

Letter to the **Hebrews**



Lesson 13-Having a Faith that Works (Part 2)

Focus: Hebrews 11:23-40

- **The Faith of Moses and those in the Exodus (v.23-29)**
 - (v.23) By faith the parents of Moses chose to follow God's law rather than Pharaoh's law. **"You shall not commit murder" (Exodus 20:13)** says God in the Ten Commandments! These parents of Moses feared God much more than they feared man or the King. Now the Bible says that we should give respect to the governing powers that regulate our countries, but should their word ever be against God's word, then we must follow God's holy word! (See **Acts 5:29**; Matthew 10:28; 22:21; Romans 13:1-7).
 - (v.24-27) **Truly following God is not a popular way with the world. The sinful world despises God's way. Also, even religious leaders, who do not follow God's right way are ones who despise the truth and cast reproach upon God's faithful people. The question to ask it, are we willing, by faith, as was Moses, to take the reproach of God's people, and to be faithful to God alone, not the bickering, standard, and wickedness of the world around us? Are we also willing to forsake sinful Egypt and its short-lived empty pleasures and vanities to follow the Living God faithfully? (Notice Revelation 12:17; Matthew 7:13,14; Ezekiel 22:26). All the world will be against God in the last days, and there will be many false religious leaders too, but we must be among the faithful (Rev. 13:3; 14:12). Jesus said, "Woe unto you when all men shall speak well of you..." (Luke 6:26). Even the religious leaders of Christ's day cursed Him and His followers, calling them a cult! (See Acts 24:14). –it was the true Bible faith, but many religious leaders and people called the way of Jesus Christ "heresy"! How sad! Let us never listen to such, but test everything by God's word and hold fast what is good (1 John 4:1). Endure by Faith, looking to God and receive the praise of God, not of men.**
 - (v.28-29) By Faith, God delivered His people! They were set free! But the evil doers were lost.
- **Faith that rose above the obstacles and brought victory (v.30-35)**
 - (v.30-31) The story of Jericho is recorded in Joshua 2:9; 6:23. There was the faith of the people and the faith of previous unbelievers who had begun to believe. Their faith saved their lives and saved the day! **Faith must trust the word of God even though immediate results are not seen...and even though our faith may look a bit foolish to others! Trust in the promises of God! They will be fulfilled.**
 - (v.32-35) **Trust in God—Faith—led to countless victories among God's people in the past! It is faith that will lead to our victories today! We must have faith and trust in God! "This is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith" (1 John 5:4). Some were raised to life by faith and others were tortured for their faith—both happened (See 1 17:22; Acts 22:25).**

➤ **Faith that endured hard trying times and laid hold on eternal life (v.36-40)**

- (v.37) *We have reports that Isaiah was sawn in two, according to Jewish tradition. Such accounts can be found in both the Babylonian Talmud and the Jerusalem Talmud. The latter states that Isaiah was found hiding in a cedar tree. Then both the tree and Isaiah were cut in half. Both Talmuds actually mention a cedar tree and Isaiah being sawn in half, but some details are a bit different; the Babylonian version does not mention Isaiah's having previously gone to hide there. One website online gives a reading from one manuscript describing the death of Isaiah. The address is: <http://www.ccel.org/c/charles/otpseudepig/martisah.htm> The text listed there comes from a book called, "The Apocrypha and the Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament," by R.H. Charles, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1913. It contains translations of original texts. In this story it tells that Isaiah did not feel the pain of his death but was in a glorious rapture of a vision with the Lord and had peace from God the whole time. He also refused to say anything flattering to his enemies, but spoke true testimony to his very death! God takes care of His servants!*
- *The Bible does not actually say that Isaiah was cut in half by the wicked king Manasseh, but that time period was definitely the end of his ministry, and Manasseh had ordered his death. Manasseh shed lots of "innocent blood" (2 Kings 21:16). Isaiah 1:1 reports Isaiah's ministry lasted through the reign of King Hezekiah, who was the king just before Manasseh. So, as far as Hebrews 11:37 goes, we don't know of any other story or character in the Bible that it could have been referring to besides what is told to us regarding Isaiah in the Talmuds—which is information the Jews of Christ's day, including the author of Hebrews would have been quite familiar with.*
- (v.38) *1 Kings 18:4, 13; 19:9 tell the story of Jezebel trying to kill God's true prophets, but they were hid in caves.*

Question (s) for the Heart:

Will you choose to follow God wherever He leads to you, by faith, and live by His word alone? _____