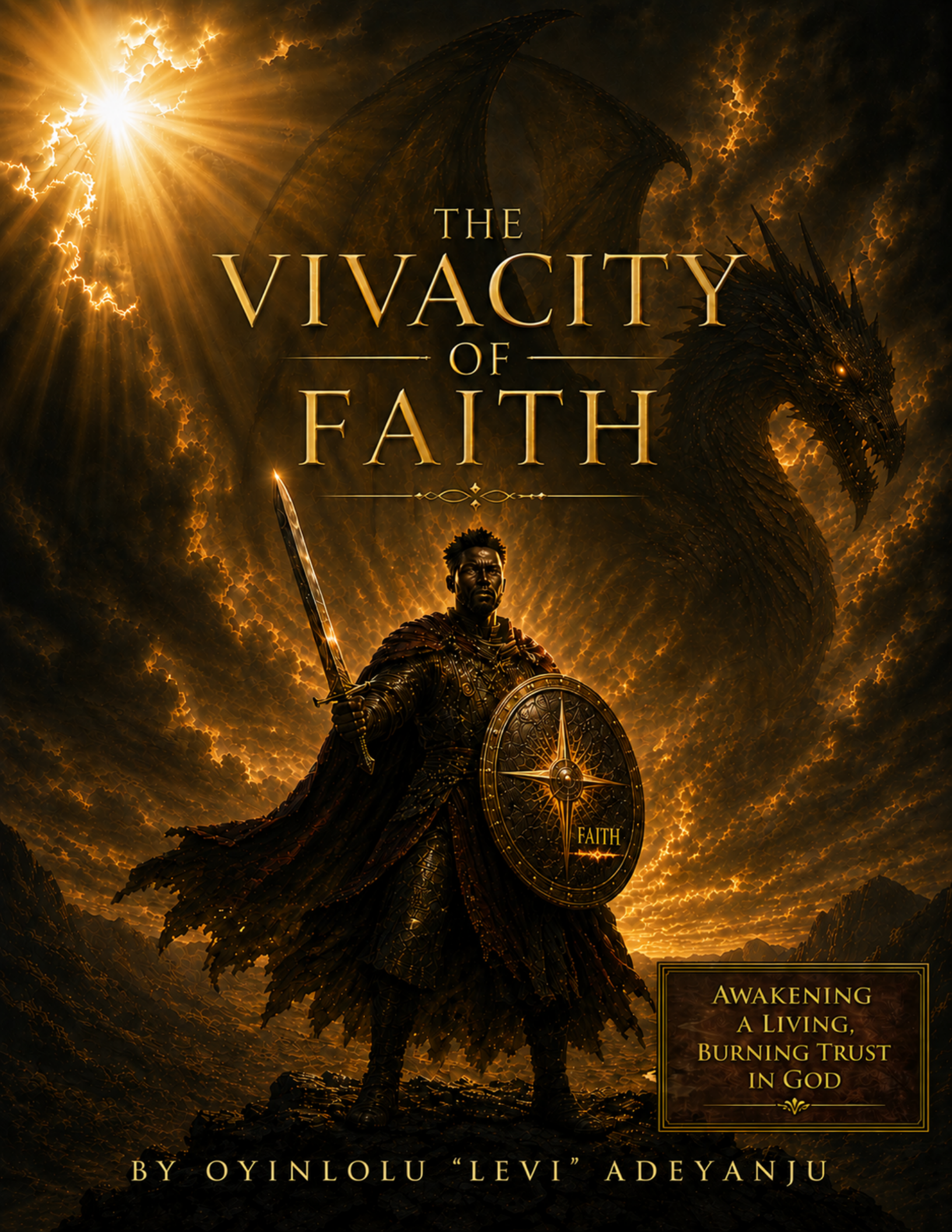




THE VIVACITY — OF — FAITH

AWAKENING
A LIVING,
BURNING TRUST
IN GOD

BY OYINLOLU “LEVI” ADEYANJU

The Vivacity of Faith

Awakening a Living, Burning Trust in God



Oyinlolu “Levi” Adeyanju

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Preface



The purpose of this free e-book was to stir and to strengthen faith in God. This free e-book was intended for Christians. I was not calling myself a teacher or proposing myself as a rabbi. We all have one Teacher, the Lord Yeshua. I desired to share what I believed the Lord was teaching me.

Please note that I use the Lord's hallowed Name Yeshua instead of "Jesus" throughout this e-book. Many call the Lord Yeshua "Jesus," which is a Greek name, although He is not Greek. Greek people actually oppressed Jewish people historically. That is at least one reason why I preferred to use the Lord's Name Yeshua rather than "Jesus."

Similarly, please note that I also use the word "Messiah" instead of "Christ." The word Messiah means "Anointed One," the King. "Christ" is the Greek form of the word "Messiah." I adjusted the language of some Bible verses to reflect these changes.

This e-book was not intended for the unrepentant. I prayed for the salvation of everyone in the Lord Yeshua's Name multiple times. I pray that those who do not necessarily believe in Yeshua will be saved and will be with Him in Paradise for all eternity in Yeshua's Name.

Acknowledgments



I am grateful to the Lord Yeshua for helping me with this free e-book.

Contents

Preface	iv
Acknowledgments	v
1 Sparking Faith	2
1.1 Belief in the Midst of Troubles	2
1.2 Hope for Healing	5
1.3 The Vivacity of Faith	7
1.4 Faith and The Holy Spirit	10
2 Building Fire	15
2.1 Yeshua Does The Saving Work	15
2.2 The Process of Sanctification	16
2.3 Patiently Waiting	18
3 Rushing Flame	22
3.1 Mountain Moving Faith	22
3.2 Blind Faith	24
3.2.1 Abraham Did Not Blink	25
3.2.2 Moses Heeded the Call	26
3.2.3 Esther Took a Step	26
3.3 Faith Like A Mustard Seed	28
3.3.1 Gideon Requested Signs	28
3.3.2 Samson's Last Request	30
3.4 According to Our Faith	32

CONTENTS

vii

4	Tempering the Burn	38
4.1	Doubt	38
4.2	Winning Against Worry	41
4.2.1	Praise	42
4.2.2	Prayer	42
4.2.3	Reading God's Word Aloud	44
4.3	Trust	45
5	Sustaining the Heat	49
5.1	Persistent Faith	49
5.2	Aim to Hit the Mark	51
5.3	Faith Makes the World Go Around	53
6	Shimmering Beam	56
6.1	Faith for Forgiveness	56
6.2	Fathered by God	58
6.3	Altar Call	59
7	Radiant Blaze	65
7.1	Fiery Providence	65
7.2	Faith That Grows	65
7.3	Yeshua At The Center	67
7.4	Faithful Perseverance	67
7.5	Reverential Submission	68
7.6	Generous Reward	68
7.7	Next Steps	69
	Afterword	72
	About the Author	73
	Future Works	75

CHAPTER 1

SPARKING FAITH



..we walk by faith and not by sight.

— 2 CORINTHIANS 5:7 NKJV

Chapter 1

Sparking Faith



1.1 Belief in the Midst of Troubles

The Israelites were surrounded. There was trouble on every side. The Red Sea affronted them. Mountains confined the Israelites from behind. The Egyptians approached the Israelites with an army bearing weapons.

The Egyptians had 600 chariots, hungry to harm the Israelites. The Israelites were unarmed and with women and children. They had been traveling in the wilderness and ran out of provisions, including food and water.

The Israelites complained against their conductor, Moses. The Israelites were ready to throw in the towel. They viewed their circumstances as impossible to escape. Likely, many would not have blamed them for surrendering, given the danger that they were in. Forces stacked the odds against them. The Israelites spoke of surrendering to the Egyptians.

However, God had just delivered the Israelites from centuries of slavery to Egypt. God had displayed wonders never seen before. God had brought 10 devastating plagues on the Egyptians and spared the Israelites from the same plagues. God protected Israel and showed His love for Israel. God also displayed His willingness to punish Israel's enemies.

Nonetheless, in the face of their difficulties, and in the heat of the moment, the Israelites did not remember the great wonders that God had worked for them. They forgot how God had brought them out of bondage. Their circumstances caused them to fear. They were ready to go back to slavery with the Egyptians in order to preserve their lives.

Moses rose up, a mighty leader in the face of this crisis. He spoke hope and encouragement to the Israelites. Moses trusted God immensely. Although their situation appeared impossible, Moses believed that God would bring them through their troubles and bless and prosper Israel.

Moses reminded the Israelites of God's amazing providence and how well God had provided for them. Moses inspired the Israelites to recall God's mighty deliverance, with His impressive signs and wonders. Moses urged the Israelites to trust God and to put their hope and faith in Him.

Moses made note that if another human had done as well for the Israelites as God had done, they would put their trust in that human. Why not trust God? Moses told the Israelites that when people could not see how things could work out, God was able and willing to deliver His people from trouble. What was impossible to man was nothing to God. Moses was brimming with faith.

Moses prayed and communicated with God. God commanded Moses, and Moses stretched out his rod. God parted the Red Sea. The Israelites walked through on dry land. The Lord moved as a pillar of cloud before the Israelites. The Lord Himself stood behind the Israelites to protect them from their enemies.



Figure 1.1: *God worked through Moses to part the Red Sea, demonstrating His faithfulness to the Israelites. Moses showed great faith. Moses believed for God to save them despite how difficult their circumstances were.*

Although the Egyptians pursued the Israelites, the waters covered the Egyptians. God eliminated every single Egyptian that had pursued the Israelites for the sake of violence. The Lord had saved Israel again.

1.2 Hope for Healing

The Lord Yeshua taught all around multiple regions of Israel. He went about proclaiming the good news of God's coming kingdom. He healed multitudes that were sick and oppressed by demons. News about Yeshua spread throughout the land, and many sought Him for healing and restoration.

Yeshua was on His way to resurrect the daughter of a synagogue leader, when He felt power go out from Him. Yeshua stopped the procession of the crowd and called out to find out who had touched Him. A lady realized that she could not go unnoticed.

She revealed that she had suffered with an issue of blood for 12 years. She had gone to physicians and spent all that she had in order to get help and healing. Despite her efforts and the money spent, her condition had only gotten worse.

When she knew that Yeshua was around, she believed that He would heal her. Many people crowded around Yeshua. However, she told herself that if she only touched the hem of His garment, she would be healed.

That is precisely what happened. She reached out and touched the hem of Yeshua's garment. She was healed instantly. Yeshua brought attention to her and her story among the throng of people surrounding Him. He told her:



Figure 1.2: *Yeshua healed the woman with the issue of blood. She told herself that if she only touched the hem of His garment, she would be healed.*

“Be of good cheer, daughter; your faith has made you well. Go in peace .”

Matthew 9:20-22, Luke 8:45-48

Notably, this lady demonstrated persistence and audacity in reaching out for Yeshua. She pressed through the crowd with faith inside of her heart. She honestly and humbly told her story of illness and the miracle of Yeshua’s healing. She knew the source of her cure was the Lord, and He commended her for believing in Him.

1.3 The Vivacity of Faith

What is faith? We can feel faith inside of us when we *know* something is going to happen, e.g., God is going to heal someone, God is going to free someone from sin, God is going to save us from calamity or from a challenging situation. Faith is a powerful force that can move Heaven and earth.

The Lord fought for the Israelites with Joshua as their general. Moses had passed on, and he transferred leadership to Joshua. The Lord loved the Israelites so much, that He literally held the sun in place for Israel to vanquish their enemies.

...So the sun stood still in the midst of Heaven, and did not hasten to go down for about a whole day. And there has been no day like that, before it or after it, that the LORD heeded the voice of a man; for the LORD fought for Israel.

Joshua 10:13-14 NKJV

Faith is a vibrant aspect of our being as humans and treasured by God Himself. Time and time again, the Lord Yeshua was pleased when He found faith in His creation. Yeshua’s delight practically

spilled off the pages of the Bible when He encountered faith in people.

Yeshua spoke often about faith as He walked about teaching. He made it evident that faith is important in seeking God. Conversely, Yeshua was disappointed when He encountered a lack of faith. People in Yeshua's hometown lacked faith in Him. Their lack of faith actually hindered His work there, as written in Mark 6:5-6.

Now He could do no mighty work there, except that He laid His hands on a few sick people and healed them. And He marveled because of their unbelief. Then He went about the villages in a circuit, teaching.

Mark 6:5-6 NKJV

Hebrews 11:6 states that without faith, it is impossible to please God. Although citizens of His hometown disappointed Yeshua, multiple others demonstrated faith. Yeshua marveled over the faith of a variety of people that He healed and helped, as described in the New Testament. Would we like God to marvel at our belief or at our unbelief?

The disciples requested for Yeshua to increase their faith. Yeshua proclaimed that even faith the size of a mustard seed could move a tree just by speaking (Luke 17:6). Mustard seeds grow. In the New Testament, it was written that faith is "confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see (Hebrews 11:1 NIV)." Paul wrote that faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God (Romans 10:17).

Therefore, faith is not fixed. Faith can grow. Growing faith could occur from reading God's word aloud or receiving God's word from someone else, e.g., pastors preaching sermons. God may

give us a unique word that He tells us personally for us to believe in. God could communicate this word via multiple methods, e.g., via dreams, via impressions within us, or through other people.

We could plainly state that faith is believing that God's word is true. Another aspect of faith is believing in the goodness of God. God loves when we recognize His abundantly gracious character. God shines His goodness, kindness, and mercy upon us more faithfully and reliably than the rising of the sun (see Joel 2:13 and Psalm 100:5).

God created us and loves us as a good father loves his children. However, sometimes we encounter difficulties in life that can cause us to forget this. Sometimes suffering can distort our perception of God.

In challenging times, God is patient with us. God helps us and supports us, even if we are not aware of it. God ensures that we maintain that vibrancy within us. We have a life force inside of us that tells us that God is good, even in tough circumstances.

Sometimes suffering can distort our perception of God.

We as humans have a mysterious and indomitable power inside of us, God's Holy Spirit. God's Holy Spirit materializes in those who believe in God and draw near to Him through His Son, the Lord Yeshua. The Holy Spirit stays inside believers forever. If we believe in Yeshua and are saved but are not aware of God's Holy Spirit, let us not worry.

God will make us aware of His Holy Spirit within us. We do not have to feel timid about requesting manifestation of God's Holy Spirit. God wants to bless us with His Holy Spirit, an incredibly powerful force.

"...If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him !"

Luke 11:13 NKJV

1.4 Faith and The Holy Spirit

God's Holy Spirit abounds in glory and wonder, like a bright, blazing fire on a dark, cold night. God's Spirit moves like a whirlwind, unpredictable by human measure. God's Holy Spirit gusts unstoppably. The Holy Spirit moves powerfully as a positive and creative force in the world.

By God's Holy Spirit, Samson defeated and killed 1,000 Philistines. Samson defeated those Israelite enemies with merely the jawbone of a donkey (Judges 15:16). With God's Holy Spirit, the prophet Elijah outran a king's chariot (1 Kings 18:44-46). However, God's Holy Spirit also works healing and has the power to do miracles. With God's Holy Spirit, the prophet Elisha raised a widow's son from the dead (2 Kings 4:32-37).

Clearly, the Holy Spirit is powerful and desirable for God's children. The Holy Spirit is a part of God's holy trinity. Therefore, the Holy Spirit is also God. However, the Holy Spirit has a certain level of mystery around it.

"...The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is

everyone who is born of the Spirit.”

John 3:8 NKJV

The Holy Spirit works with faith. However, there are other important elements of the Holy Spirit highlighted in scripture. The Holy Spirit is a spirit of truth (e.g., John 14:17). Yeshua called the Holy Spirit our helper and our advocate. The Holy Spirit instructs saints and reminds us what the Lord Yeshua told us.

“But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My Name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.”

John 14:26 NKJV

I believe there are certain keys to the Holy Spirit. One key to the Holy Spirit is faith. Ephesians 1:13 supports that the Holy Spirit emerges with faith as a key component:

“In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise...”

Ephesians 1:13 NKJV

Paul wrote in Ephesians 1:13 that getting sealed by the Holy Spirit came from belief in God’s word. In biblical times, a “seal,” indicated ownership and authenticity. When God “sealed” a believer with His Holy Spirit, He was marking them as a legitimate child of God.

Breaking a seal without authorization was considered a severe offense. God’s seal carried His protection with it. God marked His saints with His Holy Spirit to indicate that they carried His authority and presence. Spirit-filled believers moved with God’s

power and truth. This seal implied a guarantee of good rewards to come, like a deposit¹.

The presence of the Holy Spirit implied an inextricable bond with faith, belief in God's word. Another important key to the Holy Spirit included obedience to God. However, true faith already indicated a level of obedience. Faith and obedience go hand in hand (e.g., James 2:22). Acts 5:32 supports the importance of obedience, written below:

And we are His witnesses to these things, and so also is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey Him.

Acts 5:32 (see also John 14:15-16 and 1 John 3:24)

Regrettably, we humans may have challenges with obeying God, due to our sin. Notwithstanding our weaknesses, the Lord Yeshua helps us to obey God. He knows our weaknesses. By trusting in the Lord, we can attain to obedience to God and thus His Holy Spirit. Therefore, at least two fundamental factors in manifesting God's Holy Spirit are faith and obedience.

For those who do not believe that Yeshua is Lord but are interested in being in God's kingdom of light, let me implore you. If you are willing to give your lives to the Lord Yeshua and to submit to Him, there are many resultant rewards that last for all eternity. The prizes are definitely worth the challenges that come with Christianity.

Yeshua blesses His servants immensely and for all time. No one can reward you more richly than God. For example, Paradise with Yeshua includes:

¹GotQuestions.org, "What Is the Seal of the Holy Spirit?" last modified January 4, 2022, <https://www.gotquestions.org/Holy-Spirit-seal.html>.

1. Fellowship with the greatest and most loving being ever (God, our Father).
2. Community with amazing people, the saints and mighty angels of God.
3. An endless supply of the best food ever made, including fruit from the Tree of Life (e.g., see Revelation 2:7).
4. Rich, fun, and joyful experiences and pleasures forever.

The Christian road is not easy. Yeshua called it a narrow path for a reason (e.g., Matthew 7:13). However, Yeshua helps us in the faith journey. Yeshua is the author and perfecter of our faith (Hebrews 12:2). If we trust Him to bring us through the narrow path, there are amazing delights at the end of the road.

CHAPTER 2

BUILDING FIRE



*For He says: "In an acceptable time I have heard you, and in the day of salvation I have helped you."
Behold, now is the accepted time;
behold, now is the day of salvation.*

— 2 CORINTHIANS 6:2 NKJV

Chapter 2

Building Fire



2.1 Yeshua Does The Saving Work

If you are not a believer and are reading this book, I invite you to turn to the Lord Yeshua as soon as possible and without hesitation. Paradise for all eternity is not something we would want *anyone* to miss out on. Moreover, when we submit to Yeshua, He does life with us. We would not find a better companion.

Please do not wait until you believe you are more holy. Please do not wait until things get better, or until you *feel* like turning to the Lord. Please do not wait until you suppose that you are performing better in terms of behaving righteously. An important reason to not wait is that the Lord is the one who does the heavy lifting for us.

Let us simply turn to Yeshua in repentance. Let us accept Him and trust Him. He will work from within us to conform us to be like Him. Yeshua is the one who causes us to live righteously.

“Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light .”

Matthew 11:28-30 NKJV

If we could have redeemed ourselves, we would have done so already. Therefore, it should be evident to everyone that it is not

possible for us to save ourselves. We all need our Savior, the Lord Yeshua. The good news is that if we admit that we cannot save ourselves and ask God for help, He is faithful to rescue us from darkness and to bring us into His kingdom of light.

Once we have been saved and justified by Yeshua's atoning sacrifice, Yeshua does the work of cleaning us up, purifying us, and sanctifying us. We work together with Him in this process of sanctification. When Yeshua's work is done, we end up like Him.

...if we admit that we cannot save ourselves...

Becoming like Yeshua is the best that we can do as humans (Matthew 10:25). It is like the moon reflecting the light of the sun. Yeshua shines brilliantly, like a majestic gem.

Yeshua crowns the world with resplendence and nobility. Yeshua imbues us with His wisdom and adorns life with splendor. Yeshua makes life worth living. Yeshua is the perfection of beauty (see Psalm 50:2, Isaiah 28:16), the pinnacle of glory.

2.2 The Process of Sanctification

Frankly, the process of sanctification involves suffering. The disciples stated in Acts 14:22 that we reach God's kingdom through many hardships. God makes the suffering worth it by blessing us afterwards and even during our trials. We as humans suffer for much less valuable goals.

For example, those who become muscular put themselves through rigorous training in order to appear strong. They may wake up early. They lift weights. They discipline themselves, including

potentially via diet. God's kingdom is more valuable than an athletic physique.

There are multiple examples of saints in the Bible who suffered, even for prolonged periods of time, e.g., Job, Joseph, and David. God amply rewarded them for enduring their suffering. While Yeshua prepares us to become like Him, He guides us through His Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit helps us, speaking to us to let us know what to do. We may need help obeying God and the promptings of His Holy Spirit. However, we can pray to God and ask Him to help us to obey Him. God may discipline us, especially for disobedience.

However, let us not despise the correction of the Lord. The Lord disciplines the ones He loves. God treats us as a father would his children, chastising us for our benefit. We are to endure hardship as discipline (Proverbs 3:11-12). Although we may experience tough times, God will bring us through the unpleasant days. He will help us.

It may feel unpleasant at the time (Hebrews 12:11). However, God teaches us and scourges us in order to make us better. God will strengthen us through His discipline. God's discipline frees us from evil and sin and makes us useful for serving Him. He who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin (1 Peter 4:1). There is not just punishment for disobeying God but there is also great reward for obeying God.

“So do not throw away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded. You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what He has promised.”

Hebrews 10:35-36 NIV

Let us also be mindful that the process of sanctification may take longer than we may like it to take. Sometimes, we may not want to experience any discomfort at all. However, that is not the reality of this phase of existence, of this world. That may also not be consistent with the process of sanctification.

We spent a substantial amount of time living in sin before coming to the Lord Yeshua. We had unprofitable patterns of behavior before we became Christian. It may take time for us to be freed and to be healed from our sins. It could take time for us to learn to think, to speak, and to act in ways that are pleasing to God. God desires for us to be patient. This could mean waiting with discomfort as God works in us.

2.3 Patiently Waiting

There was a drought in Israel for three and a half years in the time of the prophet Elijah. Droughts meant that the people would have less food, because rain was important for farming and crops. God sent the drought to wake the Israelites up as to their spiritual dryness. God brought the Israelites attention to their sin, including having turned away from God.

God intended the drought to get the Israelites to turn back to Him. He wanted them to recognize Him as their source of life. God wanted the Israelites to stop worshiping vain and lifeless idols.

The Israelites were in the Middle East. The Middle East can be hot, dusty, and dry. God flowed to His people like a spring of cold, delicious water in a desert oasis (e.g., Jeremiah 18:12-15). The Israelites were worshiping idols, inanimate, created items,

instead of God. Idols and idolatry are like a mirage. Turning to idols is like drinking salty ocean water to quench our thirst.

At the end of the three and a half years of drought, Elijah the prophet received word from God that there would be rain. Elijah sent his servant to check to see if there was any sign of rain. Elijah's servant checked 6 times, and there was no sign of rain at all each time.

Elijah merely kept his peace, knowing that God's word would surely come to pass, even though there was no sign of rain for a substantial amount of time. Elijah calmly and confidently waited for the rain promised by God. He knew that God would keep His word despite no one seeing any sign of rain. Elijah was resolute. Elijah's patience was a sign of great faith and trust in God.

When Elijah's servant checked the seventh time, there was only a hint of rain. There was a tiny cloud the size of a man's hand (1 Kings 18:44). When the servant said this, Elijah told people to prepare. Before long, there was heavy rain.

What are we to learn from this? An important note is that God keeps His word. If God says something will happen, let us wait patiently. If it has not happened yet, then it is on the way.

Another important aspect of this great example displayed by Elijah was the power of patience. Elijah's calm demeanor and willingness to be still despite no visible sign of what God had promised gave great honor and glory to God. Eventually, God made the rain abundantly evident to everyone. Let us also be still like Elijah. The rain is coming.



Figure 2.1: *Elijah was filled with God's Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit empowered Elijah to outrun a chariot. Elijah demonstrated great faith and trust in God and waited patiently for rain.*

CHAPTER 3

RUSHING FLAME



*...but the righteous will live by
faith.*

— HABAKKUK 2:4 BSB

Chapter 3

Rushing Flame



3.1 Mountain Moving Faith

“Truly I say to you, among those born of women there has not risen one greater than John the Baptist. Yet the least in the kingdom of the heavens is greater than he !”

Matthew 11:11 Berean Literal Bible

It is not possible to receive greater commendation than from God Himself. Yeshua commended John the Baptist in front of a large gathering. Multitudes of people had thronged together. Yeshua proclaimed in front of all of them that John was greater than everyone that had come before him, even highly esteemed prophets like Isaiah and Jeremiah. That is no small matter!

Years before this extraordinary approval, struggle arose surrounding John’s birth. Herod the Great was king at that time in the region and considered a tyrant. King Herod feared that Yeshua the Messiah would arise and take power away from him.

Therefore, Herod decreed that all Hebrew boys under the age of 2 should be killed. It was an effort to try to murder Yeshua before He grew up. John’s mother Elizabeth was called righteous before God (Luke 1:6). She recognized that she had a special baby. When Elizabeth heard this decree, she fled into the hill country to save John.



Figure 3.1: *Elizabeth had mountain-moving faith. Soldiers from King Herod came to kill her baby, John the Baptist. God loved them so much that He split apart a mountain in order to help them escape.*

Alarmingly, Elizabeth came to a place where it was not possible for her to hide. There was a mountain, but she was not able to climb it. Herod's soldiers were on the way and searching for her to kill her baby boy, John the Baptist.

Elizabeth cried out to the Lord, "Mountain of God, receive your mother with child." Immediately, the mountain split into two and took her in. An angel of the Lord was with them, keeping watch over them (from the *Infancy Gospel of James*, an apocryphal work).

Elizabeth literally had mountain-moving faith. This example comes from an apocryphal work, meaning it is not in the Bible canon. However, the Lord Yeshua Himself stated that all we needed as believers was faith the size of a mustard seed in order to move mountains (e.g., Matthew 17:20).

There have also been works and writings accepted by Christians that are not in the Bible canon, e.g., 1 Enoch and The Shepherd of Hermas. There are other examples of wonder-working faith in the Bible. Some servants of God received incredible power when the Lord looked upon them with favor.

Faith was a key ingredient in these examples. Elizabeth believed in the goodness of God and His promises towards her regarding her baby John. She did not necessarily see a way initially. God demonstrated His willingness to move mountains as a sign of His love for her. God also loves us and is willing to move mountains for us.

God also loves us and is willing to move mountains for us.

3.2 Blind Faith

The Bible states that we walk by faith and not by sight (e.g., Habakkuk 2:4, 2 Corinthians 5:7). There are times when God wants us to step out in faith, without knowing what is ahead or what God has planned. Sometimes, God may ask us to do things that we do not understand.

3.2.1 Abraham Did Not Blink

Abraham was around 100 years old when Isaac was born. Abraham had literally waited decades for Isaac, even after God told Abraham that He would bless him with a son. God fulfilled His promise, and Abraham had his beloved son Isaac. While Isaac was still young, God told Abraham to sacrifice Isaac.

Abraham did not question God or even blink at this command. Abraham got up the next morning and told Isaac that they were going on a trip. Abraham obeyed God and was about to sacrifice Isaac, the cherished son he had waited decades for. Abraham did not know beforehand that God would provide a ram to sacrifice instead of Isaac.

God was very pleased with Abraham's trust in Him. Abraham is called the father of faith. God blessed Abraham bountifully. Abraham had plentiful food and material possessions. Abraham also had many servants.

Abraham was wealthy in his day. Furthermore, God blessed Abraham's son Isaac and Abraham's grandson Jacob after Isaac. God richly rewarded Abraham for his faith and obedience for generations after Abraham.

God even overlooked Abraham having a son with a different woman. Ishmael was born of the servant woman Hagar. God was clearly gracious and magnanimous. Moreover, God also blessed Ishmael because of Abraham.

God called Abraham His friend, which is no small distinction. There are other examples of those who trusted and believed in God. They did not know what would happen next. However, they had faith in God's goodness.

3.2.2 Moses Heeded the Call

Moses had gone into exile for 40 years after killing an Egyptian who was persecuting his Hebrew brethren. When other Egyptians found out what Moses did, they sought to kill Moses. One day, while tending sheep during exile, Moses encountered a burning bush that was not consumed by the fire.

God spoke to Moses from this burning bush and commissioned him to be God's spokesperson to the Egyptian Pharaoh. God wanted Moses to tell Pharaoh to let the Israelites go free from slavery. Moses initially hesitated regarding this charge.

However, Moses eventually agreed to be God's spokesperson and leader for the Israelites. God then told Moses that the people seeking to kill him were already dead, e.g., the angry Egyptian avengers. Notably, God told Moses about the death of these enemies only after Moses already agreed to serve God.

Moses took a step of faith. He found out that there was less danger in his mission than he originally anticipated. It was like a breath of relief.

3.2.3 Esther Took a Step

In the Book of Esther, a guy named Haman stirred up trouble for the Jews. He got the Persian King Ahasuerus to decree for all Jews to be exterminated. Providentially, King Ahasuerus had a wife who was a Jew, and her name was Esther.

Jews urged Esther to speak up on behalf of their people to the Persian king in order to save the Jews. This required Esther to approach the king. There was a Persian law that stated that anyone who approached the king without his summons would be



Figure 3.2: *Esther took a step of faith to save the Jews.*

killed, unless the king extended his scepter to the person to save their life.

Esther went to speak with the Persian king, although she had not been summoned. Esther took a brave step of faith on behalf of her people in order to save them. Esther was nervous, and she even stumbled before the king. There is a saying that, “If you are scared to do it, then do it scared.” The king extended his scepter to Esther. Her life was preserved.

The King gently told Esther that the rule regarding death for those who approached the king without summons was for common

people, not the queen¹. However, Esther's willingness to risk her life for her people still deserved acknowledgment and recognition. Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. once said that, "Faith is taking the first step even when you do not see the whole staircase."

3.3 Faith Like A Mustard Seed

3.3.1 Gideon Requested Signs

The Bible has demonstrated multiple times that we do not need faith like David, the giant-killer, in order to serve God. We may not be at peak levels of faith when we first start to believe in God and our Lord Yeshua. However, God is still faithful to answer our prayers.

Gideon was listed among the heroes of faith. The Lord spoke to Gideon directly to deliver the Israelites from oppression from their enemies. Gideon requested multiple signs of our Lord before proceeding with his mission. Gideon was not necessarily demonstrating large amounts of faith at the beginning of his story. However, by the end, he was full of strength and faith.

In the time of the Book of Judges, the Israelites had already turned away from God. This occurred shortly after entering The Promised Land. The Israelites had forgotten their Lord, and they were doing what was right in their own eyes instead of obeying God. The Lord permitted multiple different nations at different times to oppress the Israelites in order to draw their attention back to God. God wanted the Israelites to realize their dependence upon Him.

¹Flavius Josephus, *The Antiquities of the Jews*, in *The Complete Works of Josephus*, trans. William Whiston (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1960).

When the Lord approached Gideon, the Israelites were being heavily afflicted by the Midianites. The oppression was so bad that Israelites hid in caves and in the mountains in order to avoid the cruel treatment from the Midianites. The Midianites were destroying a lot of the Israelites' food. The Lord found Gideon hiding and preparing his food in a winepress to avoid the Midianites harassing him.

Gideon apparently did not think much of himself. His words did not sound heroic when he stated that his clan was the weakest in his tribe. Gideon also called himself the least in his father's house (Judges 6:15). Nevertheless, the Lord saw a great warrior in Gideon. The Lord charged Gideon, letting him know that the Lord was with him. The Lord called Gideon a "mighty man of valor."

Gideon requested at least three different signs from the Lord as reassurance before embarking on his mission. The Lord was faithful and provided the signs to Gideon to reassure him. This demonstrated the Lord Yeshua's patience, kindness, and grace. We may say that Gideon had faith the size of a mustard seed.

The Lord blessed Gideon with astounding success. Yeshua caused Gideon to defeat an army of 135,000 with only 300 men (Judges 8:10). This was long before the USA blockbuster Hollywood movie entitled, "300." These were also not necessarily the bravest and most courageous men of Israel.

The Lord fought for the Israelites and blessed them with victory. God re-demonstrated His love for Israel. He also showed that His servants could do amazing things with Him, even with lower levels of faith. Yeshua told us that all we needed to move mountains was faith like a mustard seed (e.g., Matthew 17:20).

God transformed Gideon from timid and hiding in a winepress into the mighty man of valor He called him to be. It did not even take long for this metamorphosis to occur. This goes to show that God can do anything. Gideon was not the only one in the Book of Judges that had some small level of faith that God blessed and magnified.

3.3.2 Samson's Last Request

God heard Samson near the end of Samson's life, when he was down and cast aside. Samson had been powerfully blessed with God's Holy Spirit. Unfortunately, Samson was deceived by enemies and made some errors. When Samson had a final prayer to God, God responded faithfully.

Samson had taken the vow of a Nazirite. As part of his vow, Samson was not supposed to take any wine or fruit of the vine (e.g., grapes, raisins, grape juice). Samson was also not supposed to cut his hair. Samson unfortunately became enamored with women, including women of his enemies, the Philistine women.

A woman named Delilah seduced and pestered Samson into revealing the source of his strength. Samson was so tired of Delilah annoying him about the source of his strength, that he eventually told her. He said that if his hair was cut, he would become as weak as any man (Judges 16:16). Delilah used this against Samson and turned him over to his enemies for money.

Delilah "lulled him to sleep on her knees (Judges 16:19)." The Philistines cut Samson's hair and overpowered him. They removed his eyes and tortured Samson. The Philistines constrained him with bronze shackles, and treated Samson like a slave. They



Figure 3.3: *God blessed Samson one more time to have vengeance on his enemies. The Bible stated that Samson killed more Philistines at his death than in all the time prior to his last major event.*

forced him to grind grain in a prison. The Philistines also humiliated Samson for their entertainment.

Samson knew that he had messed up. However, Samson turned to the Lord just one more time at a celebration the Philistines held in their temple for their idol. By this time, Samson's hair had grown again. Samson had faith in God's goodness and kindness. He believed that God would bless him to have vengeance on his enemies one last time. God answered Samson's prayers.

Samson was brought near two pillars that held up the temple the Philistines used to worship their idol. God gave Samson strength to push down the pillars, bringing the temple down upon the Philistines. The Bible noted that Samson actually killed more of the Philistines at his death than he did in his life prior to this (Judges 16:30). These examples testify that a little faith goes a long way.

With this example of Samson, we can derive further messages regarding God's grace and His compassionate nature. We learn that God is kind enough to bless us even after we have made mistakes. Samson also showed that, although time had passed, it was not too late for God to work miracles in his life.

3.4 According to Our Faith

God responds to our level of faith. This could reflect what we are believing for, e.g., healing from an illness or resolution of an ailment. This could also include God responding to details involving what we believe for.

The woman with the issue of blood was a good example of someone having faith for specific details regarding the manner of their healing. She was believing that if she only touched the hem of Yeshua's garment, that she would be fully healed. That is precisely what Yeshua did for her.

There were multiple people that Yeshua healed in person. However a centurion soldier told Yeshua, "Just say the word." The centurion soldier sent a message that he was not worthy to have Yeshua enter his home. The soldier made it evident that he believed that as long as Yeshua gave His word regarding healing his

servant, that was good enough for him. Yeshua was pleased with this level of faith.

Yeshua healed blindness in multiple different ways. For two men in Matthew 9:29, He touched their eyes and said “**According to your faith, let it be to you.**” This indicated that Yeshua touching their eyes was part of the faith they had for their healing.

Near Bethsaida, Yeshua healed a blind man in stages. First, He spat on the blind man’s eyes and laid hands on him. The man was able to see something, although not fully. The man was not completely healed until Yeshua placed His hands on him again (Mark 8:22-25). For blind Bartimaeus, who called out to Yeshua on the road, Yeshua simply spoke to Bartimaeus to heal him. Yeshua said Bartimaeus’s faith made him well when He healed his blindness (Mark 10:52).

These different instances of healing of the same condition of blindness indicated that the healing was not tied to a particular method. Otherwise, Yeshua would have done the same steps for restoring each blind person. We can take away multiple lessons from this.

We are pointed towards our Lord Yeshua as our Healer, and not a particular set of steps or methodology. These instances of healing also alluded that the afflicted person’s faith played a role in Yeshua’s work. This indicates to us as followers of the Lord to believe for the best and to not shortchange ourselves. In other words, let us have as much faith as we can for each request of God.

There was a Gentile woman who asked Yeshua to heal her daughter. Yeshua said that He was sent to the lost children of Israel.

He was implying that she was not in His plans. Yeshua presumably did this for demonstration purposes, to reveal His glory and to teach us the value of faith and persistence.

This Gentile woman humbly, candidly, and shrewdly refused to take no for an answer. She was unwilling to shortchange herself and her miracle. Perhaps she persisted, because she came before the Lord on behalf of her daughter. It may have been the love for her child that emboldened her. She gave Yeshua an apt reply, insisting on her request (Matthew 15:27, Mark 7:28). Yeshua was so pleased with her faith, that He commended her to everyone around them.

She effectively stated, “I know I do not deserve Your grace. However, I know that You are incredibly good and kind. Therefore, I believe that You will be gracious and grant my request anyway.” Yeshua blessed her according to her beliefs and healed her daughter based on her faith. Acknowledging God’s incredibly generous and benevolent character is an example of faith that pleases God.

The Lord stated in the Shepherd of Hermas that Gentiles had up to the very last day to repent and to be in Paradise with the Lord (Shepherd of Hermas Book 1, Vision 2, Verses 14-15). This is consistent with the parable the Lord taught in Matthew 20:1-16. The Lord has taught me that we should not hold malice, but we should desire salvation and Paradise for all humans (e.g., Ezekiel 33:11).

Although faith is a spiritual matter, it can manifest itself in a nearly tangible form. There was a man the apostle Paul encountered in his travels where Paul could practically sense his faith palpably. Paul called out to him for healing, noticing his belief.