This chapter was composed by the preacher/writer with the hope of steeling the tiny, expatriate Hebrew church against the persecution that was mounting against them and was soon to fall in the genocidal waves of horror orchestrated by the mad emperor Nero. And, indeed, those who did persevere did so because of their profound faith in the promises of God's Word. So we must understand that Hebrews 11 was not just an entertaining and inspiring aside, but was essential life-and-death teaching for the Hebrew church. It may well be the same for us and our children.

 We are **living in a time** where our “progressive” culture embraced.

Where **Judeo-Christian morality** is **reactionary** is **Not welcomed.**

**It’s said** – The one thing the progressives won’t tolerate – is intolerance!

 **It’s always encouraging** to **draw** on **Biblical history.**

**To remember** what God did **through individuals** > **belief was scarce.**

 Against overwhelming odds and **through faith God empowers.**

**V32**And what more shall I say? I do not have time to tell about Gideon, Barak, Samson and Jephthah, about David and Samuel and the prophets, **33**who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, and gained what was promised; who shut the mouths of lions, **34**quenched the fury of the flames, and escaped the edge of the sword; whose weakness was turned to strength; and who became powerful in battle and routed foreign armies.

 **Gideon** was called to **gather and lead** an **army against Midianites.**

**Judges 7:12**The Midianites, the Amalekites and all the other eastern peoples had settled in the valley, thick as locusts. Their camels could no more be counted than the sand on the seashore.

**Obediently he reduced** his **troops** from 32,000 to 10,000 to 300.

 **Armed with** trumpets, pitchers concealing torches, **routed the enemy.**

 **Likewise, Barak**, obeyed God's word **shared through Deborah,**

**For 20 years** the Canaanites had **cruelly oppressed the Israelites.**

**Barak faced** the **great army** of **Sisera** with its **900 chariots of iron.**

Deborah:

Judges 4:6 “The Lord, the God of Israel, commands you: ‘Go, take with you ten thousand men of Naphtali and Zebulun and lead them up to Mount Tabor. **7**I will lead Sisera, the commander of Jabin’s army, with his chariots and his troops to the Kishon River and give him into your hands.’”

 The author also **mentions Samson** because **of his faith.**

 **We might tend** to remember him for **his foolish choices.**

**He’d squandered** the **power** God had given him **to fight Philistines.**

**But once blinded,** he **regained** his spiritual **mind-set and focus.**

 **In a great act of faith,** he prayed and **received his strength back.**

**Judges 16: 28**Then Samson prayed to the Lord, “Sovereign Lord, remember me. Please, God, strengthen me just once more, and let me with one blow get revenge on the Philistines for my two eyes.” **29**Then Samson reached toward the two central pillars on which the temple stood. Bracing himself against them, his right hand on the one and his left hand on the other, **30**Samson said, “Let me die with the Philistines!” Then he pushed with all his might, and down came the temple on the rulers and all the people in it. Thus he killed many more when he died than while he lived.

**Like Samson** we **tend to remember Jephthah** for his foolishness.

 **Rejected by his half-brothers** > because **son of a prostitute.**

**As a great warrior** he was **later needed** to fight Ammonites.

Judges 11

**V30**And Jephthah made a vow to the Lord: “If you give the Ammonites into my hands, **31**whatever comes out of the door of my house to meet me when I return in triumph from the Ammonites will be the Lord’s, and I will sacrifice it as a burnt offering.”

The Lord gave the Ammonites into his hands for Israel’s sake.

**Tragically in faith** Jephthah’s daughter complied – **honoured his vow.**

**V36**“My father,” she replied, “you have given your word to the Lord. Do to me just as you promised, now that the Lord has avenged you of your enemies, the Ammonites. **37**But grant me this one request,” she said. “Give me two months to roam the hills and weep with my friends, because I will never marry.”

 **The faith of his daughter** deserves to **be mentioned here too!**

**Again**, we tend have **mixed thoughts** regarding the **great King David.**

 **Glowingly** we **teach children** about his **trust in God – his bravery.**

 Slaying the **Philistine Giant warrior** with just a **sling shot**.

**As Israel’s king** God delivered **opposing forces** into his hands.

**In weakness** – driven by **lust** took **faithful servant’s wife** – Bathsheba.

 In doing so **lost the Lord’s blessing** and **struggled there on.**

**Lastly** the author **mentions Samuel** – a **prophet not a warrior.**

 **Dedicated** to the **Lord’s service** by His **faithful mother Hannah.**

Lived a life of faith since he was a **little "boy wearing a linen ephod"**

Through faith he **fearlessly delivered** God's word to **anyone anywhere at anytime!**

 **Through faith** God’s people were **enabled to:**

**V33** conquered kingdoms, administered justice, and gained what was promised;

**The circumstances** God’s **people** may **change through the ages.**

 **But His promises do Not,** and **genuine faith still rewarded.**

**The report** City to City presented – doesn’t make for **inspiring reading.**

 **As a denomination** we need to **radically reorganise or die.**

**But our Chinese churches** were **praised** for being **faithful to mission.**

Maybe their **strong cultural character** – protects them negative forces.

 **Western churches** likely **influenced** the **progressive push.**

 **Left feeling** the **church** is **less relevant** in today’s society.

**I tend** to Not post **anything too political** on social media.

 **Fearful of attention** from the **many keyboard warriors lurking.**

**The build-up to the Voice referendum** is starting to **get hostile.**

**If you choose** to vote No, then you are a **“racist or plain stupid.”**

If you say No **to abortions**, No to **inappropriate sex lessons children.**

 Say No to our **children being encouraged** evaluate **their gender.**

Then we’re considered out of **touch – cold – kill joy moralists.**

 **But as people of faith** – in faith **we do what honours God.**

We face **vastly different struggles** the **saints of old did.**

 **But in faith** we too **need to trust God Almighty** each day.

**We serve** the **same Almighty God as:**

 **Gideon,** Barak, Samson Jephthah, David and Samuel did.

**V33**who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, and gained what was promised.

 **Today** we have the **full revelation of God** – or Bibles.

**We are Not irrelevant** – we **have power** **world doesn’t understand.**

**Mk 11:24** Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.

**James 5:16** Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.

**On Wednesday night** I **mentioned** a book that had **encouraged some.**

 **The Valley of Vision** – A collection of Puritan Prayers - 365 days.

 **These** were **written/prayed** in **very troubled times.**

**When God’s faithful people** wanted to **ground the church Biblically.**

 **The church** in **every era** has **faced opposition** – **always will.**

**Eph 6:12**For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

**One prayer** I read earlier this week **resonated with me.**

 **Reminded and encouraged me** to keep **our eyes fixed on Lord.**

**The Great God page 8.**

**32**And what more shall I say? I do not have time to tell about Gideon, Barak, Samson and Jephthah, about David and Samuel and the prophets, **33**who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, and gained what was promised; who shut the mouths of lions, **34**quenched the fury of the flames, and escaped the edge of the sword; whose weakness was turned to strength; and who became powerful in battle and routed foreign armies. **35**Women received back their dead, raised to life again. There were others who were tortured, refusing to be released so that they might gain an even better resurrection. **36**Some faced jeers and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment. **37**They were put to death by stoning;[[e](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hebrews+11&version=NIV#fen-NIV-30210e)] they were sawed in two; they were killed by the sword. They went about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, persecuted and mistreated— **38**the world was not worthy of them. They wandered in deserts and mountains, living in caves and in holes in the ground.

**39**These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised, **40**since God had planned something better for us so that only together with us would they be made perfect.