

MOSES' PARENTS' FAITH: A LOVING, FEARLESS FAITH HEBREWS 11:23

Introduction

The parents of Moses are an excellent example of an unknown married couple who had great faith in God. They were just common, ordinary folk within their community, yet they believed God and had a strong faith in Him. Their faith stands as a dynamic example of a loving, fearless faith.

- I. A faith that obeyed their hearts (v. 23).
- II. A faith that was fearless despite opposition (v. 23).

I. *Hebrews 11:23 Faith that Obeys the Heart*

The parents of Moses had a faith that obeyed their hearts. What happened was this. Generation after generation had passed since Joseph, Jacob and his sons had gone down to Egypt and settled in the land of Goshen, Egypt. The people, the Israelites, had reproduced so much that they had become a large nation of people, so large that the new king of Egypt felt threatened by them. This was when Israel became slaves to the Egyptians. The king, who did not know Joseph, took the initial step of enslaving them, thinking that he could slow down their reproduction through slavery (Exo. 1:8). However, the children of Israel continued to multiply rather rapidly, and the king felt more and more threatened. Finally he decided to wipe them out by having all newborn sons killed at birth. This cruel plot was made the law of the land (cp. Exo. 1:21-22).

This is the background of what led Moses' parents to do what they did. Unquestionably, they loved God and loved their newborn child whom they named Moses. Their action shows this.

Kenneth Wuest points out that the words "no ordinary" (*asteion*) mean "comely to God." Wuest says, "he was comely with respect to God" (*Hebrews*, Vol. 2, p. 205). That is, God had His hand upon Moses and apparently his parents realized it.

One thing is sure: the parents knew that if all the male children were killed, then the *promised seed* and *promised land* of God could never be fulfilled. It is this that lies behind their saving Moses. They loved their child, yes, but they also loved God. It was their love for both their son and God that made them do what they did. Their love stirred them to believe that God would preserve their son and use him to fulfil God's promise of an eternal seed and eternal land for His people.

Mat 22:37 Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind."

1 John 4:16 *And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him.*

Jude 1:21 *Keep yourselves in God's love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life.*

Deu 6:5 *Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.*

Deu 10:12 *And now, O Israel, what does the LORD your God ask of you but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul.*

II. Hebrews 11:23 A Fearless Faith

The parents of Moses had a faith that was fearless despite opposition. As stated above, it was the law of the land that all newborn male children were to be killed at birth. Failure to obey the law most likely meant death to the law-breaker. The parents risked their lives in disobeying the law. But note what this verse says: "they were not afraid of the king's edict." They trusted God to preserve the child, and they cast their own lives upon God's care. They knew they had to risk their lives in order to save their son and the promised seed and land of God.

The point is this: the parents of Moses never received the promised land of God and they never saw the promised seed inherit the land. But they believed and trusted God, even in the face of a king's attempt to stamp out God's people and promise. They loved God and His promises and they believed God and His promises; therefore, they were willing to stake their lives upon Him and the *promised seed and land*.

Heb 11:6 *And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.*

James 1:5-6 *If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him. But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind.*

James 2:17 *In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.*

1 John 5:4-5 *For everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. Who is it that overcomes the world? Only he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.*

Psa 34:22 *The LORD redeems his servants; no one will be condemned who takes refuge in him.*

Psa 37:5 Commit your way to the LORD; trust in him and he will do this.

Psa 118:8 It is better to take refuge in the LORD than to trust in man.

Prov 3:5 Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding.

Prov 29:15 The rod of correction imparts wisdom, but a child left to himself disgraces his mother.

Isa 26:4 Trust in the LORD forever; for the LORD, the LORD, is the Rock eternal. ■

MOSES' FAITH: A SELF-DENYING FAITH

HEBREWS 11:24-28

Introduction

Following Christ is not easy, not if a person is going to truly follow Him. Why? Because His call is contrary to what most people think. His call is a call to love, joy and peace, yes; but it is not a call to a life of ease, comfort and plenty. The call of Christ is not to physical and material health and wealth. Contrariwise, the call of Christ is to a life of self-denial and sacrifice. If a person is going to follow Christ, it costs him everything he is and has. And Christ makes no exceptions (see Mt. 19:16-22; 19:23-26; 19:27-30). Moses is a prime example of a man who gave up all that the world had to offer in order to follow God and His promises. His faith was a self-denying faith.

- I. A sacrificial faith: he chose God and God's people rather than this world and its pleasures (v. 24-25).
- II. An expectant faith: he looked to the reward (v. 26-28).
- III. An enduring faith: he courageously looked to God instead of looking to man (v. 27).
- IV. A saving faith: he believed God's message of salvation (v. 28).

I. *Hebrews 11:24-25 Sacrificial Faith of Moses*

First, the faith of Moses was a sacrificial faith, a faith that chose God and God's people rather than this world and its pleasures. Remember: when Moses was born, the king of Egypt had issued a law that all newborn male children of Israel were to be killed. He had done this because he feared Israel was growing so rapidly as a people that they were becoming a threat to the security of Egypt. The parents of Moses, acting in faith, had hid Moses down by the river in a small boat-like basket. Moses was only three months old. His parents knew that Pharaoh's daughter bathed there, and they *sensed in hope* that she would find the child, feel compassion and keep and rear him. This she did. Moses was reared as a prince in Pharaoh's court. Jewish tradition even says that his daughter was the only child Pharaoh had and that she herself was childless. If this is accurate, it means that Moses was, as tradition says, the heir to the throne of Egypt (Thomas Hewitt. *The Epistle to the Hebrews*. "Tyndale New Testament Commentaries," p. 180 and Mathew Henry. *Mathew Henry's Commentary*, Vol. 6, p. 947). In either case, Moses was a prince, the son of the daughter of Pharaoh. He had every thing that a person on earth could ever want:

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|---|-------------------------------|
| => education and knowledge | => fame and wealth |
| => possessions and estates | => power and authority |
| => position and duty | => purpose and responsibility |
| => a home and love (Pharaoh's daughter must have loved Moses to stand against Egyptian law to save him as a child.) | |
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But Moses gave it all up. He sacrificed everything for God and His promises, the *promised seed* and *promised land*. The day came when Moses had to make the most critical decision of his life. He faced as large a crisis as any man could face. Was he going to be identified as an Egyptian all the days of his life or was he going to become identified with the people of God? Was he going to pursue the pleasures of Egypt and this world or pursue God and His promises? When Moses was forty years old, he faced the crisis and made the decision (Acts 7:23). In the words of Scripture:

Exo 2:11-12 One day, after Moses had grown up, he went out to where his own people were and watched them at their hard labour. He saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his own people. Glancing this way and that and seeing no one, he killed the Egyptian and hid him in the sand.

This was a scene that Moses had often seen during his forty years as an Egyptian prince. But apparently this was the final straw; he had seen enough of the mistreatment of his people. He made the decision that launched a number of decisions — decisions that were to show that he was rejecting Egypt and the world and identifying himself with God's people.

The point is this: Moses gave up all the pleasures and enjoyment of Egypt and the world — gave it all up. He sacrificed everything for God and His people, the very people who had been given the hope for *the promised seed and the promised land*.

As these two verses of Hebrews say:

“[Aroused] by faith Moses, when he had grown to maturity and become great, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, because he preferred rather to share the oppression (suffer the hardships) and bear the shame of the people of God than to have the fleeting enjoyment of a sinful life” (v. 24-25, Amplified New Testament).

Thought 1. Moses knew what he was doing. The decision to do what he could to stop the abuse of God's people was not the rash decision of youth. Moses was forty years old, engaged in the midst of the daily duties and power of ruling. He made his decision and acted, but as the next verse shows, only after much thought.

Thought 2. The Expositor's Greek Testament has an excellent statement on this point: “the significance and source of this refusal lay in his preferring to suffer ill-usage with God's people rather than to have a short-lived enjoyment of sin....it was because they were God's people, not solely because they were of his blood, that Moses threw in his lot with them. It was this that illustrated his faith. He believed that God would fulfil His promise to His people, little likelihood as at present there seemed to be of any great future for his race. On the other hand there was...the enjoyment which was within his reach if only he committed the sin of denying his people and renouncing their future as promised by God” (Marcus Dods. *The Epistle to the Hebrews*. “The

Expositor's Greek Testament," Vol. 14, ed. by W. Robertson Nicoll. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans. 1970, p. 360).

Mat 16:24-25 *Then Jesus said to his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it.*

Mat 19:21 *Jesus answered, "If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me."*

Luke 14:33 *"In the same way, any of you who does not give up everything he has cannot be my disciple."*

1 Cor 10:24 *Nobody should seek his own good, but the good of others.*

Rom 8:13 *For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live.*

Rom 15:1 *We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves.*

II. Hebrews 11:26 An Expectant Faith of Moses

Second, the faith of Moses was an expectant faith, a faith that looked to the reward. Moses believed in the promises which God had given to Abraham and his people, the promised seed and the promised land. (See Heb. 11:8-10; 11:13-16.) The word "regarded" means that he considered and thought about the matter; he made a deliberate decision to suffer with his people and to inherit the promises God had made to them rather than to enjoy the riches of Egypt. This means...

- that he chose the sufferings of Christ, the promised seed of the Saviour, over the riches of Egypt.
- that he considered the reward of God's promise to Israel greater than the reward of earthly riches.

William Barclay explains what Moses did in practical terms:

"Moses was the man who gave up all earthly glory for the sake of the people of God. Christ gave up His glory for men. He became despised and rejected; He abandoned the glory of heaven for the buffets and the scourging and the shame inflicted by men. Moses in his day and generation shared in the sufferings of Christ. Moses was the man who chose the loyalty that led to suffering rather than the ease which led to earthly glory. He would rather suffer for the right than enjoy luxury with the wrong. He knew that the prizes of earth were contemptible compared with the ultimate reward of God" (The Letter to the Hebrews, p. 178)

Without question, Moses believed in the promises of God to Israel:

=> that Israel was the promised seed, the very people through whom God would send the Messiah, the Saviour of the world.

=> that Israel would inherit the promised land of eternal rest with God. Moses turned away from the riches of the world for the rewards of God's promises.

“He considered the contempt and abuse and shame [borne for] the Christ, the Messiah [Who was to come], to be greater wealth than all the treasures of Egypt, for he looked forward and away to the reward (recompense)” (v. 26, Amplified New Testament).

Mat 5:11 *“Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me.”*

Mat 10:42 *“And if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones because he is my disciple, I tell you the truth, he will certainly not lose his reward.”*

2 Tim 2:12 *If we endure, we will also reign with him. If we disown him, he will also disown us.*

Heb 10:34 *You sympathized with those in prison and joyfully accepted the confiscation of your property, because you knew that you yourselves had better and lasting possessions.*

Heb 11:36 *Some faced jeers and flogging, while still others were chained and put in prison.*

III. Hebrews 11:27 An Enduring Faith

Third, the faith of Moses was an enduring faith, a faith that courageously looked to God rather than to men. This event is recorded in Exodus.

Exo 2:13-15 *The next day he went out and saw two Hebrews fighting. He asked the one in the wrong, “Why are you hitting your fellow Hebrew?” The man said, “Who made you ruler and judge over us? Are you thinking of killing me as you killed the Egyptian?” Then Moses was afraid and thought, “What I did must have become known.” When Pharaoh heard of this, he tried to kill Moses, but Moses fled from Pharaoh and went to live in Midian, where he sat down by a well.*

Note: it seems that Moses fled because he feared Pharaoh; however, Hebrews says that he “left Egypt, not fearing the kings' anger.” Is this a contradiction? No, the answer is given in Acts:

Acts 7:23-25 *“When Moses was forty years old, he decided to visit his fellow Israelites. He saw one of them being mistreated by an Egyptian, so he went to his*

defence and avenged him by killing the Egyptian. Moses thought that his own people would realize that God was using him to rescue them, but they did not.

This shows that Moses had apparently thought and known for years that he was to be the deliverer of Israel. It is highly probable that his own mother had taught him this when Pharaoh's daughter unknowingly made her the nurse to Moses (Exo. 2:6-8). She certainly taught him the great promises of God to Abraham and Israel. Whatever the source, God's Spirit apparently moved upon Moses at an early age and stirred the sense and thoughts that he was to be the deliverer of his people; he was to lead them back to Israel. However, Moses went about it the wrong way. Nevertheless, he knew that God's will and purpose was for him to deliver his people. Note: Acts 7:25 says that Moses was planning to lead Israel in a rebellion against Egypt to free God's people. He did not fear Pharaoh; Moses was loaded with courage. However, when the people refused to follow him, he was left alone. He had to fear — fear in the sense of wisdom and discretion, not despondency and hopelessness. He had to fear in order to save his life.

The point is this: Moses sensed and knew his mission upon earth — that he was to free Israel in God's time. The people would not follow him then, but he believed that God would arouse the people to follow him in due time. As we find out, he kept on believing and endured in his belief for another forty years (Acts 7:30).

Thought 1. Imagine the terrible disappointment Moses must have felt. His people were suffering as slave-labourers under Egyptian bondage, and he had stepped forward to lead them in a rebellion for freedom. But they had rejected his leadership, and he had been forced to flee for his life. The disappointment must have been very heavy. But imagine this: Moses sensed and knew that God had called him to deliver His people Israel. He knew his calling. But there he was sitting in Midian, and he had sat there for *forty years* and God had not called him to go forth. How easily Moses could have lost faith in God. How easily he could have lost his sense of call. But he did not: he continued to believe in God and His promises. Moses endured in faith despite all the circumstances. What a dynamic example!

1 Cor 15:58 *Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labour in the Lord is not in vain.*

Gal 6:9 *Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.*

Heb 4:14-16 *Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are — yet was without sin. Let us then*

approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

Heb 10:23 *Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful.*

1 Pet 1:13 *Therefore, prepare your minds for action; be self-controlled; set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed.*

Rev 3:11 *I am coming soon. Hold on to what you have, so that no one will take your crown.*

IV. Hebrews 11:28 A Saving Faith

Fourth, the faith of Moses was a saving faith, a faith that believed God's message of salvation. This verse refers to the great day of deliverance and salvation for Israel. God had led Moses to prepare Israel and Egypt for the deliverance of His people. God was now ready to save His people from the bondage of Egypt (a symbol of the world). God had pronounced judgment (the taking of the firstborn) upon the people of Egypt for their injustices. As He prepared to execute the final judgment, those who believed God were instructed to slay a pure lamb and sprinkle its blood over the door posts of their homes. The blood of the innocent lamb would then serve as a sign that the coming judgment had already been carried out. When seeing the blood, God would pass over that house.

Symbolically, the Passover pictured the coming of Jesus Christ as the Saviour. The lamb without blemish pictured His sinless life, and the blood sprinkled on the door posts pictured His blood shed for the believer (Exo. 12:5; cp. Jn. 1:29).

Note that God's method of salvation was the blood of the lamb spread over the door posts (cp. Gen. 12:12-14. See *Passover, the Lord's Supper*, Lk. 22:7.) Moses' great faith is clearly seen. He not only made the proper arrangements for escaping God's judgment on that dreadful night, but he spelled out that the Passover was to be observed each year thereafter. He never doubted God's planned salvation for His people. He never doubted that God would fulfil His promises, that He would give to Israel the *promised seed* and the *promised land*.

Rom 5:9 *Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him.*

Rom 10:13 *For, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."*

Eph 2:8 *For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith — and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God.*

Heb 9:22 *In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness. ■*

LUKE 22:07 PASSOVER, LORD'S SUPPER

Then came the day of Unleavened Bread on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed. Luke 22:07

Historically, the Passover refers back to the time when God delivered Israel from Egyptian bondage (Exo. 11:1f). He had pronounced judgment, the taking of the firstborn, upon the people of Egypt for their injustices. As He prepared to execute the final judgment, those who believed God were instructed to slay a pure lamb and sprinkle its blood over the door posts of their homes. The blood of the innocent lamb would then serve as a sign that the coming judgment had already been carried out upon the sacrificial lamb. When seeing the blood, God would *pass over* that house. Those who believed God applied the blood to their homes and were saved, but those who did not believe did not apply the blood to their homes, and they were destroyed.

Symbolically, the Passover pictured the coming of Jesus Christ as the Saviour. The *lamb without blemish* pictured His sinless life (see Jn. 1:29), and the *blood sprinkled on the door posts* pictured His blood shed for the believer. It was a sign that the life and blood of the innocent lamb had been substituted for the firstborn. The "eating of the lamb" pictured the need for spiritual nourishment gained by feeding on Christ, the Bread of Life. The unleavened bread (bread without yeast) pictured the need for putting evil out of one's life and household.

In addition to the lamb and unleavened bread, the Jewish Passover Feast was celebrated by using four food and drink items, (1) A bowl of salt water was conspicuously placed on the table to remind the family of the tears shed by their forefathers in their 430 years of Egyptian bondage. (2) A bitter salad-like plate was to remind them of their forefather's bitter experiences of slavery. (3) A paste-like mixture of fruit (charosheth) with cinnamon sticks was to remind them of their forefather's toil in making bricks from clay and straw for the Egyptian cities and buildings. (4) Four cups of wine were used to remind them of God's four promises in Exo. 6:6-8 to deliver their forefathers from Egyptian slavery.

The one thing to be noted about the Passover celebration is that it is all historical. It is celebrating an act of the past, whereas the Lord's Supper is much more than mere history. It is a celebration of the living Christ in the heart and life of the believer until He returns. It is a remembrance of the potential power of the living Christ within the life of the believer right now — an explosive power that is made possible through the cross (see 1 Cor. 11:26). □

ISRAEL'S FAITH (PART I): A DELIVERING FAITH HEBREWS 11:29

Introduction

This verse deals with Israel crossing the Red Sea, a phenomenal miracle controlled entirely by God. But it took great faith for Israel to cross the Sea with two towering walls of water on both sides. This is a living example of strong faith in God, a delivering faith, the kind of faith that assures God's delivering power acting in our behalf.

- I. A faith that obeyed God against insurmountable forces (v. 29).
- II. A faith that delivered and brought protection (v. 29).

I. *Hebrews 11:29 A Trusting, Obedient Faith*

Israel's faith was a faith that obeyed God against insurmountable forces. The forces confronting Israel were threefold:

- => the pursuing army of the Egyptians.
- => the Red Sea in front and the mountain ranges on both sides.
- => their own murmuring and unbelief.

The people were ever so frightened. They were hemmed in with no way to escape, and an enraged king and people were in hot pursuit. There was no chance that the Egyptian army would have taken any live prisoners because Egypt had lost all their firstborn sons to the death-angel. Israel was doomed and the people knew it. The odds were insurmountable unless God stepped in and delivered them.

Moses, God's leader, was aroused to believe God. He stepped forward and shouted to the people:

Exo 14:13-14 Moses answered the people, "Do not be afraid. Stand firm and you will see the deliverance the LORD will bring you today. The Egyptians you see today you will never see again. The LORD will fight for you; you need only to be still."

The salvation of the Lord was being proclaimed, and that message stirred faith in the hearts of the people. In obedience to God's command, Moses lifted up his rod and moved it across the face of the waters. When he did, a strong east wind began to blow over the face of the water. It blew so forcefully that the waters divided. Imagine the scene: two towering walls of water with a stretch of dry land running down between them. But the people's salvation was on the other side. If they could reach there, they were safe. They had been grumbling, yes; but the message of God's servant, Moses, had stirred them to believe God. Now they were beholding the power of God to remove the insurmountable

odds. He had actually rolled the sea back and made a road of *dry land* for them to march across to safety. They believed God, and they began to march forth — marching in the faith of God who had promised that He would lead them to the promised land.

Thought 1. What a clear picture of salvation for people today! No matter the odds, God will overcome the odds and save us if we will only believe and begin to march forth following Christ, even as God commands.

Mat 21:21 *Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, if you have faith and do not doubt, not only can you do what was done to the fig tree, but also you can say to this mountain, 'Go, throw yourself into the sea,' and it will be done.*

1 Cor 10:13 *No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.*

2 Cor 1:10 *He has delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us. On him we have set our hope that he will continue to deliver us.*

2 Tim 4:18 *The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and will bring me safely to his heavenly kingdom. To him be glory for ever and ever. Amen.*

Heb 2:14-15 *Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death — that is, the devil - and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.*

2 Pet 2:9 *If this is so, then the Lord knows how to rescue godly men from trials and to hold the unrighteous for the day of judgment, while continuing their punishment.*

Psa 28:7 *The LORD is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in him, and I am helped. My heart leaps for joy and I will give thanks to him in song.*

Psa 40:17 *Yet I am poor and needy; may the Lord think of me. You are my help and my deliverer; O my God, do not delay.*

II. Hebrews 11:29 Faith that Delivers

Israel's faith was a faith that delivered and brought protection. The people believed God; therefore, they were delivered despite the insurmountable odds against them. But not only this: they were protected through the whole experience. Their enemies pursued them. It was night when Israel crossed the sea and when the Egyptian army reached the shore (Exo. 14:21). The Egyptians were spiritually blind to God's working and were hardened in their sin. After all, the children of Israel were not an army, but a defenceless body of people fleeing the might and power of the greatest army in the world. The Egyptians saw no reason to rush behind the people of Israel and slaughter them. Therefore, the army

acted blindly, rashly and unthoughtfully. They went right in after Israel. But God protected those who believed and trusted Him. The east wind died down and the two walls of water closed in and covered the pursuing enemy, drowning every one of them. God's people were protected — completely protected by the hand of God.

Thought 1. God performed the miracle of salvation and deliverance for the people, but it was because of their faith. God's messenger proclaimed the salvation of God and the people believed and God worked in their behalf. He saved and protected them from their enemy - an enemy that had appeared insurmountable. God always provides a way of deliverance for those who believe.

Mat 21:21 *Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, if you have faith and do not doubt, not only can you do what was done to the fig tree, but also you can say to this mountain, 'Go, throw yourself into the sea,' and it will be done."*

John 3:16 *"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."*

Acts 2:21 *'And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.'*

Rom 10:13 *For, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."*

Eph 2:8-9 *For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith — and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God — not by works, so that no one can boast.*

Psa 37:39 *The salvation of the righteous comes from the LORD; he is their stronghold in time of trouble.*

Isa 12:2 *"Surely God is my salvation; I will trust and not be afraid. The LORD, the LORD, is my strength and my song; he has become my salvation."*

Isa 25:9 *In that day they will say, "Surely this is our God; we trusted in him, and he saved us. This is the LORD, we trusted in him; let us rejoice and be glad in his salvation."*

Zep 3:17 *"The LORD your God is with you, he is mighty to save. He will take great delight in you, he will quiet you with his love, he will rejoice over you with singing." ■*

ISRAEL'S FAITH (PART II): A CONQUERING FAITH HEBREWS 11:30

Introduction

The faith of Israel was a conquering faith. This was the kind of faith Israel needed in conquering Jericho — a faith that God could give victory over insurmountable forces (cp. Exo. 14: 1f). This is also the kind of faith that any person needs — a conquering faith. We need a faith that God will give us victory over the insurmountable forces of life no matter what the forces are, even the force of death.

I. *Hebrews 11:30 A Conquering Faith*

Israel's faith was a conquering faith. This is the story of Joshua leading the people of Israel against Jericho (Josh 6:1-20). The fall of the walls of Jericho is a well-known story. Jericho was a fortress, completely surrounded by a wall and apparently manned by a strong people. How was Israel to take the city? Humanly speaking, the task was utterly impossible. Their only hope was God, and God was willing to give them victory over their enemies. It was just a matter of whether or not they would believe and trust God for victory. God issued His command:

- => The people were to march around the walls of Jericho once a day for six days.
- => Seven priests were to lead the march with the ark of the covenant following and then the people following it.
- => The march was to be in total silence for six days.
- => On the seventh day, the people were to march around the city seven times. After the seventh march, the priests were to blow seven trumpets and the people were to shout as loud as they could.

God said that if the people did this — believed His instructions and His promise — the walls of Jericho would fall down. Of course most of the citizens of Jericho would be on top of the wall because of the change of events on the seventh day, expecting this to be the day that Israel was going to attack.

The point to see is the strong faith in God and in His instructions and promise. The people clearly trusted God to conquer their enemies for them. And He did. He conquered the enemies because the people believed His instructions and promise.

Thought 1. God will conquer the enemies of any person if the person will just believe the instructions and promise of God. The instruction may seem unreasonable and appear foolish to the world. What Israel did must have seemed very foolish to the

citizens of Jericho. But if a person will go ahead and do what God says, God will conquer his enemies even as He did for Jericho.

Rom 8:31-39 *What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all — how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died — more than that, who was raised to life — is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written: “For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.” No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

2 Cor 2:14 *But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumphal procession in Christ and through us spreads everywhere the fragrance of the knowledge of him.*

Heb 2:14-15 *Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death — that is, the devil — and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.*

1 John 5:4-5 *For everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. Who is it that overcomes the world? Only he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.*

Psa 44:5 *Through you we push back our enemies; through your name we trample our foes.*

Rom 16:20 *The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you.*

1 Cor 10:13 *No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.*

James 4:7 *Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.*

Rev 3:21 *To him who overcomes, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I overcame and sat down with my Father on his throne. ■*

RAHAB'S FAITH: A SAVING FAITH

HEBREWS 11:31

Introduction

This is a beautiful picture of saving faith. It is the picture of one of Christ's ancestors, the picture of a harlot who turned from her sin to live for God. And because she did, she was saved and became one of the great women of history in the eyes of God and believers everywhere.

- I. A faith that believed in the God of Israel (v.31).
- II. A faith that saved (v.31).

I. *Hebrews 11:31 Faith in the God of Israel*

The faith of Rahab was a faith that believed in the God of Israel (cp. Josh. 2:1-21; 6:17, 22-23, 25; Mt. 1:5; Jas. 2:25). She was a harlot and a Canaanite, a woman who was the furthest thing from being a follower of God, but she experienced a phenomenal conversion and she became a strong believer. What happened was this.

Joshua sent two spies into Jericho to spy out the city. They were almost caught, but they found refuge in the house of a prostitute named Rahab. The armed soldiers had heard that the spies were hiding out in her house and they confronted her, but she hid and protected them. Why? Why would she lie to her people and protect the two Israelite strangers? Scripture says because she believed in the God of Israel. How could she have possibly believed in the God of Israel when she was not an Israelite and had never been taught about the God of Israel and His promises? Scripture tells us. In conversation with the two spies she said:

Josh 2:9-11 And said to them, "I know that the LORD has given this land to you and that a great fear of you has fallen on us, so that all who live in this country are melting in fear because of you. We have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea for you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to Sihon and Og, the two kings of the Amorites east of the Jordan, whom you completely destroyed. When we heard of it, our hearts melted and everyone's courage failed because of you, for the LORD your God is God in heaven above and on the earth below.

Rahab believed what she had heard about the God of Israel — that He was the true and living God. When it was humanly impossible for Israel to conquer Jericho — when Israel had no modern weapons to make war — when there was not a chance in this world that Israel could be victorious — Rahab believed in the God of Israel and she acted upon that faith. She believed that the God of Israel would save His people and give them the promised land. Therefore, she saved the lives of the two Israelite spies.

Psa 31:19 How great is your goodness, which you have stored up for those who fear you, which you bestow in the sight of men on those who take refuge in you.

Psa 32:10 Many are the woes of the wicked, but the Lord's unfailing love surrounds the man who trusts in him.

Psa 34:22 The LORD redeems his servants; no one will be condemned who takes refuge in him.

Psa 37:5 Commit your way to the LORD; trust in him and he will do this.

Psa 118:8 It is better to take refuge in the LORD than to trust in man.

Prov 3:5 Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding.

Prov 29:25 Fear of man will prove to be a snare, but whoever trusts in the LORD is kept safe.

Isa 50:10 Who among you fears the LORD and obeys the word of his servant? Let him who walks in the dark, who has no light, trust in the name of the LORD and rely on his God.

II. Hebrews 11:31 Faith that Saves

The faith of Rahab was a faith that saved her and her family. Rahab asked the two men to save her and her family when they attacked the city.

Josh 2:12-21 Now then, please swear to me by the LORD that you will show kindness to my family, because I have shown kindness to you. Give me a sure sign that you will spare the lives of my father and mother, my brothers and sisters, and all who belong to them, and that you will save us from death." "Our lives for your lives!" The men assured her. "If you don't tell what we are doing, we will treat you kindly and faithfully when the LORD gives us the land." So she let them down by a rope through the window, for the house she lived in was part of the city wall. Now she had said to them, "Go to the hills so the pursuers will not find you. Hide yourselves there three days until they return, and then go on your way." The men said to her, "This oath you made us swear will not be binding on us unless, when we enter the land, you have tied this scarlet cord in the window through which you let us down, and unless you have brought your father and mother, your brothers and all your family into your house. If anyone goes outside your house into the street, his blood will be on his own head; we will not be responsible. As for anyone who is in the house with you, his blood will be on our head if a hand is laid on him. But if you tell what we are doing, we will be released from the oath you made us swear." "Agreed," she replied. "Let it be as you say." So she sent them away and they departed. And she tied the scarlet cord in the window.

Note: it was seeing the scarlet (red) thread that was to save Rahab. Also note that Rahab demanded that the men "swear to her by the Lord." She strongly believed that Israel would

conquer Jericho despite the impossible odds against them. She believed in the God of Israel: that God was going to give Israel the promised land. And most important of all, she believed that her life and salvation rested with the Israelites, that is, with the God of Israel. She believed that the God of Israel could and would save her. Oliver Greene has an excellent picture on the scarlet thread and salvation:

“This presents a beautiful picture of salvation. Two spies made the promise, Rahab believed it; and even though a great host of Israelites were to move in upon the city, she believed that the scarlet thread was her assurance of protection. All the money in Jericho could not have purchased that scarlet thread, because it was Rahab’s guarantee of preservation while others were destroyed through unbelief: ‘And Joshua saved Rahab the harlot alive, and her father’s household, and all that she had; and she dwelleth in Israel even unto this day; because she hid the messengers, which Joshua sent to spy out Jericho’ Josh.6:25 .

“This is most interesting. The Word of God does not name the Israelites who befriended this woman of Jericho, but some noble soul in the land of Israel took her in, loved her, and gave her a new home; and as she lived among the Israelites she grew in grace, in faith and in strength.

“We can easily believe that Rahab was an attractive woman, one who had a winning personality and the ability to make friends easily; but now she had something more: she had the Lord God in her heart. She was a new creation, a completely new woman.

“A young man in Israel fell in love with her and married her. (I like to think that this young man was one of the spies, but that is just supposition on my part. The Bible does not tell us who he was.) The record does prove, however, that Rahab became the wife of an Israelite and God blessed them, gave them a son, and they called his name Boaz.

“We read of Boaz in Ruth 2:1 that he was a ‘mighty man of wealth, ’ and Mathew 1:5 tells us, Salmon begat Booz (Boaz) of Rachab; and Booz begat Obed of Ruth; and Obed begat Jesse. Jesse was the father of David, and it was through the lineage of David that the Saviour came!

“You see, when God saves a harlot, a murderer, a liar, a thief – or even a good moral person, that one becomes a new creation with a new heart and a new life. God saves – He does not repair: ‘Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new’ (2 Cor. 5:17)” (The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Hebrews, p. 504f).

Thought 1. Just imagine! Rahab was one of the human ancestors of the Saviour Himself, Christ Jesus our Lord. What a glorious picture of the saving grace of God.

And His mercy and grace are eternal: they are able to save any of us today no matter how much of a harlot, derelict, thief, murderer, adulterer, liar, fame-seeker, drug addict, leader, boaster, socialite or materialist we are. Whether we would be considered to be down and out or of the upper crust within society, God can save us. No matter what we are or what we have done, God can save us if we will only believe and trust in His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

John 3:15-16 *That everyone who believes in him may have eternal life. "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."*

John 3:36 *"Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him."*

John 5:24 *"I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life."*

John 11:25 *Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies."*

John 12:46 *I have come into the world as a light, so that no one who believes in me should stay in darkness.*

John 20:31 *But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.*

Rom 10:9-10 *That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.*

2 Tim 3:15 *And how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. ■*