So Great a Cloud of Witnesses

Lay Aside Every Weight: Hebrews 10:32-12:3 in the Setting of the Whole Epistle

A verse-by-verse study of the great cloud of witnesses: what faith is, who the witnesses are, and the race set before us.

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Introduction

> **Hebrews 12:1** *Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,*

A. Why This Section of Hebrews

Hebrews 11 is the best-known chapter of the epistle. Many believers who could not outline the rest of the book can name its people: Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Moses, Rahab. The chapter is often read by itself, as a gallery of heroes, and then closed.

But Hebrews 11 does not stand by itself. It opens with "Now," and it is followed at once by "Wherefore." Something leads into it, and something is drawn out of it. The verse that gives this study its title, Hebrews 12:1, is the conclusion the writer draws from the whole chapter: because so great a cloud of witnesses surrounds us, let us lay aside every weight and run.

This study reads the chapter in that setting. It begins a little before chapter 11, at Hebrews 10:32, where the writer turns from warning to encouragement, and it ends a little after, at Hebrews 12:3, where he finishes the thought with Jesus himself. Along the way it asks the questions the text itself raises:

- What is faith, as Hebrews defines it?
- Who are the "witnesses," and in what sense do they surround us?
- What did these men and women receive, and what did they not receive?
- What is "the better thing" God has provided for us?
- What is the "weight" we are to lay aside, and what is the race?
- Why does the chapter end with Jesus, and not with one more name from the Old Testament?

In short: Hebrews 11 is the centre of a larger passage, and it is read here as the writer wrote it, between "call to remembrance" (10:32) and "consider him" (12:3).

Weighing it: Method, not argument. This section sets out the questions only.

B. The Title

The title comes word for word from the King James Version of Hebrews 12:1: "so great a cloud of witnesses." The subtitle, "Lay Aside Every Weight," is the first thing the writer tells us to do in response. Most Christians know the verse. Fewer have looked closely at who the witnesses are, why there is a "cloud" of them, or what the "weight" is. Those are among the questions this study answers.

In short: the title is the verse itself, and the subtitle is its first command.

Weighing it: Method, not argument.

C. Where the Section Begins and Ends

Hebrews 11 is commonly treated as a unit in itself. In the text it is the middle of a longer passage, marked off at both ends by matching language.

It begins at 10:32. Verses 19 to 31 have just finished the call to draw near to God and the solemn warning against sinning wilfully after receiving the truth. Then verse 32 turns: **"But call to remembrance the former days" (Hebrews 10:32)**. From here the subject is one thing: faith that endures.

It ends at 12:3. "Lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds" (Hebrews 12:3) closes the thought. At 12:4 the subject moves to the training of sons ("Ye have not yet resisted unto blood"), which applies the same endurance but is a subject of its own.

The evidence that 10:32 and 12:3 belong together is set out in Chapter 2. Here it is enough to say that the same words for endurance appear on both sides of chapter 11, and nowhere else in the epistle.

In short: the passage runs from 10:32 to 12:3, with chapter 11 at its centre.

Weighing it: Reasonable inference — for the boundary of the passage at 10:32 and 12:3. The other reading can fairly answer that chapter divisions are a later convenience and that another reader could begin at 10:19 or end at 12:13. That is true, and nothing in the study depends on the exact boundary; the matching language is what is shown, and Chapter 2 shows it.

D. How This Study Is Built

The study has three parts.

- **Part One: The Setting** (Chapters 1 and 2) looks at the whole epistle, its readers, its warnings, and the passage that leads into chapter 11.
- **Part Two: The Witnesses** (Chapters 3 to 10) walks through Hebrews 11 in order, from the definition of faith to the closing verdict, "these all ... received not the promise."
- **Part Three: The Race** (Chapters 11 to 14) takes up Hebrews 12:1-3, looks briefly at where the epistle goes next, and gathers the study's findings for the believer today.

The appendices hold material that would interrupt the main reading: the Old Testament record behind each witness (Appendix A), word studies (Appendix B), Habakkuk 2:4 in its three New Testament settings (Appendix C), the question of who wrote Hebrews (Appendix D), the meaning of Hebrews 12:23 (Appendix E), and a table weighing every argument in the study (Appendix F).

Every verse is quoted from the King James Version. Where a verse carries weight in the argument, it is quoted in full, so that the reader sees the words being relied on and does not have to take them on trust.

In short: three parts, read in the order the writer wrote them, with every load-bearing verse quoted in full.

Weighing it: Method, not argument.

E. The Claims This Study Makes

The study is mostly exposition: it walks through the text and says what it says. But along the way it makes six claims that a careful reader could dispute. They are named here so that every weighing note can say which claim it bears on.

- **Claim S (Structure):** Hebrews 10:32-12:3 is one passage, framed by matching language on either side of chapter 11.

- **Claim F (Faith):** in Hebrews 11, faith is believing what God has said and acting on it. Every "by faith" follows something God said or promised.
- **Claim W (Witnesses):** the "cloud of witnesses" in 12:1 are the men and women to whom God bore witness in chapter 11. They witness to us through their record. They are not spectators watching us from heaven.
- **Claim R (Resurrection):** the witnesses died, did not receive the promise, and wait for the resurrection. None of them is made perfect apart from us.
- **Claim E (Endurance):** faith does not always mean deliverance. The chapter records faith that conquered and faith that suffered, and both are "by faith."
- **Claim J (Jesus):** Jesus is the complete example of faith, the one witness who has finished the race and been raised, exalted and seated at the right hand of God.

In short: six claims, named once, so that the reader can follow the argument for each one.

Weighing it: Method, not argument.

F. How to Read the Weighing Notes

Every section of this study ends with a short note beginning **Weighing it**. The note says two things: how strong the point is, and which way it points. Then it says what a careful reader on the other side could fairly answer.

Five words are used for strength, always with the same meaning:

- **Direct statement:** scripture says it in so many words. The only question is what the words mean.
- **Strong inference:** it follows closely from what scripture says, and the other reading has to strain against the text.
- **Reasonable inference:** it is the more natural reading, but an honest and careful reader can take it otherwise.
- **Corroboration only:** it is consistent with the position, but about as consistent with the opposite one. It may be stated, but not leaned on.
- **Neutral:** it is often cited by one side or the other and settles nothing.

Some sections argue nothing at all. Those are marked *Narrative* (telling what the text records), *Method, not argument*, *Concession* (granting a point to the other side), or *Opposing case, stated*.

Appendix F gathers every argument into one table, so that the reader can see at a glance what the study rests on and how firmly.

In short: each section tells the reader how much weight it carries and what the other side can say, so that nothing is claimed more strongly than the text allows.

Weighing it: Method, not argument.

G. A Word About Faith and Believing

The Greek noun translated "faith" is *pistis* (Strong's G4102), and the verb that goes with it, *pisteuō*, is translated "believe." English uses two different words, "faith" and "believe," for what Greek says with one family. When Hebrews 11:6 says "without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to

God must believe that he is," the two English words are one idea in Greek. This study uses "faith" and "believing" for the same thing, as the text does.

In short: "faith" and "believing" are one word family in Greek, and the study treats them as one idea.

Weighing it: Direct statement — for the shared word family. Strong's G4102 and G4100 are noun and verb of the same root. Nothing on the other side disputes this.

In Short: Hebrews 11 sits between a call to remember (10:32) and a call to consider Jesus (12:3). This study reads it there, verse by verse, with every load-bearing verse in full and every argument weighed in the open.

Part One: The Setting

Chapter 1: God Has Spoken

A. How Hebrews Opens and Closes

Hebrews has no greeting. It does not name its writer or its readers. It begins with God:

> **Hebrews 1:1** *God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, 1:2 Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;*

And near its close it returns to the same note:

> **Hebrews 12:25** *See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven:*

God has spoken, and his people must hear. Everything between those two passages explains what God has said in his Son and why it matters to hear it. Hebrews 11 belongs to this theme. It is a record of people who heard what God said and acted on it. Its first statement about faith is that **"the worlds were framed by the word of God" (Hebrews 11:3)**. Its last word to the reader, three verses into chapter 12, is to "consider him," the Son through whom God has spoken.

In short: Hebrews begins and ends with God speaking, and chapter 11 is the record of those who listened.

Weighing it: Direct statement — for the opening and closing theme of God speaking (Claim F). Both passages say it in so many words. The other reading has nothing to answer here; the only question is how much weight to put on the pattern, and this study puts only this much on it: chapter 11 fits the epistle's theme.

B. The Plan of the Epistle

Between those bookends, Hebrews moves in three broad movements. The divisions below are a working outline, drawn from where the text itself turns.

- **1:1-4:13. God has spoken in his Son.** The Son is greater than the prophets and the angels (chapters 1 and 2), greater than Moses (3:1-6), and the one who brings the rest that Joshua never gave (3:7-4:13).
- **4:14-10:18. Our great high priest.** He is a priest after the order of Melchisedec (chapters 5 to 7), the mediator of a better covenant (chapter 8), offering a better sacrifice in a better sanctuary, once for all (9:1-10:18).
- **10:19-13:25. Therefore draw near, hold fast, and endure.** The teaching turns to practice at 10:19: **"Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus" (Hebrews 10:19)**.

Hebrews 11 sits inside the third movement. That placement matters. The chapter is not a doctrinal argument about how a man is made righteous; that argument has already been made in chapters 5 to 10. It is a call to live on what has already been taught, illustrated from the lives of those who lived on what God had told them.

In short: Hebrews teaches first and applies second, and chapter 11 belongs to the application.

Weighing it: Reasonable inference — for the three-part plan. The turn at 10:19 is plain in the text ("Having therefore"). The other reading can fairly answer that commentators divide the book in many different ways, and that a different outline would group the chapters differently. That is true, and the study does not depend on this outline beyond the one point it makes: chapter 11 comes after the teaching on Christ's priesthood, not before it.

C. The Five Warnings

Running through the epistle are five warning passages. Each one urges the readers not to turn away from what God has spoken in his Son.

- **2:1-4:** "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?"
- **3:7-4:13:** "To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts."
- **5:11-6:12:** the readers have become "dull of hearing" and need to go on to maturity.
- **10:26-31:** "If we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins."
- **12:25-29:** "See that ye refuse not him that speaketh."

The great cloud of witnesses stands between the fourth warning and the fifth. That is worth noticing. God set his greatest encouragement between two of his gravest warnings. The chapter is not decoration. It is the help God gives to people under pressure to give up.

In short: Hebrews 11 is the encouragement God placed between two warnings.

Weighing it: Reasonable inference — for the placement of chapter 11 between the fourth and fifth warnings. The five passages are widely recognised, though not every reader counts them the same way; some fold 3:7-4:13 into 2:1-4 or split 5:11-6:12. The point made here survives any count, because 10:26-31 and 12:25-29 are warnings on any reading.

D. To Whom It Was Written

The epistle is addressed to Hebrew believers. The writer calls them **"holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling" (Hebrews 3:1)**. He speaks to them as people who had already believed and already suffered for it:

> **Hebrews 10:32** *But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions; 10:33 Partly, whilst ye were made a gazingstock both by reproaches and afflictions; and partly, whilst ye became companions of them that were so used. 10:34 For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance.*

They were under pressure to drift back to the temple system that Christ's one sacrifice had fulfilled. That is why so much of the epistle compares the old with the new: the old priesthood with the new, the old

covenant with the new, the old sacrifices with the one sacrifice. And it is why the warnings are so serious. To go back would be to set aside the very sacrifice that the old ones pointed to.

This matters for chapter 11. The witnesses the writer chooses are the readers' own ancestors: the fathers of their nation, the heroes of their scriptures. He is saying, in effect: the people you most honour lived by faith in what God promised. Do not abandon faith now, when the promised one has come.

In short: the readers were Hebrew believers under pressure to turn back, and the witnesses are their own forefathers.

Weighing it: Strong inference — for Hebrew believers as the first readers. The title "To the Hebrews" is not part of the text, but the content assumes readers who know the Law, the priesthood and the sacrifices intimately, and 3:1 and 10:32-34 address them as believers. The other reading can fairly answer that some have proposed Gentile readers. That proposal has to explain why the whole argument is built on the Levitical system, which a Gentile reader would not be tempted to return to.

E. Why It Is Written for Us Too

If Hebrews was written to Hebrew believers of the first century, is it for believers today? Scripture answers that question itself:

> **Romans 15:4** *For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.*
>
> **1 Corinthians 10:11** *Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.*
>
> **2 Timothy 3:16** *All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: 3:17 That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.*

Hebrews 11 also names its present-day readers. The "us" of its last verse is the believer since the coming of Christ: **"God having provided some better thing for us" (Hebrews 11:40)**. The witnesses of the chapter wait for something that includes us. Whatever was written to the Hebrews about faith that endures was written for every believer's learning.

In short: what was written to the Hebrews is written for our learning, and chapter 11 itself includes us in its last verse.

Weighing it: Direct statement — for scripture's profit to believers today. Romans 15:4 and 2 Timothy 3:16-17 say it plainly. The other reading can fairly answer that "profitable for learning" is not the same as "addressed to." That is right, and it is why this study keeps the first readers in view while drawing truths for today.

F. Who Wrote It

The epistle does not name its writer. The question is weighed in full in Appendix D. In brief: the evidence that Paul wrote it is stronger than the case for any other candidate. Peter writes to Hebrew believers that "our beloved brother Paul ... hath written unto you" (2 Peter 3:15), and no other letter from Paul to Hebrew readers is known. The writer speaks of Timothy as his companion (13:23), and of his own bonds (10:34). But nothing in this study depends on the answer. What Hebrews says about faith is true whoever held the pen, because it is God's word.

In short: Paul is the most likely writer, but nothing in the study rests on it.

Weighing it: Reasonable inference — for Paul as writer. The other reading can fairly answer that the style of Hebrews differs from Paul's other letters, and that many careful readers from the early centuries onward have doubted his authorship. Appendix D sets out both sides.

In Short: Hebrews is about God speaking in his Son. It teaches first (chapters 1 to 10) and applies second (10:19 onward). Chapter 11 is in the application, set between two warnings, written to Hebrew believers about their own forefathers, and written for our learning too.

Chapter 2: The Just Shall Live by Faith

A. What Leads In: Draw Near, Hold Fast, Consider One Another

The application of Hebrews begins with three calls, each introduced with "let us":

> **Hebrews 10:19** *Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, 10:20 By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; 10:21 And having an high priest over the house of God; 10:22 Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. 10:23 Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;) 10:24 And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: 10:25 Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.*

Draw near. Hold fast. Consider one another. The first rests on what Christ has done: the way into the holiest is open, by his blood, through the veil of his flesh, with a great high priest over the house of God. The work is finished, and the sacrifice is offered once, so the believer may come near with a true heart.

The word "boldness" in verse 19 is *parrēsia* (Strong's G3954), "all out-spokenness ... by implication, assurance." Hebrews uses it four times: 3:6, 4:16, 10:19 and 10:35. The last of these is in our passage, translated "confidence." The readers are told in 10:19 what boldness they have, and in 10:35 not to throw it away.

In short: before chapter 11 come three calls: draw near, hold fast, consider one another, and they rest on what Christ has already done.

Weighing it: Direct statement — for the three "let us" calls and the shared word in 10:19 and 10:35. The other reading has nothing to dispute in the text. How closely to tie 10:35 back to 10:19 is a matter of emphasis; the shared word is a fact.

B. The Fourth Warning

Then comes the warning:

> **Hebrews 10:26** *For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, 10:27 But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. 10:28 He that despised Moses' law*

> *died without mercy under two or three witnesses: 10:29 Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? 10:30 For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people. 10:31 It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.*

This passage has troubled many believers. Read in its setting, it addresses the readers' particular danger: going back to the temple sacrifices after receiving the knowledge of Christ's one offering. If a man sets aside that one sacrifice, "there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins," because there is no other. The old sacrifices were only shadows of it (10:1). To return to them would be to tread under foot the Son of God and count his blood unholy.

The full meaning of this warning lies outside the scope of this study. What matters here is where it sits: immediately before the passage of encouragement. Having said the hardest thing, the writer turns at once to the readers' own past faithfulness.

In short: the warning against turning back to the old sacrifices is followed at once by encouragement.

Weighing it: Reasonable inference — for reading 10:26-31 as a warning against returning to the temple sacrifices. The "no more sacrifice for sins" points that way. The other reading can fairly answer that the warning is often applied more widely, to any deliberate sin after salvation. This study does not need to settle that question; it notes only that the warning comes before the encouragement.

C. "Call to Remembrance the Former Days"

> **Hebrews 10:32** *But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions; 10:33 Partly, whilst ye were made a gazingstock both by reproaches and afflictions; and partly, whilst ye became companions of them that were so used. 10:34 For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance. 10:35 Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward.*

Here the passage begins. The writer does not open with Abel or Abraham. He opens with the readers themselves. Remember, he says, how you endured a great fight of afflictions, how you were made a gazingstock, how you stood with those who suffered, how you took joyfully the spoiling of your goods.

Three words in these verses return later in the passage, and they show how carefully it is built:

- **"Endured" (10:32)** is *hypomenō* (Strong's G5278), "to stay under (behind), i.e. remain; figuratively, to undergo, i.e. bear (trials), have fortitude, persevere." The same verb returns of Jesus: he **"endured the cross" (Hebrews 12:2)** and **"endured such contradiction of sinners" (Hebrews 12:3)**.
- **"Reproaches" (10:33)** is *oneidismos*. It returns when Moses esteems **"the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt" (Hebrews 11:26)**, and again in **"bearing his reproach" (Hebrews 13:13)**. In Hebrews it occurs only in these three places.
- **"Recompence of reward" (10:35)** is *misthapodosia* (Strong's G3405, "requital"). It occurs only three times in the New Testament, all in Hebrews: 2:2, 10:35 and 11:26. Inside chapter 11, Moses "had respect unto the recompence of the reward." And God himself is **"a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (Hebrews 11:6)**, where "rewarder" is *misthapodotēs*, found nowhere else.

The readers had already done what the witnesses of chapter 11 did. They had endured, borne reproach, and looked to a reward they could not yet see: **"knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance" (Hebrews 10:34)**. The writer's appeal is: you did it then; do not stop now.

In short: the readers had already endured, borne reproach, and looked for a reward, and the same words return in chapter 11 and in 12:2-3.

Weighing it: Direct statement — for the shared vocabulary; Reasonable inference — for the writer intending the links (Claim S). The occurrences can be checked in any concordance. The other reading can fairly answer that a writer may reuse words without designing a pattern. That is fair, and it is why the study treats the pattern as support for the boundary of the passage rather than as proof.

D. "Ye Have Need of Patience"

> **Hebrews 10:36** *For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. 10:37 For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry. 10:38 Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. 10:39 But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.*

"Patience" in verse 36 is *hypomonē* (Strong's G5281), "cheerful (or hopeful) endurance, constancy." It is the noun that goes with the verb "endured" in 10:32. In the whole epistle this noun occurs only twice: here, and at **"let us run with patience the race that is set before us" (Hebrews 12:1)**. One stands just before chapter 11 and the other just after it. Between them is the chapter that shows what such patience looks like in practice.

The need is plain: "ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise." The readers had done the will of God. What remained was to wait for what God had promised, without drawing back. Chapter 11 will close on that same word: "these all ... received not the promise" (11:39). The readers are in the same position as the witnesses: having done God's will, and waiting.

In short: "patience" appears in Hebrews only at 10:36 and 12:1, one on each side of chapter 11, and the chapter between them shows what it looks like.

Weighing it: Direct statement — for the two occurrences of hypomonē in Hebrews; Strong inference — that they frame the chapter (Claim S). A concordance shows the two places. The other reading can fairly answer that the noun is common in the New Testament (thirty-two occurrences) and that two uses in one long letter are not remarkable in themselves. What makes them notable is where they fall, one on each side of the chapter, joined to the same verb in 10:32 and 12:2-3.

E. Habakkuk 2:4, Quoted Three Times

At 10:37-38 the writer quotes the prophet Habakkuk. The prophet had complained that wickedness went unpunished, and God answered him:

> **Habakkuk 2:3** *For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry. 2:4 Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him: but the just shall live by his faith.*

The last clause, "the just shall live by his faith," is quoted three times in the New Testament:

> **Romans 1:17** *For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.*
>
> **Galatians 3:11** *But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith.*
>
> **Hebrews 10:38** *Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.*

Each quotation sets the words in a different light. In Romans, Paul's subject is how a man is made righteous: the righteousness of God is revealed in the gospel, and **"the just shall live by faith" (Romans 1:17)**. In Galatians the subject is how a man has life, by faith and not by the works of the Law: **"no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith" (Galatians 3:11)**. In Hebrews the subject is how a man goes on: he lives *by faith*, and does not draw back.

So each quotation puts its weight on a different part of the one sentence. Romans asks who is "the just." Galatians asks how he "shall live." Hebrews shows what it is to live "by faith." Chapter 11 is then an exposition of those last two words. It opens account after account with them: "By faith Abel," "By faith Enoch," "By faith Noah."

Hebrews also changes the order of Habakkuk's two clauses. In the prophet, the proud man comes first and the just man second. In Hebrews, the just man comes first, and the one who draws back follows. The writer is following the Greek Old Testament, which reads "if he draw back, my soul hath no pleasure in him," and he sets the two clauses so that the warning against drawing back leads straight into his next sentence: **"But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul" (Hebrews 10:39)**. And then: "Now faith is ..."

Appendix C sets out the three quotations side by side.

In short: Habakkuk 2:4 is quoted three times, and Hebrews puts the weight on "by faith," the two words that open the accounts of chapter 11.

Weighing it: Direct statement — for the three quotations; Reasonable inference — for the distinct emphasis of each (Claim F). The three places are plain. The other reading can fairly answer that the "different emphasis" in each is an observation about context, not something the words themselves mark. That is fair. The point rests on what each passage goes on to discuss, and the reader can check that for himself.

F. "Yet a Little While"

Verse 37 adds words that are not in Habakkuk: **"For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry" (Hebrews 10:37)**. In Habakkuk it is the vision that "will surely come"; in Hebrews it is a person, "he that shall come." The writer reads Habakkuk's vision as fulfilled in the coming of the Lord, and the opening words, "yet a little while," echo the Greek of Isaiah 26:20, where God's people are told to hide themselves "for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast."

The point for our passage is simple. The readers' patience had an end in view. They were not told to endure for ever, but for "a little while," until he comes.

In short: the endurance asked of the readers has an end in view: the coming of the Lord.

Weighing it: Reasonable inference — that 10:37 reads Habakkuk's vision as fulfilled in the Lord's coming. The change from "it" to "he that shall come" is in the text. The other reading can fairly answer

that "he that shall come" might mean God coming in judgment rather than the Messiah. Either way, the readers' endurance looks to a coming that is near and sure.

G. The Bookends

Now the frame of the passage can be seen whole. The language on each side of chapter 11 matches:

Before chapter 11	After chapter 11
"ye endured (hypomenō) a great fight of afflictions" (10:32)	Jesus "endured (hypomenō) the cross"; "endured such contradiction" (12:2-3)
"ye have need of patience (hypomonē)" (10:36)	"let us run with patience (hypomonē)" (12:1)
"reproaches" (oneidismos) borne by the readers (10:33)	the shame Jesus despised (12:2); Moses' "reproach of Christ" inside the chapter (11:26)
"the just shall live by faith" (10:38)	"Jesus the author and finisher of our faith" (12:2)
"if any man draw back" (10:38)	"lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds" (12:3)
"ye might receive the promise" (10:36)	"these all … received not the promise" (11:39)

Inside the chapter there is a second, smaller frame. The writer twice stops to make a statement about the whole company:

> **Hebrews 11:13** *These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.*
>
> **Hebrews 11:39** *And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: 11:40 God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.*

And a third pair frames the chapter's own opening and close. "Obtained a good report" in 11:2 and "having obtained a good report" in 11:39 are the same Greek verb, *martyreō* (Strong's G3140, "to be a witness, i.e. testify … have (obtain, of) good (honest) report"). The chapter begins and ends with God bearing witness to the elders. Chapter 11 of this study (on 12:1) shows why this matters for the "cloud of witnesses."

In short: the words on each side of chapter 11 match, and inside the chapter "obtained a good report" opens and closes it.

Weighing it: Strong inference — for 10:32-12:3 as one framed passage (Claim S). Each item in the table is in the text. The other reading can fairly answer that matching words can occur without a planned frame, and that some of the pairs (faith, drawing back and fainting) are pairs of ideas rather than of words. That is right; the word pairs (hypomenō, hypomonē, martyreō) carry the weight, and the idea pairs only support them.

H. One Further Observation: "We Are Not of Them Who Draw Back"

Before the first "by faith," the writer puts himself with his readers: "But *we* are not of them who draw back." The word "draw back" in 10:39 is *hypostolē* (Strong's G5289, "shrinkage (timidity), i.e. (by implication) apostasy"), found only here in the New Testament. Its opposite is "them that believe to the saving of the soul."

The word for "saving" is *peripoiēsis* (Strong's G4047), "acquisition ... by extension, preservation." It is the word Paul uses of **"the redemption of the purchased possession" (Ephesians 1:14)**. The writer is not doubting his readers' salvation here. He is expressing confidence: we are not of those who shrink back; we are of those who believe and are kept.

In short: the writer counts himself and his readers among those who believe, not among those who shrink back.

Weighing it: Direct statement — for the writer's expressed confidence in 10:39. The other reading can fairly answer that the confidence is pastoral, spoken in hope, and that the warning of 10:26-31 still stands. Both are true; the writer holds them together.

In Short: The passage begins at 10:32 with the readers' own past endurance, quotes Habakkuk 2:4 to show that the just live by faith, and opens chapter 11 with confidence that "we are not of them who draw back." The words for endurance, reproach, reward and promise stand on both sides of the chapter.

Part Two: The Witnesses

Chapter 3: What Faith Is

A. "Now Faith Is"

> **Hebrews 11:1** *Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.*

This verse is often called a definition of faith. It is better called a description of what faith does. The writer has just said that "the just shall live by faith." Now he tells his readers what that faith is in practice: it treats what God has promised as real before it is seen.

Two Greek words carry the verse.

"Substance" is *hypostasis* (Strong's G5287), "a setting under (support), i.e. (figuratively) concretely, essence, or abstractly, assurance (objectively or subjectively)." Hebrews uses it three times. Christ is **"the express image of his person" (Hebrews 1:3)**, where "person" is *hypostasis*: the very being of God. Believers are partakers of Christ **"if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end" (Hebrews 3:14)**, where "confidence" is *hypostasis*: assurance. And here, faith is the *hypostasis* of things hoped for. In the commercial papers of the time the word was also used of the documents that established a man's title to property, a title deed. Faith, in that sense, is what a man holds now that gives him title to what he will possess later.

"Evidence" is *elenchos* (Strong's G1650), "proof, conviction." It occurs only here in the New Testament. Faith is the proof of things not seen. A believer cannot see the city God has prepared (11:16), but his believing is the evidence that it is real, because his believing rests on God's word that it is.

In short: faith holds God's promise now as a title to what is not yet possessed, and is itself the proof of what cannot yet be seen.

Weighing it: Direct statement — for the meanings of the two words; Reasonable inference — for the "title deed" sense of hypostasis here (Claim F). Strong's gives "substance," "assurance" and "confidence." The title-deed sense comes from how the word was used in business documents of the

time, which is outside scripture. The other reading can fairly answer that the "title deed" picture, though apt, is a background illustration and not what the word must mean in this verse. That is right. The point holds on "assurance" alone.

B. "For by It the Elders Obtained a Good Report"

> **Hebrews 11:2** *For by it the elders obtained a good report.*

"The elders" are the men and women of old whom the chapter is about to name. "Obtained a good report" is one Greek word, *emartyrēthēsan*, the passive of *martyreō*, "to bear witness." Literally: the elders "were witnessed to." God bore witness of them.

This verb will return at every key point of the chapter:

- Abel **"obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts" (Hebrews 11:4)**. "Obtained witness" and "testifying" are both *martyreō*.
- Enoch **"had this testimony, that he pleased God" (Hebrews 11:5)**. "Had this testimony" is *martyreō*.
- All of them, at the end: **"these all, having obtained a good report through faith" (Hebrews 11:39)**. Again *martyreō*.

So the chapter opens and closes with the same statement: God bore witness to these people, because of their faith. That is what makes them "witnesses" in 12:1. They are not called witnesses because they watch. They are called witnesses because God witnessed of them, and now their record witnesses to us.

In short: "obtained a good report" means God bore witness of the elders, and the same verb opens and closes the chapter.

Weighing it: Direct statement — for martyreō at 11:2, 4, 5 and 39; Strong inference — that this is why they are called witnesses in 12:1 (Claim W). The verb can be checked in any concordance. The other reading can fairly answer that the noun "witness" in 12:1 (*martys*) is broader than the verb, and can mean someone who watches. Chapter 11 of this study answers that in full.

C. "Through Faith We Understand"

> **Hebrews 11:3** *Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.*

Before naming a single person, the writer names what faith first understands: that God made the ages by speaking.

"Worlds" is *aiōnas*, "ages" (Strong's G165, "properly, an age"). It is the same word in **"by whom also he made the worlds" (Hebrews 1:2)**. Scripture uses it of the great periods of time through which God works out his purpose. The ages were "framed," *katartizō* (Strong's G2675, "to complete thoroughly, i.e. repair ... or adjust: fit, frame, mend, (make) perfect"), by "the word of God." "Word" here is *rhēma* (Strong's G4487), "an utterance," a thing spoken.

So the first thing faith understands is that God spoke and the ages were set in order. What is seen did not come from what is seen. Behind everything visible stands what God said.

This verse governs the whole chapter. Every person named after it acted on something God had said. Abel brought what God required. Noah built because he was "warned of God." Abraham went out because he was "called." Sarah conceived because she "judged him faithful who had promised." Faith in Hebrews 11 is never a leap into the dark. It is a step onto what God has spoken.

In short: faith first understands that God set the ages in order by speaking, and every "by faith" that follows acts on something God said.

Weighing it: Direct statement — for "the worlds were framed by the word of God"; Strong inference — that every example in the chapter follows a word from God (Claim F). For most of the witnesses the word from God is recorded (Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Moses, the Passover, Jericho). The other reading can fairly answer that for some, such as Abel's offering or Rahab's hiding the spies, the Old Testament does not record a direct word from God to that person. Chapter 4 takes up Abel; Rahab acted on what she had heard of what God had done and said (Joshua 2:9-11).

D. Faith Before Sight

Verse 3 ends: "things which are seen were not made of things which do appear." The contrast between seen and unseen runs through the whole chapter and into the next:

- faith is "the evidence of things not seen" (11:1);
- Noah was warned "of things not seen as yet" (11:7);
- the patriarchs saw the promises only "afar off" (11:13);
- Moses "endured, as seeing him who is invisible" (11:27).

Paul states the same principle in another letter:

> **2 Corinthians 4:18** *While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.*

and again, more briefly: **"For we walk by faith, not by sight" (2 Corinthians 5:7)**.

In short: the chapter's people lived by what God said about things they could not yet see.

Weighing it: Direct statement — for the seen/unseen contrast throughout (Claim F). Each verse says it. There is nothing for the other reading to dispute here.

In Short: Faith, in Hebrews 11, holds what God has promised as title to what is not yet seen. God bore witness of those who had it. And the first thing faith understands is that God set the ages in order by his word, which is why every example that follows begins with something God said.

Chapter 4: Before the Flood: Abel, Enoch, Noah

The first three witnesses lived before the flood. Each shows a different side of faith. Abel shows faith in worship: how a man comes to God. Enoch shows faith in walk: how a man goes on with God. Noah shows faith in witness: how a man stands for God before the world.

A. Abel

> **Hebrews 11:4** *By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh.*

The record is in Genesis 4:

> **Genesis 4:3** *And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the LORD. 4:4 And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering: 4:5 But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell.*

Why was Abel's offering "more excellent"? Hebrews says it was offered "by faith," and faith, as chapter 3 showed, rests on what God has said. Genesis does not record God's instruction to Abel and Cain about offerings. But it does record that God himself had already shed blood to cover the man and woman: **"Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them" (Genesis 3:21)**. And it records that Abel brought "of the firstlings of his flock," an offering that required the death of an animal, while Cain brought the fruit of the ground he had worked.

The rest of scripture explains the difference: **"without shedding of blood is no remission" (Hebrews 9:22)**. Abel came to God the way God had shown. Cain came the way he chose. God "had respect" to one and not to the other, and he told Cain plainly that the way was still open to him: **"If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted?" (Genesis 4:7)**.

Abel "obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts." And "by it he being dead yet speaketh." Abel speaks still, by his record. It is the first lesson of the chapter: a man comes to God by faith, on God's terms, and God bears witness to him.

Abel's blood is mentioned again at the end of this whole passage. Believers have come **"to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel" (Hebrews 12:24)**. Abel's blood cried from the ground (Genesis 4:10). The blood of Christ speaks of what Abel's offering pointed to.

In short: Abel came to God by faith, with a blood offering, on the terms God had shown, and God bore witness that he was righteous.

Weighing it: Direct statement — that Abel offered by faith and God bore witness to him; Reasonable inference — that his offering was "more excellent" because it was a blood offering on God's terms (Claim F). Genesis 3:21 and Hebrews 9:22 support the reading. The other reading can fairly answer that Genesis never records a command about offerings, and that some read the difference as the heart of the giver rather than the kind of gift. Genesis 4:7 ("if thou doest well") and the firstlings themselves keep the blood offering in view, but the study does not claim more than a reasonable inference.

B. Enoch

> **Hebrews 11:5** *By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God. 11:6 But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.*

The record in Genesis is brief:

> **Genesis 5:21** *And Enoch lived sixty and five years, and begat Methuselah: 5:22 And Enoch walked with God after he begat Methuselah three hundred years, and begat sons and daughters: 5:23 And all the days of Enoch were three hundred sixty and five years: 5:24 And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him.*

Enoch walked with God. Two words in Hebrews' account need care.

"Translated" is *metatithēmi* (Strong's G3346), "to transfer, i.e. (literally) transport, (by implication) exchange ... carry over, change, remove, translate, turn." It is a word of removal by an outside hand. Hebrews uses it of the priesthood being **"changed" (Hebrews 7:12)**, and Stephen uses it of the patriarchs' bodies being **"carried over into Sychem" (Acts 7:16)**. It carries no sense of ascent. God removed Enoch. The Greek Old Testament uses the same verb in Genesis 5:24 for "God took him," and the same Greek reads "Enoch pleased God" for "Enoch walked with God," which is why Hebrews says "he pleased God."

"That he should not see death" is an idiom. "See death" occurs four times in scripture: Psalm 89:48, Luke 2:26, John 8:51, and here. In John 8:51 the Lord says, "If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death." His hearers took it as a promise that a man would never die, and objected that **"Abraham is dead, and the prophets" (John 8:52)**. But every believer who has kept his saying has died. The idiom, in the Lord's own mouth, does not mean "shall never physically die." It speaks of what death is to the one who keeps his word.

Scripture uses the same kind of construction with another word in a way that settles the point. **"He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption" (Acts 2:31)**. Christ died, and did not "see corruption." David died and "saw corruption" (Acts 13:36). "Seeing" corruption names something that ordinarily follows death, separate from the fact of dying.

So the clause in Hebrews 11:5 tells us that God took Enoch so that he would not "see death": not meet it in its ordinary way, through decline, deathbed and grave. It does not say that Enoch never died. And the same writer, at the close of the same chapter, settles the matter of all the elders together, Enoch named second among them:

> **Hebrews 11:39** *And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: 11:40 God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.*

If Enoch had been taken into God's presence alive, he would already have received the promise and been made perfect, apart from us. That is exactly what verse 40 says did not happen to any of them.

The lesson of Enoch, for this chapter, is the testimony he had: "before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God." And verse 6 draws the principle out at once: without faith it is impossible to please God. A man who comes to God must believe two things: that God is, and that he rewards those who seek him. "Diligently seek" is *ekzēteō*, "to search out." The same chapter says the patriarchs "seek a country" (11:14), and the epistle ends with **"we seek one to come" (Hebrews 13:14)**, both *epizēteō*, a closely related word. Faith seeks, and God rewards the seeking.

In short: Enoch walked with God and pleased him; God removed him so that he would not meet death in its ordinary way; and with all the elders he waits for the promise.

Weighing it: Strong inference — against the reading that Enoch never died, and for Enoch waiting with the others (Claim R). The decisive verse is 11:39-40, which places every elder named in the chapter among those who have not received the promise and are not made perfect without us. The other reading can fairly answer that Hebrews 11:5, read alone and at first sight, sounds like an exemption from death. That is granted. This study holds that the writer's own verdict in verses 39 and 40, and the Lord's own use of "see death" in John 8:51-52, show what the clause means.

C. "Without Faith It Is Impossible to Please Him"

Verse 6 deserves its own place, because it states the principle of the whole chapter:

> **Hebrews 11:6** *But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.*

Two things must be believed by the one who comes to God:

1. **"That he is."** Not only that a God exists, but that the God who has spoken is real and present.
2. **"That he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."** God is not indifferent. He answers the seeker.

The second point introduces a theme that runs through the rest of the chapter: reward. Abraham looked for a city (11:10). The patriarchs desired a better country (11:16). Moses had respect to the recompence of the reward (11:26). Some refused deliverance to obtain a better resurrection (11:35). The witnesses believed not only that God is, but that he would reward them, and they lived toward that reward.

In short: to come to God, a man must believe that God is and that he rewards those who seek him, and the reward theme runs through the rest of the chapter.

Weighing it: Direct statement — for the two things that must be believed; Strong inference — for reward as a theme running through the chapter (Claim F). Verses 10, 16, 26 and 35 are each in the text. The other reading has little to answer here.

D. Noah

> **Hebrews 11:7** *By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.*

Noah was "warned of God." The verb is *chrēmatizō*, used of a divine instruction or oracle; the same word is used of the wise men **"being warned of God in a dream" (Matthew 2:12)** and of Simeon, to whom **"it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ" (Luke 2:26)**. The warning concerned "things not seen as yet." There had been no flood before. Noah had nothing to go on but what God said.

He was "moved with fear," *eulabeomai*, a reverent caution, found only here in the New Testament. And he "prepared an ark to the saving of his house." His faith had a cost in labour and in years, and it had a result for others: his family was saved.

Two further things are said of him:

- **"By the which he condemned the world."** His building of the ark, in obedience to God's word, stood as a witness against the world that would not believe. Peter calls him **"a preacher of righteousness" (2 Peter 2:5)**.
- **"And became heir of the righteousness which is by faith."** Noah is the first man in the Bible said to be righteous: **"Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God" (Genesis 6:9)**. Hebrews says he inherited that righteousness by faith.

In short: Noah believed God about things not yet seen, built at great cost, saved his house, and stood as a witness against the unbelieving world.

Weighing it: Direct statement — for Noah's acting on God's warning (Claim F). Genesis 6:13-22 records the warning and the obedience in full. Nothing on the other side disputes it.

In Short: Before the flood, three men show three sides of faith. Abel came to God on God's terms and was declared righteous. Enoch walked with God and pleased him, and God removed him so that he would not meet death in its ordinary way. Noah believed God about things not yet seen and built. And verse 6 states the principle: to please God, a man must believe that he is and that he rewards those who seek him.

Chapter 5: Abraham and Sarah: Called Out and Waiting

A. Abraham Went Out

> **Hebrews 11:8** *By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.*

The record:

> **Genesis 12:1** *Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: 12:2 And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: 12:3 And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed. 12:4 So Abram departed, as the LORD had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him: and Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran.*

"When he was called." Again faith follows a word from God. Abraham was called to go out to a place he would receive later, and he obeyed before he knew where it was. "Not knowing whither he went" is not ignorance; it is trust. He knew who had called him, and that was enough.

Stephen, preaching in Acts 7, adds that God first appeared to Abraham **"when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Charran" (Acts 7:2)**. Abraham's obedience was not instant and complete in every detail; he stayed in Haran until his father died (Acts 7:4). But he went, and Hebrews counts it to him.

In short: Abraham obeyed God's call before he knew where it led.

Weighing it: Direct statement — for Abraham's obedience to God's call (Claim F). Genesis and Hebrews say it plainly.

B. Sojourning in the Land of Promise

> **Hebrews 11:9** *By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: 11:10 For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.*

Abraham lived in the very land God had promised him, but he lived in it as a foreigner. "Sojourned" is *paroikeō*, "to dwell beside," to live as an alien; it occurs only here and in Luke 24:18. He lived in tents, and so did Isaac and Jacob, "the heirs with him of the same promise." He bought only one piece of ground in the land, and that was a burial place (Genesis 23).

Why did he live so? Verse 10 says why: "he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God."

- "Looked for" is *ekdechomai*, to wait for, to expect. Hebrews uses it of Christ, **"from henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool" (Hebrews 10:13)**.
- "Foundations" is *themelios*. Tents have no foundations. The city Abraham waited for has them. John later sees the holy city, and **"the wall of the city had twelve foundations" (Revelation 21:14)**.
- "Builder" is *technitēs*, a craftsman or designer, and "maker" is *dēmiourgos*, found only here in the New Testament.

Abraham owned the promise, but he did not yet possess it. So he lived as a man waiting for something better than anything the land itself could give.

In short: Abraham lived in the promised land as a foreigner in tents, because he was waiting for a city with foundations that God himself would build.

Weighing it: Direct statement — that Abraham looked for a city whose builder is God; Reasonable inference — that this is the city of Revelation 21 (Claim R). Hebrews 11:16 and 12:22 call it "a city" God has prepared and "the heavenly Jerusalem," and 13:14 calls it the city "to come." The other reading can fairly answer that Genesis does not record Abraham speaking of a city. That is true; it is the writer of Hebrews who tells us what Abraham was looking for, and the study takes him at his word.

C. Sarah

> **Hebrews 11:11** *Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised. 11:12 Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, so many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable.*

Sarah's faith is named in its own right. She "received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age." Why? "Because she judged him faithful who had promised."

The record shows that her faith did not begin full grown. When she first heard the promise, **"Sarah laughed within herself" (Genesis 18:12)**, and when the LORD asked why, **"Sarah denied, saying, I laughed not; for she was afraid" (Genesis 18:15)**. God answered her with a question: **"Is any thing too hard for the LORD?" (Genesis 18:14)**. Hebrews does not record her laughter; it records where she came to rest. She counted God faithful, and she conceived.

Verse 12 adds the result. From Abraham, "him as good as dead," came descendants "as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable." "As good as dead" is

nenekrōmenou, from *nekroō*, "to deaden." Paul uses the same word of Abraham's body and of **"the deadness of Sara's womb" (Romans 4:19)**. God brought life where there was no life. That is the faith of Abraham and Sarah: that God gives life from the dead. The chapter will return to it at the offering of Isaac (11:19).

In short: Sarah came to count God faithful to his promise, and from two people past the age of children God brought a nation.

Weighing it: Direct statement — for Sarah's faith and its result (Claim F). The other reading can fairly answer that some manuscripts and translations read verse 11 as speaking of Abraham's faith, with Sarah mentioned only in passing. The King James reading, followed here, names Sarah as the one who received strength; either reading leaves the point of the verse unchanged.

In Short: Abraham went out when God called, lived in the promised land as a foreigner, and waited for a city with foundations that God would build. Sarah came to count God faithful, and from two people as good as dead came a nation without number.

Chapter 6: Strangers and Pilgrims

A. "These All Died in Faith"

> **Hebrews 11:13** *These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.*

The writer pauses. Having named Abraham and Sarah, with Isaac and Jacob as "heirs with him of the same promise," he makes a statement about them all: they died in faith, not having received the promises.

Who are "these all"? The verses that follow speak of people who "declare plainly that they seek a country," who "might have had opportunity to have returned" to the country "from whence they came out," and for whom God "hath prepared ... a city" (11:14-16). That fits Abraham, Sarah, Isaac and Jacob, who left their country and lived as sojourners in the land. It does not fit Abel, who left no country, or Enoch, whose departure the chapter has already described in its own terms. The best reading is that "these all" in verse 13 means the patriarchal family just named. The statement about the whole company of the chapter comes later, at verse 39.

"In faith" here is *kata pistin*, "according to faith." They died as they had lived: believing.

In short: Abraham, Sarah, Isaac and Jacob died believing, without having received the promises.

Weighing it: Reasonable inference — that "these all" in 11:13 means the patriarchal family of 11:8-12. The other reading can fairly answer that "these all" could reach back to every name so far, including Abel, Enoch and Noah. This study does not rest anything on verse 13's scope. The statement about the whole company is verse 39, and its scope is not in doubt.

B. Having Seen Them Afar Off

Three verbs describe how the patriarchs held the promises:

- they **saw them afar off**, from a distance, as a traveller sees a city on the horizon;
- they **were persuaded of them**, convinced that God would do what he said;
- they **embraced them**, *aspazomai*, the word used for greeting someone. They welcomed the promises the way one greets a friend from far off.

And they **confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth**. "Strangers" is *xenos*, foreigners. "Pilgrims" is *parepidēmos* (Strong's G3927, "an alien alongside, i.e. a resident foreigner"). Peter uses the same word of believers in his own day: **"Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul" (1 Peter 2:11)**.

The confession is in the Old Testament record. Abraham, buying a grave for Sarah, said to the sons of Heth, **"I am a stranger and a sojourner with you" (Genesis 23:4)**. Jacob, before Pharaoh, called his life **"the days of the years of my pilgrimage" (Genesis 47:9)**. David prayed, **"For we are strangers before thee, and sojourners, as were all our fathers" (1 Chronicles 29:15)**.

In short: the patriarchs saw the promises from far off, were convinced of them, welcomed them, and said openly that they were foreigners on the earth.

Weighing it: Direct statement — for the patriarchs' confession (Claim F). Genesis 23:4 and 47:9 record it in their own words.

C. A Better Country

> **Hebrews 11:14** *For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. 11:15 And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. 11:16 But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city.*

People who speak that way, the writer says, make it plain that they are looking for a homeland. "Country" in verse 14 is *patris*, a fatherland. They were not looking back. If they had wanted the land they came from, they could have gone back to it; Abraham even forbade his servant to take Isaac back there (Genesis 24:6-8). They desired "a better country, that is, an heavenly."

"Desire" is *oregomai* (Strong's G3713), "to stretch oneself, i.e. reach out after." They reached out for it.

"Better" is *kreittōn*, one of the key words of Hebrews. It occurs thirteen times in the epistle: a better name (1:4), better things (6:9), the less blessed of the better (7:7), a better hope (7:19), a better testament (7:22), a better covenant and better promises (8:6), better sacrifices (9:23), a better and enduring substance (10:34), a better country (11:16), a better resurrection (11:35), some better thing (11:40), and blood that speaks better things (12:24). Everything Christ brings is "better" than what went before, and the patriarchs were already reaching for it.

"Wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God." God identified himself by their names: **"I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob" (Exodus 3:6)**. The Lord Jesus drew the resurrection out of that very title: **"God is not the God of the dead, but of the living" (Matthew 22:32)**. God would not call himself the God of men whose hope ended in the grave. He has prepared a city for them, and they will live to enter it.

In short: the patriarchs reached for a heavenly country, and God, who has prepared a city for them, is not ashamed to be called their God.

Weighing it: Direct statement — for the better, heavenly country and the prepared city; Strong inference — that God's being "their God" implies their resurrection (Claim R). The Lord's own words in Matthew 22:31-32 draw that inference from the same title. The other reading can fairly answer that "heavenly" in 11:16 might mean a country in heaven rather than a city that comes down from heaven to a renewed earth. This study does not need to settle where the city stands. What matters is that it is prepared by God and not yet entered.

In Short: The patriarchs died believing, without receiving what was promised. They saw it from far off, welcomed it, and lived as foreigners because they wanted a better, heavenly country. God is not ashamed to be their God, and he has prepared a city for them.

Chapter 7: Faith Facing Death: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph

The next five verses share a theme. In each, the believer faces death, his own or another's, and looks past it to what God has promised.

A. Abraham Offers Isaac

> **Hebrews 11:17** *By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, 11:18 Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called: 11:19 Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure.*

This was Abraham's greatest test. "Tried" is *peirazō*, to test or prove. Genesis says the same: **"God did tempt Abraham" (Genesis 22:1)**, where "tempt" means to test. God was not leading Abraham into evil. He was proving his faith.

Two forms of the verb "offer" stand side by side in verse 17. "Offered up Isaac" is in the perfect tense: as far as Abraham's purpose was concerned, the offering was complete. "Offered up his only begotten son" is in the imperfect tense: he was in the act of offering when God stopped him (Genesis 22:10-12).

The test was severe because of the promise. God had said, "In Isaac shall thy seed be called." Every promise of descendants rested on Isaac. Now God asked for Isaac. How could both be true?

Verse 19 gives Abraham's answer: "accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead." "Accounting" is *logizomai*, to reckon, to reason out. Abraham reasoned it through. God had promised; God could not lie; therefore if Isaac died, God would raise him. The record in Genesis shows this was what Abraham expected. He told his servants, **"I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you" (Genesis 22:5)**. "We will come again." He expected to return with Isaac.

"From whence also he received him in a figure." Abraham received Isaac back from the dead, not literally, but in a figure (*parabolē*). Isaac was as good as dead, and he was given back. The whole scene points forward: a father, an only son, a hill in the land of Moriah, a substitute provided by God. Abraham named the place **"Jehovah-jireh," "In the mount of the LORD it shall be seen" (Genesis 22:14)**.

This is the faith of verse 12 again: God gives life from the dead. Abraham had already seen God bring a son from two bodies "as good as dead." He believed God could bring that son back from death itself.

In short: Abraham offered Isaac, reasoning that God, who had promised descendants through Isaac, could raise him from the dead, and he received him back as a figure of resurrection.

Weighing it: Direct statement — that Abraham reasoned God could raise Isaac (11:19); Strong inference — from Genesis 22:5 that he expected to return with him (Claim R). The other reading can fairly answer that "we will come again" might be spoken to spare the servants, not as a statement of faith. Hebrews 11:19 is the inspired account of what Abraham reasoned, and it agrees with the plain reading of 22:5.

B. Isaac Blesses Jacob and Esau

> **Hebrews 11:20** *By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come.*

Isaac's blessing looked to "things to come." The record in Genesis 27 shows him old and blind, intending to bless Esau, and Jacob receiving the blessing by deception. Yet when Isaac learned what had happened, he confirmed it: **"I ... have blessed him? yea, and he shall be blessed" (Genesis 27:33)**. Isaac recognised that God's purpose (**"the elder shall serve the younger," Genesis 25:23**) had been done, and he let the blessing stand. He blessed by faith concerning what God would do in generations he would never see.

In short: Isaac blessed his sons concerning a future he would not live to see, and he let God's choice stand.

Weighing it: Reasonable inference — that Isaac's faith lay in confirming the blessing once he saw God's purpose in it. The other reading can fairly answer that Isaac's faith may lie simply in blessing at all, concerning things to come, without any reference to the deception. Both readings agree that he blessed concerning a future beyond his own life.

C. Jacob Blesses Joseph's Sons

> **Hebrews 11:21** *By faith Jacob, when he was a dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph; and worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff.*

"When he was a dying." Jacob, near death, blessed Ephraim and Manasseh, and in doing so put the younger before the elder, as God had done with him (Genesis 48:13-20). He also adopted them as his own: **"Ephraim and Manasseh ... as Reuben and Simeon, they shall be mine" (Genesis 48:5)**. Joseph's two sons each received a full inheritance among the tribes.

"And worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff." This phrase has caused discussion, because Genesis 47:31 says **"Israel bowed himself upon the bed's head."** The Hebrew words for "bed" (*mittah*) and "staff" (*matteh*) are written with the same consonants, and the Greek Old Testament read "staff." Hebrews follows that reading. Many have also noted that Hebrews 11:21 is describing the blessing of Joseph's sons in Genesis 48, which is a separate occasion from Genesis 47:31; on that reading the two verses simply describe two different moments. Either way, the picture is the same: an old man near death, worshipping God, and passing on the promise.

In short: dying, Jacob blessed Joseph's sons, set the younger first as God had chosen, and worshipped.

Weighing it: Direct statement — for Jacob's blessing and worship; Neutral — on the bed/staff question. The study takes no position on which Old Testament moment the staff belongs to, because nothing in the meaning of the verse depends on it.

D. Joseph and His Bones

> **Hebrews 11:22** *By faith Joseph, when he died, made mention of the departing of the children of Israel; and gave commandment concerning his bones.*

Joseph, at the end of a life spent in Egypt, where he had been second only to Pharaoh, did not ask to be buried there with honour. He spoke of the exodus:

> **Genesis 50:24** *And Joseph said unto his brethren, I die: and God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land unto the land which he sware to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. 50:25 And Joseph took an oath of the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence.*

"The departing" in Hebrews 11:22 is *exodos*, the very word for Israel's departure from Egypt. Joseph died generations before it happened, and he spoke of it as certain. And he gave commandment that his bones should go with them. Israel kept his word: **"Moses took the bones of Joseph with him" (Exodus 13:19)**, and they were buried in Shechem (Joshua 24:32).

Joseph's coffin lay unburied in Egypt for generations as a silent sermon: God will bring you out.

In short: Joseph, dying in Egypt, spoke of the exodus as certain and left his bones as a pledge that God would bring Israel out.

Weighing it: Direct statement — for Joseph's words and their fulfilment (Claim F).

E. What These Five Have in Common

In each of these accounts the believer faces death and looks past it.

- Abraham reckoned that God could raise the dead.
- Isaac blessed concerning things to come after him.
- Jacob, dying, passed on the inheritance.
- Joseph, dying, spoke of the exodus and gave orders for his bones.

None of them received the promise in his own lifetime. All of them acted as if it were certain. That is the faith of 11:1: the assurance of things hoped for.

In short: in the face of death, each looked to what God would do after him.

Weighing it: Reasonable inference — for the shared theme of faith facing death (Claim R). The other reading can fairly answer that grouping verses by theme is the reader's work, not the writer's. That is fair; the reader can test the grouping against the five verses.

In Short: Abraham offered Isaac reckoning that God could raise him from the dead. Isaac, Jacob and Joseph, each near the end of life, blessed or spoke concerning what God would do after them. Faith looks past death to the promise.

Chapter 8: Moses and the People

A. Moses' Parents

> **Hebrews 11:23** *By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, because they saw he was a proper child; and they were not afraid of the king's commandment.*

The faith here is the faith of Amram and Jochebed (Exodus 6:20). Pharaoh had commanded that every Hebrew son be thrown into the river (Exodus 1:22). Moses' parents hid him for three months, because they saw he was "a proper child." Exodus calls him **"a goodly child" (Exodus 2:2)**, and Stephen says he was **"exceeding fair" (Acts 7:20)**. The Greek word in Hebrews and Acts is *asteios*, which means well-formed or fine, and Stephen's phrase reads literally "fair to God."

What did they see? Scripture does not say whether God spoke to them, but it says they acted "by faith," and faith acts on what God has said. At the least, they believed God's promise to their fathers enough to defy the king to keep this child alive. And "they were not afraid of the king's commandment." Faith set them free from fear of the king.

In short: Moses' parents hid him in defiance of Pharaoh's order, unafraid, because by faith they saw something in the child.

Weighing it: Direct statement — for their faith and fearlessness; Corroboration only — for any guess at what they saw (Claim F). Scripture does not record a word from God to Moses' parents. The other reading can fairly answer that their faith may have rested only on God's general promise to Israel. This study claims no more than that.

B. Moses' Choice

> **Hebrews 11:24** *By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; 11:25 Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; 11:26 Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward.*

When Moses "was come to years," literally "having become great," Stephen says **"when he was full forty years old" (Acts 7:23)**, he made a choice. He refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter. Three contrasts show what the choice cost him:

- **Affliction with the people of God, or the pleasures of sin for a season.** "For a season" is *proskairos*, temporary. Paul uses it in **"the things which are seen are temporal" (2 Corinthians 4:18)**. Moses weighed what lasts against what passes.
- **The reproach of Christ, or the treasures in Egypt.** He counted reproach a greater wealth than Egypt's treasure.
- **The recompence of the reward.** "He had respect unto" is *apoblepō*, found only here: he looked away from everything else, to the reward.

What is "the reproach of Christ" in the life of a man who lived fifteen centuries before Jesus? "Christ" means "Anointed." The psalmist uses almost the same phrase of God's anointed king: **"Wherewith thine enemies have reproached, O LORD; wherewith they have reproached the footsteps of thine anointed"**

(Psalm 89:51). And another psalm says **"the reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me" (Psalm 69:9)**, and Paul applies it to Christ in Romans 15:3. To suffer with God's people, who carried the promise of the Anointed One, was to share in the reproach that would fall in full on Christ himself. Moses chose that reproach. The readers of Hebrews had chosen it too (10:33), and the epistle will close by calling them to go on bearing it: **"Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach" (Hebrews 13:13)**.

In short: Moses chose to suffer with God's people and bear the reproach of the Anointed, rather than enjoy Egypt's pleasures and treasures, because he looked to the reward.

Weighing it: Direct statement — for Moses' choice and its reason; Reasonable inference — for the meaning of "the reproach of Christ" (Claims F and E). The other reading can fairly answer that "Christ" here may simply mean "the anointed one," Israel or its line of promise, without pointing to Jesus. The two readings come to the same place: the reproach Moses bore belonged to the promise that was fulfilled in Jesus.

C. Moses Forsook Egypt

> **Hebrews 11:27** *By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible.*

Moses left Egypt twice. The first time, at forty, he fled after killing an Egyptian, and Exodus says plainly that **"Moses feared, and said, Surely this thing is known" (Exodus 2:14)**. The second time, at eighty, he led Israel out. Hebrews says he forsook Egypt "not fearing the wrath of the king." That fits the second departure best. Before the exodus Pharaoh threatened him, **"Take heed to thyself, see my face no more; for in that day thou seest my face thou shalt die" (Exodus 10:28)**, and Moses answered without fear, **"Thou hast spoken well, I will see thy face again no more" (Exodus 10:29)**.

There is a fair case for the first departure too. Verse 27 comes before the Passover in verse 28, and the exodus came after the Passover. Some read the verse as saying that Moses left the first time not because he feared the king's wrath but because he was looking to God, even though Exodus records that he was afraid. This study takes the second departure as the better fit, and does not lean on it.

"He endured, as seeing him who is invisible." "Endured" is *kartereō*, found only here: to be steadfast, to hold out. Moses held out because he saw by faith the God no eye can see. He had met him at the burning bush, and he would ask to see his glory (Exodus 33:18).

In short: Moses left Egypt without fear of the king, holding steady because by faith he saw the invisible God.

Weighing it: Reasonable inference — that 11:27 refers to the exodus rather than the flight at forty. Exodus 2:14 records fear at the first departure, and Exodus 10:28-29 records fearlessness before the second. The other reading can fairly answer that the verse's place before the Passover suggests the first departure. The question changes nothing in the lesson of the verse.

D. The Passover

> **Hebrews 11:28** *Through faith he kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the firstborn should touch them.*

"He kept the passover" is in the perfect tense: he instituted it, and it stood. The record is in Exodus 12. God told Moses that every firstborn in Egypt would die, and that the blood of a lamb on the doorposts would be a sign:

> **Exodus 12:13** *And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt.*

Nothing could be seen that night to show that blood on a doorpost would keep death out. Moses believed God and commanded the people to do it. "The sprinkling of blood," *proschusis*, is found only here. "He that destroyed the firstborn" did not touch them.

The Passover is the clearest picture in the Old Testament of what Christ would do. **"For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us" (1 Corinthians 5:7)**.

In short: Moses believed God that the blood of a lamb would turn death aside, and it did.

Weighing it: Direct statement — for the Passover kept by faith in God's word (Claim F).

E. The Red Sea

> **Hebrews 11:29** *By faith they passed through the Red sea as by dry land: which the Egyptians assaying to do were drowned.*

The faith here passes from Moses to the people. "They passed through." The record:

> **Exodus 14:21** *And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the LORD caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided. 14:22 And the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon the dry ground: and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left.*

The Egyptians tried the same thing and drowned. "Assaying to do" is *peiran labontes*, "making a trial of it." The same sea, the same path, two results. The Israelites went through by faith, because God had told them to go forward (Exodus 14:15). The Egyptians went in without faith, on their own presumption, and the sea returned.

In short: Israel crossed the sea on dry land because God told them to go forward; the Egyptians tried the same path without faith and drowned.

Weighing it: Direct statement — for the crossing by faith and the drowning of the Egyptians (Claim F).

F. Jericho

> **Hebrews 11:30** *By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days.*

Forty years pass between verse 29 and verse 30. The wilderness generation, which did not believe, is passed over in silence; the writer has already dealt with them in chapters 3 and 4: **"So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief" (Hebrews 3:19)**. The next "by faith" is the next generation, at Jericho.

God's instruction was strange: march around the city once a day for six days, seven times on the seventh, then blow the trumpets and shout (Joshua 6:3-5). Israel did exactly that, and **"the wall fell down flat" (Joshua 6:20)**. Nothing about marching and shouting can bring down a wall. The walls fell because God said they would, and his people did what he said.

In short: Israel marched around Jericho for seven days because God said to, and the walls fell.

Weighing it: Direct statement — for Jericho's fall after the people obeyed God's instruction (Claim F).

G. Rahab

> **Hebrews 11:31** *By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace.*

The last name before the writer's summary is a Gentile woman and a harlot. Scripture does not soften her title; James also calls her **"Rahab the harlot" (James 2:25)**. But her faith is recorded in her own words to the spies:

> **Joshua 2:9** *And she said unto the men, I know that the LORD hath given you the land, and that your terror is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you. 2:10 For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red sea for you, when ye came out of Egypt; and what ye did unto the two kings of the Amorites, that were on the other side Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom ye utterly destroyed. 2:11 And as soon as we had heard these things, our hearts did melt, neither did there remain any more courage in any man, because of you: for the LORD your God, he is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath.*

She had heard what God had done, and she believed that "the LORD your God, he is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath." She acted on it, hiding the spies at the risk of her life. She "perished not with them that believed not." "Believed not" is *apeitheō*, to refuse to be persuaded, to disobey. The men of Jericho had heard the same news (Joshua 2:11, "our hearts did melt"). They had the same evidence. They did not believe.

Rahab was spared with her household (Joshua 6:25). And Matthew names her in the line of the Messiah: **"Salmon begat Booz of Rachab" (Matthew 1:5)**.

In short: Rahab heard what God had done, believed that he is God, acted on it, and was spared, while those who heard the same news and would not believe perished.

Weighing it: Direct statement — for Rahab's faith and her deliverance (Claim F). Her confession in Joshua 2:11 shows the content of her faith.

In Short: By faith Moses' parents hid him without fear; Moses chose God's people and the reproach of the Anointed over Egypt's treasures; he left Egypt holding steady as one who saw the invisible God; he kept the Passover; Israel crossed the sea and brought down Jericho's walls; and Rahab, a Gentile harlot, believed and was spared.

Chapter 9: Time Would Fail Me: Faith That Conquered and Faith That Suffered

A. "What Shall I More Say?"

> **Hebrews 11:32** *And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gedeon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets:*

The writer stops naming one by one. "The time would fail me." He names six men and then a whole order, "the prophets," and gives no details. Bullinger classes this as the figure *Paraleipsis*, a "passing by": the writer says he will not tell, and in saying so tells enough.

The order of the names is not the order of history. Barak came before Gideon, and Jephthah before Samson. Arranged as written, the four judges form a pattern: Gideon and Jephthah stand at the outside, Barak and Samson inside. Then come a king, a prophet, and the prophets.

Every one of these men had failings that the Old Testament records plainly.

- **Gideon** asked for sign after sign (Judges 6:36-40), and in his later years made an ephod that **"became a snare unto Gideon, and to his house" (Judges 8:27)**.
- **Barak** would not go to battle unless Deborah went with him (Judges 4:8).
- **Samson** broke his Nazirite vow and gave away his strength to Delilah (Judges 16).
- **Jephthah** made a rash vow concerning whatever came first out of his house (Judges 11:30-31).
- **David** committed adultery and murder (2 Samuel 11).

Yet God names them here for their faith. God records faith, not a man's whole record. That is a comfort to every believer who knows his own failings. It is not an excuse for them: scripture records each failing as a failing, and none of these men escaped its consequences. But what God remembers in this chapter is what they believed.

In short: the writer names judges, a king and prophets in passing; all had recorded failings, and God remembers their faith.

Weighing it: Direct statement — for the names and for the failings recorded in the Old Testament; Reasonable inference — that God's naming them shows he records faith, not a whole life's record (Claim F). The other reading can fairly answer that Hebrews names them for particular acts of faith, not as models of character. That is the same point from the other side, and the study agrees.

B. Faith That Conquered

> **Hebrews 11:33** *Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, 11:34 Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. 11:35 Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection:*

Verses 33 to 35a list what faith accomplished. Most of the phrases can be matched to Old Testament records, though the writer names no one:

- **Subdued kingdoms:** David (2 Samuel 8), Joshua, the judges.
- **Wrought righteousness:** executed justice. Samuel judged Israel (1 Samuel 7:15-17); David **"executed judgment and justice unto all his people" (2 Samuel 8:15)**.
- **Obtained promises:** received what God had promised in particular cases, such as the promise to David of a house (2 Samuel 7).
- **Stopped the mouths of lions:** Daniel said, **"My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths" (Daniel 6:22)**. Samson and David also killed lions (Judges 14:6; 1 Samuel 17:34-36).
- **Quenched the violence of fire:** Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, **"upon whose bodies the fire had no power" (Daniel 3:27)**.
- **Escaped the edge of the sword:** David from Saul (1 Samuel 18-19), Elijah from Jezebel (1 Kings 19), Elisha from the king of Syria (2 Kings 6).
- **Out of weakness were made strong:** Samson's last prayer (Judges 16:28); Hezekiah's recovery (Isaiah 38).
- **Waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens:** Gideon's three hundred (Judges 7), Jonathan and his armour-bearer (1 Samuel 14).
- **Women received their dead raised to life again:** the widow of Zarephath, whose son Elijah raised (1 Kings 17:17-24), and the Shunammite woman, whose son Elisha raised (2 Kings 4:18-37).

This is faith that won. Kingdoms fell, lions were shut up, fire did not burn, the dead were given back.

In short: by faith, men and women conquered kingdoms, escaped lions, fire and sword, and received their dead raised to life.

Weighing it: Direct statement — for the list; Reasonable inference — for the matching of each phrase to an Old Testament record. The writer names no one in these verses. The other reading can fairly answer that some phrases may refer to events the reader is meant to recall from outside the Old Testament. The matches above are all from scripture, and the study does not go beyond them.

C. Faith That Suffered

> **Hebrews 11:35** *Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection: 11:36 And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: 11:37 They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; 11:38 (Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.*

Then, in the middle of verse 35, the list turns. "And others." The word is *alloi*, others of a different kind. The first group was delivered. This group was not.

- **Tortured, not accepting deliverance.** "Tortured" is *tympanizō*, found only here: beaten to death on a rack or frame. They could have been freed, apparently by renouncing their faith, and they refused, "that they might obtain a better resurrection." Scripture does not name them. Their story is told outside the Old Testament, and the study does not rely on any of those accounts.
- **Mockings and scourgings, bonds and imprisonment.** Jeremiah was beaten and put in the stocks (Jeremiah 20:2), imprisoned (Jeremiah 37:15), and let down into a dungeon of mire (Jeremiah

38:6). Micaiah was put in prison and fed **"with bread of affliction and with water of affliction" (1 Kings 22:27)**. Hanani the seer was put in prison by King Asa (2 Chronicles 16:10).

- **Stoned.** Zechariah the son of Jehoiada was stoned **"in the court of the house of the LORD" (2 Chronicles 24:21)**; the Lord Jesus spoke of his blood (Matthew 23:35).
- **Sawn asunder.** Scripture records no such death. A tradition outside scripture says it happened to Isaiah. The study notes the tradition and does not rely on it.
- **Tempted.** Tried, tested.
- **Slain with the sword.** Elijah said to God, **"the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword" (1 Kings 19:10)**. Uriah the prophet was killed with the sword by Jehoiakim (Jeremiah 26:23).
- **Wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; destitute, afflicted, tormented.** Elijah was known as **"an hairy man, and girt with a girdle of leather about his loins" (2 Kings 1:8)**, and he lived in the wilderness (1 Kings 17:3; 19:4).
- **In deserts, mountains, dens and caves.** Obadiah hid a hundred prophets **"by fifty in a cave" (1 Kings 18:4)**. David hid in the cave Adullam (1 Samuel 22:1). Elijah lodged in a cave at Horeb (1 Kings 19:9).

And in the middle of it the writer adds: "of whom the world was not worthy." The world that rejected them was not fit to have them.

These are named "by faith" as much as the conquerors. The same faith that shut the mouths of lions endured the sword. Faith is not proved by deliverance, and suffering is not proof of unbelief. Both groups pleased God. Both "obtained a good report through faith" (11:39).

That truth is plain in the New Testament too. In one chapter of Acts, James is killed with the sword and Peter is delivered from prison by an angel (Acts 12:2, 7). Scripture gives no reason why one died and the other was delivered, and it charges no fault to James. Jesus told his disciples, **"In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" (John 16:33)**. Paul wrote, **"Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (2 Timothy 3:12)**.

In short: faith also endured torture, prison, the sword and the wilderness without being delivered, and God counts it as faith just as much as the faith that conquered.

Weighing it: Direct statement — that "others" suffered without deliverance and that all obtained a good report through faith; Strong inference — that deliverance is not the measure of faith (Claim E). Verse 39 places both groups under one verdict. The other reading can fairly answer that God does promise deliverance to those who believe, in many places, and that the sufferers' refusal of deliverance (11:35) was itself a choice of faith. Both are true. The point here is narrower: in this chapter, faith that was not delivered is counted equally with faith that was.

D. "A Better Resurrection"

The sufferers of verse 35 refused deliverance "that they might obtain a better resurrection." Better than what? The verse has just spoken of women who **"received their dead raised to life again" (Hebrews 11:35)**. Those children were raised to the same mortal life and would die again. The sufferers looked past release from torture, and past a return to mortal life, to the resurrection that does not end in death.

"Resurrection" is *anastasis*, found in Hebrews only here (twice) and at **"of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment" (Hebrews 6:2)**. The hope of these believers was not to go to heaven at death. It was to be raised from the dead, and raised to something better than they had lost.

In short: the sufferers looked past a return to mortal life to a better resurrection, which is life that does not end.

Weighing it: Strong inference — that "better" contrasts with the raisings just mentioned in the same verse (Claim R). The two halves of verse 35 stand side by side. The other reading can fairly answer that "better" may compare the resurrection of the just with that of the unjust (Acts 24:15). Both readings place the hope in resurrection, not in an immediate life after death.

In Short: The writer passes rapidly over judges, kings and prophets. Some by faith conquered, escaped and saw the dead raised. Others by faith were tortured, imprisoned, killed and driven into the wilderness, and refused release to obtain a better resurrection. God counts both as faith.

Chapter 10: Some Better Thing for Us

A. The Verdict on the Whole Company

> **Hebrews 11:39** *And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: 11:40 God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.*

Here is the chapter's closing statement. It covers "these all": every person named or described from verse 4 to verse 38, Abel to the unnamed martyrs. Two things are said of them all.

First, they "obtained a good report through faith." This is *martyreō* again, the same verb as in verse 2. The chapter has come full circle. God bore witness to every one of them.

Second, they "received not the promise." "Received" is *komizō* (Strong's G2865), "to provide for, i.e. (by implication) to carry off ... obtain: bring, receive." It is the same verb as in the readers' own need: **"ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise" (Hebrews 10:36)**. The readers are waiting to receive the promise. So are the witnesses.

Notice that "promise" here is singular. In verse 13 the patriarchs had not received "the promises," plural: the particular things God promised them, a land, a seed, a blessing. Some of the later witnesses did obtain particular promises: verse 33 says they "obtained promises." But none of them, from Abel to the last martyr, received "the promise," the great thing all the particular promises point to. In Hebrews that is **"the promise of eternal inheritance" (Hebrews 9:15)**.

In short: God bore witness to every one of the witnesses, and none of them has yet received the promise.

Weighing it: Direct statement — that "these all" obtained a good report and received not the promise (Claim R). The scope of "these all" in verse 39 is the whole chapter; the verse is its summary. The other reading can fairly answer that "the promise" here might mean the first coming of the Messiah, which the elders did not live to see. That reading is considered in section C below.

B. "Some Better Thing for Us"

"God having provided some better thing for us." "Provided" is *problepō*, found only here: to foresee, to provide beforehand. God planned it in advance. "Better" is *kreittōn* again, the twelfth of the epistle's thirteen uses.

What is the better thing? The epistle has already told us. It is everything Christ has brought: a better hope by which **"we draw nigh unto God" (Hebrews 7:19)**, a better covenant established on better promises (8:6), a better sacrifice (9:23), and the open way into the holiest by his blood (10:19). The witnesses lived before Christ came. They looked forward to him. We live after his sacrifice, resurrection and ascension, with the way already open. That is the "better thing for us."

In short: the better thing God foresaw for us is what Christ has brought: the open way to God that the witnesses only looked forward to.

Weighing it: Strong inference — that the "better thing" is what the epistle has already called better in Christ. The word *kreittōn* ties 11:40 to every earlier "better" in the epistle. The other reading can fairly answer that the "better thing" might be something still future, such as a distinct place for believers of this age at Christ's return. Nothing in 11:40 names it, and this study holds to what the epistle itself has already called "better."

C. "That They Without Us Should Not Be Made Perfect"

"Made perfect" is *teleioō* (Strong's G5048), "to complete ... accomplish, or ... consummate." It is one of the great words of Hebrews. Christ was "made perfect" through sufferings, brought to the completion of his work (2:10; 5:9). The Law "made nothing perfect" (7:19); its sacrifices could not make the worshipper perfect (9:9; 10:1). Then:

> **Hebrews 10:14** *For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.*

What the Law could not do, Christ's one offering did. He completed it, rose, ascended, and **"sat down on the right hand of God" (Hebrews 10:12)**.

The witnesses of chapter 11 had faith, and God bore witness to them. But they lived before that one offering. Their perfecting depends on it, as ours does. And the full perfecting of all God's people, them and us, comes together: "that they without us should not be made perfect." They are not made perfect ahead of us. They wait for the same completion, and it includes us.

Some take "the promise" in verse 39 to mean the first coming of the Messiah, which the elders did not see. On that reading verse 40 says they lived before Christ came, and we live after. That much is true. But the verse goes further: "that they without us should not be made perfect." If the elders were already in God's presence, perfected, then they would be made perfect without us, which is what verse 40 denies. Either way the conclusion is the same: the witnesses have not reached their completion. They wait for it.

In short: the witnesses are not made perfect apart from us; they wait for the same completion, which Christ's one offering has made possible.

Weighing it: Direct statement — that "they without us should not be made perfect"; Strong inference — that the witnesses are not now perfected in God's presence but await the resurrection (Claim R). The other reading can fairly answer that the witnesses could be in God's presence now and still not

"perfected" in the fullest sense until the resurrection of the body. That reading must assume that a man can be in God's presence before the resurrection, which is the very question at issue. Scripture elsewhere says that **"David is not ascended into the heavens" (Acts 2:34)** and that Christ is **"the firstfruits of them that slept" (1 Corinthians 15:20)**.

D. Where the Witnesses Are Now

The chapter's own words answer this question. They "all died in faith" (11:13). They looked for a city, a country, a better resurrection. They did not receive the promise. They are not made perfect without us. Nowhere does the chapter place them in heaven now.

The rest of scripture agrees.

> **Acts 2:29** *Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day.*
> **Acts 2:34** *For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand,*

Peter said this on the day of Pentecost, after Christ had ascended. David was dead and buried. He had not gone up.

> **1 Corinthians 15:20** *But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. 15:21 For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. 15:22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. 15:23 But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming.*

Christ is the firstfruits: the first to be raised to life that does not end. Then, "afterward they that are Christ's at his coming." Each in his own order. The witnesses of Hebrews 11 are among those who wait for that order to reach them.

> **1 Thessalonians 4:13** *But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. 4:14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. 4:15 For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. 4:16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:*

The dead in Christ "sleep," and they rise when the Lord descends. Paul gives that as the believer's comfort: not that the dead are already with the Lord, but that they will be raised.

So the witnesses are asleep, awaiting the resurrection. They are not watching from heaven. Their witness is in their record, which God has preserved for us.

In short: the witnesses died, are not ascended, and wait for the resurrection at Christ's coming, each in his own order.

Weighing it: Strong inference — that the witnesses sleep in death and await the resurrection (Claim R). Hebrews 11:13, 39-40 and Acts 2:29, 34 are direct statements about them or about David; 1 Corinthians 15:20-23 and 1 Thessalonians 4:13-16 state the order of the resurrection. The other reading can fairly answer that other passages are often read as placing the righteous dead in God's presence

now (Luke 16:19-31; 2 Corinthians 5:8; Philippians 1:23). Each of those deserves its own careful reading, and none of them is in this passage. Within Hebrews, the closest such verse, 12:23, is examined in Appendix E.

In Short: God bore witness to every one of the witnesses, and none received the promise. God foresaw a better thing for us, the open way to God through Christ's one offering, and the witnesses are not made perfect without us. They died in faith and wait, asleep, for the resurrection, where they and we will be made complete together.

Part Three: The Race

Chapter 11: The Cloud, the Weight, and the Race

> **Hebrews 12:1** *Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,*

A. "Wherefore"

"Wherefore" here is *toigaroun*, a strong word of conclusion found only twice in the New Testament, here and at 1 Thessalonians 4:8. It means "so then, for that very reason." Everything in chapter 11 leads to this sentence. The writer has finished his evidence and now draws the conclusion.

And notice the "we also." "Seeing *we also* are compassed about." The writer puts himself in the race with his readers, as he did in 10:39 ("we are not of them who draw back"). The command that follows is "let us," three times in two verses.

In short: chapter 11 is the evidence, and 12:1 is the conclusion drawn from it, spoken by a writer who runs alongside his readers.

Weighing it: Direct statement — for toigaroun as a word of conclusion (Claim S). The other reading has nothing to dispute.

B. "Compassed About"

"Compassed about" is *perikeimai* (Strong's G4029), "to lie all around, i.e. inclose, encircle." Hebrews uses it once more, of the high priest who **"himself also is compassed with infirmity" (Hebrews 5:2)**, and Paul uses it of the chain he wore in Rome: **"for the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain" (Acts 28:20)**. Something that lies all around a man and is part of his situation, whether weakness, a chain, or, here, a great company of witnesses.

The believer is surrounded by the witnesses of chapter 11. In what sense? Not as a runner is surrounded by a crowd in the stands. The next section shows why.

In short: the believer is surrounded by the witnesses as by something that lies all around him.

Weighing it: Direct statement — for the meaning of perikeimai. The question of how the witnesses surround us is taken up next.

C. "So Great a Cloud of Witnesses"

"Cloud" is *nephos* (Strong's G3509), found only here in the New Testament. The ordinary word for a cloud in the sky is *nephelē*, used twenty-five times. *Nephos* is the word for a great mass of cloud, and Greek writers used it of a great mass of people, as English speaks of "a cloud of" anything numerous. The writer is not describing where the witnesses are. He is describing how many they are: a vast company, so many that "the time would fail me" to tell of them all (11:32).

"Witnesses" is *martys* (Strong's G3144), "a witness (literally (judicially) or figuratively ...); by analogy, a 'martyr'." A *martys* is one who bears witness: who testifies to what he knows. In the New Testament the word is used of the apostles as witnesses of the resurrection (Acts 1:8, 22; 2:32), of Stephen (**"the blood of thy martyr Stephen," Acts 22:20**), of Antipas, **"my faithful martyr" (Revelation 2:13)**, and of Jesus himself, **"the faithful witness" (Revelation 1:5)**. In each case the witness is one who testifies, not one who watches.

Now recall the verb of chapter 11. The elders **"obtained a good report" (Hebrews 11:2)**. Abel **"obtained witness that he was righteous" (Hebrews 11:4)**. Enoch **"had this testimony" (Hebrews 11:5)**. All of them **"obtained a good report through faith" (Hebrews 11:39)**. In each place the verb is *martyreō*, from which *martys* comes. God bore witness of them. So in 12:1 the writer calls them what they have become: witnesses. They were witnessed to by God, and now they bear witness to us. Abel shows how: **"by it he being dead yet speaketh" (Hebrews 11:4)**. He speaks by his record.

If the writer had meant that the elders watch us, Greek had words for that. Luke uses *autoptēs*, an eyewitness, of those **"which from the beginning were eyewitnesses, and ministers of the word" (Luke 1:2)**, and Peter uses *epoptēs*, one who looks on, of **"eyewitnesses of his majesty" (2 Peter 1:16)**. Each word occurs once in the New Testament. Hebrews 12:1 uses neither. It uses the word for those who testify.

Bullinger makes the same point in a note on this verse: there is no idea of eye-witnesses in this word, as though they were beholding or looking upon us; the witnesses are the examples of faith cited in chapter 11.

So the picture is not of a stadium with the dead in the stands, watching the living run. It is of a runner surrounded by the testimony of those who have run before. Every one of them, by his record in scripture, says to the runner: God is faithful; I believed him; run.

And the dead, as Chapter 10 showed, are not watching. **"For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not any thing" (Ecclesiastes 9:5)**. The witnesses are asleep, awaiting the resurrection. They cannot see us. But we can see them, in the record God has kept.

In short: the "cloud of witnesses" is the vast company to whom God bore witness in chapter 11; they testify to us by their record, and they are not spectators watching from heaven.

Weighing it: Strong inference — that the witnesses are those God bore witness to, who testify to us, and not spectators (Claim W). The verb *martyreō* runs through 11:2, 4, 5 and 39, and the noun in 12:1 is its own family; the words for onlookers are not used. The other reading can fairly answer that *martys* can mean one who sees something and can report it, and that "compassed about" suggests a crowd standing around a runner, which is how the verse has often been preached. The answer is twofold: the dead "know not any thing" (Ecclesiastes 9:5), so they cannot be watching; and the chapter has just told us, four times, in what sense they are witnesses.

D. "Let Us Lay Aside Every Weight"

"Lay aside" is *apotithēmi* (Strong's G659), "to put away." It is the word for taking off clothing. The witnesses at Stephen's stoning **"laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul" (Acts 7:58)**. And it is the word Paul uses for putting off the old way of life: **"That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man" (Ephesians 4:22)**; **"Wherefore putting away lying" (Ephesians 4:25)**; **"But now ye also put off all these" (Colossians 3:8)**. James and Peter use it the same way (James 1:21; 1 Peter 2:1).

"Weight" is *onkos* (Strong's G3591), "a mass ... i.e. burden (hindrance)." It occurs only here. A runner in a race strips off anything that adds mass: loose clothing, extra bulk, anything that slows him. The weights are not necessarily sins. They are whatever hinders the running.

For the first readers, the context suggests what some of those weights were. They were being pulled back toward the temple system, the old priesthood and sacrifices that Christ's one offering had fulfilled (10:1-18). The epistle's last chapter warns them: **"Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace; not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein" (Hebrews 13:9)**. Whatever held them to what was passing away was a weight. For believers today, the weights are whatever slows the run: things not wrong in themselves, perhaps, but not worth carrying in a race.

In short: the believer is to strip off every weight, anything that adds bulk and slows the run, as a runner strips for a race.

Weighing it: Direct statement — for the meaning of the words; Reasonable inference — for what the weights were for the first readers. The other reading can fairly answer that "weight" may be meant generally, with no particular weight in view. That is likely right for later readers; for the first readers, the epistle's own concerns suggest the particular weights.

E. "And the Sin Which Doth So Easily Beset Us"

"Which doth so easily beset" is one Greek word, *euperistatos* (Strong's G2139), "well standing around, i.e. (a competitor) thwarting (a racer) in every direction." It occurs only here. It pictures something that stands all around a runner and gets in his way at every step, like a long robe winding around the legs.

Which sin is meant? The text says "the sin," with the article, as if one particular sin is in view. In the setting of Hebrews, the sin that stood in the readers' way at every turn was the sin the whole epistle warns against: unbelief, the drawing back from what God has spoken.

> **Hebrews 3:12** *Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.*
> **Hebrews 3:19** *So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.*

Chapter 11 is a chapter on faith. The sin that besets the runner is its opposite. Every witness in chapter 11 overcame it, and every warning in Hebrews is aimed at it.

In short: the sin that besets the runner at every step is, in the setting of Hebrews, unbelief.

Weighing it: Reasonable inference — that "the sin" is unbelief. The article and the setting point that way, and Hebrews 3:12 and 3:19 name unbelief as the danger. The other reading can fairly answer that

"the sin" may mean sin in general, or each reader's own besetting sin, as the verse is often applied. That application is fair, but the epistle's own subject keeps unbelief in front.

F. "Let Us Run with Patience the Race That Is Set Before Us"

"Race" is *agōn* (Strong's G73), a contest, a struggle. Paul uses it of his own ministry: **"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith" (2 Timothy 4:7)**, where "fight" is *agōn*. It is the word for an athletic contest, and the effort and struggle it involves.

"Set before us" is *prokeimai*, "to lie before." The same word describes **"the hope set before us" (Hebrews 6:18)** and, in the very next verse, **"the joy that was set before him" (Hebrews 12:2)**. The race is set before us as the joy was set before Jesus. Neither is chosen by the runner. God set it.

"With patience" is *hypomonē*, the word from 10:36. The readers "had need of patience," and now they are told to run with it. The frame of the passage closes. Patience before chapter 11, patience after it, and in between the record of those who had it.

The race is not a sprint. It is run with endurance, and its finish is not in this life. The witnesses ran and died in faith, not having received the promise. The believer runs toward the same finish: the coming of the Lord and the resurrection.

In short: the race is a contest God has set before us, to be run with endurance toward a finish that lies beyond this life.

Weighing it: Direct statement — for the meanings of agōn, prokeimai and hypomonē; Strong inference — that 12:1 closes the frame begun at 10:36 (Claim S). The other reading has little to answer here.

In Short: Because so great a company of witnesses surrounds us, the vast company to whom God bore witness and who testify to us by their record, we are to strip off every weight, throw off the unbelief that tangles our feet, and run with endurance the race God has set before us.

Chapter 12: Looking unto Jesus

> **Hebrews 12:2** *Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. 12:3 For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.*

A. "Looking unto Jesus"

"Looking" is *aphoraō* (Strong's G872), "to consider attentively," formed from "away from" and "see." It means to look away from other things and fix the eyes on one. It occurs only twice in the New Testament, here and in Paul's **"so soon as I shall see how it will go with me" (Philippians 2:23)**.

Look away from what? The writer has just set before us a great company of witnesses. Now he tells us to look away from them, to Jesus. Every witness of chapter 11 showed faith in some part: Abel in worship, Enoch in walk, Noah in witness, Abraham in obedience, Moses in choice, the martyrs in suffering. Jesus shows it whole. The witnesses are an encouragement. Jesus is the one to look at.

In short: the runner is to look away from everything else, even the witnesses, and fix his eyes on Jesus.

Weighing it: Direct statement — for the meaning of aphoraō; Reasonable inference — that "looking away" includes looking away from the witnesses to Jesus (Claim J). The other reading can fairly answer that "looking away" may mean looking away from distractions and weights, not from the witnesses. Both may be in view; the main point, that the eyes are fixed on Jesus, stands either way.

B. "The Author and Finisher of Our Faith"

"Author" is *archēgos* (Strong's G747), "a chief leader." It occurs four times in the New Testament, always of Christ:

- **"And killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead" (Acts 3:15)**;
- **"Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour" (Acts 5:31)**;
- **"to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings" (Hebrews 2:10)**;
- and here, "the author ... of our faith."

The word describes a leader who goes first and opens the way for others to follow. Christ is not only the source of faith; he is its pioneer. He went the whole way first.

"Finisher" is *teleiōtēs* (Strong's G5051), "a completer, i.e. consummater." It occurs only here. It comes from the same root as *teleioō*, "made perfect." The witnesses of chapter 11 are not made perfect without us (11:40). Jesus is the one who brings faith to its completion. He began it and he finished it.

The word "our" is in italics in the King James Version: the translators supplied it. The Greek reads "the author and finisher of faith." Bullinger observes that Jesus is here the author and finisher not only of our faith, but of faith itself: the one in whom faith was seen complete, every feature perfect, where each witness of chapter 11 showed only part.

In short: Jesus is the leader who went first and the one who brought faith to its completion.

Weighing it: Direct statement — for the meanings of archēgos and teleiōtēs and for "our" being supplied; Reasonable inference — that Jesus is the complete example of faith where the witnesses were partial (Claim J). The other reading can fairly answer that "author and finisher of our faith" may mean the one who starts and completes faith *in us*, which is also true (Philippians 1:6). The verse can bear both senses; the context of a list of examples favours the sense of Jesus as the perfect example.

C. "Who for the Joy That Was Set Before Him Endured the Cross"

"For" is *anti*. It can mean "in exchange for" or "because of." Two readings follow:

1. **Because of the joy.** Jesus endured the cross for the sake of the joy that lay ahead: the joy of finishing the work, of the redemption of his people, of being exalted to the right hand of God. This matches **"set before him,"** the same verb as "the race that is set before us" (12:1) and "the hope set before us" (6:18). The joy lay ahead, as the goal.
2. **Instead of the joy.** Jesus gave up the joy that was before him, the glory he could have had without suffering, and chose the cross instead.

The first reading fits the parallel with the runner best. The runner runs toward what is set before him; Jesus endured toward the joy set before him. It also fits the next clause: he "is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." The joy was reached.

"Endured" is *hypomenō* again, the verb of 10:32. The readers had endured a great fight of afflictions. Jesus endured the cross.

"Despising the shame." "Despising" is *kataphroneō* (Strong's G2706), "to think against, i.e. disesteem." He did not deny the shame or pretend it was not real; he counted it as nothing next to the joy. Crucifixion was the most shameful death of the ancient world. **"Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree" (Galatians 3:13)**. Jesus thought it of no account against what lay ahead.

In short: Jesus endured the cross and thought nothing of its shame, because of the joy that lay ahead of him.

Weighing it: Reasonable inference — for "because of the joy" rather than "instead of the joy" (Claim J). The parallel with "set before us" (12:1) favours it. The other reading can fairly answer that *anti* most often means "in place of," and that Philippians 2:6-7 speaks of Christ giving up what was his. Both readings are held by careful readers; both leave Jesus the complete example of endurance.

D. "And Is Set Down at the Right Hand of the Throne of God"

The verse ends where the whole epistle points. Jesus is not only an example of faith that endured; he is the one witness who has finished the race and been raised, exalted and seated. The cross was followed by the resurrection, and the resurrection by the ascension into heaven, where he sat down at God's right hand.

Hebrews says this five times:

- **"when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high" (Hebrews 1:3)**;
- **"Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool" (Hebrews 1:13)**, from Psalm 110:1;
- **"We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens" (Hebrews 8:1)**;
- **"But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God" (Hebrews 10:12)**;
- and here.

This is what separates Jesus from every witness of chapter 11. They died and did not receive the promise. He died, was raised, ascended, and sat down. He is the firstfruits, the first of the resurrection order (1 Corinthians 15:20-23). The witnesses wait; he has arrived. That is why the runner looks to him: he is not only the example of the race but the proof that the finish is real.

And from that seat at God's right hand, Peter tells us, he poured out the gift of holy spirit on the day of Pentecost: **"Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear" (Acts 2:33)**. The cross, the resurrection and the ascension together completed the work that opened the way for us.

In short: Jesus alone of all the witnesses has finished the race, been raised, ascended, and sat down at God's right hand, which proves the finish is real.

Weighing it: Direct statement — that Jesus is set down at the right hand of God, and that the witnesses have not received the promise (Claims J and R). Nothing on the other side disputes the first. The contrast with the witnesses rests on 11:39-40, already weighed.

E. "For Consider Him"

> **Hebrews 12:3** *For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.*

"Consider" is *analogizomai* (Strong's G357), "to estimate, i.e. (figuratively) contemplate." It occurs only here. It is a word of reckoning: add it up, weigh it, compare. Elsewhere Hebrews says "consider" with another word: **"consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus" (Hebrews 3:1)**; **"let us consider one another" (Hebrews 10:24)**. Here the writer chooses a word that means to reckon one thing against another. Compare what Jesus endured with what you are enduring.

He endured "such contradiction of sinners against himself." "Contradiction" is *antilogia*, speaking against, hostility in word and deed. Jesus endured it from the people he came to save.

"Lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds." "Wearied" is *kamnō*, to grow weary, to tire. "Faint" is *ekluomai* (Strong's G1590), "to relax ... faint," like a bowstring going slack. Paul uses it in **"in due season we shall reap, if we faint not" (Galatians 6:9)**, and Hebrews again two verses later, **"nor faint when thou art rebuked of him" (Hebrews 12:5)**.

This is where the passage ends. It began with the readers' own endurance (10:32) and warned against drawing back (10:38). It ends by telling them how not to faint: consider him. When the runner is tired, he looks at the one who endured far more, and finished.

In short: when the runner is weary, he is to reckon up what Jesus endured, and take heart.

Weighing it: Direct statement — for the command and its purpose; Strong inference — that 12:3 closes the passage begun at 10:32 (Claim S). The verbs of endurance and the danger of drawing back or fainting appear at both ends. The other reading can fairly answer that 12:4-13 continues the same theme of endurance, so the passage could be extended. That is true; 12:3 is the end of the frame, and what follows applies it.

In Short: The runner looks away from everything else, even the witnesses, to Jesus: the leader who went first and the one who brought faith to its completion. He endured the cross for the joy ahead, counted its shame as nothing, and is seated at God's right hand. When the runner tires, he reckons up what Jesus endured, and does not faint.

Chapter 13: Where the Road Goes Next

The passage of this study ends at 12:3. The rest of chapter 12 applies what it has said. This chapter follows the road briefly, so that the reader can see where the endurance of 12:1-3 leads.

A. The Training of Sons (12:4-13)

> **Hebrews 12:4** *Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin. 12:5 And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: 12:6 For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.*

"Ye have not yet resisted unto blood." The readers had suffered loss and reproach (10:32-34), but not yet death. Then the writer reminds them of Proverbs 3:11-12: the Lord trains those he loves.

"Chastening" is *paideia* (Strong's G3809), "tutorage, i.e. education or training; by implication, disciplinary correction." It is the word for raising a child. Paul uses it of **"the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4)** and of scripture being profitable **"for instruction in righteousness" (2 Timothy 3:16)**. The emphasis in this passage is on sonship: **"God dealeth with you as with sons" (Hebrews 12:7)**. The hardships the readers faced did not mean God had left them. Fathers train their sons, and God is **"the Father of spirits" (Hebrews 12:9)**.

The result: **"afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby" (Hebrews 12:11)**. "Exercised" is *gymnazō*, the word for athletic training. The runner of 12:1 is still in view. Then: **"Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees" (Hebrews 12:12)**. Get up and keep running.

In short: the hardships the readers faced were the training of sons by a Father, and they yield the fruit of righteousness.

Weighing it: Narrative. This section summarises the passage that follows the study's main text. The meaning of *paideia* and how the hardships relate to God's will are larger questions than this study can settle here.

B. Esau, the Counter-Witness (12:14-17)

> **Hebrews 12:16** *Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright. 12:17 For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.*

Right after the great cloud of faithful witnesses comes a warning example. Esau had the birthright, the inheritance of the firstborn, and he **"sold his birthright" (Hebrews 12:16)** for one meal (Genesis 25:29-34). He valued what he could see and taste now over what was promised later. That is the opposite of every witness in chapter 11. Moses chose reproach over Egypt's treasures, because he looked to the reward; Esau chose a meal over the birthright, because he did not.

In short: Esau is the counter-witness, who gave up the promised inheritance for something he could have at once.

Weighing it: Direct statement — for Esau's sale of the birthright; Reasonable inference — that he stands as a deliberate contrast to the witnesses of chapter 11. The other reading can fairly answer that the writer may simply be adding another warning. Both are true.

C. Not Sinai, but Sion (12:18-24)

> **Hebrews 12:18** *For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, 12:19 And the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which voice they that heard intreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more: 12:20 (For they could not endure that which was commanded, And if so much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned, or thrust through with a dart: 12:21 And so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake:) 12:22 But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, 12:23 To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, 12:24 And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.*

The writer sets two approaches to God side by side. At Sinai, Israel drew near to a mountain that burned with fire, and the people begged that the voice speak no more. Now the believer draws near to "mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem," to angels, to the church of the firstborn, to God the Judge of all, to "the spirits of just men made perfect," to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling.

"Ye are come" (*proselēlythate*) is the same verb, in the same form, as "ye are not come" in verse 18. It is the epistle's word for drawing near to God in worship (4:16; 7:25; 10:1, 22; 11:6). The contrast is between two covenants and two ways of approach, not between two points in time. The same epistle says plainly that the city is still to come: **"For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come" (Hebrews 13:14)**. What the believer has now is access and title. Possession comes later.

The list ends with "the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel." The first witness of chapter 11 appears again at the end. Abel's blood cried from the ground for justice; Christ's blood speaks reconciliation.

"The spirits of just men made perfect" needs its own treatment, which is given in Appendix E. In brief: it cannot mean the faithful dead, already perfected in heaven, because the same writer has just said they are "not made perfect" without us (11:40). It is best read as the justified, perfected in standing by Christ's one offering (10:14), with a fair alternative reading of all the just of every age, named as they will be at the resurrection.

In short: the believer draws near not to Sinai but to God through Jesus, by title to a city still to come.

Weighing it: Strong inference — that "ye are come" is the language of approach under the new covenant, not of arrival in a later age (Claim R). Appendix E weighs the whole passage.

D. "See That Ye Refuse Not Him That Speaketh" (12:25-29)

> **Hebrews 12:25** *See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven: 12:26 Whose voice then shook the earth: but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven. 12:27 And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain. 12:28 Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: 12:29 For our God is a consuming fire.*

The fifth warning closes the chapter, and returns to the epistle's opening theme. God has spoken; do not refuse him. Once his voice shook the earth at Sinai; he has promised to shake heaven and earth "yet once more," so that only what cannot be shaken remains. The believer is "receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved." That is a present participle: being received, not yet entered in full.

The response asked for is grace, and service, and reverence: **"let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear" (Hebrews 12:28)**.

In short: the chapter ends where the epistle began, with God speaking, and the believer receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken.

Weighing it: Direct statement — for the warning and the promised shaking.

E. "Bearing His Reproach" (13:13-14)

One more link carries the passage's themes into the last chapter of the epistle.

> **Hebrews 13:12** *Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate. 13:13 Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach. 13:14 For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come.*

The readers had borne reproach (10:33). Moses had chosen the reproach of Christ (11:26). Jesus had despised the shame of the cross (12:2). Now the readers are called to go out to him "without the camp," outside the old system, "bearing his reproach." And the reason is the same as the patriarchs' reason: "here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come." The word "seek" is *epizēteō*, the same word used of the patriarchs who **"seek a country" (Hebrews 11:14)**.

In short: the epistle ends by calling the readers to bear Christ's reproach and seek the city to come, as the patriarchs did.

Weighing it: Direct statement — for the shared words (oneidismos, epizēteō) in 10:33, 11:14, 11:26 and 13:13-14 (Claim S).

In Short: After the race comes the training of sons, the warning of Esau, the contrast of Sinai and Sion, the final call not to refuse him that speaks, and the call to bear Christ's reproach while seeking the city to come. The road goes on as it began: by faith, with endurance, toward a promise not yet received.

Chapter 14: Truths to Hold

This chapter gathers the study's findings for today's believer. They are arranged by what 2 Timothy 3:16 says scripture is profitable for.

A. Doctrine: What to Believe

- **Faith rests on what God has said.** It is not a feeling or a leap in the dark. Every "by faith" in Hebrews 11 follows a word, a call, a warning or a promise from God (11:3, 7, 8, 11). **"So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17)**.
- **Faith is the assurance of what is not yet seen.** It holds God's promise as title to what is not yet possessed (11:1).

- **God is, and he rewards those who seek him** (11:6). Without faith it is impossible to please him.
- **God made the ages by his word** (11:3). The first thing faith understands is that what is seen came from what God said.
- **The witnesses are not yet made perfect.** They died in faith, did not receive the promise, and wait for the resurrection (11:13, 39-40). They are not watching from heaven.
- **Jesus alone has finished the race.** He endured the cross, rose, ascended, and sits at God's right hand (12:2). He is the firstfruits of the resurrection.

In short: faith rests on God's word; the witnesses wait for the resurrection; Jesus alone is seated at God's right hand.

Weighing it: Mixed, stated per point. Each point carries the weight given where it was argued in the chapters above, and Appendix F lists them all.

B. Reproof and Correction: What to Put Right

- **Faith does not promise escape from all suffering.** Hebrews 11:35-38 records believers tortured, imprisoned, stoned, sawn asunder, slain and destitute, all "by faith," all with a good report. Deliverance is not the measure of faith, and suffering is not proof of unbelief.
- **The witnesses are not spectators.** The popular picture of the dead watching from the stands is not in the text. They are witnesses because God bore witness of them, and they testify to us by their record.
- **God records faith, not a man's whole record.** Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah and David all failed, and scripture records their failings plainly. God names them here for what they believed.
- **Faith is not opposed to obedience.** Every witness acted. Abraham went, Noah built, Moses chose, Israel marched. **"Faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone" (James 2:17)**.

In short: faith does not guarantee escape from suffering; the witnesses do not watch us; God records faith; and faith always acts.

Weighing it: Mixed, stated per point. See the weighing notes in Chapters 9, 11 and 3.

C. Instruction in Righteousness: How to Walk

- **Remember** what God has already brought you through (10:32).
- **Do not throw away your confidence** (10:35). You have need of endurance (10:36).
- **Live as a stranger and pilgrim** (11:13-16). **"For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ" (Philippians 3:20)**.
- **Choose the reproach of Christ** over the pleasures of sin for a season (11:25-26).
- **Lay aside every weight** and the sin that so easily besets, and **run with endurance** the race set before you (12:1).
- **Look unto Jesus.** Consider him when you are wearied and ready to faint (12:2-3).

In short: remember, hold on, live as a pilgrim, choose Christ's reproach, strip for the race, and look to Jesus.

Weighing it: Narrative. These are the epistle's own instructions, gathered.

D. Hope and Comfort

The promise is certain. God has provided some better thing for us. Those who went before are waiting for the same resurrection morning, and we will be made perfect with them.

> **Romans 15:4** *For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.*
> **1 Thessalonians 4:17** *Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. 4:18 Wherefore comfort one another with these words.*

In short: the promise is sure, and the witnesses and we will be made complete together.

Weighing it: Direct statement — for the comfort scripture itself gives (Claim R).

E. What Would Change These Conclusions

A study should say plainly what evidence would overturn it, so that a reader can go looking. Four findings would change the conclusions here, and this study has found none of them in the text.

1. **A passage showing that the elders of Hebrews 11 have already received the promise, or are now made perfect apart from us.** That would contradict 11:39-40 directly, and would overturn Claim R.
2. **A use of *martys* in Hebrews, or in the New Testament, where it plainly means a spectator rather than one who testifies, together with evidence that the dead are conscious.** Both would be needed to overturn Claim W, because Ecclesiastes 9:5 says the dead "know not any thing."
3. **A "by faith" in Hebrews 11 that clearly does not act on anything God said, promised or did.** That would weaken Claim F, which holds that faith in the chapter always rests on God's word.
4. **A statement in the passage that the sufferers of 11:35-38 lacked faith, or obtained a lesser report.** That would overturn Claim E. Verse 39 says the opposite.

In short: four specific findings would change these conclusions, and the reader is invited to look for them.

Weighing it: Method, not argument.

In Short: Faith rests on what God has said, holds his promise as title to what is unseen, and acts. It sometimes conquers and sometimes suffers, and God counts both. The witnesses of Hebrews 11 testify to us by their record and wait for the resurrection. Jesus alone has finished the race and sits at God's right hand. So we lay aside every weight, run with endurance, and look to him.

Appendix A: The Old Testament Record Behind Each Witness

Each witness of Hebrews 11 is listed with the verse in Hebrews, what the verse says, and where the full account stands in the Old Testament.

Hebrews	Witness	What Hebrews says	Old Testament record
11:4	Abel	offered a more excellent sacrifice; obtained witness that he was righteous	Genesis 4:1-10
11:5-6	Enoch	translated that he should not see death; pleased God	Genesis 5:18-24; Jude 14-15
11:7	Noah	warned of God, prepared an ark; heir of righteousness by faith	Genesis 6:8-9:17
11:8	Abraham	obeyed when called, went out not knowing whither	Genesis 12:1-5; Acts 7:2-4
11:9-10	Abraham, Isaac, Jacob	sojourned in the land of promise in tents; looked for a city	Genesis 12-35; 23:4
11:11-12	Sarah	received strength to conceive; judged him faithful who had promised	Genesis 17:15-21; 18:9-15; 21:1-7
11:13-16	The patriarchs	died in faith; strangers and pilgrims; desired a better country	Genesis 23:4; 47:9
11:17-19	Abraham	offered up Isaac; accounted God able to raise him	Genesis 22:1-19
11:20	Isaac	blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come	Genesis 27:1-40
11:21	Jacob	blessed Joseph's sons when dying; worshipped on his staff	Genesis 47:29-31; 48:1-20
11:22	Joseph	made mention of the departing; gave commandment concerning his bones	Genesis 50:24-26; Exodus 13:19; Joshua 24:32
11:23	Moses' parents	hid him three months; not afraid of the king's commandment	Exodus 1:22-2:10; 6:20
11:24-26	Moses	refused to be called son of Pharaoh's daughter; chose affliction	Exodus 2:11-15; Acts 7:23-29
11:27	Moses	forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king	Exodus 10:28-29; 12:31-42 (compare 2:14-15)
11:28	Moses	kept the passover and the sprinkling of blood	Exodus 12:1-30
11:29	Israel	passed through the Red sea	Exodus 14:15-31
11:30	Israel	the walls of Jericho fell after seven days	Joshua 6:1-21
11:31	Rahab	perished not; received the spies with peace	Joshua 2:1-21; 6:22-25
11:32	Gideon	named	Judges 6-8
11:32	Barak	named	Judges 4-5
11:32	Samson	named	Judges 13-16
11:32	Jephthah	named	Judges 11-12
11:32	David	named	1 Samuel 16 - 1 Kings 2
11:32	Samuel	named	1 Samuel 1-25
11:33	(unnamed)	stopped the mouths of lions	Daniel 6:16-23; Judges 14:5-6; 1 Samuel 17:34-36
11:34	(unnamed)	quenched the violence of fire	Daniel 3:19-27

11:35	(unnamed)	women received their dead raised to life	1 Kings 17:17-24; 2 Kings 4:18-37
11:36	(unnamed)	mockings, scourgings, bonds, imprisonment	Jeremiah 20:2; 37:15; 38:6; 1 Kings 22:27; 2 Chronicles 16:10
11:37	(unnamed)	stoned; slain with the sword	2 Chronicles 24:20-21; 1 Kings 19:10; Jeremiah 26:23
11:37-38	(unnamed)	wandered in sheepskins, deserts, mountains, caves	2 Kings 1:8; 1 Kings 18:4; 19:9; 1 Samuel 22:1

Two items in verses 35 to 37 have no Old Testament record: those "tortured, not accepting deliverance," and those "sawn asunder." Traditions outside scripture name people for both. This study notes the traditions and does not rely on them.

Appendix B: Word Studies

Each entry gives the Greek word, its Strong's number and definition, and where it occurs. Occurrence counts are for the Greek New Testament.

Faith (*pistis*, G4102) and "by faith" (*pistei*). Strong's: "persuasion, i.e. credence; moral conviction (of religious truth, or the truthfulness of God ...)." In Hebrews 11 the dative *pistei*, "by faith," occurs eighteen times: verses 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 11, 17, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 27, 28, 29, 30 and 31. The King James Version renders it "by faith" fifteen times and "through faith" three times (11:3, 11, 28). Verse 13, "in faith," is a different phrase, *kata pistin*, "according to faith." Verses 33 and 39, "through faith," are *dia pisteōs*.

Substance (*hypostasis*, G5287). "A setting under (support) ... essence, or abstractly, assurance." Five occurrences: 2 Corinthians 9:4 ("confident"); 11:17 ("confidence"); Hebrews 1:3 ("person"); 3:14 ("confidence"); 11:1 ("substance").

Evidence (*elenchos*, G1650). "Proof, conviction." In the Greek text used for these counts it occurs only at Hebrews 11:1. The text behind the King James Version also has it at 2 Timothy 3:16 ("reproof").

Witness (*martys*, G3144) and bear witness (*martyreō*, G3140). *Martys*: "a witness ... by analogy, a 'martyr'." Thirty-five occurrences; in Hebrews only 10:28 ("two or three witnesses") and 12:1. *Martyreō*: "to be a witness, i.e. testify ... have (obtain, of) good (honest) report." Seventy-six occurrences; in Hebrews at 7:8, 7:17, 10:15, 11:2, 11:4 (twice), 11:5 and 11:39. The words for an onlooker, *autoptēs* (Luke 1:2) and *epoptēs* (2 Peter 1:16), each occur once and are not used in Hebrews.

Cloud (*nephos*, G3509). "A cloud." Only Hebrews 12:1. The ordinary word for a cloud, *nephelē*, occurs twenty-five times.

Patience (*hypomonē*, G5281) and endure (*hypomenō*, G5278). *Hypomonē*: "cheerful (or hopeful) endurance, constancy." Thirty-two occurrences; in Hebrews only 10:36 and 12:1. *Hypomenō*: "to stay under (behind), i.e. remain; figuratively, to undergo, i.e. bear (trials), have fortitude, persevere." Seventeen occurrences; in Hebrews at 10:32, 12:2, 12:3 and 12:7.

Recompence of reward (*misthapodosia*, G3405) and rewarder (*misthapodotēs*, G3406). *Misthapodosia*: "requital (good or bad)." Only Hebrews 2:2, 10:35 and 11:26. *Misthapodotēs*: "a remunerator." Only Hebrews 11:6.

Reproach (*oneidismos*). Five occurrences: Romans 15:3; 1 Timothy 3:7; Hebrews 10:33; 11:26; 13:13.

Better (*kreittōn*). Thirteen occurrences in Hebrews: 1:4; 6:9; 7:7; 7:19; 7:22; 8:6 (twice); 9:23; 10:34; 11:16; 11:35; 11:40; 12:24.

Made perfect (*teleioō*, G5048) and finisher (*teleiōtēs*, G5051). *Teleioō*: "to complete … accomplish … consummate." In Hebrews at 2:10; 5:9; 7:19; 7:28; 9:9; 10:1; 10:14; 11:40; 12:23. *Teleiōtēs*: "a completer, i.e. consummater." Only Hebrews 12:2.

Author (*archēgos*, G747). "A chief leader." Four occurrences, all of Christ: Acts 3:15 ("Prince of life"); 5:31 ("Prince and a Saviour"); Hebrews 2:10 ("captain"); 12:2 ("author").

Translate (*metatithēmi*, G3346). "To transfer, i.e. (literally) transport, (by implication) exchange … carry over, change, remove, translate, turn." Six occurrences: Acts 7:16; Galatians 1:6; Hebrews 7:12; 11:5 (twice); Jude 4.

Weight (*onkos*, G3591) and so easily beset (*euperistatos*, G2139). Both only in Hebrews 12:1. *Onkos*: "a mass … i.e. burden (hindrance)." *Euperistatos*: "well standing around, i.e. (a competitor) thwarting (a racer) in every direction."

Lay aside (*apotithēmi*, G659). "To put away." Eight occurrences in the Greek text used for these counts: Matthew 14:3; Acts 7:58; Ephesians 4:22, 25; Colossians 3:8; Hebrews 12:1; James 1:21; 1 Peter 2:1. The text behind the King James Version also has it at Romans 13:12 ("Let us therefore cast off the works of darkness").

Race (*agōn*, G73). A contest or struggle. Six occurrences: Philippians 1:30; Colossians 2:1; 1 Thessalonians 2:2; 1 Timothy 6:12; 2 Timothy 4:7; Hebrews 12:1.

Looking (*aphoraō*, G872). "To consider attentively." Two occurrences: Philippians 2:23; Hebrews 12:2.

Consider (*analogizomai*, G357). "To estimate, i.e. (figuratively) contemplate." Only Hebrews 12:3.

Seek (*epizēteō*). Thirteen occurrences; in Hebrews at 11:14 ("seek a country") and 13:14 ("seek one to come"). The closely related *ekzēteō*, "seek diligently," is used at 11:6 and 12:17.

Appendix C: Habakkuk 2:4 in Romans, Galatians and Hebrews

	Romans 1:17	Galatians 3:11	Hebrews 10:38
The question in context	How is the righteousness of God revealed?	How is a man justified: by the Law or by faith?	How does the believer go on?
The weight falls on	"the just"	"shall live"	"by faith"
What follows	The gospel; the wrath of God on unrighteousness	The Law is not of faith; Christ redeemed us from its curse	Hebrews 11: "By faith … by faith …"

> **Habakkuk 2:2** *And the LORD answered me, and said, Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it. 2:3 For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it*

> *will not tarry. 2:4 Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him: but the just shall live by his faith.*

Three things in Hebrews' use of the verse are worth noting:

1. **"Yet a little while" (10:37)** is not in Habakkuk. It echoes the Greek of Isaiah 26:20, "for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast."
2. **"He that shall come will come" (10:37).** Habakkuk says the vision will come. Hebrews says a person will come.
3. **The order of the clauses is reversed.** Habakkuk puts the proud man first and the just man second. Hebrews puts "the just shall live by faith" first, then "if any man draw back," which leads straight into 10:39, "we are not of them who draw back." The phrase "my soul shall have no pleasure in him" follows the Greek Old Testament.

The observation that each New Testament quotation puts the weight on a different part of the sentence is an observation about context, not something the words themselves mark. The reader can test it by reading each quotation in its chapter.

Appendix D: Who Wrote Hebrews, and to Whom

A. The Evidence for Paul

1. **2 Peter 3:15-16.** Peter writes to believers of the dispersion (1 Peter 1:1; 2 Peter 3:1) that **"our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you" (2 Peter 3:15)**. If Paul wrote to Hebrew believers, and no other such letter is known, Hebrews is the natural candidate.
2. **Timothy.** The writer calls Timothy "our brother" and hopes to travel with him (13:23). Timothy was Paul's closest companion.
3. **Bonds.** The writer speaks of compassion shown to him **"in my bonds" (Hebrews 10:34)**, in the reading of the text behind the King James Version. Paul was imprisoned more than once.
4. **The thought.** The argument of Hebrews, that the Law was a shadow and Christ the substance, that faith and not the works of the Law makes a man righteous, that the just shall live by faith, is the argument of Romans and Galatians.
5. **Anonymity.** Paul was hated by many of his own nation (Acts 21:21, 28). A letter to Hebrews that opened with his name might not have been read at all. That would explain why this letter alone of his has no greeting.
6. **Manuscripts.** In several of the oldest Greek manuscripts Hebrews is placed among Paul's letters, in some directly after 2 Thessalonians.

B. The Evidence Against

1. **Style.** The Greek of Hebrews is more polished and its manner of argument different from Paul's other letters. Many readers, from the early centuries to now, have noted this.
2. **Hebrews 2:3.** The writer says the salvation **"was confirmed unto us by them that heard him."** Paul insists elsewhere that he received his gospel directly from the Lord (Galatians 1:11-12). Some take 2:3 to mean the writer was not an apostle.

3. **Early doubt.** Some early church writers suggested Barnabas, Luke, Apollos or others.

C. Weighing It

The style objection is real, but a man writing to a different audience on a different subject may write differently, and Paul was **"brought up ... at the feet of Gamaliel" (Acts 22:3)** and could write to Hebrews as a Hebrew. The objection from 2:3 is weaker than it looks: "us" may include the readers, and Paul can speak of the apostles' witness without denying his own revelation. The positive evidence of 2 Peter 3:15, together with Timothy, the bonds and the argument, favours Paul more strongly than any other single candidate.

Weighing it: Reasonable inference — for Paul as writer. The other reading can fairly answer that 2 Peter 3:15 may refer to another letter, such as Galatians or Romans, written to churches that included Hebrew believers. This study does not depend on the answer.

D. To Whom

The readers were Hebrew believers who had suffered for their faith (10:32-34) and were tempted to go back to the temple system (10:26-29; 13:9-14). Whether they lived in Judea or in the dispersion is not stated. The writer sends greetings from **"They of Italy" (Hebrews 13:24)**, which may mean he wrote from Italy, or that Italians with him sent greetings home. The letter was written before the temple was destroyed, since it speaks of the sacrifices as still offered (10:1-3, 11).

Appendix E: Hebrews 12:23, "The Spirits of Just Men Made Perfect"

A. The Question

Read quickly, Hebrews 12:22-24 sounds as if believers had already been carried into the end of the ages, and as if the righteous dead were in heaven now, already perfected. Both readings would conflict with what this study has found in Hebrews 11: that the witnesses have not received the promise and are not made perfect without us.

> **Hebrews 12:22** *But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, 12:23 To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, 12:24 And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.*

B. "Ye Are Come" Is the Language of Approach

The verb in verse 22, "ye are come," is *proselēlythate*, the perfect tense of *proserchomai*, "to come near, approach." It is the same verb, in the same form, as in verse 18, "ye are *not* come unto the mount." The writer is comparing two approaches to God, not two places on a map or two points in time.

Proserchomai is the epistle's word for drawing near to God in worship:

- **"Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace" (Hebrews 4:16)**;

- he is able to save them **"that come unto God by him" (Hebrews 7:25)**;
- the Law could never **"make the comers thereunto perfect" (Hebrews 10:1)**;
- **"Let us draw near with a true heart" (Hebrews 10:22)**;
- **"he that cometh to God must believe that he is" (Hebrews 11:6)**.

So verse 22 says: when you draw near to God, this is what you draw near to. At Sinai the people dared not touch the mountain and begged the voice to stop. Now the worshipper draws near with boldness, by the blood of Jesus (10:19). That is a contrast of covenants, Law and new covenant, not a step forward into a later age.

Weighing it: Strong inference — that "ye are come" describes approach under the new covenant, not arrival in a later age. The other reading can fairly answer that a perfect tense can describe a completed arrival. The same perfect stands in verse 18 of the approach to Sinai, which Israel made in its own day. Bullinger reads the perfect in 12:22 as standing for a future, "ye ... shall come," by a figure of speech. That reading also places the arrival in the future, and so agrees that the believer has not yet entered the city.

C. The City Is Not Yet Possessed

Hebrews never treats the heavenly city as already entered:

> **Hebrews 13:14** *For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come.*

The city is the one Abraham "looked for" (11:10), which God "hath prepared" (11:16), and which we still "seek" (13:14). "Receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved" (12:28) is a present participle: being received. The shaking of heaven and earth is still to come (12:26-27). And John later sees the city **"coming down from God out of heaven" (Revelation 21:2)**.

What the believer has now is title and access, not possession. Paul writes in the same way: **"But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all" (Galatians 4:26)**; **"our conversation is in heaven" (Philippians 3:20)**; God **"hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (Ephesians 2:6)**. To speak of a sure future as already present is the figure Bullinger calls *Prolepsis*, "anticipation," and he gives an example from Hebrews itself: **"Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet"**, of which the same writer says, **"But now we see not yet all things put under him" (Hebrews 2:8)**.

Weighing it: Direct statement — that the city is not yet possessed (13:14); Strong inference — that 12:22 describes present title and access. The other reading can fairly answer that 13:14 speaks of an earthly city the readers lacked. But the contrast in 13:14 is between "here" and "one to come," and the city to come is the heavenly city of 11:10-16.

D. Each Item in the List

- **Mount Sion, the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem.** God's own dwelling, of which earthly Zion was the picture: the city of 11:10-16 and Galatians 4:26.
- **An innumerable company of angels.** These are **"ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation" (Hebrews 1:14)**. The believer is related to them now, as an heir whom they serve.

- **The general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven.** "General assembly" is *panēgyris*, a festal gathering, found only here. "Firstborn" is plural: the heirs. It answers Esau, who sold his birthright (12:16). "Written in heaven" means enrolled, the word used of a census, and Jesus used the same idea of living disciples: **"rejoice, because your names are written in heaven" (Luke 10:20)**.
- **God the Judge of all.** The God before whom the justified now stand without fear.
- **The spirits of just men made perfect.** See section E.
- **Jesus the mediator of the new covenant. "He is the mediator of a better covenant" (Hebrews 8:6)**. The covenant was ratified in his blood, and its ministers already serve under it (2 Corinthians 3:6).
- **The blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.** The list closes on Abel, the first witness of chapter 11. Abel's blood cried for judgment (Genesis 4:10); Christ's blood speaks reconciliation.

Weighing it: Narrative.

E. Three Readings of "The Spirits of Just Men Made Perfect"

Reading A: the righteous dead, now conscious in heaven and already perfected. This is the traditional reading, and many careful commentators hold it. Against it:

> **Hebrews 11:39** *And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: 11:40 God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.*

- The same writer, a page earlier, says the faithful dead are not made perfect without us.
- They "all died in faith, not having received the promises" (11:13). **"David is not ascended into the heavens" (Acts 2:34)**. The dead "know not any thing" (Ecclesiastes 9:5).
- To hold Reading A, one has to split perfection in two: spirits perfected now, bodies later. Hebrews 11:40 makes no such split.

Weighing it: Strong inference — against Reading A. Hebrews 11:39-40 directly states that the faithful dead are not made perfect apart from us.

Reading B: the justified, perfected in standing by Christ's one offering. Hebrews uses "made perfect" (*teleioō*) chiefly of the worshipper's standing before God. The Law "made nothing perfect" (7:19); its sacrifices **"could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience" (Hebrews 9:9)**. Then:

> **Hebrews 10:14** *For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.*

"Perfected" there is the same verb, in the same perfect tense, as "made perfect" in 12:23. It is said of living believers, through Christ's one offering, now that he has sat down at the right hand of God (10:12): the cross completed in the resurrection and the ascension. And "spirits" for living people in their relation to God stands in the same chapter: **"the Father of spirits" (Hebrews 12:9)**, set against **"fathers of our flesh."**

This reading fits the passage's own logic. At Sinai no one could approach, because the Law made no one perfect. Now the approach is open, because the worshippers have been perfected by Christ's one offering.

Weighing it: Reasonable inference — for Reading B, the strongest of the three on the epistle's own vocabulary. The other reading can fairly answer that this is not the majority view, and that a list moving from "church of the firstborn" to "spirits of just men" seems to name two groups. It may name the same people under two aspects: enrolled as heirs, and perfected in standing. Or it may name the faithful of every age, which is Reading C.

Reading C: the righteous of all ages, named in the perfected state God guarantees them at the resurrection. By the same figure of anticipation, the writer names the whole company of the just as they will be when they and we are "made perfect" together (11:40). The believer has "come to" that company by title, as to the city.

Weighing it: Reasonable inference — for Reading C. It is fully consistent with 11:40 and with the sleep of the dead. It is a little weaker than Reading B only because the epistle's other perfect-tense use of *teleioō* (10:14) describes a perfection already given.

F. Conclusion

The epistle's own words exclude Reading A. Reading B is preferred, and Reading C is a fair alternative. Neither places the dead in heaven now. Hebrews 12:22-24 contrasts two covenants, Sinai and Sion, and tells the believer what his access now includes: some things he draws near to now (God, Jesus, the blood, the angels who serve the heirs), and some he holds by title and will possess later (the city, the kingdom, and the full perfecting of all the just at the resurrection).

In short: "ye are come" is a worshipper's approach under a better covenant; the city is still to come (13:14); and the just are perfected in standing now (10:14) and in full together at the resurrection (11:40).

Appendix F: Every Argument Weighed

This table gathers every argument in the study, with the claim it bears on, its weight, and what the other reading can fairly answer. Claims are named in the Introduction, section E.

#	Argument	Where	Claim	Weight	What the other reading fairly answers
1	The passage runs from 10:32 to 12:3	Intro C; Ch 2 G	S	Reasonable inference	Another reader could start at 10:19 or end at 12:13
2	*Hypomonē* occurs in Hebrews only at 10:36 and 12:1	Ch 2 D	S	Direct statement	The noun is common elsewhere; two uses alone are not remarkable
3	*Hypomenō*, *oneidismos* and *misthapodosia* link 10:32-35 to chapter 11 and 12:2-3	Ch 2 C	S	Direct statement (words); Reasonable inference (design)	A writer may reuse words without a planned pattern
4	*Martyreō* frames chapter 11 (11:2 and 11:39)	Ch 2 G; Ch 3 B	S, W	Direct statement	None on the occurrences
5	Chapter 11 sits between the fourth and fifth warnings	Ch 1 C	S	Reasonable inference	The warnings are counted differently by different readers
6	The first readers were Hebrew believers under pressure to return to the temple system	Ch 1 D	—	Strong inference	Some propose Gentile readers
7	Paul wrote Hebrews	Ch 1 F; App D	—	Reasonable inference	Style; Hebrews 2:3; 2 Peter 3:15 may mean another letter
8	Habakkuk 2:4 is quoted with a different emphasis in each of its three settings	Ch 2 E; App C	F	Reasonable inference	The emphasis is drawn from context, not marked by the words
9	Every "by faith" acts on something God said	Ch 3 C	F	Strong inference	For Abel and Rahab no direct word to them is recorded
10	*Hypostasis* in 11:1 carries the sense of a title deed	Ch 3 A	F	Reasonable inference	The title-deed sense is background from outside scripture; "assurance" suffices
11	Abel's offering was more excellent as a blood offering on God's terms	Ch 4 A	F	Reasonable inference	Genesis records no command about offerings; some read it as the heart of the giver
12	Enoch did not escape death; he waits with the others	Ch 4 B	R	Strong inference	Hebrews 11:5 read alone sounds like an exemption
13	"See death" is an idiom that does not mean "never die" (John 8:51-52)	Ch 4 B	R	Strong inference	The Lord may speak of a deeper death; this shows the idiom can, not that 11:5 does
14	Reward is a theme through the chapter	Ch 4 C	F	Strong inference	None of substance
15	The city Abraham looked for is the city of Revelation 21	Ch 5 B	R	Reasonable inference	Genesis records no city in Abraham's words
16	"These all" in 11:13 means the patriarchal family	Ch 6 A	—	Reasonable inference	It may reach back to every name so far; nothing rests on it
17	God's being "their God" implies their resurrection	Ch 6 C	R	Strong inference	The Lord himself drew this inference (Matthew 22:31-32)

18	Abraham expected to return with Isaac (Genesis 22:5)	Ch 7 A	R	Strong inference	His words may have been spoken to spare the servants
19	Isaac's faith lay in confirming the blessing	Ch 7 B	—	Reasonable inference	His faith may lie simply in blessing concerning things to come
20	The bed/staff question in 11:21	Ch 7 C	—	Neutral	Nothing depends on it
21	"The reproach of Christ" is the reproach of God's anointed and his people	Ch 8 B	F, E	Reasonable inference	"Christ" may mean Israel or the line of promise
22	11:27 refers to the exodus, not the flight at forty	Ch 8 C	—	Reasonable inference	The verse's place before the Passover suggests the first departure
23	God records faith, not a man's whole record (11:32)	Ch 9 A	F	Reasonable inference	Hebrews names them for acts, not character; the same point
24	Deliverance is not the measure of faith	Ch 9 C	E	Strong inference	God does promise deliverance elsewhere; refusing release was itself a choice of faith
25	"A better resurrection" contrasts with the raisings in 11:35a	Ch 9 D	R	Strong inference	"Better" may compare the resurrection of the just with that of the unjust
26	All the witnesses received not the promise	Ch 10 A	R	Direct statement	"The promise" may mean the Messiah's first coming
27	The "better thing" is what Christ has brought	Ch 10 B	—	Strong inference	It may be a distinct future portion for this age
28	The witnesses are not now perfected in God's presence	Ch 10 C	R	Strong inference	They could be present with God yet not perfected; this assumes the point in question
29	The witnesses sleep in death and await the resurrection	Ch 10 D	R	Strong inference	Other passages are read as placing the righteous dead with God now
30	The "cloud of witnesses" are those God bore witness to, not spectators	Ch 11 C	W	Strong inference	*Martys* can mean an observer; "compassed about" suggests a crowd
31	The weights for the first readers included the pull of the old system	Ch 11 D	—	Reasonable inference	"Weight" may be general
32	"The sin which doth so easily beset" is unbelief	Ch 11 E	—	Reasonable inference	It may mean sin generally or each reader's own besetting sin
33	"Looking unto" includes looking away from the witnesses to Jesus	Ch 12 A	J	Reasonable inference	It may mean looking away from distractions only
34	Jesus is the complete example of faith	Ch 12 B	J	Reasonable inference	"Author and finisher" may mean the one who starts and completes faith in us

35	"For the joy" means because of the joy ahead	Ch 12 C	J	Reasonable inference	*Anti* most often means "in place of"
36	Jesus alone of the witnesses is seated at God's right hand	Ch 12 D	J, R	Direct statement	None
37	12:3 closes the passage begun at 10:32	Ch 12 E	S	Strong inference	12:4-13 continues the theme; the frame could be extended
38	Esau is a counter-witness to chapter 11	Ch 13 B	—	Reasonable inference	He may simply be another warning
39	"Ye are come" (12:22) is approach under the new covenant, not arrival in a later age	Ch 13 C; App E B	R	Strong inference	A perfect tense can describe a completed arrival
40	The city is not yet possessed	App E C	R	Direct statement	13:14 may speak of an earthly city
41	"Spirits of just men made perfect" are not the conscious dead in heaven (Reading A excluded)	App E E	R	Strong inference	Reading A is the majority view of the commentaries
42	Reading B: the justified, perfected in standing	App E E	—	Reasonable inference	Not the majority view; the list may name two groups
43	Reading C: all the just, named proleptically	App E E	—	Reasonable inference	Weaker than B on the epistle's own vocabulary
44	Hebrews 11:13 proves Enoch died	Ch 6 A	R	Neutral; not used	"These all" in 11:13 may be scoped to the patriarchs; verse 39 carries the point instead
45	The two "offered" verbs in 11:17 show Abraham completing the offering in purpose	Ch 7 A	—	Direct statement (tenses); not leaned on	The tenses are commonly read this way; the lesson of the verse does not depend on them

Sources Consulted

Scripture. The King James Version is quoted throughout, and every quotation has been checked against it. Greek word forms and occurrence counts were checked against the Greek New Testament, using a full-text lemma search, so that every "only here" and every count in this study can be verified. Where the text behind the King James Version differs from that Greek text at a point the study relies on, the difference is noted.

Lexicons and concordances. James Strong, *Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*, with its Hebrew and Greek dictionaries (1890). Definitions quoted from Strong's are marked with the Strong's number.

E. W. Bullinger. *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible* (1898), for *Prolepsis*, *Paraleipsis*, the use of the perfect tense for the future, and his notes on Hebrews 11:13, 11:21 and 12:1-2. *The Companion Bible* (1909-1922), for its notes and structure of Hebrews 10:32-12:10. Both are used as reference tools; their doctrinal conclusions are weighed, not adopted by default.

Henry Alford, *The Greek Testament*, volume 4 (1874), on Hebrews 12:22-24. Alford's reading of "the spirits of just men made perfect" as the conscious departed is weighed in Appendix E and not adopted.

The Greek Old Testament (Septuagint) is cited for Genesis 5:24, Genesis 47:31 and Habakkuk 2:4, where Hebrews follows its wording.

None of these sources carries scriptural weight in this study. Each is a tool or a background reference. Every doctrinal claim has been tested directly against the text of scripture.

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