

6-11-2023, COTR Texarkana

Title: Faith Endures; Faith Receives, pt-3

Purpose: Purpose: Provoke people to embrace God as the Creator and follow the example of OT heroes of faith.

Truth for Today: Faith that endures becomes faith that receives God's promise.

Text: Hebrews 11:1-7

Topic: Faith, Creation, Universe, Abel, Noah, Enoch

Series Title: Faith Endures; Faith Receives

Series purpose: Provoke people to have faith in God that is aligned with His will so we can obediently endure difficulty and receive what He promises in His timing.

Series Truth for Today: Faith that endures becomes faith that receives God's promise.

## Faith Endures; Faith Receives, pt-3

### I. Introduction

A. Review: Summer Series: Faith Endures; Faith Receives, a vs. by vs. Heb. 11.

B. The last few weeks I've made comments about the sexual grooming of kids under the guise of transgenderism. Pic Cracker Barrel We're being bombarded by pride month, a celebration of sexual minorities. So, is it right or wrong to join in the celebration? What does the Bible say? Warning, [Ro. 1:18–28 (NIV) The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of people, who **suppress the truth** by their wickedness...<sup>24</sup> Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to **sexual impurity** for the degrading of their bodies with one another.<sup>25</sup> They exchanged the truth about God for a **lie**...<sup>26</sup> Because of this, God gave them over to **shameful lusts**. Even their **women exchanged natural sexual relations for unnatural ones**.<sup>27</sup> In the same way the **men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another**. Men committed shameful acts with other men...<sup>28</sup> Furthermore, just as they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, so God gave them over to a depraved mind, so that they do what **ought not to be done**.] It's troubling when many celebrate what God condemns. This is especially relevant because businesses and some schools are sexualizing kids.

1. How should Christians respond? As Christians, we're not fighting people in a war over sexual choices. God has given us all free will to choose His ways or reject them. We believe what the Bible teaches about

sexuality and are supposed to love everyone (including gender confused or those practicing willful sexual sin) but also tell people what God's Word says. If I really love someone, I'll tell them the truth. On Judgment Day, I don't want someone to ask me, why didn't you tell me.

C. Series: Faith Endures; Faith Receives, a vs. by vs. Heb. 11.

D. Pic Faith sandwich Last week we made a sandwich from Ch. 10 and 12 for context and emphasized enduring faith.

E. Today we'll start with 11:1 and learn about the role of faith in viewing creation and begin with heroes of faith: Abel and Enoch.

F. Title: Faith Endures; Faith Receives, pt-3

## II. Faith is...

A. [Hebrews 11:1 (NLT) Faith shows the **reality** of what we hope for; it is the **evidence** of things we cannot see. 2 Through their faith, the people in days of old earned a good reputation (*ESV commendation...from God*)]

1. Faith is a spiritual fact. It is believing in God and the Bible is true; it is proof to convince us about unseen hopes and realities.<sup>1</sup> Faith sees as real what the eyes can't see. E.g. we have faith when we turn the car key the car will start. Similarly, we have faith in God's Word, e.g., John 3:16.

2. Life App #1: Faith is the door to access God and walking daily by faith pleases Him.

## III. The universe was created by God.

A. [Vs 3 **By faith** we understand that **the entire universe was formed at God's command**, that what we now see did not come from anything that can be seen.] I.e., from nothing God created everything.

1. Def. universe: all that exists in time and space, the visible and invisible, the present and the eternal.<sup>3</sup> The universe includes the creation of the individual parts and the harmonious organization of the whole, and the continual oversight by God which maintains the universe throughout time.<sup>3</sup>

2. Heb. 11:3 references the 6 days of creation. [Genesis 1:1 (ESV) In the beginning, **God created the heavens and the earth.**] This is the starting place for true science. Since no one can replicate creation in an experiment there is no way to prove with absolute certainty the theories of people who don't believe in God as the Creator. Believers and unbelievers both have faith regarding origins; one believes God created everything and one believes nothing created everything.

3. I'm not a scientist there are only 2 options for the origin of the universe: (1) The universe was always here. Fewer scientists believe this. (2) It was created. Siri said, "the universe was formed 13.8 billion years ago in a rapid and massive expansion of space-time called the big bang." The question is who or what caused the Big Bang and why. Christians believe God is the Creator. Secular humanists believe the Big Bang created the universe and evolution took care of the rest.
4. Christian, particle physicist, Dr. Michael Strauss in his book, "The Creator Revealed." "The evidence that the big bang was God's method of creation makes people realize that the creator is a transcendent designer who cares for humanity." E.g., food production, oxygen to breath, gravity, function of the human body, etc.
5. Life App #2: Everyone has faith in the origin of the universe; Christians believe God is the Creator, unbelievers do not.

#### IV. Abel, a hero of faith

- A. [Vs 4 It was **by faith** that Abel brought a more **acceptable offering** to God than Cain did. **Abel's offering gave evidence that he was a righteous man**, and God showed his approval of his gifts. Although Abel is long dead, **he still speaks to us by his example of faith.**]
  1. Cain and Abel were Adam and Eve's sons. [Genesis 4:3-4 (ESV) Cain brought to the Lord an offering of the fruit of the ground, 4 and Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat portions. And the Lord had regard for Abel and his offering, 5 but for Cain and his offering he had no regard.]
  2. Why did God accept Abel's offering and reject Cain's? Abel's faith in God motivated his offering of a blood sacrifice for sin. It's reasonable to assume he was told about the animals that were killed to clothe God gave Adam and Eve and atone for their sin.
  3. Life App #3: God makes the rules about what we do to pay the penalty for sin. [Hebrews 9:22 (ESV)...**without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins.**] In the OT, animals were sacrificed for sin. Jesus was God's perfect and final sacrifice for sin. This is what makes Christianity different from all other religions. Religious substitutes (like Cain's offering) aren't enough.
  4. Life App #4: Jesus paid the penalty for our sins, thus making us righteous, i.e., right with God. [2 Cor. 5:21 (NLT) For **God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin**, so that we

could be made **right with God** (*ESV become the righteousness of God*) through Christ.

## V. Enoch, a hero of faith

A. [Vs 5 It was by **faith** that **Enoch was taken up to heaven without dying**—“**he disappeared** (was translated or suddenly removed<sup>3</sup>), **because God took him.**” For before he was taken up, he was known as a person who pleased God. 6 And it is impossible to please God without faith. Anyone who wants to come to him must believe that **God exists** and that **he rewards those who sincerely seek him.**] [Ge. 5:23-24 (NLT) ...**Enoch, walking in close fellowship with God. Then one day he disappeared, because God took him.**] A mortal man become immortal; God took him to heaven, and he never died because he pleased God by having faith in God and walked in close fellowship with God.

1. Maybe His faith in God made Him want a closer relationship with God. The closer He got to God the more He wanted to be with God. It seems to me the reason God created people was to have relationship, to enjoy being with them.
2. How does a person please God? (Vs. 6 And **\*it is impossible to please God without faith**. Anyone who wants to come to him must believe that **God exists** and that **\*he rewards those who sincerely seek him**. Enoch believed in God but he did more; he sincerely sought God. [Matthew 22:36–37 (NLT) “Teacher, which is the most important commandment...37 Jesus replied, “ ‘You must **love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind.**’] E.g. There’s a difference between someone who believes in God and goes to church on Sunday and someone who gets out of bed every day and says, ‘good morning Lord; what do you want me to do today?’ etc.
3. One day, lots of people will go to heaven without dying, Rapture, [1 Thes. 4:16–17 (NLT) the Lord...will come down from heaven with a...shout... 17... we who are still alive...will be **caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air...**]
4. Life App #5: The closer I walk with The Lord the better my life will be.

## VI. Conclusion: Summary of the lessons of heroes of faith

- A. Life App #1: Faith is the door to access God and walking daily by faith pleases Him.
- B. Life App #2: Everyone has faith in the origin of the universe; Christians believe God is the Creator, unbelievers do not.

C. Life App #3: God makes the rules about what we do to pay the penalty for sin.

D. Life App #4: Jesus paid the penalty for our sins, thus making us righteous, i.e., right with God.

E. Life App #5: The closer I walk with The Lord the better my life will be.

## VII. Response

A. Prayer

B. Souls

## VIII. Bibliography/ Resources: Logos Bible Software and Library, Platinum Edition, was used to prepare this message.

1. Hodges, Z. C. (1985). [Hebrews](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 807). Victor Books.
2. Ellingworth, P., & Nida, E. A. (1994). [A handbook on the Letter to the Hebrews](#) (p. 257). United Bible Societies.
3. Jamieson, R., Fausset, A. R., & Brown, D. (1997). [Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible](#) (Vol. 2, p. 470). Logos Research Systems, Inc.

## IX. Supplemental Material

A. Def. faith: Gk. Pistis: trust, confidence in God<sup>6</sup>; To believe God and His Word are true <sup>7</sup>; Faith means we obey God and act on what He says.<sup>8</sup> (See pt-2 bibliography)

B. Hebrews 1:2 (ESV)...in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, **through whom also he created the world.**

C. Abel's sacrifice was "more acceptable to God" because he offered his sacrifice by faith to make him righteous before God. Faith must have some revelation of God on which it fastens. The revelation in this case was doubtless God's command to sacrifice *animals* ("the firstlings of the flock") in token of the forfeiture of men's life by sin,...but a coat of skin put on Adam from a sacrificed animal typified the covering or atonement. <sup>3</sup>

D. Generally speaking, there are only two choices in how we can view the universe.

1) You have to attribute an eternal nature to the universe and creation. This has become less and less popular within the science community, as nearly

all evidence points to the fact that the universe had a beginning and more than likely has an expiration date. One of the more commonly known “eternal” views of the universe would be labeled the steady-state theory. This has become far less popular in the last 50 years.

2) The Big Bang theory is by far the most accepted and upheld theory to explain the beginning of the universe. This theory is simplified as an explosion that somehow brought forth all matter contained in the universe/universes and set them on course of expansion at the speed of light. Obviously, the explanations of how this explosion happened or where the subatomic matter came from are insufficient.

Interestingly, the big bang theory was first proposed by a Belgian scientist and Catholic priest named Georges Lemaitre in the 1920’s. He used mathematics and the rate of expansion of the universe to trace matter back to a single origination point. Most people of their day accepted that if there was a creation point, then the universe probably had a creator. For years, the big bang theory was rejected by the scientific community, because they believed it gave too much credibility to theism and the creation story, rather than naturalism. Since then, there has been a number of discoveries that align with his theory, and the scientific community has somewhat twisted his theory to support an atheistic worldview. I was never taught these things throughout my science degree.

I think many of these ideas serve as powerful arguments for the existence of God, rather than arguments against His existence. However, there are some creationists that will argue that science and the Big Bang are completely incompatible with the genesis account. I’m not so sure that’s true. The universe expanding at the speed of light in response to the word of God sounds like the Genesis account to me. It doesn’t have to take billions of years for this to be true.

Helge Kragh, a science historian and professor emeritus at the Niels Bohr Institute said, “The steady state theory was, especially in England, often associated with atheism, and the Big Bang theory with Christian theism.”

Here’s a quote from a Christian particle physicist at the University of

Oklahoma named, Dr. Michael G. Strauss in his book, “The Creator Revealed.”

"The evidence that the big bang was God's method of creation is compelling for many reasons. For instance, it reveals the very nature of God, just as Romans 1:20 says creation should. It doesn't just reveal God's character to those who already believe in him or to those who only look superficially at nature; it reveals the very nature of his character to those who study the universe in depth. It drives people to realize that the creator is a transcendent designer who cares for humanity. It leaves them truly without excuse because they have rejected the creator, not for the record of creation.”