

## Faith: What is it and how is it received?

- I. Introduction:
  - a. Much debate on Faith
  - b. Faith is essential for salvation – We must be able, without any uncertainty or obscurity, understand what faith is.
  - c. Let us search the scripture, and allow it to answer the argument on Faith
- II. Biblical definition of Faith
  - a. Chapter 11 of Hebrews – Discourse on Faith – Tells us what faith is and then gives a list of examples
  - b. **(Heb 11:1)** “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.”
    - i. **Substance** – essence, what something is made out of - the substance of the pulpit is wood – hard to understand in reference to faith in regards to hope (hope is made out of faith) – Doesn’t tell us anything about faith.
      1. Translated from the Greek word “ὑποστασις”
      2. ‘hupostasis’ – used 5 times in the New Testament 3 of them are translated as confidence
        - a. **Example: (Heb 3:14)** “For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our **confidence** steadfast unto the end”
      3. Confidence makes the meaning more clear (the state of being certain) – “Faith is the confidence of things hope for” (Robinson’s Greek and English Lexicon of the New Testament, pg. 768, ‘hupostasis’)
    - ii. Evidence – What does Paul mean when he says that unseen things are given evidence by faith?
      1. What are unseen things?
        - a. Unseen things – God, Heaven, Hell, angels, and Satan, Things of the Past and the things of the Future.
      2. Does faith give evidence to these things?
        - a. No – People can believe many things, doesn’t mean they are so!
        - b. Faith is a result of evidence to these things – Faith is the conviction of these things
      3. “State of being convinced, conviction, persuasion, firm belief.” (Robinson’s Greek and English Lexicon of the New Testament, pg. 255 ‘elegos’)
    - iii. Faith is the confidence of the things hoped for and the conviction of the things not seen.
      1. That is a clear definition
- III. Examples of Paul’s definition:
  - a. **(Heb 11:2)** “For by it the elders obtained a good report.”

- i. Those of times past obtained a 'good report' by their faith – He is about to show how they obtained this 'good report'
- b. First example: Creation of the World
  - i. **(Heb 11:3)** "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear."
    - 1. Through faith we have a conviction of an unseen thing – God framed the worlds by the His word
- c. Second example: Abel
  - i. **(Heb 11:4)** "By faith Abel offered unto God a more **excellent sacrifice** than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh."
    - 1. Does not say that Abel had a more excellent faith and that is why he was accepted
    - 2. It says, "a more excellent sacrifice"
  - ii. What was the object on which Abel's faith rested, when he brought the sacrifice?
    - 1. An invisible God – Conviction of things not see
  - iii. It was offered in hopes of reward
    - 1. Confidence of things hoped for
- d. Third example: Enoch
  - i. **(Heb 11:5)** "By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that **he pleased God.**"
    - 1. Nothing to sustain this doctrine in the Old Testament record, therefore Paul continues with his proof:
      - a. **(Heb 11:6)** "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that **He is**, and that **He is a rewarder** of them that diligently seek him."
  - ii. Paul brings out two elements of Enoch's faith
    - 1. Must believe that God is – conviction in things unseen
    - 2. Must believe that He is a rewarder – confidence of the things hoped for
  - iii. Under that confidence Enoch "walked with God" and pleased God
- e. Fourth example: Noah
  - i. **(Heb 11:7)** "By faith Noah, being warned of God of **things not seen as yet**, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the **saving of his house**; by the which he condemned the world, and **became heir of the righteousness** which is by faith."
    - 1. Conviction of an unseen event
    - 2. Confidence of salvation from the event (things hoped for)
- f. Fifth example: Abraham – Two incidents of his life are brought out to illustrate his faith

- i. **(Heb 11:8)** “By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.”
  - 1. Left his native land, family, everything to go to a place that he has never seen and doesn't even know where its located
  - 2. Conviction of the unseen land and country
  - 3. Confidence in the hope of possessing it
    - a. Enough conviction and confidence that he left his family and traveled 1300 miles
- ii. **(Heb 11:9-10)** “By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, **dwelling in tabernacles** with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: For **he looked for a city** which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.”
  - 1. A man of great wealth living in tents for a hundred years
    - a. 75 years old when he left his native land (Gen 12:4) – He died when he was 175 years old (Gen 25:8) – 100 years of living in tents!
  - 2. He looked for a greater city than he could ever hope to build – the city of God – Satisfied with a tent for now
    - a. Conviction of unseen – that unseen city of God
    - b. Confidence that after living a long life in tents – He would dwell there in that city with his children after him
    - c. That's the faith of Abraham!
- g. We can clearly see with these five examples of what faith is:
  - i. Confidence as to things hoped for
  - ii. Conviction as to things not seen

#### IV. Our Faith

- a. Jesus asked a question to His Apostles
  - i. **(Matt 16:13)** “Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?”
  - ii. **(Matt 16:15)** “But whom say ye that I am?”
  - iii. Peter's proclamation – “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God” **(Matt 16:16)**
- b. For us – this is an unseen fact – Jesus is no longer with us physically – on the right hand of God
  - i. Our conviction is in an unseen Christ and an unseen sacrifice – Yet we're convinced He exists and he suffered for us!
  - ii. Our confidence is in the things He has promised
    - 1. Remission of Sins
    - 2. Eternal life
- c. Faith in Jesus Christ is conviction as to things not seen, confidence as to things hoped for.
  - i. **(John 20:29)** “Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.”

#### V. How do we gain this Faith?

- a. Example One: Creation of the World
  - i. How did you obtain the faith that God created the world by His word?
    - 1. Not by reasoning about it, not by dreaming, not in answer to prayer – We read it
  - ii. **(Gen 1:1)** “In the beginning God created the Heaven and the earth.”
  - iii. We obtained this conviction by the word of God
- b. Example Two: Abel
  - i. How would Cain and Abel know that a sacrifice was even necessary?
    - 1. God must have revealed it to them, especially seeing that God respected one over the other.
- c. Example Three: Enoch
  - i. Must have received some word from God to convince him of the unseen God – and for him to have confidence in being rewarded by Him.
- d. Example Four: Noah
  - i. How did Noah obtain his conviction of the unseen flood?
    - 1. **(Heb 11:7)** “...being warned of God...” – Revealed by God!
    - 2. **(Gen 6:13)** “And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth.”
  - ii. How did Noah obtain his confidence that he and his family would be saved?
    - 1. **(Gen 6:18)** “But with thee will I establish my covenant; and thou shalt come into the ark, thou, and thy sons, and thy wife, and thy sons' wives with thee.”
    - 2. A way of salvation was revealed by God – Hope!
- e. Example Five: Abraham
  - i. How did Abraham obtain his conviction about the land when he didn't know where it was?
    - 1. God revealed it to him!
      - a. **(Gen 12:1-3)** “Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.”
- f. How did you gain your conviction that God sent His Son to die for your sins?
  - i. Through the Word of God – No other way!

- g. The Bible confirms this:
  - i. **(Rom 10:14-17)** “How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”
    - 1. The word of God is that powerful – It will bring those that believe to salvation
      - a. (1 Cor 1:21) “For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.”

- VI. How does faith bring us these blessings?
  - a. Does faith bring us all those great blessings by simply existing within us, or by what it leads us to do and feel?
    - i. The examples that we’ve read will give us the answer
  - b. Would he have received that blessing, if he had never offered his lamb?
    - i. **(Heb 11:4)** “**By faith** Abel **offered** unto God a **more excellent sacrifice** than Cain, **by** which he **obtained witness** that he was **righteous**, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh.”
      - 1. By faith Abel offered a sacrifice
  - c. Did Enoch receive his blessing through faith? Was it faith only?
    - i. **(Heb 11:5)** “**By faith** Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God.”
      - 1. **(Gen 5:24)** “...Enoch **walked** with God”
      - 2. Paul says, “he pleased God” **(Heb 11:5)**
  - d. Did Noah build an ark by faith? Yes! Did he build it by faith only? No!
    - i. **(Heb 11:7)** “**By faith** Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, **moved** with fear, **prepared** an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and **became** heir of the **righteousness** which is by faith.”
  - e. Did Abraham receive his blessing by staying home? No!
    - i. **(Heb 11:8)** “**By faith** Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, **obeyed**; and he **went out**, not knowing whither he went.”
  - f. Our faith – How is it going to bring us to the forgiveness of sins, salvation, and eternal life?
    - i. Our faith will bring us to act on the principles of the object of the faith.
      - 1. Abel offered – because it was in harmony with his faith

2. Enoch walked – because it was in harmony with his faith
  3. Noah built – because it was in harmony with his faith
  4. Abraham journeyed and dwelled – because it was in harmony with his faith
- ii. Our faith will cause us to act in harmony with the object of our faith – Jesus Christ

VII. Conclusion:

- a. By faith – we are obedient to the object of our faith
- b. We have confidence in the things hoped for and conviction to the things unseen
  - i. Like Abraham – Sojourning in this land in our tents – our earthly tabernacles – Looking for that city built by the hands of God himself
    1. **(John 14:2-4)** “In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know.”
    2. Only thing we know of its location is that Jesus will be there – He is the way
      - a. **(John 14:6)** “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”
    3. We know that God is there and we be live in His glory forever
      - a. **(Rev 21:3-4)** “And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.”
  - c. If a man has faith in Jesus Christ, he is called upon to repent of his sins
  - d. If a man has faith in Jesus Christ, he is called upon to be baptized in imitation to the death, burial, and resurrection of the Son of God
    - i. **(Rom 6:3-4)** “Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.”
    - ii. Newness of life:
      1. **(Rom 6:6)** “Knowing this, that our old man is **crucified** with him, that the body of sin might be **destroyed**, that henceforth we should **not serve sin.**”