



STUDENT NOTES

Hebrews 11:1-3, 8-16

July 25, August 1, August 8..., 2021 THESE VERSES WILL CONTINUE AT LEAST THREE WEEKS

Hebrews 11:1-3. The assurance of things hoped for

1. Now faith is assurance of things hoped for, proof of things not seen. 2. For by this, the elders obtained testimony. 3. By faith, we understand that the universe has been framed by the word of God, so that what is seen has not been made out of things which are visible.

1a. "Now faith is assurance of things hoped for

The Greek word for "assurance" has various meanings. The one most appropriate here is not assurance, but reality. For believers, faith is knowing the reality of things for which they can only hope now. For believers that reality, though only a matter of hope today, is so real that they can almost reach out and touch it.

1b. "proof of things not seen

For believers, faith leads to certainty of things not yet seen. Faith is the certainty that they will be seen.

2. "For by this, the elders obtained testimony"

The Greek word for elders is where we get our word Presbyterian. A *presbyteros* is an older person whose maturity and experience fit him/her for leadership. **(IT'S NICE TO KNOW I HAVE A GREEK DISCRIMINATIVE WORD TO LIVE UP TO)**

3a. "By faith, we understand that the universe has been framed by the word of God

In this context, universe is a good translation that encompasses all that is—both time and space.

3b. "so that what is seen has not been made out of things which are visible

Those who believe in God sometimes speak of creation out of nothing. Genesis says, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Genesis 1:1), which leads us to believe that the first step in creation was God making something out of nothing

Then Genesis says, "Now the earth was formless and empty. Darkness was on the surface of the deep" (Genesis 1:2). At this point, there was something—something had come into being by a prior step—by God's creative power.

YOUR THOUGHTS?

Hebrews 11:4-7. The faith of abel and enoch

(JUST FOR READING AND DISCUSSION IN CLASS WITHOUT COMMENTARY: WHAT ARE YOUR THOUGHTS ABOUT THE PEOPLE IN THESE VERSES?).

4 By faith, Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he had testimony given to him that he was righteous, God testifying with respect to his gifts; and through it he, being dead, still speaks. 5 By faith, Enoch was taken away, so that he wouldn't see death, and he was not found, because God translated him. For he has had testimony given to him that before his translation he had been well pleasing to God. 6 Without faith it is impossible to be well pleasing to him, for he who comes to God must believe that he exists, and that he is a rewarder of those who seek him. 7 By faith, Noah, being warned about things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, prepared a ship for the saving of his house, through which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.

Hebrews 11:8-12. The faith of abraham and sarah

8. By faith, Abraham, when he was called, obeyed to go out to the place which he was to receive for an inheritance. He went out, not knowing where he went. 9. By faith, he lived as an alien in the land of promise, as in a land not his own, dwelling in tents, with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise. 10. For he looked for the city which has the foundations, whose builder and maker is God. 11. By faith, even Sarah herself received power to conceive, and she bore a child when she was past age, since she counted him faithful who had promised. 12. Therefore as many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as innumerable as the sand which is by the sea shore, were fathered by one man, and him as good as dead.

8. “By faith, Abraham, when he was called, obeyed to go out to the place which he was to receive for an inheritance. He went out, not knowing where he went

God’s command to Abram (Abraham’s original name) was “Get out of your country, and from your relatives, and from your father’s house, to the land that I will show you” (Genesis 12:1). God didn’t give Abram a road map or a GPS destination.

I’m fascinated that Abram’s first act of obedience was simply to step onto the road that led to wherever.

9a. “By faith, he lived as an alien in the land of promise, as in a land not his own

The land where Abram ended up was Canaan, later to be known as the Promised Land (Genesis 12:5-6)—but Abraham experienced Canaan only as an alien, not as a citizen.

9b. “dwelling in tents, with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise

Tents served as shelter for nomadic herdsman, who required grazing land and water for their animals. Sheep bite the grass close to the ground, and have a reputation for being hard on pasture lands. A herdsman would need to move to new pastures with some frequency, so dwelling in tents would be a natural solution to their housing problem.

10. “For he looked for the city which has the foundations, whose builder and maker is God

As is still true today, at least in some circles, people of that day associated cities with immorality and evil. In Israel, Jerusalem was supposed to be an exception. Jerusalem housed the temple—the dwelling

place of God. But Jesus' opposition was centered in Jerusalem, and he was crucified there. Evil forces congregate in cities—even the Holy City.

But the author of Hebrews tells us that Abraham looked for another kind of city—a truly spiritual city, designed and established by God.

AS WE PROGRESS IN THIS CHAPTER, The author will talk about “the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem” (12:22).

I SELDOM TEACH FROM REVELATION...BUT...I LOVE THIS THOUGHT: The book of Revelation fleshes out that idea more fully. Babylon is depicted as a strong city, but one under God's judgment. It will be thrown down by violence (Revelation 18:19). This contrasts with “the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from my God” (Revelation 3:12). The author of Revelation “saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared like a bride adorned for her husband, (and) heard a loud voice out of heaven saying,

“Behold, God's dwelling is with people,
and he will dwell with them,
and they will be his people,
and God himself will be with them as their God.
He will wipe away from them every tear from their eyes.
Death will be no more;
neither will there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain, any more.
The first things have passed away” (Revelation 21:2-4).

11. “By faith, even Sarah herself received power to conceive, and she bore a child when she was past age, since she counted him faithful who had promised

I don't know about you, but I am surprised to read that Sarah counted God as faithful. **Here's why:**

When three strangers visited Abraham and Sarah, they promised Abraham that Sarah would bear a son. Sarah overheard that conversation, and responded by laughing. She said, “After I have grown old will I have pleasure, my lord being old also?” When God asked Abraham, “Why did Sarah laugh? ...Is anything too hard for Yahweh?” Sarah was afraid and said, “I didn't laugh.” But God said, “Oh, but you did laugh” (Genesis 18:1-15).

But God blessed Sarah with a son anyway. She bore Isaac anyway. She had a son in her old age anyway. When Isaac was born, Sarah said, “God has made me laugh. Everyone who hears will laugh with me.... Who would have said to Abraham, that Sarah would nurse children? For I have borne him a son in his old age” (Genesis 21:6-7).

12. “Therefore as many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as innumerable as the sand which is by the sea shore, were fathered by one man, and him as good as dead

How many stars are there? CARL SAGAN registered his count at “Billions, and Billions, and Billions of stars.”

Before the advent of electric light, the skies would have not have been obscured by light, so a person viewing the sky on a clear night would have seen stars beyond counting and SAGAN WOULD BE AND IS CORRECT.

How many grains of sand are there on the world's sea shores? It would be impossible to count even the grains of sand on a single sea shore. Stars and sand, therefore, represent abundance beyond measure.

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The Lord bless us and keep us;
The Lord make his face to shine on us
The Lord be gracious to us
and give us peace.

Numbers 6:24-26