

# Hebrews Chapters 11 and Faith

## by Karl Kemp; February, 2015

All quotations were taken from the New American Standard Bible, 1995 edition, unless otherwise noted. Sometimes I make comments in the middle of quotations using brackets [ ] or [[ ]] to make them more obvious. I am using straight quotation marks ("), hyphens (-) instead of dashes, and a few other things like this because some of the internet sites where I post these articles require it. Also they don't allow footnotes. Cf., e.g., means "compare, for example."

INTRODUCTION. We can learn a lot about faith from Hebrews chapter 11. For one thing, the word faith is used twenty-five times. The use of the word faith in this chapter strongly confirms that faith is something we do, but not something we do apart from the grace of God; for one thing, we respond to, and cooperate with, the grace of God by faith. God must receive all of the glory for every aspect of our salvation! (See my "A Paper on Faith" that is on my internet site [Google to Karl Kemp Teaching].) I should mention the tie to the last verses of chapter 10, where the readers are exhorted to press on in faith to the end, so that they may preserve their souls and receive their heavenly rewards.

Some years ago when I was doing a verse-by-verse study of Hebrews chapter 11, I came up with a definition for the word faith, based on its use in this chapter: Faith is an attitude of the heart where we put God first (and the things associated with God), which includes trusting Him, believing what He says, and obeying Him. This definition doesn't tell us all we need to know about the meaning of the word "faith" in the New Testament, but it is very helpful. I believe that this definition covers all twenty-five uses of the word faith in Hebrews chapter 11, in the other eight uses of the word in the book of Hebrews, and most of the other two hundred and five uses in the rest of the New Testament. (The Greek noun "pistis" is translated "faith" 238 times in the NASB; it is also translated "faithfulness" three times; "pledge" one time; and "proof" one time.)

I'll quote and briefly discuss the other eight uses of the word faith in the book of Hebrews before we start Hebrews chapter 11:

HEBREWS 4:2. **"For indeed we have had good news** [the good news of the gospel of new-covenant salvation] **preached to us, just as they also** [[referring to the people of Israel who were not able to enter the promised land because of their unbelief and disobedience (see Heb. 3:7-4:13); they didn't hear the fullness of the good news of the gospel of new-covenant salvation in their day, but they needed to submit by faith to the word that God gave them and obey that word]]; **but the word they heard did not profit them, because it was not united by FAITH in** [or, with] **those who heard."** We must take God's Word into our hearts and act on it as required, by grace through faith. The writer is exhorting his original Christian readers with the need for them (and all Christians) to have

faith in God and His Word, a faith that perseveres. We must (we have the privilege to) be united with God and His Word by grace through faith. We cannot have faith in God's Word without having faith in Him; and if we have faith in Him, we will trust Him and obey Him. Faith includes making God and His Word the top priority in our hearts and lives.

**HEBREWS 6:1. "Therefore leaving the elementary teaching about the Christ, let us press on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance and of FAITH toward God, (2) ...."**

**HEBREWS 6:12. "so that you will not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through FAITH and patience [we must continue in faith with patience] inherit the promises [the things promised]."**

**HEBREWS 10:22. "Let us draw near [to God] with a full assurance of FAITH, having our hearts [faith is of the heart (cf., e.g., Mark 11:23; we must resist doubting in our hearts)] sprinkled *clean* from an evil conscience and our bodies washed in pure water."** Our conscience must be clean for us to have a "full assurance of faith" before God. To have a clean conscience we must know that we are forgiven, that we have repented as required, and that we are committed to walk in the truth, righteousness, and holiness of God by His enabling grace in Christ.

**HEBREWS 10:35-39.** (See under these verses in my paper on Hebrews chapters 8-10 on my internet site [Google to Karl Kemp Teaching].): **"Therefore do not throw away your confidence [confidence comes with faith], which has a great reward [heaven and all that comes with it, including being glorified and beginning to reign with the Lord Jesus in a never-ending reign]. (36) For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God [by grace through faith], you many receive what was promised [heaven and all that comes with it]. (37) 'For yet in a very little while, He who is coming [The Lord Jesus is coming to save and to judge.] will come, and will not delay. [Hab. 2:3] (38) But [And] my righteous one shall live by FAITH [[The Greek has the words translated "by faith" before the verb translated "shall live" and this is important here. The writer of Hebrews is taking these words from Hab. 2:4 in the sense that because of the faith of the righteous ones [those who are righteous and stay faithful to God by grace through faith] they "shall live," that is, they will be glorified and inherit the fullness of eternal life when the Lord Jesus returns. They will not suffer the fate of "those who shrink back to destruction [eternal death]" (Heb. 10:39). (There is widespread agreement that the words "will [or, shall] live" in the context of Hab. 2:4 prophesy of living before God instead of being removed by judgment.)"**

We have spiritual/eternal life now as born-again Christians, but we will not inherit, or be born into, the fullness of eternal life until the Lord Jesus returns ((cf., e.g., 1 Tim. 6:12, 19; Titus 3:5; and Rev. 12:5 [This verse (and other verses)

speaks of our being born into the fullness of eternal life; see on Rev. 12:5 in my book "The Mid-Week Rapture" and my recently published e-book, "Introduction to the Mid-Week Rapture," which should be read first (both books are available at amazon.com))).]; **And [But] if he shrinks back** [instead of pressing on by faith], **my soul** [God says] **has no pleasure in him.**' [Those who shrink back will, as the next verse shows, participate in "destruction [eternal death]," not in the glories of spiritual/eternal life in heaven.] **(39) But we are not of those who shrink back to destruction** [which is the opposite of being saved by the grace of God in Christ], **but of those who have FAITH** [faith in God and His Word, which includes trusting Him, believing what He says, and obeying Him] **to the preserving of the soul.**" To preserve your soul is to not lose your soul to eternal death (cf., e.g., Matt. 16:26; James 1:21 [on James 1:21 see pages 12-14 of my paper "Spirit and Soul" that is on my internet site]; James 5:20).

HEBREWS 12:1, 2. (These verses are discussed in more detail in my "A Paper on Faith," which is on my internet site): **"Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us** [referring to those spoken of throughout Hebrews chapter 11. They all persisted in faith to the end of the race and made it to heaven.], **let us also lay aside every encumbrance** [or, weight] **and the sin which so easily entangles us** [Every encumbrance or weight makes it more difficult to run the race, but sin causes more serious problems for those running the race. It causes runners to stumble and fall, which is dangerous for those running the race.], **let us run with endurance the race set before us** [persisting/enduring in faith to the end of the race with a top priority by the saving, sanctifying grace of God in Christ against the opposition of the world, the flesh (the old man who wants to continue in sin), and the devil and his hosts], **(2) fixing our eyes on Jesus** [[We care about the great cloud of witnesses, but "[we fix] our eyes on Jesus," who is the perfect example of a man (the God-man) perfectly running the race and who is the only One (God the Son, the Lamb of God, our High Priest, our Savior and Lord) who can enable us to rightly run our race and finish the race that ends in glory. For one thing, He is "a forerunner for us." I'll quote Heb. 6:19, 20: "This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, a *hope* both sure and steadfast and one which enters within the veil [into the presence of God, beyond the veil], (20) where Jesus has entered as a forerunner for us, having become a high priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek [cf. Psalm 110:4; Heb. 2:17; 5:6]."], **the author** [In the margin the NASB says, "or, leader." I would translate "**leader**" or "**pioneer**," which fits the context of running the race, and many commentators agree (cf. Heb. 6:19, 20, quoted above).] **and perfecter of faith** [[First and foremost, He is the perfecter of faith in that He perfectly ran and finished the race by faith. I say this because this is what the writer of Hebrews goes on to speak of in the rest of verse 2 and in verse 3. But also, He is able to make us strong in faith and victorious in every area as we appropriate the sufficient saving, sanctifying grace of God in Christ through faith. I'll quote a sentence from F. F. Bruce (New International Commentary on Hebrews): Not only is Jesus the pioneer of faith; in Him faith has reached its perfection."]. **Who for the joy set before Him** [[This speaks of the joy set before Jesus that would result from His fully accomplishing the Father's will, especially referring to His atoning death. First we should think of the joy of knowing that He had done the Father's will. But also, He knew that by doing the Father's

will He would be saving God's people (all believers) and that He would be causing the overthrow of sin, of Satan and his followers, and of death (spiritual death and physical death).] **endured the cross** [It would be difficult, if not impossible, to overstate the difficulty of this assignment, especially in the spiritual dimension.], **despising the shame** [[I would translate "disregarding the shame" (see the BAGD Greek Lexicon on "kataphroneo"). We must keep our hearts fixed on the eternal glory reserved for us at the end of our race. The trials of this age, which are very real, are very small in comparison to the eternal glory reserved for us. To keep our eyes fixed on Jesus and the eternal glory reserved for us is part of what it means to walk by faith. Compare, for example, Rom. 8:17-39; 2 Cor. 4:16-5:10]], **and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.**" When we are glorified we will begin to reign with Christ Jesus (and the One who sent Him) in a never-ending reign (cf. Rev. 3:21; 22:5).

HEBREWS 13:7. **"Remember those who led you, who spoke the word of God to you; and considering the result ["outcome" (NIV; NKJV)] of their conduct, imitate their faith."** Those leaders stayed faithful in their lives and ministries and ended up in heaven by grace through faith. The original recipients of this epistle (and all of us) are being exhorted to imitate their faith. Their faith included having an attitude where they put God first (and the things associated with God), including trusting Him, believing what He said, and obeying Him.

NOW WE'LL GO ON TO A VERSE-BY-VERSE STUDY OF HEBREWS CHAPTER 11:

**"Now FAITH is the assurance** [[or, confidence; in the margin the NASB has, "or, substance"; the KJV and NKJV have "substance"; "Now faith is being sure of what we hope for" (NIV). The same Greek noun ("hupostasis") is translated "assurance" by the NASB in Heb. 3:14, "For we have become partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our assurance until the end." The NIV; KJV; and NKJV have "confidence" in Heb. 3:14. This Greek noun is used five times in the New Testament. The NASB translates "assurance" two times; "confidence" two times (2 Cor. 9:4; 11:17); and "nature" one time (Heb. 1:3; the NIV has "being" in Heb. 1:3; the KJV and NKJV have "person").

I believe the translation "assurance" or "confidence" or the equivalent was intended here (and in Heb. 3:14; 2 Cor. 9:4 and 11:17). If we translated "substance" or "reality," which I wouldn't, the idea would probably be that our faith in God and His Word enables us to see as real the things we have not seen, the things we hope for. (With this translation for "hupostasis" we have to supply a few words like "[faith] enables us to see [the reality]"; and see the added words supplied in the following sentence. I'll quote part of what Phillip E. Hughes ("A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews" [Eerdmans, 1977], page 439) says on this point: "...faith lays hold of what is promised and therefore hoped for, as something real and solid, though as yet unseen." (As I mentioned, I believe the translation "assurance" or "confidence" or the equivalent was intended here and in Heb. 3:14; 2 Cor. 9:4 and 11:17.) I'll quote part of what Hughes says on the meaning "confident assurance" for "hupostasis": "in the

sense of [Heb.] 3:14...and 2 Corinthians 9:4 and 11:17. It is the meaning favored here by Erasmus ('certitude'), the Reformers, and most modern commentators, and reflected in our version [the RSV] ('faith is the assurance of things hoped for') and Phillips [in his translation] ('faith means putting our full confidence in the things we hope for'). Of the three [possibilities Hughes lists, he says] this ["confident assurance"] is the most satisfactory...."

Faith doesn't make the things hoped for real [God makes them real, in accordance with His promises], but faith enables us to see them as real, which they are, based on the reality of God and His Word. Faith in God and His Word, which includes trusting and obeying Him, enables us to have the assurance/confidence "of things hoped for" because those who have faith in God know that He told us the truth regarding the things we hope for, especially referring to the eternal glory we will inherit, and by faith in God we know that He is well able to do what needs to be done for us to receive, at the right time, the things we hope for (the things that He promised). The word "hope" does not infer doubt in a context like this (like the word "hope" typically does in our day: "I hope it doesn't rain"), but the things we hope for are, by definition, future. We don't hope for things we already have (cf. Rom. 8:24, 25), but it is biblical to say that in a very real sense we have them now by faith.

"Hupostasis" is used in a totally different context in Heb. 1:3: "And He [the Lord Jesus] is the radiance of His [God the Father's] glory and the exact representation of His nature ["hupostasis"], and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high." The NASB translates "nature"; the NIV translates "being"; the KJV and NKJV translate "person."]] **of things hoped for** [[The things we hope for are the things God promised in His Word. The primary thing we hope for is eternal glory (cf., e.g., Heb. 10:34-39; 11:10, 13-16, 26, 35; Col. 1:5, 27; Titus 3:7). However, as Hebrews chapter 11 confirms, throughout this present life we receive by grace, through faith, everything we need to live and accomplish the will of God for our lives, with an emphasis on living in His truth, righteousness, and holiness, with the victory over sin (in the ideal case the victory over all sin). I should mention that the believers discussed in this chapter, who all lived in the days before the cross, still had to wait for the sin problem to be solved by the Lamb of God (cf. Heb. 11:39, 40).]], **the conviction** [In the margin has, "or, evidence." For those who have faith in God, His Word is super-solid, incontrovertible "evidence" of the truth/reality.] **of things not seen.** [The "things not seen" here include the "things hoped for" mentioned earlier in this verse. We can have a rock-solid, incontrovertible "conviction" regarding the things not yet seen, things like God's New Jerusalem (cf. 11:13-16), because we have God's Word telling us that these things are real. By faith we can, in a very real sense, see the unseen (cf., e.g., 11:7, 13, 27; 2 Cor. 4:18; 5:7).]] **(2) For by it [FAITH] men of old gained [God's] approval.** [[See 11:39. The NIV has: "This is what the ancients were commended for." They pleased God by faith and He rewarded them (cf. 11:6). These words confirm that saving faith is something

that people do, not something that God gives us; but faith does not earn God's grace, and it is nothing for man to boast about. We receive and cooperate with grace through faith.]] **(3) By FAITH we understand that the worlds** ["universe" (NIV); F. F. Bruce says, "literally ages; in both places [Heb. 1:2 with 11:3] the universe of space and time is meant."] **were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible.** [[All things that exist (including the cherubim, angels, etc.) were created by God, including physical matter. He, the Creator, our God, the God of the Bible has the authority and power to do what He says He will do, including saving His people, the ones who submit to Him and live for Him by faith. Here we have an illustration of being able to see the unseen by faith. Since the Bible informs us that God created the world by His Word (Genesis chapter 1), and since we have faith in God and His Word, we can know about God's creating the world. We can see, for example, that this present physical world is subsequent to, inferior to, and less substantial than God's invisible kingdom (at least it is invisible to us now). This world is also temporary, unlike God's eternal kingdom.]] **(4) By FAITH Abel offered to God a better sacrifice than Cain** [[Abel offered an acceptable sacrifice, a sacrifice that was pleasing to God, because he was a man of faith; he didn't just have faith when he made the offering. He lived his life with God and His will being top priority. Cain, on the other hand, was not a man of faith. Having faith includes having a right heart attitude toward God, an attitude of submission/putting God first. As Hebrews chapter 11 shows, faith includes trusting Him, believing Him, and obeying Him. Genesis 4:5-9 show that Cain's heart was not right toward God; his actions demonstrated this. I'll quote Gen. 4:7a from the NIV: "If you do what is right, will you not be accepted?" He didn't show any signs of checking up on himself, or repenting, when God rejected his offering, or even when God warned him that sin was ready to devour him; instead, he killed his brother ((cf. 1 John 3:12 ("not as Cain, who was of the evil one and slew this brother. And for what reason did he slay him? Because his deeds were evil, and his brother's were righteous."); Prov. 15:8 ("The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD [Yahweh], but the prayer of the upright is His delight.")). Then Cain lied to God and spoke disrespectfully to Him (Gen. 4:9).

Some say that God rejected Cain's sacrifice because it was not a blood/animal sacrifice; it is possible that this was a factor in God's rejection, but I rather strongly doubt it. There is no evidence that a blood sacrifice was required, or that this was a sin offering. I assume it was appropriate for Cain to bring an offering "of the fruit of the ground" since he was "a tiller of the soil" (Gen. 4:2, 3). But God doesn't accept offerings from those who don't first give Him their heart; in other words, it must be an offering of faith, like Abel's was.]], **through which he obtained the testimony that he was righteous, God testifying about his gifts** [[God testified about Abel's gifts by accepting them. God may have manifested His acceptance of Abel's sacrifice by consuming it by fire from heaven. God wouldn't have accepted his offering if Abel wasn't "righteous" (cf. Matt. 23:35) by faith. Genesis 4:4 says, "And the Lord had regard for Abel and

for his offering." These words, along with the words "he obtained the testimony that he was righteous" confirm that the life of Abel is in view, not just his offering. Also note Gen. 4:5, "but for Cain and for his offering He had no regard."

Quite often, as here (and see Heb. 11:7, 33; 12:23), believers from pre-Christian days are called "righteous." By faith they lived relatively righteous lives, but I'm sure that each one of them will testify that they are dependent on the salvation from sin (that includes receiving the imputed and imparted righteousness of God in Christ) that comes only through new-covenant salvation. See 11:39, 40. We will discuss these verses as we continue, and these verses are discussed in my "A Paper on Faith." That paper deals extensively with the use of the word faith in the New Testament. It is one of the most important words used to speak of new-covenant salvation. It is the most important word used to describe our role. Faith is something we do in response to God's saving, sanctifying grace, but we couldn't have faith without God's taking the initiative in our salvation and through His enabling grace being provided on a continuous basis. He must receive all the glory for our salvation from the beginning to the end!]], **and through FAITH, though he is dead, he still speaks** [[For one thing, faith in God brings people into the eternal dimension; they become part of the family of God's people; such people never really die - they live! One thing he says as he speaks is that God always takes care of those who submit to Him and walk before Him in faith.]] **(5) By FAITH Enoch was taken up so that he should not see death; AND HE WAS NOT FOUND BECAUSE GOD TOOK HIM UP** [See Gen. 5:21-24.]; **for he obtained the witness that before his being taken up he was well pleasing to God.** [This mention of Enoch's being "well pleasing to God" comes from the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Old Testament) at Gen. 5:24.] **(6) And without FAITH it is impossible to please Him** [[The writer of Hebrews just told us that Enoch was "well pleasing" to God. Now he tells us that this proves Enoch was a man of faith, because "without faith it is impossible to please Him." These words demonstrate the importance of, and necessity for, God's people to walk in faith. It is vitally important for us to understand faith, and for us to continually walk in faith.]], **for he who comes to God must believe that He is** [[We certainly can't have faith in God without the full assurance that He exists. Some of us start from a place of not being sure that God exists, but as we begin to cooperate with His grace through fellowship with His people, through getting into His Word, through prayer, etc., we come to the assurance of His existence, and more.]], **and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.** [[Every true Christian must know that God rewards those who seek Him (in faith). Some of the primary things we must seek Him for are the new birth; His wisdom, including learning the balanced truth of what His Word teaches; and the authority and power to live in His righteousness and holiness and to accomplish His will for our lives. These things are "rewards," and there are many other rewards as He provides everything we need for this life; however, the primary reward centers in the eternal glory reserved for us in God's heavenly kingdom, which includes reigning with Him in a never-ending reign.]] **(7) By FAITH Noah, being warned by God about things not yet seen** [[All the evidence that Noah

needed to be sure the flood was coming was God's Word on the subject, because he had faith in God. By faith he could see the coming flood, and (by faith) he acted accordingly.], **in reverence** [Having a reverent attitude before God is part of what faith in God means.] **prepared an ark for the salvation of his household** [This chapter of Hebrews makes it clear that true faith in God's Word includes obedience to that Word (see the next verse too).], **by which he condemned the world** [[He "condemned the world" by contrast in the sense that he, unlike them, by faith took God and His Word seriously and acted accordingly (cf. Gen. 6:5-7:1; Matt. 12:41; Rom. 2:27; 1 Peter 3:20; 2 Peter 2:5).]], **and became an heir of** [better, "**became an heir by**" or "**by means of**"] **the righteousness which is according to FAITH.** [[I don't believe the idea here is that Noah was to inherit the righteousness of God in Christ, which born-again Christians have (which includes the imputed and imparted righteousness of God in Christ); compare, for example, what the apostle Paul said in Rom. 1:17; 3:22; 10:4), but it is true that Noah eventually did inherit the righteousness of God in Christ and a place in heaven. The idea here, as with Abel in Heb. 11:4 ((also see 11:33 and Heb. 12:23 [which speaks of the "righteous" believers from the Old Testament days who have now been perfected through the Lord Jesus and taken to heaven, heaven in an early stage, before the resurrection (Heb. 12:23 is discussed in my book, "Holiness and Victory Over Sin," on pages 166, 167, for one place))]), is that Noah was (relatively) righteous when he lived because he was a believer (a man of faith), and he was accepted by God. In the Old Testament the believers (people of faith) typically did things God's way, and for the right reasons. Genesis 6:9 and 7:1 both speak of Noah as "righteous," and Ezek. 14:14, 20 speak of his "righteousness." See above under Heb. 11:4 on the righteousness of Abel and on the important need to qualify this (relative) righteousness. Noah and Abel (along with all believers) will be quick to admit that their ultimate righteousness and their place in God's eternal kingdom come through the atoning death of the Lord Jesus Christ, by grace through faith.

Noah's (relative) righteousness when he lived on the earth, as a result of his faith in God, would not suffice to open the door of heaven for him. He, like all of us who will have a place in new Jerusalem, will have that place through the ultimate (sufficient) righteousness of God that is imputed and imparted to us through the Lord Jesus, the Lamb of God (cf., e.g., Rev. 21:27), by grace through faith. That ultimate righteousness did not become available to believers until new-covenant salvation became available (see Heb. 11:39, 40. We will discuss these verses as we continue with this paper).

It is important for us to discuss the word "heir" (Greek "kleronomos"). Some believe it is used in the sense of "possessor" here in 11:7. It is true, as I showed above, that Noah possessed the (relative) righteousness of God, but I believe the word "heir" is used here in 11:7 of his inheriting ultimate salvation through the Lord Jesus Christ, which culminates in the fullness of eternal life in God's eternal kingdom (heaven). This Greek noun is used two other places in Hebrews. It is used of the Son of God being appointed "heir of all things" (which



things He shares with all believers) in Heb. 1:2 and in Heb. 6:17: "Because God wanted to make the unchangeable nature of His purpose very clear to the heirs of what was promised, He confirmed it with an oath" (NIV). The verses that follow in Hebrews chapter 6 show that "what was promised" includes our ultimately following Jesus into the presence of God in heaven. As Heb. 11:10 shows, Abraham was looking for the heavenly city, which is in heaven. I believe the word "heir" here in Heb. 11:7 has the same meaning. Also see under Heb. 11:9 on "fellow heirs of the same promise."

It is important for us to also discuss the Greek noun "kleronomia," which was derived from the noun "kleronomos ["heir"]," and which is used twice in Hebrews. I'll quote the first half of Heb. 9:15 from the NIV, "For this reason Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance ["kleronomia" is translated "inheritance" here]. (Hebrews 9:15 is discussed in my paper "Hebrews Chapters 8-10: 'We Have Been Sanctified Through the Better Sacrifice" that is on my internet site.) This is the same "promised eternal inheritance" that the heir(s) spoken of in Heb. 6:17 and 11:7 are to receive. And even more relevant is the other use of "kleronomia" in Hebrews, since it is the verse that follows Heb. 11:7. I'll quote the first part of Heb. 11:8 from the NASB, which I always quote from unless I note otherwise: "By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed by going out to a place which he was to receive as an inheritance ["kleronomia"]." In other words, he was a "heir" ("kleronomos)" (cf. Heb. 11:7) of that glorious "inheritance" ("kleronomia") that includes the heavenly city (new Jerusalem) that is mentioned in Heb. 11:10.

Two of the four uses of the Greek verb ("kleronomeo," which was derived from "kleronomia") in Hebrews use this verb of the believers "inheriting" the same promised salvation and eternal inheritance (Heb. 1:14; 6:12). In Heb. 1:4 it is used of Christ "inheriting" a more excellent name than the angels.

Noah became an heir of God's new-covenant salvation, which culminates with the glory of God's new Jerusalem "by" or "by means of" (see the next paragraph) his (relative) righteousness, which means that he became an heir by his faith in God and His Word/promises, since he was (relatively) righteous by faith. It is to be understood that although Noah didn't fully understand God's new-covenant plan of salvation, he would inherit that salvation when it became available because of His faith in God and His Word/promises - he was a believer.

I'll show the order of the words in the Greek in 11:7, "and of [better, "and by" or "and by means of," or the equivalent; the Greek probably should be understood as an ablative of source, or of means; on the ablative case see Dana and Mantey's "A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament" (pages 81-83.)] the according to faith righteousness he became an heir." As I mentioned, the Bible could call him "righteous" when he lived on the earth because he had faith in God and His Word. His life (including what he what he said and did) demonstrated his faith and the (relative) righteousness that resulted from his

faith.]] **(8) By FAITH Abraham, when He was called, obeyed** [[It is important to see that faith includes obedience. However, and especially when it comes to new-covenant salvation, it is necessary to understand that God in Christ gives us the grace that enables us to obey Him in our daily lives. The believers who lived before new-covenant salvation was available, which includes the new birth and the gift of the Holy Spirit, knew something of the enabling grace of God, but nothing like what is available under the new covenant.]] **by going out to a place which he was to receive for an inheritance** [[See Gen. 12:1-4, 7; 15:18-21. The last reference shows that God promised the land "from the river of Egypt as far as the great river, the river Euphrates" to the descendants of Abraham; however, the writer of Hebrews deals mostly with Abraham's looking beyond this land to his ultimate, eternal home, God's new Jerusalem. See Heb. 11:9-16]], **and he went out, not knowing where he was going.** [[He had to go out, and walk, by faith in God and His Word. God's people have no choice but to walk by faith, trusting and obeying Him and His Word. To be where God wants us to be is the only right and secure place to be.]] **(9) By FAITH he lived as an alien in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, fellow heirs** ["fellow heirs" is plural of "sugkleronomos" in the Greek, which is the noun "kleronomos," which was discussed under Heb. 11:7, and the preposition "sun" that means "with"] **of the same promise** [the promise of God for salvation in union with the Lord Jesus Christ that ultimately takes us to heaven]; **(10) for he was looking for the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God.** [As I mentioned, he was ultimately looking for God's new Jerusalem.] **(11) By FAITH even Sarah** [Abraham's wife] **herself received ability to conceive, even beyond the proper time of life, since she considered Him faithful who had promised** [Our faith is based on something super-solid, namely our faithful God and His faithful Word, including His Words of promise to us.]; **(12) therefore, also, there was born of one man, and him as good as dead at that** [cf. Gen. 25:1-5], **as many descendants as THE STARS OF HEAVEN IN NUMBER, AND INNUMERABLE AS THE SAND WHICH IS BY THE SEASHORE** [cf. Gen. 15:5; 22:17; 32:12]. **(13) All these died in faith** [They stayed in faith to the end of their lives (and beyond), as we must.], **without receiving the promises** [[He means that they died without receiving the things promised for the future ["the things promised" NIV], referring to the full salvation provided in the new covenant, which ultimately includes having a place in God's new Jerusalem, even reigning with God and His Son (cf. Rev. 22:5). During their lifetimes they did, of course, receive some preliminary things that God had promised (cf., e.g., 11:7, 11 [birth of Isaac], 28-35).]], **but having seen them and having welcomed them from a distance** [They saw, with the eyes of faith, the things associated with God's eternal salvation (cf. 11:1, 8-10, 14-16, 26, 39, 40).], **and having confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth.** [In other words, they confessed that their true home was not in this world.] **(14) For those who say such things make it clear that they are seeking a country of their own.** [As 11:16 shows, they were seeking for a heavenly country.] **(15) And indeed if they had been thinking of that country from which they went out** [that is, the country

Abraham left when called out by God (11:8)], **they would have had opportunity to return. (16) But as it is, they desire a better country, that is a heavenly one. Therefore** [since they, by faith, have fixed their hearts on God and the things of God] **God is not ashamed to be called their God; for He has prepared a city for them** [new Jerusalem, cf. 11:10]. **(17) By FAITH Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac; and he who had received the promises was offering up his only begotten son** [[The NIV has, "his one and only son." Gen. 22:2, "He [God] said, 'Take now your son, your only son, whom you love, Isaac, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I will tell you.' " As Heb. 11:19 will confirm, the wording here is intended to cause us to think of a much greater manifestation of a Father offering His unique/one and only Son. Isaac was the promised son (e.g., 11:9, 11, 12, 18). It was understood that Abraham had earlier fathered Ishmael (Gen. 16:1-16), but he was not the promised son. This testing of Abraham is described in Gen. 22:1-19. Here we have another example of Abraham, by faith, obeying God (cf. 11:8).]]; **(18) it was he to whom it was said, 'IN ISAAC YOUR DESCENDANTS SHALL BE CALLED.'** [[Gen. 21:12. The fact that Abraham knew that Isaac was the promised son and that the lineage must continue with Isaac (who, at that time, was young and did not have any offspring) made it all the more difficult for him to offer up Isaac. However, by faith, he obeyed.]] **(19) He considered that God is able to raise men even from the dead** [[Abraham proved his faith by trusting and obeying God when he was tested. (All believers are tested by God in various ways.) The same God who gave Isaac to Abraham could also raise Isaac from the dead, if need be.]]; **from which he also received him back as a type.** [[Abraham didn't literally receive Isaac back from the dead because, at the last second, God stopped Abraham from sacrificing Isaac and provided a substitute. In this sense Abraham received him back from death, which was a type of (foreshadowed) another Father receiving His sacrificed Son back from death (by resurrection).]] **(20) By FAITH Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau** [twin brothers], **even regarding things to come.** [See Gen. 27:27-29, 39, 40. Isaac (and then Jacob, and then Joseph, etc.) had the assurance of things hoped for ("regarding things to come") and the conviction of things not seen (see Heb. 11:1).] **(21) By FAITH Jacob, as he was dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph** [See Gen. 48:1-22.], **and worshiped, leaning on the top of his staff** [taken from the Septuagint, not the Hebrew, of Gen. 47:31]. **(22) By FAITH Joseph, when he was dying, made mention of the exodus of the sons of Israel** [cf. Gen. 15:13-16], **and gave orders concerning his bones** [[See Gen. 50:24-26; Ex. 13:19. Joseph's heart was with God and the people of God; he looked to the future fulfillment of all God's covenant promises, which include eternal life beyond the grave in God's eternal city.]] **(23) By FAITH Moses, when he was born, was hidden for three months by his parents, because they saw he was a beautiful child** [The NIV has, "they saw he was no ordinary child."]; **and they were not afraid of the king's edict.** [See Ex. 2:1-10. They put God first, fearing Him instead of/more than the king.] **(24) By FAITH Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; (25) choosing rather to endure ill-**

**treatment with the people of God, than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin** [Any pleasure gained through sin (and much suffering and pain comes with sin) is very brief indeed, and especially when viewed in the light of the eternal judgment to follow this life and the eternal glory that will come to those who live for God by faith.]; **(26) considering the reproach of Christ** [The *reproach of Christ* refers to the trials and persecutions that come to the people of God because they are faithful to Him. Cf. Heb. 13:12-14.] **greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he was looking to the reward** [cf. Heb. 10:35]. [Pay Day/Judgment Day is coming. For those who live for God by faith, "the reward," according to the promise of God, will include eternal glory. Note "rewarder" in 11:6.] **(27) By FAITH he left Egypt** [The point is that Moses chose God and His people, thereby forsaking the temporary glory he had in Egypt as the son of Pharaoh's daughter.], **not fearing the wrath of the king** [With his eyes fixed on God through faith, Moses feared God (The King of the Universe) rather than the king of Egypt.]; **for he endured** [persevered], **as seeing** [with the eyes of faith] **Him who is unseen.** **(28) By FAITH he kept the Passover and the sprinkling of the blood, so that he who destroyed the first-born might not touch them.** [See Ex. 11:1-12:36. By faith Moses obeyed these instructions of the Lord.] **(29) By FAITH they passed through the Red Sea as though they were passing through dry land; and the Egyptians, when they attempted it, were drowned.** [See Ex. 14:1-15:21.] **(30) By FAITH the walls of Jericho fell down, after they had been encircled for seven days.** [[See Josh. 6:1-21. By faith Israel obeyed God's instructions, and the walls fell down. God's instructions, as it often happens, were not obviously logical. But once we're sure He has given us instructions, we must obey them, trusting Him.]] **By FAITH Rahab the harlot did not perish along with those who were disobedient** [at Jericho], **after she welcomed the spies in peace.** [[See Josh. 2:1-24; 6:17, 22-25; James 2:25. Rahab's words and actions demonstrated her faith in God. In Josh. 2:9-11 she said, "I know that the LORD [Yahweh] has given you the land.... ...for the LORD your God, He is God in heaven above and on the earth beneath." This same Rahab ended up in the earthly lineage of Jesus Christ (Matt. 1:5).]] **(32) And what more shall I say? For time will fail me if I tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets,** **(33) who by FAITH conquered kingdoms, performed acts of righteousness** [The NASB has "acts of" in italics. The KJV has "wrought righteousness"; the NKJV has "worked righteousness." Like this verse says, they worked righteousness by faith. See under 11:4, 7 on righteousness.], **obtained promises** [There are many examples in the Old Testament of believers receiving things promised by God.], **shut the mouths of lions** [cf. Dan. 6:1-28, esp. 6:22; Jud. 14:5, 6; 1 Sam. 17:34-36], **(34) quenched the power of fire** [cf. Dan. 3:1-30], **escaped the edge of the sword, from weakness were made strong, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight.** [There are many examples in the Old Testament that fit the last four listings.] **(35) Women received back their dead by resurrection** [[Elijah (1 Kings 17:17-24) and Elisha (2 Kings 4:18-37) both raised women's sons from the dead. As with Lazarus and others, this was not the final resurrection with a glorified body, but a resurrection back to temporary

life in this world.]]; **and others were tortured, not accepting their release, in order that they might obtain a better resurrection** [[That is, they made it top priority to stay faithful to God, so that, at the end of this age, they might receive the resurrection to eternal glory. This resurrection is clearly much "better" than the resurrection mentioned earlier in the verse. Many commentators point out that the days of the Maccabees provided graphic illustrations of the things spoken of here, as recorded in 1 and 2 Maccabees.]; **(36) and others experienced mockings and scourgings, yes, also chains and imprisonment. (37) They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were tempted, they were put to death with the sword; they went about in sheepskins, in goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, ill-treated (38) (men of whom the world was not worthy), wandering in deserts and mountains and caves and holes in the ground. (39) And all these, having gained approval through their faith [See under 11:2.], did not receive what was promised** [[See 11:13. They did not receive the promised full salvation during their lifetime on earth because these things were not available yet. We'll deal with this promised salvation under the next verse.]] **(40) because God had provided something better for us** [The "something better" refers to new-covenant salvation, and "us" refers to Christians.], **so that apart from us they should not be made perfect.** [[Now that salvation has become available in the blood of Christ, the believers from earlier days have been "made perfect." In Heb. 12:23 they are spoken of as "the spirits of righteous men made perfect." They are spoken of as "spirits" since they have died and have not yet been resurrected. They are spoken of as "righteous" in that they lived relatively righteous lives by faith. (See Heb. 11:4, 7, 33.) They have been "made perfect" in that the fruit of Christ's atoning death and resurrection have now become fully available to them. For one thing, now that spiritual death had been overthrown, they were transferred from Sheol/Hades ((the abode of departed spirits (cf., e.g., Gen. 37:35; Isa. 38:10; Luke 16:22-31; 23:43; Eph. 4:9), but not a place of torment for God's people; they were in a place called "Abraham's bosom" that was also sometimes called "Paradise"; see the subsection titled "A Discussion on the Meaning of the Word 'Hades' in Acts 2:27, 31; the Meaning of 'Paradise' in Luke 23:43; and the Meaning of 'Abraham's Bosom' in Luke 16:22" on pages 41-44 of my paper on Ephesians chapters 1 and 4 and Rom. 8:16-39 on my internet site [Google to Karl Kemp Teaching].)) to heaven. Now, like us, they are waiting for God's time to resurrect His people to eternal glory. (Matthew 27:51-53 show that a select number of those believers were resurrected bodily right after Jesus was resurrected and that they appeared to many.) Those of us who are still living on the earth when Christ returns will not need to be resurrected, but we will be glorified.

We new-covenant believers have already been "made perfect" in that we have been born again, sanctified ((at least this is the ideal state we are called and enabled to be living in as Christians, with a relative perfection; we will not have absolute perfection until we have been glorified)), and we have access to God beyond the veil. The book of Hebrews has quite a bit to say about this

perfection/holiness. Hebrews 10:10, 14, for example, say, "By this will [God's will] WE HAVE BEEN SANCTIFIED [my capitalization for emphasis here and in verse 14] through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. (14) For by one offering HE HAS PERFECTED for all time THOSE WHO ARE SANCTIFIED." Hebrews chapters 8-10 are discussed verse-by-verse in my recently published paper titled "Hebrews Chapters 8-10: 'We Have Been Sanctified' Through the Better Sacrifice" that is on my internet site. For a discussion of Hebrews 10:10, 14 and 11:39, 40; 12:23, see my book, "Holiness and Victory Over Sin," pages 156-167. At Note 10 on page 166 of the book, I recommended two commentaries on Heb. 11:39, 40; 12:23. Add W. L. Lane ("Word Biblical Commentary," Vol. 47b, pages 392-394) and G. L. Cockerill ("The Epistle to the Hebrews," pages 597-600). These verses, including Heb. 10:10 and 14, are also discussed in my recently published e-book, "Righteousness, Holiness, and Victory Over Sin." The e-book serves as an introduction to the paperback book ("Holiness and Victory Over Sin") and should typically be read first. (Both books are available at amazon.com.)]]

May the will of God be fully accomplished through this paper and His people be edified!

© Copyright by Karl Kemp