

Hebrews II

FAITH IN ACTION

*A Bible study
Worktext*

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I. The Need for Faith

Read Hebrews 10:35-11:1.

This passage makes it very clear that persevering, or continuing in "faith," is what is required if one hopes to end up with God's "rich reward." No one who has picked up a Bible to study or attended church for any length of time would deny the importance of faith in the life of the Christian. The Word of God makes plain statements about its significance. Study the examples below:

Eph. 6:16 ". . . take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one."

1 Thess.. 5:8 ". . . let us be self-controlled, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet."

1 Tim.. 1:19 "holding on to faith and a good conscience. Some have rejected these and so have shipwrecked their faith."

1 Tim. 6:12 "Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses."

Heb 10:22 "let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water."

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."

According to Heb. 10:35, what is the thing that we must not lose, or discard, or put aside? _____ Notice the contrast in vs. 39 between those who "shrink back" and those who "believe." What do you think it means to "shrink back?" _____

What is the ultimate outcome for those who "shrink back?" _____

What about those who "believe?" _____

"Faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see," says Heb. 11:1. Many are more familiar with the translation that says, "Faith is the substance of things hoped for . . ." The word "substance," in this case refers to the place you take your stand. Your faith is the basis for your hope. What is the Christians' greatest hope? (See Titus 2:11-14) _____

_____ What serves as a basis
(substance) for this hope? _____

Read Heb. 10:35-11:1 again, when we look carefully at this passage, we see that there are four distinct steps:

- 1) **Stay confident.** Trust God. Don't discard what has been dearly won.
- 2) **Endure.** Stay in for the long haul. Don't give up. Hold on. Tough it out!
- 3) **Do the will of God.** Prove your trust by doing what He says!
- 4) **Receive the promise.**

As we study the men that are presented in this chapter as "great men of faith," keep these four steps in mind. See how they are evidenced in the lives of men like Moses, and Noah, and David.

SAVING THE SCRIPTURE IN YOUR MEMORY BANK

Study the following passage of Scripture. Try to remember the highlighted "key words."

Hebrews 10:35-11:1

. . . ³⁵*So do not **throw away** your **confidence**; it will be richly **rewarded**.* ³⁶*You need to **persevere** so that when **you** have **done the will of God**, you will **receive** what he has **promised**.* ³⁷*For in just a very little while, "He who is coming will come and will not delay. ³⁸But my **righteous** one will **live** by **faith**. And if he **shrinks back**, I will **not be pleased** with him." ³⁹But we are not of those who **shrink back** and are **destroyed**, but of those who **believe** and are **saved**.*

¹*Now **faith** is being **sure** of what we **hope for** and **certain** of what we **do not see**.*

DIGGING AT THE ROOTS: ***Word studies from the WORD***

— Perseverance —

James, who was the pastor of the Church at Jerusalem, wrote these words concerning perseverance:

"Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything" (James 1:2-4).

This says that by trusting in God and not self as we face the natural pressures and stresses of life, we develop perseverance. Perseverance is the ability to keep on and not give up. For the Christian, perseverance is the ability to keep on trusting God even though the solution to our problems may not be in sight. He is faithful. The question is, do we believe enough in His faithfulness to keep on trusting Him in the face of adversity?

Imagine that you are a runner. You have run a long way and you are tired. Your legs ache, the breath seems to scrape in and out of your lungs; and yet you must go on. The race is not ended. How far can you run? There is only one way to answer that question--run until you can't run any more. Trusting God is like running that race; the only way to find out how far we are able to trust God is to be in a situation where we trust Him as far as we can. We learn to hang in there by hanging in there! Never, never, never give up on God.

The product of our endurance is maturity. People often think of maturity in terms of aging; the older a person is the more mature they are. Maturity is more than getting older, however. Maturing is the process of becoming useful. God lovingly uses the pressures and stresses of life to mold and shape us into vessels fit for His use.

READ EACH OF THE FOLLOWING VERSES WHICH DEAL WITH THE PERSEVERANCE OF BELIEVERS AND WRITE A BRIEF PERSONAL APPLICATION FOR EACH:

All men will hate you because of me, but he who stands firm to the end will be saved (Mk. 13:13).

Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him (James 1:12).

As you know, we consider blessed those who have persevered. You have heard of Job's perseverance and have seen what the Lord finally brought about. The Lord is full of compassion and mercy (James 5:11).

CHAPTER 1 REVIEW

COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING USING THE EXACT WORD OR WORDS FROM THE NIV.

Hebrews 10:35-11:1

... ³⁵So do not _____ your _____; it will be richly _____. ³⁶You need to _____ so that when you have _____ the _____ of _____, you will _____ what he has _____. ³⁷For in just a very little while, "He who is coming will come and will not delay.

³⁸But my _____ one will _____ by _____. And if he _____, I will not be _____ with him." ³⁹But we are not of those who _____ and are _____, but of those who _____ and are _____.

¹Now _____ is being _____ of what we _____ and _____ of what we _____.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- 1) What is the best way to understand the KJV phrase "substance of things hoped for" in Heb. 11:1?
- 2) The terms "shrink back" and "believe" are contrasted in vs. 10:39. How do you understand each of these terms? Are they opposites?
- 3) What are the four steps in Heb. 10:35-11:1?
 - Step 1 -
 - Step 2 -
 - Step 3 -
 - Step 4 -

II. Trusting the God of Creation

Hebrews 11:3

FAITH - AN UNWAVERING TRUST IN THE FAITHFULNESS AND POWER OF GOD.

It may seem odd that the writer of Hebrews starts his discussion of the men of faith by recounting the deeds of creation. What, you may ask, does God's creation of the universe have to do with the everyday Christian's walk of faith? I would suggest that the writer of Hebrews wants the reader of his epistle to know for certain the power of the one in whom he is placing his confidence. This is a clear establishment of the "power of God." God's power is like nothing that we have ever seen. It is like nothing we have ever experienced from any creature of this world. God's power is total, immeasurable, unending. **There is nothing that God desires to do that he is unable to do!**

Creation, in the purest sense of the word, is making something from nothing (*ex nihilo*). God made *everything* from nothing! Heb. 1:3 says, "*by faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible.*" God didn't take matter and energy and move them around to make stars and planets, moons and comets, worms and elephants. God commanded the "stuff" of the universe to be and it existed. Science correctly tells us that today we live in a closed universe. There is no creation or destruction of anything. The total amount of matter and energy in the universe is constant. (Find a science book or encyclopedia and look up the *law of the conservation of matter and energy*). **What is will be until God decides otherwise.**

Man does not and can not create. Man can only take what already is; combine it, re-shape it, and change its form. The activity of our hands is appropriately called manipulation.

It is significant that we see the cosmic significance of the Word of God in this passage. The universe was formed at His *command*. God's Word is a reflection of *His* will and purpose. It must never be confused with any expression of the will of man!

Read Genesis 1 and write the specific commands of God.



Look up these verses and write in brief form what each says about the power of God:

Neh. 9:5b-6 _____

Ps. 33:6 _____

Ps. 102:25-26 _____

Isa. 44:24 _____

Isa. 45:18 _____

Jer. 10:12 _____

Acts 17:24-27 _____

SAVING THE SCRIPTURE IN YOUR MEMORY BANK

Study the following passage of Scripture. Try to remember the highlighted "key words."

Psalm 8:3-9

³When I consider your **heavens**, the work of your **fingers**, the **moon** and the **stars**, which you have set in place, ⁴what is **man** that you are **mindful** of him, the **son of man** that you **care** for him? ⁵You made him a little **lower** than the **heavenly beings** and crowned him with **glory** and **honor**. ⁶You made him **ruler** over the **works** of your **hands**; you put everything under his **feet**: ⁷all **flocks** and **herds**, and the **beasts** of the **field**, ⁸the **birds** of the **air**, and the **fish** of the **sea**, all that swim the paths of the seas. ⁹**O LORD**, our **Lord**, how **majestic** is your **name** in all the **earth**!

DIGGING AT THE ROOTS: Word studies from the WORD

— His Command —

God's command, His spoken word (Gk., ρημα, *rhema*), in all its forms, is an expression of *God's will*. It never fails. Whatever God *desires* to do He is *able* to do. Therefore, what He speaks, is.

A secondary meaning of the word *rhema* is "an event or happening;" something that occurs that is tangible and observable. God's Word is not like that of a man or woman. We can be ignored as easily as not. There is no real power in *our* words. God's Word, on the other hand, is *power-packed!* When God said, "*Let there be light,*" there was no argument or hesitation; what God desired became a real phenomenon. God is no less powerful in fulfilling the promises that He has made and recorded for us in His Holy Scripture. He is trustworthy!

READ EACH OF THE FOLLOWING VERSES WHICH DEAL WITH GOD'S WORD AND WRITE A ONE LINE PERSONAL PARAPHRASE. Consider how each verse applies to your own relationship with God.

Prov. 30:5 *"Every word of God is flawless . . ."*

Isa. 55:10-11 *"As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it."*

Eph. 3:20 *". . . him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine . . ."*

CHAPTER 2 REVIEW

COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING USING THE EXACT WORD OR WORDS FROM THE NIV.

Psalm 8:3-9

³When I consider your _____, the work of your _____, the _____ and the _____, which you have set in place, ⁴what is _____ that you are _____ of him, the _____ of _____ that you _____ for him? ⁵You made him a little _____ than the _____ and crowned him with _____ and _____. ⁶You made him _____ over the _____ of your _____; you put everything under his _____: ⁷all _____ and _____, and the _____ of the _____, ⁸the _____ of the _____, and the _____ of the _____, all that swim the paths of the seas. ⁹O _____, our _____, how _____ is your _____ in all the _____!

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- 1) What does the term "faith" really mean?
- 2) Why is it important for Christians to understand that God created the universe *ex nihilo*?
- 3) If man does not truly create, what does man do?
- 4) How does creation demonstrate the power of God's Word?

III. The Faith of Abel

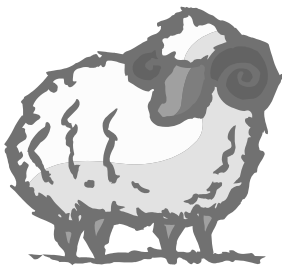
Hebrews 11:4

In verse 4 of Hebrews 11, we find a commendation for the faith of Abel, the son of Adam and Eve who was murdered by his brother Cain. There was something about Abel's life that put him in right relationship with God that was missing in the life of his brother, Cain. Neither the writer of Hebrews nor the account of the events in Genesis give us much detail about what that might have been.

Read Genesis 4:1-16.

The effects of sin are first made evident in the family and are most pronounced between Cain and Abel who, unlike their parents, never walked with God in the garden of Eden. Even though Eve had been expelled from the garden and could no longer commune with God face to face, she still knew God and honored Him. We can see from vs. 1 that Eve acknowledged that her children were God's gifts.

Read vv. 2b-4a. Do you see any indication that there was a problem between the brothers? _____ Did both brothers give to the Lord from what they had produced? _____ It appears that both Cain and Abel, like their mother, acknowledged the lordship of God and recognized that the fruit of their labors was a gift from God. Still, it is clear that God did not accept Cain's offering. How do you understand the Lord's comments to him in vv. 6-7? (Also consider 1 Jn. 3:11-12) _____



Some commentators conclude that only a "bloody" sacrifice is acceptable to God and God, therefore, rejected Cain's offering of fruit or grain and accepted Abel's offering from his flock. Actually, there is nothing in the text to indicate that such is the case.

Even though God did establish a system of sacrifice later in history, it is made clear that He is more interested in the condition of the heart than in any type of sacrifice (See Ps. 51:16-17, 116:16-18; Prov. 15:8, 21:3; Eccl. 5:1-2; Hos. 6:6). Gen. 4:7 seems to indicate that Cain did not "do right;"

that he didn't obey God in some other unspecified area of his life and it was because of this that his offering was not accepted. If this is correct, then what does this imply about the life of Abel whose offering was accepted? _____

How did Jesus describe Abel? (See Matt. 23:35 and Lk. 11:50-51). _____

If we read Heb. 12:24 we see an interesting parallel drawn between the death of Abel and that of Jesus. Abel foreshadowed Jesus in that he died because of the sin of his brother. In what ways might the death of Abel and the death of Jesus be contrasted? _____

While we have information about Abel's death, there is very little information concerning Abel's life. Taking into consideration the epistle writer's preliminary statements (Heb. 10:35-11:2), why do you think Abel was included in the list of "great men of faith?" _____

SAVING THE SCRIPTURE IN YOUR MEMORY BANK

Study the following passage of Scripture. Try to remember the highlighted "key words."

Psalm 54:4-7

⁴*Surely **God** is my **help**; the **Lord** is the one who **sustains** me. ⁵**Let evil recoil** on those who **slander** me; in your **faithfulness** destroy them. ⁶**I will sacrifice a freewill offering** to you; I will **praise** your **name**, O LORD, for it is **good**. ⁷**For he has delivered** me from all my **troubles**, and my eyes have looked in **triumph** on my foes.*

DIGGING AT THE ROOTS: ***Word studies from the WORD***

— Sacrifice —

The word "sacrifice" may be defined as "a religious act as part of worship in which an offering is made to God of some object belonging to the offerer. This offering is consumed in the ceremony to attain, maintain, restore, or celebrate a positive relationship with the Lord. While the sacrificial act has long been, and to an extent remains, part of the worship of the LORD; it is essential to understand that no amount of sacrifice on our part is enough to atone for sin, nor can the grace and mercy of God be earned through such means. What God requires of us is obedience not sacrifice. In the case of Cain and Abel, it would seem that Abel was obedient while Cain was not. This made all the difference with respect to what was or was not acceptable to God.

Consider the following passages:

"Samuel replied: "Does the LORD delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obeying the voice of the LORD? To obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed is better than the fat of rams" (1Sam. 15:22).

"The multitude of your sacrifices-- what are they to me?" says the LORD. "I have more than enough of burnt offerings, of rams and the fat of fattened animals; I have no pleasure in the blood of bulls and lambs and goats" (Isa. 1:11).

NOTES ON THE MOSAIC SACRIFICES

God did establish a system of sacrifice for His people to follow. One thing had to be made clear to the people. There can be no forgiveness of sin apart from the shedding of blood; THE WAGES OF SIN IS DEATH! We may see the sacrificial system as repugnant and ugly, but such is the sight of sin to our Holy God! The sacrificial system was, in a sense, God's most extreme audio-visual teaching method.

ANIMAL SACRIFICES

Sin offering - The sin offering was made for the whole nation on the Day of Atonement for sins consciously or unconsciously committed. (See Lev. 4:1-35, 6:24-30).

Guilt offering - The guilt offering was a special sin offering made when legal or material restitution was possible. (See Lev 5:14-6:7).

Burnt offering - The burnt offering was performed by an individual who desired to consecrate himself totally to the Lord. In this offering the entire animal, not just the "fat portions" was burned on the altar. (See Lev. 1).

Fellowship offering/Peace offering - This offering is most closely connected with the feast of Pentecost, but could be offered at any time. It is an expression of gratitude, fellowship, and peace with God.

BLOODLESS SACRIFICES

Grain offering - The grain offering could accompany any of the animal sacrifices except the sin offering.

Drink offering - The drink offering was made in connection with the grain offering. It normally consisted of wine poured on the altar on the flesh of the sacrifice.

CHAPTER 3 REVIEW

COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING USING THE EXACT WORD OR WORDS FROM THE NIV.

Psalm 54:4-7

⁴Surely _____ is my _____; the
 _____ is the one who _____ me. ⁵Let
 _____ on those who _____ me; in
 your _____ destroy them. ⁶I will _____ a
 _____ to you; I will _____ your
 _____, O LORD, for it is _____. ⁷For he has
 _____ me from all my _____, and my eyes have
 looked in _____ on my foes.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- 1) How much do we know about the "family life" of Adam, Eve, Cain, and Abel?

- 2) The Bible makes it clear that all sacrifice is not acceptable to God. What determines acceptability? Are there sacrifices like Cain's being offered today? Explain your answer.

- 3) What were the two types of sacrifices included in the Mosaic system? Paul wrote, offer your selves as "*living sacrifices*, holy and pleasing to God" (Rom. 12:1). What parallels can you draw between Mosaic and Pauline sacrifices?

IV. Enoch & Noah: Men who Walked with God

Hebrews 11:5-7

Genesis chapters 4 and 5 name two people with the name Enoch. The first was a descendant of Cain (Gen 4:17-18), the second was the son of Jared (Gen. 5:18-24). Though the names are similar in chapters 4 and 5, the characters should not be confused. The line that comes from Cain was completely destroyed by the flood. Though they were known for their accomplishments in art and technology, they did not walk with God. The line that descended from Seth led to Noah and was preserved through the flood. It is important to notice that this second group (representative of all godly people) were not saved because of their knowledge or their craftiness, but because of their *right relationship with God*.

Read Gen 5:1-31. What makes Enoch different from the others in this list? _____

In Heb. 11:6 the writer states and explains that faith is necessary in order to please God. Rewrite his statement in your own words. Why is a man without faith unable to please God? _____

Why do you think this statement was included here in a discussion about the faith of Enoch? _____

There have surely been millions of people who have served and loved God during their lives and yet only Enoch and perhaps Elijah were simply "translated" into heaven. Do you think there was something in the character of these men that made them so radically different? If so, what? _____



Read Gen. 6-8. How is Noah described in Gen 6:9? _____

Notice the phrase "he walked with God." Refer back to Gen. 5:24. Who else is said to have "walked with God"?

***It is not possible to walk with God
without being willing to let
God Himself determine your
destination, your route, and your itinerary.***

**This willingness is the first characteristic
of the man of faith!**

There are many who say they *want* to walk with God but, if their lives are examined, it is discovered that they are really trying to get God to walk with them. God is going to do what He has planned and determined to do. We either go with Him or to go our own way. But this much is clear, God won't change His program to fit ours. Enoch, and Noah were men who made the decision to let God set their course. Rest assured, there was no "God is my copilot" bumper sticker on the Ark. God sat in the drivers seat!

Verse 11 says that God viewed mankind as being "corrupt." This is the reason for using the floodwaters to destroy man. According to a Dictionary, what does the word "corrupt" mean? _____

How do you think that it applies in this passage? _____

Are there evidences of corruption in our societies today? _____ Comment:

God gave Noah very explicit instructions about how and when to build the ark and then what to do after it was built. Surely God's instructions must have seemed unreasonable to Noah! How did he respond? (Read 6:22 and 7:5)

How large a role did Noah's faithful obedience play in the saving of his own life and the lives of his family? _____

Read Gen. 8:15-20. What was the first thing Noah did after coming out of the ark? _____

Compare God's covenant with Noah (Gen. 9:1-12) with His promises to Adam (Gen. 1:28-30). List the similarities and the differences.

SAVING THE SCRIPTURE IN YOUR MEMORY BANK

Study the following passage of Scripture. Try to remember the highlighted "key words."

Micah 6:6-8

*⁶With what shall I come before the **LORD** and **bow down** before the **exalted God**? Shall I come before him with **burnt offerings**, with calves a year old? ⁷Will the **LORD** be **pleased** with **thousands of rams**, with **ten thousand rivers of oil**? Shall I offer my **first-born** for my **transgression**, the **fruit** of my **body** for the **sin** of my **soul**? ⁸He has **showed** you, O man, what is **good**. And what does **the LORD** require of you? To **act justly** and to **love mercy** and to **walk humbly** with your **God**.*

DIGGING AT THE ROOTS: ***Word studies from the WORD***

— Righteousness —

"Righteousness" is variously defined as "right-standing with God," "the just judgment of God," and "the conduct of a man whose actions follow the will of God and are pleasing to Him." It might be easiest to think of the righteous person as one whose heart and actions are *acceptable* to God. Such a person is in right-standing according to the just judgment of God. The key to understanding this is to remember that it is God who both sets the standard and judges the man. It is not man's place to do either.

In Hebrews 11:7 we find the phrase "righteousness *that comes by faith*." This is interesting because it points to *faith* as the *source* of righteousness. Remember, "*without faith it is impossible to please God*." However, there is nothing that pleases God more than a man's simple trust!!

CHAPTER 4 REVIEW

COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING USING THE EXACT WORD OR WORDS FROM THE NIV.

Micah 6:6-8

⁶With what shall I come before the _____ and
 _____ before the _____
 _____? Shall I come before him with _____
 _____, with calves a year old? ⁷Will the _____
 be _____ with _____ of _____, with
 _____ of
 _____? Shall I offer my _____ -
 _____ for my _____, the _____ of
 my _____ for the _____ of my
 _____? ⁸He has _____ you, O man, what is
 _____. And what does the _____

_____ of you? To _____ and
to _____ and to _____
_____ with your _____.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- 1) Is your experience one of "walking with God," or of trying to persuade "God to walk with you"? Share your experiences.
- 2) Consider and discuss Matt. 24:37 and 1 Thess. 5:1-10 in light of this study of the "days of Noah."

V. Abraham Makes His Move

Hebrews 11:8-10

Read Gen. 11:27-32. Abram's father was named _____. He gathered up his family and possessions and left for the land of Canaan. Where was their home and why did Abram's father decide to leave? _____

Did the family complete their journey? Why or why not? _____

Read Gen. 12-14. List the provisions of God's promise to Abram (12:2-3). _____

How did Abram respond to God's direction and promises? (See 12:1,4) _____

Notice in vs. 1 that God did not specify Abram's destination? How do you suppose Abram knew where to go? _____

At the completion of his journey, when he arrived in Canaan, the Lord appeared to Abram and made him a promise, "To your *offspring* I will give this land" (12:7). Abram had first been promised that he would be made the *father* of a "*great nation*" and now had been given land for his "*offspring*." It is certainly significant that Sarai and Abram had no children! (See Gen. 11:30).

Hardly had Abram and Sarai become settled in the "promised land" when they were forced by a natural disaster, a famine, to move again; this time to Egypt. While there, Abram became very wealthy, but because of fear for his life, allowed his wife to be taken into the house of the Pharaoh. Even though Abram is to be seen as a man of faith, this is an example of the opposite behavior. Read Gen. 12:10-15. Even though he knew God's promise of a great nation, he so feared the power of Pharaoh that he was willing to give up his wife--it is difficult to imagine how she could bear him children while in the

court of the Pharaoh!! His fear of Pharaoh at that point was greater than his trust in God's promise. Have you ever failed to follow God because of your fear of people; what they might do to you or say about you? Explain. _____

Through Abram's failure, God demonstrated His power and His commitment to the promise that He had made. The Lord intervened by bringing disease upon Pharaoh and his household. This led Pharaoh to expel both Abram and Sarai. Their reunion made the eventual birth of Isaac possible. It is very important to observe that Abram's lack of faith at this one point in his life did not cause God to reject him or to nullify Abram's calling to father a great nation. Neither did it thwart the plan or promise of God. How might Abram's experiences in Egypt have strengthened his faith? _____

Has God's faithfulness in spite of failure on your part ever served to increase your faith? If so, how? _____

SAVING THE SCRIPTURE IN YOUR MEMORY BANK

Study the following passage of Scripture. Try to remember the highlighted "key words."

Romans 4:17-22

¹⁷As it is written: "I have made you a father of many nations." He is our father in the sight of God, in whom he believed-- the God who gives life to the dead and calls things that are not as though they were. ¹⁸Against all hope, Abraham in hope believed and so became the father of many nations, just as it had been said to him, "So shall your offspring be." ¹⁹Without weakening in his faith, he faced the fact that his body was as good as dead-- since he was about a

hundred years old-- and that Sarah's womb was also dead. ²⁰Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, ²¹being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised. ²²This is why "it was credited to him as righteousness."

DIGGING AT THE ROOTS: ***Word studies from the WORD***

— Godlessness —

Righteousness, as we have seen, is determined by God Himself. It can never be man who sets the standard of right and wrong. It is God, not man, who ultimately judges actions. At the opposite end of the spectrum, we find godlessness, an absolute rejection of God and His ways. To live a godless life is to live as if there were no God.

Throughout the history of man it is has been common to find those who "do what seems right in their own eyes." I was because of man's obsession with *doing his own thing* that God destroyed the first civilization by means of the great flood. The city of Babel was built in defiance of God and what he had commanded men to do (Compare Gen. 8:1 with 11:4). These are, perhaps, the most extreme examples of society totally abandoning its "walk with God." It does bring some focus, however, to Jesus' question, ". . . when the Son of Man returns, will he find *faith* on the earth" (Luke 18:8).

Consider each of the following verses.

Prov. 14:12 - *There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to destruction.*

Prov. 21:2 - *All a man's ways seem right to him, but the LORD weighs the heart.*

Isa. 5:19-20 - *Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter. Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes and clever in their own sight.*

Rom. 3:18-20 - *Do not deceive yourselves. If any one of you thinks he is wise by the standards of this age, he should become a "fool" so that he may become wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness in God's sight. As it is*

written: "He catches the wise in their craftiness"; and again, "The Lord knows that the thoughts of the wise are futile.

CHAPTER 5 REVIEW

COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING USING THE EXACT WORD OR WORDS FROM THE NIV.

Romans 4:17-22

¹⁷As it is written: "I have made you a _____ of many _____." He is _____ in the _____ of _____, in whom he _____ -- the _____ who gives _____ to the _____ and calls things that are _____ as though they _____. ¹⁸Against all hope, _____ in hope _____ and so _____ the _____ of many _____, just as it had been said to him, "So shall your offspring be." ¹⁹Without _____ in his _____, he faced the _____ that his body was as good as dead-- since he was about a hundred years old-- and that Sarah's womb was also dead. ²⁰Yet he did not _____ through _____ regarding the _____ of _____, but was _____ in his _____ and gave _____ to God, ²¹being fully _____ that God had _____ to do what he had _____. ²²This is why "it was _____ to him as _____."

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- 1) After studying Abram's response to Pharaoh, how much do you think your faith in God is effected by your fear of man?
- 2) Consider Rom. 3:3 and 2 Tim. 2:13. Do you think that an experience like Abram's experience in Egypt would serve to build or destroy ones faith?

VI. ABRAHAM AND ISAAC

Hebrews 11:17-19

Read Gen. 15-16. What is God's promise to Abram in vv. 4 and 5?

_____ Is this a new promise? _____ What does vs. 6 say that God considered righteous? _____

_____ It is not Abram's "good works" but his *obedient trust in what God is doing* that puts him in right relationship to God. **God wants His people to trust what He says!**

*The willingness to believe and trust
the Word of God is the
second characteristic of the man of faith.*

The first portion of God's covenant with Abram had to do with his descendants being great in number and a great nation. The second portion dealt with the land. How did God confirm his promise concerning the land? _____

[NOTE: The area described in vv. 18-19 is the area controlled by Israel during the reigns of David and Solomon (See 2 Chron. 9:22-26).]

It is quite possible to believe God, but at the same time fail to understand (or to recognize) God's methods. Refer back to God's promise to Abram in 15:4. Is Sarai mentioned? _____ What was Sarai's plan to provide Abram's heir? (See 16:1-2) _____

What was the result of Sarai's plan (16:3-16) _____

Read Chapter 17. How many years passed between the end of chapter 16 and the beginning of chapter 17? _____ God renews His covenant

with Abram in vv. 1-16 with several additions. What are the new aspects of the covenant?

vs. 5 _____
 vv. 9-11 _____
 vs. 15 _____

How did Abraham react to God's promise of an heir through his wife Sarah? (See vs. 17) _____ Read chapter 20 and compare it to the incident of 12:10-20. _____

Read Gen. 21:1-22:18. If Sarah and Abraham had produced a son at the normal age the event, even though God had promised it, would have gone largely unnoticed. The way things happened, though, it was evident that Isaac was a gracious gift of God! (See vs. 1).

Remember that "Isaac" means "he laughs." Both Abraham and Sarah laughed at the prospect of having a child at their advanced age. In the first verses of this chapter we see an interesting contrast between laughter that springs from joy and laughter which springs from mockery. Describe the attitude toward God which each reflects.

Joy (vs. 6) _____

Mockery (vs. 9) _____

Historically both Arabs and Jews trace their ancestry to Abraham; the Arabs through Ishmael, the Jews through Isaac. How does God promise to deal with these two sons of Abraham? (vv. 11-18). _____

Read chapter 22. The name *Moriah* means "the place of God's provision." As we read the story of Abraham's sacrifice the initial significance of the name becomes apparent. Read Gen. 22:1-2; 2 Sam. 24:18-25; and 2 Chr. 3:1. What is the further significance of this site? _____

Carefully study Abraham's instructions to his servants in vs. 5. He said, "We will worship and then we will come back to you." Notice also his answer to Isaac's question in vs. 8. How strongly was Abraham depending on God's provision? (Recall also Heb. 11:17-19) _____

Abraham was willing to *speak* his faith in this situation. *The conviction of his heart* became the *confession of his lips*. He put himself publicly on the side of God. Relate this to Rom. 10:9-10. _____

Compare the Lord's promise to Abraham in vv 16-18 with His previous covenant. Are there any new provisions or is it simply a confirmation of what God had already promised? _____

It is hard to imagine Isaac carrying wood on his back as he trudged up Mt. Moriah--wood that was to be used to burn the sacrifice--without also picturing Jesus walking the Via Dolorosa carrying His own cross. What other parallels can you draw between Gen. 22 and John 3:16-17? What differences? _____

SAVING THE SCRIPTURE IN YOUR MEMORY BANK

Study the following passage of Scripture. Try to remember the highlighted "key words."

Matt. 6:25-33

²⁵Therefore I tell you, do not **worry** about your **life**, what you will **eat** or **drink**; or about your **body**, what you will **wear**. Is not **life** more important than **food**, and the **body** more important than **clothes**? ²⁶Look at the birds of the air; they do not **sow** or **reap** or **store** away in barns, and yet your **heavenly Father** feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? ²⁷Who of you by **worrying** can add a single hour to his life? ²⁸And why do you **worry** about

*clothes? See how the lilies of the field grow. They do not **labor** or **spin**. ²⁹Yet I tell you that not even **Solomon** in all his **splendor** was dressed like one of these. ³⁰If that is how **God** clothes the **grass** of the **field**, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not **much more** clothe **you**, O you of little **faith**? ³¹So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' ³²For the **pagans** run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. ³³But seek **first** his **kingdom** and his **righteousness**, and **all these things will be given to you as well**.*

DIGGING AT THE ROOTS: Word studies from the WORD

— **Providence** —

God's *providence* can be thought of as His "provide - ence." It is God *providing for, giving to, and meeting the needs of* His creation. God's providence can be seen in three broad areas:

- 1) God's **PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP** with His creation
- 2) God's **MAINTENANCE** of His creation's operation
- 3) God's **GUIDANCE** of His creation's destiny.

PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP - In the Psalms we read, "The LORD is faithful to all his promises and loving toward all he has made" (Ps 145:13). God did not create the universe, establish its laws of operation and then withdraw to let it run its course; He remains ever involved in its affairs. The history of man is, in reality, the story of God's ongoing involvement with mankind.

The greatest of man's needs is for a Redeemer; for man, as a result of his own foolish choices, has alienated and estranged himself from the God who created, loves and cares for him. So great is God's love for man and so strong is His desire to restore the relationship between Himself and his creatures that, in the person of Jesus, He stepped into history to redeem His people. See Ps 130:7-8.

MAINTENANCE - The same power that God employed in the creation of all things now holds all things together (see Col. 1:16-17). It is God's will and purpose that this universe exist and that is why it does. If God's will were

different the universe, likewise, would be different. The universe, everything from atoms to galaxies, exists solely because God desires it to continue. As Rev. 4:11 rather poetically reads in the KJV, "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created."

Even as God is continuously involved in maintaining the physical aspects of His creation, He is also personally involved in maintaining the very lives of His creatures. God is the giver of life. Adam was only a sophisticated clay sculpture apart from the animating breath of God. God not only gives life, however, He also sustains life. See Ps. 104:24, 27-30.

GUIDANCE - God spoke through Isaiah, His prophet, "I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say: My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please" (Isa 46:10). Our God created everything, He sustains everything, and He directs all events according to His own purposes. It is the nature of man to imagine that he is in control of his own destiny. It is God, however, who orchestrates the fate of nations. See Ps. 2:1-4, 22:28, 47:7-8, 103:19-22.

CHAPTER 6 REVIEW

COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING USING THE EXACT WORD OR WORDS FROM THE NIV.

Matt. 6:25-33

²⁵Therefore I tell you, do not _____ about your _____, what you will _____ or _____; or about your _____, what you will _____. Is not _____ more important than _____, and the _____ more important than _____? ²⁶Look at the birds of the air; they do not _____ or _____ or _____ away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? ²⁷Who of you by _____ can add a single hour to his life? ²⁸And why do you _____ about _____? See how the lilies of the field

grow. They do not _____ or _____. ²⁹Yet I tell you that not even _____ in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. ³⁰If that is how _____ clothes the _____ of the _____, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not _____ clothe you, O you of little _____? ³¹So do not _____, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' ³²For the _____ run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. ³³But seek _____ his _____ and his _____, and all these things will be given to you as well.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- 1) How important is it for Christians to have a thorough knowledge of the Word of God? Why?
- 2) How do the three aspects of God's providence (personal relationship, maintenance and guidance) apply to you as an individual believer?

VII. ISAAC, JACOB, AND ESAU

Hebrews 11:20

Read Gen. 25:19-34 and 27:1-40. This story seems to be one of lying, deceit, and unfairness. Esau was the first of the twins to be born and, according to tradition, should have had his Father's blessing. We see from the prophecy given even before their birth, however, that the events happened according to God's plan and purpose. What were the main points in the Lord's answer to Rebekah? (See 25:23). _____

Jacob and Esau represent two very different kinds of people with respect to the honor and importance that they give to the things of God. In Jacob we see an individual who actively seeks the blessings and promises of God. In Esau we see an attitude of indifference toward the blessings and promises of God. It certainly must have been known to both brothers that God had promised great and wonderful things to both their Grandfather Abraham and to their Father Isaac. These promises, if they were to be believed, would surely have had their fulfillment through Isaac's natural heir; namely, Esau. Considering this, the events of 25:29-35 in which Esau treats his birthright as a trivial thing is astounding! He treated the promise of God with contempt by placing it on a lower level of importance than a single meal. The prophet Malachi addressed this in Mal. 1:2-5. It is clear from this passage that God honors the "Jacob attitude" but hates the "Esau attitude".

Name at least three ways that people today manifest an "Esau attitude."

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____

How can a person manifest a "Jacob attitude?" _____

How do you feel about Jacob's methods in gaining his father's blessing? _____

What are the negative character traits found in this story? _____

There is one thing that the Scripture clearly reveals; **God's perfect plan is worked out in the lives of imperfect people.** While Jacob and Rebekah may have employed some rather ungodly methods in their dealings with Isaac, it remains clear that *they believed the promise of God.* They believed it enough that it became the basis for their action. And that, after all, is what real faith is about!

***A willingness to allow one's
trust in God's promise
to become action
is the third characteristic
of the man of faith.***

Faith is not only *knowing God* and *trusting His Word.* Faith is *also living out that truth.*

Read Gen. 28:10-22. In this passage we find the Lord speaking to Jacob in a dream. Verses 13-15 are essentially a restatement of the covenant. Are there any new provisions? If so what? _____

Why do you think that God makes the same promises over and over? _____

SAVING THE SCRIPTURE IN YOUR MEMORY BANK

Study the following passage of Scripture. Try to remember the highlighted "key words."

Psalm 40:1-4

¹*I waited **patiently** for the **LORD**; he turned to me and **heard** my cry.*
²*He **lifted** me out of the **slimy pit**, out of the **mud and mire**; he **set** my **feet** on a **rock** and gave me a **firm place to stand**.* ³*He put a **new song** in my mouth, a **hymn of praise** to our **God**. Many will **see** and **fear** and put their **trust** in the **LORD**.* ⁴***Blessed** is the **man** who makes the **LORD** his **trust**, who does not **look** to the **proud**, to those who **turn aside** to false gods.*

DIGGING AT THE ROOTS: Word studies from the WORD

— Blessing —

The word "blessing" is one that is used commonly in the Scripture, and yet it is a word whose meaning is somewhat elusive. The essential meaning of the word carries a sense of happiness and success. There is more to it than that, however. A blessing always relates in some way to God's plans and purposes.

In his book *Toward an Old Testament Theology*, Walter Kaiser writes, "the concept of 'blessing' was the idea of being successful in a venture or being made prosperous by God." The key to Kaiser's definition is in its last two words, "by God." "Blessing" is happiness that grows from an acknowledgment of a relationship--even a partnership--with God. The blessing does not have its basis, though, in the contribution of the man; but in the promise of God and in His power to make that promise reality. Where God has made no promise there can be no blessing.

CHAPTER 7 REVIEW

COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING USING THE EXACT WORD OR WORDS FROM THE NIV.

Psalm 40:1-4

¹I waited _____ for the _____; he turned to me and _____ my cry. ²He _____ me out of the _____, out of the _____ and _____; he set my _____ on a _____ and gave me a firm place to _____. ³He put a _____ in my mouth, a _____ of _____ to our _____. Many will _____ and _____ and put their _____ in the _____. ⁴_____ is the _____ who makes the _____ his _____, who does not _____ to the _____, to those who _____ to false gods.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1) Jacob was a man who took the promise of God seriously. He actively sought God's promised blessing. How important is it for believers today to make God's blessing (the working out of God's promise in their own lives) a top priority? (Consider 2 Chronicles 7:14 and Luke 11:9-10).

2) Is it possible to believe the promises of God and still not allow those promises to guide one's actions?

3) Some might say that the underlying "truth" in the story of Jacob and Esau is "the end justifies the means." What do you think?

REMEMBERING JOSEPH, A MAN WHO RECOGNIZED THE HAND OF GOD

Gen. 37, 39-48, and 50

If there ever was a man who was treated unfairly by life, that man was Joseph! His brothers sold him into slavery in order to separate him from the father who loved him and from the land of his birth. He walked as a godly man in the household of Potiphar, an official in Pharaoh's court, and was thrown into prison as a result. He was left in prison when release had been promised because the Pharaoh's cupbearer "forgot" about him. How do you think most men would react to these kinds of circumstances? How do you react when everything seems to be going wrong?

We never see any anger or resentment toward God from Joseph. Somehow, even in the worst of situations, Joseph managed to see the hand of God at work, taking what seemed to be bad and changing it to good. This is what made Joseph a man of faith. Because he continued to walk with God, Joseph was used to save Egypt and his family as well. Read his words in Gen 50:20 once again. Joseph, like his father before him, recognized the continuing nature of God's plan and promise and never failed to trust it--even to his own death (50:24).

PRAYER:

Lord, forgive me when I fail to acknowledge your hand at work in the situations of my life. Forgive me, Lord, when I am anxious and faithless. I know that you hold me securely in the palm of your hand, and that you work all things together for my good. Praise you, Father, because you are a good God and Your love endures to every generation.

VIII. MOSES: A MAN FOR THE PEOPLE OF GOD

Hebrews 11:23-26

Read Exodus 1-2. There are two main provisions to the covenant that God made with Abraham and his descendants. The first provision had to do with the formation of a large and great nation. The second with this people's possession of the promised land. We can see from 1:9-10 that God was fulfilling the first provision to the extent that the king of Egypt, the most powerful nation in the world at that time, was becoming alarmed. How did the king initially respond to his "Hebrew problem?" (See vv. 11-14). _____

When the king's first solution failed, he moved on to something more severe. What did he do next? (See vv. 15-16). _____

Why didn't the Pharaoh's plan to eliminate the Hebrews work? (See vv. 17-21). _____

Notice the phrase "feared God" in vv. 17 and 21. What does it mean to "fear God?" Read the following passages and then write your own definition for the phrase: Deut. 6:13-15; Jos. 24:14; Ps. 33:8-11; Prov. 1:7, 3:7-8; Eccl. 12:13. _____

Compare the actions of the midwives to Jesus' teaching in Lk. 12:4-9. Do you think that the midwives were doing the right thing when they refused to follow the order of their king? Why or why not? _____

It is interesting that Moses' mother was almost fulfilling the Pharaoh's order when she put him into the Nile in a basket (See 1:22). Who actually took care of Moses after he was 3 mo. old? (Ex. 2:5-9) _____

It is clear from 2:10 that, at least in the mind of the Pharaoh's daughter, Moses was a member of Egypt's royal house. According to vs. 11 with whom did Moses associate himself? (See Heb. 11:24-26) _____

The text in Ex. 2 doesn't really give us enough information to make a judgment about Moses' killing of the Egyptian who was beating the Hebrew man. In all likelihood, his actions saved the slave's life. The fact that this

account is followed in the same chapter by the "rescue" of Revel's daughters supports this understanding. Moses was a man who was committed to the Hebrew people and willing to put his own life on the line in their behalf.

***A willingness to be primarily identified with
Christ and with His people
is the fourth great characteristic of a man of faith.***

Read Ex. 6:1-10. God's promise to Israel in vv. 6-8 is their "Declaration of Independence" from Egypt. It is clear that the redemption of Israel from bondage to Egypt is neither a heroic "rescue" by Moses nor a work of the Hebrew people themselves. This is an example of the salvation of the Lord. Notice the number of times that the personal pronoun "I" appears in this passage referring to God. List all the "I am" and "I will" phrases.

It took a lot of courage for Moses and Aaron to proclaim the words of God to Pharaoh and to do the things that God commanded them to do. How does this demonstrate their faith? _____

Read Ex. 13:17-14:31. What was the Lord's reason for taking Israel by a longer route that led to (through!) the Red Sea? (vs. 17) _____

What did God have to gain by doing things the way He did with regard to Israel's escape? (vs. 14:4) _____

_____ After suffering through all the plagues, what caused Pharaoh to change his mind and go after the Hebrews? _____

When the Hebrews saw the Egyptian army coming they reacted as the Lord predicted. Compare 13:17b with 14:10-12. Even though they had

marched out of Egypt armed for battle, it is clear that they did not have a heart to fight. How did Moses respond to their fear? (14:13-14) _____

There are many who want to (or think they need to) fight the Lord's battles for Him. **The clear truth is that the Lord--who is more than capable of taking care of His own interests--fights our battles for us!** The Lord always requires our *obedience*, never our *might!*

While God did not require the Hebrews to fight the Egyptians, it would be wrong to think that He did not require anything of them. The first requirement was of Moses. The Sea did not part until he was obedient to the Lord's command to "raise his staff and stretch out his hand." Obviously the staff of Moses did not cause the Sea to part. God required the act as a demonstration of Moses' faith. The second requirement was of the people who had to trust God to hold back the waters that He had parted. This was a test of the people's faith.

The real tests of our faith often come, not in the big things, but in things that seem foolish to us.

SAVING THE SCRIPTURE IN YOUR MEMORY BANK

2 Cor. 4:3-7

³Even if our **gospel** is **veiled**, it is **veiled** to those who are **perishing**.
⁴The god of this age has **blinded** the **minds** of **unbelievers**, so that they cannot see the **light** of the **gospel** of the **glory** of **Christ**, who is the **image** of **God**.
⁵For we do not preach **ourselves**, but **Jesus Christ** as **Lord**, and **ourselves** as your **servants** for Jesus' sake. ⁶For **God**, who said, "**Let light shine out of darkness**," made his light shine in our **hearts** to give us the **light** of the **knowledge** of the **glory** of **God** in the face of **Christ**. ⁷But we have this **treasure** in jars of **clay** to show that this all-surpassing **power** is from **God** and not from **us**.

DIGGING AT THE ROOTS: ***Word studies from the WORD***

— Walking by Faith —

In 2 Cor. 5:7 Paul wrote, "We live by faith, *not by sight*." The writer of Hebrews similarly states that faith is being "certain of what we *do not see*." Are we to understand from these verses that faith is a walk in the dark? Nothing could be further from the truth!

By comparing Ex. 12:40-42 with Gen. 15:13-14, we see that God had already revealed to His people what was to happen to them in the future. Faith is not belief without basis. Faith is a belief based on God's Word, His promises and His proven faithfulness. **Walking by faith is not walking blind.** It is trusting what *God has said* and using His Word, rather than what your eyes lead you to understand, as a basis for what you do! "*Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path*" (Ps 119:105).

It is interesting that the Scripture often refers to those who have no knowledge of God's Word as "blind" (see Isa. 6:9, 42:20, 43:8; Jer. 5:20; Ez. 12:2; Matt. 23:16-26). **It is not the light of day, but the revelation of God that gives one spiritual sight.**

Israel was required to walk by faith on the day of their rescue from Egypt. The walls of water on their right and left must have been a fearsome sight! (See Ex. 14:29). It surely took tremendous courage on the part of the Hebrews to walk across the road through the waters.

CHAPTER 8 REVIEW

COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING USING THE EXACT WORD OR WORDS FROM THE NIV.

2 Cor. 4:3-7

³Even if our _____ is _____, it is _____ to those who are _____. ⁴The god of this age has _____ the _____ of _____, so that they cannot see the _____ of the _____ of the _____ of _____, who is the _____ of _____. ⁵For we do not preach ourselves, but Jesus Christ as

Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. ⁶For _____, who said, "Let _____ shine out of _____," made his light shine in our _____ to give us the light of the _____ of the _____ of _____ in the face of _____. ⁷But we have this _____ in jars of _____ to show that this all-surpassing _____ is from _____ and not from us.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- 1) What are the risks one takes in order to be identified with God's people?
- 2) Does it take more courage to walk by faith or by sight?

IX. JOSHUA TOOTS HIS OWN HORN

Hebrews 11:30

Read Joshua Chapter 1. Many hundreds of years after God made His covenant with Abraham concerning the land of Israel, we see the "light at the end of the tunnel." The nation of Israel--a nation built on the promise of God--stands ready to walk into the land of promise. Think back over the multitudes of men and women who had ordered their lives according to the promise and died without seeing it fulfilled. God, however, does not forget what he has said. His Word will stand if everything else falls!

The key word in this chapter is "courage." Write the verses from chapter 1 which contain a command to be courageous.

vs. 6 _____

vs. 7 _____

vs. 9 _____

vs. 18 _____

What God says to do, the man of faith does!

**A willingness to move forward
with *boldness*
is the fifth great characteristic
of the man of faith.**

Joshua had been through a lot as he and Moses had led the people on their wanderings through the desert. It had been 40 years! Now Moses was dead. How does God go about establishing a relationship with Joshua? (vv. 3-5). _____

It is interesting to compare the actions of Joshua and the people with the actions of Moses and the people when faced with similar situations. When Joshua had determined that the Lord wanted them to go in and take possession of the land, he sent spies in to "check things out." Moses had done the same. (Read Nu. 13:1-3, 26-33, 14:5-9 and Jos. 2:23-24). How did the results differ?

The crossing of the Jordan river was also comparable in some ways with the crossing of the Red Sea. We have already studied Moses at the Red Sea; read Jos. Chapter 3 to see how Joshua's experience compares.

What went before the people at the Red Sea? _____

What went before the people at the Jordan? _____

What action by Moses caused the waters to begin to part? _____

What action by Joshua caused the waters to pile up? _____

Did the Hebrews under Moses cross on dry land? _____

Did the Hebrews under Joshua cross on dry land? _____

Did Moses exalt the Lord after the crossing? _____

Did Joshua exalt the Lord after the crossing? _____

Read Joshua Chapter 2. It seems a little odd that the first place that the Hebrew spies would head, once inside Jericho, was the house of a prostitute. It is possible that the spies used Rahab's house as their "point of entry" for sneaking into the city because her house was built into the city wall (see vs. 15). Rahab's inclusion in the list of faith hero's in Hebrews 11 is to point out that, even in the midst of a pagan (and probably polytheist) culture she believed the evidence and recognized the transcendence of the God of Israel. What had Rahab heard about the Hebrews and their God? (See vv. 9-10) _____

Write her "statement of faith" as it is recorded in vs. 11b. _____

Read 6:17, 22-25. What happened to Rahab and her family as a result of her faith? _____

Read Jos. 6. After Moses led the people through the Red Sea, God totally destroyed the Egyptian army without the Israelites doing anything at all. When Joshua brought the people across the Jordan on dry land, the situation was a little bit different. First of all, the inhabitants of Jericho were not

attacking the Hebrews. They were, in fact, hiding from them within the walls of their city. Secondly, the Lord gave Joshua specific instructions as to what the people were supposed to do in order to defeat their enemy. What were the Lord's instructions? (vv. 3-5). _____

How do you think you would feel if you were among those marching around the walled city? _____

How does their action demonstrate their faith in God? _____

When the Egyptian army was defeated, their soldiers cried, "lets get away from the Israelites! The Lord is fighting for them against Egypt" (Ex. 14:25). How do you think the leaders and warriors in the cities *around* Jericho would have responded when they heard the news about the manner of its destruction?

SAVING THE SCRIPTURE IN YOUR MEMORY BANK

Romans 8:29-34

²⁹For those God **foreknew** he also **predestined** to be conformed to the **likeness** of his **Son**, that he might be the **firstborn** among many **brothers**.

³⁰And those he **predestined**, he also **called**; those he **called**, he also **justified**; those he **justified**, he also **glorified**.

³¹What, then, shall we say in **response** to this? If **God** is **for** us, **who** can be **against** us? ³²He 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**?

³³Who will bring any **charge** against those whom **God** has **chosen**? It is **God** who **justifies**. ³⁴**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.

DIGGING AT THE ROOTS: ***Word studies from the WORD***

— **Courage** —

The word "courage" is often used as a synonym for "fearless." The idea is that one who has courage lacks fear. If this is accurate and we are honest, then there are very few of us who possess the quality of courage. We might do better to think of "courage" as a synonym for "committed." True courage works itself out in stability, steadfastness and boldness. A person with courage demonstrates stability with regard to his convictions, steadfastness with regard to his standards and boldness with regard to his actions.

Courage is not the absence of fear. Courage is a willingness to go and do what is required *in spite of fear*. We know that courage is on the scene when *faith in God* is greater than *fear of failure!*

CHAPTER 9 REVIEW

COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING USING THE EXACT WORD OR WORDS FROM THE NIV.

Romans 8:29-34

²⁹For those God _____ he also _____ to be conformed to the _____ of his _____, that he might be the _____ among many _____. ³⁰And those he _____, he also _____; those he _____, he also _____; those he _____, he also _____.

³¹What, then, shall we say in _____ to this? If _____ is _____ us, _____ can be _____ us?

³²He 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? ³³Who will bring any _____ against those whom _____ has _____? It is _____ who _____.

³⁴_____ is he that _____? _____, who died-- more than that, who was raised to life-- is at the right hand of God and is also _____ for us.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- 1) Why do you think that God directed Joshua to use such unconventional (foolish??) methods in his attack on the city of Jericho?
- 2) Was the city of Jericho destroyed for all time as a result of Joshua's "battle"?
- 3) Can courage be used as a measure of one's faith? Why or why not?

XV. GIDEON (A MIGHTY MAN OF VALOR), BARAK AND DEBORAH

Hebrews 11:32

Read Judges 6. What was the spiritual condition of the people of Israel at the time that the Angel of the Lord appeared to Gideon? (vs. 1-6) _____

Does the fact that the Midianites and others were treating the Hebrews so terribly mean that God had forgotten his promise of blessing and protection for Abraham's descendants? Why or why not? _____

When the people cried out to God, how did He respond? (vs. 8) _____

It is ironic that at the very moment that the Lord called Gideon a "mighty warrior" he was hiding inside a winepress from the Midianites (vs. 11). It is also ironic that the greatest courage was required of Gideon in facing his own people. The Lord commanded Gideon to destroy the altar to Baal, to cut down the Asherah pole, and to build a proper altar for the worship of God. Gideon did as the Lord commanded. Describe the events of the following morning. (vv. 28-32) _____

It is unsettling to some that Gideon seems to exhibit doubt in vv. 36-40 and that God seems to honor his doubt. **We must be very careful to make a distinction between seeking evidence in support of faith on the one hand, and double-mindedness that refuses faith on the other.** In Gideon we see an individual who has already taken a stand for God. The question is not, "does Gideon believe God?" His actions demonstrate clearly that he does! Gideon simply wants to be sure that he correctly understands what the Lord has called him to do.

HONEST SEEKING

Honest seeking falls into three broad categories:

- 1) *seeking explanation*
- 2) *seeking clarification*
- 3) *seeking assurance.*

A person seeks explanation when he asks the Lord, "help me to understand your purpose in this situation." A person seeks clarification when he asks the Lord, "teach me more about your word and Your ways." A person seeks assurance when, in humility, he says, "are you sure I'm the one for the job?"

Refer to Heb. 11:6. Who does it say that the Lord rewards? _____

The double-minded man, on the other hand, is a man who refuses to take a stand for God. Read the following passages and then write the characteristics of the double-minded person: 2 Kngs. 17:32-33; Lk. 16:13-15; James 1:5-8, 4:4-7. _____

Would you classify Gideon as a seeker or a double-minded doubter? Why? _____

Read Judges 7. Remember that the Lord had called Gideon in response to the cries of the people. Gideon was God's man. Did God select Gideon because he was a great and powerful warrior? (See 6:15-16)

_____ At the beginning of chapter 7 it seems that Gideon had amassed quite a large army. Why didn't the Lord want Gideon to attack the Midianite camp with such a large force? (vs. 2) _____

The 300 Israelites under Gideon's command began their assault on the enemy camp at the "middle watch" (vs. 19), (i.e., sometime in the middle of the night). It is hard to imagine the effect of the sudden appearance of 300 lit torches and the sounding of 300 trumpets in the middle of the night! How did the Midianites respond? (vs 22) _____

Think back over Gideon's defeat of the Midianites. Read and compare 1 Cor. 1:27 and 2 Cor. 12:9-10. How are we able to see the Lord's strength manifested in this life? _____

Do you think "weaknesses" in your life might provide opportunities for others to see to the power of God at work? If so how? _____

Read Judges 4. Who was Deborah and what was her position in Israel? (vs. 4) _____ How did Deborah know to call for Barak to lead Israel's army? _____

This situation is quite different from that faced by Gideon. Barak's army was fairly large. The description of the battle is pretty brief, but Barak seems to have charged right into the enemy. No element of surprise here! It is clear, though from vv. 14, ". . . *has not the Lord gone ahead of you?*" and 15, "*the Lord routed Sisera,*" that God is given credit for the victory. Some other translations more clearly indicate the Lord's hand in Sisera's defeat. RSV says, "*And the LORD threw Sisera and all his chariots and all his army into a panic before Barak. . .*" The literal meaning of the word found there is "confused." The Lord, it seems, went before the army of Barak and confused the enemy to the point that Barak and his men were able to defeat them utterly.

You might wonder why this individual is included in the Hebrews along with people like Moses and Noah. The need for great faith on his part is not immediately apparent. We need to remember, however, that Israel had been under the domination of this military leader for twenty years. What two things had he become known for? (See vs. 3) _____

Barak wanted the prophetess to come along on the military campaign against Sisera. How did Deborah participate? (vs. 14) _____

SAVING THE SCRIPTURE IN YOUR MEMORY BANK

Study the following passage of Scripture. Try to remember the highlighted "key words."

1 Cor. 1:26-29

²⁶Brothers, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. ²⁷But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. ²⁸He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things-- and the things that are not-- to nullify the things that are, ²⁹so that no one may boast before him.

DIGGING IN DEEPER: Word studies from the WORD

— Boasting —

George Eldon Ladd, an important 20th American theologian, wrote that boasting is the opposite of faith. This seems odd. Most would say that unbelief is the opposite of faith. His point was that boasting is based on self-reliance. Saving faith in Christ, however, can have none of that. (Read Eph. 2:8-9 and Rom. 3:27). The word "boast" can be defined: to speak in praise of one's self, one's possessions, or one's accomplishments; to speak with pride or vanity; to use exulting, pompous, or pretentious language. In Scripture, boasting is presented as the fundamental attitude of the foolish and ungodly man. Consider Ps. 52:1, Ps 75:4-7, and Jer. 9:23-24.

CHAPTER 10 REVIEW

COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING USING THE EXACT WORD OR WORDS FROM THE NIV.

1 Cor. 1:26-29

26 _____, think of _____ you _____ when you were _____. Not many of you were _____ by _____; not many were _____; not many were of _____ birth. 27 But God chose the _____ things of the _____ to _____ the _____; God chose the _____ things of the _____ to _____ the _____. 28 He chose the _____ things of this _____ and the _____ things-- and the things that are _____ -- to the things that _____, 29 so that no one may _____ before _____.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- 1) What is a double-minded person? How might such a person act?

- 2) Why does God choose to work through the "weak things" of this world?

- 3) God threw Barak's enemy into "confusion" before Barak's army. How might this term be generally applied to those who oppose or ignore God?

XI. SAMSON AND THE "BAD HAIR DAY"

Hebrews 11:32-34

Read Judges 13:1-7. The circumstances surrounding Samson's birth are certainly extraordinary. It's not everyday that the Angel of the Lord appears to announce to a young wife that she is going to have a child!

You can hardly read chapter 13 and miss the significance placed on two things.

- 1) Neither mother nor son was to consume any product of the vineyard
- 2) the child's hair was not to be cut

These restrictions were in accordance with the vow of the Nazarite. Read Numbers 6:1-21 and list the main provisions of the Nazarite vow. _____

A Nazarite vow was normally taken for a specified (usually fairly short) period of time. It was used by an individual who wanted to separate himself from worldly activities in order to focus more or their attention on the Lord. This practice might be compared to a believer today going on a fast for a week or ten days in order to seek an answer to prayer or specific direction from God. The statement that Samson was to be a Nazarite "from birth until the day of his death" (vs. 7) was unusual in the extreme!

What great work for Israel was Samson to do? (vs. 5b) _____

Read Jud. 13:24-25. What do these verses tell us about Samson's boyhood? _____

Read Jud. 14:1-4. Why wasn't Samson's choice for a wife acceptable to his parents? _____

Read Judges 14:5-11. The fact that Samson's killing of the lion and then consuming honey from it's carcass took place in a vineyard may or may not have significance. (Remember the Nazarite vow). The episode with his "wife" in vv. 14:16-17 is certainly significant in that it foreshadows the situation with Delilah later in his life. Describe the events of Samson's wedding feast. (vv. 10-20). _____

Read Jud. 15:1-8. Why did Samson catch three hundred foxes and tie their tails together? _____

Read Jud. 15:9-16. How did the men of Judah react to what Samson had done?

_____ Why do you think they reacted the way they did? (vv. 10-11) _____

Samson was clearly capable of leading the people in a successful campaign against their oppressors. He demonstrated his ability by killing 1,000 of them using only a jawbone for a weapon! Why do you think that, having seen this, the men of Judah failed to follow him? _____

Samson was, of course, known for his feats of supernatural strength. It is natural that his enemies, the Philistines, would want to know the source of this strength. Delilah, a Philistine woman that Samson loved, was given the task of finding out his secret. What was the actual source of Samson's strength? (See 14:6, 19, and 15:14). _____

_____ How could the cutting of Samson's hair have effected his strength? _____

Did Samson fulfill God's purpose for his life? _____ How? _____

SAVING THE SCRIPTURE IN YOUR MEMORY BANK

Study the following passage of Scripture. Try to remember the highlighted "key words."

1 Thess. 4:3-8

³It is God's **will** that you should be **sanctified**: that you should avoid **sexual immorality**; ⁴that each of you should learn to **control** his own **body** in a way that is **holy** and **honorable**, ⁵not in **passionate lust** like the **heathen**, who do not **know God**; ⁶and that in this matter no one should **wrong** his brother or take **advantage** of him. The **Lord** will punish men for all such **sins**, as we have already told you and warned you. ⁷For **God** did not call us to be **impure**, but to live a **holy** life. ⁸Therefore, he who **rejects** this instruction does not reject **man** but **God**, who gives you his **Holy Spirit**.

DIGGING DEEPER: Word studies from the WORD

— Consecration —

Being "consecrated" (i.e., to be declared "holy" or "devoted to God") means that the object has been *set apart by God for His use and purpose*. That which has been set apart for God's use must never again be used for a common purpose.

One might think that such setting apart is of human volition; that we can *choose* to consecrate certain items--or even ourselves--and, as a result, those things become holy. Actually such setting apart is a work of God alone. This is true in the case of things (the holy temple), people (the priesthood) or places (God's holy mountain). **The holiness or sacredness of an object is derived from its relationship to the Holy God.** What we do, in an act of consecration, is in response to what God has already done.

In Judges 13:5 we see that Samson was to be "set apart" or "consecrated" unto the Lord from birth. This is because God had *already chosen him* for a special task. It is similarly true for all believers.

The believer has been set apart from the common, unclean, and ordinary things of the world. The Christian has been redeemed by God from the fallen world and from its influences. He is no longer related to the kingdom of the world from which he has been saved; his citizenship is in the kingdom of God. ". . . you are not your own, you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body" (1 Cor. 6:20). The saint's life belongs to Him who, at the cost of his own, redeemed it from bondage to sin and death.

CHAPTER 11 REVIEW

COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING USING THE EXACT WORD OR WORDS FROM THE NIV.

1 Thess. 4:3-8

³It is God's _____ that you should be _____: that you should avoid _____; ⁴that each of you should learn to _____ his own _____ in a way that is _____ and _____, ⁵not in _____ like the _____, who do not _____; ⁶and that in this matter no one should _____ his brother or take _____ of him. The _____ will punish men for all such _____, as we have already told you and warned you. ⁷For _____ did not call us to be _____, but to live a _____ life. ⁸Therefore, he who _____ this instruction does not reject _____ but _____, who gives you his _____.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- 1) Is there any parallel to the Nazarite vow in present day Christianity? If so, what?
- 2) How is a believer's "holiness" manifested in the world?

XII. David: A Young Man With a Heart for God

Hebrews 11:32-34

Read 1 Sam. 16:1-13. The first verse speaks of God's choosing of one man and rejecting of another. Saul, king of Israel was to be replaced by David. Samuel the prophet was God's instrument to make this known.

You might wonder how Saul became Israel's king in the first place if God was now rejecting him. Read 1 Sam. 8:5-21. Notice that the people wanted a king so that they could be "like other nations" (8:5, 19). Did God give that generation what they desired? Why or why not? _____

Who had always "gone before the people of Israel and fought their battles for them?" (See Ex. 14:13, 25; Jos. 1:9; Judges 7:2-3, 22; 8:23; 11:21) _____

What criteria did God use in His selection of David to be king? (See 16:7) _____

Read 1 Sam. 17. We can see a clear distinction between Saul--the king God gave Israel to "make them like the other nations"--and David--a man with a heart for God. Goliath was without a doubt a fearsome foe. He was big and strong and mean. Compare Saul's and David's response to his taunts (vv. 11, 37). _____

What was the source of David's confidence? _____
 _____ Goliath's weapons were his sword, his spear, and his javelin. What was David's "weapon" (vs. 45)? _____

Notice these things about David's battle with Goliath:

- 1) David was quick to give the Lord credit for past successes. This gave him confidence in the Lord's ability to meet the present need.
- 2) The Lord did not remove the problem. Instead He gave David the means to overcome it.
- 3) The successful outcome was the result of God's power + David's faith and courage.

We all face "Goliaths" (i.e., situations that seem unconquerable). How can you apply David's approach to his Goliath to the Goliaths in your own life?

Read 2 Sam. 11:1-27. The story of David and Bathsheba is well known. What commandments of God did David fail to follow in this episode in his life?

Read 2 Sam. 12:1-14. How did God cause David to acknowledge his sin? _____

Did David repent? _____
 Was David forgiven? _____ Were there consequences of David's sin?
 _____ What were they? _____

In both 1 Sam. 13:14 and Acts 13:22 David is referred to as "a man after God's own heart." How should we understand this in light of David's sinful behavior? _____

SAVING THE SCRIPTURE IN YOUR MEMORY BANK

Study the following passage of Scripture. Try to remember the highlighted "key words."

Ps. 147:7-11

⁷**Sing** to the **LORD** with **thanksgiving**; make **music** to our **God** on the harp. ⁸He covers the sky with **clouds**; he supplies the earth with **rain** and makes grass grow on the **hills**. ⁹He provides **food** for the **cattle** and for the young **ravens** when they **call**. ¹⁰His **pleasure** is not in the **strength** of the **horse**, nor his **delight** in the **legs** of a **man**; ¹¹the **LORD** **delights** in those who **fear him**, who put their **hope** in his **unfailing** love.

DIGGING DEEPER: Word studies from the WORD

— Repentance —

Repentance is a change in the direction of one's life brought about by a change of mind (i.e., a *change of heart*). While repentance is often accompanied by sorrow or remorse, these emotions do not constitute repentance unless they lead to a change in behavior.

As we can see from Lk. 13:5 and Acts 3:19 repentance is essential to salvation. The "gospel of repentance" was preached by John the baptist (Matt. 3:1-2), Jesus (Matt. 4:17), by the twelve disciples (Mk. 6:7-12), by Peter on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:38), and later by Paul (Acts 26:19-20). While the need to repent is the message of preaching and teaching it should not be understood that a persons change of heart comes as the result of man's persuasion. Repentance is a gift of God. It is the Holy Spirit who changes the heart. Changes in behavior are a result of that divine work. (See Acts 11:18).

We normally think of human repentance as a turning *to* God *from* evil, as a change for the better. God is also said to "repent." Such a turning from evil to good is clearly not applicable to God. God's essential nature does not change and certainly is not in need of improvement! Because God is in relationship with men who do change His response to their actions changes. Wrath becomes mercy or blessing becomes judgment. It is this responsiveness which the Scripture calls repentance in God.

The results of true repentance are, perhaps, more adequately understood through the use of the word "conversion" which connotes a change into something different and new which yet retains some aspects of the old.

CHAPTER 12 REVIEW

COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING USING THE EXACT WORD OR WORDS FROM THE NIV.

Ps. 147:7-11

⁷ _____ to the _____ with _____; make _____ to our _____ on the harp. ⁸He covers the sky with _____s; he supplies the earth with _____ and makes grass grow on the _____. ⁹He provides _____ for the _____ and for the young _____ when they _____. ¹⁰His _____ is not in the _____ of the _____, nor his _____ in the _____ of a _____; ¹¹the LORD _____ in those who _____, who put their _____ in his _____.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- 1) In what way did God honor the people's request for a king when He gave them Saul?
- 2) How did Saul and David differ in their response to Goliath?
- 3) What special criteria did God use in His selection of David to be king of Israel?
- 4) How did David respond when his sin was exposed?
- 5) What are the effects of repentance?

XIII. HAVING A FAITH THAT ENDURES

Heb. 11:32-40.

Observe the great achievements that the writer of Hebrews attributes to men and women of faith in verses 33-35a. Look up each reference and write a brief note about each situation.

Conquered kingdoms 2 Sam. 8:1-6 _____

Administered justice 1 Sam. 12:7-11 _____

Gained what was promised 2 Sam. 7:7-13 _____

Shut the mouths of lions Dan. 6:18-23 _____

Quenched the flames Dan. 3:19-26 _____

Escaped the sword 1 Sam. 17:48-51 _____

Weakness turned to strength Jud. 16:24-30 _____

Routed foreign armies Jud. 7:19-22 _____

Received back their dead 1 Kgs. 17:17-24 _____

What change do you observe beginning in the middle of vs. 35 and continuing through vs. 38? _____

What things did the people of God suffer as they awaited the fulfillment of God's promise? _____

Does the fact that God did not deliver these people from their circumstances mean that their faith was judged to be inadequate? Explain your answer. (Consider vs. 39) _____

There is no point in the text from vs. 32-38 where the victory of faith turns to defeat. How should we understand this? _____

For whose sake did God withhold the fulfillment of His promises? (See vs. 40)

SAVING THE SCRIPTURE IN YOUR MEMORY BANK

Study the following passage of Scripture. Try to remember the highlighted "key words."

Romans 8:35-39

³⁵Who shall **separate** us from the **love** of **Christ**? Shall **trouble** or **hardship** or **persecution** or **famine** or **nakedness** or **danger** or **sword**? ³⁶As it is written: "For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered." ³⁷No, in all these things we are **more** than **conquerors** through him who loved us. ³⁸For I am **convinced** that neither **death** nor **life**, neither **angels** nor **demons**, neither the **present** nor the **future**, nor any **powers**, ³⁹neither **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**.

DIGGING DEEPER:
Word studies from the WORD

— **Conquerors** —

Being a *conqueror* does not (and cannot) mean that one has escaped tribulation. If there is no conflict, there is nothing to conquer. Surely one cannot be an *overcomer* if there is nothing to overcome. The conqueror is not one who avoids the battle. The conqueror is the one who is there for the whole battle and is still standing at its end. It is to the one who perseveres to the end (i.e., overcomes the world's tribulation) that Christ promises the benefits of salvation. See Rev. 2:7, 11, 17, 26; 3:4-5, 12, 21-22.

It is important to recognize that nothing in all of God's creation, visible or invisible, has the power to overcome the decree of God. It is in Him and in Him alone that we are "more than conquerors."

CHAPTER 13 REVIEW

COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING USING THE EXACT WORD OR WORDS FROM THE NIV.

Romans 8:35-39

³⁵Who shall _____ us from the _____ of _____? Shall _____ or _____ or _____ or _____ or _____? ³⁶As it is written: "For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered." ³⁷No, in all these things we are _____ than _____ through him who loved us. ³⁸For I am _____ that neither _____ nor _____, neither _____ nor _____, neither the _____ nor the _____, nor any _____, ³⁹neither _____

nor _____, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to
_____ us from the _____ of _____ that is
in _____ our _____.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- 1) Why does God see fit to save some of His servants and not others?
- 2) What does it mean to be a "conqueror" in our Christian walk?