

Four Conditions You Must Meet (Go To Meeting)

Michael Heiss—January 7, 2022

We're going to take a look at what I call the four conditions we must meet to gain entrance to the Kingdom of God:

1. knowledge *or* to know
2. belief
3. faith
4. good works

They are on a continuum, one follows the other. If one is missing the other three will not count for very much.

Knowledge:

The first one is the most important one, *knowledge!* What do I mean by *knowledge?* *Not necessarily what you might think I mean!* Knowledge in English *I know something! I know a fact,* I know how many books I have on my shelf. I know the letters of the alphabet.

But in the Biblical Hebrew it is different; it is much deeper. I want to read you a paragraph that I culled from a work describing Biblical Hebrew for *knowing*:

In the Hebrew Scriptures, *to know* means not just to be intellectually informed, but to experience reality. ***Knowledge is not the possession of information!***

But we generally think it is, but it's much, much more than that!

It is an experience to know God in the Bible. It's not to know about him in some abstract and personal manner. Not to grasp philosophically His eternal existence, but to recognize and experience His reality and to obey His will!

We've often read, and Fred has pointed this out many times, about ***obeying My voice!*** Obeying the voice of God! But we're going to see that ***obeying and knowing,*** the Hebrew is deeper.

There really is not much in Hebrew for the word *obey*, which means *to hear*. But in Hebrew *to hear* means *to hear and act upon what you hear!* When God says, 'Obey My voice' it's ***listen, pay attention and do!***

In knowledge it is the same thing! It leads us to a much better understanding, for example: of the knowledge of good and evil.

Genesis 2:17—*God is instructing Adam:* "But you shall not eat of the Tree of *the Knowledge*

of Good and Evil, for in the day that you eat of it in dying you shall surely die."

Genesis 3:1: "Now, the serpent was more cunning than any creature of the field, which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, 'Is it true that God has said, "You shall not eat of any tree of the garden"?' And the woman said to the serpent, 'We may freely eat the fruit of the trees of the garden, but of the fruit of the tree which *is* in the middle of the garden, God has *indeed* said, "You shall not eat of it, neither shall you touch it, lest you die"'" (vs 1-3).

Verse 4: "And the serpent said to the woman, 'In dying, you shall not surely die! For God knows..." (vs 4-5).

Verse 6: "And when the woman saw that the tree *was* good for food, and that it was pleasing to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make *one* wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate."

The key, v 22: "And the LORD God said, 'Behold, the man has become like one of Us, to decide... [know] ...good and evil...'"

What does this tell us? *Adam and Eve experienced the evil!* To know—remember what we just read—is more than to know academically. It means to

- feel it
- believe it
- decide for one's self what is good and evil

It is using another source!

Adam and Eve experienced *choosing for self* what is good and evil. They did not know God! God was there, He taught them, but they ***didn't really know Him!***

If Eve had known God, she would never had fallen for the suave, smooth, sophisticated approach of the serpent. She did not *believe* God!

See our continuum: ***to know, to believe, have faith and to do!*** She did not *really believe* God when He said, 'Don't eat that fruit!'

So, you have to ***know*** God! It shows you also about a man knowing his wife.

Genesis 4:1: "Then Adam ***knew*** Eve his wife, and she conceived..."

In other parts of the Bible a man *knows* his wife. Why use the word *know*? We know what it means, so why would you use that word? Couldn't God come up with a different word, a word that really says what happened? *Of course, He could have!* That's not His point.

To know is to *deeply know!* To have a deep experience. What is a close expression of affection that a man and woman can have? *The sexual act!* So, when God says that *Adam knew her*, he came as close to her as he possibly could. The closest expression of endearment.

President Abraham Lincoln in his second inaugural address, one of the finest political speeches ever given, in the final paragraph there's one sentence that stands out in my mind:

...with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right...

{www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=false&doc=38&page=transcript}

What was he saying? ***God is the Source of what is right and what is wrong!*** He and He alone can tell us what is right and what is wrong.

Adam and Eve did not rely on God as a Source for what is right and what was wrong. They went to an outside source. As a result of that, ***they really didn't know God!***

Belief and Faith:

The Bible definition of faith; Hebrews 11:1: "Now, faith is the substance of things hoped for, and the conviction of things not seen."

Obviously, it means you don't have it, yet. You hope to get it, you expect to get it, you believe you're going to get it. ***That is faith!***

For me, in my simple mind, I felt I needed a more concise definition of faith. This perfectly good, it's in God's Word so you know it's good. So, I came up with one for me, and maybe it will help you, too. ***Faith is belief so strong it leads to action!*** *You call it:*

Good Works:

Let me give you a very, very simple example, and it has to be about football. I was attending Drake University and I was walking by the football field and there was a coach and he was introducing a new play to his players; he was explaining how it works.

I remember him saying something like this: 'Look! You guys have to believe in this. You have to believe and have faith in it. You've got to believe it will work.'

That's true! If you have a quarterback and he doesn't believe that his pocket is going to hold back the line, he's in trouble. He has to believe and have faith that it will work. Otherwise, he's never going to need his tight end or wide receiver.

Anyway, that is belief that leads to action. But not only belief. Don't just have to believe that God exists. ***But we have to believe God!***

Romans 4:3: "For what does the Scripture say? 'And Abraham ***believed*** God, and ***it was imputed to him for righteousness.***'"

So, here we have ***believe God***, but you can't believe God unless you really ***know*** Him.

We believe and what happens with faith? We will try to put all of this together on our continuum of ***knowledge, belief, faith and good works!***

Ephesians 2:8: "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this *especially* is not of your own selves; *it is* the gift of God, not of works..." (vs 8-9).

Verse 10: "For we are His workmanship, being created in Christ Jesus unto *the* good works that God ordained..."

That's the same thing that James said in James 2: 18: "... 'You have faith, and I have works.' *My answer is:* You prove your faith to me through your works, and I will prove my faith to you through my works. Do you believe that God is one? You do well *to believe this*. Even the demons believe and tremble *in fear*" (vs 18-19).

But there is one thing that the demons do not do; ***they do not obey the will of God!*** You have to really *know God* and experience Him to do that.

Let's look what I consider a truly classic example of faith. We've all read this I don't know how many times. But let's take a little closer look at it:

David vs Goliath

We all know the story, the Philistines were gathered together, the Israelites were gathered together, each on a side and with a valley in between. I'm just going to give you the background of it, and then we're going to read specifically.

Here came this hulk of a man—Goliath—who strode up and down saying, 'I am a man, I am a Philistine! You choose a man, you men of Saul, to fight me. If I fight and kill him, you are our slaves. If he fights and kills me, we are your slaves. *Nobody in Israel would dare go up against this giant of a man!*

While this is going on, Jesse—the father of

David—asked David to take some food to your brothers and see how things are going. David went there and saw this Philistine and what he was doing. He asked about this Philistine:

1-Samuel 17:10: “And the Philistine said, ‘I defy the armies of Israel this day....’ ***That was a ‘no, no’!***”

You don’t say that you defy the armies of the living God! God is not going to let you get away with it. David was the one, the instrument, and look at what David says when he was brought to Saul’s attention.

Verse 31: “And the words which David spoke were heard. And they were told before Saul. And he sent for him. And David said to Saul, ‘Let no man’s heart fail because of him. Your servant will go and fight with this Philistine.’ And Saul said to David...” (vs 31-33).

You’re a kid, a youth, this guy has been a warrior since his youth, you don’t have a chance of beating this individual.

Look at what David said, v 34: “And David said to Saul, ‘Your servant kept his father’s sheep, and there came a lion and a bear, and took a lamb out of the flock.’”

A lion and a bear? Go to the Middle East today, there are no lions or bears. We have had ‘climate change.’ Obviously, it wasn’t caused by carbon fuel. Remember Samson, he killed a lion with his bare hands.

Remember the ‘man of God’ who was sent to warn Jeroboam? He got sidetracked. God told to go up there and you come right back. He didn’t, an old false prophet sidetracked him and lions killed him.

When roughians, hecklers went about bothering Elisha, what happened? *Two she-bears came out!*

Just an aside, topography, climate change happened. Not by carbon fuels.

“...and took a lamb out of the flock. And I went out after it and struck it, and delivered *the lamb* out of its mouth. And when it rose against me, I caught *it* by the beard, and struck it and killed it. Your servant killed both the lion and the bear. And this uncircumcised Philistine shall be like one of them, **since he has defied the armies of the living God**” (vs 34-36).

David *knew* that! David *knew* God! He *knew* that God would not put up with that, if somebody would go against Goliath, He *knew* that God would be with him!

Verse 37: “And David said, ‘The LORD who has delivered me out of the paw of the lion and out of the paw of the bear, He will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine.’....”

There was something in the conviction of David’s voice that moved Saul. You’ll note that Saul was not in an all fired hurry to get out there and fight the Philistine. No! He wasn’t doing that!

Verse 39: “And David girded his sword upon his armor...” *But he hadn’t tested it. He really couldn’t move in it,* and he put it aside.

Verse 40: “And he took his staff in his hand, and chose five smooth stones... [David was resourceful] ...out of the brook for himself, and put them in a shepherd’s vessel, which he had, even in a bag. And his sling *was* in his hand. And he drew near the Philistine. And the Philistine came on and drew near David. And the man who bore the shield *was* before him. And the Philistine looked and saw David, and disdained him, for he was *only* a youth, and ruddy with a handsome appearance. And the Philistine said to David, ‘Am I a dog that you come to me with sticks?’ And the Philistine cursed David by his gods” (vs 40-43)—*arrogance!*

Verse 44: “And the Philistine said to David, ‘Come to me, and I will give your flesh to the birds of the air and to the beasts of the field.’ And David said to the Philistine, ‘You come to me with a sword and with a spear and with a javelin. But I come to you in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, **Whom you have defied.** The LORD will deliver you into my hand today, and I will strike you and take your head from you and give the bodies of the army of the Philistines to the birds of the air today, and to the wild beasts of the earth... [Why?] ...**so that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel**” (vs 44-46).

David was giving all of the credit to God! All of it! None for himself! Because he *believed* God, ***he knew God***, he had ***the faith*** to go out there and take his sling.

Verse 48: “And it came to pass when the Philistine rose and went and drew near to meet David, David hurried and ran toward the ranks to meet the Philistine. And David put his hand into his bag and took a stone from there, and slung *it* and struck the Philistine in his forehead, so that the stone sank into his forehead....” (vs 48-49) *That was the end of Goliath!*

David was a good shot with the sling. Pitchers today in baseball can throw 95-100 mph. Let me tell you, that can kill you! David and his sling and stone can sling it faster than 100 mph. But you have to hit the right spot.

God came in there; God was his guidance system! David did everything he knew to do. He whirled around and let it fly, and God made sure that it went right where it was supposed to go. God was the one who delivered him.

After explaining this, I now have to come with some sadness for me as I look back on many, many of the friends I knew in college, many of the brethren that I have met; they're not with us anymore!

- Why?
- What happened?

I have many of them! One of my friends in college I fasted with, we had a fasting pact: one day a week we fasted, and in the last week of the month we fasted two days in a row.

He graduated and went on to become a minister, preaching elder of the Worldwide Church of God. He's tumbled off! Gone! Gone with the wind! **What happened?**

Everyone likes to have a best friend when you're growing up. You need that, someone you can rely on and kid around with. Well, I had one at Ambassador College. For four years we paled together, did things, talked over. The closest thing I had to a best friend. In fact, he married one of the girls that I used to date, and congratulations to him. **Where is he now?**

He graduated, was ordained and he preached. Today, he's somewhere in Texas serving a small Baptist Church. **What happened?** *He left the Sabbath and Holy Days, gone!*

Another friend of mine, I hadn't seen him since the late 70s, and I found out he was coming out here a year ago during the Feast. I asked him to come over and let's talk. What have you been doing? What's going on?

He and his wife came out and we were talking and he was telling me how he was so happy, peaceful and content. He and his wife in his 'wonderful Lutheran Church.

I have nothing against Lutherans, Baptists or Presbyterians and other Protestants. God loves them all. **But what happened to him?** *The same thing that happened to them all! We're going to see that!*

Then there was an employee that I met when I was dropped from the college. He was the one who gave me my severance check, so I have fond memories of him.

He was a graduate of Imperial School and graduated from Ambassador College. He gave me my check, but before I could go out the door, he

went and closed it, locked it and said. 'Wait! Sit down! Look, you are more learned than I, please explain to me from the Bible how I know that I should keep the Sabbath.'

Mind you, here was a graduate of Imperial School and Ambassador College, went through four years of AC and didn't know why he should keep the Sabbath, or couldn't prove that he should keep the Sabbath.

That brought back to mind that on more than one occasion when I sat and almost cringed and shaken, because Herbert W. Armstrong as the Pastor General would thunder: ***I don't think half of you get it! Maybe less than half of you! I don't even think most of the ministers get it!***

I was shaking, he couldn't be right, he was overacting! ***NO, he wasn't! He understood that!*** The reason that they all left that way, they didn't **know** God! They heard about Him.

I have a picture of my graduating class—1964—and I had misplaced mine originally, but my good friend and classmate from up in Hollister—Fred Coulter—sent it to me. I'm so thankful! There they are: 29 men and 11 women. Most of the leading men—almost all of them—***are gone!***

The Student Class President, the Senior Class President, two of the go-getters who organized many of the activities. They led clubs, led this and that, became ordained ministers, preaching elders, pastors—***rebelled! Went off the deep end!***

Why? *They didn't know God!* They saw problems in the Church, and so did I. They saw corruption, and so did I. But they *didn't know God!* They made the mistake that the Israelites made, when Samuels sons weren't doing what they were supposed to be doing. Or in some cases they did some things that they shouldn't have been doing.

So, the came to Samuel and said, 'Samuel, you're old and your sons are not following your direction; give us a king, make us a king!'

Samuel didn't like it! He was hurt by it! He talked to God about it, and remember what God said to him, 'Samuel, they have not rejected you, they have rejected Me, that I should not rule over them!'

Just like all these men who left, they rejected God. Why? *They didn't really know Him!*

I remember, I'll be as blunt as I know how, laughing, joking, these were my classmates. But looking back, I realize now when we would talk about different subjects ***that God never really came up!***

The need to serve God never really came up! But I will tell you that one man in particular where it did come up; his name is Fred Coulter! How well I remember him, and he always went to serve the people. He obeyed God as best he knew how, and he's still doing it, as we all know!

These men who went off the deep end, they didn't have the advice that I received a long, long time ago. I will give you now the same advice that I was given. Out of all things, it came from a Greek Orthodox priest. I was 18-years-old and had come to realize that Jesus was the Christ, and of course, my good Greek friend brought me to *The Plato Church*, which is the largest Greek Orthodox congregation this side of Athens.

He brought me there and introduced me to a priest. We were both 18 and seniors graduating from high school. The priest came over to me and was grinning from ear to ear. 'Oh this nice Jewish boy has coming to Christ.' I appreciated that, but then he proceeded to give me some advice, very subtle but I never forgot it; and now seeing what's happened, I know why he gave it. He probably didn't know for sure why he gave it, but I believe that God meant for him to give it:

Whatever you do in your life, do not look to a man, do not trust in a man, no matter how good he may seem to be, no matter how well intentioned he may be. He is just that! He is a man! He will fail you! Always look to Christ; He will never fail you!

The best advice anybody ever gave me, in the Church, out of the Church, it didn't really matter.

So, I pass it on to you! ***Look to Christ, the Rock! You have to hang onto the Rock!***

There's also, to show you how far down people can go, there is today what is called *The Ambassador College Forum*. You can join it, as I have, and it's different people talking about different things. They're all AC graduates.

Of the 300 who are on the forum, maybe 20%--maybe not even that much--have any of the old beliefs of the Worldwide Church of God. They've all gone on to bigger and 'better' things. They don't keep the Sabbath, they don't keep the Holy Days, and some of them are so bitter in what they feel happened to them.

There's one man who was an ordained preaching elder, today he says he 'can't stand that God of the Old Testament; He's a mass murderer.' He wrote it, so I'm not telling anything he hasn't posted himself. Worse than Hitler, Stalin or Mao tse-tung or Tamerlane worst of the Mongols.

Others have said that they were 'duped' by Herbert Armstrong. He was a 'con artist.' They can see no good. All they did was look to the man. The man had failings. I know he had failings, but I also know that ***were it not for his voice, I wouldn't be here!***

In fact, I doubt that any of you would be here, either. Whether you heard his voice directly, or others who did hear his voice went on to teach you. Fred certainly heard Mr. Armstrong's voice, as I did.

Again, what happened to them? They didn't know God! When you leave and you leave the Holy Days and Sabbath behind, this is what happens: the Sabbath, as we understand it, is in the Kingdom of God for eternity! It is aside from Christ and Him crucified.

The Sabbath is the most important statute there is. Why? Because all the Holy Days; the Festivals hang on the hook of the Sabbath! The Sabbath is the Kingdom of God. The Holy Days and Festivals tell you how to get there. 'Oh, I see, I need to have my sins forgiven!' Somebody has to shed blood to forgive the sins; Passover Lamb. 'Oh, I guess I need to get rid of sin.' Days of Unleavened Bread, get rid of sin, leave it, put it out! *Plan of God!*

Then after a while there's a harvest, *Pentecost!* After Pentecost, Rosh Hashanah or the day of blowing trumpets: Feast of Trumpets when Christ returns to this earth and begins to setup the Kingdom. But He can't do it while this adversary is around, this murderer and liar: Satan! So, God has to send an angel to lock him up! Then we can begin the Millennium, the real beginning of the Kingdom of God in terms of masses of people understanding the Truth.

What happens then? *The Last Great Day!* So, all of the people who talk about all the evils that have been done and God just doesn't care about anybody. What kind of God do you worship? ***They have forgotten the second resurrection! God is going right every wrong that has ever been committed!***

But if you don't know the Sabbath, you don't keep it, you don't keep the Holy Days, ***you lose sight of His plan, and that's what Satan always does!*** He causes us to leave the Sabbath and Holy Days and you lose sight, and that's what they did!

They didn't know God! So, they left us! I didn't grasp this until finally—I don't know how many years it took—I've read this a dozen times.

1-John 2:18: "Little children, it is *the* last

time; and just as you have heard that the antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have risen up, by which we know that it is *the* last time. They went out from among us, but they were not of us, because **if they were of us they would have remained with us...** (vs 18-19).

- they didn't ***know*** Him
- they didn't ***experience*** Him

Therefore, when problems and trials came, the corruption that they saw, all could have been true, ***but they didn't look to Christ***, as that orthodox priest advised me. ***They didn't know God***, and I'm driving that point home.

- we have to ***know*** God
- we have to ***experience*** Him
- we have to ***call upon*** Him
- we have to ***learn to think as He thinks***

One of things that has been brought up and thrown in my face is *barbarism! Human sacrifice!*

- What kind of a bloody God is that?
- Moses, what a bloody husband he is, why do you have to do that?
- Why does God have to have people die?
- Can't He just forgive?
- What kind of a legalistic God do you worship?

They don't know God! God is Holy, pure, righteous, and He cannot abide sin!

One of my favorite characters in American History was in reality little man, not a great national hero, but a down to earth humble individual: Fiorello La Guardia. He was the Mayor of New York City in the 30s & 40s. he was honest and true. He was neither a Democrat or a Republican, he was an Independent. But the corrupt {inaudible} Hall could not touch him, because the people knew he was faithful; they knew he was just.

One night he was walking on the streets of New York and saw a night court in session. He always wanted to go, so he went in and there was the judge making his rulings. The judge saw him, 'Oh Mr. Mayor, welcome.' La Guardia said, 'Could I, please, just for one night sit in your place. I've always wanted to act as a judge on the night court.' *Oh, we're delighted to have you, come right up here and sit!*

The first case was a woman who stole some food. The case has been brought against her by the grocer. La Guardia head all the facts and said, 'She's guilty!'

She was poor and barely had enough money to make a living. She had children and what was she

going to do? *She stole some food!* But she broke the law! A penalty had to be paid. What did La Guardia do?

He took off his hat, put a dollar bill in it and passed the hat around, and said, 'All of those of you who can feel for this woman, contribute.' That hat made the rounds and there was more money in that hat than she ever stole in terms of bread. La Guardia then asked the grocer: 'Are you satisfied! Does this make it right with you?' *Yes and he left!* La Guardia said, 'Case dismissed.'

When you break the law, whether man's law or God's Law, there's got to be a penalty! The wages of sin is death!

So, spiritually, God had to send His Son, because He so loved the world, He so loves you and me that He provided the penalty for our crime; just the way that Mayor La Guardia collected the money to pay the find for that woman.

God is righteous! He's not cruel! He's righteous and Holy, and He cannot abide sin! Remember the story of Uzza, when David was bring the Ark of the Covenant up to Jerusalem.

He made a fundamental mistake! What did God tell him to do? *Get the Levites with their poles through the rings and carry it!* He didn't do that and as they were carrying the Ark on a new cart, it began to tip over. Uzza put up his hand to steady it and got killed. Why? That Ark was Holy and ***no man was to touch it other than the priest or the Levites!***

Didn't matter! It was to show us how Holy God is, and we have to learn to think as God thinks! We have to see as God sees. Otherwise we're not going be able to carry out His instructions.

Wonder what's in store for us? *We know what's in store for us!* Paul said that if we suffer with Him, we shall be glorified with Him. We are going to be joint heirs.

I deal with taxes and also some trusts and when the will or the estate talks about a joint heir, that means *equal*. Paul said that we are joint heirs with Christ, which means that whatever He inherits, we inherit. It's enough to blow our minds!

We are going to equal, though not in ranking or authority. The Father will always be the Grand Patriarch, and the only Begotten Son, the King of kings and Lord of lords will be right there as Chief Executive.

We're all going to have the same substance. Remember when Moses said to God, 'I want to see Your glory.' What did God say? *Well, you know, Moses, I can't do that, but there's a cleft in the rock here and I will put you in this cleft and I'm going to*

pass on by and you can see my back parts. But you cannot see My face and live, you will disintegrate!

1-John 3:1: Behold! What *glorious* love the Father has given to us, that we should be called the children of God! For this very reason, the world does not know us because it did not know Him. Beloved, now we are the children of God, and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be; but we know that when He is manifested, we shall be like Him... [Why?] ...because we shall see Him exactly as He is" (vs 1-2).

We are going to be able to match him eyeball to eyeball! We won't disintegrate, because our substance will be the same as God's substance. It has to be if we are going to be part of His Divine Family and carryout His instructions throughout the universe. But to do that, ***we have to know Him!***

- know His ways
- know His mind
- know His thoughts

So we are able to do what He asks us to do, and to be able to think how the Father would do this; how He would carry it out.

To do that, we have to carry on! We have to hang on! Or what Jesus said, and this is what all these men who left and many members of the Church have left have to do. We had a one time over 100,000 people regularly attending. We have just a small fraction of that! But God knew that!

God is in the process... He's not interested in numbers so much. He wants a hardcore, a general staff of individuals in that first resurrection! What a glorious procession that will be to be called *the sons of God* in the first resurrection!

We're going to be in a class all by ourselves. Others will be in the Family of God and will have glorified bodies, too. But those of us in this first resurrection will have a distinction that nobody else will. Of course, that will include many of the great prophets of old; they have their own standards of conduct and so forth.

But those in the first resurrection, what an incredible feat that's going to be. To do that, look at:

Matthew 7:24: "Therefore, everyone who hears these words of Mine and practices them, I will compare him to a wise man, who built his house upon the Rock; and the rain came down, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; but it did not fall, for it was founded upon the Rock" (vs 24-25).

- Who was the Rock?
- What is the Rock?

1-Corinthians 10:4: "...And that Rock was Christ."

What was it that Greek Orthodox priest advised me? ***Look to the Rock! Look to Christ! Hang onto Him! Don't ever let go! Don't let anything come between you and that Rock!***

These men who left the Church forgot that! Some of them really never knew it! God wants us, those of us who can see! We need to open our eyes so that we can see, and our ears so that we can hear! We have to!

If we don't ***know*** God, and ***know*** that we ***know*** Him, ***we'll never have the belief and the faith to do the good works that God's going to judge us by!*** It's just not going to happen!

Matthew 24: 11: "And many false prophets shall arise, and shall deceive many."

He's also talking about those in the Church and attending a congregation. He's not just talking about the world! That's what we have to realize! I remember the *King James*, which says, v 12: ***'Iniquity shall abound, the love of many will wax cold.'***

He's talking about the Church! Iniquity has always abounded in the world. In the Faithful Version:

Verse 12: "And because lawlessness shall be multiplied, the love of many shall grow cold. **But the one who endures to the end, that one shall be saved**" (vs 12-13). *He's the one who will make it through!*

All my friends that I no longer have, they didn't hang on! They didn't endure! They let feelings get in the way! ***They didn't know God!***

They couldn't realize what He was doing! He wants to know:

- **Who is with Me?**
- **Who is calling out to Me?**
- **Who is saying:**
 - ✓ **Father, help me to know You**
 - ✓ **I need to loyal to You**

Because ***IF we don't know God, we're not going to have the belief or the faith to produce the works. We're not going to be in that first resurrection unless we do know God and endure to the end!***

Revelation 2:9—*talking about the Church of Smyrna*: "I know your works and tribulation and poverty (but you are rich)..."

Rich in faith and belief; not rich in this world's goods. They had very little.

“...and the blasphemy of those who declare themselves to be Jews and are not, but *are* a synagogue of Satan. **Do not fear any of the things that you are about to suffer.** Behold, the devil is about to cast *some* of you into prison, that you may be tried; and you shall have tribulation ten days. **Be faithful unto death, and I will give you a crown of life**” (vs 9-10)—*the crown of eternal life, for evermore!*

Be faithful unto death! Same thing, *He who endures to the end!* Being faithful unto death doesn't necessarily mean martyrdom. For some it will. In fact, toward the real end of time, a lot of people are going to be martyred. Hasn't happened yet, but it will!

Whether it's being faithful until the day we die, peaceful, or we have martyrdom, He says, 'Be faithful and hang on!'

But you can't hang on unless you know God! To believe Him when He says He will give you eternal life. He will give us this crown of life for evermore.

- Do we believe Him without knowing Him?
Remember God Who cannot lie? God does not lie!
- Do we believe that?
- Do we believe God that He doesn't lie to us?
- Do we believe God that He will never forsake us?

The proof is in the pudding!

We have to follow through, and if we do, if we are faithful—***because we know God***—we believe Him, therefore we will have the faith to do whatever it is that we must do.

So, when He comes, His reward is with Him and He will then give us the crown of life, eternal life forevermore!

Scriptural References:

- 1) Genesis 2:17
- 2) Genesis 3:1-6, 22
- 3) Genesis 4:1
- 4) Hebrews 11:1
- 5) Romans 4:3
- 6) Ephesians 2:8-10
- 7) James 2:18-19
- 8) 1 Samuel 17:10, 31-37, 39-49
- 9) 1 John 2:18-19
- 10) 1 John 3:1-2
- 11) Matthew 7:24-25

- 12) 1 Corinthians 10:4
- 13) Matthew 24:11-12
- 14) Revelation 2:9-10

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