

By Faith

Key Verses: “*Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. For by it the elders obtained a good report.*”
—Hebrews 11:1,2

Selected Scripture:
Hebrews 11:1-40

Christ’s crucifixion, whereas the other is the Gospel Age church of God.

By their example, the Ancient Worthies or Old Testament saints which preceded Pentecost help us to appreciate the providences of God on our behalf. These “elders” who “obtained a good report” began with Abel and ended with John the Baptist of whom we read, “the law and the prophets were until John.” (Luke 16:16) All of them pleased God even though they were sinners. Nevertheless, the record of their lives should serve as an inspiration for us to manifest loyalty and obedience to our Heavenly Father. “And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.”—Heb. 11:39,40

The Ancient Worthies and the church include both men and women even though in the Bible, the masculine gender

IN THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER of Hebrews, the first of our Key Verses describes faith as being a reasonable conviction that becomes a basis of hope for the things which God has promised to those who love him. Between the creation of Adam and the present, there have been two classes of men and women who demonstrated this necessary quality. One existed before

is more prominent. Rahab, Sarah, and Moses' mother are listed in Hebrews as part of the former class. Some likely female members of the church might be inferred from Mark's Gospel where we read, "There were also women looking on afar off: among whom was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the less and of Joses, and Salome; (Who also, when he was in Galilee, followed him, and ministered unto him;) and many other women which came up with him unto Jerusalem."—Mark 15:40,41

Hebrews 12:1 refers to the Old Testament saints as a "cloud of witnesses," a large group of faithful individuals who existed before the Christian era was inaugurated. They are also denoted as "princes in all the earth," with billions of people to be dealt with when Satan is bound and Christ's kingdom is established. Thus it seems that the Ancient Worthies will be quite busy in the future in helping to fulfil God's plans and purposes.—Ps. 45:16; Rev. 20:1-3,6

There are pictures in the Bible that suggest close association and communion between the church and the Ancient Worthies during the Millennial Age. One of these is Jacob's dream of the ladder that was set up on earth, the top of which reached to heaven. We read in Genesis 28:10-15 of the dream and of the angels ascending and descending. It is one of the lovely stories of the Bible and shows beautifully the relationship and the communication between the heavenly and the earthly.

Another example might be the veil over Moses' face when he came down from the mount. (Exod. 34:29-35) This may suggest the antitypical Mediator, Christ, will not speak to the people directly, but through the Ancient Worthies. The loving association of David and Jonathan may also suggest the close relationship between these two classes. God especially rewards faithful ones no matter when they lived. Let us emulate the lives of those, both past and present, who have walked "by faith." ■