



*Hebrews 11:33-35a*

# OUTLINE

- Main Point
- Background
- The Faith of:
  - Job
  - Lot (**Genesis 19**)
  - Caleb
  - Widow of Zarephath (**1 Kings 17:8-24**)
  - Habakkuk
  - Nehemiah
- Closing Thoughts

# MAIN POINT

- The Hall of Faith is too big to list everyone
  - The people addressed in **Hebrews** may not be known to us, but they are remembered by God
  - Some are “big” and some are “small”
  - Don’t have to be a great man to be a great man of faith
  - The only criteria to be used by God is **obedience** to what He wants to accomplish
- We should not be discouraged with the trials and problems we go through
  - Everything comes from God
  - He knows what we can and cannot handle
  - For our ultimate good, not here, but in Eternity
- What about us?
  - Given examples to follow
  - Faith is about **obedience**, not emotion or blind, wishful thinking
  - Need to align ourselves with what God is doing, not what we want to be doing

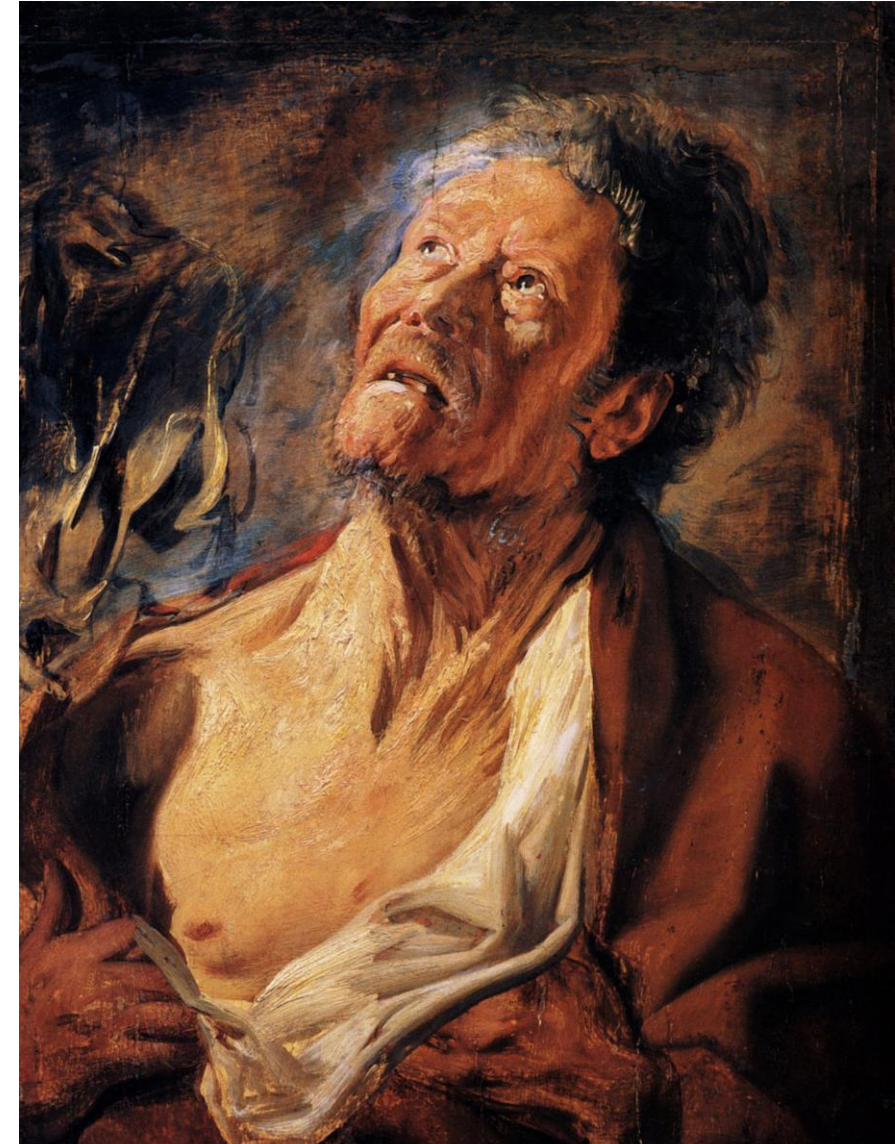
# BACKGROUND

- **Hebrews** was written to the Jews in Jerusalem because they had a problem
  - They were immature
  - Wanted to go back to Levitical ritual and custom
  - Did not understand the sufficiency of Christ
  - Likely suffering from persecution by the Jewish religious authorities
  - Addresses some very Jewish problems in a very Jewish way
- After demonstrating how and why Christ is superior to all and how His priesthood is higher than that of Aaron, the author of **Hebrews** calls them to live by faith
  - **Chapter 11** is a review of history and those who acted in faith as part of that history
  - Shows what faith is and is not
  - **Faith is obedience despite the consequences**
  - Faith is active, not passive
  - Done in obedience to God's commands, not our self-will or desires
- Acknowledges that there are too many to list and starts going through their actions in general
  - All did great things and are remembered by God, even if time did not permit for each one to have a section
  - We will chronologically review some of the Old Testament Saints not explicitly mentioned and learn about faith and obedience



# JOB

- Often misunderstood
  - Main issue is not the suffering of the innocent
  - Main issue is the Heavenly perspective
- Not a man without sin, but a man that dealt with his sin in the way God commanded
- Total trust in God, regardless of what God does to him (**Job 13:15**)
  - He was obedient to what he knew pleased God, even if things never got better
- Did not accuse God or rail against him
  - That was Satan's goal/plan (**Job 1:11**)
  - Job was part of a far larger drama than he had any way of knowing
- Endured with patience (**James 5:11**)
- Was a good witness
  - To the angels (**Job 1-2**; c.f. **1 Peter 1:12**)
  - To us (**Romans 15:4**)
- Held in high regard
  - Compared with Noah and Daniel (**Ezekiel 14:14, 20**)
  - A gentile
    - Old Testament and New Testament, Jew and Gentile, God has only ever had one way of salvation; by grace through faith (**Ephesians 2:8**; c.f. **Hebrews 10:1-4**)



# LOT (GENESIS 19)

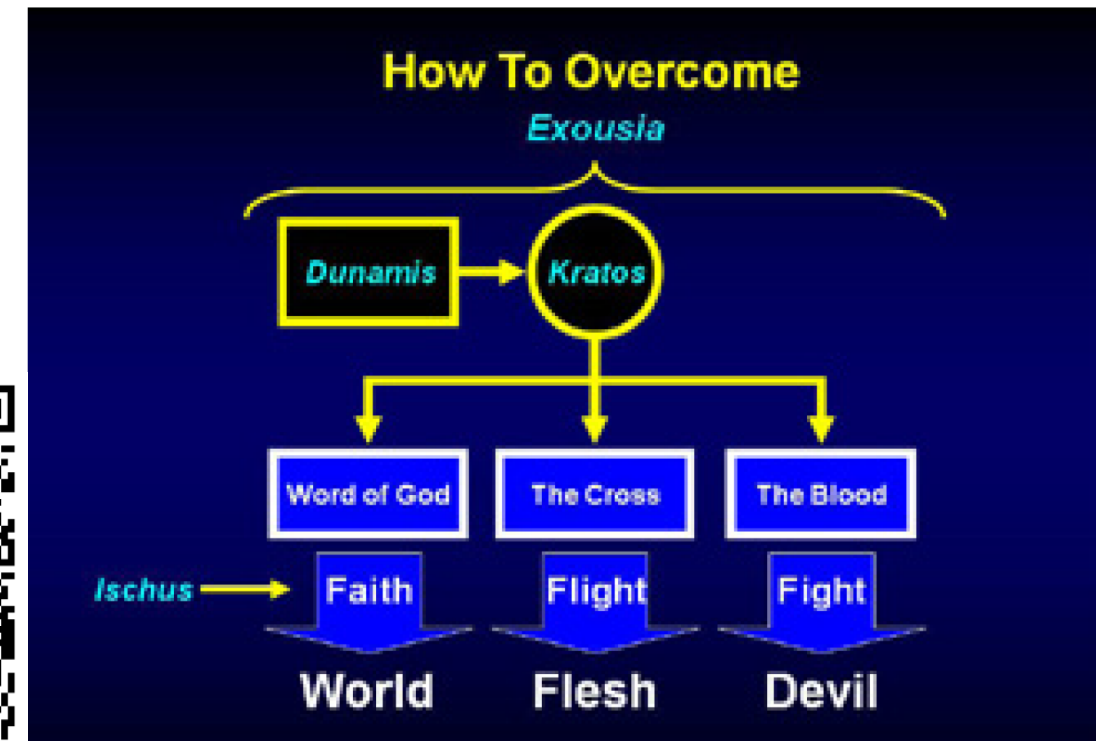
- Called a righteous man (2 Peter 2:6-8)
- Basically, did everything wrong
  - Moved to the wrong city (Genesis 13:12)
    - “Vexed” by it (2 Peter 2:7)
    - Did God try to “get his attention” with a war (Genesis 14)?
  - Became a powerful man there (Genesis 19:1)
    - Debatable if this was “bad” but he certainly was not in the ideal place
  - Did not marry a Godly woman (Genesis 19:26)
  - Even after everything that happened, did not treat/raise his daughters right (Genesis 19:30-36)
- Still called a righteous man
  - Righteousness because of God by faith, nothing else
  - Not his merit or actions, but just his faith
  - An example of God choosing the “worst” people
  - Still acted in obedience
- Not someone we should aspire to
  - Justified by faith, but had nothing to show for it
  - What will we have when we get to Eternity?
  - The story does not end when we get Saved; that is just the start; the rest is about our faithfulness to God’s call





- Had faith that they could take the Land (**Numbers 13:30**)
  - In human terms, it was not obvious they could take the Land
  - Still willing to trust what God promised them
- Even at an advanced age, was still ready to go and claim all God had for him (**Joshua 14:6-15**)
  - Never really slowed down
  - Ran the race well... to the very end (**Hebrews 12:1**)
- A gentile (**Numbers 32:12**)?
  - Saved by faith like everyone else (**Galatians 3-4**)
- Had the same information as everyone else
  - Believed as a spy (**Numbers 14:24**)
  - Believed as a conqueror (**Joshua 14:6-15**)
  - Was obedient, even when most others were not

- “More than conquerors” (**Romans 8:37**)
  - Christ has already achieved the victory
  - We need to claim that victory by faith
    - Make sure we are fighting the right battle



# WIDOW OF ZAREPHATH (1 KINGS 17:8-24)

- A Gentile (1 Kings 17:9)
  - Also called out in Luke 4:26
  - Mix of Jews and Gentiles in the Hall of Faith (e.g., Job)
- Appears to be directly called out in this passage (Hebrews 11:35a)
- Things go from bad to worse, even after the first miracle
  - Second seems to have been a confirmation to her that Elijah was a prophet (1 Kings 17:24)
  - Did not believe the first time?
  - Still acted in obedience, even if she did not understand or “fully trust”
  - Actions matter, not our intellectual capacity or ability to rationalize
- Why is she given credit?
  - God brought life back; Elijah prayed
  - **She as obedient despite the consequences**
    - Gave Elijah all she had
    - Trusted the word of God
    - Did not overthink it or try to understand how/why God would do this
  - She built on her faith
    - Saw what God did and trusted in Him to bring her son back (1 Kings 17:18-19)





# HABAKKUK

- Prophecy given to Habakkuk that God would use Babylon to judge Judah
  - Does not understand (**Chapter 1**)
  - Goes and thinks about it for a while (**Chapter 2**)
  - Praises God (**Chapter 3**)
- Gave perhaps the most profound statement of faith (**Habakkuk 2:4**)
  - Central theme of the Bible?
  - Expounded on in **Romans 1:17**, **Galatians 3:11**, and **Hebrews 10:38**
    - **Romans** = Who are the just?; **Galatians** = How do the just live?; **Hebrews** = Faith
- Came after difficulty and questioning
  - Did not despair and sought God (there is nothing wrong with waiting for more information)
  - Diligently sought after God; not a casual thing
- Nothing wrong with not understanding something God said
  - Still act on faith
  - **Be obedient, despite what that obedience may mean or cost you**
- Nothing wrong with **diligently** trying to understand it
  - Diligence is the key
  - We are commanded to **study** (**2 Timothy 2:15**)
  - But act on what you do know, not on what you do not know
  - **Obedience despite lack of total comprehension**
- Do we approach the Bible with the same vigor as our hobbies?



# NEHEMIAH

- A good example of practically living out his faith
  - Had a call of God
    - Godly desire
    - Godly opportunity
    - Godly actions from opportunity
    - Similar to Jacob in **Genesis 31:1-3**
  - Would God have blessed his work if he was not called? If so, it would have been the mercy of God, but we are not called to the same ministries (e.g., **Acts 16:6**)
- Had many enemies to confront and defeat
  - Some are open (**Nehemiah 4**)
  - Some are more subtle (**Nehemiah 6:1-14**)
  - Had problems from his own people (**Nehemiah 5:1-13**)
- A man of faith is a man of prayer and action
  - The faith of a farmer
  - 'Pray as if it all depends on God, work as if it all depends on you'
  - God tends to work with what you give him (e.g., **Exodus 4:2**)
- Did what he knew he was supposed to do
  - Gave up his good job
  - Was consistent and did not quit, especially when things became difficult
  - Obedient despite what might happen to him



# CLOSING THOUGHTS

- Faith is active, not passive
  - Obedience despite the consequences
  - Faith is not an excuse for inaction
  - Need to make sure we know the will of God before we act
  - May not always be obvious
  - Something can be “right” and not be the will of God
    - If we get ahead of God, we risk doing the wrong thing or taking a job that God had for someone else
- We are called to the highest standard of Christian living
  - Lot was Saved, but that should not be our end-goal
  - “The just shall LIVE by faith”
    - Not just about our Justification experience
    - It's what we do after that point
    - Is our every moment, action, decision, etc. taken as a step of faith on the leading of God?
- Do not become discouraged
  - Life is hard and it gets harder
  - The people we looked at today had faith and were rescued out of their trouble; they saw their victory
  - But what happens when God does not rescue us?