

Q1 L11 - Jesus, Author and Perfector of Our Faith - 2022-03-12

Shawn Brummund: Hello and welcome to another edition of the Sabbath School Study Hour right here in the Granite Bay Hilltop Seventh Day Adventist Church in the metropolitan area of Sacramento, California. It is so good to be able to have all those who are watching either livestream or those who are watching on the different, various broadcasts in which are carrying this particular program. It is always nice to be able to have you join us.

We're glad that you have decided to invest in the next one hour into studying one of my favorite Bible books, which is the Bible book of Hebrews. And so, we're coming back to our quarterly study, and the title is "The Message of Hebrews." And so, if you've been following along with this, of course, you've been blessed as we've been getting together from week to week. And if you're joining us for the very first time, we know that you're going to be blessed today, as we look at a very powerful lesson, lesson number 11, which is "Jesus: Author and Perfector of Our Faith." And so please stay with us as we continue to study.

I also would like to give a special welcome, of course, to our church family that is joining us here in person, and always nice to be able to have both our church members, as well as friends of the church, and visitors that so often come and join us from out of town, as well.

I want to also encourage you to take advantage of a free gift offer that we have for you here, today, which is "Determining the Will of God," by our lead pastor, Pastor Doug Batchelor. And if you've never read this, this is a very, very helpful book. It will help you, by faith, to be able to understand God's will and leading in your life. And so, all you need to do is dial 1-866-788-3966. Again, that's 1-866-788-3966. And when you call in, ask for offer number 778. We'll be happy to get that to you. If you live in North America or the various U.S. territories, we can have that sent out to you.

Now, another way that you could also get this is a digital form. And so, that's available to be able to download for free, as well. You just need to text the code SH025, and you want to dial that to 40544, and that'll connect you to a link on the Internet that will give you a free down link and download copy of this. Again, if you're in the U.S. and its various territories, we can get that to you.

And then there's also a website that you can see on the screen there that's available for you to be able to get online anywhere in the world and download a free digital copy for you, as well.

Father in heaven, we are thankful for the opportunity to be able to come together and worship you here this day, and we want to thank you for your Bible that you give to us. We thank you that we have a Word in which we can count on. We want to pray that as we study your Word today that it will take its effect in the way that you have always designed, to be written upon our heart, that we might walk with you, and we might not sin against you. And so, God, we want to pray for that special blessing. And again, be our teacher and be with Pastor Doug, even as he teaches today. In Jesus' name, we pray these things, God, amen.

Doug Batchelor: Good morning, friends. Good to see each of you here this Sabbath morning at the Granite Bay Hilltop Church, again. I know Pastor Shawn also welcomed already those who are a part of the wider audience. You know, we have also not only people who are watching on Facebook, and YouTube, and all the various, different networks. We're on the Good News Network, Amazing Facts. These programs air on 3ABN, Hope Channel, and we're thankful for all of that, but we also have a number of online members around the country and other parts of the world. We want to greet you, as well.

You know, sometimes I--we've got a great team of teachers and preachers here, and sometimes, because I'm the lead pastor--they used to call it senior pastor. I don't know when they officially changed that. But I prefer not being called senior at this point in my life, anything. So, I like--lead is okay. But I get to choose sometimes. And I said, "I want to teach the lesson today."

The lesson today is on Hebrews chapter 11. We'll get to that in just a minute. Of course, we're continuing, and this is not only dealing with the chapter 11 in Hebrews, but, of course, this is lesson 11, and lesson 11 has a memory verse, and the lesson title is "Jesus: The Author and Perfecter of Our Faith." Our memory verse--and if you want to repeat it after me, memory verse is Hebrews 12, verse 2. Hebrews 12, verse 2, and we're doing it here from the New King James Version. You ready? "--looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God."

Now, that's where--our last passage is from Hebrews 12. We're actually going to be starting in Hebrews chapter 10 to get into Hebrews 11. So, if you have your Bibles--my Bible conveniently today, when I open it up, it covers all of Hebrews 11. And so, we're going to do our best. There are 40 verses in Hebrews 11. We have four verses from Hebrews 10 and three verses from Hebrews 12, so we're going to do our best to cover 47 verses. It's a very simple study today, but we're going to do our best to expound on this. It's not possible to delve into all of it because there are about a dozen different Bible heroes that are mentioned in this passage, and I could preach a sermon on any one of them. I have, in fact. So, we're going to do our best, with God's help, to get through this.

So, go ahead and join me now in Hebrews chapter 10, and beginning with verse 35, "Therefore do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward." Now, let's pause right here and remind ourselves, why is Paul, the author of Hebrews, why did he write the book? What's the purpose of Hebrews? There were a lot of Hebrew or Jewish Christians that had accepted Jesus, that are meeting now with persecution. Their families are leaving them.

Do you know, it's still true today, in many Orthodox Jewish families, that if someone in the family becomes a Christian, they are disowned and even shunned. Even when I started dating Karen, my Jewish grandparents said, "Couldn't you have found a nice Jewish girl? Do you have to meet a goyim girl?" And when they met Karen, then they were very happy, and they loved her. But they're so very sensitive to--you know, when you look at the world religions, the Jews have had an incredible impact on the world, but comparatively they're very small. You've got 2.2 billion Christians in the world. And, you know, you've got--I don't know what it is. There's 1.7 billion Catholics. You have 1.7 billion Muslims. There's only 16 or 17 million Jews in all the world. And so, they want to retain their identity, and they've been scattered around the world on three different occasions. They've been disowned from their property and had to come back again. And so, they're very sensitive to maintaining their identity.

And now when these Jews have become Christians, they felt like they had abolished their identity. Paul was making it very clear. "No, when you are a Jew and you become a Christian, you're a fulfilled Jew now." This was the whole purpose of your Judaism. So, he's making that case, and he's telling them, "Do not be discouraged. Do not abandon your faith." And he's about to give them a great list of all these heroes from the Bible that held fast.

So, that's why he says here in chapter 10, "Do not cast away your confidence. Don't be discouraged. It has a great reward. For you have need of endurance." What does Jesus say? "He that endures to the end will be saved." "So that after you have done the will of God, you might receive the promise: 'For yet a little while, And He is coming will come.'" What's that promise? Eternity that is, of course, fulfilled with the coming of the Lord. "For He who is coming will come and will not tarry." Now, he's quoting from Habakkuk.

By the way, all through the book of Hebrews, Paul does an enormous amount of referencing quotations of the Old Testament which was, of course, believed by the Jews. So, he's using the Old Testament as a foundation to say, "This is the Messiah that it all pointed to." "For yet a little while, And He who is coming will come and will not tarry. Now the just shall live by faith." That's one of Paul's favorite passages. You read in Romans 1:17, "For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith. As it is written, 'The just shall live by faith.'"

The word faith in chapter 11 appears about 25 times. I think once or twice it uses the word belief, but

this is the faith chapter in the Bible, no question about it. The word faith appears more than any other time, any other passage or section of Scripture here in Hebrews, starting with verse 10, verse 35 through chapter 12, verse 3. That would amount up to about 27 or 28 references to faith or belief. So, it tells you about how crucial it is to believe. The just shall live by his faith. Paul there is quoting Habakkuk chapter 2, verse 3. He also mentions this again in not only Romans 1:17, in Galatians 3:11. The just shall live by faith.

How many of you have heard about righteousness by faith? Now, you don't get saved without righteousness. The problem with sin is it's wrong-teousness. We've all sinned. The way we become righteous is by our works? Or we're righteous by what? By faith. And it's through faith we embrace and obtain that righteousness, and there's two different kinds of righteousness. You've got a righteousness that you received as a gift, where you are justified. You come just like you are, and God looks at you just as if--that's where you get justification. He looks at you--at least that's how the evangelists explain it--just as if you had never sinned.

And then you get sanctification. You are made righteous. And because of your faith in his righteousness, you begin to be transformed, and you live a new righteous life. And so, he emphasizes the importance of righteousness by faith here. "But if anyone draws back--" Again, he's pleading, don't let go, don't lose your faith. "'If anyone draws back, My soul has no pleasure in him.' But we are not of those who draw back to perdition--" And how do you show you're drawing back? Go back to perdition, your life of sin. "We are not of those who draw back to perdition, but of those who believe to the saving of the soul."

The fruit of your belief is what? The saving of your soul. That's how important that is. Hebrews 12, verse 12. Now this is, I'm jumping ahead a chapter just to quote a verse that goes along with this. "Therefore strengthen the hands that hang down, and the feeble knees." He's saying, "Hang on. Do not become discouraged."

Now, the way you and I move around in this world, in our lives, is we operate and we know truth through our senses, through our eyes, and through our ears, and our sense of touch, and taste, and smell. And so, that's how we perceive our environment and our worldview. For the Christian, the most important sense is the sense of faith. That's how we know where a person stands. "The just shall live by faith."

So, moving on now here, let's begin by going to Hebrews--now we're in Hebrews 11. Let's jump into Hebrews 11, read the first three verses. "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." All right, he's going to talk about faith, and he's defining faith. What is faith? It's the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. If you have something in hand, you can't say, "Well, I've got faith there's a floor under me right now." Well, I don't need faith. I feel it under me. I see it under me.

Faith is when you believe in something that maybe isn't seen, but there's an evidence for your faith. Reading on here. "For by it," this is verse 2, "the elders," and he's getting ready to give a list of the elders, "obtained a good testimony," meaning Abraham, Isaac, Jacob. "By faith we understand the worlds were framed by the word of God, so the things that are seen were not made from things that are visible."

Now, do you realize that even though 2000 years have gone by since Paul said this, and roughly 6000 years have gone by since Adam, that the great scientists and philosophers then have the same problem that they have today, is how do you get something from nothing? Nothing in the world that we observe today shows us where something comes from nothing, or something happens with no cause.

What was the great cause that brought the universe into existence? Scientists can't explain that. The Bible says God spoke. I can't explain it, but I believe it. Why do I believe it? Because I have evidence from the other things I read in the Bible that God is faithful and what he says is true. I'm going to believe that. So, I think I've got more evidence than an evolutionist who says that something came from nothing with no reason. Sometime in the distant past, they got the same issue. We believe it by the Word of God, right? And then you've got the Scriptures that assure that.

Look at Psalm 33, verse 6. "For by the word of the Lord the heavens were made, And all the host of them by the breath of His mouth. For He spoke, and it was done; He commanded," this is verse 9. "He commanded, and it stood fast," by the word of God. You know, they had a program on NOVA about the universe, and it was talking about string theory, the latest theory and all of matter is string theory. And in a nutshell, string theory is the idea in theoretical physics that reality is made up of infinitesimally small vibrating strings that are producing anywhere from subatomic to very loud sounds, smaller than atoms, electrons, or quarks. And they haven't proven it, but this is the big theory now. And the bottom line, they're basically saying that all of the universe came into existence through sound. Well, the Bible says, "God said." Wouldn't that mean the Word brought it into existence?

All right, Hebrews 11, verse 6. We're jumping from verse 3 because it's going to be hard to go--wow, you know, I don't want to do that, but look--so, you go to verse 4. "By faith Abel--" Now, it's getting ready to list a number of individuals. It's going to talk about Abel--and this is in alphabetical order, not in the order they appear. Abel, Abraham, Barak, Daniel, David, Gideon, Jephthah, Jesus, Joseph, Moses, Noah, Rahab, Samson, Samuel, and then it alludes to several others. It alludes to Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego, Isaiah, Daniel, Joshua, in the stories that it shares. But it begins by saying, "By faith Abel offered a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained--"

Now, Cain is mentioned, but he's not mentioned as an example of faith. "--through which he obtained witness that he was righteous--" Notice, righteous by faith. Faith in what? In the lamb. Abel offered a lamb. Through the blood of the lamb, he believed that God would forgive him. "--testifying of his gifts; and through it he being dead still speaks" by his example. So, it's the blood of Abel speaks to us.

Then he goes to Enoch. "By faith Enoch--" And then verse 5 of chapter 11. "-- was taken away so that he did not see death, 'and was not found, because God had taken him!'; for before him, before he was taken he had this testimony, that he pleased God." And then here it makes a very powerful statement. "But without faith it is difficult to please God."

Let me read it again. "But without faith it's harder to please God." "But without faith, it's impossible to please Him." If is a dirty word to God. You remember when a thief on the cross said, "If you are the Christ, save yourself and us"? He was not saved. The father came to Jesus and said, "Lord, if you can do anything, help my son." Jesus stopped him in his tracks and said, "If you believe, all things are possible." "But without faith it is impossible to please God."

You don't want to go to your grave hoping. You want to believe that you have a saving relationship with Jesus. So, he says, "Without faith, it's impossible to please God; for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him." The Bible says, "Do not let the doubleminded man think that he'll receive anything of God." When you ask, ask in faith, believing that you'll receive, and you'll have the things that you pray for. And so, faith is crucial in the Christian experience.

Now, faith is not this reckless idea that, you know, you're not going to balance out your request and your prayers with other promises in the Bible and criteria. Faith is saying, "I believe the Word of God, and I'm going to order my life in harmony with it." If you knew that the stock market was going to crash in one week--it might, I don't know--and all of the banks were going to close, if you don't take your money out of the market and out of the bank between now and next week, you didn't really believe it. Isn't that right?

If you believed that the tornado warning--I'm talking to those who are listening in the Southwest there, mid-America--the tornado warning on the television and the radio was accurate, and you don't take shelter, you don't really believe. If you believe that sinners will be eternally lost, and the righteous will be eternally saved, and we are righteous by faith, and you do not take God up on His terms, you don't really believe it or you don't care about eternity.

So, when the Bible says those who believe in Jesus, it means believe in His teachings. You know how you say believe another way? Same thing for faith. Be live, he who be lives in Him. It means to be and to live

in Christ. That's what belief is.

So, what's happening now, you notice we're going through--Paul stops every now and then he expands. He just expanded after talking a little bit about Enoch. "Without faith it's impossible to please God." He's going through what we call the Hall of Faith in the Bible. It's the--you've got all of your great heroes here.

You know, they've got a National Baseball Hall of Fame museum in Cooperstown, New York. It serves as a central point of the history of baseball in the United States, and it displays baseball-related artifacts and exhibits honoring those who have excelled in the sport. Among fans, the Hall of Fame means it is the pantheon of players, managers, umpires, executives, and pioneers who have been inducted into the Hall. They're the greats in the game. They've also got a Football Hall of Fame. There's a Tennis Hall of Fame.

There is an Aviation Hall of Fame in Oklahoma. Did you know that? Did you know who was inducted into the Aviation Hall of Fame October 7, 1996? George E. Batchelor. Karen, you gave it away. My dad. Kind of neat to know that you're in the Hall of Fame.

And here now we're going through the Hall of Faith, they call it. It is a pantheon of the great heroes of faith. And it doesn't list them all, you'll notice as we go on.

All right, so moving on, we talked about Enoch, and then you go down a little bit, and it says in verse 7--oh, by the way, the last part of verse 6, I can't leave that out. It says, "He who comes to God must believe that He is," believe He's real, "and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him." Some people seek God, but they're never going to make it, because it's a pretty lazy seeking. The Bible says you--and this is Jeremiah chapter 29, verse 13. "You will search for Me, and you will find Me, when you search for Me with all of your heart." And if you spend 15 minutes in your Bible once a week, and 90 hours a week in front of the television, you're not seeking God with all of your heart. Is that clear? Does that make sense?

I mean, if you're seeking God with all of your heart, it should be a priority in your pursuit, in your study. Those who diligently--the word diligently there in the Greek, it represents almost a rule book. It's like to the point of perspiration, the diligently seeking after God. All right, then we go to verse 7. "By faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen--" What was not seen? The flood was not seen, rain was not even seen, but he was divinely warned. "He moved with godly fear, and he prepared an ark to the saving of his house, to the saving of his household, by which he condemned the world and be--" By his example, he said, "The world is going to be condemned. It's going to be destroyed because of the wickedness." And he "became heir of righteousness which is according to faith."

Now, the Bible says Noah found grace. So, was Noah saved by faith or by grace? Both. The grace he received was demonstrated by faith, and his faith was demonstrated by works. He built an ark. "By faith Abraham," and it spends several verses talking about Abraham because Abraham, of course, is one of the great central axles upon which major religions of the world turn. The Jews, Muslims, Christians, all look at Abraham as the father of the faithful, as they say. "By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out," meaning coming from Ur of the Chaldees, "to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going."

God said, "I want you to go out from the place you've spent all your life." And that's tough moving. It's really tough moving when you're like, you know, 70 years old. When Abraham left, he was like 70, 75. And God says, "I want you to go to this land called Canaan." Lord, can you send me some pictures? Can I look on Google Earth? Are there any Facebook sites I can go to, to find out more about it? I would like to get some testimonies online, see what the reviews are." He had none of that, and he said, "God's telling me to go. I'm going to go." And believe me, it was all that God promised it would be. And he went out to the place that he would receive as an inheritance, not knowing where he was going.

You know, being a follower of Christ means sometimes you go and you don't know where you're going. You're living day by day. You say, "God is doing something in my life. He's leading me. I'm not exactly sure where He's leading or why."

I just finished a really good book. It's an old classic. How many of you read "The Cross and the Switchblade"? I think I read it years ago, but I'd forgotten, so I read it again. And it's amazing how David Wilkerson--he died about 12 years ago. He just got impressed pastoring a small country church, saw a "Time" magazine article about the gangs and some gangs that were going to prison, and they were just kids. And God said, "I want you to go to New York." And he tried to tell his church that God had told him to go to New York and work with these young people. And they all said, "How are you going to do that?" And through a series of miracles, God led him to New York. He said he didn't even know why. Drove into town, said, "Okay, I'm here. I don't know what to do." And he would pull up right in front of the building where there was someone he was supposed to talk to. God arranged these incredible appointments. He didn't know where he was going.

And the end of the story is, that after several years of following by faith, they ended up having several centers called Teen Challenge to try to help young people, get them off drugs and lead them to Christ, and they did a wonderful ministry. But half the time he said, "I don't know why I'm here. I don't know what I'm supposed to say. I don't know what I'm doing, but God told me to go."

Sometimes in Christianity, you go, and you don't know exactly know why or where. So, it goes on to say-- I'll tell you one more story. You know, it's sort of a miracle how I ended up here, and it all can be traced back to when I lived in a cave. I, one day, got out on the road in Palm Springs and said, "I'm going north." People would pick me up, and they'd say, "Where are you going?" I'd say, "I don't know." This is after I became a Christian. But I said, "I feel like I'm supposed to go north."

And it kept happening until I got picked up by someone. And I said, "Where are you going?" And he said, "Well, don't you know where you're going?" I said, "I'm not sure. I'm going north." I said, "Maybe I'll move into a redwood tree." That's honestly what I said. I'd been living in a cave. I heard about someone that lived in a redwood tree. And I said, "So, where are you going?" They said, "Well, we're going to a little town out in the middle of nowhere called Covelo." And I said, "Are there any redwoods?" They said, "Not too many." I said, "Do they have any caves?" Said, "Yeah, probably up by the river." I said, "I'll go to Covelo." And I can see now that God led me there.

I ended up pastoring that church in that town. I was converted there, met the people I needed to meet that studied with me, and I got baptized. And I didn't know where I was going. I just went out on the road, put out my thumb. "And where are you going? Oh, that sounds good. I'll go there." So, you know, sometimes you've just got to--people tell me, you know, "I'm living in this bad situation. I can't get out, and I don't know how to get out." I say, "Yes, you can." I mean, if you've got to walk out on the road, put out your thumb, you can get out of it.

I mean, if you want to, all things are possible to people who believe. Abraham went out. "By faith he dwelt in the land," I'm in verse 9, "of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise." They all get in the promised land and saying, "Your descendants, the Messiah would come through your seed. "For he waited for a city that had foundations, whose builder and maker is God." Abraham never founded a city like Cain did. He traveled around and migrated like a shepherd because he said, "I'm looking for the city of foundations."

By the way, New Jerusalem will completely encase the territory that God gave to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. They will inherit that city, and that land is in the city. Then it diverts a little bit, and it talks about Sarah. And it says, "By faith Sarah herself also received strength to conceive seed, and she bore a child when she was past the age, because she judged Him faithful who had promised."

Now, when God first told Sarah that, she laughed. God said, "You laughed." She said, "I didn't laugh." He said, "Yes, you did." She laughed in her heart. She said, "I didn't laugh out loud." And then she finally came to believe that God would do for her what he had promised. It says these all died in faith. And from that one man, Isaac, verse 12, you got, you know, a whole nation, more than the stars of the sky. "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off--" They were living for the promise.

Now how many of you believe Jesus is coming? You have faith that Jesus is coming. Some of you may die in that faith, having seen it afar off, but it will still be true for you, won't it? And so, they're all going to get their inheritance, but they died before they saw it visualized, but they still ordered their life according to that promise. There are millions of people who have ordered their lives based upon faith that this life is temporary.

This is not the important life. This is not the one that lasts forever. Most people in the world live as though this is it. The Christian orders his life knowing this is not it. And we may not receive it in this life, but it is going to come, and we will receive it in the resurrection, right? "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth." They said, "This life is not it. I'm just passing through." "For those who say such things declare plainly they seek a homeland. And truly if they had called to mind the country from which they had come, they would have had an opportunity to return. But now they desire a better country, that is a heavenly. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared for them a city."

And Jesus said if we are ashamed of Him in this evil and adulterous generation, He will be ashamed of us. But if we proclaim and profess Him in this evil and adulterous generation, He will proclaim and profess us before the Father and the angels in heaven. And you see that happening in the book of Job. The Lord says to the devil, "Have you beheld my servant Job?" Job was not ashamed of God, and God said, "I'm not ashamed of him. I'm going to declare his name before the sons of God, the angels in heaven, and the devil himself."

And so, God is saying don't live in this world as though you're ashamed of Jesus, because you don't want Him to be ashamed of you. Amen? They desire a better country. And it goes on to say, "By faith Abraham," it returns to Abraham again. "By faith Abraham," verse 17, "when he was tested, he offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten son--" You notice there that Paul is making a pretty clear connection between Abraham and God so loving the world He gave His only begotten Son. "--of whom it was said, 'In Isaac your seed shall be called.' He concluded that God was even able to raise him from the dead, in which he received him in a figurative sense," Isaac being a type of Christ. And we talked about that in the series we're doing, cover to cover. "By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come. By faith Jacob, when he was dying, he blessed each of the sons of Joseph."

You notice it doesn't talk about all 12 there, but he blessed the sons of Joseph. You know, Ephraim and Manasseh said, "You are going to be numbered among the tribes of Israel." The other brothers might not have gone through that when Jacob died, but Jacob's prophecy came true. Ephraim and Manasseh were treated as the children of Jacob, and they became independent tribes. And then it says, making mention of, and then "By faith Joseph, when he was dying, made mention of the departing of the children of Israel, and gave instructions concerning his bones." He said, "God will surely visit you." He didn't say when, but He said, "He will visit you." "Take my bones, don't bury me here. Embalm me and take my coffin to the Promised Land."

You know, it never says Joseph ever went home again when he was sold as a slave. Said, "I want to be buried and back at home." And by faith, he made that declaration. Did it come true? Did they carry his bones back and bury him? Did God visit the children of Israel in Egypt? And these all had faith. Verse 23, now it talks about Moses. "By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden three months by his parents, because they saw he was a beautiful child." And that always makes me laugh because what if he wasn't a beautiful child? Anyway, they looked at him and they said, "We just can't obey the Pharaoh's command." "And they were not afraid of the king's command."

By faith Moses, when he became of age, he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin." When he's talking about faith, notice that he's making a reference to faith to turn away from sin, faith not to make this your kingdom, but we're looking for a better country. He esteemed the reproaches of Christ.

Now wait a second. It says Moses--what did Moses know about Christ? You look in Deuteronomy chapter 18, Moses prophesies of Christ, doesn't he? He saw Christ. He saw His day coming. "--esteeming the reproaches of Christ were of greater riches than the treasures of Egypt." Now, Egypt had, during the time of Moses, Egypt was at its zenith of wealth and splendor. The pyramids back then were glazed. They weren't all bumpy, rocky, rough. They were all beautifully glazed brick surface that shone in the sun, and everything was in its splendor. Moses could have been the king of all that. And he said, "I would rather have God's kingdom than the world as my kingdom."

So, like Jesus, he turned away from the earthly kingdoms when he was tempted, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin. He esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches. "By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath--" Like Abraham, by faith he went out. "--not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured seeing Him who is invisible. By faith he kept the Passover and the sprinkling of blood, yet lest he who destroyed the firstborn should touch them." They had faith in the blood that they would be saved. "By faith they passed through the Red Sea as by dry land, whereas the Egyptians, attempting to do so, were drowned."

Why did the sea not swallow them up, but it did swallow up the Egyptians? They had faith in God, and they were following God. The Egyptians were following the Israelites. The Israelites were following God. See the difference? "By faith, the walls of Jericho fell down." Now, here it would normally say Joshua, but it's just telling you about the event. "By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they were encircled for seven days." Now, think about that.

Now, can you imagine any military officer ever gathering his generals and saying, "Here's the plan. We're gonna march across that river that's over our heads." "How are we going to do that?" "Don't worry, God told us to do it. He'll take care of it. And after we march across that river, we're going to go to that big walled city, and we're going to march around quietly and blow a horn. And then after seven days of doing that, on the seventh day we'll do it seven times, and then we're all going to shout, and then we'll win." No general's ever tried that again, but that's what God told them to do. So, by faith, they obeyed what would normally be a very strange military plan, and God blessed, and the walls did come down.

And then he mentions, "By faith the harlot Rahab--" So, it mentions Sarah. It mentions Rahab, a couple of women here. "--did not perish--" You know, we are saved by faith. He said, "If you believe in me, you will not perish." "She did not perish with those who did not believe," meaning the Canaanites, "when she received the spies with peace."

Now, Rahab is an interesting study in this chapter on faith because it tells us that Rahab is not only mentioned as an example of faith. The Bible tells us in James--well, let me read it to you. James chapter 2, verse 25. "Likewise was not Rahab the harlot justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out another way." Martin Luther said he would like to use the book of James to start his fire. I know that shocks you to hear that. He didn't. He said it's really difficult for him because Martin Luther was all about faith. He had come out of the works orientation of Catholicism, and then he'd read James where it says by works, by works, by works. And that really bothered him because here it says that Rahab--now what does a woman represent in Bible analogy? The church.

Rahab is saved by faith because she received the two messengers sent by Joshua. How do you say Joshua in Greek? Jesus, same name. Two messengers sent by Jesus, the two witnesses, the law and the prophets, Moses and Elijah. She receives these two messengers by faith. But then she shows her faith by doing the works. She protects them. She lets them down the wall. She brings everybody into her house. She hangs the red rope in her window. She'd done something that she's told to do by these two messengers.

Because of faith, she does the works. That's how it happens for the Christian. First you've got the faith, then you have works. She demonstrated her faith when she says when the-- you can read here. It tells us that she declares--and this is Joshua 2, verse 8. "Before the men lay down, she came up to them on the roof and said, 'I know that the Lord has given you the land and that the terror of you has fallen upon us.

We heard what the Lord did for you against the Egyptians." She had the evidence of what God had done, and she had faith that God was going to bring the people all the way in, and her only way of escape was to make peace with Joshua, which she did.

So, James says faith without works is dead. I think Will Rogers is the one who said even if you're on the right track, you'll get run over if you just sit there. People said, "I've got faith." They don't do anything. Well, you don't really have faith. And then after Rahab was mentioned, as happens to me often, as happened this very moment, Paul figures, "I'm running out of time." And he said, "What shall I more say?"

I don't know if any of you that used to hear Byron Speers preach. That was a great Adventist evangelist you can still listen to his teach--Amazing Facts has copied all of his tapes, with the family's permission, to CDs or audio you can listen to. He would preach 90 minutes, use 100 Scriptures, and read all the Scriptures, never hold a Bible, and do it all by memory. But while he was preaching, whenever he paused, he'd say, "And what shall I more say," quoting this passage. "And what shall I more say?"

So, Paul was saying, I don't have time. I've only gotten to Rahab. And so, going back here, you read in verse 32, "And what shall I more say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon and Barak and Samson and Jephthah, also of David--" Many sermons on David. He can't preach them all now. "--and Samuel and the prophets." And he summarizes and he says, "--who through faith subdued kingdoms, and worked righteousness, and obtained promises, and stopped the mouths of lions."

Who's he talking about there? Samson, David, and Daniel, all killed lions or stopped the mouths. "--quenched the violence of the fire." Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. "--escaped the edge of the sword--" That could be David and many others. "--out of weakness were made strong, became valiant in battle, turned to flight the armies of the aliens--" That could be many of the judges. "Women received their dead raised to life again." That's talking about the resurrections that were done by Elijah and Elisha. "Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection." Many of the prophets. "Still others had trials of mockings and scourging, yes, of chains and imprisonment. They were stoned," like Zechariah between the altar and the porch. "They were sawn in two," like Isaiah the prophet. "They were tempted." Even these prophets were tempted. "They were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented."

You know, living a life of faith could also be a life of persecution and trial. "--of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains," like Elijah, "in dens and caves of the earth," like your pastor. "And these having obtained--" Sorry, I couldn't miss that. I did live in a cave, you know. "These all, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise."

Paul is saying to these Jewish readers, "You have seen the fulfillment of all they pointed to in Jesus." Amen? God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us.

Our last verses. "Therefore," chapter 12, verse 1. "Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses--" This is the Hall of Fame. It's just itemized. Well that is--what's the summary of everything he's saying now? Listen to this. "Let us lay aside every weight and the sin that does so easily beset us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set--" Don't give up. That's the appeal he's making.

Don't give up. "Let us run with endurance the race that is set before us." How do we lay aside the sin? How do we run the race? "Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith." Look at His example. See Him on the cross. "--who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and he has sat down at the right hand of God." Our best friend, our Savior is at the right hand of God. Amen? Wow, what a wonderful passage. I wish they had three lessons on this one subject.

We're out of time. So, I want to remind our friends who are watching, if you'd like our free offer, it's called, "Determining the Will of God," a book we'll send you. Ask for offer number 778, and the number

you would call to receive that is 866-788-3966. That's 866-Study-More, and I think you can even text us, or you can download it by texting SH025, and you text that to 40544. Outside North America, you can just go to study.aftv.org/SH025. That's a lot of information, but that'll be on the screen. God bless you, friends. We'll study His Word together again next week.

Announcer: Don't forget to request today's life-changing free resource. Not only can you receive this free gift in the mail. You can download a digital copy straight to your computer or mobile device. To get your digital copy of today's free gift, simply text the key word on your screen to 40544 or visit the web address shown on your screen, and be sure to select the digital download option on the request page. It's now easier than ever for you to study God's Word with Amazing Facts, wherever and whenever you want, and most important to share it with others.

Female: One day, my daughter and my son come to me. It was on a Sunday. And they told me that they were going to go by his friend's house. My daughter asked her brother if she could go along with him, just to get out of the house. And I says, "I want you to know that I want you guys to be careful." And I says, "I want you to know that I love you and I always will." And I said, "And I'll see you tonight."

It was at 12:30. Usually 11:30, 12:00 they usually come back to the house, but they never returned. At nighttime, we got a knock on our door. It was about 2 in the morning. And it was a sheriff and a coroner there. And they told me and my husband, he said, "I want you two to sit down." And he's like, "I've got some bad news for you," and he says, "I know it's going to be hard. He said, "Your children both got into a car accident tonight." He said, "And both of them died right on impact."

I felt numb. My world didn't seem the same anymore. For a while, after a while I had a void in my life because I knew I would never see them again. My husband was asleep in the living room, and he must've woke up. He turned on the TV and watching it. And so he comes in the bedroom, and he says, "Dorothy, you've got to get up." I said, "Why? What'd you wake me up for? You know I got to sleep." He said, "No, you've got to see this guy on TV. He's something else."

So, I got up, and I went in there. I sat down, and he says--I seen this guy there, and it's the first time I ever seen him. He said he's from "Amazing Facts." He said, "Something about this guy, what he's talking about. He's really hitting me in my heart." He said, "And the more he talked, the more I sit up here and listen." I watched Doug Batchelor, I would cry. I thought, "Man." And I wasn't crying because I was sad. I was crying because I was happy. And I also loved his humor. And he said, "Well, God has humor, too." And I said, "I imagine he does."

As I got to know more about Doug Batchelor, watching his show, the void that I had for a long, long time finally was filled. God did answer my prayer, but he did it in his own time. Since I gave myself, put my life with Christ, you know, I went through a brain surgery, I went through a heart attack, and now I have arthritis, which is most part of my body. And even though I'm in a lot of pain, I don't have no feelings at all against God. I think, matter of fact, because of that, it's drawing me closer to Him. I thank Doug Batchelor from Amazing Facts, who is one who played a very big part in my conversion and turning my life more to God, even though all the suffering I went through, you know. He helped me to just keep strong, keep going, and keep my eyes on God. Thank you for changing my life.

Announcer: Amazing Facts, Changed Lives.

Jennifer: When I was a teenager growing up, I was getting into all sorts of trouble. I was drinking, smoking. I would look for love in all the wrong places. I thought that those were ways that could make me happy, and it didn't. It just made everything worse. I was very confused. I didn't know who I was. I had no identity whatsoever and just I had such a hole in me, such hurt that I would do anything and everything just to try to fill that void. I was making a lot of bad decisions, a lot of bad choices.

I got pregnant when I was 19 years old, and I was a single mother. And to try to prove to myself and the world that I can make it on my own, I became an exotic dancer. My mom, she started sending me links to Amazing Facts Ministry, just sermons, and seminars, and Bible studies, and YouTube videos with Doug

Batchelor. And I started watching it. And beforehand, I would delete them. But now here I am watching, and I couldn't get enough of it.

My heart was on fire. I wanted more and more. So, instead of going to the club, I would go to the website, the Amazing Facts website, and then I would go to the Bible studies, and I would go after one, study one, which would make me want to study another one. So, I'd study another one and another one, and I went through the whole set. And that wasn't enough for me. I wanted more, so I just, I would do it again. I would read the whole set over again, and I was learning so much, and I just couldn't get enough of it. And this made me where I didn't even want to go to work.

I just had this fire in my heart. And then it got to where I was on the interstate to go to work, and then I pulled over, and God, He just, He told me like, He's like, "Jennifer, we can't do this anymore." And so, I told Him, I said, "God, I know this is you. I know that you're speaking to me right now." And for the first time ever, my eyes were opened, the whole situation, and how I was living my life. And I went home, and I got down on my knees, and I fell before God. I started to beg him, "God, please take me out of this lifestyle. And if you do, I promise you I will serve you for the rest of my life."

And so, for the first time in my life, I was healing, and I was learning, and I was coming to a knowledge of the truth, and that truth was Jesus Christ Himself and that He loved me." So, as I'm going about these studies, Amazing Facts comes to my local church, and Pastor Wyatt Allen, he puts on this evangelistic series, and he makes a call for baptisms, and I'm impressed, you know, that I need to do this, and I want to make this decision for Christ, to rededicate my life to Him.

My life has been completely changed in so many ways, just seeing where God has taken me on this journey, where He took me from this--to this lost, confused girl to this woman who knows who she is, her identity in Christ.

Jennifer: My name is Jennifer. Thank you for changing my life.

Announcer: Amazing Facts, Changed Lives

Nita: I'm Tlingit Indian from Sitka, Alaska. My Tlingit name is-- It was a very depressing time for the people of Alaska. A lot of alcohol, abuse was taking place. And unfortunately, my mother got caught up in the alcohol. It made myself and my siblings grow up in a pretty horrible environment. It was really hard to understand God. It was really hard to understand what love was.

I ended up having a child in my 12th grade and leaving home when I was 15 years old. But somehow, somehow, we made it. And I became a loner. I became a hermit. So, I went up to the biggest marijuana county, to Humboldt County, and started my new career. Things weren't right, though. No matter how nice I kept thinking life was, living up on top of the mountain, not having to worry about wearing clothing, just waking up and watching the plants grow, searching still for more and more.

I went to the post office, and I was standing there by myself. I looked down, and here was this, what is called a handbill, a post card, and the letters on it grabbed by attention, and it said, "Revelations." I never heard Revelation taught before. And I thought, "Gosh, that would've been so good." I looked at the time and the date, and I said, "Wow, that's today."

And for six weeks I sat there in the front seat of that building and could not believe the things that I heard. And I found this hunger that I had in my heart for decades being filled. I was actually like a starving child, you know, wanting to get in to learn more about Revelations. And I chose to be baptized on April 3rd. Even though I chose to serve God, I kept falling. I was going to Bible studies four times a week, and just so hungry to learn as much as possible. God just overnight had me studying the Word of God through AFCOE. And the miracles that happened through AFCOE is so incredible. The only preacher I was listening to was Pastor Doug Batchelor, who I didn't even call by his name. I called him the cave man. And then here all of a sudden, I'm sitting in front of him in his classroom, learning from him.

On October 11th, I sat there, though, in my room saying, "Lord, here I am studying your Word. But what am I doing here? What do I need to do? What is it you want me to do? And that night, about 1 in the

morning, God spoke to me, and he said, "I want you to write a note to Pastor Doug and tell him what you do." I sat there and I says, "No, I'm not going to write a note. I'm not going to write a note." And I said, "Okay."

So, I ripped off a piece of paper, and I wrote on the note, and I said, "I'm an experienced fashion designer. I can sew anything. I can make any patterns. If there's any way that I can be of any service to you, God told me to be bold and tell you." And I walked up, and I handed him the note, and he didn't know what it was, but he said, "Thank you."

And four hours later, I got a phone call from Amazing Facts. Pastor Doug told me that I was an answer to their prayers. They had been looking for a wardrobe stylist for their new film that they're producing.

Male: Action! Two, three!

Nita: Amazing Facts has changed my life in the direction that God wants me to go. And now out of all the knowledge that was taught to me, I'm able to go out into this world and share the gospel and finish the work for Jesus Christ.

Doug: Friends, it's because of God's blessing and your support that thousands of others like Nita have found Jesus and everlasting life.