

SPIRITUAL GIANTS

BIBLE TEXT : Hebrews 11:23-40.

LESSON 443 Senior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward" (Hebrews 11:24-26).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

Hebrews 11:23-40

23 By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, because they saw *he was* a proper child; and they were not afraid of the king's commandment.
24 By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter;
25 Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season;
26 Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward.
27 By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible.
28 Through faith he kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the firstborn should touch them.
29 By faith they passed through the Red sea as by dry *land*: which the Egyptians assaying to do were drowned.
30 By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days.
31 By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace.
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

Bible References:

Notes:

Moses' Parents

"**By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, because they saw he was a proper child; and they were not afraid of the king's commandment**" (Hebrews 11:23).

Here is evidence that the parents of Moses had faith in God. They had been for more than two hundred years in Egyptian bondage. Throughout that period there is no evidence that God spoke or manifested Himself yet there were some here who kept in touch with the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob during that period. It meant something, because they were living in the midst of heathen idolatry. The ancient Egyptians had idolatry in every imaginable form: they worshipped the Nile, they worshipped animals, they believed in reincarnation, and many other such doctrines, which made them an outstanding nation of idolaters. And yet there were those who still held to the old faith and believed in the living God.

Moses' parents were among that number. They saw that he was a beautiful child. The edict of the king had gone forth that all male children among the Israelites should be slain in order that they should not outnumber the Egyptians. After a certain number of months they were no longer able to hide this child; something had to be done. By faith they put him into an ark of bulrushes. Those were vessels that were common in Egypt in that day. They were woven together of the rushes that grew upon the banks of the Nile, and were used for various purposes in their daily lives.

Moses' mother took one of those vessels and lined it with pitch and put the little fellow into it, and set it adrift in the waters of the Nile. It seems to have been God's plan all the way through. How mysteriously He works! Way back there before anyone knew how Israel was ever to be delivered out of bondage, or before there was any intimation that they would ever be delivered, except as that promise to Abraham stood, God began to work for that little infant.

Shortly after the ark was set adrift upon the water, a princess, Pharaoh's daughter, came to the water's edge with her maids, and they discovered the ark and took it up. And because Moses was a comely child, they took pity on him. Anyone would have been pretty hard-hearted, even among pagans, who would not have done so. In the meantime Miriam, a child about nine years old, who was hidden in the bulrushes came forth and wanted to know if she should get a nurse. With the consent of the princess, she brought the mother of the child, who cared for the child until he was old enough to be taken into the household of Pharaoh where the princess took him for her own son.

Moses

Moses was educated in all the wisdom of Egypt -- that is, the wisdom of men. They had arts and sciences that to this day have been lost, and they have never been equalled. They had reached

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.

a degree of civilization in that day that was remarkable; and no doubt Moses was trained from his infancy in their culture, their literature, and their arts.

But we are told that when he reached about forty years of age, the Lord put it into his heart to visit his brethren. When he saw the oppression and the wrongs that were done, he immediately took it upon himself to try to right those wrongs. But the Lord did not have him ready yet for that kind of work.

A great many, in their zeal, will run ahead of the Spirit of the Lord, and Moses was one of them. He had been put into the court of Pharaoh for a schooling. It looked as though Pharaoh was educating him, but the Lord had a hand in it all; and when the time came, He was able to speak to the heart of Moses.

That very thing in the heart of a man is something with which God can work. Some will say that even while they were in darkness and in sin they always had a desire to serve God and do the thing that was right. God works upon that. If He can get hold of a man's heart and reveal the light to him, and cause that man to bow before Him and call upon Him, He has an instrument through which He can work, and material that can be put to use.

But Moses took things into his own hands, and he had to flee the country. His education was not quite finished. He fled down into the land of Midian, in the neighbourhood of Mount Sinai. God's hand was also in that. There he was tending the flocks of Jethro. He named his first child Gershom, which means a stranger; and he added, "I have been a stranger in a strange land" (Exodus 2:22).

Thus we see some of what Moses was going through. He had been cut off from his own people and his kindred, exiled in a foreign land among strangers, and he had time to think things over when he was out in the field with the sheep. God had an opportunity to deal with him. Moses had to go through a period of humiliation (after having been brought up in the court of Pharaoh) before his education was finished, and before the Lord was ready to put him to work.

The time finally arrived when the Lord spoke to him out of the burning bush and commanded him to go back and bring his people out. Moses remonstrated. He knew what it meant; he knew what the court of Pharaoh was; he knew what the power of Egypt was and what he was facing.

"And Moses said unto God, Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?"

"And he said, Certainly I will be with thee" (Exodus 3:11,12).

The Lord can use a very humble instrument, what might seem from the human standpoint a very inefficient instrument; if that person will yield to God, He can perfect him for His glory. John Bunyan said, "Would it be so much to be a violin -- even a very rare make? What would a violin amount to unless it were in the hands of a master?" And so it is with every one of us. We do not amount to very much, our work is crude and we are crude instruments, until God works with us and through us.

"By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter;

"Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season" (Hebrews 11:24, 25).

And he saw plenty of the pleasures of sin in that court, plenty that would entice the eye, plenty that would appeal to those who

had a glamorous turn of mind, plenty of glitter and plenty of gold. But Moses had something deep down in his nature that wanted more than that. Perhaps he was an heir to the throne, being the son of Pharaoh's daughter. But what do we read?

"Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward."

He went back; he did what the Lord commanded. He stayed with it although he met with opposition from the stiff-necked Israelites.

"Through faith he kept the Passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the firstborn should touch them" (Hebrews 11:28).

Like the other instructions that Moses had concerning what was to come upon Egypt, he had nothing but bare faith to go by. The Lord commanded, and he had to act upon faith. When it came to the preparation for this Passover it was the same way. But Moses had learned obedience. He never varied from those instructions, except the time when he struck the rock.

"By faith they passed through the Red sea as by dry land: which the Egyptians assaying to do were drowned" (Hebrews 11: 29).

Moses stood upon the banks of the Red Sea and said, "Stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD" (Exodus 14:13). They did, and in a mighty way God rolled back those waters and they went through dry-shod.

Faith and Action

It was by minute instructions and commands that they acted; and when they acted, God never failed to work. That is a good part of faith -- simply to do what God tells us to do; when God gives a command, carry it out. Do not try to evade the issue or side-step it, but implicitly obey every word of it. We never need fear that God will not do His part.

A large portion of faith is action -- acting upon what God commands. Throughout His ministry, when Jesus came into contact with anyone who needed help, He gave that one something to do. To the man who had the withered arm that hung helpless at his side, Jesus commanded, "stretch forth thine hand." You say, "That is a foolish command to give to a man with a paralysed arm." From the human or the medical standpoint perhaps it is, but not from God's standpoint. The very effort that that man put forth to obey the command that Jesus gave him, brought him into contact with divine power which brought life into that lifeless member. He stretched forth his hand and was healed.

If we are going to receive results from the Lord it will be because we act. We will do something more than just have a mental acceptance or belief of what God has for us.

A minister tells of his experience shortly after he was saved: "I was sick and had been so for several days and constantly getting worse. One of the ministers came to see me one morning after I had been prayed for and I was still lying in bed waiting for the Lord to heal me. He said, 'If you ever expect to get well you have something to do. I advise you to get up and go to meeting.' I did exactly as he said and the Lord healed me that very day and restored my strength. That was a cue for me." That is not always possible. Some may be too sick to even act upon it, but there are places where God expects us to act -- to put into practical operation the faith that He has put into our hearts. That was where the success of Moses came in.

By Faith

"By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them

that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace" (Hebrews 11:31).

Rahab lived among an idolatrous people who were strangers to God; but those many thousands who were in Jericho had the same opportunity that she had, so it was apparent that they too had heard concerning God. But out of those thousands there was only one who, with her family, accepted, believed and received the results.

"And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gideon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets" (Hebrews 11:32).

Gideon with his little band of three hundred overcame the vast hosts of the Midianites, who were like grasshoppers for number, in the valley. Someone has likened Gideon's band to the final battle of Armageddon. It bears a great deal of similarity. Gideon had no weapons -- just the pitchers, the lights; that was all. They shouted and broke their pitchers, and the victory was theirs -- the enemy was routed. In the battle of Armageddon the Lord comes not with weapons of the flesh, but with the weapons that are mighty, and that great battle is won.

Barak was the one who overcame the Canaanites -- enemies of the Lord. Samson defeated the Philistines, and Jephthae the Ammonites. Then David finished the job, and the conquest of the Promised Land was brought to a close.

"Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, . . ."

It was Joshua and Caleb who obtained the Promised Land. Why? Because they believed where the others fainted. God's promises are given, but they are to be appropriated. He promised this land of Canaan, but the Israelites had to possess it. That is the way God operates throughout His entire field of economy with His people. When they perform their part of it, God works with them. It was just so when the disciples went forth everywhere preaching, God working with them, confirming the Word with signs following. It is as if we were taken into partnership with Him. It is because of the fact that we have to work to obtain His promises that we appreciate them, and know the delights of conquest. However, some people do not consider it a delight to get into a fight and have to go through strife.

James said, "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations" (James 1:2). Why? Because if you are not in the battle, nor have temptations, you win no victories. But some of us have had, here and there, a little taste of what it means to go through afflictions, and have felt the joy of it when we won the victory.

Then there was Phinehas who, because of his stand when Israel apostatised, was given the promise of a continued priesthood. He was the grandson of Aaron. David, because of his faith and the stand that he took, was given the promise that through his posterity the Messiah would come; and God fulfilled it.

". . . stopped the mouths of lions" (Hebrews 11:33).

You notice that he is taking all his examples from the Old Testament. There was Daniel who was shut up in the lions' den and God delivered him.

"When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee" (Isaiah 43:2).

That was the experience of the three Hebrew children to the letter. I can just imagine them repeating that passage over and over, because the Hebrews knew their Bible and were resting upon the promises of God in that crisis. The Lord brought them through without the smell of smoke upon their garments.

"Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, . . ." (Hebrews 11:34).

Moses speaks of the time when he escaped the sword of Pharaoh, how the Lord took care of him when he was in the land of Midian. Elijah escaped the sword of Jezebel. David escaped the sword of Saul. Saul sought him for ten years, persecuting him, hunting him from cave to cave, from mountain to mountain. That man's life was in jeopardy day and night, but the Lord sustained him and brought him through.

". . . out of weakness were made strong, . . ."

That reminds us of that great army of about three million or more who came out of Egypt. There was not a feeble one among them. It reminds us also of Samson's recovery when he renewed his vows. Samson failed terribly, but when he was in the treadmill he had an opportunity to do a little meditating, and I believe he did some praying. The result was that when his vows were renewed his strength was restored; and with that strength he glorified God by defeating the enemies of Israel more in his death than he had in his life.

". . . waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens" (Hebrews 11:34).

That brings to mind the instance when Joshua went against the Amalekites. Moses was upon the top of the hill, and when Moses lifted up his rod the enemy was defeated. Joshua waxed valiant until finally the enemy was completely routed.

"Women received their dead raised to life again: . . ." (Hebrews 11:35).

You remember the incident of Elijah's restoring the widow's son; also that of the Shunammite's son whom Elisha raised up.

". . . and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection:

"And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment" (Hebrews 11:35, 36).

Joseph spent two years in prison in Egypt, but he never lost his faith in God. And Jeremiah was put into a dungeon, but the Lord sent a servant to provide for him; otherwise he would have perished. The people of the Lord are sometimes put into a corner; but, as a minister once said, The Lord always opens up the corner; there is a way of escape.

"They were stoned, . . ."

Zacharias, the son of Barachias, was one who was stoned. Jesus recalled that to mind when He was rebuking the Pharisees:

"Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets; and wise men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city:

"That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar" (Matthew 23:34, 35).

They stoned him to death in the court of the Lord's house because he declared the truth faithfully to them. It was not only

in New Testament times that Christians were persecuted, but God's people have been persecuted down through the ages. Some have reckoned that there were fifty million martyrs during the Dark Ages who sealed their testimony with their blood. We in our time have not gone through much after all.

**". . . they were sawn asunder, [Tradition tells us
that was the fate of Isaiah.] were tempted,
were slain with the sword; . . ." (Hebrews
11:37).**

You remember the priests at Nob. They and their families -- three hundred in number -- were slain to the last man. These priests were men of God.

**"And these all, having obtained a good report
through faith, received not the promise"
(Hebrews 11:39).**

They saw it afar off, down through the centuries; but it was not fulfilled unto them. Not even did the Promised Land fall into Abraham's hands. It went to his posterity. The only possession that Abraham ever had in the Promised Land was a burial place, and he paid for that.

**"God having provided some better thing for us,
that they without us should not be made
perfect" (Hebrews 11:40).**

You see how God welded the two together: here are the Old Testament saints, also the New Testament saints; and the promises to the Old Testament saints reached over to be fulfilled with the New Testament saints. The plan of salvation was not complete until the Holy Ghost was poured out in the New Dispensation.