

# *The Bible's Hall of Faith: Hebrews 11*

## “How Can I Obey Something I Don’t Understand?”

Hebrews 11:7 – January 22, 2006

### Overview of Our Study

THE BIBLE'S HALL OF FAITH: HEBREWS 11			
Date	Highlight	Message Title	Verse
Jan 8	Creation	How Can I Believe in Creation and Science?	1-3
Jan 15	Abel/Enoch	How Can I Walk with God?	4-6
Jan 22	Noah	How Can I Obey Something I Don't Understand?	7
Jan 29	Abraham/Sarah	How Can I Have Faith So Late in the Game?	8-16
Feb 5	Abraham–Pt 2	How Can I Offer God My Most Prized Possession?	17-19
Feb 12	Isaac, Jacob, Joseph	How Can I Trust God with the Future?	20-22
Feb 19	Moses–Pt. 1	How Can I Give Up Earthly Pleasures?	23-27
Feb 26	Moses–Pt. 2	How Can I Get Out of This Mess?	28-29
Mar 5	Rahab	How Can God Use Me When I Have Done What I've Done?	30-31
Mar 12	Others: GSSD	How Can I Have Faith Like That?	32-40

### The Simple Message of Noah's Life (Hebrews 11:7)

Obey God even when it does not make sense – even when you don't fully understand.

- The example of Noah – building a boat for an impending flood when no one had ever seen rain (Hebrews 11:7; Genesis 2:5-6)
- Suggested memory verse – **Genesis 6:22** – *Noah did everything just as God commanded him.*
- Application: What command of God am I struggling to obey because it does not make sense to me?
  1. Submitting to my husband (Ephesians 5:22-24) when...
  2. Speaking the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15) when...
  3. Loving my wife sacrificially (Ephesians 5:25-33) when...
  4. Obeying my parents (Ephesians 6:1-3) when...
  5. Remaining single and celibate (1 Corinth 7) when...
  6. Saving my sexuality for marriage (Heb. 13:4) when...
  7. Giving financially back to God (Leviticus 27:30; 2 Corinth 9:6-8) when...
  8. Forgiving those who have hurt me (Ephesians 4:32) when...
  9. Submitting to my boss or the government (Romans 13:1-7) when...
  10. Paying my taxes with integrity (Romans 13:6-8) when...
  11. Loving and praying for my enemies (Matt 5:43-47) when...
  12. Turning the other cheek (Matt 5:38-42) when...
  13. Not being anxious about anything (Philippians 4:6-7) when...
  14. Letting down my nets for a catch (Luke 5:4-5) when...
  15. Sharing my faith (Acts 1:8) when...

### Three Things Noah Did By Faith (Hebrews 11:7)

1. Out of reverence for God, he obeyed God's command to build a boat.
2. He preached and witnessed to the world around him with his life actions and his words (cf. 2 Peter 2:5).
3. He inherited righteousness (Romans 3:21-22; Philippians 3:9; 2 Corinth 5:21).

### Insights, Applications, and Rabbit Trails from the Genesis 6-9 Account of Noah's Life of Faith

1. Rabbit trail on long life spans in Genesis (5:32; 7:6; 9:29). Average life span before Flood = 912 years. Life span after Flood tapers down to 120 years. At least four possible explanations:
  - a) **MORE SIN = MORE DEATH** – God intended for humans to live forever (3:22) in fellowship with Him in the Garden. God had warned that sin would lead to death (2:17). As sin increased, life span decreased (6:5).
  - b) **GREENHOUSE** EFFECT – The Day Two creation account (1:7) appears to indicate the creation of “waters above the firmament” – perhaps a vast thermal blanket of clear water vapor that maintained a greenhouse effect that blocked life threatening radiation. The Flood would have been the releasing of this entire atmospheric layer (7:11).
  - c) **SUPERNOVA ERRUPTION** – Geophysicist Robert Brakenridge reports that the eruption of the supernova Vela occurred approximately 9000 B.C. damaging the Earth's ozone layer and, thus, increasing ultraviolet radiation by ten times on Earth. This could potentially have decreased life spans by 10 fold.
  - d) **APOPTOSIS: CELL PROGRAMMING** – Researchers have discovered a cell phenomenon called “apoptosis” – human cells are designed to shut down after a certain number of cell regenerations (approx. 120 years). Genesis 6:3 points to God declaring, “Human cell program-ming has now been changed to 120 years.”
  - e) Research more at [www.reasons.org](http://www.reasons.org) and [www.icr.org](http://www.icr.org)
2. Important truth from Genesis 6:8: Noah found favor in God's eyes before he ever obeyed and built the ark.
  - Noah found favored with God because he believed God (Hebrews 11:7)
  - We do not earn favor with God by what we do but rather by placing our trust in Him.
  - **Ephesians 2:8-9** - *For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith - and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God - not by works, so that no one can boast.*
  - **Romans 3:21-22** = *But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference.*
  - Titus 3:4-7; Philippians 3:9; 2 Corinthians 5:21
  - Application: Rest in Him. Nothing you can say or do can cause God to love you or accept you more than He already does in Christ. Renew your mind to this truth and it will transform you (Romans 12:2) and set you free (John 8:32).

3. Major parallel between Genesis 6:11-22 (promised judgment of Noah's generation) and God's promise of coming judgment some time soon for our generations
- How ridiculous Noah's actions and message must have been
  - How ridiculous our message today is (1 Corinth 1:18-31)
  - **Matthew 24:37-44** - *As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. 38 For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark; 39 and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. 40 Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other left. 41 Two women will be grinding with a hand mill; one will be taken and the other left. 42 Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come. 43 But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would have kept watch and would not have let his house be broken into. 44 So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect Him.*
  - **2 Peter 3:3-7** - *First of all, you must understand that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires. 4 They will say, "Where is this 'coming' He promised? Ever since our fathers died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation." 5 But they deliberately forget that long ago by God's word the heavens existed and the earth was formed out of water and by water. 6 By these waters also the world of that time was deluged and destroyed. 7 By the same word the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.*
  - **Application:** Do I really believe all that????
  - **Application:** If so, then build an ark!!! I believe God is calling us to build an ark to offer salvation to our generation. Noah built a physical ark and shared a verbal message (2 Peter 2:5). I believe God is calling us...
    - To build an ark of relationships with unbelievers through which we can share the Gospel message. The seeker whom I desire to build a relationship with is \_\_\_\_\_ . (Possibly invite to Easter @ The Merrell Center: April 16)
    - To build an ark of church facilities which can house the ministry of the Word, worship, prayer, discipleship to the people of Katy (Town Hall Meeting on Building, Feb. 5, 12:30)
    - To build an ark of human ministry infrastructure (children's ministry, youth ministry, adult small groups, etc.) which can minister to those God brings to our campus (begin praying now about your "Living Stones" volunteer/service commitment March 19 – April 9)
    - To build an ark of missions going, giving, praying for the Banjar people in Indonesia (Pray for mission trip Feb. 19–Mar. 7)
  - Awful Picture: Imagine what it must have been like to be outside the ark after the floodwaters reached your knees, chest, mouth. Let's act on that picture now rather than then.
  - **Application:** What ark does God want you to build? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Two examples of obedience: Noah (Gen. 6:22;7:5) and the animals (7:8-9).
- **Application:** If the animals can obey, then so can I. An area where I feel God calling me to obey is: \_\_\_\_\_

5. Lesson in perseverance (7:8-9)
- C.H. Spurgeon: "By perseverance the snail reached the ark."
  - **Application:** If the snail can make it to the ark, then I can... \_\_\_\_\_ by God's grace.
6. Observation: Noah's first act when he got out of the boat was to worship(8:20).
- **Application:** How can I make worship my first act? \_\_\_\_\_
7. God's covenant with Noah and us (8:21-9:17).
- **Application:** Next time you see a rainbow...
  - By the way, I refuse to let anti-God groups steal the rainbow!
  - **Application:** The Great Commission originated in Genesis 1:28 and was reiterated in Genesis 9:1,7. God's objective has not changed: To fill the earth with a people relating to Him by name. How can I fulfill my role in this fundamental purpose of humans? \_\_\_\_\_
8. Observation: If God can use Noah, he can use you!!!!
- Noah's act of drunkenness and indecency (Gen. 9:20-28)
  - God has consistently used cracked pots (2 Corinth 4:7-18) to do His kingdom work
  - **Application:** What excuse have I been using to say that God cannot use me? \_\_\_\_\_ When am I going to stop using that excuse? \_\_\_\_\_
  - Sidenote: The "Christians are all hypocrites" argument.

**Sermon Series Application** – When your life is over, what do you want your faith epitaph to be? (work on this through out this sermon series)

## My "By Faith" Epitaph

By faith...

### **Discussion Questions with Family, Friends, and Small Group**

1. What is your favorite image from the Noah account: The ark? The animals? The flood? The rainbow? The dove? Other? Why?
2. Read Hebrews 11:7. What do you believe was the greatest step of faith for Noah? What would be the equivalent for you or someone today?
3. Discuss the message notes. Use Scripture as much as possible. What applications are you most drawn to?
4. How is your "by faith epitaph" coming?