

Hebrews 11:31-40 (NASB) Teaching Notes

⇒ What are common excuses non-Christians use when you attempt to share the Gospel with them? How does the story of Rahab counter these excuses?

31 By **faith** Rahab the harlot did not perish along with those who were disobedient, after she had welcomed the spies in peace.

- Cf. Rahab's comments (**Josh.2:8-14**) with the Israelites' (**Dt.1:27-28**). What she knew about Israel's deliverance by God had occurred 40 years earlier!
- **Eph.2:8-10** – Rahab was saved by grace, by faith, unto good works. *Mt. 1:5; Js.2:25.*
- Rahab rebukes the common excuses of the unsaved person:
 - *"I don't know very much about the Bible."* ✓ Rahab acted on what little she knew.
 - *"I am too bad to be saved."* ✓ Rahab was a condemned heathen harlot.
 - *"What will my family think?"* ✓ Rahab's first concern was to save her family.

32 And what more shall I say? For time will fail me if I tell of **Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah**, of David and Samuel and the prophets,

⇒ What made Gideon a man of faith? ... How about Barak? ... Samson? ... Jephthah?

- Gideon was a frightened farmer whose faith gradually grew stronger (*Jud.6:11 – 7:25*).
- Barak won a huge victory over Sisera, but not without Deborah's help (*Jud.4:1 – 5:31*). They both encourage those who falter in their faith.
- Samson (*Jud.13 – 16*) failed his calling miserably nearly his entire life, then finished strong.
- Jephthah (*Jud.11:1 – 12:7*) is a curious story. It is unlikely that he sacrificed his only daughter as a burnt offering, since this was forbidden in Israel. He probably dedicated her to the Lord on the basis of the "law of vows" (*Lev.27*) to a life of perpetual virginity (*Jud.11:34-40*).

33 who by **faith** conquered kingdoms, performed acts of righteousness, obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions,

- Joshua, judges, David
- Abraham, Moses, David, Solomon
- David, Asa, Jehoshaphat, Joash, Hezekiah, Josiah
- Samson, David, Daniel (6:22)

34 quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, from weakness were made strong, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight.

- *Dan.3:23-28* – Shadrach, Meshach, Abed-nego
- Ehud, Jael, Gideon, Samson, Hezekiah
- David, Elijah, Elisha

⇒ A significant shift in focus occurs in v. 35 ... what is it?

35 **Women** received back their dead by resurrection; and **others** were **tortured**, not accepting their release, so that they might obtain a better resurrection;

• *1Kings17:17-24* ... Elijah with the widow of Zarephath *2Kings4:18-37* ... Elisha with the Shunammite's son. *Interestingly, both Gentiles.

• **“others”** (ἄλλος) = others of a different kind (land). This verse is an important transition. Not all persons of faith experience miraculous deliverance. God does not have to heal or deliver in order to prove that a person has faith (***Dan.3:17-18***).

• **“tortured”** (τυμπανίζω) = the tympanum was a wheel-shaped instrument of torture, over which criminals were stretched like they were skins, then horribly beaten with clubs or thongs.

⇒ Why does it make sense to hold to your faith even if it does not bring deliverance from suffering?

36 and others experienced mockings and scourgings, yes, also chains and imprisonment.

37 They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were tempted, they were put to death with the sword; they went about in sheepskins, in goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, ill-treated

• Prophet Zechariah stoned to death.

• Jewish tradition teaches that king Manasseh had the prophet Isaiah sawn in two.

38 (*men* of whom the world was not worthy), wandering in deserts and mountains and caves and holes in the ground.

39 And all these, having **gained approval** through their **faith**, did not receive what was promised,

• Faith enables us to turn from the approval of the world, to seek only the approval of God.

• Cf., ***Heb.6:12***

40 because God had provided something better for us, so that apart from us they would not be made perfect.

⇒ Meditate on ***Hebrews 11:1***, remembering specific ways that God has already proved Himself faithful in your life ... write these down.

• ***Jer.32:17*** *Read C.H. Spurgeon's "Evening Devotions," for June 30th.