

# Faith

## Hebrews 11:1-40

Compiled By Dr. Gary M. Gulan, ©1983 (Rev. 92,01,09)

We are now through the core of the book (5:1-10:26), which dealt with the major details of the Jewish religion. The things we dealt with are the deeper things of the Christian life, (6:11).

Faith is mentioned in the previous chapter, (10:38). The verse should be translated, “The righteous one shall live by my faithfulness.” This introduces “faith” into the discussion challenging the Jews he was writing to examine their faith. The word “faith” (Gk. “pistei/pistis/pisteos”) appears 31 times in the book of Hebrews.

Remember the ones that this book was written to, had experienced “persecution” making them want to leave the New Testament life of the Christian and go back under the life of the Old Testament Law.

1. They entered into a “fight” (Gr. “athlesis” translated “struggle”) meaning “a public athletic contest.” (10:32)
  2. They “endured” (Gr. “hupomeno”) (10:32)
  3. They faced “sufferings” (Gr. “pathema”) (10:32)
  4. They were made a “spectacle” (Gr. “theatridzo”) meaning “public insult and injury” and “theater.” (10:33)
  5. They faced “reproaches” (Gr. “onedismos”) (10:33)
  6. They faced “tribulations” (Gr. “thlipsis”) (10:33)
  7. They became “companions” (Gr. “koinonos”) meaning “forced to be a partner with other’s persecution.” (10:33)
  8. They had their goods “confiscated” (Gr. “harpago”) meaning “to plunder.” (10:34)
- (Robertson, p. 415)

### **The writer of Hebrews already laid the ground work for us about “faith.”**

1. Jesus is the author and finisher of our faith, (Heb. 12:2).
2. When you hear the Word it must be mingled with the faith that is brought to life, (Heb. 4:4; Rom. 10:17).
3. Maturity is growth in faith toward God, (Heb. 6:1).
4. We are to imitate those in the faith, (Heb. 6:12; 13:7).
5. Without faith it is impossible to please God, (Heb. 11:6).
6. If you want to get close to God you must believe that He is and He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him, (Heb. 11:6).
7. By putting into action our faith, God is not ashamed to be called our God, (Heb. 11:16).
8. What the heroes of faith in the Bible searched for was built and made by God, (Heb. 11:10).

### **1. Definition of faith**

A. “The first word in the sentence is the word “is” (Gr. “estin”) showing that “faith” is a present and continuing reality. It is not simply a virtue sometimes practiced in antiquity. It is a living thing.” (Morris, p. 113)

B. “Assurance of things hoped for,” (Heb. 11:1)

The word “assurance” (Gr., “hupostasis” KJV “substance”) means “the essence, the real content, the reality, as opposed to mere appearance.” (MacArthur, p. 287) “This noun literally means ‘that which stands under’ or ‘foundation’ and hence ‘substance.’” (Kughes, p. 61) “Faith is the title-deed of things hoped for.” (Moulton/Milligan, Pp. 659-660). There are two views of what this means: (1.) “Things that have no reality in themselves are made real by faith”; and \*(2.) “There are realities for which we have no material evidence though they are not the less real for that. Faith enables us to know that they exist and while we have no certainty apart from faith, faith does give us genuine certainty.” (Morris, p. 113) “Faith is living in a hope that is so real it gives absolute assurance.” (MacArthur, p. 287)

C. “The conviction of things not seen” (11:1)

The word “conviction” (Gr. “elenchus” KJV “evidence”) implies a response, an outward manifestation of the inward assurance.” (MacArthur, p. 288) The word “conviction” can mean (1.) “test;” (2.) in legal terms it has a meaning of “cross examining;” or \*(3.) it can mean “proof or conviction.” (Morris, p. 113)

D. “Obtained a good report” (11:2,39)

The words “obtained a good report” (Gr. “emarturethesan”) means “were able to bear witness to it.” (Wuest, p. 194) “Because of faith people of old won God’s approval.” (Ellingsworth, p. 567)

E. “By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible. (Heb 11:3)

The word “understand” (Gr. “nooumen”) means “to perceive with the reflective intelligence.” “This word is distinct from the mere physical act of seeing.” (Wuest, p. 195) Far different than the science we have today.

The word “worlds” (Gr. “tous aionas”) means “the created universe and the periods of time administered by God.” Wuest, p. 195)

The word “framed” (Gr. “katertisthai”) means “to fit out or equip, so that person or thing thus equipped or fitted might serve the purpose for which it was made.” (Wuest, p. 195)

The word “word” (Gr. “hremati”) means “to speak or utter.” It is not the word “logos” which stands for the Son of God. “Belief in the existence of the world is not faith, nor is it faith when men hold that the world was made out of some pre-existing stuff. But when we understand that it was the Word of God that produced all things, that is faith. The point is emphasized with the explicit statement that the visible did not originate from the visible.” (Morris, p. 114) “Faith enables us to understand the visible universe was created by something invisible, namely the Word of God.” (Ellingsworth, p. 568)

F. “Faith is the confidence or assurance of the things hoped for.”

“Thus the man who has true faith possesses the title-deeds of eternal realities, and the conviction and proof that these realities, though unseen, can be a living and effective power in life.” (Hewitt, p. 171) “Faith guarantees what believers hope for.” (Ellingsworth, p. 564)

## **2. Demonstration of Faith**

The writer shows us “faith” as seen in the prophetic records of the old world. (Westcott, p. 351)

1. Abel: faith can result in death, (11:4).
2. Enoch: faith can result in translation into glory, (11:5-6).
3. Noah: faith can result in special deliverance and provision for you and your family within destruction, (11:7).
4. Abraham: faith can result in leaving your family and country, (11:8-10).
5. Sarah: faith can result in doing what is physically impossible, (11:11-12).
6. Abraham: faith can result in preparing to sacrifice your son for the Lord, (11:17-19).
7. Isaac: faith can give blessings that bring future rewards to individuals, (11:20).
8. Jacob: faith can give blessings that bring future rewards to individuals, (11:21).
9. Joseph: faith can direct the future, (11:22).
10. Moses: faith can save a life of a future leader for the Lord, (11:23).
11. Moses: can forsake the world, protect your people, lead the people, (11:24-29).
12. Joshua: faith took down the walls of the enemy, (11:30).
13. Rahab: faith can save the servants of the Lord, (11:31).
14. Gideon, Barak, Samson, Samuel and the prophets: faith accomplished great things for the Lord, (11:32-38)

**From the examples we have learned that a life of faith will have some of the following characteristics.**

1. Obedience is involved.
2. Looking forward not backward is involved.
3. Waiting for things in the future is involved.
4. Being aliens on the earth while waiting for fulfillment of promises is involved.
5. Looking for a future permanent home is involved.
6. The abandoning of your own country and family may be involved.
7. What is sought is now in heaven.
8. God does reward the life of faith.
9. Persecution of the faithful is often involved.
10. Faithfulness to God is a life long endeavor.
11. Death maybe involved.
12. The fulfilling of promises is not determined by our timing.
13. The fulfillment of promises is coming.

## **Summary: (Heb. 11:2, 13-16)**

1. The Bible is filled with examples of “faith” lived out in the experiences of life.
2. The life of faith has trials and triumphs for the believer.
3. The saints living under the Old Testament share in common aspects of faith.
4. The saints of the New Testament will experience the common joy with the old testament saints in the fulfillment of the promises.

(Kistemaker, Pp. 361-362)

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