

In part 1, we introduced chapter 11 by stating that in this chapter we do not see Jesus as much as we see his influence in the lives of others. The chapter begins by giving a Biblical definition of faith followed by some faithful examples. It started with Cain and Able and then moved to Enoch, Noah, Abraham and Sarah. In this lesson we will continue looking at other faithful illustrations.

(17) By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, The severest test to prove Abraham's faith was the command for Abraham to offer up his son, Isaac (Genesis 22:1-14). The record shows that Abraham went immediately to do what God had commanded, without complaint and without question. In this verse, well as James 2:21, it states Abraham offered up Isaac. Abraham was so committed to doing what God commanded that the act was counted as completed even though Isaac was saved from actual death. Isaac is called the "*only son of Abraham*" even though he had Ishmael and the sons of Keturah. But Isaac was the only son of Abraham and Sarah. Isaac was the only son of promise (Genesis 22:2). The Greek word for "*begotten*" is "**monogenes**" which is correctly translated "only, one of a kind or unique." Isaac was the only son of promise.

(18) Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called: (19) Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure. The command was to kill his son Isaac who was the one through whom the promise could come. Abraham knew the promise depended upon Isaac being alive; therefore, he reasoned that God would raise Isaac from the dead. What faith Abraham had in God to work out the problem. Since he had determined to follow God's command and was in the process of doing it so that it was counted as completed when Isaac was spared, it was as though Isaac had risen from the dead. Abraham's statement in Genesis 22:5 indicates he expected to return from the mountain with Isaac. Abraham believed in God, trusted God and obeyed God.

(20) By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come. (21) By faith Jacob, when he was a dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph; and worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff. When Jacob blessed Ephraim and Manasseh, the two sons of Joseph, he deliberately bestowed the greater blessing on Ephraim the younger (Genesis 48:14-19). Jacob blessed Ephraim and Manasseh concerning things to come. The author follows the Septuagint. The

Hebrew (Massoretic) text reads, "bed" instead of staff. There is just one letter difference in the Hebrew between bed and staff. This might account for the difference.

Joseph believed the promise made to Abraham would be fulfilled. Before he died, he made commandment concerning his bones that they should be carried to the land of promise (v22) (Genesis 50:24-25). Moses took the bones of Joseph with him when the children of Israel left Egypt (Exodus 13:19) and Joshua buried the bones of Joseph when they entered Canaan (Joshua 24:32).

(23) By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, because they saw he was a proper child; and they were not afraid of the king's commandment. (24) By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter;

The author will have a great deal to say about the faith of Moses; therefore, he begins with the faith of his parents as exhibited at his birth. They acted courageously not being afraid of the Pharaoh's command. The parents saw Moses was a good looking child. As Stephen says in Acts 7:20, a fair or beautiful child.

Later Moses left Pharaoh's house. Stephen says Moses made this decision when he was about forty years of age (Acts 7:23) which means he was a man of maturity and accomplishments when he made the decision. He made a deliberate decision to be associated with the Hebrew slaves rather than with the royal family of Egypt. From the worldly standpoint, it must have looked like a foolish decision; however, from a spiritual standpoint it was a great act of faith.

Moses saw things as they really were. The treasures and honors of Egypt looked like the greatest thing in the world; however, by faith (v25) Moses realized that sharing the ill treatment with the Israelites and being right with God was the most important thing. Men need to clearly see the issue today.

(27) By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible. By faith Moses left Egypt and went to Midian where he was a shepherd for forty years. This passage adds an interested

observation. Exodus 2:11-15 says that he fled Egypt because of fear after the killing of the Egyptian became known. Here we are told that he did not fear the wrath of the king. The difference is time. When Moses first fled to the land of Midian it is expressly said that he went because he did fear the anger of Pharaoh for his having killed an Egyptian; Exo 2:14-15. He was at that time in fear of his life; but when he left Egypt at the head of the Hebrew people, he had no such apprehensions. By faith he saw him **who is invisible**, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He believed and trusted in God to deliver the people as he had promised Abraham.

(28) Through faith he kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the firstborn should touch them. (29) By faith they passed through the Red sea as by dry land: which the Egyptians assaying to do were drowned. For the tenth plague God instructed Moses to instruct the children of Israel to observe the Passover feast and to put the blood of the lamb on the lintel and doorpost. The destroyer would pass over them; however, in all other homes, the first born of man and cattle of Egypt would die (Exodus 12). They had to act by faith, and they did. Then we see in v29 not only the faith of Moses, but it includes the faith of the Israelites. When they were seemingly trapped at the Red Sea with Pharaoh's army coming after them, God commanded them to go forward. They went forward by faith. God opened the Red Sea and they crossed on dry land. The Egyptians followed after them by presumption and were drowned in the sea.

The author skips over the wilderness as there were many times of unbelief during their wanderings in the wilderness; however, Moses' faith remained strong.

(30) By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days. The capture of the city of Jericho is a good demonstration of faith, as it was captured in an unusual way. God told the Israelites to march around the city once a day for six days. On the seventh day they were to march around the city seven times. After this the priests were to blow the trumpets. The people were to shout and the walls would fall down. The city would be theirs. They believed God, trusted God and obeyed God's command. The walls fell just as God said they would (Joshua 6:1-21).

(31) By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace. The most amazing example of faith is **Rahab** who was a Gentile and a prostitute. When the spies came to Jericho,

she hid them because she had come to believe in the one true God (Joshua 2:11). She believed God would deliver her city to the Israelites; therefore, she acted in faith. She is also used as an example of faith in James 2:25.

There are many more examples to be given. Just to name a few. **Gideon** was the fifth judge of Israel. He defeated a great force of Midianites with just three hundred men (Judges 7). **Barak** was the general under Deborah, the woman judge, who defeated the Canaanites (Judges 4). **Samson** was the thirteenth judge. He was a Nazirite from birth who afflicted the Philistines (Judges 14). **Jephthah** was the ninth judge. He defeated the Ammonites. Also he is the one who made the rash vow concerning his victory which resulted in the death of his daughter. **David** is the only king mentioned; however, he was the best and the greatest of all the kings. In the Old Testament all the kings were evaluated in relationship to David. He had a great faith in God as demonstrated by his fight with the giant Goliath. He also conquered the Philistines, Moabites, Syrians and Edomites. **Samuel** was the fifteenth and last judge of Israel. He was probably the greatest judge of Israel as far as righteousness is concerned.

Vs 33 and 34 speaks of some accomplishments made by these great men such as Daniel stopping the mouths of lions or Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego quenching the power of fire.

Not only were great illustrations of faith seen in men but women also. There are two instances where women had their sons resurrected from the dead. There was the widow of Zarephath by Elijah (1 Kings 17:21) and also the raising from the dead the son of the Shunammite woman by Elisha (2 Kings 4:17ff). Others did not deny their faith but instead died on account of it.

(36) And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: (37) They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; (38) (Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. (39) And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: There were others besides those already mentioned who were persecuted because of their faith. Some can be identified. Tradition says that Jeremiah was stoned to death. Tradition also says that

Isaiah was sawn in two by a wooden saw during the days of Manasseh. Some of the prophets during the time of Elijah were slain with the sword (I Kings 19:10). Many were destitute, afflicted and ill treated for their faith especially during times like Manasseh, Ahab and Jezebel.

These people were outlawed as people who were unfit for society; however, the truth of the matter was that society was unfit for these righteous men and women. Faith in God carries no guarantee of comfort; however, it does carry a guarantee of "recompense of reward." All of the great men and women of faith mentioned in this chapter did not see the promise of the Messiah come to reality. They were great men and women of faith. The writer does not say all of these were saved, that is to be determined at the Day of Judgment.

(40) God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.

The **better thing** in v40 is the new covenant with all its blessing and promises in Jesus Christ (Ephesians 1:3). The people in the Old Testament could not be saved by the law. They were saved by the blood of Christ just like people today. Therefore, the author teaches that men could not be saved except through Jesus Christ the Son of God (John 14:6; Acts 4:12).

Invitation