

Hebrews 11:29-40

11:29 – “By faith the people crossed the Red Sea as on dry land, but the Egyptians, when they attempted to do the same, were drowned.

Crossing the Red Sea

Moses parted the sea for them but the people followed and are given credit for faith

The Lord’s victory is recorded in Ex. 15:1 and is similar to his victory over the forces of chaos in Isaiah 51:9-11

Why did the Sea part?

1. an act of God - Ex. 14:14
2. the east wind – Exodus
3. the faith of the people – here in Hebrews

Why did the Egyptians drown?

1. an act of God – Ex. 14:25
2. the east wind – Exodus
3. the Egyptian’s did not have faith – here in Hebrews

No more recording of deeds of faith in the wilderness for forty years

11:30 – “By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they had been encircled for seven days.

The walls of Jericho fall because of the people’s faith demonstrated in obedience of marching.

11:31 – “By faith Rahab the prostitute did not perish with those who were disobedient, because she had given a friendly welcome to the spies.

Rahab in Joshua 2:11

zonah in Joshua 2:1 means “a secular harlot” and not a temple prostitute.

11:32 – “And what more shall I say? For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets—

1. Gideon – fought Midian but at first didn’t believe (Jd. 6:11)
2. Barak – fought Sisera the commander of the Canaanites and his chariots but at first Barak refused to fight unless Deborah went (Judges 5)
3. Samson – fought the Philistines but his life was filled with weakness (Jd. 13-16)
4. Jephthah – fought the Ammonites but made a rash vow to sacrifice his daughter (Jd. 11)
5. David – had faith, had sin but received the promise in 2 Sam. 7:19 and 23:3-5
6. Samuel – manifested the gift of the prophet and others followed him
7. The Prophets

Notice: Barak and Gideon are out of order as are Jephthah and Samson and Samuel and David.

11:33 – “who through faith conquered kingdoms, enforced justice, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions,

1. conquered kingdoms – David
2. administered justice – Solomon
3. gained what was promised – The promised land in David and Solomon’s day
4. shut the mouths of lions – Daniel

5. Quenched the fury of the flames – Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego
6. escaped the edge of the sword –
7. weakness was turned to strength
8. became powerful in battle – Maccabees
9. routed foreign armies – Maccabees
10. Women received back their dead, raised to life – Elijah and Elisha with the poor widow of Zarephath and the wealthy woman of Shunem

11:34-37 – “Women received back their dead by resurrection. Some were tortured, refusing to accept release, so that they might rise again to a better life. Others suffered mocking and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were killed with the sword. They went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, afflicted, mistreated—

1. Others were tortured – Many of the following would be included in the account of the Maccabean Revolt against the Seleucid Empire and Antiochus IV Epiphanes 167-164 BC
2. some faced jeers
3. flogging
4. chained
5. put in prison –Jeremiah in Jeremiah 20:2, 7-10, 37:15, 38:6-13
6. stoned – Tertullian says Jeremiah was stoned
7. sawed in two – Isaiah by Manasseh when he fled Jerusalem for hills of Bethlehem and was hiding in a tree, the tree was sawn down and Isaiah sawn in half. This is recorded in the book “Ascension of Isaiah”
8. death by the sword
9. sheepskins and goatskins – Elijah 2 Kings 1:8 and Isaiah and his disciples in Ascension of Isaiah 2:10
10. destitute
11. persecuted
12. mistreated – Daniel 11:33 some would fall “by the sword or be burned or captured or plundered”
13. wandered in deserts and mountains, in caves and holes – prophets and the faithful hiding persecution

Some escaped death by the sword like Elijah others died by the sword.
If they lived or they died they did so by faith

In Acts James dies by sword and Peter escapes sword

11:38 – “of whom the world was not worthy—wandering about in deserts and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.

11:39 – “And all these, though commended through their faith, did not receive what was promised,

1. The all accepted and believed the promise but none of them received the promise.
2. They died looking for something that was not on this earth

11:40 – “since God had provided something better for us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect.

1. “Be made perfect”
 - a. In Christ – with these “better” things:

- i. Better Covenant
 - ii. Better promises
 - iii. Better sacrifice
 - iv. Better priest
- b. In Eternity
 - i. At the resurrection
 - ii. Resurrected bodies, like Christ, perfect, glorious, with no sin nature

Judith -The Book of Judith is a vivid story relating how, in a grave crisis, God delivered the Jewish people through the instrumentality of a woman. She was a beautiful Jewish widow who lured an Assyrian general to his assassination and delivered Israel. (This book is not found in the Dead Sea Scrolls or in the Masoretic Text.)

2 Maccabees 6

1 Not long after this, the king sent an Athenian senator to compel the Jews to forsake the laws of their fathers and cease to live by the laws of God,

2 and also to pollute the temple in Jerusalem and call it the temple of Olympian Zeus, and to call the one in Gerizim the temple of Zeus the Friend of Strangers, as did the people who dwelt in that place.

3 Harsh and utterly grievous was the onslaught of evil.

4 For the temple was filled with debauchery and reveling by the Gentiles, who dallied with harlots and had intercourse with women within the sacred precincts, and besides brought in things for sacrifice that were unfit.

5 The altar was covered with abominable offerings which were forbidden by the laws.

6 A man could neither keep the sabbath, nor observe the feasts of his fathers, nor so much as confess himself to be a Jew.

7 On the monthly celebration of the king's birthday, the Jews were taken, under bitter constraint, to partake of the sacrifices; and when the feast of Dionysus came, they were compelled to walk in the procession in honor of Dionysus, wearing wreaths of ivy.

8 At the suggestion of Ptolemy a decree was issued to the neighboring Greek cities, that they should adopt the same policy toward the Jews and make them partake of the sacrifices,

9 and should slay those who did not choose to change over to Greek customs. One could see, therefore, the misery that had come upon them.

10 For example, two women were brought in for having circumcised their children. These women they publicly paraded about the city, with their babies hung at their breasts, then hurled them down headlong from the wall.

11 Others who had assembled in the caves near by, to observe the seventh day secretly, were betrayed to Philip and were all burned together, because their piety kept them from defending themselves, in view of their regard for that most holy day.

12 Now I urge those who read this book not to be depressed by such calamities, but to recognize that these punishments were designed not to destroy but to discipline our people.

13 In fact, not to let the impious alone for long, but to punish them immediately, is a sign of great kindness.

14 For in the case of the other nations the Lord waits patiently to punish them until they have reached the full measure of their sins; but he does not deal in this way with us,
15 in order that he may not take vengeance on us afterward when our sins have reached their height.

16 Therefore he never withdraws his mercy from us. Though he disciplines us with calamities, he does not forsake his own people.

17 Let what we have said serve as a reminder; we must go on briefly with the story.

18 Eleazar, one of the scribes in high position, a man now advanced in age and of noble presence, was being forced to open his mouth to eat swine's flesh.

19 But he, welcoming death with honor rather than life with pollution, went up to the rack of his own accord, spitting out the flesh,
20 as men ought to go who have the courage to refuse things that it is not right to taste, even for the natural love of life.

21 Those who were in charge of that unlawful sacrifice took the man aside, because of their long acquaintance with him, and privately urged him to bring meat of his own providing, proper for him to use, and pretend that he was eating the flesh of the sacrificial meal which had been commanded by the king,

22 so that by doing this he might be saved from death, and be treated kindly on account of his old friendship with them.

23 But making a high resolve, worthy of his years and the dignity of his old age and the gray hairs which he had reached with distinction and his excellent life even from childhood, and moreover according to the holy God-given law, he declared himself quickly, telling them to send him to Hades.

24 "Such pretense is not worthy of our time of life," he said, "lest many of the young should suppose that Eleazar in his ninetieth year has gone over to an alien religion,

25 and through my pretense, for the sake of living a brief moment longer, they should be led astray because of me, while I defile and disgrace my old age.

26 For even if for the present I should avoid the punishment of men, yet whether I live or die I shall not escape the hands of the Almighty.

27 Therefore, by manfully giving up my life now, I will show myself worthy of my old age

28 and leave to the young a noble example of how to die a good death willingly and nobly for the revered and holy laws." When he had said this, he went at once to the rack.

29 And those who a little before had acted toward him with good will now changed to ill will, because the words he had uttered were in their opinion sheer madness.

30 When he was about to die under the blows, he groaned aloud and said: "It is clear to the Lord in his holy knowledge that, though I might have been saved from death, I am enduring terrible sufferings in my body under this beating, but in my soul I am glad to suffer these things because I fear him."

31 So in this way he died, leaving in his death an example of nobility and a memorial of courage, not only to the young but to the great body of his nation.

2 Maccabees 7

1 It happened also that seven brothers and their mother were arrested and were being compelled by the king, under torture with whips and cords, to partake of unlawful swine's flesh.

2 One of them, acting as their spokesman, said, "What do you intend to ask and learn from us? For we are ready to die rather than transgress the laws of our fathers."

3 The king (***Antiochus IV Epiphanes, began ruling 175, died 164; Maccabean Revolt began 167***) fell into a rage, and gave orders that pans and caldrons be heated.

4 These were heated immediately, and he commanded that the tongue of their spokesman be cut out and that they scalp him and cut off his hands and feet, while the rest of the brothers and the mother looked on.

5 When he was utterly helpless, the king ordered them to take him to the fire, still breathing, and to fry him in a pan. The smoke from the pan spread widely, but the brothers and their mother encouraged one another to die nobly, saying,

6 "The Lord God is watching over us and in truth has compassion on us, as Moses declared in his song which bore witness against the people to their faces, when he said, 'And he will have compassion on his servants.'"

7 After the first brother had died in this way, they brought forward the second for their sport. They tore off the skin of his head with the hair, and asked him, "Will you eat rather than have your body punished limb by limb?"

8 He replied in the language of his fathers, and said to them, "No." Therefore he in turn underwent tortures as the first brother had done.

9 And when he was at his last breath, he said, "You accursed wretch, you dismiss us from this present life, but the King of the universe will raise us up to an everlasting renewal of life, because we have died for his laws."

10 After him, the third was the victim of their sport. When it was demanded, he quickly put out his tongue and courageously stretched forth his hands,

[11](#) and said nobly, "I got these from Heaven, and because of his laws I disdain them, and from him I hope to get them back again."

[12](#) As a result the king himself and those with him were astonished at the young man's spirit, for he regarded his sufferings as nothing.

[13](#) When he too had died, they maltreated and tortured the fourth in the same way.

[14](#) And when he was near death, he said, "One cannot but choose to die at the hands of men and to cherish the hope that God gives of being raised again by him. But for you there will be no resurrection to life!"

[15](#) Next they brought forward the fifth and maltreated him.

[16](#) But he looked at the king, and said, "Because you have authority among men, mortal though you are, you do what you please. But do not think that God has forsaken our people.

[17](#) Keep on, and see how his mighty power will torture you and your descendants!"

[18](#) After him they brought forward the sixth. And when he was about to die, he said, "Do not deceive yourself in vain. For we are suffering these things on our own account, because of our sins against our own God. Therefore astounding things have happened.

[19](#) But do not think that you will go unpunished for having tried to fight against God!"

[20](#) The mother was especially admirable and worthy of honorable memory. Though she saw her seven sons perish within a single day, she bore it with good courage because of her hope in the Lord.

[21](#) She encouraged each of them in the language of their fathers. Filled with a noble spirit, she fired her woman's reasoning with a man's courage, and said to them,

[22](#) "I do not know how you came into being in my womb. It was not I who gave you life and breath, nor I who set in order the elements within each of you.

[23](#) Therefore the Creator of the world, who shaped the beginning of man and devised the origin of all things, will in his mercy give life and breath back to you again, since you now forget yourselves for the sake of his laws."

[24](#) Antiochus felt that he was being treated with contempt, and he was suspicious of her reproachful tone. The youngest brother being still alive, Antiochus not only appealed to him in words, but promised with oaths that he would make him rich and enviable if he would turn from the ways of his fathers, and that he would take him for his friend and entrust him with public affairs.

[25](#) Since the young man would not listen to him at all, the king called the mother to him and urged her to advise the youth to save himself.

[26](#) After much urging on his part, she undertook to persuade her son.

[27](#) But, leaning close to him, she spoke in their native tongue as follows, deriding the cruel tyrant: "My son, have pity on me. I carried you nine months in my womb, and nursed you

for three years, and have reared you and brought you up to this point in your life, and have taken care of you.

[28](#) I beseech you, my child, to look at the heaven and the earth and see everything that is in them, and recognize that God did not make them out of things that existed. Thus also mankind comes into being.

[29](#) Do not fear this butcher, but prove worthy of your brothers. Accept death, so that in God's mercy I may get you back again with your brothers."

[30](#) While she was still speaking, the young man said, "What are you waiting for? I will not obey the king's command, but I obey the command of the law that was given to our fathers through Moses.

[31](#) But you, who have contrived all sorts of evil against the Hebrews, will certainly not escape the hands of God.

[32](#) For we are suffering because of our own sins.

[33](#) And if our living Lord is angry for a little while, to rebuke and discipline us, he will again be reconciled with his own servants.

[34](#) But you, unholy wretch, you most defiled of all men, do not be elated in vain and puffed up by uncertain hopes, when you raise your hand against the children of heaven.

[35](#) You have not yet escaped the judgment of the almighty, all-seeing God.

[36](#) For our brothers after enduring a brief suffering have drunk of everflowing life under God's covenant; but you, by the judgment of God, will receive just punishment for your arrogance.

[37](#) I, like my brothers, give up body and life for the laws of our fathers, appealing to God to show mercy soon to our nation and by afflictions and plagues to make you confess that he alone is God,

[38](#) and through me and my brothers to bring to an end the wrath of the Almighty which has justly fallen on our whole nation."

[39](#) The king fell into a rage, and handled him worse than the others, being exasperated at his scorn.

[40](#) So he died in his integrity, putting his whole trust in the Lord.

[41](#) Last of all, the mother died, after her sons.

[42](#) Let this be enough, then, about the eating of sacrifices and the extreme tortures.