

## Hebrews 11 – Faith of our Fathers

**Hebrews 11** is a well-known chapter in the letter to the Hebrews and is often called the “faith chapter” of the New Testament.. The chapter opens with a definition of faith as being **“the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.”** Verse 6 tells us that **“without faith it is impossible to please”** God. All of us must believe in His existence and that He rewards all of us who **“diligently seek Him.”**

There are a number of heroes of faith that are spoken about in the following verses: **Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses and Rahab** – all praised because of their faith and their actions because of their faith. Then there are those who are mentioned, but their story is not told. These were people well-known to the Hebrew writer’s readers, but need some explanation for us, especially those who were not so recognizable:

**Gideon:** The leader of the Hebrew forces who started with 32,000 men and led the assault against Midian with only 300 of them. His faith in God’s power to bring about a great victory against overwhelming odds. (**Judges 7**)

**Barak:** The leader of the Hebrew forces under their judge Deborah. He, with God’s strength and leadership, defeated the mighty Canaanite Sisera. (**Judges 4 and 5**)

**Samson:** Who, with God’s strength, killed many a Philistine, **but “the dead that he killed at his death were more than he had killed in his life”** as he pulled their temple down upon himself. (**Judges 13-16**)

**Jephthah:** The judge of Israel who led forces against Ammon. He made a vow to the Lord to sacrifice whatever was the first thing to come out of his house after the Lord gave him a victory. His daughter, however, was the first. Instead of reneging on his vow, he stated in **Judges 11:35: “I have given my word to the LORD, and I cannot go back on it.”** He did sacrifice her, and was given additional victories after that. (**Judges 11 and 12**)

We are familiar enough with the last two, **David and Samuel**, so additional information about their faith and actions because of that faith is unnecessary. However, the statement made by the Hebrew writer concerning all of the faithful in Hebrew history is noteworthy:

**“...through faith (they) conquered kingdoms, administered justice, and gained what was promised; who shut the mouths of lions, quenched the fury of the flames, and escaped the edge of the sword; whose weakness was turned to strength; and who became powerful in battle and routed foreign armies. Women received back their dead, raised to life again. There were others who were tortured, refusing to be released so that they might gain an even better resurrection. Some faced jeers and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment. They were put to death by stoning; they were sawed in two; they were killed by**

***the sword. They went about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, persecuted and mistreated—the world was not worthy of them. They wandered in deserts and mountains, living in caves and in holes in the ground.” (Hebrews 11:33-38)***

Faith is indispensable. I doubt our faith will be tested like the faith of these, but it will be tested nonetheless. It is imperative that our faith remain strong and lead us to serve God in every way he directs us. He will give us the strength to do all He asks. Believe it!

---Johnny

Stephens