

Christ is the fulfillment of the faith of the saints of the Old Testament

“By Faith”

Hebrews 11:1-40

When we were here last February, I preached a message titled, “Living by Faith” from the first six verses of Hebrews 11. I don’t intend to preach the whole thing again, but I do want to go over the main points and make some comments as a way of review.

We will look at that text in more detail in this message as it applies to the illustrations given from the Old Testament of those that demonstrated faith in God.

We saw last year in that message on faith:

- What faith is – vs. 1
 - “The substance of things hoped for” – our faith is, first of all, the reality of the things unseen that God has promise.
 - “The evidence of things not seen” – our faith is, secondly, that by which invisible things are proved (and we are convinced of their reality).
- Why live by faith – vs. 5

To please God, as is said of Enoch, by doing His will. The things we need, and desire, will come as a result of pleasing Him.
- How to live by faith – vs. 6
 - Believe that God IS – is the self-existent One, the Almighty One, the true God.
 - Believe that He rewards those who diligently seek Him.

I. BY IT [FAITH] THE ELDERS – VS. 2, 39

Hebrews 11 opens and closes with the statement concerning the elders that they “obtained a good report.” All the stories of Abraham, Moses, Rahab, and the others given here share one common feature: they were honored by God because they trusted Him, even when they didn't see the full results yet.

A. “For” – this connects to verse 1: “Faith has power to see and realize the unseen, for the experience of the fathers proves it” (Wuest).

B. “The elders” – primary focus is on the list in between verses 2 and 39 but would also include all of the “elders” mentioned in the Bible that demonstrated their faith in God.

C. “Obtained a good report”

1. All one word in the Greek (μαρτυρέω – transliterated in the English word *martyr*).
2. It's translated “honest report” in Acts 6:3 in relation to what is considered to be the text for the basic requirements of men to be considered to be deacons.

Acts 6:3

³ Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business.

- a) This phrase means they have a witness borne them that they have a good reputation.
- b) This speaks of their testimony both within the church and from without – their family, their co-workers, their neighbors, etc.

c) As one put it, "that there may be no room to suspect them of partiality or injustice" (Wesley)

3. The "good report" they obtained means God Himself gave testimony to their lives. It's as if heaven wrote a report card on their faith (Hebrews 11) – and God's voice declared, "*This one believed Me. This one trusted Me.*"

Applied to us today, "faith writes a story about your life that God loves to tell."

II. THROUGH FAITH WE – VS. 3

This verse speaks of creation and that fact that "we" (then and now) "understand" this truth because of faith.

Let me make a comment here on the difference between "by faith" and "through faith." Both of these phrases are the same in the Greek New Testament and almost all modern translations translate them with the phrase "by faith," but there is a difference that the KJV translators wanted to show in how the phrases were used.

- "By faith" (as in verse 4) suggests an action performed as a result of faith – faith being the motivating agent or cause.
- "Through faith" (as in verse 3) suggests a process – faith is the lens or means through which we come to understand something unseen.
- "By" sounds like faith caused the action, and "through" sounds more experiential or mediating.

III. BY FAITH ABEL – VS. 4; GEN. 4:1-7

- A. "Offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain" – the question arises, "How would Abel have known what type of offering the Lord

required?”

1. God would have likely revealed it to them both, even if Genesis doesn't record it explicitly.

There are clear hints that God had, in fact, already given instructions about what He expected.

- a) Genesis 3:21 states, that after Adam and Eve sinned, "Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them."

For God to make clothing from skins, blood had to be shed – implying the first death, a sacrificial covering for sin.

- b) This points to a pattern (Law of First Mention): blood sacrifice is needed for covering (atonement).
2. The type of offering mattered because it symbolized atonement.

Hebrews 9:22

²² And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.

- a) Abel's offering was a blood sacrifice – a lamb, a firstling of the flock.
 - b) Cain's offering was from the ground – works of his own hands, not involving the necessary blood sacrifice that God required. This speaks to works for salvation.
3. Abel offered by faith

Faith comes by responding to something God

has revealed:

Romans 10:17

¹⁷ So then faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

Abel couldn't have acted "by faith" unless God had told him what was required at some point.

Even if Genesis doesn't record that specific conversation, it had to have happened.

B. "By which he obtained witness that he was righteous"

1. "By which" – faith
2. "He obtained witness" – same word as that translated "obtained a good report" in verse three.
3. His faith demonstrated to those who knew him, testifying that he was righteous. His righteousness, as we know from a finished Scripture, was that which came from the sacrificial work of Christ – his faith pointed forward to it.

C. "And by it he being dead yet speaketh"

1. "It" – his faith
2. Although he's been dead for several thousand years, his faith in the work of redemption still speaks, and will speak as long as time endures.

IV. BY FAITH ENOCH – VS. 5-6; GEN. 5:21-24

(Not much time will be spent on these verses – they were dealt with in the earlier referenced message.)

- A. Enoch is one of only two men recorded in the Bible that didn't die – the other was Elijah. That's what the first part of verse five refers to.
- B. The most important point recorded here about Enoch's faith is that it was demonstrated in the phrase, "that he pleased God."
- C. Verse six further clarifies how essential our faith is to pleasing the Lord.

While it certainly includes coming to God through the work of Christ for salvation, the main emphasis is on believers continually coming to Him with their needs and seeking His help, much like the encouragement given earlier in Hebrews 4:14-16.

V. BY FAITH NOAH – VS. 7; GEN. 6:8-22

- A. His faith is described in the phrase, "of things not seen as yet" – this is a basic repeat of verse one.
- B. Because of his simple faith in the word of God, when he was told a flood was going to overwhelm and destroy the earth ("being warned of God"), he "moved with fear."

1. The word for "fear" here isn't to be understood as terror. It comes from two Greek words that in their literal sense can be understood as "to take hold of something carefully and reverently."

The BDAG lexicon defines the word as "to show reverence, awe, or caution in response to a divine warning or presence."

2. He didn't merely feel fear – he was motivated by reverent faith to prepare the ark exactly as

God instructed. His reverence ("fear") led him to act in careful accordance with God's warning, even when everything God said was contrary to his senses and experience.

C. "Prepared an ark to the saving of his house"

1. Immediate, Primary Meaning: Physical salvation.
 - a) Noah built the ark literally to save their physical lives from the flood.
 - b) Hebrews 11 is recounting real historical events – real faith that resulted in real-world actions and consequences.
2. Deeper, spiritual picture: typological salvation.
 - a) However, in typical biblical style, physical salvation often foreshadows spiritual truths.

1 Peter 3:20-21

²⁰ ...the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water. ²¹ The like figure whereunto *even* baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ:

- b) Peter says the ark and flood are a type (a "figure") pointing to spiritual salvation – not because water saves us, but because faith in God's provision (the ark for Noah, Christ for us) saves us.

(1) The ark = a type of Christ.

(2) The flood = a type of judgment.

(3) Entering the ark by faith = a type of entering Christ by faith to be saved.

The Ark and Christ: A Beautiful Typology

| The Ark | Christ |
|---|---|
| Provided by God as the only means of escape from judgment (Genesis 6:14) | Provided by God as the only way of salvation from eternal judgment (John 3:16) |
| Made according to God's specific instructions (Genesis 6:15-16) | Came according to God's exact plan and promises (Galatians 4:4-5) |
| Only one ark – no other way to survive the flood (Genesis 7:1) | Only one Savior – no other name by which we must be saved (Acts 4:12) |
| Enter by a single door (Genesis 6:16) | Jesus is the only door to salvation (John 10:9) |
| Those inside the ark were safe from God's judgment (Genesis 7:23) | Those "in Christ" are safe from condemnation (Romans 8:1) |
| The ark bore the brunt of the floodwaters – the judgment fell on the ark, not on those inside | Christ bore the wrath of God for sin on the cross, protecting believers (Isaiah 53:5-6) |
| Entrance required faith in God's warning, not sight (Hebrews 11:7) | Salvation requires faith in God's promise, not sight (2 Corinthians 5:7) |
| After the flood, Noah and his | Believers in Christ are made |

| | |
|---|--|
| family stepped into a new creation (Genesis 8:15-19) | new creations (2 Corinthians 5:17) |
| The ark came to rest on the mountains of Ararat – "high place" – symbolizing victory and new beginnings (Genesis 8:4) | Christ rose and reigns – the high place of triumph over sin and death (Philippians 2:9-11) |

D. "By the which he condemned the world"

1. "By the which" – points to his faith.
2. By that faith (trusting God's unseen warning), he condemned the world (showed it to be wrong by contrast) and inherited righteousness.
 - a) This isn't to be understood in the sense of Noah judging or cursing the world personally – that was reserved for God to do for He's the only One that can judge the world in that sense.
 - b) Instead, his faith-filled obedience stood as a living rebuke to the unbelief and wickedness of the rest of the world.
 - c) In other words, Noah's life became a standard by which the world was shown to be guilty. When someone obeys God in faith, it automatically exposes those who reject God.

This is what Jesus referenced in John 3:19-21.

John 3:19-21

¹⁹ And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. ²⁰ For every one that doeth evil hateth the

light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. ²¹ But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.

3. He became a living testimony both of God's salvation and God's judgment.

E. "And became heir of the righteousness which is by faith"

Noah became heir to the righteousness which is by faith – not because he lived a perfect life, but because he trusted God's word. His righteous living was the evidence of the righteousness he received by faith, not the cause of it.

VI. BY FAITH ABRAHAM – VS. 8-10, 17-19

A. His faith is demonstrated in his obedience: "When he was called to go out...he obeyed" – vs. 8; Gen. 12:1-4

Faith that obeys despite uncertainty – vs. 8

1. "When he was called" (καλούμενος) – suggests an ongoing call during his final departure – obedience in real time, so to speak.
2. "He obeyed" (ὑπήκουσεν) – in a form that shows decisive obedience in response to God's call.
3. "Not knowing whither he went" (μὴ ἐπιστάμενος ποῦ ἔρχεται) – shows obedience even though his knowledge was very limited in the "why" of the command.

Biblical faith is responsive – grounded in the authority of God's word, not the clarity of human foresight.

B. His faith is directed toward heaven – vs. 9-10; Gen. 17:6-8

1. “He sojourned in the land of promise” (παρώκησεν) – means he resided temporarily as a foreigner.

Abraham lived in the promised land as a resident alien, without legal claim.

Genesis 23:4

⁴ I am a stranger and a sojourner with you: give me a possession of a burying place with you, that I may bury my dead out of my sight.

2. “Dwelling in tabernacles” – (σκηναῖς – tents) – symbol of impermanence and vulnerability.
3. Vs. 10 – “For he looked for” (ἐξεδέχεται) – continuous, eager expectation. The form of the verb pictures “a steady and patient waiting in spite of disappointment” (Robertson).
4. “A city which hath foundations” – this is to be seen in direct contrast to the “tabernacles” (tents) in verse nine. It speaks of permanence (in contrast to impermanence), security (in contrast to vulnerability), and Divine origin.

Hebrews 12:22

²² But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels,

Hebrews 13:14

¹⁴ For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come.

Revelation 21:2

² And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem,

coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

5. "Whose builder [τεχνίτης] and maker [δημιουργός] is God" – pointing to a future heavenly fulfillment (eschatological) rather than an earthly one.

Faith doesn't cling to present realities but lives in anticipation of the heavenly fulfillment of the promises.

C. His faith is Divinely proven – vs. 17-19; Gen. 22:1-14

1. Faith that surrenders the promise (Isaac) back to God – vs. 17-18

a) "When he was tried" (πειραζόμενος) – this term has a range of meanings depending on the context. The two primary ones are:

(1) To test or examine, often with the intent of proving or revealing character (positive sense).

(2) To tempt, sometimes with evil intent or enticement to sin (negative sense – e.g., James 1:13, "God cannot be tempted with evil").

In Hebrews 11:17, the context is clearly positive and divine – not temptation to sin, but a test of Abraham's faith and obedience.

(3) The verb is in the present tense, emphasizing that Abraham was in the very process of being tested when his faith was exercised. He didn't show faith only after the test, but in the midst of it.

- (4) This phrase underscores that faith is not theoretical; it must be proven.

James 2:21

²¹ Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?

- (5) God's test in Genesis 22 was not to produce faith, but to reveal and refine it. Like God in fire, Abraham's faith was demonstrated to be genuine through trial.

1 Peter 1:7

⁷ 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:

The phrase "*when he was tried*" (πειραζόμενος) highlights that Abraham's faith matured and was made manifest through trial. The participle marks the test as a divinely orchestrated, ongoing process, and his obedience as a product of trust in God even under intense moral and emotional strain. This wasn't a spontaneous act of blind obedience but a theologically informed act of trust grounded in God's prior promises and character.

- b) "Offered up (προσενήνοχεν) Isaac" – emphasizes the enduring reality of the act of obedience.
- c) "He that had received the promises offered up...of whom it was said..." – there's a paradox here with a heightened tension: Abraham is both the recipient of the promise and the one asked to relinquish it.

d) “Only begotten son” (μονογενής) – this is the only time those words are used that are not in reference to the Son of God (John 1:14, 18; 3:16, 18; 1 John 4:9).

(1) In Isaac’s case, the word is used in the sense of being the unique, covenantal son, the one tied directly to God’s redemptive promise.

(2) Isaac was the child of promise – miraculously born to Sarah, according to God’s timing and word.

Genesis 17:19-21

¹⁹ 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. ²⁰

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.

²¹ But my covenant will I establish with Isaac, which Sarah shall bear unto thee at this set time in the next year.

(3) Only Isaac was the heir of the Abrahamic covenant – the one through whom the Messiah would eventually come.

(4) So, from a biblical-theological perspective, Isaac stands in a category all his own, despite not being Abraham’s only biological son.

(5) There is a great typology here of Isaac as a type of Christ. Just a few of those types are:

- A father offering his “only begotten

son”

- The son carrying wood up the mountain (Jesus carried the cross)
- A substitutionary sacrifice provided by God

That language of “only begotten” intentionally echoes Christ – the ultimate fulfillment.

2. Faith that trusts God’s power over death – vs. 19 – “accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead...”

- a) “Accounting” (λογισάμενος) – means to reckon, calculate, conclude after reasoned reflection.

Suggests Abraham’s faith was not blind, but thoughtful and theologically grounded.

- b) “To raise...from the dead” (ἐκ νεκρῶν ἐγείρειν) – a remarkable thought considering resurrection had not yet occurred in biblical history in Abraham’s day.

- c) “In a figure” (παραβολῆ) – a type or symbolic foreshadowing of something yet to come. In this case, it is Isaac’s near-death and deliverance as a typological picture of Christ (see Romans 4:17-24).

The Greek structure shows that Abraham, by an act of obedient will, had already offered up Isaac in his heart before the trial concluded. He expected to fully carry out the sacrifice and believed God would raise Isaac from the dead to fulfill His promise. The phrase “received him in a figure” points to a symbolic death and resurrection – real in intent, but not in literal execution. (Wuest)

"Since the sacrifice did not take place as a literal slaughter, there could not be a literal restoration from death. There was a real offering in Abraham's will, but not a real death of Isaac. Isaac's death took place symbolically, in the sacrifice of the ram: correspondingly, the restoration was only a symbolic restoration from the dead." (Vincent)

VII. THROUGH FAITH SARAH – VS. 11-12; GEN. 21:1-3

"Because she judged him faithful"

A. Received faith – vs. 11a-b

1. "Through faith" – The "through faith" (πίστει) construction emphasizes that faith was the means by which God enabled what was naturally impossible.
2. "Also Sarah herself" (πίστει καὶ αὐτῇ Σάρρα) – the construction καὶ αὐτῇ Σάρρα ("even Sarah herself") is emphatic, possibly indicating surprise or significance – that Sarah, despite her initial doubt (Gen. 18:12), ultimately exercised genuine faith.

Genesis 18:12

¹² Therefore Sarah laughed within herself, saying, After I am waxed old shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also?

3. "Received strength to conceive seed"
 - a) "Received strength" (δύναμιν ἔλαβεν) – the passive aorist form shows that the strength came from outside herself (divine empowerment).
 - b) "To conceive seed" – Sarah was given the ability

to bear a child by natural means.

4. "And was delivered of a child when she was past age"

This underscores the miraculous nature of Isaac's birth – not merely improbable, but humanly impossible.

Genesis 18:11

¹¹ Now Abraham and Sarah *were* old *and* well stricken in age; *and* it ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women.

B. Reasoned faith – vs. 11c – "because she judged him faithful"

1. "She judged" (ἡγήσατο) – she considered, or reckoned – a deliberate, reasoned conclusion of trust.
2. "Him faithful" (πιστόν) – she believed God was reliable, not based on emotion but grounded in His prior covenantal actions (Gen. 17-18).

C. Rewarded faith – vs. 12

1. "Of one" – refers to Abraham, though Sarah is just mentioned – it emphasizes the human origin of the promised seed.
2. "And him as good as dead"
 - a) Perfect passive participle from *νεκρώω* – literally: "having been put to death" or "rendered lifeless."
 - b) Paul uses the same imagery in Romans 4:19, where both Abraham and Sarah's bodies are considered functionally dead in regard to reproduction.

Romans 4:19

¹⁹ 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:

- c) This is not just poetic exaggeration – it's a theological statement about human inability vs. divine capability.
3. "So many as the stars... and as the sand..." – Echoes Genesis 15:5 and 22:17 – linking the promise of Isaac to the broader Abrahamic covenant and its ultimate spiritual fulfillment (cf. Gal. 3:29).

D. Remarkable faith

- Sarah's inclusion in Hebrews 11 affirms that women, too, are vital examples of saving and enduring faith, and that God honors faith even when it begins small or late.
- Her story shows that initial doubt does not disqualify enduring faith. Though she laughed in unbelief (Gen. 18:12), Hebrews interprets her eventual trust in God's faithfulness as genuine faith.
- Sarah's faith is distinctively feminine: she doesn't go out or sacrifice anything but believes God's promise concerning her own body.
- The verse emphasizes God's power in human weakness, a major Hebrews theme (cf. Heb. 4:15; 11:34).

VIII. PARENTHETICAL – VS. 12-16

NOTE: This is a separate message titled: "Strangers

and Pilgrims.”

“What does it really mean to live by faith?” Hebrews 11 doesn’t just define faith – it *illustrates* it through the lives of those who saw God’s promises from afar and still believed. In verses 13 through 16, we pause in the middle of this great ‘hall of faith’ to reflect on how the patriarchs lived and died without ever receiving the full promises in this life – but they lived looking forward, letting go of the world, and longing for something better.

This short section is more than a historical note – it is a spiritual blueprint for every believer who wants to walk by faith in a world that doesn’t feel like home. These verses show us what kind of faith pleases God – a faith that is persuaded of His promises, presses on in pursuit, and receives His praise.

A. Their perspective in life and death – vs. 13

1. Confidence in the promises

“These all died in faith, not having received the promises...”

They didn’t receive the promises in full, but believed in them.

- a) “These all died” – this is speaking specifically of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (vs. 8-12).
- b) “In faith” (κατὰ πίστιν) – This phrase has the sense of according to the standard of faith or in the sphere of faith. It suggests that:
 - (1) Their entire life and death were characterized or governed by faith.
 - (2) It was not merely one action (as in “by faith Abel offered...”), but a life posture – a continuous faith that remained even unto

death, despite not receiving the full promises.

- c) "Not having received the promises" – of the promised land, numerous descendants, and most importantly, the promise that the Seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob would bless the earth, speaking of the coming Messiah.
- Abraham – Gen. 12:1-3
 - Isaac – Gen. 26:1-5
 - Jacob – Gen. 28:13-15; 35:9-12

2. Clarity of vision

"But having seen them afar off..."

They saw the promises *afar off*, with spiritual perception.

- a) "Having seen them" – this aorist participle suggests that this "seeing" was a decisive starting point – a moment when they recognized and believed God's promises were real, even if distant.
- b) "Afar off" – the patriarchs – Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob – saw the fulfillment of God's promises (a land, a people, and universal blessing) not as something realized in their lifetimes but as something far off in the future.

(1) They "saw them afar off" – Not with physical eyes, but with the eyes of faith (cf. 2 Cor. 5:7).

2 Corinthians 5:7

⁷ (For we walk by faith, not by sight:)

(2) They perceived the promises as real and certain, even if they were not immediate.

- (3) They demonstrated that true faith looks beyond the present, holding fast to what is future and eternal.

The phrase closely mirrors how believers today view the return of Christ, the resurrection, and the heavenly city. Like the patriarchs, we too:

- Walk by faith, not sight (Heb. 11:1; 2 Cor. 5:7).
- Long for promises still unfulfilled in this life (Heb. 11:39-40).
- Are strangers and pilgrims, awaiting a better country (Heb. 11:16).

The use of "*afar off*" reminds us that:

- Faith doesn't demand immediate results. It clings to God's word despite delay.
- We are to embrace the promises as certain, even if we don't yet possess them.
- Our vision must be shaped by eternity, not by the nearness or comfort of earthly things.

Supporting Scripture:

- John 8:56 – *"Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad."*
→ Abraham saw Christ's coming afar off, with the eyes of faith.
- Romans 4:20-21 – Abraham was *"fully persuaded that what He [God] had*

promised, He was able also to perform."

- Hebrews 11:1 – *"Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."*

3. Conviction in their faith

They "were persuaded of them" – fully convinced of the reliability and certainty of God's promises.

4. Celebration in hope

They "embraced them" – a word that speaks of welcoming or greeting, expressing a joyful acceptance of future realities.

5. Confession of pilgrimage

"...and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth."

The patriarchs openly acknowledged ("confessed") that this world was not their true home.

- "Strangers" (ξένοι) – foreigners, those without rights of citizenship in a land.
- "Pilgrims" (παρεπίδημοι) – temporary residents, sojourners, exiles.

These terms highlight that the patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob) recognized their transient status on earth. Though they physically lived in the land of promise (Canaan), they never truly possessed it in their lifetime. More importantly, their hearts were set on a heavenly country (v.16), showing they viewed themselves as citizens of another kingdom.

This same language is echoed in 1 Peter 2:11 (9-12), where believers are called “strangers and pilgrims” and urged to live holy lives. Just as Abraham and his descendants lived by faith in the future city God had prepared, believers today are to live as heavenly citizens, resisting the world’s pull and reflecting the identity described in 1 Peter 2:9: “a chosen generation... a peculiar people.”

Application: Their confession was not just with their lips but with their lives – they lived as people who belonged somewhere else. So should we.

B. Their pursuit of a greater country – vs. 14-15

“For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country...”

1. Seeking a better homeland – vs. 14

Explanation: The patriarchs' own confessions (v.13) made it clear – they were actively seeking something greater than earthly security.

- a) The Greek word for “seek” (ἐπιζητοῦσιν) suggests earnest desire or diligent pursuit.
- b) The “country” here (πατρίδα) isn't merely a location but a homeland – a place of true belonging, which verse 16 reveals to be heavenly.

2. Separation from the past – vs. 15a

“And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out...”

Explanation: The patriarchs had left their homeland (Ur of the Chaldees), and they didn't dwell on it, cherish it, or desire to return.

- a) Spiritually, this mirrors the believer's break from the old life of sin and worldly values. As new creations in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17), we are called to set our affection on things above (Col. 3:2) and not look back.
- b) Just as Lot's wife looked back and was judged, the patriarchs looked ahead and walked by faith, refusing to return to what God had called them out of.

Spiritual Application: Faith not only embraces the future – it lets go of the past. True pilgrimage demands separation from what once defined us.

3. Steadfast in their journey – vs. 15b

"...they might have had opportunity to have returned."

Explanation: The opportunity to return was available – but they deliberately stayed the course. Their commitment reflects the same mindset Jesus commended: *"No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God"* (Luke 9:62).

- a) For the believer, this speaks of enduring in discipleship, resisting the temptation to turn back to the comforts or compromises of the world (cf. Heb. 10:39).
- b) They had forsaken the past, not because they were forced to, but because their faith had given them something better to live for.

Spiritual Application: The faith that saves is also the faith that endures. Pilgrims don't retreat – they press forward, eyes fixed on the promise.

C. Their praise from God – vs. 16

1. God's affirmation of their testimony

"But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly..."

Explanation: The entire verse shows that the lives of these patriarchs testified of their desire for God over the world. God's approval and provision are His affirmation of that testimony.

- a) They sought a better country → God praises them and prepares one.
- b) Their legacy becomes a model for faith (cf. Heb. 12:1), and their lives bring honor to God's name.

Spiritual Insight: A life of faith doesn't just receive a reward – it leaves a testimony that God honors before others.

2. God's approval of their faith

"...wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God..."

Explanation: The word *"wherefore"* (Greek: *διό*) shows that God's commendation is a direct response to their faith-filled pursuit of a better country.

- a) God's statement "I am the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob" (Ex. 3:6; Matt. 22:32) is not just covenantal, but commendatory. He associates His name with them because their lives honored Him.

Exodus 3:6 [the call of Moses at the burning bush]

⁶ Moreover he said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God.

Matthew 22:32 [Jesus answering the Sadducees]

³² I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.

- b) The phrase “not ashamed” implies God is pleased, even honored, to be publicly identified with them.

Spiritual Insight: When we live by faith, we bring glory to God, and He is not ashamed to claim us as His own (cf. Heb. 2:11).

Hebrews 2:11

¹¹ For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren,

3. God’s preparation for their future

“...for he hath prepared for them a city.”

Explanation: This “city” is the heavenly homeland they longed for (cf. Heb. 11:10; 12:22; 13:14; Rev. 21:2).

- a) “Prepared” (ἡτοιμάσεν) shows intentional provision – God Himself made it ready in response to their faith.
- b) This reflects not only a reward but a relational fulfillment – they sought God, and He prepared a place for them (cf. John 14:2-3).

John 14:1-3

¹ Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. ² 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. ³ 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.

Spiritual Insight: Faith is not in vain – God responds to our faith with eternal provision. What they longed for, God lovingly prepared.

Conclusion: The lives of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob teach us something essential: real faith isn't just about believing *in* God, it's about believing God enough to live like strangers and pilgrims here – people on the move toward a heavenly country.

They saw the promises “afar off,” but they were persuaded, they embraced them, and they confessed that this world was not their home. And what was God's response? He was not ashamed to be called their God, and He prepared for them a city.

So the question we must ask ourselves is this: Are we living like people who belong somewhere else? Because that's what faith does. It loosens our grip on this world and fixes our eyes on the one to come – where Christ is, and where the promises of God are fully and forever fulfilled.

Hebrews 11 shifts from the broad theme of living by faith to three rapid, yet profound, examples of the patriarchs exercising faith at the end of their lives. Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph all looked forward, trusting God's promises beyond their own lifetimes. Their dying actions were not backward-looking or focused on regret, but anchored in God's covenant and hope for the future. Each of these blessings is a testament to faith that sees beyond the present.

IX. BY FAITH ISAAC – vs. 20; GEN. 27:27-40; 28:2-3

Faith that submits to God's sovereign plan.

A. Faith in the unseen future – “concerning things to come”

Isaac believed that the blessings he pronounced would shape the future of nations, in line with God's promises to Abraham. The phrase "things to come" (*περι μελλόντων*) refers to future, divinely ordained realities not yet visible.

B. Submission to God's order – “blessed Jacob and Esau”

Though Isaac initially intended to bless Esau, he accepted God's reversal and affirmed the blessing on Jacob (Gen. 27:33). Faith submits to God's sovereign choices, not human tradition.

Romans 9:10-13

¹⁰ And not only *this*; but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, *even* by our father Isaac; ¹¹ (For *the children* being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;) ¹² It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. ¹³ As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.

Malachi 1:2-3

² I have loved you, saith the LORD. Yet ye say, Wherein hast thou loved us? Was not Esau Jacob's brother? saith the LORD: yet I loved Jacob,

³ And I hated Esau, and laid his mountains and his heritage waste for the dragons of the wilderness.

C. Acknowledgment of redemptive history

Isaac's blessing recognized that the Abrahamic promise would continue, ultimately culminating in

Christ through Jacob's line.

Matthew 1:2 [and following]

² Abraham begat Isaac; and Isaac begat Jacob; and Jacob begat Judas and his brethren;

Application:

Faith yields to God's ordering and speaks confidently of the future He has declared.

X. BY FAITH JACOB – VS. 21; GEN. 48:5-22

Faith that worships

A. Blessing with spiritual insight

Jacob intentionally crossed his hands (Gen. 48:14) to bless Ephraim over Manasseh (Gen. 48:13-20), showing spiritual discernment by faith, not favoritism. He trusted God's revealed purposes, even when they contradicted cultural norms.

B. Worship in weakness

The image of Jacob leaning on his staff speaks of physical frailty, yet he worships God in reverence. Faith worships even in weariness. The Greek verb for worship (*προσεκύνησεν*) conveys reverence and submission, highlighting faith expressed even in physical weakness.

The reference here is to Gen. 47:31, where it states, "And Israel bowed himself upon the bed's head." To make a long explanation of linguistic nuances short: "The passage means that Jacob, rising from his bed to take the oath from Joseph, supported his aged limbs on the staff, which was a type of his pilgrimage (Gen. 32:10), and at the end of the oath bowed his head over the staff in sign of thanks and reverence to God" (Cambridge Bible notes).

Genesis 32:10

¹⁰ I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which thou hast shewed unto thy servant; for with my staff I passed over this Jordan; and now I am become two bands.

C. Vision beyond Egypt

Jacob's actions anticipated God's promise to bring Israel back to the land (Gen. 48:21-22). He died in Egypt but looked toward the promised land, echoing Hebrews 11:13-16.

Genesis 48:21-22

²¹ And Israel said unto Joseph, Behold, I die: but God shall be with you, and bring you again unto the land of your fathers. ²² Moreover I have given to thee one portion above thy brethren, which I took out of the hand of the Amorite with my sword and with my bow.

Genesis 49:29-33

²⁹ And he charged them, and said unto them, I am to be gathered unto my people: bury me with my fathers in the cave that *is* in the field of Ephron the Hittite, ³⁰ In the cave that *is* in the field of Machpelah, which *is* before Mamre, in the land of Canaan, which Abraham bought with the field of Ephron the Hittite for a possession of a buryingplace. ³¹ There they buried Abraham and Sarah his wife; there they buried Isaac and Rebekah his wife; and there I buried Leah. ³² The purchase of the field and of the cave that *is* therein was from the children of Heth. ³³ And when Jacob had made an end of commanding his sons, he gathered up his feet into the bed, and yielded up the ghost, and was gathered unto his people.

Hebrews 13:14

¹⁴ For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come.

Application:

Even in decline, faith clings to God's promises and gives glory to Him.

XI. BY FAITH JOSEPH – vs. 22; GEN. 5:-24-25

Faith that speaks of deliverance

A. Faith in national redemption

Joseph didn't just believe in Israel's eventual freedom – he *testified* to it as part of God's word to Abraham. The Greek *ἐμνησεν* ("made mention") implies deliberate recollection and testimony.

Genesis 50:24

²⁴ 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.

Genesis 15:13-14

¹³ And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land *that is* not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years; ¹⁴ And also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance.

Acts 7:17-18

¹⁷ But when the time of the promise drew nigh, which God had sworn to Abraham, the people grew and multiplied in Egypt, ¹⁸ Till another king arose, which knew not Joseph.

B. Hope in personal resurrection

"...and gave commandment concerning his bones"

Genesis 50:25

²⁵ 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.

Exodus 13:19

¹⁹ And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him: for he had straitly sworn the children of Israel, saying, God

will surely visit you; and ye shall carry up my bones away hence with you.

Joshua 24:32

³² And the bones of Joseph, which the children of Israel brought up out of Egypt, buried they in Shechem, in a parcel of ground which Jacob bought of the sons of Hamor the father of Shechem for an hundred pieces of silver: and it became the inheritance of the children of Joseph.

1. Burial in the Promised Land as a Theological Statement

Joseph's insistence that his bones not remain in Egypt, but be carried to Canaan, was more than a sentimental connection to his ancestry – it was a declaration that death would not cancel God's promises. His burial was a *prophetic testimony* that the land covenant still stood and would one day include his own future presence.

He believed God's promise to Abraham in Genesis 15:13-16 would come true – even if it was centuries later.

2. Burial reflects belief in bodily resurrection

In the ancient Near Eastern mindset, burial location was not merely ceremonial – it often reflected one's ultimate hope. Joseph's burial request implied:

- "I belong in the land where God will raise His people."
- "I want my remains to rest where God will fulfill His promise to our nation."

This is consistent with Hebrews 11:16, which says the patriarchs sought a heavenly country –

a better city prepared by God. Their earthly burial in the land anticipated a future, heavenly resurrection.

Hebrews 11:35

³⁵ Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection:

Job 19:25-27

²⁵ For I know *that* my redeemer liveth, and *that* he shall stand at the latter *day* upon the earth: ²⁶ And *though* after my skin *worms* destroy this *body*, yet in my flesh shall I see God: ²⁷ Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; *though* my reins be consumed within me.

Daniel 12:2

² And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame *and* everlasting contempt.

3. Connection to New Testament theology

The Apostle Paul viewed burial with resurrection in mind (cf. Romans 6:4-5). In that same spirit, Joseph's bones were planted in hope (to borrow 1 Cor. 15:42-44 language) – that he would one day rise in the land of promise.

Acts 7:15-16 recounts that Jacob and the patriarchs, including Joseph, were buried in Shechem. This reinforces that burial location was linked to covenant identity and eschatological hope.

Acts 7:15-16

¹⁵ So Jacob went down into Egypt, and died, he, and our fathers, ¹⁶ And were carried over into

Sychem, and laid in the sepulchre that Abraham bought for a sum of money of the sons of Emmor *the father* of Sychem.

Summary Statement:

Joseph's burial command was not just about honoring his heritage. It was a statement of enduring faith in God's covenant, pointing forward to the day when not only would Israel be redeemed from Egypt – but when the dead would rise, and Joseph himself would stand in the eternal land of promise, resurrected and glorified.

Philippians 3:20-21

²⁰ For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: ²¹ Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.

Joseph's bones preached a sermon for 400 years – a sermon about the faithfulness of God and the hope of resurrection.

C. Confidence in God's timing

Though Joseph saw no sign of deliverance in his lifetime, he trusted the timing and certainty of God's word. His words in Genesis 50:24, "*God will surely visit you...*", were spoken hundreds of years before the Exodus, yet he spoke them with confidence in God's timetable.

This aligns in a unique way with Habakkuk 2:3: "*For the vision is yet for an appointed time... though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry.*"

This verse, originally given in a time of national waiting and uncertainty, underscores a truth that

Joseph embraced: God's promises may not come quickly, but they never come late. Faith rests not in immediate fulfillment but in the faithfulness of the One who gave the promise.

- Joseph did not panic or doubt because of the delay – he believed God had appointed a time, and that time would come.
- His command concerning his bones (Gen. 50:25) was not only a burial instruction but a confession of God's perfect timing – he was saying, *"When the time comes, and it will, take me with you."*

Conclusion to this point:

Faith, especially at life's end, speaks volumes. These patriarchs could have looked back, but instead, they looked forward, trusting God's Word beyond their lifespans. Each man bore witness that God's promises were worth holding onto, even when they would not live to see them fulfilled.

Isaac submitted to God's plan, Jacob worshiped in weakness, and Joseph prepared others for deliverance. Their faith still speaks (cf. Heb. 11:4).

Challenge: Will your life – and your final words – point others to "things to come"?

XII. BY FAITH MOSES, THE NATION OF ISRAEL, AND RAHAB – vs. 23-31

FAITH FOR THE LONG JOURNEY – A FAITH THAT FINISHES

The story of Moses is not just the story of one man – it is the story of a faith that begins in the cradle, grows through surrender, endures under pressure, submits in obedience, and continues in a people who walk with God even when the way is hard.

Hebrews 11 highlights the faith of Moses and of the people of Israel – not because they were perfect, but because they trusted a perfect God. What we see in this passage is a progression of faith: from hiding in Egypt to marching around Jericho to being spared under the scarlet cord.

Faith is not a single moment. It is a lifelong journey of believing God. This message traces seven distinct demonstrations of faith, from the faith of Moses' parents to the faith of Rahab the harlot. Each step builds a testimony of what God can do when His people walk by faith.

A. Faith that shelters – vs. 23; Ex. 2:2-10

1. Their faith saw the remarkable – “they saw he was a proper child.”
 - a) Moses’ parents, Amram and Jochebed, saw he was “a proper child” (KJV) – not just in appearance, but in spiritual potential.
 - b) This word (ἀστειόν) can mean “well-formed” or “remarkable.”
 - c) Their insight was more than parental pride – they recognized God's hand on their child (cf. Acts 7:20).

Acts 7:20

²⁰ In which time Moses was born, and was exceeding fair, and nourished up in his father's house three months:

2. Their faith acted in the face of danger.
 - a) They hid Moses for three months, defying the command by Pharaoh, which ordered the death of all male Hebrew babies.

Exodus 1:22

²² 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.

- b) Their act was intentional and sustained, not a moment of panic.
 - c) Faith sometimes acts quietly but courageously behind the scenes.
3. Their faith caused them to fear God more than man.
- a) "They were not afraid of the king's commandment" – an astonishing statement considering Pharaoh's power.
 - b) This phrase (οὐκ ἐφοβήθησαν) is emphatic: they chose not to be ruled by fear.
 - c) Faith replaces the fear of man with the fear of God (Proverbs 29:25; Matthew 10:28).

Proverbs 29:25

²⁵ The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the LORD shall be safe.

Matthew 10:28

²⁸ And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

4. Their faith sheltered what we might consider to be the next generation.
- a) Consider that point carefully in light of what's already been said. It takes faith to shelter our children from the dangers around them – it's our responsibility to shelter the next generation

today.

- b) What they did in faith would later affect an entire nation.
- c) Faith in the home matters. It protects, preserves, and prepares.

B. Faith that surrenders – vs. 24-26

Moses' parents had the faith to hide him, but Moses would need faith to leave everything behind.

As he grew up under Pharaoh's roof, he faced a choice: the comforts of Egypt, or the calling of God.

Faith that shelters starts the journey, but faith that surrenders must carry it forward – even when it costs everything.

1. In his surrender, he made a definitive choice – vs. 24a – “when he was come to years, refused...”
 - a) “When he was come to years” – literally means Moses had grown up (cf. Exodus 2:11).

Exodus 2:11

¹¹ And it came to pass in those days, when Moses was grown, that he went out unto his brethren, and looked on their burdens: and he spied an Egyptian smiting an Hebrew, one of his brethren.
 - b) He made a deliberate, mature decision – not under pressure, but with full understanding.
 - c) The verb “refused” (ἤρνήσατο, middle voice) reflects a firm, personal rejection of Egyptian identity.

2. In his surrender, he rejected the easier life.
 - a) Moses could have remained in wealth, power, and status – “the son of Pharaoh’s daughter.”
 - b) Instead, he refused the fleeting pleasures of sin (v. 25).
 - c) Faith doesn’t seek comfort – it chooses the cross when it leads to Christ.

3. In his surrender, he chose to identify with God’s people – vs. 25.
 - a) He chose “to suffer affliction with the people of God” – not just to help them, but to be one of them.
 - b) Deliberate Choice:
 - (1) The word “choosing” (αἰρεتیζομαι) means a thoughtful, reasoned selection – used nowhere else in the NT.
 - (2) Moses didn’t drift into suffering – he chose it with clarity and conviction.
 - c) Willing Participation:
 - (1) “To suffer affliction” is a word (συγκακουχεῖσθαι) that means to suffer together.
 - (2) A compound verb meaning to share mistreatment, not merely to sympathize.
 - (3) This was an act of solidarity, not mere compassion.
 - d) Spiritual Alignment:
 - (1) Moses didn’t just reject Pharaoh – he

embraced God's covenant people.

(2) This shows us that faith will always identify with those God has chosen, even if the world has rejected them.

e) Application:

(1) Are we willing to stand with God's people when they're mocked rather than praised?

(2) Faith aligns us with God's people even when it brings reproach instead of reward.

4. In his surrender, he valued eternal reward over the temporary earthly kind (temporal) – vs. 26.

a) "Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches..." – Moses calculated the spiritual profit of reproach for Christ to outweigh Egypt's wealth.

"Esteeming" (ἡγησάμενος) means to weigh in the balance and decide.

b) He endured hardship because "he had respect unto the recompence of the reward" – a focus on eternity.

(1) "He had respect" (ἀπέβλεπεν)

(a) This is in the imperfect tense, meaning ongoing action – Moses kept looking toward something.

(b) The word means to turn the eyes away from one thing to fix them on another.

Moses intentionally shifted his focus away from Egypt's treasures and toward God's eternal reward. This wasn't a passing thought – it was his sustained

focus.

"Faith doesn't just glance at eternity – it gazes at it."

(2) "The recompense of the reward"

(a) This is a compound word (μισθαποδοσία):

(i) μισθός – "wages, payment"

(ii) ἀπόδοσις – "giving back, repayment"

(b) This word refers to a full, just, God-given reward.

(c) It's used earlier in Hebrews 10:35: "Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward."

(d) This is not salvation by works:

(i) This is not earning salvation, but God's faithful reward for obedience (cf. 1 Cor. 3:14).

1 Corinthians 3:14

¹⁴ If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward.

(ii) Moses wasn't motivated by greed, but by the certainty of God's approval and promised inheritance.

(3) This is faith that fixes its eyes on the future

(a) Moses weighed the riches of Egypt against the reward of obedience – and

chose eternal gain.

(b) He saw beyond the palace walls to the promise of God.

(c) Faith values what God will give over what man can offer.

Matthew 6:19-21

¹⁹ Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: ²⁰ But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: ²¹ For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

Romans 8:18

¹⁸ For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time *are not worthy to be compared* with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

C. Faith that stands – vs. 27

Surrendering Egypt was one thing – standing up to it was another.

Faith didn't just cause Moses to walk away – it gave him the strength to stand firm when the wrath of the king was kindled.

Faith not only surrenders – it stands in courage, seeing the invisible God as more real than the most visible threats.

1. Stands in defiance of fear – “he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king...”
 - a) “He forsook Egypt” refers not to Moses’ early flight after killing the Egyptian (Exodus 2:14-15), but to his final departure during the Exodus.

- (1) "Forsook" (κατέλιπεν) – Often used to describe a deliberate departure or decisive break (e.g., Matthew 19:5 – "leave father and mother").
 - (2) The verb "he forsook" (κατέλιπεν) is in the aorist tense, indicating a decisive, climactic departure – not a panicked escape.
 - (3) That first flight was marked by fear, but this departure was marked by faith.
 - (4) This view fits the flow of Hebrews 11, and it transitions directly into v. 28 with the Passover.
- b) "Not fearing the wrath of the king" – Moses was face to face with Pharaoh, delivering God's judgments without backing down.
2. Sees the invisible – "he endured, as seeing him who is invisible" (this is the heart of the verse) – goes back to Heb. 11:1
 - a) The verb "seeing" (ὁρῶν) is present tense – not a one-time glance, but ongoing spiritual perception – "as continually seeing the Invisible One."
 - b) The verb "endured" (καρτερέω) means to remain steadfast with strength and courage.
3. Endures in obedience
 - a) Moses' endurance wasn't passive – he continued trusting, leading, and obeying despite pressures from Pharaoh, the people, and the wilderness.
 - b) He stood because he saw God, not Pharaoh, as the one truly in control.

4. Stands today

- a) We are still called to stand in faith, not fold under pressure.
- b) The more clearly we see God – through His Word and His Spirit – the less sway the threats of the world hold over us.

"You will never stand firm until you see clearly."

Conclusion to this point:

Faith that Shelters – The faith of Moses' parents protected him from death and aligned him with God's purpose before he could even speak. Their faith created an environment where God's calling could be nurtured.

Faith that Surrenders – When Moses grew up, he chose to turn his back on all that Egypt offered. His faith valued eternal reward over earthly riches, and he was willing to suffer because he saw something greater.

Faith that Stands – Moses' faith gave him courage to confront Pharaoh, to endure wrath, and to keep moving forward by seeing the invisible God. He stood firm, not because of who he was, but because of who he saw.

So let me ask you:

- What are you sheltering in faith? Maybe a child, a calling, or a conviction the world says isn't worth preserving?
- What have you surrendered lately? True faith doesn't cling – it lets go when God says, "Follow Me."
- Are you standing even when the world pushes

back? The pressures around you are real, but so is the God who sees you and stands with you.

The world needs people like Moses – people who will trust God when it's dangerous, obey Him when it costs, and see Him when no one else does.

We need God to raise up people of faith even in our church – people who don't just believe once, but believe continually.

Not just faith that starts well... but faith that finishes.

D. Faith that submits – vs. 28; Exodus 12

“He kept the Passover”

Exodus 12:7

⁷ 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.

Exodus 12:12-13

¹² 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. ¹³ 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.

- In this verse, faith is seen in an act of obedient submission to God's specific instruction – the keeping of the Passover.
- This was not a suggestion or tradition – it was a command from God that required precise obedience, and the consequences for disobedience were life or death.

1. Faith submits to God's plan of protection.
 - a) "Kept the Passover" – Greek verb *πεποίηκεν* (perfect tense): completed obedience with lasting effect.
 - b) Obedience involved sacrifice, carefulness, and urgency (Exodus 12).
 - c) Faith trusts that God's way is the only way of deliverance – even if it seems strange.

Exodus 12:28

²⁸ And the children of Israel went away, and did as the LORD had commanded Moses and Aaron, so did they.

2. Faith doesn't substitute its own ideas.
 - a) No one in Israel had seen this before. It may not have made sense. But faith submits to what God says, not what man would prefer.
 - b) The only safeguard that night was faith in God's word, expressed through obedience.
 - *Submission is the evidence of trust. Real faith doesn't argue – it obeys.*

3. Submission always precedes salvation.
 - a) Moses obeyed before the plague came.
 - b) Submission always precedes salvation.

Submission to God's way is the posture of saving faith. Moses and Israel didn't invent their own method of escape – they obeyed the specific word of the Lord. Had they refused to apply the blood, they would have perished.

This is not works-based salvation, but the reality

that true faith submits to God's revealed means of salvation.

Biblical support for this point:

Romans 10:3 – *“For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.”*

→ Salvation requires submission to God's way, not self-made efforts.

James 4:6-7 – *“God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble. Submit yourselves therefore to God.”*

→ Grace is extended to the humble – submission is a matter of posture, not payment.

Luke 18:13-14 – *“¹³And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. ¹⁴I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.”*

→ The publican, not the Pharisee, went home justified – because he came in humble dependence, not self-righteous pride.

Hebrews 5:9 – *“[Christ] became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him.”*

→ This “obedience” is the obedience of faith (Romans 1:5), not merit, but *believing submission* to the gospel.

Application:

Many want God's blessing, but few want God's boundaries.

Moses submitted. Israel obeyed. And judgment passed them by.

Faith submits – not just when it's easy, but when it's essential.

E. Faith that saves – vs. 29; Exodus 14

1. Faith obeys when the path is unclear.

- a) God told Moses to lift his rod and Israel to go forward (Exodus 14:15-16).

Exodus 14:15-16

¹⁵ And the LORD said unto Moses, Wherefore criest thou unto me? speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward: ¹⁶ But lift thou up thy rod, and stretch out thine hand over the sea, and divide it: and the children of Israel shall go on dry *ground* through the midst of the sea.

- b) The sea had not yet parted – but faith moved when God said move.
- c) This was not reckless – it was obedient trust in God's Word.

2. Faith trusts God in the impossible.

- a) The Red Sea was an impossible obstacle – but God made a way through.
- b) Faith didn't create the dry ground – but it walked where God opened the way.

Exodus 14:21-22

²¹ And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the LORD caused the sea to go *back*

by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea dry *land*, and the waters were divided.
²² And the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon the dry *ground*: and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left.

3. Faith is more than imitation.

- a) The Egyptians “assaying to do” were drowned – they tried to mimic Israel’s faith, but without God’s Word or covenant.
- b) This shows the danger of presumption: copying God’s people without trusting in God Himself.

➤ *God doesn’t honor imitation – He honors obedience born of faith.*

4. Faith that saves and faith that sustains

- a) Israel’s Red Sea crossing pictures deliverance by faith, but also the daily walk of faith every believer must continue.
- b) The same faith that led them out had to lead them through.
- c) Believers still face Red Sea moments – when fear says freeze, enemies press in, and God simply says, “Go forward.”

➤ The Red Sea was not just a salvation event – it was a faith training ground. And God still brings His people to places where the only way forward... is faith.

Key Cross-References:

Exodus 14:15 - “Speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward.”

Hebrews 10:38 - "The just shall live by faith."

2 Corinthians 5:7 - "We walk by faith, not by sight."

Colossians 2:6 - "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him."

F. Faith that surrounds – vs. 30; Joshua 6

"By faith...they were compassed about"

Joshua 6:3

³ And ye shall compass the city, all ye men of war, *and* go round about the city once. Thus shalt thou do six days.

Joshua 6:20

²⁰ So the people shouted when *the* priests blew with the trumpets: and it came to pass, when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, and the people shouted with a great shout, that the wall fell down flat, so that the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they took the city.

- Jericho marked the first obstacle in the Promised Land – fortified, walled, humanly impossible.
 - But faith surrounded the city without battering rams, or weaponry – just obedience.
1. Faith obeys even when it seems foolish.
 - a) God's command to march around the city made no sense militarily – but faith doesn't operate by human logic.
 - b) What mattered was not strategy but submission.
 - c) Faith sometimes means doing the simple thing faithfully until God moves.

2. Faith waits while obeying

- a) The people had to keep walking – day after day – with no visible results.
- b) It was not their strength, but their obedience, that brought the victory.
- c) The Greek participle for “compassed about” – “*κυκλωθέντα*” – (having been encircled) puts the emphasis on the action done in advance – *they walked first, then God brought the wall down.*

➤ *“Faith is not just about the outcome – it’s about the obedience that leads to it.”*

3. Faith gains the victory

- a) Jericho represents obstacles in the believer’s journey – “strong holds” we can’t tear down in our own power.

2 Corinthians 10:4

⁴ (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;)

- b) Faith “surrounds” the problem in obedience, waiting on God to help us gain the victory.
- c) Sometimes faith marches without explanation and trusts without timetable.

➤ Believers today must learn to walk in circles when God says so – not aimlessly, but faithfully, knowing the wall will fall in God's timing, not ours.

When the strongholds don't fall on day one... will you still walk on day six?

- d) Jericho's walls didn't fall because of volume or

violence – they fell because of faithful obedience.

God still honors the faith that keeps walking even when it feels like nothing is changing.

G. Faith that spares – vs. 31; Joshua 2 and 6

“By faith...Rahab perished not”

- Rahab’s inclusion in Hebrews 11 (as well as in the lineage of Jesus Himself) is remarkable – a Gentile, a woman, a harlot, living in a city doomed for destruction... yet spared by faith.
- Her story reminds us that faith is not limited by background, past, or reputation – it is available to anyone who believes and responds to God’s truth.

1. Rahab’s faith was rooted in what she heard.

- a) She had not seen the Red Sea parted or Egypt overthrown – but she had heard.
- b) Her words in Joshua 2:10-11 show a deep belief in the supremacy of Israel’s God.

Joshua 2:10-11

¹⁰ 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. ¹¹And 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.

2. Rahab’s faith was proven by what she did.

- a) She risked her life to hide the spies (Joshua 2:4) and tied the scarlet cord in her window as instructed (Joshua 2:18, 21).
 - b) This is obedient, active faith – the same kind of faith James says justifies in the sight of men (James 2:25).
 - c) Her faith wasn't silent – it produced action and resulted in rescue.
3. Rahab's faith set her apart from the city around her.
- a) Our text says she "perished not with them that believed not."
 - b) Her survival wasn't luck – it was faith.
 - c) She was surrounded by people who had every opportunity to repent (Joshua 6:1-2), but they chose defiance over belief.
- (1) They had witnessed or heard of God's power for decades.

Joshua 2:10

¹⁰ 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.

- This refers to events 40 years earlier (Exodus 14), meaning that the people of Canaan had plenty of time to process what God was doing.
- Rahab says "*our hearts did melt...*" (2:11) – not just her heart, but collectively, the people were terrified.

→ This implies awareness, not ignorance.

(2) Their fear proves knowledge – but not faith.

Joshua 2:11

¹¹ 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.

- Fear swept through Jericho. But fear alone does not equal repentance.
- They could have humbled themselves, as Rahab did.
- Instead, they hardened their hearts and fortified their city.

(3) Jericho had time to respond before judgment fell.

Joshua 6:1

¹ Now Jericho was straitly shut up because of the children of Israel: none went out, and none came in.

- This verse shows the city was on lockdown, not preparing to surrender, but to resist.
- They had seven days of Israel marching around their walls, silent but visible.

→ This could have been a final window of opportunity to respond.

- Remember: God often gives space for repentance before judgment (cf.

Revelation 2:21).

Revelation 2:21

²¹ And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not.

(4) Rahab proves they could have responded

- Rahab is the biblical counterexample – a citizen of Jericho who heard, believed, and acted in faith.
- She wasn't visited by angels, prophets, or priests – she just heard the reports and feared God rightly (Proverbs 1:7).

Proverbs 1:7

⁷ The fear of the LORD *is* the beginning of knowledge: *but* fools despise wisdom and instruction.

- If she could believe, so could others.

4. Rahab's faith is a reminder for both the lost and the saved.

a) To the lost: No matter your past, your failures, or what others call you – faith in God can rescue, redeem, and rewrite your story.

b) To the believer: Rahab reminds us that faith must act – not just in the big decisions, but in the daily ones. God still uses the unlikely.

➤ Faith spared Rahab from destruction – and brought her into the line of redemption. No one is beyond the reach of God's grace. Her faith proves that even when judgment is near, salvation is still available to those who believe and obey.

- Rahab's scarlet cord in the window became a symbol of salvation, much like the blood on the doorposts at Passover. She believed, she obeyed, and she was spared. And today, the same God still saves those who put their faith in Him.

Conclusion to this point:

Each step in this passage reveals a people learning to trust not in themselves, but in the promises of God.

- Faith shelters when danger is near.
- Faith surrenders to God's will above the world's rewards.
- Faith stands when fear and opposition close in.
- Faith submits to God's Word, even when it's strange or difficult.
- Faith saves – not because of works, but because it trusts the only way of deliverance.
- Faith surrounds the impossible in obedience, waiting on God to work.
- And faith spares – even the most unlikely – when that faith is placed in a merciful and mighty God.

These aren't just stories of ancient heroes – they are examples for us, written that we might run our race with the same kind of faith.

As Hebrews 12:1-2 reminds us:

"Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight... and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus..."

That's what this faith is all about:

Not just starting strong...

But finishing faithfully – by keeping our eyes on the One who is the Author and Finisher of our faith.

So the question is this:

Will you walk by faith when the path isn't clear?
Will you trust God when the walls haven't fallen?
Will you surrender to His way even when the world offers its best?

If you want to finish well... then walk by faith – from beginning to end.

XIII. THROUGH FAITH MANY OTHERS – VS. 32-40

“FAITH THAT ENDURES TO THE END”

In the previous point (vs. 23-31), we saw examples of Faith That Finishes. It spoke of those who began a journey with God and, by faith, followed Him through to the end.

As we come to the concluding section of this chapter, we see faith that endures. We will see that faith enduring through personal trials, through suffering, obscurity, and even martyrdom. These were believers who did not see the full promise in their lifetime, yet held fast in faith to the very end.

This passage marks the conclusion of the great “Hall of Faith” in the book of Hebrews. Throughout this chapter, we’ve seen the faith of some of the most recognizable saints in the Old Testament: Abel, Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Joshua (and the nation of Israel), and Rahab. Their lives have served as examples to encourage and strengthen our own walk of faith with the Lord today.

In this final section, we will consider a few more truths about faith that I trust will continue to impact our lives long after this study is complete.

When I speak of faithful people in this passage, I don't mean those who never doubted or struggled. Rather, these are men and women whose trust, though imperfect, was ultimately placed in God, not in themselves or their circumstances.

And by faithful, I also mean those who have believed in Christ for eternal salvation, as the final verses of the chapter affirm, not merely "spiritual" or "religious" people, as our culture might define them today.

A. God honors the faith of imperfect people – vs. 32-35a

➤ Even in some of the darkest times recorded in the Bible, God commends faith.

1. Faith in a time of rebellion against God: the judges: a time when *"every man did that which was right in his own eyes."*
 - a) Gideon (Judges 6 and 7) – required multiple signs to anchor his hesitant faith.

He was literally hiding in a winepress when "the angel of the LORD" called him a "mighty man of valor."

Judges 6:11-12

¹¹ And there came an angel of the LORD, and sat under an oak which was in Ophrah, that pertained unto Joash the Abiezrite: and his son Gideon threshed wheat by the winepress, to hide it from the Midianites. ¹² And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him, and said unto him, The LORD is with thee, thou mighty man of valour.

Gideon's faith was shown to be quite like ours today, serving as a powerful example of someone who struggled to believe what

God told him, and he asked for a sign to strengthen his face several times, yet he ultimately obeyed "through faith."

(1) The angel's sign with the offering – Judges 6:17-21

- (a) Gideon asks for a sign that the Angel of the Lord is truly speaking to him. He prepares an offering, and the Angel touches it with His staff. The fire consumes it, and the Angel vanishes.

This was done to confirm God's presence and call. It produced both fear and acknowledgement of God's presence.

(2) The first fleece test – Judges 6:36-38

- (a) He asks God to make the fleece of wool (not sure what this was: perhaps his sheepskin cloak with wool on it) wet with dew while the ground around it remains dry.

- (b) This was done to confirm God's promise to save Israel through him.

(3) The second fleece test (reverse) – Judges 6:39-40

- (a) Gideon asks again about the fleece, only this time to have the fleece dry and the ground wet.

- (b) The purpose was to remove any doubt in his mind. He asks this in humility, recognizing his own limited faith.

(4) Although he didn't ask for another sign, God gave him one last support: the enemy's

dream confirmed – Judges 7:9-15.

(a) He tells Gideon to go to the enemy camp and listen to what they were saying. He overhears a Midianite soldier tell a dream of a tumbling loaf of barley bread destroying the camp, which was interpreted (in vs. 14) as “the sword of Gideon the son of Joash.”

(b) Gideon’s faith was firmly established now, and his reaction to this was “worship” (vs. 15).

b) Barak – hesitant at first, but followed through with obedient faith (Judges 4)

(1) Some have termed Barak’s faith as “faith in motion,” moving from uncertainty toward obedience.

(2) When he said he wouldn’t go to battle without Deborah (Judges 4:8), it’s not to be viewed as cowardice. It’s an honest recognition of his own limitations combined with a willingness to obey despite those limitations.

➤ Barak’s faith teaches us that recognizing our need for stronger faith is itself a step of faith, but we must not wait until our faith feels strong to act in obedience. God honors faith that acts, even when it feels weak.

c) Samson – his inclusion here speaks on the issue of faith after failure (Judges 13-16)

(1) Samson’s mention in Hebrews 11 shows us that God can redeem a life that is marred by failure when there is a return to faith.

(2) Though Samson sinned greatly, he turned

back to God in his final moments, and God answered him. His story shows us that past failure does not disqualify a person from ever having faith again or from God's recognition of that faith when repentance and trust are present.

Judges 16:28

²⁸ And Samson called unto the LORD, and said, O Lord GOD, remember me, I pray thee, and strengthen me, I pray thee, only this once, O God, that I may be at once avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes.

- d) Jephthah – he is a picture of faith amidst a flawed understanding or theology (Judges 11)
- (1) Jephthah was the son of a prostitute, rejected by his family, and drawn into leadership in desperate times. Yet, in faith, he trusted God for victory over Israel's enemies and God delivered His people.
 - (2) The most dramatic and well-known episode in Jephthah's life is his misguided attempt to secure God's favor with the vow to offer the first thing that came out of his house when he returned from victory.

This is one of the most difficult texts in the entire Bible and scholars have debated it for ages. The point is not to give details and an opinion on that at this point. Regardless of what happened with his daughter, his presence here shows us:

- (a) God honors genuine faith, even in the midst of theological or moral errors.
- (b) A sincere heart can still make very unwise decisions: "you can be sincere and be sincerely wrong."

(c) God used Jephthah in spite of his flawed background and limited understanding (he didn't have all that we have today in a finished Scripture, the indwelling Holy Spirit, a fellowship of believers).

2. Faith in time of rule: the kingdom

- a) David – king of Israel – “a man after God’s own heart.”
- b) Samuel – priest, prophet, and judge – faithful from his childhood to his death.
- c) The prophets (considering the use of this phrase in the New Testament in general, this can be viewed as the time of the writing prophets) – these were fearless proclaimers of God’s word, no matter the consequence.

➤ Faith is not the absence of flaws or being perfect; it’s the presence of trust and dependence. God uses those who trust Him, not those who impress men.

B. God honors the faith of unnamed sufferers – vs. 35b-38

“Of whom the world was not worthy”

From the world’s point of view, these faithful people appeared like those that would be rejected: some were homeless, persecuted, living in caves and holes in the ground. They looked like complete failures but the author of the book of Hebrews shows something quite the opposite: it wasn’t that these people were unworthy of the world, but that the world was unworthy of them.

This provided comfort and encouragement to the original readers who were themselves facing

persecution. The author is essentially saying, "When the world rejects you for your faith, remember that you're in the company of people so faithful that the world itself was unworthy to contain them." This allows us to see suffering as not something to fear but something where we see the presence of Almighty God working through.

1. Some were tortured without accepting deliverance (vs. 35b) "that they might obtain a better resurrection."
 - a) From what many scholars aptly show, this is speaking of the time between Malachi and Matthew, a period of about 400 years. It is known as the Maccabean Period because of a leader of a rebellious faction a couple centuries before Christ.
 - b) There were martyrs during the time of persecution under Antiochus Epiphanes (175-164 BC), particularly those as described in 2 Maccabees 7-7 (an apocryphal book). These martyrs explicitly refused offers of deliverance from this persecution if they renounced their faith because they believed in a "better resurrection."

Philippians 3:10-11

¹⁰ That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; ¹¹ If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.

2. Some were mocked and scourged (vs. 36a), showing they were rejected by the world.
3. Some were imprisoned, stoned, sawn asunder, etc. (vs. 36b-37) – speaks of martyrdom for

their faith.

4. Some wandered destitute (vs. 38b)

- God sees all those serving Him in obscurity, those that are afflicted, and even those that are forgotten, and honors their steadfast faith. The world, even the Christian world, honors success whereas God honors faithfulness.

C. God will ultimately honor the faith of all His saints eternally – vs. 39-40

1. Though they were commended for their faith, the Old Testament saints did not receive the fullness of the promise – vs. 39.
 - a) "And these all" – this goes back to verse 2, and the phrase "by it the elders..." The "all" is the "elders." I made this point as we began studying this chapter: The primary focus is on the list between verses 2 and 39 but would also include all of the "elders" mentioned in the Bible that demonstrated their faith in God.
 - b) "Having obtained a good report" – as stated in that first study: The "good report" they obtained means God Himself gave testimony to their lives. It's as if heaven wrote a report card on their faith (Hebrews 11) – and God's voice declared, "This one believed Me. This one trusted Me."
 - c) "Through faith" – question: "Could it be said of us that God has written a good report of us because of our faith?" If we learn who all these "elders" (saints) were and how God used very imperfect people, we have no real reason to not be able to live a life of faith that would merit the same "good report."
 - d) "Received not the promise"

- (1) Hebrews 9:15 speaks of the “promise of eternal inheritance,” which helps clarify Hebrews 11:39, where the saints “received not the promise.” The term “inheritance” would have resonated deeply with Jewish readers, but more than that, it refers to the full enjoyment of what God promised: eternal life secured through Christ. Though Old Testament believers were saved by grace through faith, they did not receive the complete fulfillment of that promise until after the redemptive work of Christ.
 - (2) This phrase does not mean the Old Testament saints were not saved or were somehow excluded from God’s blessings. It means they did not experience the fulfillment of the promised Messiah and the new covenant in their lifetime. They looked forward in faith (vs. 13), but the fullness of that promise (the redemption accomplished in Christ and the eternal inheritance is secured) was something they anticipated but did not see.
2. God has provided something better for the New Testament saints – “for us” – vs. 40a
- a) This is speaking of what we have seen so often throughout this study of Hebrews: the New Covenant, the finished work of Christ.
 - b) That “better thing” that we now enjoy through Christ includes:
 - (1) The coming of Christ (Heb. 1:2)
 - (2) His once-for-all sacrifice (Heb. 9:12)
 - (3) Direct access to God’s presence (Heb. 10:19-20)

- (4) The indwelling Holy Spirit (Heb. 8:10-11; Ezek. 36:27)
 - (5) Full knowledge of the gospel (1 Pet. 1:10-12)
 - c) The author is saying that the New Covenant is the fulfillment of what the Old Covenant pointed toward, and the reality that we now live in that they only anticipated.
3. "They" (the Old Testament saints) "without us should not be made perfect" (vs. 40b).

➤ Faith looks ahead, not only to what God is doing now, but to what He has prepared for eternity. Our story today is connected to theirs, and the fulfillment of the promise (eternity in heaven) is yet to come.

a) "Made perfect" (τελειόω) in Hebrews means to reach completion or fulfillment, not moral perfection.

b) "Without us"

God had something better in store, not just for the saints of old, but for all of us together. Though those who came before us lived by faith and were approved by God, they didn't receive the fullness of the promise in their lifetime. Why? Because God planned something greater: that we, along with them, would one day be made complete together in Christ. Their faith looked forward, ours looks back, but we are all part of the same story of redemption. And in the end, God will bring all His people – past and present – into the fullness of His promise, perfected together in Him.

Conclusion: When we began this study, we learned that "faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." We've now seen that truth demonstrated through several of God's saints across thousands of years, and we've discovered that God has been writing a story about faith that includes not just these ancient heroes, but every person who trusts in Him.

These heroes have shown us that God wants those with genuine faith that trusts His character and moves towards His will, regardless of background or history. The question is whether you will join the ranks of those who live by faith rather than sight, who choose God's promises over what the world has to offer, and who trust His goodness even when His ways are unclear. The same God who honored their faith is ready to honor yours.