

Hebrews 11:1-19

The Portrait Gallery of the Faithful



Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see. v1

2 Corinthians 4:16-18 Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

The solid foundation to build on



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This is not imagination

Ephesians 2:8-9 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God-- not by works, so that no one can boast.

1 Corinthians 2:9-10 However, as it is written.. "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him"-- but God has revealed it to us by his Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. (from Isaiah 64:4)

This is what the ancients were commended for. v2

Believers in past times were noted for their faith.
Follow their example!



By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God`s command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible. v3

Beginning with God`s works:
We weren`t there but God has told us
Faith -> understanding
Matter didn`t come from matter
He made it all from NOTHING
Cf. $e=mc^2$



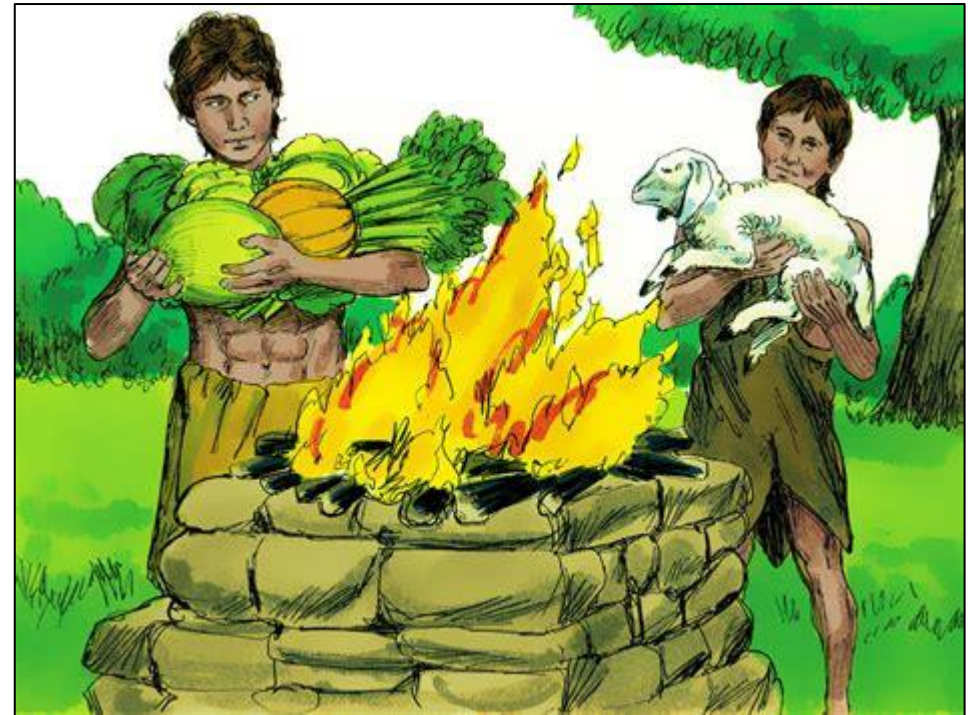
By faith Abel offered God a better sacrifice than Cain did. By faith he was commended as a righteous man, when God spoke well of his offerings. And by faith he still speaks, even though he is dead. v4

The first human example?

Why better? – he believed God.

How did God show his acceptance?

Abel's actions based on faith still have a lesson for us.



By faith Enoch was taken from this life, so that he did not experience death; he could not be found, because God had taken him away. For before he was taken, he was commended as one who pleased God. v5

The first man not to die
Pleased God = walked WITH God

- daily trusting pleases God



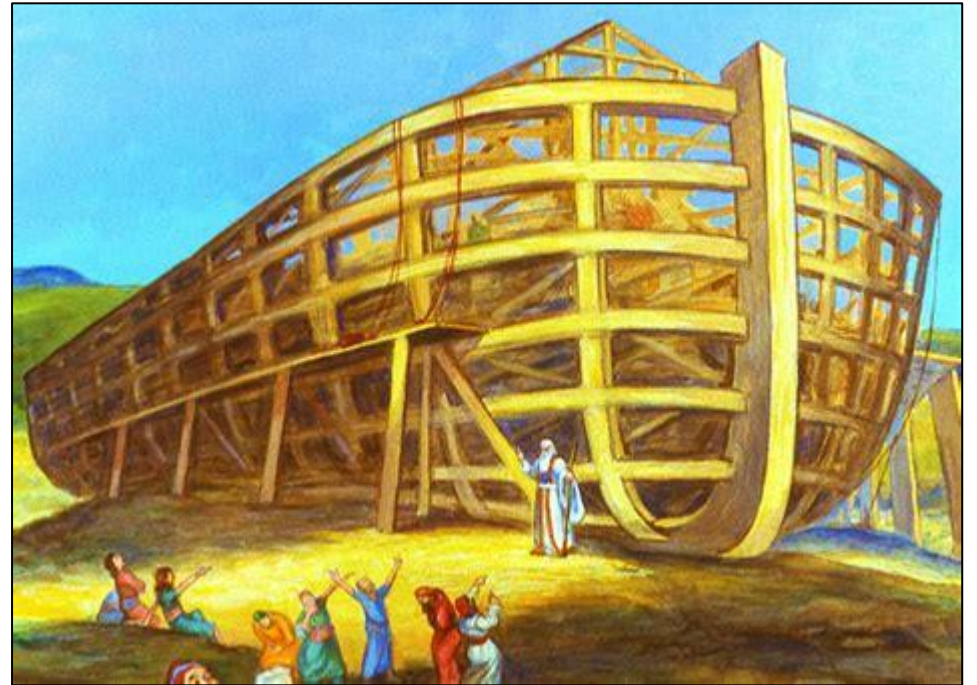
And without faith it is **impossible** to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him. v6

This is **fundamental** to a relationship with God
We believe - He's there and he acts graciously.



By faith Noah, when warned about things not yet seen, in holy fear built an ark to save his family. v7

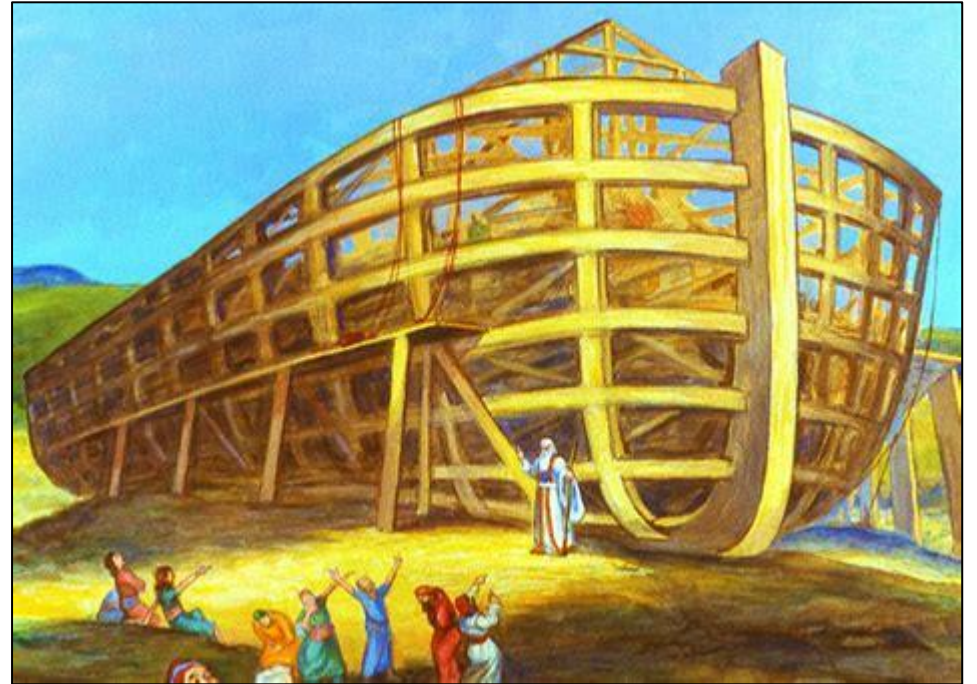
He believed the threatened destruction was coming. It was his faith that led him to build the ark.



By faith Noah, when warned about things not yet seen, in holy fear built an ark to save his family. By his faith he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness that comes by faith. v7

The man who stood out from his generation. He stood in contrast to the 'world' – their rebellion and evil.

Obtained righteousness in God's eyes by faith
(link to Abraham)



By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going. v8



The father of the chosen people

It had to be faith when he didn't know where God was taking him.

By faith he made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country; he lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God. V9-10

The promised land wasn't his final destination

He believed there is a future city
- God's home!



And by faith even Sarah, who was past childbearing age, was enabled to bear children because she considered him faithful who had made the promise. v11

She became a mother against all the natural circumstances.

She believed God would make it possible and would keep his promise.



And so from this one man, and he as good as dead, came descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as countless as the sand on the seashore. v12



Faith's results – just as God promised

All these people were still living by faith when they died. v13

They all had a daily trust and looked to a future beyond this life



They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance. And they admitted that they were aliens and strangers on earth. v13



The promised Messiah didn't come in their time but ...
The promises were beyond this life
This life is temporary in a foreign/hostile environment .

John 8:56 Your father Abraham rejoiced at the thought of seeing my day; he saw it and was glad.

People who say such things show that they are looking for a country of their own. v14

It is a testimony to how they think and view things

Their own country
– where they belong



If they had been thinking of the country they had left, they would have had opportunity to return. Instead, they were longing for a better country--a heavenly one. v15-16

It wasn't an earthly destination for them



Longing for Better?
– No more sorrow,
pain, frustration

2 Peter 3:13 But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, where righteousness dwells.

Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them. v16

He is Not ashamed!

He gladly acknowledges us as his own

The proof that he loves them ...

= he wants them to be with him



By faith Abraham, when God tested him, offered Isaac as a sacrifice. v17

Was Abraham's trust in God real?

God's test (He does not tempt)

James 1:13 When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone;

God knew his heart but Abraham's choice was a real one.



He who had received the promises was about to sacrifice his one and only son, even though God had said to him, "It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned." v17-18

The present situation appeared to contradict the promise.

But since God said it Abraham believed he knew what he was doing



Abraham reasoned that God could raise the dead, and figuratively speaking, he did receive Isaac back from death. v19

Faith's solution!
God will keep his promise
Therefore

In spiritual reality he offered his son
even though on the natural level
God prevented it happening.



The parallel of Jesus' life and offering was seen in Abraham and Isaac

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. v1

These examples show that a real, living faith has always been the road along which God's people have found fellowship with God and has provided a foundation on which to build their lives.

