

# Better

A Study of the Book of Hebrews

**“Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says, ‘Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion... Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, **unbelieving heart**, leading you to fall away from the living God.’”**

**Hebrews 3:7-12**

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“For we have come to share in Christ, if indeed **we hold our original confidence** firm to the end.”

**Hebrews 3:14**

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“And to whom did he swear that they would not enter his rest, but to those who were disobedient? **So we see that they were unable to enter because of unbelief.**”

**Hebrews 3:18-19**

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“And we desire each of you to show the same earnestness to have the full **assurance of hope until the end**, so that you may not be sluggish, but imitators of those who **through faith** and patience inherit the promises.”

**Hebrews 6:11-12**

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*“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.”*

**JOHN 3:16**





*“Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.”*

**JOHN 5:24**

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*“Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes has eternal life.”*

**JOHN 6:47**





*For by grace **you have been saved through faith**. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.*

**EPHESIANS 2:8-9**



**What is faith?**



## Textual Commentary:

**THIS IS FAITH  
DEFINED!**

## Hebrews 11:1-3

Now faith is the **assurance** of things hoped for, the **conviction** of things not seen. <sup>2</sup> For by it the people of old received their commendation. <sup>3</sup> **By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God,** so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible.

# THE HALL OF FAITH

#1

THE FAITH OF  
ABRAHAM & THE  
PATRIARCHS

#2

THE FAITH OF THE  
PROPHET MOSES

#3

FAITH SKETCHES  
OF THE HEROES OF  
OLD

## Textual Commentary:

### FAITH EXPLAINED BY STORY: *ABEL, ENOCH, NOAH*

## Hebrews 11:4-7

<sup>4</sup> **By faith** Abel offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain, through which he was commended as righteous, God commending him by accepting his gifts. **And through his faith, though he died, he still speaks.** <sup>5</sup> **By faith** Enoch was taken up so that he should not see death, and he was not found, because God had taken him. Now before he was taken he was commended as **having pleased God.** <sup>6</sup> And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God **must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.** <sup>7</sup> **By faith** Noah, being warned by God concerning events as **yet unseen,** in reverent fear constructed an ark for the saving of his household. By this he condemned the world and became an heir of the righteousness **that comes by faith.**

## Textual Commentary:

# FAITH EXPLAINED BY STORY: *FATHER ABRAHAM & SARAH*

## Hebrews 11:8-12

<sup>8</sup> **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.** <sup>9</sup> **By 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. <sup>10</sup>

**For he was looking forward to the city that has foundations,** whose designer and builder is God. <sup>11</sup> **By faith** Sarah herself received power to conceive, even when she was past the age, **since she considered him faithful who had promised.** <sup>12</sup>

**Therefore** 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.





**PAUSE**

## Textual Commentary:

# A SHADOW OF THINGS TO COME!

## Hebrews 11:13-16

<sup>13</sup> 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. <sup>14</sup> For people who speak thus make it clear that they are seeking a homeland. <sup>15</sup> If they had been thinking of that land from which they had gone out, they would have had opportunity to return. <sup>16</sup> **But 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.





*Wait . . . didn't Abraham make it to the Promised Land? Didn't Sarah have her promised child, Isaac? **Yes, but what they experienced in this life was merely a foretaste, a shadow of things to come.** Abraham didn't receive the full promise, just a down payment. Abraham and Sarah had only one child—the promise was for descendants “innumerable as the sand which is by the seashore” (11:12). The land in which he sojourned was indeed the Promised Land, but he, Sarah, Isaac, and all their household lived there as “strangers and exiles on the earth” (11:13; cf. 1 Pet. 2:11).*

**PASTOR CHUCK SWINDOLL**

## Textual Commentary:

### FAITH EXPLAINED BY STORY: *FATHER ABRAHAM, ISAAC, JACOB, AND JOSEPH*

## Hebrews 11:17-22

<sup>17</sup> **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, <sup>18</sup> of whom it was said, “Through Isaac shall your offspring be named.” <sup>19</sup> **He considered that God was able even to raise him from the dead**, from which, figuratively speaking, he did receive him back. <sup>20</sup> **By faith** Isaac invoked future blessings on Jacob and Esau. <sup>21</sup> **By faith** Jacob, when dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, bowing in worship over the head of his staff. <sup>22</sup> **By faith** Joseph, at the end of his life, made mention of the exodus of the Israelites and gave directions concerning his bones.

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**FAITH SKETCHES  
OF THE HEROES OF  
OLD**

## Textual Commentary:

# FAITH EXPLAINED BY STORY: *THE PROPHET MOSES*

## Hebrews 11:23-28

<sup>23</sup> **By faith** Moses, when he was born, was hidden for three months by his parents, because they saw that the child was beautiful, and they were not afraid of the king's edict. <sup>24</sup> **By faith** Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter,<sup>25</sup> choosing rather to be mistreated with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. <sup>26</sup> **He considered the reproach of Christ greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, for he was looking to the reward.** <sup>27</sup> **By faith** he left Egypt, not being afraid of the anger of the king, for he endured as **seeing him who is invisible.** <sup>28</sup> **By faith** he kept the Passover and sprinkled the blood, so that the Destroyer of the firstborn might not touch them.

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## Textual Commentary:

### FAITH EXPLAINED BY STORY:

*ISRAEL, JERICHO,  
RAHAB*

## Hebrews 11:29-31

<sup>29</sup> **By faith** the people crossed the Red Sea as on dry land, but the Egyptians, when they attempted to do the same, were drowned. <sup>30</sup> **By faith** the walls of Jericho fell down after they had been encircled for seven days. <sup>31</sup> **By faith** Rahab the prostitute did not perish with those who were disobedient, because she had given a friendly welcome to the spies.



## Textual Commentary:

# FAITH EXPLAINED BY STORY: *THE HEROES OF OLD*

## Hebrews 11:32-38

<sup>32</sup> And what more shall I say? For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets— <sup>33</sup> who **through faith** conquered kingdoms, enforced justice, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, <sup>34</sup> quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, were made strong out of weakness, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight. <sup>35</sup> Women received back their dead by resurrection. Some were tortured, refusing to accept release, so that they might rise again to a better life. <sup>36</sup> Others suffered mocking and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment. <sup>37</sup> They were stoned, they were sawn in two,<sup>[a]</sup> they were killed with the sword. They went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, afflicted, mistreated— <sup>38</sup> of whom the world was not worthy—wandering about in deserts and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.

## Textual Commentary:

**FAITH EXPLAINED  
BY STORY:  
*THE HEROES  
WAIT FOR US!***

## Hebrews 11:39-40

<sup>39</sup> And all these, though commended through their **faith**, did not receive what was promised, <sup>40</sup> since God had provided something better for us, **that apart from us they should not be made perfect.**



**LIVE  
THE  
TEXT**



# What should we do with the gift of faith?

- **Anchor faith** with a lofty vision of the future.
- **Pursue faith** with passion and determination.
- **Hold faith** with a willingness to lose earthly gain.

**LIVE THE TEXT**