

# "THE JUST SHALL LIVE BY FAITH"

**BIBLE TEXT** : Habakkuk 2:4; Romans 1:16, 17; Galatians 3:10, 11; Hebrews 10:35-39 Romans 5:1-21.

LESSON 313 **Junior Course**

**MEMORY VERSE:** "Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him" (Hebrews 10:38).

## **BIBLE TEXT in King James Version**

### **Habakkuk 2:4**

<sup>4</sup> Behold, his soul *which* is lifted up is not upright in him: but the just shall live by his faith.

### **Romans 1:16-17**

<sup>16</sup> For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

<sup>17</sup> For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.

### **Galatians 3:10-11**

<sup>10</sup> For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed *is* every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.

<sup>11</sup> But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, *it is* evident: for, The just shall live by faith.

### **Hebrews 10:35-39**

<sup>35</sup> Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward.

<sup>36</sup> For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise.

<sup>37</sup> For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry.

<sup>38</sup> Now the just shall live by faith: but if *any man* draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.

<sup>39</sup> But we are not of them who

## **BIBLE REFERENCES:**

### **NOTES:**

#### **A Journey to Rome**

A long time ago, just a few years after Columbus had discovered America, two monks walked from their monastery in Germany to visit the Pope in Rome, Italy. It was a long walk, and for many weary weeks they trudged on and on. But they were happy because they felt that they were on a mission for the Lord. There had been trouble in their Church at home, and they hoped to tell the Pope about it so that it could be settled for the glory of God.

One of the monks was Martin Luther. He had been trained to be a lawyer, but several things had happened which caused him to decide to become a priest. First, he had found a Bible in the school library where he was studying. In those days there were very few Bibles, and they were written either in the original languages of Hebrew and Greek, or in Latin. As Luther read, he received a deep longing to know more about the truth of God. Then happened a series of incidents, which caused him to promise his life in service to God. He kept his vow, and dedicated himself to a life of self-denial, living as simply as he could in order to please God by his sacrifice.

#### **Luther's Disappointment**

When Martin Luther entered Rome, he was disappointed with the great display of wealth and grandeur that he saw in the Church. He had believed that the life of a Christian was a simple life, and all the elegance he saw seemed very sinful to him. And he saw many people doing things that he had been taught were wrong. The Pope, to whom he had come for help in cleansing the Church in Germany, was not at all interested in correcting the wrong. In his disillusionment, Luther began to pray and to do penance by climbing some sacred stairs; and God answered him.

#### **God's Words**

These are the words God spoke to Martin Luther: "The just shall live by faith." It was a short sentence; but a tremendous and everlasting truth was contained in those words. All the pious deeds Luther had done had not gained for him eternal life. If he were to be righteous before God, he must come as any sinner comes today: believing in the Lord Jesus Christ unto salvation. Climbing up and down stairs on his hands and knees did not save his soul. The just shall live by faith!

After a month in Rome, Martin Luther and his friend walked back to Germany. Over and over in his mind went those words. "The just shall live by faith": -- faith in Jesus Christ. By faith Martin Luther found the peace that he had longed for.

When he arrived home he began to preach that truth, and to write books about it. But the Catholic Church was the ruling Church at that time, and the people were taught that the Pope's word was of much greater importance than the Word of God. And so it was that a great controversy arose over the preaching of Luther.

#### **Excommunication**

Martin Luther had had confidence in the Church, and had no

draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.

### **Romans 5:1-21**

<sup>1</sup> Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:

<sup>2</sup> By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

<sup>3</sup> And not only *so*, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience;

<sup>4</sup> And patience, experience; and experience, hope:

<sup>5</sup> And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.

<sup>6</sup> For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.

<sup>7</sup> For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die.

<sup>8</sup> But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

<sup>9</sup> Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.

<sup>10</sup> For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.

<sup>11</sup> And not only *so*, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.

<sup>12</sup> Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:

<sup>13</sup> (For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law.

<sup>14</sup> Nevertheless death reigned from

intention of withdrawing. He thought that the trouble lay in some of the people who were in it, and if they could be dealt with and caused to see the truth, all would be well. But he finally realized that if he was going to stand for the truths of the Bible, he would have to take his stand against the Church.

The day came when Martin Luther was called to stand for the truth of God's Word before more than 200 high officials; some were sent from the Pope, and others were rulers in Germany. This meeting was called a Diet, and it was held at Worms, Germany, so it is known as the Diet of Worms.

An Audience of about 4,000 people had gathered to witness Luther's trial. Calmly he stood before his angry accusers, confident that he was right, and that God would not forsake him.

He was asked if he had written the books before him, and he answered that he had. He was willing to destroy any of them, which could be proved to be contrary to the Scriptures; but if that could not be done, he would not take back one word.

How grateful we should be to that man who was willing to take his stand for the Word of God against kings and princes and bishops. It might mean his death; but eternal life was of greater importance to this humble child of God. May God put that determination and steadfast purpose into our hearts not to yield to the forces of evil, but bravely stand for the right though it might mean our life!

Luther was given one more opportunity to yield, but he courageously answered: "I cannot and will not recant anything. Here I stand. I cannot do otherwise. So help me God. Amen."

There was such excitement in the room that his last words could hardly be heard. Though the people were angry because he had dared to defy the Pope, they dared not lay a hand on him because he had been promised safe passage to and from the meeting.

### **In Hiding**

On his way home, a journey of several days, Luther was kidnapped by friends and hidden for almost a year in a castle in the mountains. During that time he wrote many letters of encouragement to people who had accepted his teachings. His most important work, however, was the translating of the New Testament into the German language. Later he translated the Old Testament, also; and although that was way back in the year 1521, no better German translation has ever been made.

### **The Beginning of the Reformation**

Thus was the Reformation launched by one man's courage, faith, and love for the truth. The light of the Gospel had dawned again after the centuries of the Dark Ages, which had followed the death of the founders of the early Church. Because he had the courage to stand for the truth that God had given him – "The just shall live by faith" – Luther broke the absolute power of the Catholic Church and proved that all men have the opportunity to repent of their sins and to seek forgiveness through Jesus and the Blood He shed on Calvary.

Luther had been taught that he must atone for his own sins through doing penance and making sacrifices. He had tried hard to work his way into Heaven, but he had never found peace. He was never sure that he was being accepted by God. Now he knew the truth of the Bible: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16:31). "By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast" (Ephesians 2:8, 9). He had many times repented of his sins, fulfilling that requirement of the Lord (**Mark 1:15** <sup>15</sup> **And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the**

Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come.

<sup>15</sup> But not as the offence, so also *is* the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, *which is* by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many.

<sup>16</sup> And not as *it was* by one that sinned, *so is* the gift: for the judgment *was* by one to condemnation, but the free gift *is* of many offences unto justification.

<sup>17</sup> For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.)

<sup>18</sup> Therefore as by the offence of one *judgment came* upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one *the free gift came* upon all men unto justification of life.

<sup>19</sup> For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.

<sup>20</sup> Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound:

<sup>21</sup> That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.

**kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.**), but he had never believed unto salvation. Now Luther knew that he was forgiven by God, for the Spirit of God bore witness to it; and he went everywhere preaching to all men the possibility of knowing that they were saved from sin.

### **Not a New Doctrine**

The fact that people can be saved by faith in Jesus was not new when Luther preached it. It had just come to light again after the Dark Ages. The Apostles and disciples of Jesus' day had taught it, and even the Old Testament saints had believed and lived by that doctrine. "The just shall live by faith" has been God's law for His followers ever since He has dealt with men. (Faith means believing in Jesus so firmly that one is willing to forsake his sins. The just are righteous people who will be ready to meet Jesus when He comes.)

### **Abel's Faith**

The first two children born into this world brought sacrifices to God. Cain's sacrifice was rejected because he did not come to God in the right manner. God said to him: "If thou does well, shalt thou not be accepted? And if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door" (Genesis 4:7). If he had had such faith as his brother Abel had, he would have been righteous and would have done well. It was by faith that "Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous" (Hebrews 11:4). The righteousness of Abel, way back in the beginning of time, came by faith.

### **The Faith of the Patriarchs**

The Apostle Paul tells us, "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness" (Galatians 3:6). Righteous Abraham lived by faith.

Noah enjoyed the righteousness which is by faith, even before the world was destroyed by the Flood. Paul says of him: "By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith" (Hebrews 11:7).

This faith was a belief in Jesus who had not yet been born. Jesus said of Abraham: "Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad" (John 8:56). And Job said: "I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: . . . whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold" (Job 19:25-27). And David said: "As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness" (Psalm 17:15). He was confident that Jesus was coming, and through that faith he was saved and made ready to meet Him.

### **Faith unto Salvation**

When the Apostle Paul said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16:31), it sounded easy. But another time he explained a little more about being saved when he said: "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved" (Romans 10:9). We must believe from the heart that Jesus is the divine Son of God, in order to be saved. And the Spirit of God must teach us how to do that. We cannot be saved without the help of the Spirit of God drawing us to Him.

When Jesus asked His disciples, "Whom say ye that I am?" and Peter answered, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," Jesus told him, "Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 16:13-17). It

was necessary for the Spirit of God to reveal to Peter the fact that Jesus was divine.

We are happy today that the Gospel is for the whosoever will. We appreciate the fact that we have an open Bible, wherein we can all find the truth that sets us free. And we rejoice in the power in the Blood of Jesus to keep His people living without sin.

### **QUESTIONS**

1. Who is given credit for starting the Reformation?
2. Describe what happened at the Diet of Worms.
3. What Scripture text was the keynote of the Reformation?
4. Who was the first person, of whom we have an account in the Bible, who was saved by faith?
5. How were Abraham, Noah, and Job made righteous?
6. How do we know that Abraham believed in Jesus?
7. How did Peter know that Jesus was the Son of God?
8. What must a person do to be saved, in addition to believing in the Lord Jesus Christ?