

## SECTION ELEVEN

### FAITH AND FAITHFULNESS—THE IMITATION OF FAITH AND ITS HEROES

#### 1. TEXTS

a. **Hebrews 11:1 – 12:3.**

b. **Complementary relevant texts**

- (1) **Romans 4**—“... the promise comes by faith, so that it may be ... guaranteed to all Abraham’s offspring” (v 16).
- (2) **Galatians 4:1-7**—“God sent his son ... to redeem those under law, that we might receive ... sonship.”
- (3) **1 Corinthians 10:1-12**—“These things ... written ... for us, upon whom the culmination of the ages has come.”

#### 2. TRANSITION FROM PREVIOUS SECTION TO THIS SECTION

a. **Hebrews 11:36-39**—“We do not belong to those who shrink back and are destroyed, but to those who have faith and are saved.”

b. **Key points about the dangers of apostasy and the necessity of remaining faithful which make the transition**

- (1) We are justified, like Abraham, under the covenant of faith, not the covenant of law.
- (2) But we reach the goal of the promise by which that covenant was established only through remaining faithful.

#### 3. A CHARACTERIZATION OF FAITH WHICH IS PERTINENT TO THE SUBJECTS BEING CONSIDERED (11:1,3, 6)

a. **Faith as the hearers of this message must experience it**

- (1) Substance/real being/foundation (*hypostasis*) of things hoped-for—holding that for which one hopes.
- (2) Conviction/proof (*elegchos*) of things not seen—the immediate reality of things which are not actually here.
- (3) Without faith it is impossible to please God;
  - (a) Anyone who would come to/approach/draw near to (*proserchomai*) God must believe that He exists ...
  - (b) ... and that He is a rewarder of (*misthapodotes*) those who seek/investigate/crave/ require (*ekzeteo*) Him.

b. **The outcome of this faith which binds us to the new covenant**

- (1) By faith we understand that the worlds/time/the universe (*aion*) were prepared/made fit/completed/put in order/arranged/adjusted/made ready for oneself (*katartizo*) by the word of God ...
- (2) ... so that what is seen was not made out of things that are seen—there is no ultimate explanation of material things in terms of other material things which makes reality clearer or more meaningful.

#### 4. THE CAST OF HEROES (11:2, 4-5, 7-38)

a. **Abel—brought a better offering, and speaks even though he is dead (v4).**

b. **Enoch—did not experience death, was commended as one who pleased God (v5).**

- c. **Noah—warned of things not seen, acted in holy fear, and condemned the world (v7).**
- d. **Abraham—left his home, not knowing where he was going, and wandered, without foundations (vv8-12, 17-19)**
  - (1) He made his home (he *rested*) in the *promised* land, with other heirs of the same *promise*.
  - (2) He and Sarah were granted the *promised* offspring, even though he was “as good as dead.”
  - (3) He offered Isaac as a sacrifice, not doubting that through Isaac God would keep His *promise*.
  - (4) “... looking forward to the city *with foundations* (the city of faith), whose ... builder is God” (**Hebrews 12:22**).
- e. **All these people who persisted in living by faith—they were faithful—until they died (vv 13-16)**
  - (1) They did not receive the things promised, but saw them from a distance.
  - (2) They are looking for a better country (home, rest), a heavenly one.
  - (3) God, being not ashamed to be called their God, has prepared a city (the city of the new covenant) for them.
- f. **Isaac—blessed Jacob and Esau, giving them their future by promise (v20).**
- g. **Jacob—as he was dying blessed his offspring and Joseph’s sons, with a view to a future beyond his life (v21).**
- h. **Joseph—foresaw the exodus, and made arrangements that his bones be returned to Canaan (v22).**
- i. **Moses’s parents—not fearing the king’s edict, treated Moses as no ordinary child (v23).**
- j. **Moses—did not go back to the household of Pharaoh, but forward, to suffer with the people of God (vv 24-29)**
  - (1) Regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of superior value, because he looked forward to the reward.
  - (2) Kept the Passover and the application of blood, so that the destroyer would not touch the firstborn.
  - (3) Led the people of Israel across the sea, in which the army of Egypt was drowned.
- k. **Those involved in the conquest of Jericho (vv30-31)**
  - (1) Marched around the city for seven days (not a classic military strategy for the conquest of a city!).
  - (2) Rahab, from within Jericho, did not shrink back to destruction, but went outside the city, into life with Israel.
- l. **Others, individuals and in a group (vv32-38)**
  - (1) Gideon, Jephthah, Barak, Samson, David, Samuel, the prophets ...
  - (2) Brief catalog of their achievements—the world was not worthy of them.
  - (3) They did not receive what they were *promised*, because God had planned their *completion* (*teleioo*) only in us.

## 5. WE ARE THUS CHALLENGED (12:1-3)

- a. **Therefore, with all these people watching us, as though they were spectators in a stadium**
  - (1) We need to *finish* the race we have started, not stop, and not turn into the opposite direction.
  - (2) In order to finish the race, we must shed every hindrance, including the most-besetting sin (of faithlessness).
- b. **Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, who has run this race before us, who is our leader in this race**
  - (1) He endured the cross, regarding the shame attached to it as unworthy of His consideration.
  - (2) He was opposed by sinners, as those to whom this exhortation is addressed were being opposed.
  - (3) We must keep running, not losing heart—not letting our desire to finish the race wane.