



Lesson 10 August 7th, 2021

Meaning of Faith

Study Scripture – Hebrews 11:1-8, 13-16

Background Scripture – Hebrews 11; Genesis 5:21-24; Genesis 6-7; 12:1-8; 15

Key Verse:

Now faith is the certainty of things hoped for, a proof of things not seen.

Hebrews 11:1

INTRODUCTION

Our Lesson Study's Key Verse is the closest you will get to a definition. The Bible is definitely not like a Dictionary. But now in this book of Hebrews we see a definition of faith which has been accepted as a standard definition. Scripture says, "Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen".

The writer of Hebrews therefore gives us a long series of examples to show us what Scriptures mean by faith. It certainly involves assurance, and it involves conviction. We should therefore now look at these same strong Old Testament saints to see what they did and what they had to do and to bear so that we can understand what this thing called faith is.

You will find that "**faith**" is quite reasonable and it is a "sense" which gives us evidence of an invisible spiritual world that is in fact the only real world. It is just like our physical eyesight in the sense that that tells us about the material world because we can watch, smell, touch, and see using our physical organs. Human beings are set up to be able to understand things about the physical world because we have organs as our eyes, ears, skin, fingers and so on that enable us to do that.

If the physical world is all there, is we would not need or use **faith**. It is needed because there is a world that we can't see or can't touch physically. It is beyond the facts produced by our physical senses and therefore we can consider it as belief beyond reason, though it is not necessarily always against reason.

But we should remember that **faith** is not what we would consider to be bare belief or intellectual understanding. In biblical terms then there must be **hearing, understanding, assenting** or agreeing to what you hear and understand, **willingness to trust in**, or to rely on, and to **cling to**, which involves commitment even if what the physical senses tell you contradicts this **faith**.

To understand the biblical meaning of faith we will now therefore be looking at what is considered to be the honour role of Old Testament saints. These individuals belong to the Lord

God and have genuine faith and as a result of that they live. They are existing now as we read this, and they will not face the wrath of God. However the time of judgment will come for those who do not belong to the Lord God.

In this vitally important commentary on the faith of the ancient saints, Hebrews in this section will look at and focus on the book of Genesis, and as well to sections of Exodus and on parts of the book of Maccabees which even though it is not one of the 66 inspired books of the Bible it does record some truth as well as a historical truth.

The language used in Scripture for **faith** comes from a word which looks toward the future and so the very word is close to the idea of **hope**. **So** if you want to meditate on and learn about the certainty of the Christian life if you're a believing Christian you would find this teaching on **certainty on eternal life** right here in Hebrews 11.

Now we must make clear that when you think about **hope** you don't always have the assurance that you are dealing with reality. You can have hope your favourite sports team will win the game but because of that 'hope' there is no assurance. But when Hebrews talks about **hope** it is the **hope of reality**. This **faith** looks forward to the future.

Not only that but we **know** certain things. The Apostle John says three times in four verses

- ***"We know that whoever is born of God does not sin.***
- ***We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one.***
- ***And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us an understanding, that we may know Him who is true".***

Some people might laugh at you saying that you believe anything that you cannot see, and you are always short of things you can only hope for, because you say you are living by faith. They may laugh at you saying you have a "pie-in-the-sky approach to life and that you only go around in this world once. But we know that we just don't go around once for there is something more for us believers. We have seen it for God has revealed it to us and it is therefore firmly riveted and cannot be removed from our minds and from our hearts. One writer therefore says, and we know it **"The best is yet to come!**

We must understand that some people only believe in what they can test with their five senses, what they see, hear, taste, touch and smell. They would only accept what they can examine in a test-tube or dissect or verify by experiments. But these people are really short-sighted. They do not want to see that the great scientists are people with great vision, who saw in their minds that which they could only hope someday to verify in the laboratory.

One writer tells us that Walt Disney even before he built Disneyland when all you could see were orange groves, would point out that Frontierland is over there! Adventure land is over there! Tomorrowland is over there! He imagined customers riding on monorails, steamboats and canoes, and spacecraft. They existed then because he saw them in his imagination and they were real to him, even though they are only real to us today.



So ask yourself What is real? Is it only the world that we can touch real?

The Scripture of faith then, let us be very clear about it, is that

- **faith** in God is against the world
- It is **faith** in the invisible against the visible and so there is conviction that the things we do not see are nevertheless real things.
- It is **faith** in the certainty of the divine future. The promises though afar off can be embraced and be confident in.

THE TEXT

Verse 1. The context for this verse is to be found in chapter 10: 36 and one has to look at this to understand why this exhortation is made. The writer of Hebrews had said:

“For you have need of patience so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise”.

Believers have to endure and to show in their lives evidence of genuine faith and so they have to have patience that the great promises in the Word will be fulfilled in every believer.

Therefore given that position he can now say faith is the substance of things hoped for. We are now being told about objective realities toward which we look. **Faith** is something that is substantial. We believe really that we have these promises even though we don't have them yet, but we are sure they are ours.

There is also Assurance of the realities of the promises of God for that comes in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who brings the believer into the body of Christ and installs them in their heart so that the believer has that subjective faith.

So when a believer has that **faith**, they have the reality. There is confidence about the things that are ahead of us and so there can be no going back and no idea that the promises will not be fulfilled.

Scripture has made it plain that there is a reality that we cannot see with our physical senses. We see this in the event where Israel was having difficulties with the Syrians and Elisha kept telling the king of Israel what the Syrian king Benhadad was up to so that he could adopt countermeasures to escape the Syrian army. The king of Syria told his people that something was wrong: maybe there was a traitor in their camp, but his men told him that there was a man of God who kept telling the King's top secrets to the king of Israel. So the king of Syria decided to send an army by night to besiege Dothan where Elijah lived. Elijah's servant was in a panic for he woke up in the morning and saw the Syrian army surrounding the home and he cried out to Elijah asking what they could do now.



But nothing fazed Elijah for he knew **“faith was the substance of things hoped for and evidence of things not seen”** and so he simply asked the Lord what the situation really was and asked God to open the eyes of the servant that he might see reality. God opened the servant's eyes and he saw a mountain full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha's house.

Note that Elisha did not see the armies of God, but he knew they were there because for him **“faith was the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen”** .

The servant did not have that kind of faith and so he had to be shown the substance and the evidence.

So do you live the Christian life? You have the promises of the word of God, and they are for you and all believers. Your faith is the substance of the things that have been given to you in the promises of the word of God and you can trust these promises. So examine yourself to make sure that you understand what biblical **faith** is, for that is what you should have.

Verse 2. The elders who lived in different countries and lived under different circumstances all have in common **faith**. And so they therefore lived this life giving a good testimony to the entire world.

And there is a need therefore to have this kind of **faith** nowadays, doing the same things as the elders consistent with **faith** that they have done before, trusting God even if others around them do not like it and this behaviour from a human standpoint looks risky.

These Jewish Christians had to be reminded of this so that they would not be discouraged. They needed to look at the examples of **faith** so that they would cast off any discouragement.

We have to be reminded of the dangers of discouragement and make sure this chapter 11 is always in our minds.

Verse 3. The examination now begins at Genesis 1 verse 1one which says **“In the beginning God created the heavens and the Earth and the earth was without form and void, and darkness was on the face of the deep, and God said, ‘Let there be light’”**.

Focus now on the fact that this creative work was all in God's mind. Everything that existed in time and space and in the ages came to pass in time and space by the word of God **“So that the things that are seen were not made of the things which are visible”**. One writer makes this important comment:

“The universe is not self-existent; nor is it the random occurrence of tidal disruptions of the sun by passing stars or some ancient series, nor fragments of an exploding star, nor that the image of starlight and gravity drove together gases and dust to form the Earth. He goes back beyond that, before there was any matter at all, and traces it all to the Lord God in Heaven.



Plato... made a statement that might have suggested that he believed in what we understand to be creation; that is, creation arising out of nothing. But, actually, he did not. He believed in the eternity of some form of matter, and that it was formed in accordance to the likeness of what he called the Forms. So while some statements of his have been cited as if he believed in divine creation, *ex nihilo*, that is, God created what we have about us out of nothing, he did not really believe that”.

Remember that God sees and knows everything and so for Him there is no such thing as **faith** in the sense that we human beings use it. God did not create the world by **faith** for God sees everything and does not “hope” for anything. One writer therefore states:

“Most scientists at the time that the book of Hebrews was written believed that the universe was created out of existing matter, not out of nothing. They believed that the world was made out of things which are visible. But the Bible corrects this misunderstanding clearly saying that the world was *not made of things which are visible.*”

Verse 4. The facts that will now be discussed are found in Genesis 4: 1 through 15. Adam and Eve have now been thrown out of the Garden of Eden because of their sin and now Eve has as a son they named Cain, and then she has another child which was named Abel. Cain was a farmer, a tiller of the ground, while Abel kept animals. Eve might have remembered the promise of chapter 3 verse 15 and thought that Cain was the Promised Seed for she said in suggested language

“I have acquired a man from the Lord”. Some translators render as it ***“I have acquired of man that is Yahweh”.***

This of course would mean that Eve expressed faith in God’s promises.

Interestingly both boys brought sacrifices to God but there was a difference between the sacrifices, for God had respect for Abel and his offering which implied that Cain’s offering was not accepted like that of Abel. In Genesis chapter 4:6-7 we are told that Cain recognized that his offering was not acceptable, and he was angry and so God asked him why he was angry and why his countenance had fallen. Ominously God said ***“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”.***

God was clearly displeased with Cain, and it seems that God had suggested that Cain could behave in such a way that His sacrifice would be acceptable to Him. The difference between the sacrifice of Cain and a sacrifice of Abel was clearly not therefore between animal and vegetable for it seems that Abel’s sacrifice was made **by faith**.

We are told in Genesis 4 that Abel brought the firstborn of the flock and the fat in sacrifice. That is precisely what the book of Leviticus told the people of Israel they should do when they were offering sacrifices to Him.

Adam and Eve and the children all knew that God had killed a lamb to provide clothing for Adam and Eve and so they all knew the correct way to approach the Lord God was to come with



a lamb which they would offer in sacrifice. Abel's sacrifice was therefore a sacrifice of faith. He was being obedient to God. So Hebrews 4 would state that ***"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"***.

Abel knew what God had done in the garden of Eden and so he was motivated by faith, coming with a lamb so he offered to God a more excellent sacrifice. The Commandments in Leviticus were not new. Abraham also sacrificed all the time on altars that he built everywhere he went. After the flood Noah did exactly that for, he offered the kind of sacrifices in blood that God loved and would accept. So clearly the two boys knew exactly what they should do when they approached God. Cain however was satisfied in bringing the work of his hands and so it would certainly seem that Cain's offering was made in the wrong spirit and so he was exposed to divine condemnation and judgment.

1 John 3:12 sums up Cain's attitude. He was not prepared to even listen to what God was telling him and when he faced divine judgment for what he had done he was simply interested in asking God to prevent people from killing him when they found him. With this attitude that he had John compared both brothers' attitude and sacrifice and stated:

"Not as Cain, who was of the wicked one and murdered his brother Abel. And why did he murder him? Because his works were evil and his brother's righteous".

The attitudes of both brothers therefore expressed the true faith or lack of faith that was there in their hearts. One had a heart which expressed the teaching and example of God who slew the animals and clothed Adam and Eve with coats of skin prefiguring the blood of Jesus which was shed to cover us and remove our sin.

Abel's offering showed that he knew the state of man and his sin that separated man from the Lord God. In coming with a slain animal which showed the judgment of sin which is death and which in that offering showed that he knew man's state as a sinner, it could be said in Scripture ***"God testifying of his gifts"***.

Abel's sacrifice and God's reaction showed that God gave assent to the blood sacrifice for without shedding of blood there is no remission of sin. Abel knew this and that without faith it was impossible to please God and that God rewarded those that believed in Him and that diligently sought Him. Abel knew the Word of God and His faith came from the Word of God. He believed, agreed with God, and did what God was pleased with.

Notice however that Cain's heart was sinful, but he still had really come to offer sacrifices, but those sacrifices were apart from righteousness. He came to worship but after worship came murder. He killed when church was over. So one writer comments:

.. that's exactly the value of your Psalm singing and sermon hearing, which you have been engaged in. You said you enjoyed the discourse exceedingly last Thursday and then you filled up the income tax paper falsely. That indicates what your real faith is. Not what you said about the sermon".



So it is possible to be disobedient. Scripture tells us that you must bring an offering of obedience not disobedience. **Faith** comes by hearing the Word of God. You can hear but bring a different offering. If something is wrong in your heart that will tell you what to bring to God. It means you're trusting in your human works. Cain brought the fruit of the ground that he produced because he had worked.

The startling and sad thing is that Cain and Abel had the same father and mother, the same nature, grew up in the same environment, had the same knowledge, had the same opportunities, had been blessed by the grace of God, but one came out with rebellion in the heart offering things contrary to the word of God.

So God testified of Abel's gifts, that is his faith, and though he were dead he yet speaks, for death is as one writer says, not the last word in the life of a righteous man. Abel still speaks and tells us it is necessary to approach the Lord God through faith and that faith comes from hearing and obeying the word of God.

You had better realize that there are not different ways of salvation. There is only one way, and that way is truly believing in and committing yourself totally to the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ as the Word of God has set out. The word of God says about Jesus,

"I am the way, the truth and the life; no man cometh unto the father but by Me. I am the Good Shepherd; the Good Shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. I am the door, by Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved".

Abel had illustrated the beginning of life in faith in sacrifice. He had brought the sacrifice which pointed to the coming of the Lamb of God. All faithful life therefore begins in bringing sacrifices to the Lord Jesus Christ as He is Saviour; for it is His atoning work that has removed our life of sin. So be prepared to offer spiritual sacrifices for you all are priests of God.

Verse 5. Now in logical order we are told about Enoch who in par excellence illustrates perseverance in the faith. He is a perfect example of endurance and perseverance so that as 10:36 stated such a person would receive the promise. He received his heavenly reward for recognizing Christ as the Saviour and living a life of communion with the Lord.

So we read everywhere that the men of old died. But the life of Enoch reminds us it is possible that the bell of death does not have to toll for us. One writer therefore tells us:

"A man planted his feet on higher ground and walked with God into eternity, and as far as we know he still walks with God".

Enoch portrays the continuation of the life of faith in communion and the fact that at the end of life on earth we will have our heavenly reward. But though the Scriptures do not spell out a lot about Enoch we know

1. He was a father in his family and this father was one who walked with God.
2. He was a husband; he was married and so we know that his children had great advantages since he was a man of God.



3. As a man of God he was a safe neighbour and people did not have to worry about what he would do to them.
4. As a man of God he was obviously a great citizen, and the government didn't have to worry about him breaking laws.
5. As a father he would obviously have been a worker, not slacking off and depending on others for survival.

Clearly God and Enoch agreed. Amos had told us, ***“Can two walk together except they be agreed?”***

There was no controversy between God and Enoch. Micah told us that God had a controversy with Israel, but here there was no disobedience and Enoch walked with God for he knew the ways of the Lord. Enoch kept in step with God. He was happy and contented walking with God for that walk was a walk of safety. Enoch knew that God was always at his side as Psalm 23 reminds us.

When you walk with God has an influence on you spiritually. The relationship with God was so intense that ***“By faith Enoch was taken away so that he did not see death and was not found”***.

When it states that he was not found it meant that people were looking around for this man of faith and they always asked where he now was to be found. The search parties could not find him. They missed him. But they knew he had this testimony that he pleased God and so it was revealed to them that God had taken him.

Enoch fulfilled the purpose for which man had been created.

Verse 6. Here we see the doctrinal position of Scripture stated clearly. You cannot miss it or misunderstand.

First, basic faith requires that those who come to God must believe that God exists. God is. Faith means that you believe in this critically important fact of life which is that God lives. Life is only in God.

Second, the verse tells us about ***“he who comes to God”***.

This clearly means that men are at a distance from God.

They are sinners.

We are hiding from God.

We are trying to get away from God.

We want to run. That is our natural response.

So if there is **faith** it means that the person involved is coming to a God who they know is a God who exists.

And He is a God who has made everyone know that He is happy for us to come to Him.

Basic faith therefore involves knowing that God is one of mercy and loving kindness.

He rewards those that diligently seek Him.



Enoch therefore was a man who had faith in God, and he had this testimony that he pleased God. What a great example and definition of faith.

You might hear an interesting and amusing story about a little girl who went to church and came home and told her mother that she had heard a wonderful story about a man called Enoch. She said,

He used to take long walks with the Lord God. And one day, they walked so far that the Lord said to Enoch, 'You know, we have walked so far, Enoch, that you better just come on home with me?'

This is how this little girl figured out what had happened.

Now you might think that Enoch lived in a beautiful place with everybody around him behaving themselves and following God. But remember Genesis 6 told us exactly what the situation was among which Enoch lived. Scripture tells us that in Genesis 6:3 God stated:

"My spirit shall not strive with man forever for he is indeed flesh ; yet his days shall be 120 years".

In verse 5 we then read:

"Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And the Lord was sorry that He had made man on the Earth, and He was grieved in His heart. So the Lord said "I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, creeping things and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them".

So clearly Enoch lived in a bad, very bad time. Enoch did not have an easy life. He did not live in an easy age. He had to survive in times and situations that were worse than the times that we live in today.

The book of Jude tells us in verses 14 and 15 that man of God who was filled with faith was the seventh from Adam and he prophesied about the Second Coming of Jesus Christ long before the prophecies of the Old Testament were given. He said,

"Behold, the Lord comes with 10,000 of His saints to execute judgment on all, to convict all who are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have committed in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him".

The man of faith Enoch lived in a time that was ungodly, degenerate, violent, having lost any significant knowledge of God. It was the events of his day which brought the coming of the Flood which wiped out all but eight people in the Earth.

But note therefore that as one writer says the power of the walk of faith conquered death. We might not be taken by God before we die like He took Enoch, but we know that we have a faith which gives us power to walk in faith so that we will conquer death and we will be with God.



Death should have no terror for believers for though it is mysterious, and we cannot explain it we know it is inevitable, but we know it will not bring us to extinction for when we come to face death then we will be taken into the presence of God.

So we advise ourselves to diligently seek God, to walk with Him diligently, to believe that He exists, and that He will reward us.

Verse 7. Now Hebrews discusses the walk of faith and a man called Noah whose faith in the word of God showed a faith that worked. Real faith will always lead us to do something of great value and hence Noah worked showing his faith.

He was obedient to the word of God and so he is responsible for bringing man through the judgment of the Flood and as such he is a saviour of mankind physically.

Evil had made a great deal of progress and sin had spread so far that God condemned man with his sin nature. When God created it was good but now it was all bad. It was so bad that man was clearly beyond helping himself and God now had to act. Evil had reached its ultimate level.

But Noah had found grace. It led him into the standing of righteousness before God and the walking with God.

The remedy for the corrupt and unbelievably wicked situation was awful. But God had promised man the race would be redeemed (Genesis 3:15) and though the world was corrupt God had determined to save some so that the promises found in Genesis 3:15 would be fulfilled and the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ the seed of the woman would come. God had given a promise and that could not be broken.

So God gave instructions and Noah simply did according to all that God had commanded. Do not ever think that you can disobey the instructions of God and then go to heaven. Remember that everything must rest on faith in God and what He has commanded. So do not be rebellious against God's atoning work of Jesus Christ.

So we are told that by faith Noah was warned of things that he had not yet seen, and he is controlled by what God says about the future. By faith he was moved with godly fear, and he prepared the Ark. So we learn from this as one writer says:

“Faith is the channel through which grace comes. The saving faith, which is the means by which we enter into the existence of salvation, is precisely that. It is the means by which we enter into something. There is no value in faith itself. Faith is simply the means. It's kind of a hard way and medicine, someone said. It's the means by which we enter into the blessings of life. The Ark was prepared by faith and now, “By faith, Noah, divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, prepared the Ark for the saving of his household by which he condemned the world”.



Faith therefore consists of knowledge, agreeing to the message of the Gospel and instructions of God, and giving oneself to the Lord. It is Christ who saves. But as one writer states: **“It is the faith, the remedy, the medicine that saves. So saving faith is simply the faith that takes Christ to save. That's saving faith”**.

So faithful Noah prepares the ark and every nail in that ark, says one writer, was a testimony to God's truth. He tells us that it was also a testimony of condemnation for those that did not listen to Noah's preaching for Noah was called a herald of righteousness according to 2 Peter 2:5.

Noah preached for 120 years. One writer reminds us:

“Every tree that was cut down, every axe stroke in the process of cutting down the tree was itself part of the condemnation to those who did not come to get into the Ark. Every plank that was brought in. Every nail that was nailed in the planks. Plus the sermons. All of these things were things that condemned the world about him when they did not respond. His pulpit was the shipyard. His voice was the ring of hammer. As someone has said, “They laughed at Noah, but Noah had the last laugh””.

Noah certainly was not popular, but he is said to have been the heir of righteousness. Noah had an inheritance and he received grace as a free gift just like you receive an inheritance without working for it.

This public preacher of righteousness was living in a terrible time.

He tells us that it is possible to tell people about the truth, but they will pass it by. Working for 120 years was a pretty expensive project.

If you have found grace in the sight of God, you will work for God. You must listen to Him, look to the future, and do what He says to prepare for the future.

Verses 8-13 . We now look at the obedience of Abraham who lived a life shaped by **hope**. Abram is considered to be one of the greatest men who believed and on top of that he is called a friend of God. In Islam, Judaism, and in Christianity he is considered to be great and as well the founder of their religion.

If you're going to get salvation you have to get it through Abraham because it is through the Abrahamic promises that we have been put into the position of being justified.

Scripture tells us that by **faith** Abram obeyed.

By **faith** Abraham lived in the land of promise.

By **faith** Abraham faced and passed the supreme test when he prepared himself and went to offer up his only son Isaac, the son of promise, believing that even if Isaac was offered, he would be resurrected. He believed that the promises of God had to be fulfilled.

We can look at the life of Abram and see what is written about him for this will benefit you and me. We know that his family worshipped false gods, the Moon God and the Moon goddess. His



life really seems to climax the whole life of faith. He was confident in God and especially in regard to his future.

Note carefully that Abraham obeyed. He obeyed when he was called. There is no evidence that he sought out God the Lord for he lived in a family that was an idolatrous family. God initiated the salvation of Abram and so God called him, appeared to him and called him out of his environment. The sermon of Stephen before the Sanhedrin tells us that Abram, when he obeyed and left for a place and that he did not know where it was, he took his father with him, and he didn't go into the land of Canaan until his father died in Haran.

It is amazing for Abram did not have a map showing where he was going. He left his family, his friends and a very populous and well-developed city to go into the wilderness. Today Ur of the Chaldees is a nothing city but then it was a highly developed city, a great city with a great and highly developed civilization.

So like Abraham remember we are called to walk into the unknown for our citizenship is in heaven and our place is not on Earth.

Abraham went out from home not knowing where he was going, and he did not even have a house in this foreign country. He lived in tents moving around, building altars wherever he went, offering sacrifices to God wherever he went, ending up with no real estate for he was waiting for the promises, and he looked for a city that had foundation whose builder and maker was God.

It is said that crisis reveals one's character. Abraham was a faithful servant of God. He was confident in the Word of God and in his future and that characterized his life. So we should ask ourselves a question, do you believe the word of God?

Abraham knew that this faith would result in only one thing for he believed in the word of God. He accepted the God of the Lord Jesus Christ and trusted in Him. He lived that kind of life accordingly. But note that he enjoyed the companionship of God despite his wanderings.

Verses 13 to 16. All of these people of **faith**, Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Sarah did not receive the promises but only saw them afar off with them not feeling discouraged when they looked at it, realizing that the fulfillment would be only far away into the future.

But they embraced the promises in faith thinking you can be sure, many times a day about what God promised them.

They understood that this world was not their home and that God had prepared an enduring and more pleasant home for them. They desired a better country, one without the sin and wickedness evidenced on Earth.



They are examples of faith for they had difficulty and discouragement but held onto the promises, enduring the shame, laughter, and attacks on them. So God was not ashamed to call them His people for they called Him their God. They held onto the promises that their God had made to them.

CONCLUSION

This brings us to a warning. God has thereby given us the example of our father Abraham. When God calls us, He would stand at the gate and provide a light for us leading and telling us constantly that we are His children in **faith**.

The warning however it is that there is real danger as one writer says in opposing the faith that we see in the lives of others. We should resist our tendency to pronounce verdict on OTHERS who live the life of faith.

Remember that if you're not living the life of faith, you don't know what the life of faith is. You have no right to criticize the life that someone is living in faith.

Let God be the judge. All you do is encourage others to live according to the word of God.

The secret of Abram and Sarah's life is **faith**.

God gave them promises and he repeated them.

You have been given promises too and you have a history of these faithful lives of faith and hope.

So keep thinking about the promises. Keep thinking about the atoning sacrifice made by the Lord Jesus Christ. He is sitting at the right hand of the Father ministering for us as our great High Priest, one writer reminds us.

So we pray that you would respond to God's marvelous grace in faith. Listen to the words of the Lord Jesus Christ. Give assent to them. Hold on to them. Commit yourself to the Saviour of your soul. Your **faith** will please God the Father and you will be rewarded.

Just look carefully at the lives of these in the honour role of faith and you will see what the **word faith** means and how it should show in your heart and in your life.

