

# HEBREWS

## STUDY 6

### 10:19 – 11:40



### The Practical Consequences of Jesus' Superiority

#### Six Key Verses

- 10:19-20 We have confidence in Jesus through a new and living way.
- 10:24 Our faith allows us to provoke one another in love.
- 10:32 We do not shrink back from a hard struggle with sufferings.
- 11:1 Faith is the assurance of things hoped for and the conviction of things not seen.
- 11:13 Heroes of faith in the past provide us with powerful examples - they saw the promises of God from a distance, but they believed without seeing him.
- 11:39-40 God provides something even better than promises through Jesus Christ.

#### A New and Living Way (10:19-22)

The author returns to the way we're led into God's presence through Jesus. Unlike the Tent of Meeting, Jesus provides more than an entrance to the area of sacrifice – he himself is the entryway to the worship area. He is not only the high priest who goes through the curtain – he *becomes* that curtain.

This image of an entryway is a familiar one to the original readers – access to the sacred area. The description is graphic as Jesus provides the way to God, through his sacrifice on the cross.

*Curtain*: (see Exodus 26:36-37) refers to the one that was ripped on Good Friday when Jesus dies – symbol of hope and encouragement. Jesus personifies that presence for all who believe in him.

*Day*: refers to when Jesus returns to wrap everything up and God's purposes are made clear once and for all.

*Way*: an image of who Jesus is for them. This image evokes the path God provided through the Red Sea as the people escaped Egypt, the 40-year journey across the Sinai Desert, the way imagined by the prophets, and shown in John the Baptist as he prepares God's coming in Jesus. The way is the road that Jesus later takes which leads to Jerusalem.

In the early church it becomes a 'living way' as the Christian movement defined its faith pilgrimage as the Way of God, (Acts 9:2; 19:23; 25:3) or the way of truth (2 Pet. 2:2).

#### Provoke One Another to Love (10:24-25)

This is how the church makes its journey alive and vital – maintaining regular worship and fellowship.

The Greek word translated 'provoke' (*paroxusmos*) is a strong, almost violent word (as in *paroxysm*) which refers to a powerful outpouring of emotion or a sudden or ongoing attack of a disease (like a high fever) that can cause one to shudder or have the shakes.

Here 'provoke' is positive in its image of hope – encouraging someone to respond with concern and charity for another. It is a phrase that would be used of a statesman who dealt gently with others and was able to 'incite' them to right behaviour.

In 1 Corinthians 13: 4-7, Paul says that love is not irritable nor resentful; it is patient and kind – bears, hopes, believes, endures. Hebrews encourages true Christian love which leads to regular fellowship and mutual encouragement.

### The Situation the Readers Face (10:32-39)

It is evident that these verses provide insight into the reasons why Hebrews was written in the first place. Some of these terrible experiences were predicted by Jesus (Mark 13), as well as the imprisonments experienced in Acts – humiliations, beatings, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities that Paul endured in Rome.

This is also the beginning of a list of heroes/heroines of the faith, which demonstrates the severity of what was happening; possibly even involving Roman persecution and military terrorism. The number of examples is to help them from shrinking back (10:39).

Other New Testament books follow a similar theme, including:

- 1 Pet. 1:6-7 having their faith tried by fire
- Heb. 2:11 called aliens and exiles
- 1 Pet. 4:15 referred to as murderers, thieves, criminals and mischief makers
- Jude 10 speakers of believers being slandered by opponents.

Hebrews may thus have been written after 90AD, when the church sustained long periods of persecution in many regions of the Roman empire.

### The Conviction of Things Not Seen (11:1-3)

Habakkuk 2:4 reinterpreted “my righteous one shall live by faith.”

Paul also quotes the same Habakkuk verse in Rom. 1:17 and Gal. 3:11, to distance himself from the Jewish system of forgiveness by works.

The Hebrews author paraphrases this verse to encourage the readers and hearers to have faith in the promises that are invisible - ones not yet fulfilled.

*“Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.”*

This would be a real word of comfort at a time when people are in turmoil and danger.

The most important things in life cannot be measured, quantified and recorded. The author of Hebrews sees God at work in the lives of believers through very concrete events, through acts of faithfulness, sacrifice, love, and belief in the promises of God. We learn and are encouraged through these examples.

### The Heroes of Faith (11:4-40)

- Abel and Cain** Gen. 4; Matt. 23:35; Luke 11:51; Jude 11
- Enoch** Gen. 4:17-18; 1 Chronicles 1:3; Luke 3:37. One who walked with God.
- Noah** Gen. 5:29-10:32; Isaiah 54:9; Ezekiel 14:14; Luke 17:26-27
- Abraham** Gen. 11:27-25:11; Rom. 4:1-16, 9:7, 11:1; James 2:21-23
- Sarah** Gen. 17:15-25:10. Isaiah 51:2. She is one of two women included in the heroes of faith. The other one is **Rahab**, a prostitute who helped the Israelites spy on Jericho (Joshua 2:1-7; 6:17; 23-25). She is also listed among the ancestors of Jesus, the grandmother of Ruth’s husband (Matt. 1:15). Also in James 2:25, where it says she is justified by her works.
- Isaac** Gen. 22:1-19 and his near sacrifice to God; his blessing of his son **Jacob** instead of the elder son, **Esau** (Gen. 27 1:40). Tradition says that Abraham offered Isaac to God on the site where the Holy of Holies was constructed in the Jerusalem Temple.
- Moses** Jesus is greater than Faith’s Founders

### Question

**Who would be on your list of people who have influenced your faith?**