

# Christ is the fulfillment of the faith of the saints of the Old Testament

Explain that the original title in the earlier notes wasn't worded quite right.

## "By Faith"

### Hebrews 11:1-40

When we were here last February, I preached a message titled, "Living by Faith" from the first six verses of Hebrews 11. I don't intend to preach the whole thing again, but I do want to go over the main points and make some comments as a way of review.

We will look at that text in more detail in this message as it applies to the illustrations given from the Old Testament of those that demonstrated faith in God.

We saw last year in that message on faith:

- **What faith is** - vs. 1

- "The substance of things hoped for" - **our faith** is, first of all, the **reality** of the things unseen that God has promise.
- "The evidence of things not seen" - **our faith** is, secondly, that by which **invisible things are proved** (and we are convinced of their reality).

- **Why live by faith** - vs. 5

To please God, as is said of Enoch, by doing His will. The things we need, and desire, will come as a result of pleasing Him.

- **How to live by faith** - vs. 6

- Believe that God IS - is the self-existent One, the Almighty One, the true God.
- Believe that He rewards those who diligently seek Him.

## I. BY IT [FAITH] THE ELDERS - VS. 2, 39

Hebrews 11 opens and closes with the statement concerning the elders that they "obtained a good report." All the stories of Abraham, Moses, Rahab, and the others given here share one common feature: **they were honored by God because they trusted Him, even when they didn't see the full results yet.**

- A. "For" - this connects to verse 1: "Faith has power to see and realize the unseen, for the experience of the fathers proves it" (Wuest).
- B. "The elders" - primary focus is on the list in between verses 2 and 39 but would also include all of the "elders" mentioned in the Bible that demonstrated their faith in God.

### C. "Obtained a good report"

1. All one word in the Greek (μαρτυρέω - transliterated in the English word *martyr*).
2. It's translated "honest report" in Acts 6:3 in relation to what is considered to be the text for the basic requirements of men to be considered to be deacons.

Acts 6:3

<sup>3</sup> Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business.

- a) This phrase means they have a witness borne them that they have a good reputation.
- b) This speaks of their testimony both within the church and from without - their family, their co-workers, their neighbors, etc.

c) As one put it, "that there may be no room to suspect them of partiality or injustice" (Wesley)

3. The "good report" they obtained means God Himself gave testimony to their lives. It's as if heaven wrote a report card on their faith (Hebrews 11) – and God's voice declared, *"This one believed Me. This one trusted Me."*

Applied to us today, "faith writes a story about your life that God loves to tell."

## II. THROUGH FAITH WE - VS. 3

This verse speaks of creation and that fact that "we" (then and now) "understand" this truth because of faith.

Let me make a comment here on the difference between "by faith" and "through faith." Both of these phrases are the same in the Greek New Testament and almost all modern translations translate them with the phrase "by faith," but there is a difference that the KJV translators wanted to show in how the phrases were used.

- **"By faith"** (as in verse 4) suggests **an action performed as a result of faith** - faith being the motivating **agent** or cause.
- **"Through faith"** (as in verse 3) suggests **a process** - faith is the lens or means **through which** we come to understand something unseen.
- "By" sounds like faith caused the action, and "through" sounds more experiential or mediating.

## III. BY FAITH ABEL - VS. 4; GEN. 4:1-7

- A. **"Offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain" - the question arises, "How would Abel have known what type of offering the Lord required?"**

1. God would have likely revealed it to them both, even if Genesis doesn't record it explicitly.

There are clear hints that God had, in fact, already given instructions about what He expected.

- a) **Genesis 3:21** states, that after Adam and Eve sinned, "Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them."

For God to make clothing from skins, blood had to be shed - implying the first death, a **sacrificial covering** for sin.

- b) This points to a **pattern** (Law of First Mention): blood sacrifice is needed for covering (atonement).

2. The type of offering mattered because it symbolized atonement.

Hebrews 9:22

<sup>22</sup> And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.

- a) Abel's offering was a **blood sacrifice** - a lamb, a firstling of the flock.
- b) Cain's offering was **from the ground** - works of his own hands, not involving the necessary blood sacrifice that God required. This speaks to works for salvation.

3. Abel offered by faith

Faith comes by responding to **something God has revealed:**

Romans 10:17

<sup>17</sup> So then faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

Abel couldn't have acted "by faith" unless **God had told him** what was required at some point.

Even if Genesis doesn't record that specific conversation, **it had to have happened**.

**B. "By which he obtained witness that he was righteous"**

1. "By which" - faith
2. "He obtained witness" - same word as that translated "obtained a good report" in verse three.
3. His faith demonstrated to those who knew him, testifying that he was righteous. His righteousness, as we know from a finished Scripture, was that which came from the sacrificial work of Christ - his faith pointed forward to it.

**C. "And by it he being dead yet speaketh"**

1. "It" - his faith
2. Although he's been dead for several thousand years, his faith in the work of redemption still speaks, and will speak as long as time endures.

**IV. BY FAITH ENOCH - VS. 5-6; GEN. 5:21-24**

(Not much time will spent on these verses - they were dealt with in the earlier referenced message.)

- A. Enoch is one of only two men recorded in the Bible that didn't die - the other was Elijah. That's what the first part of verse five refers to.**

- B. The most important point recorded here about Enoch's faith is that it was demonstrated in the phrase, "that he pleased God."
- C. Verse six further clarifies how essential our faith is to pleasing the Lord.

While it certainly includes coming to God through the work of Christ for salvation, the main emphasis is on believers continually coming to Him with their needs and seeking His help, much like the encouragement given earlier in Hebrews 4:14-16.

## V. BY FAITH NOAH - VS. 7; GEN. 6:8-22

- A. His faith is described in the phrase, "of things not seen as yet" - this is a basic repeat of verse one.
- B. Because of his simple faith in the word of God, when he was told a flood was going to overwhelm and destroy the earth ("being warned of God"), he "moved with fear."

1. The word for "fear" here isn't to be understood as terror. It comes from two Greek words that in their literal sense can be understood as **"to take hold of something carefully and reverently."**

The BDAG lexicon defines the word as "to show reverence, awe, or caution in response to a divine warning or presence.

2. He didn't merely feel fear - he was **motivated by reverent faith to prepare the ark** exactly as God instructed. His reverence ("fear") led him to **act in careful accordance with God's warning**, even when everything God said was

contrary to his senses and experience.

### C. "Prepared an ark to the saving of his house"

1. Immediate, Primary Meaning: **Physical salvation.**

a) Noah built the ark literally to save their physical lives from the flood.

b) Hebrews 11 is recounting real historical events – real faith that resulted in **real-world actions and consequences.**

2. Deeper, spiritual picture: **typological salvation.**

a) However, in typical biblical style, **physical salvation often foreshadows spiritual truths.**

1 Peter 3:20-21

<sup>20</sup> ...the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water. <sup>21</sup> The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ:

b) Peter says the **ark and flood** are a **type** (a "figure") pointing to **spiritual salvation** – not because water saves us, but because **faith in God's provision** (the ark for Noah, Christ for us) **saves us.**

(1) The ark = a type of Christ.

(2) The flood = a type of judgment.

(3) Entering the ark by faith = a type of entering

Christ by faith to be saved.

## The Ark and Christ: A Beautiful Typology

The Ark	Christ
<b>Provided by God</b> as the only means of escape from judgment (Genesis 6:14)	<b>Provided by God</b> as the only way of salvation from eternal judgment (John 3:16)
<b>Made according to God's specific instructions</b> (Genesis 6:15-16)	<b>Came according to God's exact plan and promises</b> (Galatians 4:4-5)
<b>Only one ark</b> – no other way to survive the flood (Genesis 7:1)	<b>Only one Savior</b> – no other name by which we must be saved (Acts 4:12)
<b>Enter by a single door</b> (Genesis 6:16)	<b>Jesus is the only door</b> to salvation (John 10:9)
<b>Those inside the ark were safe from God's judgment</b> (Genesis 7:23)	<b>Those "in Christ" are safe from condemnation</b> (Romans 8:1)
<b>The ark bore the brunt of the floodwaters</b> – the judgment fell on the ark, not on those inside	<b>Christ bore the wrath of God</b> for sin on the cross, protecting believers (Isaiah 53:5-6)
<b>Entrance required faith in God's warning, not sight</b> (Hebrews 11:7)	<b>Salvation requires faith in God's promise, not sight</b> (2 Corinthians 5:7)
<b>After the flood, Noah and</b>	<b>Believers in Christ are</b>



<b>his family stepped into a new creation</b> (Genesis 8:15-19)	<b>made new creations</b> (2 Corinthians 5:17)
<b>The ark came to rest</b> on the mountains of Ararat - "high place" - symbolizing victory and new beginnings (Genesis 8:4)	<b>Christ rose and reigns</b> – the high place of triumph over sin and death (Philippians 2:9-11)

#### D. "By the which he condemned the world"

1. "By the which" – points to his faith.
2. By that faith (trusting God's unseen warning), he **condemned** the world (**showed it to be wrong by contrast**) and **inherited righteousness**.
  - a) This isn't to be understood in the sense of Noah **judging** or **cursing** the world personally - that was reserved for God to do for He's the only One that can judge the world in that sense.
  - b) Instead, **his faith-filled obedience** stood as a **living rebuke** to the unbelief and wickedness of the rest of the world.
  - c) In other words, Noah's life became a standard by which the world was shown to be guilty. When someone **obeys God in faith**, it **automatically exposes** those who reject God.

This is what Jesus referenced in John 3:19-21.

John 3:19-21

<sup>19</sup> And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were

evil. <sup>20</sup> For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. <sup>21</sup> But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.

3. He became a **living testimony** both of God's **salvation** and God's **judgment**.

**E. "And became heir of the righteousness which is by faith"**

Noah became heir to the righteousness which is by faith – not because he lived a perfect life, but because he trusted God's word. His righteous living was the **evidence** of the righteousness he received by faith, not the cause of it.

**VI. BY FAITH ABRAHAM - VS. 8-10, 17-19**

**VII. THROUGH FAITH SARAH - VS. 11**

**VIII. PARENTHETICAL - VS. 12-16**

**IX. BY FAITH ISAAC - VS. 20**

**X. BY FAITH JACOB - VS. 21**

**XI. BY FAITH JOSEPH - VS. 22**

**XII. BY FAITH MOSES - VS. 23-28**

The words "by faith" and "through faith" are used four (4) times in these verses relating to Moses.

**A. "When he was born" - vs. 23**

**B. "When he was come to years" - vs. 24-26**

**C. "He forsook Egypt" - vs. 27**

**D. "He kept the Passover" - vs. 28**

**XIII. BY FAITH THEY (ISRAEL) - VS. 29-30**

**XIV. BY FAITH RAHAB - VS. 31**

**XV. THROUGH FAITH MANY OTHERS - VS. 32-39**

**XVI.**