

## *Study Notes For Hebrews* **(Chapter Eleven)**

**Hebrews 11:1** - The previous chapter concluded with a message of continued faithfulness (Hebrews 10:35-39). Within that message they were reminded that the just shall live by faith (Hebrews 10:38; cf. Habakkuk 2:4). That certainly ties into the eleventh chapter of this letter. We will be studying about faith throughout this whole chapter starting with these words: *“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen”* (Hebrews 11:1).

Faith begins and is sustained through learning the unadulterated word of God (Romans 1:15-17, Romans 10:5-17, and I Thessalonians 2:13). Faith is a crucial part of our salvation (Mark 16:15-16, John 3:1-36, John 8:23-24, and Hebrews 11:6). The word “faith” is used in various ways throughout the New Testament. Obviously, the word faith is used in discussing salvation (Hebrews 6:9-12). Faith is used in a manner wherein we learn about our system of faith rather than life under the Law of Moses (Galatians 2:16). Even outside of contrasting the Law of Moses to the faith in Christ, the teaching we have obeyed and that we live under is called “the faith” (Acts 6:7, Acts 14:22, Romans 14:1, Colossians 1:23, Titus 1:13, Jude 1:3, etc.). The word “faith” is used in contexts discussing personal convictions regarding authorized liberties (Romans 14:22). The word “faith” appears as a spiritual gift (I Corinthians 12:1-11). The word “faith” is used to describe the people of God (Galatians 6:10). I could list other uses of the word, but you should see the point. We have to be careful when using tools such as concordances to be sure we know how the word is being used in each context.

The word translated “substance” [ὑπόστασις] means: “A setting under (support), i.e. (figuratively) concretely, essence, or abstractly, assurance (objectively or subjectively): — confidence, confident, person, substance. A setting or placing under; thing put under, substructure, foundation; that which has foundation, is firm; that which has actual existence. A substance, real being; the substantial quality, nature, of a person or thing. The steadfastness of mind, firmness, courage, resolution; confidence, firm trust, assurance” (Strong’s # 5287). Aside from the translation here of “substance” the KJV translators have translated this word as “confident” (II Corinthians 9:4), “confidence” (II Corinthians 11:17 and Hebrews 3:14), and “person” (Hebrews 1:3). With the definition of the word, other uses, and how this word is used in the context we are studying; the word “faith” in this passage is best understood as the confidence, the foundation whereupon the faithful live and act. We will see in this chapter the wording of “through faith” and “by faith” over and over again. True faith is what moves God’s people to do the right things the right ways (James 2:14-26).

Faith and hope are inseparable (I Corinthians 13:13 and I Thessalonians 5:8). Our faith and hope is in God (Psalms 71:5 and I Peter 1:18-21). We have one faith and one hope (Ephesians 4:1-6). Our hope is not in this world (Colossians 1:5, Titus 1:1-3, Titus 2:11-14, and Titus 3:7). Our hope lays wait for us in the resurrection (I Peter 1:3-9). Thankfully, we are not like those who have no hope (I Thessalonians 4:13-5:11). Without the hope of a future resurrection, our hope would not even be in the person of Christ (I Corinthians 15:1-23). Among other things, we are saved by proper hope (Romans 8:24-25).

The word translated “evidence” [ἔλεγχος] means: “proof, conviction: — evidence, reproof. A proof, that by which a thing is proved or tested; conviction” (Strong’s # 1650). The only other time we find that Greek word in the New Testament it is translated “reproof” (II Timothy 3:16). Our God does not require blind faith (so to speak). He expects us to prove [test] all things (I Thessalonians 5:21). So, He has provided us with natural evidences of His existence (Acts 14:15-17 and Acts 17:16-30). Throughout the Scriptures God has said things long before man had found them out on their own (Job 26:7, Job 38:16, Ecclesiastes 1:7, Ecclesiastes 11:3, Isaiah 40:22, and Amos 9:6). God provided witness accounts as a testimony of things said and done as evidence for all to read (Acts 2:32, Acts 3:15, Acts 4:33, Acts 7:44, I Corinthians 15:1-8, and Hebrews 2:1-4; cf. John 8:17). God doesn’t do something and allow men to wonder if He did it or not (Isaiah 42:8 and Isaiah 48:11). We should appreciate the fact that God not only allows us to question things, but demands us to do so!

Now let’s consider the things that are not seen. Outside of Jesus, no man that has walked this earth has seen our Heavenly Father (John 1:18 and I John 4:12). Our Heavenly Father, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, and the angels are the only ones that inhabit Heaven (I John 5:7 and Matthew 22:30). Those of us alive today have not seen the works the Scriptures testify of. The Scriptures are written so that we can believe (John 20:30-31), but we are not eyewitnesses of those things. Therefore, there is much we have not seen. It is the things we have not seen that God asks us to have faith in (II Corinthians 4:18). Having said all of that, there is an inspired text that I will use that will best summarize this point.

With exception to the earnest of the Spirit that we do not have, consider this: *“For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life. Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is*

*God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit. Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: (For we walk by faith, not by sight:) We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord. Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him" (II Corinthians 5:1-9).*

**Hebrews 11:2** - This chapter started by defining faith (Hebrews 11:1). Now we read this: "*For by it the elders obtained a good report*" (Hebrews 11:2). Soon we will begin reading about the faith of Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Sara, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, etc. This verse is not about them. This verse is about the elders of Israel.

When you study through the Scriptures of old, you come to the conclusion that the elders of Israel were held in high regard when Israel was faithful. When Moses came to speak to the children of Israel in Egyptian bondage, he was to address the elders (Exodus 3:15-18 and Exodus 4:29). The elders served a large role in the establishment of the Passover (Exodus 12:1-28 [notice vs. 21]). In answering the murmuring of the people, the elders were witnesses of Moses bringing about water (Exodus 17:1-7). The elders were involved in offerings (Leviticus 4:1-35 [notice vs. 15]). When God chose helpers for Moses, he did so from among the elders in Israel (Numbers 11:1-30). The elders played significant roles in judgment among the children of Israel (Deuteronomy 19:1-13, Deuteronomy 21:1-9, Deuteronomy 21:18-21, Deuteronomy 22:13-30, and Deuteronomy 25:1-10). The elders gave commandments unto the children of Israel (Deuteronomy 27:1; 32:7). Their authority was made clear in events such as when Boaz wanted to take Ruth as his wife (Ruth 4:1-12) and when Israel desired to have a king (I Samuel 8:1-5). God looked down on the children of Israel when they did not favor the elders (Lamentations 4:16).

The Jewish saints addressed in this Hebrew letter would have had some understanding of the role the elders played in Israel. The fact is, the elders still had considerable authority among the Israelites in the first century. They had such authority that they could bind laws, even in sinful ways (Matthew 15:1-2). They were still involved in judgment. Sadly, we can see their authority used against our Lord (Mark 14:53; cf. Luke 9:22). Clearly, those who had erred are not the ones being discussed here in Hebrews 11:2. So, let's consider the points made in how the elders of the past obtained a good report by faith.

The Greek term [μαρτυρέω] that is translated "good report" is defined as: "To be a witness, i.e. testify (literally or figuratively): — charge, give (evidence), bear record, have (obtain, of) good (honest) report, be well reported of, testify, give (have) testimony, (be, bear, give, obtain) witness. To be a witness, to bear witness, i.e. to affirm that one

has seen or heard or experienced something, or that he knows it because taught by divine revelation or inspiration. To give (not to keep back) testimony; to utter honorable testimony, give a good report; conjure, implore” (Strong’s # 3140). The majority of the times this Greek word appears in the New Testament, it is translated as bear witness or something very similar to that (i.e. Matthew 23:31, Luke 4:22, Luke 11:48, John 1:7-8, John 1:15, John 1:32, John 1:34, John 3:26, John 5:31-33, John 5:36-37, John 8:13-14, John 12:17, John 18:37, John 19:35, Acts 15:8, Acts 23:11, etc.).

As I looked at the Greek word “μαρτυρέω” and read through a great number of accounts to gain a better understanding, I found a few passages that were very clear in defining what the word means. If you read through the tenth chapter of the book of Acts you read about a man named Cornelius. He was the first recorded Gentile that obeyed the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Within the account of how he was taught and converted, there is a passage that has the Greek term “μαρτυρέω” in it. It is translated the same as we find in Hebrews 11:2. Notice: *“And they said, Cornelius the centurion, a just man, and one that feareth God, and of **good report** among all the nation of the Jews, was warned from God by an holy angel to send for thee into his house, and to hear words of thee”* (Acts 10:22). Similarly, a widow indeed (I Timothy 5:3-16) is a woman that is “well reported of for good works” (I Timothy 5:10). If you were to look at the Greek text through chapter eleven of the book of Hebrews, you will find the Greek word “μαρτυρέω” used four more times in this chapter. It is translated as “obtained witness” and “testifying” in Hebrews 11:4. It is translated as “testimony” in Hebrews 11:5. It is translated as “good report” in Hebrews 11:39.

The elders of Israel had a good report among the people because of their faith. Their faith served as a character witness for them. As we read through this chapter we see that genuine faith is visible because faith produces good works. Faith and works are inseparable.

In conclusion, think about this familiar text: *“What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him? If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit? Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works. Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? And the scripture was fulfilled*

*which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God. Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only. Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way? For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also” (James 2:14-26).*

**Hebrews 11:3** - *“Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear”* (Hebrews 11:3). Through faith, Peter and John were able to heal a lame man (Acts 3:1-16). Through faith, there is power in the blood of Christ (Romans 3:25). Through faith, Gentiles and Jews were and are justified (Romans 3:30-31 and Galatians 3:8). Through faith, the grace of God works in His plan of redemption (Ephesians 2:1-10). Through faith, the Scriptures work to make one wise unto salvation (II Timothy 3:15). Through faith, saints are able to inherit the promises God has made (Hebrews 6:12). Through faith, many wonders and mighty acts have happened throughout the Scriptures (Hebrews 11:11, Hebrews 11:28, and Hebrews 11:33). Through faith, the incorruptible inheritance is kept by the power of God (I Peter 1:3-5). Therefore, this study starting off with the statement “through faith” signifies that we are talking about how powerful faith is.

From this passage we also see that faith relates to understanding. The Greek word [νοέω] that is translated “understanding” means: “To exercise the mind (observe), i.e. (figuratively) to comprehend, heed: — consider, perceive, think, understand...” (Strong’s # 3539). You can see this directly when the Lord chastised His disciples when they did not understand the warning about the doctrine of the Pharisees and Sadducees. Notice: *“The Pharisees also with the Sadducees came, and tempting desired him that he would shew them a sign from heaven. He answered and said unto them, When it is evening, ye say, It will be fair weather: for the sky is red. And in the morning, It will be foul weather to day: for the sky is red and lowring. O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not discern the signs of the times? A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given unto it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas. And he left them, and departed. And when his disciples were come to the other side, they had forgotten to take bread. Then Jesus said unto them, Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees. And they reasoned among themselves, saying, It is because we have taken no bread. Which when Jesus perceived, he said unto them, O ye of little faith, why reason ye among yourselves, because ye have brought no bread? Do ye not yet understand, neither remember the five loaves of the five thousand, and how many baskets ye took up? Neither the seven loaves of the four thousand, and how many baskets ye took up? How is it that ye do not understand that I spake it not to you*



*concerning bread, that ye should beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees? Then understood they how that he bade them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees”* (Matthew 16:1-12). With that understanding, let’s consider the “worlds” framed by the word of God.

The term translated “worlds” is broad. It can mean a period of time such as “for ever” (Matthew 21:19), “evermore” (Revelation 1:18), or “ages” (Colossians 1:26). It can mean “world” (Matthew 24:3 and Titus 2:12). The only other time we see the translation of “worlds” is in Hebrews 1:2. Part of the definition of the Greek term “αἰών” includes “universe” (Strong’s # 165). Therefore, through faith, we understand that time and the universe were framed by the word of God. In other words, we understand these things were spoken into existence (Genesis 1:1-31, Psalms 33:6-9, and Psalms 148:1-5). Not only was the word of God the source of creation, but the word of God is also the power that sustains the continuation of the existence of what was created (II Peter 3:1-7). We also understand through faith, the inference concerning Christ being the Word through faith and thus His role in the creation of all things (John 1:1-14; cf. Colossians 1:12-20).

The power of God’s word is amazing (Hebrews 4:12). Not only was the universe completed through the spoken word of God, but through the spoken word of God miracles were performed (John 4:46-54 and John 11:38-44). Furthermore, and of most significance for mankind now, through the spoken word of God lost souls are saved (Acts 11:1-14, Romans 1:14-16, Romans 10:14-17, James 1:21, and I Peter 1:22-25). We are told to live by every word of God (Matthew 4:4).

Now, let’s consider how that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear. This just furthers the point that the word of God was the source of Creation. When men build something, they need materials to use in construction (i.e. I Kings 6:14-38). God is declaring here that there were no materials or tools used in the Creation of the universe and life therein. What we see in the Creation account is “God said” (Genesis 1:3, Genesis 1:6, Genesis 1:9, etc.).

In Elihu’s words of correction to Job, he told Job to stand still and consider the wondrous works of God (Job 37:14). Paul taught the idolatrous Athenians that God gave life and breath to all (Acts 17:16-28). When we look up into the sky and see stars, the moon, the sun, other planets, etc.; we are seeing what God created (Psalms 8:1-9, Psalms 19:1, and Isaiah 40:22-26). A Psalmist said: *“I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well”* (Psalms 139:14). Creation is a testimony to the power of God (Jeremiah 27:5). We can marvel that God set the bounds of the sea (Jeremiah 5:22). Ask someone in New

Orleans, LA, USA how effective man is in setting up barriers between bodies of water and the dry ground (in reference to Hurricane Katrina). Through faith, we see Creation and know that God's word is powerful. Through that same faith, we see and do the will of God to be saved (Hebrews 10:39).

**Hebrews 11:4-5** - *"By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh. By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God"* (Hebrews 11:4-5). In the two Scriptures we are looking at in this article we see two men whose works were pleasing to God. Their works were fueled by their faith (James 2:14-26).

There are many lessons to be learned from Abel. For example, Abel gave unto the Lord from his first fruits even before the Law of Moses taught such (Exodus 23:16-19). In this, he showed a great understanding of how to honor God appropriately in giving (Proverbs 3:9). With Abel, we could discuss how that pleasing God can bring about persecution (Matthew 5:10-12) even of our own families (Matthew 10:34-39). An inspired Apostle used the account of Cain and Abel to teach about brotherly love (I John 3:11-12). There are many more lessons we can learn from Abel.

Take the time to read the account of Abel's more excellent sacrifice and learn from it what you can apply in your relationship with our Lord: *"And Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man from the LORD. And she again bare his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the LORD. And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering: But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell. And the LORD said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen? If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him. And Cain talked with Abel his brother: and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him. And the LORD said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not: Am I my brother's keeper? And he said, What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground. And now art thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand; When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength; a fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth"* (Genesis 4:1-12).

Enoch did not die. The record we have regarding this point is as follows: *“And Enoch walked with God after he begat Methuselah three hundred years, and begat sons and daughters: And all the days of Enoch were three hundred sixty and five years: And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him”* (Genesis 5:22-24). The only other person recorded of not dying before leaving this world was Elijah (II Kings 2:1-14). This is an important fact of Scripture. We are taught that all will eventually die (II Samuel 14:14, Psalms 89:48, Ecclesiastes 3:20, and Hebrews 9:27). With Enoch and Elijah however, we see two exceptions to that natural law. What does that mean for us? That means we can have great confidence that if Jesus were to come today, we who are alive would not have to experience death as we see promised (I Thessalonians 4:13-18).

Like Abel, we do not have a significant amount of information to study about Enoch. One detail not given in Genesis or in Hebrews 11:4 is that Enoch was a prophet that had some understanding about the judgment of our Lord. Notice: *“And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him. These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaketh great swelling words, having men's persons in admiration because of advantage”* (Jude 1:14-16).

Aside from what we just read, let's back up and think about the fact that Enoch pleased God. We read in Genesis 5:22 and Genesis 5:24 that Enoch “walked with God.” The prophet Micah wrote: *“He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God”* (Micah 6:8)? So, what does it mean to walk with God? Walking with God was not unique to Enoch. In fact, in the very next chapter of the book of Genesis we read that Noah walked with God (Genesis 6:9).

Walking with God is all about being obedient to His will. Consider what was taught to the Reubenites, Gadites, and the half tribe of Manasseh: *“But take diligent heed to do the commandment and the law, which Moses the servant of the LORD charged you, to love the LORD your God, and to walk in all his ways, and to keep his commandments, and to cleave unto him, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul”* (Joshua 22:5). Add to that what was said of Levi: *“And ye shall know that I have sent this commandment unto you, that my covenant might be with Levi, saith the LORD of hosts. My covenant was with him of life and peace; and I gave them to him for the fear wherewith he feared me, and was afraid before my name. The law of truth was*



*in his mouth, and iniquity was not found in his lips: he walked with me in peace and equity, and did turn many away from iniquity” (Malachi 2:4-6). From these things we learn that Enoch was obedient to the will of God. That is what it means to walk with God. We too are expected to do the same as did Enoch (I John 2:1-6).*

**Hebrews 11:6** - *“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). Earlier in this letter the point was made that unbelief comes from having an evil heart (Hebrews 3:12). From there, the saints addressed in this letter were reminded that a generation of Israelites failed to enter into the promised land because of unbelief (Hebrews 3:14-4:11; cf. Numbers 13:1-14:38). The importance of faith is obviously being emphasized in this epistle. Throughout the New Testament we see clearly that one cannot please God without faith (Mark 1:14-15, Mark 16:15-16, John 3:12-18, John 3:35-36, John 5:24, Acts 8:4-13, Acts 8:26-39, Romans 1:16-17, Galatians 3:26-29, Ephesians 3:8-12, Colossians 1:23, I Timothy 1:5, Hebrews 10:38, I Peter 1:9, I John 5:4, and I John 5:10). Shouldn’t Christians know this? Why did it have to be taught?*

When we carefully study through the New Testament we can see that many Jews that were converted to Christ struggled with letting go of the Law of Moses. We can see that they struggled in accepting salvation through faith in Christ opposed to salvation by works of the Law of Moses. Consider the following that was written to those already baptized into Christ (cf. Romans 6:1-6): *“Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith. Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law. Is he the God of the Jews only? is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also: Seeing it is one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith. Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law” (Romans 3:24-31). The fact is, the letter to the saints in Rome is full of teaching of faith in Christ over obedience to the Law of Moses (Romans 4:1-5:21 and Romans 7:1-10:21).*

This subject matter wasn’t just a struggle for the saints in Rome. Many in the churches of Galatia had fallen away by going back to certain points in the Law of Moses (Galatians 1:1-9, Galatians 3:1-5, Galatians 5:1-9, and Galatians 6:11-16). In the epistle to the saints in the area of Galatia we find this: *“Knowing that a man is not justified by*

*the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified... And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed. So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham. For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith. And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them. Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree: That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith” (Galatians 2:16 and Galatians 3:8-14).*

We need to understand that it was not a problem of faith in regard to belief in God the Father. The problem was in the transition to faith in Christ. Thus, the wording “for he that cometh to God must believe that he is.” The Jews believed in Jehovah. They struggled to accept the deity of Christ (i.e. John 10:30-33). Therefore, the “he” in Hebrews 11:6 is in reference to Christ. Consider the following: *“Then said the Jews, Will he kill himself? because he saith, Whither I go, ye cannot come. And he said unto them, Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world. I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins. Then said they unto him, Who art thou? And Jesus saith unto them, Even the same that I said unto you from the beginning. I have many things to say and to judge of you: but he that sent me is true; and I speak to the world those things which I have heard of him. They understood not that he spake to them of the Father” (John 8:22-27).* This is why this letter to the Hebrews starts off by covering the deity of Christ and His authority (Hebrews 1:1-3:6).

Furthermore, the “he” who is the rewarder is Jesus Christ our Lord (Matthew 25:31-46 and II Corinthians 5:7-10). When Peter was teaching Cornelius he said this: *“How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him. And we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree: Him God raised up the third day, and shewed him openly; Not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead. And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead” (Acts 10:38-42).*

Rather than seeking Moses' law, they needed to diligently seek Christ. Faith in Christ and His words is necessary for salvation. The record of Christ is given for that very reason (John 20:30-31). Therefore, be diligent in the right things (II Peter 1:3-10). Be diligent in living aright so that the reward will be granted unto you by Him in the end (II Peter 3:9-14).

**Hebrews 11:7** - *“By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith”* (Hebrews 11:7). In the beginning God set this in place: *“These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens, And every plant of the field before it was in the earth, and every herb of the field before it grew: for the LORD God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was not a man to till the ground. But there went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground”* (Genesis 2:4-6). It was not long before man had to till the ground (Genesis 3:23). Rain was not mentioned prior to the days of Noah. Certainly, flooding that could wipe out humanity was not something the earth had seen before. In the account of the flood we read: *“...the windows of heaven were opened. And the rain was upon the earth forty days and forty nights”* (Genesis 7:11-12).

Think about what you just read. Generally speaking, if a person is warned to prepare for something that they've never considered possible; it is not likely that person would act. The warning for Noah was this: *“And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth. Make thee an ark of gopher wood; rooms shalt thou make in the ark, and shalt pitch it within and without with pitch”* (Genesis 6:13-14). After some details were given of how to construct the ark, God said: *“And, behold, I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh, wherein is the breath of life, from under heaven; and every thing that is in the earth shall die. But with thee will I establish my covenant; and thou shalt come into the ark, thou, and thy sons, and thy wife, and thy sons' wives with thee”* (Genesis 6:17-18). After further instructions, we read: *“Thus did Noah; according to all that God commanded him, so did he”* (Genesis 6:22). From there we continue to see that Noah obeyed God (Genesis 7:5; 7:9; 7:16).

For a few moments, think about Noah moving with fear. Salvation has to be worked out with fear and trembling (Philippians 2:12). Moses told Israel: *“Ye shall walk after the LORD your God, and fear him, and keep his commandments, and obey his voice, and ye shall serve him, and cleave unto him”* (Deuteronomy 13:4). A certain

Psalm says: *“Like as a father pitieth his children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear him”* (Psalms 103:13). Another Psalm says: *“The LORD is nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth. He will fulfil the desire of them that fear him: he also will hear their cry, and will save them. The LORD preserveth all them that love him: but all the wicked will he destroy”* (Psalms 145:18-20). So, fear worked for Noah as it does for all that need saved.

As a result of Noah’s faith and his fear, eight souls were saved by water (I Peter 3:20). Those eight souls were Noah, his wife, their sons, and the wives of their sons (Genesis 7:7). Those were the eight that were saved in the days the Lord flooded the earth. Think about how the inspired Apostle Peter refers to Noah: *“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”* (II Peter 2:5). We don’t have details about who Noah preached to. We don’t have details concerning what he said. The only details we have relative to the matter is that he saved his family.

What is one of the greatest roles a father has? Consider this: *“And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord”* (Ephesians 6:4). Prior to the flood, Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God (Genesis 6:9). Obviously, he commanded the respect and honor of his family. His sons were not little boys either. They were married men. They still listened to their father. That speaks greatly of Noah and also of his sons. While they were to leave their mother and father and join themselves to their wives (Genesis 2:24), they did not cease to hear the counsel of their father. That is awesome! Solomon wrote: *“My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother... Hear, ye children, the instruction of a father, and attend to know understanding... A wise son heareth his father’s instruction: but a scorner heareth not rebuke”* (Proverbs 1:8, Proverbs 4:1, and Proverbs 13:1).

Salvation was not the only thing that occurred in the days of Noah. Obviously, for salvation to occur at all there has to be the reality of damnation too. Otherwise there would be nothing to be saved from. While Noah and his family were saved, the world was condemned and all other people living at that time perished. In the days of Noah, God had decided to destroy most created beings with a flood. From the time of that decision to the flood was one hundred twenty years (Genesis 6:3). So, how did Noah condemn the world? His faithfulness to God stood as a condemnation of others (cf. Luke 11:29-32).

With all of that, Noah is called an “heir of the righteousness” which was by his faith. Like Abraham, *“For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not*

*to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith”* (Romans 4:13). Noah believed God’s warning. He acted. Therefore, he inherited life thereafter. From then until Jesus returns to judge the living and the dead, Noah’s actions by faith live on to teach us all. Like Noah, we have to hear what the Lord has said and act accordingly. If we live after examples such as Noah, when this world is destroyed the final time we will have an inheritance beyond this world for all eternity (II Peter 3:1-14).

**Hebrews 11:8-10** - *“By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God”* (Hebrews 11:8-10).

The life of Abraham [Abram] is recorded from Genesis 11:26-25:10. Abraham’s life was not always simple nor were his decisions always right. Those things are not the subjects of the context we are studying. The event from which the text above begins is as follows: *“Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father’s house, unto a land that I will shew thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed. So Abram departed, as the LORD had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him: and Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran”* (Genesis 12:1-4).

There is plenty in the Scriptures concerning Abraham. The faith of Abraham was used as a teaching tool in multiple ways. For one example, Abraham’s faith was used in an attempt to teach the Jews in Rome out of their thinking about the works of the Law of Moses. Notice: *“Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin. Cometh this blessedness then upon the circumcision only, or upon the uncircumcision also? for we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness. How was it then reckoned? when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision. And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also: And the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had being yet uncircumcised. For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. For if*



*they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect: Because the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, there is no transgression. Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all, (As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were. Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be. And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sara's womb: He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform. And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness. Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification” (Romans 4:8-25).*

What we can see about Abraham is how that he believed what God said and then obeyed it. He did not debate with God. He did not stagger at the promises. Since he obeyed the instructions of our Lord, all the earth is blessed through his seed (Genesis 22:18; cf. Galatians 3:6-29). Abraham was a stranger in the land he was sent into (Genesis 23:1-4). The same was true for Isaac and Jacob (Genesis 26:1-5, Genesis 33:1-20, and Genesis 37:1). We should be able to relate to that feeling. We, who are in Christ, are citizens of Heaven (Philippians 3:20). Our mount Zion is spiritual (Hebrews 12:22-23). In this world, we are strangers and pilgrims (I Peter 2:11). We are sojourners (I Peter 1:17). We should all realize that there is nothing to cling to in this present world (I John 2:15-17). Like Abraham, for us to get our inheritance we need to hear and obey (Hebrews 5:8-9).

The motivation of Abraham was his looking for a city that obviously was not to be found among men. Later in this Hebrew letter we find this statement: *“For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come”* (Hebrews 13:14). Jesus told the Apostles this: *“Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also”* (John 14:1-3). Therefore, in a similar manner likened to Abraham, we are headed toward a home that we cannot see. We will get there as he did, by obeying the voice of our Lord (Revelation 22:14).

The advantage that we have over Abraham is that we have more information about our inheritance than he did his. For one, what we know was a mystery to those of old (I Peter 1:1-12). Secondly, we know that we will inherit eternal life (Titus 1:1-2, James 1:12, and I John 2:25). While we walk by faith not seeing what Heaven is (cf. II Corinthians 5:7), we are not entirely without direction or knowledge. We know the way (John 14:6). We know the choice comes down to two paths (Matthew 7:13-23). We have the advantage of the full revelation of God (II Timothy 3:15-17). Seeing these things are so, go by faith to our eternal home.

**Hebrews 11:11-12** - *“Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised. Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, so many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable”* (Hebrews 11:11-12). Sara was Abraham’s wife (Genesis 11:29). Sara [Sarai and Sarah] was barren (Genesis 11:30). This is something significant as God had made this promise to Abraham: *“Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed. So Abram departed, as the LORD had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him: and Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran. And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their substance that they had gathered, and the souls that they had gotten in Haran; and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came. And Abram passed through the land unto the place of Sichem, unto the plain of Moreh. And the Canaanite was then in the land. And the LORD appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land: and there builded he an altar unto the LORD, who appeared unto him... For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever. And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered”* (Genesis 12:1-7 and Genesis 13:15-16).

Abraham was concerned about being childless in light of the promises God had made (Genesis 15:1-6). Sara came up with a plan to resolve the problem of Abraham having no child. The plan was one that Sara would regret. Notice: *“Now Sarai Abram's wife bare him no children: and she had an handmaid, an Egyptian, whose name was Hagar. And Sarai said unto Abram, Behold now, the LORD hath restrained me from bearing: I pray thee, go in unto my maid; it may be that I may obtain children by her. And Abram hearkened to the voice of Sarai. And Sarai Abram's wife took Hagar her*

*maid the Egyptian, after Abram had dwelt ten years in the land of Canaan, and gave her to her husband Abram to be his wife. And he went in unto Hagar, and she conceived: and when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress was despised in her eyes”* (Genesis 16:1-4). Sara dealt hard with Hagar until the Lord intervened (Genesis 16:5-16). Yet, this was not the plan God had in mind with His promise.

When Abraham was ninety-nine years old God informed Abraham that he was to be the father of many nations (Genesis 17:1-6). Circumcision was instituted at that time as an indicator of that promise God had made Abraham (Genesis 17:7-14). This is when we read this promise: *“And God said unto Abraham, As for Sarai thy wife, thou shalt not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall her name be. And I will bless her, and give thee a son also of her: yea, I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of people shall be of her... And God said, Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac: and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him. And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee: Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation. But my covenant will I establish with Isaac, which Sarah shall bear unto thee at this set time in the next year”* (Genesis 17:15-16 and Genesis 17:19-21).

Both Abraham and Sara had the same reaction when first hearing this news. They both laughed (Genesis 17:17 and Genesis 18:12). The message of God was this: *“And the LORD said unto Abraham, Wherefore did Sarah laugh, saying, Shall I of a surety bear a child, which am old? Is any thing too hard for the LORD? At the time appointed I will return unto thee, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son”* (Genesis 18:13-14). When God desired the barren to have a child, He made it happen (Genesis 25:19-28, Genesis 29:31, Genesis 30:22-23, Judges 13:1-25, I Samuel 1:1-20, and Luke 1:5-66).

Though Sara’s initial reaction was an internal laugh that she tried to deny (Genesis 18:15), here in the book of Hebrews we have read that Sara judged God faithful. So, God kept His promise. Notice: *“And the LORD visited Sarah as he had said, and the LORD did unto Sarah as he had spoken. For Sarah conceived, and bare Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken to him. And Abraham called the name of his son that was born unto him, whom Sarah bare to him, Isaac. And Abraham circumcised his son Isaac being eight days old, as God had commanded him. And Abraham was an hundred years old, when his son Isaac was born unto him. And Sarah said, God hath made me to laugh, so that all that hear will laugh with me. And she said, Who would have said unto Abraham, that Sarah should have given children suck? for I have born him a son in his old age”* (Genesis 21:1-7).

As things progressed forward, God continued His promise that the seed of Abraham through his wife Sara would multiply as the sand which is upon the sea shore (Genesis 22:17). Moses told the descendants of Abraham and Sara this: *“And I spake unto you at that time, saying, I am not able to bear you myself alone: The LORD your God hath multiplied you, and, behold, ye are this day as the stars of heaven for multitude”* (Deuteronomy 1:9-10; cf. Exodus 32:13). That promise was substantial to the faith of God’s people of old. You can see that throughout the history of Israel (I Chronicles 27:23 and Nehemiah 9:22-23). We too should be thankful for Sara. It is through that promise to her that we too are spiritually the children of Abraham and heirs of the promise (Galatians 3:16-29).

**Hebrews 11:13-16** - *“These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city”* (Hebrews 11:13-16).

Let’s begin by discussing who “these” are. So far in this chapter we have read about the faith of Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, and Sara. They are the “these” referenced in verse thirteen. The promises that they did not receive is again mentioned later in this chapter. Notice: *“And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect”*(Hebrews 11:39-40). In this letter we have already read about how there is that better hope than those of old had obtained (Hebrews 7:19 and Hebrews 8:6).

What should stand out to us is that these people of faith were sure of the promises they could only see at a distance. They did not have clarity of view. They truly walked by faith, not by sight (II Corinthians 5:7). To understand the better promises and their seeing them afar off, consider what the inspired Apostle Peter wrote: *“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: That the trial of your faith,*

*being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls. Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into” (I Peter 1:3-12).*

To the disobedient Jews, Jesus said: *“Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad”* (John 8:56). Abraham was fully persuaded that God would fulfill His promises (Romans 4:21). Not just Abraham, but also Abel, Enoch, Noah, and Sara professed to be strangers and pilgrims on earth. Those who had that faith understood, though afar off, that their citizenship was not truly in this world (Psalms 39:12). By such a profession they were declaring that they were seeking to be elsewhere. They, like those of us faithful to God now, seek a continuing city (Hebrews 13:14).

It is interesting that the point is made in the context we are looking at that if they had been mindful from whence they came, they might have returned. Think about the message here. For Christians, you cannot put your hand to the plow and look back (Luke 9:57-62). For Jewish Christians, their ancestors had a habit of looking back. In particular, those that came out of Egypt and even generations later. They often looked back to Egypt or at the least relied upon the Egyptians (Exodus 14:1-13, Exodus 16:1-3, Exodus 17:1-3, Numbers 11:1-5, Numbers 21:5, II Kings 18:21, Isaiah 30:1-7, and Acts 7:38-39). This was a valid point to be made to Jewish Christians in the first century, because first century Jews had a bad habit of repeating their ancestors transgressions (Matthew 23:29-32 and Acts 7:51-53).

Faithful saints know better than to follow those who have done evil (III John 1:11). What we should do is look to those such as we are discussing in our study. We should look to those who through faith have an inheritance (Hebrews 6:12). That pattern of faith is to press forward to the promises of God without looking back. When we seek to “go home” it is not a home we have had in this world. Our home is being prepared for us in Heaven (John 14:1-3).



Take a moment to think about this phrase: *“But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly.”* Like other passages in the Scriptures (i.e. Matthew 22:23-33), this shows life after death along with a conscious awareness. Those who had before lived faithful and have died are still looking forward to heaven. They may be in Paradise (Luke 16:19-31 and Luke 23:39-43). Yet, that is not the everlasting city they sought after wherein God was not ashamed of them (II Corinthians 5:1, Colossians 1:5, and I Thessalonians 4:13-18).

The nation of Israel’s past was sinful (Deuteronomy 9:24 and Deuteronomy 31:27). Even many generations later, God looked at them like they were harlots (Jeremiah 3:1-11 and Ezekiel 16:1-63). Some erring first century Jewish Christians caused God’s name to be blasphemed (Romans 2:17-24). God has not had a good relationship with His children of old or those that followed the ways of their fathers. Heaven is the home of the faithful. He certainly will have no shame in those who will arrive in eternity through faithfulness.

**Hebrews 11:17-22** - *“By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called: Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure. By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come. By faith Jacob, when he was a dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph; and worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff. By faith Joseph, when he died, made mention of the departing of the children of Israel; and gave commandment concerning his bones”* (Hebrews 11:17-22).

God tested Abraham by telling him to offer his son Isaac as a burnt offering (Genesis 22:1-2). Abraham went forth and was ready to carry out that instruction (Genesis 22:3-10). At the point wherein Abraham was about to take the knife to his son, the angel of the Lord stopped him (Genesis 22:11-12). God provided a ram to offer instead (Genesis 22:13). As a father, I cannot imagine this test. In addition to a father’s love being tested, it was through Isaac that God was going to fulfill His promises to Abraham (Genesis 17:19).

Abraham’s willingness to obey God’s very difficult instruction proved his faith. James wrote: *“Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works. Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? And the scripture*

*was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God. Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only” (James 2:18-24).*

Through the pen of the Hebrew writers we see that Abraham believed that God was able to raise up Isaac. That may be what Abraham was thinking when he told the young men with he and Isaac, *“I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you”* (Genesis 22:5). Abraham was fully persuaded that, what God had promised, He was able also to perform (Romans 4:21). We too know that God keeps His promises (Numbers 23:19 and Titus 1:1-3). Therefore, like Abraham, we know that we can obey God’s instructions without fear that those instructions will cause us to miss out on His promises.

After writing about Abraham passing his test, the writers of this letter jump forward to Isaac blessing Jacob and Esau. We know that this language is a very simplified account of what happened (Genesis 27:1-28:4). The focus herein is not on what happened between Jacob and Esau. The focus is not on the trickery of Rebekah and Jacob. The focus is on Isaac’s faith in granting the blessing. Like his father, Isaac believed in the promises of God. Isaac knew that the seed of his father would continue through him because God made that promise (Genesis 21:12). The fact that he extended this blessing through his offspring is a testimony to his faith in that promise.

The account then moves forward to the end of Jacob’s life. The Holy Spirit did not focus on how Jacob’s marriages came about or the births of his children (Genesis 28:1-30:43 and Genesis 35:1-27). What happened as Jacob was pursued by Laban is not covered (Genesis 31:1-55). The Holy Spirit did not have the account of Jacob and Esau’s feud or resolution (Genesis 32:1-33:16). The Holy Spirit did not have these penmen focus on what happened with Dinah (Genesis 34:1-31). The Holy Spirit did not have these penmen focus on what happened to Joseph and how the children of Israel got to Egypt because of Joseph (Genesis 37:1-47:27). What is mentioned is the blessing of Joseph being given to his sons by his father Jacob (Genesis 47:28-48:20). Again, the faith is in the promise of God made originally to their father Abraham.

Then, the writers of this Hebrew letter jump forward to the time Joseph died. The original record says this: *“And Joseph dwelt in Egypt, he, and his father's house: and Joseph lived an hundred and ten years. And Joseph saw Ephraim's children of the third generation: the children also of Machir the son of Manasseh were brought up upon Joseph's knees. And Joseph said unto his brethren, I die: and God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land unto the land which he sware to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. And Joseph took an oath of the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit*

*you, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence. So Joseph died, being an hundred and ten years old: and they embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt”* (Genesis 50:22-26).

This section of our study could easily be subtitled: “Faith In The Promises Of God.” God has a great track record. In the days of Joshua we read: *“And the LORD gave unto Israel all the land which he sware to give unto their fathers; and they possessed it, and dwelt therein. And the LORD gave them rest round about, according to all that he sware unto their fathers: and there stood not a man of all their enemies before them; the LORD delivered all their enemies into their hand. There failed not ought of any good thing which the LORD had spoken unto the house of Israel; all came to pass”* (Joshua 21:43-45). This matters to us because unto us there have been given, *“exceeding great and precious promises”* (II Peter 1:4). We can look back at examples such as we have in this study and see that God did exactly what He promised. If you read the details of the accounts, you can see that even great obstacles did not change what God said would happen. Like those before us, go forward in faith!

**Hebrews 11:23** - Outside of Jesus, Moses just might be the most well-known person from the Scriptures. The beginning of his life is an amazing account. The Hebrew penmen wrote this: *“By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, because they saw he was a proper child; and they were not afraid of the king's commandment”* (Hebrews 11:23).

To appreciate the short account above, let's start by taking a look at why Moses had to be hid. Notice: *“Now there arose up a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph. And he said unto his people, Behold, the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we: Come on, let us deal wisely with them; lest they multiply, and it come to pass, that, when there falleth out any war, they join also unto our enemies, and fight against us, and so get them up out of the land. Therefore they did set over them taskmasters to afflict them with their burdens. And they built for Pharaoh treasure cities, Pithom and Raamses. But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew. And they were grieved because of the children of Israel. And the Egyptians made the children of Israel to serve with rigour: And they made their lives bitter with hard bondage, in mortar, and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field: all their service, wherein they made them serve, was with rigour. And the king of Egypt spake to the Hebrew midwives, of which the name of the one was Shiphrah, and the name of the other Puah: And he said, When ye do the office of a midwife to the Hebrew women, and see them upon the stools; if it be a son, then ye shall kill him: but if it be a daughter, then she shall live. But the midwives feared God, and did not as the king of Egypt commanded them, but saved the men children alive. And the king of Egypt called*

*for the midwives, and said unto them, Why have ye done this thing, and have saved the men children alive? And the midwives said unto Pharaoh, Because the Hebrew women are not as the Egyptian women; for they are lively, and are delivered ere the midwives come in unto them. Therefore God dealt well with the midwives: and the people multiplied, and waxed very mighty. And it came to pass, because the midwives feared God, that he made them houses. And Pharaoh charged all his people, saying, Every son that is born ye shall cast into the river, and every daughter ye shall save alive” (Exodus 1:8-22).*

Now, notice the account from which the penmen of this letter are drawing their account: *“And there went a man of the house of Levi, and took to wife a daughter of Levi. And the woman conceived, and bare a son: and when she saw him that he was a goodly child, she hid him three months. And when she could not longer hide him, she took for him an ark of bulrushes, and daubed it with slime and with pitch, and put the child therein; and she laid it in the flags by the river's brink. And his sister stood afar off, to wit what would be done to him. And the daughter of Pharaoh came down to wash herself at the river; and her maidens walked along by the river's side; and when she saw the ark among the flags, she sent her maid to fetch it. And when she had opened it, she saw the child: and, behold, the babe wept. And she had compassion on him, and said, This is one of the Hebrews' children. Then said his sister to Pharaoh's daughter, Shall I go and call to thee a nurse of the Hebrew women, that she may nurse the child for thee? And Pharaoh's daughter said to her, Go. And the maid went and called the child's mother. And Pharaoh's daughter said unto her, Take this child away, and nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy wages. And the woman took the child, and nursed it. And the child grew, and she brought him unto Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son. And she called his name Moses: and she said, Because I drew him out of the water” (Exodus 2:1-10).*

Moses was a “proper child” in the Hebrew account. In the Exodus account above he was called “a goodly child.” The second letter to Theophilus says: *“In which time Moses was born, and was exceeding fair, and nourished up in his father's house three months” (Acts 7:20).*

It should stand out to us that they were not afraid of the king's commandment. This is rather abnormal. It takes a lot of courage to stand in opposition to a king. Solomon wrote: *“The wrath of a king is as messengers of death: but a wise man will pacify it. In the light of the king's countenance is life; and his favour is as a cloud of the latter rain... The king's wrath is as the roaring of a lion; but his favour is as dew upon the grass... The fear of a king is as the roaring of a lion: whoso provoketh him to anger sinneth against his own soul” (Proverbs 16:14-15, Proverbs 19:12, and Proverbs 20:2).*

When the time arose that they could not longer hide Moses, they acted in a way that ultimately put Moses in Pharaoh's house. We will talk about how that ended up in our next article. For now, consider that Moses' parents did not act in a manner that would have ended their child's life. They were brave. Where did their bravery come from? The account we are looking at in this Hebrew letter says it came from their faith.

Strength and faith certainly tie together (I Corinthians 16:13). We see this in the time that Jesus walked this earth. There was a storm at sea. The disciples were with Jesus. They feared they were going to perish (Matthew 8:23-25). In response, Jesus said: *"And he saith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Then he arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm"* (Matthew 8:26). When God was working directly with the children of Israel, what was there to fear for the faithful? A Psalmist wrote: *"I called upon the LORD in distress: the LORD answered me, and set me in a large place. The LORD is on my side; I will not fear: what can man do unto me? The LORD taketh my part with them that help me: therefore shall I see my desire upon them that hate me"* (Psalms 118:5-7).

**Hebrews 11:24-27** - *"By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward. By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible"* (Hebrews 11:24-27).

The original account that is referenced in our current study can be found in the book of Exodus (Exodus 2:10-25). A great summary, that includes a few details not even found in the original account was preached by Stephen. Notice what Stephen stated: *"And when he was cast out, Pharaoh's daughter took him up, and nourished him for her own son. And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds. And when he was full forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren the children of Israel. And seeing one of them suffer wrong, he defended him, and avenged him that was oppressed, and smote the Egyptian: For he supposed his brethren would have understood how that God by his hand would deliver them: but they understood not. And the next day he shewed himself unto them as they strove, and would have set them at one again, saying, Sirs, ye are brethren; why do ye wrong one to another? But he that did his neighbour wrong thrust him away, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge over us? Wilt thou kill me, as thou diddest the Egyptian yesterday? Then fled Moses at this saying, and was a stranger in the land of Madian, where he begat two sons"* (Acts 7:21-29).



Moses made a decision. He chose to suffer rather than enjoy the carnal pleasures that came with being in Pharaoh's house. Even without being immersed in the Hebrew culture, Moses understood that it was/is better to be with God than with the world (Psalms 84:1-12). Remember, no one at that point in time had the knowledge of the hope we have in Jesus Christ (I Peter 1:1-12). So, his decision is not even comparable today. We have a far greater hope in Christ than anything Moses had to have hope in (II Corinthians 4:13-5:1). What we know was a mystery to those who lived before and during the Law of Moses, the prophets, and the Psalms (Romans 16:25-27, I Corinthians 2:6-10, II Corinthians 3:1-18, and Ephesians 3:1-11). Having said that, Moses did know that there is a greater reward from God than from man (Psalms 19:7-11 and Proverbs 11:18). He somehow knew and had believed that God is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him (Hebrews 11:6).

Throughout the New Testament we read that the faithful who suffer for the cause of our Lord will be rewarded in eternity (Matthew 5:10-12, Luke 6:20-23, Acts 14:22, Romans 8:17-39, II Timothy 2:9-12, I Peter 4:13-19, and Revelation 2:8-11). We know this because we can read the Scriptures just cited as well as others that prove it. Let me repeat something though. This information was not revealed at the time Moses was alive. As you have read in earlier references in this article, this information was a mystery. We live under the time of the *"better hope"* (Hebrews 7:19). We live in the time of the *"better covenant, which was established upon better promises"* (Hebrews 8:6). Yet, Moses knew the principle without even having the revelation to prove it. Later in this chapter, this is written: *"And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect"* (Hebrews 11:39-40). If Moses was so motivated by a lesser hope, how much the more should we be motivated by the greatest hope?

Think about treasures for a moment. A Psalmist wrote: *"A little that a righteous man hath is better than the riches of many wicked"* (Psalms 37:16). Jeremiah taught: *"Thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the LORD"* (Jeremiah 9:23-24). Material wealth does bring some worldly advantages (Proverbs 10:15, Proverbs 19:4, Ecclesiastes 7:12, etc.). Yet, for those who trust in such wealth rather than in God, there is a rude awakening coming to them (Psalms 49:6-14, Luke 12:13-21, and Luke 16:19-31).

We should also consider the idea of enjoying the pleasures of sin for a season. By such a statement we cannot deny that sin can be pleasurable. If sin were not pleasurable, it would not be so hard for people to turn away from it. However, those who are wise understand that sin is not fulfilling (James 5:5). Sin is but for a moment. Anything carnal is temporary (Job 20:5, Psalms 39:6, II Peter 3:9-14, and I John 2:15-17). Yet, sin occurs because people have desires they want to fulfill (James 1:13-16). Most just cannot reason enough to understand that the end reward of sin is not worth the temporary pleasure (Romans 6:23). Even without the extent of the teaching we have available to us now, Moses was able to reason through this and come to the right conclusion.

Moses decided, by faith, to forsake Egypt and all that was to be had there if he were to remain. Though Moses did not see God (John 1:18), he endured as though he had (cf. II Corinthians 5:7). Like his parents, fear did not prevent him from acting upon his faith (Hebrews 11:23). We considered how that is not common in our previous article. That does not mean Moses didn't have any fear (Exodus 2:14-15). It is wise to fear the king (Proverbs 24:21). What is not wise is to fear any man more than we fear God (Isaiah 51:7 and Matthew 10:28). By faith, we too should endure without fear as Moses did.

**Hebrews 11:28** - Anyone who has studied through the Scriptures has seen the mentioning of the passover. As we continue to study about the faith of Moses we find where the passover originated. Notice: *“Through faith he kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the firstborn should touch them”* (Hebrews 11:28).

God had told Moses that after one final plague, Pharaoh would let the children of Israel go (Exodus 11:1). That plague was the death of all the firstborn in the land of Egypt (Exodus 11:2-5). God had a way that the children of Israel would be safe during this final plague. That plan was what is known as the passover. The passover was remembered by the children of Israel throughout the time of the Law of Moses and the prophets. Even in the first century we can read about the children of Israel observing the passover (Matthew 26:17-30).

The passover instructions were as follows: *“And the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, This month shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you. Speak ye unto all the congregation of Israel, saying, In the tenth day of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the house of their fathers, a lamb for an house: And if the household be too little for the lamb, let him and his neighbour next unto his house take it according*

*to the number of the souls; every man according to his eating shall make your count for the lamb. Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year: ye shall take it out from the sheep, or from the goats: And ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening. And they shall take of the blood, and strike it on the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses, wherein they shall eat it. And they shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire, and unleavened bread; and with bitter herbs they shall eat it. Eat not of it raw, nor sodden at all with water, but roast with fire; his head with his legs, and with the purtenance thereof. And ye shall let nothing of it remain until the morning; and that which remaineth of it until the morning ye shall burn with fire. And thus shall ye eat it; with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste: it is the LORD'S passover. For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the LORD. And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt” (Exodus 12:1-13).*

God then put in place a law that was to be passed down throughout their generations regarding the passover. Those instructions were as follows: *“And this day shall be unto you for a memorial; and ye shall keep it a feast to the LORD throughout your generations; ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance for ever. Seven days shall ye eat unleavened bread; even the first day ye shall put away leaven out of your houses: for whosoever eateth leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that soul shall be cut off from Israel. And in the first day there shall be an holy convocation, and in the seventh day there shall be an holy convocation to you; no manner of work shall be done in them, save that which every man must eat, that only may be done of you. And ye shall observe the feast of unleavened bread; for in this selfsame day have I brought your armies out of the land of Egypt: therefore shall ye observe this day in your generations by an ordinance for ever. In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month at even, ye shall eat unleavened bread, until the one and twentieth day of the month at even. Seven days shall there be no leaven found in your houses: for whosoever eateth that which is leavened, even that soul shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether he be a stranger, or born in the land. Ye shall eat nothing leavened; in all your habitations shall ye eat unleavened bread. Then Moses called for all the elders of Israel, and said unto them, Draw out and take you a lamb according to your families, and kill the passover. And ye shall take a bunch of hyssop, and dip it in the blood that is in the bason, and strike the lintel and the two side posts with the blood that is in the bason; and none of you shall go out at the door of his house until the morning. For the LORD will pass through to smite the Egyptians; and when he*

*seeth the blood upon the lintel, and on the two side posts, the LORD will pass over the door, and will not suffer the destroyer to come in unto your houses to smite you. And ye shall observe this thing for an ordinance to thee and to thy sons for ever. And it shall come to pass, when ye be come to the land which the LORD will give you, according as he hath promised, that ye shall keep this service. And it shall come to pass, when your children shall say unto you, What mean ye by this service? That ye shall say, It is the sacrifice of the LORD'S passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when he smote the Egyptians, and delivered our houses. And the people bowed the head and worshipped” (Exodus 12:14-27).*

The children of Israel did as Moses and Aaron had instructed (Exodus 12:28). Thus, we read: *“And it came to pass, that at midnight the LORD smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sat on his throne unto the firstborn of the captive that was in the dungeon; and all the firstborn of cattle. And Pharaoh rose up in the night, he, and all his servants, and all the Egyptians; and there was a great cry in Egypt; for there was not a house where there was not one dead”* (Exodus 12:29-30). It is through the faith of Moses that Israel was led to keep the passover and deliver their firstborns from death. When future generations partook of the passover they were to remember how the Lord brought Israel out of Egypt by night (Deuteronomy 16:1-8). When Israel failed God, there were times wherein the passover wasn't observed. When Israel repented of their sins, restoration always included restoring the passover (i.e. II Kings 23:1-27 and Ezra 6:19-22).

**Hebrews 11:29-30** - As we progress in our studies of this chapter of the Hebrew epistle, the language changes. Instead of talking about Moses, we now see the word “they” in the passages we are going to discuss. These are general passages talking about the children of Israel. Israel passed through the Red Sea while Moses was alive (Exodus 13:17-14:31). However, at the time the walls of Jericho fell down (Joshua 6:1-27) they were being led by Joshua as Moses had died at that point (Joshua 1:1-3). Here is what we are going to look at in this article: *“By faith they passed through the Red sea as by dry land: which the Egyptians assaying to do were drowned. By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days”* (Hebrews 11:29-30).

Before all of the plagues on Egypt, Moses and Aaron spoke to the children of Israel. The record states this: *“And the LORD said to Aaron, Go into the wilderness to meet Moses. And he went, and met him in the mount of God, and kissed him. And Moses told Aaron all the words of the LORD who had sent him, and all the signs which he had commanded him. And Moses and Aaron went and gathered together all the elders of the children of Israel: And Aaron spake all the words which the LORD had*

*spoken unto Moses, and did the signs in the sight of the people. And the people believed: and when they heard that the LORD had visited the children of Israel, and that he had looked upon their affliction, then they bowed their heads and worshipped”* (Exodus 4:27-31). Following that, the children of Israel had seen the great works of the Lord done upon Egypt (Exodus 5:1-12:51). So, they had plenty of evidence that God was able to do wondrous things. Therefore, some might discount the fact that they were willing to cross the Red Sea believing they would not drown. Is that fair to them?

If seeing miracles were a given as assurance of faith, we would not read that we walk by faith and not by sight (II Corinthians 5:7). Many people saw miracles and still did not act in faith (John 12:37-43). In fact, some had the ability to perform miracles and still did not have the kind of faith it takes to walk out onto the sea. Consider the Apostle Peter. The Apostles had been partially given the ability to perform miracles (Matthew 10:1-8). Yet, notice this: *“And straightway Jesus constrained his disciples to get into a ship, and to go before him unto the other side, while he sent the multitudes away. And when he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray: and when the evening was come, he was there alone. But the ship was now in the midst of the sea, tossed with waves: for the wind was contrary. And in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea. And when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, It is a spirit; and they cried out for fear. But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid. And Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water. And he said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus. But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me. And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt? And when they were come into the ship, the wind ceased. Then they that were in the ship came and worshipped him, saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God”* (Matthew 14:22-33).

In addition to the children of Israel crossing the Red Sea, the next generation went on to take the land God had promised to their fathers (cf. Genesis 12:1-7). I say the next generation because those whom had faith enough to cross the Red Sea later failed in faith and were made to wander in the wilderness until most of that generation died (Numbers 3:1-14:38). We have covered that already in our study of the book of Hebrews (Hebrews 3:7-4:10). In their efforts to inherit the land God promised to their fathers, they came to Jericho. Right from the start of the taking of Jericho, God’s work was visible.



*“And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, behold, there stood a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand: and Joshua went unto him, and said unto him, Art thou for us, or for our adversaries? And he said, Nay; but as captain of the host of the LORD am I now come. And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship, and said unto him, What saith my lord unto his servant? And the captain of the LORD'S host said unto Joshua, Loose thy shoe from off thy foot; for the place whereon thou standest is holy. And Joshua did so” (Joshua 5:13-15). If you read the reference earlier in this article, as you should have (Joshua 6:1-27), you know what happened.*

The same point applies here as did with the crossing of the Red Sea. So what that they had seen great wonders up to this point? So what that their forefathers had witnessed and told them of the wondrous works they had seen? Being told to compass the city for six days and all that was to happen thereafter was a test of their faith. If it was not, the Hebrew writers would not have recorded it. Imagine how silly this looked to the people of Jericho.

The Apostles of our Lord witnessed great wonders by our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. They later told of what they saw (Acts 2:29-32, Acts 3:14-15, Acts 5:30-32, Acts 10:38-39, etc.). Yet, after seeing all those things and meeting face to face with our Lord after His resurrection, we read the following: *“Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them. And when they saw him, they worshipped him: but some doubted”* (Matthew 28:16-17). Witnessing great things and following because of what a person has seen is one thing. Following instructions from God to do what may seem silly to others, that is faith! Thankfully, Israel displayed their faith and we can read about it.

**Hebrews 11:31** - In our previous article we looked at, in part, the fall of the walls around Jericho (Hebrews 11:30). In this article we are still going to be considering something that happened in Jericho. We are going to look at the faith of a harlot. Here is what we are going to study in this article: *“By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace”* (Hebrews 11:31).

If you read the account of the fall of Jericho in the book of Joshua (Joshua 6:1-27), you read about the harlot and her household being saved. The record states this: *“And they utterly destroyed all that was in the city, both man and woman, young and old, and ox, and sheep, and ass, with the edge of the sword. But Joshua had said unto the two men that had spied out the country, Go into the harlot's house, and bring out thence the woman, and all that she hath, as ye sware unto her. And the young men that were spies went in, and brought out Rahab, and her father, and her mother, and her*

*brethren, and all that she had; and they brought out all her kindred, and left them without the camp of Israel” (Joshua 6:21-23). So, what did Rahab do to save herself and her household?*

Here is the account of Rahab the harlot: *“And Joshua the son of Nun sent out of Shittim two men to spy secretly, saying, Go view the land, even Jericho. And they went, and came into an harlot's house, named Rahab, and lodged there. And it was told the king of Jericho, saying, Behold, there came men in hither to night of the children of Israel to search out the country. And the king of Jericho sent unto Rahab, saying, Bring forth the men that are come to thee, which are entered into thine house: for they be come to search out all the country. And the woman took the two men, and hid them, and said thus, There came men unto me, but I wist not whence they were: And it came to pass about the time of shutting of the gate, when it was dark, that the men went out: whither the men went I wot not: pursue after them quickly; for ye shall overtake them. But she had brought them up to the roof of the house, and hid them with the stalks of flax, which she had laid in order upon the roof. And the men pursued after them the way to Jordan unto the fords: and as soon as they which pursued after them were gone out, they shut the gate. And before they were laid down, she came up unto them upon the roof; And she said unto the men, I know that the LORD hath given you the land, and that your terror is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you. For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red sea for you, when ye came out of Egypt; and what ye did unto the two kings of the Amorites, that were on the other side Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom ye utterly destroyed. And as soon as we had heard these things, our hearts did melt, neither did there remain any more courage in any man, because of you: for the LORD your God, he is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath. Now therefore, I pray you, swear unto me by the LORD, since I have shewed you kindness, that ye will also shew kindness unto my father's house, and give me a true token: And that ye will save alive my father, and my mother, and my brethren, and my sisters, and all that they have, and deliver our lives from death” (Joshua 2:1-13).*

If you read the above account, you can see that Rahab believed in God and the power of His might. That is the same kind of faith we as Christians have as we are taught of God's wondrous works (Ephesians 1:19-23). She heard about the work of God and believed it. That is more than what Israel did at times (Deuteronomy 9:23, II Kings 17:12-18, and Psalms 106:21-27). What God did in bringing Israel through the Red Sea had an impact on Rahab as it should have (Joshua 4:23-24). That is the kind of fear that brings about obedience (Deuteronomy 4:39-40). Her belief and actions that came about from that belief was then rewarded.

Notice the promise made to Rahab and her continued actions of faith: *“And the men answered her, Our life for yours, if ye utter not this our business. And it shall be, when the LORD hath given us the land, that we will deal kindly and truly with thee. Then she let them down by a cord through the window: for her house was upon the town wall, and she dwelt upon the wall. And she said unto them, Get you to the mountain, lest the pursuers meet you; and hide yourselves there three days, until the pursuers be returned: and afterward may ye go your way. And the men said unto her, We will be blameless of this thine oath which thou hast made us swear. Behold, when we come into the land, thou shalt bind this line of scarlet thread in the window which thou didst let us down by: and thou shalt bring thy father, and thy mother, and thy brethren, and all thy father's household, home unto thee. And it shall be, that whosoever shall go out of the doors of thy house into the street, his blood shall be upon his head, and we will be guiltless: and whosoever shall be with thee in the house, his blood shall be on our head, if any hand be upon him. And if thou utter this our business, then we will be quit of thine oath which thou hast made us to swear. And she said, According unto your words, so be it. And she sent them away, and they departed: and she bound the scarlet line in the window”* (Joshua 2:14-21).

James wrote: *“Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only. Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way? For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also”* (James 2:24-26). A harlot is not typically one thought of when people think of faithful obedience. Yet, a harlot is more likely to be saved than the “religious elite” (Matthew 21:23-32). Rahab is an example of one who can be saved by acting upon one’s faith. We all need to hear, believe, and do (James 1:21-25).

**Hebrews 11:32-40** - In summary of this great chapter of faith, the following was written: *“And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gedeon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets: Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection: And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; (Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. And these all, having obtained a*

*good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect” (Hebrews 11:32-40).*

This reminds me of how there is so much to say about the works of Jesus (John 20:30-31) that the world could not contain the volume of the books that should be written (John 21:24-25). The great faith and works of Gedeon [Gideon; Jerubbaal] is recorded in the book of Judges (Judges 6:1-8:35). The great faith and works of Barak are recorded in the book of Judges (Judges 4:1-5:31). The book of Judges also records the faith and works of Jephthae [Jephthah] (Judges 11:1-12:7) and Samson (Judges 13:1-16:31). Gideon [Jerubbaal] and Jephthah were remembered with other judges for their deliverance of Israel (I Samuel 12:11).

We can read about the life of Samuel in the book of I Samuel (I Samuel 1:1-25:1). You can even read how the witch of Endor summoned Samuel from beyond the grave (I Samuel 28:1-25). Samuel saw the end of the days of the judges in Israel (Acts 13:20). Interestingly, we don't read of the first king of Israel (Saul) in this chapter of faith. However, we do read of his successor. There is much written about David. You could start studying about David in the book of Ruth (Ruth 4:17) and your studies would take you all the way through the book of Revelation (Revelation 22:16). To say that time would fail me to write about David would be a massive understatement. God chose David not only to be a king in Israel (I Samuel 16:1ff.), but also to be the first in the succession of kings all the way to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (Matthew 1:1, Luke 1:32, and Acts 2:25-30).

Through faith, Israel had great victories and were capable of subduing kingdoms. There were battles wherein God's hand was clearly seen in their victories such as when Joshua led the armies of Israel (Joshua 10:1-43). The history of God's people includes times of faith wherein righteousness was shown forth (Genesis 43:1-47:12). Through faith, the children of Israel obtained promises made to them by God (Genesis 12:1-7 and Joshua 23:1-11). I would be surprised if someone was unaware of Daniel being in the lion's den (Daniel 6:1-28).

As we are seeing, there were many accounts of faithful acts from God's people in the past. We get to learn from those acts of faith (Romans 15:4). Think about men that were willing to literally enter the fire to stand faithful. Men such as Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego did just that (Daniel 3:1-30). These men refused to worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up. One of my personal favorite responses is in that account. Nebuchadnezzar threatened them and commanded them to bow down to his idol. That is when we read: *“Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, answered and said to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in*

*this matter. If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up*" (Daniel 3:16-18). To see men stand, even if God would not deliver them, is a great show of faith among other things.

Great people of faith escaped the edge of the sword (Psalms 144:10). Faith allowed strength to come about in times of weakness (I Samuel 30:1-6). Faith allowed men to wax valiant [mighty; powerful] in fight (I Kings 18:1-46). Armies of men were caused to flee from the armies of Israel because of faith (I Samuel 14:1-23). Women received their dead raised to life again (I Kings 17:17-24). Through faith, the people of God had and always will be willing to suffer persecution in an unwavering fashion (II Chronicles 16:1-10, Jeremiah 20:1-2, and Acts 4:1-5:42). The people of God knew and still know that the reward is worth the suffering in this present world (Matthew 5:10-12, Luke 6:22-23, Acts 14:22, Romans 8:17, Philipians 1:28-29, II Thessalonians 1:4-10, and II Timothy 2:12). Thus, the Scriptures show us much suffering for those who stood for the truth (I Kings 19:1-18, II Chronicles 36:14-16, Psalms 105:17-18, Jeremiah 2:30, Jeremiah 37:15, Acts 7:51-52, etc.).

This study, for me at least, has been an emotional one. I hate to read about the sufferings of those that stood for God before us. It is certainly true that the world did not deserve to have such people of faith among them because of how the world treated them. When the righteous suffered, people often ignored it (Isaiah 57:1). I am also strengthened, for I know that we can be stronger than they because we have it better than they did. This Hebrew letter shows us that from chapters three through ten. We have a better law, better hope, better priesthood, better promises, etc. We know what they desired to know (I Peter 1:1-12). All of those accounts of old are there for us to learn much from (I Corinthians 10:1-13). Brethren, stand fast in the faith (Philipians 4:1) like those before us did!