

Hebrews 11:8-22

FAITH AND WAITING

April 19, 2026

We are studying the book of Hebrews. The letter to Jewish believers in Jesus as the Christ. Today we are in Chapter 11 of Hebrews. The “hall of faith.” These Jewish people who he is writing to have trusted in Christ and are under severe persecution. They were tempted to return to Judaism and the Law to avoid persecution.

Throughout the first 10 chapters we have followed the author as he has presented Jesus as the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of His nature. He is superior to the angels, superior to Moses and He is a superior high priest. The old covenant, temple sacrifices, and temple ceremonies are obsolete. They have been replaced by a better covenant, a better sacrifice and a perfect high priest sitting at the right hand of God. Righteousness is achieved, not through the Law, but through FAITH.

The author, Spirit of God, also gave five warnings to the Jewish believers.

1. Hebrews 2:1-4 – Warns of the believer who begins to ***drift***.
2. Hebrews 3:7-4:13 – Warns of the believer who begins to ***doubt***.
3. Hebrews 5:11 – Warns of the believer who becomes ***Dull to the Word.***”
4. Hebrews 6:6 – Warns of the believer who falls away, is worthless and has *no reward*.

He concluded chapter 10 with the strongest warning in all the Bible reminding the Jewish Christians that the Jewish Law says that

“there is no sacrifice and no mercy for anyone who has disregarded the Law of Moses. So how much worse punishment do you think will be deserved by the one who rejects the Son of God.”

His final warning is to the one who is an apostate. The one who rejects the Messiah and lives in willful and deliberate sin. He says, “It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of a living God.”

The author concludes chapter 10 with an exhortation or encouragement saying in verse 39, “But WE are not those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who have FAITH and preserve their souls.”

The author is saying, “**We take hold of the new covenant by Faith.**” They were so accustomed to following the law they neglected the simple faith that God desires. In chapter 11 he lists the Hebrew heroes and emphasizes that they were RIGHTEOUS BECAUSE OF THEIR FAITH. He begins chapter 11 by defining faith.

The author first defines faith in 11:1.

Hebrews 11:1 Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.

And now the author goes chronologically through the Hebrew Bible, the Old Testament, reminding them that FAITH was the key characteristic that pleased God and made them righteous. The same FAITH that is required of you and me on this side of the resurrection to save us and make us righteous. A couple weeks ago I took us through the stories of the faith of Able, Enoch and Noah.

- By faith Able offered God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain. Blood is required to cover sin before we can come to God.
- Enoch sought out God, He walked with Him, communed with Him and his faith was pleasing to God. The Scripture says **By faith** Enoch was taken up so that he would not see death.
- By faith Noah built an ark before he had ever seen rain. When we revere God’s Word and obey, we exercise faith in God, and it is pleasing to God.

Now after the flood, we have the descendants of Noah and in Genesis 12 we get the promise of God to Abraham.

Genesis 12:1-3 Now the LORD said^[a] to Abram, “Go from your country^[b] and your kindred and your father's house to **the land that I will show you.** ² And I will make of you a **great nation**, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. ³ I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you **all the families of the earth shall be blessed.**

The Rabbi's had taught that Abraham pleased God because of his works. God searched all over the world, found a super righteous man, Abraham, and chose him to receive His blessing. This is wrong!

Genesis 15:6 And he/Abraham believed the Lord, and He counted it to him as righteousness.

The author of Hebrews argues that Abraham was righteous because he was a man of FAITH. He trusted in God, and God imputed righteousness to Him. The Apostle Paul also makes this argument and shows the need to contradict this Jewish teaching in his letter to the church at Rome and Galatia. Look at this quickly with me.

Romans 4:1-5 What then shall we say was gained by Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh? ² For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. ³ For what does the Scripture say? “Abraham **believed** God, and it was **counted to him as righteousness.**” ⁴ Now to the one who works, his wages are not counted as a gift but as his due. ⁵ And to the one who does not work but believes in him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness,

This must have been a common misbelief in the early church. Rome was the western church, and here we see Paul making the same argument to the Galatians across the mediterranean to the east.

Galatians 3:1-9 O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? It was before your eyes that Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified. ²Let me ask you only this: Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law or by hearing with faith? ³Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by^[a] the flesh? ⁴Did you suffer^[b] so many things in vain—if indeed it was in vain? ⁵Does he who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you do so by works of the law, or by hearing with faith— ⁶just as Abraham “believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness”? ⁷Know then that it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham. ⁸And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify^[c] the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, “In you shall all the nations be blessed.” ⁹So then, those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.

Verses 3:26-29 ²⁶for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. ²⁷For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. ²⁸There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave^[g] nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹And **if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.**

- So the author argues, by faith Abraham was made righteous. By faith we are “sons of Abraham” and share in the blessings promised to Abraham.

In Genesis 12, Abraham had received the promise from God. The promise for land. The promise that from his offspring he would produce a great nation. And the promise that in Abraham all the families of the earth shall be blessed. In our text today, as we walk through Abraham’s life we will see six faith events of Abraham and his descendants.

1. Abraham’s **FAITH TO OBEY** in leaving his homeland of UR to a promised land.
2. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob’s **FAITH IN THE FUTURE PROMISE OF GOD** as they sojourn in the Promised Land waiting on God.
3. Abraham’s **FAITH THAT TRUSTS IN THE POWER OF GOD TO DO THE IMPOSSIBLE** in Sarah’s conception of Isaac

4. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob's **FAITH THAT EXCEEDS DEATH** believing in God's promise even in their death.
5. **FAITH THAT CAN BE TESTED.** Abraham's faith to kill Isaac, his child of the promise, knowing that God would be faithful even to raise him from the dead.
6. **FAITH THAT CAN BE PASSED ON TO FUTURE GENERATIONS** Faith that was passed on from Abraham, to Isaac, to Jacob and to Joseph.

Hebrews 11:8 ⁸ By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going.

- God promised a land that He would show him. Just as Noah took action "by faith" even though he had not seen rain, God called Abraham to leave his home and go to a land he would show him and Abraham obeyed. "And he went out, not knowing where he was going."
- I am reminded of Paul, Silas and Timothy, who were called to share the gospel with the Gentiles. They obeyed the call and started heading west through the Galatian region. Recall in Acts 16 where they tried to head south and west into Asia, but they were "**forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia**, modern day Turkey." So, they tried to go north to minister to the prosperous cities around the Black Sea, "**But the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them.**" So they go to the only open place that had not been forbidden and end up at Troas on the edge of the sea where Paul receives the vision of a man of Macedonia saying, "**Come over to Macedonia and help us.**" And the Scripture says, "**immediately we sought to go on into Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.**" God opened the door to Europe and changed the world! Paul responded to the call of God to go and share the gospel to the Gentiles. Not even sure of where he was going, Paul, Silas and they picked up Timothy along the way. If you want to know **how to by faith obey?** That's how. Just keep moving

forward in faith. Closed doors can be as clear as open doors. When you finally hit a dead-end God will often open a door and direct your steps.

- Abraham demonstrates FAITH THAT OBEYS.

Hebrews 11:9-10 ⁹By faith he went to live in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise. ¹⁰For he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God.

- Abraham's second example of faith was sojourning in a foreign land. Sojourning means temporarily residing or staying in place for a limited time. Not setting down. While Abraham's offspring would inherit the land, Abraham would live in the land as a foreigner. We also see this in Acts 7 as Stephen is repeating the history to the Jews as they stoned him, he says of Abraham,

Acts 7:5 ⁵Yet he gave him no inheritance in it, not even a foot's length, but promised to give it to him as a possession and to his offspring after him, though he had no child.

- Abraham believed even while he was a foreigner and sojourner in the promised land. In verse 10 the author says, he was looking forward to a city designed and built by God. A city that has foundations. It would be a permanent city that was fortified and protected by God. We also, as believers, are sojourners in the land. This is not our home. We are looking forward to a heavenly kingdom designed and built by God. A permanent home where we will live in security for eternity.
- Do you think Abraham's patience was tested? Do you think Abraham ever asked God, "I am tired of sojourning and living in temporary housing. When Lord will this promised land be a home?"
- Is your patience ever tempted?
- Abraham demonstrates FAITH THAT HOPES for the future.

Hebrews 11:11-12 ¹¹By faith Sarah herself received power to conceive, even when she was past the age, since she considered him faithful who had promised. ¹²Therefore from one man, and him as good as dead, were born

descendants as many as the stars of heaven and as many as the innumerable grains of sand by the seashore.

- We now **look back** before Abraham sojourned with his sons Isaac and Jacob to see Abraham's faith in the conception of Isaac.
- This is often read as the faith of Sarah receiving the power to conceive, but most commentators argue that it was Abraham's faith since the word "conceive" describes the father's contribution in "depositing seed." So, it could read, "by Abraham's faith, Sarah herself received power to conceive." And verse 12 describes Abraham as the "one man" from whom countless descendants came.

We read this story in Genesis 17.

Genesis 17:15-17 ¹⁵And God said to Abraham, speaking of Sarah....I will give you a son by her.¹⁷Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed and said to himself, "Shall a child be born to a man who is a hundred years old? Shall Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a child?"

- In my view, both were as our Scripture says, "good as dead" and both dismissed God's promised son through Sarah as laughable.
- The opposite of faith is unbelief. I think Abraham still had faith in the promises of God, but at 100 years old uncertainty and wavering of his convictions certainly crept in. The fact that Abraham and Sarah "wavered in their assurance and convictions" and still are commended in the Hall of Faith is an encouragement to all of us who doubt. Uncertainty is a very real part of living in a fallen world and is something we all encounter.
- Do you struggle with doubt and uncertainty? Uncertainty or doubt when properly handled is an opportunity to struggle through our questions and overcome uncertainty to strengthen and give assurance to our faith.
- Do you think God's timing matched with Abraham's expectation? Abraham, again, waited for 100 years to see God provide his promised son. Do you have something that you are patiently or impatiently waiting for?

So what did Abram and Sarah do?

Genesis 16:3 ³So, after Abram had lived ten years in the land of Canaan, Sarai, Abram's wife, took Hagar the Egyptian, her servant, and gave her to Abram her husband as a wife.

- Sarah and Abraham thought they would take matters in their own hands and Sarah offered Hagar, her servant, to father a child, Ishmael.
- God is not bound by schedules or expectations. We are called to SURRENDER to His perfect timing. In Luke chapter 1 we know the story of Elizabeth who waited for decades to conceive a child, and in God's perfect timing she became the mother of John the Baptist.
- Ultimately, Abraham and Sarah demonstrate a FAITH THAT TRUSTS IN THE POWER OF GOD TO DO THE IMPOSSIBLE.

HEBREWS 11:13 These all died in faith, not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth.

- Here the author zooms out to the time after the deaths of the Patriarchs: Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Their deaths happened before receiving the things God's promised. They were still sojourners and had yet to inherit the land and generate countless offspring. Abraham & Sarah, Isaac & Rebekah, Jacob and his wives are commended for their faith. They did not receive what was promised but maintained assurance that God's promises would be accomplished even though they did not see them accomplished during their lifetime.
- My grandparents believed in the promise that Jesus would return and hoped it would happen in their life, yet never saw Him return. They died in with the conviction that He would return even though they would not see the promise realized in their lifetimes but passed on their faith to my parents. My parents also believed that Jesus will return in their lifetimes and may both die before He returns. I also believe and it may be the same with me. We maintain our faith and our assurance in Jesus' promise that He will return. We pass this faith on to our children even if we do not see him return before we die.

- **Galatians 4:4** “But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son” – Surrender to the Lord’s perfect timing. He will return in the fullness of time.
- Abraham and his offspring demonstrate FAITH IN THE PROMISE THAT EXCEEDS DEATH

Hebrews 11:14-16 For people who speak thus make it clear that they are seeking a homeland. ¹⁵If they had been thinking of that land from which they had gone out, they would have had opportunity to return. ¹⁶But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore, God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared for them a city.

- The “people who speak” is referring to the patriarchs who sojourned. The people who lived in tents. They saw themselves as temporary residents in a foreign land seeking the homeland promised by God. As said in verse 10, they were looking for a city whose designer and builder was God. They were looking for the real homeland where they truly belong. Their real homeland was not the land of Canaan, which their descendants eventually received as their inheritance.
- They were also not thinking of the land of Mesopotamia from which Abraham came. That was not their home. They were looking for a heavenly homeland and a city where they could dwell forever with the God who promises.
- Even though Abraham, Sarah, Isaac and Jacob were sinful humans and sometimes tested their faith, God was not ashamed to be called their God for He has prepared a city for them. In the same way, we who have faith in Christ are also flawed and we see in Scripture Jesus is not ashamed to call us His brothers.

Hebrews 11:17-19 By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and **he who had received the promises** was in the act of offering up his **only** son, ¹⁸of whom it was said, “Through Isaac shall your offspring be named.” ¹⁹He considered that God was able even to raise him from the dead, from which, figuratively speaking, he did receive him back.

- The final act of Abraham’s faith, **the one who had received the promise**, was to submit to God in trusting obedience even to sacrifice his only son., the promise of God.

- Note: “only” son refers to the promised son of Sarah. It excludes Ishmael, the son with Hagar. The author then quotes **Genesis 21:12** saying, “through Isaac shall your offspring be named.”

We read the story of Isaac in Genesis 22.

Genesis 22:9-13 ⁹When they came to the place of which God had told him, Abraham built the altar there and laid the wood in order and bound Isaac his son and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. ¹⁰Then Abraham reached out his hand and took the knife to slaughter his son. ¹¹But the angel of the Lord called to him from heaven and said, “Abraham, Abraham!” And he said, “Here I am.” ¹²He said, “Do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him, for now I know that you fear God, seeing you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me.” ¹³And Abraham lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, behind him was a ram, caught in a thicket by his horns. And Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up as a burnt offering instead of his son.

- Abraham’s faith in God’s promise and God’s trustworthiness was so resolute that Abraham believed God would fulfill His promise even if it required Him to raise Isaac from the dead – “from which, figuratively speaking, He did.”
- A foreshadow of the God’s sacrifice of His own Son and His resurrection from the dead to fulfill the promise to Abraham that through him, through Abraham, **all the families of the earth shall be blessed.**

And we will close with the death of the patriarchs.

Hebrews 11:20-22 ²⁰By faith Isaac invoked future blessings on Jacob and Esau. ²¹By faith Jacob, when dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, bowing in worship over the head of his staff. ²²By faith Joseph, at the end of his life, made mention of the exodus of the Israelites and gave directions concerning his bones.

- A final word on the faith of the Patriarchs. The faith of Abraham was passed on to Isaac, and Isaac to Jacob, and Jacob on his death bed says

to his son Joseph who was sold by his brothers in slavery to Egypt.

Genesis 48:11 “I never expected to see your face; and behold, God has let me see your offspring also.” And Jacob passed on the blessing to the sons of Joseph, Manasseh and Ephraim.

- Joseph would die in Egypt and not make it to the promised land. But he maintained the faith of his fathers that God is faithful to his promise.
- God is not bound by our schedules or expectations.

And we see at the of Joseph’s life recorded in Genesis 50.

Genesis 50:24-25 And Joseph said to his brothers, “I am about to die, but God will visit you and bring you up out of this land to the land that he swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.”²⁵ Then Joseph made the sons of Israel swear, saying, “God will surely visit you, and you shall carry up my bones from here.”

- Joseph says to his brothers, God will deliver you out of the land of Egypt and bring to the land promised. He believed so much he made the sons of Israel promise to carry his bones that they may forever rest in the promised land.
- **HE PASSED ON FAITH TO THE FUTURE GENERATIONS**

What does Jesus want me to know?

Hebrews 10:39 ³⁹ But **WE** are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but **WE** are **those who have faith and preserve our souls**.

Hebrews 11:1 Now faith is the **assurance** of things hoped for, the **conviction** of things not seen.

How can our faith be strengthened and encouraged by the faith of Abraham and the Patriarchs?

1. We can have **FAITH TO OBEY**. To obediently follow the call by God to go even when we did not know where we are going.
2. We can have **FAITH IN THE FUTURE PROMISE OF GOD** - We are sojourners in this world, and this is not our ultimate home. We are heirs to the promise to Abraham through Christ. We have faith in the future promise of a heavenly home through the resurrection of the Christ.
3. We can have **FAITH THAT TRUSTS IN THE POWER OF GOD TO DO THE IMPOSSIBLE**.
4. We can have **FAITH THAT EXCEEDS DEATH**. We know the promises of God and even though we may not see the return of Christ in our lifetime we maintain our faith in the promise even in our death.
5. **WE CAN HAVE FAITH THAT CAN BE TESTED**. By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac. When our faith is tested, we will trust God.
6. **OUR FAITH CAN BE PASSED ON TO THE FUTURE GENERATIONS** – We are to pass our faith on to our children and to our children’s children.

A Last word: This is a lesson about faith, but it is also a lesson about waiting. I think the waiting is another encouragement that may be for someone here today. Waiting is a test to our faith. Are we able to **surrender** our desires and

wait for the fulfillment of God's purposes in the fullness of God's time. While we are waiting, we must also be **obeying**.