Hebrews 11:7-19 Inductive Bible Study Notes and Discussion Questions

Outline:

I. Noah (7)

II. Abraham (8-10, 17-18)

III. Sarah (11-12)

IV. Commentary on Abraham/Sarah (13-16)

I. See Noah Character Study

Discussion Questions

What was the world like at the time of Noah?

What are some of Noah’s most outstanding character qualities?

In what ways did Noah show his faith in God?

In your opinion, what would have been the most difficult aspects for Noah to keep obeying God?

What lessons can we learn from Noah’s life?

Are there any applications we can make to our life today from the life of Noah?

Cross References

Genesis 5-9

Ezekiel 14:14,20

Matthew 24:37-38

II. Abraham -

Discussion Questions

Where did Abraham’s family live before he went to the Promised Land?

What did God tell him to do?

How did Abraham respond?

In what ways during Abraham’s life did he show faith in God?

What were Abraham’s most outstanding character qualities?
Were there times that he demonstrated a lack of faith in God? When?

Since Abraham was indeed a man with a lot of sin and sometimes making terrible mistakes, why do you think he is in this list?

What do other New Testament books tell us about Abraham?

What are some of the key lessons we can learn from his life?

Are there any applications we can make to our life today from the life of Abraham?

**Cross References**

Genesis 12-23

Romans 4

John 8:56

Galatians 3:6-9

James 2:21-23

III. Sarah - See Sarah Character Study

Why is Sarah mentioned in this list?

How could she make the list?

What do you think were some of Sarah’s best character qualities?

What situations did she face that would have been difficult to have faith in?

Genesis 12-23 is largely about Abraham, but what role do you think Sarah played in the events in those chapters?

How did Abraham treat Sarah? How easy would it have been for Sarah to submit to some of Abraham’s decisions (giving the best to Lot, leaving their own country, telling Pharaoh she was Abraham’s sister, etc.)?

Are there any applications we can make to our life today from the life of Sarah?

Sarah, since you are named “Sarah,” as a woman what you can learn and apply from her life?

**Cross References**

1 Peter 3:6
Genesis 12:17, 16:1, 5, Genesis 17:15-20, 20:1-6, 21:1,

IV. Verses 13-16

Discussion Questions

What promises are referred to in verse 13 which these Old Testament characters did not receive?

What promises did they live to see fulfilled in their own lives? Are there some promises which we will see fulfilled in our lives now and some which we won’t? For example?

What does it mean that they were strangers and exiles on the earth? Did they realize and accept this?

How about us? In what ways can we live like strangers on the earth? What type of lifestyle indicates our home is in heaven? What kind of lifestyle indicates we are attached to this world?

What country were they seeking?

What is the country from which they had went out?

Why did they not go back to it?

What city has God prepared for them? Is there anything perhaps symbolic about the “Promised Land?”

What is the Promised Land for a Christian?

Cross-References

Philippians 3:20 – Our citizenship is in heaven.

Colossians 3:2 – Set your mind on things above…

Teaching Points

1. Remember from the first verses in this chapter that faith is hope and conviction in things unseen. Noah, Abraham, Sarah and other Old Testament characters saw a lot less than we have. They didn’t have the benefit of a complete Bible. They didn’t have the benefit of world history. They didn’t know about Jesus’ coming, His birth, death, or resurrection. Abraham and Sarah never lived to see a great nation spring up from their descendants. Noah never lived to see the world repopulated. He died as one of only a handful of people left on the planet. This could have driven many people mad with depression and loneliness. Certainly all of these characters had some promises fulfilled during their lives. Noah saw great miracles with his whole family and two of every type of animal being saved from the flood. Abraham saw cities destroyed divinely by God, his own small band defeat kings, his wife get pregnant at the age of 90, and an angel appearing to save Isaac. But none of them lived to see God’s plan through them fulfilled completely. They died with many questions left. None of them were perfect. They were sinners like you and made, but they had faith and they showed this faith by action.

A. Application: We also are to live by faith. There are more promises that God has made that haven’t yet been fulfilled. We may never see them fulfilled before our death. But we should welcome them from a distance and through faith sacrifice everything we have for God.
2. They confessed they were strangers on this earth. These saints realized a very important truth, and that is that they were only passing through this world. One day they would face God in judgment and have to give a report for how they lived, for what they did, said, and thought. Knowing that their time on this earth was limited, this motivated them to make the most of their time and serve God faithfully no matter the potential consequences.

3. These saints were seeking something more than this world. They had a dissatisfaction with what they saw around them. They weren’t happy to just “eat, drink, and be merry.” They realized that the people around them were living an empty and futile existence with no meaning, direction, or purpose. Certainly Noah could have joined the people around him in sin (no one would have blamed him as everyone was doing it), but he didn’t. He used 120 years of his life toiling away building a boat. How often must he have been tempted to stop and enjoy himself, but he didn’t. He wanted something more than the emptiness he saw around him. Abraham and Sarah could have turned back to Ur. They had many chances to go back. When things got tough, they surely remembered some of the comforts and conveniences of where they used to live. There were certainly holidays, and feasts, and festivals, and parties, and friends, and activities that they might have missed. But they realized those were empty celebrations and the laughter and smiles were hollow. They didn’t want to be like everyone else. They didn’t want to put on a facade of happiness while feeling empty and oppressed in times alone because of the bondage of the idols and gods everyone else followed. They did not love this world. Rather they saw through the deceit and lies and empty promises Satan makes and made a conscious decision that they wanted more no matter how much they had to sacrifice to get it. And that is why their faith has put them in this chapter.

4. What did God do for them? In verse 16 we learn that God happily calls Himself their God. In other words He accepted them. He welcomed them. He in fact has built an everlasting city for them (heaven). In John 8:56 we see that Abraham saw the day of Jesus and was glad. This shows us that Abraham is very much alive in God’s presence. He was excited to see Jesus descend from heaven to this world to save humanity. Abraham had already entered this city God had prepared for Him. God welcomed Abraham, Sarah, Noah and the rest of the saints in this chapter already. How about you? Will you follow their examples of faith? Will you despise the empty promises and of culture around you? Will you set your mind on things above or will you be attached to this world? When you die will you enter this city or will God be ashamed to say He is your God?

**Application**: What specific action do you believe God wants you to do based on what we have learned today? Write it down.

To learn about the individual characters in Hebrews 11:18-39, please see our character studies (ww.calligraphyforgod.com/inductivebiblestudies.html) on these and other heroes of the faith.