

20:20 Vision Ministries – Devotions by Roger Browning

Week 37 (September 4-10, 2016)

The promises of God in His Word will not do you any good unless you have the **faith** to believe them and claim them for yourself. Let's spend the next two weeks on the subject of **faith**. (Reprinted and updated from week 23, 2014)

Sunday, September 4 (read Hebrews 11:1-6)

*Now **faith** is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see. (Hebrews 11:1, emphasis mine)*

The Old Testament saints were commended for their **faith** as they looked forward to the coming of their Messiah (v. 2). They didn't live long enough to see His arrival, but they were sure of what they hoped for and certain of what they never got to see (v. 1). Today's passage gives two examples of men of **faith**, Abel and Enoch. Abel was murdered by his brother, Cain, but he made the **Faith Hall of Fame** described in Hebrews 11 because he brought the required blood sacrifice to God instead of vegetables (see Genesis 4:1-16). Enoch is my Old Testament hero because he "walked with God" (Genesis 5:22) and became the first person to go into the Kingdom of Heaven without suffering death, thus previewing the rapture (Genesis 5:24). We will continue to study this passage in tomorrow's devotion.

Monday, September 5 (reread Hebrews 11:1-6)

*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. (Hebrews 11:6, emphasis mine)*

In today's society, we must exercise **faith** to believe "that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible" (v. 3). Our children are taught evolution as though the theory is a proven fact. My wife and I recently visited the Creation Museum in Petersburg, Kentucky. If you get an opportunity, I recommend that you do the same if you want to learn what Biblical scientists believe. It takes less faith for me to believe that God **spoke** the universe into existence thousands (not billions) of years ago than it does to believe that a big bang made life appear out of nothing. You can never please God until you learn to trust His Word and His promises through **faith** (v. 6), even when you have to stand alone against man's teachings (see Romans 3:4).

Tuesday, September 6 (read Hebrews 11:7)

*By **faith** Noah, when warned about things not yet seen, in holy fear built an ark to save his family. (Hebrews 11:7a, emphasis mine)*

Today's reading text is short, but it teaches one of the most important **promises** in the Bible. By **faith**, like Noah, I believe the prophecies in the Bible that have yet to take place, so I am leaving behind a legacy that my children (physical and spiritual) will have long after I am gone. The ark I am building consists of teaching my listeners and readers to boldly claim the **promises** of God. I know that you do not want to go to Heaven **alone** and leave your family behind, so begin today to build an ark to protect them. Your ark may be to trust God's Word in every action so that your children can see the difference the Lord is making in your life (see 1 Peter 3:15-16). If you are not **sailing** on the ark you have built, how can you expect them to want to get on board? Your actions will condemn the worldly crowd that rejects the teachings of the Bible, but you can be sure that **you and your family** will be heirs of eternal life as well as all the other promises of God (v. 8). Can you trust Him enough to claim your family for Jesus?

Wednesday, September 7 (read Hebrews 11:8-19)

*All these people were living by **faith** when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance. (Hebrews 11:13a, emphasis mine)*

The verse above comes right in the middle of the discussion of Abraham's **faith**. God promised him that he would not only become the father of a great nation (Israel), but he would also be a blessing to **all the nations** on earth (Genesis 12:1-3). Abraham had to follow a **promise** as he sought **God's eternal city**, because he was not told where he would be going (v. 8-10). God worked the miracle He **promised** because Abraham followed his master's call purely on **faith**. Perhaps you are becoming impatient because you have not yet **seen** the fulfillment of **promises** from God's Word. Perhaps you won't see some of His **promises** fulfilled until you are with Him in Heaven. Learn a lesson from the earthly father of our **faith** and live your lives as strangers on this earth while you wait for every word of the Bible to be proven true. Don't even think about returning to the "country" in which you once lived (13b-16)!

Thursday, September 8 (Hebrews 11:20-29)

*By **faith**, he (Moses) left Egypt, not fearing the king's anger; he persevered because he saw Him who is invisible. (Hebrews 11:27, emphasis mine)*

Today's text mentions the **faith** of Isaac, Jacob and Joseph (v. 20-22) prior to beginning a discussion on the **faith** of Moses. The parents of Moses showed great **faith** when they hid him so that he would not be killed along with the other Hebrew baby boys (v. 23; see also, Exodus 2:1-10). Moses had an affluent life in Egypt, having been raised as the son of Pharaoh's daughter, but he willingly "chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to **enjoy** the pleasures of sin for a short time" (v. 25, emphasis mine). Young people, God is aware that sins of the flesh are enjoyable until you begin to suffer the consequences. For your sake, the Lord asks you to delay the fulfillment of fleshly desires and seek "Him who is invisible." You are called to exercise great **faith** by choosing to live your life quite differently than most of your classmates. Kids of all ages, are you up to the task?

Friday, September 9 (Hebrews 11:30-34)

*By **faith** the prostitute Rahab, because she welcomed the spies, was not killed with those who were disobedient. (Hebrews 11:31, emphasis mine)*

So far, all of the heroes we have studied from Hebrews 11 were great men of **faith**. Today's reading includes some "super sinners" who were transformed by God and used mightily in His work. I featured Rahab in the printed verse because she is a forgiven prostitute who had enough **faith** to hide the Jews who were sent to spy on the city of Jericho. She not only made the Faith Hall of Fame, but she also saved her **entire family** by her faith (see Joshua 6:22-25). "She lives among the Israelites to this day" (Joshua 6:25) because she is listed in the genealogy in Matthew 1:5 in the bloodline that leads to Jesus Christ. Likewise, you and I will also live among the redeemed Israelites because, when we reach the end of our journey on this earth, we will find Jesus waiting to receive us into His kingdom.

Saturday, September 10 (Hebrews 11:35-40)

*These were all commended for their **faith**, yet none of them received what had been promised. (Hebrews 11:39, emphasis mine)*

Those TV preachers who promise only good things to their listeners have apparently never read today's text. Christians are already being persecuted in many countries, and it cannot be long before the persecutions begin in this nation. Two truths in these verses should give you great comfort: 1) In v. 38, God takes Christians home to Heaven because "this world is not worthy of them" and 2) In v. 40, "Only together **with us** would they (the OT saints) be made perfect." This old world is not our home; we are citizens of Heaven (Philippians 3:20). God is not finished with us yet. Someday we will be like Him because we will see Him as He is (1 John 3:2). Until then, Keep Looking Up – Fully rely On God!