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God, through His Son Jesus, provides eternal grace for our failures and human limitations.

Hebrews 11.

(2013)

The Bible not only reveals God's eternal plans purposes and promises

But also shows how you can know God for yourself.

Teach it, don't demand it.

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Hebrews 11.

INTRODUCTION: this letter is written to Hebrews who had been enlightened, endured sufferings, been publicly exposed to reproach and affliction, stood alongside others who were persecuted, had compassion on those in prison and joyfully accepted others plundering their property (probably the Romans) knowing they had an eternal possession (Heb. 10:31-36).

It appears they had a faith in Christ, but were still bound by the Levitical priesthood and the Jewish religious system and because of this the author brilliantly uses Moses Tabernacle, the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place and Old Testament Scriptures to prove Jesus is the only High Priest anyone needs and that it is by faith in Christ and God's grace not religious works that God's people are counted righteous. The blessing of this letter is not limited to the Hebrews since everyone who is seeking God or who is a brother or sister of Christ will be overwhelming awed as they read this well-crafted and awe-inspiring letter as it beautifully progresses through the chapters proving Jesus is the Christ.

Topics.

- Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.
- The faith of Abel, Enoch, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph and Moses.
- The faith of those who crossed the Red Sea and of those who saw Jericho fall.
- The faith of Rahab, Noah, Abraham, Sarah, and of the Old Testament father's.
- All died in faith not having received the promise.
- Greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt.
- Made strong out of weakness.

The Previous Chapter.

In the previous chapter the author told the Hebrews that the law was a shadow of good things to come and that it was impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. He talked of God writing His laws on hearts and minds, of Jesus coming in the scroll of the book, of Jesus offering for all time a single sacrifice for sins and of Christ perfecting for all time those who are being sanctified. He spoke of having confidence to enter the Most Holy Place of not neglecting to meet together, of the one who is coming without delay and made it clear that God has no pleasure in those who shrink back from trusting in Christ and God's Grace for their righteousness.

NOTE: for information concerning people, places and the meaning of words see Map Locations and People of the Bible, and Bible Dictionary on Website Menu.

Faith is the Assurance of things Hoped for the Conviction of things Not Seen.

Hebrews 11:1-2 ----- ¹Now faith is the assurance (substance in KJV) of things hoped for, the conviction (evidence in KJV) of things not seen. ²For by it the people of old received their commendation (Good report in KJV)

There are a variety of interpretations of what faith actually is, so rather than try to find the meaning of faith based on this verse alone we need to firstly to look at the faith of all those the author mentions in this chapter famously known as the Hall of Faith.

The author speaks of those who have faith in creation and of the faith of Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph. He talks of the faith of Moses parents, of Moses himself, the people who crossed the Red Sea and the faith of those who saw the walls of Jericho fall, of Rahab, the faith of the Old Testament fathers, Joshua, Gideon, Jephthah, David, Barak and Samson.

In the lives of all these examples of faith we discover that: -

- The faith of some involved believing without any evidence that what they believed was actually so or would come to pass while God did give others proof he would do what he had spoken.
- There was always some form of outward action that evidenced the inward faith.
- The persons faith was either based on God's word, trust in God or from a relationship of love for God
- Their faith sometimes involved things they could do (travelling to a better city, offering sacrifices etc.,) and at other times it involved things supernatural that only God could do.
- Only God had power to bring what he had spoken or promised to pass.
- The people's faith always resulted in some kind of blessing.

From these examples we see that it is faith that gives the mind the mental confidence and the heart absolute conviction that a thing hoped for will come to pass and that a thing unseen is real.

NOTE: the King James Bible says, "Faith is the evidence of things hoped for" (v1) this can be misleading, because of the way we think of evidence today. When we look at the faith of the people mentioned in this chapter most had no physical or tangible evidence that what they believed would actually come to pass, and in this same verse it is stated "Faith is the substance of things not seen" so there can be no tangible evidence (not visible anyway). This is why faith differs from anything else it stands alone and does not need evidence (as we think of evidence) to support what it is sure of.

Certainly some people do need evidence before they can have faith. God had to turn Moses rod into a snake and turn the flesh of his hand leprous and heal it before Moses would believe God would do what he said, but most men and women of faith mentioned in this chapter believed God simply because it was God who was speaking. Today some may need a lot of biblical knowledge before they can have faith in Christ, while others need very little at all to walk in faith with the Lord. This is because faith based on the Bible does not need evidence since it is God speaking, nevertheless though faith does not need proof some people do.

Substance: the word substance means confidence, or sure confidence it carries the idea of the thing that becomes the foundation for another thing to stand on. The substance is the ground for confidence and what validates, authenticates, verifies, corroborates, proves, confirms and supports and underpins a thing to be real and true. In this context the substance refers to faith it is faith that is the ground that gives a thing unseen mental existence, mental reality and mental assurance and confidence.

Some say that the word of God is the substance, but this is not so since to a person without faith the word of God means nothing faith has to exist before the word of God takes on any value to those reading it. With faith the word of God takes on a beauty and reality full of majestic promises, eternal love, grace and mercy, but without faith it is to those who are reading it, just another interesting spiritual book and to others a book full of stories of childlike fantasies and of rules, laws and religious customs and traditions (i.e., the letter of the law). Certainly to those who have Christian faith the word of God is what they put their trust in, but it is faith that is the foundation that confidence, trust conviction and assurance rises up out of.

Of things hoped for: the things hoped for are not as extensive as the things unseen this is because the things hoped for refer to things future and joyful to us, whereas the things unseen embrace the future the past and the present and can refer to things good or bad. When salvation to eternal life is spoken of as the hope of the faithful in Christ, it is not called hope because it might or might not happen, but because it is unseen and yet future. The hope itself is guaranteed because it is based on God's promise and he cannot lie.

The apostle Paul wrote; "In hope of eternal life, which God, who never lies, promised before the ages began" (Titus 1:2).

The Christian hopes to be resurrected from the grave to be raised up to eternal life and everlasting glory to be made perfectly free from sin; to be everlastingly happy. It is faith that gives these things a mental reality in the mind and it is under this influence of faith that those in Christ allow these unseen and yet future events to control their mind as if they were a reality now.

Faith and hope: the difference between faith and hope is that by faith alone we are sure of eternal salvation it is certain and guaranteed by faith whereas by hope we look forward with confidence that we will have eternal salvation. All Christian hope stands on faith since it is faith that secures and guarantees the promise of God. Faith and hope go together they are partners that complement each other since the same things that are the focus of our hope are the same things that our faith is trusting in. Faith secures while hope looks forward to what is secured by faith.

The conviction of things not seen: the conviction of things not seen refer to creation; the existence of God; of Christ; of heaven; of angels; of salvation; of forgiveness of sin; of God's grace and mercy and of our righteousness in Christ despite the sinful dysfunctions and aberrations that still exist within our corrupted and fallen body and of the glories of the eternal world to come. Faith allows the heart and the mind to see and believe what the natural eyes cannot see. Faith brings to mind the reality of those things that cannot be discerned by the eyes of the body or its senses. Faith is to the spiritual body what the senses are to the physical body.

A personal testimony: over the years I have heard Christian faith being likened to people sitting on a chair for the first time not knowing if it will support them or of a person going to London with full confidence that it exists even though they have never been there or seen it. But these examples are very limited in explaining Christian faith since hundreds sit on chairs every day and have proven them to be safe and multitude have been to London and testify of its great city, whereas no-one has seen heaven, angels, God, Christ, a dead body raised from the grave or anyone return that has eternal life (other than Christ) none of these things have been proven whereas London and the safety of chairs have.

Faith and the senses: the substance of Christian life is faith without faith it is impossible to please God (v6). Faith not only captures as a real fact what is not revealed to the senses and rests on that fact (being the word of God), but also acts upon it, and is upheld by it even though it is unseen. Faith is a real mental and spiritual seeing that apprehends and grasps hold of God's word without any doubt of its truth.

Christian faith and evidence: though Christian faith does not need evidence it is not without an overflow of many types of proofs supported and testified by the word of God (i.e., archaeology, the history of Israel, the prophetic messages) (many fulfilled with others still to come) the destructive power of sin and the numerous testimonies of people from all nations, languages and cultures throughout history testifying to it, but though there is a mountain of evidence if one goes hunting for it a Christian does not need evidence to walk with Christ and be saved to eternal life since faith stands alone without the need of proof.

Christian faith: faith for the Christian is a firm persuasion, expectation and confidence that God will perform all that he has promised to us in Christ. This persuasion is so strong that it not only gives the heart a kind of possession and present reality of things unseen and hoped for, but also gives spiritual enjoyment of them now in this present time and a subsistence and reality of them in the heart

and the mind. Since Christian faith deals with spiritual and invisible things exclusively, faith is the faculty needed by every brother and sister in Christ to grasp hold of these invisible things. The word of God states: "God created the universe and that by faith we believe what cannot be proven" it with this same unquestionable faith in the word of God that we place our eternal future on.

False faith: since faith continues, whether it is true or false, well-founded or not and gives all the force of reality to what is believed. We should always be open to examine what we believe is actually what the word of God is teaching. Muslims believe in Allah, Hindus believe in Buddha with the same faith that Christians believe in Christ.

Throughout history so called Christian men have killed others believing they were acting in the name of God. Added to this horror is the reality that there have always been many false teachings of the Bible amongst Christianity. The reason for study is not to support faith since faith does not need proof rather the purpose of study is to make sure our faith is founded on a solid foundation and that what we believe is the truth.

By Faith we understand the Universe was created by the Word of God

Hebrews 11:3 ----- ³By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible.

- Having faith that God created the universe is *based* on God's word alone.
- Faith in creation is, *believing* the universe was created by God from things unseen.
- There is *no (absolute) evidence* that proves God created the universe.
- We have the *power to perform* this action of faith (believe God created).
- Only God had the *power to bring* creation into reality.
- The outward *action* of believing God created the universe is evidenced by a person's faith in God, since whoever believes God created the universe must believe God exists.
- Having faith that God created the universe *results* in having respect for creation.

The truth that God created the universe cannot be proven by science (though they are foolishly spending billions of dollars trying to do so) and no-one living today was there to see how it came to pass so though there maybe many good theories based on certain truths and evidences that God was the creator, if it had to be taken to court to be proven by a jury they would be forced to dismiss the case since despite all the good evidence and arguments made for creation it cannot be proven beyond a shadow of doubt to an unbelieving mind.

Even the Bible agrees with this statement otherwise it would not state that it is by faith (i.e., not scientific proof) that we believe the universe was created by the word of God. God made things that we see with our eyes out of things that we cannot see and it is by faith that we believe this. This kind of faith not only pleases God since there is no absolute proof, but also clearly shows that faith does not need absolute proof.

Abels Faith.

Hebrews 11:4 ----- ⁴By faith Abel offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain, through which he was commended as righteous, God commending him by accepting his gifts. And through his faith, though he died, he still speaks.

- Abel's faith was *based* on faith alone.
- Abel *believed* his offering would be acceptable.
- We have *no recorded evidence* that Abel had anything to base his faith on.
- It was in Abel's *power to perform* this action of faith (offering the sacrifice).
- Only God had the *power to bring the blessing to pass* (count Able righteous).
- The outward *action* of Abel's faith was evidenced in his offering to God the best that he had.
- Abel faith *resulted* in him being counted righteous.

Abel was a keeper of sheep and Cain a worker of the ground (Gen. 4:2). Cain offered the fruit of the ground to the LORD and Abel offered the firstborn of his flock. The LORD had regard for Abel and his offering, but not for Cain and his offering. So Cain was very angry, and the LORD said to Cain, "Why, are you angry if you do what is right you will be accepted?" (Gen. 4:3-7).

Since there is no recorded mention in the Bible of animal sacrifices prior to Abel's offering, scholars have speculated much as to the reason why the offering of Abel was accepted, and that of Cain rejected; but such speculation rests on no certain basis, and therefore the statements of the author here regarding Abels offering should be accepted without the need of further proof.

Some have said that Abel's offering was accepted because it was an offering of faith, whereas Cain's was an offering of his hands, but this is simply speculation since there is no mention of faith in the Genesis account of Abels offering. Added to this, Cains offering could not have been offensive to God on the basis that it was an offering of the fruits of the ground, because such offerings were commanded under the Jewish Law and were not in themselves wrong. Both brothers selected what was to them most obvious. Cain had cultivated the earth and he naturally brought what had grown under his care while Abel naturally brought an animal from the flock that he had raised under his care.

Had both brothers given their offering with the same temperament of mind and attitude there is no reason to doubt that the offering of each would have been accepted. This idea is supported by God's words to Cain, "If he did well he would be accepted as Abel was" (Gen. 4:6-7) it is more likely that Cain's offering was unacceptable because of his heart attitude. Clearly Cain proved his heart was grossly wicked by his action of murdering his brother Abel.

It is the author of Hebrews who tells us one brother had faith and the other did not, how he was informed that Abel had faith we are not told, but it is also equally impossible to tell with certainty what exactly the nature of Abels faith was. Many have asserted that it was faith in Christ; looking forward to his coming and depending on his sacrifice, but there is no positive evidence of this. Nevertheless the following words: -

- Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel (Heb. 12:24).

Clearly shows that Abel's sacrifice was well established in the mind of the Hebrews and was instituted as a type of Christ's sacrificial offering of himself early in the history of the world. The bloody offering of Abel is the first of its kind to be mentioned in the Scriptures (though it is not improbable that such sacrifices were offered by Adam) and therefore Abel may be regarded as the recorded head of the whole sacrificial system, or as the first of the blood sacrifices with Christ being the last.

Though Abel Died, He Still Speaks.

There are various understandings of what the words, "Through Abels faith, though he died, he still speaks" (v4) mean, the following are some of the most common: -

- Abel speaks through the Scriptures since they talk of him.
- Abel speaks by his blood, which calls for vengeance and justice.
- The words he still speaks means he is still spoken of.
- Abel still speaks through the sacrificial offering of Christ in that it is only through Christ's sacrifice that we are accepted by God and Abels offering was the first recorded blood offering of the sacrificial system and all following blood sacrifices for sin were types and shadows of the sacrifice of Christ so in this sense Abels voice still speaks.

The story of Abel also shows us that faith that pleases God does not need absolute proof since in the Genesis account of Abel there is no recorded mention of Abel's faith or that Abel had any evidence or proof that his offering would be considered more acceptable than Cains, but here we are clearly told that it was by faith that Abel offered his sacrifice and it was because of Abels faith that God was pleased.

NOTE: the fact the Abels faith is highlighted here in the offering of his sacrifice implies that Cain when he presented his offering presented it without faith which also implies that it was his attitude that made his offering unacceptable and not the offering itself. It is a similar principal to that of money, money in itself is neither good nor bad, but our attitude toward it can make it a vehicle of great blessing or a vehicle of great evil.

Enoch's Faith.

Hebrews 11:5-6 ----- ⁵By faith Enoch was taken up so that he should not see death, and he was not found, because God had taken him. Now before he was taken he was commended as having pleased God. ⁶And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.

- Enoch's faith was *based* on his relationship to God alone.
- It is certain Enoch had faith that he would inherit eternal life after he died, but it is unlikely he *believed* or even knew that God was going to take him when he did since it was a blessing from God because of Enoch's great faith.
- Enoch's had absolutely *no evidence* at all that he would be taken up.
- It was in Enoch *power to perform* the action of faith (he pleased God).
- Only God has the *power to bring it to pass* (take Enoch up).
- The outward *action* of Enoch's faith was evidenced by him living a lifestyle that pleased God.
- Enoch's faith *resulted* in him pleasing God and being taken up.

God taking Enoch is recorded in Genesis, it says, "Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him" (Gen. 5:24) (this is all the information we are given).

For further information on men being taken, see the title: -

- Elijah taken into Heaven in, Various Topics (ON WEBSITE MENU).

Here we discover that no-one can please God without faith, and that Enoch's faith in God was so real and powerful that it is twice stated in the Scriptures that he walked with God (Gen. 5:22, 24). Enoch's faith differed to the faith of many in the Old Testament who believed in God in that his faith surpassed the letter of the law. Many Israelites who believed in God never got past their faith simply being a confession of faith (i.e., an intellectual ascent and agreement with the Scriptures and the Old Covenant), but those who truly please God are those whose faith

surpasses intellectual ascent and whose faith is such that the Lord is a very real person living by his Spirit in their heart and mind by love. In the same way that a teenager falls in love for the first time and that love possess their mind their heart, their passions in such a powerful manner that no-matter where they are they are conscious of the one they love and not only do they desire to do those things that will please them, but also have no desire to cause them harm or offense. This is the kind of faith Enoch had in God and the faith that pleases God.

Here we see that faith that pleases God brings about a response from God which is totally beyond our control. Enoch was taken, something he had absolutely no power over. Likewise faith (i.e., total dependence on Christ for righteousness and not our own religious works and self-effort) not only pleases God as Enoch's faith did, but will also result in those who are sleeping in Christ and those who are alive being taken as Enoch was.

All those of the household of faith will be gathered together to be with Christ in everlasting glory when he returns as King of kings and Lord of lords' to establish God's Kingdom of righteousness justice, joy and peace on earth.

God Rewards those Who Seek Him.

The following verse, "Whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him" (v6) shine a spotlight on two acts of faith without which we cannot please God. The first is obvious, we must believe God exists, the second is not quite so clear to some, because of the prosperity teaching in some circles of Christianity today.

The underlying current of this prosperity Gospel is that if you are right with God and pleasing Him your life will be charmed, prosperous, successful and healthy because God rewards those who seek Him. But this not the rewards the author of Hebrews has in mind. The reward all who seek God must believe is the reward of eternal life and everlasting glory, not material rewards of this world or even a charmed life this side of Christ's return.

Certainly God blesses those who belong to his Kingdom with His love, grace and mercy and with a deep sense of joy and contentment and there are clearly a certain few that are blessed with great wealth, but these are not the rewards that the author here is telling those who seek after God that they must believe will come to pass, but rather that God will reward them with a treasure that by far surpasses any wealth or riches this world can give since no matter how glorious one might live in this world without God they are destined for the grave, in contrast to those who seek after the Lord being destined for eternal life and everlasting glory, this is the reward the author is telling us we must all believe.

Noah's Faith.

Hebrews 11:7 ----- ⁷By faith Noah, being warned by God concerning events as yet unseen, in reverent fear constructed an ark for the saving of his household. By this he condemned the world and became an heir of the righteousness that comes by faith.

- Noah's faith was *based* on God's word alone.
- Noah *believed* what was unseen would come to pass.
- Noah had absolutely *no evidence* at all to base his faith on.
- It was in Noah's *power to perform* this action of faith (he built the Ark).
- Only God has *power to bring it to pass* (make Noah an heir of righteousness).
- The outward *action* of Noah's faith was evidenced in him building the Ark.
- Noah faith *resulted* in him being counted righteous for eternal life and in him saving his family.

It is interesting to notice that in the Genesis account of Noah the single act of corruptness (of course there would have been all kinds), but the one that is highlighted is violence. We are told, "God looked upon the earth and saw it was corrupt and filled with violence because everyone had corrupted their way on the earth."

Added to this God said to Noah that he had determined to make an end of all mankind because the earth was filled with violence and for this reason told Noah to make an ark," because he is about to flood the earth, of course we all now know that Noah did all that God commanded him (Gen. 6:11-14, 22) (the full story continues through the chapters following Genesis chapter six.).

Abraham's Faith.

Hebrews 11:8-10 ----- ⁸By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. ⁹By faith he went to live in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise. ¹⁰For he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God.

By faith Abraham went out, not knowing where he was going.

- Abraham's *faith* was based on God's word alone.
- Abraham *believed* he was travelling to a better place.
- Abraham had absolutely *no evidence* at all to base his faith on.
- It was in Abraham's *power to perform* this action of faith (he obeyed).
- Only God has the *power to bring it to pass* (bring Abraham into the promised eternal land and heavenly city).
- The outward *action* of Abraham's faith was evidenced by him going out not knowing where he was going.
- Abraham's faith *resulted* in him becoming the father of faith and when Christ returns in glory will result in him inheriting the world with Christ and with all who have the same faith (Rom. 4:13).

Sarah's Faith.

Hebrews 11:11-12 --- ¹¹By faith Sarah herself received power to conceive, even when she was past the age, since she considered him faithful who had promised. ¹²Therefore from one man, and him as good as dead, were born descendants as many as the stars of heaven and as many as the innumerable grains of sand by the seashore.

- Sarah's faith was *based* on God's word alone.
- Sarah *believed* she would conceive a child even though she was barren and long past the age for child bearing.
- Sarah had absolutely *no evidence* at all to base her faith on.
- Sarah had *power to perform* this action of faith (i.e., lay with her husband).
- Only God had the *power to bring it to pass* (cause Sarah to conceive).
- The outward *action* of Sarah's faith was evidenced in her not giving her slave girl to her husband Abraham to bear a child, but laying with him herself believing she would conceive.

- Sarah faith *resulted* in her giving birth to a son and her descendants being as many as the stars of heaven and as sand on the seashore.

All Died in Faith Not Having Received the Promise.

Hebrews 11:13-16 --- ¹³These all died in faith, not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. ¹⁴For people who speak thus make it clear that they are seeking a homeland. ¹⁵If they had been thinking of that land from which they had gone out, they would have had opportunity to return. ¹⁶But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared for them a city.

- Abel's sacrifice echoed Christ's sacrifice.
- Noah's Ark echoed Christ the deliverer, the resurrection and a New Age to come.
- Enoch was taken as all in Christ will be.
- Abraham's faith echoed Christians travelling through this corrupted world to a better world to come.
- Sarah's miracle birth of Isaac by Abraham the father of faith echoed the miracle birth of Christ.

So in this sense through their faith they all echoed things to come, Abel was accepted by God through his sacrificial offering as we all are through the sacrificial offering of Christ, Enoch was taken as all in Christ will be, Abraham entered the promised Land as all brothers and sisters in Christ will and through Sarah's descendants Christ was born.

Abel, Noah, Enoch, Abraham and Sarah all died in faith not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar (V13) means that they lived their lives by faith not setting their attention on the temporal things of this world, but fixing the focus of their mind on the eternal homeland to come, the heavenly country, and royal city God is preparing for them and for us through Christ.

NOTE.

This does not mean that to live in faith a person has to forget their dreams and goals and forsake their passion, talent or career (unless God specifically calls them to do so), rather it means that while living on this earth pursuing whatever path we are called to or talented for there is a deep consciousness that we are strangers and exiles on the earth, we do not belong to this world and the greatest thought of our mind and passion of our heart is as Abel, Noah, Enoch, Abraham and Sarah's was in that by their good lives and faith toward God they made it clear that their citizenship was a heavenly one and that they were seeking an eternal homeland and a heavenly city.

The following beautiful words of faith: -

- They were strangers and exiles on the earth (v13).

Apply to every faithful follower of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ through all ages of history. The faithful of the Old Testament knew that their citizenship was not of this temporal world and that the grave was not their final destination, but simply a place of rest until they were raised to a better world.

The word heavenly in the following verse: -

- They desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one (v16).

Means they desired a better world (i.e., one that is influenced by God, His ways and His Spirit). This better country of course will be when Christ returns as, King of kings and Lord of lords (Rev. 19:11-16) to rule and reign from God's Holy City Jerusalem (on Mount Zion God's Holy Mountain) to establish God's Kingdom on earth during his millennial reign. In the first resurrection (Rev. 20:4-5) the dead in Christ and the faithful, who are alive, will be gathered together to rule and reign as kings and priests with the Lord over those nations who are left outside the Holy City of God. Christ the King united with his people will not only bring peace to the Middle East, but establish God's Kingdom of steadfast love, faithfulness, righteousness, joy and peace throughout the world and the glory of God will cover the earth.

Jesus will do justice to the poor and oppressed, he will be a faithful and compassionate King forever. He will not allow anyone to strike terror in the earth or use lies and deception to enlarge their own wealth and power. The land will abundantly produce and even the deserts will flourish. The animals will not feed on each other and even the lamb will be able to lie down with the wolf and everyone will eat of their own hands because all that they plant will produce. All nations the LORD has made will come and worship before the Lord Jesus Christ. They will glorify God's Name, proclaiming the LORD is great and does wondrous things and that He alone is God.

The book of Revelation states: -

- Jesus Christ, the faithful witness who loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood has made us kings and priests unto God and his Father is coming in glory and every eye shall see him, and they also who pierced him and all kindreds of the earth (Revelation 1:5-7).

And in Revelation chapter five we are told that: -

- Christ was slain, and by his blood he redeemed a people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation and made them a kingdom and priests to God and they shall reign on the earth (Revelation 5:9-10).

This is the homeland all the faithful of the Old Testament and the faithful of the New are seeking and the city God has prepared for them (v14, 16).

God swore by an oath and made a promise to Abraham and his offspring that he would be heir of the world (Rom. 4:13) if God does not set up this promised better world He would be made to be a liar. At the end of this glorious Kingdom age God descends to earth on a Great White Throne the sea, death and hades (the grave) give up the dead. They stand before God and are judged according to what is written in certain heavenly books according to what they have done. Death and those counted unworthy are cast into the Lake of Fire a symbol of eternal destruction (i.e., total extinction) (also called the, Second Death) (Rev 20:11-15). Christ hands the Kingdom over to his heavenly Father and God is ALL in ALL and ETERNITY begins in all its fullness and majestic royal glory.

For further information see titles: -

- Kingdom of God (ON WEBSITE MENU).
- The Second or Great White Throne Judgment.

In, Resurrection (ON WEBSITE MENU).

The Eternal City.

God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared for them a city the city is the city is Jerusalem this is the only city in the world that God has put his name on.

Added to this the LORD said: -

- Thus says the LORD: “I have returned to Zion and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem it will be called the faithful city and the mountain of the LORD of hosts, the holy mountain (Zech. 8:3-4).
- Jerusalem! “Behold your king is coming to you righteous and having salvation, humble and mounted on a donkey, he will speak peace to the nations and his rule will be from sea to sea and to the ends of the earth (Zech. 9:9-10).
- Jerusalem shall again be inhabited in its place and the LORD will give salvation and glory to its inhabitants. On the day Jerusalem’s enemies surround the city the LORD will protect its inhabitants. On that day God will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem and will pour out on the inhabitants of the city a spirit of grace and pleas for mercy, so that, when they look on him whom they have pierced they will mourn and weep bitterly over him as one mourns one weeps over a firstborn child and on that day the mourning in Jerusalem will be as great (Zech.12:5-11).

In the last mention of Jerusalem in the Old Testament God said: -

- Behold, I send my messenger (Jesus) and he will prepare the way before me. (This is prior to God Himself descending to the earth, at the end of Christ’s millennial reign) And the Lord (Israel’s Messiah the Christ) whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple and the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight, behold, he is coming, says the LORD of hosts. ²But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears? For he is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap. ³He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver and he will purify the sons of Levi and refine them like gold and silver (Christ did not do this during his ministry on earth) (they plotted his murder) and they will bring offerings in righteousness to the LORD. ⁴Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the LORD as in the days of old and as in former years (Malachi 3:1-4).

God has not spoken this way over any other city on planet earth.

Jesus himself said: -

- Jerusalem is the city of the great king (Matt. 5:34-35).

In the book of Revelation John in a vision saw: -

- The Holy City Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God (Rev. 21:10) with the nations and the kings of the earth walking in the glory of the LORD and the light of the Lamb and bringing their glory into it the new city of Jerusalem (Rev. 21:24).

These are only a few of the Scriptures throughout the Bible that exalt Jerusalem as the city of God.

The better homeland and heavenly country (Heb. 11:14-16) means: -

- A righteous King rules and its citizens are devoted to God and worship him only.
- God's glory is seen in the land and its people and nothing evil dwells in it.
- Its citizen's care for each other rather than self and God's will is done.

The following verses show the future of the earth: -

- The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD (Isaiah 11:9).
- The new heavens and the new earth that I make (Isaiah 66:22).
- The earth will be filled with the glory of the LORD (Hab. 2:14).
- Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth (Matt. 5:5).
- Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth (Rev. 21:1).

- By the glory of the LORD and the Lambs light the nations will walk and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into the new city of Jerusalem (Rev. 21:10) (Rev. 21:24).

This is the promised hope the coming majestic wonder, the
Breath-taking excitement and the eternal glory for the
City of Jerusalem and our glorious planet that
God has set his love upon.

Abraham's Faith in Offering up Isaac.

Hebrews 11:17-19 -- ¹⁷By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was in the act of offering up his only son, ¹⁸of whom it was said, "Through Isaac shall your offspring be named." ¹⁹He considered that God was able even to raise him from the dead, from which, figuratively speaking, he did receive him back.

- Abraham's faith was *based* on God's word alone.
- Abraham *believed* God would raise up Isaac.
- Abraham had absolutely *no evidence* to base his faith on.
- It was in Abraham's *power to perform* this action of faith (offer up Isaac).
- Only God has the *power to bring it to pass* (raise up Christ who Isaac was a type of).
- The outward action of Abraham's faith was *evidenced* by his preparing to sacrifice Isaac.
- Abraham's faith *resulted* in him receiving Isaac back and through his descendants Christ was born.

God had made an oath to Abraham promising him that he would be heir of the world, how thrilled God must have been with Abraham. Abraham's faith is incredible he longed to have a son from his own loins to be the heir to his estate. God gives him the desire of his heart and through his wife Sarah Isaac was born. Now God is telling Abraham to sacrifice his only son Isaac. Abraham's faith is majestically stunning in the following two ways: -

1. He was prepared to sacrifice Isaac who he deeply loved.
2. He believed God would raise him up. Thus the reason he is called, "The father of faith."

The Stunning Beauty and Glory of Shadows, Types and Patterns of the Bible.

Here we have a beautiful earthly picture of God the heavenly Father offering up his only beloved Son the Lord Jesus Christ. Isaac was totally willing to lay his life down for his father as was Christ. When Abraham was about to sacrifice his son, Isaac said, to his father: -

- My father! And he said, "Here I am my son." Isaac said, "Behold, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" (Gen. 22:7).

Abraham said: -

- God will provide for himself the lamb for a burnt offering, my son," so they both went together to the altar (Gen. 22:8).

Now here is the glory in this story: God provided Abraham with a lamb to sacrifice in place of his son, in contrast, Jesus was the Lamb without blemish to be sacrificed. Nevertheless just as Isaac was raised up from the altar (figuratively speaking) to go on an honour his father and multiply his kingdom as the stars of

heaven and the sand on the seashore, Jesus was raised up from the altar of the cross and in the same way will multiply the Kingdom of his heavenly Father as the stars of heaven and the sand on the seashore. (For those who love to hunt out shadows, patterns and types there are many more to be found in the story of Abraham and Isaac such is the glory, excitement and beauty of the Bible). (The full story is found in Genesis 22:1-19).

The Faith of Isaac.

Hebrews 11:20 ----- ²⁰By faith Isaac invoked future blessings on Jacob and Esau.

- Isaac's faith was *based* on his trust in God.
- Isaac *believed* God would bring to pass the blessings he prayed upon Jacob and Esau.
- Isaac had *no tangible evidence* to prove God would bring the blessings to pass.
- It was in Isaac's *power to perform* this action of faith (pray the blessing).
- Only God has the *power to bring it to pass* (the future blessings).
- The outward *action* of Isaac's faith was evidenced by him praying a future blessing upon Jacob and Esau.
- Isaac's faith *resulted* in Jacob and Esau receiving a blessing of God.

Isaac's blessing to Jacob: was that Jacob would prosper and dwell in a land which would produce abundantly, people of all nations would serve Jacob and he would be lord over his brothers (Esau). Everyone who curses Jacob would be cursed and everyone who blesses Jacob would be blessed (Gen. 27:28-29).

Isaac's blessing to Esau: was that Esau would live away from the rich soil, he would live by war and serve Jacob (re-named Israel), but eventually the tension between Jacob and Esau would be broken (Gen. 27:39-40).

The majestic glory of Bible prophecy: Abraham and Sarah gave birth to Isaac and Isaac married Rebekah. The LORD promised Rebekah two Nations (i.e. Esau also called Edom) and Jacob (called Israel) Jacob would be the stronger and Esau would serve him (Gen. 25:23). Today the people of Esau refer to the Palestinians and their associated Arab nations and of course from Jacob came the twelve tribes of Israel forming the nation Israel. Here we see how amazing Bible prophecy is, thousands of years ago the LORD stated that the Palestinians will live in desert places and by war and Israel would rule over them.

Isaac in Esau's blessing says that Israel's authority over Esau and the tension between the two brothers would eventually be broken (Gen. 27:38-40).

This tension between the two brothers will continue until the Lord Jesus Christ returns in glory (for further information see the notes under the title, "All Died in Faith not having Received the Promise following (v13-16) above).

Jacob's Faith.

Hebrews 11:21 ----- ²¹By faith Jacob, when dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, bowing in worship over the head of his staff.

- Jacob's faith was *based* on his trust in God.
- Jacob *believed* God would bring to pass the blessings he prayed upon his twelve sons.

- Jacob had *no tangible evidence* to prove that God would bring the blessings to pass.
- It was in Jacob's *power to perform* this action of faith (pray the blessings).
- Only God has the *power to bring it to pass* (the future blessings).
- The outward *action* of Jacob's faith was evidenced by him praying the blessing upon his twelve sons.
- Jacob's faith *resulted* in the twelve sons receiving a blessing of God.

Jacob's blessings for his twelve sons are found in (Genesis chapter 49).

Joseph Faith.

Hebrews 11:22 ----- ²²By faith Joseph, at the end of his life, made mention of the exodus of the Israelites and gave directions concerning his bones.

- Joseph faith was *based* on his trust in God's promise that Israel would inherit the Promised Land.
- Joseph *believed* God would bring Israel into the Promised Land.
- Joseph had *no tangible evidence* to prove that Israel would enter the Promised Land.
- It was in Joseph's *power to perform* this action of faith (request his bones be taken to the Promised Land).
- Only God had the *power to bring it to pass* (i.e., by safely delivering Israel into the Promised Land).
- The outward *action* of Joseph faith was evidenced by him giving directions to the Israelites to bury his bones in the Promised Land.
- Joseph faith *resulted* in his bones being buried in the Promised Land.

Joseph told the twelve sons of Israel that God would deliver them from the bondage of Egypt and made them swear that they would carry his bones out of Egypt. When Moses lead the people of Israel out of Egypt he took the bones of Joseph with him (Gen. 50:25) (Exod. 13:19). Joseph's bones were buried in Shechem in the Promised Land (Joshua 24:32).

The Faith of Moses Parents.

Hebrews 11:23 ----- ²³By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden for three months by his parents, because they saw that the child was beautiful (Exod. 2:2) (Acts 7:20), and they were not afraid of the king's edict.

The edict of the King of Egypt stated; if a Hebrew woman gave birth to a son the midwife was to kill it, but if it was a daughter she was to let the baby live, but the Hebrew midwives feared God and therefore would not put the babies to death. So the Hebrew people multiplied, but when the Pharaoh saw that the Hebrews were growing strong he commanded all the people of Egypt to let the daughter born to the Hebrew woman live, but to throw every son into the Nile River (Exodus 1:16-22).

The story of Moses birth is found in (Exodus 2:1-10). (Moses father and Mother were descendants of Levi) (Exod. 2:1).

- The faith of Moses parents was *based* on their love for their new born child.
- There is no-doubt that Moses parents being both Levites *believed* God would somehow protect their child.
- Moses parents had *no tangible evidence* to prove that God would watch over their child and protect him from harm.
- It was in Moses Parents *power to perform* this action of faith (hide the baby).
- Only God had the *power to bring it to pass* (keep the baby safe).
- The outward *action* of Moses parent's faith was evidenced by their hiding their child in the Nile River.
- Moses parent's faith *resulted* in Moses becoming the deliverer of the Hebrew people under the bondage of Egypt (also called the house of slavery). Just as Moses a type of Christ (i.e., deliver and saviour) delivered people from the bondage of slavery and the kingdom of Egypt (a symbol of the world and spiritual darkness), Jesus delivers people from the bondage of sin, the world and from spiritual darkness.

Moses Faith.

Hebrews 11:24-28 ---- ²⁴By faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, ²⁵choosing rather to be mistreated with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. ²⁶He considered the reproach of Christ greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, for he was looking to the reward. ²⁷By faith he left Egypt, not being afraid of the anger of the king, for he endured as seeing him who is invisible. ²⁸By faith he kept the Passover and sprinkled the blood, so that the Destroyer of the firstborn might not touch them.

- Moses faith was *based* on God's promise to deliver Israel from Egypt.
- Moses *believed* God would do what he had promised.
- God gave Moses two signs that *evidenced* God would do what he had spoken firstly, God turned a rod in Moses hand into a snake and then back into a rod and secondly, God had Moses put his hand in to his tunic and when he took it out it was as leprous as snow and then after putting his hand into his tunic again and taking it out his leprous hand was as clean as his other flesh (Exod. 4:1-9). God calls Moses in (Exod. 3).
- It was in Moses *power to perform* this action of faith (leaving Egypt etc.).
- Only God has the *power to bring it to pass* (the eternal reward).
- The outward *action* of Moses faith was evidenced by his refusal to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, refusing to enjoy the wealth of Egypt (a symbol of the world) and the fleeting pleasures of sin and by keeping the Passover and sprinkling blood on the door posts.
- Moses faith *resulted* in him leading the children of Israel out of Egypt.

Is it any wonder God called and trusted Moses to be the deliverer of Israel? Moses was raised amongst all the worldly riches, wealth and pleasures of Egypt. He could have had all the power, importance and pleasure pride, ego and lust crave after, yet he chose suffering and poverty rather than a prosperous life in Egypt (a symbol of the world). Here we see the great wisdom of Moses his focus was eternal not the fleeting pleasures of this world. The book of Proverbs cries out for us to seek after wisdom, to hunt it down as though our lives depended upon it. This book shows that one of the greatest attributes of wisdom is being able to foresee whether the

end result of a decision made in the present moment will in the long term bring about a good or bad result. A practical example of this would be a person who on an impulse buys a car or house they absolutely love, but can't afford, so they borrow above their means and eventually the car or house is repossessed, wisdom is being able to see what the ramifications of a choice made in the now will be in the long term. For those of faith their wisdom is eternal, they know that their choice to accept Christ now will in the long term result in eternal blessing and glory.

Clearly Moses had this wisdom, his mindset was such that eternal reward was far greater than anything this world could give him and it could have given him everything our natural nature desires. God's heart must have been filled with overwhelming joy (humanly speaking) when he saw that Moses chose suffering poverty rejection and the wrath of the king because of his love for the invisible God, the Hebrew people and eternal things.

NOTICE: through God is invisible Moses lived as though he saw God, this means that Moses was fully conscious of God in his daily life and in everything he did.

Moses considered Christ greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt: many have been stumbled by the word Christ (v26) here, because they cannot see how Moses could have had any knowledge of him, but consider the following thoughts: -

- Moses prophesied that, "The LORD God would raise up for Israel a prophet like Moses from among their brothers and that it is to him they shall listen" (Deut. 18:15). It is evident that at a certain level God had revealed Christ to Moses (who was himself a type). Based on this there is no-doubt Moses had faith in the promised seed to come spoken of in (Genesis 3:15) and was looking toward a future King and Saviour to come.
- Moses was willing to bear the reproaches according to his belief that the Messiah the Christ would come.
- Moses renounced his interest in Egypt (a symbol of the world) before Pharaoh to obey the divine call of God upon his life as Christ renounced his interest in this world before Satan to obey his heavenly Father's divine call on his life
- Moses was reproached and blamed by the Egyptians for freeing their slaves from their bondage as the chief priest, Pharisees and scribes reproached Jesus for setting their followers free from their bondage.
- Moses was reproached for bringing Egypt's god Dagon to ruin as Christ was reproached for bringing Israel's Levitical Priesthood to ruin.
- Moses was ridiculed by many for leaving the royal position he had in Egypt, to join with an oppressed and despised people as Christ humbled himself and laid down his kingly crown to join with sinners, the poor and the oppressed.

It is in this sense that the author states Moses suffered reproaches as Christ did. It was because of Moses' faith in God and his belief that the Messiah the Christ would come that he willingly gave up the treasures of Egypt and suffered with God's people so in this sense it is right and proper for the author to state that Moses endured reproaches as Christ endured them. No matter what age of history all sufferings on account of God can be spoken of as suffering for Christ since all the faithful of every age have believed in the promised Messiah the Christ to come and it was in this hope that they suffered and endured reproaches.

Greater Wealth than the Treasures of Egypt.

The words: -

- Moses considered the reproach of Christ Greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, for he was looking to the reward (v26).

Show that Moses looked beyond the prosperous lifestyle Egypt would have given him and past the hardships of what it meant to leave such a prosperous lifestyle behind and fixed his attention upon God's eternal reward and the eternal and future

state of happiness in the Kingdom of the Messiah the Christ in the same way as all Israel's believing ancestors did and as we do today. Moses being the adopted son of the daughter of the king was therefore a natural heir to a great estate, but saving others and delivering his nation from bondage was of greater joy to him than all the wealth which could be gained in a life filled with the riches and pleasures of Egypt.

The "Recompense of the reward" can refer to the following: -

- Deliverance of the Israelite people from bondage.
- Enjoyment of the Promised Land for an inheritance to the seed of Abraham.
- Joy of God's presence among his people who is their exceeding great reward.
- Eternal life and everlasting glory which is the reward of the promised inheritance.
- The blessedness of the coming eternal Kingdom of Israel's Messiah the Christ and its hope, its joy and its glory.
- God's rewards to be received at Christ return.

Moses faith of things unseen caused him to choose afflictions with his people and the reproaches of Christ to a prosperous life, worldly riches and the royal grandeur of Egypt.

The Faith of the People who Crossed the Red Sea.

Hebrews 11:29 ----- ²⁹By faith the people crossed the Red Sea as if on dry land, but the Egyptians, when they attempted to do the same, were drowned.

The faith of the people who crossed the Red Sea.

- Their faith was *based* on their trust in God in that he would keep the Sea parted until they reached the safe ground on the other side.
- They crossed the Red Sea *believing* God would deliver them from their enemies.
- They had *no tangible evidence* to prove that the Red Sea would remain parted until they were on safe ground.
- It was in their *power to perform* this action of faith (walk through the parted waves).
- Only God had the *power to bring it to pass* (keep the waves parted).
- The outward *action* of their faith was evidenced by their walking through the sea with their families and children.
- Their faith *resulted* in them being safely delivered from their enemies.

Though Israel had seen the mighty hand of God in the ten plagues of Egypt, the first few plagues also affected them (so much so they complained against Moses) so they still had to have faith that God would hold the roaring waves on each side of them up while they walked through the Red Sea and until they had reached the safe ground on the other side.

Faith and the Walls of Jericho.

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

The faith of the people who saw the walls of Jericho fall.

- Their faith was *based* on the word of God.
- They *believed* the walls of the city would fall and that God would give Jericho into their hands.
- They had *no tangible evidence* to prove that the walls would fall at the sound of their shout and at the sound of the trumpets.
- It was in Israel's *power to perform* this action of faith (march around the walls).
- Only God had the *power to bring it to pass* (cause the walls to fall).
- The outward *action* of their faith was evidenced by their marching around the city and their shout and blast of the trumpets.
- Their faith *resulted* in them getting the victory over the city of Jericho.

The story of the walls of Jericho falling is found in (Joshua 6:1-21).

Israel's great faith: this is a stunning show of faith since it involved the whole nation of Israel and not just Joshua. It also shows the enormous honour the people of Israel esteemed Joshua with and how much they trusted his leadership. God told Joshua (not all Israel) what to do and then Joshua told the people.

Remember Jericho was a fortified city with walls of solid stone. Armies like Babylon and Assyria would encamp around cities like this for one or two years building siege-works to get over the walls and into the city. Here Joshua tells all the people of Israel that Jericho's walls will supernaturally fall down if their men of war and the priest's march around the city with the Ark of God once for six days and seven times on the seventh day. Then when the priest's blow their trumpets and all the people shout Jericho's walls (which no-doubt would have taken years to build) will crumble to dust. All Israel obeyed Joshua and the walls came crashing down. Clearly the faith of Joshua and the people was in God, but the people had to trust Joshua's word that the extremely strange thing he was telling them to do was actually God's will.

The Faith Rahab.

Hebrews 11:31 ----- ³¹By faith Rahab the prostitute did not perish with those who were disobedient, because she had given a friendly welcome to the spies.

- Rahab's faith was *based* on her belief that Israel's God was the God in the heavens above and on the earth beneath (Josh. 2:11).
- Rahab *believed* God would give Israel victory over the city Jericho.
- Rahab had *some evidence* to prove that God would give Israel victory because she knew they had defeated all the cities before Jericho.
- It was in Rahab's *power to perform* this action of faith (hide the spies).
- Only God has the *power to bring it to pass* (by giving Israel the victory).
- The outward *action* of Rahab's faith was evidenced by her protecting the two spies of Israel.
- Rahab's faith *resulted* in her being saved and exalted as a great woman of faith so much so that her name is here recorded in the Hall of Fame with all God's other great men and women of faith. Here is manifested the glory of God's grace, Rahab was a prostitute a woman despised by society and especially the religious community, yet here she is in the Hall of Fame.

The story of Rahab: Joshua sent two spies to secretly spy out the land of Jericho and they lodged in the house of Rahab a prostitute (Josh 2:1). Rahab told the two spies that she believed the LORD the God of Israel is the God in the heavens above and on the earth beneath and that the hearts of all the men of Jericho melted because of Israel. She told the two men that there was no spirit of courage left in any of Jericho's men because they had heard how the LORD had dried up the water of the Red Sea and how Israel had destroyed the two kings of the Amorites (Sihon and Og) (Joshua 2:8-11).

In her faith in the power of Israel's God she hid Israel's two spies from the soldiers of Jericho (Josh. 2:6) and because of this Joshua, before he invaded the city of Jericho told the men of war to keep Rahab the prostitute and all who belong to her father's household alive because she hid the spies who he sent. The city was destroyed, but Rahab was saved and lived in Israel (Josh. 6:25) (Josh. 6:17). Thousands of years later James in the New Testament said: -

- Rahab the prostitute was justified by her works when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way (James 2:25).

James is not teaching that Rahab's works saved her as some think, since no-one is saved by self-effort and works, rather James is teaching his readers that her outward works evidenced and proved her inward faith in the God of Israel. James message is that if a person says they have faith in God, but there is absolutely nothing in their life that evidences it they are deceiving themselves (i.e., if a person says they believe in the Lord, but live a totally worldly lifestyle they are deluding themselves).

The Faith of the Old Testament Father's.

Hebrews 11:32-34 --- ³²And what more shall I say? For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets— ³³who through faith conquered kingdoms, enforced justice, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, ³⁴quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, were made strong out of weakness, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight.

Joshua: conquered the seven Canaanitish nations.

Gideon: conquered the Midianites.

Jephthah: conquered the Ammonites.

David: conquered the Philistines, Amalekites, Jebusites, Edomites, Moabites, Syrians, Ammonites etc.

Barak: went to battle against Sisera his chariots and his troops and conquered all his armies by the edge of the sword; not a man was left except Sisera himself, but Jael drove a tent peg through his temple as he slept (the full story is found in Judges chapter 4). After this victory the land of Israel had rest for forty-years (Judges 5:31). This was such an historic victory Deborah and Barak sang a song about it (Judges Chapter 5).

Enforced justice: God is the God of justice and fairness for all people, here we are told men of faith not only applied and put into effect the laws of justice protecting the innocent and doing what is fair for all people, but also enforced God's wrath upon the guilty especially the cruel and wicked nations.

They obtained promises: (i.e., promised blessings) as a result of their faith some examples of these would be: -

- Joshua and Caleb, who, through their faith in God, obtained the Promised Land while all the rest of their generation were excluded.
- Phineas who, for his act of zealous faith in slaying Zimri and Cosbi, got the promise of an everlasting priesthood.

- David who for his faith and obedience obtained the kingdom of Israel and had the promise that from his seed the Messiah would come.

Stopped the Mouths of Lions.

Samson: tore a lion in pieces as one tears a young goat (Judges 14:5-7).

David: to save a lamb in a lions mouth caught the lion by its beard and struck and killed the lion (1 Sam 17:34-35).

Daniel: was cast into a den of lions and left there overnight, the next morning he told Darius the king of the Medes and the Persians who desired to set Daniel above all others in his kingdom (because of the excellent spirit that was in Daniel) (Dan. 6:1-3) that God had sent his angel and shut the lions' mouths, and they have not harmed him because he was found blameless before the LORD and also before the king (Dan. 6:16-22).

Quenched the power of fire: refers to Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the fiery furnace. King Nebuchadnezzar filled with fury against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego ordered a burning fiery furnace to be heated seven times more than it usually was and then had the three men thrown into it. The flame of the fire killed the men who threw Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego into the furnace, but the three men were not hurt. We are told the fire had no power over the bodies of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego their hair was not singed, their cloaks were not harmed and no smell of fire had come upon them (Dan. 3:19-28).

They escaped the edge of the sword: means that they were not defeated in battle. The LORD sent Barak, Jephthah and Samuel to deliver Israel out of the hand of their enemies on every side and Israel lived in safety (1 Samuel 12:11).

The prophets: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Elijah, Elisha and so many more who without faith not only would they be in spiritual darkness, but we all would be without the glorious light we have of God and his eternal plan, promises and purposes for mankind's salvation and the promised glorious eternal inheritance.

Made strong out of weakness: Samson is a good example of one who was made strong out of weakness (v34). The lords of the Philistines after gouging out Samson's eyes gathered together to praise their god Dagon for giving Samson into their hand. For entertainment they had Samson stand between the two structural pillars the building rested upon.

Samson prayed: -

- Lord GOD, please remember me and please *strengthen* me only this once that I may be avenged on the Philistines for my two eyes.

Samson grasped the two pillars and said: -

- Let me die with the Philistines.

Then with all his strength he smashed the pillars and the house fell upon all the lords and upon all the people (about 3000) who were in it (Judges 16:21-29).

The Action of Faith.

Hebrews 11:35-40 -- ³⁵Women received back their dead by resurrection. Some were tortured, refusing to accept release, so that they might rise again to a better life. ³⁶Others suffered mocking and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment. ³⁷They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were killed with the sword. They went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, afflicted, mistreated— ³⁸of whom the world was not worthy— wandering about in deserts and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. ³⁹And all these, though commended through their faith, did not receive what was promised, ⁴⁰since God had provided something better for us (NT saints) than apart from us they should not be made perfect.

Amongst the western world today there is a religious teaching that proclaims Christians will be successful, prosperous and healthy. Teachers of this Gospel proclaim that whoever belongs to God is a child of God the eternal King (O.K. so far), but here the subtle deception enters, based on this they reason that if a person belongs to the Kings family it will be evidenced by success, good health and prosperity because they are a child of the King (especially since the King is God).

This is not only a grossly false teaching, but also insults the men and women God is commending in these verses. Certainly under the Old Covenant of Law the blessings were materialist, if Israel did right God would bless, their nation, their land, their cattle, their crops, their children, their health and everything they put their hand to, but if they rebelled God would bring all these things to ruin. Israel as a nation rebelled against God and as a result faithful individuals suffered because the nation as a whole turned from the LORD their God bringing the curses of the Covenant they entered into with God at Mount Sinai upon their land, their nation and all they put their hand to do.

Today we are under the New Covenant of Grace the blessings are spiritual (i.e. contentment, joy, mental peace and eternal life) not by self-effort, but by faith in Christ and God's grace this is the majestic glory of the age we live in, Christ has set us free from strictly adhering to ceremonial rites, and holy days and keeping religious customs and traditions to earn God's favour and be saved to eternal life.

Today in certain circles of Christianity what should be the least materialistic religion on earth has become the most materialistic.

The World was not Worthy of those God Commended for their Faith.

The faithful wandered by day in deserts and mountains, driven from the society of men, for safety sake compelled to hide by night in dens and caves of the earth to conceal themselves from persecutors and those seeking their death. They were men and women who because they would not deny their faith were driven from their homes and forced to wander about from place to place and live on a meagre existence just to survive.

Perhaps the author has in mind Elijah and the hundred prophets who fled from Jezebel who Obadiah hid in caves and fed with bread and water (1 Kings 18:4) and to David who was often forced to hide himself in caves from Saul (1 Sam 24:3), but it really does not matter who the author had in mind since throughout all ages of history including our present age there have always been faithful men and women who have experienced similar persecutions to Elijah and David (consider Christians in Communist Russia and China or in radical Moslem countries etc.)

These lowly, despised, and persecuted people, living as outcasts and wanderers, were of a faith toward God that honoured his character and his name in contrast to the men and women of the world who not only give God no thought (perhaps Easter and Christmas might be exceptions), but also spend billions of dollars trying to prove that God doesn't exist. Is it any wonder the author here says that the world was not worthy of these men and women who considered their faith in God of far greater treasure than the wealth, riches and pleasures of this world."

Those who reject what is good expose
their own unworthiness.

The world in shutting these men and women of faith out, shut out from themselves God's blessing. In condemning those God holds in high esteem the world condemns itself. The grace of God, wherever it is found enables men and women to serve God in a good cause in their generation in whatever way they may be employed. It is a greater honour to do what is right and good than to work miracles. By faith we have the comfort of God's promise and it is by faith that all in the Kingdom of God are prepared to patiently wait until God by His Spirit of grace in Christ and at the proper and due time carries us safely through to the glorious inheritance of them.

Faith that endures to the end not only gives victory over mortal death,
but delivers one into eternal life and everlasting glory.

They did not Receive what was Promised.

The things promised (v39) refers to: -

- The promised seed of the woman in (Genesis chapter 3:15).
- The promised seed of Abraham and the promised seed of David.
- The promised prophet to come like Moses (a deliver and saviour).
- The promised Messiah, the Christ and promised King and his Kingdom.
- The promised heavenly homeland, the better country and the eternal city that God has prepared for them.

Though they never received the promise (as yet) they lived their life by faith always seeing before them the glory, the wonder and majestic beauty of the eternal things they were seeking and that God promised (Heb. 11:13-16).

Something better: the something better in the following verse, "God had provided something better for us that apart from us they should not be made perfect (v40) refers to the following two things: -

1. The New Covenant of grace in contrast to the Old Covenant of law.
2. The Old Testament faithful will not be resurrected until we are.

The apostle Paul wrote: -

- There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; so also is the resurrection of the dead, the body is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption; it is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body (1 Cor. 15:41-44).

Added to this eternal glory Paul said: -

- Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither can corruption inherit incorruption this is the mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye; the last trumpet will sound and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we will be changed because this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal body must put on immortality so when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, "Death is swallowed up in victory (1 Cor. 15:50-54).

When the last trumpet sounds this glorious awe-inspiring and world changing event will take place and both the faithful of the Old Testament and the faithful of the New Testament will be resurrected together to eternal life and everlasting glory. In this climatic event faith will be rewarded and together every brother and sister of the Old and the New will be made perfect in thought, motive, passion, mind, body and heart in every way.

End.