

18 – THE REALITY OF FAITH (HEBREWS 11:1-40)

I. The Nature of Faith (Hebrews 11:1-3)

A. Faith Defined (Hebrews 11:1)

- Faith is being sure and certain about unseen hopes and realities.

B. The Faith of the Elders (Hebrews 11:2)

- This is the testimony of the Old Testament saints concerning their faith in what would come.

C. Faith's Understanding (Hebrews 11:3)

- Faith allows believers to understand the creation of the world by God's word.
- Faith understands that the physical world was created out of nothing.

II. The Examples of Faith (Hebrews 11:4-38)

A. The Faith of Those Before the Flood (Hebrews 11:4-5)

- Abel and Enoch were men whose lives testified of their faith.

Historical Note: Abel

Abel was the second son of Adam and Eve. He was a shepherd of sheep. He made an offering to the Lord of the best of his flock. The Lord accepted his offering as his brother Cain's offering was rejected. His brother Cain murdered him shortly thereafter.

See: Genesis 4:2-9, 25; Matthew 23:35; Luke 11:51; Hebrews 11:4; 12:24.

Historical Note: Enoch

Enoch was the son of Jared and father of Methuselah. Genesis records that Enoch walked with God. It is also recorded that Enoch did not die since he was taken by God. There is no record of Enoch's prophecy in the Old and New Testaments apart from Jude's reference to it.

See: Genesis 5:18-24; 1 Chronicles 1:3; Luke 3:37; Hebrews 11:5; Jude 14.

Theological Note: Translation

The theological term "translation" means to remove from place to another. Enoch was translated way by God by faith so that he would not die (see Genesis 5:24). Elijah was translated by being take up in a chariot of fire so that he would not experience death (2 Kings 2:11). The Rapture of the church is a future translation where believers will not experience death as they meet Jesus Christ in the air (see 1 Thessalonians 4:17).

B. The Principle of Faith (Hebrews 11:6)

- You cannot please God without faith.

Understanding Our Faith: The Letter to the Hebrews

- Those who come to God must believe that he is and that he rewards those who seek him.

C. The Faith of Noah (Hebrews 11:7)

- Having been warned of an unseen judgment, Noah acted in faith to build the Ark.

D. The Faith of Abraham & the Fathers (Hebrews 11:8-22)

- Abraham's life exhibited his faith in God even though he did not see.
- They died in faith not receiving the promises while alive.
- They were assured of the promises as they embraced them by faith.
- Their faith moved them to declare themselves strangers and pilgrims in this world.
- Isaac, Jacob and Joseph were men whose lives testified of their faith.

E. The Faith of Moses (Hebrews 11:23-28)

- Moses' life reflects the decisions of faith.
- By faith, Moses kept the Passover which saved their firstborn.

F. The Faith of Those in Israel (Hebrews 11:29-38)

- By faith Israel passed through the Red Sea.
- The writer follows the history of faith from those known and unknown in Israel.

III. The Fulfillment of Faith (Hebrews 11:39-40)

A. The Faith of Those Before Christ (Hebrews 11:39)

- The Old Testament saints had faith even as they did not receive the promise.

B. The Provision of God (Hebrews 11:40)

- God provided something better for us, that is Jesus Christ.
- The Old Testament saints will experience the promise together with believers today.