

## Legacy of Faith

11:1 *Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.* 2 This is what the ancients were commended for.

3 *By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible.*

4 By faith Abel *offered* God a better sacrifice than Cain did. By faith he was commended as a righteous man, when God spoke well of his offerings. And by faith he still speaks, even though he is dead.

5 By faith Enoch was taken from this life, so that he did not experience death; he could not be found, because God had taken him away. For before he was taken, he was commended as one who pleased God. 6 *And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.*

7 By faith Noah, when warned about things not yet seen, in holy fear *built an ark* to save his family. By his faith he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness that comes by faith.

8 By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, *obeyed and went*, even though he did not know where he was going. 9 By faith he *made his home in the promised land* like a stranger in a foreign country; he *lived in tents*, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. 10 For he *was looking forward* to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God.

11 By faith Abraham, even though he was past age-and Sarah herself was barren-was *enabled to become a father* because he considered him faithful who had made the promise. 12 And so from this one man, and he as good as dead, came descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as countless as the sand on the seashore.

13 All these people were *still living by faith when they died.* They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance. And they admitted that they were aliens and strangers on earth. 14 People who say such things show that they are looking for a country of their own. 15 If they had been thinking of the country they had left, they would have had opportunity to return. 16 *Instead, they were longing for a better country-a heavenly one.* Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them.

17 By faith Abraham, when God tested him, *offered Isaac* as a sacrifice. He who had received the promises was about to sacrifice his one and only son, 18 even though God had said to him, "It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned." 19 Abraham reasoned that God could raise the dead, and figuratively speaking, he did receive Isaac back from death.

20 By faith Isaac *blessed* Jacob and Esau in regard to their future.

21 By faith Jacob, when he was dying, *blessed* each of Joseph's sons, and *worshiped* as he leaned on the top of his staff.

22 By faith Joseph, when his end was near, spoke about the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt and *gave instructions* about his bones.

23 By faith Moses' parents *hid him* for three months after he was born, because they saw he was no ordinary child, and they *were not afraid* of the king's edict.

24 By faith Moses, when he had grown up, *refused* to be known as the son of Pharaoh's daughter. 25 He *chose* to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a short time. 26 He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he was *looking ahead* to his reward. 27 By faith he *left Egypt*, not fearing the king's anger; he *persevered* because he saw him who is invisible. 28 By faith he *kept the Passover* and the sprinkling of blood, so that the destroyer of the firstborn would not touch the firstborn of Israel. 29 By faith the people *passed through* the Red Sea as on dry land; but when the Egyptians tried to do so, they were drowned.

30 By faith the walls of Jericho fell, after the people *had marched* around them for seven days.

31 By faith the prostitute Rahab, because she *welcomed the spies*, was not killed with those who were disobedient.

32 And what more shall I say? I do not have time to tell about Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel and the prophets, 33 who through faith *conquered kingdoms, administered justice, and gained what was promised; who shut the mouths of lions, 34 quenched the fury of the flames, and escaped the edge of the sword;* whose weakness was turned to strength; and who *became powerful in battle and routed foreign armies.* 35 Women *received back their dead,* raised to life again. Others were tortured and *refused to be released,* so that they might gain a better resurrection. 36 Some *faced jeers and flogging,* while still others were *chained and put in prison.* 37 They were *stoned;* they were *sawed in two;* they were *put to death* by the sword. They went about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, persecuted and mistreated- 38 the world was not worthy of them. *They wandered* in deserts and mountains, and in caves and holes in the ground.

39 *These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised.* 40 *God had planned something better for us so that only together with us would they be made perfect.*

## Faith in What Is Promised

### *Faith Is Rational*

By faith we “understand” that the universe is not self-existent; rather, it was designed by the Creator (v. 3). The notion that one cannot be intelligent without being anti-religious is a myth propagated by those who hate God. Logic and faith are companions.

### *Faith Depends upon Revelation*

God has, in history, “borne witness,” “warned,” “called,” etc. (v. 4,5,7,8). Man does not intuitively know how to serve God. The Lord has spoken (Heb. 1:1), and, in the final analysis, that revelation is embodied in the Holy Scriptures.

### *Faith Involves Trusting Our Maker*

When Noah was warned of God, though he had never seen a flood, he prepared the ark (v. 7). Abraham left Chaldea “not knowing whether he went” (v. 8). Clearly, trusting the unseen God is a vital component of true faith.

### *Faith Is an Action Word*

Whereas many seem to entertain the notion that faith is merely a mental conviction, *this chapter reveals that faith, in order to be valid, must act.* By faith Abel “offered” a sacrifice (v. 4), Noah “prepared” an ark (v. 7), and Abraham “obeyed” the Lord (v. 8). Faith, divorced from obedience, is dead (Jas. 2:26).

### *Faith Discriminates*

It chooses the spiritual over the material, the eternal over the temporal. Moses chose heavenly riches over the treasures of **Egypt** (v. 26).

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“Faith is the art of holding on to things your reason has once accepted in spite of your changing moods”  
C.S. Lewis

“Faith is deliberate confidence in the character of God whose ways you may not understand at the time.”  
Oswald Chambers

“To one who has faith, no explanation is necessary. To one without faith, no explanation is possible.”  
Thomas Aquinas

## Looking for a Heavenly Country

“I must take on the one hand, never to despise, or be unthankful for, these earthly blessings, and on the other, never mistake them for the something else of which they are only a kind of copy, or echo, or mirage. I must keep alive in myself the desire for my true country, which I shall not find till after death.”  
C.S. Lewis

“He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose.”  
Jim Elliot

“Let no one apologize for the powerful emphasis Christianity lays upon the doctrine of the world to come. Right there lies its immense superiority to everything else within the whole sphere of human thought or experience. When Christ arose from death and ascended into heaven. He established forever three important facts, namely, that this world has been condemned to ultimate dissolution, that the human spirit persists beyond the grave, and that there is indeed a world to come. We do well to think of the long tomorrow.”  
A.W. Tozer