

➤ **Review Hebrews 10:1–18.**

➤ **Now skim Hebrews 11:1–40.**

1. Given what the author wrote at the end of chapter 10 and what you know of his readers' situation, what purpose do you think he intended chapter 11 to serve?

➤ **Read Hebrews 11:1–16.**

2. In verse 1 the author lays out two key aspects of faith—aspects that the faithful “ancients” (v. 2) of this list lived out. What are they?

→ *As you work through this lesson, keep these aspects of faith in mind.*

3. Perhaps surprisingly, the author begins his catalogue of the faithful with creation. Why do you think he begins his list that way? What connection(s) do you see between creation and the rest of the chapter?
4. In this chapter, there is a close link between faith and righteousness, and between faith and an obedient life. What is the relationship between them?

10:38a (📖* Hab. 2:4b)

Rom. 4:3–6 (📖 Gen. 15:6)

Eph. 2:8–10

Titus 2:11–14

James 2:14–26

5. The author's list of faithful Old Testament figures is essentially chronological. It begins with Abel, the son of Adam and Eve. (If you are unfamiliar with Abel or need a refresher, turn to Genesis 4:1–12.) What do you think our passage suggests about why Abel's sacrifice was acceptable and Cain's was not? (You may also wish to compare Genesis 4:7.)

6. Genesis 5:21–24 relates this brief story of Enoch: "When Enoch had lived 65 years, he became the father of Methuselah. After he became the father of Methuselah, Enoch walked faithfully with God 300 years and had other sons and daughters. Altogether, Enoch lived a total of 365 years. Enoch walked faithfully with God; then he was no more, because God took him away."

What elements of basic faith does the author suggest Enoch possessed? (v. 6; You might also want to consider verse 1.)

7. Genesis does not explicitly mention faith in connection with Abel and Enoch. Nevertheless, our author is able to reason from the little Genesis says about them. Fill in the blank in the following logical deduction:

→ "Without faith it is impossible to please God" (v. 6).
→ Enoch (and Abel) pleased God.
→ Therefore, Enoch (and Abel) _____.

8. Read about Noah in Genesis 6:5–7:7.

a. How is Noah characterized in Genesis 6:8–9 and 7:1?

b. The author of Hebrews states that Noah "became heir of the righteousness that is in keeping with faith" (v. 7). How did Noah demonstrate faith as it is described in verse 1? (Heb. 11:7)

c. What do you think it means that Noah "condemned the world" "by his faith" (Heb. 11:7)?

9. Read the beginning of Abraham's long story of faith and obedience in Genesis 12:1–9. Why did obeying God's command require great faith on Abraham's part? (Gen. 12:1, 4; Heb. 11:8–9)

10. God promised Abraham not only land but also a multitude of descendants. What circumstances could have been obstacles to Abraham and Sarah's believing God's promise of descendants? (vv. 11–12; Rom. 4:18–19)

What obstacles to your faith have you encountered?

How do these stories of faith encourage you?

Sarah's Faith

Sarah is perhaps better known for laughing when she is told she will bear a son than for exhibiting deep faith. However, “in spite of the fact that Sarah laughed when first hearing that she was to have a child, her mockery must have turned to faith long before Isaac was born. It needed a woman of faith to be wife of a believer as outstanding as Abraham. She too had to come to the same conviction as her husband that the God who had promised would honour his word (*she considered him faithful who had promised*).”¹

11. Why might knowing that God was the one who created the universe at a command—with all “the stars in the sky and...the sand on the seashore” (v. 12)—have helped Abraham and Sarah trust him to give them the child he had promised?
12. How much territory did Abraham own in the Promised Land when he died? (Gen. 23:1–4, 17–20; Acts 7:5)
13. The faithful ancients like Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, and Jacob (who died not in Canaan but in Egypt) “were still living by faith when they died”; “they did not receive the things promised” during their lifetimes (v. 13).
- a. Rather than looking ahead to an earthly fulfillment of God's promises to them, what were they looking ahead to? (vv. 10, 14, 16)
 - b. How did they view themselves? (v. 13c)

“This city... emerges as a main theme in these last chapters of the letter.”²

14. Living on this side of Jesus' life, death, resurrection, and enthronement, we have many advantages over those ancients, among them the ability to see that "no matter how many promises God has made, they are 'Yes' in Christ" (2 Cor. 1:20a). We have even been granted a glimpse of the heavenly city to which they looked forward (see Rev. 21–22). Nevertheless, we too live by faith. What does our life of faith look like?

1 Cor. 13:12


2 Cor. 4:18

1 Pet. 2:11–12

Col. 3:1–3

Phil. 3:20

15. What practices or verses help you to live this life of faith?

* For further study

¹ Donald Guthrie, *Hebrews: An Introduction and Commentary*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, ed. Leon Morris, vol. 15 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1983), 234–235.

² N. T. Wright, *Hebrews for Everyone* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004), 133.