

# Studies in Hebrews



## Lesson XVIII

### Text: Chapter 11:17-31 (NIV)

<sup>17</sup>By faith Abraham, when God tested him, offered Isaac as a sacrifice. He who had received the promises was about to sacrifice his one and only son, <sup>18</sup>even though God had said to him, "It is through Isaac that your offspring<sup>[a]</sup> will be reckoned."<sup>[b]</sup>

<sup>19</sup>Abraham reasoned that God could raise the dead, and figuratively speaking, he did receive Isaac back from death.

<sup>20</sup>By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau in regard to their future. <sup>21</sup>By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each of Joseph's sons, and worshiped as he leaned on the top of his staff. <sup>22</sup>By faith Joseph, when his end was near, spoke about the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt and gave instructions about his bones.

<sup>23</sup>By faith Moses' parents hid him for three months after he was born, because they saw he was no ordinary child, and they were not afraid of the king's edict. <sup>24</sup>By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh's daughter. <sup>25</sup>He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a short time. <sup>26</sup>He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking ahead to his reward. <sup>27</sup>By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the king's anger; he persevered because he saw him who is invisible. <sup>28</sup>By faith he kept the Passover and the sprinkling of blood, so that the destroyer of the firstborn would not touch the firstborn of Israel.

<sup>29</sup>By faith the people passed through the Red Sea<sup>[c]</sup> as on dry land; but when the Egyptians tried to do so, they were drowned. <sup>30</sup>By faith the walls of Jericho fell, after the people had marched around them for seven days. <sup>31</sup>By faith the prostitute Rahab, because she welcomed the spies, was not killed with those who were disobedient.<sup>[d]</sup>

#### Footnotes:

- a. Greek *seed*
- b. Gen. 21:12
- c. That is, *Sea of Reeds*
- d. Or *unbelieving*
- e. Some early manuscripts *stoned; they were put to the test*

# Questions for Group Discussion

1. Review: What is faith? Why is it important? What role does it play in the believer's life? (cf. Heb. 11:1, 6; Tit. 1:1-2; Eph. 2:8-10; 2 Cor. 5:7)
2. Is our faith ever tested? How did Abraham respond to his own test of faith? What time-tested truth enabled him to maintain his faith in God in the face of great loss? (vv. 17-19)
3. How does faith help us to face the uncertainty of the future? (vv. 20-22; cf. Heb. 12:2; Phil. 1:6)
4. When it comes to our relationships, does faith assume *the worst* or hope for *the best* in others? (vs. 23)
5. How does faith inspire courage to do the right thing, regardless of the danger involved? (vs. 24-30)
6. Why is it significant that Rahab is included along with Abraham and Moses in the great "Hall of Faith"? (vs. 31)

NOTE: There has been some controversy in modern scholarship about whether or not Rahab (Joshua 6:25; James 2:25) was truly a "prostitute" or simply an "inn keeper." However, it is not without significance that the New Testament writers chose the Greek word *porne* (πόρνη) in describing Rahab's profession, which translates as "prostitute" or "harlot." Every English version reflects the same translation (including the KJV, NKJV, ASV, NASV, AMP, NLT, YLT, etc).

- If Rahab was truly a former prostitute, how did faith affect her standing before God?