

# Hebrews 11 – The Hall of Faith

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## Introduction

Hebrews 11 is often called the “Hall of Faith,” highlighting Old Testament saints whose lives demonstrated faith in God despite hardship, delay, and persecution. The writer of Hebrews is not merely retelling history—he is urging believers under pressure to persevere in faith, drawing encouragement from those who came before. Faith is not wishful thinking but confident assurance in God’s promises.

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## Section 1: The Nature of Faith (Hebrews 11:1–3)

### Scripture (ESV):

*“Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. For by it the people of old received their commendation. By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible.”* (Heb. 11:1–3)

### Exegesis & Word Study

- **Faith defined:** “assurance” (ὑπόστασις, *hypostasis* – “confidence, foundation, reality”) ... “conviction” (ἔλεγχος, *elegchos* – “evidence, certainty”).
- Faith rests on God’s unchanging promises, not circumstances.
- Creation (v. 3) illustrates faith: the visible came from the invisible by God’s command.

### Application

- Faith is grounded in God’s Word, not human opinion.
- True faith confidently clings to what is not yet seen because it trusts God’s character.

### Discussion Questions

1. How does this biblical definition of faith differ from how culture defines “faith”?
  2. What promises of God are you trusting today without yet seeing?
  3. How does believing God as Creator strengthen your faith in His other promises?
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## Section 2: Examples of Early Faith (Hebrews 11:4–7)

### Scripture (ESV):

*“By faith Abel offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain, through which he was commended as righteous, God commending him by accepting his gifts. And through his faith, though he died, he still speaks. By faith Enoch was taken up so that he should not see death, and he was not found, because God had taken him. Now before he was taken he was commended as having pleased God. And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.*

*By faith Noah, being warned by God concerning events as yet unseen, in reverent fear constructed an ark for the saving of his household. By this he condemned the world and became an heir of the righteousness that comes by faith.” (Heb. 11:4–7)*

## Exegesis & Word Study

- **Abel:** Offered by faith; worship grounded in obedience to God’s way.
- **Enoch:** Pleased God by walking with Him—without faith, pleasing God is impossible.
- **Noah:** Obeyed God concerning unseen things—faith sees beyond present realities.

## Application

- Faith is lived in worship (Abel), walk (Enoch), and obedience (Noah).
- Each faced challenges but honored God through trust.

## Discussion Questions

1. What do we learn about worship from Abel’s example?
2. What practices help us walk daily with God like Enoch?
3. How might God be calling you, like Noah, to obey Him in ways the world doesn’t understand?

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## Section 3: The Patriarchs of Faith (Hebrews 11:8–22)

### Scripture (ESV):

*“By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going.*

*By faith he went to live in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise. For he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God.*

*By faith Sarah herself received power to conceive, even when she was past the age, since she considered him faithful who had promised.*

*Therefore from one man, and him as good as dead, were born descendants as many as the stars of heaven and as many as the innumerable grains of sand by the seashore.*

*These all died in faith, not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. (Heb. 11:8–13, selected through v. 22)”*

## Exegesis & Word Study

- Abraham obeyed without full knowledge—trusting God’s promise.
- Lived as a **sojourner** (παρεπίδημος, *parepidēmos*) pointing to heavenly citizenship.
- Sarah trusted the God who promised, despite her barrenness.
- Patriarchs looked ahead, confessing themselves as “strangers and exiles.”

## Application

- Faith often means living with delay, longing for God’s promises yet unseen.
- True faith invests in eternal realities, not temporary ones.

## Discussion Questions

1. What does it mean for us to live as “strangers and exiles” in today’s world?
  2. How does Abraham’s example encourage us when God’s promises seem delayed?
  3. How can your faith influence the next generation like the patriarchs did?
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## Section 4: Moses and the Deliverance of Israel (Hebrews 11:23–31)

### Scripture (ESV):

*“By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden for three months by his parents, because they saw that the child was beautiful, and they were not afraid of the king’s edict.*

*By faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter, choosing rather to be mistreated with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin.*

*He considered the reproach of Christ greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, for he was looking to the reward.*

*By faith he left Egypt, not being afraid of the anger of the king, for he endured as seeing him who is invisible.*

*By faith he kept the Passover and sprinkled the blood, so that the Destroyer of the firstborn might not touch them.*

*By faith the people crossed the Red Sea as on dry land, but the Egyptians, when they attempted to do the same, were drowned.*

*By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they had been encircled for seven days.*

*By faith Rahab the prostitute did not perish with those who were disobedient, because she had given a friendly welcome to the spies.” (Heb. 11:23–31)*

### Exegesis & Word Study

- Moses **refused** (ἐλόμενος, *helomenos*, deliberate choice) the world’s status for God’s promises.
- He endured “seeing Him who is invisible.”
- Rahab, a Gentile outsider, showed faith by welcoming God’s people.

### Application

- Faith often means costly decisions and rejection of worldly status.
- God uses unlikely people (like Rahab) to display His grace.

## Discussion Questions

1. How does Moses’ choice between Egypt’s treasures and God’s promises speak to us today?
  2. What “fleeting pleasures” of sin tempt Christians to compromise faithfulness?
  3. What does Rahab’s story teach us about God’s grace?
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## Section 5: Faith Through Triumphs and Trials (Hebrews 11:32–40)

### Scripture (ESV):

*“And what more shall I say? For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets— who through faith conquered kingdoms, enforced justice, obtained promises, stopped*

*the mouths of lions, quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, were made strong out of weakness, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight.*

*Women received back their dead by resurrection. Some were tortured, refusing to accept release, so that they might rise again to a better life.*

*Others suffered mocking and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were killed with the sword.*

*They went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, afflicted, mistreated—of whom the world was not worthy—wandering about in deserts and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.*

*And all these, though commended through their faith, did not receive what was promised, since God had provided something better for us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect.” (Heb. 11:32–40)*

## Exegesis & Word Study

- Some saw **victory**: conquering, miracles, deliverance.
- Others saw **suffering**: torture, persecution, death.
- Both are commended equally as faith—faith is not about results but endurance.
- **“The world was not worthy of them” (v. 38)** — heaven’s assessment of faith-filled lives.

## Application

- Faith isn’t always rewarded by worldly success but always honored by God.
- Our faith connects with theirs in Christ, who is the fulfillment of the promise.

## Discussion Questions

1. Why must we recognize that faith sometimes leads to suffering, not earthly success?
2. How does the phrase “the world was not worthy of them” encourage you when facing hardship?
3. What does it mean that God has provided “something better” for us in Christ?

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## Conclusion

Hebrews 11 reminds us that biblical faith is confident assurance in God’s promises. From Abel to the prophets, these saints lived by faith—often without seeing fulfillment in their lifetime. Their lives now serve as a witness to us. And as Hebrews 12 will declare, our eyes must now be fixed on **Jesus—the founder and perfecter of our faith.**