

I. Lesson: The Better Reward (Hebrews 11)

A. Faith Defined (11:1)

The writer defines faith the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen. This definition suggests that faith holds on to the intangible and sees the invisible. In other words, faith recognizes the reality and presence of that which has not arrived. But what should the believer be expecting? What often gets missed in these discussions of this definition is the focus on the promise of the heavenly coming to earth through Jesus. This is the ultimate promise to which all other promises give witness. One cannot just have faith for something God has not promised. Faith, real faith, points to the coming together of all things through Jesus Christ.

B. Faith Demonstrated (11:2-38)

1. Faith has been demonstrated by seeing beyond the current problem to something better.
 - a. We understand creation through faith; Abel's offering and blood; Enoch was translated; Noah built the ark; Abraham moved, he and Sarah brought forth Isaac, offered Isaac; Isaac blessed blessings on Jacob and Esau; Jacob blessed the sons of Joseph; Joseph mentioned the exodus and told the people to take his bones; Moses was persevered, left Pharaoh's house, left Egypt, kept the Passover, led the people through the Red Sea; The walls of Jericho fell; Rahab protected the spies; Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, and Samuel all displayed powerful faith in various ways. They conquered kingdoms, established justice, were delivered from lions, put out fires, overcame the sword, defeated armies, and received healing.
 - b. Faith also required people to suffer from mocking, flogging, imprisonments, being stoned to death, cut into two, hiding for one's own life, and all other sorts of persecutions.

C. Faith and our Destiny (11:39-40)

All these stories were known by the congregation of the writer and are known to us, but the lesson often got lost. They maintained their confidence in God despite all the trouble they endured with the hope of something they did not see. The promise they were looking for was the Deliverer, the Messiah, the Great High Priest. They did not receive the promise because the time of perfection, the day of the resurrection, would unite all the people of God.