

Hebrews - Chapter 11

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This chapter is a reminder of the foundation, or the substance that sustained many who served God from the beginning of time. To understand their sacrifice, their commitment and their tenacity to stay the course, one must understand faith and its source.

Heb 11:1-3: *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.* Greek words, as well as Hebrew words, can be translated often using more than one English word in order to convey various shades of the meaning according to the context. (Cp other Bible versions) Restated, notice the emphasis on faith:

*1. Now faith is the substance [or foundation] being anticipated, evidence [or conviction] of things not seen. 2. For in it the elders revealed a testimony. 3. By faith we [perceive] understand⁽³⁵³⁹⁾ the ages [generations, Gen 2:4] to have been completed by the [spoken] word of God (Ps 33:6,9), so that things being seen were not made from things appearing. Compare **Rom 1:20:** For the invisible things of him since the creation of the world are clearly seen, being perceived⁽³⁵³⁹⁾ through the things that are made, even his everlasting power and divinity... (American Standard) God uses the physical things of this world (trees, water, soil, seed, air, sun, etc) to teach us about the invisible things (God, heaven, carnal or spiritual minds, salvation, etc). The collection of these teachings is called faith. **2 Cor 5:7:** For we walk by faith, not by sight: We grasp a spiritual understanding from the world around us, as the spirit of God impresses the heart.*

Faith and its source: Many, including pastors, use the word 'faith' like a verb, as if to say 'believe in' Jesus. However, 'believe' is a verb (*pisteuo*⁴¹⁰⁰) derived from the noun of 'faith' (*pistis*⁴¹⁰²). The root of faith is *peitho*³⁹⁸², a word meaning 'to persuade', particularly with kind words or motives. So faith is a belief or an idea of which we have been convinced. Therefore, the source of our understanding determines into what image we are transformed - evil or good.

Jesus said that he, only, was the way, the truth and the life (Jn 14:6), and that all things were delegated to him by his heavenly Father (Jn 3:35). In another place, he said that only the Father could reveal the Son, and only the Son could reveal the Father (Lk 10:22). So, the ultimate source of true faith is the Father, who gives to the Son, who attempts to persuade mankind (Rev 1:1). If we get our understanding from any other source, it will be corrupted. What about pastors, teachers, etc.? Paul expressed it this way: **1 Cor 3:5:** *What then is Apollos? and what is Paul? Ministers through whom ye believed; and each as the Lord gave to him.* (AS) **2 Tim 2:7:** *Consider⁽³⁵³⁹⁾ what I say; and the Lord give thee understanding⁽⁴⁹⁰⁷⁾ in all things.* The word *noeo*⁽³⁵³⁹⁾ means to perceive, consider and understand, and *Sunesis*⁽⁴⁹⁰⁷⁾ means 'a mental bringing together.' We are to receive what others teach only as the Spirit confirms it in our conscience - it is God's voice.

Our heavenly Father told us, via the written word, to listen to His son (Lk 9:35), because he has been made the author and finisher of our faith (Heb 12:2). We can conclude with certainty, then, that faith is the spiritual understanding of the Father which resides in the Son? Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ (Jn 1:17); and since he is the truth (Jn 14:6), therefore, the spirit of Jesus is the Spirit of truth. **2 Tim 1:13:** *Have as a type, sound words which you have heard from me, in faith and love that (are) in Christ Jesus.* (Interlinear) What Jesus believes and understands was given to him by his Father (cf Jn 8:28, 38; 12:49-50), and he will give it to us if we answer the knock at the door of the heart. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob did not have the written word, yet, they obeyed God as they were impressed through the conscience.

Chapter 11 tells of various people's faith, mentioning their trials and endurance because they could see with the mind's eye what God had for them. **Heb 11:6:** *But without faith it is impossible to please him: for the one coming to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of those diligently seeking him.* (KJ with voice, tense, mood corrections) Without Christ's knowledge, wisdom and understanding, it is impossible to please the Father. Why? Because thoughts lead to actions, and if we do not have God's way of thinking, then our actions only bear out our sin. Some of the accounts show differences in the faithful and unfaithful.

When God covered Adam and Eve with skins, it was a simile of being covered by the shed blood of Christ. Abel's gift indicated that he understood this idea, while Cain's gift was the fruit of the earth (SELF). Therefore, Abel's gift was more excellent than Cain's, for without the shedding of blood there is no deliverance. (Heb 9:22)

Verse 5: Not much is written about Enoch. Jude (14-15) quotes the apocryphal Book of Enoch utilizing a prophecy of Enoch's about the wicked, and also stating Enoch was the seventh from Adam. In Genesis five it says that *Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him* (Verse 24). It is this verse in Hebrews that gives us the understanding that the phrase *God took him* means Enoch was taken to heaven without seeing death. Other than that, all we have is the Genesis account which tells us that he had a son named Methuselah, and that God took Enoch when he was 365 years old. Being the seventh generation from Adam, in this respect, Enoch is a type of the righteous who will become spiritually complete, as indicated by the number 7.

Verse 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 which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is [according to] faith.* People in that day, had not seen rain, and the catastrophic events that took place in those days are types for all generations of how mankind became spiritually corrupt. How this corruption came about is revealed in the next verses: **Gen 6:4-5:** *4. There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown. 5. And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.*

Giants: The Hebrew word for 'giants' is *nephilim* ⁽⁵³⁰³⁾. The main support for translating it as 'giants' comes from the LXX, a Greek copy of the Old Testament, considered by the western churches to be corrupted. Gesenius gives the meaning of the word as *excellent, noble, skillful*, and a similar meaning is given in the TWOT as *wonderful, strong, mighty, separate, distinguished*. The context of the scripture implies that the *nephilim* were 'mighty men' and 'renown', or famous, well known. This would lend credence to translating *nephilim* as 'heroes', which also will fit the only other use of the word in Numbers 13:33. It was men of renown who led the multitudes to build the tower of Babel (Gen 11). Considering the spiritual application, we have religious heroes, or men of renown today, who, when they announce a meeting, or go on TV, literally attract thousands of followers. These leaders have built their own religious strongholds, into which they have drawn multitudes. Even these 'towers of Babel' have been duplicated on a smaller scale in splinter groups.

Sons of God: A 'son of God' is defined in Romans as those being led by the Spirit of God (8:14). Then, daughters of men would be a type of those NOT led by the Spirit of God. Many have interpreted the 'giants' to be the result of fallen angels, sons of God, who had sex with human females, daughters of men. I have actually heard well known religious leaders teach this publically on radio and TV. However, this verse is teaching us how the people following God mingled with those following man and became spiritually corrupted.

When considering the scriptures from the heavens, there is another verse that supports the view described above: **Gen 7:11:** *In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the*

month, the same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened. Waters from heaven mixed with waters out of the earth. Considering water as a symbol, it represents words or thought (cf Dt 32:1-2; Pr 18:4). The flood is a spiritual type of men of renown teaching their own opinions mixed with God's which leads His people astray. The ark is a symbol of a heart filled with Christ's knowledge & love, which will carry us through the flood of false teachings in the world today. Like Noah, we are led to accept a God we cannot see, nor have we seen the things we are told that is coming on the earth. It is time to be in the ark! (cf 1 Pet 3:20-21)

Verse 8-12: Abraham & Sarah left their homeland and kin to journey in the land of promise. They struggled through life as we do today, believing God was with them. Sarah was given strength to conceive a child in her old age (90), whose womb was considered dead, and from her child came multitudes, as the stars of the sky and sand of the sea shore. (Consider the stars as a type of the righteous' lineage through Isaac, and the sand to represent the wicked lineage through Ishmael.). Consider the womb as a symbol of the mind, and *being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh* God gives you strength to conceive spiritual seed which generates thoughts.

Verses 17-19: Abraham's trial and sacrifice of Isaac, *accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure*, is a picture of God's offering His only son in our behalf. Additionally, it is a type of the death of the 'old man' and resurrection of 'the new' (Eph 4:22-24).

Verses 13-16: *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.* (Verse 13); *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.* (Verse 16) All before the cross looked for a country that God would provide. Perhaps they anticipated a literal country, or city. However, the city which God prepared, for which Abraham looked, whose builder and maker is God, is that city named Jerusalem, which is a figure of the mind of the Son of God. (Cf Isa 65:17-18; Gal 4:25-26) It is a *better country* and a *heavenly place* with God.

Summary: Verse 2: *For in it (faith) the elders revealed a testimony.* By faith Abel offered a more excellent sacrifice; Enoch walked with God; Noah built a boat; Abraham left his homeland seeking the promised land; Sarah conceived, being beyond child bearing age; By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau; and Jacob blessed the son's of Joseph; By faith Moses parents were not afraid of the kings commandment concerning male children; by faith Moses chose to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. By faith Moses became the greatest leader Israel ever knew. Faith, faith and more faith is what we need to be persuaded to stick with God's plan, to reject the pleasures and riches of the world and to be made, ultimately, in the image of Christ. Faith, indeed, is the substance, the understanding, the foundation of all knowledge that leads to a perfect world. All who went before, went in faith, but *received not the promise.* And, *God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.* It would behoove all to know what is faith and diligently seek to obtain it. Amen.

Eph 1:15-18: *[Because of this] I also, [having] heard of [the] faith [among you] in the Lord Jesus, and love [toward] all the saints, 16 Cease not [giving] thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; 17 That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you (a) spirit of wisdom and revelation in his knowledge: 18 The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may [see] what is the hope of his calling, and what (are) the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints... [Greek Interlinear]*