

IMPACT

I **M**ust **P**ersonally **A**cknowledge **C**hrist **T**oday
Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; *in all your ways acknowledge Him* and He shall direct your path.
Proverbs 3:5-6

Passage: 2 Timothy 3: 12 “Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.”

Quote: “How sweet the Name of Jesus sounds In a believer's ear! It soothes his sorrows, heals his wounds, And drives away his fear.” John Newton

The end of Hebrews 11 describes what it was like to live for Christ in the First Century. Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, the human author of this book describes a grim, often grisly environment. Of believers in that day, he writes, “who through faith subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, became valiant in battle, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. Women received their dead raised to life again. And others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. Still others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yes, and of chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, were tempted, were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented— of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, in dens and caves of the earth. And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise, God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us.”¹

“The faith of Old Testament saints looked forward to the promised salvation, whereas the faith of those after Christ looks back to the fulfillment of the promise. Both the groups are characterized by genuine faith and are saved by Christ's atoning work on the cross.”² In addition to salvation by grace alone through repentant faith alone in Christ alone, believers of all time will share in God's ultimate blessing of His people! “The saints of the Old Testament, along with those of this era, will partake together of the same end-times perfection: sinless selves in deathless resurrection bodies.”³ What a living hope we have in Christ! *In the grand design of God, the best is yet to come!*

Until that day when Christ returns for His own, we are called to shine as lights in an ever-darkening world. There are Christians today who are being mercilessly persecuted for their faith by radical religious groups whose agenda is to control the world. Christians in America are naïve if we think for a moment that we will be insulated from these predators, or from atheists who loath the very idea of a Creator-God Who will one day judge all of mankind.

Those listed in Hebrews 11 had strengths and weaknesses in their character just like we do. What set them apart for our encouragement is their personal faith in God. Like them, there are questions that each of us must ask. “Do I believe that God is Who He says He is, and that He will do all that He has promised to do in my own life? Do I believe that “the eye of the LORD is on those who fear Him, on those who hope in His mercy?”⁴ Do I believe that Christ knows about my trials

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and that I can go to God for grace and mercy in my times of need? How do I demonstrate to others that what I profess to believe is truly a reality in my life?

God's all-sufficient Word declares that “the angel of the LORD encamps all around those who fear Him, and delivers them. Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good; blessed is the man who trusts in Him! Oh, fear the LORD, you His saints! There is no want to those who fear Him.”⁵ God has promised that He will protect us, provide for us, lead us, teach us, comfort us, chasten us and one day bring us Home to Heaven. Do you believe Him? If you are truly trusting in the shed blood of Christ for the welfare of your eternal soul, look upon your trials as God's appointed opportunities to display and further develop Christ's likeness in you. Being a Hebrews-eleven-type Christian takes coming “boldly to the throne of grace (to) obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”⁶ It takes purposing that your life will glorify God; it takes staying true to your King in the midst of tough times that surely lie ahead!

¹ Heb.11:33-40 ² J. MacArthur ³ ESV Study Bible; Rom.8 ⁴ Ps.33:28
⁵ Ps.34:7-9 ⁶ Heb.4:13-16