

THE HALL OF FAITH - I

Text: Hebrews 11:1-6

Key Word: Faith

Key Thought: What Kind of Faith Does God Want Us to Have?

*** The Hall of Fame for Great Americans structure is located on the campus of Bronx Community College of The City University of New York. It honors Americans who have made significant contributions to the welfare or culture of the United States. The hall was erected in 1900. It consists of a semicircular, open-air colonnade, with a massive substructure, designed by the American architect Stanford White and overlooking the Harlem River. Bronze portrait busts by distinguished American sculptors line the colonnade.

Elections to the Hall of Fame were held every three years (every five years before 1970) and conducted by a committee of prominent representatives of the 50 states. Any United States citizen could nominate a candidate to the Hall of Fame. Candidates must have been U.S. citizens by birth or through naturalization, and must have died at least 25 years before their nomination. The original plan provided for a total selection of 102 men and women, a process that was completed by 1993. ***

Reviewed by: Bronx Community College of the City University of New York
"Hall of Fame For Great Americans"

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For the next few sermons I want to speak on one the great chapters of the Bible. In it are found the names of men and women who have stood out as distinguished leaders of faith in God. This list has been added to many times over since the writer to the Hebrews completed his guided penmanship. These people are part of God's HALL of FAITH because they had . . .

I. CREATIVE FAITH (11:1-3)

II. COMMENDED FAITH (11:4-6)

I. CREATIVE FAITH (11:1-3)

Faith began in a very interesting subject to study. Faith is creative. It produces and forms things in such a manner that we can believe it is in existence even though our physical eyes cannot behold it.

“Faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we cannot see.”

Hebrews 11:1

“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. {substance: or, ground, or, confidence}”

KJV

“Now faith is assurance of [things] hoped for, a conviction of things not seen.”

NASB

“ Now faith is [the] substantiating of things hoped for, [the] conviction of things not seen.”

Darby’s

Surgeon: *“I think the medical profession is the first profession mentioned in the Bible. God made Eve by carving a rib out of Adam.”*

Engineer: *“No, engineering was first. Just think of the engineering job it was to create things out of chaos.”*

Politician: *“That’s nothing . . . Who do think created the chaos?”*

****** A little boy was driving home from Sunday School one day with his father and mother who asked him what story he was taught that day.

I was told about Moses building a huge raft to get the people across the Red Sea. They then attended a great banquet hosted by the people living in the desert (bedouins). They traveled by wagon train until they reached the Jordan River where a Ferry brought them across to the other side. Once they got there, they huffed and puffed and blew the walls down.

“Are you sure that is what they taught you?”

“No! But I don’t think you’d believe me if I told you what **THEY** said. It was a really wild story.” ******

I. CREATIVE FAITH (11:1-3) (Contd.)

Faith makes the unbelievable believable. Faith is creative. Its results are often hard to believe. Just consider that God made the entire universe through His spoken Word. He started with nothing and created everything in a matter of a few days. I don't want you to think that true faith has no substance to it. Rotherham's translation says,

“But faith is of things hoped for, a confidence of facts.”

Hebrews 11:1

The word used for “*substance; assurance, being sure*” is “*hypostasis*” which was found on a papyrus in Egypt to describe a “*title deed.*” **A title deed is the basis or foundation of any claim.** The title deed is often used to settle arguments of who is the true owner of a property. Faith is our title deed that we show as evidence of our ownership of God's many blessings.

“Faith is a firm persuasion and expectation that God will perform all that He promised to us in Christ.”

Matthew Henry

“Faith provides the soul with an undergirding and keeps it steady during the time of protracted waiting.”

Charles A. Ratz
“*Outlined Studies in Hebrews*”
p. 247

II. COMMENDED FAITH (11:4-6)

The second characteristic found in those recorded in this Faith chapter was that they had Commended Faith. Two examples are recorded to illustrate the meaning of this faith. The first example is found in the story of Cain and Abel. To discover the meaning of what the writer to the Hebrews was saying we must go back and read the account in the book of Genesis.

A. The Commended Faith of Abel (Hebrews 11:4)

*“In the course of time Cain brought some of the fruits of the soil as an offering to the LORD.
4. But Able brought fat portions from some of the firstborn of the flock. The LORD looked with favor on Abel and his offering,
5. But on Cain and his offering he did not look with favor. So Cain was very angry, and his face was downcast.”*

Genesis 4:3-5

II. COMMENDED FAITH (11:4-6)

A. The Commended Faith of Abel (Hebrews 11:4)(Contd.)

At first glance it almost appears as if God is showing favoritism between the two brothers. Was God provoking Cain to wrath? The natural eye would say - Yes!! But those who understand how faith works see beyond the surface.

We must understand that God has always had a way of communicating His perfect will to those He created by faith. After Adam and Eve sinned, God made garments of skin to clothe them. It is unlikely that God just created skins for this purpose of providing a more permanent type of clothing. I believe these skins were obtained through the sacrificial death of animals whom God used to atone for Adam and Eve's sin. We must understand that this was well before God instituted the Mosaic Law. (See also Abraham in Genesis 15).

God wants to produce a faith within us that He can commend. **It comes through the revelation and response to His Word.** Abel responded to God in a manner that he knew would be pleasing to the Father. He acted upon **revelation** NOT **reason**. His was a gift of **quality** NOT **quantity**. The difference between Cain and Abel's act of worship continues today. **One responds through works while the other is a manifestation of faith.** It is a faith that is commended by God.

"For the LORD is a God who knows, and by him deeds are weighed."

I Samuel 2:3b

In response to those who keep the Law, commands, statutes, ordinances the Psalmist says,

"By them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward."

Psalm 19:11

Abel was commended by God for acting in such a way that God was pleased with. Cain on the other hand had his act of worship rejected because his heart was hardened to the will of God. Cain's worship abounds today.

"... sacrifice is acceptable to God not for its material content, but in so far as it is the outward expression of a devoted and obedient heart."

FF. Bruce
"The Epistle of the Hebrews"
p. 283

II. COMMENDED FAITH (11:4-6)

B. The Commended Faith of Enoch (11:5,6)

The second person used to illustrate the importance of a Commended Faith was found in the life of Enoch. Very little is written about this man.

*“Altogether Enoch lived 365 years.
24. Enoch walked with God; then he was no more,
because God took him away.”*

Genesis 5:23,24

Enoch was the father of the oldest man who lived in the Bible. Methuselah lived to be 969 years of age. When Methuselah turned 300 years old (Genesis 5:21,22) Enoch was taken to be with the LORD. It seemed like God couldn't wait any longer to commend Enoch for his faith. Heaven was not going to delay a moment longer. It's interesting that God chose to take him on his 365th birthday, knowing that we would use this as the length of our calendar year.

In the Septuagint we find this text rendered,

*“Enoch was well-pleasing to God . . . he was not found, because
God translated him.”*

God gave **“Enoch”** (meaning **“to narrow; disciple, dedicate, train up [see Proverbs 22:6]**) this name because he was willing to walk the line of full obedience to God. He was commended for his walk of faith by being translated into the presence of God. He was one of the two O.T. saints that went into God's presence without dying. Like Jesus, he was brought into his Father's presence as a reward for his outstanding obedience.

*“For before he was taken, he was commended as
one who pleased God.”*

Hebrews 11:5

This is the kind of faith that we should strive to achieve. We may think that it is impossible to reach this goal. I would suggest that this is one goal that would be better to try to reach and fall short of than set a goal too short and reach it.

We need to **challenge ourselves** without being **condemned by others** in order that we may be **commended by God**. Faith in God will help us reach the expectations that God knows we can achieve. Don't settle for anything less than God's best for your life. Become listed in God's Hall of Faith as chapter 11 continues to grow.

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Date: Sept 16/18

Place: FCA

Time: 10:30 Am

Song: Reign in Me - G

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II. COMMENDED FAITH (11:4-6)

A. The Commended Faith of Abel (Hebrews 11:4) - *Genesis 4:3-5; See also Abraham in Genesis 15; I Samuel 2:3b; Psalm 19:11*

B. The Commended Faith of Enoch (11:5,6) - *Genesis 5:23,24; Genesis 5:21,22*

God gave "*Enoch*" (meaning "*to narrow; disciple, dedicate, train up [see Proverbs 22:6]*") this name because he was willing to walk the line of full obedience to God.