

# **LEGENDS OF FAITH**

## **HEBREWS 11 SERIES**

Newton church of Christ  
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# **Legends of Faith**

## **Hebrews 11 Series**

### **Lesson 1: Introduction**

By Steven F. Deaton

#### **What Is Faith? | Hebrews 11:1-3**

To understand the characters of faith, we will need to know what faith is. Is it a feeling or an action; an attitude or conviction? While looking at definitions of the word “faith” in Greek lexicons is helpful, the Hebrew writer prefers to show us faith in the lives of God’s children. It is that faith we must emulate in our lives to be pleasing to God.

#### **The Faith of Enoch | Hebrews 11:5, 6**

Enoch is a somewhat mysterious figure to us, but the record of Hebrews 11 along with Genesis 5 gives us some insight on his family. We will consider a few points about him, including the meaning of his name, and his relatively short life of 365 years.

#### **They Died In Faith | Hebrews 11:13-16**

Abraham, Sarah, Abel, Noah, and the “elders” all died in faith. Their lives were committed to serving God and pursuing a goal He set before them, but never realized it while on earth. That is dedication. They could do so because they were “assured of them.”

The “Legends of Faith” did not get distracted with their past or the cares of this life. Why? Because they wanted something better. Imagine someone like Abraham who was “very rich in livestock, in silver, and in gold” considered God’s promises better (Gen. 13:2). His treasures were in heaven, not on earth.

#### **Great Feats and Great Suffering | Hebrews 11:33-12:2**

It is hard to fathom, but the men and women of old accomplished the “impossible.” They endured great pain and suffering for the cause of God. Something we need to keep in mind is the fact that they were people, human, just like you and me. They had struggles, fears, sorrows, passions, dreams, and setbacks. Yet, they still lived in a way that honored God and changed the world. They played a part in the unfolding of the “scheme of redemption” to help move it forward for generations to follow. May our faith be as strong and resilient.

**Questions and Discussion**  
**Hebrews 11 Introduction**

1. What is the definition of faith as stated in Hebrews 11:1?
2. What does it mean that the “elders obtained a good testimony” (Heb. 11:2)?
3. List some names of those who fit what is described in Hebrews 11:33-38?
4. Why was the world not worthy of these saints (Heb. 11:38)?
5. If there was one of these saints you could meet in person, who would it be and why?

# Legends of Faith

## Hebrews 11:4

### Abel

By Steven F. Deaton

#### **The Story of Abel** | Hebrews 11:4; Genesis 4:1-12

The Hebrew writer notes the righteousness of Abel by contrasting his sacrifice with that of his brother, Cain (Heb. 11:4). The two brothers were radically different. Their story and the character displayed by each of them is the basis for many practical lessons.

When it comes down to it, the story of Cain and Abel shows us the difference between one who follows God's will and one who follows his own will. Abel honored God and goes down as a "Legend of Faith," while Cain yielded to Satan, ended up murdering his own brother, and, therefore, stands out as one of the icons of evil.

#### **Questions and Discussion**

1. What are some lessons the account of Cain and Abel teaches about worship?
2. How did religious practices impact the relationship between brothers? Find some New Testament passages that address this issue.
3. Read Genesis 4:16-26 and comment on the legacy left by Cain.
4. What positive lesson/s do you see in Abel's life to follow?
5. Would you trade places with Abel? Why?

# Legends of Faith

## Hebrews 11:7

### Noah

By Steven F. Deaton

#### The Story of Noah | Hebrews 11:7; Genesis 6-8

Noah's faith motivated him to build an ark that resulted in the salvation of his family. His story of faith is known throughout the world to one degree or another. *Answers In Genesis* notes that about 200 civilizations have a "flood story" in their culture, including the Babylonians, Chinese, and Hawaiians. This shows it is not a myth, but an historical event that had an incredible, worldwide impact.

The lessons from Noah and the ark are nearly endless and an important point to note is that they are foundational to our faith in God and His Son Jesus Christ.

#### Questions and Discussion

1. Approximately how many years did Noah work on building the ark and what does this tell us about his faith (Genesis 6:1-3)?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. What did Noah do besides build the ark and how successful was he at it (2 Pet. 2:5; 1 Pet. 3:20)?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. What impact did Noah have on God's people and plan?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. What do you most admire about Noah?

# **Legends of Faith**

## **Hebrews 11:8-19**

### **Abraham and Sarah**

By Steven F. Deaton

**The Story of Abraham and Sarah** | Hebrews 11:8-19; Genesis 12, 18, 21, 22

Abraham's faith stands out to the author of Hebrews, even among the "Legends of Faith." More focus is given to him than any other single legend. Yet, he is but one person in a long line of those God used to fulfill His plan of redemption.

It is hard to overstate Abraham's importance to the world. He did not found a city or empire. He did not reveal a law code. However, he is called the friend of God and father of all believers (James 2:23; Romans 4:16).

#### **Questions and Discussion**

1. How many world religions claim a connection to Abraham and what does this say about his impact on mankind?
2. What motivated Abraham and Sarah to leave their home and travel to an unknown land and what did they have to leave?
3. Consider Luke 9:23 in light of Abraham's call, specifically what we know and don't know when called to take up our cross. Prepare to discuss.
4. What do you most admire about Abraham or Sarah?

**Legends of Faith**  
**Hebrews 11:7**  
**Isaac, Jacob, Joseph**  
By Steven F. Deaton

**The Story of Isaac, Jacob, Joseph** | Hebrews 11:20-22; Genesis 27, 28, 48, 50

Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph were father, son, grandson respectively and lived in the shadow of Abraham, the father of the faithful. Each had brothers whose lives and characters stood in contrast to their own. None of these men were perfect, but their faith was strong and came through in their lives. Their faith compelled them to endure great trials and aggressively pursue God's blessings. Their story is the bridge between Abraham and the nation of Israel.

**Questions and Discussion**

1. What did the Hebrew writer note about Isaac relative to Jacob and Esau, and about Jacob relative to each of his sons? What lesson/s can we draw from this?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. Read Genesis 28:1-5 and discuss how Isaac came to view his previous blessing given to Jacob (the one Jacob tricked him into giving).
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. How did Jacob view God's care and promises, as expressed when Jacob adopted Ephraim and Manasseh (Gen. 48:15, 16)?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. Why did Joseph give instructions concerning his bones (Gen. 50:24, 25)?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
5. What do you most admire about Isaac, Jacob, and/or Joseph?

# Legends of Faith

## Hebrews 11:23-29

### Moses

By Steven F. Deaton

**The Story of Moses** | Hebrews 11:23-29; Exodus 2, 12, 14

Moses had a desire to fulfill God's purpose in his life, but did not understand it for many years. His greatest work was in the last  $\frac{1}{3}$  of his life; a time when many think their best days are behind them. The experiences he had in the first  $\frac{2}{3}$  of his life prepared him for the monumental work of leading Israel out of Egypt.

There are many strengths displayed in Moses' life, including a willingness to give up earthly blessings to align with God's people, humility when challenged, and acceptance of God's will in spite of personal sacrifice.

### Questions and Discussion

1. Was physical beauty the basis of Moses' parents hiding him (Ex. 2:2; cf. Acts 7:20)? Explain.
2. What advantages did Moses have as the adopted of Egyptian royalty (Heb. 11:25; cf. Acts 7:21, 22)?
3. What did Moses choose instead of enjoying the "royal" lifestyle (Heb. 11:25, 26)?
4. What do you most admire about Moses?



# Legends of Faith

## Hebrews 11:31

### Rahab

By Steven F. Deaton

#### **The Story of Rahab** | Hebrews 11:31; Joshua 2, 6

Rahab is an unlikely figure of faith. It is stated that she had both great faith and great works (Heb. 11:31; Jas. 2:25). Her brief appearance in the Biblical record is set out as an example for us to follow and helps us see God can use anyone in His plans.

Her inclusion in the lineage of Christ is a testament to God's view of her and the change she made in her life. Our past does not unalterably determine our future. No matter what we have done we can make a change and devote ourselves to the King and His Kingdom and impact the generations to come.

#### **Questions and Discussion**

1. Rahab is mentioned three times in the New Testament (Matt. 1:5; Heb. 11:31; Jas. 2:25).  
Note anything significant or interesting about each passage.
2. How did Rahab have faith (Josh. 2:9-11)?
3. Why is it significant that Rahab helped the spies (Josh. 2:1-7, 15, 16)?
4. What do you most admire about Rahab?

# Legends of Faith

Hebrews 11:32

Gideon

By Steven F. Deaton

**The Story of Gideon** | Hebrews 11:32; Judges 6-8

Gideon is one of five judges mentioned in Hebrews 11. Like the others, he was not a perfect man, but his faith in God is the final word on his life. He did what God commanded and, as a result, delivered God's people from oppression.

The account of Gideon's defeat of the Midianites and their allies is one we often learn from youth. It is a great illustration of how God can accomplish mighty deeds through just a few. The same God is at work today and can use a few of us to achieve incredible results for His Kingdom.

## Questions and Discussion

1. How did the people react when Gideon tore down the altar of Baal and why is this ironic in light of Judges 6:6 (Judges 6:25-32)?
2. Explain what is happening with the fleece in Judges 6:36-40. What is Gideon doing? What is God doing?
3. What does Judges 8:32-35 say regarding Gideon's influence and what lesson can we draw from this?
4. What do you most admire about Gideon?

# Legends of Faith

Hebrews 11:32

## Samuel

By Steven F. Deaton

**The Story of Samuel** | Hebrews 11:32; 1 Samuel 7, 8, 13, 15

Samuel is one of the greatest and most well-known men in the Old Testament. He is chiefly known as a prophet, but he also served as a judge and priest. The Lord raised him up in a time of great need in Israel; a need for reform and rededication to God.

During his life he dealt with a rebellious nation, a wayward king, and a humble shepherd boy that would become Israel's greatest monarch. Through it all, Samuel displayed determination in honoring God and took action that would have intimidated lesser men.

### Questions and Discussion

1. How did Samuel influence and help the children of Israel before a king was anointed (1 Sam. 7:2-14)?
2. What prompted the children of Israel to ask for a king (1 Sam. 8:1-22)? Hint: there's more than one reason.
3. Why did Samuel have to confront Saul and how did he deal with the king (1 Sam. 13:1-14; 15:1-23)?
4. What do you most admire about Samuel?