

THE GLORIES OF CHRIST IN THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS

by

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CHAPTER TEN

“A CLOUD OF WITNESSES”

Hebrews 11:1-12:3

Faith—The Title Deeds To Unseen Realities

11:1-3

From Hebrews 11:1-12:3 we have an amplification of the great word from Habakkuk, “**The just shall live by faith.**” We are told that “**faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence [or, ‘conviction’] of things not seen.**” The word “substance” has the same meaning as the word “*assurance.*” However, according to fresh light which has been shed on Greek as spoken during the period when the New Testament was written, this term, which is variously translated “*substance,*” “*essence*” or “*assurance,*” was at that time used to mean “*title deeds.*” Therefore, what Hebrews 11:1 declares is that he who has faith has the title deeds to unseen realities in his hand.

The passage is not so much a definition of faith as a description of its effects. It brings us into the light of the now invisible and coming world.

- We give up the visible, therefore, because we are under the influence of the invisible.
- We give up the present, because we have the title deeds to that which is to come.

Following this statement concerning the work of faith in the heart of the believer, the Holy Spirit encourages the persecuted Hebrew Christians by reminding them of the faith of their fathers, the Old Testament saints, called here “**the elders**” (v. 2).

Four times in this chapter it is written that God hath borne witness to the faith of these men and women who believed His Word (11:2, 4, 5, 39), They are a veritable “**cloud of witnesses**” (12:1), to which our Lord Himself is added as the chief Example of faith (12:2), as well as the Author and Finisher of faith. Heartened by their testimony, “**looking unto Jesus,**” the suffering, troubled saints are exhorted to run the Christian race; laying aside the weight of besetting sin as they press on toward that “**city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God**” (11:10).

Not all of the Old Testament heroes and heroines of faith are named in this roll of honor; “**for time would fail me,**” the inspired apostle writes, to mention all of them. But enough are called by name to encourage believers throughout the Christian era to follow their example, walking in the path of faith (11:4-7), even as they learn the patience of faith (11:8-22), and realize something of the power of faith (11:23-40), bestowed by Him who, in His earthly ministry, was and is and ever shall be the perfect Pattern of faith (12:2). “**Consider him**” the apostle adds, “**lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds**” (12:3).

He is the One by whom “**the worlds [or, ‘ages’] were framed**”; and He is the Creator (11:3; cf. John 1:3, 10; Colossians 1:16, 17; Hebrews 1:2, 3). By faith we understand these eternal truths, believing that the “**things which are seen were not made of things which do appear**” (11:3). There is no room for speculation in that statement; and the infallible Holy Spirit wrote it! Thus, in the lesson before us, the Spirit of God covers the long ages of time—from the past eternity to the cross, resurrection, ascension and present ministry of Jesus, the Creator, ever living Lord and Great High Priest of His redeemed. Not only so, but He looks forward to the future eternity, when the children of faith shall dwell with the Triune God in that “**better . . . heavenly . . . country**” (11:16 cf. 11:10, 14, 26, 35, 40). Only God-given faith can lay hold of these things.

The Path of Faith

11:4-7

1. “**By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain**” (11:4). We have in Abel’s sacrifice the basis of happy relations with God for a fallen creature. Through the “**more excellent sacrifice . . . he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts.**” The Lord Jesus called him “**righteous Abel**” (Matthew 23:35).

This man of faith brought both the burnt offering and the meal offering—in type, a full Christ, His blessed life, so fragrant to heaven and His sacrificial death. It is His “**blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel**” (12:24). This is the second time in this epistle that Abel is said to speak to us, by his act of faith, concerning “**the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world**” (John 1:29).

Cain brought only that which spoke of the life of Jesus. He ignored that which set forth His death for our acceptance. Alas! Twentieth century apostasy goes “**in the way of Cain**” (Jude 11), and the Spirit pronounces woe upon such unbelief.

2. “**By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death**” (vv. 5, 6).

Having given Abel as an example of justification by faith, the Holy Spirit, in beautiful order, writes of Enoch who chose God as his traveling companion in an ever darkening world, ripening for judgment. Moreover, Enoch’s walk with God led him on to his translation to heaven without dying. In this he becomes a type of the saved who will be living when the Lord Jesus comes to take unto Himself His Bride, even His blood-bought Church (Cf. I Thessalonians 4:13-18; I Corinthians 15:51-57; Titus 2:13 and parallel passages).

Many centuries before Jesus was born in Bethlehem, Enoch preached— by faith—about the second coming of Christ to judge the wicked (Jude 14, 15). Doubtless many refused to heed the warning of Enoch, the great-grandfather of Noah; for “**before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God**” (v. 5).

“**But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him**” (v. 6).

3. “**By faith Noah . . . prepared an ark to the saving of his house**” (v. 7).

Noah, “**a preacher of righteousness**” (II Peter 2:5), by building the ark to save his family from the waters of judgment, became a type of Christ, who is Himself a Refuge from judgment for His house; because our Lord passed through the baptism of death unto resurrection ground. By his testimony Noah “**condemned the world,**” who would not heed the warning sent by God.

Abel—Enoch—Noah—on the path of faith, speak to us particularly of salvation by faith, a holy walk with God, and a testimony before the Christ-rejecting world of impending judgment upon the ungodly.

The Patience of Faith

11:8-22

By faith the patriarchs believed the promise of God concerning the Saviour to come. Most of the Book of Genesis is devoted to the record concerning the five children of God whose faith is mentioned in Hebrews 11:8-22—Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph. Again, in this faith chapter no reference is made to their failures—and they were many; neither is this the story of their achievements. But their faith in the promises of God, the patience of faith—this is the lesson which the Holy Spirit emphasizes here (Note how often faith in God’s “**promise**” is mentioned in this chapter).

God began a new order in Abraham. He had purged the world by judgment; but it again became corrupt, falling into idolatry, with its resultant moral degradation (Cf. Romans 1). Therefore, separation by the call of God became the responsibility of the believer; and Abraham became the typically heavenly man, a pilgrim and a stranger, even in the Land of Promise. In Genesis 14:13 he is called “**the Hebrew,**” which the Septuagint Version translates by *perates*, meaning the passenger. All the children of Abraham’s faith are thus Hebrews, that is, passers-on to another country.

It was faith in God’s promise that the Redeemer should come through his family that led Abraham to leave an advanced, though idolatrous civilization in Ur of Chaldea and go out, “**not knowing whither he went**” (v. 8; cf. Genesis 12:1-3; Joshua 24:2). It was faith that claimed the Land of Promise as his inheritance, even though he lived in tents with Isaac and Jacob the remainder of his life. The only portion in Canaan, to which he had an earthly title deed, was the field with the cave of Machpelah—a place to bury his dead (See Genesis 23:1-20). His hope was fixed upon that “**city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God**” (v. 10).

For more than twenty-five years Abraham and Sarah had waited for the promised son and heir. **“Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran”** (Genesis 12:4). How long he had stayed in Haran, following God’s call, we are not told. But he was **“an hundred years old when Isaac was born”** (Genesis 21:5); and Sarah was ninety (Genesis 17:17). With the birth of this son of promise God turned Sarah’s laughter of unbelief into the laughter of joy, for **“Isaac”** means *“laughter”* (Cf. Genesis 18:10-15; 17:19). In spite of her lapse, she did judge **“him faithful who had promised”** (v. 11). And through Isaac came the Hebrew nation, which gave to the world the Saviour.

“These all”—Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Jacob, as well as Abel, Enoch, Noah and all the **“elders”**—**“died in faith, not having received the promises”** (v. 13). That is, they did not live to see Christ in His earthly ministry; but they saw Him by faith, acknowledged that they were strangers in a God-dishonoring world, pilgrims journeying to that **“better . . . heavenly”** country (vv. 13-16). The patriarchs could have returned to Chaldea (v. 15), rather than live in tents in a strange land; but because they desired a heavenly habitation, God was **“not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city”** (v. 16).

Throughout this entire portion of Hebrews 11 the story of the faith of Abraham is interwoven with that of Sarah, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph. The heavenly calling is set forth in the family which Abraham founded, and the principle of election runs through divine dealings with it. Ishmael was cast out; Esau was left out; Manasseh was crossed out; for God will have **“no flesh . . . glory in his presence”** (I Corinthians 1:29).

The truth of death and resurrection is also emphasized. Faith must reckon with the God who quickens and raises the dead. Isaac must be laid on the altar.

- Jacob must have his strength taken out of him at Peniel before he can become Israel.
- Joseph must know the pit and the dungeon before his early dreams can be fulfilled.

And our God still disciplines and trains His elect in this strange way.

When the Lord Jesus was on earth, He said to the unbelieving Jews,

“Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad” (John 8:56).

Surely in the trial of the patriarch’s faith when he **“offered up his only begotten son”** of promise on Mount Moriah (v. 17). God was teaching both Abraham and Isaac of His well-beloved and only begotten Son who was to be offered on Mount Calvary as the true Lamb of God. The faith of Abraham in the Lord’s power to raise Isaac up **“even from the dead”** (v. 19) pointed on to the bodily resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And Isaac’s obedience to his father foreshadowed our Lord’s perfect obedience to the will of His Father in heaven, even unto “the death of the cross” (Philippians 2:8). Without doubt God must have been teaching Abraham and Isaac of **“the day of Christ.”** No wonder **“Abraham rejoiced . . . and was glad”!**

Yet such obedience required faith; and it is that faith which God honors in Hebrews 11. The Genesis record tells us that Isaac had sought to give the covenant-blessing to Esau; but by faith he refused to take it away from Jacob, after God showed him that the Saviour should come through Jacob's family. It was "**concerning things to come**" (v. 20) he exercised faith (cf. Genesis 27, 28).

Someone has said that the picture we get of Jacob in verse 21 portrays the aged patriarch dying, blessing, worshiping, leaning—by faith in the God of his fathers.

And it was Joseph's faith in God's promise to Abraham (Genesis 15:13, 14; cf. 50:24) that He would lead Israel out of Egypt into Canaan which prompted him to give "**commandment concerning his bones**" (v. 22; Genesis 50:25; Exodus 13:19; Joshua 24:32). Joseph, the ruler of Egypt might have been buried in one of the costly tombs of the country; but his faith he cast his lot with the people of God.

The Power of Faith

11:23-40

1. *By faith the parents of Moses "were not afraid of the king's commandment" (v. 23).*

How did Moses come to have faith that the despised Hebrews were "**the people of God,**" that to suffer affliction with them was better than the pleasures of sin? We must credit his parents for this, and God gives them an honorable mention as examples of faith. Thus we see that there must have been a believing remnant among the Hebrews, however hidden and small. Their very names, indeed, indicate this fact (Exodus 6:20), "**Amram,**" the name of the father of Moses, means "*the people are high*"; and "**Jochebed,**" his mother's name, means "*The Lord is exalted.*" Only faith on the part of his grandparents could have named them thus. And so it was that Moses was born into an atmosphere of deep piety, which left its impression on him, an influence which the glory and wisdom of Egypt could not wipe out.

It has been well said by another that the parents of Moses had faith *for* him till, through grace, he had faith *for himself*. So godly parents may commit their children to the Lord and instill into their minds the principles of truth, trusting that grace will keep them from the snares of this present evil world till the hour of their own definite decision to his disciples of the Lord Jesus.

Moses' parents saw that their child was "**goodly,**" that is, "*beautiful*" (v. 23); "**exceeding fair,**" or "*fair unto God*" (Acts 7:20). And because of their faith, the wicked Pharaoh's own daughter saved the very child of the despised Hebrews who was to be used of the Lord to thwart the evil designs of her father, the king of Egypt.

2. *By faith Moses proved the power of God (vv. 24-29).*

The energy of faith is seen in him, witnessed to in this God-given summary of his life:

- a. *He gave up his title to royal dignities (v. 24).*
- b. *He chose the company of the people of God (v. 25).*

c. *He changed his valuations* (v. 26).

d. *He forsook Egypt* (v. 21).

e. *He kept the Passover* (v. 28).

The Hebrews kept the Passover as a matter of command. But the faith of Moses secured the preservation of the whole people, and inspired them with faith to go through the Red Sea (cf. vv. 28, 29). We also find that through his ministry the tribes of the Hebrews, in bondage in Egypt, became a nation solemnly married to the Lord God. They had begun as a nation under the shelter of the blood of the Lamb when they forsook Egypt. And when God ratified His covenant with them at Mount Sinai and Moses read to them from **“the book of the covenant,”** he **“took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words”** (Exodus 24:7, 8; cf. Hebrews 9:18-22).

It was by faith that Moses identified himself with a despised slave people after he had achieved renown in Egypt. Not only was he the adopted son of Pharaoh’s daughter; but Josephus, the Jewish historian, tells us that he was a consummate military leader, having been instructed in all the wisdom of Egypt, and that he was mighty in his words and works (cf. Acts 7:22). The Israelites were **“the people of God”** to him (v. 25). They certainly did not look like the people of God. They had neither altar nor temple, prophet nor priest. They had forgotten the very name of the God of their fathers (Exodus 3:13), having become idolaters like their Egyptian masters (Ezekiel 20:4-8). But faith saw their divine election and calling. Faith saw their future. Faith apprehended that the covenants, the glory, the giving of the law, the promises, the fathers, belonged to them. Faith foresaw that of Israel, according to the flesh, the Christ would also come, who is over all, God most blessed forever! (Romans 9:4, 5)

Time would fail us to speak of all the lessons set before us in such words as: choosing **“to suffer affliction with the people of God,”** brevity of the **“pleasures of sin . . . the reproach of Christ . . . recompense of the reward . . . seeing him who is invisible.”**

The book of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy tell us of the experiences these words recall concerning Moses, the man of faith. But one thing we would ask ourselves here: How could Moses consider **“the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt,”** when he lived fifteen hundred years before Jesus was born in Bethlehem? There is but one answer: Moses **“saw the day of Christ”** as Abraham did—by far And Moses **“wrote of me,”** the Lord Jesus said (John 5:46; cf. Luke 24:27, 44).

In the Passover, the Red Sea deliverance, the manna, the smitten rock, the brazen serpent, the cities of refuge; in Genesis 3:15; 12:1 -3; 49:10; Numbers 24:15-19; Deuteronomy 18:15-18; in all the Pentateuch in more ways than we can count, Moses wrote of the Christ, for whom he chose the reproach of Egypt because his faith was fixed upon Him, whom having not seen he loved (Cf. I Corinthians 10:1-11; I Peter 1:8). Few men have known the power of faith in God as Moses did.

3. **“By faith the walls of Jericho fell down . . . by faith . . . Rahab perished not”** (vv. 30, 31).

The opening chapters of the Book of Joshua tell the story of God's miracle-working power; but in the verses before us His Holy Spirit honors the faith of those for whom He wrought. By faith Joshua and the children of Israel did what the world would call foolishness, marching around the walls of Jericho, blowing rams' horns; but they obeyed God. That is faith in action. By faith Rahab turned from idolatry to the Lord (Joshua 2:9-11), subjecting herself to the stigma of being called a traitor to her own people, and claimed deliverance for herself and her family. Not only was she saved, but three times in the New Testament she is honored for her faith (Matthew 1:5, 6; Hebrews 11:31; James 2:25). And she became the mother of Boaz, through whose family Christ "**according to the flesh**" was born in Bethlehem (Matthew 1:5; cf. Ruth 4:21, 22; Romans 1:3).

4. *By faith a great multitude removed "mountains"; by faith other: endured affliction, even martyrdom* (vv. 32-40).

A long list of men and women of faith now follows, taking us on into the days of Maccabees. They are divided into two groups. First those are listed who had faith to let God perform miracles through their service: Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel and the prophets. By faith they "**subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. Women received their dead raised to life again**" (vv. 32-35). We marvel at these old-time heroes and heroines of faith.

But let us read on and consider another aspect of belief in God's Word. There were "**others,**" who did not exhibit anything sensational or perform wonders, but they accepted apparent failure and defeat "**through faith.**" They were "**tortured [or, 'beaten to death'], not accepting their deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection**" (v. 35).

"And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; (Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise" (vv. 36-39).

Does it not seem that the faith that can go down into disaster and death is of a higher quality than the faith that can remove mountains? It would seem so, as the perfect Pattern and Object of our trust in God exhibited faith of this category. (See 12:2, 3).

Many Old Testament stories are recalled by this record of the unnamed men and women of faith. We are reminded of Daniel who "**stopped the mouths of lions**"; of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego who "**quenched the power of fire**"; of the widow of Zarephath, whose son Elijah raised from the dead; and of the son of the Shunammite woman, whom Elisha restored to life. Tradition tells us that Jeremiah and Isaiah were "**sawn asunder.**"

These and very many more examples of faith explain why the inspired writer introduced this great multitude by asking, “**And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me if to tell of . . .**” them all (v. 32)!

Since the grace of God was sufficient to sustain them in such bitter trials, surely it was sufficient for the Hebrew Christians of apostolic days—was, is and will be sufficient for the believer of all ages.

For the second time in this chapter the thought expressed in verse is written:

“**And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise**” (cf. v. 13).

They saw their Messiah only by faith, not by sight; for He had not come into the world when they died,

“**God having provided [or, ‘foreseen’] some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect**” (v. 40).

God foresaw what their faith claimed, the redeeming work of our crucified and risen Lord Jesus. The Old Testament saints could not be made perfect as pertaining to the conscience until Christ died, forever settling the sin question; but the moment the vail of the Temple was rent in twain, all the efficacy of His finished work was put to their account.

Therefore, Hebrews 12:23 assures us that, when this epistle was written, they *had been* “**made perfect.**” While they lived, they were “**just men,**” that is, justified by faith in the Saviour to come; now that He had paid the penalty for their sins, they were justified men “**made perfect.**”

Have you noted the better things of this faith chapter—“**a more excellent sacrifice . . . a better country, that is an heavenly . . . greater riches . . . a better resurrection . . . some better thing**” (vv. 4, 16, 26, 35, 40)? Encouragement indeed for every trial of human experience.

“So Great a Cloud of Witnesses”

12:1

The great “**cloud of witnesses**” of Hebrews 12:1 refers, of course, to the men and women of faith, about whom we have been reading in chapter 11.

Are they to be regarded only as former witnesses to the faithfulness of God, or do they also watch us and rejoice in our progress? We know how godly men have differed on this subject.

The writer of these lines is inclined to accept the view of Dr. Handley C. G. Moule expressed in his Messages from the Epistle to the Hebrews, that these “**witnesses**” are “*spectators, watchers, not merely testifiers. The context seems to decide something positively for this explanation.*”

Running the Race—“Looking Unto Jesus”

12:1, 2

“Wherefore let us also, seeing also we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight [or, ‘encumbrance’], and the sin which doth so easily beset us [or, ‘doth closely cling to us’; or, ‘is admired of many’], and let us run with patience [or, ‘steadfastness’] the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus.”

We are called to run our race in the light of our Lord’s present glory. This race calls for perseverance and patience, for every ounce of devotion, and for our concentration on it as the one thing we do (Philippians 3:13). Hence everything in our life which is superfluous must be stripped off.

1. *This is a relay race.*

It is no ordinary foot race like the one in I Corinthians 9:24, where only one gets the prize.

2. *No one is crowned yet.*

3. *The prizes will not be awarded till the last man has finished the race.*

4. *The number of runners who have reached the goal is continually growing.*

These are **“the great cloud of witnesses,”** waiting for the race to be finished, that they may get their rewards.

The whole idea is that of a relay race. One man starts, carrying the flag and runs till he puts it into the hands of the next man of his team in front of him, and so on. As the race continues, the increasing numbers who have made their run cheer the newcomers. No matter how brilliantly they may have run, they cannot win until the last man of their side has come home.

Pansanias, the ancient Greek writer, describes such a race with a lighted torch. He calls it the *lampadedromia*. The team that first brought the lighted torch home was the winner. While running they had to watch lest the torch go out, as well as to strive to get in first.

So one generation of believers has to pass on the torch of testimony to a succeeding generation. Every individual believer is a necessary link in the chain. Woe to him if he stumbles and drops the torch! Not only does he endanger his own well-being, but he imperils the success of the cause with which he is identified.

How apt was this illustration when this epistle was written!

The unbelieving brethren of the Hebrew Christians were mustering for the conflict with Rome. Because the believers could not join the national cause, they were branded as traitors; whereas in reality they were upholding the precious torch of the faith of Abraham, of the prophets and of the saints of old. To hearten them, the Holy Spirit exhorts them to keep **“looking unto Jesus,”** to **“consider him”** who is the perfect Example of faith.

Jesus—The Perfect Pattern of Faith

12:2

“Jesus, the author [or, ‘captain’] and finisher of our faith”

Chapter 11 is the story of the men and women who risked and dared everything because they believed in the reality of God and the certain of His rule. They lived and died to bring in His supremacy, but theirs was only a fragmentary life of faith at the best. Jesus is the Prince and the Perfecter of faith. He went into the shame and ignominy of the cross; and on Him our eyes are now fixed, for He has gathered up in Himself every aspect of faith. In our English translation of this passage the word “**our**” is in italics and, therefore, was not in the Greek language. Accordingly, the Lord Jesus is the Author and Perfecter “**of faith.**” He always had perfect faith.

“**For the joy that was set before him,**” our Lord endured the cross, despising the shame. Most people see only the tragedy of Calvary. But there was triumph also. We need to take notice how our Lord spoke of it. In what spirit did He approach His final sufferings? When the Greeks came to the feast and heard about Him, desiring to meet Him, He said that they had come in an hour when the Son of Man would be glorified—glorified in what looked like His deepest humiliation (John 12:23).

Whatever He touched He has made glorious. How glorious the manger in which they laid Him! How He has dignified poverty, toil, reproach! His was a voluntary and a glad poverty. And at the end He glorified His cross, the most shameful thing the world then knew.

He began speaking of His cross very early in His ministry. He was not taken by surprise by it. He meant to go through what was written concerning Him, “**that it might be fulfilled.**” The cross was something predetermined in the divine plan. He did not feel that He had lost His way. The cross led to the appointed goal. The future gain of His shameful death swallowed up the present pain.

When He stood before Pilate, it was the idealist who stood before the realist. Watch Him, the unperturbed Christ! “**What is truth?**” asked Pilate, rather cynically. He just could not understand that strange Man! He had met a King whose kingdom was not of this world, but in the realm of the unseen, One who would not use material force to establish His royal claims. Pilate did not even know the alphabet of the language which Jesus spoke. To our Lord the distant was near; the invisible, objectively real; the spiritual, solid and substantial. And so He was Master of the situation then as always.

What was the secret? What enabled Him to endure the cross? The passage under consideration links together three items: endurance, contempt of the shame, joy of conquest.

1. “Jesus . . . endured the cross.”

It was by faith that our Lord endured the cross. In the deepest darkness, where not one ray of comfort shone, He trusted in God. It was thus He accomplished His greatest victory.

“By weakness and defeat
He won the meed and crown,
Trod all our foes beneath His feet
By being trodden down.”

To many, life is unendurable. Our divine Lord came into our life and knew it and endured it at its worst. Even such a famous optimist as Walt Whitman wrote during the Civil War, “I am thoroughly frightened of life.” His universe was going to pieces. Many felt that way during the First World War, and again during the greater horrors of the second. But faith reckons with One who saw the worst, and saw beyond it.

- He never wavered in the hope of the ultimate supremacy of divine good over its opposite.
- He did not fly from the ills of life.
- He did not refuse the cup of life because of its bitterness.
- He did refuse the cup of wine mingled with gall, kindly offered to act as an opiate.
- He would taste the death of the cross with full consciousness.

Thus He teaches His people not to repudiate life but to endure it.

2. Our Lord despised the shame of the cross.

He endured the cross, despising the shame—not that He despised or belittled the cross. He measured the awful depths of “**the cup**” which He had to drink. But He steadfastly set His face toward all that the drinking of that awful cup meant. The vision He had on the cross, as given in Psalm 22:1-21, was before Him in that solemn hour. He believed would yet see of “**the travail of his soul, and be satisfied**” (Isaiah 53:11). What was the shame in comparison with that!

The suffering Saviour was sensitive to the shame associated with cross. “**I may tell [count] all my bones: they look and stare upon me. They part my garments among them,**” He said in Psalm 22:17, 18. He felt the indecency of it all; but He belittled the shame, without being callous to it. When He hung in nakedness upon the accursed tree, that cross became more than a thing of shame. It became a transfigured cross. Ever since that day, it has been the symbol of sublime and unconquerable faith. All the glories of the Christian life assemble there.

No wonder the apostle Paul, living in a time when the idea of the cross was held in repugnance, exclaimed, “**God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ**” (Galatians 6:14)!

The cross teaches us to rise above our environment. It reminds us that the only thing to be ashamed of is sin, ignominy of character, the defacing of the image of God; that the only real poverty is that of being bereft of faith, hope, love, God.

A prison may become a palace to a believer; as to a swinish man a palace becomes a pigsty.

The man is more than environment.

3. *“For the joy that was set before him” the Lord Jesus went the cross.*

When our Lord cried, **“It is finished”** (John 19:30), He tasted the joy of a completed life task. It was a shout of triumphant joy. The character of God had been vindicated before angels, men and demons. The Father had been revealed. Every chamber of His heart was opened up to view. The strength of hell was broken. Come what may now, the final supremacy of God in the universe was made absolutely sure. Moreover, who can measure our Lord’s joy in the thought of being restored to the presence of the Father which He had experienced **“before the world was”** (John 17:5), yea, from all eternity? And there was the joy of being glorified in His Bride, whom He was leading unto glory (2:10), the joy of having His redeemed of all ages with Him in heaven throughout eternity.

Now we are to look unto Jesus and learn His secret. The invisible world is watching us, whether we let the lower appetites clog us, or, whether we rise above them in the victory of faith, of which the cross of Christ was the perfect expression.

The Glorified Christ

Four times the heavens are opened to view in Hebrews to show us the glorified Christ there (cf. Psalm 110:1):

1. *As the Son— “God with us”* (1:1-3)

In the opening verses of the epistle, we see Him as the Son in whom God has given the complete revelation, who at the beginning created the worlds, and has finally made, by Himself, purification for sins (Cf. Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:23; John 1:14).

2. *As our Great High Priest* (8:1, 2)

By Him we draw near to God.

3. *In all the perfection of His sacrifice* (10:12, 13)

Never will He need to offer another! From henceforth He is waiting to have every hostile force subdued under His feet.

4. *The Man Christ Jesus in glory* (12:2)

Here He is seen seated at God’s right hand, even as, because of His divine glory, He *sat* down (1:3), having in His human life perfectly glorified God in maintaining faith and dependence every step of the way.

He not only wears the High Priestly mitre; not only is He crowned with royal honor and glory; but on His brow the victor’s wreath has also been placed. We are to look away unto Him, to be encouraged to run the race set before us also.

“Consider Him”

“Consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds” (12:3).

This is the second time the child of God is urged, in this epistle, to **“consider”** the Lord Jesus (cf. 3:1) who, from His incarnation to the cross, walked the path of faith—as a Man, trusting utterly His Father in heaven. (Cf. 2:13). As the persecuted Hebrew Christians kept looking unto Jesus, they were strengthened for the race set before them. And as we today consider Him in all the perfection and glory of His person and work, we too shall **“run, and not be weary”**; we shall **“walk, and not faint”** (Isaiah 40:31).

Assignment for Exam 10

1. Memorize Hebrews 12:1, 2.
2. Remember the Old Testament illustrations in Hebrews 11 foreshadowed the cross of Christ:
 - a. Abel’s **“more excellent sacrifice”** (v. 4)
 - b. Abraham’s act of faith, whereby he **“offered up his only begotten son”** of promise (v. 17)
 - c. The Passover in Egypt (v. 28)

If you are not familiar with these stories, read them prayerfully. You will find them in Genesis 4; 22; Exodus 12 (cf. I Corinthians 5:7).

3. Remember the prophetic lesson concerning the resurrection God’s only begotten Son (v. 19); and the faith of **“the elders”** of Israel **“a better resurrection”** (v. 35)—better, of course, than the resurrection the wicked (Revelation 20:11-15).
4. Allow the Holy Spirit to make the message of 12:1-3 a living, abiding experience in your life.

CHAPTER TEN

NOTE: PLEASE DO NOT CONTACT THE MOODY CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOL FOR GRADING OF YOUR EXAMS – IF YOU WISH TO COMPLETE THEM, CONSIDER THEM AS AN OPEN BOOK EXAM

1. In the right-hand margin write “True” or “False” after each of the following statements. (10 points)

- a. The author of your textbook believes that the phrase, “cloud of witnesses” (Hebrews 12:1), refers to heavenly spectators. _____
- b. Abraham had faith that God would raise Isaac from the dead. _____
- c. The race mentioned in Hebrews 12:1 may be likened to a relay race. _____
- d. The runner receives his crown as soon as he has finished this race. _____
- e. The Lord Jesus said that Abraham rejoiced to see His day and was glad. _____
- f. “The promise” (Hebrews 11:39) made to the Old Testament believers was that the Messiah was coming. _____
- g. Moses refused the “pleasures of sin” because he did not want to bring reproach upon Pharaoh’s daughter. _____
- h. Moses wrote of Christ in many different ways. _____
- i. Cain’s sacrifice was more acceptable to God than Abel’s. _____
- j. Enoch preached concerning the second coming of Christ. _____

2. In the blank space write the letter of the correct answer. (12 points)

(1) The elders referred to in Hebrews 11:2 were

- (a) Leaders in the Jerusalem church
- (b) Old Testament believers in the promised Redeemer
- (c) Tribal heads of families in Old Testament times
- (d) Members of the Sanhedrin _____

(2) In New Testament times the word translated “substance” (Hebrews 11:1) meant “title deeds.” It refers to

- (a) The burying place purchased by Abraham when Sarah died
- (b) The land of Goshen which Joseph gave to his brethren in Egypt
- (c) The property inherited by the Old Testament believers when they conquered Canaan
- (d) The unseen realities which are ours to claim by faith _____

(3) The Old Testament patriarchs

- (a) were unable to return to Chaldea**
- (b) were saved by faith in the promised Redeemer**
- (c) received the promises before they died**
- (d) found the “city which hath foundations” in the land of Canaan _____**

3. How do the following illustrate dying to self and being cast entirely upon God, who raises the dead? (10 points)

a. Isaac _____

b. Jacob _____

c. Joseph _____

d. (1) Name one other person mentioned in Hebrews 11 who had to learn this truth.

(2) Explain briefly in what way he was brought to an end of himself and to entire dependence on God. _____

e. Do we still have to learn this lesson in our day? _____

4. Outline the fivefold way in which Moses proved the power of God, as summarized in the textbook from Hebrews 11:24-29. (10 points)

- (a) _____**
- (b) _____**
- (c) _____**
- (d) _____**
- (e) _____**

5. Match each name in column 1 with the correct exercise of faith listed in column 2 by placing the correct letter, from column 1 in the proper blank in column 2. (20 points).

Column 1	Column 2
a. Joseph	(1) Prepared an ark to the saving of his house
b. Amram and Jochebed	(2) Received the spies with peace
c. Noah	(3) Was translated that he should not see death
d. Jacob	(4) Left Ur of Chaldea at God's call, not knowing whither he went.
e. David	(5) Became the mother of Isaac when she was ninety years old
f. Rahab	(6) Gave commandment concerning his bones
g. Jephthah	(7) Blessed both the sons of Joseph
h. Isaac	(8) Were not afraid of the king's commandment
i. Enoch	(9) Blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come
j. Abraham	(10) Passed through the Red Sea as by dry land
k. Samuel	
l. Israel	
m. Sarah	

6. State five ways in which Moses wrote of Christ. (10 points)

- (a) _____
- (b) _____
- (c) _____
- (d) _____
- (e) _____

7. Answer each of the following with a New Testament reference only. Do not take these verses from Hebrews 11. (16 points)

- a. Where are we told that Christ's sacrifice is better than Abel's? _____
- b. Where do we read that Enoch prophesied of Christ's second coming? _____
- c. Where is Noah called "a preacher of righteousness"? _____
- d. Where is Abel called "righteous Abel"? _____

8. In your own words explain briefly what you understand by the following statements. (12 points)

a. Jesus . . . endured the cross.

b. Our Lord despised the shame of the cross.

c. “For the joy that was set before him” Jesus went to the cross.

~ end of chapter 10 ~

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