

HEBREWS 11:1-7

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to Hebrews chapter 11 as we continue our study through the Word of God.

Over the last ten chapters of Hebrews we have been dealing with doctrine and in doing so we have been looking at the fact that Jesus is superior to everyone and everything!

Remember that Paul is writing to Jewish believers who were struggling with their faith, they were being drawn back into Judaism.

And Paul has shown them that Jesus is superior to the prophets, to angels, to Moses, to Joshua, to the Levitical priesthood as He comes from a better priestly order, He has given to us a better covenant, He is a better sanctuary, and He is a better sacrifice!

In other words, Paul is admonishing them not to go back to that which is inferior, stay with Jesus! Remember what we read in Hebrews 6:19, **“This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast . . .”**

Our hope, all of God’s promises to us are true and we can rest in that fact, Jesus is Almighty God who has come to save us from our sins and the work is completed, finished on the cross of Calvary as Jesus sat down at the right hand of the Father.

In Fact, Paul wants them to understand that the Old Covenant is made obsolete by the New Covenant and that Old Covenant is passing off the scene. He wrote in Hebrews 8:13, **“In that He says, ‘A new covenant,’ He has made the first obsolete. Now what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away.”**

The Temple and all the sacrifices were going away, they will be destroyed, and they were destroyed by the Romans in 70 A. D. So don't hold onto that which is passing away, hold onto Jesus!

This evening we will begin the last division of this letter that Paul wrote to these Hebrew Christians who were living in Jerusalem and being persecuted for their faith.

This section deals with the *Superiority of Jesus Over the Principle of Faith* as Jesus is not only the example of faith, but the One who enables us to live a life of faith.

In Hebrews chapter 11 we will look at *EXAMPLES OF FAITH*.

In Hebrews chapter 12 we will look at the *ENDURANCE OF FAITH*.

And lastly, as Paul closes this letter, in Hebrews chapter 13, he gives us an *EXHORTATION IN FAITH*.

Hebrews chapter 11 has been called "*The Saints Hall of Faith*," "*The Honor Roll of the Old Testament*," "*The Faith Chapter*," "*Heroes of Faith*," and more.

Why does Paul move in this direction after he has shown us that Jesus is superior to angels, to Moses, to Joshua, to the Levitical Priesthood? It almost seems out of place.

Make no mistake about it, this fits in perfectly to what he has already said and keep in mind who he is writing to. He is writing to Jewish believers who were struggling with their faith, mainly because of the persecution they were facing at the hands of their fellow, non-believing Jews, as well as the Romans. Thus, they were being drawn back into Judaism so they would not rock the boat, they would not cause trouble, they would not face any further persecution!

But to go back would mean to go back to the sacrifices, the rituals that were only a type, a picture of who was to come, Jesus. Remember, Jesus is the substance, the One they hoped for. He is the Lamb of God who has come and taken away the sins of the world!

Thus, Paul concludes Hebrews chapter 10 by saying, “**But we are not of those who draw back to perdition, but of those who believe to the saving of the soul.**” Hebrews 10:39.

Now, as these Jews were reading this letter and finished that last part of Hebrews chapter 10, they may be thinking, “*But you don’t know what I am going through. You don’t know the difficulties that I am facing. It is hard. It is tough. I am being drawn back!*”

I think that Paul anticipated a response like that to what he said and thus, he gives to them examples of men and women of faith who died before the Messiah came and how strong their faith was in the promises of God.

And as we look at these heroes of faith, notice how their faith in God was manifested in different ways. As we go through these lessons, see how they can apply to your life, because I believe each one does.

Paul has spent ten chapters on doctrine, and now he is moving towards the application of that doctrine or how we should live out our faith.

He did that in Romans, the first eleven chapters dealt with doctrine and then from Romans chapter 12 through the end of the letter, Romans chapter 16, it is the application of that doctrine to our lives, or, again, how we should live out our faith!

And Paul does this a lot in his letters because it is not only about what is right, it truly is about how we walk after we know these truths.

Folks, this is where the rubber meets the road you might say.

And here in Hebrews chapter 11 he shows us how God impacted people’s lives and then in chapters 12 and 13 how it should be manifested in our own lives.

With that said, let's begin reading in Hebrews chapter 11, starting in verse 1 and see what the Lord has for us this evening as we begin our study looking at the men and women of faith to encourage us to go on, not to give up no matter what comes our way because our faith is in the Lord!

HEBREWS 11

VERSE 1

Paul starts out with a bang as he tells us about what faith is. Now, here is the problem. When people speak of faith there are a variety of ideas out there to what it means.

Think about those that are involved with the Word of Faith Movement or the name it and claim it group.

They believe that faith is nothing more than a ***“force”*** that functions according to certain laws. And because they have a misconception about faith, it is manifested in their lives in unbiblical ways. Let me show you what I mean.

Some of you have heard of the Word of Faith teacher, Charles Capps. Listen carefully to what he has to say about faith. ***“God’s Word in your mouth produces a force called ‘faith’, it generates a spiritual force called faith.”***

Then there is Kenneth Copeland, and, along those same lines he writes, ***“Faith is your servant; it’s a force just like gravity that we can use because we are part of God and have all His capabilities.”***

And that is just a couple of views of what they believe about faith. The bottom line is this. To them, faith is nothing more than a force that operates along some certain laws and anyone who taps into these laws, learns these laws can harness this force called faith and use it to their advantage. God spoke forth the worlds by the Word of His mouth, and thus, we can do the same they believe!

The problem here, and they are not ashamed to speak of it, is that faith is related to you and you tapping into this force, kind of like a Star Wars faith!

Now don't get mad at me, that is exactly what Kenneth Hagin titled his book, ***"Having Faith in Your Faith."*** And this is what he wrote in it, ***"That's what you've got to learn to do to get things from God: Have faith in your faith."***

Now, some of you may not agree with what I have said, you respect these men, but listen carefully to what the Bible has to say compared to what they are telling us about faith.

In Mark 11:22 Jesus said, **"Have faith in God."** Notice, we are not to have faith in ourselves but in God. And as we pray, we don't order God to give us things, we ask God that if it is in His will, that He will do these things. Huge difference!

You see, faith is not some kind of force and it really is nothing in and of itself. We don't pray to make God work for us, we pray so that we can know the will of God and ask God to intercede in various situations that we are facing.

What do I mean by that, that faith is really nothing in and of itself?

Here's the thing. The only reason faith is something is because of the object it is attached to. You see, then and only then can we determine whether or not its meaningful or meaningless or powerful or powerless.

Let me give you an example. You are jumping out of a plane with a parachute and your faith is in that parachute to see you to safety. The problem here is that this parachute has cords that are broken, a bunch of holes are in this parachute.

Now, no matter how much faith you have in that parachute, it is not going to save you from crashing to the ground. Thus, your faith is meaningless because the object of your faith is powerless to do what it is supposed to do!

I hope that makes sense to you.

Others see faith as having your fingers crossed that somehow something may come to pass in an uncertain tomorrow. That too is not faith, it is just wishful thinking!

Others believe that you just have to have faith in something or someone and that is good enough. But again, if the object of your faith is powerless to do anything then your faith is meaningless!

And the reality is, that is not the faith that the Bible speaks of nor is it the faith that Paul is speaking of here.

You see, before Paul speaks of the men and women of faith to be examples to these Jewish believers, he explains what faith is.

Faith, in a sense, gives us evidence of the invisible, of those things we can't see and yet with the same confidence to what we can see with our physical eyes.

In fact, it should be even stronger than what we can see with our physical eyes.

Think about that for a minute. Our senses can lie to us and we can be deceived.

Have you ever seen something that looked so good to eat and once you ate it, took a bite of it, you found it to be the exact opposite? Your senses deceived you!

But faith in God, faith in the promises of God are far more secure, in fact they are 100% sure because God cannot lie.

Paul, in Titus 1:2 tells us, **“in hope of eternal life which God, who cannot lie, promised before time began.”**

Then why do we believe so much in what we see with our physical eyes instead of the promises of God?

Because we lack faith!

And so, faith is living in a hope that is so real it gives absolute assurance to us that it will come to pass. That is the faith of these Old Testament saints!

Think about it. When we came to Jesus and asked Him to be Lord and Savior of our lives, He has promised us heaven, He has promised to come and receive us to Him. We only have God’s promises to us, and thus, our faith is in the Lord and His promises to us even though we can’t see this happening right now, we know it will happen.

And notice how Paul starts out here in Hebrews 11:1. Paul starts out by saying, **“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for . . .”**

Now some may be thinking, *“Isn’t that just wishful thinking? Isn’t that just wishing that something would happen?”*

Not at all.

Paul is saying that faith is the **“substance”** which is the Greek word HUPOSTASIS, (hoop-os’-tas-is) and it speaks of a, ***“support from beneath.”*** In other words, think of it like a foundation.

In other words, faith is to our hope just as a foundation is to a house!

That is why Paul starts out like this. Faith is what undergirds our hope, our hope in the things that God has promised us!

I like the way that The Amplified Bible puts Hebrews 11:1, **“NOW FAITH is the assurance (the confirmation, the title deed) of the things [we] hope for . . .”**

In other words, *“Faith is the confidence of things hoped for!”*

Let me show you how this is played out. Look at Hebrews 11:24-26 where Paul says, **“By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward.”**

Moses, instead of grabbing for the material things of this world that were before him, he forsook them and grabbed hold of that which he couldn’t see with his physical eyes but saw with his eyes of faith, the coming of the Messiah. That is Biblical faith manifested in the life of Moses!

Now, keep in mind that this was still some 1400 years down the road and yet he believed it by faith and lived his life accordingly.

Paul, in Hebrews 11:13 explains it like this, **“These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.”**

You see, their reality was in the promises of God rather than what they saw with their physical eyes. And because they trusted in the promises of God, their faith held their hope up and helped them to live a life that was pleasing to God.

You see, for them this earth was not the final goal, but being with the Lord, they were pilgrims and strangers on the earth as we are, for our citizenship is in heaven!

For the unsaved, they have a saying, *“Seeing is believing.”*

But for the Christian, they also have a saying that is a little different, ***“Believing is seeing!”***

That is faith, not in a wishful hope, but in a promise made to us by God, and it will come to pass no matter how impossible it may seem!

Next, Paul says that faith is **“The evidence of things not seen.”**

The word ***“evidence”*** or ***“substance”*** can be translated ***“title deed”*** or ***“ownership.”***

In other words, Biblical faith is not a blind leap into darkness. Not at all! It is a reasonable faith that is built upon many infallible proofs that will stand up as evidence in any court of law!

We can trust God’s Word; it is infallible and inherent. Many have come to disprove it and have become believers because of it. We have prophecy, over 300 prophecies of Christ’s first coming, all fulfilled down to the tiniest detail! We have scientific evidence that when the Bible speaks about since, it is 100% correct! We have historical accuracy of places and people. And so much more. We can trust God’s Word and thus, we can trust what He has promised to us.

Because you know the promises of God, you believe the promises of God, and now it is manifested in your life, the things you do. It is trusting in God and living accordingly!

Remember the story of Daniel’s three friends who were taken captive with Daniel to Babylon?

The King of Babylon, a wicked man named Nebuchadnezzar made this huge image that he wanted everyone to bow down and worship, which was not a problem for most people, since they were polytheistic, they believed in many gods.

But for Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-Nego, these Jewish captives, it was a huge problem because they worshiped the true and living God, one God, they were monotheistic!

Thus, they refused to bow down and worship this image.

This made the King furious; he was out of control and he threatened to throw them in the fiery furnace if they did not reconsider this and obey his commands.

This King, not known for his patience, did give them a second chance and a stern warning, **“Now if you are ready at the time you hear the sound of the horn, flute, harp, lyre, and psaltery, in symphony with all kinds of music, and you fall down and worship the image which I have made, good! But if you do not worship, you shall be cast immediately into the midst of a burning fiery furnace. And who is the god who will deliver you from my hands?”** Daniel 3:15.

Now listen to their response to this King in Daniel 3:16-18, **“Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego answered and said to the king, ‘O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. If that is the case, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us from your hand, O king. But if not, let it be known to you, O king, that we do not serve your gods, nor will we worship the gold image which you have set up.’”**

Here we see faith manifested in the lives of these three men.

With their physical eyes they could see the King. With their physical ears they could hear his threats. They could see the fiery furnace!

And yet they put their faith in a God they could not see and trusted in His promises to them, that no matter what happens to them, God is in control and He is able!

My prayer is, ***“Lord, give me that kind of faith, that no matter what happens, you are in control!”***

Now there are two kinds of faith.

First, there is saving faith and we see that in Romans 10:17, “**So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.**”

This saving faith is the faith of a moment and it affects our eternity!

Then there is practical faith and that is a faith that is lived out every day of our lives. It is a faith that goes moment by moment and it affects our daily lives!

We see this in Hebrews 10:38 where Paul wrote, “**Now the just shall live by faith . . .**”

One author defines it this way, “*Faith is confidence in the trustworthiness of God. It is the conviction that what God says is true and that what He promises will come to pass.*”

So faith supports those things we know to be true, the promises of God even though we might not see them with our physical eyes, but through the eyes of faith we believe.

And that belief is the evidence or the confidence we need to live what we believe.

You see, faith truly begins when all other possibilities end, it is out of our hands and in the hands of God.

I like the way George Muller put it. He says, “*Difficulties are found for faith to feed on.*”

We grow by trusting in Him, not a blind leap of faith but a trust in His Word, in His promises, that what God has promised He is more than able to bring to pass.

And that is what Paul is going to show us in this chapter, showing us the men and women who have entered this hall of faith!

VERSE 2

Keep in mind who Paul is writing to. He is writing to Jewish Christians that were discouraged because they were suffering persecution at the hands of the Roman government and their own Jewish countrymen.

And, because of it, some were even thinking of abandoning Christianity altogether and going back to Judaism.

And Paul wants them to understand that the Christian life is not easy, it is not a tiptoe through the tulips. And we see examples of that in both the Old and New Testament and Paul is going to share some of those examples with them to encourage them.

He wants them to understand that it was faith that saw them through all those difficulties. A faith that looked forward to the promises of God and keeping their eyes on the eternal. What a good lesson for us to learn!

Remember what Paul wrote in II Corinthians 4:16-18, **“Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.”**

I think looking at men and women of faith and how they handled the situations that they faced can encourage us in our walk with the Lord.

An example I can give you as a kid of watching someone and trying to follow their example was the great Willie Mays. I would watch him as he was making that catch over his shoulders as the ball was going over his head.

As I saw that I thought, *“If he can do it, why can’t I?”*

One good reason is that he was a professional baseball player and I was a kid, but that didn’t stop me from trying.

And you know what, I got that catch down; I could do what Willie Mays did!

You see, he was a great example to me and by watching him I learned to catch like him.

That is what Paul is doing here. Paul is trying to encourage these discouraged Jewish believers by having them look at the elders of faith, how they lived, the things they went through so they could follow in their footsteps. It was to be an encouragement to them!

In fact, Paul, as he finishes up this section on the Hall of Faith, he opens up chapter 12 by saying, **“Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.”** Hebrews 12:1-2.

In other words, look at these men and women of faith and then run the race with endurance looking to Jesus who not only is the Author of our faith but also the Finisher of our faith. He will see our faith to the end!

They were to be an encouragement to them to run to win, run to finish!

Let’s face it, I think we all go through times of discouragement from time-to-time and as we look at the good testimony of others, as we see their example, it spurs us on, it encourages us!

One thing we will notice as we go through this section is that the situations, the circumstances these people found themselves in were all different.

Then what was the common denominator?

It was their faith in God and His promises!

Now, when you take God out of the equation, what do you have?

There is no faith, there is no hope, there is no peace, there is no assurance, there is no confidence.

And in that they will try all kinds of things so they may find it, but outside of God, it is all empty.

Let me share this with you and you will see what I mean. We are told,

As the story goes, a man despairing of life had climbed the railing of the Brooklyn Bridge and was about to leap into the river when a policeman caught him by the collar and pulled him back.

The would-be suicide protested, “You don’t understand how miserable I am and how hopeless my life is. Please let me jump.”

The kind-hearted officer reasoned with him and said, “I’ll make this proposition to you. Take five minutes and give your reasons why life is hopeless and not worth living, and then I’ll take five minutes and give my reasons why I think life is worth living, both for you and for me. If at the end of ten minutes you still feel like jumping from the bridge, I won’t stop you.”

The man took his five minutes, and the officer took his five minutes. Then they stood up, joined hands, and jumped off the bridge!

- R. Kent Hugues, Hebrews – An Anchor for the Soul, Vol. 2, p. 59

Please understand I am not talking suicide lightly here. But here is the reality. Why is suicide so high in our country? Sadly, we have taken God out of the picture and without God, there is no hope. Well, I shouldn't say that there is no hope, but the faith that people are placing in this hope they have is powerless and thus, meaningless. It is not really hope.

For us as Christians, our faith is not blind, it trusts in the promises of God because God's promises will come to pass, they are certain and it gives us hope, peace, assurance, confidence no matter what happens.

You see, God is in control!

And, like the elders of the Old Testament, we too can have a good testimony.

Our lives will be a witness to others, we will encourage others by our faith!

Thus, as Paul has shown us, true Biblical faith is: ***SUBSTANCE, EVIDENCE AND TESTIMONY!***

VERSE 3

As Paul finishes up his definition of what Christian faith is all about, he says, "**By faith we understand . . .**"

And the Greek word that is used here speaks of seeing something, but not just with our physical eyes, but with the eyes of faith!

And Paul starts out by speaking of God creating the heavens and the earth by the word of His mouth, He created everything out of absolutely nothing!

Now we were not there and thus we did not see this happen.

If that is true, and it is, then how do we know that He created all these things instead of the Big Bang or evolution?

Because we are told in Genesis 1:1, “**In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.**”

Thus, we believe it by faith but again, this is not a blind faith. We see that science backs up what God has already said or to put it correctly, science has caught up with God!

Let me share this with you.

Atoms are so small that they can't be seen with the naked eye, I think we all understand that.

And for centuries Christians had to take this by faith, “**. . . so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible.**” Hebrews 11:3.

In other words, the visible universe was made up of things that were invisible!

But today, we see the reality of that statement.

Again, look at the atom. Atoms are made up of one or more electrons that orbit the nucleus of the atom.

Now, I don't want to blow your mind here, but if the electron was the size of a basketball it would orbit the nucleus at a distance of three thousand miles. As amazing as that is, it also tells us that there is more space in an atom than substance.

And that is why the scientists say that, what we call matter, like this podium, is really nothing more than an *energy field*.

And like I have said, Paul tells us here that it was by the words of His mouth that God created everything! And not only created everything, but God also holds everything together!

It is just as the Psalmist tells us in Psalm 33, “**By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, And all the host of them by the breath of His mouth. . . . For He spoke, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast.**” Psalm 33:6, 9.

Or in Genesis 1:3, **“Then God said, ‘Let there be light’; and there was light.”**

God spoke it, He commanded it and it was!

Now I do understand that believing in creation is by faith and the reason it is faith is that I cannot reproduce creation or something out of nothing.

But, like I have said, as I look at this world, I see that there must be a Creator, there must be a Designer, it couldn't have happened by random chance occurrences.

You see, my faith is in God and as I look at the evidence, it shows that my faith in creation is real.

Now, for the evolutionist, his faith is blind, it is based on hope and a hope that is without substance, it is without support! It is powerless and thus, it is truly meaningless!

In fact, Darwin was well aware that his theory of gradual evolution by natural selection carried a heavy burden. He said,

If it could be demonstrated that any complex organ existed which could not possibly have been formed by numerous, successive, slight modifications, my theory would absolutely break down.

- Charles Darwin, Origin of Species, 6th ed. (1872), p. 154

Guess what, it broke down!

Michael J. Behe in his book, *Darwin's Black Box*, speaks of irreducible complexity.

He defines this term as follows: “. . . *a single system composed of several well-matched, interacting parts that contribute to the basic function, wherein the removal of any one of the parts causes the system to effectively cease functioning. . . . Since natural selection can only choose systems that are already working, then if a biological system cannot be produced gradually it would have to arise as an integrated unit, in one fell swoop, for natural selection to have anything to act on.*” (Page 39).

To give us an example of irreducible complexity he uses a simple mousetrap.

The function of a mousetrap is, of course, to immobilize a mouse so it cannot do destructive things in the house. It is captured, and sorry, from my experience, it is dead.

Now for a mousetrap it has only five working parts to it: the platform or the base; the spring that presses against the platform and hammer when the trap is charged; the hammer, which crushes the mouse; the catch, which releases when slight pressure is applied; and the holding bar that holds the hammer back until it is released.

Now all these parts are needed for the mousetrap to function and any part that would be missing would cause the mousetrap to cease functioning.

Now, Darwinian evolution is stating that not only did all these parts not exist to begin with but gradually, over time, these parts came into being and then they not only became a mousetrap but a skateboard, toy wagon, car and-so-on, they continued to evolve, gaining more information over time, becoming more complex over time.

And all those parts would have to evolve at the same time, come on, really? Yes, that is what it all boils down to and that is one of the many reasons evolution is a fairy tale!

Now take that which is mechanical and go to living things, which are far more complex and when you do you see that that kind of faith is empty. In other words, just for one example, the eye, unless it is fully formed it is non-functioning and thus, it could not evolve and that is only one example.

Just this simple concept of irreducible complexity makes Darwinian evolution false and those who believe in it have an empty faith, it is not of any substance, there is no real hope in it!

I like the way that T. L. Moore, physics professor at the University of Cincinnati put it. He said, ***“To talk of the evolution of thought from sea slime to amoeba, from amoeba to a self-conscious thinking man, means nothing. It is the easy solution of a thoughtless brain.”***

For the evolutionists, for the person who rejects God, his faith is empty.

But for us as Christians our faith is not in empty things, it is in God and thus, because of the object of our faith, all things are possible!

Now we are going to move from this section on the definition of faith and into a section that deals with the application of faith in believer’s lives.

We will see faith played out in various ways and the reality is, faith is the only way to God and these Old Testament saints knew that, believed that and lived that out in their lives!

VERSE 4

Now, keep in mind that these are examples of faith and to understand the point that Paul is making, we need to see it through faith.

So, the big question is, ***“Why did God accept Abel’s sacrifice and reject Cain’s?”***

Now some feel that it was that Abel offered up a blood sacrifice while Cain offered up a grain sacrifice, and that may have played a role in God accepting Abel's and rejecting Cain's, but I think there is more to that here. Remember, this is an example of faith.

I think the reason is a heart issue. Abel offered up his sacrifice to God in obedient faith and Cain was offered up in disobedient faith.

Again, I don't think it was just that Abel brought a blood sacrifice before God, like I have said, but he did so with a right heart and that is why God accepted his sacrifice over Cain's!

Now, how did they know if God accepted their sacrifice?

Think about it, they knew without a doubt that Cain's was rejected, and Abel's accepted, but how?

I tend to believe that God consumed that sacrifice of Abel's with a fire from heaven showing that it was accepted.

Cain's was not consumed in the fire from heaven and thus, it was not accepted.

Do we see evidence for this in the Scriptures?

You bet we do. In Leviticus 9:24 at the dedication of the Tabernacle we read, "**and fire came out from before the LORD and consumed the burnt offering and the fat on the altar. When all the people saw it, they shouted and fell on their faces.**"

At the dedication of the Temple in II Chronicles 7:1-3 we are told, **“When Solomon had finished praying, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices; and the glory of the LORD filled the temple. And the priests could not enter the house of the LORD, because the glory of the LORD had filled the LORD’s house. When all the children of Israel saw how the fire came down, and the glory of the LORD on the temple, they bowed their faces to the ground on the pavement, and worshiped and praised the LORD, saying: ‘For He is good, For His mercy endures forever.’”** (See also I Kings 18:38 and I Chronicles 21:26).

Thus, as Cain saw that God did not accept his sacrifice, it was not consumed in the fire from heaven, he became angry. He wanted to come to God in his own way, under his own terms and God refused; He rejected Cain for his heart was not right.

How many people today try to follow the way of Cain, coming to God under their own terms, their own way and God still rejects it!

Jesus said in John 4:23-24, **“But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.”**

It is His way or the highway!

Even now, thousands of years later we still see the faith of Able speak to us and we also see the faithlessness of Cain speak to us.

It is as James Moffatt said, *“Death is never the last word in the life of a righteous man. When a man leaves this world, be he righteous or unrighteous, he leaves something in the world. He may leave something that will grow and spread like a cancer or poison, or he may leave something like the fragrance of perfume or a blossom of beauty that permeates the atmosphere with blessing.”*

What are you leaving behind!

VERSES 5-6

Here is one of those mystery men of the Bible that is mentioned in Genesis chapter 5 as the man who walked with God, he pleased God, Enoch.

Now how did he please God, what work did he do that God was pleased with him?

It wasn't his works but his faith in God. You see, Paul does not tell us it is ***DIFFICULT*** to please God outside of faith because then there would be a chance.

No, he says it is ***IMPOSSIBLE*** to please God outside of faith!

I fully don't understand how Enoch was cleansed of his sin before Christ, but since he walked with God, he must have been cleansed by faith!

John tells us, **“This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.”** I John 1:5-10.

Now, of this man named Enoch we are told in Genesis 5:21-24, **“Enoch lived sixty-five years, and begot Methuselah. After he begot Methuselah, Enoch walked with God three hundred years, and had sons and daughters. So all the days of Enoch were three hundred and sixty-five years And Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him.”**

That is interesting to me, because, before the flood of God’s judgment came upon this earth, God removed Enoch!

Thus, I tend to see Enoch as a type or picture of the Church being Raptured before the judgment of God falls upon this Christ rejecting world.

Just as Enoch was removed before the flood waters came, we too will be removed before the Tribulation Period begins.

Then what about Noah, who is he a type of?

Noah is a type or a picture of the Jews who will go through the Tribulation Period and for those who are in the ark, those who come to Christ during the Tribulation Period and make it through will enter into the Kingdom Age with Him!

Even today, unless you come to God by faith, you cannot be saved.

Jesus, meeting up with the 5,000 men, plus women and children a day after He fed them, rebuked them for their desire to fill their stomachs with physical food and starve their spirit by neglecting spiritual food.

And in John 6:28 we are told, **“Then they said to Him, ‘What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?’”**

What a great question, what do we need to do, what works do we need to do to enter into heaven, to have a relationship with God?

We don’t have to guess for in John 6:29 we are told, **“Jesus answered and said to them, ‘This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent.’”**

You see, believe in Jesus, the Messiah, God incarnate, faith in Him as Paul tells us in Ephesians 2:8-9, **“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.”**

And as we believe in Him, He will reward us; fruit will be born in our lives as we are attached to the Vine, to Jesus!

You see, by faith we believe in Jesus, and then we walk by faith with Jesus. It is a walk by faith from salvation until we go home to be with the Lord!

As we read on, we will be looking at Noah, and, as one writer put it, *“Abel illustrates the worship of faith, and Enoch the walk of faith. Noah, perhaps more than any other person in history, illustrates the work of faith, obedience.”* (John MacArthur)

VERSE 7

Keep in mind what the time period was like in the days of Noah. Wickedness filled the heart of man continually. Noah lived at a time when the wickedness of man was even greater than today. And yet, Noah lived among them as a *“light”* in the darkness. And that is a great encouragement for us to do no less!

Now Noah was the first man in the Scriptures to be called *“righteous.”* In other words, he had a right standing with God.

How was Noah righteous? What made Noah righteous.

Noah believed God, he believed what God said.

How do I know that?

Because God told Noah to build an ark in the middle of a desert. Also, there was no rain yet. And even though Noah didn't know how God was going to accomplish this, he believed God by faith and that faith was manifested in good works!

Think about this task that the Lord gave to Noah.

The ark was some 450 feet long, 75 feet wide and 45 feet high, containing three decks.

It weighed between 15 to 20 thousand tons and built as a barge for stability, not for speed.

It was almost 1½ times the length of a football field!

The total deck capacity was 96,000 square feet. The volume capacity was some 1.3 million cubic feet. It was huge!

Now as impressive as that is, there is something that is even more impressive to me, and that is the faith of Noah.

Noah probably lived in Mesopotamia between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers but not close to any large bodies of water to float this boat on.

And, like I have said, in Genesis chapter 6 we are told that wickedness had filled the earth and God was going to bring judgment upon man for their wickedness, except for Noah and his family.

And this judgment would come by a flood.

Not a problem for us today for we understand what floods are like, but back then there were no floods, there was no rain, the earth was watered with a mist that came up from the ground until that first rain drop started to fall after Noah and his family and the animals were safely in the ark.

So by faith Noah spent 120 years building this boat and trusting in the words of God, the promises of God.

Here again we see obedience born out of faith!

And in this we also see that his righteousness was not based out of his good works, but out of his faith, just as ours is!

Please understand that the kind of righteousness that saves us (the righteousness of Christ) is never earned it is always imputed through our faith in Jesus, but it always produces the *fruits of righteousness* if it's genuine.

Here we are, in the twenty-first century and God has warned us of a coming judgment.

What are we doing about it? Are we just living our lives as usual or are we working to bring the Gospel to a lost and dying world?

“It is not easy! No one wants to listen. It has been so long that we have heard this coming judgment and nothing yet!” And I can go on with the excuses, but Noah worked hard day in and day out building this ark without even a hint of rain coming, just the Word of God to him. And for 120 years he built that ark and then the judgment of God came upon this world, it came as a flood of waters from above and below, and Noah and his family were spared.

It was not that Noah did not warn them, he was a preacher of righteousness, but they didn't listen, and they lost their lives because of it.

Our responsibility is to speak forth the Gospel message and then leave it in the hands of God and to the individual, it is their choice.

And I realize, especially in the days we are living in, as we stand up for righteousness, live godly lives as Noah did, as we tell people of the coming judgment of God, many will laugh at us, mock us, as they did Noah.

Don't let that stop you because judgment is coming for those outside of Christ and we need to share the Good News of Jesus with others so they will escape the coming judgment.

God may not call us to build an ark for 120 years, but whatever He calls us to do, may we do it, may we be obedient to His Word as our obedience is a measure of our faith!

As you can tell, we are far from finishing up this chapter here in Hebrews. And we are going to take our time going through it because this is an important section.

Not that the whole Bible is not important, it is, but this is dealing with faith and we truly need to understand what faith is all about and then be encouraged by the men and women of faith, that cloud of witnesses that are before us to spur us on!

So next time we will pick-up in Hebrews chapter 11, starting in verse 8 as we study the faith of Abraham, another powerful lesson for us to learn from.

Let me close tonight with these words from Paul that we have covered tonight but I think they are important for us to take home with us.

Paul said, **“But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.”**

Hebrews 11:6.

May we not forget that!