

Answer Key

THEY SAW THE INVISIBLE

The Heroes of Hebrews 11

Claudia Barba

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I'm so glad you've chosen *They Saw the Invisible!*

My prayerful goal is that the men and women of Hebrews 11 will become real to you, not just as long-ago heroes of faith, but as people who struggled to live for God on earth. Sometimes they failed; sometimes they had victory. Just like us.

This is not a topical study of faith. There's way more to know about faith than we could ever learn in this short book. We will simply dive into the one chapter of the Bible that is entirely focused on faith, hoping to emerge with a accurate understanding of what faith *is* and what faith *does*.

If you are working through this book on your own, take your time. Listen to what the Lord is saying to you through His Word. If you get stuck, this answer key will help you.

If you are leading a study group, please don't use this key as a substitute for your own study. Prepare each lesson yourself, then decide where to focus your group discussions. Guide the conversation, encouraging each woman to share how the Lord is using each chapter's truth in her life. Together, make practical applications of the rich doctrine in Hebrews 11.

Studying and writing about Hebrews 11 has been a rich, challenging, humbling experience for me. My prayer is that the Lord will use it to change you, too.

Claudia Barba

Page 1

How many times can you find this word in Hebrews 11?

Faith appears 24 times; the word *faithful* appears once.

Page 2

What is "the faith"? Why do you think it is called that?

The faith is the truth revealed in the Bible. By faith, we know and believe it.

Who else does Jesus praise?

He praises those who believe by faith, without tangible evidence.

Page 3

Which blessing was accomplished by God for you—by faith—the moment you were saved?

You were justified--legally declared righteous and free from guilt and condemnation. The penalty you owe for your sin has been cancelled by your faith in Jesus Christ.

Which blessings are yours right now—by faith?

You have peace with God, are reconciled to Him, and are no longer His enemy. By grace you have access to the Father through the Son and can approach Him as Your loving Father.

Which one are you still waiting for—by faith?

You have confident hope that in your eternal home you will share in the glory of Jesus.

Page 4

Who are three reliable witnesses to the truth?

The Father; Jesus Christ, the Word (John 1:1); and the Holy Spirit

How has truth been made available to us?

Through the Word of God, which came through holy men inspired by the Holy Spirit

How do we know what God says is true?

God cannot lie. He does not change, so His truth will never change. He means what He says and does not break His promises.

If we doubt His word, what are we doing?

We are calling God a liar.

Page 6

How long will visible things last?

All the visible things of creation are temporary; they will not last eternally (Mark 13:31). "The heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up" (2 Peter 3:10). Then a new heaven and new earth will appear, and God will make all things new (Rev. 21:5).

How long will invisible things last?

Forever

Which of these does faith focus on?

Faith focuses on invisible, eternal realities.

What is *it*?

Faith

Page 9

Which member of the Trinity was the special agent of creation?

Jesus, God the Son. All things were made by Him and for His glory, and He holds together all created things.

Here's how creation happened: "Then God _____"

God *said*. He spoke, and it was done.

Page 10

Why can't any theory about the beginning of the universe be proved using the scientific method?

Creation was not observed by humans and cannot be repeated by them.

Page 11

How could we trust anything that follows?

Once we have been lied to, we are rightly suspicious of anything we hear from that source.

Page 12

If you don't believe the opening words of the Bible, what are you saying about God and His Word?

You are saying that you lack faith in its Author and are prepared to doubt the other truths in His Book.

When Paul was preaching to worshipers of false gods, what did he tell them about God to persuade them to turn from idols toward faith in God?

Paul told them that God is a living Being Who created all that exists. The Lord of heaven and earth does not live in manmade buildings and cannot be worshiped through idols made by people. Because He gives life to all, He is above all. To reach the hearts of these idol-worshipers, Paul began by teaching creation.

Page 13

According to verse 5-6, what two past acts of God do they deliberately forget?

Creation and the worldwide flood. The first demonstrates the power of God to create, the other His right to destroy. Both are fearful realities to those who do not want to believe, so they "willfully forget," or pretend they are not true.

What will this angel remind people about God?

He will remind them that God is the One Who made all things in heaven and earth.

Why do you think He chose to emphasize that truth?

The angel reminds people that God, not Satan or the Antichrist, deserves their honor and reverence. Every person is accountable to the One Whose creation declares His power and might. He alone is worthy of worship, for no one can do what He has done.

Why do you think most people would rather not believe in a personal Creator?

To believe that God is the Creator means that He has immeasurable, incomprehensible power over all things, including them. That means they are accountable to Him today and in eternity. Acknowledging Him as Creator requires a shift from a me-centered life to a God-centered life. Most people would rather not make that change, for it limits their freedom to do as they please.

Why does the devil work so hard to convince people that what the Bible says about creation is not true?

The devil wants us to believe that we are free from God's authority. If we evolved from lesser forms of life, we are not answerable to a personal Creator for how we live or how we respond to the death of Jesus Christ for our sins. Satan wants to turn our minds away from creation because that is where God's "invisible attributes are clearly seen . . . His eternal power and Godhead" (Rom. 1:20). The devil would rather we ignore or reject this truth.

Page 15

But what about your unwelcome but unchangeable traits? What would God say to you about them?

He would assure you that He designed you perfectly for the job He has given you to do and that He does not value physical perfection the way we do. He wants you to trust Him enough to be fully content in the body He gave you, to be grateful for it, and to remember that someday, you will be perfect!

Page 18

What sort of work did the brothers do?

Abel was a shepherd; Cain was a farmer.

What gifts did they bring?

Cain brought produce from his field. Abel brought one or more of his best lambs.

Page 19

How did God respond to their offerings?

The Lord accepted Abel's offering but rejected Cain's.

What is one thing all animals have that vegetables and fruits don't have?

Blood, which represents life (Lev. 17:11)

Page 20

What word describes Abel in both verses?

Righteous

What is the only way to be righteous?

By faith in Christ, not by obeying the Law (doing good works)

Page 21

Who are they like? What did Jesus want His listeners to understand?

The Pharisee was like Cain, who expected God to be pleased with his good works. The tax collector was like Abel, who brought a repentant heart that begged for God's mercy. The Pharisee was not forgiven, but the tax collector was made righteous. Jesus was teaching that salvation comes through God's grace, not through human merit.

Page 22

What did God hear crying from the ground?

The voice of Abel's blood

What do you think it said?

Like the voices of the martyrs killed for their faith, it cried out for the "Lord, holy and true" to judge his murderer and avenge his death.

Page 25

What is the fleshly walk like?

Blinded by sin and ignorant of God's truth, the sinful mind thinks in a twisted way. Fleshly people are given over to sensuality and greed. They lack restraint because they are insensitive to, or ignorant of, the moral demands of God. The more they indulge their lusts, the more they grow numb to truth.

What is the opposite of walking in the flesh?

Walking in the Spirit, living to please God rather than self, obeying His commands

If you want to walk with God, how should you relate to those who don't?

Beware of making lasting alliances (in marriage, business, or spiritual work) with unbelievers. Good and evil (right and wrong, light and darkness, Christ and the devil, Christianity and idolatry) cannot work together to honor God.

But do not isolate yourself from all unbelievers. Shine the light of the gospel into the darkness of the world by being a model and witness for Christ in every situation.

Page 26

What gave Enoch the confidence to boldly forecast future judgment?

He had faith that the voice he heard telling him what to speak to the people was the voice of God, Who cannot lie.

Why does a prophet have to preach “by faith, not by sight” (2 Cor. 5:7)?

One of the tasks of a prophet is to preach what *will* happen, and no one can see the future except by faith.

Page 31

When the Lord looked at the earth before the flood, what did He see?

Men on earth were so wicked that all their thoughts were evil. Society was totally corrupt and overflowing with violence.

Why did people act that way?

Their wicked plans, murders, sexual sins, stealing, lying, blasphemy, and all their other sins emerged from their sinful hearts.

Page 32-33

He “was a *just* man, *perfect* in his *generations* [in his time]”, blameless compared to his contemporaries.

Page 33

Do you fear God? How does that change the way you live?

The fear of displeasing God will motivate you to do right regardless of what others do.

Page 34

What else was he?

Noah was also “a preacher of righteousness.”

What would Noah have said to them?

He begged them to repent of their sin before the judgment of God came in the form of a worldwide flood.

What were Noah’s other tasks?

He brought a pair of every kind of land-dwelling creature into the ark, including birds, animals, and creeping things, along with a supply of food for them and for his family.

Page 36

What is the difference between Noah’s faith and theirs?

Noah’s faith was alive, for it acted. He proved what he believed by what he did. Their faith did not act, so it was dead.

Page 38

What does God look for in us before doing miracles for us?

He looks for faith. The smallest bit of faith can move mountains, for nothing is impossible to those who believe in a mighty, omnipotent God.

Page 41

What does Joshua 24:2 tell us about Abraham's father, Terah?

Terah and his people "served other gods," or worshiped idols.

But what extraordinary thing happened to this otherwise ordinary man?

God personally appeared to Abraham and told him to leave his family and homeland and travel to a land God would show (and give) him.

Page 45

God talked to Abraham again and expanded His covenant promises. Who else was now included?

Abraham's descendants were now also included in the covenant promise of land.

How did Abraham respond?

He built an altar to the Lord and called on the name of the Lord. He moved away from Shechem and pitched his tent between Bethel and Ai.

Page 46

What special relationship does God have with people with that kind of obedient faith?

He calls them His friends.

Page 47

What did Jesus ask His disciples to do?

He asked them to love Him more than family, take up the cross of willing sacrifice, follow wherever He leads, and be willing to surrender life itself for His sake. One sign of true discipleship is total commitment.

What does a growing Christian leave behind?

Matthew 6:19, 24—accumulation of earthly treasures and material wealth

Ephesians 4:22-31—old desires that lead to behaviors like lying, wrath, stealing, foul language, bitterness, strife, and slander

Colossians 3:8—sudden explosions of anger, deep continuing bitterness, hatred, slander of God or man, filthy language

1 Peter 2:1—any sort of evil, deceit, hypocrisy, evil speaking

Page 48

If you live for heaven, how will your life on earth look?

You will look strange because you have different values. You will spend your time serving Christ and others rather than pleasing yourself self. You will care more about accumulating spiritual treasure than a big bank account. You will dress, talk, and entertain yourself in ways that honor God rather than trying to fit in with the world around you. When you live for the praise of God rather than popularity with people, you will be different!

Page 49

God saw Abraham's hurt and came to encourage His friend. What two legacies did He remind Abraham were his?

All the land that would forever be his and innumerable descendants

Page 51

How long would the covenant last? So who still rightfully owns the land of Canaan?

The covenant was everlasting, and the land of Canaan was given to Abraham and his descendants "as an everlasting possession," so the land still belongs to the Jews.

How old were Abraham and Sarah when they heard that news? (See Gen. 17:17, 24.)

Sarah was 90 and Abraham was 99 (nearly 100).

How many years after leaving Haran for the Promised Land was Isaac born to Abraham and Sarah?

Twenty-five years

Page 54

Isaac was also the son Abraham loved. Why do you think God mentioned that just before asking Abraham to kill him?

God was reassuring Abraham that He was not indifferent to the love Abraham had for his son. He would not lightly ask this sacrifice or treat Abraham's pain with indifference.

Page 55

What in this verse suggests that he thought he would not be returning home alone? What did Abraham believe God was going to do?

Abraham told his servants that after the sacrifice, "we will come back to you." Abraham had faith that if he sacrificed his son in obedience to God's command, God would resurrect Isaac.

Page 57

How is the scene on Mt. Moriah like the scene at Calvary?

The most obvious impression is of a father preparing to sacrifice his beloved son. But the scene is also the first picture in the Bible of substitutionary blood atonement. The ram died on the altar so that Isaac could live, as Jesus, the Lamb of God, died on the cross so that we can live.

What is the connection between faith, patience, and trials?

Trials rightly endured produce growth in both perseverance and faith. Hard times test our faith so we can see how strong (or weak) it is. When we look back on trials and see that God was faithful all through them, our faith in Him grows.

Page 59

What was their lifestyle like?

They had a pilgrim life, traveling often and living in tents while they waited for God to fulfill His promise of a permanent homeland.

Page 60

What is “a stranger’s indifference”? What are a pilgrim’s priorities?

Local affairs are of little concern to someone who isn’t a permanent dweller in the community, to a traveler just passing through. A pilgrim travels light, isn’t concerned about temporary comfort, and is focused on the end of the journey.

These faith heroes could have gone back to their old home if they had wanted to, but they didn’t. Why not?

Their old life held no appeal when compared to their much better, heavenly home.

Page 61

How did God feel about these men who lived for heaven rather than earth?

He was not ashamed of them but was proud to call Himself their God.

Page 62

What was the crisis? What was Isaac’s plan to deal with it?

The crisis was a local famine. Isaac planned to move his family to Egypt where there was food, to get help from Abimelech, a heathen king.

Why was God going to do this for Isaac?

God was going to bless Isaac because his father Abraham had been obedient to God. Abraham’s faithful life was the basis of the covenant blessing passed on to Isaac.

How did He calm Isaac’s fears?

God appeared in person to assure Isaac that He was with him and would bless him and multiply his descendants for Abraham’s sake.

Page 63

What did Jacob see?

A ladder reaching to heaven, with angels going up and down and the Lord Himself standing above it

What did God call Himself?

The God of Abraham and Isaac

Why do you think He used that name?

This name assured Isaac that the promises God made to his father were also for him.

Page 64

What vows did he make there?

Jacob promised that if God would be with him, keep him safe, and provide for his needs until he returned safely to his father's house, he would worship only the Lord. The stone he set up at Bethel would be a place of worship, and he would tithe all his wealth.

Why do you think He used that name?

It reminded Jacob of the vows made at Bethel.

How had this man changed? Now where was his focus?

Jacob now humbly admitted that he did not deserve God's mercies. He knew his large family and many possessions were God's fulfillment of His promises. He acknowledged his fear of Esau and asked for protection for his family. Jacob's focus had shifted from himself to God and others.

Page 65

How do you think Joseph survived?

He survived by remembering the visions of his youth. He had faith that God would deliver him from his miseries and fulfill those prophecies.

Page 68

How did God take care of His people?

The more they were oppressed, the more "they multiplied and grew."

How did God protect His children?

God gave two Hebrew midwives courage to defy Pharaoh's command to murder baby boys. They lied to protect the children—but still God blessed them, and the number of Israelites grew.

Page 70

How do you think Jochebed, knowing that this day would come, prepared Moses? What would she have taught her little boy while he was still with her?

Jochebed would have taught Moses about God's covenant promises of land, descendants, and blessings for the Jews. She taught her little boy to reject idols and have faith in Jehovah, which was especially important for one who would be educated in a heathen palace. She also guided

him to believe he might someday be the deliverer of his people from slavery. Moses went to the palace with a clear understanding that he was a Jew, not an Egyptian.

“By faith” what did he refuse and reject? What did he choose and value instead? What did he look forward to?

Moses rejected the temporary pleasures of sin and the riches of Egypt. Instead, he chose to share the pain and reproach of God’s chosen people. Moses looked past the wealth and power of Egypt to God’s future rewards.

Page 71

How did Moses feel toward the Israelite slaves?

They were his brothers.

What motivated his attack on the Egyptian?

The Egyptian was hurting an Israelite, probably physically. Moses was defending the slave and taking revenge on the attacker.

How did he expect the Israelites to respond?

He thought they would immediately acknowledge him as their deliverer.

Page 72

What was Moses’ assignment from God?

He was to present himself to Pharaoh and bring the children of Israel out of Egypt.

List his objections and God’s answers to them.

Exodus 3:11-12—

Who am I to do this? I’m nobody!

I’ll be with you now, and later you’ll serve Me on this mountain.

Exodus 3:13-14—

When I tell Israel that the God of their fathers has sent me, and they ask me Your name, what can I say?

Tell them My name is I AM WHO I AM, and I have sent you.

Exodus 4:1-9—

But they won’t listen to me or believe that You have sent me.

Perform these miracles to show you are supernaturally empowered: a rod which becomes a serpent, a hand that becomes leprous and is then restored, and river water that turns to blood.

Exodus 4:10-16—

I am not eloquent. I am slow of speech and tongue. Send somebody else who can talk better than I can.

I made your mouth, your eyes, and your ears. I will be with you and tell you what to say. Your brother Aaron speaks well and will help. Tell him whatever I tell you. He will be your spokesman, and I will speak through both of you.

Page 73

How did God respond to Moses' frustration?

God promised that Pharaoh would eventually let the children of Israel go, even force them to leave. He reminded Moses Who He was: God Almighty, Who had made a covenant with His people. He assured Moses that He had heard the groans of His people and seen their suffering. He would rescue them from slavery with His mighty power and judgment on their enemies and bring them into the land He had sworn to give them.

What final prediction did Moses make?

At midnight, all firstborn sons and animals in Egypt would die.

Page 74

They left their chains behind, but in fulfillment of prophecy, what did they take with them?

Plunder--silver, gold, and clothes, requested by the Israelites and given by the Egyptians

What was the attitude of the people as they stood on the edge of the impossible?

They were terrified and cried to God. They verbally attacked Moses, criticizing him for taking them away from Egypt to die in the wilderness. They complained that it would have been better to be living slaves than dead free people.

Where did he turn the people's attention? What did he have faith God would do?

Moses turned their minds toward the Lord and what He could do. Moses had faith that God would fight for them, save their lives, and destroy their Egyptian enemies. They only had to stand still and watch.

What kind of man was Moses when he was forty?

He was self-confident, expecting people to follow his lead.

When he was eighty?

He felt inadequate to do what he was called to do.

Page 75

What is he like now, at the edge of the Red Sea?

He is confident not in his own ability, but in the power of Jehovah. He is a bold leader who knows what God will do. His faith is no longer in himself, but in his God.

Page 78

What price did those faithless folks pay?

All people over twenty who complained and feared to enter the land of promise died and were buried in the wilderness. Their children wandered the wilderness for forty years. Only Caleb and Joshua, the two spies with faith, entered the land. The ten spies who brought a pessimistic report from the land died from the plague.

Page 79

What command did God give Joshua three times?

Be strong and courageous.

What was it?

I will be with you; I will not leave you or forsake you; I will be with you wherever you go.

What daily habit would bring Joshua prosperity and success?

Meditating in the Book of the Law (the five books of Moses) day and night, and obeying what was written there.

What are you supposed to do with them? If you do, what good things will happen?

Read, study, meditate on, and obey them. Then you will be prosperous and successful.

Page 80

What did the people need to do before battling?

The males needed to be circumcised. This rite had not been observed during the forty years of wandering in the wilderness.

Why did this matter?

As an enduring symbol of the covenant, circumcision identified the Jews as God's special, set-apart people.

Page 81

What did Israel do next?

They once again observed the Passover.

What happened the day after they kept the first Passover in their own land?

Manna stopped falling, and they ate food grown in the land.

Page 82

How were "all the inhabitants of the land" reacting to this crowd of people camping in their territory? Why?

They were so terrified that “their heart melted.” They had no spirit to go out and fight but shut themselves up inside their walled city. They had heard that the God of Israel was doing mighty miracles for Israel.

Who did the soldier say He was? How did Joshua respond?

He said He was the “Commander of the army of the Lord.” Joshua fell on his face, worshiped Him (the pre-incarnate Christ), and asked to hear His words. Joshua also took off his sandal as told, for he was on holy ground.

Page 84

What had Rahab heard about Israel and their God? (See Josh. 2:8-10.)

Rahab had heard that their God had given Israel the land, and that everyone now living there was terrified. She and the others had heard about the miraculous crossing of the Red Sea and the complete destruction of two kings of the Amorites across the Jordan River. Rahab knew that Israel’s God was the sovereign creator of the earth.

What did Rahab ask the spies to do?

She asked them to spare her, her family, and their possessions from destruction.

Page 85

How big does faith have to be for God to honor it?

As big as a mustard seed—tiny!

Who does God specialize in saving?

Sinners, not those who (think they are) already righteous

Rahab married *Salmon*. Their son was *Boaz*, who married *Ruth*.

Their son was *Obed*. His son was *Jesse*, and his son was *David*.

Page 87

Why does this enemy hate you?

The world hates you because Jesus is your Master, and they hate Him. You do not belong to this world, but to God’s world.

What are the Bible strategies for victory over the world?

2 Timothy 3:12-17—Continue believing the scriptures you have learned.

1 John 2:15-17—Don’t love the world. Love to do God’s will instead.

Page 88

1 John 5:4-5—Have faith that Jesus is the Son of God; this faith gives victory.

What are the Bible strategies for victory over your flesh?

Romans 8:13—Put to death the sins of your body by purifying your habits and behavior.

Romans 13:14—Don't provide yourself with opportunities to sin. Don't make it easy to do wrong.

Galatians 5:16—Walk in the Spirit. Give yourself over to His control; purposefully and in a disciplined way do what pleases Him.

Page 89

What is he doing right now?

The devil is stalking you like a ravenous lion who wants to eat you up.

What are the Bible strategies for victory over the devil?

Ephesians 6:11-18—Put on the whole armor of God and stand firm.

1 Peter 5:8-9—Be serious; stay alert; resist him; be firm in your faith.

James 4:7—Be submissive (obedient) to God and resistant to the enemy.

Page 91

What were his complaints?

If God is really with us, why has all this happened? Where are those miracles we've heard about? The Lord has forsaken us and let us be oppressed by our enemy.

What excuse did he make?

I am the weakest person in the smallest clan in Manasseh. How can I save Israel?

What did Gideon ask for?

A sign that his visitor was God.

Page 92

What kind of faith did Gideon have now?

He had faith in what *would* happen--faith in the invisible.

Page 94

What kind of man was he?

Samson was strong in body but weak in character. He was dedicated to God from birth but constantly indulged in fleshly sin. He was the victim of one scheming woman but defeated many Philistines. He failed continually but was called and enabled by the power of God.

Page 95

How do you know Samson had not lost his faith?

In this crisis, Samson prayed for strength to destroy His enemies, for he knew his power ultimately came from God, not himself.

Page 96

What motivated David to battle Goliath? What did David want everyone to know?

David came in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, the One being defied by Goliath. David wanted everyone to see the power of the God of Israel, Who did not need a sword or spear to defeat His enemies.

What did David do before going into battle?

David asked if he should go to fight and asked what the outcome of the battle would be.

What kept David calm when this bitter man was trying to kill him?

David had faith that the Lord would avenge Saul's evil. God was the Judge Who would see Saul's behavior, plead David's case, and deliver him.

Page 100

When God uses fallible people to accomplish great feats of faith, what is He revealing about Himself?

He is revealing that the victory is His, not ours. The weaker we are, the more we rely on His strength, and the more He is glorified (2 Cor. 12:9). He is not dependent on our abilities but can do great things through weak but willing servants who know how much they need Him.

Page 102

As his torture began, what did he see?

The heavens opened to reveal the glory of God, with Jesus standing at God's right hand.

Page 105

Words from Jesus, Who was rejected and crucified.

Matthew 5:10-12—Those who are persecuted, reviled, and attacked for the sake of Jesus and righteousness are blessed. The kingdom of heaven is theirs, and since they are following the example of the prophets, they can rejoice and be glad.

John 15:18-21—Those who are not part of this world will be hated by them just as they hated and persecuted Jesus. Your suffering comes in Jesus' name from those who do not know the Father.

Words from the apostle Paul, who suffered well.

Romans 5:3-5—Glory in tribulation, because it produces endurance, character, and hope. The ultimate end of trials is understanding how much God loves you.

Romans 8:16-18—We suffer with Jesus so we can be glorified with Him. Today's sufferings are nothing in comparison to the glory that will come later.

2 Corinthians 1:3-5—God, the source of all real comfort, consoles us when we suffer so we can comfort others when they suffer.

2 Corinthians 4:16-18—As our bodies gradually age and die, our souls grow stronger. Our light and temporary afflictions produce in us eternal glory that far outweighs our present pain. Loss on earth results in gain in eternity.

Words from Peter, who was martyred.

1 Peter 1:6-7—Rejoice, even if for a short time you must have various sorts of trials, for the fire of trials proves your faith is genuine and more valuable than gold. Tried and proven faith gives Jesus praise, honor, and glory.

1 Peter 2:19-23—Suffering for doing wrong is useless. Suffering for doing right is honored by God because it follows the example of Jesus, Who suffered.

Page 106

1 Peter 3:13-17—People who do good things are not usually harmed, but if you do suffer for doing right, consider yourself blessed. Don't be afraid of threats or upset by them. Instead, submit to God and do what He says. Always be ready to humbly and respectfully explain what you believe. Have such a clear conscience that nobody will believe accusations made against you. It is better to be harmed for doing good than for doing evil.

1 Peter 4:12-14—Don't think it's strange when you have fiery trials. They let you share in Christ's sufferings so that when He comes back, you will overflow with joy. You are blessed when you are blamed and treated badly for Jesus' sake, for then the Spirit of God comes with supernatural comfort and help.

How can this be? What makes the difference?

When tried by fire, faith is either purified or destroyed, depending on its quality. Small, temporary trials give us the opportunity to learn to trust God truly and deeply, so that when giant, terrifying trials arrive, our faith will survive.