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BIBLE TEACHINGS

THE MEN OF WISDOM, AUTHORITY, AND FAITHFULNESS

Hebrews 11: 24-30



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The Men of Wisdom, Authority & Faithfulness

(Hebrews 11: 24-30)

(Jeremiah 37: 11-21)

Introduction

The epistle to the Hebrews is a delightful piece of literary work. Concerning its author, we are not so certain, as it does not bear the name of any in the front of it, as the rest of the epistles do, and there has been some dispute among the learned to whom they should ascribe it. However, it is generally assigned to the apostle Paul. The design of this epistle was to press the believing Hebrews to constantly adhere to the Christian faith, and persevere in it, notwithstanding all the sufferings they might meet in so doing.

Chapter 11, is a portion of an appeal – *the fruitfulness of faith*. “*Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the demonstration of things not seen*” (v. 1). The word *hypostasis*, (Greek), which we translate *substance* signifies ‘substance,’ that which becomes a foundation for another thing to stand on. *Elenchos* (evidence) on the other hand, signifies such a ‘conviction’ as it produced in the mind by the ‘*demonstration*’ of a problem, after which demonstration no doubt can remain, because we see from it that the thing is, that it cannot but be, and that it cannot be otherwise than as it is and is proven to be. Such is the faith by which the soul is justified; or rather, such are the effects of justifying faith.

Study Outline:

- I. What is Man?
- II. Moses: Man, of Purpose and Power.
- III. Jeremiah: Man, of Faithfulness.

Supplementary Passage: (Exodus 2: 1-10; Matthew 25: 14-30).

I. What is Man? (Psalm 8: 4)

As Created – God’s Masterpiece:

“So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them” (Gen. 1: 27).

God's image upon man consists of three things:

- (i) In his nature and constitution, not those of his body (for God has not a body), but those of his soul. This honor indeed God has put upon the body of man, that the Word was made flesh. The Son of God was clothed with a body like ours and will shortly clothe ours with a glory like that of His.
- (ii) In his place and authority: *have dominion*. As he has the government of the inferior creatures, he is, as it were, God's representative, or viceroy, upon earth. Yet his government of himself by the freedom of his will has in it more of God's image than his government of the creatures.
- (iii) In his purity and rectitude. God's image upon man consists in knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness, (Eph. 4: 24; Col. 3: 10). Thus holy and happy, were our first parents, in having the image of God upon them.

As a Sinner – The Devil's Puppet:

"In which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience" (Eph. 2: 2).

Let us be very clear in this crucial matter. A state of sin is a state of conformity to this world. The Ephesians had not sinned casually, or now and then, but continually; they *walked* in trespasses and sins. This was not a solitary case; all the nations of the earth acted in the same way. It was the *course of this world*, "*according to the life*," mode of living, or successive ages of this world. The word *aion*, the literal meaning of which is '*constant duration*,' is often applied to things which have a complete course, as the Jewish dispensation, a particular government, and the '*term of human life*;' so, here, the whole of life is a tissue of sin, from the cradle to the grave; every human soul, unsaved by Jesus Christ, continues to transgress. *Sons of disobedience*. As the good Spirit works that which is good in obedient souls, so this evil spirit works that which is evil in wicked men; the *prince of the power of the air* being their father, while disobedience is their mother.

As Saved – A Trophy of Grace:

"For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God" (Eph. 2: 8).

As you are now brought into a state of salvation, your sins being all blotted out, and you are made partakers of the Holy Spirit; and, having a hope full of immortality, you must not attribute this to any works or merit of yours; for when the gospel reached you, you were all found "*dead in trespasses and sins*" (v. 1). Therefore, it was God's free mercy to you, manifested through Christ, in whom you were commanded to believe. Having believed by the power of the Holy

Spirit, you received, and were sealed by, the Holy Spirit of promise so that this salvation is in no sense *of yourselves*, but is the '*free gift*' of God. It is not of any kind of *works*, so that no man can *boast* as having wrought out his own salvation, or even contributed anything towards it.

As a Saint – Christ Reproduction:

"I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me" (Gal. 2: 20).

Having received a spiritual resurrection through Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised Him from the dead, Paul admonished with regards to the risk of reversion to Judaism (*the Law*). "The death of Christ on the Cross," he says, "has showed me that there is no hope of salvation by the law; I am therefore as truly dead to all expectation of justification by the law as Christ was dead when He gave up the ghost upon the Cross. It is not of my natural life I speak, nor of any spiritual things which I myself have procured, *but Christ lives in me*. Also, by believing on Christ as a Sacrifice for sin; for he *loved me*, and because He did so He *gave Himself for me* – made Himself a Sacrifice unto death, that I might be saved from the bitter pains of death eternal."

II. Moses: Man, of Purpose and Power (*Hebrews 11: 24-30*)

Most Bible student know that Moses was brought up at the Egyptian court, and he was considered to be the son of Pharaoh's daughter, and probably might have succeeded to the throne of Egypt (Exod. 2: 2; Acts 7: 20-29). But finding that God had visited His people and given them a promise of spiritual and eternal blessings, he chose rather to take the lot of this people i.e., God as his Portion forever, than to "*enjoy the pleasures of sin*," which, however gratifying to the animal senses, could only be 'temporary.'

His Distinguished Trait or Qualities

Refusing (v. 24), what he '*refused*,' - Honor.

He *refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter* lest he should undervalue the truer honor of being a son of Abraham, the father of the faithful; lest it should look like renouncing his religion as well as his relation to Israel and no doubt both these he would have done if he had accepted this honor. Self-denial is an essential moral quality, "*For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live*" (Rom. 8: 13). The apostle is not satisfied with assuring them that they are under no *obligations* to the flesh, to listen carefully to its suggestions, without reminding them where it will end if they do; and he uses the word '*mortify*' (put to death) as a kind of play upon the word '*die*' just before. '*If you do not kill sin, it will kill you.*' But he tempers this by the bright alternative, that

if they do, through the Spirit, mortify the deeds of the body, such a course will infallibly terminate in 'life' everlasting.

Choosing (v. 25), what he '**chose**,' - Suffering.

He was willing to take his place with the people of God here, though it was a suffering place, that he might have his portion with them hereafter. Herein he acted rationally as well as religiously. The pleasures of sin must end in speedy repentance or in speedy ruin. The pleasures of this world, and especially those of a court, are too often the pleasures of sin. A true Christian will despise them. Note, misery or difficulties is to be chosen rather than willful breaking of the moral law; there is comparatively much evil in the least sin performed than there can be in the greatest suffering experienced.

Esteeming (v. 26), what he '**esteemed**,' - Reproach.

The Christ or Messiah had been revealed to Moses; of Him he prophesied, (Deut. 18: 15). The *reproach* which God's people had, in consequence of their decided opposition to idolatry, may be termed *the reproach of Christ*. For they refused to become one people with the Egyptians, because the promise of the '*rest*' was made to them, and in this '*rest*' Christ and His salvation were included. Although it does not appear that these things were known to the Hebrews at large, yet it is evident that there were sufficient intimations given to Moses concerning the great Deliverer (of whom himself was a type) that determined his conduct in the above respect. He fully understood that he must renounce his interest in the promises and in the life eternal to which they led, if he did not obey the divine call in the present instance.

At Corinth, Paul once said, "I not only endure *reproaches* patiently, but I am pleased when they occur; for I do it *for Christ's sake*, on His account; for on His account I suffer. *For when I am weak*, most oppressed with trials and afflictions, *then I am strong* (2 Cor. 12: 10), God supporting my mind with His most powerful influences, causing me to rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory."

Respecting (v. 26), what he '**respected**' - Recompense.

He '*looked attentively*' to it; his eyes were '*constantly directed*' to it. This is the import of the original word, and the whole conduct of Moses was an illustration of it. It was the Lord Jesus who admonished in the Beatitudes or Sermon on the Plain, "*Give, and it will be given to you. Men shall return it into your bosom.*" God often makes use of men as instruments, not only of his *avenging*, but of his *rewarding* justice. God will incline the hearts of others to give us when we need, and to give liberally, *good measure, pressed down, shaken together* (Luke 6: 38). Whom God recompenses he recompenses abundantly.

Forsaking (v. 27), what he *'forsook,'* - Egypt.

He believed that God would fulfill the promise He had made, and he cheerfully changed an earthly for a heavenly portion. *Not fearing the wrath of the king.* The apostle speaks here of the departure of Moses with the Israelites, not of his flight to Midian, (Exod. 2: 14-15); for he was then in great fear. But when he went to Pharaoh with God's authority, to demand the dismissal of the Hebrews, he was without fear and acted in the most noble and dignified manner, fearing nothing but God. Further, he feared not the wrath of *visible* man; the characteristic of *faith* (v. 1; Luke 12: 4-5), *as seeing Him who is invisible.* He continued to act as one who had the Judge of his heart and conduct always before his eyes. By calling the Divine Being the *Invisible*, the apostle distinguishes Him from the gods of Egypt, who were visible, corporeal, gross, and worthless. The Israelites were worshippers of the true God, and this worship was not tolerated in Egypt.

He endured. When the twelve Apostles were sent forth, they were also made aware of the coming persecutions. In Matthew 10 we are here told from whom, and by whom, they should suffer these hard things. (a) From men in general (v. 17) - *beware of men*; you will have need to stand upon your guard. (b) From professing men, men that *have a form of godliness*, and make show of religion, *(they will scourge you in their synagogues)*. (c) From great men, and men in authority. *You will be brought before governors and Kings* (v. 18). (d) From all men (v. 22), *and you will be hated by all for My name's sake.*

'Steadfastness' is a clarion call in light of the *Parousia*, Greek for the second coming of Christ in his glory in order to judge the *'quick and the dead'* and to establish the Kingdom of God. Christians are attached to Christ, and saved from the corruption that is in the world, therefore the world will hate them. "The principles of Christ condemn a vicious world, and annoy it to revenge." See Stephen the Martyr and Saul persecution of the Church, (Acts 7: 54 -60; 8: 1-3).

Keeping (v. 28), what he *'kept,'* - The Passover.

The Passover was one of the most solemn institutions of the Old Testament, and a very significant type of Christ. To entitle them to this distinguishing favor, a lamb must be slain, the blood of it must be sprinkled with a bunch of hyssop upon the lintel of the door, and on the two side-posts. Christ is that Lamb, he is our Passover, he was sacrificed for us. His blood must be sprinkled and it must be applied to those who have the saving benefit of it. It is not owing to our inherent righteousness that we are saved from the wrath of God, but to the blood of Christ and his imputed righteousness. Wherever this blood is applied, the soul receives Christ by faith, and lives upon him. All our spiritual privileges on earth should quicken us to set out early, and get forward, in our way to heaven.

Overcoming (vv. 29-30), what he *'overcame,'* - All obstacles.

“By faith they passed through the Red Sea.” This was by far one of the greatest examples of deliverance in the history of Israel. Moses and Aaron, it is believed, ventured first into this untrodden path, and then all Israel after them; and this march through the paths of the great waters would make their march afterwards, through the wilderness, less formidable (Exod. 14: 22). Those who had followed God through the sea needed not to fear following him wherever he leads them. It was Martyn Lloyd-Jones who said: “Faith always shows itself in the whole personality.” The Egyptians though they could walk through the sea as well as the Israelites; they tried, and were drowned, while the former passed in perfect safety. The one walked by faith, the other by sight; one perished, the other was saved.

By faith the walls of Jericho fell down. The Lord gave directions how the city should be besieged. No trenches are to be opened, nor any military preparation made. The ark of God must be carried by the priests around the city once a day for six days together, and seven times the seventh day, attended by the men of war in silence, the priests all the while blowing with trumpets of rams’ horns, (Jos. 6: 3-4). They believed what the Lord had promised, did as they were commanded, and the promise was fulfilled.

The Secret of his Success, “By Faith.”

The Christian is saved by faith – *“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God”* (Eph. 2: 8).

Through faith – the effect of the power of Christ’s resurrection (chap. 1: 19-20; Phil. 3: 10) whereby we are *“raised together”* with Him (v. 6; Col. 2: 12). Some of the oldest MSS. read, *‘through your* (lit., *‘the’) faith.*’ The instrument or mean of salvation on the part of the person saved; Christ alone is the *meritorious* agent.

The salvation of your souls (1 Pet. 1: 9) – The salvation of the soul was the prize these primitive Christians sought for, the end they aimed at, which came nearer and more within their reach every day. Every faithful Christian is daily receiving the salvation of his soul. The recipients of the apostle Peter’s epistles had the beginnings of heaven in the possession of holiness and a heavenly mind. They were on the losing side in the world, but the apostle puts them in mind of what they were receiving; if they lost an inferior good, they were all the while receiving the salvation of their souls. Moreover, the object of the Jewish expectations in their Messiah was the salvation or deliverance of their bodies from a foreign yoke; but the true Messiah came to save the soul from the yoke of the devil and sin.

The Christian lives by faith – *“Now the just shall live by faith; But if anyone draws back, my soul has no pleasure in him”* (Heb. 10: 38).

When we have been at prayer, pouring out our complaints and requests before God, we must carefully observe what answers God gives by his Word, his Spirit, and his providences. We

should wait for the accomplishment of God's plans (Hab. 2: 3): *for the vision is yet for an appointed time*. The ways of God can be such an exercise of faith and patience as will try and bring to light men what they are. Those who are truly good, and whose hearts are upright with God, will value the promise, and venture their all upon it. They will keep close to God and duty in the most difficult and trying times, and live comfortably in communion with God, depending on him, and expecting of him.

The Christian walks by faith – “*For we walk by faith, not by sight*” (2 Cor. 5: 7).

Faith is for this world, and sight is reserved for the other world. How comfortable and courageous we ought to be in the hour of death (v. 6) and again (v. 8). We should be willing rather to die than live, when it is the will of God that we should *put off this tabernacle*, to close our eyes to all things in this world, and open them in a world of glory. Faith will be turned into sight. *Not by sight* – Greek, ‘*not by appearance*.’ Our life is governed by faith in our immortal hope; not by outward specious *appearance* of present things. *We are confident* (v. 8). We are ‘*of good courage*,’ notwithstanding our many difficulties, because we have this earnest of the Spirit, and the unfailing testimony of God. Notwithstanding this, we are *well pleased rather to be absent from the body* – we certainly prefer a state of glory to a state of suffering, and the enjoyment of the beatific vision to even the anticipation of it by faith and hope; but, as Christians, we cannot desire to die before our time.

The Christian overcomes by faith – “*For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world – our faith*” (1 John 5: 4).

Whoever believes that Jesus is the Son of God believes therein that Jesus came from God to be Savior of the world, (Mark 1: 1; Luke 1: 35; John 1: 34; 3: 16-17), and whoever so believes must needs by his faith overcome the world. He regards it as a great part of the Savior's work, and of his own salvation, to be redeemed and rescued from this malignant world. He perceives that the Lord Jesus conquered the world, not for himself only, but for his followers. He is possessed with a spirit and disposition that cannot be satisfied with this world, that looks beyond it. Dutch theologian Simon Episcopius (1583-1643), comments, “Survey the whole world, and show me even one of whom it can be affirmed with truth that he overcomes the world, who is not a Christian, and endowed with this faith.” Indeed, it is the Christian's revelation that is the great means of conquering the world, and gaining another that is blessed and eternal.

“*...To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God*” (Rev. 2: 7). To him who continues steadfast in the faith and uncorrupt in his life, who faithfully confesses Jesus and neither imbibes the doctrines nor is led away by the error of the wicked, *I will give to eat from the tree of life*. As he who conquered his enemies had, generally, not only great honor but also a reward, so here a great reward is promised ‘*to the conqueror*.’ As in the Grecian games, to which there may be an allusion, the conqueror was crowned with the leaves of some tree, here it is promised that they should *eat* of the fruit of

the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God; that is, that they should have a happy and glorious immortality.

III. **Jeremiah: Man, of Faithfulness** (*Jeremiah 37: 11-21*)

As the author of the longest prophetic book, his career spanned more than forty years during the reigns of Judah's last five kings and beyond. Jeremiah was called by God when he was still a young man, and throughout his long, turbulent life, constantly had to confront a people who had rejected God for false gods. He warned them that this would cause their destruction, but they refused to repent, so Jerusalem and the temple were destroyed and the people were deported to Babylon. He did not want to be a prophet in the first place, but the urgency of his message was like a fire within him, and he could not contain it (Chap. 20: 9). His life is an example of total faithfulness to God, regardless of personal desires or circumstances.

Uncircumspect (vv. 11-12).

When the Chaldeans had broken up from Jerusalem because of Pharaoh's army, Jeremiah determined to go into the country, and (as the margin reads it) to slip away from Jerusalem in the midst of the people, who, in that interval of the siege, went out into the country to look after their affairs. He endeavored to steal away into the crowd; for, though he was a man of great eminence, he was content to be lost in the multitude and buried alive in a cottage. Was it quite consistent to leave his post of duty at such a time? We are commanded to "*walk circumspectly*" (Eph. 5: 15), and to "*abstain from all appearance of evil*" (1 Thess. 5: 22).

Misjudged (v. 13).

"False! I am not defecting to the Chaldeans; I am going upon my own lawful occasion." Believers are sure to be falsely accused as was **Joseph**. *"Then Joseph's master took him and put him into the prison, a place where the king's prisoners were confined. And he was there in the prison"* (Gen. 39: 20). Potiphar, it is likely, chose that prison because it was the worst. He was committed to the king's prison, that he might thence be preferred to the king's person. As was **Moses**, *"For he supposed that his brethren would have understood that God would deliver them by his hand, but they did not understand"* (Acts 7:25). He probably imagined that, as he felt from the divine influence he was appointed to be their deliverer, they would have his divine appointment signified to them in a similar way; and the act of justice which he now did in behalf of his oppressed countryman would be sufficient to show them that he was now ready to enter upon his office, if they were willing to concur.

As was **David**, *"Now Eliab his oldest brother heard when he spoke to the men; and Eliab's anger was aroused against David"* (1 Sam. 17: 28). David was browbeaten and discouraged by his eldest brother Eliab. He was vexed that his younger brother should speak bold words against the Philistine which he himself dare not say. It seems as if he would that Goliath should

triumph over Israel than that David should be the man that should triumph over him. Eliab intended, in what he said, to represent him to those about him as an idle proud lad. He wanted them to understand that his business was only to keep sheep, and falsely insinuates that he was a careless unfaithful shepherd. David could not escape this hard character from his own brother.

As was **John the Baptist**, *“And when John had heard in prison about the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples and said to Him, ‘Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?’”* (Matt. 11: 2-3). In his pertinent comments on, *“How doubts may be solved,”* Scholar F. B. Meyer wrote:

“The Baptist was languishing in a gloomy dungeon in the castle of Machaerus, on the farther shores of the Dead Sea – like a wild creature of the desert, suddenly entrapped. The darkness of his cell depressed his spirit; it seemed strange, too, if Jesus were the Messiah, that he did not overthrow the tyrant rule of Herod and release his captive friend. When you are in doubt, go straight to Jesus and ask him to deal with it! Our Lord did not argue with the messengers sent by John, but pointed to the beneficent works that the Father had given him to do (cf. John 5: 36; also Isa. 29: 18; 35: 5-6). The influence of Christ on individuals and the world is the best testimony to the validity of his claims. The demonstration of Christianity is to be found in its acceptance and practice. John’s disciples had gone before our Lord uttered this great eulogy on his faithful friend, lest he should be exalted beyond measure and lest his faith should not have room to grow. Ah, downcast soul, who art writing hard things of thyself, it may be that thy merciful Lord is viewing thy life more accurately and estimating it more lovingly than thou know.” – Meyer: *Bible Commentary*

As was Christ, and many others - *“And they began to accuse Him, saying, ‘We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to pay taxes to Caesar, saying that He Himself is Christ, a King’”* (Luke 23: 2). *Pervverting the nation* – The Greek word signifies *‘stirring up to disaffection and rebellion.’* Many MSS. and versions add *‘our’ nation*. They intimated that He not only preached corrupt doctrine, but that He endeavored to make them disaffected towards the Roman government, for which they now pretended to feel a strong affection! *Forbidding to pay taxes to Caesar*. These were the falsest slanders that could be invented. The whole of Jesus conduct disproved them. His decision in the case of the question about the lawfulness of paying tribute to Caesar, (Matt. 22: 21), was so fully known that we find Pilate paid not the least attention to such evidently malicious and unfounded accusations.

Indignant (v. 14)

“Then Jeremiah said, ‘False! I am not defecting to the Chaldeans.’ But he did not listen to him. So Irijah seized Jeremiah and brought him to the princes.” Jeremiah’s protestation of his integrity, though he is a prophet, and is ready to say it *on the word of a*

priest, is not regarded. He is brought before the privy council, who without examining him, but upon the base insinuation of the captain, *were angry*.

There is a holy indignation that is justifiable when we repudiate false charges, as Jeremiah did, for the honor of God. Jesus sometimes defended Himself: *"I spoke openly to the world. I always taught in synagogues and in the temple, where the Jews always meet, and in secret I have said nothing"* (John 18: 20). *I spoke openly to the world*. To every person in the land indiscriminately – to the people at large. This is another proof that John uses the term *world* to mean the Jewish people only, for it is certain Jesus did not preach to the Gentiles. The answer of Jesus, mentioned in this and the following verse, is such as become a Person conscious of His own innocence and confident in the righteousness of His cause. *Why do you ask Me?* (v. 21). This seems to imply that He saw the attempt to draw Him into self-crimination and resented it by falling back upon the right of every accused party to have some charge laid against Him by competent witnesses. At other times Jesus raised the issue of tongue restrained, *"By your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned"* (Matt. 12: 37). That is, the whole tenor of your conversation will be an evidence for or against you in the great day. Men ought to pray, ***"Lord, put a watch before the door of my lips!"*** This is a prayer proper for all men. Let us quietly trust God when we are displeased with how we are being treated (Ps. 37: 5-6).

Ill-treated (v. 15).

They smite him and then *put him in prison*, in the worst prison they had, that *in the house of Jonathan the scribe*. Into this prison Jeremiah was thrust, *entered the dungeon*, which was dark and cold, damp and dirty. *There Jeremiah remained many days*. Persecution and imprisonment have been the common heritage of believers (Matt. 23: 34). Christ foresees and foretells the ill-usage that his messengers would meet with among them; *"Some of them you will kill and crucify, and yet I will send them;"* yet he loves them never the less, for he designs to glorify himself by their sufferings, and them after them; he will counter-balance them, though not prevent them. *"Remember the word that I said to you, 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they kept My word, they will keep your also"* (John 15: 20). We have been appointed for the one purpose of being imperishable fruit, but our holy service to the world will never be appreciated. The world has its own god and religion. It hates without cause. The more Christ-like we are, the closer we will be identified with his sufferings. There is no limit to the hatred and persecution which the world will vent on those who have ceased to belong to because of their identification with the Crucified. But through the pitiless storm, we must be glad. There must be no slackening of our love, which will certainly conquer hate as tomorrow's sun the darkness (vv. 26-27). In each Christian century there has been this double witness of the Spirit in the Church. The voice of the Church has testified to the living Christ, not arguing but attesting and to each word of testimony the Holy Spirit had borne assenting witness. Christian apologetics are of less

importance than the witness of obscure but Spirit-led lives. – F. B. Meyer: *Bible Commentary*. For more on *Suffering for Jesus' sake*, see (Acts 5: 28, 40; 12: 5; 2 Cor. 11: 23-27; Heb. 11: 36-38; and 2 Tim. 1: 8; 3: 12).

“He who knoweth how to suffer will enjoy much peace.
Such a one is a conqueror of himself and lord of the world,
a friend of Christ, and an heir of Heaven.”

Thomas A Kempis

Faithful (vv. 16-19).

By this time, Jeremiah's life and comfort was now in Zedekiah's hand, and he now had a petition to present to him for his favor, and yet, having this grand opportunity, he tells him plainly that *there is a word from the Lord*, but no word of comfort for him or his people: “*You shall be delivered into the hand of the King of Babylon.*” If Jeremiah had consulted with flesh and blood, he would have given him a plausible answer; he might have chosen whether he would tell him the worst at this time. But Jeremiah was one that had *obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful*, and would not, to obtain mercy of man, be unfaithful either to God or to his prince; he therefore tells him the truth, the whole truth. Zedekiah expected comfort, perhaps flattery, from Jeremiah, but the prophet could only speak the word of doom. He would not allow his pity for the king to weaken his fidelity to God. It was so with Christ when he was before Pilate (Matt. 27: 11-14): “*And the governor asked Him, saying, ‘Are You the King of the Jews?’ Jesus said to him, ‘It is as you say’*” (v. 11). *Marveled great* (v. 14). Silence under calumny manifests the utmost magnanimity. The chief priests did not admire this because it confounded them; but Pilate, who had no interest to serve by it, was deeply affected. This very silence was predicted in Isaiah 53: 7.

Courageous (v. 20).

“Please hear now, O my lord the king. Please, let my petition be accepted before you, and do not make return to the house of Jonathan the scribe, lest I die there”?

Here is not a word of complaint of the princes that unjustly committed him, but a modest supplication to the king. A lion in God's cause must be a lamb in his own. Bravery paid dividend; the king gave him his request, took care that he should not die in the dungeon. Though by nature Jeremiah was of a timid and shrinking disposition (Jer. 1: 6), and felt suffering keenly, yet before he thinks of his own personal comfort and safety, he fearlessly proclaimed God's Word, though he knew it might have meant his death.

Released (v. 21).

The king also ordered Jeremiah his *daily bread, until all the bread in the city was gone*. Zedekiah ought to have released him, but he did not have the courage to do that; it was well he did as he did. God can make even confinement turn to advantages and the court of a prison to

become as green pastures. Though not wholly set at liberty, the prophet's condition was greatly improved. He did not suffer for his faithfulness. Fidelity does not always end in death. In the long run it pays to be brave and true. Steadfastness in the harvest carries a reward. The apostle's completion of 1 Corinthians 15: 58 reads: *"Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord."* You must not only work, but you must *labor* – put forward all your strength and you must work and labor *in the Lord* – under His direction, and by His influence. For without Him you can do nothing. This labor cannot be *in vain*; you will have a resurrection unto eternal life – not because you have labored, but because Christ died and gave you grace to be faithful.

CONTEMPLATIVE QUESTIONS

Though man is a worm (Job 25: 6), yet God puts a respect upon him, and shows him abundance of kindness. How do you put this into perspective (see Psalm 8: 4)?

Christ became a Sin offering to God on behalf of mankind, that they might be saved from their sins Galatians 1: 4. According to this inference, what is the affinity with your personal 'salvation'?

In Romans 8, the apostle employs the word '*mortify*' (put to death) as a kind of play upon the word '*die*.' Why did he send this admonition to the Christians in Rome from Corinth?

While in Egypt, Moses was without fear, and acted in the most noble and dignified manner. Why was Moses able to feel content in captivity? What was the true source of his majestic demeanor (see Hebrews 11: 27)?

"For we walk by Faith, not by sight" (2 Corinthians 5: 7). How can we practice faith, even if we're not safe from predicaments?

Personal Response

Write out additional reflections questions you may have or a prayer.

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Chief Editor

Dr. Everton I. Anderson

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