

# HEBREWS: THE INFINITE SUPREMACY AND SUFFICIENCY OF JESUS CHRIST

## XVIII. God's Acceptance Of A Life Of Faith

(Hebrews 11:2, 4-16)

### I. Introduction

- A. We live in an era of great need for an encouraging word amid man's discouraging spiritual failure, so a word from God on the infinite supremacy and sufficiency of His Son Jesus Christ is both desirable and fitting.
- B. The Epistle of Hebrews offers it, and Hebrews 11:2, 4-16 illustrates how God accepts a life of faith in Him in the experiences of the men of old, so we view it for our insight, application and edification (as follows):

### II. God's Acceptance Of A Life Of Faith, Hebrews 11:2, 4-16 ESV.

- A. After defining what is involved in living a Christian life of faith in God in Hebrews 11:1, the Author of Hebrews claimed that by such a life, men of old received commendation from God, Hebrews 11:2.
- B. The Author then illustrated this claim in Hebrews 11:4-16 (as follows):
  - 1. By faith Abel offered God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain, by which he was commended as righteous through God's receiving his offering, Hebrews 11:4a. Through Abel's example of faith, though he died a martyr's death for his sacrifice, he still speaks, Hebrews 11:4b.
  - 2. By faith Enoch was translated that he should not face death, and he was not found on earth since God had taken him, and before he was taken up to heaven, he was commended for having pleased God, Heb. 11:5.
  - 3. The Author interjected the axiomatic truth that without faith it is impossible to please God, for whoever would draw near to God of necessity must believe that He exists and that He "becomes" (*ginetai*, present tense of *ginomai*, "become," U. B. S. Grk. N. T., 1966, p. 770; The Analyt. Grk. Lex. (Zon.), 1972, p. 78) a "Recompenser, Rewarder" (*misthapodotes*, Ibid., U. B. S. Grk. N. T.; Ibid., The Analyt. Grk. Lex., p. 271) of those who "seek diligently or earnestly after" (*ekzeteo*, Ibid., p. 124) Him, Hebrews 11:6.
  - 4. The Author then applied the idea of God's rewarding a believer for living by faith to Noah: When warned of God about a coming worldwide Flood that had not been seen or experienced on earth since creation, in reverent fear, he built the ark for the saving of his household, Hebrews 11:7a. Noah and his family were thus saved during the Flood, and he became an heir of the righteousness that comes by faith, Heb. 11:7b.
  - 5. Abraham also obeyed God's command to travel to a place he was to receive as an inheritance, trusting God's goodness to give him a good land, Hebrews 11:8. By faith he lived in that Promised Land as a foreigner, not taking possession of it, living in tents as a nomad with his descendants Isaac and Jacob who were heirs of that same promise. Abraham functioned this way because he looked for a city with foundations, the heavenly and eternal Jerusalem that God had designed and built, Hebrews 11:9-10.
  - 6. By faith Sarah, Abraham's wife, received the ability to conceive in old age, for she considered God faithful Who had promised her a son, Hebrews 11:11. This faith was rewarded in that God caused from one man, Abraham, whose reproductive system was as though dead due to old age, to spring forth descendants as the many as the stars of heaven and the numerous grains of sand on the seashore, Hebrews 11:12.
  - 7. All of these men of old died in faith, not having receive the things God had promised, but having seen them and greeted them from a distance, and having acknowledged that they were mere strangers and exiles on the earth in their day, Hebrews 11:13.
  - 8. These men of old were seeking a homeland other than the homelands from which they had come, otherwise they would have returned to their former homelands, Hebrews 11:14-15. Rather, they desired a better country, a heavenly one, so God was not ashamed to be called their God, for He had prepared for them a heavenly city (Hebrews 11:16).
  - 9. Incidentally, these Old Testament men of old now live in that heavenly city following their earthly lives, awaiting the resurrection and the fulfillment of God's land promise that occurs at the start of the Millennial Kingdom (cf. Daniel 12:12-13) according to Hebrews 12:22-24: That city now hosts (a) deceased believers in the Church era ("church of the firstborn" KJV), (b) and the "spirits of just men made perfect" (KJV) who are "(b)elievers of Old Testament times," Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, ftn. to Hebrews 12:23.

***Lesson:*** *Believers of antiquity in Old Testament times were rewarded and commended by God for trusting God's promises though they died not having seen those promises as yet fulfilled, for they sought a better existence in the heavenly Jerusalem, the city where their souls now exist!*

***Application:*** *May we live by faith in God's promises, for doing so brings great reward as seen in godly men of old.*