

“The Spiritual Heroes of the Faith”
Hebrews 12:1
(0-1000 A.D.)
March 11, 2012

We are surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses!

1. New Testament martyrs.
 - James- (Acts 12:1-2)
 - Stephen –(Acts 7:58-60)
 - Many unknown men and women.
2. The Apostles.
3. A.D. 150 -Polycarp of Smyrna –*“86 years I have served Him and He never did me any wrong. How can I blaspheme my King who saved me?”*
4. A.D. 303 –Diocletian - *“All churches and Christians to be destroyed!”*
5. A.D. 312 –Constantine - *“All Christians to be protected and honored!”*
6. A.D. 325 –The Council of Nicea - *“Confirmation of Biblical truth in the face of heresy.”*
7. A.D. 420 –Jerome –The Bible is translated into Latin.
8. A.D. 360-430 – Augustine of Hippo – *“The City of God”*
9. A.D. 700 – Charlemagne–Great warrior and leader that also spread the preaching of the Gospel.
10. A.D. 970-1040 – The Crusades Begin –A Desperate and confused desire for Heavenly reward.

Observations and Application

1. Christ is worthy to live for and to die for!
2. There is great danger with government intrusion into the church!
3. We have a strong foundation of faith!

Bible Study Questions/ Discussion
"The Spiritual Heroes of the Faith" (0 -1000 A.D.)

Heb. 12:1
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1. Read Heb. 12:1 and discuss the awareness or impact of those that have gone before us. In what way are they "witnesses" to us?
2. In the early church there were two prominent examples of martyrdom –James (Acts 12:1-2) and Stephen. (Acts 7:58-60) What are the main impressions you have as you read their stories? What impact did the persecution have on families? (Acts 8:1-3)
3. From the sermon notes which apostle's story had the greatest impact on you? Was there any surprises? Discuss the dramatic change in their lives. Compare Mark 14:50.
4. As you learned of Polycarp's courage in the face of death, discuss the kind of courage that is needed in your life to live for Christ. Respond to his statement to his accusers –"86 years I have served Him and He never did me any wrong. How can I blaspheme my King who saved me?"
5. In the reign of Diocletian, people were pressured to sign a document denouncing Christ. How difficult would that be if that happened to you? Could you forgive those who signed the document and then later wanted to reunite with the church?
6. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of a ruler like Constantine declaring Christianity as a national religion. Also, discuss his belief about baptism –wanting to do it on his death bed so he could enter heaven without sin. (Review Matt. 28:18-20)
7. The Council of Nicea brought clarification to the New Testament teaching. The church was under attack from false teachers like Arius who taught Jesus was a created being. What warnings do we have concerning false teachers? (Matt. 24:4-5, 23-24; I John 4:1-3) Read the Nicene Creed and discuss the impact of such clarity of teaching on the church.
8. Jerome (345-420 A.D.) was very concerned about the worldliness of the church, so he lived in a monastery in Bethlehem. How do we enjoy the blessings of this natural world without "loving the things of this world?" (Matt. 6:33; I Tim. 6:17-19; I Tim. 4:4; 2 Tim. 2:4)
9. What do you think of Augustine's quote –"You made us for Yourself and our hearts find no peace until they find rest in you?" How does this compare to your search for the Lord?
10. Charlemagne (742-814 A.D.) followed a group of rulers that were called the "Do-Nothing Kings." How does the New Testament describe our level of effort in serving the Lord? (I Cor. 15:58) What was wrong with the crusades and the idea of "indulgences?" (Eph. 1:7; 2:8-9)
11. As you review the first 1000 years of Church history –discuss the following application points:
 - Christ is worthy to live for and to die for! (Acts 4:31; 5:41)
 - There is great danger in government intrusion into the church. (Col. 1:17-18; Acts 5:29)
 - We have a strong foundation of faith. (Eph. 2:19-20; I Peter 2:9)