

Example Five: concerning inability to please God:

(a) New Testament characterization of the unregenerate state:

"So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you."

(Romans 8:8-9)

(b) Old Testament characterization of the state of the believer:

"When a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him."

(Proverbs 16:7)

(c) New Testament statements concerning Old Testament believers

"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."

(Hebrews 11:5)

"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.

By faith Noah . . .

By faith Abraham

By faith Isaac

By faith Jacob

By faith Joseph

By faith Moses

By faith the harlot Rahab

Gideon . . . Barak . . . Samson . . . Jephthah . . . David . . .

Samuel . . . the prophets: who through faith

(Hebrews 11:6,7,8,20,21,22,23,31,32,33)

In this fifth example of antithesis, the unregenerate man is said to be totally unable to please God. However, not only the possibility but the actuality of pleasing God is asserted with respect to Old Testament believers. In the context of Hebrew 11, it does not appear that the writer is stating that, although without faith it is impossible to please God, yet even with faith it is possible not to please Him. (One could assert that, strictly speaking, the converse may not be drawn, since the writer could be stressing the necessity of faith, but not its sufficiency, in regard to the possibility of pleasing God. One might conceivably stress the need of additional elements besides faith. But this would appear to go against the