

## THE WINNER'S CIRCLE

*Examining Biblical Characters Who Won By Faith*

*Hebrews 11*

*Introduction*

### BACKGROUND OF HEBREWS

Hebrews was written to a group of first-century Christians who were in danger of giving up. Times were hard! The letter appeals to all these severely tested believers to keep their faith firmly anchored to the moorings of truth, to maintain their steady confidence in Christ and to press on to mature Christian stability. This letter's primary exhortation is an appeal for endurance, using various Old Testament examples. Most significant of all, Jesus endured. These Jewish Christians could endure by looking to Christ.

**THEME OF HEBREWS**—"The Preeminence of Jesus Christ." Jesus Christ is superior to everyone and everything.

### SPIRITUAL THEMES IN HEBREWS

- **ATONEMENT**—Atonement is the restoration of a relationship with God that has been broken by sin. According to the Old Testament, atonement was made when the high priest offered the blood of a bull or goat on the day of Atonement. (Lev.16:1-34, Heb 2:17-18, 4:14-5:10, 9:1-10:18)
- **SACRIFICE**—The sacrifices prescribed by the Old Testament involved the slaying of an animal and the offering of the animal's blood to God. Hebrews compares Jesus' death by crucifixion and his subsequent ascension into heaven as the two parts of this sacrificial process. (Heb. 4:14-5:10; 9:1-10:18).
- **PROMISES**—The promises of God express a commitment to bless God's people. God promised a homeland and many descendants, but Abraham did not live to see the full realization of these promises (Heb. 6:13-20; 11:8-16). The blessings that God promised to Abraham and his descendants—including the followers of Jesus—will be completely fulfilled in the heavenly Jerusalem, the homeland where the vast company of the redeemed celebrates in God's presence (Heb. 4:1; 12:22-24).
- **CONFESSION**—Hebrews exhorts readers to hold fast to their confession of faith in Jesus, who is their hope for life now and in the future (Heb. 3:1; 4:14; 10:23). A confession is a statement of faith that is shared by a community. By calling upon readers to hold on to the confession, the author also builds community, directing them to the faith that binds them to God and to each other.
- **FAITH**—For the author of Hebrews, faith has two dimensions: first, it means trust in the promises of God; second, it means faithfulness to God. Together, these two dimensions show what it means to live in authentic relationship to God.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF FAITH

Faith is mentioned 230 times in the Bible.

## WHAT IS FAITH?

"Faith is trusting and obeying God inspite of your feelings, circumstances, or consequences."

"Faith does not guarantee that things will go smoothly for us. It does guarantee that we will be living in such a way that God is pleased with us and that we will experience His blessing, even in the midst of trouble and persecution." Warren Wiersbe

## WHY DO WE NEED FAITH?

- To stand through life's challenges.
- To stand through life's persecutions.
- To display our light to others.

## THE WINNER'S CIRCLE IN HEBREW 11

Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Sarah, Joseph, Moses, Rahab, Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel and the prophets.

## THE DNA OF THE BIBLICAL CHARACTER'S IN THE WINNER'S CIRCLE

- THEY WERE FINITE
- THEY WERE FLAWED
- THEY WERE FAITHFUL

## FACTS ABOUT FAITH (Heb 11:1-6)

- ✓ Faith involves confidence and conviction v.1 "substance", "evidence"
- ✓ Faith always relates to the future v. 1 "hope for"
- ✓ Faith has an object v. 1 "things not seen"
- ✓ Faith is basic to pleasing God v. 2, 6
- ✓ Faith means focusing fully on God v. 6