

Chapter Five ***HEBREWS 11***

If Hebrews, chapter 11 is not recorded for us as a list of the heroes of faith, what is its purpose? Why has the Holy Spirit, the author of all the Scripture, placed this chapter here?

As in all matters of Biblical interpretation, we need to consider the literary context. For several chapters, up to and including chapter 10, verse 18, the author has been writing about the practices and purposes of the Old Testament covenant, law, temple and sacrifices. These are contrasted with the better things found in Christ.

We have a better salvation	ch.2
a better Law giver	ch.3
a better rest	ch.4
a better High Priest	ch.5
a better covenant	ch.8
a better promise	ch.8
a better sacrifice	ch.9

In chapter 10 verse 19, he begins a new theme.

v19: *Since therefore, brethren, we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus*

v22: *.... let us draw near with a sincere heart ...*

v23: *.... let us hold fast the confession of our hope ...*

v24: *.... let us consider how to stimulate one another*

He is now writing to emphasise the life style that should be characteristic of those who have experienced the 'better things' found in Christ.

Remember the former days, when, after being enlightened, you endured a great conflict of sufferings, (v32) therefore do not throw away your confidence, which has great reward. For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised. For yet in a very little while, He who is coming will come, and will not delay. But My righteous one shall live by faith; and if he shrinks back, My soul has no pleasure in him. But we are not of those who shrink back to destruction, but of those who have faith to the preserving of the soul. (vv35-39).

The next portion, chapter 11, is written to give us examples of 'living by faith'. It is striking that Caleb, Elisha and Daniel are missing while Moses (a murderer), Sarah (who laughed at God's promise) and Rahab (a liar) are present. It does not take a spiritual giant to walk the walk of faith. Anyone, whatever their spiritual maturity, can begin this exciting journey today, walking in faith, without which it is impossible to please God. Another example of God's amazing grace!

Hebrews 11:1 *"Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen"*

We have already considered verse 1 as a definition of faith, a gift and a fruit.

Hebrews 11:2 *"For by it the elders obtained a good report."*

Men and women of old, who walked in Faith, had a good testimony, a good report. Others looked at them and knew that such people walked with God. There were **lessons to be learned** by watching how God worked in their lives. Similarly, our lives should also be a testimony of faith, revealing God's leading and our obedience to that leading. The world does not want to hear our words of believing in what to them is irrational - they want to see the witness of our lives.

We are not called to stand in the world giving testimony to Christ; we are called to stand in Christ giving testimony to the world.

Hebrews 11:3 *Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.*

All religions have their stories about creation. Some are wonderful and mythical. The foundation of our faith is found in an uncreated God Who called all creation into being by His Word. This is beyond human comprehension, beyond scientific explanation. All science can do is investigate what is already in existence - and stand back in awe as it proves the reality of what is written! It is only possible to comprehend, when God has granted an inner revelation, the faith to enable us to believe. This is not replacing reason; it is over and above all reason. "He that cometh to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him" (Hebrews 11:6).

We shall now begin to consider each of the characters named in Hebrews 11, to see how the Lord led them in the walk of faith. Coming from the standpoint that the Holy Spirit deliberately led His human author in the choice of people named, I ask myself to read beyond the words to see **what principles of the walk with God He has made evident in these examples**. I am thrilled as I see the great truths of The Faith being revealed. I pray that the following chapters will excite you as we consider them together. May the Holy Author speak to your soul concerning what He has written here.