

Sunday March 11th 2012
The Letter to the Hebrews
Part Thirty Six

1). Heb 11:1 ¶ *Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. 2 For by it the elders obtained a good testimony. 3 By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible. 4 ¶ By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and through it he being dead still speaks. 5 By faith Enoch was taken away so that he did not see death, "and was not found, because God had taken him"; for before he was taken he had this testimony, that he pleased God. 6 But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. 7 By faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his household, by which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith. 8 By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. 9 By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; 10 for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God.*

a). We have seen in our previous weeks of study that the word ‘faith’ that we find at the beginning of Chapter 11 is not the generic ‘wish fulfillment’ that the word has come to mean throughout most of Christendom, but is rather believing God with respect to one thing – the saving of the soul.

b). Within the immediate context of the verses that precede it and within the overall context of the Book of Hebrews, which is a Book dedicated to the ‘age to come’ - Heb 2:5 ¶ *For He has not put the world [age] to come, of which we speak, in subjection to angels.*

It can be nothing else.

c). And then in the first verse of Chapter 11 we find two remarkable statements about the outcome of having faith to the saving of the soul – firstly, it is ‘the substance of things hoped for’, and secondly, it is ‘the evidence of things not seen’.

d). The 'substance of things hoped for' speaks of a foundation upon which our understanding of Christ and His coming Kingdom, our hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, with all that this will encompass, rests.

e). The 'evidence of things not seen' speaks of a bringing to light from the scriptures, through the ministry of the Holy Spirit, those things associated with the coming Kingdom of Christ and the salvation of the soul as well as how the 7th Day is an integral part of God's overall arrangement of the eternal ages, that can only be seen with the eyes of faith, by believing that which God has said about all of this.

f). The present age in which we live has been shaped by the introduction of sin into the newly restored earth at Man's fall in the Garden. Because of this that which surrounds us externally is in ruin and chaos and on the inside of us we have the wickedness of a sin nature. Therefore nothing that we can see with the natural eye within the present world system, or hear with the natural ear, or even think with the natural mind can reveal to us anything of God's plans for the eternal ages – 1Jo 5:19 *We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one.*

1Co 2:9 *But as it is written: Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man The things which God has prepared for those who love Him."*

g). It is only by faith to the saving of the soul that we can see these things with the eyes of faith - 1Co 2:10 *But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God.*

h). It is for this reason that we are admonished - Ro 12:2 *And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.*

i). Ro 8:5 *For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.*

j). Lu 11:34 *"The lamp of the body is the eye. Therefore, when your eye is good, your whole body also is full of light. But when your eye is bad, your body also is full of darkness.*

k). And then in 11:3 we are given an example of the very thing that we have just seen taught in 11:1.

3 By faith [to the saving of the soul] we understand [through our faith] that the worlds [ages] were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen [with the natural eye in the present world system] were not made of things which are visible [only with the eyes of faith].

2). Now we know that the scriptures teach us in - Ro 1:16 ¶ *For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. 17 For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "The just shall live by faith."*

a). But what we may not have realized until now is that the first step in our progress to maturity, from faith to faith, may well be moving from faith with regards to eternal salvation, the salvation of the spirit, to believing that which God has said about the saving of the soul. From believing that we have been saved, to believing also that we are being saved and that we will be saved.

b). Because, as we have seen from our Hebrews 11 scriptures this morning, it is believing God to the saving of the soul upon which all revelation from the word of God concerning the coming Kingdom of Christ rests and it is through believing God to the saving of the soul that this revelation concerning the Kingdom is brought to light.

c). It may be that the key that unlocks to door for us to begin to see the coming Kingdom of Christ is simply believing that our soul needs to be saved beyond the point of our eternal salvation. And this of course begins in foundation in Genesis as we realize that we are made in God's image – in three parts, spirit, soul and body and that redemption must therefore include all three parts of our being - 1Th 5:23 ¶ *Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

3). We had also seen last week that not only do the scriptures relate the whole sequence of events concerning God's plans and purposes for the endless ages, a purpose that begins with a perfectly ordered universe and ends with that perfect order having been restored; a purpose that deals with the removal of sin and the provision of redemption within a framework of 7 days; but that the very structure of the scriptures themselves also conforms to this same structure.

a). This being said, it will come as no surprise that here in Hebrews Chapter 11 the first 4 individuals who are noted because of their faith, set out for us a dispensational picture that takes us to the establishment of the 7th Day – of all the OT saints that could be drawn from, and from all the combinations of people that were available, we see the Divine hand at work in the careful selection of those who are to be presented to us.

b). This is what we see – 'by faith Abel', by faith Enoch', 'by faith Noah', 'by faith Abraham' – In these 4 individuals we move through 2000 years of history. Enoch is the 7th generation from Adam, denoting a complete period of time; Noah is the 10th generation, denoting another complete period of time; and Abraham takes us on another 10 generations, also denoting a complete period of

time - And the picture given here is a dual type that reveals God's sequence of events for both Israel and the Church through this dispensation and beyond.

c). The Dine hand through the writer of Hebrews begins with Abel whose sacrifice is accepted by God. In the overall picture that is given through Abel we would see that he is a type of Christ. Abel's death at the hands of his brother Cain is the foundational picture of the nation of Israel slaying its brother, Christ.

d). Having killed Christ some 2000 years ago, Israel has been waiting, although they don't realize that they are doing this, for the next event on God's prophetic timetable – the rapture of the Church – the removal from the earth of all the eternally saved from this dispensation, both those who have experienced physical death and those who remain alive when this event takes place. And this event, the rapture of the Church, is pictured for us in Enoch who was taken into heaven without tasting physical death, because he had the testimony that he pleased God - 1Th 4:16 *For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.*

The next major event on God's timetable is pictured in Noah, who passes through the flood with his family, providing us with a type of Israel passing through the Great Tribulation as God judges the nations of the earth and destroys Gentile world power - Mt 24:21 *"For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. 22 "And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened.*

Following the example of Noah, we then have Abraham, who left one land in order to receive an inheritance in another land that God would show him. And with the example of Abraham we see a picture of the re-gathering of Israel from amongst the Gentile nations in order to receive their inheritance in the land with the establishment of the 7th Day – the earthly portion of the promise given to Abraham and his descendants - Jer 23:7 *"Therefore, behold, the days are coming," says the LORD, "that they shall no longer say, 'As the LORD lives who brought up the children of Israel from the land of Egypt,' 8 "but, 'As the LORD lives who brought up and led the descendants of the house of Israel from the north country and from all the countries where I had driven them.' And they shall dwell in their own land."*

e). And for the Church the picture and the starting point are the same – the death of Abel pictures the death of Christ, giving us the means of our eternal salvation. And for us, beyond eternal salvation, we also wait for the next event in God's timetable, our appearance at the Judgment Seat of Christ following the

rapture when the salvation of our soul will be realized – again pictured through Enoch who pleased God – something only possible by having faith to the saving of the soul.

Our receiving our inheritance in the heavenly land, the heavenly portion of the promise to Abraham, must wait until God concludes His dealings with Israel through the time of Jacob's trouble, that we see in Noah.

f). And so, for both Israel and the Church, following Christ's death on the cross, all in one sense is contingent upon those who will have faith to the saving of the soul, a faith that will make possible the events of the 7th Day, as it is only together with His Bride that Christ can rule during the Millennial Kingdom – Ge 1:26 ¶ *Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." 27 So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.*

g). And it is only those who will have faith to the saving of the soul who will be the Bride.

h). And again, as we see this dispensational framework laid out for us in the examples of those who had faith to the saving of the soul at the beginning of Chapter 11, within the context of the 7 days, we have yet another example of our faith to the saving of the soul being the 'evidence of things not seen' – bringing to light through the scriptures the plan and the purpose of God, that cannot be seen except through the eyes of faith.

4). Heb 11:4 ¶ *By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and through it he being dead still speaks.*

a). The first of the OT 'elders', presented to us, who obtained a good report is Abel, taking us right back to the very beginning of the human race. We are told that Abel acted 'by faith' with respect to the offering that he brought to God and contextually this faith that governed his actions is faith to the saving of the soul. We will also see from our verse that through Abel's actions because of believing that which God had said 'he obtained witness that he was righteous' – this is the righteousness that comes through faith to the saving of the soul - Php 3:9 ¶ *and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith;*

b). Ga 3:6 ¶ *just as Abraham "believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness."*

c). We also see in this verse the contrast that is made between Abel and Cain, with Abel offering 'a more excellent sacrifice than Cain' – all of which

draws from and provides commentary for the account of Cain and Abel in the Book of Genesis.

5). Ge 4:1 ¶ *Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain, and said, "I have acquired a man from the LORD." 2 Then she bore again, this time his brother Abel. Now Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. 3 ¶ And in the process of time it came to pass that Cain brought an offering of the fruit of the ground to the LORD. 4 Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat. And the LORD respected Abel and his offering, 5 but He did not respect Cain and his offering. And Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell. 6 ¶ So the LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? 7 "If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. And its desire is for you, but you should rule over it." 8 ¶ Now Cain talked with Abel his brother; and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother and killed him.*

a). Cain was the firstborn of Adam and Eve, making him the first human being to have been procreated, and he was a tiller of the ground; Abel was the second born and was a keeper of sheep – now neither of these occupations of themselves has any sense of being more acceptable to God than the other.

b). Within a typological framework though we could see Cain's association with the ground as making him a man of the earth, with his focus being earthly and this would certainly carry over to the nation of Israel of whom he is a picture. And Abel's association with sheep would certainly carry over to his being a type of Christ – the Great Shepherd of the sheep.

c). Now we see in v3-4 that Cain and Abel bring an offering to the Lord. This is said to have happened 'in the process of time', which should literally be translated 'at the end of the days' – Therefore we will understand that this was not an offering that was brought arbitrarily to the Lord, but at an appointed time. Either, Cain and Abel had been instructed by God Himself in this, or they had been instructed by their parents whom God had instructed – and we could understand this in much the same way as God gave particular instructions to Israel through the Law of Moses.

d). We also see that when each brought their offering that Abel's offering was respected by the Lord, but Cain's was not. And the reason for Cain's offering being rejected and Abel's accepted can be found in the first two words of Hebrews 11:4 – 'by faith'. Abel acted 'by faith' in the offering that he brought, but Cain acted apart from faith in the offering he brought. And because Cain acted apart from faith the Lord's response to him could only be one of rejection –

Heb 11:6 *But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.*

e). Abel then had believed that which God had said and had brought that which God required from the first fruits of his flock, but Cain failed to bring that which God required from the first fruits of his crop.

f). And as a result of the Lord not respecting Cain's offering the scripture records this - *And Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell.*⁶ ¶ *So the LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? 7 "If you do well, will you not be accepted?*

g). Cain became very angry and his countenance fell, literally he 'burned with anger' and he looked down and therefore away from the One he should have been looking to. And yet despite his action the Lord leaves the way open for his repentance as we see in v7. Cain could have repented and then brought the offering that Lord required and had he done so he would have been accepted just as Abel was.

h). As well as opening the door to repentance the Lord also tells Cain what will be the consequences for him if he doesn't repent as well as giving him a promise concerning the certainty of his repentance for the future - *And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. And its desire is for you, but you should [lit. shall] rule over it."*

i). Sin here is seen as predatory, it lies at the door waiting for him – and maybe an allusion here to our adversary the devil who walks about like a roaring lion – but the promise is that he will ultimately 'rule over it' – he will come to repentance.

j). Cain, as we know, does not repent at this time, even though the Lord has made this available. Still 'burning' with anger, the scripture records what happens next.

6). Ge 4:8 ¶ *Now Cain talked with Abel his brother; and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother and killed him. 9 ¶ Then the LORD said to Cain, "Where is Abel your brother?" He said, "I do not know. Am I my brother's keeper?" 10 And He said, "What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood cries out to Me from the ground. 11 "So now you are cursed from the earth, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. 12 "When you till the ground, it shall no longer yield its strength to you. A fugitive and a vagabond you shall be on the earth." 13 ¶ And Cain said to the LORD, "My punishment is greater than I can bear! 14 "Surely You have driven me out this day from the face of the ground; I shall be hidden from Your face; I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond on the earth, and it will happen that anyone*

who finds me will kill me." 15 And the LORD said to him, "Therefore, whoever kills Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold." And the LORD set a mark on Cain, lest anyone finding him should kill him.

a). Cain in his anger and in his rejection rises up and kills his brother – he cannot accept Abel’s righteousness and he has rejected becoming righteous himself through repentance. This conflict between the righteous and the unrighteous is something we see again in the scriptures with regards to Ishmael and Isaac recorded in – Ga 4:29 *But, as he who was born according to the flesh then persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit, even so it is now.*

b). As a result of Cain killing Abel he is cast out as a fugitive and a vagabond on the earth – the idea contained in the word fugitive is someone who has no home.

c). Faced with his exile Cain is fearful for his life expecting that anyone who finds him would kill him because of his slaying his brother.

d). And in v15 we find the Lord making an extraordinary promise, ‘Therefore, whoever kills Cain, vengeance will be taken on him sevenfold’. For anyone then who would kill Cain, they could expect the complete vengeance of God, signified by the number 7, to come upon them.

e). Now all of this concerning Cain may seem a little strange until we realize that, that which is taught here is the foundational picture of what was to happen with respect to the nation of Israel. A truth that is taught at the very beginning of scripture depicting events that would take place almost 4000 years beyond the picture itself. And this is significant for us for not only does it explain what has happened with Israel in past history, but also reveals that nation’s current condition and the promise that awaits the nation in the future.

f). And how do we see this and understand this? - Through having faith to the saving of the soul.

g). Israel had, ‘in the process of time’, been continuing to bring offerings to the Lord, but that which they offered was offered apart from faith, just as we saw with Cain - Jer 6:19 *Hear, O earth! Behold, I will certainly bring calamity on this people-The fruit of their thoughts, Because they have not heeded My words, Nor My law, but rejected it. 20 For what purpose to Me Comes frankincense from Sheba, And sweet cane from a far country? Your burnt offerings are not acceptable, Nor your sacrifices sweet to Me." 21 Therefore thus says the LORD: "Behold, I will lay stumbling blocks before this people, And the fathers and the sons together shall fall on them. The neighbor and his friend shall perish."*

h). Mt 21:19 *And seeing a fig tree by the road, He came to it and found nothing on it but leaves, and said to it, "Let no fruit grow on you ever again." Immediately the fig tree withered away.*

i). When the One who was the Great Shepherd, the keeper of the sheep, came, Israel, through its religious leaders is seen in the same condition as Cain – they ‘burned with anger’ and their countenance was fallen – they had looked away from the One who offered them repentance and in the antitype of Cain, in this condition they could do nothing other than that which Cain had done – they rose up and killed their Brother, the One who was their Messiah.

j). And at the time of Christ’s death the nation made two alarming statements that continue to impact the nation to the present day and beyond –
Mt 27:25 *And all the people answered and said, "His blood be on us and on our children."*

Joh 19:15 *But they cried out, "Away with Him, away with Him! Crucify Him!" Pilate said to them, "Shall I crucify your King?" The chief priests answered, "We have no king but Caesar!"*

k). The statement made by the nation in Matthew 27:25 was to have and still has, far reaching consequences for the nation, especially considering that which Christ had told them in - Mt 23:34 ¶ *"Therefore, indeed, I send you prophets, wise men, and scribes: some of them you will kill and crucify, and some of them you will scourge in your synagogues and persecute from city to city, 35 "that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar. 36 "Assuredly, I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation.*

l). Upon this generation and their children – every succeeding generation, all the righteous blood shed on the earth from Abel onwards is required of them. Every generation of Jews then, including those alive today are considered guilty of this blood even though they were not responsible themselves for shedding it.

m). But the promise remains of repentance, just as with Cain, but in the meantime the nation is as a fugitive and a vagabond scattered amongst the Gentile nations and if any nation should set their hand against Israel then just as with Cain they will receive the Lord’s vengeance ‘sevenfold’.

n). And here we will close for today.