

# CHAPTER 11

## INTRODUCTION TO HEBREWS 11

The apostle having, in the preceding chapter, spoken in commendation of the grace, and life of faith, and of its usefulness to preserve from apostasy, proceeds in this to give some account of the nature and actings of it; and which he illustrates by the examples of many of the Old Testament saints: he begins with a definition of it, which consists of two parts, (<sup><S110B></sup>Hebrews 11:1) and with an account of the usefulness of it to the elders in general, who by it obtained a good report, (<sup><S110D></sup>Hebrews 11:2) and of the service it is of in understanding the creation of the worlds, the author and original of them, (<sup><S110E></sup>Hebrews 11:3) and then goes on to give particular instances and examples of faith among the elders, or ancient believers, which are reduced into several classes; and the first is of the saints before the flood, Abel, Enoch, and Noah. Abel's faith lay in offering a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, in obtaining a testimony from God that he was righteous, and in yet speaking, though dead, (<sup><S110F></sup>Hebrews 11:4). Enoch's faith is evidenced by his translation of God, that he should not see death, and by the testimony he received from him before it, that he was acceptable to him; by which it is clear he had faith, since, without it, it is impossible to please God; nor can any come aright unto him, without believing that he is, and has a gracious respect to all that diligently seek him, (<sup><S110G></sup>Hebrews 11:5,6). Noah's faith was seen in preparing an ark, by the order of God, for the saving of his family, and in condemning the world by so doing, and by becoming an heir of righteousness through faith, (<sup><S110H></sup>Hebrews 11:7). The next class is that of the saints from the flood, to the times of Moses, in which are Abraham and Sarah, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph. Abraham's faith is celebrated for his obedience to the divine call, quitting the country where he was, and going he knew not where; and for his sojourning in the promised land, as in a strange one, in which Isaac and Jacob dwelt with him in tents; and for looking by faith for the heavenly city built by the Lord; and for his offering up his son at the command of God, who was the son of promise, believing God was able to raise him from the dead, from whence he received him by faith, (<sup><S110I></sup>Hebrews 11:8-10,17-19). Sarah's faith lay in receiving strength through it to conceive, bear, and bring forth a child

when past age, which was, founded upon the faithfulness of a promising God; hence from Abraham, by her, sprung a large posterity, like the stars of the sky, and the sand on the sea shore, (<sup><S8111></sup>Hebrews 11:11,12). Now all these patriarchs, both before and after the flood, as they lived by faith, they died in it; who, though they had not received the things promised, yet by faith saw them at a distance, were very well persuaded they would come to pass, and so, in some sense, enjoyed them; hence, while they lived, they lived like pilgrims and strangers, showing that they had no regard to the country they came from, and had no mind to return thither, but sought another, a better, and an heavenly one; so that God is not ashamed to be called their God, he having prepared a city for them, (<sup><S8113></sup>Hebrews 11:13-16). Isaac's faith is commended in blessing his two sons with respect to things future, (<sup><S8112></sup>Hebrews 11:20) and Jacob's faith is well spoken of for blessing both the sons of Joseph in his last moments, worshipping on the top of his staff, (<sup><S8121></sup>Hebrews 11:21) and Joseph's faith is instanced in two things; in making mention of the departure of the Israelites out of Egypt, as a certain thing; and in giving them strict orders to carry his bones along with them, when they went from thence, (<sup><S8122></sup>Hebrews 11:22) the third class of men, famous for faith, is that of such from the times of Moses to the judges, in which are the parents of Moses, Moses himself, the Israelites in general, and the harlot Rahab. The parents of Moses showed their faith in hiding him three months, seeing him to be a lovely child, contrary to the king's edict, (<sup><S8123></sup>Hebrews 11:23). Moses's faith lay in refusing to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; in preferring afflictions to the pleasures of sin, and the reproach of Christ to the riches of Egypt; he having, by faith, a respect to the heavenly glory, another instance of it; and by forsaking Egypt, without fear of the king's displeasure, by faith seeing a King who is invisible; and by keeping the passover, with the sprinkling of blood, that so the destroyer of the firstborn of Egypt might not touch the Israelites, (<sup><S8124></sup>Hebrews 11:24-28). The instances of the faith of the Israelites are their passage through the Red sea, as on dry land, when the Egyptians, who attempted it, were drowned; and their compassing the walls of Jericho seven days, believing they would fall, as accordingly they did, (<sup><S8129></sup>Hebrews 11:29,30). The faith of Rahab, the harlot, is commended for two things; for peaceably receiving the spies that came to her; and for the salvation she believed she should have, and had, when the unbelieving inhabitants of Jericho perished, (<sup><S8131></sup>Hebrews 11:31). And the last class of heroes for faith, includes the times of the judges, kings, prophets, and the Maccabees; the judges, kings, and prophets, are lumped together, and only a few of

their names are observed as a specimen of the rest, the apostle not having time to mention particular one, (<sup><S813></sup>Hebrews 11:32) and various instances of without reference to particular persons to whom they belong, are recorded; some which lay in doing things greatly heroic, and even miraculous, (<sup><S813></sup>Hebrews 11:33-35) and others in suffering things the most cruel and torturing, and death itself in divers shapes, (<sup><S813></sup>Hebrews 11:35-38). And thus, by an induction of particulars, the apostle proves both his definition of faith, (<sup><S810></sup>Hebrews 11:1) and the usefulness of it to the elders, (<sup><S810></sup>Hebrews 11:2) they by it obtaining a good report, though they did not receive the thing promised, (<sup><S813></sup>Hebrews 11:39) wherefore New Testament saints have great encouragement, and much more reason, to exercise this grace; since God has provided for them the better thing he promised to others, that the one without the other might not be perfect, (<sup><S814></sup>Hebrews 11:40).

**Ver. 1.** *Now faith is the substance of things hoped for*, etc..] The “faith” here spoken of is not a mere moral virtue, which is a branch of the law; nor a bare assent to anything revealed, declared, and affirmed in the Gospel; nor a faith of doing miracles; nor an implicit one; nor a mere profession of faith, which sometimes is but temporary; nor the word or doctrine of faith; but that which is made mention of in the preceding chapter, by which the just man lives, and which has the salvation of the soul annexed to it: and it does not so much design any particular branch, or act of faith, but as that in general respects the various promises, and blessings of grace; and it chiefly regards the faith of Old Testament saints, though that, as to its nature, object, and acts, is the same with the faith of New Testament ones; and is a firm persuasion of the power, faithfulness, and love of God in Christ, and of interest therein, and in all special blessings: it is described as “the substance of things hoped for”; and which, in general, are things unseen, and as yet not enjoyed; future, and yet to come; difficult to be obtained, though possible, otherwise there would be no hope of them; and which are promised and laid up; and in particular, the things hoped for by Old Testament saints were Christ, and eternal glory and happiness; and by New Testament ones, more grace, perseverance in it, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal life. Now faith is the “substance” of these things; it is the ground and foundation of them, in which there is some standing hope; in which sense the word **υποστασις** is used by Septuagint in (<sup><S810></sup>Psalm 69:2). The word of promise is principal ground and foundation of hope; and faith, as leaning on the word, is a less principal ground; it is a confident

persuasion, expectation, and assurance of them. The Syriac version renders it, the “certainty” of them; it is the subsistence of them, and what gives them an existence, at least a mental one; so with respect to the faith and hope of the Old Testament saints, the incarnation, sufferings, and death of Christ, his resurrection, ascension, and session at God's right hand, are spoken of, as if they then were; and so are heaven, and glory, and everlasting salvation, with regard to the faith and hope of New Testament saints: yea, faith gives a kind of possession of those things before hand, (~~f167~~ John 6:47). Philo the Jew <sup>f221</sup> says much the same thing of faith;

“the only infallible and certain good thing (says he) is, that faith which is faith towards God; it is the solace of life, **πληρωμα χρηστων ελπιδων**, “the fulness of good hopes”, etc..”

It follows here,

*the evidence of things not seen*; of things past, of what was done in eternity, in the council and covenant of grace and peace; of what has been in time, in creation, and providence; of the birth, miracles, sufferings, death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ; of things present, the being, perfections, love, etc.. of God; of the session of Christ at God's right hand, and his continual intercession; and of the various blessings of grace revealed in the Gospel; and of future ones, as the invisible realities of another world: faith has both certainty and evidence in it.

**Ver. 2.** *For by it the elders obtained a good report.*] By whom are meant, not merely old men, or elders in age, but such who lived in ancient times; some before the flood, and to a great age, and others who were in office, civil or ecclesiastical, and were the ancestors and predecessors of the Hebrews; who in general obtained or received a good report from God; that they were the chosen of God, and were justified and accepted with him; that they were the children and friends of God, and should be glorified; and from men, from good men, for their faith and holiness; and from evil men, for their good works: and these also believed the report of the Gospel, and gave a good report of God, and of the good land, and adorned their profession; particularly, Abel received a good report, that he was righteous; and Enoch, that he pleased God, and walked with him; and Noah, that he was a just man, perfect in his generation, and also walked with God; and Abraham, that he was a believer, a friend of God, and one that feared and obeyed him; and Job, that he was a man that feared God, and shunned evil; and Moses, that he was a meek man, and a faithful one;

and David, that he was a man after God's own heart, and fulfilled his will; and so others: and they received this report by faith, and as a fruit of it; which shows that faith is no new thing, and that the character of a believer is an old and honourable one. The apostle mentions this, to take off the Hebrews from any esteem of their traditionary elders, who had got a name, not by their faith, but by their traditions; and to engage their imitation of men of antiquity, authority, and wisdom superior to them; and to let them know, unless they had the same faith with their ancestors, it would be a vain thing to boast of descent from them.

**Ver. 3.** *Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God*, etc..] The celestial world, with its inhabitants, the angels; the starry and ethereal worlds, with all that is in them, the sun, moon, stars, and fowls of the air; the terrestrial world, with all upon it, men, beasts, etc.. and the watery world, the sea, and all that is therein: perhaps some respect may be had to the distinction of worlds among the Jews; (see Gill on ~~“Hebrews 1:2”~~), though the apostle can scarce be thought to have any regard to their extravagant notions of vast numbers of worlds being created: they often speak of three hundred and ten worlds, in all which, they say, there are heavens, earth, stars, planets, etc..<sup>f222</sup>; and sometimes of eighteen thousand<sup>f223</sup>; but these notions are rightly charged by Philo<sup>f224</sup> with ignorance and folly. However, as many worlds as there are, they are made “by the Word of God”; by Christ, the essential Word of God, to whom the creation of all things is ascribed in (~~“John 1:1-3”~~). And this agrees with the sentiments of the Jews, who ascribe the creation of all things to the Word of God, as do the Targumists<sup>f225</sup>, and Philo the Jew<sup>f226</sup>. And these are “framed” by the Word, in a very beautiful and convenient order; the heavens before the earth; things less perfect, before those that were more so in the visible world, or terraqueous globe; and things for men, before men, for whom they were; and it is by divine revelation and faith that men form right notions of the creation, and of the author of it, and particularly of the origin of it, as follows:

*so that things which are seen*: as the heaven, earth, and sea, and in which the invisible things of God, the perfections of his nature, are discerned:

*were not made of things which do appear*; they were not made from pre-existent matter, but out of nothing, out of which the rude and undigested chaos was formed; and from that invisible mass, covered with darkness, were all visible things brought into a beautiful order; and all from secret

and hidden ideas in the divine minds; and this also is the faith of the Jews, that the creation of all things is *ʿyam*, “out of nothing”<sup>f227</sup>. There seems to be an allusion to the word *arb*, used for creation, which signifies to make appear a thing unseen; and is rendered in the Septuagint version by *δεικνυμι*, (<sup><0H60></sup>Numbers 16:30) and *καταδεικνυμι*, (<sup><24B></sup>Isaiah 40:26 41:20) to show, or make appear; and thus God created, or made to appear, the heavens and earth, which before were not in being, and unseen, (<sup><000B></sup>Genesis 1:1,2) and created to make, as in (<sup><000B></sup>Genesis 2:3) that is, made them to appear, that he might put them into the form and order they now are.

**Ver. 4.** *By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain*, etc..] The apostle proceeds to examples of faith, and begins with Abel: it may seem strange that Adam and Eve are not mentioned; this omission is not because they were not believers; but either because of the fall and ruin of mankind by them; or because the apostle speaks only of such who had received some eminent testimony by faith, and therefore passes by many believers, and hastens to Abraham, the father of the Jews. The superior excellency of Abel's sacrifice to Cain's, lay both in the matter, and in the manner of it; the one was offered heartily to the Lord, the other only in show; the one was offered in faith, the other not; Abel looked through his sacrifice to the sacrifice of Christ, not so Cain. Abel's sacrifice was a lamb, a type of Christ, the Lamb of God; a firstling, a figure of him who is the firstborn of every creature; one of the fattest of his flock, expressive of the excellency of Christ; and this was offered up at the end of days, as Christ at the end of the world; and the superior excellency of the sacrifice of the one to that of the other, appears from God's regard to the one, and not to the other, (<sup><000B></sup>Genesis 4:3-5) from whence it may be observed, that sacrifices were of divine institution, and were very early types of Christ; and that there always were two sorts of worshippers, spiritual and carnal ones, whom God can distinguish, for he seeth not as man seeth; that the acceptance of persons is in Christ, and is previous to their offerings; that whatsoever works do not spring from faith are unacceptable to God; that no dependence is to be had on birth privileges, or outward actions; and that electing and distinguishing grace very early took place, and appeared.

*By which he obtained witness that he was righteous*; not righteous by his offering, nor by his faith, but by the righteousness of Christ, which his faith

in his sacrifice looked unto; though it was by his faith that he obtained, or received a witness in his own conscience, from the Spirit of God, testifying that he was a justified person; and in consequence of this, he had an outward testimony bore to him in the Scriptures, that he was a righteous person hence he is called righteous Abel, (<sup><4235></sup>Matthew 23:35).

*God testifying of his gifts:* not of his own gifts, temporal or spiritual, but of Abel's gifts, which he offered to the Lord; that is, his sacrifices; of these he testified, when he showed respect either by an audible voice, declaring his acceptance of them; or by sending down fire from heaven, upon his sacrifice, which in later times was a symbol of acceptance.

*And by it, he being dead, yet speaketh:* good men die, and some of them die a violent death, as did Abel, yet he speaks in the Scriptures, which have a voice in them, (<sup><4169></sup>Luke 16:29) or by his blood, which calls for vengeance; or rather by, or because of his faith, though he is dead, “he is yet spoken of”, as the word may be rendered.

**Ver. 5.** *By faith Enoch was translated*, etc.] Which is to be understood, not of a spiritual translation from the power of darkness, into the kingdom of Christ, as all converted, persons are translated, and doubtless Enoch was; nor of a rapture, or removal from one part of the earth to another, or from one part of a country to another, as Philip was caught away by the Spirit, after the baptism of the eunuch; but of a translation from earth to heaven; and not for a while only, as Paul was caught up to the third heaven; but as Elijah was, there to continue, and as the living saints will be at the last day; and this was a translation of him, soul and body, to heaven, to eternal glory and happiness, by a change from mortality to immortality, which passed upon him; and which is a pledge of the resurrection of the dead, and a proof of the Old Testament saints knowing, expecting, and enjoying eternal life. And with this agrees the sense of some of the Jewish writers concerning this affair. Jonathan ben Uzziel, in his paraphrase on (<sup><4054></sup>Genesis 5:24) has these words:

“and Enoch worshipped in truth before the Lord; and behold he was not with the inhabitants of the earth, *dygnta*, “he was translated”, and ascended to the firmament (or heaven), by the Word before the Lord.”

And the Jerusalem Targum to the same purpose;

“and Enoch worshipped in truth before the Lord; and lo, he was not, for he was translated by the Word from before the Lord;”

or by the Word of the Lord, which went out from him; for this translation was of God, as our apostle afterwards asserts. R. Eleazar says <sup>f228</sup>:

“the holy blessed God took Enoch, and caused him to ascend to the highest heavens, and delivered into his hands all the superior treasures, etc.”

He is said <sup>f229</sup> to be one of the seven which entered into paradise in their life; and some of them say <sup>f230</sup>, that God took him, **צָרַנּוּ פְּגֻבָּה**, body and soul; see the Apocrypha:

“He pleased God, and was beloved of him: so that living among sinners he was translated.” (Wisdom 4:10)

“Enoch pleased the Lord, and was translated, being an example of repentance to all generations.” (Sirach 44:16)

And this translation is said to be “by faith”; not through any virtue and efficacy in that grace to procure it; nor through faith, in that particular point; but God put an honour upon the faith of Enoch, and on him as a believer, this way.

*That he should not see death*; meaning not a spiritual or moral death; nor an eternal one, though some have suggested this to be the sense; and which is favoured by the character some of the Jewish writers give of Enoch, which will be hereafter taken notice of; but a corporeal death, which he died not; to which agrees the Targum of Oukelos on (~~1190~~ Genesis 5:24),

“and Enoch walked in the fear of the Lord, and he was not, for the Lord, **תִּמְחַ אֵל**, “did not kill him”, or cause, or suffer him to die:”

though an exemplar of that paraphrase is cited <sup>f231</sup>, without the negative particle, thus,

“and he was not, for the Lord killed him,”

or inflicted death on him: and it is the sense of several of the Jewish commentators, that he did die a common death, as Jarchi, Eben Ezra, and others; who by the phrase, “God took him”, understand death, for which they cite the following places, (~~1190~~ 1 Kings 19:4 ~~1246~~ Ezekiel 24:16,18).



*and was not found, because God had translated him*; that is, he was not found among men, in the land of the living; he appeared no more there, for God had removed him from earth to heaven; so Elijah, after his rapture and translation, was sought for, but could not be found, (<sup><1216></sup>2 Kings 2:16,17)

*for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God*: he did those things which pleased him; he walked with God before, (<sup><062></sup>Genesis 5:22,24) which the Targumists explain by worshipping in truth, and walking in the fear of the Lord, which are things well pleasing to God; he walked with God by faith in the ways of his worship and service; and he was acceptable to him in Christ; the same phrase is used in the Apocrypha:

“He pleased God, and was beloved of him: so that living among sinners he was translated.” (Wisdom 4:10)

“Enoch pleased the Lord, and was translated, being an example of repentance to all generations.” (Sirach 44:16)

This testimony he received from God, from men, and in his own conscience, and which now stands in the sacred Scriptures, (<sup><064></sup>Genesis 5:24). Some of the Jewish writers very wickedly, and without any ground and foundation, give a different character of him; some of them say that he was a hypocrite, sometimes righteous, and sometimes wicked, and that the holy blessed God removed him, while he was righteous <sup>f232</sup>; and others <sup>f233</sup>, that allow him to be a righteous and worthy man, yet represent him as fickle and inconstant; and, therefore, God, foreseeing that he would do wickedly, and to prevent it, made haste, and took him away, by death, before his time: and which is not only contrary to what the apostle here says, but to the account of Moses, concerning him; from whence it appears, that he was a walker with God; that the course of his conversation was holy and upright; and which was the reason of his being taken, or translated; and which was an high honour bestowed upon him: and upon the whole, he has obtained a better testimony than those men give him.

**Ver. 6.** *But without faith it is impossible to please him*, etc..] Or do things well pleasing in his sight; or any of the duties of religion, in an acceptable way; as prayer, praise, attendance on the word and ordinances, or any good works whatever; because such are without Christ, and without his Spirit; and have neither right principles, nor right ends: for this is not to be understood of the persons of God's elect, as considered in Christ; in whom

they are well pleasing to him before faith; being loved by him with an everlasting love; and chosen in Christ, before the foundation of the world; (see Gill on “~~488~~ Romans 8:8”).

*for he that cometh to God*; to the throne of, his grace, to pray unto him, to implore his grace and mercy, help and assistance; to the house of God, to worship, and serve him, and in order to enjoy his presence, and have communion with him; which coming ought to be spiritual and with the heart; and supposes spiritual life; and must be through Christ, and by faith: wherefore such a comer to God,

*must believe that he is*; or exists, as the Arabic version; and he must not barely believe his existence, but that, as it is revealed in the word: he must believe in the three Persons in the Godhead; that the first Person is the Father of Christ; that the second Person is both the Son of God, and Mediator; and that the third Person is the Spirit of them both, and the applier of all grace; for God the Father is to be approached unto, through Christ the Mediator, by the guidance and assistance of the Spirit: and he must believe in the perfections of God; that he is omniscient, and knows his person and wants; is omnipotent, and can do for him, beyond his thoughts and petitions; is all sufficient, and that his grace is sufficient for him; that he is immutable, in his purposes and covenant; that he is true and faithful to his promises; and is the God of grace, love, and mercy: and he must believe in him, not only as the God of nature and providence, but as his covenant God and Father in Christ:

*and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him*; who are such, as are first sought out by him; and who seek him in Christ, where he is only to be found; and that with their whole hearts, and above all things else: and, of such, God is a rewarder, in a way of grace; with himself, who is their exceeding great reward; and with his Son, and all things with him; with more grace; and, at last, with eternal glory, the reward of the inheritance.

**Ver. 7.** *By faith Noah, being warned of God*, etc..] In the Greek text, Noah is called “Noe”, and so the Septuagint interpreters of the Old Testament call him; but Josephus calls him “Noeos”: or “having received an oracle from God”; in which he was admonished, how to make an ark, as Moses was, in like manner, how to make a tabernacle, (~~488~~ Hebrews 8:5). This oracle or warning is extant, in (~~063~~ Genesis 6:13-22) and it was

*of things not seen as yet*; as the universal deluge; the building of an ark or ship, which was the first that ever was in the world; the entrance of all creatures into it; their preservation in it, and the destruction of all without it: and this divine warning, or oracle, concerning things of such a nature, delivered to Noah, and received by him, shows that he was a favourite of God; that his faith rested in the word of God; and that it agreed with the apostle's definition of faith, (~~8100~~ Hebrews 11:1),

*moved with fear*; not with a fear of his own damnation; nor with a distrust of the salvation of himself and his family in the ark; but with an awful sense of the judgments of God upon the wicked; and with reverence of God, from whom he received the oracle; and with a religious fear, with which he worshipped God, and which he discovered by a regard to his word and ordinances; and which fear does not arise from nature, but from grace; and is increased by the discoveries of divine love; and is consistent with faith, goes along with it, and is a fruit of it: hence he

*prepared an ark for the saving of his house*. Immediately, and without delay, he set about the building of the ark, and made it exactly according to the pattern which was given him; and his end in it was to secure his family, himself and his wife, his three sons and their wives, from the flood, which he believed would shortly come upon the world, according to the word of God; and in this his faith was seen: and from hence it may be observed, that, though God can save without means, yet, generally speaking, it is his will to save by them; and that as God saved Noah and his family in the waters, so he can, and does, save his people in afflictions; and also, that true faith is attended with obedience:

*by the which he condemned the world*: the inhabitants of the world, the world of the ungodly: as a preacher, he declared they would be condemned, in case of impenitence and unbelief; and his words heard, and his actions seen by them, were aggravations of their condemnation; for by his works, as well as by his words, he reprov'd, and condemned them; by building the ark, as he declared his own faith, so he condemned their unbelief; (see Gill on "~~4024~~ Matthew 12:41")

*and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith*: not of the law, but of the righteousness of Christ, and of eternal life through that; for he was not only heir of this world, as Abraham, but of that which is to come; and not through works of righteousness done by him, but through the

righteousness of Christ received by faith, or through faith in Christ, the antitype of the ark.

**Ver. 8.** *By faith, Abraham, when he was called,* etc..] The Alexandrian copy and the Vulgate Latin version read, “by faith he who was called Abraham”; but this call is not to be understood of his name; for though his first name Abram might be given him, in the faith of his being a great man, and his second name Abraham, when he himself was a believer; yet this change was made some years after the call referred to; which is that in (<sup>Gen 12:1</sup>) Genesis 12:1) when he was called out of his own country, kindred, and father's house; which was an emblem of the call of God's people out from among the men of the world, and from their friends, relations, and acquaintance, and even out of themselves; and as Abraham was called from “Ur” of the Chaldees, so they from darkness, bondage, idolatry, and communion with wicked men; that, as he, they might not perish with idolaters, being chosen vessels, and for whom God has peculiar blessings in store: and so the grace of God is seen in calling them, without any respect to their deserts, as in calling Abraham: and the care and goodness of God may be observed, in raising up fit instruments to propagate his cause and interest. Now Abraham, being called

*to go out into a place;* from Ur of the Chaldees, to the land of Canaan;

*which he should afterwards receive for an inheritance;* not in his own person, but in his seed and posterity, unless after the resurrection, in the New Jerusalem church state, and which inheritance was typical of heaven;

*obeyed* the divine call; and which was a fruit and evidence of his faith, and may he called the obedience of faith:

*and he went out, not knowing whither he went:* for though he went forth to go into the land of Canaan, and into the land of Canaan he came, (<sup>Gen 12:5</sup>) Genesis 12:5), yet, when God called him to go forth, and he prepared to obey his call, he knew not what land he was to go into; for it is only said, (<sup>Gen 12:1</sup>) Genesis 12:1),

*unto a land that I will show thee:* upon which words a Jewish commentator <sup>f234</sup> has this note;

“he (God) did not immediately make known the land unto him, that so it might be lovely in his eyes;”

and it is, elsewhere, said by the Jews <sup>f235</sup>, that Abraham

“came from Aspamia (i.e. Mesopotamia), and its companions, <sup>^</sup>kyh [dwy hyh al w, “and he knew not where” he was, as a man that is in the dark;”

all which agrees with our apostle: and, from hence, it may be observed, that God sometimes leads his people in ways they have not known, though they are known to him, and are always right; and that it is the property of faith to follow God, when it cannot see its way; and a great mercy it is to have God for a guide. This also shows, that Abraham's faith agrees with the apostle's definition of it, (<sup><810></sup>Hebrews 11:1).

**Ver. 9.** *By faith he sojourned in the land of promise*, etc..] The land of Canaan, so called, because it was promised to Abraham and his seed; and is typical of heaven, which is not by the works of the law, but by the free promise and grace of God: here Abraham sojourned for a while,

*as in a strange country*; which was not his native place, and not his own, but another's; (see <sup><400></sup>Acts 7:5) and an idolatrous one; here he sojourned by faith, believing that as it was promised, it would be given to him, and his seed: so all God's people are sojourners in this world, strangers and pilgrims in it; this is not their dwelling place; they do not belong to it, but to another; their stay in it is but for a while; and, while they are in it, do not look upon themselves at home, but are looking out for another, and better country; they are unknown to the men of the world, and the men of the world are strangers to them; though they have a civil conversation with them, they separate from them, both as to profaneness and superstition, and live by faith, in the expectation of the heavenly country, as Abraham also did:

*dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise*; the same promised land, the same promised blessings, and the same promised seed, the Messiah; (see <sup><012></sup>Genesis 12:3 26:3,4 28:13,14) with these Abraham dwelt, for he lived until Isaac was seventy five years of age, and Jacob fifteen; he was an hundred years old when Isaac was born, (<sup><0126></sup>Genesis 21:5) and he lived one hundred and seventy five years, (<sup><0127></sup>Genesis 25:7) and Isaac was sixty years old when Jacob was born, (<sup><0125></sup>Genesis 25:26) and Abraham dwelt with them in tabernacles, or tents, which they pitched at pleasure, and moved from place to place. So true believers, as they are Abraham's seed, they are heirs with him,

according to the promise; and are heirs together of the grace of life; and dwell in earthly tabernacles, in houses of clay, which are erected for a while, and then taken down.

**Ver. 10.** *For he looked for a city which hath foundations*, etc..] Not the city of Jerusalem, nor the Gospel church state; but either the city of the new Jerusalem, said to have twelve foundations, (<sup>¶14</sup>Revelation 21:14) and in which glorious state, Abraham, with the rest of the saints, being raised from the dead, will in person possess the promised land; or else the ultimate glory of the saints in heaven, where God dwells, and keeps his palace; and which will be the dwelling place of the saints, and will have in it many habitations; and which will be both peaceable and safe, and full of glory, riches, joy, and pleasure; and into which none but holy and righteous persons will enter; the “foundations” of which are the everlasting love of God, eternal election, the covenant of grace, the promise and preparation of it by God, from the foundation of the world, and the Lord Jesus Christ, his blood and righteousness; which show the immovableness of it, it being opposed to the tabernacles Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob dwelt in, and to the transitory enjoyments of this world: and for this sure, immovable, and comfortable state of things, Abraham was “looking” by faith; he looked through, and above temporal things, to spiritual things; he went through difficulties with cheerfulness, did not greedily covet earthly things, but looked with disdain upon them, and to heaven with faith, affection, and earnest desire; and this proves his faith to be, as that is defined, (<sup>¶10</sup>Hebrews 11:1)

*whose builder and maker is God*: God the Father has prepared this glory from the foundation of the world, and has promised before the world began, and has chosen his people to it; the Spirit of God makes it known, and prepares them for it; and the Lord Jesus Christ is the forerunner entered, who is gone to get it ready for them, and will put them into the possession of it: this shows the superior excellency of this city, or glorious state; and that God has the sole right to dispose of it.

**Ver. 11.** *Through faith also Sarah herself*, etc..] Some copies add “being barren”; and so read the Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions; which is a circumstance which makes her faith appear the greater: but it is a question whether the apostle speaks of the faith of Sarah, or of Abraham; some think he speaks of Abraham's faith; and that it was through his faith that Sarah conceived; and observe, that the last clause may be rendered,

“because he judged him faithful”, etc.. and the rather, because the apostle, both before and after, is speaking of Abraham's faith, (<sup><S112></sup>Hebrews 11:8-10,17). And in (<sup><S112></sup>Hebrews 11:12) mention is made only of one, even of Abraham; and in (<sup><S117></sup>Romans 4:17) only notice is taken of Abraham's faith, respecting this matter; nor is Sarah's faith observed in the history of it, but her diffidence: but why may not Sarah be joined with Abraham, in this commendation, as well as Isaac and Jacob? and though, at first, she distrusted, yet she afterwards feared, and believed: other women are mentioned in this catalogue of believers; and they share in the same grace and privileges as men: and Sarah, being a believer, as well as Abraham,

*received strength to conceive seed*: sometimes “strength” itself signifies seed, as in (<sup><S118></sup>Proverbs 31:3) and so to receive strength is to receive seed; which the female does from the male; hence that saying of the Jews <sup>f236</sup>, the male does not receive strength from another, but the female **j k t l bqm** “receiveth strength” from another; but here it is to be understood of receiving power from God to retain seed, received from men, and conceive by it; which Sarah, in her circumstances, without the interposition of the almighty power, could never have done. The nymph Anobret is so called, in imitation of this conception of Sarah's; or as she is called in the Phoenician language, **trbn[ ^j**, which signifies “conceiving by grace”: as this conception must be entirely ascribed to the power and grace of God:

*and was delivered of a child when she was past age*; of bearing and bringing forth children, being ninety years of age, (<sup><S117></sup>Genesis 17:17). Now though the conception, bearing, and bringing forth of children are things natural, ordinary, and common, yet here was a particular promise respecting this matter; and there were great difficulties in nature attending it, and such as to reason were insuperable; but these were got over, through the power and grace of God, and which is ascribed to faith in the faithfulness of a promising God:

*because she judged him faithful who had promised*; that she should have a son at the time of life; (see Gill on “<sup><S123></sup>Hebrews 10:23”).

**Ver. 12** *Therefore sprang there even of one*, etc..] That is, Abraham: the Arabic version has here a strange interpolation;

“this faith Isaac and Rebecca conceived in mind, and so there were born of one, Esau and Jacob.”

*And him as good as dead*; being an hundred years of age; (see Gill on “<sup><B449></sup>Romans 4:19”). The Ethiopic version reads, “the bodies of both were like a dead carcass”; both of Abraham and Sarah:

*so many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable*; as was promised to Abraham, (<sup><0155></sup>Genesis 15:5 22:17) which has been fulfilled, (<sup><2302></sup>Isaiah 10:22) and will still have a further fulfilment, (<sup><3010></sup>Hosea 1:10).

**Ver. 13.** *These all died in faith*, etc..] Not all the seed of Abraham, but all the believers in the preceding verses, excepting Enoch, particularly the three patriarchs, with Sarah; these died a corporeal death, which is common to all, to the righteous, and to the wicked; and yet saints die not as other men; they die in faith, having the grace itself, which being once implanted, can never be lost; and sometimes in the exercise of it, as these believers did: they died in the faith of their posterity inheriting the land of Canaan, and in the faith of the promised Messiah, and in the believing views of the heavenly glory; and so to die is comfortable to themselves, and a confirmation of the truth of religion to others, and is very precious, desirable, and gainful. It may be rendered, “according to faith”; they died according to the life of faith they lived, and the doctrine of faith they professed, being the Lord's both living and dying.

*Not having received the promises*; the things promised, the land of Canaan, the Messiah, and the blessings of the Gospel dispensation; they had the promises of these things, and though they were not fulfilled in their days, they believed they would be fulfilled, and died in the faith of them:

*having seen them afar off*; the things themselves in the promise; as Abraham saw the going forth of his posterity out of Egypt, after they had been afflicted four hundred years, and saw the day of Christ at a greater distance still, (<sup><01513></sup>Genesis 15:13,14 <sup><4456></sup>John 8:56).

*And were persuaded of [them], and embraced [them]*; they had a full assurance of faith, that what was promised would be fulfilled; and they took a kind of possession of them before hand, as Abraham did of the land of Canaan, by sojourning in it; as did also Isaac and Jacob; and all of them by faith embraced the Messiah, and dealt with, and laid hold upon his blood, righteousness, sacrifice, and grace, by which they were saved, as New Testament saints are.



*And confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth*; for they sojourned in the land of Canaan, as in a strange land, as the saints do in this world; (see <sup><310></sup>Hebrews 11:9). And they were pilgrims, travelling through this world to the heavenly country, and they confessed themselves to be such, (<sup><470></sup>Genesis 47:9) nor are believers ashamed to own and confess their mean estate in this world; for it is only with respect to earth, and earthly things, that they are strangers and pilgrims, and only while they are on earth; and it is therefore but for a little time that they are so, ere long they will be at home, and know as they are known.

**Ver. 14.** *For they that say such things*, etc..] That they are strangers and pilgrims on earth:

*declare plainly that they seek a country*; heaven, so called, for the largeness of it; it is a good land, a land of uprightness; a pleasant land, a land of rest, though a land afar off; here the Father of Christ, and Christ himself, and all his people dwell: the Syriac version renders it, “their own city”; the place of their nativity, of which they were citizens: the act of “seeking” it supposes some things, with respect to the place where they were, as that they were in a strange land, had no settlement there, nor satisfaction in it, and that they sat loose to the world, and the things of it; and some things respecting the country sought after, as that they were not in it; that it was at a distance from them; that they had some knowledge of it, and of the way to it; that their desires were after it, and that they had a strong affection and value for it: the right way to this country is not mere civility and morality, nor legal righteousness, nor birth privileges, nor submission to outward ordinances, nor a mere profession of religion, but the Lord Jesus Christ; he is the true way to eternal life; it is his righteousness which gives a title to it, and on account of which believers expect it, though not without holiness, nor without trouble. The right manner of seeking it is, in the first place, above all things else, with the whole heart, by faith, and by patient continuance in well doing. Many are the reasons which may induce believers to seek it; it is their own, and their Father's country; it is a better one than that in which they are; and because of the company they shall there enjoy, and the work they shall be employed in; and because of the happiness they will be possessed of; and because their inheritance, riches, and treasures, lie here.

**Ver. 15.** *And truly if they had been mindful of that country*, etc..] Chaldea, which was Abraham's country:

*from whence they came out*; as Abraham and Sarah did, in person, and their posterity in them:

*they might have had opportunity to have returned*: for the way from Canaan or Egypt, where they sojourned, was short and easy: and though Abraham sent his servant thither to take a wife for his son Isaac, yet he would not go thither himself, nor suffer his son; nay, made his servant swear that he would not bring him thither, if even the woman should refuse to come; so unmindful was he of that country; so little did he regard it; yea, so much did he despise it: so when men are called by grace, and converted, they come out of a country, this world, which is a land of sin and iniquity, of great folly and ignorance, of darkness, and of the shadow of death; a desert, a mere wilderness; a country where Satan reigns, full of wicked and ungodly men; and which is the land of their nativity, as to their first birth: and they may be said to come out of it, not in a natural and civil sense, but in a spiritual one; and it is the character of a converted man, or one that is come out of the world, and is separated from it, to be unmindful of it; not so as not to consider from whence he came out, as owing to rich grace; nor so as not to lament the iniquities of it; nor so as not to pray for the conversion of the inhabitants of it; but he is unmindful of it, so as to be desirous of the company of the men of it, or to have the affections set upon it, and the heart tickled with the pleasures of it, or so as to desire to return to it, for which there is a great deal of reason: for this country is not worth minding; and there is much in it to set a gracious mind against it; a good man has better things to mind; and it is below, and unworthy of a Christian, to mind the world; and besides, worldly mindedness is attended with bad consequences. Moreover, though the saints have opportunities of returning, yet they do not; they are near it, and the country they are seeking is afar off: many things in it are alluring and ensnaring; a corrupt and deceitful heart often lingers after them, and Satan is not wanting to tempt unto, and by them. And yet they do not return; some that bear the name of Christians, but are not truly such, may wholly return, and never come back more; and true believers may strangely go back again in some instances; but they shall not return finally and totally: for they are held and drawn with the cords of love; they are in the hands of Christ, and are secured in the covenant of grace; they are returned to Christ, in the effectual calling, who will keep them; they are of the household of God, and shall be no more foreigners; should they return in such sense, they would be condemned with the world, which cannot be.

**Ver. 16.** *But now they desire a better country*, etc..] Which is not to be understood of the then present time, in which the apostle wrote; for the patriarchs, of whom he speaks, were not then on earth, nor in any third place between heaven and earth; they were then in heaven; and though there are indeed in heaven desires after perfect happiness, in soul and body; yet this intends the desires of these saints when on earth, and which are common to all believers in the present state of things; who, as the patriarchs desired a better country than Chaldea, or even Canaan itself, so they desire a better country than this world; and such is heaven: it is on high; here are no noxious and pestilential vapours, no mists or fogs beclouding, no storms and tempests, but it is full of light and glory; having the delightful breezes of divine love, and the comfortable gales of the blessed Spirit; here is no heat of persecution, nor coldness, nor chills of affection; here is plenty of most delicious fruits, no hunger nor thirst; and here are riches, which are solid, satisfying, durable, safe and sure: many are the liberties and privileges here enjoyed; here is a freedom from a body subject to diseases and death, from a body of sin and death, from Satan's temptations, from all doubts, fears, and unbelief, and from all sorrows and afflictions; the inhabitants of it are the spirits of just men made perfect, angels, God, Father, Son, and Spirit, and Christ in human nature; upon all which accounts it is abundantly the better country, and as it is explained,

*that is, an heavenly*; an inheritance in heaven, an house eternal in the heavens, the kingdom of heaven; and it is no wonder that it should be desired by such who know it, and the nature of it: the word denotes a vehement desire; and it is such, that the saints desire to depart from this world, and go unto it; which shows that they are weaned from this, and have seen something glorious in another. Remarkable is the saying of Anaxagoras<sup>f237</sup> who, when one said to him, hast thou no regard to thy country? answered, I have, and that the greatest, pointing with his fingers towards heaven; and, says Philo the Jew<sup>f238</sup>, the soul of every wise man has heaven for his country, and the earth as a strange place:

*wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God*; their covenant God and Father; (see Gill on “<sup>s880</sup>Hebrews 8:10”), even though he is the God of the whole earth;

*for he hath prepared for them a city*; in his council and covenant, and by his Son; (see Gill on “<sup>s810</sup>Hebrews 11:10”). This proves that he is not

ashamed of the relation he stands in to them, since he has made a provision for them to dwell with him to all eternity.

**Ver. 17.** *By faith Abraham, when he was tried*, etc..] Or tempted; that is, by God, (<sup>(023)</sup>Genesis 22:1). This temptation or trial respects the command given by God to Abraham, to offer up his son Isaac; which lays no foundation for a charge against God, either of sin or cruelty; for God's will is the rule of justice and goodness, and whatever he requires is just and good; and though his creatures are bound by the laws he prescribes them, he himself is not: besides, he is the Lord of life, the giver and preserver of it; and he has a right to dispose of it, and to take it away, when, and by what means, and instruments, he thinks fit; to which may be added, that the secret will of God was not that Isaac should die, but a command was given to Abraham to offer him up, for the trial of his faith and love; this was a temptation of probation, not of seduction, or to sin, as are the temptations of Satan; for God tempts no man with sin. The Jews speak <sup>f239</sup> of ten temptations, with which Abraham was tried, and in all which he stood; and say, that this of the binding of Isaac was the tenth and last.

*Offered up Isaac*; he showed great readiness to do it; as soon as he had the command given him, he travelled three days' journey in order to it; took the wood of the burnt offering, and laid it on his son; took fire, and a knife in his hand, with the one to burn the wood, with the other to slay his son; he built an altar, laid the wood in order on it; and bound his son, and laid him on that; and took the knife, and stretched forth his hand to slay him, and fully intended to do it, had he not been prevented: and all this he did by faith; he believed the equity, justice, and wisdom of the divine command; he was fully assured of the truth and faithfulness of God in his promises, however contrary this might seem thereunto; and he was strongly persuaded of the power of accomplishing them in some way or another. This was great faith, and it was greatly tried, as follows:

*and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son*; he had a promise made him that he should have a son, and that a numerous issue should spring from him, which should inherit the land of Canaan; yea, that the Messiah himself should be of his seed: and he had received these promises; given credit to them, and firmly believed them, and fully expected the performance of them; as he had reason to do, since the first was fulfilled, the son was born; and yet now he is called to offer him up, on whom his expectation was placed; everything was trying; it was an human

creature he was called to offer, whose blood is not to be shed by man; a child of his own, a part of himself; a son, an own son; an only begotten son; a son whom he loved; an Isaac, a son of joy; a son of promise; and his heir, the son of his old age, and who was now a grown up person. The Jews are divided about the age of Isaac at his binding: Josephus <sup>f240</sup> says he was twenty five years of age; others say twenty six <sup>f241</sup>; some say <sup>f242</sup> thirty six: but the more prevailing opinion is <sup>f243</sup>, that he was thirty seven years of age; only Aben <sup>f244</sup> Ezra makes him to be about thirteen; rejecting the more commonly received account, as well as that he was but five years old, that being an age unfit to carry wood. Some Christian writers have thought he might be about three and thirty years of age, the age of Christ when he suffered, of whom he was a type.

**Ver. 18.** *Of whom it is said*, etc.] That is, of Isaac, Abraham's own son, whom he offered up; or rather, “to whom it was said”, as the Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions render it; that is, to Abraham, for to him was this said, (<sup>-0212</sup>Genesis 21:12)

*that in Isaac shall thy seed be called*; that numerous natural seed of his, which should inherit the land of Canaan; and his special famous seed, the Messiah, to whom the promises were made; (see Gill on “<sup>-0507</sup>Romans 9:7”).

**Ver. 19.** *Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead*, etc.] Abraham did not go about this affair without thought; and yet he did not consult with flesh and blood; his reasoning was the reasoning of faith; and the conclusion of it was, not that he believed that God would raise his son from the dead, but that he was able to do it. He knew that he had received him at first, as it were, from the dead; he sprung from his own dead body, and out of Sarah's dead womb; and though his faith did not prescribe to God, yet as he believed the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead, he might believe that God would raise his son from the dead, rather than that his promise should fail; and this conclusion proceeded upon the power and faithfulness of God:

*from whence also he received him in a figure*; or for an “example” of faith and obedience; or for a “parable or proverb”, that such a proverbial expression might be made use of, for the comfort and encouragement of saints in distressed and difficult circumstances, as is in (<sup>-0224</sup>Genesis 22:14) or as a type of the death and resurrection of Christ, whose type he was in other things, as well as in this; as in his birth, and the circumstances of it;

he was long promised and expected, as Christ, was; his birth was beyond the ordinary course of nature, and attended with great joy; he was circumcised the eighth day; at his weaning a great feast was made, typical of the Gospel feast; and as he was persecuted by Ishmael, so was Christ by Herod, in his infancy: and he was a figure of him in his oblation; they were both sons of Abraham; both only begotten and beloved sons; both heirs; both carried the wood on which they were offered; both were offered on a Mount, and by their father, by whom neither of them were spared; and both by the command of God, and alone, none were with them: and Isaac prefigured him in his deliverance; Abraham stretched out his hand, but was restrained, and not a bone of Christ must be broken; not Isaac, but the ram was slain, not the divine, but the human nature suffered; both were delivered on the third day, the one as from death, the other really from death; and both returned to their father's house. Moreover, Abraham received his son in the similitude of a resurrection; it was as life from the dead; it was like the return of the prodigal, (<sup><D152></sup>Luke 15:32). Abraham, looked upon him as dead to him, and Isaac thought himself a dead man; so that he that was accounted as one dead, was received alive. The Jews speak of this matter agreeably to the apostle; they say, a man has two breaths or souls, one in this world, and another in the world to come; and of Isaac they say <sup>f245</sup>, that

“in the time that he was offered upon the altar, his soul (or “breath”), which he had in this world, “went out”; and when it was said to Abraham (or by him) blessed be he that quickeneth the dead, his soul (or breath), which he had in the world to come, returned to him — for **tmk bçj ta**, “he was accounted as dead”.”

They speak of him as if he was just dead; they say <sup>f246</sup>,

“when he saw the sword over his neck, his breath fled from him, and came to the place of the soul, **hyh wl yak**, “as if he was at the point of giving up the ghost”.”

So that a Jew cannot find fault with the apostle for expressing himself in this manner.

**Ver. 20.** *By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau*, etc..] The history of this is in (<sup><O273></sup>Genesis 27:33-39). The former of these was a good man, and, though the youngest son, he is set before, and was blessed before the

eldest; and the latter was a wicked man, and yet had a blessing; for temporal blessings are enjoyed in common: and this blessing was prophetic, it was concerning things to come. Jacob's blessing was plenty of temporal things, and under which may be signified the dews of divine grace, the fatness of God's house, the bread of life, and wine of divine love, which true Israelites partake of; also dominion over his brother, and government over nations, which had their accomplishment in his posterity; and may be expressive of the spiritual reign of the saints, and their dominion, by grace; and of the kingdom that shall hereafter be put to their hands; and of the extensiveness of Christ's kingdom in the latter day, who was to spring from him. Esau's blessings were merely temporal ones, and respected things future, which were fulfilled in his posterity; and these several blessings Isaac pronounced upon them by faith, believing they would be bestowed upon them; and so his faith answered to the account of faith in (~~810E~~ Hebrews 11:1). It may be asked, how Isaac can be said to have blessed Jacob by faith, when he was deceived by him? It is certain he took him to be Esau, when he blessed him, wherefore it was not the design of Isaac, though it was the will of God that he should bless him, (~~027B~~ Genesis 27:18-30), but yet notwithstanding this, Isaac might do it in faith, believing that the person he blessed would be blessed, though he was mistaken in him; and which he confirmed when he did know him, (~~027B~~ Genesis 27:33,37) to which the apostle may have respect; and besides, he blessed him after this, (~~028E~~ Genesis 28:1-3).

**Ver. 21.** *By faith Jacob, when he was a dying*, etc.] Which was the usual time of blessing with the patriarchs; and the reason of it was, that what was said might be more attended to and regarded, and more strongly impressed upon the mind; and this is a proof that it was done in faith by Jacob, when there was no appearance of the fulfilment of these things, and it was not likely that he should see them; and this shows the truth of what the apostle says in (~~810E~~ Hebrews 11:1,13), blessed both the sons of Joseph; whose names were Ephraim and Manasseh; the form of blessing them is recorded in (~~048E~~ Genesis 48:15,16) and which was done in faith, and under the direction and inspiration of the Spirit of God, as appears by his setting Ephraim before Manasseh, (~~048E~~ Genesis 48:13,14,17-19) and when he delivered the blessing he firmly believed it would be fulfilled, though they were then in a strange land:

*and worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff*; not that he “worshipped the top of his staff”, as the Vulgate Latin version renders it, either his own,

or Joseph's, or any little image upon the top of it; which would be an instance of idolatry, and not faith, contrary to the scope of the apostle; nor is there any need to interpret this of civil worship and respect paid to Joseph, as a fulfilment of his dream, and with a peculiar regard to Christ, of whom Joseph was a type; whereas, on the contrary, Joseph at this time bowed to his father, as was most natural and proper, (<sup>(-0473)</sup>Genesis 48:12) nor is there any necessity of supposing a different punctuation of (<sup>(-0473)</sup>Genesis 47:31) and that the true reading is not “mittah”, a bed, but “matteh”; a staff, contrary to all the Targums <sup>f247</sup>, and the Talmud <sup>f248</sup>, which read “mittah”, a bed, seeing it is not that place the apostle cites or refers to; for that was before the blessing of the sons of Joseph, but this was at the same time; and the apostle relates what is nowhere recorded in Genesis, but what he had either from tradition, or immediate revelation; or else he concludes it from the general account in (<sup>(-0480)</sup>Genesis 48:1-12) and the sense is, that Jacob, having blessed the two sons of Joseph, being sat upon his bed, and weak, he leaned upon the top of his staff, and worshipped God, and gave praise and glory to him, that he had lived to see not only his son Joseph, but his seed also, (see <sup>(-0482)</sup>Genesis 48:2,11,20).

**Ver. 22.** *By faith Joseph, when he died*, etc..] The riches and honours of Joseph, as they could not secure him from death, so they did not make him unmindful of it; nor was he afraid of dying, or uneasy about it; nor did his prosperity make him proud, or above speaking to his brethren, nor revengeful to them, nor unthoughtful of their future afflictions; nor did his affluence of temporal things take off his regards to divine promises, nor weaken his faith in them, which is here commended in the following instances; as that at the time of his death,

*he made mention of the departing of the children of Israel*; that is, out of the land of Egypt: he remembered it himself, and put his brethren in mind of it, by speaking of it to their comfort, with great assurance; he knew they were well situated in the land of Egypt, and yet speaks of their departure out of it; he foresaw, and firmly believed they would be greatly afflicted in it, and that God would look upon them, and visit them, and bring them out of it, into the land of Canaan; all which shows the strength of his faith, and that it was about things not seen.

*And gave commandment concerning his bones*; and the command was a very strict one when he gave it; he took an oath of his brethren to fulfil it; it was concerning his bones, not his body, which shows that he believed their



departure out of Egypt was at a great distance, when his flesh would be consumed, and only his bones left, as it was about two hundred years after his death; it respects the carrying them out of Egypt with them, and burying them in the land of Canaan, when they came there; and this is an instance of his humility, in choosing to lie with his fathers, rather than with the kings, and great men in Egypt, and of his care to prevent idolatry, which he might observe the Egyptians would be prone unto: and this command was a great instance of Joseph's faith, that the children of Israel would return to Canaan, and which might serve greatly to confirm their faith in it; it also shows his belief of the resurrection of the dead, and of his enjoying the heavenly inheritance, signified by the land of Canaan; (see <sup><4524></sup>Genesis 50:24,25), the Papists, from hence, plead for the relics of saints; but it should be observed, that it was at the request, and by the command of Joseph, that his bones were preserved, which is not the case of the saints, whose relics are pleaded for; besides, these were the true and real bones of Joseph, whereas the relics of the saints are only pretended; to which may be added, that the bones of Joseph, were ordered to be buried, not to be showed for a sight, much less worshipped, as Popish relics are. Joseph's coffin, the Jews say <sup>f249</sup>, was put into the river Nile; and so says Patricides <sup>f250</sup>, an Arabic writer: others say it was in the buryingplace of the kings, until it was taken up and removed by Moses.

**Ver. 23.** *By faith Moses, when he was born*, etc..] Which is to be understood, not of the faith of Moses, but of the faith of his parents, at the time of his birth; which was when Pharaoh had published an edict, ordering every male child to be cast into the river; but instead of obeying this order, Moses was hid three months of his parents; that is, in his father's house, as it is said in (<sup><4070></sup>Acts 7:20) and is here expressed in the Ethiopic version. According to the Targumist <sup>f251</sup>, his mother went with him but six months, at the end of which he was born, and that she hid him three months, which made up the nine, the time in which a woman usually goes with child; and after that she could conceal him no longer: the hiding of him is here ascribed to both his parents, though in (<sup><4082></sup>Exodus 2:2) it is represented as the act of his mother; which, no doubt, was done, with the knowledge, advice, and consent of his father; and the Septuagint there renders it, **εσκεπασαν**, "they hid him"; though the order of the history makes it necessary that it should be read in the singular. Parents ought to take care of their children; and persons may lawfully hide themselves, or others, from the cruelty of tyrants, and that as long as they can, for their safety; and this

was so far from being wrong in the parents of Moses, that it is commended, as an instance of faith: they believed the promise in general, that God would deliver the people of Israel; they believed this to be about the time of their deliverance, and had some intimation, that this child in particular would be the deliverer, because they saw he was a proper child; not only of a goodly and beautiful countenance, but that he was peculiarly grateful and acceptable to God; they perceived something remarkable in him, which to them was a token that he would be the deliverer of God's people, and therefore they hid him; (see Gill on "~~4072~~Acts 7:20").

*And they were not afraid of the king's commandment*; nor did they observe it, for it was contrary to nature, and to the laws of God, and to the promise of God's multiplying of that people, and to their hopes of deliverance: there is a great deal of courage and boldness in faith; and though faith may be weakened, it cannot be lost; and a weak faith is taken notice of, as here; for though they feared not at first, they seem to be afraid afterwards; but when God designs to work deliverance, nothing shall prevent.

**Ver. 24.** *By faith Moses, when he was come to years*, etc..] Or "was great"; a nobleman in Pharaoh's court; or when he was arrived to great knowledge, being learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians; or rather when he was well advanced in years, being full forty years of age, (~~4072~~Acts 7:22,23)

*refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter*; by whom Moses was taken up out of the water; by whom he was named, and provided for; she reckoned him as her own son, and designed him for Pharaoh's successor, as Josephus reports <sup>f252</sup>: he refused all this honour, both in words, and by facts; he denied that he was the son of Pharaoh's daughter, as the words will bear to be rendered; for to be "called", often signifies only to "be"; and by taking part with the Israelites, and against the Egyptians, he plainly declared that his descent was from the former, and not the latter: and this discovered great faith; and showed that he preferred being called an Israelite to any earthly adoption, and the care of the church, and people of God, to his own worldly honour and interest; and that he believed the promises of God, before the flatteries of a court; and esteemed afflictions and reproaches, with the people of God, and for his sake, better than sinful pleasures, and earthly riches, as in the following words. Of Pharaoh's daughter, (see Gill on "~~4072~~Acts 7:21").

**Ver. 25.** *Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God,* etc..]

The Israelites, who were God's chosen and peculiar people, and were the true worshippers of him; Moses chose to be with those: the company and conversation of such is most eligible to every good man, because God is with them; his word and ordinances are with them; there are large provisions of grace in the midst of them; so that it is profitable, delightful, and honourable, to be among them, and is attended with comfort, peace, and satisfaction: but then those are a poor, and an afflicted people; affliction is with them, for the sake of God, and Christ, and the truths which they profess, and the worship and service they are engaged in; and their afflictions are many and grievous: and now Moses chose to suffer these with them, to suffer the same afflictions they did, and to sympathize with them: and this was more eligible to him,

*than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season:* meaning, either the pleasures, honours, and riches in Pharaoh's court, attended with sin; as indulging himself in the luxury of a court, when his brethren were in distress; approving Pharaoh's cruelty and persecution, at least conniving at it, and not opposing it, which could not be without sin; carrying himself as the son of Pharaoh's daughter, when he was an Hebrew; and preferring his own ease to the deliverance of his people; and now these, had he continued at court, would have been but for a short season: or else sinful lusts in general are intended, in which men promise themselves much pleasure, when it is only imaginary, and lasts but for a while neither; and both may be intended, and are what the Jews call <sup>f253</sup> [gr ygw n] t, “pleasures for a moment”, or momentary ones. And the reasons which might induce Moses, and so every good man, to such a choice, may be taken partly from the nature of afflictions themselves, which are such that God has chosen for them, and appointed them unto, and which he gives them to suffer for his name, and which are an honour to them, and issue in their good, and in the glory of God; and partly from the nature of sinful pleasures; there is no solidity, nor satisfaction, in the best of worldly enjoyments; there can be no true pleasure in sin; there is always bitterness in the end, and it issues in death, if grace prevent not: now it was by faith Moses made this choice, for it is manifestly contrary to flesh and blood: it showed him to be a man thoroughly acquainted with the nature of sin; and that he looked beyond the things of sense and time, to those of eternity.

**Ver. 26.** *Esteeming the reproach of Christ,* etc..] That is, either Christ personal; meaning not any reproach that lay upon Christ, as the immediate

object of it; nor upon the people of Israel for the delay of his coming; but rather for the sake of Christ: Christ was made known to the Old Testament saints, and they believed in him; he was typified by sacrifices which they offered; and they were reproached for his sake, for the sacrifices they offered, and for the worship they performed, for their faith in the Messiah, and their expectation of him: or this may be understood of Christ mystical, the church; called Christ, because of the union, communion, sympathy, and likeness there is between them, insomuch that what is done to the one, is done to the other: when the saints are reproached, Christ himself is reproached; and therefore all reproaches of this nature should be bore willingly, cheerfully, courageously, patiently, and constantly: and such Moses reckoned

*greater riches than the treasures in Egypt*; he counted reproach itself riches; that is, he esteemed that riches for which he was reproached, as Christ, his word, and ordinances, and communion with the saints in them; all which are comparable to gold, silver, and precious stones; yea, are more valuable and desirable than thousands of gold and silver, or than the treasures in Egypt, which were very large; money, cattle, and lands coming into the hands of the king, through the seven years' famine in it, (<sup><0474></sup>Genesis 47:14,17,20) and for which immense treasure, treasure cities were built, (<sup><0311></sup>Exodus 1:11) which would have become Moses's, had he been Pharaoh's successor, to which he bid fair, before he discovered himself.

*For he had respect unto the recompence of the reward*; by which is meant, either the deliverance of the Israelites from their bondage, which he judged a sufficient recompence for all his afflictions and reproaches he endured, as the Apostle Paul did for the elect's sake, for the sake of Christ's body the church, (<sup><3024></sup>Colossians 1:24 <sup><5120></sup>2 Timothy 2:10) or the enjoyment of the land of Canaan, promised for an inheritance to the seed of Abraham; or the enjoyment of God's presence among his people, who is their shield, and exceeding great reward; or rather eternal glory, which is the reward of the inheritance, and is a reward of grace, and not of debt; this he had respect unto, looked for, and believed he should enjoy; so that his faith was of things unseen; and this caused him to prefer even afflictions with the saints, and reproaches for Christ, to all worldly riches and grandeur.

**Ver. 27.** *By faith he forsook Egypt*, etc..] Either when he fled to Midian; this was before the eating of the passover, and so it stands in its proper

order; whereas, his going out of Egypt with the children of Israel was after it, and mentioned in (~~8129~~ Hebrews 11:29). The word “forsook” implies fleeing; and then it was when Pharaoh's wrath was kindled against him: but it may be said, that Moses seemed then to be afraid of it, seeing he fled: to which it may be answered, that he showed great courage and intrepidity in slaying the Egyptian; and he took no methods to gain the king's favour, when the thing was known; his fleeing was consistent with courage, and was a point of prudence, and in obedience to the will of God: his departure shows, that he would not desist from the work he was called unto; but that he waited God's time, when he should be again employed; wherefore he endured affliction and meanness in Midian, and waited, patiently, till God should call him again to service: or this is to be understood of the time when he led the children of Israel out of Egypt; when he had many difficulties on the part of that people: they were seated and settled in the land of Egypt; they knew nothing of Canaan, nor of the way to it; and, besides, that was in the possession of others; they were a very morose, impatient, stiffnecked, and an ungovernable people, whom he led into a wilderness, without food or arms; and their number was very large; and he had many difficulties, on the part of Pharaoh and the Egyptians. The Israelites were in the midst of them; he brought them out from among them, with the spoil of them in their hands; he knew the changeableness and fury of Pharaoh's mind, and yet he led them out, and left Egypt,

*not fearing the wrath of the king*; of Pharaoh, king of Egypt; though it was as the roaring of a lion: so such as are called by grace, from a state of darkness and bondage, and out of a strange land, forsake this world, and leave their situation in it, their sinful lusts and pleasures, the company of wicked men, and everything that is near and dear, when it is in competition with Christ; not fearing the wrath of any temporal king or prince; nor of Satan, the prince of this world:

*for he endured*; afflictions, reproach, and menaces, with patience and courage; his mind was not broken with them, nor overborne by them; he expected divine help, and persevered; and so do such, who are called by the grace of God:

*as seeing him who is invisible*; that is God, as the Syriac version expresses it; who is not to be seen corporeally, though intellectually; not in his essence, though in his works of creation and providence; not immediately, though mediately in and through Christ; not perfectly now, though face to

face hereafter. Moses saw him visionally, and symbolically in the bush; he saw him by faith, and with the eyes of his understanding; and so believing in his power, faithfulness, etc.. did what he did.

**Ver. 28.** *Through faith he kept the passover*, etc..] Which Moses made, or appointed by divine direction; he kept it, with all its rites and ceremonies, and caused the people of Israel to observe it; and which he did, in faith of the speedy deliverance of the children of Israel, from the house of bondage; and in the faith of the Messiah, of whom the passover was a type; (see Gill on <sup>“407b”</sup>1 Corinthians 5:7”). The Syriac version reads, “through faith they kept the passover”; that is, the Israelites:

*and the sprinkling of blood*; of the paschal lamb; which was received into a basin, and was sprinkled upon the lintel, and two side posts of the doors of the houses, in which the Israelites dwelt; which was done with a bunch of hyssop dipped into it:

*lest he that destroyed the firstborn should touch them*; for the Lord, seeing the blood sprinkled, as above, when he smote the firstborn of Egypt, passed by the houses of the Israelites, so distinguished; and they were all safe within, and not one of them touched: this was typical of the blood of Christ being sprinkled upon the hearts and consciences of his people; whereby they are purified through faith; which blood is looked upon by Jehovah, so that justice passes by them; and they are all safe and secure, and will be, when others are destroyed; nor can they be hurt by the second death.

**Ver. 29.** *By faith they passed through the Red sea, as by dry land*, etc..] Not through a river, but through the sea, the Red sea, the sea of Suph, or weeds; (see Gill on <sup>“407c”</sup>Acts 7:36”). Some say they came out on the same side they went in; but it should seem rather, by the phrase here used, that they passed through it, from one side to the other; and that all one as if it had been on dry ground; even Moses, and all the children of Israel: and this they did by faith, believing, that God would make a passage quite through it for them, and deliver them out of the hands of their enemies, who were closely pursuing them:

*which the Egyptians assaying to do, were drowned*. These were Pharaoh, and his numerous army; who, observing the Israelites march on through the sea, as on dry land, thought they could do the same; and so made an attempt, but were everyone of them drowned; in just retaliation for the

cruel edict for drowning the male infants of the Israelites, as soon as they were born.

**Ver. 30.** *By faith the walls of Jericho fell down*, etc..] Of themselves, not from any natural cause: the Jews say <sup>f254</sup> they sunk right down into the ground, and were swallowed up; even the whole wall fell round about, as the Septuagint version in (~~(f66)~~Joshua 6:20) expresses it: or, it may be, only that which was over against the camp of Israel, as Kimchi observes; since Rahab's house was built upon the wall, and yet fell not. And this was by the faith of Joshua, and the Israelites, who believed the walls would fall, at the sound of the rams' horns, as God said they should: after they were compassed about seven days; which was a trial of their faith and patience: the Jews say <sup>f255</sup> it was on the sabbath day that they fell: this was a preternatural act, and cannot be ascribed to any second cause; nothing is impossible with God; no defences, ever so strong, are anything against him; unlikely means are sometimes made use of by him; faith stops at nothing, when it has the word of God to rest upon; and what God does, he does in his own time, and in his own way. This may be an emblem of the fall of the walls of the hearts of unregenerate men; of their unbelief, hardness, enmity, and vain confidence; and of the conversion and subjection of them unto Christ, through the preaching of the Gospel; which, in the eyes of men, is as mean and despicable, and as unlikely to bring about such an event, as the sounding of the rams' horns might be to the inhabitants of Jericho: and it may be also an emblem of the fall of Babylon, and other antichristian cities, (~~(f66)~~Revelation 16:19).

**Ver. 31.** *By faith the harlot Rahab*, etc..] The Targum on (~~(f66)~~Joshua 2:1) calls her **atyqdnwp atta**, “a woman, that kept a victualling house”: this paraphrase is taken notice of by Jarchi and Kimchi on the place, who interpret it, “a seller of food”: and even the Hebrew word **hnwz**, is so explained by a considerable Jewish writer <sup>f256</sup>; and this may rather seem to be the sense of the word, and to be her proper business, from the spies going to her house, as being an house of entertainment; and from Salmon's marrying her, which might be thought strange that a prince of Israel would, had she been a person of ill fame; to which may be added, the encomiums of her for her faith and works, both by our apostle, and by James: but yet, the constant use of the word, in this form, the testimonies of two apostles, and her making no mention of her husband and children, when she agreed with the spies, confirm the generally received character of her, that she was

an harlot. Some Jewish writers say <sup>f257</sup> that she was ten years of age when the Israelites came out of Egypt; and that all the forty years they were in the wilderness, **htnz**, “she played the harlot”; and was one and fifty years of age when she was proselyted. She is called an harlot; not with respect to her present, but past life. In the Greek text, she is here called Raab, as also in (<sup><9125></sup>James 2:25) and so in the Septuagint in (<sup><9111></sup>Joshua 2:1,3). Rachab, which exactly answers to the Hebrew word **bj r**, (<sup><9111></sup>Joshua 2:1) and by Josephus <sup>f258</sup> “Rachabe”. This woman was a wonderful and singular instance of the free, sovereign, distinguishing, powerful, and efficacious grace of God; being one that sprung from Canaan, and was of the nations that were abhorred; but, being called by grace, became an eminent believer: she believed that the God of the Israelites was God in heaven and on earth; that he had given the land of Canaan to them; she received the spies, and hid them through that faith; she caused them to swear by the Lord, that they would show mercy to her, and her family; and gave credit to them; and observed their instructions: and so she

*perished not with them that believed not*; the inhabitants of Jericho, who were unbelievers, and disobedient, and all perished by the sword: but Rahab perished not, neither temporally, nor eternally; her temporal salvation was an emblem and type of her spiritual salvation; her receiving the spies was an emblem of a soul's receiving the Gospel, and the ministers of it; the scarlet thread, that was hung out, was an emblem of the blood of Christ, by which sins, though as scarlet, are made white as wool; and the saving of her whole family is an emblem of the complete salvation of all the elect, soul and body, by Christ:

*when she had received the spies with peace*; and had hid them, for some time, in her house, and then let them down by the wall; and who, at the taking of the city, saved her, and hers, according to their promise and oath: the number of these spies were two, according to (<sup><9111></sup>Joshua 2:1). The Jews <sup>f259</sup> say one of them was Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the high priest; and others <sup>f260</sup> of them say they were Phinehas and Caleb.

**Ver. 32.** *And what shall I more say*, etc..] Intimating he had said enough to prove the definition of faith he had given; and that the elders, by it, had obtained a good report; and yet he had not said all he could; and that he had so much to say, that he could not say all:



*for the time would fail me*; either the time of life, and so it is an hyperbolic expression; or the time convenient for the writing this epistle; to enumerate all the instances of faith, and enlarge upon them, would take up too much of his time, and make the epistle prolix and tedious: this form of speech is often used by Philo the Jew <sup>f261</sup>, and by Julian the emperor <sup>f262</sup>. It may be observed, that many, who are not mentioned by name, do not stand excluded from being believers; and that the number of believers, under the Old Testament, was very large:

*to tell of Gedeon*; so Gideon is called in the Septuagint version of (~~GEN~~Judges 6:11) and other places; and by Josephus <sup>f263</sup>, and Philo <sup>f264</sup> the Jew, as here: he was a man, but of a mean extract, and had his infirmities; and even in the exercise of that particular grace, for which he is mentioned; but was, no doubt, a good man, and is commended for his faith; which appeared in ascribing former mercies and present afflictions to the Lord; in destroying the altar of Baal; in crediting the word of the Lord, that Israel should be saved by him; which he showed by the preparation he made, and in marching against a numerous army, with only three hundred men, and they but weak: all which may be seen in the book of Judges, (~~GEN~~Judges 6:1-8:35) and

*of Barak*; who was before Gideon, as Jephthah was before Samson, and Samuel before David; for the apostle does not observe strict order, reciting these in haste. Barak, when the word of the Lord came to him, showed some diffidence, yet acted in obedience to it, under the sole direction and counsel of a woman; he engaged Sisera's vast army with a small number, and gave the glory of the victory to the Lord, (~~GEN~~Judges 4:1-5:31).

*and of Samson*: who was a child of promise, and devoted to the Lord; he was famous for his great strength; he had his infirmities, but was, without doubt, a good man: the last act of his life seems to be a great instance of faith; he did it with calling upon the Lord; he was strengthened for it by the Lord; he acted, not as a private person, but as the judge of Israel; nor did he act from private revenge, but from zeal for God, and love to his country; and his intention was not to destroy himself, but his enemies; in which he acted as a type of Christ:

*and of Jephthah*; the Syriac version calls him "Nepthe", and the Arabic version "Naphtah"; he was base born; and, for a time, joined himself to vain men, but became a believer; and is marked for his faith, in ascribing the conquests of Israel in the wilderness to the Lord; in fighting with the

Ammonites, whom he conquered; and in his conscientiousness, in observing his vow, (<sup><071B></sup>Judges 11:30-40).

*of David also*; a man after God's own heart, raised up to fulfil his will; whose faith appeared in his dependence on God, when he fought with Goliath; in encouraging himself in the Lord his God, when in exile and distress; and in believing his interest in the covenant of grace, when his house and family were in a disagreeable situation, and he just going out of the world:

*and Samuel*; a child of prayer, and early devoted to the Lord, who ministered to him, when a child; was always ready to hearken to his voice; was used very familiarly by him, and behaved with great uprightness, all his days; and had a good report of God and man:

*and of the prophets*; from Samuel to John the Baptist, who were famous for their trust in God, their faith in the Messiah, and for their honourable walk and conversation.

**Ver. 33.** *Who through faith subdued kingdoms*, etc..] As David did particularly; who subdued Syria, Moab, Ammon, Amalek, Edom, and the Philistines, (<sup><082></sup>2 Samuel 8:12,14). War, in some cases, is lawful; and kingdoms may be subdued; and faith makes use of means to do it: these kingdoms, though subdued by faith, yet not without fighting. Believers have no reason to be afraid of kings, or kingdoms; and this should encourage the saints, in their combats with the powers of darkness.

*Wrought righteousness*; exercised vindictive justice, in taking vengeance on the enemies of God, and his people; civil righteousness, in the discharge of their offices; and moral righteousness, in their conversation before God and men; which, being imperfect, was not justifying: wherefore they stood in need of another, and better righteousness, which is perfect and durable; and, in consequence of which being known, embraced, and received, men work righteousness: it may be observed, that to do works of righteousness in faith, and by it, is something very considerable; it is reckoned here among actions of the greatest fame; and that true faith is an operative grace, it works by love, and is always attended with works of righteousness; and that righteousness is a fruit and evidence of faith; and that faith is not the believer's righteousness; and that the righteousness of faith is not that which faith works, but which it receives.

*Obtained promises*; the promise of the land of Canaan; particular promises of victory over their enemies; promises concerning the Messiah, and of everlasting life and happiness: their faith was not the cause of promises being made, nor of their being fulfilled; but was the grace by which these believers received them, believed them, and waited for the accomplishment of them; and, in some sense, enjoyed the things promised before hand; their faith realizing things future and invisible to them: to obtain a promise from God is a great and marvellous thing; it is an instance of rich grace; and there is never a promise, but what is great in itself, and precious to the saints: all God's promises are obtained; they are sure, and are certainly fulfilled; and it is the work and business of faith to receive, and enjoy them.

*Stopped the mouths of lions*: a lion was slain by Samson, and another by David; but the most remarkable instance of stopping the mouths of lions, was in the den, into which Daniel was cast; and this may encourage the faith of God's people, when they are in the midst of men, comparable to lions; and may animate them not to fear the devouring lion, Satan.

**Ver. 34.** *Quenched the violence of fire*, etc..] Which may be said to be done, when a believer, or a righteous man, is delivered out of it, as Lot from Sodom, when God rained fire and brimstone on it; when, by prayer, it is stopped, as by Moses, at Taberah, (~~CHIEF~~ Numbers 11:1,2) when persons are not hurt by it, as Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, when cast into Nebuchadrezzar's fiery furnace; and many of the martyrs have triumphed in the flames: so believers are delivered out of the fire of afflictions, and are not consumed thereby; and quench the fiery darts of Satan, thrown at them; and are untouched by the fire of God's wrath, in every state and case; and shall not be hurt of the second death, which is a lake of fire, burning with brimstone.

*Escaped the edge of the sword*; and were not destroyed by it; as Lot, Abraham, Moses, Joshua, the Judges, David, Elijah, Elisha, and others.

*Out of weakness were made strong*; being recovered from bodily diseases, as David, Hezekiah, etc.. by an increase of bodily strength, as Samson; by being filled with courage, and strength of mind; when before timorous, as Barak, etc.. so believers, when they have been weak in the exercise of grace, have been made strong:

*waxed valiant in fight*; as Barak, Gideon, David, etc.. so believers, in the spiritual fight of faith, have waxed valiant; being engaged in a good cause,

and under a good Captain; being well provided with armour, and assured of victory, and a crown.

*Turned to fight the armies of the aliens:* such as the Canaanites, the Moabites, Ammonites, Philistines, and others; who were put to flight by Joshua, the Judges, David, and others.

**Ver. 35.** *Women received their dead raised to life again,* etc..] As the widow of Zarephath, and the Shunammite, (~~1172~~1 Kings 17:22 ~~1284~~2 Kings 4:34,35). Their sons were really dead, and they received them alive gain, from the hands of the prophets, Elijah and Elisha, in the way of a resurrection, and by faith; by the faith of the prophets:

*and others were tortured;* racked, or tympanized; referring to the sufferings of seven brethren, and their mother, in the times of Antiochus, recorded in 2 Maccabees 7 as appears from the kind of torment endured by them; from the offer of deliverance rejected by them; and from their hope of the resurrection: for it follows,

*not accepting deliverance;* when offered them by the king, see the Apocrypha:

“24 Now Antiochus, thinking himself despised, and suspecting it to be a reproachful speech, whilst the youngest was yet alive, did not only exhort him by words, but also assured him with oaths, that he would make him both a rich and a happy man, if he would turn from the laws of his fathers; and that also he would take him for his friend, and trust him with affairs. 25 But when the young man would in no case hearken unto him, the king called his mother, and exhorted her that she would counsel the young man to save his life.” (2 Maccabees 7)

*that they might obtain a better resurrection;* which they died in the faith of, see the Apocrypha:

“7 And him he sent with that wicked Alcimus, whom he made high priest, and commanded that he should take vengeance of the children of Israel. 11 And said courageously, These I had from heaven; and for his laws I despise them; and from him I hope to receive them again. 14 So when he was ready to die he said thus, It is good, being put to death by men, to look for hope from God to

be raised up again by him: as for thee, thou shalt have no resurrection to life. (2 Maccabees)

The resurrection of the saints, which is unto everlasting life, is a better resurrection than mere metaphorical, and figurative ones, as deliverances from great afflictions, which are called deaths; or real ones, which were only to a mortal state, and in order to die again, as those under the Old Testament, and under the New, before the resurrection of Christ; or than the resurrection of the wicked: for the resurrection the saints will obtain will be first, at the beginning of the thousand years; the wicked will not live till after they are ended; it will be by virtue of union to Christ, whereas the wicked will be raised merely by virtue of his power; the saints will rise with bodies glorious, powerful, and spiritual, the wicked with base, vile, and ignoble ones; the righteous will come forth to the resurrection of life, the wicked to the resurrection of damnation. The consideration of the better resurrection is of great use to strengthen faith, under sufferings, for righteousness sake, and this is obtained by suffering; not that suffering is the meritorious cause of it, but saints in this way come to it; it is promised to such, and it will be attained unto, and enjoyed by such; for all that live godly, do, and must suffer persecution in one way or another.

**Ver. 36.** *And others had trial of cruel mockings*, etc..] As Samson by the Philistines; Elisha by the children, whom the bears devoured; Jeremiah by Pashur, and others; the Jews by Sanballat and Tobiah, when building the temple; the prophets, whom God sent to the Jews, as his messengers, (<sup>0765</sup>Judges 16:25-28 <sup>1123</sup>2 Kings 2:23,24 <sup>2417</sup>Jeremiah 20:7,8 <sup>1435</sup>2 Chronicles 36:15,16).

*and scourgings*; or smittings, as Jeremiah and Micaiah, (<sup>2417</sup>Jeremiah 20:22 <sup>1435</sup>2 Chronicles 18:23,24).

*yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment*; as Joseph, Samson, and Jeremiah, (<sup>0331</sup>Genesis 39:20 <sup>0761</sup>Judges 16:21 <sup>2417</sup>Jeremiah 20:2 37:15). Now of these things they had trial, or experience; their graces were tried by them, and they patiently endured them.

**Ver. 37.** *They were stoned*, etc..] As Naboth, by the order of Ahab, (<sup>1213</sup>1 Kings 21:13-19), Zachariah in the court of the Lord's house; (<sup>1421</sup>2 Chronicles 24:21) and the character of Jerusalem is, that she stoned the prophets that were sent unto her, (<sup>4237</sup>Matthew 23:37).

*They were sawn asunder*; to which there seems to be an allusion in (<sup>f265</sup>Matthew 24:51). There is no instance of any good men being so used in Scripture: perhaps reference is had to some that suffered thus in the time of Antiochus. The Jews have a tradition, that the Prophet Isaiah was sawn asunder in the times of Manasseh, and by his order; which some think the apostle refers unto; though it seems to be all fictitious, and ill put together. The tradition is in both Talmuds: in the one, the account is this: <sup>f265</sup> that

“Manasseh sought to kill Isaiah, and he fled from him, and fled to a cedar, and the cedar swallowed him up, all but the fringe of his garment; they came and told him (Manasseh), he said unto them, go and saw the cedar, *wrsnw*, “and they sawed the cedar”, and blood was seen to come out.”

And in the other <sup>f266</sup> thus,

“says R. Simeon ben Azzai, I found a book of genealogies in Jerusalem, and in it was written that Manasseh slew Isaiah.”

And after relating the occasion of it, being some passages in Isaiah Manasseh was displeased with and objected to; and the prophet not thinking it worth his while to return an answer, or attempt to reconcile them with other passages, objected, knowing that the king would use him contemptuously; he is made to say,

“I will swallow (or put myself into) a cedar, they brought the cedar, *wrsnw*, “and sawed it asunder”, and when it (the saw) came to his mouth, he expired.”

Another Jewish writer <sup>f267</sup> out of the Midrash, reports it thus;

“Manasseh sought to slay him, and Isaiah fled, and the Lord remembered him, and he was swallowed up in the middle of a tree; but there remained without the tree the fringe of his garment; and then Manasseh ordered the tree to be cut down, and Isaiah died.”

And it is become a generally received opinion of the ancient Christian writers, that Isaiah was sawn asunder; as of Justin Martyr <sup>f268</sup>, Origen <sup>f269</sup>, Tertullian <sup>f270</sup>, Lactantius <sup>f271</sup>, Athanasius <sup>f272</sup>, Hilary <sup>f273</sup>, Cyril of Jerusalem <sup>f274</sup>, Gregory Nyssene <sup>f275</sup>, Jerom <sup>f276</sup>, Isidorus Pelusiota <sup>f277</sup>, Gregentius <sup>f278</sup>, Procopius Gazaeus <sup>f279</sup>, and others; but more persons seem to be designed:

*were tempted*; either by God, as Abraham, and Job; or by the devil, as all the saints are; or rather by cruel tyrants, to deny the faith, and renounce the worship of God, as Eleazar, and the seven brethren with their mother; at least some of them were, 2 Maccabees 6,7. Some think the true reading is *επηψησαν*, “were burned”; as one of the seven brethren were in the Apocrytha,

“Now when he was thus maimed in all his members, he commanded him being yet alive to be brought to the fire, and to be fried in the pan: and as the vapour of the pan was for a good space dispersed, they exhorted one another with the mother to die manfully, saying thus,” (2 Maccabees 7:5)

and as Zedekiah and Ahab were roasted in the fire, by the king of Babylon, (<sup><292></sup>Jeremiah 29:22) though they were lying prophets, and cannot be referred to here; (see <sup><713></sup>Daniel 11:33). This clause is wanting in the Syriac version:

*were slain with the sword*; as the priests at Nob, by the order of Saul; (<sup><928></sup>1 Samuel 22:18,19). The prophets of the Lord by Jezebel, (<sup><1182></sup>1 Kings 18:22 19:10) and many in the times of the Maccabees; (<sup><713></sup>Daniel 11:33) and in the Apocrypha:

“And there were destroyed within the space of three whole days fourscore thousand, whereof forty thousand were slain in the conflict; and no fewer sold than slain.” (2 Maccabees 5:14)

*they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins*; with the wool or hair upon them; and with such Elijah and Elisha might be arrayed; since the former is said to be a hairy man, or covered with a hairy garment, as John the Baptist was, who came in his spirit and power, and also in his form; and the latter, wore the mantle of the other; (<sup><118></sup>2 Kings 1:8 2:8,14) and to these reference may be had, who were obliged to wander about, because of those who sought their lives; and was the case of others who were forced, by reason of persecution, to quit their habitations, and wander abroad; and some clothed themselves in this manner, to show their contempt of the world, and their contentment with mean apparel; and others, because they could get no other raiment:

*[being] destitute*; of bodily food, as Elijah, who was fed by ravens, and by the widow of Zarephath; (<sup><1176></sup>1 Kings 17:6-15),

*afflicted*; pressed, drove to the greatest straits, despairing of, life, and weary of it, as the same prophet, (<sup><1194></sup>1 Kings 19:4-10),

*tormented*; or evilly treated, reproached, vilified, persecuted, and made the filth of the world, and the offscouring of all things.

**Ver. 38.** *Of whom the world was not worthy*, etc..] These words are inserted in a parenthesis, to remove or prevent such objections as these; that they were restless and unquiet persons, that made disturbance in the world, and so unfit to live in it; and that they were deservedly punished for crimes they were guilty of; and to show the great worth and inestimable value of the people of God, which exceeds that of the whole world; and to intimate the removal of them out of the world, or from dwelling among the men of it, is by way of punishment to it:

*they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth*; as Elijah did; (<sup><1195></sup>1 Kings 18:4 19:9,10), and many in the times of the Maccabees;

“And they kept the eight days with gladness, as in the feast of the tabernacles, remembering that not long afore they had held the feast of the tabernacles, when as they wandered in the mountains and dens like beasts.” (2 Maccabees 10:6)

**Ver. 39.** *And these all having obtained a good report through faith*, etc..] This may either be limited to the sufferers in the preceding verses, who were martyred, or suffered martyrdom for the faith, as the words may be rendered; and who are called martyrs or witnesses, in (<sup><812></sup>Hebrews 12:1) and so the Ethiopic version renders the clause, “and all these were witnesses concerning the faith”: or it may be extended to all the instances of faith throughout the chapter; and so the apostle reasserts what he had said, (<sup><813></sup>Hebrews 11:2), having proved it by a variety of examples; (see Gill on “<sup><814></sup>Hebrews 11:2”).

*received not the promise*; not that they did not receive the promise of the land of Canaan, for so did Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, etc.. nor that they did not receive the promise of deliverance and victory, for so did Joshua, the Judges, and others; or that they did not receive the promise of eternal life, for that they all did; but the promise of the Messiah, that is, the Messiah promised: for they had the promise, but not the thing; who is called “the Promise”, emphatically, because he is the first and grand promise; and because in him all the promises centre, and are yea, and amen:



him the Old Testament saints received not; they, greatly desired to see him in the flesh; they saw him by faith; they believed in him, and rejoiced in the expectation of his coming; but he was not exhibited to them incarnate. Now since these saints so strongly believed, and so cheerfully suffered before Christ came; the apostle's argument is, that much more should the saints now, since Christ is come, and the promises received, go on believing in him, and readily suffering for his sake; (see ~~scri~~ Hebrews 12:1-4).

**Ver. 40.** *God having provided some better thing for us*, etc..] Not a better state of the church, in such respect, as to be free from suffering reproach and persecutions; for this is the case of saints under the New Testament as under the Old; nor the felicity of the soul after death; nor any greater degree of happiness in the other world; nor the perfection of blessedness in soul and body; things common to all believers; but Christ, as now exhibited in the flesh: Jesus Christ was the same in the yesterday of the Old Testament, as he is in the present day of the Gospel dispensation; he was slain from the foundation of the world; and the saints then were saved as now, by his grace and righteousness: only with this difference between them and us; they had Christ in the promise, we have him himself that was promised; they had him in type and shadow, we have him in reality and truth; they believed in, and were saved by Christ, who was to come; we believe in him, and are saved by him, as being come. Hence our case is, with respect to these circumstances, better than theirs; we have a better covenant, or a better administration of the covenant of grace; we have a better priesthood, and a better sacrifice; the Gospel is dispensed in a better manner, more dearly and fully: our condition is better than theirs; they were as children under tutors and governors, and were under a spirit of bondage; but we are redeemed from under the law, and are clear of its burdensome rites, as well as of its curse and condemnation; and have the spirit of liberty and adoption. And this God has provided for us in his council and covenant: for this denotes God's determination, designation, and appointment of Christ, to be the propitiatory sacrifice for sin; and has respect to the nature and circumstances of his death, which were fixed in the purposes of God; as well as the time of his coming into the world, and the season of his death; and in all this God has shown his great goodness, his amazing love, and the riches of his grace: and his end herein is,

*that they without us should not be made perfect*; the Old Testament saints are perfectly justified, perfectly sanctified, and perfectly glorified; but their

perfection was not by the law, which made nothing perfect, but by Christ, and through his sacrifice, blood, and righteousness; and so were not made perfect without us; since their sins and ours are expiated together by the same sacrifice; their persons and ours justified together by the same righteousness; they and we make up but one church, and general assembly; and as yet all the elect of God among the Jews are not called, and so are not perfect in themselves, or without us. Jews and Gentiles will incorporate together in the latter day; and besides, they and we shall be glorified together, in soul and body, to all eternity.