

Pentwater Bible Church

Hebrews Message 36

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The Rapture by Pat Marvenko Smith

Daniel E. Woodhead – Pastor Teacher

Pentwater Bible Church

The Book of Hebrews

Message Thirty-Six

FAITH CHAMPIONS V

September 16, 2018

Daniel E. Woodhead

THE FAITH OF MANY

Hebrews 11:32-40

³² And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gedeon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets: ³³ who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, ³⁴ quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. ³⁵ Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection: ³⁶ and others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: ³⁷ they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; ³⁸ (of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. ³⁹ And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: ⁴⁰ God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect (KJV).

THE FAITH OF SAMUEL, DAVID & THE PROPHETS

Hebrews 11:32b

³² And what shall I more say? of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets (KJV).

Samuel, the last judge trusted God because through faith he was obedient to Him. After 20 years of oppression, Samuel, gained national prominence as a prophet (1 Samuel 3:20), summoned the people to the hill of Mizpah, and led them against the Philistines who were soundly defeated. The retreating Philistines were then slaughtered by the Israelites.

He established his headquarters at Ramah, riding a circuit to various cities where he settled the people's disputes. When the people demanded a king, Samuel listened to God tell him that the people hated Him and he would give them one. He further said that they would not like what they would receive. Samuel anointed the first king of Israel, a tall, handsome Benjaminite named Saul. Samuel warned the people to give up idols and serve God. He told them if they and King Saul disobeyed, God would sweep them away. But Saul did disobey, offering a sacrifice himself instead of waiting for God's priest, Samuel, to do it.

Again, Saul disobeyed God in a battle with the Amalekites, sparing the enemy's king Agag, and the best of their livestock when Samuel had ordered Saul to destroy everything. Just before his retirement, Samuel gathered the people to an assembly at Gilgal, and delivered a farewell speech in which he emphasized how prophets and judges were more important than kings, that kings should be held to account, and that the people should not fall into idol worship. Samuel promised that God would subject the people to foreign invaders if they disobeyed God's commands. This prophecy was fulfilled in 722 B.C. and 586 B.C. Samuel confronted Saul for his disobedience and told him that God made him king, and God can unmake him king. Samuel then proceeded to execute Agag. Samuel then proceeded to Bethlehem and secretly anointed David as the chosen king. He would later provide sanctuary for David, when the jealous Saul first tried to have him killed.

Sometime after Samuel's death, Saul had the Witch of Endor against the Mosaic Law bring back Samuel from the dead in order to predict the result of an up-coming battle with the Philistines. He and his son Jonathan perished in the battle. Samuel's faith in God enabled him to prevail in a number of situations. He always knew God's promises were valid.

DAVID

David was a man after God's own heart. He was chosen to succeed Saul and became Israel's greatest king. He demonstrated his faith through his dependence on God when he fought with Goliath for example. David always was fellowshiping in faith with the Lord his God. David was appointed as an aide at the court of Saul, Israel's first king. Initially he distinguished himself as a musician and a warrior against the Philistines. His popularity caused Saul's jealousy, and a plot was made to kill him. All the while he trusted God to provide for him. David was proclaimed king in Hebron over all of Israel. He conquered the Jebusite-held town of Jerusalem, which he made the capital of the new United Kingdom and to which he moved the Ark of the Covenant, the place of God's presence with Israel. He defeated the Philistines so thoroughly that they were never again a serious threat to the Israelites' security, and he annexed Gaza the coastal region. He went on to establish an empire by becoming the overlord of many small kingdoms bordering on Israel, including Edom, Moab, and Ammon. Of the 150 Psalms David's name is attributed to 76. His Psalms reflect a deep trust and dependence on God's Word. One example of his trust in God is displayed in his Psalm 138.

Psalm 138

¹I will give thee thanks with my whole heart: Before the gods will I sing praises unto thee. ²I will worship toward thy holy temple, And give thanks unto thy name for thy lovingkindness and for thy truth: For thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name. ³In the day that I called thou answeredst me, Thou didst encourage me with strength in my soul. ⁴All the kings of the earth shall give thee thanks, O Jehovah, For they have heard the words of thy mouth. ⁵Yea, they shall sing of the ways of Jehovah; For great is the glory of Jehovah. ⁶For though Jehovah is high, yet hath he respect unto the lowly; But the haughty he knoweth from afar. ⁷Though I walk in the midst of trouble, thou wilt revive me; Thou wilt stretch forth thy hand against the wrath of mine enemies, And thy right hand will save me. ⁸Jehovah will

perfect that which concerneth me: Thy lovingkindness, O Jehovah, endureth for ever; Forsake not the works of thine own hands (ASV, 1901).

While king David committed adultery with Bathsheba and had her husband Uriah killed. She later became the mother of David's successor King Solomon. The adultery was revealed to Nathan the prophet who in turn challenged David with this information. David repented but suffered the loss of the baby that Bathsheba was carrying. His sin was responsible for the civil war that ensued as the Lord turned his sons against him. All the while he never lost his faith in God and continued to trust Him his entire life.

THE PROPHETS

The Lord spoke through His trusted emissaries the prophets. He used them to bring His Word to this world.

Amos 3:7

⁷Surely the Lord Jehovah will do nothing, except he reveal his secret unto his servants the prophets (ASV, 1901).

In addition to the twelve minor prophets and four majors there are many others identified as prophets due to their use by God. Following is a partial list of them.

1. Anna
2. Deborah
3. Elijah
4. Elisha
5. Enoch
6. Miriam
7. Moses
8. Simeon
9. John the Baptist.

The Lord Jesus affirmed the status of John the Baptist.

Mathew 11:11

Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he (KJV).

The prophets spoke God's Word in faith regardless of the outcome. In many instances they received a stoning or murder for bringing God's Word to the people.

Luke 13:34

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not (KJV)!

The prophets therefore were extraordinary ministers to the nation Israel, who were used of God. Sometimes they announced judgment, sometimes promised mercy, but always called sin for exactly what it was without excuse. Frequently they foretold remarkable future events, known only to God, and brought the foretelling of the Messiah. They told of both His comings, person, and offices; for in him the prophets as well as the law center (Matthew 22:40). A true and strong faith was required in order for them to carry out their responsibilities usually in adverse circumstances.

WORLDLY PUNISHMENT TO THE FAITHFUL

Hebrews 11:33-38

³³ Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, ³⁴ quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens (KJV).

The apostle finished naming particular persons. Now he explains the circumstances which caused them to be listed in this section of the Bible with the faithful.

1. *By faith they subdued kingdoms.* King David, Joshua, and many of the judges are in this category
2. They *wrought righteousness.* They turned many away from idolatry to the ways of righteousness; faithfully they believed God, and it was imputed to them for righteousness; they walked and acted righteously towards God and man. We see that faith is an active principle of righteousness.
3. They *obtained promises.* By faith that we have the assurance of the promises of God
4. They *stopped the mouths of lions.* Here the apostle refers to what Samson, (Judges. 14:5, 6), and David, (1 Samuel. 17:34, 35), and (Daniel, 6:22) did. God has the power to control as his creatures.
5. They *quenched the violence of the fire.* So, Moses, by the prayer of faith, quenched the fire of God's wrath that was kindled against the people of Israel, (Numbers 11:1, 2). So did the three friends of Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego (Daniel 3:17-27). Their faith in God, by refusing to worship the golden image, caused Nebuchadnezzar to cast them unharmed into a fiery furnace.
6. They *escaped the edge of the sword.* David escaped the sword of Goliath and of Saul; and Mordecai and the Jews escaped the sword of Haman. The swords of men can be said to be held in the controlling hand of God. He can protect His people against their enemies when He pleases.
7. *Out of weakness they were made strong.* The nation Israel frequently experienced national weakness and persecution caused by their unbelief. However, when their faith

revived after correction by God, their blessings revived and flourished. For example, Hezekiah, believing the word of God, recovered out of a fatal disease. He attributed his recovery to the promise and power of God (Isaiah 38:15, 16), *What shall I say? He hath spoken it, and he hath also done it. Lord by these things men live, and in these is the life of my spirit.*

8. They *grew valiant in fight*. Examples of this are Joshua, the Judges, and David during warfare. True faith gives courage and patience, because it is aware of the presence, promises and strength of God. And they were not only valiant, but successful. God, as a reward and encouragement of their faith, *put to flight the armies of the aliens*, of those who were aliens to their commonwealth.

ADDITIONAL PERSECUTIONS AND REWARDS FOR FAITH

Hebrews 11:35–38

³⁵ Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection: ³⁶ and others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: ³⁷ they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; ³⁸ (of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth (KJV).

These unnamed women are the widow of Zarephath, whose son Elijah raised from death (1 Kings 17:22–24), and the Shunamite, whose son was raised by Elisha (2 Kings 4:36). The text says that they received their children from the dead; because in both instances the prophets, after raising them from the dead, gave them back into their mothers' arms, who received them with joy and thankfulness.

The text "*and others were tortured*" is referring to the sufferings of seven brethren, and their mother, in the times of Antiochus Epiphanes as, recorded in 2 Maccabees 7. They were offered deliverance if they would denounce God. However, the offer was rejected by them. Because by faith they knew *that they might obtain a better resurrection* after which when they died in the faith. The resurrection of the saints, which is unto everlasting life, is a better resurrection than deliverances from great afflictions. Jesus made a similar statement to the faithful.

Matthew 10:28–33

²⁸ And be not afraid of them that kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. ²⁹ Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? and not one of them shall fall on the ground without your Father: ³⁰ but the very hairs of your head are all numbered. ³¹ Fear not therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows. ³² Every one therefore who shall confess me before men, him will I also confess before my Father who is in

heaven. ³³*But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father who is in heaven (ASV, 1901).*

“*They were stoned,*” refers to Naboth, by the order of Ahab, (1 Kings 21:13–19). Zachariah in the court of the Lord’s house; (2 Chronicles 24:21) and the character of Jerusalem is, that she stoned the prophets that were sent unto her, (Matthew 23:37). *They were sawn asunder;* to which there seems to be an allusion in (Matthew 24:51). There is no obvious record of any men being *sawn asunder* in Scripture. The Jews have a tradition, that the Prophet Isaiah was sawn asunder in the times of Manasseh, Hezekiah’s son. The tradition is in both Talmuds.

The life of the faithful being persecuted is characterized with the life of John the Baptist. He wore skins, lived in the desert, and ate locusts and wild honey. The world is not worthy of such men who are faithful to God. John speaking God’s law to Herod was beheaded.

GOD’S PROMISES ARE ETERNAL

Hebrews 11:39–40

³⁹ *And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: ⁴⁰ God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect (KJV).*

These last two verses summarize and conclude the chapter. Those who died in the past will be resurrected and be the Messianic Kingdom when it is established. and, yet, they all recognized it will be fulfilled because of God’s promise. They did not receive the fulfillment of the promise in their lifetime. Some promises were fulfilled in their day, but they did not receive the national and Messianic promises and prophecies. They foresaw that these promises would be fulfilled in the future and they died in faith. They still possessed their faith when they died.

Since the Messianic Kingdom promises have not yet been fulfilled, both Old Testament and New Testament believers can anticipate the same thing: The Messianic Kingdom. There is something waiting for all believers in the future. First it is Paradise when they left their bodies and New Testament saints are promised Heaven. Both will be in the Messianic Kingdom. At the Second Coming of Jesus all will receive their ultimate glorification together. By then all the faithful will be resurrected since all believers are part of the First Resurrection.

These saints persevered through their trials and disappointments by exercising patient endurance, which was the evidence of their faith. The author has pointed out many times that his readers possess faith. Now, they are to use their faith by showing patient endurance as did these Old Testament saints when they are faced with persecution and a desire to return to rabbinic Judaism.

Next message: OUR RESPONSIBILITY TO BE FAITHFUL TO THE LORD

E-mail: Penwaterbiblechurch@scofieldinstitute.org Call: 877-706-2479