

By Faith – Abel, Enoch, and Noah

Hebrews 11

Introduction

1. Hebrews 11 is filled with exemplars of faith. It is written to urge the readers to faithfulness before God themselves.
 2. Upon establishing some fundamental principles of faith, the Hebrew writer sets out with some examples of faith in the beginning before the flood – Abel, Enoch, and Noah.
 3. While these three, along with the others, have much in common concerning faith, there are differing details of the inspired writer's commentary on their actions which prove beneficial to our understanding of faith in God.
- I. Review – Hebrews 11 in Context
- A. The Hebrew audience was slouching toward apostasy due to persecution inflicted by their own countrymen.
 - B. The writer urged them to endure in doing God's will to receive the promise.
 - C. **Habakkuk 2:3-4** was quoted to show God's expectation for His people in times of adversity – **"the just shall live by faith"**
 - D. Upon noting his optimism concerning the Hebrew audience, the writer began his great chapter of faith giving a number of examples of men and women of God pressing forward through trial, maintaining and demonstrating their faith.
 - E. Points on faith:
 - a. Faith is the undergirding, or substance of our hope – as it trusts in God's promises.
 - b. Faith is the conviction of things not seen, to the degree of needing no more proof.
 - i. Such is why we understand the worlds were framed by God's word.
 - c. Faith is how saints in the past have been pleasing to God, as they believed in His existence, but did something about it to please Him and receive their reward.
 - i. Such did not occur in immaculate arenas where everything went their way.
 - ii. Faith was displayed through great turmoil, adversity, and trial.
 - F. NOTE: These were not written in the OT, nor in Hebrews 11 for our viewing pleasure, but as instructive examples we are called to emulate – **Hebrews 12:1**
- II. By Faith Abel... **(v. 4)**
- A. Faith is More than Conviction, it is Directed Conduct
 - a. Account of sacrifice – **Genesis 4:1-5**
 - i. Not told why Cain's was not respected.
 - ii. Hebrew writer's insight – **"By faith"** – is how Abel's sacrifice was **"more excellent"**
 - b. "By faith"
 - i. Means his was sincere, but Cain's was not? – How would we know?

1. **Genesis 4:5** – Cain’s reaction is not one of a man without a care.
 - ii. Abel wanted to please God, but Cain did not? – There is no evidence of such.
 - iii. **Romans 10:17** – vital connection of faith – comes from hearing God’s word.
 1. What is not done from God’s word is not by faith.
 2. Cain’s sacrifice – **Genesis 4:7** (LXX) – ***“Hast thou not sinned if thou hast brought it rightly, but not rightly divided it?”***
 3. Regardless of the detail, we know Cain’s was not by faith because it was not done in accordance with God’s will.
 - c. Our actions are only regarded as **“excellent”** if they are directed by God’s word:
 - i. **Ephesians 2:10** – He prepared works for us to walk in.
 - ii. **2 Timothy 3:16-17** – His word equips us for “excellent” works.
- B. Our Righteousness is Confirmed or Denied by God’s Word
- a. He obtained witness of his righteousness through his sacrifice:
 - i. He KNEW he was right before God – there was no question.
 - ii. How did he know?
 - b. God testifying of his gifts:
 - i. **Genesis 4:4-5** – God respected Abel’s offering.
 1. Not told how such was shown.
 - ii. How would God testify of an action of a servant being right?
 - c. God’s word bears witness with our attitude and actions to it:
 - i. **Romans 8:15-16** – HS bearing witness w/ our “spirit” (disposition as sons).
 1. **Romans 8:7** – carnal mind not subject to law of God.
 - a. If we don’t obey we are shown to be carnal, not spiritual.
 2. **Romans 8:9** – not in flesh if Spirit of God dwells in you.
 - a. **Romans 8:2** – through the Law of Spirit (Gospel of Christ)
 - ii. The HS gives instruction and we follow such out of filial (as sons not slaves) submission – testifies of our righteousness before God.
 - d. We can know if we are pleasing to God – **2 Corinthians 13:5** – examine self.
- C. Faith Can Anger the Unfaithful
- a. **Hebrews 11:4** – mentions Abel’s death. (All of Hebrews 11 died except Enoch, but Abel’s death we know to be different.)
 - b. Abel was murdered by his brother – **Genesis 4:8**
 - i. **1 John 3:11-12** – Cain killed him because his own works were evil.
 - ii. Darkness hates the light – **John 3:19-21** – ALWAYS TRUE, though manifested in different ways.

- c. Do not stumble because of the anger aroused in the wicked by your faithfulness – **John 15:18; 16:1** – the world hated Jesus, and they will hate us.
 - i. Faith endures the hate and trusts in God.
 - ii. **1 Peter 3:13-14** – who can truly harm you?
 - iii. Abel is in the arms of the Lord!
 - D. Faith Leaves a Legacy
 - a. **Hebrews 11:4** – still speaks.
 - i. **“through IT”** – reference, not to his death, but to his “more excellent” sacrifice offered by faith.
 - ii. NOT a reference to his blood crying out, but TO HIS ACTIONS OF FAITH SPEAKING VOLUMES.
 - b. **Hebrews 11:2** – the elders obtained a good testimony
 - c. When we live by faith, we establish a legacy like no other which those who know of it and hear of it can follow.
 - i. **Hebrews 13:7** – whose faith follow.
 - ii. Are we leaving a legacy of faith for others to follow?
- III. By Faith Enoch... **(v. 5)**
- A. Faith Requires a Willingness to Change
 - a. Account of Enoch – in genealogy, not historic record – **Genesis 5:21-24**
 - i. **(v. 22)** – only “walked with God” after the birth of Methuselah – 65 years.
 - 1. Perhaps God uses things like the birth of a child to sharpen our focus, and weed out things which are unimportant and erring.
 - ii. 65 years is a lot of time to develop bad habits and get set in your ways.
 - iii. God calls to repentance – **Acts 17:30**
 - b. He turned it completely around and never looked back – 65 years of unfaithfulness and 300 years of faithfulness.
 - i. It wouldn’t have mattered if he died at 67 if he turned his life around at 65.
 - ii. Actually, doing God’s will is what matters – **Matthew 21:28-31** – one said he wouldn’t, but later did. One said he would, but never did.
 - iii. Parable of workers in vineyard – **Matthew 20:8-16** – agreed for a denarius a day, some worked all day, others started late, paid same wage.
 - B. Faith Requires Outspokenness
 - a. Enoch noted to be a prophet – **Jude 14-15** – warned of the judgment.
 - b. Prophets are called and sent by God – He evidently had an obligation to fulfill.
 - c. Hebrews are called to outspokenness of their faith:
 - i. **Hebrews 10:35** – do not cast away confidence.

1. Confidence – *parrēsia* – *pas* (ALL), *rheō* (to utter, i.e. speak or say) – all out-spokenness, i.e. frankness, bluntness, publicity (STRONG)
- d. Our faith is not to be kept to ourselves – **Matthew 10:27-28, 32-33** – outspoken faith in the midst of contrary people.
 - i. **Acts 8:4** – going about preaching the word (**v. 3** – men and women who comprised the church)
- C. God May Spare the Faithful from Some Difficulty
 - a. **Hebrews 11:5** – God took Enoch before death.
 - i. NOTE: well before he would die of natural causes.
 - ii. Before Enoch – Jared (Father – 962 yrs), Mahalalel (Grandfather – 895 yrs), Cainan (Great-Grandfather – 910 yrs).
 - iii. After Enoch – Methuselah (Son – 969 yrs), Lamech (Grandson – 777 yrs), Noah (Great-Grandson – 950 yrs)
 - iv. Enoch – 365 yrs when God took him.
 - b. Enoch 7th son from Adam – **Jude 14** – through Seth.
 - i. **Genesis 5:22** – walked with God.
 - c. Lamech 7th son from Adam – **Genesis 4:16-18** – through Cain.
 - i. First polygamist – **Genesis 4:19**
 - ii. Followed after Cain and murdered – **Genesis 4:23-24**
 - d. Contrast in the genealogies:
 - i. **Genesis 4:25-26** – when Adam had Seth, men began to call on the name of the Lord.
 - ii. Before, in Cain's lineage – materialists, not focused on spiritual – **Genesis 4:19-24** – father (originator, or leader) of various physical trades.
 1. "In Enoch, the seventh from Adam through Seth, godliness attained its highest point; whilst ungodliness culminated in Lamech, the seventh from Adam through Cain, who made his sword his god." (Keil & Delitzsch)
 - e. Where Cain's lineage led – **Genesis 6:5** – great wickedness over the globe.
 - i. By being taken by God, Enoch was spared from this experience.
 - ii. "In comparison with the longevity of the other fathers, Enoch was taken away young, before he had reached half the ordinary age, as a sign that whilst long life, viewed as a time for repentance and grace, is indeed a blessing from God, when the ills which have entered the world through sin are considered, it is also a burden and trouble which God shortens for His chosen." (Keil & Delitzsch)
 - f. It is a blessing to depart and be with the Lord – **Philippians 1:21, 23; Psalm 116:15**
- IV. By Faith Noah... (**v. 7**)
 - A. Faith Acts on God's Word, Not the Status Quo

- a. Noah – **Genesis 6:5-9** – Noah stood out from the majority as one who followed God.
 - i. Faith that withstands tests is well established prior to the test and strengthened through the test.
 - ii. **Genesis 5:32** – 500 yrs old – walking by faith during this time.
 - b. God’s declaration on the ungodly world – **Genesis 6:13, 17** – destroy earth w/ flood waters.
 - i. Nothing like this seen up to this point, and nothing like this to be seen again.
 - ii. **“of things not seen”** – both future, and sheer magnitude of nature.
 - iii. Some suggest it hadn’t even rained before – possibly.
 - c. Noah had followed God to this point – **Romans 10:17** – that by His word.
 - i. **“divinely warned”** – *chrēmatisō* – always refers to an utterance of God.
 - ii. His trust in God’s word to this point prepared him for trusting in God’s word regarding the great flood.
 - d. Scoffers addressed by Peter – **2 Peter 3:3-7** – trusting in the status quo, rather than God’s word.
 - i. Likely what happened in the days of Noah too – mocked for speaking a message of such novelty.
 - ii. Preaching this – **2 Peter 2:5** – bringing in that flood with much scoffing at him.
 - e. Noah followed God’s instructions by faith for a great period of time – **Genesis 6:3** – not that the flood came immediately.
 - i. Things continued as they were for 120 yrs after God said what He said.
 - ii. HOW MUCH MORE SHOULD WE CONTINUE TO TRUST THAT THE GREAT JUDGMENT DAY IS COMING?
- B. Faith Gives Attention to Detail in Fear of God
- a. Noah did not display his faith by obeying in part, but fully – **Genesis 6:22**
 - b. **Hebrews 11:7** – his preparation of the ark WAS ENERGIZED (“moved”) BY GODLY FEAR.
 - c. Hebrews called not to refuse God who speaks – **Hebrews 12:25, 28-29** – He is a consuming fire.
 - i. His word will stand fast, and disobedience will receive a just reward – **Hebrews 2:1-4**
 - d. God’s instructions were specific – **Genesis 6:14-16**
 - i. What if he was off on something?
 - ii. What if he decided to do something different?
 - iii. Godly fear – understood it would not bode well.
 - e. We are to hold fast to the pattern – **2 Timothy 1:13** – IN FAITH.
 - i. FAITH UNDERSTANDS THAT THE DETAILS GOD GIVES ARE NOT MATTERS TO TAKE OR LEAVE.

C. Faith Affects Families for the Better

- a. Noah saved his family with the building of the ark – **Hebrews 11:7**
 - i. **1 Peter 3:20** – eight souls saved through water – Noah, wife, 3 sons and their wives.
- b. Faith, or lack thereof with the father will drastically affect the spiritual direction of a family:
 - i. **Joshua 24:15** – as for me and my house...

D. Faith Will Naturally Condemn the Unfaithful

- a. **“by which he condemned the world”** – i.e. through moving with godly fear and preparing the ark.
- b. If we are doing what God says, those who are not will be ashamed by observing our faithfulness:
 - i. This is not something to be ashamed of – we ought not hide our righteousness.
 - ii. This is by God’s design:
 - 1. **Matthew 5:13-16** – salt and light – let it shine.
 - 2. **1 Peter 2:11-12** – speak evil of you but glorify God when visited with the gospel.
 - 3. **1 Peter 3:16** – shame may come first.
 - iii. Salvation appears first in godly sorrow – **2 Corinthians 7:10** – produces repentance leading to salvation.
 - 1. We may be the catalyst of such godly sorrow.

Conclusion

- 1. The faith of Abel, Enoch, and Noah speaks volumes about what God expects from His people, and how such will even affect others.
- 2. Faith is more than simply belief. It’s a firm trust in God and His word expressed in consistent obedience through trying circumstances.