

Faith Sees Another Realm

‘A pastor boarded an airplane to take the first flight he had ever flown. As they were about to take off, the flight attendant noticed his clerical garb and also his panicky look and his white knuckles as he gripped the seat in semi-terror. She walked over to the pastor and said, “Sir, I’m surprised at you. You are obviously a man of faith—you shouldn’t be so nervous about flying. Don’t you have any faith in God?” The cleric looked at her and said, “Look, young lady, the promise in Scripture is, ‘Lo, I am with you always’. It doesn’t say anything about ‘High’.”

Of course, we all know that “lo”, doesn’t mean “low” in altitude. It’s an emphatic, an exclamatory word. Which, in the scripture verse that pastor quoted from Matthew 28:20, the very last phrase in the Gospel According to Matthew, actually is emphasizing, lest there be any doubt whatsoever, that Lord Jesus is actually, totally, and for certain, always and forever with us, and us with Him. This is a promise we can take to the bank. It is an unbreakable, unshakeable, indisputable, ironclad promise. Given to us by Him Whose very Word spoke the entire cosmos and each and everyone of us into existence. Without His Word we would not live even one second longer! The elephant in the room issue is, in view of that irrefutable and unassailable fact, why don’t God’s

people believe it? Why don't we all bank on it everyday of our lives? Why do we let doubts, the continuous streams of lies from the world around us, the news media, the subliminal messaging coming from tv shows, secular movies, and the vaunted celebrities who spout off pronouncements ad infinitum believing that they actually know what they are talking about, when in actual fact they know nothing about nearly everything they pontificate about?

Chapter Eleven of Hebrews is rightly called the Faith Hall of Fame. But it is only a briefest summary. Even the anonymous author of Hebrews, which I believe to be Apollos, acknowledges that he has only scratched the surface, particularly when he writes in verse 32: "For there is not enough time to tell you of the faith of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel, and the prophets". He doesn't even bother to name the prophets. So many have lived since the creation of the world with faith, faith that pleased God. Faith that took God at His Word. Faith that ignored the circumstances around them. Faith that mocked the world's faux powers who claim ultimate authority over God's people. These multiplied millions of heroes of faith could see by faith, into eternity, into the spiritual realm. They could tell that this world, this earthly life, is but the most transient blink-of-an-eye moment compared to that which is eternal and true. That the spiritual realm is the actual foundation, the actual structure, upon which our earthly lives are first birthed and sustained. Without the spiritual realm, there is no earthly realm. Take away the spiritual

realm, there is no existence whatsoever. Take away the earthly realm, the spiritual realm continues on oblivious. It is eternal. And it is not only what we must hang our current physical lives on, it is what we must strive for and look into each and every moment we continue to live in this physical world.

King Solomon, because of his immense God-given wisdom, wrote in Ecclesiastes 4:16, and in many other verses, “it is all meaningless—like chasing the wind”. How great is the imagery of chasing the wind. That was Solomon’s metaphor to illustrate the absolute futility and vanity of trying to live this life as if this is all there is. Chasing the wind. Feel a breeze? Run after it. But then it changes direction. Turn to follow it. But then it speeds up. We can’t catch up. Then it slows down to a calm. Where did it go? It’s just up and vanished! But then it whispers back over there. But as soon as we think we’ve gotten to it, it’s gone somewhere else. Can one imagine a greater state of total futility? Of utter and complete exhaustion? Running after fame, fortune, and pleasurable experiences. But once experienced, the momentary pleasure they produced disappears. We’re left with a void that needs filling. So another experience. Another swig. Another drug. It never stops. Who wants to live such a pointless, indeed, evil existence? Anyone in their right mind would avoid it like the plague! But most people who’ve ever lived have lived this exact baneful life. Forever empty. And when they finally die, when they seek death from assisted suicide doctors and machines because

they're literally exhausted from trying to live this world's definition of living, they discover, too late, that all along they'd ignored the simple Truth, the simple Person Who longed to, fill their lives with the ultimate purpose, pleasure and beauty of life.

This is what the heroes of the faith in Hebrews 11 all experienced in the midst of this life. An all-too-common fallacy of many people who could otherwise be included in the family of the faithful is that by expressing faith in God, believing, their lives will be on Easy Street. Their problems and issues in life go away. They'll be well off, comfortable, and live happily ever after. No! Our lot in these physical lives is no bowl of cherries. Some people do seem to have it made. But the true faithful are not concerned with accumulating all the luxuries and creature comforts the world lures us with, which for most of us are unaffordable anyway. For they are all fit for garbage bags, as the Apostle Paul so eloquently described in Philippians 3:8 in The Message translation: "Yes, all the things I once thought were so important are gone from my life. Compared to the high privilege of knowing Christ Jesus as my Master, firsthand, everything I once thought I had going for me is insignificant—dog dung. I've dumped it all in the trash so that I could embrace Christ and be embraced by Him". And we must remember all of what Paul is talking about here. Unlike most of us, he had a resume that would be the envy of practically everyone else on earth! He had the finest Jewish education money could buy, personally taught by the most preem-

inent scholar in all the land, a veritable genius himself being taught by the highest rated and most esteemed genius of the era. As far as respect and honor from the world, Paul had it all! He even had Roman citizenship. Native born into it! The entire world and all its riches and glory lay at his fingertips. But, on the road to Damascus, like King Solomon had a thousand years before, he suddenly discovered that it was all meaningless! So meaningless that Paul willingly and without a second thought chucked it all for a life of torture, imprisonment, stoning, snake bites, shipwrecks, and finally, execution by beheading. This is not the life most mothers and fathers would choose for their children.

But when you can see the spiritual realm, the realm that God teaches us about in the Holy Bible, there is no contest! There's simply no comparison. Can we even begin to imagine the glories that accompany Paul in Heaven? And he will not want any of them. He will give all glory, honor, thanksgiving and praise right back to Him Who Alone is worthy of all things—Christ Jesus, the Word, the Savior, the Lord, the King of the Universe!

Though some may see becoming a Christian as a way to better one's life's circumstances and standing in the world, this is hardly the case anymore. Christians and Jews, the believers in the One True and Living God, are being persecuted all over this earth as never before. Just as of this past July, over 7,000 of our brothers and sisters in Christ have been martyred in Africa, this year! If one is interested in preserving one's life, in living peace-

ably, comfortably, with longevity, it doesn't pay to be a Christian! Or a Jew! Notice how the nearly the whole world is turning against Israel! As Revelation predicts. Truly, the End Times have begun! But, we don't live for this life. We see another realm, the eternal realm, the realm which truly matters, the realm on which this physical life operates and constructs God's glorious plans in this physical sphere. As Lord Jesus taught us in Matthew 16:25, "For if you choose self-sacrifice and lose your lives for My glory, you will continually discover true life. But if you choose to keep your lives for yourselves, you will forfeit what you try to keep".

So what if we haven't felt a supernatural touch from God? What if Lord Jesus didn't show up in glorious lightning flashing all around us and throw us off our horse and temporarily blind us as He did Paul? What if we have never received a heavenly vision or dream? What if we have never heard a direct, audible word from God? It doesn't matter! Do we think that all the heroes of the faith in Hebrews 11 experienced continuous angelic visitations and felt the weight of God's incomprehensible glory cloud all the time? No, they did not. The vital, essential ingredient is that all of them believed. Whether they physically experienced anything supernatural, heavenly, or not, is neither here nor there. The one essential ingredient is they believed that what God has told us right in here, is true. God said it. We believe it. And that's that. Even if we don't see into the spiritual realm now, we will. No question about it. We know it. That is faith.

