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Hebrews 11 - By Faith and Hope We See Jesus



By Steven J. Hogan

~ A Saturday Morning Post #152 ~

Living for God must be by faith, and a great place to learn about this is in Hebrews 11. Called the hall of faith, it describes the lives of godly people who were living by faith. These holy men and women had faith in God for the present and for the future, for today and for eternity. Faith in God for the future is what we call hope, that which is based on God's promises. These Old Testament saints had both faith and hope, which is exactly what Christians in this church age need to have. But what specifically does God want us to learn from Hebrews 11, this faith and hope-focused chapter?

The way to have a relationship with God is by faith. By faith, Enoch *"walked with God"* (Genesis 5:24) which means he was close to Him. By faith, *"Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord"* (Genesis 6:8). By faith, Abraham was a friend of God (2 Chronicles 20:7). By faith, Moses saw *"Him who is unseen"* (Hebrews 11:27). All the saints in Hebrews 11 had a relationship with God as they were sinners who, by faith, experienced His grace, mercy and love. This resulted in them loving God, seeking God, and obeying God.

The way to please God is by faith. Whether it was Noah building an ark, Abraham leaving his homeland, or Sarah believing she would have a child, it was by faith. This phrase *"by faith"* is repeated 19 times, example after example being given of believers trusting God, waiting on Him, and doing what He said. And God was pleased by their faith, by their obedience, and this is the only way you and I can please God and gain His approval.

The way to be rewarded is by faith. God wants to bless our lives now and forever. But it's not by our works, not by what we do, but by believing what God wants to graciously do for us, and through us. This chapter illustrates that God blesses His people, and the key is to have faith in Him, to believe He wants to bless us. By faith Noah constructed the ark, a huge building project that took 60-70 years, and God blessed his obedience, hard work and perseverance, saving him from the flood and His wrath. And by faith, Enoch was taken to heaven, Abraham was given a child, and Moses escaped Egypt.

The way to be resurrected, and live forever, is by faith. Abraham believed that God could raise his son from the dead (Hebrews 11:19). Women received back their dead by resurrection (Hebrews 11:35), and these who were raised from the dead died again. But there is a *"better resurrection"* (Hebrews 11:35), and this is still future, a *"resurrection of*

life” (John 5:29) when we *“will be made alive… at His coming,”* when we will all be given glorified bodies, when we will be made perfect. 1 Corinthians 15:22-23, 42-44, 51-53

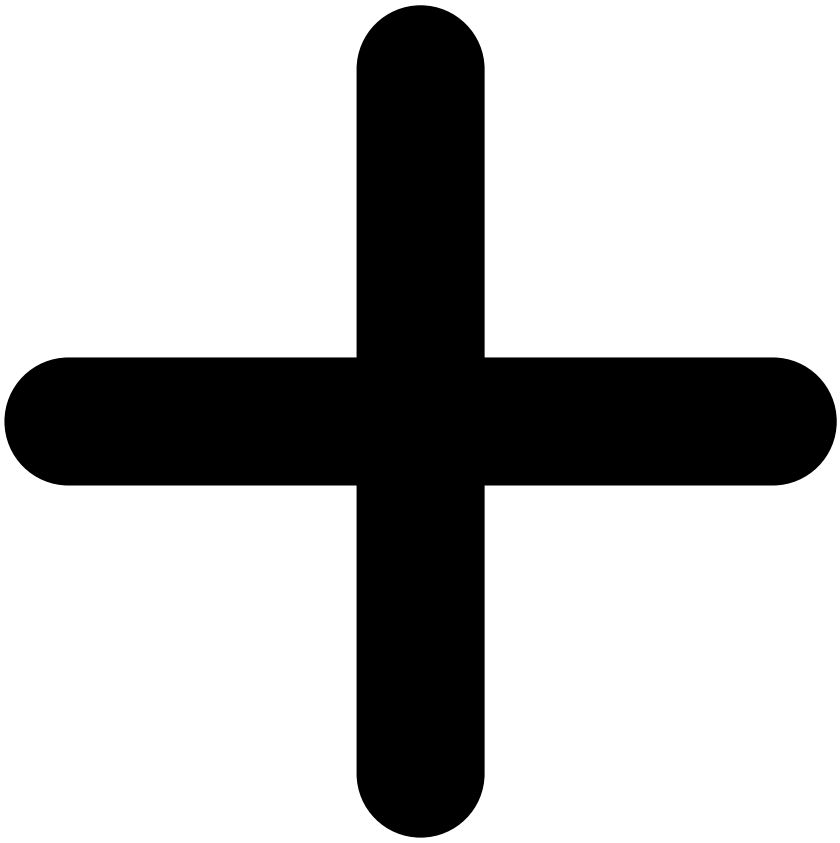
The way to persevere is by faith, and by hope. Life was extremely difficult for these saints of God. Noah, no doubt, was harassed and laughed at as he built the ark. Abraham lived in tents, and admitted he was a stranger on this earth. Moses gave up the riches of Egypt and the passing pleasures of sin. Some *“experienced mockings and scourgings, yes, chains and imprisonments…”* Others were *“wandering in deserts and mountains and caves and holes in the ground”* (Hebrews 11:36-38). How did they endure and keep going? Why were they willing to suffer? It was by faith in God’s promises, faith that gave them hope, a confidence about a wonderful future. Enoch wanted to be with God in heaven. Abraham was *“looking for the city which has foundations”* (Hebrews 11:10). Moses was *“looking to the reward”* (Hebrews 11:26). All these Jewish believers were hope-filled and forward-looking – *“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 aliens on this earth… they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one.”* Hebrews 11:13, 16

The way we live for God is by faith. By faith, we walk with God, we serve, we obey, we sacrifice, and we fellowship. And we persevere because we have hope, for we believe it’s worth it to live for God in the present because we know He will reward us in the future. This hope-based perseverance, a major theme in Hebrews 11, is what everyone of us need. God is kind to us for He gives us His word, His glorious promises, and we can only endure and keep going for Him because we are looking forward to when they will be fulfilled. (Note: there are short-term promises, those fulfilled during this life, and long-term promises, those fulfilled after we have gone to heaven).

It all comes together in the last two verses, the conclusion of Hebrews 11. *"All these, having gained approval through their faith, did not receive what was promised, because God had provided something better for us, so that apart from us* (Christians) *they* (saints of old) *would not be made perfect"* (Hebrews 11:39-40). Do you see this? The saints of old did not then and, nor have even today, received all that was promised them, and neither have Christians. But these verses mean that many of God's promises for Old Testament believers and for Christians, will be fulfilled at the same time. For example, 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17 says that all believers from all time will be glorified at Christ's coming, when the church is raptured. At that moment, God's work with the saints of old will be coinciding with His work with the church, and all of us will be glorified, be made perfect.

We live in the end-times and it won't be long before God's work with the saints of old and the saints of this age will converge and climax at Christ's coming. At that time and in the ages to come, all God's promises for His people will be fulfilled. For now, let's be like Abraham who *"was looking for the **city** which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God"* (Hebrews 11:10). Know that *"God is not ashamed to be called their* (our) *God*; *for He has prepared a **city** for them* (us)" (Hebrews 11:16, John 14:1-3). Think about when you go to heaven – *"You have come to Mount Zion, the **city** of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant."* Hebrews 12:22-24, Revelation 21. **Amen!!!**

P.S. I can't overstate the importance of having hope, godly hope. There is a previous post and a previous article I encourage you to to read – "You Need Hope to Get Through Life," and "You Have to Have Hope!"



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