

Know the God of Scripture

Volume 1

Week 7: What is Genuine Faith? - Answer Guide

Below is the answer guide for this week's lesson. By no means are the answers complete or the only possible responses to each question. They are a guide to fully understanding the intent of the questions posed.

1. The Wilderness of Paran is the desert west of the Dead Sea on the southern border of the Promised Land. God was ready to lead the Israelites into the land of promise, Canaan, but their lack of faith to follow His instructions prevented them from entering. They were virtually at the door of what was promised, prepared to enter, but failed in their faith to trust in God's guidance.

2. The Israelites complained about everything! Below are a few examples:

- Numbers 11:1 – The Israelites complained about their hardship. God sent fire and consumed some on the outskirts of the camp.
- Numbers 11:4 – The rabble (Hebrew word means a mixed multitude) of Israel were not satisfied with just bread from heaven so they complained about God's provision of manna (In Hebrew manna means "What is it?"). In answer to their complaint God had Moses appoint 70 elders in whom He placed the Spirit of God to help him. Afterwards God made an overabundant amount of meat fly into camp for a month until they were sick of it! Because of their lack of faith God sent a plague among those who complained.
- Numbers 12:1 – Now Miriam & Aaron rebelled against God! Miriam was afflicted with a skin disease.
- Numbers 14:1 – Israel rebelled and refused to enter the Promised Land. As a result, God made them wander in the desert for 38 years.
- Numbers 16:1 – Korah and 250 prominent leaders challenged Moses' authority. In questioning Moses' authority, they questioned God's appointment of Moses and thereby questioned God Himself. This resulted in God opening the earth and swallowing them.

In all situations God gave them instructions to follow and they rebelled with lack of faith.

3. The Israelite's lack of faith began to take its toll on Moses' faith and relationship with God. Moses reminds God of the monumental task of feeding over 600,000 fighting men (which equates to about 2 million people total!). God's power, His omnipotence, is limitless! This event is a reminder that we quickly become like those we hang around. Draw your strength and faith from God, not from weak-minded individuals.

This seems to be a precursor to Jesus' feeding of the 5,000 with bread and fish. Take some time and compare and contrast the two events.

4. There are prophets among you, but Moses is "My" prophet who seeks My will and whom I speak directly to. There's an unprecedented intimacy and loyalty between Moses and Yahweh that the Israelites should have revered. The same respect and reverence should be displayed by congregants to their leadership today. Pastors, priests and lay leaders who are called to ministry have a monumental task laid before them. They are called to shepherd God's flock and sometimes that wears on them. Give them the respect they deserve.

5. In both (Numbers & Mark/Philippians), one who is close to the prophet is concerned with others prophesying. In both cases, the prophet says don't worry, preaching God is good no matter who or how they prophesy. In both cases the one close to the prophet went on to do mighty deeds for God. In both cases, one close to the prophet thought the prophet's reputation was tarnished, which turned out not to be the case. In both cases the spirit of God

was with those who prophesied. As a side note, the Hebrew name Eldad means “God has loved” and Medad means “loving people/others.” They both “spoke in ecstasy” or under divine influence.

6. Both Caleb and Joshua had witnessed the miraculous exit from Egypt, the miracles of God in the desert, the law given by Moses, the construction, erection and operation of the Tabernacle, and the cloud and the fire of God that hovered over the Tabernacle. However, they believed with their heart, not their eyes. Their faith should be an encouragement to us today, to trust in the Lord even when circumstances tell you otherwise.

Comparing Deuteronomy 1:22 with Numbers 13:1-4, it appears the idea to send spies into the land came from the Israelites. However, God seems to have approved their faithless act.

Side notes: Joshua is from Ephraim, the tribe that would become dominant in the north (Israel). Caleb is from Judah, the tribe that would become dominant in the south (Judah) before the exile. The Hebrew word Hoshea means “salvation.” The Hebrew name Joshua means “Yahweh saves.” Jesus’ name, Yeshua, derives from the Hebrew name Joshua, and means “Yahweh saves!”

If you have time, I encourage you to compare this story with that of David & Goliath. Juxtapose the faith of Caleb & Joshua with that of David, their backgrounds, circumstances, etc.

7. It is remarkable that God tolerates so much provocation of evil before acting in righteous judgement. His love is strong and tolerant of our many rejections. Throughout Scripture He demonstrates His patience, tolerance and eternal love.

8. The ten times the Israelites complained mentioned in Numbers 14:22:

- 1) Exodus 14:10-12 (Egyptian Army)
- 2) Exodus 15:22-24 (Water at Marah)
- 3) Exodus 16:1-4 (Hunger at Wilderness of Sin)
- 4) Exodus 16:19-20 (Manna left out)
- 5) Exodus 16:27-30 (Sabbath manna gathering)
- 6) Exodus 17:1-4 (Water at Wilderness of Sin)
- 7) Exodus 32:1-35 (Golden Calf)
- 8) Numbers 11:1-3 (Hardship)
- 9) Numbers 11:4-34 (Lack of meat)
- 10) Numbers 14:3 (Moses & Aaron)

9. The children, under the age of 20, did not witness the mighty works of God parting the Red Sea, etc. They needed to be taught God’s providence by wandering in the desert for 40 years. Likewise, today, children must be taught the character of God and other things pertaining to Him so that they will develop their own faith. Your faith walk should be shared with your children so as to encourage them to walk in like faith. Ultimately, the Bible is the source from which to teach such truths.

10. Moses, though battered and bruised by previous rebellions, exercised humility and sought God’s directions. He obeyed God’s commands and exposed the rebels for what they were, prideful and arrogant.

Additional Questions:

1. Answers will vary depending on personal experiences.
2. In every believer there is an inner struggle between the desires of the flesh and the will of the Spirit (Mathew 26:41; Romans 7:14-25). In any life circumstance, attempts in the flesh are futile to the glory of God. We must always heed the promptings of God and be led by the Spirit that abides in our hearts. Through obeying God's will you will produce fruits of the Spirit that glorify God.

