

Living by Faith

According to Hebrews

July 2018

Recommended Resources:

- Thomas R. Schreiner. *Commentary on Hebrews.*, Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing, 2015.
- John Piper. *The Faith of Noah, Abraham and Sarah (Hebrews 11:7-12).* desiringgod.org, 1997

Week 2: Faith in the Promises

Hebrews 11:16b – Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared for them a city.

1. Faith Defined (Review)
 - a. Biblical faith is real (11:1)
 - i. (11:1) “Faith is the reality of what is hoped for, the proof of what is not seen (HCSB).
 1. Not just assurance, confidence and/or conviction.
 2. Reality/substance/evidence only applies to faith in Christ.
 - ii. (12:2) This is because biblical faith is in God/Christ alone
 1. Jesus is the founder of our faith-> the source of the gift.
 2. Jesus is the object of our faith->in him alone.
 3. Jesus is the perfecter of our faith->his promises are sure.
 - b. Biblical faith pleases God (11:2, 6)
 - i. (11:2) “For by this the elders of old received their *commendation.*” Notice both Abel and Enoch were *commended* in 11:4-5.
 - ii. (11:6a) “Without faith it is impossible to please God”
Therefore those commended by God did so by faith.
 - iii. (11:6b) Because those who draw near and seek Him, do so:
 1. Believing He is who says He is (He exists)
 2. Knowing He’ll do what He says He’ll do (He rewards)

2. Faith in the book of Genesis-Part One

a. Creation (11:3) -> Gen 1-2

- i. (11:3) “By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made from visible things.
- ii. Note the analogy with 11:1. Something unseen gives rise to something seen.
 1. Hope->evidential faith
 2. Word of God->created universe (/ages)

b. Abel (11:4) -> Gen 4:1-10

- i. (11:4a) “By faith Able offered a better sacrifice than Cain ...and was *commended* as righteous.”
- ii. (Gen 4:4) The LORD gazed favorably upon Abel and his offering. Hebrews concludes that this favorable gaze is evidence of faith, because he pleased God with his sacrifice and how he offered it.
- iii. (11:4b) “Though he died his blood still speaks” God declares in Gen 4:10 that Able’s “blood cries to Me from out of the ground”. Cain failed to destroy him. Abel lives on (Rev. 6:9-11)

c. Enoch (11:5) -> Gen 5:21-24

- i. (11:5) By faith Enoch was taken up so that he should not see death...having been commended as having pleased God
- ii. (Gen 5:22,24) “Enoch walked with God 300 years” unlike any of his predecessors or successors in the genealogy of Gen 5.
- iii. LXX* translates “walked” as “well pleasing”. It can be assumed that his walk was well pleasing given his eventual reward of not experiencing death. (*Septuagint translation dated ~130BC)

d. Noah (11:7) -> Gen 6:9-22, 7:1-21

- i. (11:7a) “By faith Noah in reverent fear constructed an ark for the saving of his household.” Note the fear working with faith.
- ii. (Gen 6:9, 7:1) Noah was righteous, blameless and walked with God (or was well pleasing as per LXX*)

- iii. (Gen 6:13-21) God warned Noah of judgment and directed him to make an ark to save his family and all the animals.
 - iv. (Gen 6:22, 7:5, 16) “Noah did all that God commanded him”
 - v. (11:7b) “By this Noah condemned the world and became an heir of righteousness.” Speaks to more than deliverance from the flood.
- e. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob’s sojourn in tents (11:8-10) ->Gen 12-35
- i. (11:8-9) By faith Abraham obeyed and went to live in the land of promise as in a foreign land, living in tents.
 - ii. (Gen 12:1-5)-Abram obeys the LORD leaving home for the unknown.
 - iii. Abraham chooses to live in **tents** avoiding wicked cities
 - 1. (Gen 12:6-7) Moves on from Shechem (because of the Canaanites) after God appears to him and confirms he will give this land to his offspring.
 - 2. (Gen 12:8) Pitches his tent near Bethel and calls on the name of the LORD (prays).
 - 3. (Gen 13:3) Returns to Bethel where he had first pitched his tent after famine forced him into Egypt. The LORD confirms his promise with him there (13:14-17).
 - 4. (Gen 13:18) Moves his tent and settles near Hebron after Lot pitches his tent near Sodom (13:12), a choice that ends badly for Lot, but works out well for Abraham.
 - iv. Isaac chooses to live in tents, also.
 - 1. (Gen 24:67) Isaac marries Rebekah in his mother’s tent, living in the Negeb, a desert region south of Hebron.
 - 2. (Gen 26:25) Returns to the Negab/Beersheba to pitch his tent and pray after famine forced him to Gerar, a city of the Philistines. The LORD covenants with him there (26:24).
 - v. Jacob eventually learns to live in tents
 - 1. (Gen 25:27) Grows up dwelling in tents with his mother and father in the Negeb /Beersheba.

2. (Gen 28:10-22) First encounters the LORD at Bethel on his way out of the Promised Land.
 3. (Gen 33:16) Upon returning to the Promised Land after 14 years with Uncle Laban he first builds a house at Succoth.
 4. (Gen 33:18-19) He then pitched a tent near Shechem and purchased land, something Abraham and Isaac never did.
 5. After the debacle at Shechem (Gen 34)
 - a. The LORD directs him back to Bethel (35:1).
 - b. Jacob buries all his idols at Shechem (35:2-4).
 - c. Journeys to Bethel and calls on the LORD (35:5-7).
 - d. God covenants with him and changes his name to Israel (35:8-15).
 6. Gen 35:21 Israel (Jacob) eventually pitches his tent near Bethlehem and dwells there having learned his lesson.
- vi. (11:10, 13-16) Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were each looking for the city that has foundations whose designer and builder is God.
1. (11:13a) These all died in faith not having received the things promised. But were buried in the land in Hebron->Gen 23:16-20, 25:8-10, 35:37-29, 49:29-32, 50:12-13.
 2. (11:13b) They considered themselves strangers and exiles dwelling in tents, never settling at a permanent residence.
 3. (11:14-15) They were seeking a promised homeland not looking to return from where they came.
 4. (11:16a) They desired God's better country, his promised heavenly one.
 5. (11:16b) Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God. In effect, he was pleased by their faith (11:6), because they believed that his reward is sure.

