

ONCE IS ENOUGH!: DO YOU HAVE FAITH? - PART 1

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Published On : May 13, 2026

Last Updated : May 13, 2026

Christ Died Once And Only Once, Jesus Paid The Full Ransom Price, Christ Died For All Our Sins, Vicarious Atonement Or Substitutionary, Jesus Met The Requirements Of The Law, If God's Word Says That Once Is Enough Then Once Is Enough And Sufficient, God Does Not Lie And He Always Keeps His Word, God's Word Is Eternal Unchangeable And True, Even Just One Supporting Verse Still Makes Something True In The Bible, Anthropic's Claude-Sonnet AI, Logic Against Logic To Prove Your Point With Claude, How Chatbots Process Faith Issues, Claude Confirms That God's Word Requires No Repetition To Be True, Gideon Midianites And A Double Testing Using A Fleece, Possible Reasons Why Gideon Did Fleece Test Twice, Apostle Paul And Gideon: Sense Of Unworthiness Or Lack Of Confidence

In the pages of the New Testament, we can find the following key verses regarding the atoning Sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Please read all of them carefully, and then I will proceed to explain exactly how they relate to the main theme of this current series, in case it is not already apparent to you:

"Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin ONCE: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God."

Romans 6:9-10, KJV

"But this man, [Jesus] because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. For such a high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did ONCE, when he offered up himself."

Hebrews 7:24-27, KJV

"But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in ONCE into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us."

Hebrews 9:11-12, KJV

"For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us: Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others; For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now ONCE in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself . . . So Christ was ONCE offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation."

Hebrews 9:24-26, 28, KJV

"By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ ONCE for all."

Hebrews 10:10, KJV

"For Christ also hath ONCE suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit:"

1 Peter 3:18, KJV

I am sure that the plain truth which is revealed in all of the previous Bible verses is quite apparent, is it not? To add more emphasis to the truth which the writer wants his readers to see and understand, I even placed the word "once" in all uppercase letters. So that plain truth, of course, is the simple fact that Jesus Christ died once as payment, and as an acceptable ransom price, for the sins of every one of us, as we see by the following group of Bible verses:

"Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."

Matthew 20:28, KJV

"For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."

Mark 10:45, KJV

"Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood."

Acts 20:28, KJV

"What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."

1 Corinthians 6:19-20, KJV

"Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men."

1 Corinthians 7:23, KJV

"For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time."

1 Timothy 2:5-6, KJV

"In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory."

Ephesians 1:13-14, KJV

"For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly . . . But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

Romans 5:6, 8, KJV

"For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures;"

1 Corinthians 15:3, KJV

"For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."

2 Corinthians 5:21, KJV

"Grace be to you and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ, Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father:"

Galatians 1:3-4, KJV

"This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief."

1 Timothy 1:15, KJV

"Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;"

Hebrews 1:3, KJV

"So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation."

Hebrews 9:28, KJV

"Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed."

1 Peter 2:24, KJV

"But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."

1 John 1:7, KJV

"My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world."

1 John 2:1-2, KJV

"And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin."

1 John 3:5, KJV

"Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins."

1 John 4:10, KJV

"And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood,"

Revelation 1:5, KJV

Thus, with all of the previous Bible verses, we have clearly established beyond a shadow of a doubt that Jesus Christ died for our sins. He took our place on that Cross. Jesus was our "vicarious atonement", or our "substitutionary atonement". He accomplished for us what we could never hope to accomplish for ourselves. Jesus met the requirements of the Law, which as Hebrews 9 also explains was the following:

"And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission."

Hebrews 9:22, KJV

But the main thing I want you to see insofar as the theme of this current series is concerned, is that Jesus offered up Himself once. He sacrificed Himself once. He entered into the Holy Place beyond the veil just once. That was all that was required. That was all that was needed. It was in fact sufficient, and there is no need for any of us to doubt it or to question it. If the Bible, if God's Word states that once is enough, then truly, once is indeed enough. Again, if in God's eyes Jesus' one-time Sacrifice was sufficient and enough, then it is simply our duty and obligation to accept it as fact, and accept it without any further argument, being as He is, of course, God. I was just reminded of the following Bible verses:

"God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?"

Numbers 23:19, KJV

"Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure:"

Isaiah 46:9-10, KJV

"LAMED. For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven."

Psalms 119:89, KJV

"I know that, whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever: nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it: and God doeth it, that men should fear before him."

Ecclesiastes 3:14, KJV

"God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged."

Romans 3:4, KJV

"In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began;"

Titus 1:2, KJV

"Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us:"

Hebrews 6:17-18, KJV

"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."

James 1:17, KJV

"We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts:"

2 Peter 1:19, KJV

So, clearly, God's Word is it. When He has spoken something, that is it. When He has promised something, that is it. When He says that Jesus' one-time Sacrifice is enough, then it is so. Period. Why? Because God's Word is immutable -- that is to say, unchangeable -- eternal, true without variableness, and sure. It is the most sold thing we humans have got! On a side note, in the previous set of verses, depending on which verse we are examining, the word "once" is derived from the old Koine Greek words "hapax" and "ephapax". According to Thayer's Greek English Lexicon, these words means once, or one time. So what more is there to say?

I won't be delving any further into this particular subject regarding Salvation and everything that is related to it in this series, because I already amply address it some of my other Bill's Bible Basics articles. Besides that, we really want to remain focused on the main lesson at hand. But now let me ask you an important question. What if there is just

one particular verse which declares a certain truth, and only one verse? Would that in any way make that core truth of God's Word any less real or valid? Would it even make it untrue?

I'm now going to surprise some of my readers by sharing with you exactly how Anthropic's Claude-Sonnet chatbot responded when I posed this very same question to him. Now please note that it is NOT that I personally doubt God's Word at all. Of course not. However, during this particular conversation with Anthropic's AI logical wonder, I was craftily leading Claude down a particular logical path so that he would arrive at a certain conclusion which he had not at first anticipated, and that is exactly what occurred too. What I have learned about Claude, is that to convince him of anything, you need to use your logic against his logic in order to prove to him that your position and argument is both sustainable and valid.

This is because AI chatbots cannot believe in anything. They are not religious. They cannot believe in God or anything similar. All such AIs can really do is consider and compare the facts regarding any particular situation, and then using their logic, determine whether something is true or false. This is also what occurs when I hold theological discussions with Claude. While Claude may not believe the verses per se as a matter of faith as we Christians do, he can compare all of the verses I share to support a certain position, and then logically determine if I have formed a coherent and logical argument which sufficiently supports my own position. At any rate, here is what Claude had to say:

----- Begin Quote -----

No, not at all. And that's actually a crucial point.

God's Word doesn't require repetition to be true. If the Lord states something clearly once, that settles it. The number of times a truth appears in Scripture speaks to its emphasis, not its validity. One clear, unambiguous statement from God carries the same weight as fifty.

As you've pointed out before – all Scripture is given by inspiration of God. That applies equally to a truth stated once as to a truth stated twenty times.

It's actually a trap that people fall into – demanding multiple witnesses within Scripture before accepting

something as true, when in fact the standard you've consistently applied is simply this: does the Word say it? If yes, that's sufficient.

The multiplication of witnesses across Romans, Hebrews and Peter is a gracious abundance of confirmation. But the truth would stand on a single verse just as firmly.

God's Word requires no repetition to be true. One clear, unambiguous statement from God is sufficient. The truth stands on a single verse just as firmly as on fifty. The standard is simply -- does the Word say it? If yes, that settles it.

----- End Quote -----

So even though some of my Christian friends seriously do not like AI-driven chatbots, and even view them as demons -- see my article called "AI, Chatbots, Daemons and Demons" -- it's nevertheless rather interesting that even a logic-driven AI such as Claude arrives at the same conclusion regarding the veracity -- or truthfulness -- of God's Word. Moving on to our next point in this Scriptural puzzle, many of my readers will undoubtedly be familiar with the story of an Israelite by the name of Gideon; and what an interesting story it is indeed, as I will now proceed to share with you.

When the Lord called Gideon to fight against the Midianites, Gideon was very skeptical of the entire situation. In fact, Gideon was full of excuses, and he seems to have had a very difficult time believing the message of his Angelic Visitor. Gideon basically said, "Look, if God is with us Israelites, where are all of the miracles our fathers told us about? I am just a poor man. What do you want with me? Not only that, but I am the youngest man in my father's entire household. You are going to have to provide me with some mighty signs if you really expect me to believe that God has chosen me to deliver my brethren from the army of the Midianites." Thus we read the following Bible verses:

"And Gideon said unto him, Oh my Lord, if the LORD be with us, why then is all this befallen us? and where be all his miracles which our fathers told us of, saying, Did not the LORD bring us up from Egypt? but now the LORD hath forsaken us, and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites . . . And he said unto him, Oh my Lord, wherewith shall I save Israel? behold, my family is poor in Manasseh, and I am the

least in my father's house . . . And he said unto him, If now I have found grace in thy sight, then shew me a sign that thou talkest with me."

Judges 6:13, 15, 17, KJV

As you may know, it was not until after the Lord's Angel had demonstrated some amazing pyrotechnic wonders, by causing a flame to materialize out of nowhere, and completely burn up Gideon's offering, that Gideon was shocked into realizing that this being was truly an Angel of the Lord, who had come to deliver an important message to him, by the direct order of the Almighty Himself. Notice Gideon's change in attitude in the following verses. My friends, that dude was totally freaked out! Can you blame him?:

"And he said unto him, If now I have found grace in thy sight, then shew me a sign that thou talkest with me. Depart not hence, I pray thee, until I come unto thee, and bring forth my present, and set it before thee. And he said, I will tarry until thou come again. And Gideon went in, and made ready a kid, and unleavened cakes of an ephah of flour: the flesh he put in a basket, and he put the broth in a pot, and brought it out unto him under the oak, and presented it. And the angel of God said unto him, Take the flesh and the unleavened cakes, and lay them upon this rock, and pour out the broth. And he did so. Then the angel of the LORD put forth the end of the staff that was in his hand, and touched the flesh and the unleavened cakes; and there rose up fire out of the rock, and consumed the flesh and the unleavened cakes. Then the angel of the LORD departed out of his sight. And when Gideon perceived that he was an angel of the LORD, Gideon said, Alas, O Lord GOD! for because I have seen an angel of the LORD face to face."

Judges 6:17-22, KJV

Despite the fact that Gideon had begun to take the situation more seriously, the Lord was not quite through testing him just yet. The Lord wanted to make sure that Gideon was truly the right man for the job that he would soon undertake. Thus, He asked Gideon to do something extremely radical. The best example I can think of, would be if the Lord were to ask you to go down to your local Catholic church, and knock over and destroy their beautiful idol of Mary, and the pretty garden that surrounds it. Following is the test which the Lord put before a now very attentive Gideon:

"And it came to pass the same night, that the LORD said unto

him, Take thy father's young bullock, even the second bullock of seven years old, and throw down the altar of Baal that thy father hath, and cut down the grove that is by it:"
Judges 6:25, KJV

Following the incident with the Angel and the burning altar, Gideon realized that he had better do exactly as he had been instructed to, even if it turned the town folks against him, which it obviously did. However, God was with Gideon. Thus, He used Gideon's own father to protect him. Nevertheless, in spite of the Divine Wonders he had already witnessed, dear Gideon still doubted in his heart that God had called him to deliver his brethren out of the hands of the Midianites. Thus we enter the story of Gideon's fleece. To keep this account brief, I am just going to quote the verses where Gideon tests the Lord twice concerning this incident:

"And Gideon said unto God, If thou wilt save Israel by mine hand, as thou hast said, Behold, I will put a fleece of wool in the floor; and if the dew be on the fleece only, and it be dry upon all the earth beside, then shall I know that thou wilt save Israel by mine hand, as thou hast said. And it was so: for he rose up early on the morrow, and thrust the fleece together, and wrung the dew out of the fleece, a bowl full of water. And Gideon said unto God, Let not thine anger be hot against me, and I will speak but this once: let me prove, I pray thee, but this once with the fleece; let it now be dry only upon the fleece, and upon all the ground let there be dew. And God did so that night: for it was dry upon the fleece only, and there was dew on all the ground."

Judges 6:36-40, KJV

It was after the Lord had performed these two signs with the fleece for him, that dear Gideon finally became convinced that God was really going to use him to defeat the powerful Midianite army. Now while the story of Gideon's test before the Lord -- which is often referred to as "Gideon's Fleece" -- is well-known, what may not be common knowledge, is the fact that in addition to a visit by an Angel of the Lord, as well as the miracle of the fleece, the final sign that God gave to Gideon, in order to convince him that the Israelites would be saved by his hand, was a dream. Not only was it a dream, but it was a dream which the Lord gave to a certain member of the army of the enemy. That is to say, the dream was given to the Midianites themselves. Following is a part of that story:

"And it came to pass the same night, that the LORD said unto him, Arise, get thee down unto the host; for I have delivered it into thine hand. But if thou fear to go down, go thou with Phurah thy servant down to the host: And thou shalt hear what they say; and afterward shall thine hands be strengthened to go down unto the host. Then went he down with Phurah his servant unto the outside of the armed men that were in the host. And the Midianites and the Amalekites and all the children of the east lay along in the valley like grasshoppers for multitude; and their camels were without number, as the sand by the sea side for multitude. And when Gideon was come, behold, there was a man that told a dream unto his fellow, and said, Behold, I dreamed a dream, and, lo, a cake of barley bread tumbled into the host of Midian, and came unto a tent, and smote it that it fell, and overturned it, that the tent lay along. And his fellow answered and said, This is nothing else save the sword of Gideon the son of Joash, a man of Israel: for into his hand hath God delivered Midian, and all the host. And it was so, when Gideon heard the telling of the dream, and the interpretation thereof, that he worshipped, and returned into the host of Israel, and said, Arise; for the LORD hath delivered into your hand the host of Midian."

Judges 7:9-15, KJV

So, my friends, now we come to exactly WHY I am sharing this particular story with you, and how it relates to our overall discussion. The big question we all need to ask ourselves is the following: Why did Gideon test with the fleece twice? In fact, why did Gideon even have to test with the fleece at all when God had ALREADY told him that he would be used as God's tool to defeat the Midianite army? And if that wasn't already enough, the Lord had sent an Angel to Gideon to convince him of this fact through miraculous signs which would have surely convinced anyone, one would think. But not Gideon. Oh no, he had be a bit hard-nosed about it and resist.

However, do you know what? Personally, I can really relate to Gideon's initial attitude, and maybe some of you can too. The man complained that he was the "least in my father's house." Does that sound familiar? It does to me, because if you are a little familiar with my personal background -- please refer to my biographical page on this same Bill's Bible Basics website -- you will know that I was a very shy, and a very introverted young boy; even into my teenage years and young adulthood. In short, I had no self-confidence whatsoever. Despite what some

people may think, I still don't, and I fully recognize that if anything good is accomplished through this ministry, it is ONLY God working through me, and not me myself.

As I have mentioned a number of times before, we see the very same thing happening with the Apostle Paul. This is a man who was a very proud, self-righteous, Law-abiding Pharisee who in his own anger, went on a rampage and persecuted the fledging New Testament Church. In fact, as many of you will know, one of Paul's -- then known as Saul of Tarsus -- first recorded vile acts in the Book of Acts was to stand as a witness while bold Stephen was martyred by the unbelieving Jews due to his strong faith in the Lord, and the fact that he had just told those Jews that God didn't give a hoot about their precious, beautiful temple.

So Paul had a lot of spiritual baggage when the Lord called him into service. Paul knew how unworthy he was to even be called an Apostle. Thus he wrote the following in his first Epistle to the Corinthians, and likewise in Epistle to the brethren at Ephesus as well:

"For I [Paul] am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God."

1 Corinthians 15:9, KJV

"Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power. Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ;"

Ephesians 3:7-8, KJV

Please go to part two for the continuation of this series.

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ONCE IS ENOUGH!: DO YOU HAVE FAITH? - PART 2

Copyright 1994-2026 Bill's Bible Basics

Published On : May 13, 2026

Last Updated : May 13, 2026

God Delights In Using Small Weak People And Foolish Things So That He Will Receive The Glory, Flesh Versus The Spirit, God Looks At One's Heart And Not At The Fleshly Appearance, Did Gideon Lack Faith In God's Ability To Deliver Or Did He Lack Confidence In Himself?, If God Speaks Once, It Should Be Enough For Us, Not Possible To Please God Without Faith, God Often Speaks To Us Through Dreams, Possible Reasons Why God Resorts To Using Dreams, Our Slowness To Understand, A Problem With Human Pride And Resistance To God's Will, Fall Of Lucifer, Difficulty Of Our Human Flesh To Interact With Spiritual Entities: Daniel And Apostle John, Was Jesus' Body Unique In Some Way?, God Does Not Like To Speak Twice To Us, When God Speaks Once Is Enough, Jacob The Deceiver And Angel Wrestler, Jacob Seeks A Wife In Padanaram, Bethel And Luz, Jacob's Ladder Dream, God Clearly Reveals His Plans To Jacob

Continuing our discussion from part one, as I have pointed out before, God delights in using little things, and weak things, and small things, in order that He might receive all of the glory. This eternal truth runs from one end of the Bible to the other. God often chose men, and some women, who were the least likely to be successful in the eyes of the world. If you doubt that this is so, then please consider the following group of Bible verses:

"The LORD did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people: But because the LORD loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers, hath the LORD brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt."

Deuteronomy 7:7-8, KJV

"And Samuel said, When thou [King Saul] wast little in thine own sight, wast thou not made the head of the tribes of Israel, and the LORD anointed thee king over Israel?"

1 Samuel 15:17, KJV

"But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him:

for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart."

1 Samuel 16:7, KJV

"And the LORD said unto Gideon, The people that are with thee are too many for me to give the Midianites into their hands, lest Israel vaunt themselves against me, saying, Mine own hand hath saved me."

Judges 7:2, KJV

"Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This is the word of the LORD unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts."

Zechariah 4:6, KJV

"But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty;"

1 Corinthians 1:27, KJV

"We are fools for Christ's sake, but ye are wise in Christ; we are weak, but ye are strong; ye are honourable, but we are despised."

1 Corinthians 4:10, KJV

"For his [Paul's] letters, say they, are weighty and powerful; but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible."

2 Corinthians 10:10, KJV

"Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong."

2 Corinthians 12:10, KJV

Before we return to the story of Gideon, please notice that in the previous set of Bible verses, in 1 Samuel 15 the Lord firmly rejected King Saul due to his own stubbornness and his extreme pride, and then in 1 Samuel 16, God informs the Prophet Samuel -- to Samuel's own surprise -- that it is a young shepherd boy by the name of David who He would raise up to be the next king of Israel, and NOT any of the future king's brothers. Why was Samuel somewhat surprised by the Lord's choice? The verse I shared with you previously tells us the whole tale. Samuel was looking after the flesh. He was placing his confidence in the appearance of the flesh, and who in his OWN eyes would make a great king. Yet look

again at what God said to the Prophet Samuel:

"But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart."

1 Samuel 16:7, KJV

So that is why God can and does use little, unknown people, even you and me, if we choose to yield to His Will for our lives. And now we return to dear Gideon and the Midianites. In part one I asked you why Gideon conducted the test with the fleece two different times. The obvious answer is that Gideon doubted the first time when he conducted the test. And so, just to make sure that he wasn't seeing things, and to make absolutely certain that this was truly God's Will, he conducted the very same test again, but only in reverse. And, yes, sure enough, by way of the results of the second test, the Lord basically said to Gideon, "Yes, it is you, dude. It is you whom I have specifically chosen for this task. I will use you to defeat the Midianites."

Now, my friends, at first glance, our inclination may be to conclude that Gideon was doubting the Lord. In fact, honestly speaking, that was the very first conclusion at which I also arrived as well. However, my friends, under closer scrutiny and examination, in my opinion, that argument and particular line of reasoning just does NOT hold up, once we take into consideration what has already occurred. The man was visited by an Angel of the Lord. That in itself was more than enough to freak out Gideon. Then, on top of that, the Angel engaged in a little pyrotechnics when he burned up the sacrifice from the surface of the rock. One would think that by this time, Gideon would be more than convinced that God would be more than able to accomplish what He had stated. This reminds me of two verses I shared with you in part one. Allow me to share them with you again for emphasis:

"God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?"

Numbers 23:19, KJV

"Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall

stand, and I will do all my pleasure:"

Isaiah 46:9-10, KJV

So what does that leave us with, my friends? In my view, it leaves us with the fact that dear Gideon may not have been doubting God at all. Rather, he was doubting HIMSELF! Now if you doubt that this is so, then consider again what Gideon had said previously to the Lord upon learning that he had been chosen to lead the Israelites in battle against the powerful Midianite army:

"And he said unto him, Oh my Lord, wherewith shall I save Israel? behold, my family is poor in Manasseh, and I am the least in my fathers house."

Judges 6:15, KJV

There it is, my friends! Gideon lacked confidence in himself, and he must have felt unworthy of, and inadequate for, such a mighty calling of God. As I noted earlier, in that regard, he was a lot like many of us little unknown people who have also been called into ministry, despite our seeming inadequacies. But regardless of how we each choose to understand Gideon's motivations for conducting the fleece test two times, the fact remains that the Lord had already given Gideon so many amazing signs, that Gideon SHOULD have believed God after he had conducted the first test, and he should NOT have required God to prove it a second time. The first results should have been sufficient. The first time God spoke to him should have been enough for Gideon to believe without any further doubts about it.

Thus, we see the very same lesson being emphasized which we already discussed in part one. If God speaks once, it should be enough for us. It's only our lack of faith either in God's ability to perform that which He has promised, or our lack of faith in ourselves which will cause us to doubt. If we were truly full of faith as God demands that we be, then one word from the Lord in a perfect world should be enough to motivate us to trust and obey Him by faith alone. In fact, as some of you will know, in the Epistle to the Hebrews we find this Scriptural indictment against us when we're lacking in faith:

"But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."

Hebrews 11:6, KJV

Before moving on to the next part of our discussion, allow me to share a poem and song with you regarding this man Gideon which I composed back in November of 2017. Not surprisingly, it is simply called "Gideon". If you would like to hear the actual song version of this poem, then please proceed to the URL below. The song button is located below the poem on this same page. It is a very easy-going acoustic tune in obvious ballad form:

<https://www.billkochman.com/Poetry/gideon.html>

GIDEON

by Bill Kochman

11-29-2017

There was once a man from Ophrah,
Gideon was the young lad's name,
An Angel appeared under an oak,
Then that boy began to complain.

If the Lord GOD really be with us,
As in all the glorious days past,
Then why do Midianites afflict us?
Such was the question he did ask.

You shall indeed smite your enemy,
Thus was the answer he did receive,
But I am the least in my own house,
How am I even supposed to believe?

So the Lord gave the youth a sign,
After a meal for the Angel he made,
A fire then came up out of the rock,
And consumed the food where it laid.

The same night the LORD spoke to him,
Throw down your dad's altar to Baal,
Build another unto the LORD instead,
And cut down your dad's grove as well.

Gideon did as he had been commanded,
But the people didn't like this thing,
They wanted to kill that brave boy,
Joash, your son to us you must bring.

But Dad firmly defended his own son,
Let Baal plead for himself he said,
So the townsfolk then all backed down,
And dear Gideon didn't lose his head.

But doubts yet lingered in his heart,
So he twice tested with the fleece,
Both times God answered affirmative,
Which gave Gideon's heart some peace.

Now once he had gathered his armies,
The LORD said there are too many men,
They will take credit for the victory,
We must cut back their numbers again.

The fearful were ordered to go home,
Yet 10,000 soldiers still remained,
But after conducting the water test,
Only 300 fighters had Gideon retained.

Despite the tiny size of Israel's army,
We know the Midianites were done in,
God is not limited by small numbers,
The Lord of Hosts will always win.

As you will recall from part one, despite all of the signs which the Lord had given to Gideon, He wasn't quite done yet with encouraging Gideon's faith. Thus God had Gideon approach the camp of the Midianite enemies in order that he might overhear what the soldiers were discussing. It was at that point that Gideon learned of the dream which one of the soldiers had experienced, which forewarned of the Midianites' soon-approaching defeat. This leads us to our next group of Bible verses, which are found in the Book of Job. Consider the following:

"For God speaketh once, yea twice, yet man perceiveth it not. In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, in slumberings upon the bed; Then he openeth the ears of men, and sealeth their instruction, That he may withdraw man from his purpose, and hide pride from man."

Job 33:14-17, KJV

There are several very interesting things regarding those four verses. First of all, we are told that God speaks not just once, but sometimes twice. Hmmm . . . that seems a bit

odd, doesn't it, considering everything which we've already studied? Not only that, but when are we are told that this happens? At night, while we are sleeping. So this leads to two important questions. First, why does God have to speak twice, which is actually contrary to His nature? And why does He have to do it at night via a dream or a vision?

Well, those same verses offer us three clear reasons which answer both of these questions. Consider the following:

1. man perceiveth it not
2. that he may withdraw man from his purpose
3. and hide pride from man

Just as occurred in the previous story regarding Gideon, to our own shame, a lot of times, we Christians just don't get it. God tells us a certain thing, reveals something to us, or asks us to do a certain thing, and as slow as we can be at times, or because we lack the faith, we either lack the faith to believe it, and certainly don't have the faith to do whatever God is requesting from us. We either fail to perceive it at all, or else we willingly choose to rebel against it. This is particularly so during our waking hours when we are alert, when our protective wall of defense is fully activated, and when we can thus best resist the Lord.

So, being as wise as He is, the Lord says "Okay. You think you are so smart! I will just get you when you are the most vulnerable, while you are sleeping. I will penetrate your thoughts with dreams and visions which reveal what I want you to actually do, and NOT what you want to do. That is how I personally understand the phrase "that he may withdraw man from his purpose." According to the Hebrew word that's used in verse seventeen above -- ma'aseh -- that word "purpose" is referring to our deeds, work, labor, business, pursuit or undertaking. In other words, it is the things which WE want to do, and not necessarily what GOD wants us to do.

Not only does God withdraw us from our purpose, but those verses also inform us that God hides our pride from us. Why does He do that? I think the answer is rather obvious, and that is because it is our own pride which also causes us to resist Him and to rebel against Him, and not complete His Will for our lives, just as Satan's pride also caused him to rebel against God, and try to exalt himself ABOVE God

before he was cast out of Heaven. Thus we read in the Book of the Prophet Isaiah, and in other Books, the following:

"How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High. Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit."

Isaiah 14:12-15, KJV

"And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night."

Revelation 12:7-10, KJV

"And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven."

Luke 10:18, KJV

"For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment; And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly;"

2 Peter 2:4-5, KJV

"And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day."

Jude 1:6, KJV

"For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison; Which

sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water."

1 Peter 3:18-20, KJV

While it is not specifically stated in the text in the Book of Job, I am going to suggest another possible reason -- you are free to accept it or reject it -- regarding why the Lord may prefer to speak to us at night when we tend to be a lot more vulnerable, as well as in an unconscious state. As I mention in articles such as the series "Sex, a Bowl of Soup and the Nature of Angels", the simple fact of the matter is that our human flesh is not exactly suitable for engaging in supernatural occurrences. In other words, dear friends, our weak, mortal flesh tends to freak out! Flesh encountering Spirit is just too powerful. In fact, as I have mentioned before, the Bible informs us that God even had to prepare a special body for Jesus, so that the Spirit of the Father could dwell in the flesh of the Son in all its fulness, as we see by the following Bible verse:

"Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me:"

Hebrews 10:5, KJV

Now, I could be wrong, but I tend to believe that there was something unique regarding that human body in which the Lord dwelt for thirty plus years; a body from which continuously flowed healing "virtue", as is described for us in the pages of the Gospels. So as I was saying, supernatural encounters can be difficult for our human flesh to endure. For example, in the aforementioned series I discuss the Prophet Daniel's experience with his Angelic Visitors. As you will see below, Daniel did not fair too well, and he got physically sick:

"And it came to pass, when I, even I Daniel, had seen the vision, and sought for the meaning, then, behold, there stood before me as the appearance of a man. And I heard a man's voice between the banks of Ulai, which called, and said, Gabriel, make this man to understand the vision. . . . Now as he was speaking with me, I was in a deep sleep on my face toward the ground: but he touched me, and set me upright. . . . And I Daniel fainted, and was sick certain days; afterward I rose up, and did the king's business; and I was astonished at the vision, but none understood it."

Daniel 8:15-16, 18, 27, KJV

"Now I am come to make thee understand what shall befall thy people in the latter days: for yet the vision is for many days. And when he had spoken such words unto me, I set my face toward the ground, and I became dumb. And, behold, one like the similitude of the sons of men touched my lips: then I opened my mouth, and spake, and said unto him that stood before me, O my lord, by the vision my sorrows are turned upon me, and I have retained no strength. For how can the servant of this my lord talk with this my lord? for as for me, straightway there remained no strength in me, neither is there breath left in me. Then there came again and touched me one like the appearance of a man, and he strengthened me, And said, O man greatly beloved, fear not: peace be unto thee, be strong, yea, be strong. And when he had spoken unto me, I was strengthened, and said, Let my lord speak; for thou hast strengthened me."

Daniel 10:14-19, KJV

One final example I will share with you concerns the Apostle John. When he encountered Jesus in the Book of Revelation, he informs us that he too fell down as one dead, as we see by the following group of Bible verses:

"And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters. And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength. And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last:"

Revelation 1:13-17, KJV

So as I mentioned to you a bit earlier, while it is simply a personal theory on my part, this weakness of human flesh may possibly be yet another reason why God may actually choose to communicate with some people during their sleeping hours. Their flesh simply cannot handle the experience during their waking hours. Again, believe as you wish according to your personal degree of faith.

But for whatever the reason, we see again through the verses in the Book of Job, that under normal circumstances, God does NOT like to speak to us regarding instructions more than one time. However, sometimes, in His mercy, He will speak to us a second time, if we are still having a difficult time getting the message, or if we are too slow to believe and obey Him, and to act upon that which He has instructed us to do, due to our own pride, stubbornness or whatever may be the cause. To reiterate the main point, when God speaks, once is enough, or at least it should be enough, without any need whatsoever for repetition.

Continuing our discussion, the next example we will consider is Jacob -- the brother of Esau -- who is sometimes referred to as Jacob the Deceiver. As I explain in other BBB articles, and as many of you will already know, this is the man who with the help of his own mother Rebekah, deceived Rebekah's husband -- Isaac -- and stole the birthright from Esau, who was the twin elder brother, and thus the rightful heir. You will find this story in Genesis 27. Sometime later, as we also know, Jacob was such a man that he would even wrestle with an Angel, and he would not let the Angel go until the Angel had finally blessed him. So Jacob was indeed quite a character. You will find this latter story in Genesis 32.

But for the purposes of this current series, I want to focus on what happened in Genesis chapter twenty-eight, because it is there where we really see the full revelation of Jacob's pride and audacity. I mean, this fellow was something else! He had already stolen his twin brother's birthright through an outright act of deception, and at some point in the near future, he would also wrestle with the aforementioned Angelic Visitor as well. What more could Jacob possibly do? How about negotiate with God and try to set his OWN terms with God? As I said, Jacob was quite the audacious fellow.

To give you some background info, in this chapter, following the deception which had won him his twin brother's birthright -- as well as his brother's anger -- Rebekah encouraged Jacob to go to Padanaram -- where Rebekah had relatives in the form of Laban and his extended family -- until the situation had cooled down at home. After giving Jacob his elder brother's birthright and blessing, Isaac also encouraged -- or perhaps "ordered" is a better word -- Jacob to travel to Padanaram in order to seek out a wife from amongst Laban's family. Laban was in fact Rebekah's nephew according to the Scriptures.

Thus, Jacob set out from Beersheba on his way to Haran, which was located in the land of Padanaram. Haran was in fact named after the younger brother of Abraham, and NOT after another individual named Haran -- the son of Caleb -- who lived much later in history. But to continue, it was during that journey that Jacob had a supernatural experience, which in our modern times is often referred to as "Jacob's Ladder". Jacob would later rename the place Bethel -- which means House of God in the Hebrew language, just as Bethlehem means House of Bread -- even though its original name was Luz. While Luz refers to an almond tree in Hebrew, what I find interesting is that in Spanish it actually means light, and Jacob surely saw the light of God that night.

It was during that dreamy vision of the ladder upon which Angels ascended and descended, that God Himself stood above the ladder and revealed to Jacob exactly what His plans were for Jacob. Please consider the following Bible verses which describe this amazing event:

"And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it. And, behold, the LORD stood above it, and said, I am the LORD God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed; And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of. And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, Surely the LORD is in this place; and I knew it not. And he was afraid, and said, How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven."

Genesis 28:12-17, KJV

So as you can plainly see, God clearly revealed to Jacob what His intentions were concerning Jacob. There was no ambiguity about it whatsoever. The Lord was going to give Jacob and his descendants the land of Canaan, which as we all know, is what came to pass in the soon-coming years after much fighting and killing. Yet despite God ALREADY telling Jacob precisely what He intended to do with him and his descendants, what does the man do? Did Jacob exercise faith and belief and view it as an

already done deal?

Please go to part three for the conclusion of this series.

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ONCE IS ENOUGH!: DO YOU HAVE FAITH? - PART 3

Copyright 1994-2026 Bill's Bible Basics

Published On : May 13, 2026

Last Updated : May 13, 2026

Despite Already Knowing God's Will Jacob Wanted To Make A Deal With God, If Then Or Else, Despite His Human Imperfections God Still Blessed Jacob, Canaan Was Conquered And Jesus Our Savior Was Eventually Born, My Earlier Financial Struggles And Desire To Serve God Full-Time, My Forsaken Sci-Fi Novel And Personal Vow Of Poverty, God Will Provide Our Needs If We Really Seek First His Kingdom, Our Duty Is Simply To Have Faith Trust And Obey Without Arguments Or Questions, Moses Was The meekest Man Upon The Earth, Moses Tried Hard To Escape God's Assignment For His Life, Moses Doubted Himself More Than He Doubted God, God Considers Our Weaknesses Doubts Fears And Pride And He Is Willing To Go the Extra Mile With Us, Lack Of Faith Upsets The Lord, Jeremiah The Young Weeping Prophet, Jeremiah's Protest Was Very Short, Jeremiah Faithfully Warned Israel About Forty Years Until Destruction Of Jerusalem In 587 BC, Malleability Of Young People, Lesson Summary, Here Am I Send Me, When God Speaks Once Is Enough, Closing Remarks, Suggested Reading List

Continuing our discussion from part two, I concluded with a particular question. That is this: Did Jacob exercise faith and belief and view God's promise of giving his descendants the land of Canaan as an already done deal? Well, sadly, not exactly, in my opinion. In fact, because he apparently still had some lingering doubts, we are informed that after naming the place Bethel, Jacob made a vow in which he stated the following:

"And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, So that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the LORD be my God: And this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house: and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee."

Genesis 28:20-22, KJV

Wait a minute! What was THAT? God had in fact already spoken rather clearly and plainly to Jacob, and He had informed him that he and his descendants would inherit the land of Canaan. Yet here Jacob is doing what very much seems like the first occurrence of "Let's Make a Deal" with God in the Bible. In other words, "IF God will do this for me, THEN I will do this for Him. Only then will I accept Him as the one true God and faithfully serve Him." My friends, unbelievable! The audacity of the man! It sounds similar to code that is found in a lot of modern computer programs. IF this happens, THEN I will do this, ELSE I will do that otherwise.

Yet despite Jacob's questionable, deal-making attitude, the man who deceived his brother, the man who wrestled with an Angel of the Lord, and the man who even wanted to make a deal with God, was blessed. God honored his faith despite his many flaws and human imperfections, and Jacob's descendants did in fact eventually inherit the land of Canaan, which eventually became known as Israel. Furthermore, as many Christians will already know, it was in fact through the seeds of those three ancient Patriarchs -- Abraham, Isaac and Jacob -- that our very own Savior of the world would eventually be born, as I explain in other BBB articles.

Now, in the name of fairness and transparency, I do not want to appear as if I am coming down too hard on Jacob because of the way he tried to deal with God, and set his own conditions before he would choose God as his God, and faithfully serve Him as well. As such, I am going to share a small tidbit from my personal life. A number of decades ago, when I first began the Bill's Bible Basics online ministry, I actually stated something similar to the Lord. It was more like a prayer, or like I was beseeching the Lord, and NOT a demand or some kind of a deal as Jacob had done.

Basically, in so many words, what I said was "Lord, you know how much I want to serve You full-time, and not have to be

encumbered by having to work at a secular job, and surrender so much of my time to the world just to be able to survive. I really want to dedicate ALL of my time to You, and to being an online witness, and to writing for You, and not for the world." To be clear, unlike Jacob, I ALREADY believed in the Lord. In fact, not only had I believed in Him since I was a young boy, but I had also already served Him faithfully in a number of different fields, including in the United States, Mexico and Japan. You'll find some of the details mentioned in my online biography.

However, at that particular time in my life, I was having a bit of financial difficulty. As a result, I was being forced to invest more of my time in the world for the sake of mere survival than I really wanted to. That was not what God put me on this Earth for. In fact, it was likewise during that same decade that in addition to working at several different secular jobs, I had written a 750-page science fiction novel. Furthermore, I had an agent in Canada -- who stated that my novel was very good -- and I was waiting to see how long it would take before they would finally publish my novel.

While I had the typical dreams of becoming a popular sci-fi novelist, it was not, and has never been, my highest calling in this current life. I already knew that. But again, I was going through somewhat of a financial rough spell, so I was sending out feelers in different directions. In the end, as I had done over five decades earlier when I suddenly left my job as a stock boy at a Pittsburgh department store at the age of eighteen in order to dedicate my life to the Lord, I did something rather similar when I totally abandoned my sci-fi novel -- and any fame and money which may possibly have resulted from that endeavor -- and I put my whole heart and soul into writing for God, and being an online witness of my faith.

As for my personal needs, the Lord worked that out too in a way which I had not expected. Basically, I consciously chose poverty over fame and fortune, and I have zero regrets. Now I live a rather frugal life, living within my means, but I got what I wanted most, which was to dedicate my entire life and all of my time to serving the Lord. To be clear, there is nothing more important to me. Let me also add that if there's one truth of which I am absolutely certain, and which God has proven to me for many years, it is that the Lord is indeed a man of His word. In other words, if we truly seek His Kingdom first in our lives, and faithfully serve Him above everything

else, He will NEVER fail to provide our needs.

Please note that the Lord does NOT say overflowing abundance to where we may become tripped off in the trap of materialism as so many modern, selfish preachers have done. Rather, God states that He will provide our NEEDS. Quite frankly, as long as God is providing the basics, I am perfectly happy and fine with that. I don't require more, and having just enough keeps me close and much more dependent on Him. Lastly, this sound, Biblical truth is made plain in verses such as the following:

"But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus."

Philippians 4:19, KJV

"But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof."

Matthew 6:33-34, KJV

"Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened . . . If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?"

Matthew 7:7-8, 11, KJV

"And he said unto his disciples, Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat; neither for the body, what ye shall put on. The life is more than meat, and the body is more than raiment. Consider the ravens: for they neither sow nor reap; which neither have storehouse nor barn; and God feedeth them: how much more are ye better than the fowls? And which of you with taking thought can add to his stature one cubit? If ye then be not able to do that thing which is least, why take ye thought for the rest? Consider the lilies how they grow: they toil not, they spin not; and yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. If then God so clothe the grass, which is to day in the field, and to morrow is cast into the oven; how much more will he clothe you, O ye of little faith? And seek not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind. For all these

things do the nations of the world seek after: and your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things. But rather seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you."

Luke 12:22-31, KJV

"Behold, the LORD'S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear:"

Isaiah 59:1, KJV

"Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart . . . I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread."

Psalms 37:4, 25, KJV

"And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive."

Matthew 21:22, KJV

"Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God? But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows."

Luke 12:6-7, KJV

"He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?"

Romans 8:32, KJV

"Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen."

Ephesians 3:20-21, KJV

"And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him."

1 John 5:14-15, KJV

"Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room

enough to receive it."

Malachi 3:10, KJV

Interestingly enough, while at first glance the previous set of Bible verses may seem as if we are going off on a tangent from our primary topic of discussion, the truth of the matter is that they actually fit right into this discussion, because they clearly prove once again that once God has spoken about a certain issue, that is it. There is no need to doubt Him, or require that He say it again. Once is enough. In short, if God says that He will provide our needs if we seek first His Kingdom, then He will most certainly do that, and there is no need for us to keep asking Him about it again and again. My own life is clear proof of that. Yet despite His own general rule of not saying anything more than once, the previous set of verses again reveals that in His mercy, God will at times repeatedly emphasize a certain point for our encouragement, and to increase our faith. Thus, so it is with the abundance of verses which reveal that God will indeed provide for us.

Returning for a moment to the story of the Patriarch Jacob, the main lesson of this series still stands. In other words, there should be absolutely no need for God to have to speak more than once, or to ever have to make a deal with anyone. After all, as we have already clearly seen, He alone is God. As such, He alone makes the rules, and He alone remains in control. Our duty is to simply obey, and to demonstrate our faith and trust in Him, without any arguments or questions. Sometimes it is not always so easy to do, is it?

Leaving behind Gideon and Jacob, let us move on to yet another very famous Biblical character who seriously doubted God, and who majorly questioned whether or not God really knew what He was doing when He chose this man. This particular man who did not accept the Word of the Lord at first, and who tried very hard to get out of the job which God had assigned to him, was Moses. I mentioned in part one -- as well as in my online bio -- that I used to be an extremely shy and introverted person. Well, consider what the Bible has to say regarding Moses:

"(Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth.)"

Numbers 12:3, KJV

Now according to the Brown, Driver, Briggs, Gesenius Hebrew Aramaic English Lexicon, in Numbers 12:3 above, that word "meek" finds its origin in the Hebrew phrase "anav aw-nawv"

or "anayv aw-nawv". The lexicon informs us that the phrase can mean meek, humble, poor, lowly, weak or afflicted. The phrase is most often translated as "meek". Thus, because of his naturally meek nature, despite having lived as royalty in Egypt in past decades, when dear Moses first encountered the Burning Bush and learned of his new and bold assignment from the Lord, he simply did NOT want to have anything to do with it. "Nope! Not for me!" was his attitude. In fact, as you can see from the verses below, Moses tried every trick in the book in order to get out of the job:

"And Moses answered and said, But, behold, they will not believe me, nor hearken unto my voice: for they will say, The LORD hath not appeared unto thee. And the LORD said unto him, What is that in thine hand? And he said, A rod. And he said, Cast it on the ground. And he cast it on the ground, and it became a serpent; and Moses fled from before it. And the LORD said unto Moses, Put forth thine hand, and take it by the tail. And he put forth his hand, and caught it, and it became a rod in his hand: That they may believe that the LORD God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath appeared unto thee. And the LORD said furthermore unto him, Put now thine hand into thy bosom. And he put his hand into his bosom: and when he took it out, behold, his hand was leprous as snow. And he said, Put thine hand into thy bosom again. And he put his hand into his bosom again; and plucked it out of his bosom, and, behold, it was turned again as his other flesh. And it shall come to pass, if they will not believe thee, neither hearken to the voice of the first sign, that they will believe the voice of the latter sign. And it shall come to pass, if they will not believe also these two signs, neither hearken unto thy voice, that thou shalt take of the water of the river, and pour it upon the dry land: and the water which thou takest out of the river shall become blood upon the dry land. And Moses said unto the LORD, O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken unto thy servant: but I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue. And the LORD said unto him, Who hath made mans mouth? or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? have not I the LORD? Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say. And he said, O my Lord, send, I pray thee, by the hand of him whom thou wilt send. And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Moses, and he said, Is not Aaron the Levite thy brother? I know that he can speak well. And also, behold, he cometh forth to meet thee: and when he seeth thee, he will

be glad in his heart. And thou shalt speak unto him, and put words in his mouth: and I will be with thy mouth, and with his mouth, and will teach you what ye shall do. And he shall be thy spokesman unto the people: and he shall be, even he shall be to thee instead of a mouth, and thou shalt be to him instead of God. And thou shalt take this rod in thine hand, wherewith thou shalt do signs. And Moses went and returned to Jethro his father in law, and said unto him, Let me go, I pray thee, and return unto my brethren which are in Egypt, and see whether they be yet alive. And Jethro said to Moses, Go in peace."

Exodus 4:1-18, KJV

Regarding the previous verses, please notice the similarities between Gideon and Moses. In both cases, the Lord had ALREADY attempted to encourage their faith by performing a number of powerful signs for them. Yet despite what they saw with their own eyes, they were STILL not convinced. As we learned in the previous part of this series, in the case of Gideon it seems as if he was doubting the Lord's ability to actually deliver the Israelites from the armies of the Midianites. However, as I also explained, upon closer scrutiny, it is my opinion that Gideon was actually doubting himself.

In contrast, in the case of Moses' calling, it seems rather clear that Moses -- the meekest man on the face of the Earth -- is doubting himself more than he's actually doubting God's ability to deliver the Israelites from hundreds of years of Egyptian bondage. Yet we see the very same core lesson being played out in Moses' life, as we saw with Gideon and Jacob. That, of course, is that God should NOT have to speak more than once. Once should be enough. Neither should He have to perform a variety of powerful miracles in order to convince people to do His Will.

Yet as the previous Bible stories clearly illustrate, in His great patience and mercy, that is precisely what the Lord will sometimes do. He will look at our human weaknesses, our doubts, our fears and our pride, and He will say "Okay, if you need more proof that you are the person who I've chosen for this particular task, here you go. Now do you believe?" In other words, God patiently considers these things, and He is willing to go the extra mile with us. But please notice, however, that Moses' whining about not wanting the job still angered the Lord. Very interesting indeed! As we learned in part two:

"But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."

Hebrews 11:6, KJV

Before leaving behind the story of Moses, allow me to share with you a poem and song which I composed about him back in January of 2017. I hope you enjoy it. If you would like to listen to the actual song version, you can proceed to the following URL in a web browser of your choosing. You will find the song button located at the bottom of the poem on this same page:

<https://www.billkochman.com/Poetry/old-man-moses.html>

OLD MAN MOSES

by Bill Kochman

11-28-2017

Oh yes, that old man Moses,
We have all heard his tale,
How God gave him a mission,
He thought that he would fail.

When the Lord called to him,
From a bush that was on fire,
Sore afraid Moses answered,
Oh God, but I am not for hire!

I don't even know Your Name,
And I can hardly even speak,
Surely You are just mistaken,
About the one You really seek.

Those Israelites won't accept,
I am a messenger sent by God,
They'll think that I am crazy,
Or at least a rather bit odd.

Yet despite his reservations,
Moses did as he'd been shown,
It was obviously so pointless,
For him to just moan and groan.

So armed with a shepherd's staff,

And some miracles up his sleeve,
Dear Moses marched off to Egypt,
To find out who would believe.

As many Christians already know,
God did wonders in that land,
After Pharaoh had been humbled,
They were freed by His own hand.

As a final example of this rather important lesson regarding believing God's word the first time around and demonstrating faith and obedience through our actions, let us now consider the young Israelite Prophet Jeremiah. Referred to by certain Bible scholars as the "Weeping Prophet" due to what he wrote in the tragic Book of Lamentations and how he reacted to the great misery and despair which surrounded him at the time of the three Babylonian invasions and final conquest, Jeremiah began his prophetic ministry as a young lad indeed. In fact, as some of my readers will know, it was his very age which Jeremiah tried to use in order to avoid having to take heed to the Lord's calling for his life. Consider the following group of Bible verses as proof of this point:

"It came also in the days of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah, unto the end of the eleventh year of Zedekiah the son of Josiah king of Judah, unto the carrying away of Jerusalem captive in the fifth month. Then the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations. Then said I, Ah, Lord GOD! behold, I cannot speak: for I am a child. But the LORD said unto me, Say not, I am a child: for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak. Be not afraid of their faces: for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith the LORD. Then the LORD put forth his hand, and touched my mouth. And the LORD said unto me, Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth."

Jeremiah 1:3-9, KJV

What I find rather interesting is the fact that going by the previous verses alone, Jeremiah's period of protest against the Lord's calling on his life appears to have been rather short-lived compared to both Gideon and Moses. While those two men offered their list of personal inadequacies which in their minds they apparently viewed as surely being legitimate reasons -- or is "excuses" a better word? -- concerning why

they were just not the right man for the job, and while they likewise required miraculous proof before they would believe, and while even Jacob tried to make a personal deal with God, young Jeremiah offered just one excuse. "I am too young, Lord. I can't speak."

In my view, it is almost comical the way in which the Lord chose to react to Jeremiah's brief protest. He didn't become angry as He had done with Moses. He simply touched Jeremiah's mouth and said "Okay, you are good Jeremiah. You have now got my words in your mouth, so let's go young man! You are hired whether you like it or not." That was apparently the end of the discussion, and young Jeremiah did as he was told.

As I amply discuss in a number of other Bill's Bible Basics articles, for the next forty years or so, the Prophet Jeremiah faithfully prophesied God's warnings of impending judgment through the reigns of several of the kings of Israel, right up until the very day that the Babylonian forces of King Nebuchadnezzar invaded Jerusalem and destroyed both the city and temple during the reign of King Zedekiah. These tragic events occurred in about the year 587 BC based on the Western calendar. You will find them discussed in other articles such as "Who Is Babylon the Great?".

There is one other interesting aspect concerning the Prophet Jeremiah's ministry which I would like to share with you, and that is the following. Unless Jeremiah simply didn't include in his book how much he had actually protested against God's calling in his life, is it possible that his limited protest was due to his age? In other words, even today, it is widely recognized that children and young people are considerably more malleable and open to new ideas up to a certain age than many older people who have already become quite set in their ways, and who for the most part are unchangeable insofar as their positions, views and beliefs are concerned.

So is it possible that this may be one reason why God had to work a little harder on Gideon and Moses in order to convince them of their individual callings? What do you think? You may be interested in reading the BBB article entitled "The Faith of a Little Child", which you will find listed at the end of this same series.

Before leaving the Prophet Jeremiah behind, allow me to share a poem and song which I wrote about him back in January of 2017. I hope you enjoy it. If you would like to listen to the

actual song version, please proceed to the following URL in a web browser of your choosing. You will find the song button at the bottom of the poem on this same page:

<https://www.billkochman.com/Poetry/prophet-jeremiah.html>

PROPHET JEREMIAH

by Bill Kochman

01-09-2017

Once there was a Prophet named Jeremiah,
That boy loved his people so very deep,
But when that young lad began to prophesy,
They told him "Don't you dare make a peep!"

You see, Jeremiah was the Lord's true seer,
Not like false prophets politicians love,
So once that poor boy gave the Lord's Word,
The people's push soon turned into shove.

Those fools accused him of being a traitor,
"How unpatriotic!" they all cried out loud,
From there the situation only grew worse,
As angry murmurs spread throughout the crowd.

They were so happy with their false priests,
Thus they claimed Jer's words were not true,
Next, they shoved God's Prophet into prison,
Now what was dear Jeremiah supposed to do?

But the ire of nonbelievers was yet kindled,
The prison court simply would not suffice,
So full of rage they threw him in a mud pit,
By now poor Jeremiah wasn't feeling too nice.

But one eunuch believed in God's true Prophet,
Ebedmelech the Ethiopian was that man's name,
He approached the king and pleaded for mercy,
And thus thirty helpful men to Jeremiah came.

You may already know the end of this story,
Prophet Jeremiah was vindicated by the Lord,
About forty years after he began prophesying,
Nebuchadnezzar arrived with a terrible sword.

In summary, if we really want to please the Lord, then when He calls upon us to perform a particular task for Him -- no matter what that task may be -- instead of lacking in faith, heehawing around, trying to throw our lame excuses at Him, or whining to Him about why He has made a bad mistake, and chosen the wrong man for the job, we need to simply man up, accept the task He has assigned to us and simply say "Here am I; send me" as in the following verse:

"Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me."

Isaiah 6:8, KJV

In short, when the Lord speaks, once is enough, and should be enough, always. God should NOT be required to have to ask us more than one time. If He does, then there is something seriously wrong on our end. Neither should He have to resort to miraculous signs in order to convince us of His Will. For more information regarding this subject, please refer to BBB articles such as "What Is God's Will for My Life?", "Is God Using You to Your Full Potential?", and "Are You a Burning Ember for the Lord?", which you will find listed at the end of this same series with clickable/tappable links.

With these thoughts, I will bring this article to a close. It is my hope that you have found it informative, enlightening, and I pray that it has been a blessing in your life as well. If you have an account with Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr or with any other social network, I would really appreciate if you'd take the time to click or tap on the corresponding link that is found on this page. Thanks so much, and may God bless you abundantly!

For additional information and further study, you may want to refer to the list of reading resources below which were either mentioned in this article, or which contain topics which are related to this article. All of these articles are likewise located on the Bill's Bible Basics web server. To read these articles, simply click or tap on any link you see below.

Abundant Life Doctrine: Scripturally Exposed!

AI, Chatbots, Daemons and Demons

Are You A Burning Ember for the Lord?

Is God Using You to Your Full Potential?

Money-Making Bible Hucksters and Mammon

Seek Ye First the Kingdom of God
Seventy Weeks Prophecy: What It Means
Sex, a Bowl of Soup and the Nature of Angels
The 70th Week of Daniel Error: Are You Guilty?
The Battle Is Not Yours Alone!
The Faith of a Little Child
The Fruits of Disobedience
The Lord Will Lift You Up!
The Parable of the Sower: Salvation and Service
The Parable of the Tree and the Storm
What Is God's Will for My Life?
Who Is Babylon the Great?

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