

STUDIES IN THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS

Part IV

STUDY NUMBER TWENTY - HEBREWS 11:23-40

**What's the overriding theme to Hebrews 11?
Why is it in the Bible?**

Throughout all of the first 11 chapters the writer has been telling these folks that all they really need is a relationship to Christ.

They are contemplating going back under Judaism from their relationship to Christ because of the persecution and the difficulty.

So when we arrive at Hebrews 11 the author leaves the principles and goes to people.

If you wrote a little phrase over the top of Hebrews 11 it would be something like this:

**“THESE ARE THE FOLKS WHO MADE IT,
WHY CAN'T YOU?”**

Since they did it, why can't you?

Why can't you hang in there?

Why can't you persevere?

**Why can't you be tough and be faithful
to God through all of your life?**

And so we looked at 8 people last week.

We looked at 3 people that lived before the flood.

- 1. Abel**
- 2. Enoch and**
- 3. Noah**

**We saw faith worshipping,
faith walking and
faith working in those 3 guys.**

**And then we saw 5 others
that started with the patriarchal period
when the promise of the seed had been given.**

**Abraham, by faith, left Ur of the Chaldeans
to go to a country he didn't know where he was going.**

**The promise was kept and then came Isaac.
And so Isaac was the next one.
And then Jacob.**

Then we had Sarah mixed in there too.

And then the last one was Joseph.

**Do you remember what Joseph was doing
when we finished the study?**

**Joseph told his family,
“be sure my bones go with you when you leave.”**

In other words he knew that the children of Israel were only going to be in Egypt for a period of time and they were going to go back to their land.

So looking forward in faith he told those guys, “be sure my bones go with you” and what happened?

In Exodus 13 when they are out of there, Moses is very careful to see to it that Joseph’s bones go with them back to the land.

And so each one of these people were looking forward in faith to what God was going to do and they lived their lives consistently in view of that.

Now we pick up today with the one that gets the most press.

And the reason he does is because he is the key figure.

Moses the great lawgiver.

And so he gets more press than anybody else because he is the critical issue.

They are going to go back and live under the law, they are going to go back and do these old sacrifices again, that’s the kind of life they are contemplating.

Was Moses a man who lived by faith? Yes.

**Now let me remind you of something, okay.
Your faith shines the brightest when God says no
to your plans because of a greater purpose.**

**New Testament faith, when it shines its brightest
is a person who is coming to a Sovereign God.**

Who has a real struggle in his life.

**And God has some greater purpose
that person doesn't know and so God says no.**

**But God always says, "My grace is sufficient for you,
my strength is made perfect in your weakness,
now shine for me right where you are
in the circumstances where you are.**

**His no always obligates Him to a better plan.
You trust Him in the midst of all of that.**

**Faith is displayed in perseverance
in the midst of adversity.**

We don't often hear that.

**When we come to the end of Hebrews chapter 11,
you won't believe what these great people of faith
endured to make it to victory.**

**You think we have a tough curriculum.
You think we have a tough road to hoe.**

Wait until you see some of these people that are going to wrap up this study today.

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.

“By faith, when he was born, verse 23.”

Verse 24, “by faith, when he had grown up.”

Now “by faith when he was born he was hidden for three months by his parents.”

The only reason this man lived is because of his parents.

Incredible, as it sounds.

It was the faith of his parents that made it possible for Moses to live.

And yet how many of us remember the names of his parents, Amram and Jochebed?

Let's get the culture in mind.

Pharaoh is going to stamp out as many of the children of Israel as possible because they are multiplying

abundantly.

Pharaoh is concerned that they are going to become a political force and he is threatened by the multiplicity of the Jews in Egypt.

So he hits upon a plan, that every little baby boy is going to be thrown into the Nile River and become food for the crocodiles.

And that is basically what they were doing.

Now, here Amram and Jochebed have their third child. It's a little boy.

They've already had Miriam and Aaron and now here comes this third little boy.

The first thing they do is they hide him for three months so Pharaoh doesn't get word of him.

But now he's getting too old and too big.

His Mom and Dad believed that God had something special for this little guy so they risked things for three months.

Do you remember the rest of the story?

They placed the baby in a little basket, kind of an ark, and put him in the river.

And wouldn't you know, God in His sovereign, greater purpose, has Pharaoh's daughter come down and take a bath.

She finds the little baby.

**And then Miriam steps forward and says,
"I can get somebody to nurse him for you."**

So Jochebed gets paid by the court to nurse her own baby and Moses gets a chance to grow up and then is taken into the palace and he has all the privileges of Egypt.

All the education and all the opportunities are his.

And so God is behind the scenes.

So they hide baby Moses for three months.

**Notice the last part of verse 23,
"they were not afraid of the king's edict."**

Faith casts out fear.

**They are not afraid because they know,
they are walking with God and God is going to protect them in this situation.**

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

Notice Moses' convictions in verse 24 and the key word.

"by faith Moses, when he had grown up," what?

"REFUSED." Okay.

"Refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter."

Moses is characterized as a man of conviction because he is not going to go along with what everybody is calling him to do.

Moses has this great opportunity and it must have been a tough decision because here he is, he is next in line to become the Pharaoh of Egypt.

Moses is thinking, "Do I stay in the court and then help the children of Egypt who are having such a hard time in their servanthood? "I could exercise influence in policy and I could really be of help out there.

Or do I get out and identify totally with my people?"

And of course God's plan, was for him to get out and identify with the people.

Now that's a courageous decision.

So he “refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter.”

The rudder of forged convictions will give you the strength to stand against the culture when it’s the right thing to do.

Mind you conviction is something that God blesses every time He sees it.

**Why was God blessed with Martin Luther?
“Here I stand. God help me.” Was his famous statement?
Martin Luther was standing against his culture because of his personal convictions.**

The Bible is full of those illustrations.

Daniel purposed in his heart that he wouldn’t defile himself with the king’s meat.

Daniel chose to pray three times a day after the edict had been signed that you don’t pray to anybody but Darius.

Daniel kept on praying and of course he got thrown in the lion’s den.

Joseph refused to have an affair with Potiphar’s wife. He stood against the culture in Egypt and refused to do that and God blessed Joseph.

Nehemiah was called four times by Geshem and Sanballat to come down and meet with them.

Because they were trying to stop him from building the walls to the city.

Four times Nehemiah said, “No, why should the work stop while I come down to meet with you.”

So Moses’ conviction is seen in the word “REFUSED.”

**Moses is a CROCODILE rather than a CHAMELEON.
You don’t argue with a crocodile.
But a chameleon always takes his color from the last environment he crawled across.**

**There are a lot of people who live like that.
They play to the crowd.
They have to please everybody.
So they don’t have any forged convictions whereby they take a stand.**

Moses “refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter.”

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

**Moses’ forged convictions were,
God wanted to use him as a leader for his people and**

he forsook the opportunity to do that.

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

The key words here are “CHOOSING RATHER.”

Whereas you have his CONVICTIONS in verse 24 you have his CHOICES in verse 25.

The choices we make must be based on convictions which we hold.

And we live today by the choices we've made up to this point.

The level of our happiness and fulfillment is based on the choices that we have made.

And conviction determines choice.

Moses, “chose rather to suffer affliction, ill-treatment with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.”

Now do you think that's a powerful message to these Hebrew Christians?

Remember they are CHOOSING to go into the comfort zone rather than “to suffer the ill-treatment of

the people of God.”

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

**Let's review, what is his conviction?
He refused.**

**What's his choice?
His choice is to choose rather. Okay.**

The next one is his character.

**He exhibits his character as he considers and
the key word is CONSIDERING.**

**“Considering the reproach of Christ,”
now I know what you are thinking,
“how could Moses do that because he lived
way before Christ.”**

**Jesus said of Abraham in John 8:56,
“Your father Abraham rejoiced at the thought
of seeing my day; he saw it and was glad.”**

And here for Moses he knows that Christ is coming.

**He looked, it says, “for he was looking forward to the
reward.”**

George W. Truitt was a great old preacher that actually preached at First Baptist before W.A. Criswell. Truitt was one of these great, great Bible expositors. And the people just loved him at the church.

But one night one of the wealthy guys at the church invited him out to dinner, he and his wife. And they are out there for dinner and they have this wonderful meal and then he takes him out on the porch and he says now, Dr. Truitt I want to tell you one thing.

He says 25 years ago I didn't have a cent. He said but I want you to look just as far as you can out that way.

He says all those oil wells are mine. And then he says I want you to look just as far as you can out that this way and all those herds of cattle are mine.

And then I want you to turn around and look back over here and all these grain fields are mine.

And then he says look back here behind us. All this timber and forestland belongs to me. The guy is thinking, oh man, he is really going to compliment me on my success.

And Truitt reached over and tapped him on the shoulder and he says, what have you got up there.

Let not up for yourselves treasures upon earth where moth and rust corrupt and where thieves break through and steal but rather lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven where moth and rust does not corrupt and where thieves do not break through and steal.

If you are exercising faith you are living in view of something else.

You are looking forward to the time when you will be there in his presence.

And you will enter into the inheritance and the reward which he has for you.

Moses does that.

He makes a decision.

His character is reflected in his decision and he has his eyes on the future.

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

**You have his CONVICTIONS in 24,
his CHOICES in 25,
his CHARACTER in 26 and then
THE CONSUMMATION of it in verse 27.**

“He left Egypt,” why?

It says, “he was not fearing the wrath of the king.”

Isn't that great!

Moses is just like his parents?

They didn't fear the king's edict when they hid him for three months.

And now here comes the boy grown up and he doesn't fear Pharaoh and isn't intimidated by him as he leaves Egypt.

He left Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king, why? Look at the reason.

For “he persevered, AS SEEING HIM WHO IS INVISIBLE.”

That's a key phrase to the whole study.

He's looking forward to the reward.

He's paying the price in the present because it's going to produce a prize in 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.

Do you remember the Passover?

Remember Aaron and Moses go in there and they tell Pharaoh that all the firstborn are going to die?

Now what's God going to do?

God's got to make an exception for the children of Israel.

They are going to be living through this horrible plague.

How are they going to be protected?

God gives them a plan for protection.

Moses said this, "You take the little lamb and you slay him for your family, you take his blood and you put it over the top of the door and down on the sides and then ya'll sit down and have a real good meal and go to bed and just sleep tight."

Because the death angel is going to see the blood and he's going to pass over you.

And the blood of that little lamb is only a picture of John 1:29, the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, and you and I if we are going to have any hope for eternal salvation it is going to be because the sacrifice of our priest who sacrificed himself on the cross to provide eternal redemption so by faith they kept the Passover and the sprinkling of the blood in order that the one who is destroying the firstborn

might not touch them.

They are sheltered by the blood of the sacrifice is the picture.

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.

In verse 28 God delivered them out through the Passover.

In verse 29 God delivered them through the miracle of the Red Sea.

Now “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.”

Pharaoh got mad. He sent 600 chariots.

And then on top of that he sent all of his military force to try to apprehend these fleeing Israelites.

They get up to the Red Sea and they panic. I mean panic hits.

Man we have a sea in front of us and we have the army coming behind us, we're dead, we're done.

And Moses in faith just says, “Stand still and see the salvation of the Lord.” Exodus 14:13

God miraculously opens up a corridor through the water.

And they go through and then Pharaoh starts to follow them through and they have wheel trouble.

The wheels start falling off the chariots and stuff starts falling apart and all of the sudden the water comes back on them and then they are out of here.

So the children of Israel are completely delivered. “By faith they passed through the Red Sea.”

So the focus now is on the children of Israel themselves and they experience this wonderful miracle of passing through the Red Sea on dry land.

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

Now “by faith the walls of Jericho fell down.”

God had a very interesting military plan. They faced this very foreboding walled city.

God says, “Walk around the city one day, two days, three days, four days, five days, six days, on the seventh day do it seven times and then just give a big shout and

the walls are going to fall down and the city is yours.

And they had to, by faith, believe that.

And so they did and the city was given to them.

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

We have had all these great heroes of faith and now we have a prostitute.

How do you put all that together?

Nobody is beyond the grace of God.

I don't care who you are sitting here today.

God loves you so much He wants to put His arms around you right now.

He doesn't care what you've been doing.

He loves you that much!

And this wonderful lady is standing here in the Hall of Faith to illustrate God's great grace.

Rahab, lives in the city of Jericho.

Joshua is no dumb military commander.

He sends two spies to go over and check things out. They go over and lo and behold the king finds out they are in the city.

Where might you head when you are trying to get away from the king? The red light district.

They go there and they end up on the roof under the stalks of flax while Rahab lies about where they are and that they have already left.

And so that evening after it gets dark she goes up on the roof and she is sitting up there and she is telling those two guys everything.

She says, “They are so scared of you here in the city, they are frozen in fear.

They have already heard what you have done to the kings on the other side of the river and they know what God has done for you.”

She tells them the whole story.

And it’s like I believe in your God. Now honor me, and they do.

They say, “when we return, your house will be the only one that is going to be saved.

**And so go and get all your family and stuff together.
And they saved the whole family.**

**Now, like Paul Harvey, do you want to hear
the rest of the story?**

**Rahab was adopted into the land.
She became part of the people of Israel.**

**After that she fell in love with a guy
by the name of Salmon.**

**They had a little baby.
His name was Boaz.**

**Boaz grew up and he became the kinsman-redeemer
that redeemed a little nobody's girl
that was a foreign girl.**

Boaz and Ruth get married and guess what?

**They had a little baby and that baby's name
was Obed and then he grew up**

.

And he had Jesse.

And Jesse grew up.

**And Jesse had nine boys and the youngest one
was David.**

And 26 generations later you have Jesus Christ!

You might say, “Where did you get that?”

Well you read it at Christmas.

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. . . .

And Jesus Christ is born of the house of David the King of Israel.

So many times we think we’ve sinned up such a storm and it’s too late for us and we process the Devil’s lie.

Isaiah 1:18

“Come now, let us reason together,” says the Lord. “Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool.”

v. 32 And what more shall I say? For time will fail me if I am telling of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah; [Those are four of the judges from the period of the judges who were used by God] of David [the king] and Samuel [the prophet] and the [the rest of the] prophets;

He is saying, “I could tell you all kinds of stories of people living in faith.”

I think John had the same problem.

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.

In other words he couldn't tell all the stories of Jesus that he experienced because the library would be so great and so he's just picked a few.

As we get ready to wrap this up I want to show you what faith will go through and what faith will do.

You are going to see nine things in verses 33 and 34 and then you are going to see ten things in verses 35 – 38.

v. 33 who by faith [all these people] 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.

Look at those nine things:

They conquered kingdoms:

Joshua, Gideon, Samson, Jephthah, David.

They performed acts of righteous:

Samuel, Elijah, Elisha

They obtained promises:

Elijah and Elisha

Shut the mouths of lions:

Daniel

You can go on through all of them:

Quenched the power of fire:

Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego

Escaped the edge of the sword:

Obediah during Jezabell's reign.

Protected those prophets who could have been killed.

And then you have from weakness were made strong:

Samson, Hezekiah, David, when he met Goliath

Became mighty in war:

Some of David's mighty men in battle.

We've read of them in the scriptures.

Put foreign armies to flight:

All these military men experienced those great things.

But now what happens when faith has to face physical death?

What are you going to do when you know you are going to die and you are not going to see the fulfillment of your promises when you die?

Verses 35-38 are ten triumphs of faith here.

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 scourings, 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

This is a true picture of faith.

These are people who are persevering.

**Seeing the invisible,
going through the impossible,
for the glory of God.**

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

**You know we spend so much time talking about
our pains, about our adversities and our difficulties.**

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

**All of them lived on that side of the cross and they died
looking forward to the promises never having received
them, why?**

Because of you and me.

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

**The Savior came and died.
He provided
a better priesthood,
a better sacrifice,
a better covenant.**

**All so that we, by grace,
could know Him in a personal way.**

Max Lucado says:

**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!**

LESSONS FROM THE PASSAGE:

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.

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

QUESTIONS:

- 1. Read Hebrews 11:23-40 and summarize in your own words what Paul is saying in this section.**
- 2. Outline the priorities and choices of Moses in verses 24-26.**
- 3. What did Moses do “by faith,” according to verse 27?**
- 4. Describe the battle plan to capture Jericho, according to verse 30.**
- 5. What did Rahab do by faith, according to verse 31?**
- 6. Outline the great accomplishments of faith by men and women of the Old Testament in verses 33-37.**
- 7. What had not yet happened for these Old Testament saints, according to verse 39?**
- 8. What has God done for us, according to verse 40?**
- 9. What verse in the study has meant the most to you?**
- 10. What lesson have you learned from this study?**

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