

STUDIES IN THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS

STUDY NUMBER TWENTY - Hebrews 11:23-40

TEXT:

v.23 By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden for three months by his parents, because they saw he was a beautiful child; and they were not afraid of the king's edict.

v.24 By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter;

v.25 choosing rather to be suffering ill-treatment with the people of God, than to be enjoying the short-lived pleasures of sin;

v.26 considering the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he was looking forward to the reward.

v.27 By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he persevered, as seeing Him who is invisible.

v.28 By faith he kept the Passover and the sprinkling of the blood, in order that the One who is destroying the firstborn might not touch them.

v.29 By faith they passed through the Red Sea as though [they were passing] through dry land; and the Egyptians, when they attempted it, were drowned.

v.30 By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they had been encircled for seven days.

v.31 By faith Rahab the harlot did not perish along with those who were disobedient, after she had welcomed the spies in peace.

v.32 And what more shall I say? For time will fail me if I am telling of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah; of David and Samuel and the prophets;

v.33 who by faith conquered kingdoms, performed [acts of] righteousness, obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions,

v.34 quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, from weakness were made strong, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight.

v.35 Women received [back] their dead by resurrection; and others were tortured, not accepting their release, in order that they might obtain a better resurrection.

v.36 And others received mockings and scourgings, yes, also chains and imprisonment.

v.37 They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were tempted, they were put to death with the sword; they went about in sheepskins, in goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, ill-treated

v.38 (men of whom the world was not worthy), wandering in deserts and mountains and caves and holes in the ground.

v.39 And all these, having gained approval through their faith, did not receive what was promised,

v.40 because God had provided something better for us, in order that apart from us they should not be made perfect.

INTRODUCTION:

(Aladdin Factor, The by Jack Canfield and Mark Victor Hansen)

Two ministers died and went to Heaven. St. Peter greeted them and said, “Your condos aren’t ready yet. Until they’re finished, you can return to earth as anything you want.”

“Fine,” said the first minister. “I’ve always wanted to be an eagle soaring over the Grand Canyon.”

“And I’d like to be a real cool stud,” said the second.

Poof! Their wishes were granted.

When the condos were finished, St. Peter asked an assistant to bring back the two ministers. “How will I find them?” the assistant asked.

“One is soaring over the Grand Canyon,” St. Peter replied. “The other may be tough to locate. He’s somewhere in Detroit--on a snow tire.”
pp. 134-5

Postcard to psychiatrist: “Having a wonderful time. Wish you were here—to tell me why.”

(From Parson's Bible Illustrator 1.0)

Erma Bombeck has done it again in her new book All I Know About Animal Behavior I Learned in Loehmann's Dressing Room.

Consider the camel. He has yellow teeth, corns, and halitosis. When he catches a cold he mopes around with his nose running and is unbelievably rude. Now don't tell me you haven't had a blind date who matches that description perfectly.
p. 3

I bought the facial repair kit. I put it in the trunk of my car with the tire jack, flares, and spare tire. You never know if you are going to be out alone on a dark road some night when your lips go flat!
p. 97

Call it a wild theory of mine, but I think exhibitionists are born that way. He's the baby in his crib who cries like he has just swallowed a razor blade, and when you pick him up he stops.

He's the child who, in every home movie, sails across the screen in front of everyone like a blurred Frisbee out of control. At the dinner table, he will dangle a French fry from each nostril and bark like a seal. He wets in the wading pool, clearing it out in fifteen seconds. He wears his clothing inside out to school and lets his underwear hang out of his tennis shorts. For show-and-tell he takes your checkbook to class. When he grows up he frequents karaoke bars and sings "Strangers in the Night"--off-key.

The majority of *Homo sapiens* live quiet lives in the bleacher seats. They are content to sit back and watch the attention seekers.

This leaves a select group who carry cards in their billfolds reading, "In case of accident--call a press conference."
pp. 111-12

A few years ago, my husband and I were in Africa going on game runs and photographing animal rumps. We would have preferred their faces, but it was their call.

As we stretched out on cots in a tent, the darkness was pierced by the shrill laugh of hyenas.

"They sure know how to have a good time," observed my husband.

"Either that or his wife just crammed her size 14 body into a size 3 nightgown with a Victoria's Secret label."

I know a sister when I hear one.
pp. 206-7

We are now prepared to enter in upon a study of the later part of Hebrews 11:
THE GREAT FAITH CHAPTER.

We have seen the manifestation of faith during the pre-patriarchal period and the patriarchal period and now we move a little further on in history.

We will be FOCUSING primarily on:

MOSES and

the CHILDREN OF ISRAEL.

We will see:

FAITH IN THE WILDERNESS SOJOURN (verses 11:23-31),
 FAITH IN THE MIDST OF TRIALS (verses 11:32-38), and
 THE VICTORY OF FAITH (verses 11:39, 40).

This truly is FAITH IN ACTION.

Lane calls the first section (verses 23-31):

The Triumphs of Perseverance in Faith in the Mosaic Era (11:23-31)
 p. 366

Lenski says:

From Genesis the writer proceeds to Exodus and dwells at length on Moses, not only because so much of faith appears in his life, but also because his readers esteem Moses so highly. They are thinking of forsaking Christ for Judaism because Judaism had Moses and all the ritual commandments given through Moses. Well, Moses himself is one of the greatest examples of faith in Christ. Let the readers, therefore, follow Moses, namely this faith of his.
 p. 407

Wiersbe observes:

Three great themes relating to faith are seen in the life of Moses. First, *the refusal of faith* (Heb. 11:24-25). As the adopted son of the Egyptian princess, Moses could have led an easy life in the palace. But his faith moved him to refuse that kind of life. He chose to identify with God's suffering people. True faith causes a believer to hold the right values and make the right decisions. The phrase "pleasures of sin" does not refer only to lust and other gross sins. The phrase describes a way of life that we today would call "successful"--position, prestige, power, wealth, and freedom from problems.

Moses' refusal of faith led to *the reproach of faith* (11:26). The mayor of a large American city moved into a dangerous and decayed housing project to demonstrate the problems and needs of the minorities. But she also kept her fashionable apartment and eventually moved out of the slum. We commend her for her courage but we have to admire Moses even more. He left the palace *and never went back to the old life!* He identified with the Jewish slaves! Men and women of faith often have to bear reproach and suffering. The apostles suffered for their faith. Believers today behind the iron curtain know what it is to bear reproach. If reproach is an evidence of true faith, we wonder how much true faith there is in our country today!

Finally, there is *the reward of faith* (11:26b-29). God always rewards true faith--if not immediately, at least ultimately. Over against "the treasures in Egypt" Moses saw the "recompense of the reward." As Dr. Vance Havner has said, "Moses chose the imperishable, saw the invisible, and did the impossible."
pp. 126-7

Morgan says:

The last three chapters of the letter to the Hebrews are of the nature of appeal on the basis of all the arguments that have been advanced. The subject of these chapters is in a very special way that of faith, faith in God, and therefore faith as the supreme need of human life. Thus in the final movement the underlying philosophy of life comes into clear revelation.
p. 116

Wiersbe quotes D. L. Moody:

"Faith makes all things possible;
love makes all things easy."

D. L. Moody

p. 821

Stedman says:

Take each example in this chapter and you will see that it is one of action. Without exception these men and women were set to work by their faith. Their faith made them act in the present. Therefore faith is not passive, it is dynamic, forceful.

p. 199

McGee comments on this section by saying:

Now we move down quite a few years to the time when the children of Israel are in slavery in the land of Egypt. Moses represents the *sacrifices* of faith.

p. 592

v.23 By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden for three months by his parents, because they saw he was a beautiful child; and they were not afraid of the king's edict.

We are going to be looking at:

THE LEADER in verses 23-28 and

THOSE WHO ARE LED in verses 29-31.

In examining Moses' faith we will see his:

PERSONAL FAITH (verses 23-26) and

PUBLIC DECLARATION OF FAITH (verses 27, 28).

In the life of Moses we are going to see that FAITH OPERATES IN SPITE OF ADVERSITY.

In verse 23 the FOCUS is on:

"WHEN HE WAS BORN."

In verse 24 it will be on:

"WHEN HE HAD GROWN UP."

He "WAS HIDDEN FOR THREE MONTHS BY HIS PARENTS" for 2 REASONS:

1. "THEY SAW HE WAS A BEAUTIFUL CHILD" and
2. "THEY WERE NOT AFRAID OF THE KING'S EDICT."

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

With this transition to the life of **Moses**, the writer began to focus on the way faith confronts opposition and hostility, a subject familiar to his readers.
p. 808

Moses miraculously and sovereignly survived because he "WAS HIDDEN FOR THREE MONTHS BY HIS PARENTS" and they did this:

1. "BECAUSE THEY SAW HE WAS A BEAUTIFUL CHILD."

Stephen makes reference to this in his sermon:

Acts 7:20

"And it was at this time that Moses was born; and he was lovely in the sight of God; and he was nurtured three months in his father's home.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

Delighted by the precious gift of a son which God had given them, they evidently believed God had something better for this lovely baby than death. Not fearing Pharaoh's **edict**, they kept him alive, and God rewarded their faith by their son's illustrious career.
pp. 808-9

Lane says:

Their confidence in God's power to accomplish his sovereign purposes more than outweighed their fear of reprisals because they had defied the royal decree.
p. 370

Hewitt says:

The author now moves from Genesis to Exodus, from the age of the patriarchs to that of Moses, the leader of Israel, but he introduces the great lawgiver by first mentioning the faith of the parents who preserved his life as a babe.
p. 180

Wuest says:

In view of the fact that Moses was such a handsome, well-favored child, the parents naturally looked forward to a great destiny for him, an exceptional career, and that God would use him for an outstanding service. They had faith that God would thus save him from the mandate of the king.
p. 206

Griffith Thomas says:

It is noteworthy that Moses occupies more attention than any other in this list of men and women of faith, and the prominence given to him is full of striking suggestion in regard to his faith in God.
p. 149

Bruce says:

The next example of faith is Moses, whose whole life is marked by awareness of the presence and power of the unseen God, and believing obedience to his word.
p. 308

Bruce raises this further question (speaking of the parents of Moses):

Wherein precisely did their "faith" lie? Probably the statement that Moses was a "goodly" child means more than that he was a beautiful baby. We are perhaps intended to infer that there was something about the appearance of the child which indicated that he was no ordinary child, but one destined under God to accomplish great things for his people.

Kistemaker says:

The writer of Hebrews opens the Book of Exodus and reads about the cruel command of Pharaoh to kill all the Hebrew male children at birth. A Levite and his fiancée, Amram and Jochebed, decide to get married. Subsequently they are blessed with the birth of a son. Now they face the possibility of losing their child. They act boldly in faith. Seeing that their son is a most attractive child, they defy the king's command. What give Amram and Jochebed the courage to disobey? Most likely, they see in their strikingly handsome son a sign of God's approval (see Exod. 2:2; Acts 7:20). And because of God's favor they continue to exercise their faith.
p. 335

Westcott observes:

Faith under two forms moved the parents of Moses to preserve him. Something in his appearance kindled hope as to his destiny; and then looking to God for the fulfilment of His promise they had no fear of the king's orders.
p. 371

Richards says:

The many ways faith changed the life of Moses are stamped vividly on the pages of the Old Testament. Here we're reminded that at every critical stage in his life, faith shaped him for his ultimate ministry. His parents' faith first saved his life (v. 23). Growing up, faith led him to throw in his lot with the slave people of Israel rather than his adoptive royal family (vv. 24-26). Faith enabled him to defy rather than give in to Pharaoh, remaining obedient to the heavenly King (vv. 26-27). Faith led Moses to command the people to keep the first Passover, and to walk boldly into the Red Sea (vv. 28-29).

Almost every difficult, every challenging experience, every danger, every decision in Moses' life was faced on the basis of faith's obedient response. Faith enabled each obedient act, and the pattern of faithful obedience that emerged made Moses the man he finally became.
pp. 120-21

Montefiore in Black's commentary says:

Moses is next on the roll-call of witnesses. It is hardly surprising that no less than five instances of faith are taken from his life, since Moses was the greatest figure of the old dispensation, and our author has already found it necessary to prove that Jesus is superior to him (cf. iii. 2 ff.).
p. 202

G. Campbell Morgan in his little book on Hebrews 11, The Triumphs of Faith, says:

Amram and Jochebed did not foresee this thing; but they believed God, they believed in God. They did not know what was going to happen, or what would take place. They did not know what the issue would be; but believing, by faith they prepared the ark. They put the baby in it; they committed it to the waters of death, and then waited, and that was the issue.
p. 118

Let us thank God that in this marvellous chapter chronicling the triumphs of faith the writer was led, as I believe of the Spirit, to include this action of two people, little known, hidden away among the crowds of slaves; and so much so that even to this day very few people really know their names; and yet they by an act of venturesome superlative faith marched with God, and created vantage ground upon which He marched forward in the fulfilment of His high purpose.
p. 119

English says much the same thing:

Unheralded and comparatively unknown, Amram and Jochebed were instruments of God toward the release from bondage of His people, Israel, and in respect to other mighty deeds, *because of their faith*. They believed God, and as a result they are noted in one of the great chapters of the Bible.
p. 399

Lange says in his commentary:

When we believe that God has special purposes regarding a man, we not merely *hope* for his *preservation*, but we acquire *courage* in cooperating for his deliverance; and we rely on God's assistance in deeds of daring, and amidst circumstances of peril.

p. 193

Phillips says:

First, the faith of Moses' parents was eminently practical. They hid Moses for three months, for as long as they could. With the death sentence hovering over him by the decree of Pharaoh, Moses was sheltered because his parents took a vigorous step of faith. "How does God save a person condemned to death?" they asked themselves. Then they thought of Noah and his ark. We will do that, they said. We will make a little ark. We'll put Moses in the river, as commanded by Pharaoh, but we'll put him in the ark first. We'll put the ark between him and the waters of death, and we'll trust God to do for Moses what He did for Noah."

p. 176

He says further:

Moses' parents acted with great personal courage. They were "not afraid of the king's commandment" (11:23c). It was no light thing to defy the royal decree, but Amram and Jochebed (Ex. 6:20) were made of the stuff that makes martyrs. Their faith drove out their fear; their eyes were on a greater King than Pharaoh. Thus, they triumphed over this world's dangers.

p. 176

v.24 By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter;

Whereas, in verse 23 it was:

"By faith Moses, when he was born."

Now in verse 24 it is:

"BY FAITH MOSES, WHEN HE HAD GROWN UP."

We are going to be talking about:

MOSES' CONVICTIONS (verse 24),

HIS CHOICES (verse 25),

HIS CHARACTER (verse 26), and

THE CONSUMMATION (verse 27).

It is the rudder of forged convictions that give us the strength to JUST SAY NO! It is the same convictions that cause us to STAND AGAINST A CULTURE.

DANIEL purposed in his heart not to defile himself with the king's meat.

JOSEPH refused to go to bed with Potapher's wife.

NEHEMIAH met his enemies, Sanballat and Geshem, with stern resistance in their request for a summit meeting.

Nehemiah 6:3, 4

"I am carrying on a great project and cannot go down. Why should the work stop while I leave it and go down to you?" Four times they sent me the same message, and each time I gave them the same answer."

MOSES is a THERMOSTAT instead of a THERMOMETER. He determines social climate rather than registering it.

He is a CROCODILE instead of a CHAMELEON. A chameleon gets his color for the last environment he crawled across.

"BY FAITH MOSES, WHEN HE HAD GROWN UP, REFUSED TO BE CALLED THE SON OF PHARAOH'S DAUGHTER."

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

In a classic presentation of the way faith chooses between the attractive but temporary **pleasures of sin** and the prospect of **disgrace for the sake of Christ**, the writer showed **Moses** to be a real hero of faith who had an intelligent regard for the eschatological hopes of the nation of Israel. The readers also were to accept "disgrace" and reject "the pleasures of sin," and they would do so if they, like Moses, anticipated their **reward**.
p. 809

Westcott says:

. . . point to a crisis when the choice was made, as distinct from Moses' habitual spirit.
p. 371

Kistemaker says:

To break the tie with the daughter of Pharaoh and to choose to be identified with the mistreated Hebrew slaves called for faith and courage. Moses acted not rashly in youthful fervor but maturely as a man who at the age of forty was fully educated. Deliberately he associated with "the people of God," the Hebrews.
p. 336

Morgan says:

But he saw through it all. He saw clearly that it was fading that it was for a season, that it was doomed; and he saw the hope of the Messiah bringing reproach, men laughing at it; and yet burning like a beacon; and he said: No, I will not be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter. In other words, to go back to our early consideration and the definition of faith, that was confidence in things hoped for, and conviction of things unseen, and so by faith he refused.
p. 126

Thomas says:

Notwithstanding all the magnificent opportunity that lay before Moses in his adoption by the daughter of the king, he deliberately refused to be regarded as her son, basing his refusal on an estimate of the comparative value of the glory of Egypt and the position of God's people. We note the significance of the statement, "when he was come to years of discretion," implying that the decision was made when he was in the full vigor of manhood.
p. 149

Wuest says:

He believed that God would fulfil His promise to His people, little likelihood as at present there seemed to be of any great future for his race.
p. 206

Lane says:

Moses himself is presented as an exemplar of faith for an apathetic and discouraged congregation in vv 24-27. The first episode directs attention to his decisive renunciation of privilege and power in the determination to identify himself with his own people who were enslaved in Egypt.
p. 370

MacArthur reminds us:

Life is made up of decisions. Some are simple and unimportant, and some are complex and extremely important. Many are made almost unconsciously, whereas others we think about carefully for a long time. Some decisions are made by default. When we put off deciding, a decision is made for us. But it is still our decision, because we decide to put it off. The course and the quality of our lives are determined much more by our decisions than by our circumstances.
p. 345

Wiersbe in his little book, Run With the Winners, says:

When faith says yes to God, it must also automatically say no to something else; otherwise the person is compromising. God demands total commitment to Him; we cannot serve two masters. Because Abraham believed God, he left Ur of the Chaldees and went to Canaan. He did not ask for a contract, nor did he try to negotiate terms with God. He simply obeyed. He said yes to God and no to Ur of the Chaldees. It took both decisions to make him a real man of faith.

It is relatively easy to say yes to God, but difficult to say no to the world, the flesh, and the devil. Lot said yes to God but never said no to the world, and the story of his pilgrimage ends in a cave where there is darkness, drunkenness, and debauchery. "Demas, having loved this present world, has deserted me," wrote Paul at a time when he desperately needed companionship and help (2 Timothy 4:10).

p. 99

Because of his personal values and his faith and trust in God and His purpose and plan, not only for his life but for the life of the nation, Moses has the courage to stand and make a very difficult decision. The courage to make that decision is forged out of his convictions.

(Perilous Pursuits by Joseph M. Stowell)

You and I face the same choices as these men. We can harness these incredibly powerful forces for God's glory and our good. Or we can unharness them and let them run like those wild stallions, leaving destruction, emptiness, and despair in their path.

My passions, disconnected from God, long for any object or person that promises to satisfy my need for significance: a car, a companion, a title, a trip, drugs, sex, power, or position. It's different from person to person.

p. 48

(The Things that Matter Most by Cal Thomas)

President Clinton sought to drive a wedge between logic and politics when he argued that people should be judged not on the basis of "who they are," but on "what they do." This presumes that who they are can be separated from what they do, which it cannot.

p. 92

WHAT A MAN IS WILL DETERMINE WHAT A MAN WILL DO.

Mark 7:20-23

And He was saying, "That which proceeds out of the man, that is what defiles the man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed the evil thoughts and fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, deeds of coveting and wickedness, as well as deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride and foolishness. All these evil things proceed from within and defile the man."

The KEY WORD in verse 24 which manifests MOSES' CONVICTION is:

"REFUSED."

"[HE] REFUSED TO BE CALLED THE SON OF PHARAOH'S DAUGHTER."

v.25 choosing rather to be suffering ill-treatment with the people of God, than to be enjoying the short-lived pleasures of sin;

Whereas, in verse 24 we focused on:

CONVICTIONS,

in verse 25 we are focusing on:

CHOICES.

Make no mistake about it, the CHOICES we make are based on the CONVICTIONS which we hold.

Whereas, in verse 24 we focused on the word:

"refused,"

in verse 25 we are going to be focusing on the words:

"CHOOSING RATHER."

This is a powerful message to these Hebrew Christians.

Wiersbe in his book, Run With the Winners, says:

For Moses, "the passing pleasures of sin" would mean the ease and affluence of the palace as compared with the trials and sufferings of his people. Whatever he did as an Egyptian officer would never last, but whatever he did in the service of God would last forever.
p. 104

Thomas reminds us:

The pleasures of sin are only "for a season," but the people of God have "pleasures for evermore" (Ps. 16:11).
p. 149

Psalm 16:11

You have made known to me the path of life;
you will fill me with joy in your presence,
with eternal pleasures at your right hand.

Westcott says:

Moses was called to devote himself to his people. He knew the source of the call: to have disobeyed it therefore by seeking to retain his place in the Egyptian court would have been 'sin,' though such disloyalty would have given him the opportunity for a transitory enjoyment of the resources of princely state.
pp. 371-2

Moses was able to recognise in a host of bondsmen a divine nation. By faith he saw what they were called to be.
p. 372

Bruce says:

But when Moses made that refusal he did not foresee the reputation which he was going to establish for himself; he had nothing to look forward to but privation, danger, scorn, and suffering--with Israel's liberation, please God. To have remained at Pharaoh's court would have been lasting dishonor, and that dishonor would be a price too high to pay for material advantages which at best would be but short-lived.

p. 311

Stedman says:

One characteristic of faith is that it gladly sacrifices present advantage in order to gain the future. It does not try to have its cake and eat it too. Therefore, it clashes head-on with the common philosophy of our day, "Get it now or you may never have another chance."

p. 200

Lenski says:

Moses chose this lot "rather than to have enjoyment of sin lasting for a period," the sin consisting not in sinful deeds in his court life but in disowning his people in order to enjoy the earthly grandeur at Pharaoh's palaces and court.

p. 409

A. T. Robertson in his Word Pictures says:

To have been disloyal to God's people would have brought enjoyment to Moses in the Egyptian Court for a short while only.

p. 426

Delitzsch says:

He knew them to be but temporary, and to have an eternally bitter end in prospect. And in that conviction consisted his faith, which looked through the deceptive appearances of worldly good things, to their inward and essential nothingness, and to their fearful end. Therefore he suffered not himself to be dazzled by all the honours and luxury which his position offered him.

p. 261

TWO WAYS BEFORE YOU

An intentionally known physicist and his wife decided while they were still in the university that doing God's will would be the primary concern of their lives. Upon graduation, they respond to His call to serve as missionaries in Borneo. Think of it! Two young people with a brilliant future--he with degrees from two universities, and she a medical doctor--preparing themselves to work among a primitive and pagan people! One eminent British scientist, hearing of their decision, exclaimed, "What a complete and utter waste of time!" But today they look back upon their years of missionary service, convinced that they chose the right path. Not only did they experience a full and joyous life in serving the Lord, but souls were won to Christ. A waste of time? Never! Their choice was the way of eternal worth.

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

When you choose the lesser of two evils, always remember that it is still an evil.

Max Lerner

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

(Worms In My Tea: And Other Mixed Blessings by Becky Freeman & Ruthie Arnold)

“Look, Scott, our family life can’t get any worse than it is right now. We’re microwaving underwear to get it dry in time to wear it and eating stuff out of the refrigerator that looks like it needs a shave.

“I’m sending up the white flag, throwing in the towel. This camel’s back is broken, this filly won’t ride, this heifer won’t milk, (deep breath) not gonna do it anymore. How else can I say it?

“I have only so much time and energy to give and when I’m working, I have nothing left for the people I love the most. No one is mindin’ the store around here! Whatever the cost, we *have* to find a way to get me home again.”

Scott blinked twice and asked, “Is that it?”

“Yep,” I answered, bracing for another round.

“Okay,” he said.

“*What?*” I said.

“Okay,” he repeated slowly. “We need you. To be honest, I’m relieved. And that’s a surprise to me, too. We’ll find a way to make it.”

p. 149

(Halftime: Changing Your Game Plan from Success to Significance by Bob Buford)

I was accustomed to putting together periodic strategic plans for my business. These plans were a yardstick by which those of us in the company could measure our effectiveness in bringing our common dreams to fruition. They were easy to flesh out and, most of the time, fun to execute.

But this was substantially different. Now I needed to draw up a strategic plan for *me*. So I spread out my jumbled dreams and desires, lists of perceived strengths and weaknesses, professions of faith, projects begun and half-begun, things to do and things to abandon. It was a quagmire of both complementary and conflicting ambitions, a cacophony of noisy themes and trills of the sort one hears when symphony orchestra musicians are warming up for performance and seeking their pitch.

What should I do? How could I be most useful? Where should I invest my own talents, time and treasure? What are the values that give purpose to my life? What is the overarching vision that shapes me? Who am I? Where am I? Where am I going? How do I get there?

pp. 49-50

(Strength of Soul: The Sacred Use of Time by W. Phillip Keller)

This morning I climbed a mountain. The ascent began at 5:00 A.M. Only the birds and bears and beaver in the river were astir when I left camp alone. It would have been much, much easier to stir up the embers from last night's campfire, warm up with a hot cup of tea, then just take things easy-- nice and easy.

Life is so much like that.

Hard choices.

Tough challenges.

Difficult decisions between discipline and dilly-dallying.

We of the western world have become soft people.

We are sated with self-satisfaction.

We prefer leisure and pleasure over taking the measure of challenge that calls for sacrifice.

p. 45

(The Living Body: The Church Christ Is Building by Dr. Richard Halverson)

Cardinal Wolsey, "Would that I had served my God the way I have watched my waistline!"

p. 33

The "SIN" in verse 25 would be DISOBEDIENCE. It would be Moses staying in the court when God told him to leave.

(Active Spiritually by Charles R. Swindoll)

The active spiritual person must avoid the favorite unguarded mind game so many folks play in imagining how stimulating it would be to live it up . . . to throw restraint to the winds and "let it all hang out." Face it, sin has its sensual and seasonal pleasures. They may be short-lived and passing (Heb. 11:25), but they're certainly not dull and boring!

p. 136

(The Life of God in the Soul of Man by Rev. Henry Scougal)

All sin and vice springeth from the property of our own will; all virtue and perfection cometh and groweth from the mortifying of it, and the resigning of it wholly to the pleasure and will of God.
p. 161

(Perilous Pursuits by Joseph M. Stowell)

"God values pleasure, both his and ours, and it is his pleasure to give us pleasure as a fruit of his saving love," writes J. I. Packer.
p. 126

(Pain: The Gift Nobody Wants by Paul Brand and Philip Yancey)

Recently scientists have identified a "pleasure center" in the brain which can be stimulated directly. Researchers have implanted electrodes in the hypothalamuses of rats, who are then placed in a cage in front of three levers. Pressing the first releases a piece of food, the second lever yields a drink, and the third activates electrodes that give the rats an immediate but transient feeling of pleasure. Laboratory rats quickly figure out the three levers, and in these experiments the rats choose to press only the pleasure lever, day after day, until they starve to death. Why respond to hunger and thirst when they can enjoy the pleasures associated with eating and drinking in a more convenient way?

I would like to require every potential addict of crack cocaine to watch a video of the rats pushing levers, smiling on the way to their deaths. They demonstrate the seductive fallacy of pursuing pleasure artificially.
p. 297

(The Christian in Complete Armour by William Gurnall)

Oh, it is strange--and yet not strange, considering man's degenerate nature--to see how Satan leads sinners by the nose with his gilded hook. Let him but bait it with honor, or wealth, or pleasure, and their hearts strain after it as eagerly as fish for a worm. He can get them to sin for a morsel of bread. It happened to Demas, who forsook the Gospel for the world's pleasures.

An evil heart is so eager to collect the bonuses which the devil promises that it ignores the dreadful wages God threatens to pay for the same work. The men who fall into the devil's snare are those resolved to feast on the fruit of unrighteousness. How it glistens as it hangs on the tree of temptation. One bite, and you want more. But beware! Nothing Satan offers is free of his curse. His rewards are as contaminated as he is. They are poison to the souls of men (1 Timothy 6:9).

(March 24)

That one love which makes the saint deny a lust causes him not to deny a cross.

(September 27)

He wore his rubbers when it rained.

He brushed his teeth TWICE a day--with a nationally advertised toothpaste. The doctors examined him twice a year.

He slept with the windows open.

He stuck to a diet with plenty of fresh vegetables.

He relinquished his tonsils and traded in several wornout glands.

He golfed--but never more than 18 holes at a time.

He got at least eight hours' sleep every night.

He never smoked, drank or lost his temper

He did his "daily dozen" daily. He was all set to live to be a hundred.

The funeral will be held Wednesday. He's survived by eight specialists, three health institutions, two gymnasiums and numerous manufacturers of health foods and antiseptics. He forgot God.

(From Parson's Bible Illustrator 1.0)

(The Message: Psalms by Eugene H. Peterson)

Psalm 49

We aren't immortal. We don't last long.
Like our dogs, we age and weaken. And die.

This is what happens to those who live for the moment,
who only look out for themselves:
Death herds them like sheep straight to hell;
they disappear down the gullet of the grave;
They waste away to nothing--
nothing left but a marker in a cemetery.

p. 72

v.26 considering the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he was looking forward to the reward.

Whereas, we were considering the:

CONVICTIONS OF MOSES in "refused" (verse 24) and
CHOICES OF MOSES in "choosing rather" (verse 25).

We come now to the:

MANIFESTATION OF CHARACTER in "CONSIDERING" (verse 26).

"CONSIDERING THE REPROACH OF CHRIST GREATER RICHES THAN THE TREASURES OF EGYPT."

The REASON:

"FOR HE WAS LOOKING FORWARD TO THE REWARD."

Hebrews 13:13

Hence, let us be going out to Him outside the camp, bearing His reproach.

Stedman says:

He weighed the wealth of Egypt and the prestige of royalty against the satisfaction of being an instrument of the living God and an heir of the promises of God. He unhesitatingly chose because, we are told, he saw the unseen; he looked beyond the visible and saw the Invisible and believed in Him. He saw God at work and because of that, Moses became the man, more than any other man in recorded history, who saw God doing things and learned to know God intimately.

p. 202

Bruce says:

To readers whose perseverance was in danger of faltering because of the stigma attached to the name of Christ the example of Moses was calculated to be a challenge and encouragement. It would help them to fix their eyes on the reward held out to faith if they remembered how Moses weighed the issues of time in the balances of eternity: "his eyes were fixed upon the coming day of recompense" (NEB).

p. 312

Westcott says:

The reproach of the Christ is the reproach which belongs to Him who is the appointed envoy of God to a rebellious world. This reproach which was endured in the highest degree by Christ Jesus (Rom. xv. 3) was endured also by those who in any degree prefigured or represented Him, those, that is, in whom He partially manifested and manifests Himself, those who live in Him and in whom He lives.

p. 372

Lane says:

The portrait of Moses as an exemplar of faith who endured reproach on behalf of the Christ has been accommodated to the description of the early experience of the community addressed. In the past they had publicly endured "reproaches" and loss because they were identified with Christ and with the new people of God, who had been subjected to insult, persecution, and imprisonment (10:33-34). They had been motivated by the certainty that they enjoyed a better and abiding possession, which is contemplated under the metaphor of a "great reward" (10:35). With vocabulary recalling that report, Moses is described as choosing to suffer hardship with the people of God, a choice that entails loss and abuse for the sake of the Christ. The congregation could identify with the experience of a suffering Moses because he had endured what they had experienced.
p. 374

Hewitt says:

All these suggestions have real truth in them, and it is more than possible that the author had such things in mind; yet he may have meant nothing more than that Moses suffered the reproach, having the coming of Christ in view.
p. 181

J. Vernon McGee says:

Someone else other than Abraham saw Christ's day and rejoiced--Moses did.
p. 592

DeHaan says:

The secret of it all, however, was a matter of perspective. They looked beyond the immediate and the present. They translated all their trials into terms of the future; they weighed all their sacrifices in the balances of eternity. They had their eyes on the reward. They were not satisfied with "little" faith, but strove for a conquering faith. They, like Paul, counted all things but loss for the prize at the end of the race.
pp. 159-60

Draper says:

Moses esteemed or accounted the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt. The word "esteemed" means "to balance things out." Moses counted the cost. He looked at both sides of the issue. He looked at the riches that would be his if he stayed in Egypt. He looked at the prestige, power, and position that would be his if he stayed. Then he looked at the slaves, the people who had no leader to guide them. They were poor and wretched. They were simply pawns in the hand of Pharaoh.

Moses looked at both sides and counted the cost.
p. 315

MacArthur says:

Considering involves careful thought, not quick decision. Moses thought through his decision, weighing the pros and cons. He weighed what Egypt had to offer against what God offered. When he reached a conclusion it was well-founded and certain. God's offer was infinitely superior in every way. In the eyes of the world no **reproach** (being ridiculed and persecuted) would be worth sacrificing riches for. Yet Moses believed that the worst he could endure for Christ would be more valuable than the best of the world.
p. 353

MacArthur speaking about the "REPROACH OF CHRIST" says:

I believe, however, that the meaning is just as it seems to be in most translations--with "Christ" capitalized. That is, Moses suffered reproach for the sake of Jesus Christ, the true Messiah, because he identified with Messiah's people and purpose long before Christ came to earth. Every believer since Adam's fall has been saved by the blood of Jesus Christ, no matter in what age he has lived. It is also true, therefore, that any believer at any time who has suffered for God's sake has suffered for Christ's sake. In a sense, David suffered just as surely for Christ's sake as did Paul. In one of his psalms, David says, "The reproaches of those who reproach Thee have fallen on me" (Ps. 69:9). From the other side of the cross Paul made a similar statement: "I bear on my body the brand-marks of Jesus" (Gal. 6:17). The Messiah has always been identified with His people.
pp. 353-4

MacArthur says still further:

Portia, a beautiful and wealthy heiress, is the heroine of Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice*. She had many suitors of noble birth who wanted to marry her. But her father's will decreed that her husband would be chosen by a certain test. She would belong to the one who chose the right chest out of the three that were prepared. One chest was made of gold. On it was inscribed, "Who chooseth me shall gain what many men desire," and inside was a skull. The second chest was of silver, with the inscription, "Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves," and inside was the picture of a fool. The winning chest was made of lead and held Portia's picture. On the outside was the inscription, "Who chooseth me must give and hazard all he hath." All of her suitors but Bassanio chose one of the first two chests, because both the precious metals and the inscriptions were so attractive. Bassanio picked the one of lead and got Portia's hand in marriage, because he was willing to give everything he had for the sake of the one he loved.

p. 355

Wiersbe in his book Run With the Winners says:

Life is built on character, and character is built on decisions. But decisions are built on *values*. We make our choices on the basis of the things that are important to us.

p. 105

How could Moses identify with "the reproach of Christ" when Christ had not yet come? When you remember the persons to whom the book of Hebrews was sent, you answer the question. They were Jewish believers who were suffering for their faith, and who were tempted to return to the ease and comfort of Judaism. They were facing the same decision that Moses faced. Jesus Christ bore reproach for us; should we not bear reproach for Him? "Hence, let us go out to Him outside the camp, bearing His reproach" (Hebrews 13:13).

p. 106

In every way, Moses' decision of faith utterly defied the life of Egypt. He refused position in Egypt, the pleasures of Egypt, and the promises of Egypt, that he might do the will of God. He never regretted his decision. Though the people of Israel often wanted to go back to Egypt, not once did Moses court that desire. By faith Moses *buried* Egypt! His eyes had, by faith, caught a vision far greater than anything Egypt had to offer, and he was determined to press on to that great goal. When your values are based on faith, they don't fluctuate with the changing standards of the world.

p. 107

THE WISE INVESTOR

George W. Truett, a well-known pastor, was invited to dinner in the home of a very wealthy man in Texas. After the meal, the host led him to a place where they could get a good view of the surrounding area.

Pointing to the oil wells punctuating the landscape, he boasted, "Twenty-five years ago I had nothing. Now, as far as you can see, it's all mine." Looking in the opposite direction at his sprawling fields of grain, he said, "That's all mine." Turning east toward huge herds of cattle, he bragged, "They're all mine." Then, pointing to the west and a beautiful forest, he exclaimed, "That too is all mine."

He paused, expecting Dr. Truett to compliment him on his great success. Truett, however, placing one hand on the man's shoulder and pointing heavenward with the other, simply said, "How much do you have in that direction?" The man hung his head and confessed, "I never thought of that."

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

EARLY TO BED, EARLY TO RISE

To get his wealth, he spent his health,
and then, with strength and main,
He turned around and spent his wealth
to get his health again.

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

(Over the Top by Zig Ziglar)

Men of genius are admired. Men
of wealth are envied. Men of
power are feared, but only men
of character are trusted.

Arthur Friedman

p. 60

(First Things First by Stephen R. Covey, A. Roger Merrill, & Rebecca R. Merrill)

Gandhi once observed that "a person cannot do right in one department of life whilst attempting to do wrong in another department. Life is one indivisible whole."

p. 203

(Holiness by J. C. Ryle)

I grant the list is a heavy one. But where is the item that could be removed? Bold indeed must that man be who would dare to say that we may keep our self-righteousness, our sins, our laziness and our love of the world, and yet be saved!

I grant it costs much to be a true Christian.

p. 69

These are they who cannot find it in their hearts to quarrel with their besetting sin, whether it be sloth, indolence, ill-temper, pride, selfishness, impatience or what it may. They allow it to remain a tolerably quiet and undisturbed tenant of their hearts. They say it is their health, or their constitutions, or their temperaments, or their trials, or their way. Their father, or mother, or grandmother, was so before themselves, and they are sure they cannot help it. And when you meet after the absence of a year or so, you hear the same thing!

But all, all, all may be summed up in one single sentence. They are the brethren and sisters of Lot. They linger.

p. 149

(The Victorious Christian Life by Dr. Tony Evans)

You are like a stalled car. Your driver is God; your engine, Jesus Christ; the gas, the Holy Spirit, and the road map, the Bible. But you are going nowhere--or even backwards because you're stuck in the mud of sin.
p. 60

The REASON Moses is:

"CONSIDERING THE REPROACH OF CHRIST GREATER RICHES
THAN THE TREASURES OF EGYPT"

is seen in the last phrase of verse 26:

"FOR HE WAS LOOKING FORWARD TO THE REWARD."

He had his eyes on the future. He also is manifesting the ability to experience delayed gratification.

v.27 By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he persevered, as seeing Him who is invisible.

We have considered thus far:

MOSES' CONVICTIONS in the word "refused" (verse 24),

HIS CHOICES in the words "choosing rather"(verse 25),

HIS CHARACTER focusing on the words "considering" and "looking forward" (verse 26), and now

THE CONSUMMATION (verse 27)--"BY FAITH HE LEFT EGYPT."

"BY FAITH HE LEFT EGYPT, NOT FEARING THE WRATH OF THE KING."

Here Moses is characterized just like his folks back in verse 23:

"they were not afraid of the king's edict."

In Hebrews 13:5, 6 we read:

Let your manner of life be free from the love of money, being satisfied with what you are having; for He Himself has said: "I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you," so that we are saying with confidence: "The Lord is my helper, I will not be afraid. What shall man do to me?"

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

. . . Moses was undeterred by fear of **the king's anger**.
 . . . In the same way, the readers should not be afraid of human wrath and should maintain their separateness from the surrounding world. They should persist in the worship experience made possible by the blood of the New Covenant. If they would do so, they would not fall under divine retribution (cf. 10:19-31).
 p. 809

There is a QUESTION as to which one of the two times that Moses left Egypt is being referred to here in this act of faith. Was it:

WHEN HE FLED AFTER SLAYING THE EGYPTIAN INTO THE
 WILDERNESS OF MEDIAN?

OR

THE EXODUS IN LEADING THE PEOPLE OUT?

There are arguments on both sides. I prefer to follow those who say that this is a reference to the Exodus that took place when Moses led the people out and he never looked back.

He certainly fled in fear of the king on the first occasion.

The REASON he:

"LEFT EGYPT, NOT FEARING THE WRATH OF THE KING"

is given in the final phrase of verse 27:

"FOR HE PERSEVERED, AS SEEING HIM WHO IS INVISIBLE."

His priorities are in place. His horizontal and vertical relationships are right. So he can continue to persevere and press on as he is "SEEING HIM WHO IS INVISIBLE."

Wiersbe in Run With the Winners says:

The secret? "He endured, as seeing Him who is unseen" (Hebrews 11:27). Like the patriarchs of old (11:10, 13-16), Moses had eyes of faith. He looked beyond Pharaoh and Egypt and saw God! Once you have caught the vision of the greatness and glory of God, you will not be afraid of kings or armies. "The Lord is my helper, I will not be afraid. What shall man do to me?" (Hebrews 13:6).

It has well been said that the greatest ability is dependability. Without dependability, all other abilities are useless. The people to whom Hebrews was written were tempted to quit. Life was just too much for them and it was costing them to maintain their Christian testimony. "Be like Moses!" the writer is saying. "He endured because he kept his eyes of faith fixed on the Lord!"

p. 109

MacArthur says:

Fear did not work on Moses, at least not when God called him out of Egypt. He knew he had an invisible but powerful means of support, **as seeing Him who is unseen**. He knew that, no matter what happened, whatever he had to face, he would be held up and strengthened and rewarded. He believed with David, "The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The LORD is the defense of my life; whom shall I dread?" (Ps. 27:1).

p. 356

Proverbs 29:25

Fear of man will prove to be a snare, but whoever trusts in the Lord is kept safe.

2 Timothy 1:7

For God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and

discipline.

Jeremiah 1:8, 9

Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you and will rescue you," declares the Lord. Then the Lord reached out his hand and touched my mouth and said to me, "Now, I have put my words in your mouth.

Joseph Parker says:

Then the second lesson is that we must allow for different ways of expressing our ideas of invisible things. We do not express ourselves alike about things visible: how then should we use the same words about things that are not seen? The vital thing is to believe in the invisible, to endure as seeing the invisible, to clothe the invisible with such features and attractions as shall commend it with supreme fascination to our hope and our loyalty. "If in this life only we have hope, we are of all men most miserable." p. 201

Macaulay has this little poetic piece:

O for a faith that will not shrink,
 Though pressed by many a foe,
 That will not tremble on the brink
 Of poverty or woe,

That will not murmur nor complain
 Beneath the chastening rod,
 But, in the hour of grief or pain,
 Can lean upon its God;

A faith that shines more bright and clear
 When tempests rage without,
 That when in danger knows no fear,
 In darkness feels no doubt.

pp. 196-7

Barclay says:

Verse 27 tells us that Moses was able to face all things as one who sees Him who is invisible. The great outstanding characteristic of Moses was the close intimacy of his relationship with God. In Deuteronomy 33:9-11 we read of how Moses went into the Tabernacle; “and the Lord spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend.” In Numbers 12:7, 8 we read of God’s verdict on Moses when there were those who were ready to rebel against him: “with him will I speak mouth to mouth.” To put it very simply and very humanly--the secret of the faith of Moses was that Moses knew God personally. To every task he came out from the presence of God.
pp. 180-81

Pink observes:

And what was it that enabled Moses to conduct himself with such firmness and boldness? What was it that delivered his heart from fearing the wrath of the king? FAITH, a spiritual, supernatural, God-given, God-energized faith.
p. 312

Westcott, speaking to the issue of whether or not this was the flight into Midian or the actual Exodus, says:

It is however more likely that the words refer to the Exodus. Moses, the leader of the people, left the safe though servile shelter and support of Egypt, casting himself on the protection of the unseen God against the certain vengeance of the king in the fulfilment of his arduous and self-sacrificing work.
p. 373

Kistemaker says:

The words "he persevered because he saw him who is invisible" take on added meaning against the setting of Moses' experience of seeing the burning bush in Midian. Also, God spoke to Moses repeatedly in Egypt. During the wilderness journey, "the LORD would speak to Moses . . . , as a man speaks with his friend" (Exod. 33:11; also see Num. 12:7-8). Although Moses was not permitted to see the face of God, he did see his back (Exod. 33:23). The abiding presence of God, especially during Moses' trying days in Egypt, strengthened Moses' faith. Because of God's instructions, Moses was able to persevere in faith and accomplish his task to lead the people of Israel out of Egypt.

p. 340

Phillips points out:

Again the writer of Hebrews makes his point. His readers must lay hold of the invisible world. The visible world of Judaism was as enticing to them as Egypt was to Moses, but they, too, must endure "as seeing him who is invisible." They could not have both Judaism, the obsolete, visible religious system, and Christ, the risen, ascended, invisible, soon-coming Messiah.

p. 178

This is a POWERFUL PHRASE at the end of verse 27 giving us the SECRET TO MOSES':

PERSONAL CONVICTIONS,

CHOICES,

CHARACTER, and

CONSUMMATION in the action that he took in following the Lord back to Egypt and leading the children of Israel out.

"FOR HE PERSEVERED, AS SEEING HIM WHO IS INVISIBLE."

There was so much to discourage him on the horizontal that he would have quit many, many times but it is only because of the ultimate reality of the eternal that keeps Moses persevering on to the full accomplishment of the task that is set before him.

(2nd Helping of Chicken Soup for the Soul, A: 101 More Stories to Open the Heart and Rekindle the Spirit by Jack Canfield & Mark Victor Hansen)

Effort only fully releases its reward after a person refuses to quit.

Napoleon Hill

History has demonstrated that the most notable winners usually encountered heart-breaking obstacles before they triumphed. They won because they refused to become discouraged by their defeats.

B.C. Forbes

p. 251

The man who has no problems is out of the game.

Elbert Hubbard

p. 261

Character cannot be developed in ease and quiet. Only through experiences of trial and suffering can the soul be strengthened, vision cleared, ambition inspired and success achieved.

Helen Keller

p. 272

Again in the word "PERSEVERED" we have the MANIFESTATION OF DELAYED GRATIFICATION.

We also saw this back in verse 26 in:

"looking forward to the reward."

He had his eyes on the future and PAYING THE PRICE IN THE PRESENT PRODUCES THE PRIZE OF THE FUTURE.

v.28 By faith he kept the Passover and the sprinkling of the blood, in order that the One who is destroying the firstborn might not touch them.

In verse 27,

"By faith he left" and

in verse 28,

"BY FAITH HE KEPT."

This "[keeping] THE PASSOVER" is considered a tremendous act of faith on the part of Moses and the people.

Kistemaker says:

Moses' task of instructing a nation of slaves in the meaningful celebration of the Passover was an act of faith.
p. 340

Wiersbe says:

The faith of Moses was rewarded with deliverance for him and his people. (See Ex. 11-13 for the exciting Passover account.) Faith brings us *out* (Heb. 11:28), takes us *through* (v. 29), and brings us *in* (v. 30). When we trust God, we get what God can do; but when we trust ourselves, we get only what weak people can do. The experience of Moses is proof that true Biblical

faith means obeying God in spite of circumstances and in spite of consequences.
p. 127

English says:

By faith we, too, believe God's Word about the blood--the blood of His perfect, sinless, spotless Lamb, His only begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. God has spoken in His Word, and we believe God. The world and some "bloodless" religions may deride us, call us old-fashioned and fanatical, and look with scorn upon us. Theirs is the way of Cain, however, whereas it was Abel's offering, "by faith," that was acceptable to God, by which Abel obtained witness that he was righteous (vs. 4). For "without shedding of blood is no remission" (9:22). God grant that the faith that we have in Him and His Word, God-given faith, may remain steadfast, resting in the precious blood of Christ that was shed for us.

p. 414

The nation Egypt had survived the nine plagues that had preceded the plague on the first-born. This tenth and final plague was to involve the death of the first-born children and cattle alike.

The provision for the Israelites was to be made in the blood of a little lamb that would be sprinkled on the sides and the tops of the doorframes of the houses. When the death angel came he would see the blood and he would pass over that household.

THEY WERE SHELTERED BY THE BLOOD OF A SACRIFICE.

The REASON the Israelites were sprinkling the blood on the sides and tops of the doorframes of their homes is seen in the last phrase in verse 28:

**"IN ORDER THAT THE ONE WHO IS DESTROYING THE
FIRSTBORN MIGHT NOT TOUCH THEM."**

How can anyone study these great passages in the book of Hebrews and deny the blood as necessary in the forgiveness of sin?

Hebrews 9:22

And one may almost say that with blood all things are being cleansed according to the Law, and without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.

Why was the offering of Abel accepted and that of Cain rejected? Because the sacrifice of Abel, which was pleasing to the Lord, involved the shedding of the blood of the lamb that was presented.

It was John the Baptist who said when seeing the Christ:

John 1:29

The next day he saw Jesus coming to him, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"

v.29 By faith they passed through the Red Sea as though [they were passing] through dry land; and the Egyptians, when they attempted it, were drowned.

The FOCUS is on:

BEING DELIVERED OUT (verse 28),

BEING DELIVERED THROUGH (verse 29), and

BEING TAKEN IN (verse 30).

So we have the word:

"out" (verse 28),

"THROUGH" (verse 29), and

"IN" (verse 30).

The God who:

TOOK THEM OUT (verse 28),

can TAKE THEM THROUGH (verse 29), and

will be faithful to TAKE THEM IN (verse 30).

We notice a CHANGE in verse 29,

"BY FAITH THEY."

Whereas, we have noticed in the PREVIOUS 2 VERSES:

1. "by faith he left" (verse 27),
2. "by faith he kept" (verse 28).

Now the focus is moving from the:

LEADER to the LED.

We are now FOCUSING on the "FAITH" of the children of Israel in verses 29 and 30.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

The readers could also look forward to victory over their enemies (cf. 1:13-14). They could learn from the destruction of **the Egyptians** and the collapse of **the walls of Jericho** what triumphs faith can win over its adversaries.
p. 809

I am confident that a lot of these Old Testament stories of the experiences of the children of Israel conjure up Sunday School memories from your childhood but it is awfully easy, too, to get some of these stories confused and out of sequence.

(The Complete Book of Zingers by Croft M. Pentz)]

One young minister thought high cholesterol was a church holy day.
p. 236

You will remember the story of the children of Israel as they came out of Egypt following that Passover celebration. As they began to move toward the promised land, the Pharaoh changed his mind and began in hot pursuit the fleeing Israelites with some 600 of the best chariots along with all the other chariots of Egypt with officers over all of them.

When the children of Israel saw the dust of the approaching chariots behind them and the Red Sea in front of them, they pushed the panic button.

It was then that Moses spoke those great words recorded in:

Exodus 14:13, 14

Moses answered the people, "Do not be afraid. Stand firm and you will see the deliverance the Lord will bring you today. The Egyptians you see today you will never see again. The Lord will fight for you; you need only to be still."

The God who brought them OUT was also the God who was fully capable of taking them THROUGH.

And so our verse tells us:

"BY FAITH THEY PASSED THROUGH THE RED SEA AS THOUGH [THEY WERE PASSING] THROUGH DRY LAND."

We see GOD'S INTERVENTION in the final phrase of verse 29:

"AND THE EGYPTIANS, WHEN THEY ATTEMPTED IT, WERE DROWNED."

We take up the record again in:

Exodus 14:23-28

The Egyptians pursued them, and all Pharaoh's horses and chariots and horsemen followed them into the sea. During the last watch of the night the Lord looked down from the pillar of fire and cloud at the Egyptian army and threw it into confusion. He made the wheels of their chariots come off so that they had difficulty driving. And the Egyptians said, "Let's get away from the Israelites! The Lord is fighting for them against Egypt." Then the Lord said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand over the sea so that the waters may flow back over the Egyptians and their chariots and horsemen." Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and at daybreak the sea went back to its place. The Egyptians were fleeing toward it, and the Lord swept them into the sea. The water flowed back and covered the chariots and horsemen --the entire army of Pharaoh that had followed the Israelites into the sea. Not one of them survived.

Lane says:

The action of the people in crossing the sea indicates that they shared the faith of Moses. The biblical record is explicit that they had been terrified by the approach of the Egyptian army and had begun to complain bitterly. As in the case of Moses (v 27), faith in the reality and presence of God entailed an overcoming of an initial fear that could have paralyzed them (Exod 17:13-14). At the critical moment they demonstrated that they were prepared to attempt the impossible at the command of God (Exod 14:15-22, 29; 15:19).

p. 377

Delitzsch says:

The great paschal night of the Old Testament, in the celebrations of which the faith of Moses roused and guided that of his people, is now followed by the great paschal deliverance, in which the faith of all Israel was manifested by their triumphant passage through the Red Sea.

p. 270

Westcott says:

The Faith of the people met the Faith of the leader.

p. 375

Stedman says:

You can see the daring of faith in the people of Israel at the Red Sea and before the walls of Jericho. Here were two impossibilities. The waters were flowing before them and God said to go down and walk through it. They obeyed, not knowing what God would do. It was impossible from an earthly standpoint, but as they went forward God moved the waters back by a great wind and they went through on dry land. The Egyptians, trying to do it without faith, drowned. When the great walls of Jericho stood before them, 85 feet thick and over 100 feet high, impassable, impossible, they had only feeble instruments of warfare; but in obedience to God they marched around the city seven times and the walls fell down. By an earthquake, you say? Yes, perhaps so, but it was an earthquake that came in God's time and in God's place, and the walls were shaken down. Faith dares. It pays no attention to impossibilities. As someone has put it,

"Faith, mighty faith
The promise sees
And looks to God alone,
Laughs at impossibilities
And cries, 'It shall be done.'"

pp. 204-5

Macaulay observes:

IT WOULD SEEM that every great movement of faith must face an apparent impasse before it is well launched. Young faith is full of daring, ready for exploits, but it is inexperienced, and frequently mixed with much self-confidence. An early trial is, therefore, wholesome, having a sobering effect, and tending to cast the soul wholly on God. Being thus shut up to God, one discovered anew His faithfulness and learns to put no trust in the flesh.

p. 198

Phillips points out:

What lesson could the early Hebrew Christians derive from this? The obvious lesson, surely, was that they, too, must "go forward," scorning the difficulties before them and the dangers behind them.

p. 180

Wiersbe has this insight in his book Run With the Winners:

It took but one night for God to take Israel out of Egypt, but it took forty years to take Egypt out of Israel. Whenever the going got tough, some of the people immediately began to talk about retreating back to Egypt. They failed to understand that the God who saved them was able to keep them and fulfill in them all His perfect will. When we walk by sight, we see only the difficulties; but when we walk by faith, we see the possibilities. The same situation that drowns an unbeliever only delivers the believer, because his trust is in God alone.

p. 112

v.30 By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they had been encircled for seven days.

The God who:

BROUGHT THEM OUT in verse 28 under the shelter of the blood is the God who,

BROUGHT THEM "THROUGH the red sea" (verse 29), and now

He is the God who, 40 years later, is BRINGING THEM INTO THE LAND (verse 30).

I think it is really important for us to notice that there is no record of the 40 years it took for them to experience the judgment of God for refusing to go into the land on the first opportunity.

I think it is good for us to be reminded of the fact that the Scripture many times skips over those years of living out of fellowship with the Lord or living in unbelief.

We see a similar situation in the LIFE OF ABRAHAM in:

Genesis 16:15-17:1

So Hagar bore Abram a son, and Abram gave the name Ishmael to the

son she had borne. Abram was eighty-six years old when Hagar bore him Ishmael. When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to him and said, . . .

Those 13 years are passed over in silence after Abraham and Sarah took matters into their own hands and tried to fulfill God's promise in providing Hagar the Egyptian handmaid as the instrument through whom the promised seed would be born.

For the children of Israel wandering in the wilderness of unbelief after refusing to go into the land on the first occasion, this period of time is completely passed over in this great chapter of faith.

"BY FAITH THE WALLS OF JERICO FELL DOWN"

The FIRST OBSTACLE that the children of Israel faced as they crossed the Jordan River on dry ground was the IMPOSING FORTIFICATION of the city of Jericho.

Jeremiah 32:17

"Ah, Sovereign Lord, you have made the heavens and the earth by your great power and outstretched arm. Nothing is too hard for you."

Bruce says:

The record of faith, then, is suspended for forty years and resumed with the entry into Canaan.
p. 317

Draper says:

Hebrews 11:30-34 speaks of victory. It speaks of conquering, subduing, quenching all the things that would discourage, depress, and take us away from happiness, meaning, and fulfillment. We need the kind of faith that is victorious. These verses tell us about the faith that conquers.
p. 319

MacArthur says:

Life is always a struggle for the believer. God's way is not the world's way, and as long as the believer is in the world he will have to struggle in that conflict. The only effective weapon he has in this struggle is faith. It is because of faith that many of our struggles come, and it is only by faith that our struggles can be faced and conquered.
p. 361

Barclay says:

Herein is the very point that the writer to the Hebrews wishes to make. The taking of Jericho was the result of an act of faith. It was taken by men who thought, not of what they could do, but of what God could do for them. They went to the task, not in their own might, but in the might of God. They were prepared to believe that God could make them able to achieve the impossible, that God could make their obvious weakness able for an incredible task. After the smashing of the Spanish Armada, there was erected on Plymouth Hoe a monument with the inscription: "God sent His wind and they were scattered." In other words, when the people of England saw how the storm and the gale had shattered the Spanish Armada, they said: "God did it." When we are faced with any great and demanding task, our thought should be, not what we can do, but what God can do with us and for us. When we are assessing our resources, God is the one ally whom we must never leave out of the reckoning. That which to us alone is impossible is always possible with God.
pp. 182-3

Kistemaker says:

The writer of Hebrews deliberately by-passes the forty-year journey from Egypt to Canaan. He wants to indicate that the people of Israel refused to exercise faith and that, devoid of faith, they perished in their disobedience. Except for Joshua and Caleb, all the Israelites who were twenty years or older died in the desert. Their sons and daughters demonstrated faith in Israel's God when they conquered the fortress city of Jericho.
p. 346

Lane says:

The writer had earlier referred to the faithlessness of the wilderness generation in 3:16-19. It is not surprising that in a catalogue of exemplary persons and events he passes over in silence the forty-year period during which those who had experienced the celebration of the Passover, the exodus from Egypt, and the miraculous crossing of the Red Sea wandered aimlessly in the wilderness. Not until the entrance into Canaan can a recital of the acts of faith be resumed.
p. 378

Wiersbe says:

If you and I had been writing this chapter, the next section would be *Faith Wandering*—but there is no mention of Israel's failure and 40 years of wasted time. Why? Because that was an experience of *unbelief*, not faith! The writer of Hebrews did use this experience, in chapters 3 and 4, as an illustration of doubting the Word. But nowhere in Hebrews 11 will you find a record of *any* failure because of unbelief. Faith records only the victories.
p. 127

Wiersbe also makes reference to this SILENCE in his book Run With the Winners:

Between verses 29 and 30 are forty years of Israel's wandering in the wilderness; yet not one word is said about it. Why? Because those were years of unbelief, and Hebrews 11 celebrates faith.
p. 113

Phillips says:

So, once again, the writer of Hebrews makes his point. Satan has his devices to hinder spiritual progress. They are ominous enough, but faith rests itself on God's Word and goes forward, even though the world may mock at what is being done. The towering walls of organized Judaism seemed indeed an insurmountable obstacle. But faith would simply march around those walls and they would melt like snow before the noonday sun.
p. 181

Macaulay says:

What is that in your life which bars the way to consecration, victory, enlargement, usefulness, joy, peace, and power? What is that key decision which has to be made before you enter into the more abundant life? What is the pivotal point of controversy between you and the Lord, cutting you off from the rich blessings of Canaan? That is your Jericho. Lay siege to it by faith, sound the trumpet of faith against it, lift the shout of victory over it, and it too will crumble as did the Jericho of thirty-three centuries ago, and become the portal into an altogether new measure of life.
p. 201

Paul describes his ministry in:

2 Corinthians 10:4-6

for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ, and we are ready to punish all disobedience, whenever your obedience is complete.

(The Book of Virtues by William J. Bennett)

Doors of Daring

Henry van Dyke

Barriers are invitations to courage.

The mountains that inclose the vale
With walls of granite, steep and high,
Invite the fearless foot to scale
Their stairway toward the sky.

The restless, deep, dividing sea
That flows and foams from shore to shore,
Calls to its sunburned chivalry,
"Push out, set sail, explore!"

The bars of life at which we fret,
That seem to prison and control,
Are but the doors of daring, set
Ajar before the soul.

Say not, "Too poor," but freely give;
Sigh not, "Too weak," but boldly try;
You never can begin to live
Until you dare to die

pp. 479-80

Let us refresh our minds with the ORIGINAL INSTRUCTIONS from the Lord in:

Joshua 6:1-5

Now Jericho was tightly shut up because of the Israelites. No one went out and no one came in. Then the Lord said to Joshua, "See, I have delivered Jericho into your hands, along with its king and its fighting men. March around the city once with all the armed men. Do this for six days. Have seven priests carry trumpets of rams' horns in front of the ark. On the seventh day, march around the city seven times, with the priests blowing the trumpets. When you hear them sound a long blast on the trumpets, have all the people give a loud shout; then the wall of the city will collapse and the people will go up, every man straight in."

We then read in:

Joshua 6:20

When the trumpets sounded, the people shouted, and at the sound of the trumpet, when the people gave a loud shout, the wall collapsed; so every man charged straight in, and they took the city.

v.31 By faith Rahab the harlot did not perish along with those who were disobedient, after she had welcomed the spies in peace.

James 2:25

And in the same way was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works, when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way?

Before the crossing of the Jordan River into the land, Joshua sent two spies secretly to look over the land:

Joshua 2:1

. . . he said, "especially Jericho." So they went and entered the house of a prostitute named Rahab and stayed there.

When the king of Jericho found out that the spies were there he confronted Rahab and she sent them on a wild goose chase:

Joshua 2:6

(But she had taken them up to the roof and hidden them under the stalks of flax she had laid out on the roof.)

We then have the record of Rahab's faith recorded in:

Joshua 2:8-14

Before the spies lay down for the night, she went up on the roof and said to them, "I know that the Lord has given this land to you and that a great fear of you has fallen on us, so that all who live in this country are melting in fear because of you. We have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea for you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to Sihon and Og, the two kings of the Amorites east of the Jordan, whom you completely destroyed. When we heard of it, our hearts melted and everyone's courage failed because of you, for the Lord your God is God in heaven above and on the earth below. Now then, please swear to me by the Lord that you will show kindness to my family, because I have shown kindness to you. Give me a sure sign that you will spare the lives of my father and mother, my brothers and sisters, and all who belong to them, and that you will save us from death." "Our lives for your lives!" the men assured her. "If you don't tell what we are doing, we will treat you kindly and faithfully when the Lord gives us the land."

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

If, as seems probable, there were a few Gentiles in the church that received this letter, they could take comfort from the experience of **the prostitute Rahab**, a Gentile who was spared when Jericho was conquered.
p. 809

Many are amazed that Rahab, a prostitute, could be included in these examples of faith.

What an encouragement to us who are sinners that she is included!

FALLEN ANGELS?

On one Christmas, a church bulletin gave exciting ecclesiastical authority to "Sing, choirs of angels, sin in exultation."

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

Kistemaker says:

By using the expression *disobedient*, the writer places the inhabitants of Jericho on the same level as the rebellious Israelites who perished in the desert. He asks, "And to whom did God swear that they would never enter his rest if not to those who disobeyed?" (3:18). Unbelief results in disobedience; faith in obedience. Rahab believed and welcomed the spies into her home. At great personal risk she protected them from the king's soldiers, who knew that the spies were in Rahab's house. Rahab not only believed; she also put her faith to work in the interest of God's people (James 2:25). And last, she trusted God that at the time of the siege of Jericho her life and those of the members of her family would be spared (Josh. 2:14-21).

pp. 348-9

Barclay says:

Yet Rahab believed--and staked her whole future on the belief--that God would make the impossible possible. She believed in God against the evidence of the facts. When commonsense pronounced the situation hopeless she had the uncommon sense to see beyond the situation. She had the adventurous courage to fling in her lot with God, when it seemed that to do so was to back the losing side. The real faith and the real courage are the faith and courage which can take God's side when that side seems doomed to defeat. As Faber had it:

"Thrice blest is he to whom is given
The instinct that can tell
That God is on the field when He
Is most invisible.

For right is right, since God is God,
And right the day must win;
To doubt would be disloyalty,
To falter would be sin."

Westcott says:

The list of the champions of Faith whose victories are specially noticed is closed by a woman and a gentile and an outcast. In this there is a significant foreshadowing of its essential universality.

p. 375

Delitzsch says:

The conquest of Jericho reminds naturally of the deliverance of Rahab. The sacred writer subjoins, therefore, to these two acts of faith (vers. 29, 30) on the part of Israel, a third (ver. 31) performed by a Gentile woman who was received through her faith into Israel's fellowship.

p. 272

Hewitt says:

This despised heathen woman, who became united with the people of God and also an ancestress of the Messiah, points to the universality of the gospel.

p. 184

English says:

God is not concerned with what we were before we put our trust in Him, but is tremendously interested with what we are after we know him. In the divine measure, is the sin of prostitution any worse than that of thievery, or of untruthfulness, or of pride? Sin is sin. All sin is worthy of condemnation, whether that sin be large or small. And are we not all of us actually guilty of breaking the whole law? "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all" (Jas. 2:10).

p. 420

Hughes says:

There is no one who is too bad or too ignorant to be saved! Some are not only doing drugs but dealing them--dealing death to others. Some have prostituted their sexuality--doing anything with anyone. But anyone can come to faith, like Rahab in her bordello, and be saved. Rahab's story means there is hope for all us sinners with our incipient, imperfect, stumbling, selfish faith. This ought to cause us to shout for joy!

p. 142

He says further:

The third reward of Rahab's faith may be spoken of as her "glorification." Here her story becomes lyrical--an "impossible dream." Not only did Rahab live in Israel the rest of her life, but she married an Israelite and became an ancestor of Jesus Christ. Matthew's genealogy of Jesus bears out the incredible truth: ". . . and to Ram was born Amminadab; and to Amminadab, Nahshon; and to Nahshon, Salmon; and to Salmon was born Boaz by Rahab; and to Boaz was born Obed by Ruth; and to Obed, Jesse; and to Jesse was born David the king" (Matthew 1:4-6, NASB). And Christ came from David's lineage!

p. 143

With Paul Harvey it is good for us to pause and reflect on:

"THE REST OF THE STORY."

We have a little genealogy at the end of the book of Ruth that helps us trace the rest of the story:

Ruth 4:21, 22

Salmon the father of Boaz, Boaz the father of Obed, Obed the father of Jesse, and Jesse the father of David.

Rahab became a part of the nation and she fell in love with Salmon and she and Salmon had Boaz as their son.

It was BOAZ who married Ruth the Moabitess who came back with Naomi from the land of Moab.

And Boaz and Ruth had a child by the name of OBED.

Obed grew up and had a child by the name of JESSE.

Jesse had a son by the name of DAVID.

And many generations later, out of that very line, came the LORD JESUS CHRIST.

In the genealogy of Jesus we read in:

Matthew 1:5, 6

and to Salmon was born Boaz by Rahab; and to Boaz was born Obed by Ruth; and to Obed, Jesse; and to Jesse was born David the king. . . .

These two women stand out in the genealogy of Jesus to help us understand that no one is beyond the bounds of the grace of God. That, in mercy, can forgive and cleanse and provide a wonderful future if we by faith will trust Him.

RAHAB the prostitute and RUTH the foreigner from the land of Moab both had fantastic futures by the choices they chose to make in the faith that they exercised.

v.32 And what more shall I say? For time will fail me if I am telling of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah; of David and Samuel and the prophets;

We come now to the NEXT SECTION of Hebrews 11 and we could title it:
FAITH IN TRIALS (verses 32-38).

The EMPHASIS is that FAITH IS ASSOCIATED WITH TRIALS and they should not nullify faith but strengthen it. The trials demand more faith.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

There were far too many heroes of faith for the writer to deal with them all in detail. Swiftly he mentioned the variegated accomplishments of some of them. At the climax of this last stand **women** . . . --a truly superlative victory of faith which does not allow death to defeat it . . .

p. 809

Peter affirms this truth when he says:

1 Peter 1:5-7

who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials, that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ;

The writer begins verse 32 with a QUESTION:

"WHAT MORE SHALL I SAY?"

He obviously is quite overwhelmed with the subject matter and the illustrations at his disposal. He gives us the REASON for the question:

"FOR TIME WILL FAIL ME IF I AM TELLING OF GIDEON, BARAK,

SAMSON, JEPHTHAH; OF DAVID AND SAMUEL AND THE PROPHETS."

John had that same experience as he concludes his own record of the life of Jesus:

John 21:25

And there are also many other things which Jesus did, which if they were written in detail, I suppose that even the world itself would not contain the books which were written.

Here in verse 32 he speaks of:

4 JUDGES:

1. "Gideon,"
2. "Barak,"
3. "Samson,"
4. "Jephthah"

and a KING:

"DAVID"

and a PROPHET:

"SAMUEL"

and then just mentions unnamed "THE PROPHETS" gathering all the other prophets together who could be great illustrations of faith as well.

Richards says:

The pathway of faith that Hebrews commends is the answer to our search for meaning and progress in our Christian life. But it's no guarantee of good times.

Here the writer gives examples of victories won by faith's obedience (11:33-34), but he also presents the record of those whose life of faith led to suffering (11:35-38).

p. 122

Montefiore in Black's commentary says:

Sixteen instances of faith have been given from the period of biblical history between Adam and Joshua. Although even by biblical chronology this is a long period of time, the bulk of biblical history still lies ahead of it. And so the list is cut short by the use of a classical formula: **What more am I to say?**
p. 206

Focusing on verse 32, Montefiore says:

The first four names are taken from Judges. They are not given in chronological order, but possibly in order of their popularity. **Gideon** with a [three] hundred men put to flight the Midianites (Judges vii). **Barak**, at Deborah's command, routed the forces of Jabin, king of Canaan, which were under the command of Sisera (Judges iv f.). **Samson** both during his life and by his death troubled the Philistines (Judges xiii-xvi). **Jephthah** the Gileadite conquered the people of Ammon (Judges xi f.). These four judges witness to the gradual extension of Israelite power in Canaan.
p. 207

Lane titles the remaining verses:

The Triumphs of Perseverance in Faith in Subsequent Eras (11:32-40)
p. 380

Westcott says:

Records of their exploits are preserved: Judg. vi.--viii. (Gideon); iv. v. (Barak); xiii.--xvi. (Samson); xi. xii. (Jephthah).

It may be noticed that they overcame different enemies, Midianites, Canaanites, Philistines, Ammonites; and in referring to them the writer passes no judgment on character . . .
p. 377

Phillips says:

What lessons the Hebrew readers of this epistle could glean from the lives of these men whose histories were so familiar to them: lessons of faith doing what God demanded, of faith believing God to do the impossible, of faith picking itself up after a disastrous fall to become true to death, of faith desiring God above all earthly ties and joys.
pp. 183-4

Wiersbe in Run With the Winners says:

In verse 32, the writer mentioned three periods in Israel's history: the Judges (Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah), the Kings (David), and the Prophets (Samuel and the prophets). Faith is not limited to one period in history or even to one kind of political system. Before there was an official kingdom, the judges were doing great exploits of faith. When the kingdom degenerated, God raised up the prophets to demonstrate the power of faith. We must never say that faith cannot operate because of the "times" or the "circumstances," because true faith is not limited by history.
p. 129

Hughes summarizes this verse well when he says:

The writer begins by listing half a dozen obvious winners who were empowered for victory: "And what more shall I say? I do not have time to tell about Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel and the prophets" (v. 32).

At God's direction, *Gideon* underwent a remarkable divestment of power in preparation for his phenomenal victory over the Midianites. Obediently he reduced his troops from 32,000 to 10,000 to 300. Then the 300, armed with trumpets and pitchers that concealed torches, routed the Midianites whose "camels could no more be counted than the sand on the seashore" (Judges 7:12). Gideon's feat was a stupendous act of faith.

Likewise, *Barak*, obeying God's word as given through Deborah, sallied forth to meet the great army of Sisera with its 900 chariots of iron and myriads of troops, Barak himself having only 10,000 men drawn from just two of Israel's tribes, Naphtali and Zebulun (Judges 4:6). But his token army was victorious. Once again faith carried the day.

Normally, we do not think of *Samson* as a man of faith, but rather a great dunce whose moral brain waves had gone flat! But there was a subterranean substance of faith in Samson. He knew God had given him power to deliver his people from the Philistines--though he frittered it away. But once blinded, he regained his spiritual perspective, and in a great act of faith he prayed and received strength to avenge himself (Judges 16:25-30).

Normally would we imagine *Jephthah* as a man of faith because of his infamous and foolish vow to sacrifice his own daughter (Judges 11:30-39). Nevertheless, this illegitimate son, this outcast Hebrew Robin Hood, was called back to save Israel--which he did through his faith in God. He conquered because of his faith--notwithstanding that his raw uninformed faith tragically was perverted so that it became the source of his rash and wrongful vow to sacrifice "whatever comes out of the door of my house to meet me" (Judges 11:31).

pp. 148-9

v.33 who by faith conquered kingdoms, performed [acts of] righteousness, obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions,

v.34 quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, from weakness were made strong, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight.

The word "WHO" points us back to "the prophets" in verse 32 as well as the other named individuals in that verse.

By faith they accomplished several things. There are 9 THINGS that are listed here in verses 33 and 34.

They are actually divided into THREE TRIPLETS.

#1 focuses on NATIONAL VICTORY,

#2 focuses on PERSONAL DELIVERANCE, and

#3 focuses on PERSONAL GIFTS AND ATTAINMENTS.

"WHO BY FAITH":

1. "CONQUERED KINGDOMS,"
2. "PERFORMED [ACTS OF] RIGHTEOUSNESS,"
3. "OBTAINED PROMISES."

Montefiore in Black's commentary says:

The first triplet of faith's examples stresses the social advantages that accrued.
p. 207

Owen says:

The Apostle proceeds to declare the things which were wrought by faith, all unto the same end--to encourage us to make use of the same grace on all occasions.
p. 239

Westcott says:

The first triplet describes the broad results which believers obtained:

Material victory.

Moral success in government.

Spiritual reward.

The second triplet notices forms of personal deliverance from:

Wild beasts.

Physical forces.

Human tyranny.

The third triplet marks the attainment of personal gifts:

Strength.

The exercise of strength.

The triumph of strength (the believer against the alien).

p. 377

Hughes says:

Three triads--nine empowerments--what power comes through faith!

This was important to know and believe under the darkening skies of Nero's impending pogrom. The examples of the empowered six and the litany of the triads of empowerments that have come to the church ought to make one think very clear: God delights to effect mighty triumphs through people of faith. Faith pleases God--and faith empowers.

p. 151

Let us consider these 9 ACHIEVEMENTS OF FAITH here in verses 33 and 34. "WHO BY FAITH:"

1. "CONQUERED KINGDOMS."

This, of course, could refer to any of the military exploits of "Joshua, Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah and David" (just to mention a few).

2. "PERFORMED [ACTS OF] RIGHTEOUSNESS"

Many of the prophets come into consideration here when we think of Samuel, Elijah, Elisha, and others.

3. "OBTAINED PROMISES"

Elijah and Elisha both come into focus here as first Elijah prayed on Mount Carmel for fire and rain and both came in response to his prayers. Elisha asked for a double portion of Elijah's spirit and laid claim to that as well.

4. "SHUT THE MOUTHS OF LIONS"

Montefiore in Black's commentary says:

The next three instances of lives dominated by faith concern personal deliverance, not social advantage.
p. 208

David and Daniel both had experiences with lions in their career.

HOLLYWOOD HERO

Sunday School teacher to class of young boys: "Who went into the lion's den and came out unhurt?"

Answer: "Tarzan!"

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

"GOD IS GREAT, GOD IS GOOD . . ."

A missionary unexpectedly met a lion in the jungle. Not seeing any way to escape, he fell to his knees in prayer. He was comforted by seeing the lion kneeling next to him.

"Dear Brother, how delightful to join you in prayer when only a moment ago I feared for my life," the missionary said.

"Don't interrupt," said the lion, "I'm just saying grace."

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

v. 34 quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, from weakness were made strong, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight.

5. "QUENCHED THE POWER OF FIRE"

This is a reference to SHADRACH, MESHACH and ABEDNEGO, the friends of Daniel who went through the experience of the fiery furnace and trusted God to be faithful in the midst of these circumstances and He was.

(The Power of Suffering: Strengthening Your Faith in the Refiner's Fire by John MacArthur, Jr.)

Daniel's' three cohorts are an extraordinary testimony of how inner principle and conviction, grounded in the truth of God, can prepare believers for and sustain them through the greatest of persecutions and testings.
p. 57

6. "ESCAPE THE EDGE OF THE SWORD"

We think of the prophets that were hidden by faithful Obediah during Ahab and Jezabell's reign. We think of Elijah himself as he raced into the wilderness to get away from Jezabell. We think of Elisha at Dothan when the angels of God protected he and his servant from the armies who were sent to apprehend him.

Montefiore in Black's commentary says:

The next three instances show how faith brought strength and vigour.
p. 208

7. "FROM WEAKNESS WERE MADE STRONG"

Samson, Hesachia, David (when he met Goliath).

This particular phrase reminds me of the APOSTLE PAUL. He so often speaks of the strength that is available.

Philippians 4:13

I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.

2 Corinthians 12:9

And He has said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness." Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may dwell in me.

8. "BECAME MIGHTY IN WAR"

David was one of the greatest, mighty men in battle along with many of his cohorts.

Joshua was often reminded by the Lord not to be fearful or discouraged but to be strong and courageous.

Joshua 10:8

The Lord said to Joshua, "Do not be afraid of them; I have given them into your hand. Not one of them will be able to withstand you."

9. "PUT FOREIGN ARMIES TO FLIGHT"

DAVID did that with numerous encounters with the Philistines.

GIDIAN did it with the Midianites.

JOSHUA experienced this on numerous occasions as he carried the people into the land and on military campaign after campaign in the southern and northern and mid-section portions of the land.

Joshua experienced victory putting "FOREIGN ARMIES TO FLIGHT."

Barclay says:

The writer to the Hebrews is here seeking to inspire new courage and a new sense of responsibility by making his hearers remember their past. He does not do it blatantly; he does it with infinite artistry; he does not so much himself tell them what to remember; by his delicate hints he compels them to remember for themselves. When Oliver Cromwell was arranging for the education of his son Richard, he said: "I would have him learn a little history." When we are discouraged, let us look back and remember and take heart again. God's arm is not shortened; His power is not grown less. What God did once He can do again, for the God of history is the same God whom we worship to-day.
p. 187

2 Corinthians 2:14

But thanks be to God, who always leads us in His triumph in Christ, and manifests through us the sweet aroma of the knowledge of Him in every place.

1 Corinthians 15:57

but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

v.35 Women received [back] their dead by resurrection; and others were tortured, not accepting their release, in order that they might obtain a better resurrection.

In verses 35-38 we are going to see FAITH TRIUMPHS OVER DEATH.

This is the PINNACLE OF FAITH. Triumphing over death gives way to a higher victory, victory through death.

There are 10 THINGS that we are going to be seeing in verses 35-37.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

In a swift transition of thought, the writer moved from faith's obvious triumphs to what seemed to be its defeats. But these defeats were only apparent, not real. Those who **were tortured and refused to be released** did so because they knew their sufferings would lead to a richer **and better resurrection** experience. So the readers might also endure suffering staunchly and expect reward in the future world. Indeed, all manner of physical suffering . . . has been endured by people of faith, as well as ostracism from their homes and countries, treatment that the readers might also have to endure.
p. 809

CAN YOU DRINK THE CUP?

“No man is fit to preach the gospel, seeing the whole world is set against it, save only he who is armed to suffer.”

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

C. H. Spurgeon, commenting on death for the Christian, observed that it's wonderful to "have the tenement gradually taken down, and yet not to feel any trouble about it, but to know that you are in the great Father's hands, and you shall wake up where old age and infirmities will have passed away, and where, in everlasting youth, you shall behold the face of Him you love."

(From Parson's Bible Illustrator 1.0)

Wiersbe says:

The transition in Hebrews 11:35 is important: not all men and women of faith experienced miraculous deliverance. Some were tortured and died! The word translated "others" in verse 36 means "others of a different kind." These "others" had faith, but God did not see fit to deal with them in the same way he dealt with Moses, Gideon, and David.
p. 130

Wiersbe says further:

The writer of Hebrews (11:36-38) records the fact that many unknown men and women of faith *were not delivered* from difficult circumstances; yet God honored their faith. In fact, it takes more faith *to endure* than it does to *escape*. Like the three Hebrew children, we should trust God and obey Him *even if He does not deliver us* (Dan. 3:16-18).
p. 130

Westcott says:

The triple triplet of victorious faith is followed by a single, abrupt clause which presents the highest conquest of faith, 'women received from resurrection their dead.' In this case faith appears under a twofold aspect. There is a silent, waiting, passive faith of love, which works with the active faith. Women, in whom the instinct of natural affection is strongest, cooperated with the prophets through whom the restoration was effected. They received their dead.
pp. 378-9

Kistemkar says:

In the next few verses the author summarizes the physical suffering that the heroes of faith endured. They were martyrs for God's cause. By faith they conquered even though they lost their lives.
p. 353

Thomas says:

Now the thought turns to what faith can endure, the emphasis being on the sufferings of the people. Faith enables as well as equips, and through faith people can suffer and be strong.
p. 153

The "WOMEN [who] RECEIVED [BACK] THEIR DEAD BY RESURRECTION" are:

1. the widow at Zerephath whose son died and Elijah was used by God to restore that child.
2. the woman at Chunam whose little boy died and Elisha was the instrument God used in that resurrection.

"AND OTHERS WERE TORTURED, NOT ACCEPTING THEIR RELEASE"

The PURPOSE behind that:

"IN ORDER THAT THEY MIGHT OBTAIN A BETTER RESURRECTION."

A. T. Robertson says:

A "better resurrection" than the temporary ones alluded to in this verse by the women.
p. 429

Wuest says:

They did this in order that they might attain to a better resurrection than the one mentioned above, namely, a mere continuation of life on earth. These were looking forward to the resurrection that would be unto glory.
pp. 209-10

Wiersbe, commenting on this phrase, says:

In so doing, they obtained "a better resurrection." Better than what? Better than the resurrection described in the first part of Hebrews 11:35. For, after all, the women received their dead back to life, *and they died again*. But when these martyrs are raised from the dead, they will share the glory of Christ and never suffer or die again!
p. 139

Hughes says:

Now to balance the record, the writer changes the emphasis by showing that faith also provides a different empowerment
--the power to persevere to the end.
p. 151

Westcott says:

The record of the open triumphs of Faith is followed by the record of its inward victories in unconquered and outwardly unrewarded endurance.
p. 379

v.36 And others received mockings and scourgings, yes, also chains and imprisonment.

Matthew 5:11, 12

"Blessed are you when men cast insults at you, and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely, on account of Me. Rejoice, and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you."

Circumstances are the rulers of the weak; they are but the instruments of the wise.

Samuel Lover

Why not go out on a limb? Isn't that where the fruit is?

Frank Scully

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

Wiersbe says:

The phrase "still others" (v. 36) reminds us that we can live by faith and appear to be defeated. Not everybody who trusted God was delivered or protected (vv. 36-40). But the important thing is not God's deliverance; it is God's approval (v. 39). Faith in God gives you the ability to endure when others are giving up.

pp. 820-21

v.37 They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were tempted, they were put to death with the sword; they went about in sheepskins, in goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, ill-treated

Let us just reflect for a minute on this CURRICULUM that is a part of what these who are exercising faith endured.

There are 10 THINGS:

1. "WOMEN RECEIVED [BACK] THEIR DEAD BY RESURRECTION,"
2. "OTHERS WERE TORTURED,"
3. "OTHERS RECEIVED MOCKINGS,"
4. "SCOURGINGS,"
5. "CHAINS AND IMPRISONMENT,"
6. "STONED,"
7. "SAWN IN TWO,"
8. "TEMPTED,"
9. "PUT TO DEATH WITH THE SWORD," and
10. "WENT ABOUT IN SHEEPSKINS AND GOATSKINS; BEING DESTITUTE, AFFLICTED, ILL-TREATED."

Wiersbe says:

Faith enables us to turn from the approval of the world and seek only the approval of God. If God is glorified by delivering His people, He will do it. If He sees fit to be glorified by *not* delivering His people, then He will do that. But we must never conclude that the absence of deliverance means a lack of faith on the part of God's children.

p. 131

Wiersbe in his book Run With the Winners says:

"God did it for me, and I know He will do it for you!"

Have you ever heard those words from a preacher of another believer bearing witness? Have you ever read them in a book? *They are dangerous words!* They give the impression that God *always* works the same way, in similar or identical situations. "If God healed me," says the enthusiastic witness, "He will also heal you! Now, all you have to do is--" and there follows the sure-fire "formula" for experiencing God's healing.

I received a phone call from a frantic young lady who kept shouting, "It doesn't work! It doesn't work!"

"What doesn't work?" I asked, after she had calmed down.

"I did everything they told me to do at the seminar, I followed all the steps, *and it doesn't work!*" She was so distraught that she threatened to commit suicide.

Doctors warn us that it's dangerous to take medicine that is prescribed for someone else, and that same warning can be applied to the spiritual life. We should beware of comparing our spiritual experiences with those of others. God's principles are always the same for every believer, but His plans and purposes may be different. God always honors faith, but we who believe must permit Him to honor it in His own way.

pp. 137-8

We are plagued in the 20th century church with a strain of theology that is focusing more on:

SELFISH ENTITLEMENT

than it is on:

SACRIFICIAL SERVANTHOOD.

(Living in the Lions' Den Without Being Eaten by William Carr Peel)

A. W. Tozer warned us, "Whoever seeks God as a means toward desired ends will not find God. God will not be used."

p. 28

(Acts of Love: The Power of Encouragement by David Jeremiah)

Some years ago, I was given a book by Florence Bulle which bore this interesting title: God Wants You Rich and Other Enticing Doctrines. In her book she had some choice words for those who seek the easy way to growth and maturity.

The deception in the success-prosperity doctrine is subtle. It sounds so spiritual to assert that we cannot be sick or fail if we trust God, and that He will reward us for faith and giving and being good, by making us rich in material things. But this was not the message of the men and women of faith who throughout history set church and nation aflame with revival.

The more we pursue such poppycock, the more likely we will end up like pampered children. Getting everything we want won't turn us into soldiers for Christ. We may wear a tailored suit with gold buttons and hash marks, but we will be no more soldiers than the six-year-old with his feet shoved in his dad's old combat boots and carrying a wooden gun. Unchecked, the success-prosperity syndrome will not see Christians developing together into a vigorous, stouthearted, indomitable church. Rather, it will reduce the body of Christ to spiritual flabbiness.

This past year I read that Jim Bakker, convicted in 1989 of defrauding PTL partners of millions of dollars, had been convicted once again. This time he'd been convicted by rereading and writing out every word in the Bible which Jesus ever spoke.

I asked all who sat under my ministry to forgive me for preaching a gospel emphasizing earthly prosperity. Many today believe that the evidence of God's blessing on them is a new car or a house, a good job. If that be the case, then gambling casino owners, drug kingpins and movie stars are blessed of God. There is no way, if you take the whole counsel of God's Word that you can equate riches or material things as a sign of God's blessing, or even health. If we equate earthly possessions with God's favor, what do we tell the billions of those living in poverty, or what do you do if depression hits, or what do you say to those who lose a loved one? Many in-name-only Christians would curse God if they lost all of their material possessions and their health. Jesus said, "Don't lay up for yourselves treasures on earth." He wants us to love Him, not the things that He gives us.

pp. 176-8

(Perilous Pursuits by Joseph M. Stowell)

I'm reminded of the story of the big dog who was trotting home one day, a fine steak firmly in his jaws. Happy with his fresh find, he crossed a little foot bridge and stopped to look in the water, where he saw his reflection. He supposed the vision to be another dog with a steak in its mouth. In the distortion of the reflecting pond, the dog assumed that the other dog's steak was better than his. When he opened his mouth to grab it, his steak disappeared into the pond. Just when the dog thought he had more, he ended up with less.

Another complication to our madness for more is a unique brand of heresy that's touted every day over the religious airwaves and in massive conferences across the country. It may just be the most malicious appeal of all to a Christian's compulsion for more. It is the brazenly proclaimed teaching that says if you just have enough faith, God will give you health, wealth, and happiness. He has to, say the false prophets of more. He's bound by His promises to prosper you. All you have to do is claim your inheritance--after, of course, you have sent these false teachers your "seed gift" to guarantee your return from God.

This teaching is detestable because it allows us to cover our greed with a cloak of faith, giving us permission to demand from God those things that He may want to give us, but has never promised to. Ironically, the teaching often comes from those who are driven by their own madness for more. Furthermore, it distorts faith and God's work of grace in a person who has learned to be content.
pp. 68-69

The pursuit of pleasure distorts and dulls our prayer life. James went on to say, "When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures" (4:3). While this is true in terms of much of what we ask for, it is especially true of the heretical "health, wealth, and happiness" gospel we talked about earlier. Prayer is not a manipulative weapon to force God to grant us pleasure. It is a means by which we worship Him, finding peace in the midst of pain and grace and mercy to help in the time of need.
p. 121

Death and sorrow will be the companions of our journey; hardship our garment; constancy and valor our only shield. We must be united, we must be undaunted, we must be inflexible.

--Sir Winston Churchill, 1940

(From Parson's Bible Illustrator 1.0)

Backward Christian soldiers,
fleeing from the fight,
With the cross of Jesus clearly out of sight:
Christ our rightful Master standing against the foe,
But forward into battle we are chicken to go.

Like a mighty tortoise moves the church of God;
Brothers we are treading where we've often trod,
We are much divided, many bodies we,
Having different doctrines, not much charity.

Crowns and thrones may perish, kingdoms rise and wane,
But the Church of Jesus hidden does remain;
Gates of hell should never 'gainst that Church prevail,
We have Christ's own promise, but think that it will fail.

Sit here, then, ye people, join our useless throng;
Blend with ours your voices in a feeble song.
Blessings, ease, and comfort, ask from Christ the King.
With our modern thinking, we won't do a thing.

--George Verwer, *Come! Live! Die!*, p. 91-92.

(From Parson's Bible Illustrator 1.0)

v.38 (men of whom the world was not worthy), wandering in deserts and mountains and caves and holes in the ground.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary points out the fact that:

. . . a lovely touch [is placed here], the writer commented that **the world was not worthy** of those whom it banished.
p. 809

Westcott says:

They were men worth more than the whole world, and they lacked all.
p. 381

Hughes says:

The calculated irony here is that the world has rejected such people, and yet the world does not deserve to have them even if it were to accept them.

So much for the prosperity gospel! Here are saints who are so holy and so full of faith that the world is not worthy to contain them, and yet they are called to persevere in persecution, deprivation, and death. Not only that, but the reason they are able to persevere *is* their great faith!
p. 153

Wuest says:

Expositor's quotes Davidson: "The world drove them out, thinking them unworthy to live in it, while in truth it was unworthy to have them living in it."
p. 211

Kistemaker quotes:

Man may trouble and distress me,
 'Twill but drive me to Thy breast;
 Life with trials hard may press me,
 Heaven will bring me sweeter rest.

p. 357

Pink says:

This parenthetical clause is brought in here for the purpose of removing an objection: many might suppose that these despised wanderers were only receiving their just due, as not being fit to live in decent society. To remove this scandal the apostle put the blame where it rightly belonged, affirming that it was society which was unworthy of having the saints of God in their midst.

pp. 385-6

Delitzsch says:

The world despised them, and thought them not worthy of its regards or society; but the reverse was the truth: the world was not worthy of them, and therefore God withdrew them from it. The world, in persecuting and driving them into the desert, witnessed against and punished itself.

p. 289

MacArthur says:

The world is **not worthy** of having such people in its midst, just as these people did not deserve the sufferings they received. For its inflicting the suffering, the world will be judged and punished; for their enduring the suffering the faithful saints will be resurrected and rewarded. They knew with Paul that "the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us" (Rom. 8:18), and they looked forward with Peter to "an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven"

(1 Pet. 1:4).

p. 368

Phillips says:

If, the writer of Hebrews argues, men and women could bear such things for the faith in the old days when they lived in the shadowlands of faith, how much more should Christian believers, dwelling in the full blaze of light brought to men by Christ, be willing to dare all for Him! So then, whether delivered from their foes or delivered to their foes, they should be willing to remain true to Christ.

p. 187

The Pilgrims

Dramatic and significant is the story of the Pilgrims. On December 21, 1620, the voyaging *Mayflower* dropped anchor in Plymouth Bay, with Captain Christopher Jones at her helm. It had been a grueling voyage, taking the one-hundred-twenty-ton-capacity ship sixty-six days to make the perilous crossing. There had been disease, anxiety, and childbirth among the 102 courageous passengers. Furthermore, they arrived on the black New England shore during a hard winter which ultimately claimed half of their number. However, when spring came and the captain of the *Mayflower* offered free passage to anyone desiring to return, not a single person accepted.

The fidelity of the forty-one men, who while still aboard the *Mayflower* had signed the famous Compact beginning with the words, "In ye name of God Amen," was taking on visible meaning, these chivalrous souls had dedicated themselves to the total causes of freedom. They had come to a wilderness to carve out a better way of life. Faith prompted the voyage; faith sustained the Pilgrims and their religious convictions constrained them to raise their voices in praise. Their hardship, sacrifice, devotion, concept of government, and vigorous religion all remind us of those who sought a country.

--1000 Illustrations For Preaching and Teaching.

(From Parson's Bible Illustrator 1.0)

(Lambs Among Wolves by Bob Briner)

Bill says that too many Christians are cut away from the culture and cannot speak to it, or they just simply are too scared: “Someone has said that silence is golden; but more often than not, silence is yellow.” In typical Texas fashion, Bill says it is time for believers to “walk into the night and start kicking cockroaches in the butt.” The key is walking *into* the night, not standing on the perimeter.

pp. 34-35

(Broken in the Right Place by Alan E. Nelson)

When we are externally oriented, we want our circumstances to change more than we are willing to change our hearts and our characters to match our circumstances. When we are broken, we pray for strength to match the situation. As one commentator noted, Paul was chained but not contained. The result of a broken attitude is an inability to be controlled by external circumstances, whether they be people, health, finances, or others. When we pray for strength to match the challenge instead of a different challenge, we become the miracle.

Life upheavals can occur in sudden, traumatic turn-arounds, such as a job loss, heart attack, financial disaster, and the like. Someone said, trouble always happens at the same time, when you need it least. Often the shock of the event itself adds to the impact. Other problems occur with a gradual decay of circumstances. Perhaps it is a stalled dream, a business that deteriorates, a relationship malaise, or a worsening health condition. Sometimes the gravity of the process is just the day-to-day awareness that life is not getting better, and you are not sure how to change it. Both types of processes remind us that we ultimately are not in control. They show us our limited power to run our lives.

pp. 55-56

(The Complete Book of Zingers by Croft M. Pentz)

Don't tell me about your labor pains--show me the baby.
p. 91

v.39 And all these, having gained approval through their faith, did not receive what was promised,

Verses 39 and 40 are THE VICTORY OF FAITH.

Hebrews 11:13

All these died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them and having welcomed them from a distance, and having confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

In a concluding summary the writer pointed out that the great heroes of faith he had spoken of had not yet realized their eschatological hopes. This fact shows that **God had planned something better for them and us**. It is indeed "better for us" that the future hopes they strove toward be delayed, since only thus could believers enjoy the present experience of becoming companions of the Messiah who leads them to glory.
p. 809

As a result, the perfecting (cf. 10:14; 12:23) of the Old Testament worthies--that is, the realization of their hopes--awaits that of all believers.
p. 809

Westcott says:

The faith by which they welcomed the divine promises became the power through which the fellowship of God with them was made evident.
p. 382

Bruce says:

From righteous Abel to those whose faith was so nobly manifested on the very eve of the coming of Christ, they all "won their record for faith" (Moffatt). Some of them, as we were told in v. 33, "obtained promises," but none of them received *the* promise in the sense of witnessing its fulfilment. They lived and died in prospect of a fulfilment which none of them experienced on earth; yet so real was that fulfilment to them that it gave them power to press upstream, against the current of the environment, and to live on earth as citizens of that commonwealth whose foundations are firmly laid in the unseen and eternal order.

p. 330

DeHaan says:

If these Old Testament heroes with the limited light and opportunities were able to overcome, then what excuse can we give with all the added light which we possess, when we meet Jesus? For we have much more promised than they. The chapter closes with a reminder of this.

p. 161

Hession points out:

One thing is said of them all--indeed, it is put both at the beginning and the end of the chapter--"by it the elders had witness borne to them" (11:2) and "these all had witness borne to them through their faith . . ." (11:39). And the witness God gave of them was that they pleased Him. Whatever might have been lacking in their personal characters, the fact that they believed God and acted on His promises was enough to enable Him to express His pleasure with regard to them. God counted their faith a righteousness they did not otherwise possess. That is certainly said of Noah (11:7), and one can assume it goes for the rest of them.

p. 186

They had faith to believe that Jehovah was standing with them, that there was "a better resurrection" and "a great recompence of reward" hereafter, and they had a determination that at all costs they were not going to miss that.

It can be understood what tremendous bearing this would have on Paul's message to his readers that they should, whatever it might cost them, endure to the end. If it was by faith that the elders did so, this must be the way for them too. This was the great crowd of witnesses, men who had gone this way before, and whose faith was to inspire theirs to see it through.
p. 187

Barclay says:

In the end he says a great thing. All these died before the final unfolding of God's promise, before the coming of God's Messiah into the world. It was as if God had so arranged things, that the full blaze of His glory and revelation should not be revealed until we and they can enjoy it together. The writer to the Hebrews is saying: "See! The glory of God has come. But see what it cost to enable it to come! That is the faith which gave you your faith. What can you do but be true to a heritage and a tradition like that?"
p. 194

Montefiore in Black's commentary says:

Our author has now made an imposing sweep of biblical history from its earliest beginnings to the latest events recorded in his Greek bible. He has painted an inspiring picture of faith and endurance and obedience. The whole point of the chapter is now summed up. All these have won testimony because of their faith. The witness of their faith is in the scriptures.
p. 212

“The quality of a man’s life is in direct proportion to his commitment to excellence, regardless of his chosen field or endeavor. . . . I firmly believe that any man’s finest hour—his greatest fulfillment to all he holds dear—is that moment when he has worked his heart out in a good cause and lies exhausted on the field of battle, victorious.”

--Vince Lombardi

(From Parson's Bible Illustrator 1.0)

(Seeing Through: Reflecting God’s Light in a Dark World by David Roper)

God does not look for powerful instruments but for instruments that can be wielded by his power.

p. 83

(The Living Body: The Church Christ Is Building by Dr. Richard Halverson)

God's schedule often involves waiting. The Bible is full of stories about people who waited. Sarah waited for ninety years to give birth to her much-desired son, Isaac. The grieving Jacob waited for years in protracted mourning before learning his son, Joseph, was still alive. Joseph waited for years in prison before being elevated to the second-most important post in Pharaoh's government. Moses waited forty years in the wilderness to be prepared to lead Israel. Israel waited with the Red Sea in front of them and the Egyptian army in hot pursuit behind them until God miraculously opened the waters for them to pass through.

Waiting may be difficult, but it can be very good. "Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for him," says the psalmist (Psalm 37:7). Isaiah promises, "Those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint" (Isaiah 40:31, NRSV).

p. 78

(Broken in the Right Place by Alan E. Nelson)

In his book, *The Fifth Discipline*, Peter Senge shares a tragic story which illustrates the fight many of us go through in the brokenness process.

Some years ago, while on an early spring canoe trip in Maine, we had come to a small dam, and put in to shore to portage around the obstacle. A second group arrived, and a young man who had been drinking decided to take his rubber raft over the dam. When the raft overturned after going over the dam, he was dumped into the freezing water. Unable to reach him, we watched in horror as he struggled desperately to swim downstream against the backwash at the base of the dam. His struggle lasted only a few minutes; then he died of hypothermia. Immediately, his limp body was sucked down into the swirling water. Seconds later, it popped up, ten yards downstream, free of the maelstrom at the base of the dam. Ironically, it was his very struggle against the forces at the base of the dam that killed him. He didn't know that the only way out was counterintuitive. If he hadn't tried to keep his head above water, but instead dived down to where the current flowed downstream, he would have survived. What he had tried in vain to achieve in the last moments of his life, the currents accomplished for him within seconds after his death.

p. 86

(Christian Disciplines by Oswald Chambers)

We need to remind ourselves of the stern, heroic stuff Jesus Christ always spoke when He talked about discipleship. "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me" (Luke 9:23). Few of us do it though plenty of us talk about it. It means an impaired life. "A sword will pierce through your own soul also."

pp. 101

(The Hidden Price of Greatness by Ray Beeson & Ranelda Mack Hunsicker)

Augustine's motto may prove helpful in this struggle: "To my God, a heart of flame; to my fellow men, a heart of love; to myself, a heart of steel."
p. 27

(Oswald Chambers: Abandoned to God by David McCasland)

"There will come one day a personal and direct touch
from God when every tear and perplexity,
every oppression and distress, every suffering and pain,
and wrong and injustice will have a complete and
ample and overwhelming explanation."

--Shade of His Hand

p. 273

v.40 because God had provided something better for us, in order that apart from us they should not be made perfect.

That "SOMETHING BETTER" is ACCESS INTO GOD'S VERY PRESENCE.

It is:

the new priesthood,

the new covenant,

the one final sacrifice for sin on the part of our Savior,

the conscience being cleared from all guilt because of Christ's sacrifice.

It is the glory of the future that gave them endurance for the present!

GOD IS NOT ASHAMED OF THEM--verse 16.

THE WORLD IS NOT WORTHY OF THEM--verse 38.

First, we have the REASON why they "did not receive what was promised":

"BECAUSE GOD HAD PROVIDED SOMETHING BETTER FOR US."

He then follows this with the PURPOSE:

"IN ORDER THAT APART FROM US THEY SHOULD NOT BE MADE PERFECT."

Griffith Thomas says:

The chapter closes (vv. 39, 40) with a summary statement about all these worthies whose faith was acknowledged by God, though they did not obtain what God had promised. The reason for this was that God's time had not come. He did not intend them to be placed by themselves. They had to wait for us, and now, through Christ, the Old Testament saints have been put in a better position, and are able to share in the spiritual blessings provided by Christ. The entire Epistle is occupied with this thought of the inferiority of spiritual privileges under the old covenant compared with those which are our portion now. Thus, in the old days, sin was set aside, while now it is sent away; in the old days, sins were constantly remembered, now they are completely removed.
p. 153

A. T. Robertson says:

But this glorious and gracious purpose (foresight) of God is not due to any special merit in us. It is simply the fulness of the time in God's dispensation of grace of which we are the beneficiaries. But all the same and all the more (*noblesse oblige*), we should prove worthy of our heritage and of God's goodness to us and be loyal to Christ.
p. 431

Lane says:

The failure of the exemplars of faith to obtain the promised eternal inheritance can be traced to no fault of their own. It was because of the gracious providence of God who "Provided something better with us in mind" (v 40a).
p. 392

Lane says further:

The privileged status of Christians as those who have shared in the fulfillment of God's promise should motivate them to be more willing and equipped to endure the testing of faith than were their predecessors, all of whom received attestation from God through their faith.
p. 394

Owen says:

These "better things" provided by God are, without question, the incarnation of the Son of God, the coming of the promised Seed, with His accomplishment of the work of redemption of the Church, and all the privileges of the Church, in light, grace, liberty, spiritual worship, with boldness of access unto God that ensued thereon.
p. 243

Bruce says:

But now the promise has been fulfilled; the age of the new covenant has dawned; the Christ to whose day they looked forward has come and by his self-offering and his high-priestly ministry in the presence of God he has procured perfection for them--and for us. "With us in mind, God had made a better plan, that only in company with us should they reach their perfection" (NEB). They and we together now enjoy unrestricted access to God through Christ, as fellow-citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem. The "better plan" which God had made embraces the better hope, the better promises, the better covenant, the better sacrifices, the better and abiding possession, and the better resurrection which is their heritage, and ours.
p. 330

Hession says:

This leads to the truth that the real fulfillment of what God has for us will never be realized in this life, only fully in heaven. Even the most fulfilled Christian life in this world with, say, every hope satisfied and every prayer answered, would be at best but an unfinished symphony. The final movement of the symphony, that which completes the whole, will not sound forth until we stand before the throne of God and of the Lamb in our glorified bodies.
p. 188

Phillips says:

So the great appeal merges into the great application. "God having provided some better thing concerning us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect" (Heb 11:40). The Old Testament saints had only the shadows; we have the substance. They had good things; we have better things. Their sphere and horizon was earthly; ours is heavenly. Thus the writer of Hebrews applies the lessons from all the lives he has been considering, applies them with great leverage and tremendous pressure, to the lives of the Hebrew Christians to whom he wrote. "Go on," he says. "Go on. Never go back. Go on."
pp. 187-88

A few hours before Dwight L. Moody died, he caught a glimpse of the glory awaiting him. Awakening from a sleep, he said, "Earth recedes, heaven opens before me. If this is death, it is sweet! There is no valley here. God is calling me, and I must go!" His son who was standing by his bedside said, "No, no father, you are dreaming."

"No," said Mr. Moody, "I am not dreaming. I have been within the gates; I have seen the children's faces." A short time elapsed and then, following what seemed to the family to be the death struggle, he spoke again: "This is my triumph; this my coronation day! It is glorious!"

(From Parson's Bible Illustrator 1.0)

A person is not really ready to live until he is ready to die. It was a dark night in Marshfield, October 24, 1852. Daniel Webster was dying. He was ready. His physician, a very sensitive man named Dr. Jeffries had ministered as much medicine as he could and as was practically possible. He realized that death was near and he chose to be a friend rather than a physician at that moment and he picked up an old rather well worn hymn book that Webster had often sung from and he chose to read the words of one of his favorite hymns:

There is a fountain filled with blood
 drawn from Immanuel's veins
 And sinners plunged beneath that flood
 lose all their guilty stains.

He read every stanza, when he got to the last, Webster's lips were moving, though no sound came:

When this poor lisping, stammering tongue
 lies silent in the grave,
 then in a nobler, sweeter song,
 I'll sing thy power to save.
 I'll sing thy power to save,
 I'll sing thy power to save.

And he looked at Webster, their eyes met, and Webster uttered 3 final words: Amen, Amen, Amen!

(From Parson's Bible Illustrator 1.0)

(A Gentle Thunder: Hearing God Through the Storm by Max Lucado)

If God had a refrigerator, your picture would be on it. If he had a wallet, your photo would be in it. He sends you flowers every spring and a sunrise every morning. Whenever you want to talk, he'll listen. He can live anywhere in the universe, and he chose your heart. And the Christmas gift he sent you in Bethlehem? Face it, friend. He's crazy about you.
 p. 122

(Seeing Through: Reflecting God's Light in a Dark World by David Roper)

As Yogi Berra observed, "There are some people who, if they don't know, you

can't tell them.”
p. 56

CONCLUSION:

What are some of the lessons we can learn from this particular study?

LESSON #1: It was the faith of Amram and Jochebed, the parents of Moses, who made it possible for Moses to survive.

LESSON #2: Moses manifested the convictions of faith when he "refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter."

LESSON #3: Moses made the choices of faith when he was "choosing rather to be suffering ill treatment with the people of God, than to be enjoying the short-lived pleasures of sin."

LESSON #4: Moses was manifesting the character of faith when he was "considering the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt."

LESSON #5: Moses was manifesting the consummation of faith as "he was looking forward to the reward."

LESSON #6: Moses "persevered, as seeing Him who is invisible."

LESSON #7: Rahab testifies to the fact that no one is beyond the grace of God and the ability to exercise faith.

LESSON #8: Trials do not nullify faith but rather strengthen it.

LESSON #9: True faith involves sacrificial servanthood and not selfish entitlement.

LESSON #10: The glory of the future gave them the endurance for the present.

F. B. Meyer says:

There are many difficulties before us all. Stormy seas forbid our passage; frowning fortifications bar our progress; mighty kingdoms defy our power; lions roar against us; fire lights its flaming barricade in our path; the sword, the armies of the alien, mockings, scourgings, bonds, and imprisonment--all these menace our peace, darken our horizon, and try on us their power; but faith has conquered all these before, and it shall do as much again. We will laugh at impossibility; we will tread the shores of the seas, certain they must make us a way; we will enter the dens of wild beasts and the furnaces of flame, sure that they are impotent to injure us; we shall escape the edge of the sword, out of weakness become strong, turn to flight armies of aliens, and set at nought all the power of the enemy: and all because we believe in God. Reckon on God's faithfulness. Look not at the winds and waves, but at his character and will. Get alone with Him, steeping your heart and mind in his precious and exceeding great promises. Be obedient to the utmost limit of your light. Walk in the Spirit, one of whose fruits is faith. So shall you be deemed worthy to join this band, whose names and exploits run over from this page into the chronicles of eternity, and to share their glorious heritage.
pp. 42-43

(Rise and Walk by Dennis Byrd with Michael D'Orso)

Finally, with more fresh tears welling up inside me, I came to the end, to the definition of who I had been when I first came to this city and who I had become as I prepared to leave.

"Four years ago," I said, "I came to New York a young Christian man."

I paused to draw my breath and fight back the tears.

"Now I go home a young Christian man and a New York Jet."

I had to pause again.

"I'm very proud to say that I'm a New York Jet," I said, the tears finally fighting their way out, "and I will be forever."

p. 233

(Lambs Among Wolves by Bob Briner)

Frank Reich warmed up his car on a cold Buffalo morning, getting ready to drive to Rich Stadium. It was January 3, 1993, and he was about to start his first NFL play-off game. His opponent: the Houston Oilers. While the windows of his car defrosted, he listened to a taped song--a song he had played over and over at least a hundred times that week. The song was "In Christ Alone," sung by Michael English, with lyrics by Shawn Craig and music by Dan Koch.

Frank sat and listened to the words and music, which had inspired him all week during practice. The ice melted from his windows. The song ended. Frank headed off to the stadium. When he got there he sat in his car, listening to the song over and over. Finally, he pulled some paper from his football playbook and wrote down the song's words. He sensed that God somehow wanted him to share the words with someone that day, maybe a teammate, a friend, or even a stranger. Right there, Frank promised that he would.

Then he headed off to the game. Little did Frank know that he would--that very day--quarterback the greatest comeback in the history of the National Football League. Down 35-3 midway into the third quarter, Frank led the Bills to an amazing 41-38 overtime victory over the Oilers before a massive play-off television audience.

When he returned to the locker room, people were yelling and hugging, going completely crazy. Suddenly the Bills' public relations man signaled his way. "C'mon, Frank," he said. "I've got to get you down to the press conference!" That is when it dawned on him: "The Holy Spirit just hit me," Frank says. He fumbled around and found that paper. He walked down the hall and into a room packed with media. Standing behind the podium, an awestruck nation waited to hear his comments about the victory. Frank stepped to the microphone to start the press conference and read these words:

*In Christ alone will I glory
 Though I could pride myself in battle won.
 For I have been blessed beyond measure,
 And by His strength alone I overcome.
 Oh, I could stop and count successes,
 Like diamonds in my hand.
 But those trophies could not equal
 to the grace by which I stand.
 In Christ alone
 I place my trust
 And find my glory in the power of the cross.
 In every victory let it be said of me,
 My source of strength, my source of hope
 is Christ alone.
 In Christ alone will I glory,
 for only by His grace, I am redeemed.
 And only His tender mercy, could reach
 beyond my weakness to my need.
 Now I seek no greater honor than to know
 Him more,
 And to count my gains but losses, and to the
 glory of my Lord.*

Frank Reich, a backup Bill's quarterback who has taken countless blows from a rushing defensive end, who has sweated out training camps, who has competed for ten years at the highest levels of athletics--this same man, at a moment when so many others would have basked in the glory of making NFL history--said that he "counts his gains but losses, and to the glory of my Lord." And he said it on NBC before one of the year's largest television audiences.

pp. 132-3

(The Finishing Touch: Becoming God's Masterpiece: A Daily Devotional by Charles R. Swindoll)

TIME TO TOUGHEN UP

“Be on the alert, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong” (1 Cor. 16:13). Those words were written by a man who practiced what he penned. Paul was his name. “Guts” could have been his nickname. With singleminded determination, the rugged apostle hitched in his belt and pressed on.

Through hard labors, imprisonments, beatings, and dangers . . . in spite of a brutal stoning, three frightening shipwrecks, a day and a night in the waters of the Mediterranean, threats on his life, extreme cold and intense heat, sleepless nights, dreadful days when hunger weakened him and thirst tormented him . . . regardless of continued misunderstanding from former companions, hateful treatment and vigorous opposition, ugly letters from the Corinthians, disappointment over the Galatians, mistreatment in Philippi, mocking in Athens, satanic oppression, and sustained isolation in a damp, dark dungeon in Rome before being beheaded, the persecutor-turned-apostle from Tarsus refused to run scared or lick his wounds. Even a cursory review of his life makes most Christians of today look like pantywaists.

Where did Christians get the idea that we’d be appreciated, affirmed, and admired? The Savior himself taught that blessings are reserved for the persecuted, for those who are reviled, for those against whom folks say “all kinds of evil . . . falsely . . .” (Matt. 5:10-11). He is the One who also warned, “Woe to you when all men speak well of you” (Luke 6:26).

It sure is easy to forget those words and get soft, becoming too tender, too sensitive. Fragility is not a virtue extolled in Scripture. Saints with thin skin get distracted and, shortly thereafter, discouraged. There’s a long, demanding course to be run, most of which takes place in the trenches and without applause. I suggest we lower our expectations as we intensify our determination and head for the goal.

Endurance is the secret, not popularity. This vile world is no friend of grace to help us on to God. He’s looking for troops who are in this thing for the long haul, caring and loving, of course, but not crowd-pleasing cheerleaders who rely on audience reaction to keep going.

Why “be on the alert”? Because we have an adversary who is always ready to pounce. Why “stand firm in the faith”? Because nothing worthwhile was ever accomplished without commitment to truth. Why “act like men”? Because being childish won’t cut it when the battle rages. Why “be strong”? Because weakness precedes surrender . . . and quitting is not an option.

There are 1,130 frostbitten miles, mountain ranges, blizzards, hungry beasts, and frozen seas between Anchorage and Nome. This awful trek is the scene of the ultimate endurance test known as the Iditarod Sled Dog Race, where twelve huskies pull a sled and its driver through the most grueling,

inhuman conditions one can fathom. The most frequent champion is a woman named Susan Butcher, whose tough-minded fixation on winning has earned her the nickname, Ayatollah Butcher. She holds the record: 11 days, 1 hour, and 53 minutes, but that doesn't satisfy. Her goal is to break the 10-day barrier.

The secret, she will tell you, is her own mindset and the training of those dogs, which gives new meaning to the word "serious." Her 150-dog kennel is a thing to behold. Shortly after each pup's birth, while it is still blind, she holds it in her hands and breathes her breath into its nose. That way, she claims, each one will associate her smell with comfort and encouragement. The rapport begins with that breathing-into-the-nose routine. She personally feeds, trains, massages, and--on a rotation basis--sleeps with each dog. She personally nurses them to health when they are injured. She is infinitely patient with them, talks with them, believes in them, even sings to them (old folk songs by Bob Dylan and Joan Baez, plus a few Irish lullabies). The objective? To bond with them. It pays. They have saved her life on the trail more than once. Back in 1979, she led her dog team to the 20,320-foot summit of Mt. McKinley. It took 44 days.

What a woman! One reporter described her as having "a stiff spine . . . a stubborn mind-set," which is what is needed to endure moose attacks, blizzards so severe that one time for five hours she couldn't see the lead dog, and a sudden plunge into icy water (Granite and Maddie, the mushers, pulled her out). But what is most interesting is that a race you and I would call impossible, she describes as "thrilling . . . especially when you conquer it."

The Christian life isn't an 11-day race. It's a lifetime journey full of more dangers and pitfalls than a hundred Iditarods. So it's foolish to think we can enter it half-heartedly or sustain it easily. More often than not, to borrow from Bunyan, "this miry slough is such a place as cannot be mended." To survive it calls for help from above and toughness from within. If Susan Butcher is willing to give that kind of effort to win a race that is incredible in the eyes of the world, seems to me we should be capable of conquering the marathon from earth to heaven.

A combination of two ingredients is essential: the capacity to accept and the tenacity to endure. It's hard, but what else is new? Sitting around whining and complaining won't cut it. The gutsy apostle didn't, and neither should we. The Christian life is "thrilling . . . especially when you conquer it."

If it's time to vote, I move that we toughen up. All in favor, say "Mush."
pp. 440-42