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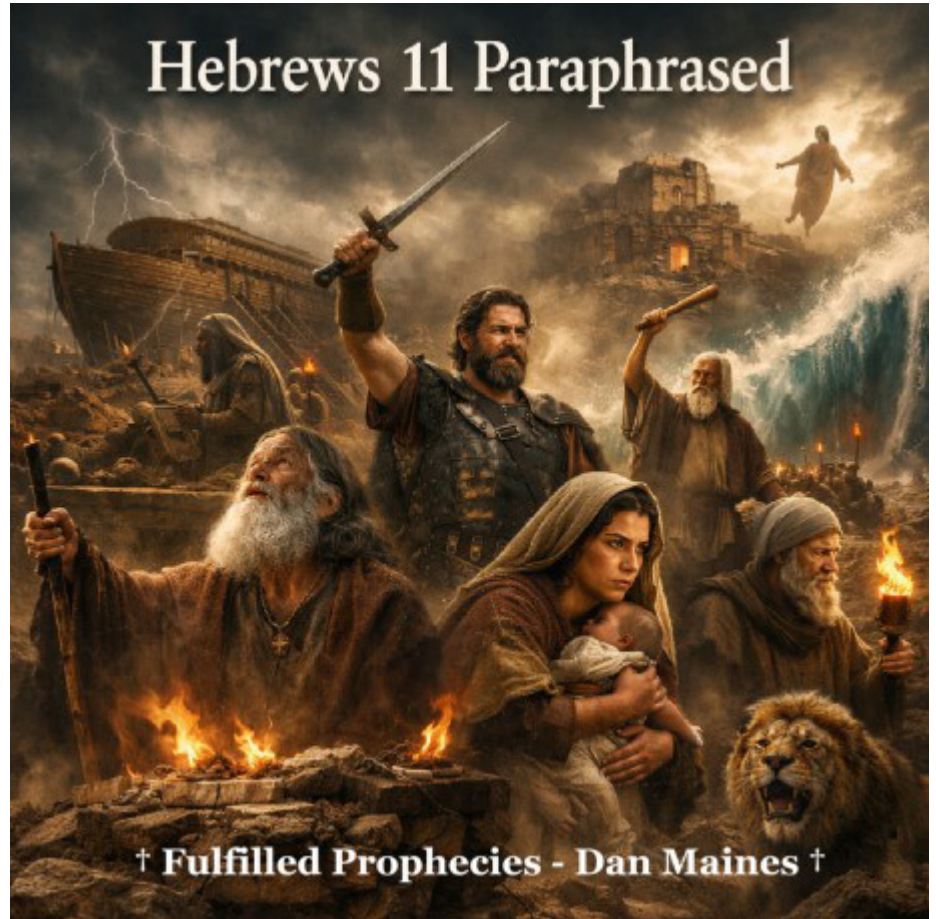
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Hebrews 11 Paraphrased



By Dan Maines

Hebrews 11 Paraphrased

Introduction

† Hebrews 11 explains what faith really is and then walks through the lives of men and women who trusted God before the fulfillment arrived. The writer is showing the Hebrew believers that faith always looked forward to what God promised, and that promise was finally completed in Christ. (Hebrews 10:36-39)

† The chapter isn't about blind belief. It's about trusting God's word even before the promise was visible. These people lived before the age of fulfillment, yet they acted because they believed God would keep His word. (Romans 4:20-21)

† The message to the first century church was clear. Don't turn back to the old covenant system. The faithful before you endured because they believed God's promise would come through the Messiah. (Hebrews 10:38)

Scripture

Hebrews 11:1

Faith means we're confident in what we hope for, and we're convinced about things we cannot yet see.

† Faith isn't imagination. It's confidence that God will do what He said even before the promise appears. (Romans 8:24-25)

† The early believers were waiting for the completion of God's covenant promises, which were about to be fulfilled in their generation. (Hebrews 10:36-37)

† Faith always rests on God's word, not human feelings or speculation. (2 Corinthians 5:7)

Hebrews 11:2

Because of this faith, the people who lived long ago were approved by God.

† The Old Testament saints were accepted because they trusted God's promises even though they hadn't yet seen the fulfillment. (Romans 4:3)

† Their faith pointed forward to Christ, the one who would bring the promises to completion. (Galatians 3:24)

† God honored their faith because it trusted His word above everything else. (Psalm 33:4)

Hebrews 11:3

By faith we understand that the world was formed by God's command, so what we see came from what cannot be seen.

† Creation itself shows that God's power brings visible results from His invisible authority. (Genesis 1:1-3)

† Faith recognizes God's unseen power behind everything that exists. (Romans 1:20)

† The same God who created the world also carried out His covenant plan through Christ. (Colossians 1:16)

Hebrews 11:4

By faith Abel offered God a better sacrifice than Cain, and because of that he was declared righteous, God showing approval of his offering. Even though Abel died, his faith still speaks.

† Abel's sacrifice showed trust in God's way rather than human effort. (Genesis 4:3-5)

† His example continues to teach that righteousness comes through faith in God, not through works alone. (Hebrews 12:24)

† Faithful obedience always stands in contrast to self-made religion. (1 John 3:12)

Hebrews 11:5

By faith Enoch was taken away so that he didn't experience death, and he couldn't be found because God took him. Before he was taken, he had the testimony that he pleased God.

† Enoch's life showed that walking with God requires faith and trust in Him. (Genesis 5:22-24)

† His example proves that pleasing God isn't about ritual but about trusting Him. (Micah 6:8)

† Faith produces a life that walks closely with God. (Amos 3:3)

Hebrews 11:6

Without faith it's impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to Him must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who seek Him.

† Faith begins with trusting that God is who He says He is. (Jeremiah 29:13)

† God responds to those who genuinely pursue Him. (Psalm 34:10)

† The Hebrew believers needed this reminder because they were tempted to turn back from trusting Christ. (Hebrews 10:35)

Hebrews 11:7

By faith Noah, being warned by God about things not yet seen, prepared an ark to save his household. By doing this he condemned the world and became an heir of righteousness that comes through faith.

† Noah trusted God's warning even though judgment hadn't yet appeared. (Genesis 6:13-14)

† His obedience showed that faith responds with action. (James 2:17)

† The ark itself became a symbol of salvation through trusting God. (1 Peter 3:20)

Hebrews 11:8

By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go to a place he would later receive as an inheritance, and he left without knowing where he was going.

† Abraham trusted God's promise even when the future was unclear. (Genesis 12:1)

† Faith moves forward based on God's word rather than visible certainty. (Romans 4:18)

† The promise to Abraham ultimately pointed to Christ and the coming kingdom. (Galatians 3:16)

Hebrews 11:9

By faith he lived in the land of promise like a foreigner, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs of the same promise.

† Abraham lived as a temporary resident because the promise wasn't yet fulfilled. (Genesis 26:3)

† The patriarchs were looking forward to God's greater plan. (Hebrews 11:10)

† Their lives pointed toward the future covenant fulfillment. (Romans 4:13)

Hebrews 11:10

He was waiting for the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God.

† This city represents God's established kingdom and covenant community. (Hebrews 12:22)

† The promise pointed forward to the heavenly Jerusalem revealed in Christ. (Galatians 4:26)

† The first century believers were approaching that fulfillment. (Hebrews 12:28)

Hebrews 11:11

By faith even Sarah herself received the ability to conceive even though she was past the age, because she considered the One who promised faithful.

† Sarah's faith rested on God's faithfulness rather than her own ability. (Genesis 21:2)

† God's promises aren't limited by human weakness. (Luke 1:37)

† Faith believes God will keep His word. (Romans 4:20)

Hebrews 11:12

So from one man, and he as good as dead, came descendants as numerous as the stars of heaven and countless like the sand by the seashore.

† God's promise to Abraham multiplied into a great people. (Genesis 15:5)

† Ultimately the promise pointed to the spiritual family formed through Christ. (Galatians 3:29)

† God's plan unfolded exactly as He promised. (Joshua 21:45)

Hebrews 11:13

All these people died in faith without receiving the promises, but they saw them from a distance and welcomed them, admitting they were strangers and foreigners on the earth.

† The Old Testament saints lived before the covenant promises were completed. (Hebrews 9:15)

† They trusted God's future fulfillment even though they didn't see it in their lifetime. (1 Peter 1:10-11)

† The fulfillment arrived in the first century through Christ. (Hebrews 1:1-2)

Hebrews 11:14

Those who say such things make it clear that they're seeking a homeland.

† They weren't ultimately looking for an earthly kingdom. (Philippians 3:20)

† Their hope rested in God's coming kingdom. (Daniel 2:44)

† This promise was fulfilled in the kingdom Christ established. (Luke 17:20-21)

Hebrews 11:15

If they had been thinking about the country they left, they would've had opportunity to return.

† Faith doesn't look back to the old life. (Luke 9:62)

† The Hebrew believers were being warned not to return to the old covenant system. (Hebrews 10:39)

† True faith presses forward toward God's promise. (Philippians 3:13)

Hebrews 11:16

Instead they desired a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Because of this God isn't ashamed to be called their God, because He prepared a city for them.

† The heavenly country refers to God's covenant kingdom. (Hebrews 12:22)

† The city prepared by God is the New Jerusalem revealed through Christ. (Revelation 21:2)

† God's people now belong to this heavenly kingdom. (Ephesians 2:19)

Hebrews 11:17

By faith Abraham offered Isaac when he was tested. The one who received the promises was offering his only son.

† Abraham trusted that God would still keep His promise through Isaac. (Genesis 22:2)

† This event foreshadowed God offering His own Son. (John 3:16)

† Faith obeys God even when the command is difficult. (James 2:21)

Hebrews 11:18

It was he to whom it was said, Through Isaac your descendants will be named.

† God's covenant promise was tied to Isaac. (Genesis 21:12)

† Abraham believed God would keep that promise no matter what. (Romans 4:21)

† God's word always proves true. (Numbers 23:19)

Hebrews 11:19

He considered that God is able even to raise people from the dead, from which he also received Isaac back as a figurative

picture.

† Abraham believed God had power over life and death.
(Genesis 22:5)

† This event foreshadowed resurrection. (Romans 4:17)

† Isaac's deliverance pointed forward to Christ's victory over death. (Acts 2:24)

Hebrews 11:20

By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come.

† Isaac trusted God's future plan for his sons. (Genesis 27:27-29)

† God's purposes unfold through generations. (Genesis 28:14)

† Faith recognizes God's sovereignty in the future. (Proverbs 19:21)

Hebrews 11:21

By faith Jacob, as he was dying, blessed each of Joseph's sons and worshiped while leaning on the top of his staff.

† Jacob trusted God's promises even at the end of his life.
(Genesis 48:15)

† Faith continues until the final moment of life. (Psalm 92:14)

† God's covenant promises were carried forward through the tribes. (Genesis 49:1)

Hebrews 11:22

By faith Joseph, when he was dying, spoke about the departure

of the Israelites and gave instructions about his bones.

† Joseph believed God would bring Israel out of Egypt.
(Genesis 50:24-25)

† His request showed confidence in God's future deliverance.
(Exodus 13:19)

† Faith trusts God's promises even across generations. (Joshua 24:32)

Hebrews 11:23

By faith Moses' parents hid him for three months after he was born, because they saw he was a beautiful child and they weren't afraid of the king's command.

† Moses' parents trusted God more than Pharaoh's decree.
(Exodus 2:2)

† Faith sometimes requires courage in the face of danger. (Acts 5:29)

† God was preserving the leader who would deliver Israel.
(Exodus 3:10)

Hebrews 11:24

By faith Moses, when he grew up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter.

† Moses chose God's people over worldly privilege. (Exodus 2:11)

† Faith often requires turning away from comfort and status.
(Matthew 16:24)

† Moses identified himself with God's covenant people. (Acts 7:23)

Hebrews 11:25

He chose to suffer with God's people rather than enjoy the temporary pleasures of sin.

† Moses saw beyond temporary rewards. (Psalm 16:11)

† Faith values God's promise above earthly gain. (Hebrews 10:34)

† God's people often endure hardship for the sake of righteousness. (2 Timothy 3:12)

Hebrews 11:26

He considered the reproach associated with the Messiah greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking toward the reward.

† Moses understood that God's plan pointed toward the coming Messiah. (Deuteronomy 18:15)

† Faith focuses on eternal reward rather than temporary riches. (Matthew 6:20)

† God's promise outweighs worldly success. (Philippians 3:8)

Hebrews 11:27

By faith he left Egypt without fearing the king's anger, because he endured as seeing the One who is unseen.

† Moses trusted God's presence even when circumstances were dangerous. (Exodus 12:31)

† Faith sees God's power beyond what is visible. (2 Corinthians 4:18)

† God's guidance leads His people forward. (Psalm 32:8)

Hebrews 11:28

By faith he kept the Passover and the sprinkling of blood so that the destroyer wouldn't touch the firstborn of Israel.

† The Passover symbolized salvation through sacrificial blood. (Exodus 12:13)

† This pointed forward to Christ as the ultimate Passover lamb. (1 Corinthians 5:7)

† Faith trusts God's provision for deliverance. (Psalm 34:7)

Hebrews 11:29

By faith they passed through the Red Sea as though it were dry land, but when the Egyptians tried the same thing they were drowned.

† God miraculously delivered Israel through the sea. (Exodus 14:21)

† Faith trusts God's power even when escape seems impossible. (Psalm 77:19)

† God's deliverance demonstrates His authority over nature. (Nehemiah 9:11)

Hebrews 11:30

By faith the walls of Jericho fell after they had been marched around for seven days.

† Israel followed God's unusual command in faith. (Joshua 6:20)

† Victory came through trusting God's instruction. (Psalm 20:7)

† God's power overcame impossible barriers. (Zechariah 4:6)

Hebrews 11:31

By faith Rahab the prostitute didn't perish with those who were disobedient, because she welcomed the spies in peace.

† Rahab believed that Israel's God was the true God. (Joshua 2:11)

† Her faith brought salvation even though she came from a sinful past. (James 2:25)

† God's grace reaches people from every background. (Matthew 1:5)

Hebrews 11:32

What more can I say? Time would fail me to tell about Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel, and the prophets.

† These leaders demonstrated faith during times of crisis. (Judges 6:14)

† God repeatedly raised people to guide Israel. (1 Samuel 16:13)

† Their stories show God's faithfulness through history. (Psalm 78:4)

Hebrews 11:33

Through faith they conquered kingdoms, carried out justice, obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions.

† Daniel is an example of faith shutting lions' mouths. (Daniel 6:22)

† Faith empowered God's people to overcome powerful enemies. (1 Samuel 17:45)

† God acted through those who trusted Him. (Psalm 44:3)

Hebrews 11:34

They extinguished the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, were strengthened from weakness, became mighty in battle, and put foreign armies to flight.

† The three men in the furnace were protected by God. (Daniel 3:25)

† God strengthened His servants in times of danger. (Judges 7:7)

† Faith gave courage and endurance. (Isaiah 40:31)

Hebrews 11:35

Women received back their dead by resurrection, and others were tortured, refusing release so that they might obtain a better resurrection.

† Elijah and Elisha both restored life to children. (1 Kings 17:22)

† Faithful people sometimes endured suffering for God's truth. (2 Chronicles 24:21)

† Their hope rested in God's future promise. (Daniel 12:2)

Hebrews 11:36

Others experienced mockings and scourgings, even chains and imprisonment.

† Many prophets suffered persecution. (Jeremiah 20:2)

† Faithfulness to God often brings opposition. (Matthew 5:11)

† God's servants remained faithful despite suffering. (Acts 5:41)

Hebrews 11:37

They were stoned, they were cut in two, they were killed with the sword. They wandered in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, oppressed, and mistreated.

† Tradition records that Isaiah was killed during persecution. (2 Kings 21:16)

† Prophets were often rejected by the people they warned. (Matthew 23:37)

† Their suffering showed unwavering commitment to God. (Hebrews 11:38)

Hebrews 11:38

The world wasn't worthy of them. They wandered in deserts, mountains, caves, and holes in the ground.

† Faithful servants sometimes lived as outsiders in the world. (1 Kings 19:9)

† God's kingdom values faithfulness above earthly status. (Luke 6:22)

† Their devotion demonstrated loyalty to God. (Psalm 84:10)

Hebrews 11:39

All these gained approval through their faith, but they didn't receive what was promised.

† The fulfillment of the promises came later through Christ. (Hebrews 9:15)

† They lived before the completion of God's redemptive plan. (1 Peter 1:12)

† Their faith pointed forward to the coming fulfillment. (Luke 24:44)

Hebrews 11:40

God had provided something better for us, so that apart from us they wouldn't be made complete.

† The completion of God's promise arrived through Christ and the new covenant. (Hebrews 12:23)

† The first century believers were witnessing the fulfillment of what earlier saints anticipated. (Hebrews 1:1-2)

† God's redemptive plan reached completion in Christ's covenant kingdom. (Ephesians 1:10)

Historical References

† Clement of Rome wrote about the faith of the prophets and martyrs who endured suffering while waiting for God's promises to be fulfilled.

† Eusebius recorded how early Christians looked back at the faith of the patriarchs as examples of endurance and trust in God's covenant promises.

† Irenaeus described how the Old Testament believers trusted God's promises that were ultimately fulfilled through Christ.

How It Applies To Us Today

† Hebrews 11 reminds us that faith isn't about seeing everything clearly right now, it's about trusting God's word because He has always proven faithful.

† The saints before Christ waited for fulfillment. We now live after that fulfillment, which means our faith rests on promises God has already completed.

† The same faith that carried Abel, Abraham, Moses, and the prophets is the faith that sustains believers today.

Q & A Appendix

Q Why didn't the Old Testament believers receive the promise during their lifetime?

A Because the fulfillment came through Christ in the first century when the new covenant was established. Hebrews 9:15; Hebrews 11:39-40.

Q What is the better thing God provided?

A The completed covenant through Christ, bringing the promises to fulfillment. Hebrews 8:6; Hebrews 12:22-24.

Q What does faith mean according to Hebrews 11?

A Faith is trusting God's promises even before they become visible. Hebrews 11:1; Romans 8:24-25.

Q Why does Hebrews 11 list so many Old Testament people?

A The writer is showing that faith has always been the way God's people lived, long before the fulfillment arrived in Christ. Their lives demonstrated trust in God's promises even before they were completed. Hebrews 11:2; Romans 4:16.

Q What promise were they ultimately waiting for?

A They were waiting for the Messiah and the covenant fulfillment that would come through Him. All the promises pointed forward to Christ and the completion of God's redemptive plan. Luke 24:44; Hebrews 9:15.

Q What does Hebrews 11:40 mean when it says they wouldn't be made complete without us?

A It means the Old Testament believers and the first century church were both part of the same plan of fulfillment. The promises reached completion when Christ established the new covenant and the old covenant age ended. Hebrews 12:22-23; Ephesians 1:10.

† This is the fulfilled perspective we proclaim at Fulfilled Prophecies †

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Source Index

† Hebrews 11:1-40

† Clement of Rome, First Epistle to the Corinthians

† Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History

† Irenaeus, Against Heresies

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