

# First Quarter 2021 Bible Study Outline



## CLOUD OF WITNESSES - STUDY 1

**Main Text: - Heb.12: 1-2.**

### **Introduction:**

According to Hebrews 12: 1, we are in a race. When you are in a race, you can't stay still or motionless and you can't go to sleep either. We just must be active and keep moving. No Christian must be idle, we just must be active - **Matt.20: 1-7.**

The Christian race is a Marathon and not a Dash or Sprint. It requires diligence, patience, self-control, endurance, persistence and perseverance - **Prov.22: 29; 27: 23 (Acts 20: 28); 1Cor.9: 25; Heb.12: 1.**

The Christian race requires clear vision, determination, soberness, watchfulness and prayerfulness also - **Prov.29: 18; 1Pet.5: 8; Matt.26: 41.**

There are weights and sins along the way of this race. Weights are all forms of encumbrance, impediment or hindrance. They may not be outright sins but works of the flesh or simply carnal manifestations that slow us down as believers in our Christian race. These weights if not dealt with over time can stop a believer in His Christian race altogether - **Rom.8: 5-8; Gal.5: 19-21; 1Cor.6: 12.**

Sin is all forms of unrighteousness - **1Jn.5: 17; 1Jn.3: 7-8; Rom.6: 23 (Ezek.18: 4).**

Weights and sins easily beset (attack, attach or cling, surround or entangle) us as believers

God's Counsel - Lay aside, remove, do away with, dodge or avoid weights and sins.

### **Some Key People & Parts of A Race:**

- i. The Rules of The Game - Every game has its rules - **2Tim.2: 5.**
- ii. The Athletes or participants - The actual people running the race - **1Cor.9: 24.**
- iii. The Referee or Umpire - (The Holy Spirit) - Monitors and enforces rules of the game - **2Tim.2: 5; 1Cor.3: 11-15.**

- iv. The Trainer or Coach - (The Lord Jesus Christ) - Trains and prepares and enlists the athletes for the game - **Matt.22: 14; 2Tim.1: 8-9; 2: 4.**
- v. The Donor or Rewarder - (God The Father, Almighty) - Calls for and rewards the athletes at the end of the game - **Rom.2: 5-6; 1Cor.2: 9; 3: 8; Heb.11: 6; Col.3: 23-24; 2Tim.4: 7-8; Jam.1: 12.**
- vi. The Spectators or Witnesses - All the people around the arena or stadium watching the game - **Heb.12: 1-2; 22-24.**
- vii. The rewards or trophies - Five Crowns:
  - i. Crown of Life - **Jam.1: 12; Rev.2: 10.**
  - ii. Incorruptible Crown - **1Cor.9: 25.**
  - iii. Crown of Righteousness - **2Tim.2: 8.**
  - iv. Crown of Glory - **1Pet.5: 2-4.**
  - v. Crown of Rejoicing - **1Thess.2: 19; Phil.4: 1.**

In this study, we shall be focusing on the Spectators or Witnesses in particular.

The word 'Witness' can either be used as a verb or noun.

Witness as a verb - To witness something is to present and see, hear or know about that thing.

Witness as a Noun = A witness is an individual who by being present sees, hears or knows about something. A witness in this sense is also a spectator or onlooker - **Lk.24: 48; Acts 1: 8.**

There are different categories of spectators watching us as we run our Christian race. They all serve as our Cloud of Witnesses and they are as follow:

- i. Angels of God - **Dan.6: 21-22; 10: 10-15; Lk.1: 5-20, 26-28; 2: 8-14; Acts 13: 11,** etc.
- ii. Demons from Hell - **Matt.8: 28-29; Acts 19: 13-16.**
- iii. Dead Saints - **1Sam.28: 15-20; Heb.11: 32-40; Rev.6: 9-11.**
- iv. Dead Sinners - **Matt.11: 21-24; Lk.16: 22-24.**
- v. Living Saints - **Matt.18: 15-16; 2Cor.13: 1; 1Tim.5: 19-20.**

These witnesses are described as Cloud of Witness because they are so many that they are uncountable or innumerable as the cloud in the sky. However, we shall limit this study (for constraints of time) to only some of the Dead Saints especially listed for us in Hebrews 11 as our Cloud of Witnesses- **Heb.11: 1-13, 17-40.**

## First Quarter 2021 Bible Study Outline



### CLOUD OF WITNESSES - STUDY 2

**Main Text: - Heb.11: 1-3.**

#### **Witnesses' Common Ground of Faith:**

Hebrews 11 is described as the Bible's Hall of Fame or Hall of Faith. It documents for us the exploits of the saints of old through faith. All our Witnesses listed in here agree and confirm that we must live by faith in order to please God - **Heb.11: 6 (Hab.2: 4; Rom.1: 17; Gal.3: 11; Heb.10: 38)**. We cannot come to God or please Him except by faith.

#### **Faith Facts or Understanding Faith - Heb.11: 1.**

1. Faith is the substance (receipt or title deed) of things hoped for. Faith enables the believer to treat the future as present. Faith and hope go together.
2. Faith is the evidence (proof) of things not seen. Faith is not a mystery but the firm conviction that God will fulfill His promise. It is seeing the invisible or visualizing things not yet physical. Faith is treating the invisible as seen.
3. Faith can be described as the sixth or extra sense with which we see God and serve Him. Actually, life runs on faith e.g. eating, sleeping, taking a vehicle, flying in a plane, banking, using credit or debit card, marriage, etc. Faith is substance for the scientific mind and evidence for the legal mind.
4. Faith sits in the heart but manifests through our words and works - **Rom.10: 10**. Sin then is what beclouds the heart of man and makes it difficult for him to believe God. If the problem of sin is dealt with in the life of an unbeliever, he will instantly become a believer.
5. Faith comes from God and starts with God - **Heb.11: 3; Rom.4: 17; Ps.33: 9**. God formed the world by faith and through His word. There are only either two explanations for the origin of the world - Revelation or Speculation (and there are lots of speculations). Those who fail or refuse to believe what God says in His Word (i.e. Revelation) will only continue in their own assumptions and presumptions (i.e. Speculation).

6. Faith does not align with science or human senses - **Rom.8: 5-8** e.g. Creation goes against Evolution and Miracles go against the Law of Conservation of Matter.

7. It is IMPOSSIBLE to please or satisfy God without faith. Relationship with God starts with believing His existence, His abilities and His reliability. Faith is to trust God and rest on His Word - **Heb.11: 6**.

### **Good & Reliable Reports of The Witnesses - Heb.11: 2.**

The people in our Cloud of Witnesses are regarded as our elders, seniors or those people of old who have gone before us - **Heb.11: 2**. This gives us the picture of a big or large family with siblings, uncles, aunties, etc.

The faith of these elders was their honour. We should always remember that we are not the first set of people to serve God. So, we must learn from these elder brothers and sisters in God's universal family in order to succeed like them. Again, their reports or testimonies are certified by God as good and reliable. So, we cannot ignore them.

If these men were diligent to record and report their exploits for God in their time, we also must be ready to give account and be diligent to record and report our exploits in our time - **Ps.68: 11; Exod.17: 14; 34: 1; Deut.6: 9; 11: 20; Jer.30:1-2; Hab.2: 2; Rev.1: 1; 2: 1**.

## First Quarter 2021 Bible Study Outline



### CLOUD OF WITNESSES - STUDY 3

#### **Our Cloud of Witnesses:**

What these saints of old did in the past through faith should always serve as examples for us now in our own time - **Phil.3: 17**.

As we read their stories, we should challenge ourselves that if they could do what they did then, we can do them also for they were not superhuman beings but all mere mortal men and women like anyone of us - **Jam.5: 17**.

The First 3 Witnesses (Abel, Enoch and Noah) lived before the Great Flood of Noah's time

#### **1. Abel - The Way of Faith - Heb.11: 4.**

In Abel, God makes it clear for man to know that we can only come to Him and be saved by faith. Abel had something that Cain, his brother didn't have - **Gen.4: 1-7**.

#### **Lessons From Cain and Abel:**

Cain and Abel didn't have any grand-parents, uncles or aunties who could have influenced them negatively - just their parents.

They were alike in their parentage, environment and in offering sacrifices to God but different in their mind-set.

We cannot blame our parents (grand-parents, uncles, aunties, siblings or other people around us), environment (posh or slum) for our sins or wrongdoings.

Time will eventually reveal a man's mindset or character. Eventually, the different mindsets and characters of Cain and Abel were revealed in their offerings.

Abel offered a lamb which typified Christ, the Sacrifice for sin and Saviour of the world (**Heb.11: 4**) while Cain only offered the fruit of the ground. Let's remember that faith is revelation (not speculation) . Abel must have been guided by a revelation from God (like Moses before the Passover in Egypt) but Cain simply relied on speculation and the works of His hands. Cain offered his sacrifice first. Perhaps he was hasty in his offering and didn't even bother to ask from God what He wanted in the first place. We must not presume or assume but sincerely seek for divine guidance when we prayer e.g. Ahab and Micaiah (**1Kg.22**).

Through Abel, God made Himself clear that man is a sinner and without the shedding of blood, there is no remission of sin (**Rom.3: 23; 6: 23; Heb.9: 22**). Without any doubt, Jesus Christ is the ONLY WAY to God - **Jn.14: 6**.

## **2. Enoch - The Walk of Faith - Heb.11: 5; Gen.5: 1-24.**

After coming to God through Christ Jesus then, you have to learn to walk with God by faith. Enoch teaches us that lesson.

Enoch pleased God by faith - **Heb.11: 6**. God also Rewards. Salvation is a free gift from God which we do not work for but there are rewards for our walk and work with God by faith. Every man that from Adam died until we get to Enoch who didn't die. It's like walking through a graveyard of dead people and suddenly coming across a living soul.

Here again is the fallacy of the theory of Evolution. Man has been dying since the time of Adam and no one has evolved to escape death. No man has even lived for more than a thousand years.

Enoch gave birth to his first son - Methuselah at the age of 65 and started to walk with God after Methuselah was born - **Gen.5: 21-22**. The birth of a child (especially the first child) in a home usually changes the lifestyle of the parents. In that sense, babies have a way of speaking for God - **Mk.10: 14-15**.

The birth of Methuselah changed Enoch's lifestyle and relationship with God. He started to walk with God and pleased God. He pleased God because he walked and worked by faith and not rules and regulations. Then, he didn't die but God gave him a foretaste of rapture and took him - the only man in the entire Bible to have such experience.

Whereas, Noah represents those saints who shall be saved during the Great Tribulation (144,000 from Israel and a great number of Gentiles - **Rev.7: 1-4**. Enoch represents the Church of Christ or Christians who live by faith and not works and who shall be raptured - **Rev.3: 10**.

The Bible says, Enoch was TRANSLATED. In translation, the message is the same though the language is different. Whether a believer is translated by death or rapture, the person is the same, it is the location or address that changes. Again, Enoch shows clearly like Paul that children of God must never be afraid of going to be with God (by death or rapture - **Phil.1: 21**).

Like a preacher put it, Enoch was always walking with God until one day when he crossed the boundary of heaven and earth - then, God took him!

Like Enoch, the Lord Jesus Christ will come for us - Christians, who are maintaining a daily walk with God and take us home to heaven to be with Him - **Jn.14: 1-3; Matt.24: 35-42; 1Cor.15: 51-53; 1Thess.4: 15-18**.

### **3. Noah - The Witness of Faith - Heb.11: 7; Gen.6: 1-10.**

Noah did not just believe God and saved himself from the flood of his time that destroyed the then world, he equally saved his household.

Even, if Noah did not win any other convert, he surely won his family to the Lord. We also must strive to walk in Noah's shoes that even if we fail to win any other convert to the Lord, we must not fail to win our immediate family members to the Lord.

The Bible confirmed quite clearly that Noah walked with God - **Gen.6: 9**.

Noah surely walked with God by faith - **Heb.11: 7**.

God told him He was going to destroy the earth by flood and Noah believed God. All the other men upon the earth then apart from Noah household did not believe God or the message from God (maybe because it had not rained upon the earth in a long time). They even mocked Noah as he acted on God's word but Noah won his family for God.

Only Noah and his family members constructed the Ark and without any defect or problem. The Ark was well constructed. Noah, apart from believing God and being obedient was also good and diligent in ship building. The Bible emphasizes severally the fact that a Christian must not be lazy but be hardworking and diligent - **Prov.6: 6-11; 12: 24; 22: 29**.

We must teach members of our households hard work and diligence also.

Take note also that Noah's 3 sons - Shem, Ham and Japheth were with him together with their wives. Whether they never moved away from their parents or they moved away but later returned back home - it is still to their credit and a sign of godliness in honouring and obeying their father. Many wayward and rebellious children now-a-days like the prodigal son always want to move away from home as soon as possible. However, this is not to condone lazy and irresponsible children who don't ever want to move out of their parents' home.

## First Quarter 2021 Bible Study Outline



### CLOUD OF WITNESSES - STUDY 4

#### **Abraham - The Worship of Faith - Heb.11: 8-19; Gen.12: 1-5.**

Abraham is known as the man of faith. He is even called the father of faith.

The important word in Heb.11: 8 is OBEDIENCE. The worship of God leads to obedience i.e. work or doing the things that God us to do. God called Abraham out of his country and kindred to an unknown land of promise. By this call, Abraham was converted from the idolatry of his father's house. Abraham was called to leave the godless family of his parents in Haran to establish his own Godly family in Canaan. Abraham obeyed God by leaving Haran even when he did not know where he was going until God brought him to Canaan.

Abraham lived in that land by faith also. He believed God that his descendants would someday possess the land like God promised when he was yet to have children. In that sense, Canaan was only a land of promise yet to be possessed in the future but still, Abraham believed and trusted God. We must learn to trust God in order to please Him like Abraham also - Heb.11: 6.

Abraham did not wage war against the old inhabitants of the land to forcefully eject or dispossess them but waited patiently and with contentment on the future promise of God and living instead as a stranger in their midst. He dwelt in temporary, make-shift structures, ready to move at anytime on God's instruction. That should be our attitude as Christians in the world also - **Jn.17: 15-16; 1 Pet.2: 11-12.**

The first thing Abraham did when he got to Canaan was to build an altar to worship God - **Gen.12: 7.** Subsequently, Abraham built an altar everywhere he went (at Bethel - **Gen.12: 8** & Moriah - **Gen.22: 1-12**). Abraham did not build greats mansion or palaces for himself but instead built altars of worship for God. How is obedient are you and how your worship life? - **Jn.4: 24.**



Sarah, Abraham's wife also though her faith was initially weak and she doubted God, eventually believed and received strength from God to conceive in her old age - **Heb.11: 11-12; Gen.18: 9-15**.

Sarah later admitted her doubt and named her son Isaac - meaning, 'Laughter' or 'He will laugh'. It was her doubt that made her push Hagar, her maidservant to her husband to lie with and had Ishmael in the first place. Abraham also, offered Eliezer, his chief servant to God to bless earlier on also - **Gen.15: 1-6**.

Desperation, doubts and fear will always push us to take wrong decisions and steps. However, we can still call upon God for help when our hearts are assailed by doubts and fear like the man in **Mk.9: 14-27**.

God also overlooked and forgave both Abraham and Sarah's doubts and weakness of faith in that it was not mentioned at all in the account in Hebrews 11. Instead, their faith was painted in glowing colors. This is the beauty of God's forgiveness - **Exod.33: 19; Ps.32: 1-2**. However, we cannot presume on God's forgiveness and act in unbelief like Sarah.

Sarah looked beyond her own feelings and abilities but instead counted on God's abilities and faithfulness in fulfilling His promise. Eventually, she received the power not just to conceive and give birth to Isaac but to bring forth children as innumerable as the sand of the seashore, dust of the desert and stars of heaven just as God promised. If we have faith, we shall ultimately realize every one of God's promises to no matter how impossible they may seem to be now.

Eventually, Abraham and Sarah never saw the fulfillment of God's promise that their children or descendants would be as numerable as the sand of the seashore or dust of the desert or stars of heaven yet, they lived as strangers and pilgrims and died in faith fully trusting God. The promise of God for us may not be fulfilled immediately but they are sure and will certainly come to pass. Faith always looks to the future with certainty.

The faith of parents always affect and procure blessings for their children. Isaac also walked in his father, Abraham's footsteps to learn how to build altars of worship to God - **Gen.26: 24-25**. Abraham lived till Isaac was 75 years old, and Jacob 15 years old. God eventually renewed the same promise he gave to Abraham to Isaac and Jacob and in that sense they both became heirs of the same promise together with Abraham though they did not live to see its fulfillment. As children of Abraham, we are joint heirs of this promise with them also. They all lived as strangers and pilgrims in the world - **Heb.11: 9 & 13**. We are strangers and pilgrims in the world also. Heaven here is described as a city with foundation built by God - well established, well supplied and well defended just like Jesus confirmed it to be - **Jn.14: 1-3**. Abraham believed in this heavenly city, looked forward to it, waited and died in hope for it. We should all be like Abraham in that sense also.

**Hebrews 11: 17-19; Gen.22: 1-19.**

Abraham had other children (Ismael & co) but Isaac was called the only begotten of his father - like Jesus Christ and unto him the promise was made.

God did not ask Abraham to sacrifice Ishmael because he wasn't the right child before God (just like the sacrifice of Cain). Any sacrifice to God must be acceptable to Him.

God promised Abraham to give him and his descendants the land of Canaan. God also gave Sarah the power to conceive in her old age and Give birth to the child of promise. Now, the same God is asking Abraham to sacrifice his precious son Isaac to Him. This, no doubts, is a test of faith. No mention is made here of Sarah's reaction. Perhaps, Abraham didn't tell her all about the sacrifice. That further confirms the notion that Abraham believed that even if he killed Isaac, God would bring him back to life. God will test our faith also but He knows our abilities and has already promised not to test us beyond what we can bear - **1 Cor.10: 13.**

In testing our faith, God wants our focus to be on Him alone; not our parents, spouses, children or anyone else. We must not even look too much to our pastors and spiritual leaders also lest they become idols in our lives. Your faith is mostly personal to you! see its fulfillment. They also lived as strangers and pilgrims in the world - **Heb.11: 9 & 13.**

## First Quarter 2021 Bible Study Outline



### CLOUD OF WITNESSES - STUDY 5

#### **Isaac - The Willingness of Faith - Heb.11: 20; Gen.27: 1-40.**

Very little is said about Isaac especially in contrast with his father, Abraham. The focus and emphasis of Isaac's faith is on his willingness to be offered by his father as a sacrifice to God. Isaac was not a small boy at this time but a fully grown up man in his thirties.

At a time of famine, Isaac wanted to relocate from Gerar in the land of the Philistines to Egypt but God restrained him. Isaac obeyed God and was willing to stay back in Gerar though there was famine there. This was a major step of faith - Gen.26: 1-6.

The faith of Isaac was tested and he shook a bit like that of his father when he lied about his wife being sister. Again, God overlooked his wrong, forgave him and providentially bailed him out of the situation and mess that could have come out of it - **Gen.26: 7-11**.

This again shows the beauty of God's mercy and forgiveness - **Ps.32: 1-2; 130: 3-4**.

Although, there was famine, Isaac later sowed in that land and reaped 100 folds that year and became rich, famous and influential - **Gen.26: 12-14**.

Isaac was always willing to dig another well each time the Philistines filled up the previous one with sand - **Gen.26: 17-22**.

The willingness of Isaac to be offered a sacrifice to God by his father was only figurative. He was much eager in real life to be cheated and be glossed over in order to preserve his posterity and for the blessing to be passed on to his sons. Isaac was a man of peace who was always willing to be cheated in order to maintain peace. Apart from the Philistines who cheated him, his wife and Jacob, his son also cheated him. Somehow, Isaac was never desperate for anything but always believed that God would bless and replenish him and therein lies his faith. That's why not much is said about him in scripture. If we have faith like Isaac, it will not be difficult for us to allow others to cheat us - **1 Cor.6: 7; Matt.5: 38-48; Rom.12: 14, 17-21**.

Isaac gave birth to a set of twins - Jacob and Esau and from them came forth multitudes of nations like the sand of the seashore, dust of the desert and stars of heaven just like God promised Abraham. However, unlikely things may seem presently, let us learn to live by faith and hold tightly to God.

## First Quarter 2021 Bible Study Outline



### CLOUD OF WITNESSES - STUDY 6

#### **Jacob - The Worship of Faith - Heb.11: 21.; Gen.48: 1-22.**

Jacob is a character of interest in the sense that he is a perfect picture of the typical human nature.

Jacob's life and the general human psychology can be studied in 3 ways:

- i. Prenatal Period or Before Birth**
- ii. Neonatal Period or During Birth**
- iii. Postnatal Period or After Birth**

#### **i. Prenatal Period: - Gen.25: 21-23.**

Jacob was a twin and before he was born, he struggled or wrestled with his His brother in the womb - trying to get the upper hand.

#### **ii. Neonatal Period: - Gen.25: 24-26.**

At the time of his birth, Jacob was still struggling with his brother. Though he came out last, he grabbed the heel of his brother still struggling to get ahead. And, he was like that throughout all his life.

#### **iii. Postnatal Period: - Gen.25: 27-34; 27: 1-41; Gen.30: 25-43.**

Jacob grew up as a deceiver. Although, God promised to bless him but it was as if Jacob could not wait for the fulfillment of God's promise and so had to resort to cheating and very deceptive methods in order to succeed in life.

If we look at Jacob's faith in connection with his father, his brother and Laban, his uncle, he was a deceiver who couldn't wait for the fulfillment of God's promise for his life but again, when we look at Jacob's faith in connection with his Laban, his uncle and Joseph, his son, he was not the deceiver but was deceived - **Gen.29: 15-28; 37: 13-35.**

When he left home for Haran and stopped over at Bethel, no change had taken place in his life at all - **Gen.28: 10-22.**

He was still a crafty deceiver throughout his stay with his uncle, Laban until later when he was returning home and wrestled with the Angel of God who changed his name and blessed him - **Gen.32: 24-32.**

Jacob was repaid for his sins and deceits in Laban, his uncle and Joseph, his son. Laban short-changed Jacob by giving him Leah to marry instead of Rachel after serving him for 7 years. He had to serve another 7 years before marrying Rachel eventually.

Again, the sons of Jacob sold Joseph, their brother into slavery but lied to Jacob their father that a wild beast must have killed him. They showed Jacob the blood-stained coat of Joseph as proof of his death. Jacob wept and mourned for Joseph though he was still alive. Jacob was deceived by his sons just the way he deceived his father and others. This is a clear case of God visiting the sins of the father upon his son. In that sense, Joseph, though innocent suffered for the sins of Jacob, his father.

Now, looking at Jacob's faith in connection with his grandsons, Ephraim and Manasseh towards the tail end of his life, he blessed these two sons of Joseph by faith. This is the first major thing Jacob did in his entire life by faith - totally relaxed, trusting and depending on God and no longer his own wisdom.

Again, Jacob worshipped God at this time also. We should all learn a major lesson of faith here. Many people like Jacob are just not relaxed in life and relationships. They find it difficult to trust both God and fellow men. Even, at the dying moments of his life, Jacob still struggled to lean upon his staff in blessing Ephraim and Manasseh instead of lying down and dying peacefully - **Gen.48: 1-2; Heb.11: 21; Prov.3: 5-6.**

Even at this time, Jacob still placed Ephraim, the younger son of Joseph ahead of Manasseh, his senior brother just like he did to Esau, his senior brother. However, it is still not certain how Ephraim eventually became greater or better than Manasseh, his brother.

Eventually, by this time when Jacob had learned to relax, trust God and worshipped God, things were almost too late for him as he was already on his death bed. He knew that nothing good could come out of the crookedness of his life but trusted God to establish the words of His mouth in blessing those sons of Joseph. He knew also that there was nothing he could do by himself to fulfill his blessing for Ephraim and Manasseh, the sons of Joseph. He then had no more choice but to relax and trust God to bring those prayers and blessings to pass. So, Jacob eventually died in faith but it was at the tail end of his life when it was almost too late. God's counsel to us all is in **Eccles.12: 1-2.**

## First Quarter 2021 Bible Study Outline



### CLOUD OF WITNESSES - STUDY 7

#### **Joseph - Heb.11: 22; Gen.50: 22-26.**

Joseph demonstrated faith at many instances in his life.

He did not give up faith and hope when his brother sold him into slavery - Gen.37.

He did not despair in Portiphar's House and in prison - **Gen.39-40.**

Joseph also looked up to God to interpret Pharaoh's dreams and to manage the resources of Egypt - **Gen.41: 14-16; 37-45.**

Joseph's life was a sharp contrast to that of his father. He was also a type of Christ.

He was the best beloved of his father. His father made him a coat of many colours as proof of his special love for Joseph which set him apart from his brethren. Jesus is God's beloved Son - **Matt.3: 16-17; 17: 5-6.**

Joseph always obeyed his father just like the Lord - Jesus Christ - **Jn.4: 34; Matt.26: 39 & 42.**

He had a clear vision of the future so much so that his brothers nick-named him the dreamer. The Lord Jesus Christ came with the Gospel of the kingdom of God that many of the Jews looked at Him as a wild dreamer and hated Him for His message just like Joseph - **Matt.4: 17; 16: 18; Jn.2: 19-21.**

Joseph's brethren rejected him just like the Jews rejected Jesus - **Jn.1: 11.**

Joseph was sent by his father into the wilderness seeking his brethren. Jesus also was sent by God, His Father into the world seeking the lost - **Lk.19: 10.**

Joseph found his brethren in the fields who were shepherds by profession. There were shepherds in the fields also the night Jesus Christ was born into the world - **Lk.2: 1-12.**

Joseph was sold into slavery by his brothers just as Jesus Christ also was betrayed and sold to his enemies for thirty pieces of silver by Judah's Iscariot - one of His disciples - **Matt.26: 14-16.**

Joseph was tempted in Portiphar's House just as Jesus was tempted in a world of sin and Satan - **Matt.4: 1-11.**

Although, Joseph was not killed eventually but his coat was dipped in blood to depict the death and shedding of blood of the Lord Jesus Christ - **Isa.53: 5; Mk.8: 31; Heb.9: 22.**

Joseph was sold into Egypt but the Lord raised him there a minister and a Saviour for the then world. The Lord Jesus Christ went into death and hell and after three days, God raised Him back to life as Saviour of the world - **Col.2: 15; Eph.4: 8; Matt.27: 50-53.**

Just like Joseph eventually made himself known to his brethren who initially rejected him, someday, Jesus Christ will make Himself known to the Jews who have rejected Him as Lord and Saviour - **Acts 1: 10-11; Rev.1: 7.**

Joseph had absolute faith in the dream he was given just like Jesus had absolute faith in His mission on earth - **Jn.10: 30; 14: 1.**

At the end of his life, despite all his achievements, Joseph was not satisfied with Egypt. By faith, he prophesied about God's divine visitation upon Israel in Egypt and instructed them not to leave his bones behind in that land. Jesus also told us already about His return or second coming into the world - **Jn.14: 1-3; Acts 1: 10-11; 1Thess.4: 16-18; Rev.1: 7; 22: 12.**

No doubts, Joseph was a hero and deliverer of his people. Also, Jesus is not just our Hero but also Saviour and Deliverer of His Church - **Eph.5: 22-24.**



## First Quarter 2021 Bible Study Outline



### CLOUD OF WITNESSES - STUDY 8

#### **Moses - The Work of Faith - Heb.11: 23-27.**

Moses had Godly parents who stood by faith and refused to give him up to be killed by Pharaoh - **Exod.2: 1-10.**

Moses was raised in the palace of Pharaoh and could have been the next Pharaoh but instead chose to identify with the children of Israel and their reproach - **Exod.2: 11-15.**

Faith without works is dead - **Jam.2: 20.** Faith is both believing and doing. The faith of Moses moved him to action. What is your faith moving you to do now?

By faith Moses, obeyed God in observing the Passover in Egypt - **Exod.12: 21-42.**

At the Red Sea, the Israelites were afraid and were tempted to return back to Egypt. Again, it was the faith of Moses that came into play to divide the Red Sea for them to cross to the other side and watched how Pharaoh and his hosts were destroyed in the sea.

Let us always remember that God has not promised us a problem-free life, we must only learn to live by faith each time to overcome the problems of life we face - **Hab.2: 4; Rom.1: 17; Gal.3: 11; Heb.10: 38.** This faith comes only by the word of God - **Rom.10: 17.**

## First Quarter 2021 Bible Study Outline



### CLOUD OF WITNESSES - STUDY 9

#### **Joshua - The Watch of Faith - Heb.11: 30; Josh.6: 1-27.**

Joshua had the faith to believe and follow God's strange strategy of war while the rest of the children of Israel only watched and saw the walls of Jericho come tumbling down.

Joshua's Commander-in-Chief really was in heaven while he led the people as their captain.

Joshua himself as he led the host of Israel was watching out for those walls to come down. We can only imagine what was going on in Joshua's mind and the rest of the people each of those six days until the seventh day when the walls finally fell down flat.

Why do you think God asked Joshua to go through this strange and process in order to give them victory at Jericho? Compare and contrast this story with the cleansing of Naaman in **2Kg.5: 1-16** also.

Apart from having faith, God wants us to be obedient also. So, He will always test both our faith and obedience.

Faith requires obedience just as obedience demonstrates our faith.

## First Quarter 2021 Bible Study Outline



### CLOUD OF WITNESSES - STUDY 10

#### **Rahab - The Wonder of Faith - Heb.11: 31; Josh.2: 1-21.**

This is another woman whose story is in connection with the fall of the walls of Jericho. Rahab was still inside Jericho while the children of Israel marched round its walls but she did not perish with the rest of the unbelievers in Jericho.

As a harlot, Rahab should have been one of the last persons anyone would expect to have faith or be saved. She was a pagan woman and a harlot in Jericho.

Why do you think that Rahab took the two spies into her house in the first place if she knew they were Israelites?

She was a harlot who initially saw the spies as customers-to-be - harlots don't discriminate.

However, when these men informed her of their mission, and explained to her that God was going to give the city to them. Surprisingly, Rahab believed their report, took them in and hid them in the roof, risking her own life before her people.

She quickly sort for refuge under the God of Israel also. She even confirmed that she and the rest people of Jericho had had stories of the victories of Israel and her God before.

She then asked for favour from these men - to remember her and her family and save them when they return to destroy the city (that means she already believed that Israel would win and Jericho would be destroyed). And the spies promised her and agreed to the sign of the scarlet thread to be tied on her window

Eventually, when Joshua and his people attacked and took Jericho, they spared this woman and her family. Her faith and salvation lied in her testimony - **Josh.2: 9-12.**

This is a strange statement from a harlot and a revelation of the reason why God did not entirely destroy the city of Jericho.

For 40 years (a long time), the people of Jericho had been hearing about Israel and her God - how they crossed the Red Sea and river Jordan. They heard the stories and possibly believed them but they never believed in the God of Israel until the Israelites got to Jericho.

Why did Rahab believe and sort for refuge under the God of Israel and the rest of her people did not? Remember the Gibeonites (**Josh.9**).

We may all read and listen to the same word and yet react or respond differently. How do you understand and respond to the word of God you read and the sermons you listen to each time? Remember the Ethiopian Eunuch - **Acts 8: 26-40**.

Most likely, there were many people in Jericho who heard the same report like Rahab but who perhaps felt they were morally good enough to be saved but were destroyed just because of their unbelief - they did not believe the (only) way by which God moved in relation to this city.

The king of Jericho and some of his people shut their Gate and even searched around for the spies and wanted to arrest them but Rahab reacted differently. She hid and kept them safe.

Rahab exercised her faith in a definite way in that while all the gates of Jericho were shut up against the children of Israel, she was the only one who opened her doors to the spies though a harlot.

Compare the people of Jericho with the Gibeonites (Josh.9). The people of Jericho simply did not make the best use of the opportunity God gave them to believe Him.

If God saved the Gibeonites and Rahab the harlot then, He would save anybody who believe Him in Jericho or anywhere else at all - **Jn.1: 12; 3: 16; Acts 16: 31**.

God saw all of them in Jericho and in fact everywhere only on one basis - all have sinned and come short of the glory of God - **Rom.3: 23**.

Rahab was only more sincere, open and humble than the rest people in Jericho at that time. We all have equal opportunities to trust God but we don't all respond the same way. The people of Jericho (except Rahab) had at least about 40 years to decide whether they would believe God or not but it was so sad that they didn't believe Him.

Although, God is patient and long-suffering but how long really do you think God should give an average man to believe Him? So, we see in Rahab, the wonder of faith in the sense that God doesn't see any sinner as being worse than others but will save anyone, anywhere (however bad), who will simply believe and receive Him as Lord and Saviour.

What a wonderful picture of faith here!

## First Quarter 2021 Bible Study Outline



### CLOUD OF WITNESSES - STUDY 11

#### Other Heroes of Faith - 1 - Wars of Faith - Heb.11: 32-40.

Here, several other heroes of faith are listed for us. This list includes men and women like Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel and the prophets

Here, we see as it were a wall with the list of these past heroes of faith. None of them is dealt with in as much details as the previous ones but they all have one thing in common - everyone mentioned here was a ruler either as a judge or king and they were all fought wars for God and each one of them won those wars by faith.

#### **Gideon - Judg.6-7:**

Gideon was a judge at the time when the Midianites had taken the land and badly oppressed the Israelites. Gideon's faith was initially weak as a coward but later, he waxed great in faith. He eventually believed God and fought the vast army of Midian only with a small army of 300 men and won them. This is big victory of faith!

The work of God across the land and across time is being done not by the so called popular mega churches but by many small unknown groups that we don't hear much about, spread across the land and ages. These are God's Gideons across the world. This is also the message of God to the great prophet Elijah - **1Kg.19: 18.**

#### **Samson - Judg.13-16:**

Why do you think God put Samson in this list? Samson was a failure by any human standard. Although, he started the job well to deliver the children of Israel from the Philistines but he didn't finish well.

However, Samson repented and reconciled with God before he died and Bible testifies that he killed more Philistines at his death than in his lifetime. Samson teaches us a great lesson of faith that nobody is beyond redemption and it is never too late to call upon God - so long as there is life, we can always repent and return back to God - **Lam.3: 40.**

## First Quarter 2021 Bible Study Outline



### CLOUD OF WITNESSES - STUDY 12

#### Other Heroes of Faith - 2 - The Wilderness of Faith - Heb.11: 35.

These others had trials of cruel mocking, they were tortured, slain with swords and wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins in the deserts, wilderness, mountains, dens and caves of the earth being destitute, afflicted and tormented. It was like they were not worthy to live.

These ones didn't have victories or triumphs in the battlefields of life and they didn't shine in the limelight of life but had trials, mocking, scourging, burns and imprisonments. They were stoned (Stephen), slain with the sword (James, John the Baptist, etc) and sawn asunder (Isaiah). These were violent, painful and horrible ways to die. They were all tempted to give up their faith but thank God they endured and held on to the end.

Please, take note that some (mentioned earlier on) escaped the sword by faith, but these other ones were slain and had to endure the sword by faith. One group ESCAPED the sword by faith but the other group ENDURED the sword by faith. It's all by faith.

All these people died without yet receiving the promise so that they without us would not be made complete or perfect. God had us in mind while dealing with these people. And even now, while God is dealing with us, He has in mind those who would still come in to be saved and be added to the church later until His church and His work is complete and perfect - **Rev.6: 9-11**.

This surely exposes the fallacy of the prosperity Gospel. Many modern preachers are deliberately closing their eyes to this other side or type of faith. They only teach how to name it and claim it by faith in order to ESCAPE the sword. They don't know or deliberately leave out how to ENDURE great suffering by faith and not give up the faith. Let us be honest in handling the word of God - **2Tim.2: 15**.

We are surrounded by all these many witnesses who give us the correct and balanced view and understanding of faith. Be careful so that no one will deceive or bewitch you with any false teaching - **Gal.3: 1; 1: 6-9**.

Christian Suffering is part of the true teachings and doctrines of the Bible - **Jn.16: 33; Acts 9: 13-16; 14: 21-22; Phil.1: 29; 3: 8-10; 2Tim,2: 3 & 12; Jam.5: 10; 1Pet.4: 14; 5: 10**.