

GLENKIRK CHURCH



WEEKLY DEVOTIONS

The DEVO

OCTOBER 3 - 7, 2022

Hebrews 11-13

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Sermon Series

Oct 2 - Nov 20

MONDAY

Read **Hebrews 11:4-22; Galatians 3:11**

This week's Hebrews text surveys some members of the so-called "Hall of Faith." However, these people lived in Old Testament times prior to Jesus. How could they be saved if Messiah had not yet come? Via dutiful religious practices, including animal sacrifices and God-ordained rituals?

"A common misconception about the Old Testament way of salvation is that Jews were saved by keeping the Law. But we know from Scripture that this is not true. ... In Romans 4 the apostle Paul makes it very clear that the Old Testament way of salvation was the same as the New Testament way ... by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone. ... [For example,] '*Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness*' (Romans 4:3). ... Abraham could not have been saved by keeping the Law, [having] lived over 400 years before the Law was given! ...

"Throughout history people have tried to pervert the gospel by adding human works to it, requiring certain things to be done to 'earn' salvation. But the Bible's clear message is that the way of salvation has always been through faith. ... Those who lived in the time of the Old Testament looked forward to the Messiah and believed God's promise of [His coming] (Isaiah 53). ...

“As early as Genesis 3:15, we see the promise of a coming Savior, and throughout the Old Testament there are hundreds of promises that the Messiah would ‘save *His people from their sins*’ (Matthew 1:21). Job’s [faith rested] in the fact that he knew that his ‘*Redeemer lives, and that in the end He will stand upon the earth*’ (Job 19:25). Clearly, Old Testament saints were aware of the promised Redeemer, and they were saved by faith in that Savior, the same way people are saved today. ... Salvation is found in no one [and nothing] else.” (GotQuestions.org)

Do you know anyone whose eternal hopes are based upon their “merit” and/or religious practices? They need to understand that worldly criteria for “goodness” fall infinitely short of God’s perfect, holy standard. Introduce them to Jesus Christ, the only Way to salvation.

QUESTIONS

What are some common misperceptions regarding “how people were saved in the Old Testament”? How did Job’s story and faith anticipate the coming Messiah?

PRAYERS

For Gio and Indra Garcia and the ECO Church Plant

Pray for ECO Church planters (Gio and Indra Garcia) and their team here at Glenkirk. Pray that they would stay connected to God and His Word so that their ministry would grow from this strength.

TUESDAY

Read **Hebrews 11:1-3, 6, 13-16; John 5:24; Acts 16:25-34**

It is common to struggle occasionally with our faith. After all, the eternal, almighty Creator is Spirit—invisible to us, existing beyond space and time. God created time, the universe and physical laws for us, enabling us to learn about our surroundings and, ultimately, about Him. A “god” limited by time, space and physical properties would be no God at all, but merely a created thing captive to creation.

Some complain, “It’s impossible to believe in an unseeable God! How can I have such faith?” However, everyone has faith in something—every time I sit on a chair, I express faith that it will support me. Yet saving faith is another matter.

“In Scripture [there are] three aspects that are essential for true faith. The first ... [is] the intellectual content of what we believe. Saving faith is faith in the Person and work of Christ, so we must know [things] about Jesus and what He has done if we are to have actual faith in Him.” (Ligonier) “Saving faith is intelligent ... You aren’t saved by information alone, but you can’t be saved without it. ... Christian faith is not blind ... We are called to believe in Something—not just anything.” (Keep Believing)

“The second component of saving faith is ... belief that the content of the Christian gospel is true. It is possible to know something and not believe it is true ... such as the content of other religions. But ... Christian faith is dependent on [belief in the] historical reality of things such as the resurrection of Jesus. ...

“Finally, saving faith includes ... placing trust in the One revealed ... [via our belief]. ... Mere knowledge and belief ... can no more connect [one] with God than the sight of the sun can carry [one] up to heaven. We also need to place our trust in Christ personally to save us ... pledging ourselves to follow Him ... [and thereby] saying, ‘Lord, [I] have nothing and [am] owed nothing; please take [and use me] as You will.’” (Ligonier) Lord, *“I believe; help my unbelief!”* (Mark 9:24).

QUESTIONS

What does “A god limited by time, space and physical properties would be no God at all” mean? What are some ways in which virtually everyone exhibits some form of faith regularly? What are the three elements essential to saving faith?

PRAYERS

For Gio and Indra Garcia and the ECO Church Plant

Pray for the families who are already supporting Gio and Indra, that they will grow through this church planting.

WEDNESDAY

Read **Hebrews 11:4-32**

It's natural to think of key biblical figures as “spiritual superheroes”—they get featured ink in the Bible! And a number of these are highlighted in the “Hall of Faith.” Hebrews 11 surveys them positively, disregarding the spotty histories of several.

After faithfully fulfilling God's call—building and navigating the ark through the flood—Noah got drunk and was discovered “*uncovered*” by his sons; this dark incident prompted a discordant family dynamic (Genesis 9:20-27). Abraham—fearing for his life—twice deceived country leaders with claims that wife Sarah was his sister, risking her virtue (Genesis 12:10-20; 20:2-13). Sarah laughed at God's promise of a child despite her old age (Genesis 18:9-15) and colluded with Abraham to birth a child by her handmaiden, Hagar (Genesis 16).

Isaac repeated father Abraham's sin, representing wife Rebekah as his sister and subjecting her to impropriety out of his safety fears (Genesis 26:7-11). Jacob had a long history of conniving and swindling (Genesis 25:29-33:18). Joseph was, at the least, naïve and insensitive regarding his brothers' feelings (Genesis 37). Joseph took an Egyptian wife (Genesis 41:47), though God had located Israel in Egypt to keep its lineage pure.

This “Hall of Faith” later references Moses, a murderer (Exodus 2:12) who misrepresented God before the people—corrupting God's

intended Messianic crucifixion imagery and blocking Moses' own entry into the Promised Land (Numbers 20:6-12). Rahab was a prostitute who lied to Jericho's king while harboring Hebrew spies (Joshua 2). Interestingly, Rahab was King David's great-great-great grandmother, thus in the Messiah's ancestry. Following his God-given military victories, Gideon ensnared himself, his family, and Israel in idol worship (Judges 8:22-28). Samson was an oath-breaking womanizer (Judges 14-16). King David committed adultery with Bathsheba, subsequently having her husband, Uriah, murdered upon learning of her resultant pregnancy (2 Samuel 11).

Note, however, that Hebrews 11 looks upon these Old Testament figures from this side—the redeemed side—of Calvary's cross. Though they sinned greatly, God—who “looks on the heart” (1 Samuel 16:7) and can rescue and restore anything—apparently sees them in Christ. What encouragement—with Jesus as our Lord and Savior, we also receive such grace!

QUESTIONS

Which “dark incidents” in the lives of Hebrews 11 “Heroes of Faith” stories resonate most with you? What “sin pattern” did Isaac apparently pick up from his father, Abraham? Why does Hebrews 11 position these featured people—many with some extreme sins—and their faith in such positive light?

PRAYERS

For Gio and Indra Garcia and the ECO Church Plant

Pray that the Lord would connect the church plant team with people in and around the community and that those relationships would develop to share the Good News.

THURSDAY

Read **Hebrews 11:8-19; Genesis 22:1-18**

Today and tomorrow we conclude this week's Hebrews 11 "Hall of Faith" survey regarding those with stories from Genesis. Today we consider the comingled stories and amazing faith of the patriarch Abraham, wife Sarah, and their son, Isaac.

Wednesday touched upon the failings of these three and others featured in Hebrews 11. Yet God used them mightily despite their mistakes—as He can do with us. Abraham was possibly a worshiper of multiple pagan "gods" when called by God from his Chaldean (Babylonian) home and promised a lineage of kings and great nations, despite his old age and Sarah's barrenness. Abraham and Sarah left all they knew and settled as tent-dwellers in Canaan, awaiting God's further instructions. While there, Abraham rescued nephew Lot from his capture by foreign kings.

The pinnacle of God's faith-testing came when He told Abraham to prepare for sacrificing Isaac. Imagine this! This 100-year-old Abraham and 90-year-old Sarah had birthed Isaac as the promised means for "*nations [and] kings ... [to] come from her*" (Genesis 17:16). In response to God's command for this sacrifice, Abraham and son Isaac journeyed to Moriah (the area including what would become Jerusalem and Calvary, where Jesus would be crucified 2000+ years later) to complete this mission. However, God stopped Abraham just before he sunk the knife into Isaac.

Abraham passed the test, obediently willing to do the unthinkable. The Bible indicates no opposition from Sarah throughout this episode. And Isaac's faith—demonstrated compliantly—is hard to overestimate. Scholars estimate Isaac as being a teenager if not age 20+ by this time—certainly capable of overpowering elderly Abraham to avoid execution. Yet the Bible shares no such resistance. Husband, wife and son exhibited amazing faith, trusting that “*God ... [could] raise [Isaac] from the dead*” (Hebrews 11:19).

Why would God—One condemning abhorrent Canaanite child sacrifices (Leviticus 20:2)—ask this of Abraham and his family? Omniscient God was unsurprised, knowing what they would do. Perhaps they misunderstood their faith's limits until this trial—they needed testing to enable continuing faithfulness in serving God. God uses tests to strengthen our faith, to reveal its limits and possibilities, and to prepare us for greater kingdom living.

QUESTIONS

How did Abraham's call to sacrifice Isaac anticipate and picture Jesus' first-coming mission? Who do you think—among Abraham, Sarah and Isaac—exhibited the greatest faith in God? Why would God call Abraham to such a horrific task, only to prevent him from carrying it out at the last second?

PRAYERS

For Gio and Indra Garcia and the ECO Church Plant

Pray for the preparations of the launch date of the ECO Church plant, which is October 16.

FRIDAY

Read **Hebrews 11:4-22; Genesis 50:15-21**

“Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.” (Hebrews 11:1)

“Faith does not eliminate questions. But faith knows where to take them.” (Elisabeth Elliot) Another relevant, anonymous quote: “Faith is the currency of heaven.” Today’s sketches of key Old Testament figures reveal faith and, hopefully, encouraging, useful principles.

Abel was second-born among Adam and Eve’s children. When he and older brother Cain brought offerings to God, *“the LORD had regard for Abel and his offering (while not for Cain and his)”* (Genesis 3:4-5), prompting covetous Cain’s murderous actions. Why such “preferential treatment” by God? Unlike Cain, Abel *“brought the firstborn of his flock”* (Genesis 3:4), something valuable and personal. Centuries later, Israel’s King David relevantly declared: *“I will not sacrifice to the LORD my God [things] that cost me nothing”* (1 Samuel 24:24).

Enoch arrived five generations after Abel. His unusual, short story: *“Enoch walked with God (for 365 years), and he was not, for God took him”* (Genesis 5:24). God withdrew faithful Enoch from an increasingly wicked world facing looming judgment, an eternal blessing to Enoch that was likely viewed tragically by his contemporaries.

Three generations later, God called Noah to survive the epic, judging flood He brought and thereafter repopulate the world. This story’s

familiarity makes it easy to underestimate Noah's and his family's related faith. Rain—as we know it—had never happened before, much less flooding. Noah obediently followed God's instructions, a project taking decades to complete. Noah likely endured many years of scorn from wicked countrymen in building the ark, his faith honored by God.

Jacob, translated “heel-catcher” or supplanter, lived a conniving, “self-sufficient” life until God lovingly wrestled him into submission (Genesis 32:22-30). Jacob fathered Israel's twelve tribes—God's chosen—a testimony to God's lovingkindness, forgiveness and perseverance in pursuing one who was unworthy and who eventually surrendered to His will. Jacob's eleventh son, Joseph, endured his brothers' life-threatening betrayal and wrongful imprisonment. Joseph's sustained faithfulness and giftedness enabled a rise to prominence within ungodly ancient Egypt, God using it to preserve Israel.

Does your story intersect within any of these illustrations? How has God's faithfulness enabled your faith?

QUESTIONS

What does this quote, “Faith is the currency of heaven,” mean to you? Why did God favor Abel's sacrifice while rejecting Cain's? What key principles do you take from today's biblical sketches and all of this week's devos?

PRAYERS

For Gio and Indra Garcia and the ECO Church Plant

Pray for finances. May God provide the necessary resources for the development of this church planting and may the Holy Spirit bring new donors to join.

Sources

- GotQuestions.org quotes can be found at <https://www.gotquestions.org/Old-Testament-salvation.html>.
- Ligonier's quotes are from <https://www.ligonier.org/learn/devotionals/what-saving-faith>.
- Keep Believing's quote can be found at <https://www.keepbelieving.com/what-is-saving-faith-2/>.
- Elisabeth Elliot's quote is from <https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/311976-faith-does-not-eliminate-questions-but-faith-knows-where-to>.

