

Pentwater Bible Church

Hebrews Message 31

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Leap of Faith by Abraham Hunter

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Pentwater Bible Church

The Book of Hebrews

Message Thirty–One

FAITH CHAMPIONS

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THE FAITHFUL

Hebrews 11:1–7

¹Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. ²For by it the elders obtained a good report. ³Through 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. ⁴By 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. ⁵By 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. ⁶But 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. ⁷By 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 (KJV).

FAITH DEFINED

Hebrews 11:1–3

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Our text here continues on from the introduction of faith in chapter ten. Here it is described as the confident assurance of what is hoped for is genuinely going to happen. The word hope here describes an expectation or belief and assurance that what we are assured of happening in God's Word will actually occur. There is no doubt that God will do exactly as He says He will perform. The author is describing faith as a principle that deals with what is yet future and unseen. Future events described in the Bible are made sure to us by faith the same as past historical events must be taken by faith as actually having occurred. Faith looks forward to the future, to things anticipated and hoped for. Since the future with all its hope is not yet realized, patience endurance is required waiting for God to perform the word He of which He has assured us He will perform. Living by faith means that we will patiently endure the trials, naysayers, and other obstacles which try our faith regarding the promises of God. Faith in God brings His acceptance and rewards.

Faith starts with believing in God's character as described throughout the Bible that He is who He says He is. Again, hope here is a desire based on the assurance which is based upon God's character. The result is absolute certainty. Our faith in God is so real that it gives absolute certainty in expectation regarding the *assurance of things hoped for* which will really come to pass. Some examples of these are progressive sanctification which yields spiritual maturity, the certainty of Jesus' return, the promise of Heaven, and the future resurrection and glorification. There is no wishing, dreaming or fantasy involved here. It is certainty or in other words it is standing on Gods' Word.

The text in verse two states that *by it the elders obtained a good report* which means that not merely old men, or elders in age or position, but many who lived in ancient times who received a good report from God; that they were the chosen of God, and were justified and accepted with Him. They were the individuals who were friends of God because they trusted in Him. They believed that there was more to creation than can be seen. They realized that we were created by a superior intelligent being and recognized Him in faith which caused their salvation. Their faith caused them to step out in deeds which received the praise of God and increased their faith with this realization. Because of the realization that God's promises are true one's faith strengthens.

Proverbs 9:10

¹⁰The fear of Jehovah is the beginning of wisdom; And the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding (ASV, 1901).

Many of the elements of creation are not visible to the naked eye. We cannot see air, energy, the forces separating the celestial bodies or the origin of light emanating from stars in the heavens. But even though we cannot see them while we live in these bodies we know that they exist by and through faith. We cannot know how the Lord performed the creative process *ex nihilo* or out of nothing. But we can see that this creation could not have come from itself.

Genesis 1:1

"¹In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." (KJV)

In this the first verse of the Bible we are told that God existed before "*the beginning*", or to say it another way, before the beginning of time as we know it. However, the definite article "the" is absent in the Hebrew. This is an indication that within the first Nano second or shorter time when time came into existence God opened up a space within the origin of the time domain to insert the creation. Another words it says "In Beginning" all the following creation occurred. In fact the apostle Paul writing to Timothy stating the same thing:

II Timothy 1: 9

*"⁹For God saved us and called us to live a holy life. He did this, not because we deserved it, but because that was his plan from before the beginning of time."
(NLT)*

We need to realize that the New Testament affirms one component of Genesis 1: 1 by stating that God acted before the beginning of time. The first verse is foundational to the entire Bible. It describes the fact that God was in existence before any creation efforts were put forth. It has often been pointed out that an understanding of the early chapters of Genesis, and *believing* them, makes the rest of the Bible easy to understand. This one verse also refutes all the "isms", such as atheism, pantheism, polytheism, materialism, dualism, humanism and evolutionism. All these philosophies are just different ways to say there is no God. They are all expressions of unbelief. Genesis takes the existence of God for granted. The Bible begins with God and moves into the creation account. Those who believe in other theories all start with another preexisting matter or force that brings about cosmic changes. They describe extremely long periods of time to finally get the earth and humans to where we are today. The "isms" or secular philosophies never answer the question: "what started those forces or matter in the first place?"

Only God can create. Mankind is not able to do this. He can form, manage, and rearrange. He cannot create matter out of nothing. In Genesis 1:1 the verb "*created*" in Hebrew is the word *bara*, which means that at some point God "spoke the creation into being". God alone is infinite and omnipotent. This attribute of God leads humans to the point of having to make a decision about these concepts. The Hebrew verb *bara* in its unmodified form is only used to denote the creation and the living soul that God placed in man and the animals. Is matter eternal, or is God eternal? John 1:3 says that the person of Jesus of Nazareth, the second person of the Godhead created all things. If matter is eternal, then where did we come from? How did we get here and why? Everything has a cause and effect. Our human reasoning and experience affirm that.

God created "*the heavens*", and the heavens here refer to space. So, the beginning of time was then followed by the space of the universe. Our entire universe only consists of three components. They are space, time and matter. The Hebrew word *shamayin* is the word for "*heavens*", the space component of the space–time–matter universe. This is followed by the Hebrew word *erets*, which is translated as "*earth*", but primarily refers to "matter". Matter of course is anything that has weight and takes up space. At the time that matter was created there were no heavenly bodies in the space. They were created on the fourth day. The term matter is understood to include energy.

"*In the beginning*" is a direct reference to the creation of the physical property of time. When we ponder the concept of time we find it impossible to arrive at a suitable definition. Einstein came close in his quest to understand the basic fundamentals of energy in the universe. He saw time as bending, having a velocity and decaying. Time is not uniform. It is a physical property that varies with mass, acceleration and gravity among other things. Particle physicists insist that we exist in more dimensions than we are aware of. These are all products of the time domain. What is important to understand is that time had a beginning, is in existence now, and will have an end. These are concepts the human cannot fully understand. For example, consider our awareness spectrum while we are in these bodies. We are aware of events transpiring at

the present. We can remember the past, but we cannot predict the future because we cannot see it. Now God who lives outside of time (not where there is a lot of time) knows the future. In fact one might say “God Remembers Tomorrow!” This is the unique characteristic of time, and God has limited our understanding of time as He understands it. The unity of the three components of our existence, time, matter and space are all independent and coterminous with the whole. The universe is not part time, matter and space. It is rather all space, time and matter.¹

The same faith is what we place in the existence of God. After which he will bless us with the assurance of His will and promises of past and future events. What we see comes from forces and attributes of God to cause the creation of which we can see much. The unseen truths of Christianity are more certain than what can be seen (e.g. II Timothy 1:9).

The scripture is full of abundant examples of individuals who exhibited this faith.

HEROES OF FAITH

Hebrews 11:4–7

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. 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. 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. 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 (KJV).

ABLE’S SACRIFICE WAS SUPERIOR

Genesis 4: 3–5

“³And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto Jehovah. ⁴And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And Jehovah had respect unto Abel and to his offering: but unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. ⁵And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell.” (ASV, 1901)

Sacrifices were introduced in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3: 21). The shedding of blood is the only acceptable sacrifice to God. Since they were born early in the history of the human family, both of these men knew this, and this was probably not their first sacrifice. They knew what God required. The issue here is obedience toward God’s requirements. Cain knew what God required, and he chose not to provide it. Able knew too, and he chose to give God a sacrifice that was proper. In fact, the text adds further detail to Abel’s offering by including it

¹ Woodhead, Daniel E. *Bible Commentary on the Book of Genesis*. Scofield Institute Press, 2018, pgs. 9,10

was “of the firstlings” and had “the fat” included. Both of these requirements would be instituted later into the Mosaic Law (Exodus 23: 18 etc.). Our text here in Hebrews tells us that “by faith” Abel offered a better sacrifice than Cain (Hebrews 11:4). It also says that Christ’s sacrifice was better than that of Abel (Hebrews 12:24). Cain went through the motions and submitted an inferior offering that did not meet God’s requirements. God made it quite clear to them which offering he respected and which He did not.

ENOCH PLEASED GOD

Genesis 5:21–24

“²¹And Enoch lived sixty and five years, and begat Methuselah: ²²and Enoch walked with God after he begat Methuselah three hundred years, and begat sons and daughters: ²³and all the days of Enoch were three hundred sixty and five years: ²⁴and Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him.” (ASV, 1901)

One obvious aspect of the seed line is the truncated life of Enoch. In comparison to the others, his life was relatively short at 365 years. The Bible says that God “took” him. God gave immortality to him. The Hebrew word for “took” is *lackach*, and it means that the Lord “captured” him. We can also translate this as “rapture”. Our text also affirms this (Hebrews 11: 5), and says Enoch “pleased” God. Enoch functioned as a prophet according to Jude 14–15. He was instrumental in witnessing to the world the message of God. Enoch’s translation is a model, or type, of the Rapture of the Church which is yet future to us, and clearly explained in I Thessalonians 4: 16–17. The Rapture occurs in the general chronology of the Bible before the Great Tribulation. By believing the fact that Jesus died, and rose from the dead we are pleasing God. This is because He provided the gift of salvation to us and He is *pleased* when we accept the gift.

NOAH

Noah’s name in Hebrew means “comfort” or “rest”. The meaning of Noah’s name is in direct contrast to the toilsome, sluggish work that Adam experienced after the Fall. Noah has three sons who, with their wives and children, repopulated the earth after the Flood. None of the individuals cited in the Godly seed line died in the Flood. All were either dead or raptured before the Flood that Noah and his sons survived. All exhibited faith in God.

Genesis 6:3

³And Jehovah said, My Spirit shall not strive with man for ever, for that he also is flesh: yet shall his days be a hundred and twenty years (ASV, 1901).

Jehovah God is saying here that His Spirit namely the Holy Spirit will not strive (Hebrew *yadon*) forever with man. This striving is in the sense of restraining and proclaiming sin to the world. The sin here is one of complete disassociation from God in pursuit of fleshly desires. The Sons of God were intermarrying with promiscuous women and producing a wicked offspring. God had used Spirit filled Enoch and Noah to preach to the world. Now God is

saying that because people were wholly living without God, evil, and all their thoughts were of violence and wickedness He would only let them live for another one hundred and twenty years. These are the years remaining before He brought the Flood on the earth. God in this declaration was warning the world that His long suffering of man's sin would have an end. It was to be one hundred twenty more years. Peter the apostle adds to this in reflection.

I Peter 3:20

²⁰that aforesaid were disobedient, when the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water (ASV, 1901).

Genesis 6:9

⁹These [are] the generations of Noah: Noah was a just man [and] perfect in his generations, [and] Noah walked with God." (KJV)

The word "*perfect*" here is from the Hebrew word *tamiym* that means "without blemish", "sound", "healthful", "without spot", or "unimpaired". This means that his gene pool had not been corrupted, and he was *spiritually obedient to God's Word*. Noah was well aware of God, and was following Him in that he obeyed God's commands. "*Just*" in Hebrew is *tzaddik*, and when coupled with *tamiym*, and it means "*wholly righteous*". He was unlike all the others in his generation. His faith was sure and steady.

Next message: LIVING THE LIFE OF FAITH

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