

Hebrews 11.1-7

“Faith – The Best Gift Ever!”

Merry Christmas! Did OPEN your PRESENTS? Get what WANTED?

OFFER Best Gift Ever – ETERNAL Difference to You and Loved Ones

FREE -- but it will COST you EVERYTHING!

10 Chapters > PASTOR Encouraged Hebrew Xtians > Jesus is BETTER

Famous Ch 11 > Make SURE they KNOW Jesus >

Faith is KEY to UNLOCK the Door to ETERNAL LIFE

Faith is CHANNEL thru which God’s BLESSINGS Flow

Faith is CUP into which God POURS His Saving GRACE

Ended EXHORTATION to TRUST Jesus with CONFIDENCE

10.39 But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who have faith and preserve their souls.

Ch 11 DESCRIPTION of Faith > NOT intended as DEFINITION

FOCUS – WHAT is It? – HOW does it WORK??

HEROES of Faith > Greatest EXAMPLES of OT > Saved with THEM

11.39,40 And all these, though commended through their faith, did not receive what was promised, since God had provided something better for us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect.

v. 1 Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.

Certain Assurance >> Faith looks to the FUTURE

THINGS Hoped For BUT Not Yet POSSESSED or FULLY SEEN

Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience. Romans 8.24,25

“We walk by faith, not by sight”

2 Corinthians 5.17

Faith CHOICE to See Life from perspective of GOD’S Power & Promises

Writer CHOOSES Greek word with WIDE Selection of MEANING

ESV “assurance”/NIV “being sure”/KJV “substance”/Philips “confidence”

The writer of Hebrews deliberately chose a word that has a broad and rich array of meanings, all of which are to the point. Faith is the substance of things hoped for; it is the foundation upon which they are brought into being; it is the confident attitude toward those things God has promised; and it is the guarantee that gives us a sure possession even now. Richard D. Phillips

The Spirit of God shows us hidden things, the knowledge of which cannot reach our senses...we are told of the resurrection of the blessed, but meantime we are involved in corruption; we are declared to be just, and sin dwells within us; we hear that we are blessed, but meantime we are overwhelmed by untold miseries; we are promised an abundance of good things, but we are often hungry and thirsty; God proclaims that He will come to us immediately, but seems to be deaf to our cries. What would happen to us if we did not rely on hope, and our minds did not emerge above the world out of the midst of darkness through the shining Word of God and by His Spirit? Faith is therefore rightly called the substance of things which are still the objects of hope and the evidence of things not seen.

John Calvin

NOAH built ARK when it had NEVER Rained in Human History

ABRAM left FAMILY and FRIENDS to FOLLOW Unseen God

MOSES was POWERLESS Advocate for SLAVES before PHARAOH

v. 2 For by it the people of old received their commendation.

What Follows thru REST of Hebrews 11 Stories of Men & Women

Not their Gifts, Attainments, Beauty, Strength, or Popularity

No Monuments 2 'em, No Books Ancient Libraries, Unnoticed by World

Scorned by Men – GREAT in Eyes of God because of FAITH

v. 3 By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible.

NATURE of Universe cannot be EXPLAINED by What EYES See

Only FAITH gives ANSWER to Question of ORIGINS – Xtian & Atheist

Nobody SAW Earth Created – CHOOSE an INTERPRETATION

FAITH: Big BANG /Big GOD, Accident or Providence? Lucky or Loved?

“In walking with God a person will go just as far as he believes, and no further. His life will always be proportioned to his faith. His peace, his patience, his courage, his zeal, his works – all will be according to his faith”

J.C. Ryle

Quick Look at 3 Great Examples for us to Follow...

### 1. Abel – WORSHIP by Faith

v. 4 By faith Abel offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain, through which he was commended as righteous, God commending him by accepting his gifts. And through his faith, though he died, he still speaks.

Adam & Eve's 2<sup>nd</sup> Son ABEL, Man of FAITH, unlike Older Brother CAIN

WORSHIP – Sacrifice to God – Offered by FAITH – SINCERE Gift

Brother Performed RITUAL but had no RELATIONSHIP with God  
 Abel NOT just Christmas Christian but COMMITTED Christian  
 STILL Talking about ABEL's Acceptance: "tho he died, he still speaks"

## 2. ENOCH – Walking by FAITH

v. 5 By faith Enoch was taken up so that he should not see death, and he was not found, because God had taken him. Now before he was taken he was commended as having pleased God.

Intriguingly BRIEF Synopsis of LIFE of ENOCH in Genesis 5

7<sup>th</sup> Patriarch in Line of ADAM thru SETH

Age 65 > Father of Methuselah / DISAPPEARED from Earth age 365

'Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him.' Genesis 5.24

Faith Commences in Worship > CONTINUES by Walking with God

Faith REJOICES in Worship > and REVEALED in Walking with God

Like DISCIPLES Walked with JESUS > ENOCH walked with GOD

One is Student > Other is MASTER / 1 DISCIPLE > Other is LORD

Walking w/ God is IT'S Own DESTINATION > Still GOING Somewhere

v. 6 And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.

Today MANY talk about POWER of Faith – Faith IN ITSELF is Empty

STRENGTH of Faith is WHAT it was IN – yourself, family, GOD?

Enoch Walked w/ GOD > Believed GOD, God of BIBLE, EXISTS

Moses stood at Burning Bush and asked GOD --- WHO are YOU?

Exodus 3.14 LXX (used by writer) "I AM the One who EXISTS"

Want to DRAW Near to God must have FAITH that HE EXISTS

v. 6 believe that he exists **and that he rewards those who seek him**

FEW do Profess ATHEISM > MOST People believe God EXISTS

MANY Deny RELEVANCE of God – No Rewards, I can Live w/ Out G.

Serve other **WORLDLY** gods for their **SUPPOSED REWARDS**

Might be **BACK** to Christmas Service 2023 > Live All Year w/ Out **GOD**

**DANGER** > Only this **GOD** can **SAVE** You from Hell

**Emmanuel** **CAME** to be **GOD WITH YOU** --- **NOW** and **FOREVER**

One Day **ENOCH** on **LONG** Walk w/ **GOD** > **FAR** from Home

God said “My house is closer than yours” – Come on to **MY HOUSE**

**NEVER DIED** > Walked with God > **AND** God **TOOK** him!

### 3. **NOAH** – Working by **FAITH**

v. 7 By faith Noah, being warned by God concerning events as yet unseen, in reverent fear constructed an ark for the saving of his household. By this he condemned the world and became an heir of the righteousness that comes by faith.

Noah shares **DISTINCTIONS** w/ Adam 1) All Humanity descended from

2) Called by God to be **FRUITFUL** & Multiply in a **NEW** Creation

Spent 100 yrs **BUILDING** a **HUGE BOAT** > Never **RAINED** on **EARTH**

**WARNED** – All who **LISTENED**: God sending Judgment > **FLOOD**

Current **FASCINATION** with **NOAH** as **ENVIRONMENTALIST**

**NOAH** & Fellow **SINNERS** > Brought **DESTRUCTION** to World

**NOAH** was **GUILTY** as Multitudes **WHO** Drowned > Got **MERCY**

**SAVED** by **GRACE** thru **FAITH** in **PROMISES** of **GOD**

“**GOD** did not spare the ancient world, but preserved Noah, a herald of righteousness, with seven others, when he brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly” 2 Peter 2.5

By **FAITH** Noah Stood **ALONE** in his **WICKED** Generation

Noah **CRAZY** Man – Preaching about Something Never Happened Before

God calls us to Share Most Substantiated Facts in History

**BIRTH** -- **DEATH** and **RESURRECTION** of Jesus Christ

**WORLD** Rejected **NOAH'S** Ark – Laughed until **RAIN** began to **FALL**

By **THEN** Noah & Family – their **ZOO** – **SAFE** Inside the **ARK**

**PETER** says **JESUS** is Our **ARK**

We WORK in Faith like NOAH – Kind, Winsome, Courageous

INVITE Sinners like US – Come find MERCY and GRACE

Christ Jesus is our ark now: big enough for the whole world, strong enough to withstand the shocks of life, the rising waters of death, and the upheavals of the last judgment. There is safety here in the Son of God, sent to be for us the shelter, the salvation, the we so desperately need: our ark and safe passage into the new world God has planned. From that ark we will emerge into a new heaven and new earth.

Peter Lewis