his life. He had also looked forward to the son (and the associated blessings) God had promised, but, that son never came. Finally, after both Abraham and his wife Sarah were past child bearing years, at about 100 years of age, the promised son was miraculously born to them. Abraham was ecstatic and continued in his love for God, and also, of course, in his love for Isaac; the promised deliverer who would come through him. Question is: Did Abraham love God with all his heart, or, had he spent his life loving the blessings and good promises coming from God? You do realize: Loving God and wanting his blessing is not one and the same thing? So, then, after all Abraham had been through, God told him (at somewhere around 120 years of age), to take Isaac and sacrifice him. What would Abraham do? His whole life was built around that son promised him by God. He didn't waver or hesitate, but made the journey to the mountain God directed and there prepared Isaac. Abraham then took up the knife to kill his son. He believed God could bring Isaac back to life. (Heb 11:17-19) Only then did God step in to provide an animal sacrifice in place of Isaac, as He told Abraham to free his son. Then, only at that point in Abraham's life (and in his old age), God said something very interesting. God said: "Now I do know that you are God fearing, in that you have not withheld your son, your only one, from me." (Gen 22:1-13) "Now I do know" you are God fearing, God said. God apparently had not known Abraham in that way before. If God had not known, that had to mean Abraham

didn't know; which in turn meant Abraham had not truly and completely decided God was first in his life (above all else). God also needs to know that about you and me. It simply must be that way because God is good. He is preparing to give eternal life to all who are righteous and He must first know who the righteous are! One wonderful benefit of God knowing us is we can, at the same time God does, come to know ourselves as friends of God. (Isa 41:8; Jas 2:18-26) Why, though, is God knowing us so important?

If you worry at all about the problems afflicting

mankind (about the snowballing tribulation which is destroying our world), you surely must wonder how God can clean up and correct all this mess. How can He fix it while so many people continue actively causing it; by hating and killing each other. Some of the people of our day have become so vile or ignorant, when they hear Jesus's words about his second coming being similar to the days of Noah and Lot, they actually assert Noah was bad. Such people remain so ignorant or stupid as to imagine Noah was somehow responsible for the destruction of all the wicked people of his day. You should be very clear about this point: God destroyed the wicked, not Noah. God destroyed the wicked because they were wicked! Wicked people always hurt other people. The Bible says God was, in fact, going to destroy everyone; but Noah proved to be a friend of God. (Gen 6:5-8) You should personally be very pleased with Noah and thankful for him. The very fact you are alive means you are a descendant of that righteous man. It's almost comical to watch ignorant or wicked people as they squirm around trying to avoid hearing and being warned by God's truth. They try and hide their ears from anyone or anything (including even historical Noah) that might expose them to God and the truth befalling us. (Acts 7:57-58) They can't hide! (Heb 4:13 of 7-16) They will only get more and more lost in their own ignorance and deception, as they continue trying to disparage truth. (Rom 1:28 of 28-32) God's solution for ending the harm being done, throughout all the earth, is not complicated. Simply stated, bad people, and everyone who supports them (not

warning them about what is happening to them may be giving them support), must each one change what they are (by listening to Christ so as to become God's friends). If they refuse that opportunity from God, they must die. (John 3:19 of 16-21) That's not my judgment, mind you, it's God's. (Ps 37:10-11 of 8-15) God's judgment is righteous and I join Jesus and all the faithful heavenly host in supporting it. (Rev 4:8; Rev 4:11; John 17:25-26; Rev 4:8 & 4:11) My recognizing God's judgment, however, and my trying to help you understand what is happening, isn't causing the tribulation, any more than Noah caused the one in his day. (Rom 14:10-12) My knowing the truth has no lasting effect on anyone besides me; nor do I have control over the outcome of God's arrangement to bring an end to this time of trouble. (Mat 24:21-22) He is using Christ's Kingdom to usher in paradise. (Isa 9:6-7; Isa 11:1-12) How, though, can those necessary and happy changes be brought? And again, while it's a new idea and unfamiliar to most of us, it's not hard to understand; if we you just listen to Christ. As Jesus himself explained:

We must each be reborn by God's spirit. (John 3:1-8)

While that is likely a new idea for you, being reborn is still easily understood. Being reborn by Holy Spirit simply means we are listening to Christ, taking in God's spirit through Jesus's words. (John 6:63) It just means we take advantage of the opportunity provided by God through Christ to become loving and kind people. If we refuse to avail ourselves of God's gift of life, contained only in Christ's teachings, Jesus said we will continue dying in our sins. (John 8:23-24) (Reading Christ's words and putting faith in him thus equates with our modern day ark of Noah.) Please just think what is happening: God is getting ready to grant eternal life to his "friends." (John 17:3) Even God, however, can't grant eternity to individuals who refuse to become upright by changing who they are; so as to stop hurting others. If God allowed people into the new Eden who refuse to listen to Christ, and so change themselves (so as to stop hating and hurting others), those people would once again destroy the paradise

being restored to the earth. (Isa 11:1-12) Allowing for the perfect judgment of wicked people is one of the reasons God has patiently tolerated the 6000 year long period of mankind's existence, as we lived in large measure separated from God. (Rom 9:22-24) While God's method for ending our rebellious period (Acts 17:30-31) and bringing necessary change is very simple, you must realize, it has taken about 100 human lifetimes to accomplish. (It has taken about 6000 years since the Garden of Eden.) God allowed mankind enough time, taking into account our disobedience had already set our own destruction in motion, and then, at the right time, He sent Jesus as the promised Messiah; to teach us how to have the faith necessary to protect ourselves. (Mat 9:21-22 & 29 & 15:28 & Luke 7:9-10 & 48-50...) If we are just willing to learn from Jesus to love God and our fellow man, we will become God's children and be adopted as descendants of God's friend Abraham. (Gal 3:26-29; Rom 9:6-9) Jesus is sent by God to teach everyone (who will listen and learn from him) how to take in God's spirit; and thus to be reborn by that spirit. (John 1:9-13 & John 6:44 of 41-47) God's spirit exists, please now entertain, in the words Jesus spoke. (John 6:63) All we need do is hear Jesus and take his words to heart. (Heb 1:2; Mat 17:5) That is the act and/or method of consuming the spirit of God. Taking that simple action (of hearing God's command to listen to Jesus [Mark 9:7] and then doing so) amounts to a rebirth by God's spirit. (John 1:13 of 9-13; Rom 5:15-21) While this is all simple, it is also spiritual and unfamiliar to most of us. Here is your very real danger: You must be careful you are actually listening to Christ, and only to him. That is because the world is full of people trying to deceive you to believe what they have been misled to believe. (Mat 24:23-25) To be able to deceive you, they must first make the truth seem complicated. Jesus himself warned you about those enemies. (Mat 7:15-16) His followers warned you as well. (Acts 20:29-30) Some religionists are actually sincere people, but their sincerity is based on believing the religious lies they have been taught. (Just like faith in lucky sox, faith in religious lies can't help.) You should take note that Jesus said in Mat 7:16 you can

spot his your enemies by the fruit they bear. What bad fruit was he warning about? Bad fruitage is any activity by any person (or group) who rises up, usually under some title like "elder" or "priest" or "father" etc., to direct you away from Christ in favor of elevating their religious sect in your eyes. They always assert you must follow and obey them. (Mat 23:8-10 of 1-15) Real Christians will direct you only to Jesus Christ, thus making clear you don't need them or any other human or group! Directing people to Christ is the only good fruitage.

Because of the danger they pose, I don't usually

listen to preachers. Please consider an example of how even possibly well intentioned religious people can cause harm to others: Recently, while visiting someone, I found myself listening to a TV evangelist of Asian descent. (I do not single this man out as especially wicked or deceitful. What I say applies in principle to all the preachers of all the oh-so-many religious sects of this world.) This man was trying to convince his audience they should be "his" followers because he had power from God and was healing some among their fellow viewers. He asserted he was getting messages from God about the plight of some of his listeners. He said he sensed one of them had this malady, cancer maybe, and then another had some other problem; as he rebuked their diseases and unclean spirits one after another. All the while he used a string of disjoint scriptural references feigning his power to heal. The last of his tales I listened to, before taking my leave, was when he claimed to cast out a demon; telling it to have a stone around its neck and be cast in the sea. Jesus did use those words, but it was when he warned that would be a better end than those persons (those humans) would receive who reject the message his Father sent him to bring. (Mark 9:42) I'm not sure, however, being forced under water would have any bad effect on the demon this man claimed to cast out. This man was, as most preachers do, trying to convince his audience they need "him" to

connect them with God's spirit and help. That is the horrible lie (and is the bad fruitage) perpetrated by all religion. They are all trying to replace Christ in your life. (Mat 24:21-28 of 15-31) True Christianity, on the other hand (being very different from religion), is comprised of all the individuals who worship God in spirit and truth and direct you to Christ. (John 4:23-26) Christians worship through their faith in what they personally know God's son taught. Only Christ is the appointed overseer (anointed by his Father) of who are members of that true Christian flock. You can't get that truth, and you especially you can't take in God's spirit, by listening to some preacher. (John 6:63) And yes, that does include me. You are living the final test of (and for) your very life, and you can't cheat by building faith in anyone besides Christ. (John 3:19 of 16-21) Even if my faith is perfect, I still can't tell you what you need to know. That's what God sent Jesus to do. (John 12:48 of 46-50) And, Jesus has already answered all your questions in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. The great difference between me and the preacher man of my illustration (and all other secular preachers) is this, I seek to teach you (only) this one simple truth:

You must hear God's command to listen to his

SON, and then, having heard God's order, you must read the Gospels so as to actually sit at the feet of Christ (and learn what he taught). The words of Christ can heal you, but (I believe) preachers can not. Listening to Christ is how you become part of God's family. (Mark 3:31-35) Everything I write, including my entire website (JustBibleTruth.com), exists for the sole purpose of sharing that one simple command from God. (Mat 17:5) Once you hear God's command to listen to Christ (and to him alone), you are set free (John 8:31-32) of any need for me or anyone else (except Jesus). Just pick up your bible and read the words of God's Messiah from the Gospel books recorded by Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

Let's ponder what that preacher's pretending to be healing people was actually doing to his listeners. If I am right about his misapplying some of the scriptures he used, that makes him a liar. (Mat 5:33-37) What fate does that bring him? (Rev 21:5-8) More simply, if what he is teaching is not truth, it is lies! (2 Pet 3:14-18) Next consider, what are his motives? Is he trying to help because of his love for God and his fellow man, or, does he do his "works" seeking donations? Is he a real healer? If he is real, why aren't people flocking to him in droves, and coming forward on the news with their medical records to document their being healed? A more basic question: Is he even a true believer? If God is really talking to him and telling him who is sick, why doesn't he call them by name? If he is real, why doesn't he heal people openly on his TV program for all to see and put faith in him? The Bible documents Jesus healed people openly in public for all to see! (Luke 6:17-19) That leads to even more serious questions: If God isn't speaking to him to tell him about who is sick, what does that make him? (Acts 20:29-30) How could he be so bold as to lie about such things? Will God, in our special days of the end, strike him down for his deliberate deception? (It was another special period right after Christ died: The fledgling congregations, surrounded by religious enemies, were protected and helped by men who could actually perform miracles. During their special time, at least some deceivers were struck dead by God. -Acts 5:1-11 - We today live in another "special time," the "time of the end.") What God will do with him is, of course, between him and God. I do not presume to judge. It is my own relationship with God that is most important to me, and, that I need to worry about; as yours should be for you!

If you would like to know what a Christian preacher should be, God provided a wonderful example: Read the first chapter of the Bible Book of John, verses 1 through 27, where the writer John gives an account of the work of John

the Baptist (the Baptist being a different John from the Book's writer. The writer is the Disciple John). John the Baptist was a person sent by God to announce the Christ. (John 3:25-30) As you continue to read the Gospel of John, you will note several times he references the Christian efforts by John the Baptist; and, the Baptist always tells everyone he is only a forerunner of Christ. He always makes clear they should listen to Jesus. As you read the Gospel of John, then, as well the other three Gospels, pay attention to their mention of John the Baptist. All four Gospel writers used the Baptist as an example of what a preacher of Christ should sound like. John the Baptist's sole effort was to direct people away from himself and to inform them they must listen to Jesus. (John 1:29-34; John 5:31-38; Mat 3) Just like John the Baptist, then, you yourself should be directing people to listen to Christ as you avoid being deceived to mislead them toward joining some religious sect. (John 7:16-18; John 5:39-47) I've been studying the Bible, at least to some extent, for sixty plus years; and after all that time, I only just now realized the wonderful example of John the Baptist as a help in seeing what a Christian preacher should be. It's something I learned, not from any sect of men, mind you, but from running through the present version of my recurring and self-analyzing mental loops; as I once again scripturally consider the words of Christ in deciding whether God is real and worthy of my faith. Isn't meditating on God a good thing...?

Listen to and take to heart the teachings of Jesus Christ. God inspired Jesus's life activity recorded in four parallel accounts by Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

Accept the reward from God: His King Christ Jesus.

(<u>Isa 9:6-7</u> GNB) A child is born to us! A <u>son</u> is given to us! And he will be our ruler. He will be called, "Wonderful Counselor," "Mighty God," "Eternal Father," "Prince of Peace." (7) His royal power will continue to grow; his kingdom will always be at peace. He will rule as King David's successor, basing his power on right

and justice, from now until the end of time. The <u>LORD Almighty</u> is determined to do all this.

I am thankful to have John the Baptist, along with the other faithful Bible characters, as examples to pattern my life after. As a personal observation (thus making clear what I am about to say is my opinion, and not something I claim is a direct Bible teaching): It really shocked me to hear people on TV (the directors of a current main stream TV series) imply Noah was wicked and somehow caused the destruction of the (wicked) people of Noah's day. Saying or even insinuating such a lie seems a direct assault on God and his goodness. It seems they are making fun of God's message from the Bible. What could people who say such things really imagine will happen to them? Not emboldening myself as their judge, mind you, since judgment belongs to God. (1 Cor 4:1-5) If they can say such things and be pleasing to our Creator, it is certainly fine with me. I do believe, however, there is real danger for them in contradicting or making fun of the Bible. Why, though, do I even mention such people at all? It is because of what they actually cause me to wonder: Is their action is just another sign of the completion of wickedness of our latter day world. (2 Tim 3:12-4:5) Is there flagrant disregard for God's Word, and even their abusive speech toward his friends, just another reason God is destroying this present day world system. (Mat 24:36-42) Remember: The people in their day made fun of Noah and Lot as well. (Gen 19:12-14) It would seem people who ridicule the Bible are taking the responsibility for making it harder for other people to put faith in God's Word. Is it dangerous for them to be making fun of the Bible or discrediting even the men God mentioned in his Word as being righteous? (2 Pet 2:5-9) Well, we'll see...

Why is believing the account of Noah important to also believing in God and his son; (Pro 30:4) and to having real faith in what they are doing? [(1 Cor 2:9-10) God's spirit comes to us through the

words of Christ. (John 6:63)] Faith in Jesus includes realizing he used Noah as an example when he said his return as King would accompany (or be accompanied by) the most terrible world conditions in human history. (Dan 12:1); Mat 24:21-22) In the news yesterday (June 13, 2021), a young mother threw her little boy and 2 year old girl out an upper story window and the then jumped out after them. A witness said when she and the children survived, she picked up her daughter by the leg and dropped her; twice... On Sat., Aug 21 of 2021, 17 inches of rain fell in the early morning leaving 10 dead and 42 unaccounted for. That is just two atrocities among a mountain of too many to count! How bad do things really need to get before people realize and start talking about the tribulation Jesus said would come? (Mat 24:3-14) One thing to take serious note of: God said it will get bad enough to cause everyone to know (and probably to talk about it)! (Rom 14:10-12; 1 Pet 4:5; 2 Cor 5:10) It will get worse for some than for others. "It is my faith," I should say, it will get worse for some than for others. Jesus said that promised day (or period which I believe corresponds with our day in time) would be even worse than the terrible conditions caused by the wicked people of Noah's day. (Mark 13:9; Gen 6:9-14) Jesus also said if his Father didn't bring an end of our tribulation, no one could remain alive. (Mat 24:22 of 15-31; Mark 13:32) Jesus taught all the droves of people who came to him to be healed, it was their own faith that helped them. (Mat 9:21-22 & 23 & 29 & 15:28 & Luke 7:9-10 & 48-50...) Jesus went on to say faith can do anything. (Mark 11:22-24) It is faith in Christ, then, that can preserve us you alive through this tribulation. The final question is: What do you really personally believe? How you answer that guestion in secret, don't you see, is your true faith! Is that what you pray to God for, and then, do you really expect you will have those things? (Mark 11:22-24; John 15:7; Mat 21:21-22) In light of Jesus's warnings, can't you see how dangerous it would be to let other people tell you what you should pray for; or to believe they

decide if you are approved by <u>God</u>? (<u>Acts 20:29-30</u>) Can't you also see how any <u>ignorant or wicked</u> assault on Noah and his integrity, or any silly implication that Noah was wicked, can undermine your faith or that of others? Of course it can. Have respect for God's word. (<u>Heb 4:12</u>; <u>Mat 5:3</u>) To have true faith, you will likely have to think about these things more than once; maybe over and over and over... Read the Gospel accounts of the life and teachings of Jesus Christ, for by doing so, you take your seat at his feet. (<u>Luke 10:41-42</u>) In doing that, you are joining his family! (<u>Mark 3:31-35</u>) Read <u>Matthew</u>, <u>Mark</u>, <u>Luke</u> and <u>John</u> again and again.

My personal feeling about TV is that it is not good. It is mostly a waste of time at best, and it often seems a window onto Satan's world. (1 Cor 6:9-11; 1 Tim 1:8-11; 1 Pet 4:3-6) All that said, I do watch it way too much. Recently, I watched the conclusion of series that has run for several years. I only watched a few episodes over the seasons, but I watched the last few to see how they would conclude the series. I'm always a sucker for a happy ending. In those last 3 or 4 episodes, they cultivated the idea that the two main characters were doing a great and good work, by eradicating really bad people from the world; even though they did also do some bad things along the way. The writers built up the theme that the two felt destined to accomplish good works, or even that they were being guided or supported by a higher power. Finally, in the last few minutes of the last episode, a villainous character appeared and shot dead the heroine who was about to take over the imagined good works of her elderly and terminally ill mentor. Their faith and hopes, along with any aspirations of good, were all dashed out of existence in that instant... The imagined future good purpose of their very lives was erased... There are liars who want you to believe that is the fate of those who trust in the God of the Bible. It isn't! Well, my faith is it isn't... (Psa 37:8-11 & Psa 37:29)

Remember always, our faith in God is exactly that: Faith! God is not whispering in anyone's ear. (Some will no doubt assert God is talking to them, but, if He really were, my faith is he would say it to all of us. – In truth, I actually do believe God is talking to each of us, of course, but only to each one in the same way using the words of his son. – Job 23:13; Mat 17:5) At birth, we are awakened living a fascinating life on our wonderful earthly home. (Yes, there are lots of problems now, but they will soon be over and gone forever. - Isa 11:1-12; Ps 37:8-11) As to our being able to understand what life is about: God has given the Bible providing a record of our 6000 years explaining where we came from and where those who love him are headed. We must decide if it is God's explanation we believe, or something else; even if that something else is nothing. What we believe to be true is the manifestation of who we are. God sent his son to teach us what we need to learn. (John 8:28 of 26-30; John 7:28; John 8:42) Our response to Christ's teachings then amounts to our own judgment of ourselves. (John 3:19 of 16-21) So, we have only two real choices. We either believe in a God who is good, (Heb 11:6) and we choose to put faith in the son He sent, (Heb 1:1-3) or, we don't. The world is full of people who do not believe in God. The purpose of their life then becomes to undermine the faith of those who do believe. Non-believers and false Christians foment hatred and war. You have available a very simple and clear selfprotection in that war we are all you are caught up in. (Mat 10:34-36 of 32-39; Eph 6:12 of 10-20) All you need do is hear and obey God's command to listen to his son. (Mat 17:5) Then, simply read and reread the four short Gospel accounts of the life and teachings of Christ: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Since Jesus gave his very life to bring that message, reading his words can be thought of as eating his flesh and drinking his blood. (2 Sam 23:15-17) In hearing those words, please take special note: Jesus said eating his flesh and drinking his blood would give us life within ourselves. (John 6:53 of 52-58) Reading the words of Christ

is the act of taking in God's spirit. (John 6:63) If you want to build and maintain a living true faith in God, even while so many try to undermine and destroy your faith, living on the words God's son taught is the only way to stay alive. (John 6:48-51) Choosing to build faith necessary to follow God's command to listen to his son, also makes you God's son or daughter and his friend. (Rom 8:18-21; Gal 3:23-29; Gal 3:7-9) Building faith takes time and exercise, just like building a muscle. It may sometimes require running our mind back and forth over the facts that comprise the evident demonstration of the reasons for our faith. (Heb 11:1 of 1-3) You may need to do it several times. That is not time wasted running in circles. It is building faith for life. Read the Gospels! Matthew, Mark, Luke or John.

A great difference: Jesus's faith was to death,

yours to life. While we should spend our lives learning all we can from Jesus, there is one great difference you should understand between his faith and yours. His faith was to death, but yours can be should be to life. Please understand: That is true only because of the time period when you are favored to be alive (living during the second coming of Christ). (John 11:25-26) You might think of our hearing God's command to listen to his son as learning God's sacred secret. (Rom 16:25-27) Only in these latter days can those who seek God understand that command, in the sense of knowing how it is actually preserving our very lives; (Job 33:13-30) by our having faith in God's command to listen to his son. (Mark 9:7) If you had been born 200 years ago, for example, and then spent the 100 year span of your life so as to fully understand God's sacred secret (by hearing his command to listen only to Jesus), while at the same time you avoided any entanglements with the religious sects of this world, you would still have been 100 years too early to be saved through the tribulation. Your faith 100 years ago, even with a full understanding of God's sacred secret, would have led to your

death in hope of a resurrection; just as Jesus's faith did for him. It is what God is doing at any particular time that defines what can happen to us. Because you are living now, in the time of Christ's return to accomplish the destruction of the wicked and preservation of the righteous, your faith can be to life eternal. (John 11:25-26) To receive that reward, however, that must be what you actually believe. While Jesus did have faith his Father would resurrect him from death, he also understood he needed to endure death as a sacrifice for our sins. [While I doubt any of us can fully understand, Christ was God's provision to buy back our life rights that Adam and Eve threw away. (Rom 5:6-11 & 5:12-21) We were all born in their sin (under the condemnation of the death their sin incurred) and were without hope in the world. (Eph 2:12) Jesus understood from the scriptures that he was sent to set us free, and that meant he had to die. (Isa 53:12) He told his disciples he was headed toward that horrible death. (Mark 8:31-33; Luke 24:44-48) (Perhaps most horrible about his death in Jesus's eyes: He died as an accused evil doer and enemy of his Father.) On one occasion of Jesus telling his followers he had to die, Peter tried to rebuke him so as to protect Jesus's life. Jesus, however, told Peter it was from Satan for Peter to say such things. (Mat 16:21-23; Mark 8:31-33) Jesus learned something new from his having to die. He learned for the first time what it meant for his service to God to cost him something. Before that, in the unknown eons of time he loved and served his Father, (Pro 8:22-31) it resulted only in blessings. Not this time, however. As Jesus came closer to facing that horrible death, he actually prayed to his Father for the same thing he had rebuked Peter for asking: Jesus prayed to his Father to let him live. (Mat 26:36-39) He ended that prayer asking for his Father's will to be done first, above his own, of course. So... Was Jesus undergoing a tiny conflict of faith? Please take special note: I am not saying that is what this account means; but only saying maybe, or that I tend to believe that is what it means. Some religious people will say my

questioning Jesus's faith, even in this small way, amounts to the display of my own lack of faith; some even that it indicates I am an enemy of God. I believe, on the other hand, running over the reasons for my faith again and again helps me know Christ better.] In any case, realizing and understanding Jesus faith was leading him to his (temporary) death, while mine can be is to life eternal, is just a most wonderful thing to know. What that means is I believe we are alive at (or that our day is the time for) the revelation of Christ as king, (Luke 17:26-30) and that it is time for the fulfillment of the promises recorded in the Book of Job (among other scriptures). (Job 33:13-30; Isa 28:14-22) My hope that I can continue alive forever is the faith I try to maintain at all times. (John 11:25-26) Question is: Is that faith real and complete in me...? Is it real in you? Considering and reconsidering the words of Christ Jesus strengthens my hope and transform it into a living faith with power. (Heb 11:1-12:3) Remember, what Christians believe, according to Jesus, is what will happen to us. (Mat 9:21-22 plus)

I'm Murray Cummings [feel free to write me at: support (at) justbibletruth.com] and I now do my best to share with you what happened on the evening of Wed, June 30, 2021 (last evening, as I write). It was nearly too wonderful for me to believe. Please take special note: I am not claiming a miraculous vision. All I'm doing is telling you what happened. About bed time last night, after several weeks of study looking up scriptures in preparing this document, I heard faint rumbling and noted lightning flashes through the windows. There were storm warnings for our area and I expected one was blowing up. So, as I sometimes do, I went out front to lay on our porch swing and watch the storm build. The lightening continued off over the eastern horizon but the faint sound of thunder stopped. That left a quiet evening with a barely discernable northerly breeze carrying the smell of rain and just a hint of cool; thus bringing an end of a sweltering day. As I

lay on the swing it was overcast and black dark, just a perfect evening. There were lightening bugs flickering everywhere. I was facing east where the lightening showed just above the horizon. We live in a valley opening to the North, so the Eastern horizon is a ridgeline of trees only about 500 yards from our house. We are surrounded by hills except to the north. About 75 feet east of the house is a tree that has been cut back many times over the years, so it is more like a large bush; having lots of thin limbs reaching up well above my porch view of the horizon. What that all means is the light flashing from over the horizon was right behind that tree (bush) and had to pass through for me to see. The nearly constant flashing of lightening just kept happening directly behind the bush. The light showed through as to make it look like the bush was on fire. The light flashed near constantly for probably 20 or 30 minutes. That whole time, the bush looked like it was ablaze. My depth perception was lost in the dark, so it appeared the bush was burning on the ridgeline forming the horizon. It was spectacular and very encouraging (you will better understand why if you have read this letter from the beginning). I don't assert knowledge of what it means, only that it made me feel like I was in the presence of God. It was more wonderful than I can put in words. One reason I write it down is in hope of being able to keep alive the feeling it gave me. And/or, maybe, so I can read this later and "recapture" the feeling later!

Now, I do know, I sort of poked fun at a preacher who proclaimed he was healing people out in TV-land. One reason I cast doubt on him was because he was asking us to put faith in miracles he said he was performing, while we have no way to verify. I tend to believe only in the Bible because Jesus taught there would be so many frauds trying to deceive us. (Mat 7:15) So... Now, here I am, telling you something there is no way for you to verify. Consider our motives. He was trying to get you to send him your money. I don't want anything from you. He was absolutely asserting he was

performing miracles. I only tell you what I saw, while I make clear my own efforts to understand. He wants you to join his church and follow him; while I only tell you to hear God's command to listen to his son; (Mat 17:5) and then, to actually follow Jesus. You must begin following Jesus by first reading Jesus's words from the four short Bible Books of Matthew, Mark, Luke or John. Please just really consider: You can't ever be deceived or misled by listening to Christ? (Luke 10:38-42)

For my part, I wish I could go outside and "see" God anytime I want. It seems that's the way it was back in the beginning (of mankind): The Bible tells us Adam walked and talked with God in the breezy part of the day; probably anytime he wanted. (Gen 3:8) It wasn't like Adam was going to use up all God's time and energy by visiting with him. I suspect God could visit with everyone alive, all at the same time, without being burdened in any way. So, Adam's personal and open relationship with God is what I look forward to. (John 16:L23-24) My own future relationship with God, then, is what I hope I just had a glimpse of! On the day God knows me well enough to grant me the gift of life, faith will no longer be required. (Rom 8:24-25) Beginning that day, I will be truly known by God and He will no doubt show himself openly. If that (the Bible) is true, then, all I need do is reach out my hand and accept God's gift. (John 4:10 & 25-26 of 4:7-26) That requires I build and strengthen my own faith, so as to become God's friend. The best way I can do that is by taking in God's spirit through the words of his Christ, (John 6:63) so as to be reborn by that spirit (we must restructure our mind using God's spirit, and that's what God sent Jesus to teach). (John 3:3-7) Since all who come to Christ must first be directed there by God's spirit, (John 6:44) following Christ makes us a people born from God by Holy Spirit. (John 1:9-13)

Laying there in the quiet black of the night, with just the faint and distant sounds of the frogs and critters in the background, it made

me think of being in Vietnam. (See: VietnamJC.com) In the Nam, I almost always went to sleep holding (or with my hand on) my M-16 (rifle). I just didn't want it lost in the dark if I needed it. That was just the last part of my doing "all I could" to protect myself before going to sleep. Going to sleep with a hand on my M-16 seems to equate today with having spent time reading he words of Christ; so as to take in God's spirit. (John 6:63) We have bears and some say mountain lions in our area. When I am out at night, like last night, I still keep a handgun on me. One great difference is I do realize my faith in what Jesus taught is the only thing that can protect me from my "spiritual enemies," and even from old age and death. (Job 33:13-30) Vietnam was a terrible time and I can remember laying in the black of the evening, as I tried to go to sleep; knowing people all around were trying to kill me. To keep my sanity, I just did "all I knew to do" to protect myself, before I laid down; and then, I prayed to God and left it with him. The spiritual war we are all caught in today feels a little like that. My website message is very popular with a lot of people, but, not with some extremely religious people. There are religious enemies who say I am lost to God, and some even that I am God's enemy; all because I won't join their religious efforts (and, I think, because I shed scriptural light on their membership oriented sectarian group). Actually listening to Christ (without religious influence) over the last few years has taught me I don't need any of them, (1 Cor 4:1-5) but some of them hate me because I warn other people don't need them either. We all need Christ, but only Christ. (Mat 23:8 of 1-15) Sharing that message makes religionists hate me and say horrible things about me: That I am an apostate or demon worshipper. So... They are trying to kill me spiritually. Some of the nationally entwined religions (like the Holy Roman Church of the Dark Ages would have, or the Muslim religion/government of our modern times still do...) would kill me physically if they could. I thank God for our nation's protection against religion as it has been afforded us here in America. Added

to the harm and threats from religion, I am 73 years old with heart and other health problems. When I lay down at night, then, just like back in Vietnam, after I have spent time trying to learn from Christ by reading his words (or, "after I have done all in my power to protect myself"), I pray to God everything will be alright and leave it with him. I hope, then, you can appreciate how seeing my burning bush encouraged me. It was more wonderful than I can say. Was it, though, or is my relationship with God, the most precious thing in my life? Is God really most important to me? It's sobering to understand that's the very thing I am deciding; and, to have to realize I must not yet have fully decided. These are the questions I keep asking myself. It is my belief you should too. Is pleasing God most important to me day in and day out, both by day and night? As I learn principles from God's word to govern my behavior, do I sometimes give in to doing things that I believe or fear will displease him? Remember: It doesn't matter who you think I am, or what religious sect approves me, or who I assert myself to be, or even who I imagine and believe I am. It only matters who I really am, as demonstrated in my actions. (1 Cor 4:1-5) I want to have true faith and I believe I do. God knows, and you can probably tell from this letter, I have in large measure sacrificed my whole life on the alter of my faith. (That's not to say I was a righteous man in my youth. Those who knew me do know I was a scoundrel. Still, I never deliberately sought to harm anyone and God was always in my mind. In the Nam, I served my country and did what I had to do to stay alive.) So then, I believe I have become faithful to God. The real question is, am I faithful like Abraham before he attempted to offer up his son, or, am I faithful as God's friend like Abraham became only after he offered Isaac. (Jas 2:23 of 18-23; 2 Chron 20:7) Please now entertain, we all and each are making that same decision as we reveal ourselves! I look forward to more clearly seeing God every day of my life!

Sharing personal and private experiences of the things I believe to be God's activity in my life is normally something I avoid. That is because I always try to warn you should listen to and learn from Christ Jesus himself. And I remember, just like you if you're sincere, I'm just doing my best to learn from Jesus for the protection of my-own-self. It's not like God whispered in my ear. But please note, God did send Jesus to do that exact thing! (John 12:49; John 7:16; John 3:34-36; John 6:41-51) This burning bush experience was very personal for me. While I hope to have more and similar and better experiences, as God learns (and then judges) I am a person worthy of life, I'm feeling now like this is the last such personal experience I will share. It feels too private; like it might be a personal gift from God. Anyway, it seems there are two parts to being a Christian: First is learning what Jesus said and building faith in his words for the preservation of our own life. The second part comes as our opportunity to direct others to Christ. As the tribulation continues to intensify, already killing people and soon bringing this old wicked world system to its end, everyone is being driven to consider God's command to listen to his son (all are being forced to consider Jesus as our Creator's only source of knowledge, thus affording each individual the opportunity for the preservation of life). What I am about to say is just my personal opinion: I believe Armageddon (which is now ending or soon will end the tribulation we endure) may impose a time limit on preaching (on our being able to help others). (Mat 24:21-22) I do not, of course, know that to be so. What I do know is your own faith must answer such questions for you. It just feels I have said all I know to say to encourage people you to listen to Christ. What we all need to must do is stop continuing as Doubting Thomases, (John 20:24-29) and to stop allowing our faith to waiver, like Peter's. (Mat 14:24-31) We must become people of absolute faith; like Abraham, and foremost, like Jesus Christ. (Heb 12:1-3) It feels like it's time for me to spend more energy on my own faith, and on my personal relationship with God. Words fail me for any

more I could say, or any better way I could tell it; so as to encourage everyone to hear God's simple command to listen to his son. (Mat 17:5) It would then seem some burden rests on the hearers to just actually read the Gospels and learn from Christ for themselves. (John 17:3) It seems time for me to focus on building and strengthening my own relationship with God. It seems time for me to, as they say, "crap of get off the pot" "practice what I preach." It's time to stop talking about my own opinion of "our" need to have faith in Christ, and to actually have that faith for myself: To awaken (by really hearing Christ) to my own real life, and live. (Rev 3:1-3) As the song says, then: "It's time for my real life to begin."

My closing thought: If my faith is based on fairy tales and foolishness, as some very religious people of this world imagine and openly assert it is, I will continue to get older and soon be going the way of all the earth. (Jos 23:14; 1 Kings 2:1-3) In that case, there is nothing more I could say that could be helpful. If I am right, however, the tribulation (which is already killing so many people) will quickly escalate until it finally kills everyone who is not being protected by their own personal faith in Christ's words. (John 8:24; John 5:24) Helping people see their need to separate themselves from religion and to learn what Jesus actually said, so as to build true faith in him, is one purpose of this letter. I can't even assure you by proving my opinions are true. It is my faith and I await the outcome, the same as you. My own faith is the second reason for this booklet. This material serves as an ongoing Bible study for my-own-self. It reflects the current state of my Bible study, and, therefore, of my faith. I use it to go over these referenced scriptures often; to maintain and strengthen my faith. Your faith must be yours, and for it to be a faith that has power to help, it must be in what you actually know Christ Jesus said. (Some people have faith in lucky sox. Such faith can't help. Only faith in Christ's words can help!) Since this does

reflect the ongoing and current state of my personal Bible study, it will be updated as I continue alive and am able. Always remember, though, by my own admission, all you really need is your Bible and your faith in Christ. Since this reflects my own study and meditation, it will be updated with any additional scriptures I can find; the purpose again being to strengthen my faith. In either case, and as of now, I see no reason for me to write anything beyond this letter. This is my effort to organize and then be able to reference and meditate on the scriptures comprising my faith. Please don't imagine from what I say you might learn what is real and true by watching to see what becomes of me; or, by watching to see what becomes of my spiritual enemies... I might be right in everything I say, and still die because I am unfaithful. I might live 20 or 30 more years because I have good genes, but not because I have God's blessing. My hope, of course, is to live forever. Also, if I am right, the escalating tribulation won't allow you time to be worrying about what becomes of me. You will need to be listening to Christ so as to build your own personal faith in his words; to protect yourself from being killed along with the wicked people of this world. (Mat 24:21-22) Everything I know that might help is conveyed here and can be summed up in these few words: Christ Jesus was sent by God to tell you what you we all need to hear. (John 18:37; John 17:3 of 1-4; Ecc 12:13-14; Ecc 12:11-12) Read Jesus's sayings from the Gospels recorded by Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

So, I daily and willingly offer my life (my energies or my works) on the altar of my faith, soon to follow (at 73 years of age) in the path of all humankind. (Jos 23:14) And still I hope, all the while, God will step in at the last minute (sooner is better) with the sacrifice protecting my life. (Gen 22:1-14) Even if I die, of course, I retain the hope of life through the resurrection. (John 5:25-29; John 11:21-26) What I hope and have faith in, however, is to continue alive forever. (Job 33:13-30; John 11:26) Speaking about

my sacrifice is not boasting of my own righteousness. I do pray it means I love God, but I also well know, I love the hope of eternal life and <u>God's</u> other good promises; very much! Only <u>God</u> can judge what my true love is. (<u>1 Cor 4:5 of 1-5</u>)

Amen! Come quickly Lord Jesus! (Rev 22:18-20)

The following translations may have been quoted in this document:

ALT – 1999 Analytical Literal Translation (Gary F. Zeolla)

ASV - 1897 American Standard Version (American Revision Committee)

BBE - 1949, 1964 Bible in Basic English (Cambridge Press)

Bishops - 1568

Calvin – 1856 (Calvin Translation Society)

Coverdale – 1535 James Coverdale

CEV – 1995 Contemporary English Version (American Bible Society)

Darby - 1884, 1889 Darby Bible (John Nelson Darby)

DRB - 1899 Douay-Rheims Bible

ESV – 2001 English Standard Version (Crossway Bibles)

Geneva – 1587 (Christopher Barker, printer to the "Qveenes Maiestie")

GNB – 1992 Good News Bible (American Bible Society)

GW – 1995 God's Word Bible (GOD'S WORD to the Nations Bible Society)

IHOT+ - Interlinear Hebrew Old Testament with Strong's numbers

ISV – 1996 International Standard Version (The ISV Foundation)

KJV - King James Version (1611)

LITV - Literal Translation of the Holy Bible (1976-2000 by J. P. Green)

MKJV - Modern King James Version (1962-1998 by J. P. Green Sr.)

Murdock – James Murdock (1851)

MWT - Modern World Translation (JustBibleTruth.com)

NWT – New World Translation (Watchtower Bible and Tract Society)

RV – 1769 Revised Version (King James Revised Version)

Webster - 1833 Webster Bible (Noah Webster)

WTNT – 1525 William Tyndale New Testament (William Tyndale)

Wycliffe – 1394 Wycliffe (Purvey Revision)

YLT – 1862 Young's Literal Translation (J.N. Young)

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