

A Call to Follow Jesus Faithfully and with Perseverance

Hebrews 10:19-12:29

Persevering in Faith under Pressure

Hebrews 10:32-12:3

2. Faith and its many outstanding examples

Hebrews 11:1-40

b. Examples of those who lived, suffered, and died in faith as they relied on the strength of God's grace

Hebrews 11:4

1st Example is Abel

Note the following

1. Chapter 10 closed by encouraging us to live by faith which would protect against apostasy

2. Chapter 11 enlarges upon the nature and fruits of faith.

a. We studied verses 1-3 on the nature and honor of faith reflected on those who live by faith

b. In this lesson, we are going to look at the Old Testament examples of faith (4-38)

c. When we get to verses 39-40, we will see that the exercise of our faith gives us greater advantage than the Old Testament saints had.

Note: Tonight, we begin to look at examples of those who lived, suffered, and died in faith as they relied on the strength of God's grace (4-38)

i. Part One of the Examples of Faith is verses 4-31.

Note: The writer has given us a general account of the grace of faith, and now he proceeds to give examples of faith in Old-Testament times, which are divided into two classes.

i. Class One are those whose names are mentioned, and what they did by faith.

ii. Class Two are those whose names are barely mentioned.

1) In Class Two, the writer only gives a general account of the exploits of their faith

2) In Class Two, the reader has to research the names and deeds accomplished by faith.

3) In Class Two, you will find those whose names are not only mentioned, but the particular trials of their faith are simply added as a list.

1) The lessons of faith begins with Abel

Note the Scriptures which refer to the story of Abel

i. Hebrews 11:4

1) KJV...

By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh.

2) NLT...

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.

3) CE...

Because Abel had faith, he offered God a better sacrifice than Cain did. God was pleased with him and his gift, and even though Abel is now dead, his faith still speaks for him.

4) AMP...

[Prompted, actuated] by faith Abel brought God a better and more acceptable sacrifice than Cain, because of which it was testified of him that he was righteous [that he was upright and in right standing with God], and God bore witness by accepting *and* acknowledging his gifts. And though he died, yet [through the incident] he is still speaking.

ii. Genesis 4:1-13 (KJV)

1) And Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man from the Lord. 2) And she again bare his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. 3) And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord. 4) And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering: 5) But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell. 6) And the Lord said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen? 7) If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him. 8) And 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 slew him. 9) And the Lord said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not: Am I my brother's keeper? 10) And he said, What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground. 11) And now art thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand; 12) When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength; a fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth. 13) And Cain said unto the Lord, My punishment is greater than I can bear.

Note: Adam and Eve are not mentioned in this record of faith

- i. Why?
 - ii. For whatever reason, the Spirit of God did not see fit to comment on our 1st parents.
 - iii. We assume that God granted forgiveness to Adam and Eve
 - 1) He clothed them with skin of an animal, so we assume God taught them to sacrifice.
 - 2) God promised to Eve “a special seed” that would crush satan’s head.
 - 3) Evidently Adam and Eve taught their children how to sacrifice, or else Abel would not have known to bring a blood sacrifice for the covering of sin.
 - 4) We believe that God granted Adam and Eve grace if they would continue to follow His direction in animal sacrifice.
 - iv. The annals of faith begin with Abel
 - 1) Abel is identified as one of the first saints
 - 2) Abel is the first martyr for religion
 - 3) Abel is the only son of Adam to be identified as living by faith and dying in faith
 - 4) Abel is a fit pattern for the Jewish Christians to imitate, and for us to imitate as well
 - a) Abel by faith “offered up a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain” which means that he offered a more “full and perfect sacrifice.”

Note the Amplified... Prompted by faith Abel brought God a better and more acceptable sacrifice

- i) After the fall, God opened a new way for the children of men to return to Him in worship.
 - 1) This is the first instance recorded where fallen and sinful man came to worship God
 - 2) It is amazing that all intercourse between God and man had not been eliminated by the fall.
- ii) After the fall, God must be worshipped by sacrifices which required
 - 1) Confession of sin
 - 2) Desertion of sin

- 3) A profession of faith in a Redeemer who was to be a ransom for the souls of mankind.
- 4) Sacrifice was required because it takes blood to cover sin.

Note Hebrews 9:22...

And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.

- iii) We see how at the beginning there was and is a great difference in those who come to God.
 - 1) Here we see two people, brothers who went to worship God, yet there is a great difference in them and their worship.
 - 2) Cain was the oldest, yet Abel was preferred
 - 3) We need to understand it is not seniority of birth, nor talent, but grace that makes men honorable.
 - 4) You can observe the difference in their persons
 - a) Abel was an upright person, a righteous man, a true believer;
 - b) Cain was a formalist who had not a principle of special grace.
 - 5) You can observe the difference in their principles
 - a) Abel acted under the power of faith
 - b) Cain acted from the force of education, or natural conscience.
 - 6) There is a noticeable difference in their offerings
 - a) Abel brought a sacrifice of atonement, and in doing so, he was acknowledging himself to be a sinner who deserved to die with the only hoping for mercy being through the great sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

Note Genesis 4:4...Abel “brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof.”

Note: By offering sacrifices, the Old Testament saints were looking forward to “The Sacrifice, which was Christ Jesus,” and Paul, in Ephesians 4:8-10, emphasized that Christ went into the depths of the earth and brought forth captives out of captivity so that Paradise would be above in heaven, not in the depths of the earth.

- b) Cain brought
 - i) Only a sacrifice of acknowledgment
 - ii) Only a mere thank-offering
 - iii) According to Genesis 4:3 an offering of “the fruit of the ground”
 - 1] In Cain’s offering, there was no confession of sin
 - 2] In Cain’s offering, there was no regard to the ransom

Note: A ransom had to be paid to get someone out of slavery. Therefore, the ransom required blood, and the fruit of the ground was not a high enough price to pay the ransom. Christ paid the ultimate ransom with His blood when He offered Himself for all mankind.

Note this comment from Dake’s Annotated Reference Bible, concerning Cain’s offering.

“A product of the curse could not remove the curse. In Numbers 18:12-14 and Leviticus 27, the fruits of the ground were accepted as tithes and offerings to support the ministry, but they could not picture the atonement of Calvary or been a sin offering” since Hebrews 9:22 says that blood is required for forgiveness of sin.

- 7) There will always be a difference in those who worship God
 - a) Some will approach God with lies
 - b) Others will be faithful like the saints mentioned in Hebrews 11
 - c) Some, like the Pharisee, will lean to their own righteousness
 - d) Others, like the publican, will confess their sin, and cast themselves upon the mercy of God in Christ.

Note: How do you approach God with your worship?

- b) Now, let us notice what Abel gained by his faith

Note: Genesis 4:4 tells us that “God had respect to Abel, and to his offering.”

- i. With respect, God was gracious to Abel’s person.
- ii. With respect, God showed grace to Abel because of his offering
- iii. With respect, God honored Abel because of his offering which was done in faith.

iv. Abel in offering his sacrificed gained by faith some special advantages.

Note: If we respond in faith, do we get special advantages with God?

1st. Hebrews 11:4 tells us that Abel obtained Witness that he was righteous

1] Righteous means a person that is justified, sanctified, and accepted

2] When God accepted Abel's sacrifice, there had to be something visible so that Cain and Abel knew that Cain's sacrifice was rejected and Abel's was accepted

a] Some think Abel's sacrifice was consumed by fire from heaven signifying God's acceptance of Abel's sacrifice and of Abel.

b] Other's think that when Cain offered his sacrifice, that the smoke from the fire settled down around the sacrifice showing God's displeasure

c] On the other hand, the smoke from Abel's sacrifice and offering ascended in a straight line into heaven as if God inhaled or breathed in the smoke and aroma of a sacrifice that pleased him.

d] Regardless of how it was done, both Abel and Cain knew Abel's offering was accepted and Cain's offering was rejected.

2nd. God gave witness to the righteousness of Abel by testifying of His acceptance of Abel's blood offering.

Note: When the fire, an emblem of God's justice, consumed the offering, it was a sign that the mercy of God accepted the offerer for the sake of the great sacrifice.

Note: Does this have anything to do with being baptized with the Holy Ghost and fire?

3rd. Hebrews 4:4 tells us that "by it (his example of faith) Abel being dead yet speaketh," and so we learn the following from Abel's example .

Note these thoughts.

i. Abel had the honor of leaving behind an instructive speaking case of faith.

ii. What does Abel's faith say to us?

iii. What should we learn from Abel?

iv. Name someone who has died, but yet speaks to you, and what is their message.

- 1] That fallen man can worship God with hope of acceptance.
- 2] That when we and our gifts are accepted, it is through faith in Christ
- 3] That acceptance with God is a peculiar and distinguishing favor.
- 4] That those who obtain this favor from God must expect the envy and malice of the world.
- 5] That God will not suffer the injuries done to his people to remain unpunished, nor their sufferings unrewarded.

Note: Great comments, but “the blood of sprinkling speaketh better things than that of Abel.”

i. What does the “blood of sprinkling” mean?

ii. 1st Peter 1:2

1) KJV...

Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.

2) CE...

God the Father decided to choose you as his people, and his Spirit has made you holy. You have obeyed Jesus Christ and are sprinkled with his blood. I pray that God will be kind to you and will keep on giving you peace!

3) NLT...

God the Father knew you and chose you long ago, and his Spirit has made you holy. As a result, you have obeyed him and have been cleansed by the blood of Jesus Christ. May God give you more and more grace and peace.

iii. Hebrew 12:24

1) KJV...

And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.

2) CE...

And Jesus is here! He is the one who makes God’s new agreement with us, and his sprinkled blood says much better things than the blood of Abel.

iv. Comment from Biblegateway.com about the sprinkling of the blood in 1st Peter 1:2

According to Exodus 24.3-8 the people of Israel were sprinkled with the blood of cows to show they would keep their agreement with God. Peter says that it is the blood of Jesus that seals the agreement between God and his people.

Note Hebrews 9:18-22 in the Nlt...

18) That is why even the first covenant was put into effect with the blood of an animal. 19) For after Moses had read each of God's commandments to all the people, he took the blood of calves and goats, along with water, and sprinkled both the book of God's law and all the people, using hyssop branches and scarlet wool. 20) Then he said, "This blood confirms the covenant God has made with you." 21) And in the same way, he sprinkled blood on the Tabernacle and on everything used for worship. 22) In fact, according to the law of Moses, nearly everything was purified with blood. For without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness.

6] That God would not suffer Abel's faith to die with him

a] God would raise up others who would obtain like precious faith

b] Our faith does not die with us, and God raises up others who have the same "like precious faith."

c] Whose faith has impacted you to raise like precious faith in you, and who will follow you with "like precious faith."