



Chapter Eleven
Part 3

11:23 By faith, Moses, who has been commended already for faithfulness in God's house, was hidden by parents Amram and Jochebed. Their act was in violation of the king's commandment that Hebrew male infants should be destroyed. To say that Moses was a proper child is to say he was urbane, stately, or well-favored. Jewish tradition said that Moses' parents were informed of God's plans for Moses, through either a dream of Amram or a prophetic utterance by Moses' sister Miriam. Scripture states simply that they acted from faith.

Hebrews 11:23 (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.

The Hebrew writer cites two reasons that Amram and Jochebed hid baby Moses. First, they saw he was a beautiful child. The word for beautiful in the Greek here means unique and different. An interesting fact about Moses is that Levi was not only his grandfather but also his great-grandfather.

Levi was the father of Kohath which was the father of Amram the father of Moses. Then on Moses' mothers side, Jochebed was the daughter of Levi making Moses his grandson. Amram and Jochebed could tell or perhaps were told that there was something special about Moses. It seems fair to conclude that they hid Moses because they believed that God had a special plan for him. Perhaps they even thought Moses would be the one to deliver Israel from Egypt and that an exodus. In Acts 7, Stephen said that Moses was concerned about leading an exodus 40 years before it actually happened. **Acts 7:25** "And he supposed that his brethren understood that God was granting them deliverance through him, but they did not understand. Second, they were afraid of the king's edict. Pharaoh had made an edict for Israelite boys to be thrown into the Nile. **Exodus 1:22** Then Pharaoh commanded all his people, saying, "Every son who is born you are to cast into the Nile, and every daughter you are to keep alive." The law for infanticide was to reduce the number of Israelites in Egypt. One cannot be absolutely sure if Moses' parents were unafraid

because they believed that God would protect them from any consequences or if it was because they were willing to face any consequence that might come if they got caught. While the Bible would certainly teach obedience to the laws of the land, there is room for disobedience when those laws violate God's laws. When a manmade law calls for the harming of a child, there remains a duty to disobey the law. Not only did Moses' parents violate this law, but the Hebrew midwives did as well. **Exodus 1:15-17** (15) Then the king of Egypt spoke to the Hebrew midwives, one of whom was named Shiphrah and the other was named Puah; (16) and he said, "When you are helping the Hebrew women to give birth and see them upon the birthstool, if it is a son, then you shall put him to death; but if it is a daughter, then she shall live." (17) But the midwives feared God, and did not do as the king of Egypt had commanded them, but let the boys live. Obviously, somehow, and somewhere God's people were taught the value of human life, especially of the innocent. We see a similar divine protection surrounding Jesus as King Herod sought to

kill male children that were born. God warned Joseph then they fled to Egypt. Also, the magi tricked Herod to preserve a life Herod was seeking to destroy. After 3 months' time, they put Moses in a basket in the Nile and he was scooped up by Pharaoh's daughter.

11:24 When Moses was mature or come to years, he acted by faith and refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, by whom he had been adopted as an infant. The refusal may have taken the form of a dramatic confrontation or it may have been by identification with the enslaved Hebrews through incidents such as that recorded in the Exodus chapter 2.

There is no doubt that his worldly position warred against his faith. To his eternal credit Moses trusted God instead of appearances.

Hebrews 11:24 (24) By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter,

We see that Moses refused to be call the son

of Pharaoh's daughter. The Hebrew writer points to this decision as an act of faith. Moses was 40 years old when he fled Egypt. Moses' decision was one of a mature man, not an immature child. This is incredibly significant because as the son of Pharaoh's daughter, Moses would have had a clear path to the throne. It is amazing that he identified himself with the class of slaves rather than the class of rulers. He was raised to be fully Egyptian. He was raised to be fully Egyptian. **Acts 7:22** **Moses was educated in all the learning of the Egyptians, and he was a man of power in words and deeds.** Moses understood that he was a Hebrew and not an Egyptian. Where did Moses get this desire to connect with his Hebrew roots? It is probable that it came as a result of the teaching of his mother, Jochebed. After Moses was taken up from the Nile, his own mother had been the one to nurse him and perhaps had an early influence on him. Despite growing up in the palace with privilege Moses was curious about the Hebrews. **Hebrews 2:11** **For both He who sanctifies and those who are sanctified are all from one Father; for which reason He is not ashamed to call them**

brethren, Perhaps this is the moment in mind of the Hebrew writer when Moses refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter. When the chance came, Moses did not side with the Egyptian, but sided with and protected a Hebrew slave. After killing an Egyptian, Moses fled to Midian for 40 years. The Midianites were distant cousins of four generations back from the Israelites by the way of Abraham's wife Keturah.

11:25 Moses could have known a powerful position in Egypt, perhaps even becoming Pharaoh. Instead he cast his lot with a group of slaves. His faith looked behind the scenes and calculated it better to suffer affliction with the people of the eternally-existent and rewarding God than to enjoy all the conceivable pleasures of sin which were temporary. We could say by faith, Moses looked through the deceptive appearance of worldly appealing things, to their inward and essential nothingness, and to their fearful end.

Hebrews 11:25 (25) choosing rather to endure ill-treatment with the people of God

than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin,

Moses could not identify as a Hebrew and an Egyptian at the same time. Just as we cannot identify as a Christian and as a part of the world. The Hebrew writer says that Moses gave up the passing pleasures of sin. There is definitely a greater draw to sin as a part of the world than living as a Christian. However, that does not mean that Christians are exempt from temptations. By worldly standards, the decision that Moses made may seem foolish. The key word here about the pleasure is that it is “passing.” This is still true of sin today. Sin offers temporary pleasure with a lasting and lethal sting. Remember Solomon examined the passing pleasures of sin and found them to be vanity, or useless.

11:26 The treasures of Egypt were fantastic, as demonstrated by a few small caches uncovered in certain royal tombs. The treasures of King “Tut” Tutankhaten, fourteenth century before Christ are well known; that much or more might have belonged to Moses. But faith appraised the

alternatives and pronounced reproaches with God's people to be the greater riches!

Moses chose the reproaches of Christ. Suffering accepted for God's sake binds together saints of both testaments and identifies them all with Christ. David so spoke in **Psalm 69:7-9** (7) **Because for Your sake I have borne reproach; Dishonor has covered my face. (8) I have become estranged from my brothers And an alien to my mother's sons. (9) For zeal for Your house has consumed me, And the reproaches of those who reproach You have fallen on me.** In words later seen to refer also to Christ. In another psalm, Ethan spoke of his sufferings as for the sake of God's anointed one. Moses suffering was one link in the great chain of events by which God directed history to its focal point in Christ.

Hebrews 11:26 (26) **considering the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he was looking to the reward.**

How could Moses suffer the reproaches of

Christ even before the Messiah came to this earth? What this is saying is that Moses felt and faced the same type of reproach that Christ did. Christ too would suffer reproach and in this way our Savior and Moses are united. **Romans 15:3** For even Christ did not please Himself; but as it is written, "THE REPROACHES OF THOSE WHO REPROACHED YOU FELL ON ME."

The Greek word for "treasure" here can also mean a store-house of valuable things. This is a reminder to us all that we must all make the decision in our own life, what things are valuable to use. Are they temporal or everlasting? The decision we make now can still affect and impact us 40 or even 80 years down the road, just like Moses. While the Greek word for "reward" means a payment of wages.

11:27 By faith Moses forsook Egypt for Midian. Lest the Exodus account be misunderstood, our author adds that this flight was not prompted by the wrath of the king. Like his parents before him, Moses was well aware of Pharaoh's wrath, but also like

them he acted through positive faith in God and not through fear. Fear might have led a slave rebellion, which would have been crushed at once. Faith quietly retreated to the desert to be molded forty years for God's great deliverance.

In this particular crisis and thereafter, Moses endured the consequences of his faith by looking toward God who is invisible. Again we are reminded that faith believes that God is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him. The faith of Moses stood against the unbelief of Pharaoh, who historian Philo says "Pharaoh did not acknowledge any deity apart from those that could be seen." The plagues on Egypt were judgments against its many visible gods.

Some relate this verse to the Exodus rather than to Moses' earlier flight to Midian, but at least four objections may be raised to that view. First, the order here is reversed. The Passover preceded the Exodus but is mentioned in the verse following this one. Second, our writer does not mention the faith of Israel here, as he does regarding the Red

Sea and as one might expect if this refers to the Exodus. Third, Pharaoh of the Exodus was not the king from whom Moses fled, yet our author has to deny that fear prompted the flight under consideration. Fourth, Israel did not leave Egypt under fear, but at the urging of Pharaoh and the Egyptians.

Hebrews 11:27 (27) By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured, as seeing Him who is unseen.

It was by faith Moses left Egypt. It was by faith that Moses would lead the people of God out of Egypt. This was done in faith because he did not know how something like that was possible other than the fact that God told him to do it. That is faith! His leaving Egypt was prompted by a vision in the burning bush. Not fearing the king's wrath, he proceeded in faith. This does not mean the wrath of the king was not something to be feared, but that Moses simply trusted in God to take care of him. The first time Moses fled, he fled in fear to Midian. The second time he fled, he did not fear the king's wrath.

Exodus 14:5-9 (5) When the king of Egypt

was told that the people had fled, Pharaoh and his servants had a change of heart toward the people, and they said, "What is this we have done, that we have let Israel go from serving us?" (6) So he made his chariot ready and took his people with him; (7) and he took six hundred select chariots, and all the other chariots of Egypt with officers over all of them. (8) The LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and he chased after the sons of Israel as the sons of Israel were going out boldly. (9) Then the Egyptians chased after them with all the horses and chariots of Pharaoh, his horsemen, and his army, and they overtook them camping by the sea, beside Pihahiroth, in front of Baal-zephon.

From our text the word "seeing" is in the present tense which indicates that it is an action he continuously did. Moses endured in faith because he saw God. Moses did see God in a different and special way. **Exodus 33:11** Thus the LORD used to speak to Moses face to face, just as a man speaks to his friend. When Moses returned to the camp, his servant Joshua, the son of Nun, a

young man, would not depart from the tent.

11:28 By faith, Moses kept the Passover for the first time and left it as a perpetual celebration. Faith prompted the sprinkling of the lamb's blood; it was rewarded in Israel's deliverance when the firstborn of Egypt's men and animals were destroyed by God.

Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper at a Passover meal. His selection of bread and fruit of the vine as the elements of His covenant meal also demonstrates the continuity between old and new testaments.

John's Gospel presents Jesus' death against a background of the slaying of Passover lambs in the temple. Paul make the unleavened bread of Passover week a type representing moral purity among Christians, whose Lamb is Christ. **1 Corinthians 5:6-8**
(6) Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump of dough? (7) Clean out the old leaven so that you may be a new lump, just as you are in fact unleavened. For Christ our Passover also has been sacrificed.

(8) Therefore let us celebrate the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. Our author does not use Passover typology. He stresses the Day of Atonement and its perfect fulfillment in the self-offering of Christ.

Hebrews 11:28 (28) By faith he kept the Passover and the sprinkling of the blood, so that he who destroyed the firstborn would not touch them.

It is not that Abraham “kept” the Passover by faith, the thing being pointed to was that Abraham instituted the Passover by faith. The Passover was intended to be a lasting ordinance among the people. It can be said that Moses instituted the Passover by faith because he instituted it and observed it the way that God said to do it. He specifically mentions the “sprinkling of blood.” In Exodus 12, Moses was given instructions for protecting the Israelite home from the plague of the firstborn. Moses believed that the blood would protect them from the plague despite the fact that there was no logical

connection between blood on the doorposts and lintels of the house. Moses had nothing to base this belief in except for the Word of God. When we do what God says, it is an act of living “by faith.” God had told Moses that the Lord would make a distinction between Israel and Egypt in this matter. **Exodus 11:7** 'But against any of the sons of Israel a dog will not even bark, whether against man or beast, that you may understand how the LORD makes a distinction between Egypt and Israel.' It just so happened that the distinction was the presence of the blood of the Passover Lamb. What would have happened if Moses had decided that such a response made no sense and was silly?

11:29 The Israelites were represented by Moses in the previous verse. Here they are mentioned in his company. It is striking that examples of faith are drawn from individuals, usually persons who were faithful when all around them were not. The nation is used to illustrate disbelief. The great moment of Israel’s faith immediately preceded forty years of unbelief in the wilderness.

By faith Israel passed through the midst of the divided Red Sea, though God divided the sea with a strong east wind which came at the signal from Moses. The Egyptians lacked faith, and were drowned.

The Hebrew Old Testament call this the Sea of Reeds. English versions generally agree with the Greek Old Testament in calling it the Red Sea. Exodus 14:2 indicates that the crossing took place at a northern extension of what is now the Gulf of Suez. This mighty act of divine deliverance was immediately celebrated in a song of praise. Still later it was used to represent God's great power to accomplish His covenant purpose. Paul used this crossing as a type of Christian baptism, and argued from it that those once in fellowship with God may forfeit their blessing through loss of faith.

Hebrews 11:29 (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.

This "by faith" speaks not only to Moses, but

of all the Israelites who left Egypt. The event referenced is the Red Sea crossing. It seems that the Israelites passed through the Red Sea with some element of faith as they were being pursued by the Egyptian army. It also seems that somehow the Egyptians tried to make a pass through the Red Sea that the difference was that they did not do so with faith.

11:30 The capture of Jericho involved what we call psychological warfare; the inhabitants must have been terrified after six days of encirclement by a silent army who marched behind blowing trumpets. But the walls fell down on the seventh day and that by the faith which prompted the past week's strange behavior. On Israel's part the six days of marching demonstrated the perseverance of true faith, an element close to our writer's mind as he pens this chapter.

An Archaeologist name Garstang thought he had uncovered the very walls of which fell before Joshua but dating based on later work of Kathleen Kenyon made that identification very unlikely. Such matters are

of interest, but the truthfulness of the biblical story does not depend on the excavator's spade. The same God whom Israel's faith touched that day thousands of years ago stand now behind our written account of that event, and the same kind of faith which trusted His direct word then places confidence now in His word that is written.

Hebrews 11:30 (30) By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they had been encircled for seven days.

These tactics were not necessarily wide spread military practices. They were told to march around the city walls for six days and on the seventh day, seven times. Once again seemingly no connection between marching around the city and causing the walls of Jericho to collapse. There probably had been no evidence of anything like this being done before with success. The key is that the people had faith in the Word of God. God said for them to do this and they believed the Word of God. The leader of the Israelite army during this even was Joshua, a great example of faith. He was a faithful

spy. He is famous for his “as for me and my house we will serve the Lord” speech. Joshua was a faithful, spiritual leader.

Joshua 24:31 Israel served the LORD all the days of Joshua and all the days of the elders who survived Joshua, and had known all the deeds of the LORD which He had done for Israel.

11:31 When the walls of Jericho fell and Israel stormed the city, Rahab and her family were the only survivors. Her salvation was the result of her faith, which had been demonstrated earlier in hiding the two Israelite spies. Her act was of faith because she had heard of God’s past deeds for Israel and she behaved from a reverent recognition of His power and purposes.

Rahab is contrasted here with them believe it or not. The translated “believe” here implies obedience that comes from a persuasion of faith. James uses Rahab as an illustration of that saving faith which does not merely profess but obeys.

Some pious Jews of antiquity tried to make

Rahab an innkeeper or a seller of food, instead of a harlot, but the word used in both the Old and New Testaments demands that she be just that. Nor is this the word for a cultic or pagan temple prostitute, but an ordinary harlot. In spite of her former way of life, Rahab was transformed through the power of faith. She later was to marry a Hebrew named Salmon to become a chosen vessel in the ancestry of Jesus. She would become the great, great-grandmother of the King David.

Hebrews 11:31 (31) By faith Rahab the harlot did not perish along with those who were disobedient, after she had welcomed the spies in peace.

In this case, her faith in God was the acceptance of the testimony of what she had heard about God. As a result of her faith, Rahab did not perish along with the rest of Jericho. Rahab took a great risk to side with the people of God. Rahab's act of faith was not a giant act, but it was one that stemmed from faith in God. From just a small amount of knowledge that she had about God came

an act of faith that she was rewarded for and immortalized in Scripture positively for.

11:32 Using a Greek phrase common to orators, our author notes that his time would fail if he detailed every example of faith, and draws his list to a close.

Hebrews 11:32 (32) And what more shall I say? For time will fail me if I tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets,

The first four names are selected from the period of the Judges, and carry the Old Testament story from the time of Joshua to the time of the kings. Gideon, who we also know as Jerubbaal delivered Israel from the marauding Midianites who used the speed of camels to make their plundering attacks. We find his story in Judges chapters 6-8. Gideon claimed to not be the best man for the job. Even though he acted in faith, he was still afraid. **Judges 6:27** Then Gideon took ten men of his servants and did as the LORD had spoken to him; and because he was too afraid of his father's household and the men

of the city to do it by day, he did it by night. As we also remember Gideon was the one that wanted proof that he was the guy by laying out the whole fleece test. Also even though he refused to be their king he made an ephod from the spoils of his victory and it became as an idol to him. But still his faith came through again, with going to battle with only 300 men. Gideon's life from what we know was not overly impressive. It appears he had a timid faith. It appears he had a wavering faith. Through all of this Gideon is a man of faith that trusts not in his own weaknesses, but in God's power.

As Deborah's war-captain, Barak shared in the deliverance of the northwestern tribes from a confederacy of Canaanite kings who used chariots long before they were a common vehicle of war. The story in Judges 4-5 does not indicate Barak's faith, unless it is to be seen in his agreement to assist Deborah with prospects of no personal glory. Although Barak led the army to go into battle, it was a woman named Jael that drove the point home in killing Sisera and really nailed down the victory for Israel, lol.

Chronologically Barak comes before Gideon, but in importance the order is reversed.

The exploits of Samson against Philistine occupation-troops are familiar to the Bible student. We find his story in Judges 13-16. Physical strength was his, he was about escapades with women. Samson's faith was not always strong or active, but it came to the fore on the occasion of his death.

Jephthah was instrumental in delivering the eastern tribes from Ammon. This story is found in Judges 11-12. Though he is now remembered chiefly for a rash vow, his general behavior was grounded in a knowledge of God's past acts on behalf of Israel and a confidence that He would act once more for His own people. But in order to do so he made a rash vow to offer as a burnt offering whatever came out of his house to greet him. It just so happened that his daughter was the first to come out and greet him. Jephthah also illustrates the fact that God may use ignoble individuals to accomplish great things.

Time would fail, indeed, to give details of the faith of David. It is somewhat surprising that David did not occupy more space in the passage. He is the only king mentioned in this listing. The man after God's own heart who served God's purpose in his own generation must have been characterized by exceptional faith it is impossible to please God at all. David was not a perfect man, but he certainly walked by faith.

Samuel was the last of the judges and the first of a chain of prophets who would instruct Israel through the rest of the Old Testament period. Although he preceded David, he is here placed more naturally with the prophets who followed him. Samuel's own birth was in answer to a prayer of faith, and his personal ministry early included a total of trust in the word God revealed to him.

The prophets include Elijah, Elisha, Micaiah, and other non-writing prophets, as well as the sixteen whose books bear their names. One does not have to look far to be impressed by their faith. He needs only to consider the mighty works of Elijah and

Elisha, the patient and trying service of Hosea or Jeremiah, the holy boldness of Micaiah or Amos or Daniel, the unquestioning obedience of Ezekeil, or the confident reliance which Habakkuk expresses so beautifully in his poetic third chapter. These men all, along with a host of God's holy ones whose faith will be celebrated only in the resurrection, eloquently illustrate the many-faceted qualities of that faith which is unto the saving of the soul.

It seems that any trouble one might have understanding the inclusion of some can be settled by understanding that when we walk by faith God does not count our sin against us. A constant theme of this chapter is for our writer to not mention the sins and shortcomings of people of faith that the Old Testament mentions clearly. We have to believe that as an inspired writer, the Hebrew writer had special insight into the life and faith of some of the people mentioned. For example, Peter refers to Lot as a righteous man. This is a statement that we would not know to be true from the Genesis

account alone. **2 Peter 2:8** (for by what he saw and heard that righteous man, while living among them, felt his righteous soul tormented day after day by their lawless deeds) We also have to believe that God knows the hearts of each of these people. It also seems evident from scripture and even our experiences that sometimes people who love God and have faith in God do things that are seemingly inconsistent with what God would desire. This is kind of what Paul is sharing about himself in Romans chapter 7. It is not the intention of this chapter to condone every action of every person mentioned here. As a matter of fact, this helps us to see that just because a person has a short coming does not mean they do not have faith in God or that they do not walk by faith.

11:33-34 Through faith men have subdued kingdoms, Joshua, the judges, and David come to mind at once. Others have wrought righteousness by the public administration of divine justice. This is noted of Samuel and David. Faith has obtained the fulfillment as well as the word of promises: of the Exodus,

of Canaan's possession, of great territories, of God's care and protection of Jerusalem, of a captivity that ended as predicted and a return home.

Hebrews 11:33-34 (33) who by faith conquered kingdoms, performed acts of righteousness, obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions, (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.

Faith has stopped the mouths of lions, by death, in the cases of Samson and David, but especially when Daniel had been delivered to hungry lions by his enemies and God delivered him from their jaws.

Faith has sometimes quenched the violence of fire, most notably in the case of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Peter's mention of "fiery trials" may suggest that such persecution was a possibility in the case of those reading his epistle.

Look at Elijah, Elisha, and Jeremiah all

escaped the edge of the sword by faith, but others by faith met the steel.

Out of weakness men and women of faith had been made strong. Gideon was the most insignificant member of his family, but God used him mightily. Neither Saul nor David claimed personal merit when God called for service. Both responded to the call in faith, and in personal weakness found God's strength. Others already discussed in the chapter were enabled by faith to accomplish what would otherwise have been impossible.

God has never depended on numbers, nor has He valued man's appraisals of strength and weakness. To consider the examples in this chapter is more frequently that not to see God working in spite of the very instruments He chooses to use, overcoming men's own weaknesses and mistakes to bring about His eventual glory. This lesson is always needed in the church, even and especially still today, for men constantly face the temptation to view through human values rather than with the clear and certain lens of faith.

By faith others waxed valiant in fight and turned the armies of the aliens to flight. Old Testament characters could be adduced here, but these terms also fit the heroic men of faith who lived between the testaments. The book of 1 Maccabees is not inspired, but it tells of numerous victories which faith brought the sons of Mattathias in their godly struggle against the pagan Syrian ruler Antiochus Epiphanes.

11:35 Women who had lost loved ones received them to life again through the power of faith. We think of the widow of Zarephath and the Shunamite woman and perhaps there were even others. Tortured in this text is translated a word which describes quite literally an extremely cruel persecution in which an individual was stretched out on a rack then beaten to death.

Second Maccabees is not quite so reliable as the first book, but it tells of a godly scribe named Eleazar who died in this very man for his faith in Jehovah. When Eleazar was captured, he was offered deliverance if he would eat swine's flesh. This he refused, in

hope of a better resurrection. Whether our author has him in mind or not, Eleazar's dying words are characteristic of those who are intended here.

Hebrews 11:35 (35) Women received back their dead by resurrection; and others were tortured, not accepting their release, so that they might obtain a better resurrection;

The reason for their endurance was said to be in order to receive a better resurrection. The idea is that they would receive a better resurrection if they endured and died than if they were released because they denied their faith. The future resurrection of the godly is better than the resurrection of the ungodly. Jesus taught that both the righteous and wicked will have a future resurrection. **John 5:25-29 (25)** "Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live. (26) "For just as the Father has life in Himself, even so He gave to the Son also to have life in Himself; (27) and He gave Him authority to execute judgment, because He is the Son

of Man. (28) "Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs will hear His voice, (29) and will come forth; those who did the good deeds to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil deeds to a resurrection of judgment. Temporary torture seemed like a minor thing when they were seeking to be a part of the resurrection of the godly. The early Christians often endured without compromise to the point of death.

When faced with the choice to renounce Christ and swear an oath to the Roman emperor, Polycarp famously refused, stating, "Eighty-six years I have served Him, and He has done me no wrong. How can I blaspheme my King who saved me?" Before being bound for execution, Polycarp offered a prayer, thanking God for the opportunity to be among the martyrs and drink the cup of Christ. Polycarp looked at the crowd of lawless heathen and said, "Away with the atheists!" Polycarp was burned at the stake and then pierced with a spear for refusing to burn incense to the Roman emperor.

11:36-38 Others faced the test of mocking's by many cruel and sportive tortures. They endured scouring's or whippings; they suffered bonds and imprisonment. The recipients of our epistle have endured some trials of faith early in their Christian lives and had shared with others who were imprisoned for Christ. Jeremiah had known imprisonment for the word of God, as had Joseph for his faithfulness to God. Others include individuals not yet mentioned, and perhaps unknown to us, but known to the original readers.

Hebrews 11:36-38 (36) and others experienced mocking's and scouring's, yes, also chains and imprisonment. (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 (38) (men of whom the world was not worthy), wandering in deserts and mountains and caves and holes in the ground.

Long before Stephen, men of God had been

stoned to death for their faithfulness. When Joash was king of Judah and the nation turned from God, a prophet named Zechariah came to testify against the people. They conspired against him and stoned him with stones at the commandment of the king in the court of the house of the Lord. Tradition has Jeremiah stoned to death by the Jews who took him into Egypt after the captivity of Judah. Nor was he the only man of God to meet this fate from those who were called God's people. Others for their faith were sawn asunder. Very ancient Jewish traditions say that Isaiah was killed with a wooded saw under the reign of Manasseh. Scripture does not confirm this story, but one can well imagine such an act from a king who offered his own children in pagan sacrifice and who made the people of Judah "do worse than the heathen." He led the nations to do more wicked and evil than any of those that came before him.

Faithful saints were tempted in many ways, but held fast their confidence in the God they could not see. It has been suggested that the word here translated tempted might, by the

change of one letter, be translated “met death by fire.” This was the fate of some faithful ones during the time of the inter-testament period, but textual evidence does not appear to warrant such a change here.

Some were slain with the sword for their faith, although others by faith escaped this death. Elijah was mocked and jeered as the “troubler of Israel.” He was spared when others died. Elisha was mocked. Jeremiah escaped the sword when Urijah was slain. Herod killed James with the sword but Peter was spared. Jesus was mocked while on the cross. Only God knows why some died and others did not, but the faith of each will have its reward.

Because they walked by faith, God’s people have sometimes lost their homes and have been forced to wander about in sheepskins and goatskins. While it is true that Elijah, John the Baptist, and perhaps others wore hairy garments, our author speaks of a condition brought on by force, not choice, and apparently intends some others than these.

Godless crowds have cried that faithful saints were unfit for this world. With this our author agrees, though with an opposite meaning! Of such the world was not worthy, so they lived in deserts, mountains, caves, or dens while they waited for their heavenly city and eternal homeland.

We see Elijah hiding at Horeb, Elisha at Carmel, or 100 prophets in caves. During the period between the testaments, many of the faithful were forced to forsake their homes to seek safety in remote areas.

11:39 What was said earlier of the patriarchs is said now of all these faithful men and women. They obtained a good report or were subjects of good testimony regarding their faith, whether directly from God or by later men of faith always grasps, that final and complete inheritance from the invisible God who is trusted to be a rewarder.

We must not take this to mean that these ancient saints were outside the provisions of

divine grace or that they will not be among the glorified faithful with Christ in eternity. Indeed they were justified by faith, they had this testimony, and the offering of Christ declares that God was righteous in accepting them because of their faith.

Hebrews 11:39 (39) And all these, having gained approval through their faith, did not receive what was promised,

Thought these Old Testament saints were commended for their faith in God, they only had a distant promise that they could claim if they remained faithful. The promise that they had not yet received was salvation in Christ. Jesus's death on the cross worked before and after the cross. **Romans 3:25** (25) whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed; We too have not ultimately received what is promised. Part of living by faith is that we live before the promise is received. The Old Testament saints lived before the

redemption that came from the sacrifice of Jesus. We live before the promise of an eternal home in Heaven is received.

11:40 The fact that their faith was unrewarded in life is not a sign that faith is ineffective or that God is unfaithful. It is rather a pointer to the unity of all men of faith in every dispensation or age. They who lived by faith before Christ were not perfect or complete without those of us who know God through Christ in the new covenant. Christ is the essential bond that binds together the saints of all ages.

At the same time, God has provided something for us that is better than anything they were given. This is the knowledge of a high priest who has offered a perfect sacrifice for sins once for all, who now sits at God's right hand making intercession for His people, who has opened the way into heaven by His own life and death, and who has promised to return to His people to share the glory with them He has already acquired as their representative.

Better is a key word in Hebrews and is characteristic of the new covenant with all it offers, particularly in contrast to the former covenant and institutions. It is used of Christ's name or position, His dedicatory sacrifices of the heavenly sanctuary, the new testament or covenant, the Christian hope, resurrection, country, substance, and message of Christ's blood. It is also used of the behavior these blessings should elicit from Christ's people.

The verb made perfect is also a frequent one in this letter. It is used both of Christ and of those covered by His sacrifice. Such perfection is given through faith: faith that accomplishes great feats, but also faith that suffers and endures. Perhaps most of all it is faith that endures. That is our author's chief point now as he urges the lesson on his readers.

Hebrews 11:40 (40) because God had provided something better for us, so that apart from us they would not be made perfect.

As we close this great chapter, please notice that it said God had planned something better for us. God has always had a perfect plan for redemption in place. **1 Peter 1:18-20** (18) knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, (19) but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ. (20) For He was foreknown before the foundation of the world, but has appeared in these last times for the sake of you. Again, notice our word: “better.” The something better refers to the blessings enjoyed under the New Covenant. We enjoy such blessings as forgiveness of sins, the gift of the Holy Spirit, the complete and finish Word of God, access to God in prayer, and being made a royal priesthood. The perfecting is something done together with the Old Testament saints. They together with us can enjoy un-restricted access to the Father through the Son. His point is that if the Old Testament saints could live out their faith, some under harsh conditions, with only a promise in the future, how much more should we be willing to remain faithful living

in a time where we can claim the forgiveness that comes from the cross. The faith of the Old Testament saints and our faith today are united together in Christ.