

# An Exposition of Hebrews

## Lesson 15 – Chapter 11:1-16 <sup>3415</sup>

Passage NASU	Commentary & Analysis	Bible Interprets the Bible References
<p><b>Contextual Transition:</b> The previous chapter was focused much on confidence in and endurance in our faith. This new chapter is going to exposit in greater detail and by example what a true, mature faith that brings obedience to God looks like.</p>		
<p><b>By Faith We Understand</b> it is in our faith (a gift from God) and the power of the Holy Spirit (who indwells those who are truly “in Christ” that our faith becomes a powerful witness to the glory and the majesty and the mercy of God offered to sinners unto salvation from God’s certain wrath.</p>		
<p><b>11:1</b> Now <u>faith</u> is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.</p>	<p>Here is a good working definition of <u>faith</u>. Faith is when hoped for promises of God are sure in our soul, and things not seen in this life are believed with a certain conviction of the truth of these things. Faith is an existential trust in God’s truthfulness in His revelation to men.</p>	<p><b>Heb 3:5-6</b> Now Moses was faithful in all His house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken later; <sup>6</sup>but Christ was faithful as a Son over His house – whose house we are, if we hold fast our confidence and the boast of our hope firm until the end.</p>
<p><b>Faith</b> πιστις pistis (Str. 4102) 243x; belief, trust, confidence, the act of believing with a sure confidence.</p>		
<p><b>In Heb 10:22</b> we read <u>“let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.”</u></p>	<p>A faith that saves a sinner is one that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. changes the inner man with a sincere heart, and</li> <li>2. providing the Christian a full assurance of that faith, and</li> <li>3. our hearts having been cleaned of the old evil conscience that cannot and will not convict us of sin in our life, and</li> <li>4. our bodies have been washed with pure water.</li> </ol>	
<p><b>11:2</b> For by <u>it</u> the men of old gained approval.</p> <p>Read MacArthur’s Commentary on Hebrews; pp. 289 - 290</p>	<p>The “<u>it</u>” here refers to the “<u>faith</u>” of verse 1. This is the subject of this chapter. The word “faith” occurs 24x in this chapter.</p>	<p><b>Rom 1:15-17</b> So, for my part, I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome. <sup>16</sup>For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. <sup>17</sup>For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, <b><u>“BUT THE RIGHTEOUS man SHALL LIVE BY FAITH.”</u></b> <sup>“ Hab 2:4; Gal 3:11; Heb 10:38</sup></p>
<p><b>11:3</b> <u>By faith</u> we understand that the <u>worlds</u> were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible.</p>	<p>These “unregenerate” Hebrews already believed, unequivocally, that God had created all things.</p> <p>The created <u>worlds</u> extend this passage well beyond just where we live, but unto the very unknown worlds of which we have no evidence or experience. It all came into existence by the very “Word of God” ex-nihilo.</p>	<p><b>Ps 33:6 &amp; 9</b> By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, and by the breath of His mouth all their host. - - - <sup>9</sup>For He spoke and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast.</p>
<p><b>11:4</b> <u>By faith</u> Abel offered to God a better sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained the testimony that he was righteous, God testifying about his gifts, and through faith, though he is dead, he still speaks.</p>	<p>Abel’s offering was a true foreshadowing of God’s holy plan of redemption for men. He was praised by God, but murdered by Cain.</p> <p>Cain’s offering was not a foreshadowing of God’s holy plan of redemption, but rather was a foreshadowing of a false gospel of man’s own sufficiency in the work of his own hands to earn merit before a holy God! <b>Abel exemplifies worshiping by faith!</b></p>	<p><b>Mt 23:28-37</b> - - - <sup>36</sup>Truly I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation.</p> <p><sup>37</sup>“Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling.</p>
<p><b>11:5</b> <u>By faith</u> Enoch was taken up so that he</p>	<p>These various men of faith in this chapter exemplify the progressive</p>	<p><b>Gal 3:26-29</b> For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. <sup>27</sup>For all of you</p>

<p>would not see death; AND HE WAS NOT FOUND BECAUSE GOD TOOK HIM UP; for he obtained the witness that before his being taken up he was pleasing to God.</p>	<p>nature of God’s revelation of Himself to man. Abel worshipped according to God’s direction.</p> <p>Enoch walked with God, lived righteously before God. Enoch was pleasing to God in his daily walk of life.</p>	<p>who were <u>baptized into Christ</u> have clothed yourselves with Christ. <sup>28</sup>There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. <sup>29</sup>And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s descendants, heirs according to promise.</p>
<p><b>11:6</b> And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.</p>	<p>Here is a shorthand version of the gospel of God. It is impossible to please the Father in anyway other than by faith in the perfect, loving, complete work of His own Son on calvary’s tree. Any other gospel is an offense to Him!</p>	<p><b>Jas 1:5-8</b> But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him. <sup>6</sup><b>But he must ask in faith without any doubting</b>, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind. <sup>7</sup>For that man ought not to expect that he will receive anything from the Lord, <sup>8</sup>being a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.</p>
<p><b>11:7</b> <u>By faith Noah</u>, being warned by God about things not yet seen, <u>in reverence</u> prepared an ark for the salvation of his household, by which he condemned the world, and became an heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.</p>	<p>1<sup>st</sup> Noah was warned by God about something he was entirely unfamiliar with and likely could not fully conceive of.</p> <p>2<sup>nd</sup> Noah apparently feared God enough to act on God’s warning in obedience to the Father and built the ark as he was commanded by God. The phrase <u>in reverence</u> apparently speaks of being under a holy fear of God’s wrathful intention.</p> <p>3<sup>rd</sup> Noah committed his entire life for a long time to the construction of this ark in obedience to God which certainly reflects his faith in God’s Word to him.</p> <p>God’s intentions in judgment are His certain plans. He is patient, but He is never idle in His justice!</p>	<p><b>2 Pet 3:5-7</b> For when they maintain this, it escapes their notice that by the word of God the heavens existed long ago and the earth was formed out of water and by water, <sup>6</sup>through which the world at that time was destroyed, being flooded with water. <sup>7</sup>But by His word the present heavens and earth are being reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.</p>
<p><b>Faithful Abraham</b> - a man who lived by His faith in this ancient God who had spoken to him and guided him throughout the rest of his adult life.</p>		
<p><b>11:8-10</b> <u>By faith Abraham</u>, when he was called, obeyed by going out to a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing where he was going. <u>By faith he</u> lived as an alien in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, fellow heirs of the same promise; <sup>10</sup>for he was looking for the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God.</p>	<p>“The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Haran” (Acts 7:2). What marvelous grace! The God of glory condescended to draw near and reveal Himself unto one that was sunk in sin, immersed in idolatry, having not concern for the Divine honor. There was nothing in Abraham to deserve God’s notice, still less to merit His esteem. But more: not only was the grace of God here signally evident, but the sovereignty of His grace was displayed in thus singling him out from the midst of all his fellows. As He says in Is 51:2, “I called him alone, and blessed him.” “Why God should not call his father and kindred, there can be no answer but this: God hath mercy on whom He will (Rom 9:18). He calleth Isaac and refuseth Ishmael; loveth Jacob, and hateth Esau; taketh Abel and leaveth Cain: even because He will, and for not cause that we know of.” A. W. Pink; <i>An Exposition of Hebrews</i>; p. 418.</p>	
<p><b>11:11</b> <u>By faith even Sarah</u> herself received ability to conceive, even beyond the proper time of life, since she considered Him faithful who had promised.</p>	<p>Although ultimately Sarah was faithful regarding God’s promise to provide a son to Abraham, she was not entirely faithful in that she tried to arrange a human solution to the problem by offering her handmaiden to serve as the birthmother for Abraham’s offspring, resulting in the birth of Ishmael. Ishmael’s offspring (Arabic people groups) ended up being the enemy of the Israelites coming first through Isaac and then through his son Jacob. Sarah’s plan backfired badly and yet God in His own sovereign purpose worked all things according to His own will.</p>	

<p><b>11:12</b> <i>Therefore there was born even of one man, and him as good as dead at that, as many descendants AS THE STARS OF HEAVEN IN NUMBER, AND INNUMERABLE AS THE SAND WHICH IS BY THE SEASHORE.</i></p>	<p>In 2021, only about 0.2% of the world’s population are considered “core” Jewish. The “core” – meaning those who identify as Jewish above all else.</p> <p>It appears that at a future date the Jewish population will increase dramatically to deserve the characterization of being innumerable as the sand on the seashore.</p> <p>My guess is that this will occur with all the other prophecies to Israel that will be fulfilled when Christ rules on David’s throne in the Millennial Kingdom yet to come.</p>	<p><b>Deut 7:6-8</b> <i>For you are a holy people to the Lord your God; the Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for His own possession out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth. <sup>7</sup>The Lord did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any of the peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples, <sup>8</sup>but because the Lord loved you and kept the oath which He swore to your forefathers, the Lord brought you out by a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.</i></p>
<p><b>The Heavenly Hope</b> It is in hope that the saint of God thrives in this world. It is in the surety of the Hope from God that the saint rests secure, and it is in this certain hope that the saint of God finds ultimate meaning in this life!</p>		
<p><b>11:13</b> <i>All these died in faith, without receiving the promises, but having seen them and having welcomed them from a distance, and having confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth.</i></p>	<p>Abraham, to whom the promises were unilaterally made by God, and Abraham’s seed (Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph) died without seeing God’s promise fulfilled.</p> <p>Nevertheless, these faithful Israelites lived and hoped by faith in God’s promise, looked forward in time (at a distance) while at the same time knowing that they were yet strangers and exiles on the earth, not possessors of those promises yet to come.</p>	<p><b>John 8:53-58</b> <i>“Surely You are not greater than our father Abraham, who died? The prophets died too; whom do You make Yourself out to be?”</i>  <sup>54</sup><i>Jesus answered, “If I glorify Myself, My glory is nothing; it is My Father who glorifies Me, of whom you say, ‘He is our God’; <sup>55</sup>and you have not come to know Him, but I know Him; and if I say that I do not know Him, I will be a liar like you, but I do know Him and keep His word. <sup>56</sup>Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad.” <sup>57</sup>So the Jews said to Him, “You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?”</i>  <sup>58</sup><i>Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am.”</i></p>
<p><b>11:14-15</b> <i>For those who say such things make it clear that they are seeking a country of their own. And indeed if they had been thinking of that country from which they went out, they would have had opportunity to return.</i></p>	<p>These Patriarchs who confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth, were desirous of having God’s promised land, but had they been covetous of just any land, they could have returned to Ur of the Chaldeans from whence they had come (Gen 11:31).</p> <p>Their willingness to patiently wait for God’s promise to be fulfilled at a much later date (past their own lifetime) and to remain as strangers and exiles on the earth, indicates a deep and holy faith in God’s ultimate provision to them. They understood that this God of theirs was faithful to His word and immutable in His nature.</p>	
<p><b>11:16</b> <i>But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for He has prepared a city for them.</i></p>	<p>Theirs, by the Divine unilateral promise, is the City of God in the Millennial Kingdom, followed by the Eternal City of the New Heavens and Earth as promised in Revelation 19-21 and by most of the Old Testament prophets of God. These great men of faith held a certain hope based on God’s promises. They were men of Great faith!</p>	
<p><b>Summary/Conclusions/Comments:</b> This chapter on “faith” will continue next week.</p>		

**Important Quote(s)**

If men are saved, it is because of the direct intervention of God. The regeneration of the soul must be the exclusive work of the Holy spirit. Salvation is by grace alone. As the American theologian William Shedd writes, "Grace is imparted to sinful man, not because he believes, but in order that he may believe; for faith itself is a gift of God."

**Irwin Lutzer;** from *Doctrines that Divide*; p.158