

Hebrews 11: A Better Report

- 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.

- *Faith*, Greek for *moral conviction*
- *Substance*, Greek for *support, assurance*
- *Hoped for*, Greek for *expectation*
- *Evidence*, Greek for *proof*
- *Obtained a good report*, Greek for *witness* (word from which we derive “martyr”)
- Before we gloss over this list as another “who’s who” of Bible heroes, consider each name on the list as some were vessels to accomplished great things, but the same often displayed the same character flaws and failures as us today
- It was their faith, not their beginnings, middles, or endings that placed them in this prestigious list

- 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.

- At this time, most scientist believed the universe was constructed from matter that was already in existence, but the writer states that the universe was created from things unseen or not existing
- How do we *understand* this? The writer tells us that faith is not an absence of an analytical or educated mind, but rather the avenue to such
- Whether a creationist or evolutionist, we all require a measure of faith to believe our theories of the origin of the cosmos as science is the *observation* of a subject

- 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.

- Faith = sacrifice
- It has been argued as to the reason God accepted the sacrifice of Abel and rejected that of Cain, but one thing is made certain here – Abel offered in faith
- Possibly his life of faith opened his heart to the sacrifice he felt to be most appropriate
- The scriptures do clearly teach that Abel brought the best of his flock and Cain brought some of his harvest

- 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.

- Faith = relationship
- Enoch walked with God so closely that the Lord translated him

- Enoch is also a picture of the raptured saints before judgment (flood)
- Enoch also prophesied the Lord's return with a multitude of saints

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.

- It is more than *difficult* to please God without faith – it is *impossible*

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.

- Faith = action
- Noah worked for years on the Ark while preaching of the coming judgment – all of this occurred long before the first raindrops fell

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:

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

- Faith = journey
- Abraham left a sophisticated society and permanent housing for a tent and unknown destination

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.

- Faith = life
- Abraham and Sarah waited 25 years for their promised heir
- The couple that had spent most of their lives desperately seeking a family would give birth to a nation (most of the tribes and nations located around them are no longer recognized)
- If miracles are based on our faith (as some movements would have us believe), how would a couple whom arranged a surrogate mother and eventually laughed at the promise of God receive a child?

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.

- Faith = perseverance
- *Strangers*, Greek for *foreigners*
- *Pilgrims*, Greek for *resident foreigners* (akin to present day work visa)

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.

- Faith = seeking
- *Declare plainly*, Greek for *exhibit* (where we derive our word for *emphasis*)

Philippians 3:13-14

13 Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, **forgetting those things which are behind**, and reaching forth unto those things which are before,

14 I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

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**.

- Faith = submission
- *Figure*, Greek for *symbolically* (where we derive our word for *parable*)

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.

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

- Faith = legacy
- Faith is passed generation to generation

- 23 **By faith Moses**, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, because they saw he was a proper child; and they were not afraid of the king's commandment.
- 24 **By faith Moses**, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter;
- 25 Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season;
- 26 Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward.

➤ Faith = sanctification

- 27 **By faith he** forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible.
- 28 **Through faith he** kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the firstborn should touch them.
- 29 **By faith they** passed through the Red sea as by dry land: which the Egyptians assaying to do were drowned.

➤ Faith = deliverance

➤ Have you ever noticed how the ticket counter inspects the ticket, but not the passenger? They board based on the value of the ticket, not their own worth

- 30 **By faith** the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days.
- 31 **By faith the harlot Rahab** perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace.
- 32 And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gedeon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets:
- 33 **Who through faith** subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions,
- 34 Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.
- 35 Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection:

➤ Faith = victory

➤ A short list of what we would view as the positive results of faith

36 And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment:

37 They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented;

38 (Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.

- Faith = persecution
- A short list of what we would view as negative results of faith

39 And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise:

40 God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.

- Faith = Jesus

Oh, brethren, be great believers! Little faith will bring your souls to Heaven, but great faith will bring Heaven to your soul. – C.H. Spurgeon

Faith is needed all the way,
Faith to toil and faith to pray,
Faith to learn and faith to teach,
Faith to practice, faith to preach;
Faith to start each day anew,
Faith to do our duty, too;
Faith to help the weak along,
Faith to bear, in patience, wrong;
Faith to smile, though sad within,
Faith to conquer every sin,
Faith to ask Him for His care
While we earthly trials bear;
Faith to smother every sigh,
Faith to live and faith to die.

There was once a good woman who was well-known among her circle for her simple faith and her great calmness in the midst of many trials. Another woman, living at a distance, hearing of her, said, "I must go and see that woman, and learn the secret of her calm, happy life." She went, and, accosting the woman, said, "Are you the woman with the great faith?" "No," was the answer, "I am not the woman with the great faith, but *I am the woman with the little faith in the great God.*"

