

Hebrews 11:20-40

The Portrait Gallery of the Faithful (Part 2)



Now faith is being sure of what we hope for
and certain of what we do not see. v1

Faith - The solid foundation to build on

Verses 20 -40 give us a brief history of Bible times concerning many individuals whose lives were marked by great acts of faith.

The writer is making the strong point that all of God's people are called to live by faith, following their example.

By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau in regard to their future. v20

Genesis 27:33 Isaac trembled violently and said, "Who was it, then, that hunted game and brought it to me? I ate it just before you came and I blessed him--and indeed he will be blessed!"

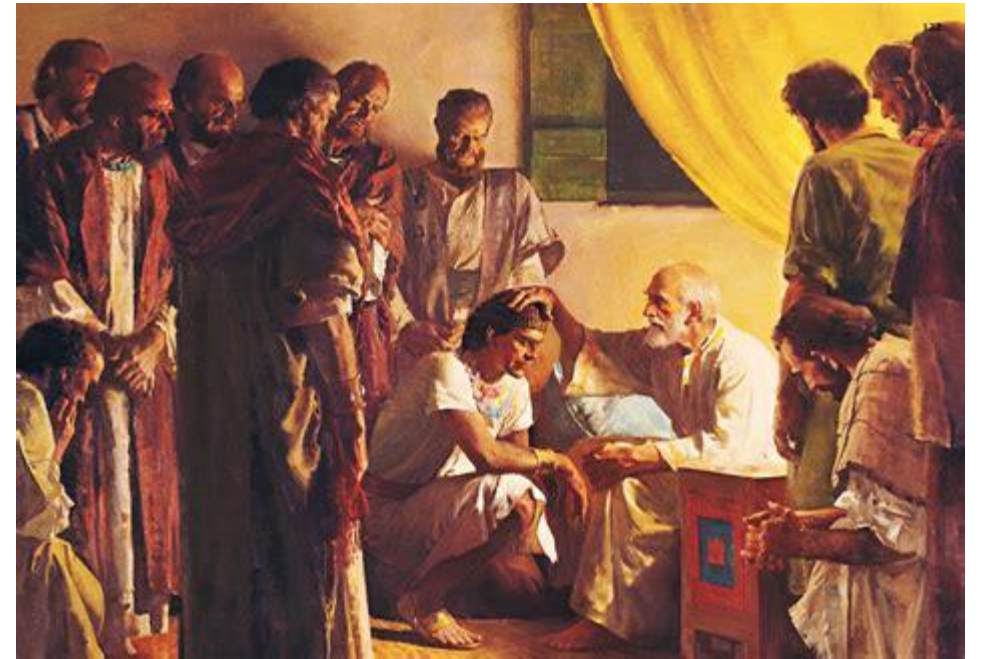
He believed the promise of God's future blessing and so passed them on to Jacob (the blessing of the firstborn – and the promised Messiah) and to Esau – his status as a great leader of a nation.



By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each of Joseph`s sons, and worshiped as he leaned on the top of his staff (bed). v21

Grace is given when his time to die comes. Jacob knowing his time was drawing to a close prophesied about his sons and their future as the nation Israel and for Judah as the line of kings and the Messiah.

The reason for the variation is that having no vowel points the LXX. understood the word to be matteh, “staff,” not mittah, “bed,”



both are true: the bed-head was effectively a support

By faith Joseph, when his end was near, spoke about the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt and gave instructions about his bones. v22



His request to have his bones taken and buried in Canaan – trusting that in the future God would fulfil his promise concerning the land (and looking forward to the day of resurrection)

Genesis 50:24-25 Then Joseph said to his brothers, "I am about to die. But God will surely come to your aid and take you up out of this land to the land he promised on oath to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob." And Joseph made the Israelites swear an oath and said, "God will surely come to your aid, and then you must carry my bones up from this place."

By faith Moses` parents hid him for three months after he was born, because they saw he was no ordinary child, and they were not afraid of the king`s edict. v23

Jochebed and Amram

Were they afraid?

Did it stop them obeying God?

(Principle- cf. midwives also ‘When the authorities order you to do something that God forbids – don’t do it’.

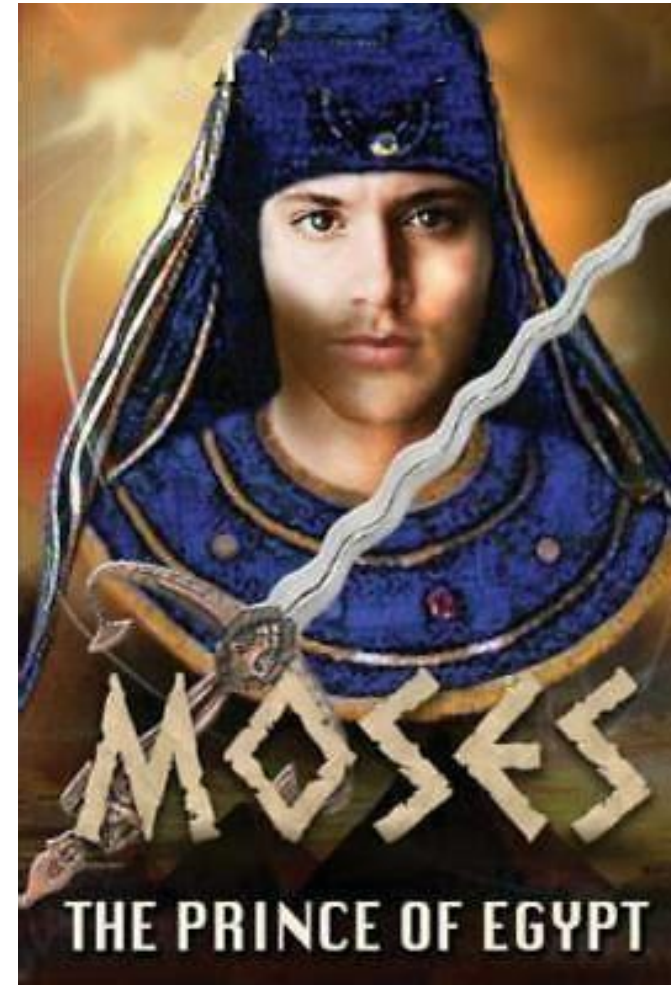
What did they see in Moses that persuaded them to protect him?



By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh's daughter. v24

He saw his identity as a son of God's promise to Abraham

Consider what he left behind.
What skills had God given him during his time in Pharaoh's palace?



He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a short time. v25

Life in the Egyptian court is used as an illustration of the world.

There was a choice to be made it must be one or the other.

Temporary problems as one the Lord's people
Or

Temporary pleasures that ultimately lead to death

Warning:-Apostacy as a temporary escape?



He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking ahead to his reward. v26

Weighing the choices –

The world's criticism for trusting the Messiah
(he is similar to Jesus as the leader of the people)

Or the world's approval and 'gifts'

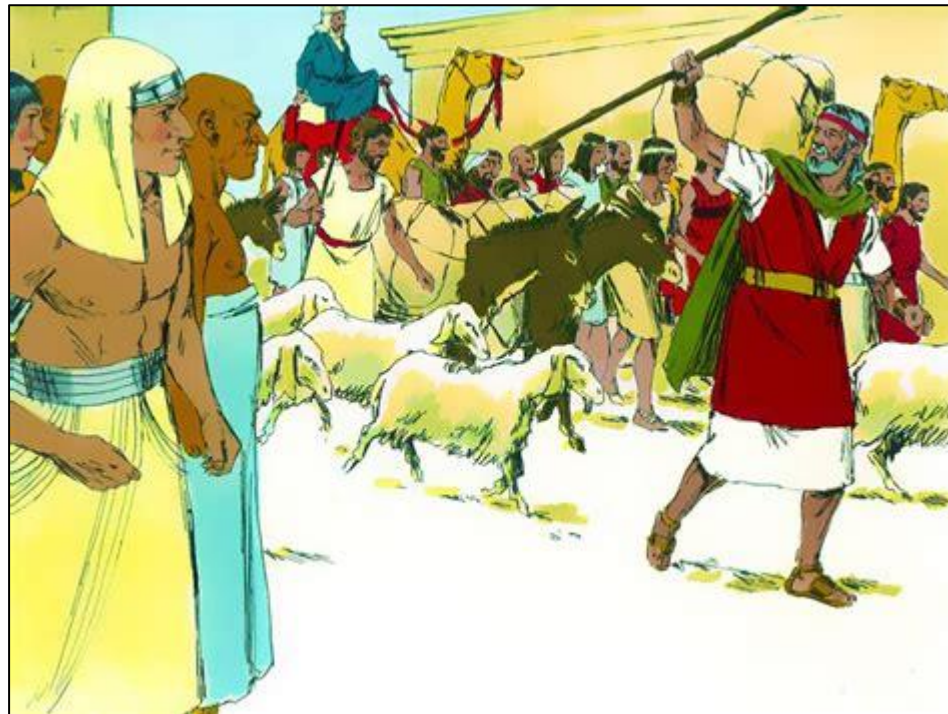
Another example of 'seeing the invisible' - faith again!

“well done – good and faithful servant”



By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the king`s anger; he persevered because he saw him who is invisible. v27

He ran the first time but when God had met and dealt with him he led out the people from the front!



Trust in the invisible God
keeps you going!

By faith he kept the Passover and the sprinkling of blood, so that the destroyer of the firstborn would not touch the firstborn of Israel. v28

He (and the Israelites) did as they were instructed because they believed God would do what he had threatened.



By faith the people passed through the Red Sea as on dry land;
but when the Egyptians tried to do so, they were drowned. v29

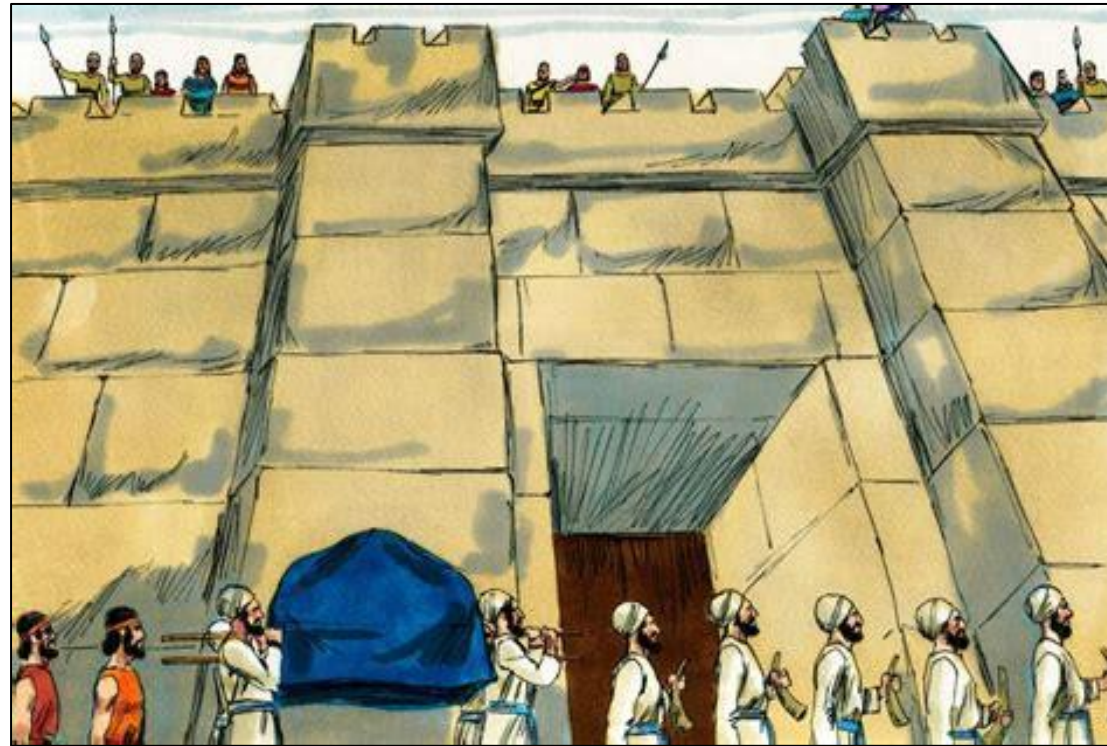
God promised a clear passage to the Israelites – not to the Egyptian army pursuing them.

The Egyptians went in so far (they saw that the waters had been parted) but only faith in God gets you through.
Works without faith brings death
--- warning!



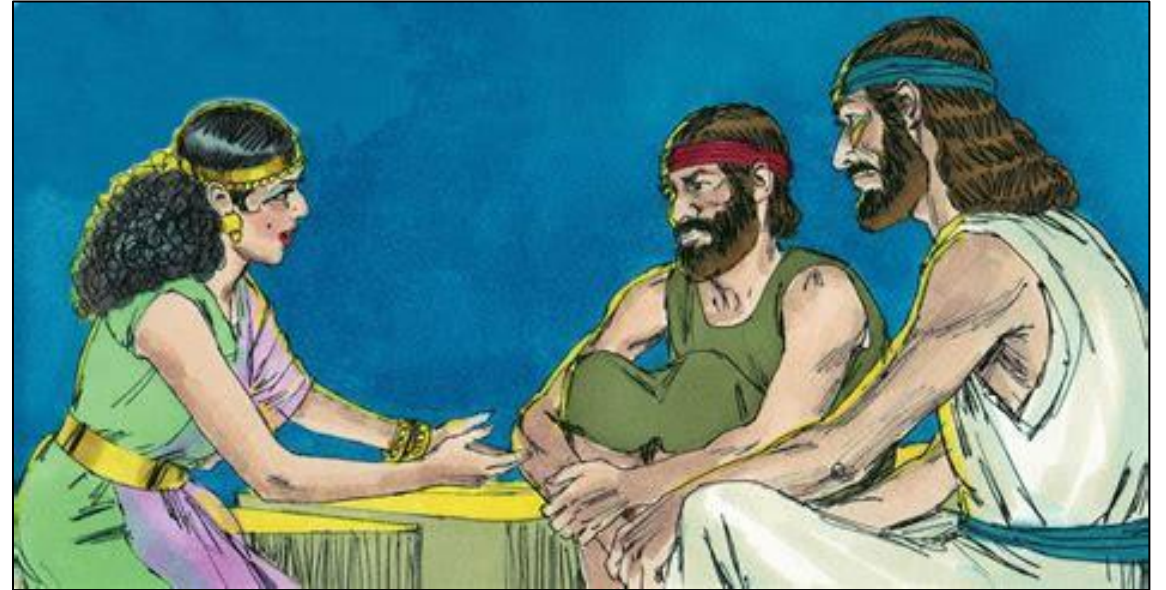
By faith the walls of Jericho fell, after the people had marched around them for **seven** days. v30

It wasn't their walking that toppled the walls – but faith that if they did what God told them, he would push them over.



By faith the prostitute Rahab, because she welcomed the spies, was not killed with those who were disobedient. v31

A fallen woman (and future ancestor of the Messiah) was saved from a doomed city because she welcomed God's servants – she believed what she had heard about the God of Israel.



Joshua 2:11 When we heard of it, our hearts melted in fear and everyone's courage failed because of you, for the LORD your God is God in heaven above and on the earth below.

And what more shall I say?

I do not have time to tell about Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah,
David, Samuel and the prophets, v32

There are many more - out of time!
Think about these...

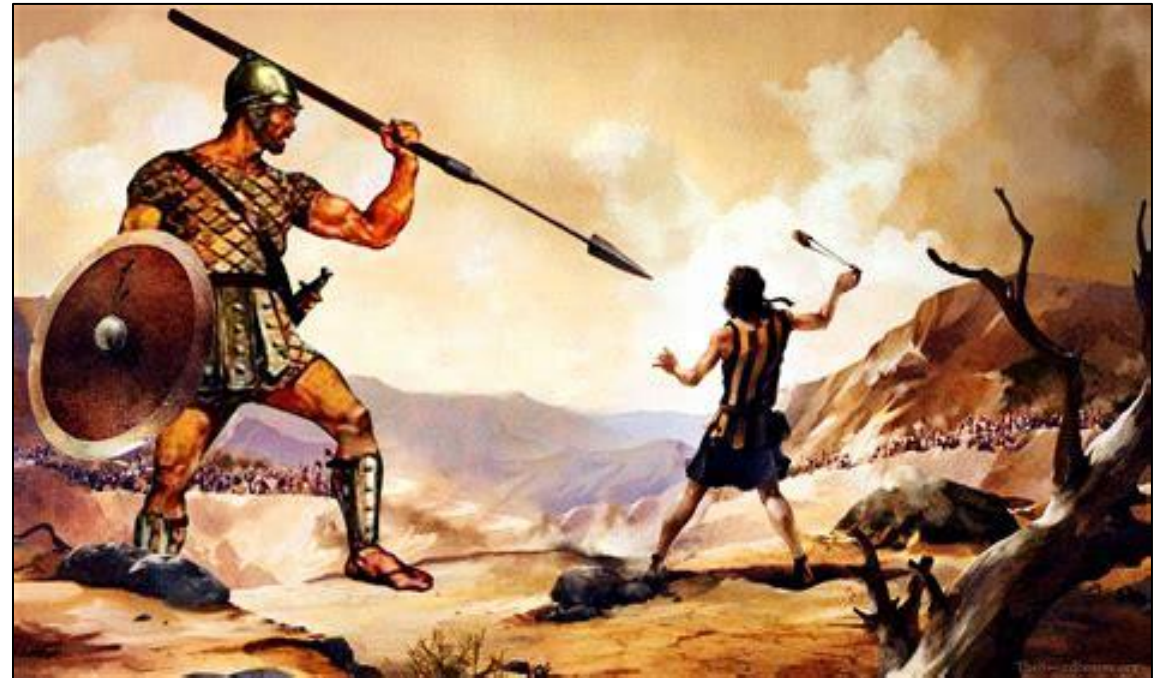
Not chronological (eg Samuel comes
before David) but arranged as groups
1, national leaders, 2, prophets



who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, and gained what was promised; v33

Against great odds – succeeded eg Joshua

Cf. wars against the Philistines,
Brought the people back to God



who shut the mouths of lions, quenched the fury of the flames, and escaped the edge of the sword; v33 -34

Daniel, Samson, Benaiah Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego.

Esther

The times of captivity and exile.



whose weakness was turned to strength;
and who became powerful in battle and routed foreign armies. v34

The source of their strength was not in themselves.

God gets the glory of the victory
cf. Jehoshaphat

It is a possible reference to Maccabees

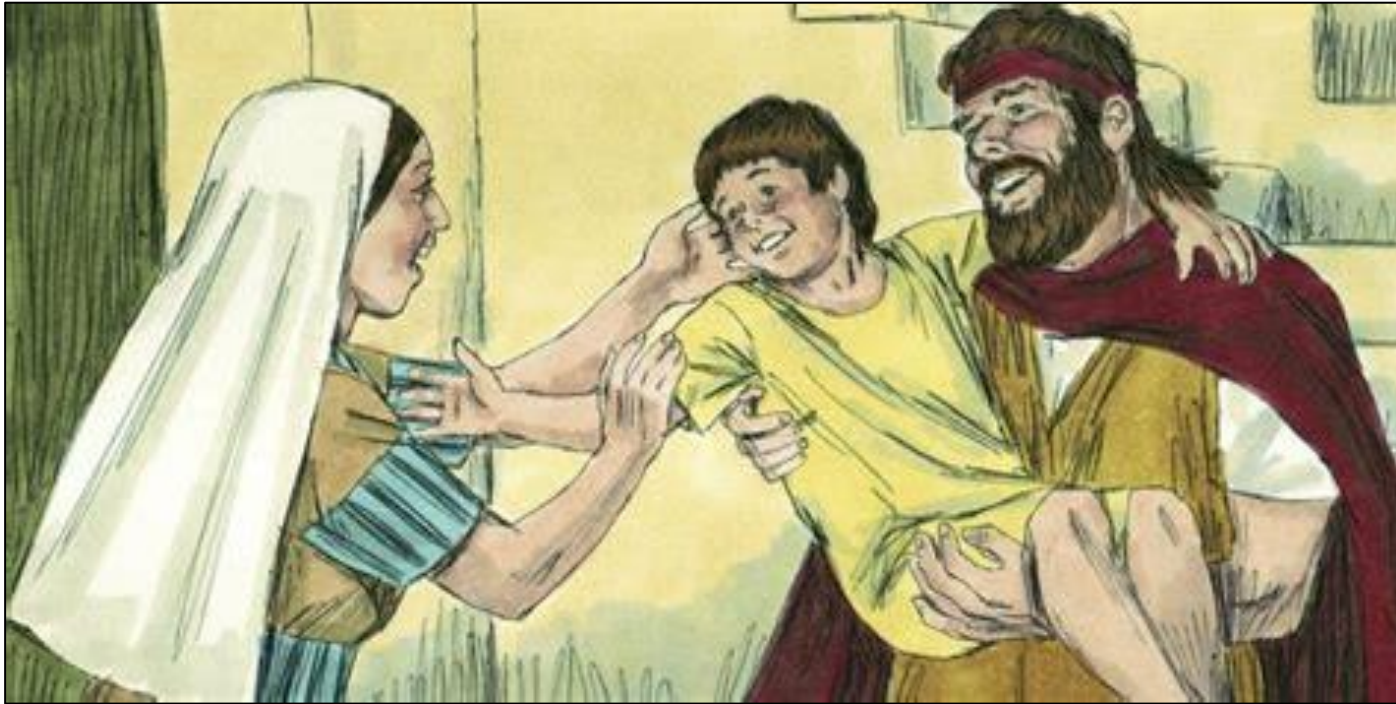


Cf. Paul – “when I am weak ...”

All were flawed people – but even little faith is powerful

Women received back their dead, raised to life again. v35

Elisha



Resurrection (?) intro to the next thought

Others v35

In praise of the 'little' people!

1 Corinthians 1:26-29 For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, so that no human being might boast in the presence of God.



Others were tortured and refused to be released, so that they might gain a better resurrection. v35

By faith, some were victorious **under** their circumstances.

the STRUGGLE

No names are given – but they are known to God

Cf. a Maccabees reference?

They are counted equally as heroes of faith.

Choose this life or the next?

Resurrection to eternal life.

Some faced jeers and flogging, while still others were chained and put in prison. v36

Degrees of persecution

Jeremiah



They were stoned; they were sawed in two;*(they were tempted)*; they were put to death by the sword. v37

Degrees of persecution

Zechariah was stoned to death between the altar and the temple, and Naboth was stoned to death by Jezebel's henchmen.

Eg Tradition says that Isaiah was killed by being sawn in two.

They went about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, persecuted and mistreated-- the world was not worthy of them. They wandered in deserts and mountains, and in caves and holes in the ground. v37-38

David, Elijah, and prophets under the leadership of Obadiah were all forced to flee and hide in caves.

Hard times!

What is the proper valuation?

The world knows the price but not the value.



These were all commended for their faith,
yet none of them received what had been promised. v39

All were commended

But as examples from the past they didn't
get to see the Messiah in their day.



Jesus said:-

For I tell you the truth, many prophets and righteous men
longed to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear
what you hear but did not hear it. (Matthew 13:17),

God had planned something better for us so that only together with us would they be made perfect. v40

For us now who know the Lord Jesus and his completed work on the cross and his resurrection life ...
... we with them become the people of God looking and knowing what the perfect fulfilment will be.

Notice : The unity of true believers through the ages!



Do you hope to have your portrait in the gallery?



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and certain of what we do not see. v1