

HEROES OF FAITH

BIBLE TEXT : Hebrews 11:1-22

LESSON 442 Junior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Hebrews 11:1).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

Hebrews 11:1-22

1 Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

2 For by it the elders obtained a good report.

3 Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.

4 By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh.

5 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.

6 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.

7 By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.

8 By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.

9 By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as *in* a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise:

Bible References:

Notes:

The statement, "The just shall live by faith," proves that it is very important that we have faith. The eleventh chapter of Hebrews opens with a good definition: "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Hebrews 11:1). That means that we have to believe things we never saw. Some people say they cannot believe anything they cannot see, but they do. We cannot see the air we breathe, but we know it is there. There are many things in this nuclear age about atomic power that we cannot see nor understand, but we believe that it works, for results have proved it.

If we have faith, we will have results, too. "Faith is the **substance** of things hoped for," not just a longing to have it. To get things from the Lord, we start by trying to believe, and as we consecrate, promise to do the will of God, He makes us believe that it is happening. That is faith -- and the result is that we receive what we asked for. When we believe with all our heart that Jesus saves our soul, that believing becomes faith and we are saved. "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God" (Ephesians 2:8).

We have never yet proved how much God will do for us if we truly believe. Paul gives us many examples of what people in Old Testament times obtained through faith.

Foolish Theories

He begins by saying that it is by faith that we believe that God created the world. We were not there when He did it, we did not see Him when He said, "Let there be light." But if we are Christians we believe that He did it. People who do not believe in Jesus often try to prove that the world just happened. From ancient times so-called scientists have worked out theories of creation, which today sound very silly. Each generation of human beings has a new theory, but no new facts. No one has been able to prove that man descended from the apes -- or from tadpoles. They have never found a man who was still in the process of evolution -- part ape and part man. It is much easier to believe that God made man in His own image, perfect, upright, beautiful. The reason so many people are evil, deformed and ugly, is that when Adam sinned he brought sin upon all his descendants and mankind lost that perfection in which the first man was created.

In Image of God

There is only one way to be renewed in the nature of God, and that is through being saved and sanctified. Paul spoke of the Colossians as having "put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him" (Colossians 3:10). When we are born into the family of God, we are different from when we were sinners. We walk in newness of life. And when we are sanctified, even the nature of sin with which we were born, which caused us to sin in the first place, is removed.

Abel Saved by Faith

Abel was the son of Adam, the first man in the world. He lived to please God and brought the sacrifices God wanted: a slain lamb. This lamb typified Jesus who would some day come as the

10 For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker *is* God.

11 Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised.

12 Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, *so many* as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable.

13 These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of *them*, and embraced *them*, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.

14 For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country.

15 And truly, if they had been mindful of that *country* from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned.

16 But now they desire a better *country*, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city.

17 By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten *son*,

18 Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called:

19 Accounting that God *was* able to raise *him* up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure.

20 By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come.

21 By faith Jacob, when he was a dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph; and worshipped, *leaning* upon the top of his staff.

Lamb of God to die for sinners. Abel never saw Jesus, but He believed in Him and was saved.

Enoch lived a few hundred years later, when there were no churches and not many people who lived good lives to please God; but he was not influenced by evil people around him. He did not care about being one of the crowd, being popular with other people. He walked with God. In fact, he walked so closely with God that God took him out of this world without his having to die.

Pleasing God

Would you rather please God than be popular with your friends? Can you take your stand against sinners when they want you to do things that you know are contrary to the spirit of the Gospel? The people Paul talks about in this eleventh chapter of Hebrews were all such who did not consider their own desires, but wanted all that they did to be pleasing to God. And think of the wonderful rewards they received! Paul says they "obtained promises." God today will give us just as great and precious promises as He gave them if we live wholly to please Him. If we live till Jesus comes, and are prepared, we will go into Heaven without dying, just as Enoch did. That is the promise to all overcomers, those who obey God in all that they know to do.

The Flood

Noah had never seen rain. It was unheard of that water could cover the earth enough to float a ship the size of the ark that Noah built, but when God told him to build an ark, he believed God and built it. Many years passed, and still no rain, but Noah continued to build. When God told him to go into the ark and take his family and two of all the animals on the earth with him, Noah obeyed. To people without faith it must have looked ridiculous for those people and all those animals to be shut up in an ark out on dry land. But after God had shut the door to the ark, it began to rain. It was a cloudburst. More than that, geysers opened up in the ground and shot up huge amounts of water. Noah's faith and preaching were not in vain; God proved that what Noah had believed was really true.

Fiery Judgment

God said He would never again overthrow the world with water. The next time He sends judgment He will destroy the world with fire. We have never seen that much fire, but we believe when God's time of judgment comes, He will send enough to do what He said He would do. Men's hearts are becoming harder and harder. They disobey God in big things and little things. Very few people care anything about living to please God. Do you blame Him for sending judgment upon those who hate Him? God has promised everything good and beautiful to those who obey Him, and the added blessing of eternal life. But if people disobey, He has promised to curse them; and eternal punishment in hell will be their doom. We have the example of Noah to look at, and no one who refuses to do the will of God will have any excuse.

The Father of the Faithful

Abraham is held up in the Bible as an outstanding example of one who had faith. God promised him all the land of Canaan for an inheritance, but he had never seen it. He did not know anyone else who had. The people he lived among did not believe in God, so of course would not have believed the promises God made to Abraham. Abraham was strong enough in faith to leave everything he knew, and start out to an unknown land.

God had promised the land to Abraham's posterity, but at that time he did not have any children. In fact, even after God particularly promised him a son, it was 25 years later (when

22 By faith Joseph, when he died, made mention of the departing of the children of Israel; and gave commandment concerning his bones.

Abraham was about 100 years old) that Isaac was finally born. In addition to that, God asked Abraham to offer Isaac as a sacrifice. All the hopes for the ages to come (all the blessings God was promising to the nations who would be Abraham's descendants) depended upon Isaac. How could he slay him? Paul says Abraham believed God would raise him from the dead. Abraham gave him up so completely that it was the same as though God did raise him from the dead -- but He stopped Abraham before he used the knife.

Other Heirs of the Promise

The descendants of Isaac became as many "as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand, which is by the sea shore innumerable." There were a very great many of them when they were at their greatest strength. Other nations were afraid of them when God was with them, blessing them.

Isaac had two sons, but it was through his son Jacob that all the Israelites came. Paul tells us that Isaac and Jacob lived in tents (temporary homes) through their lifetime, but God had made the promise to them, too, that Canaan would be theirs. They all died before the promise was fulfilled, but they still believed. Besides, they were more interested in the "heavenly country." When they died in the faith, they inherited Heaven. Because they had faith, "God is not ashamed to be called their God." God will not be ashamed of us either if we believe Him.

Jacob had twelve sons, and it was during his lifetime that the family moved to Egypt during a famine in Canaan. Joseph, one of the twelve sons, had been sold by his brothers to travelling merchantmen who took him to Egypt. His brothers were jealous of him, and did it for spite; but God used it to bring deliverance to them, providing food for all the people of Egypt and for Jacob's family as well. When Joseph died, he told the family to take his bones with them when they went back to Canaan. It was more than 200 years later when the nation of Israel (all descendants of Jacob's family) left Egypt, just as Joseph had believed they would; and they fulfilled his wishes.

The people who lived during those four hundred years, believing God, all died without seeing the promise fulfilled. But they believed God and it was counted to them for righteousness.

QUESTIONS

1. How are the just to live?
2. What are some things we believe that we cannot see?
3. What facts of evolution have scientists proved?
4. What made man sinful and ugly?
5. How do we put on the "new man"?
6. What kind of sacrifice did Abel bring? What did it prove?
7. What was the result of Enoch's faith?
8. What was Noah's task God gave him to do? What happened when he finished it?
9. How did Abraham please God?
10. How will the world be destroyed next time?