

EXPLANATION OF 58TH BIBLEBOOK HEBREWS 11 (A.D. 64)

OUTLINE

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11:1-3. The nature and examples of faith / Christian faith involves following in the footsteps of Old Testament believers.

a. The nature of faith (11:1-3).

(1) The nature of faith.

11:1. Faith is *continually* the assurance of things *continually* hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.¹

The word 'assurance'² is *not objective* in the sense of giving 'substance' or 'essence' or 'actual being or reality' (1:3) to our hopes, *but subjective* in the sense of *the 'conviction' or 'confident assurance' or 'guarantee' that things we now hope for will in the future be realities.*

The word 'conviction'³ in 2 Timothy 3:16 has the sense of 'refutation' of error⁴, reproof, censure, correction. But the word 'conviction' in Hebrews 11:1 means (legal) 'evidence' or 'proof' that the invisible things belong to the spiritual order and that they are invisible because they belong to the future, like the fulfilment of God's promises. Physical eyesight produces evidence (and therefore conviction) of visible things, but *faith is the organ which enables people to see the invisible order*⁵.

(2) The faith of the ancients in the sense of the men and women of old⁶ (1:1).

11:2. For in this (faith) the ancients (literally. Elders, the believers in the past) were commended for (by God).⁷

The writer sets them in historical sequence, gives an outline of God's salvation history (faith and righteousness) throughout *the Old Testament period of promise* until the beginning of *the New Testament period of fulfilment*. Their faith is presented as 'a testimony' or 'divine recommendation' from the Old Testament. The Greek passive may be the so-called theological passive indicating that it is God who commends or bears witness concerning the elders. Christ is the Author and Perfecter of this faith (12:2).

(3) The faith with regard to creation.

11:3. By faith we (Christians) understand the universe was formed (*and now exists*) at the spoken word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible.⁸

This is an illustration that faith is a conviction (of the reality or existence) of things not seen. Only 'by faith' in God's revelation, Christians understand that God 'formed' the 'ages'⁹ (cf. 1:2) in the sense of the 'the whole universe of matter, energy, space and time'. The perfect tense emphasises that the universe now 'exists'.

¹ **11:1.** Faith (ἡ πίστις)(n-nf-s) is *continually* (ἐστίν>εἰμι)(vipa--zs) the assurance (ἡ ὑποστάσις)(n-nf-s) of things *continually* hoped for (ἐλπίζομενων>ἐλπίζω)(vpppgn-p), the conviction (ὁ ἐλεγχος)(n-nm-s) of things (τὸ πρᾶγμα)(n-gn-p) not seen (βλεπομεν>βλεπω)(vpppgn-p).

² ἡ ὑποστάσις

³ ὁ ἐλεγχος

⁴ 2 Timothy 3:

⁵ cf. 11:27; Romans 8:24-25

⁶ οἱ πρεσβύτεροι, οἱ πατέρας

⁷ **11:2.** For (γάρ)(cs=conjunction subordinating) in this (οὗτος-αὐτή-τούτο)(apddf-s=adjective pronominal *demonstrative pronoun* dative feminine singular) (faith) the ancients (believers in the past, lit. elders)(πρεσβυτερος-α-ον)(ap-nm-p) were commended for (εμαρτυρηθησαν>μαρτυρεω)(viar--zr (by God).

⁸ **11:3.** By faith (ἡ πίστις)(n-df-s)(dative of instrument) we (Christians) understand (νοομεν>νοεω)(vipa--xp) the universe (ὁ αἰών)(n-am-p) was formed (*and now exists*) (κατηρτισθαι>καταρτιζω)(vnp perfect tense) at the spoken word (command) (τὸ ρημα)(n-dn-s) of God (ὁ θεός)(n-gm-s), so that (εἰς)(pa=preposition accusative) what is seen (τὸ βλεπομενον)(vpppan-s) was not made (did not become *and now exists*) (γεγονενα>γινωμαι) (vna perfect tense accusative) (infinitive used to express result) out of (ἐκ)(pg) what was visible (to become visible, observable) (τὸ φαινόμενον>φαινομαι)(vppgn-p) (the empirical creation originated out of the non-empirical).

⁹ αἰώνας

In Hebrews 1:3 God made the universe by the agency of the Son of God¹⁰ and in Hebrews 11:3 he fashioned it by his ‘spoken word’, his ‘creative command’¹¹. While Greek speculation says that the ordered world was formed out of formless matter, the Bible maintains that God created the universe ‘out of nothing’ (creatio ex nihilo). Christians maintain this because they believe in God’s revelation, especially in Genesis 1-2.

b. The faith of the Antediluvians (11:4-7).

(4) The faith of Abel.

11:4. By faith Abel brought/offered to God a better or more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he had witness borne (to him) that he was righteous, *when* God bore witness (NIV when God spoke well of) in respect of his gifts (offerings). And through this (faith) he already being dead still *continues* to speak.¹²

People in the past have speculated about the word ‘better’. They said that Abel was a shepherd, but Cain only an agriculturalist. Abel offered living things, but Cain a lifeless thing. Abel offered what grew spontaneously in accordance with nature, but Cain offered what was forcibly produced by the ingenuity of covetous man. Abel offered his sacrifice in the right way, but Cain did not divide his sacrifice in the right way. Abel offered a sacrifice by shedding blood, but Cain did not shed blood. However in both cases they brought the appropriate firstfruits of their increase and were not making sacrifices of atonement! The material of their sacrifices was quite suitable.

God had regard for Abel’s sacrifice and would also have regard for Cain’s sacrifice if Cain would do well and deal with or master the sin crouching at his door¹³. Cain had to master the sin that threatened to be his undoing. The word ‘crouch’ in Hebrew is ‘robesh’, which is cognate with Akkadian ‘rabishu’, the name of a demon. ‘Sin’ is not a demon, but is depicted as an evil power lying in wait to pounce upon its prey. It is powerless against a man living righteous! Abel’s sacrifice was accepted, *because he was righteous*¹⁴ and Cain’s sacrifice was rejected, because his work was evil¹⁵. The Lord detests the sacrifices of the wicked, but the prayer of the upright pleases him¹⁶!

This helps to *understand how God views the so-called ‘good works’ of non-Christians (unbelievers)*. “All of us (the godless people of Jerusalem) have become like one who is unclean and all our righteous acts (‘righteous’ in our own eyes) are like filthy rags. Therefore we all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind our sins sweep us away”¹⁷. *Natural man cannot produce any ‘righteousness’!*

Sacrifice is acceptable to God NOT for its material content, but insofar it is *the outward expression of a devoted and obedient heart*¹⁸. Because righteousness comes only by faith (cf. 10:38; 11:6), the writer can make a statement about Abel’s faith.

Through his faith Abel continues ‘to speak’, even though he himself was dead. Abel’s blood was ‘crying’ (speaking) to God from the ground¹⁹, protesting against his murder and appealing for vindication, just like the souls of the martyrs in Revelation 6:9-10. But the blood of Jesus Christ speaks a better word (speaks more graciously, not revengeful) than the blood of Abel (12:24), because it brings a message of cleansing, forgiveness and peace with God to all who put their faith in Jesus Christ.

(5) The faith of Enoch.

11:5. By faith Enoch was transferred (translated) to (another place) not seeing (=experiencing) death. And he was not found because God had taken him away. For before he was taken, he was commended (as) one who pleased God.²⁰

¹⁰ John 1:3

¹¹ cf. Genesis 1:3

¹² **11:4.** By faith Abel brought/offered (προσηνεγκεν>προσφερω)(viaa--zs) to God (ο θεος)(n-dm-s) a better or more excellent (πλειων-ον, πλειστος-η-ον)(a-maf-s)(coMparative of πολλος) sacrifice (η θυσια)(n-af-s) than (παρα)(pa) Cain, through (δια)(pg) which (ης)(aprgf-s relative pronoun)(this faith) he had witness borne (to him) (εμαρτυρηθη>μαρτυρω)(viap--zs) that he was (ειναι>ειμι)(vnpa) righteous (δικαιος-α-ον)(a--nm-s), *when* God (του θεου) bore witness (NIV when God spoke well of) (μαρτυρουντος>μαρτυρω) (vppagm-s) in respect (επι)(pd) of his (αυτου)(npgmzs=noun pronoun genitive masculine 3rd person singular) gifts (offerings) (το δωρον)(n-dn-p). And through (δια)(pg) this (ουτος-αυτη-τουτο)(npgfzs)(faith) he already being dead (αποθανων>αποθνησκω)(vpaanm-s) still (ετι)(ab=adverb) *continues* to speak (λαλει>λαλεω)(vipa-zs).

¹³ Genesis 4:7

¹⁴ Matthew 23:35

¹⁵ 1 John 3:12

¹⁶ Proverbs 15:8; cf. Isaiah 1:13

¹⁷ Isaiah 64:6

¹⁸ cf. 1 Samuel 15:22-23; Psalm 40:6-8 / Hebrews 10:5-8; Isaiah 1:11-18; Hosea 6:6; Micah 6:6-8

¹⁹ Genesis 4:10

²⁰ **11:5.** By faith Enoch was transferred (translated) (μετετεθη>μετατιθημι)(viap--zs) to (του) (dgn= determiner/definite article genitive neuter singular) (another place) not seeing (=experiencing) (ιδειν>οραω)(vnaa genitive) death (ο θανατος)(n-am-s). And (και) he was not (ουχ)(ab) found (ηυρισκατο>ευρισκω)(viip--zs) because (διоти)(cs=conjunction subordinating) God (ο θεος)(n-nm-s) had taken away (μετεθηκεν>μετατιθημι)(viaa--zs) him (αυτου-η-ον)(n-pamzs=noun pronoun accusative masculine 3rd person singular). For before (προ)(pg = preposition genitive) he was taken (μεταθεσεως>η μεταθεσις)(n-gf-s), he was commended (εμαρτυρηται>μαρτυρω)(viip--zs *perfect tense*) (as) one who pleased (ευαρεστηκεναι>ευαρεστω)(vnaa *perfect tense*) God (ο θεος)(n-dm-s).

He was commended to be a person that pleased God before he was taken from this life. “The Hebrew ‘Enoch walked with God’ is rendered in the Greek translation: “He was well-pleasing to God”²¹. ‘Walking with God’ in the Old Testament revelation consisted of a personal relationship with God accompanied by the practice of justice and lovingkindness²². *God is only pleased with a righteous life and righteousness comes only by faith!* Therefore, the writer could make a statement about Enoch’s faith.

The Hebrew “He was not; for God took him” is rendered in the Greek translation: “He was not found, because God ‘translated’ him”²³. The New Testament (11:5) follows the Greek Old Testament translation. *The word ‘translated’ denotes a turning, changing or transformation for the better, a transfer or move to a new home. Here it is a reference to the ‘transfer’ or ‘translation’ of Enoch (his soul) to heaven.*²⁴ However, the emphasis is not on the word ‘transfer’, but on the fact that Enoch was righteous and therefore had faith (cf. 10:38).

(6) Faith is indispensable.

11:6. And without faith it is impossible to please (God), because he who approaches God must believe that he (God) is (exists) and is a rewarder to those who earnestly seek him.²⁵

Without faith it is impossible to be justified or to please God. *Without faith it is impossible to be righteous or do righteousness!* This faith is a faith in the invisible order and a faith in what is still a future reality! (That is why Christians do not revere visible idols or ‘gods’ invented by religions or philosophers). It is not a belief in the existence of ‘a god’, but a believe in the existence of ‘the only living God’²⁶, ‘the God of the Bible’, who revealed himself through the Old Testament prophets and finally in Jesus Christ (1:1). Those who ‘approach’ him (cf. 4:16; 7:25; 10:22; 11:6) can do so in full confidence that he exists, that his word is true and that he will never reject or disappoint a person that sincerely ‘seeks’ (searches out) him. *The reward for earnestly seeking the God of the Bible is the joy of finding him!* God himself is the ultimate joy of believers²⁷. Faith is thus a faith in the existence of the invisible God and a faith that waits patiently and confidently for the reward promised (10:35-26).

(7) The faith of Noah.

11:7. By faith Noah warned about things not yet seen, in holy fear constructed an ark for the salvation of his household, through which he condemned the world and became an heir of the righteousness according to the standard of faith.²⁸

His faith begins with God’s word: a ‘divine revelation, injunction or warning’. Noah believed that God would certainly do what he (God) said. Faith then brought Noah into action and his faith is made complete by his action²⁹. God announced to Noah that he would do something that has never happened before in the experience of Noah or his contemporaries (the flood). Noah’s faith took the form of a conviction of things not seen and of things still future. The ‘building’ or ‘construction’ of the ark far inland and over such a long period of time must have seemed absurd to his contemporaries, but in the end his faith was vindicated and their unbelief was condemned. Noah became the heir of righteousness which is according to faith. His faith was his ready acceptance of what God had said.

Noah in the New Testament.

- The flood of Noah’s day that destroyed the wicked is an illustration of the sudden final judgement and a foreshadowing of the second coming of Jesus Christ³⁰.
- The safe passage through the waters which overwhelmed others is a symbol of Christian baptism³¹.
- Noah himself is described as ‘a preacher of righteousness’³².

²¹ Genesis 5:24a

²² Micah 6:8; Genesis 17:1; Genesis 24:40; Genesis 48:15

²³ Genesis 5:24b

²⁴ Ecclesiastes 12:7; Luke 23:46. It is not making a statement about Enoch’s body.

²⁵ **11:6.** And (δε)(cc) without (χωρις)(pg) faith (η πιστις)(n-gf-s) it is impossible (αδυνατος-ον)(a--nn-s) to please (ευαρεστησαι>ευαρεστειω) (vnaa) (God), because (γαρ)(cs) he who approaches (προσερχομενον>προσερχομαι)(vppnam-s) God (ο θεος)(n-dm-s) must (δει)(vipa--zs) believe (πιστευσαι>πιστειω)(vnaa) that (οτι)(cc=conjunction coordinating) he (God) is (exists) (εστιν>ειμι)(vipa--zs) and (και) is (γινεται>γινομαι)(vipn--zs) a rewarder (ο μισθαποδοτης)(n-nm-s) to those who earnestly seek (εκζητουσιν>εκζητεω)(vppadm-p) him (αυτος-η-ο)(npamzs).

²⁶ Isaiah 43:10-11

²⁷ Psalm 43:4

²⁸ **11:7.** By faith Noah warned (given divine instruction) (χρηματισθεις>χρηματιζω)(vppnm-s) about (περι)(pg) things not yet (μηδεπω)(ab) seen (βλεπομενων>βλεπω)(vpprgn-p), in holy fear (acting with reverence) (ευλαβηθεις>ευλαβεομαι)(vraonm-s, o=pas dep) constructed (κατεσκευασεν>κατασκευαζω) (viaa--zs) an ark (η κιβωτος)(n-af-s) for (εις)(pa) the salvation (η σωτηρια)(n-af-s) of his (αυτος-η-ο)(npgmzs) household (ο οικος)(n-gm-s), through (δια)(pg) which (ης)(aprgf-s=adjective pronominal relative feminine singular) (this faith) he condemned (passed judgement) (κατεκρινεν>κατακρινω)(viaa-zs) the world (ο κοσμος)(n-am-s) and (και) became (εγενετο>γινομαι)(viad--zs) an heir (ο κληρονομος)(n-nm-s) of the righteousness (η δικαιοσυνη) (n-gf-s) according to (κατα)(pa) the standard of faith (πιστις)(n-af-s).

²⁹ James 2:22

³⁰ Matthew 24:37-39

³¹ 1 Peter 3:20-21

³² 2 Peter 2:5

- The connection between grace and righteousness. “Noah found favour (grace) in God’s eyes. Noah was a righteous man”³³.
- The connection between faith and obedience. “Noah did everything just as God commanded him”³⁴

c. The faith of Abraham (11:8-12).

(8) The faith of Abraham.

11:8. By faith Abraham *when* called obeyed to go out to a place which he was about to receive as an inheritance, and he went out not knowing where he was going.³⁵

11:9. By faith he made his home in the land of promise as a stranger, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, (being) heirs together of the same promise.³⁶

His faith begins with God’s word: a divine call. He believed that God could certainly do what he (God) had promised. Faith then brought Abraham into action and his faith was made complete by his action³⁷. God called Abraham to go to a country he did not know and to live there without ever possessing it in person. He took God at his word. He believed, obeyed and went³⁸. His outward obedience was the visible evidence of his inward faith!

11:10. For he was looking forward to (awaiting expectantly for) the city that has foundations, whose architect and builder (is) God.³⁹

Looking forward to the future reality: God’s world and God’s city. God’s covenant promise⁴⁰ to Abraham was reconfirmed several times:

- along with the promise of an heir⁴¹
- and again reconfirmed after the requirement of circumcision⁴²
- and finally reconfirmed after he was willing to sacrifice his son Isaac⁴³.

God’s promised inheritance was not an incentive to obedience, but the reward for obedience. The covenant promise was not the visible possession of the land, but to Abraham *the promise of God was as substantial as its realisation!* Thereafter Abraham lived keeping that promise in his mind. Year after year he pitched his moving tent amid the settled inhabitants of Palestine. He was “in the land, but not of the land”⁴⁴. He was “*Abraham, the Hebrew*”⁴⁵. He commanded respect in the land as “a prince of God”⁴⁶, but he did not own a square centimetre of the promised land until he bought the field of Machpelah as a burial ground. He *lived as a stranger in a foreign land.*

The secret of his patience was that his faith and his hope were not fixed on a transient kingdom of the temporal order, but on the eternal reality. Just like *the true rest of God is not the earthly Canaan* in the time of Joshua (4:8), *so the only city with enduring foundations was not the earthly Jerusalem.* God himself was ‘the architect’, ‘craftsman’, ‘designer’ or ‘maker’ of the plan and ‘builder’, ‘constructor’ or ‘maker’ that executes the plan.

He was looking forward to the new world⁴⁷ and the heavenly Jerusalem, the kingdom of God in the spiritual and eternal order, which became effectively accessible by the completion of Christ’s high priestly work and into which all believers in Christ come to be enrolled as true citizens⁴⁸. Only since the first coming of Jesus Christ, Abraham and the other Old

³³ Hebrew: saddiq, Greek: δικαιοσ. Hebrew: hen, Greek: χαρις. Genesis 6:8-9

³⁴ Genesis 6:22

³⁵ **11:8.** By faith Abraham *when* called (καλουμενος>καλεω)(vppnm-s) obeyed (υπηκουσεν>υπακοω)(viaa--zs) to go out (εξελθειν>εξερχομαι) (vnaa) to (εις)(pa) a place (ο τοπος)(n-am-s) which (ον)(apram-s relative) he was about (ημελλεν>μελλω)(via-zs+) to receive (λαμβανειν>λαμβανω)(+vnpa) as (εις)(pa) an inheritance (η κληρονομια)(n-af-s), and (και) he went out (εξηλθεν>εξερχομαι) (viaa--zs) not (μη)(adverb) knowing (επισταμενος>επισταμαι)(vppnm-m-s) where (που)(abi interrogative adverb) he was going (ερχεται) (vipn--zs).

³⁶ **11:9.** By faith he made his home (lived) (παρωκησεν>παροικεω)(viaa--zs) in (εις)(pa) the land (η γη)(n-af-s) of promise (η επαγγελια)(n-gf-s) as (ως)(cs) a stranger (αλλοτριος>α-ον)(ap-af-s), living (κατοικησας>κατοικεω)(vraanm-s) in (εν)(pd) tents (η σκηνη)(n-df-p) with (μετα)(pg) Isaac and Jacob, (being) heirs together (συνκληρονομος>ον)(ap-gm-p) of the same (ο αυτος>η αυτη>το ουτο)(a--gf-s) promise (η επαγγελια)(n-gf-s).

³⁷ James 2:22

³⁸ Genesis 26:4-5

³⁹ **11:10.** For (γαρ)(cs) he was looking forward to (awaiting expectantly for) (εξεδεχeto>εκδεχομαι)(viin--zs) the city (η πολις)(n-af-so) that has (εχουσαν>εχω)(vppaaf-s) foundations (ο θεμελιος)(n-am-p), whose (ης)(aprgf-s=adjective pronominal relative genitive feminine singular) architect (ο τεχνητης)(n-nm-s) and builder (ο δημιουργος)(n-nm-s) (is) God (ο θεος)(n-nm-s).

⁴⁰ Genesis 12:1-3

⁴¹ Genesis 15:18-19

⁴² Genesis 17:8

⁴³ Genesis 22:16-18

⁴⁴ cf. John 17:11,14

⁴⁵ Genesis 14:13 cf. Jacob was a wandering Aramean (Deuteronomy 26:5); his father was an Amorite and his mother a Hittite (Ezekiel 16:3,44-48)

⁴⁶ Genesis 23:6

⁴⁷ Romans 4:13

⁴⁸ cf. 11:16; 12:22-24; 13:14; Philippians 3:20; Galatians 4:26

Testament believers equally enjoy the blessings of New Testament believers in the heavenly Jerusalem, because they are “alive to God”⁴⁹. *They, who walked with God on the earth, now live to God in heaven!*

11:11. By faith he (Abraham, being very old) --- // even together with Sarah herself being barren (sterile)⁵⁰ (dative case instead of nominative case) // --- received the ability to sow seed (to father, to beget)(something a woman could not do, and therefore cannot be interpreted as ‘to conceive’) even though he was past the right time of life, because he considered the one who promised (to be) faithful.⁵¹

Abraham received ability to father a child. Abraham laughed in appreciation of the divine absurdity of the situation and God told him to call his son Isaac, which means ‘he laughs’. But he believed what God said⁵². Sarah also laughed in disbelief and then lied saying “I did not laugh”.⁵³ The problem with translating verse 11 is that Sarah was not an example of faith and moreover that the Greek words ‘deposition of seed’⁵⁴ refer to the father’s part in the generative process and not to the mother’s part. ‘Deposition of seed’ cannot be construed to mean ‘conception of seed’. The solution is to construe the words in the dative case instead of the nominative case. Then verse 11 still speaks of Abraham’s faith and not of Sarah’s faith!

Correct translation: “By faith he (Abraham), even together with Sarah being barren (sterile), received the ability to (father, sow seed) beget a child even though he was past the proper age, because he counted him faithful who had promised”. Verse 12 follows on very naturally.

11:12. Therefore also from one (man)(Abraham), and these (Abraham and Sarah) as good as dead (impotent), there was born (descendants) so numerous (in number) as the stars in the sky and as uncountable as the sand that (is) along the shore of the sea.⁵⁵

God’s covenant promise was fulfilled⁵⁶! Paul says that when Abraham received God’s covenant promise, he weighed up all the adverse circumstances - “without being weakened in faith he considered his own body now as good as dead (he being about a hundred years old), and the deadness of Sarah’s womb⁵⁷ - and yet concluded that the certainty of God’s promise far outweighed all the negatives. In his hopeless situation Abraham hoped in God. That is why God counted his faith as righteousness⁵⁸.

d. Faith looks forward to the heavenly city⁵⁹.

(9) The faith of the patriarchs.

11:13. (Living) according to the principle of faith, these all died. Not receiving the things promised, but from a long distance seeing and welcoming them (the fulfilment of these promises). And admitting that they were aliens and strangers (pilgrims) on the earth.⁶⁰

Seeing and welcoming the future reality. “These all” were generally all the Old Testament believers, who died in faith without having received the fulfilment of God’s promises, but who saw them by faith and greeted them from afar (11:39).

⁴⁹ Luke 20:37-38

⁵⁰ Galatians 4:27. Blass Debrunner

⁵¹ **11:11.** “By faith he (Abraham being very old) --- //even (kai) ‘together with Sarah herself (αυτος-η-ο)(nprfzs=noun pronoun nominative feminine 3rd person singular) (=αυτη Ζαρα with ‘υ’ under the ‘η’ and ‘α’)(dative case) being barren (sterile) (η στεριρα)(with ‘υ’ under the ‘α’)(dative case) (instead of: ‘and Sarah herself’ (αυτης-η-ον)(nominative case)//--- received (ελαβεν>λαμβανω)(viaa--zs) the ability (power) (η δυναμις)(n-af-s to sow (εις + η καταβολη)(t.t. for sowing seed in the sense of begetting) seed (το σπερμα) (to father, to beget)(something

a woman could not do! And therefore cannot be interpreted as “to conceive seed” or “to become pregnant”) even though (και) he was past (παρα)(pa) the right (proper) (καιρος-α-ον)(a--am-s) time of life (age)(η ηλικια)(n-gf-s), because (επει)(cs=conjunction subordinate) he considered (counted, regarded) (ιγησατο>ιγεομαι)(viad--zs) the one who promised (επαγγελιαμενον>επαγγελλω)(vpadam-s) (to be) faithful (πιστος-α-ον)(a--am-s).

⁵² Genesis 17:17 and Genesis 15:6.

⁵³ Genesis 18:10-17.

⁵⁴ καταβολην σπερματος

⁵⁵ **11:12.** Therefore (διο)(cs) also (και) from (απο)(pg) one (man)(Abraham)(ενος>εις, εν)(apcgm-s cardinal), and these (Abraham and Sarah) (ουτος-αυτη-τουτο)(considered) as good as dead (impotent) (νεκρωμενον>νεκροομαι)(vprpgrm-s perfect tense), there was born (εγεννηθησαν>γεννω)(viar--zp) (descendants) so (καθως) numerous (in number/quantity) (το πληθος)(n-dn-s) as the stars (το αστρον) (n-nn-p) in the sky (ο ουρανος)(n-gm-s) and as (ως) (cs) countless (η αναριθμητος-ον)(innumerable/uncountable)(a--nf-s) as the sand (η αμμος)(n-nf-s) that (η)(dnfs=determiner/definite article neuter feminine singular) (is) along (παρα)(pa) the shore (bank, lips)(το χειλος)(nan-s) of the sea (η θαλασσης)(n-gf-s).

⁵⁶ Genesis 15:5; 22:17

⁵⁷ Romans 4:19

⁵⁸ Romans 4:22

⁵⁹ The destination was ‘the heavenly city/country’ and not any earthly country. Therefore the State of Israel founded in 1948 is not ‘the Israel of God’.

⁶⁰ **11:13.** (living) according (κατα)(pa) to the principle of faith (η πιστις)(n-af-s), these (ουτος-αυτη-τουτο)(apdnm-p= adjective pronominal Demonstrative nominative masculine plural) all (πας)(a--nm-p) died (απεθανον>αποθνησκω)(viaa--zp). Not (without)(μη)(ab) receiving (λαβοντες>λαμβανω)(vpaanm-p) the things promised (η επαγγελια)(n-af-p), but (αλλα)(ch=conjunction hyper/supercoordinating) from a long distance (afar) (πορρωθεν)(ab) seeing (ιδοντες>οραω)(vpaanm-p) and welcoming (ασπασαμενοι>ασπαζομαι)(vpadnm-p) them (αυτας)(npafzp). And (και) admitting (saying the same thing as God) (ομολογησαντες>ομολογεω) (vpaanm-p) that (οτι)(cc=conjunction coordinating) they were (εισιν)(vira--zp) aliens (ξενος-η-ον)(ap-nm-p) and (και) strangers (pilgrims)(παρεδιδημος-ον)(ap-nm-p) on (επι)(pg) the earth (η γη)(n-gf-s).

“These all” were prominently Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, who lived as strangers and pilgrims on earth (within the promised land)! They accepted their status as ‘pilgrims’⁶¹.

11:14. People who say such things show that they are *continually* looking (striving) for a homeland (fatherland) of their own.⁶²

The fulfilment was not found on this earth. The believers strive after (seek to find) a homeland. Yet *they did not find it on earth (in Canaan).* Canaan was not their home because they sought the country of their heart’s desire⁶³.

11:15. And if they had been thinking (had in mind) of that (country, e.g. Mesopotamia) from which they had departed they would have had opportunity to return.⁶⁴

If they had thought of Mesopotamia as their true home (fatherland, motherland), they could have returned. Abraham forbade his servant to bring Isaac to Mesopotamia⁶⁵.

Later Jacob fled from Esau to Mesopotamia, but his vision at Bethel on the first night of his journey there made it impossible for him ever to think of Mesopotamia as his home. Twenty years later “Canaan was the land of his fathers”⁶⁶, even if he had no settled abode in it.

11:16. But now they were striving for a better (country), that is a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed of them to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them.⁶⁷

Striving towards the true homeland. The true homeland they strove for was not on earth (not Canaan), but in heaven (namely, the Heavenly Jerusalem). The earthly Canaan and the earthly Jerusalem were temporary object lessons pointing to the everlasting ‘rest’ of all believers. ‘The Heavenly Jerusalem’ is the city with foundations, of which God himself is the architect and builder (11:10), ‘the better and heavenly country’ (11:16). After the first coming of Christ, the Heavenly Jerusalem is also ‘the spiritual mother’ of the New Testament believers⁶⁸. After the second coming of Christ, the Heavenly Jerusalem would become ‘the New Jerusalem’⁶⁹.

The Old Testament believers have a share in the same inheritance of glory as is promised to the New Testament believers. *There is no spiritual warrant to make a distinction between the people of God in the Old Testament period and the people of God in the New Testament period⁷⁰, except that God’s Old Testament people were unemancipated children of God under tutelage/supervision of the (ceremonial) law in order to lead them to Christ, while God’s New Testament people are emancipated sons of God through faith in Jesus Christ!⁷¹*

e. *The faith of the patriarchs until Joseph (11:17-23) about ‘things to come’ (11:20).*

(10) The faith of Abraham tested in offering his only son.

11:17. By faith Abraham being tested had brought as a sacrifice Isaac (*in his mind already an accomplished fact*). And he who had received the promises *was about to (on the point of)* offer his one and only (son).⁷²

Abraham’s faith concerning things to come, was tested⁷³. The perfect tense of the verb ‘offered’ may denote the completion of the sacrifice so far as Abraham’s resolution was concerned! The imperfect tense indicates that, so far as

⁶¹ Genesis 23:4; Genesis 47:9; cf. 1 Peter 2:11

⁶² **11:14.** People who say (λεγοντες>λεγω)(vrpanm-p) such things (τοιαντος-α-ον)(apdan-p *demonstrative*) show (εμφανιζουσιν>εμφανιζω) (vira--zp) that (στι)(cc) they are *continually* looking (striving) for (επιζητουςιν>επιζητεω)(vira--zp) a homeland (fatherland) (η πατρια)(n-af-s) (of their own).

⁶³ cf. Galatians 4:26; Philippians 3:20

⁶⁴ **11:15.** And if (κα ε μεν) they had been thinking (had in mind) (εμεινονευσον>μνημονεω)(viaa--zp) of that (εκεινος-η-ον)(apdgrf-s) (country) (e.g. Mesopotamia) from (αφ/απο)(pg) which (ης)(aprgf-s *relative*) they had departed (εξεβησαν>εκβανω)(viaa--zp) they would (ον)(qv=particle verbal) have had (ειχον>εχω)(via--zp) opportunity (ο καρος)(n-am-s) to return (turn back again) (ανακαμψω >ανακαμπτω)(vnaa).

⁶⁵ Genesis 24:6

⁶⁶ Genesis 31:3

⁶⁷ **11:16.** But (δε)(ch=conjunction hyper/superordinating) now (as it is) (νυν)(ab=adverb) they were striving for (ορεγονται>ορεγομαι)(virm--zp) a better (preferable) (κρειττων-ον)(apmgf-s *comparative*)(comparative of αγαθος) (country), that (ουτος-αυτη-τουτο)(apdnn-s *demonstrative*) is (εστιν>ειμι)(vira--zs) a heavenly one (επουρανος-ον)(a---gf-s). Therefore (διο)(ch) God (ο θεος)(n-nm-s) is not ashamed (επαισχυνεται>επαισχηνομαι) (virm--zs) of them (αυτους)(npramzr=noun pronoun accusative masculine 3rd person plural) to be called (επικαλιθαι>επικαλεω)(vnrp) their (αυτος-η-το)(nrgmzr) God, for (γαρ) he has prepared (ητοιμασεν>ητοιμαζω)(viaa--zs) a city (η πολις)(n-af-s) for them (αυτοις)(nrdmzr).

⁶⁸ Galatians 4:24-27; Hebrews 12:22-24; Hebrews 13:14

⁶⁹ Revelation 21:1-2

⁷⁰ cf. Hebrews 11:40

⁷¹ Galatians 3:15 – 4:7

⁷² **11:17.** By faith Abraham being tested (by God) (divine passive) (πειραζομενος>πειραζω)(vrppnm-s) had brought as a sacrifice Isaac (*in his mind already an accomplished fact*)(προσενηνοχεν> προσφερω)(vira--zs)(*perfect tense*). And he who had received (αναδεξαμενος >αναδεχομαι) (vrpadnm-s) the promises (η επαγγελια)(n-af-s) *was about to (on the point of)* offer (bring as a sacrifice) (προσφερεν>προσφερω) (viaa--zs)(*imperfect tense*) his one and only (μυνογενης-ες)(ap-am-s)(son).

⁷³ Genesis 22:1

outward action was concerned, the sacrifice was not completed by Isaac's death. Translate: "He was on the point of offering up".

Abraham's only begotten son.

- This expression corresponds to the Hebrew: 'only one'⁷⁴, and Greek: 'beloved'⁷⁵ and Symmachus: 'only'⁷⁶. The Hebrew adjective combines both ideas: 'only one' and 'beloved'.
- Three times the word 'μονογενής' is used for 'the only child'⁷⁷.
- John's application of this term to Jesus Christ⁷⁸ is practically synonymous with 'beloved'⁷⁹ in Mark 1:11; 9:7 and 'chosen'⁸⁰ in Luke 9:35.
- In the parable of the vineyard⁸¹ the proprietor "had yet one, a beloved son"⁸². "He did not spare his 'own'⁸³ son", in which the Greek 'ιδιος' represents the Hebrew 'jachid' as also in Acts 20:28: God purchased the church with the blood of his own", that is, "his only begotten son".
- Isaac was unique and irreplaceable. This is the point of the expression: "only begotten". God said to Abraham about Isaac, "Take your son, your only son, Isaac, whom you love"⁸⁴. Abraham had to sacrifice him!

11:18. To whom he (God) said, "It is through Isaac that he shall *certainly* be called your offspring."⁸⁵

11:19. (Abraham) reasoning that God was able to raise the dead, wherefore in a parable (figuratively speaking) he did receive him back (from death).⁸⁶

Abraham's faith was concerning 'things to come'. Abraham's faith was an assurance of things hoped for, a conviction of things not seen (11:11). He set an example of faith manifested in action. He demonstrated his faith in the promises of God. God imputing (regarding, ascribing, crediting) Abraham's faith to him as righteousness⁸⁷ preceded the sacrificing of Isaac by many years⁸⁸, but his sacrifice of Isaac showed how implicit was his faith in God's promise and in God's power to fulfil the promise, come what might.

Apart from his natural affection for his only son, *Abraham's problem was how the promise of God could be reconciled to the command of God*. Abraham, however, treated this as God's problem. *It was for God and not for Abraham to reconcile his promise and his command!*

Abraham reasoned that God could raise the dead. In Genesis 22:5 Abraham says to his servants, "The boy and I will go there and worship, and we will come back to you". The plain meaning of these words are that Abraham expected to come back with Isaac (alive) after he had sacrificed him. Thus he believed that God would raise him up from the dead!

Figuratively speaking Abraham did receive Isaac back from the dead. So far as Abraham's resolution was concerned, Isaac was as good as dead, and it was practically from the dead that he received him back when God stopped his hand in mid-air and forbade him to proceed further. 'In a figure'⁸⁹ Abraham received Isaac back from the dead, probably in a manner that (Isaac's stay in life/resurrection) prefigured the resurrection of Jesus Christ. John refers to this in John 8:56, "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day (e.g. to see Jesus' day of resurrection, Jesus being a descendant of the resurrected Isaac, the Isaac who stayed in life); and he saw it; and was glad". The words in John 8:56 may also refer to Abraham's reply to Isaac, "God will provide for himself the lamb (e.g. the future Jesus Christ) for the burnt-offering"⁹⁰.

(11) The faith of Isaac concerning things to come (the future).

11:20. By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau in regard to the things about to happen (in the future).⁹¹

⁷⁴ 'jachid' Genesis 22:2

⁷⁵ αγαπητος Matthew 3:17

⁷⁶ μονος

⁷⁷ Luke 7:12; Luke 8:42; Luke 9:38

⁷⁸ John 1:14,18; John 3:16,18; 1 John 4:9

⁷⁹ αγαπητος

⁸⁰ εκλεγμενος

⁸¹ Mark 12:6

⁸² ετι ενα ειχεν, υιον αγαπητον

⁸³ ιδιος

⁸⁴ Genesis 22:2

⁸⁵ **11:18.** To (towards) (προς)(pa=preposition + accusative) whom (ον)(apram-s relative) he (God) said (ελαληθη>λαλεω)(viap--zs), "It is through (εν)(pd) Isaac that he shall *certainly* be called (κληθησεται>καλεω)(vifp--zs) your (σου)(npd-ys) offspring (descendants) (το σπερμα)(n-nm-s).

⁸⁶ **11:19.** (Abraham) reasoning (λογισαμενος>λογιζομαι)(vpadm-n-s d=mid dep) that (οτι)(cc=conjunction coordinating) God (ο θεος)(n-nm-s) was

able (δυνατος-η-ον)(a--nm-s) to raise (εγειρειν>εγειρω)(vnpa) the dead (ο νεκρος)(ap-gm-p), wherefore (οθεν)(ab) in (εν)(pd) a parable (η παραβολη)(n-df-s) (figuratively speaking) he did receive back (εκομισατο>κομιζω)(viam--zs) him (αυτος-η-ον)(npamzs)(Isaac) (from death).

⁸⁷ Genesis 15:6

⁸⁸ Genesis 22

⁸⁹ εν παραβολη

⁹⁰ Genesis 22:8

⁹¹ **11:20.** By faith Isaac blessed (ευλογησεν>ευλογεω)(viaa--zs) Jacob and Esau in regard to (περι)(pg) the things about to happen (in the future) (τα μελλοντα>μελλω)(vpagn-p).

God reaffirmed his covenant promise to Isaac⁹². When he learned that Jacob had received the blessing intended for Esau, Isaac did not revoke it, but rather reconfirmed it⁹³.

He also blessed Esau, but not with a promise concerning ‘things to come’. That is why the names Jacob and Esau are in the order they received their father’s blessing. Like Abraham, Isaac believed God and his faith too was an assurance of things hoped for, a conviction of things not seen (11:1).

(12) The faith of Jacob concerning things to come.

11:21. By faith Jacob *when* he was dying blessed each of the sons of Joseph, and worshipped (as he leaned) on the top staff.⁹⁴

God reaffirmed his covenant promise to Jacob⁹⁵. He deliberately bestowed the greater blessing on Ephraim, the younger son of Joseph⁹⁶. He blessed them ‘concerning things to come’ as he himself had been blessed by Isaac. Thus, while Jacob’s earlier career had been marked by anything but faith, as he endeavoured repeatedly by his own scheming to gain advantage for himself, yet at the end of his life he recognised the futility of all his scheming and relied on the faithfulness of God.

The statement that Jacob “worshipped, leaning on the top of his staff” is based on the Greek translation of Genesis 47:31. The Hebrew text says, “Israel bowed himself upon the bed’s head⁹⁷, but the Greek text read the Hebrew ‘mittah’ (bed) as though it were ‘matteh’ (staff).

(13) The faith of Joseph concerning things to come.

11:22. By faith Joseph *when* he was dying, mentioned (reminded) about the exodus of the sons of Israel (from Egypt) and gave instructions about his bones.⁹⁸

Joseph manifested faith throughout his life in his steadfastness under trial and his patience under unjust treatment. Apart from his first 17 years, he had spent his whole life (120 years) in Egypt. He too regarded himself as ‘a stranger and pilgrim’, because at his deathbed he spoke of the future exodus of Israel from Egypt and gave instructions that his bones should be taken along back to Canaan⁹⁹.

f. The faith of Moses (11:23-28).

(14) The faith of Moses’ parents concerning things to come.

11:23. By faith Moses, *after* he was born, was hidden for (a period of) three months by his parents, because they saw the child (was) special (well-pleasing), and they were not afraid of the edict of the king.¹⁰⁰

While the Hebrew text says that his mother hid him, the Greek text says that his parents hid him (LXX Exodus 2:2, verbs are in the plural). They did not fear the king’s edict but acted by faith, because they saw he was “no ordinary child”. The word ‘αστειος’ can mean ‘beautiful or well-formed’, but here it means ‘acceptable or well-pleasing’. It does not refer to the external appearance of the child, but that there was something about this child which indicated that he was no ordinary child. *He was a child destined under God to accomplish great things for his people.*

(15) The faith of Moses.

11:24. By faith Moses, *when* he had become grown-up, refused to be called the son of the daughter of Pharaoh.¹⁰¹

The faith of Moses refused status. The writer of Hebrews reads the narrative of Moses as Stephen did, and concludes that, by his identifying himself with the downtrodden Israelites, Moses renounced the status which he enjoyed in Egypt

⁹² Genesis 26:2-5

⁹³ Genesis 27:33

⁹⁴ **11:21.** By faith Jacob *when* he was dying (αποθνησκων>αποθνησκω)(vppanm-s) blessed (ευλογησεν>ευλογεω)(viaa-zs) each (εκαστος-ον) (ap-am-s) of the sons (ο υιος)(n-gm-p) of Joseph, and worshipped (προσεκυνησεν>προσκυνεω)(viaa--zs) (as he leaned) on (επι)(pa) the top (το ακρον)(n-an-s) of his (αυτου)(npgmzs) staff (η ραβδος)(n-gf-s).

⁹⁵ Genesis 28:12-15; Genesis 32:12

⁹⁶ Genesis 48:14,19

⁹⁷ cf. 1 Kings 1:47

⁹⁸ **11:22.** By faith Joseph *when* he was dying (τελευτων>τελευταω)(vppanm-s), mentioned (thought of, remembered, reminded) (εμνημονευσεν>μνημονεω) (viaa--zs) about (περι)(pg) the exodus (η εξοδος)(n gf-s) of the sons (ο υιος)(n-gm-p) of Israel (from Egypt) and gave instructions (εντειλατο>εντελλομαι)(viad--zs) about (περι)(pg) his bones (το οστεον)(n-gn-p).

⁹⁹ cf. Exodus 13:19; Joshua 24:32

¹⁰⁰ **11:23.** By faith Moses, *after* he was born (γεννηθεις>γεννω)(vpadnm-s) was hidden (εκρυβη>κρυπτω)(viap--zs) for (a period of) three months

(τριμηνος-ον)(ap-an-s) by (υπο)(pg) his (αυτου)(npgmzs) parents (πατηρων plural)(ngm-p), because (διουτι)(cs) they saw (ειδον>οραω) (via-zp) the child (το παιδιον)(n-an-s) (was) special (acceptable, well-pleasing)(αστειος-α-ον)(a--an-s) and (και) they were not (ουκ)(ab) afraid (εφοβηθησαν>φοβεω)(viao--zp) of the edict (το διαταγμα)(n-an-s) of the king (ο βασιλευς)(n-gm-s).

¹⁰¹ **11:24.** By faith Moses, *when* he had become (γενομενος>γινωμαι)(vpadnm-s) grown-up (great, large) (μεγα-μεγαλη-μεγα)(a--nm-s), refused (denied)(ηρνησατο>αρνεομαι)(viad--zs) to be called (λεγεσθαι>λεγω)(vnp) the son (ο υιος)(n-nm-s) of the daughter (η θυγατρος)(n-gf-s) of Pharaoh (Exodus 2:5).

as a member of the royal household. “By faith he ‘refused’ or ‘denied’ or ‘said no’ to be known as the son of Pharaoh’s daughter”.

Jewish legends concerning Moses. These magnified the achievements of Moses far beyond the biblical account!

- Josephus¹⁰² enlarges Moses' outstanding wisdom and exceptional beauty of stature (2:230f) and describes a victorious expedition which he had led against the Ethiopians as Egyptian commander-in-chief (2:238f)¹⁰³.
- Philo¹⁰⁴ credits Moses with proficiency in arithmetic, geometry, poetry, music, philosophy, astrology and all branches of education.
- Eupolemus (about 157 B.C.)(a Greek Jewish writer) makes Moses the inventor of the alphabet, which the Phoenicians acquired from him, and the Greeks from them.
- Artapanus (about 250-100 B.C.)(a Greek Jewish writer) says that Egypt owes her civilization to Moses.
- Stephen¹⁰⁵ says that Moses was educated in all the wisdom of the Egyptians and was powerful in speech and action.

When Moses was 40 years old, he avenged the murder of an Israelite and thought that his people would realise that God was using him to rescue them, but they did not¹⁰⁶.

11:25. (Moses) choosing to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than for a short time have the enjoyment of sin^{107, 108}.

The faith of Moses chose ill-treatment. If Moses had chosen to remain at Pharaoh's court and use his influence there on behalf of the Israelites instead of renouncing his Egyptian citizenship and becoming a member of the oppressed group without political rights, he would have 'sinned' (that is, he would have missed God's purpose for his life)! He would have clearly seen God's path for him and yet turn away from it, that is, he would have committed apostasy, the sin against which the Hebrews were so emphatically warned (6:4-6)!

11:26. Regarding the disgrace of Christ a greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, because (his eyes) were *continually* fixed on the reward.¹⁰⁹

The faith of Moses regarded his disgrace as a despised Israelite slave in Egypt as of greater value than being the son of the daughter of Pharaoh. He preferred the disgrace or stigma that rested on Christ. When Moses went to demand his people's release, God told him to say: "My son, my firstborn is Israel¹¹⁰. These words are as *applicable to Jesus personally as they were to Israel corporately.* Thus, God's firstborn is in reality Christ¹¹¹! The disgrace or stigma which Israel suffered as slaves in Egypt is a type of the disgrace or stigma which Jesus would suffer. The Messiah sees his own experiences in the experiences of his people:

- "The insults of those who insulted you have fallen on me"¹¹².
- "In all their (Israel's) distress he (the Saviour) was distressed"¹¹³.
- "Out of Egypt I called my son"¹¹⁴.
- Moses and Elijah spoke with Jesus about his departure or 'exodus'¹¹⁵.

The 'disgrace' or 'stigma' that rested on God's Anointed (Christ) was far more valuable than the temporal wealth of Egypt.

The faith of Moses kept his eyes fixed on the reward. His eyes were 'fixed' just like the eyes of an artist are fixed on the painting or sculpture he is making. The imperfect tense *emphasizes the continuous action in the past time.*

11:27. By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the anger of the king, he persevered because as seeing the one who is invisible.¹¹⁶

¹⁰² 37 B.C. - 100 A.D., (Antiquities, 66-70 A.D.)

¹⁰³ cf. the film 'The Ten Commandments'

¹⁰⁴ 20 B.C. - 50 A.D.(Life of Moses 1:20ff)

¹⁰⁵ Acts 7:22

¹⁰⁶ Acts 7:25

¹⁰⁷ Matthew 13:21

¹⁰⁸ **11:25.** (Moses) choosing (ελομενος>αρεομαι)(vpanm-s)(αιρω=to lift up) to be mistreated along (συγκακουχεσθαι>συγκακουχεομαι)(vnpn) with the people (ο λαος)(n-dm-s) of God (ο θεος)(n-gm-s) rather (μαλλον)(ab=adverb) than (η)(subordinating conjunction) for a short time (προσκαιρος-ον) (a--af-s) have (εχειν>εχω)(vnpa) the enjoyment (pleasure) (η απολαυσις) (n-af-s) of sin (η αμαρτια)(n-gf-s).

¹⁰⁹ **11:26.** Regarding (considering, reckoning (ηγησαμενος>ηγεομαι)(vpadm-s) the disgrace (ο ονειδισμος)(n-am-s) of (for the sake of) Christ (genitive) a greater (μειζων-ονα)(a-mam-s *coMparative*) wealth (ο πλουτος)(n-am-s) than (genitive of comparison) the treasures (ο θησαυρος)(n-gm-p) of Egypt, because (γαρ)(cs) (his eyes) were *continually* fixed on (απεβλεπεν>αποβλεμω)(viaa-zs) the reward (η μισθαποδοσια)(n-af-s).

¹¹⁰ Hebrew: beni bekori Jisrael. Exodus 4:22

¹¹¹ Compare: 'the people of God are the Body of Christ': 'the Head of the Body is Christ', and 'He is the Son of God' and the members of the Body, the believers, are the sons or children of God'.

¹¹² Romans 15:3; cf. Psalm 69:9

¹¹³ Isaiah 63:9

¹¹⁴ Matthew 2:15; Hosea 11:1

¹¹⁵ εξοδος Luke 9:31

¹¹⁶ **11:27.** By faith he left (κατελιπεν>καταλειπω)(viaa--zs) Egypt, not (μη)(ab) fearing (φοβηθεις>φοβεομαι)(vpaonm-s) the anger (ο θυμος) (n-am-s) of the king (ο βασιλευς)(n-gm-s), he persevered (to hold out) (εκαρτερησεν>καρτερεω)(viaa--zs) because (γαρ)(cs=conjunction subordinating) as (ως)(cs) seeing (ορων>οραω)(vpanm-s) the one who is invisible (αορατος-ον)(ap-am-s).

The faith of Moses made him leave Egypt. The Hebrew text says, “Moses feared that his deed of killing an Egyptian had become known. So he fled”¹¹⁷. The Greek translation says, “Moses did not flee¹¹⁸ from Pharaoh, for then he would have run away¹¹⁹ without returning, but ‘he withdrew’¹²⁰, like an athlete taking an interval to regain his breath”. The writer to the Hebrews does not intend to contradict the Hebrew text of Exodus 2:15, but rather interprets it. The fear of Moses was not connected directly to his flight. Moses was afraid, but that was not why he left Egypt. *His leaving Egypt was not an act of fear, but an act of faith!* “By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the anger of the king; he persevered because he saw him who is invisible”. The word ‘left’ denotes physical departure as well as heart renunciation¹²¹. By faith he discerned that God’s timing for him and for Israel was yet in the future. By faith he resolutely turned his back on the course he began to take (violence and killing an Egyptian), backed away to Midian in order to enter *at God’s time and in God’s way!* *By faith Moses realised that it would be harder to live for his people than to die (as a martyr) for his people!*

The faith of Moses made him persevere, because he saw him who was invisible. He ‘was strong and held out’ or ‘persevered’. Moses paid more attention to the Invisible King of kings than to the present visible king of Egypt. His faith was a conviction of things not seen and above all a conviction regarding the unseen God (cf. 11:6)! *The secret of his faith and perseverance was his awareness of the presence and power of the unseen God and his believing obedience to God’s word.*

*The writer to the Hebrews again emphasises to the Hebrews that the real and permanent order is the invisible and eternal order of the heavenly Jerusalem with Jesus Christ as High Priest and not the visible, but transient order which Judaism enjoyed up to the destruction of the earthly Jerusalem and temple in A.D. 70*¹²².

11:28. By faith he made (*instituted as a perpetual institution*) the Passover¹²³ and the sprinkling of blood so that the destroyer of the firstborn would not touch them.¹²⁴

By faith Moses instituted the Passover as a perpetual memory. The word ‘made’ or ‘kept’ in the perfect tense means, “Moses has left us the institution of the Passover” or “He instituted the Passover and it became a perpetual institution”. The ‘pouring’ or ‘sprinkling’ of the blood on the doorframes prevented the destroyer from touching ‘the firstborn’ of Israel¹²⁵. John and Paul depict Jesus Christ as the antitype of the paschal lamb¹²⁶, but the writer to the Hebrews does not stress this point, because he did not want to detract from the correspondence between the death of Jesus and the annual sacrifice on the Day of Atonement (9:11-15,23-26).

g. Faith at the Exodus and settlement in Canaan (11:29-31).

(16) The faith of Israel crossing the Red Sea.

11:29. By faith the people *once for all* passed through the Red Sea as through a dry land, of which *when* the Egyptians made an attempt, they were *totally* engulfed.¹²⁷

By faith Israel crossed the Red Sea. It was the faith of Moses that eventually stimulated the faith of the Israelites to cross the Red Sea. Whatever way you look at it: whether crossing a *deep* Red Sea “as on dry land” or drowning the whole Egyptian army in a *shallow* Red Sea, the crossing of the Red Sea remains a miracle of God!

(17) The faith of Joshua and the Israelites when the wall of Jericho fell.

11:30. By faith the walls of Jericho fell *after* (the people) had marched around (encircled) them for seven days.¹²⁸

This historical record of faith is then suspended for 40 years, because it was a period of unbelief and God was displeased with that generation (3:7ff). The historical record of faith is resumed with the entry into Canaan.

¹¹⁷ Hebrew: wayyibrah, Greek φευγω

¹¹⁸ φευγω

¹¹⁹ απεδιδρασκω

¹²⁰ αναχωρω

¹²¹ Luke 5:28

¹²² cf. Galatians 4:21-31

¹²³ Hebrew: pesach

¹²⁴ **11:28.** By faith he made (*instituted as a perpetual institution*) (πεποιηκεν>ποιεω)(vira—zs perfect tense) the Passover (το πασχα) and (και) the sprinkling (η προσχυσις)(n-af-s) of blood (το αιμα)(n-gn-s) so that (ινα)(cs) the destroyer (ολοθρευων>ολοθρευω)(vppanm-s) of the firstborn (children) (πρωτοτοκος-ον)(ap-an-p) would not (μη)(ab) touch (θηγη>θιγγανω)(vsaa--zs) them (αυτους-η-ον)(npgmzp).

¹²⁵ Exodus 12:21-23

¹²⁶ John 19:36; 1 Corinthians 5:7

¹²⁷ **11:29.** By faith the people *once for all* passed through (διεβησαν>διαβαινω)(via-zp) the Red (of roses)(ερυθρος-α-ον)(a-af-s) Sea (η θαλασσα)(n-af-s) as (ως)(cs) through (δια)(pg) a dry (ξηρος-α-ον)(a-gf-s) land (η γη)(n-gf-s), of which (ης)(aprgf-s) *when* the Egyptians made (λαβοντες>λαμβανω)(vraanm-p) an attempt (ηπειρα)(n-af-s), they were *totally* (preposition κατα+) engulfed (overwhelmed, drowned) (κατεποθησαν>καταπινω)(viap--zs).

¹²⁸ **11:30.** By faith the walls (το τειχος)(n-nn-p) of Jericho fell (επεσαν>πιπτω)(viaa--zp) *after* (the people) had marched around (encircled) them (κυκλωνεντα>κυκλωω)(vrapnn-p) for (επι)(pa) seven (επτα)(a-caf-p cardinal) days (η ημερος)(n-af-p).

By faith of Joshua and the Israelites the wall of Jericho fell. It was primarily Joshua's faith that moved Israel to faith. By faith they marched around Jericho for 7 days and on the 7th day after the 7th time around the city, the blast of ram's horns and the shouting with a great shout of the people, the wall fell down flat¹²⁹. God could have used an earthquake or any other means, but it was by the power of their faith that Jericho was overthrown!

By this same faith other Jericho's both large and small, can still be overthrown! "The weapons we fight with are not weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds"¹³⁰.

(18) The faith of Rahab.

11:31. By faith the prostitute Rahab was not killed together with the disobedient, having welcomed the spies with peace.¹³¹

By faith Rahab welcomed the spies of Israel with: "peace¹³² be upon you or upon your house"¹³³. She expressed her faith in the God of the Bible¹³⁴. Her act of faith is commended¹³⁵. She was not 'destroyed together with' the disobedient. She even became the ancestress of king David and of Jesus Christ¹³⁶!

h. The faith of judges, kings, prophets and others (11:32-38).

(19) The faith of judges, kings and prophets.

11:32. And what more shall I say; time will fail me to narrate about Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel and the prophets,¹³⁷

By faith Gideon conquered the Midianites¹³⁸. By faith Barak conquered the confederate chariot force¹³⁹. His unwillingness to go out unless Deborah went along may be the expression of faith, not seeking his own glory, but God's. By faith Samson conquered the Philistines. He was deeply conscious of the invisible God and his call to be an instrument in God's hand against the enemy¹⁴⁰. By faith Jephthah conquered the Transjordan Ammonites¹⁴¹. David did much by faith. Samuel did much by faith. In his time we first meet the prophetic guilds¹⁴².

(20) The faith of others.

11:33. Who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, and obtained what was promised; who shut the mouths of lions,¹⁴³

They 'after struggling against' kingdoms 'subdued' or 'overcame' them. They 'worked effectively' or 'wrought' or 'practised' righteousness or justice (within the areas under their control). They 'obtained' promises¹⁴⁴. They 'stopped' or 'blocked' or 'fenced in' the mouths of lions¹⁴⁵

11:34. quenched the fury of the flames, escaped the edge of the sword; who *became* strong out of weakness, and who *became* powerful in battle and routed foreign armies in battle line.¹⁴⁶

¹²⁹ Joshua 6:20

¹³⁰ 2 Corinthians 10:4f

¹³¹ **11:31.** By faith the prostitute (η πορνη)(n-nf-s) Rahab was not (ου)(ab) killed together with (συναπωλετο>συναπολλυμι)(viam--zs) the disobedient (απειθησασιν>απειθεω)(vpaadm-p), having welcomed (received) (δεξαμενη>δεχομαι) (vpadnf-s) the spies (ο κατασκοπος) (n-am-p) with (μετα)(pg) peace (η ειρηνη)(n-gf-s).

¹³² Hebrew: shalom

¹³³ Luke 10:5f

¹³⁴ Joshua 2:11

¹³⁵ James 2:25

¹³⁶ Matthew 1:5

¹³⁷ **11:32.** And (και) what (τι)(aptan-s inTerrogative) more (ετι)(ab) shall I say (λεγω)(vspa--xs); time (ο χρονος)(n-nm-s) will fail (επιλειπει>επιλειπω)(vifa--zs) me (με)(npa-xs) to narrate (tell, describe) (διηγουμενον>διηγομαι)(vppnamxs) about (περι)(pg) Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel and (τε και)(cc) the prophets (ο προφητης)(n-gm-p),

¹³⁸ Judges 7:7ff

¹³⁹ Judges 5:19

¹⁴⁰ Judges 14:4

¹⁴¹ Judges 11

¹⁴² 1 Samuel 10:5,10f; 1 Samuel 19:20

¹⁴³ **11:33.** Who (οι) through (δια)(pg) faith (η πιστις)(n-gf-s) conquered (subdued, overcame)(κατηγωνισαντο>κατηγωνιζομαι)(viad—zp d=mid dep) kingdoms (η βασιλευς)(n-af-p), administered (worked, practised, brought about) (εργασαντο>εργαζομαι)(viad--zp) justice (η δικαιοσυνη)(n-af-s), and obtained (received) (επετυχον>επιτυγχανω)(viaa--zp) what was promised (η επαγγελια)(n-gf-p); who shut (blocked, fenced in) (εφραξαν>φρασσω)(viaa--zp) the mouths (το στομα)(n-an-p) of lions (ο λεων)(n-gm-p),

¹⁴⁴ cf. Acts 13:23

¹⁴⁵ Daniel 6:22.

¹⁴⁶ **11:34.** quenched (put out) (εσβεσαν>σβεννυμι)(via--zp) the fury (power) (η δυναμις)(naf-s) of the flames (το πυρ)(n-gn-s), escaped (εφυγον>φευγω)(viaa--zp) (violent death by) the edge (mouth) (το στομα)(n-an-p) of the sword (η μαχαира)(n-gf-s); who *became* (ingressive aorist) strong (dynamic) (εδυναμωθησαν>δυναμοομαι)(viap-zp) out of (απο)(pg) weakness (η ασθενεια)(n-gf-s) (whose weakness was turned to strength), and who *became* (εγενηθησαν>γινομαι)(viao—zp o=pas dep) powerful (ισχυρος-α-ον)(a-nm-p) in battle (ο πολεμος) (n-dm-s) and routed (make bend/turn in flight) (εκλιναν>κλινω)(via-zp) foreign (αλλοτριος-α-ον)(ap-gm-p) armies in battle line (η παρεμβολη)(n-af-p).

They ‘quenched’ the power of fire¹⁴⁷. They ‘escaped’ the edge of the sword: Elijah was delivered from Jezebel¹⁴⁸, Elisha from Jehoram¹⁴⁹ and Jeremiah from Jehoiakim¹⁵⁰. From weakness they were made strong: Gideon was the least in his family’s house and his family was the poorest in Manasseh¹⁵¹, but God made him strong: he waxed mighty in war and turned armies of aliens to flight. *They became mighty in war, that is, they believed that the battle was not theirs but God’s*¹⁵². They put foreign armies to flight (made them bend). So one of them chased a thousand and two put ten thousand to flight¹⁵³. Believers knew that “God can save by many or by few”¹⁵⁴.

11:35. Women received back through resurrection their dead. Others were tortured not receiving release by payment of a ransom, so that they might gain a better resurrection.¹⁵⁵

By faith women received back their dead through resurrection (11:35), for example, the widow of Zarephat¹⁵⁶ and the wealthy woman of Shunem¹⁵⁷.

By faith others were ‘tortured’, like being pounded on a kettle drum which has a skin stretched taut for striking. Some were stretched over a wheel and whirled while being afflicted with rods to break their limbs until they died. This happened to Eleazar¹⁵⁸. They refused to be released by paying a bribe or ransom money, because they were looking forward to a better life, namely, the resurrection and life on the new earth where only righteousness will reign!

11:36. Others also received the trial of jeers and floggings, while still others (experienced the trial) of chains and of prison.¹⁵⁹

By faith others experienced mockings and scourgings ... bonds and imprisonment. Jeremiah was beaten and put in stocks¹⁶⁰. He was made a laughing stock by members of society and by his own family. Later he was beaten again and put in prison¹⁶¹ and then thrown into a muddy cistern¹⁶².

11:37. They were stoned, sawn in two, they died by being killed with a sword. They went about in sheepskins and skins belonging to goats, destitute, persecuted and mistreated.¹⁶³

By faith some were killed. According to tradition Jeremiah was stoned to death by the Jews living in Egypt and Zechariah was stoned to death by Joash¹⁶⁴. They were sawn in pieces. According to tradition this was the fate of Isaiah during the reign of Manasseh. He was sawn in two with a wooden saw. ‘The Martyrdom of Isaiah’ says, “Isaiah neither cried aloud nor wept, but his lips spoke with the Holy Spirit until he was sawn in two”. (“They were tempted” was probably a false double writing¹⁶⁵). They were slain with the sword. Uriah by Jehoiakim¹⁶⁶ and James by Herod¹⁶⁷. *By faith one lived (11:34) and by faith the other died (11:37)!* James was killed, but when Herod tried to do the same with Peter he failed and Peter escaped. They went about in sheepskins and goatskins¹⁶⁸ as later also John the Baptist¹⁶⁹. They were ‘destitute’ or ‘suffered lack’, ‘afflicted’ or ‘put under pressure’, ‘ill-treated’ or ‘mishandled’.

¹⁴⁷ Daniel 3:18

¹⁴⁸ 1 Kings 19:2ff

¹⁴⁹ 2 Kings 6:31ff

¹⁵⁰ Jeremiah 36:19,26

¹⁵¹ Judges 6:15

¹⁵² 2 Chronicles 20:15

¹⁵³ Deuteronomy 32:30; Leviticus 26:8; Joshua 23:10

¹⁵⁴ 1 Samuel 14:6

¹⁵⁵ **11:35.** Women (η γυνη)(n-nf-p) received back (ελαβον>λαμβανω)(viaa--zp) through (εξ)(pg) resurrection (η αναστασις)(n-gf-s) their (αυτων)(pnpgfzp) dead (ο νεκρος)(ap-am-p). Others (αλλος-η-ο)(ap-nm-p) were tortured (ετυμπατισθησαν>τυμπανιζω)(viap--zp) not (ου)(ab) receiving (προσδεξαμενοι>προσδεχομαι) (vpadm-p d=mid dep) release by payment of a ransom (η απολυτρωσις)(n-af-s) (they refused to be released), so that (ινα)(cs) they might gain (receive) (τυχουσιν>τυγχανω)(vsaa--zp) a better (κρειττων)(aa-mgf-s comparative) resurrection (η αναστασις)(n-gf-s).

¹⁵⁶ 1 Kings 17:17ff

¹⁵⁷ 2 Kings 4:17ff

¹⁵⁸ 2 Maccabees 6:19,28

¹⁵⁹ **11:36.** Others (ετερος-α-ον)(ap-nm-p) also (δε)(cc) received (ελαβον>λαμβανω)(viaa--zp) the trial (ηπειρα)(n-af-s) (=experienced/faced a trial) of jeers (mocking, derision) (ο εμπαιγμος)(n-gm-p) and floggings (scourging, whipping with a scourge)(η ματιξ)(gf-p), while still (ετι)(ab=adverb) others (δε)(cc) (experienced the trial) of chains (ο δεσμος)(n-gm-p) and of prison (η φυλακη)(n-gf-s).

¹⁶⁰ Jeremiah 20:2

¹⁶¹ Jeremiah 37:15

¹⁶² Jeremiah 38:6ff

¹⁶³ **11:37.** They were stoned (ελιθασθησαν>λιθαζω)(viap--zp)(ο λιθος= a stone), sawn in two (επρισθησαν>πριζω)(viap--zp)(a method of execution), they died (απεθανον>αποθνησκω) (viaa--zp) by being killed (murder) (ο φονος)(n-dm-s) with a sword (η μαχαира)(n-gf-s). They went about (περιηλθον>περιερχομαι)(viaa--zp) in sheepskins (η μηλωτη)(n-df-p) and skins (το δερμα)(n-dn-p) belonging to goats (αγχιος-α-ον)(a--dn-p), destitute (to lack, to suffer need)(υστερουμενοι>υστερομαι)(vpppnm-p), persecuted (to put under pressure, to cause distress) (θλιβομενοι>θλιβω)(vpppnm-p) and mistreated (κακουχομενοι>κακουχεω)(vpppnm-p).

¹⁶⁴ 2 Chronicles 24:21

¹⁶⁵ ‘επρισθησαν’ was the original and ‘επειρασθησαν>πειραζω’ was accidentally miswritten and then added.

¹⁶⁶ Jeremiah 26:23

¹⁶⁷ Acts 12:2

¹⁶⁸ cf. Elijah, 2 Kings 1:8

¹⁶⁹ Matthew 3:4

11:38. Of whom the world was *continually* not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, and in caves and holes in the ground.¹⁷⁰

By faith others ‘wandered’ in desolate places and sought shelter in caves. (The godly Jews who fled from persecution under Antiochus Epiphanes¹⁷¹). They were outlawed as people who were unfit for civilized society. The truth was that civilized society was unfit for them! “For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered”¹⁷².

i. The vindication of faith comes with Jesus Christ (11:39-40).

11:39. And *although* these all were *once* commended for their faith, they did not receive what had been promised.¹⁷³

None of these heroes of faith witnessed or experienced the fulfilment of these promises of God!

11:40. Something better was planned from God with regard to us, so that without us they would not be made perfect.¹⁷⁴

God had planned (foresaw) something better (the realities in Jesus Christ instead of the shadows)¹⁷⁵ with regard to us (the New Testament believers) so that they (the Old Testament believers) would not be made perfect (reach God’s final goal) without us (the New Testament believers). They (the Old Testament believers) lived and died in prospect of a fulfilment which none of them experienced on earth. Yet the fulfilment was so real to them that they experienced the power to press upstream, against the current of their society or environment and to live as citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem (the heavenly reality), nevertheless as strangers and pilgrims on this earth (the earthly reality).

At the first coming of Jesus Christ, the promise was fulfilled and the age of the new covenant had begun. *God’s plan was that the believers during the Old Testament period would not ‘reach their destined perfection’ or ‘reach their complete goal’ before the believers of the New Testament period!* Together, the believers of the Old Testament period and the believers of the New Testament period now enjoy unrestricted access to God through Jesus Christ as citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem.

God’s eternal plan was NOT completed with Israel of the Old Testament period, but became complete and absolutely perfect with the Church of the New Testament period¹⁷⁶! God’s better plan, embraces the better hope, the better promises, the better covenant, the better sacrifices, the better and abiding possession and the better resurrection (7:19,22; 8:6; 9:23; 10:34; 11:35). That is the true heritage of believers (from the Old Testament period and from the New Testament period)!

¹⁷⁰ **11:38.** Of whom (ων)(aprgm-p) the world (ο κοσμος)(n-nm-s) was *continually* (ην>ειμι)(viaa--zs) not (ουκ)(adverb) worthy (αξιος-α-ον)(a--nm-s) (the world was not worthy of them). They wandered (πλανωμενοι>πλαναομαι)(vpppnm-p) in deserts (η ερημος)(n-df-p) and mountains (το ορος, τα ορειων)(n-dn-p), and in caves (το σπηλαιον)(n-dn-p) and holes (η οπη)(ndf-p) in the ground (η γη)(n-gf-s).

¹⁷¹ Daniel 11:33

¹⁷² cf. Psalm 44:22; Romans 8:36

¹⁷³ **11:39.** And *although* these (ουτος-αυτη-τουτο)(apdnm-p *demonstrative*) all (πας, παντες)(a--nm-p) were *once* commended (to be attested by witness) (μαρτυρηθεντες>μαρτυρομαι)(vparnm-p (*concessive participle*) for (through)(δια)(pg) their faith (η πιστις)(n-gf-s), they did not (ουκ)(ab) receive (obtain as an outcome of their faith) (εκομισαντο>κομιζομαι)(viam--zp) what had been promised (η επαγγελια)(n-af-s).

¹⁷⁴ **11:40.** Something (τι)(a-ian-s *indefinite*) better (κρειττων)(apman-s *coMparative*) was planned (foreseen, thought out before, provided) (προβλεψαμενου>προβλεπω) (vpmgm-s) (participle used in a genitive absolute construction) from God (ο θεος)(n-gm-s) with regard to (περι)(pg) us (ημων)(n-npg-xp), so that (υνα)(cs) without (χωρις)(pg) us (ημων)(npg-xp)(the new Testament believers) they (the Old Testament believers) would not (μη)(ab) be made perfect (τελειωθωσιν>τελειωω)(vsap--zp).

¹⁷⁵ Colossians 2:16-17; Hebrews 8:5

¹⁷⁶ cf. Hebrews 12:22-24