

WOK Conference
Kenya – August 2014
By Faith – Part Three

1). 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. 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). Contained in these 7 short verses is a treasure trove of spiritual truth that sets out for us in a foundational, panoramic picture, God's plans and purposes for His 3 firstborn sons – His only begotten Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, His currently wayward son, the nation of Israel, and His soon to be adopted son, faithful Christians comprising the 'Church'.

b). They also provide us with the sequential ordering of the events on God's prophetic calendar from Christ's death on the cross to the Millennial Kingdom.

c). And provide for us some of the most clearly stated and profoundly challenging doctrine with regards to having faith to the saving of the soul.

d). It would not be overreaching to say that these 7 verses set out for us in succinct form God's plan and purpose for Man – the whole of scripture in embryonic form. What we see here is truly amazing.

e). Now to state the obvious – the Book of Hebrews is presently the 19th Book to be found in that which we call the NT and in this sense is a long way from that which was penned in the OT, and yet, as we have seen, Hebrews

draws very heavily from the OT scriptures; and in doing so there is the expectation that those studying this Book will have an intimate knowledge of the OT scriptures or at the very least would take this opportunity to search out the references that are given.

f). You see there is not a great deal of detail in these verses in Hebrews because that detail exists elsewhere and it is incumbent upon us to search it out and apply it to the verses before us. Let's remember that which God has said about understanding the scriptures - Isa 28:9 ¶ *"Whom will he teach knowledge? And whom will he make to understand the message? Those just weaned from milk? Those just drawn from the breasts? 10 For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept, Line upon line, line upon line, Here a little, there a little."*

g). We have already seen in a previous message that God opens His Word through the ministry of the Holy Spirit to those who are progressing from faith to faith, to those who believe to the saving of the soul and this is exactly what is stated by Isaiah in v9 – understanding the message is not for those who are content to know nothing else but the Gospel of Grace, portrayed here as 'milk', nor for those who are complacent and/or lazy, but for those who will diligently search out the truth under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, who will search out one precept to place upon another, who will take one line and compare it with another, who will take a little from one book add it to a little from another book and another until they have all of that which God desires for them to know - 1Co 2:13 *These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.*

Ps 19:7 ¶ *The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul; The testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple;*

Ps 119:130 ¶ *The entrance of Your words gives light; It gives understanding to the simple.*

2Pe 1:20 *knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation,*

2Ti 3:16 *All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.*

2). So then, to view the panorama in Hebrews 11:4-10 – we firstly see a sacrifice that is acceptable to God; this is followed by a man being 'taken' alive into heaven and then another man and his family passing safely through a

worldwide destruction brought about by the flood; and finally there is a man who is taken from one land to another land in order to receive an inheritance.

a). What is pictured here should be very obvious – the sacrifice that is acceptable to God pictures the death of the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross of Calvary. Some 2000 years beyond the cross the ‘Church’, the one new man in Christ Jesus will be ‘taken’ from the earth in the resurrection/rapture, pictured for us through Enoch, then following closely upon this event Israel will go through the time of the Tribulation, pictured through Noah and his family going through the flood – and following the Tribulation the Jewish people will be taken from the Gentile nations to the land of Israel where they will receive their inheritance, pictured for us through Abraham, the one to whom the promise is originally given - Ge 22:15 ¶ *Then the Angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time out of heaven, 16 and said: "By Myself I have sworn, says the LORD, because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son - 17 "blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies. 18 "In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice."*

b). As simple as this sequence is, the events we have looked at set out for us the irrevocable truth concerning the order of that which must take place with respect to the ‘Church’ and Israel and will lay to rest, for those with eyes to see, any confusion that exists with regards to the timing of the resurrection/rapture of the ‘Church’.

c). With all this in mind let’s look at what the Lord records in – Isa 46:9 *Remember the former things of old, For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like Me, 10 Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times things that are not yet done, Saying, 'My counsel shall stand, And I will do all My pleasure,'*

3). So, let’s ‘remember the former things of old’, beginning in Hebrews 11:4 - *By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain,*

a). The reference to Cain and Abel in Hebrews must take us back to the account of these 2 brothers that we find in Genesis – 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 [lit. you shall] 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

b). This would be 'the former things of old'. And we see that a distinction is made between the 2 with Abel being 'a keeper of sheep' and Cain 'a tiller of the ground' and in this distinction Abel will be seen to have his focus on spiritual things and Cain on the things of the earth, the things of this world, in much the same way as Esau is described as 'a man of the field' and Jacob as a 'mild man, living in tents'.

c). We see that, 'in the process of time', a phrase that should more correctly be translated, 'when the days were completed' Cain brings an offering to the Lord 'of the fruit of the ground and Abel an offering of the 'firstborn of his flock and their fat'. And by comparing this with what we are told in Hebrews we find that Abel's offering was made 'by faith' and was 'respected' by the Lord because of it, whereas Cain's offering was not respected by the Lord and therefore cannot have been given by faith – remembering that without faith it is impossible to please Him.

d). And it is by faith and not by faith that marks the difference between these 2 offerings. Cain is not penalized because his offering is of the fruit of the ground, but because he has not believed that which God had said with respect to the offering he brings.

e). We may know for certain that both Cain and Abel were eternally saved and that God had given clear instructions concerning the offering they were to bring, 'when the days were completed'.

f). Cain had obviously done that which seemed right in his own eyes and was angry because God did not accept it - Pr 12:15 ¶ *The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, But he who heeds counsel is wise.*

g). The counsel God gives to him offers the opportunity for repentance, the opportunity to act by faith and therefore the opportunity to be accepted, *If you do well, will you not be accepted?*

h). Despite being given every opportunity Cain does not repent and instead of acting by faith he rose up and killed his brother Abel when they are in the field together.

i). And here in the account of these 2 brothers is the foundational picture, the foundational type, for Christ and Israel. Christ, as Abel, is pictured as a keeper of sheep - Heb 13:20 *Now may the God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep,* And Israel as Cain is seen to have their focus on the things of this world - Jg 17:6 *In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes.*

j). Israel had been told exactly what the Lord expected of them in the Law of Moses with the statutes and judgments - all they had to do was to act by faith - Ex 19:5 *'Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine.*

But this they didn't do consistently throughout their history. Consequently the offering they brought to the Lord was not in response to that which he had said, it was not done by faith and therefore could not be respected -

Mt 23:27 *"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness. 28 "Even so you also outwardly appear righteous to men, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.*

Mt 23:23 *"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone.*

k). And nor did they embrace the opportunity for repentance throughout the centuries and most specifically at the Lord's first advent - Mt 4:17 *From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."*

l). And here at the Lord's first advent Jesus is Himself the sacrifice that God respects - Joh 1:29 ¶ *The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!*

Causing His brother, Israel, whose offering is rejected, to be angry -

Lu 22:2 *And the chief priests and the scribes sought how they might kill Him, for they feared the people.*

m). And so when Jesus and His brother Israel were in the land together His brother Israel rose up and killed Him - 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!"*

n). However, despite the apparent hopelessness of this situation we find in God's interaction with Cain the promise of ultimate redemption for Israel – *And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. And its desire is for you, but you should [lit. you shall] rule over it.*"

o). The promise to Cain here is that he shall 'rule over' his sin, in other words the day of his repentance and forgiveness will come, without a doubt. Now the scriptures do not provide a record of this day with respect to Cain, but it must have happened as God clearly says that it would, and in the antitype of Cain, for the nation of Israel, the promise of this future day of repentance and forgiveness still remains and will without a doubt come about 2Ch 7:14 *"if My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.*

Jer 31:34 *"No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more."*

4). To continue in the 'former things of old' in the account of Cain and Abel we will read from - Ge 4:10 *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). Here as we continue in Genesis Chapter 4 we find the interaction between God and Cain following the death of Abel. And we find that in punishment for killing his brother Cain is 'driven out this day from the face of the ground'. He is to be a fugitive and a vagabond on the earth, but despite this there is the promise of protection and vindication - *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*

b). So then, as a result of Cain having refused to act by faith and be obedient to the command of the Lord, which ultimately leads to him killing his brother, he is driven out from the land in which he lives into the lands that comprise the rest of the earth.

c). And here again we find foundational truth with respect to unfaithful Israel that is foreshadowed time and again in their history over centuries of time, to be fulfilled in a future day that lies beyond the killing of their Brother, the Lord Jesus Christ - Mt 27:25 *And all the people answered and said, "His blood be on us and on our children."*

d). We can follow a cyclical pattern of deviant behavior resulting in persecution followed by repentance, restoration and blessing and then unfaithfulness leading to persecution again throughout the Book of Judges as Israel turned from unfaithfulness to repentance and back to unfaithfulness again - Jg 2:18 *And when the LORD raised up judges for them, the LORD was with the judge and delivered them out of the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge; for the LORD was moved to pity by their groaning because of those who oppressed them and harassed them. 19 And it came to pass, when the judge was dead, that they reverted and behaved more corruptly than their fathers, by following other gods, to serve them and bow down to them. They did not cease from their own doings nor from their stubborn way.*

e). Eventually, this continued corrupt, stubborn and disobedient behavior, devoid of faith reached such an unacceptable degree during the days of the divided kingdom, following the death of Solomon, that God allowed the Northern 10 tribes of Israel to be taken into captivity by the Assyrian empire in 722BC.

f). In 612BC the Babylonians along with the Medes and the Scythians conquered the Assyrian empire, completely destroying its capital city of Nineveh, and it is from this time onwards that the Babylonian empire rises to prominence with Babylon, the original city of Nimrod, at its center.

g). In 605BC Nebuchadnezzar succeeded his father Nebopolassar as king of Babylon and it is shortly after his succession to the throne that the southern 2 tribes of Judah and Benjamin are taken into captivity because of their unfaithfulness, bringing the Theocracy, which began with the first generation of Israel to come out of Egypt under Moses, to an end, and initiating the times of the Gentiles – times that have existed from that day to this and will continue yet until those times are fulfilled.

h). It is at this point in time that there is no national presence in the land we call Israel with Israel taken captive amongst the Gentile nations, after the fashion that we saw with Cain – but this is only a partial fulfillment.

i). As we see Israel scattered throughout the Babylonian Empire this reflects back on foundational truth already recorded in Israel's history and looks forward prophetically to that which must transpire yet future.

j). As we noted a little earlier this is not the first time that Babylon has featured prominently in the scriptures – we first see it in the account of Nimrod – Ge 10:8 *Cush begot Nimrod; he began to be a mighty one on the earth. 9 He was a mighty hunter before the LORD; therefore it is said, "Like Nimrod the mighty hunter before the LORD." 10 And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, Erech, Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar. 11 From that land he went to Assyria and built Nineveh, Rehoboth Ir, Calah, 12 and Resen between Nineveh and Calah (that is the principal city).*

k). Nimrod is the first king of Babylon, which was the beginning of his kingdom, which then expanded to encompass the land of Shinar and Assyria, encompassing then the entirety of the geographical area ruled by Nebuchadnezzar at the time of the Jewish captivity.

l). And we can see that which Nimrod, as the first king of Babylon, tried to accomplish recorded in Genesis Chapter 11 - Ge 11:1 ¶ *Now the whole earth had one language and one speech. 2 And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar, and they dwelt there. 3 Then they said to one another, "Come, let us make bricks and bake them thoroughly." They had brick for stone, and they had asphalt for mortar. 4 And they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower whose top is in the heavens; let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth." 5 ¶ But the LORD came down to see the city and the tower which the sons of men had built. 6 And the LORD said, "Indeed the people are one and they all have one language, and this is what they begin to do; now nothing that they propose to do will be withheld from them. 7 "Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, that they may not understand one another's speech." 8 So the LORD scattered them abroad from there over the face of all the earth, and they ceased building the city. 9 Therefore its name is called Babel, because there the LORD confused the language of all the earth; and from there the LORD scattered them abroad over the face of all the earth.*

m). The whole earth having one language is suggestive of a worldwide kingdom, which we shall see again later. And this kingdom seeks to 'make a name for ourselves' and to build a city and a tower whose top is in the

heavens – seeking to reach the realm from which rulership of the earth takes place. And these actions are reminiscent of what we know of Satan’s rebellion from – Isa 14:13 *For you have said in your heart: 'I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation On the farthest sides of the north;*

Something that we shall also see again later.

n). And what we will take note of for the moment from the verses in Genesis Chapter 11 is that God intervenes to put an end to Nimrod’s plans. Something else we shall also see again later.

o). The connection between those coming from this geographical area and the nation of Israel continues with the account of Israel in the days of Moses - Ex 1:8 ¶ *Now there arose a new king over Egypt, who did not know Joseph. 9 And he said to his people, "Look, the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we; 10 "come, let us deal shrewdly with them, lest they multiply, and it happen, in the event of war, that they also join our enemies and fight against us, and so go up out of the land." 11 Therefore they set taskmasters over them to afflict them with their burdens.*

p). According to the Greek version of the OT this ‘new’ king is translated with the word ‘heteros’, which means of a different kind – this was a different kind of king over Egypt, and history shows us that this new king was an Assyrian. He was an Assyrian Pharaoh in a conquered land hence his concern about the number of Jews in Egypt.

q). He deals ‘shrewdly’ with the Jews by forcing them into slavery and so we find God’s chosen people persecuted at the hands of a Gentile world power.

r). All of this then provides us with foundational, unchangeable truth that if followed to its conclusion will not allow us to be sidetracked into error by the ideology of men.

5). To return to Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonian captivity of Israel, it is during this time period that we have given to us the great prophecies recorded by the prophet Daniel - Da 9:24 *"Seventy weeks are determined For your people and for your holy city, To finish the transgression, To make an end of sins, To make reconciliation for iniquity, To bring in everlasting righteousness, To seal up vision and prophecy, And to anoint the Most Holy. 25 "Know therefore and understand, That from the going forth of the command To restore and build Jerusalem Until Messiah the Prince, There shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; The street shall be built again, and the wall, Even in troublesome times.*

26 "And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself; And the people of the prince who is to come Shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end of it shall be with a flood, And till the end of the war desolations are determined. 27 Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; But in the middle of the week He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, Even until the consummation, which is determined, Is poured out on the desolate."

a). And amazingly it is here amidst their captivity by a Gentile world power that the God of heaven gives Daniel an exact timetable for that which lies in the future for his people.

b). A timetable that was entirely prophetic at the time of its writing – a timetable that has been partially fulfilled, but is still awaiting its conclusion – a timetable that is entirely consistent with the order of events set out for us in Hebrews 11:4-10, which itself draws from the same sequencing set out in the genealogy of Adam in Genesis Chapter 5.

c). We will continue with this in our next session.