What is FAITH?

Hebrews 11:1-16
4-7-2024

Introduction: v.1-2 v.1- The Definition of Faith
v.2- The Divine Approval of Faith

**** What does Faith accomplish?***

I. Faith UNDERSTANDS God (v.3)
(The believer understands creation by faith)

II. Faith SACRIFICES to God (v.4)
(Abel sacrificed by faith)

III. Faith PLEASES God (v.5-6)
(Enoch walked by faith)

IV. Faith FEARS God (v.7)
(Noah built by faith)

V. Faith OBEYS God (v.8-10)
(Abraham journeyed by faith)

VI. Faith TRUSTS God (v.11-12)
(Sarah became pregnant by faith)

VII. Faith WAITS on God (v.13-16)
(The Patriarchs anticipated Heaven by faith)

What is FAITH?

(and what does Faith DO?)

Hebrews 11:1-16

4-7-2024



Introduction: v.1-2 v.1- The Definition of Faith
v.2- The Divine Approval of Faith

**** What does Faith DO? What does it accomplish?***

I. Faith _____ God (v.3)
(The believer _____ by faith)

II. Faith _____ to God (v.4)
(Abel _____ by faith)

III. Faith _____ God (v.5-6)
(Enoch _____ by faith)

IV. Faith _____ God (v.7)
(Noah _____ by faith)

V. Faith _____ God (v.8-10)
(Abraham _____ by faith)

VI. Faith _____ God (v.11-12)
(Sarah _____ by faith)

VII. Faith _____ on God (v.13-16)
(The Patriarchs _____ by faith)

FAITH

Hebrews 11:1-16
4-7-2024

Introduction: v.1-2 v.1- The Definition of Faith
v.2- The Divine Approval of Faith

This treatise on faith comes on the heels of a warning not to apostacize (to abandon one's faith) (10:26-31), but rather to steadfastly believe God's Word regarding Christ and salvation (10:35-39).

V. 1

"Faith is" - Although many unbelieving men may view faith as an unmeasurable, weak-minded jump into the darkness, here is God's definition of faith. The words God uses to define faith are very strong words.

"Substance" - A sure or solid assurance. The word comes from *hupostasis* (*hupo* = "under"; *stasis* = "a standing"). Hence, the quality of confidence which leads one to stand under, endure, or undertake anything (II Cor. 9:4, 11:17; Heb. 3:14) (Vine, p. 120).

"Evidence" - *elenchos* - conviction; to have sufficient proof or evidence so as to form a certain conviction regarding a matter ("The word was used in the papyri of legal proofs of an accusation" - Rienecker, p. 706).

Faith is not a mere intellectual understanding; nor is it a recognition of certain facts (although faith includes a mental comprehension of truth, it is not limited to such "head knowledge").

Faith is more than a mental awareness of someone; faith is a sure confidence on Someone.

"The substance of things hoped for" **=** the solid assurance of matters anticipated.

"The evidence of things not seen" **=** the certain conviction of matters not visible to the mortal eye.

Hence, this complex verse can be translated: "Now faith is the solid assurance of matters anticipated, the certain conviction of matters invisible to the eyes."

The words ***"hoped for"*** show that faith involves an assurance of a future reality (the tense of faith is primarily future).

The words ***"not seen"*** show that faith involves a confidence in reality that is invisible to the sight (*"We walk by faith, not by sight"* - II Cor. 5:7).
Someone has said, "Faith is to believe what we cannot see; and the reward of faith is to see what we believe."

"Faith" -To trust, rely on, or depend upon God with full confidence; such firm persuasion results in steadfast conviction (II Tim. 1:12) and motivates one's attitude and action.

The Object of Faith:God
(Mk. 11:22 - *"And Jesus answering saith unto them, Have faith in God."*)
The Basis of Faith:God's revelation
(Rom. 10:17 - *"So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."*; Gal. 3:2, 5)
The Result of Faith:Salvation
(Rom. 5:1 - *"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ"*)
The Evidence of Faith:A Changed Life (Love and obedience)
(SEE Ja. 2:14-26; I Jn. 5:1)

We are not only saved by faith, but will live by faith (Rom. 1:17 - *"For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith."*). Such living faith is a product of the Spirit.

V. 2

"For by it the elders obtained a good report" - By faith the Old Testament Patriarchs received recognition. Although their eyes could not see God, God's eyes saw them, He was an eyewitness to their faith, and He gave them His approval.

To gain divine approval is to gain the best approval.

Faith honors God; therefore, God honors faith.

**** What does Faith accomplish?***

I. Faith <u>UNDERSTANDS</u> God (v.3)
(The believer <u>understands creation</u> by faith)

"Through faith we understand" - Faith and reason are not incompatible terms. Believe and knowledge can go together.

Because of our believe in the written revelation of God, we have a higher level of understanding than the evolutionist who has no solid answers as to origins.

Such a trust in Genesis (etc.) provides us with a world view that eludes the grasp of the spontaneous generation crowd.

"The worlds" - the <u>ages</u> of time, space and matter that have been sovereignly planned and designed by God.

"Word of God" - *rhemati* - the spoken word of God. God spoke and matter, time, and space came into existence.

Gen. 1 - *"And God said. . . and it was so."*

The *<u>Logos</u>* of God (Jesus Christ - Jn. 1:1-3) spoke the *<u>Rhema</u>* of God and created the universe with His Word.

[Note the power of Christ's words - with His word He healed the sick, cast out the demons, calmed the storm, raised the dead (Lazarus), and will resurrect the departed dead in the future (Jn. 5:25).]

God created the world by His word; He sustains it by that same word; and He will one day destroy it by His word (II Peter 3:5-7).

The tangible was not made by means of materials that could be touched.

The visible was not made by means of elements that could be seen.

God did not use pre-existing material to build the universe. God created everything *"ex nihilo"* - out of nothing.

Psalm 33:6-9 - *"By the word of the Lord the heavens were made; and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth. He gathereth the waters of the sea together as a heap: he layeth up the depth in storehouses. Let all the earth fear the Lord: let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him. For He spake, and it was done; He commanded and it stood fast."*

II. Faith SACRIFICES to God (v.4)
(Abel sacrificed by faith)

"A more excellent sacrifice" - A far better sacrifice.

Although Abel offered a blood sacrifice and Cain a grain sacrifice, it wasn't the type of sacrifice (EX: blood vs. grain) that gave it its worth; rather, it was the quality of the sacrifice that made Abel's "excellent" (*"the fat"* - Gen. 4:4) and Cain's bad (Cain had the opportunity to give his best - Gen. 4:7).

God would accept a grain sacrifice (as He did in the Mosaic Law - Lev. 2:1, 4, 14-15), if it were offered from a loving, generous, and faithful heart.

By faith we can give God not only what He wants, but in the way He wants it. Let's give Him our heart!

(The Old Testament priests of Malachi's day gave God the garbage sacrifices - Mal. 1:6-14)

It takes faith to give to God sacrificially, when bills are screaming from your mailbox. It takes faith to offer God your whole life (time, talent, treasure, location and vocation). Let's give God ourselves as a living sacrifice (Rom. 12:1).

"He obtained witness that he was righteous" - His sacrifice testified of his righteousness. Note: Abel's sacrifice did not made him righteous; rather, it revealed him to be righteous.

Works do not produce righteousness; they show it (James 2).

"God testifying of his gifts" - God gave us a written record of the gifts (sacrifices) Abel offered in Genesis 4:4-5.

"Being dead yet speaketh" - Because of Abel's faith, his life and testimony (as brief as it was) still speaks today!

What will your life speak when you are gone? What legacy will you leave?

III. Faith PLEASES God (v.5-6)
(Enoch walked by faith)

V. 5

"He pleased God" - The Old Testament narrative reads *"Enoch walked with God"* (Gen. 5:22, 24).

One who walks with God is one who pleases God. No one pleases God if they don't seek Him and walk in step with Him and His ways.

V. 5b

The phrase which shows how Enoch pleased God, is the phrase "Enoch Walked with God" (Gen. 5:21-24)

A.Enoch walked with God "after" his son was born (v. 22)

Apparently, Enoch lived 65 years (v. 21) before he finally walked with God.

The birth of Methuselah was perhaps an incentive for Enoch to walk with God. Often, the first child in the home awakens parents to the need to live Godly and set a right example. [SEE poem - "To Any Daddy"]

Enoch's walking with God at the age of 65 teaches us that it is never too late to begin walking with God. You can begin today!

B.Enoch walked with God for 300 years (v. 23-24)

Once Enoch began his walk with God, he never stopped.

Perhaps the reason for his son living so long (the longest life ever recorded - 969 years old) was due to a Godly example on the part of his father, which Methuselah followed.

C.Enoch walked with God in a wicked world (6:5)

SEE Genesis 6:5

"In a deteriorating age, Enoch gave a remarkable demonstration of commendable piety. In thought, work, deed, and attitude, he was in accord with the divine will, and he brought joy to the heart of his Maker" (Wycliffe Bible Commentary, p. 11).

When someone walked with God in the Bible, they always walked alone.

EX: the isolated examples of men and women of God sprinkled throughout the Bible who lived in pagan societies (Noah, Abram, Lot, Joseph, Moses, Elijah, Jeremiah, Daniel, John the Baptist, etc.).

Those who walk with God are always in the minority.

NOTE: The only other reference to someone walking with God was to Enoch's great grandson, Noah (Gen. 6:9). God rewarded Noah by delivering him from the flood.

Your walk with God is very often alone but it is not lonely.

"Translated" - To transfer (change) from one place to another.

Enoch had a special "Metroline" ticket: one-way to Glory!

1)Enoch's faith caused him to walk pleasing to God

2)His pleasing walk gave him a powerful testimony

3)And to validate his testimony, God rewarded (v. 6) Enoch by receiving him to heaven without going through the experience of dying.

Enoch is an exception to the dismal refrain "and he died" in Genesis 5 (cp. v. 5, 8, 11, 14, 17, 20, 27, 31).

Enoch walked with God right into the glorious presence of God.

"A beautiful and meaningful miracle was wrought so that the one man who had learned to love

God and walk with Him might continue in that fellowship without interruption" (Wycliffe, p. 11).

Only two men ascended to heaven without dying -

1) Enoch (Gen. 5:24; Heb. 11:5)
2) Elijah (II Ki. 2:11)

The only other time this phenomenon will happen is at the Rapture (I Thes. 4:17).

Enoch and Elijah are perhaps the most obvious guess at who the "two witnesses" are in Rev. 11:3-12). (Elijah is sure to return - Malachi 4:5).

V. 6

No one pleases God in any way, shape, or form who does not have faith in Him.

In order for anyone to approach God, they must believe two facts about God:

1.The Fact of His Existence

(You must ***"believe that He is"***)

Both creation (Ps. 19:1ff; Rom. 1:20) and conscience (Rom. 2:14) validate His essence.

2.The Fact of His Graciousness

(You must believe that ***"He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him"***)

The fact that God rewards the faith of those who diligently seek Him answers the question: "What about people who never had the chance to hear the Gospel?"

God rewards those who rightly respond to general revelation (EX: creation) with more revelation about Himself and His way of salvation. Bible examples of this:

1)Philip (Acts 8)
2)Cornelius (Acts 10)
3)Lydia (Acts 16)

IV. Faith FEARS God (v.7)
(Noah built by faith)

"Warned of God" - So many of God's warnings go unheeded today (people pay little attention or mock at His teaching regarding sowing and reaping, hell and the lake of fire).

"Of things not seen" - rain and a flood.

"Moved with fear" - motivated by deep respect for God; propelled by a holy reverence for God's warning.

[Many parents give warnings to their children which amount to a "scarecrow" because the parent fails to back it up and fulfill the warning. God, however, never makes empty threats. Noah by faith knew this.]

Noah's labor was propelled by fear
(Noah feared God's word and respected God's power)
EX: of O.T. Passover in Egypt. The people who feared God applied the blood.

Noah's labor saved his family (the animal world, and succeeding generations; you and I would not be here today if it were not for Noah!)

Noah's work was preparing an ark. A 450 foot long, 75 feet broad, and 45 feet high barge (SEE Ryrie's note on Gen. 6:15).

Our faith in God's Word regarding hell, the future judgment, and the lake of fire is one motive that propels us to flee to Christ for salvation and to urge others to trust Him (*"and others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire, hating even the garment spotted by the flesh"* - Jude 23)

"Prepared an ark" - A barge which took approximately 100 years to build.

"By the which he condemned the world" - His faith was a rebuke to the world's disbelieve; his righteousness was a rebuke to their unrighteousness, and proved them worthy of judgment.

"Righteousness which is by faith" - Righteousness does not come by works, but by faith; however, it is a faith that produces works, as Noah's faith did.

V. Faith <u>OBEYS</u> God (v.8-10)
(Abraham <u>journeyed</u> by faith)

V. 8

Abraham was the *"friend of God"* (Ja. 2:23) because he by faith <u>obeyed</u> God.

Faith is always the foundation for obedience. The level of your obedience reveals the level of your faith.

"Not knowing whither he went" - It was a road he never had traveled, a location which would forever separate him from his hometown, family, and friends.

By Faith ABRAHAM STEPPED OUT TO WHERE HE HAD NEVER BEEN BEFORE
(The <u>Step</u> of Faith)

God's call of Abraham - SEE Gen. 12:1.

Abraham was to leave the "security" of <u>country</u>, <u>family</u>, and <u>home</u>, to follow the leading of God.

Note: The importance of <u>separation</u>.

1 -The original call came at Ur
(Acts 7:2)
2 -The family moved out of Ur to Haran
(Gen. 11:31)
3 - God then moved Abraham out of Haran into Canaan
(Gen. 12:4-5)

Jesus spoke of leaving country and family for the Gospel's sake and the rewards that would come with such sacrifice (Mk. 10:29-30; cp. Mt. 19:29-30).

To do that which you have never done before requires faith.

<u>7 Steps to Stagnation</u>

1."We're not ready"
2."We never did it that way before"
3."We don't know how"
4."We've tried that once before"
5."It costs too much"
6."That's not our responsibility"
7."It won't work"

--It's a step of faith to go to Bible College or Seminary.

--It's a step of faith to sign up to teach a Sunday school class.

--It's a step of faith to go out on visitation and evangelism.

--It's a step of faith to go to a foreign field as a missionary.

V. 9

"In a strange country" - in a foreign land.

"Dwelling in tabernacles" - living in tents (not permanent structures; not stationary brick houses; not stable buildings). Old Abe was a camper for life.

By Faith ABRAHAM DID NOT PLANT HIS ROOTS TOO DEEP IN THIS WORLD
(The Quest of Faith)

Abraham lived in tents because he was a stranger and pilgrim in the world and had to be ready to move whenever God spoke.

Christians today are also strangers and pilgrims -

I Pet. 1:1 - "Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia."

I Pet. 2:11 - "Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul."

Faith keeps this life in perspective.

"This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith" (I Jn. 5:4).

EX: Hymn - "Faith is the Victory"

V. 10

Abraham had his sight on the eternal not the temporal,
the enduring, not the decaying,
the immortal, not the mortal,
the spiritual, not the physical,
the supernatural, not the natural.

VI. Faith TRUSTS God (v.11-12)
(Sarah became pregnant by faith)

V. 11

Although Sarah initially laughed at the thought that she, an elderly woman, would give birth to a son, she afterward believed, and because of that faith in the God of the impossible, she received the power to conceive.

Faith is simply trusting a God who is faithful. Such a faithful God is worthy of our full faith.

"Great is Thy Faithfulness!"

GOD IS FAITHFUL TO HIS PROMISES
(He keeps His covenants)

God is bound by His Oaths (Abraham - Rom. 4:19-21; Sarah - Heb. 11:11)
Examples of God's faithfulness to His promises:
1)God's promise as evidenced by the rainbow (Gen.9:16)

2)God's promise of deliverance from Egypt (Ex.6:4-8)

3)God's promise to keep His Word (I Kings 8:56; Matt.5:18)

4)God's promise to give the believer eternal life
(Titus 1:2; cp.II Cor.1:20)

V. 12

The billions of Jews who lived throughout history and the millions on the earth today all stem from the one old man and old woman who lived some four millenia ago.

Do you trust God to do what you cannot do?

What may seem humanly impossible is possible for God.

His ways are not our ways; He will often allow our faith to be tested and tried, and will often delay a promise. But in the end, He will always keep His Word.

VII. Faith <u>WAITS</u> on God (v.13-16)
(The Patriarchs <u>anticipated Heaven</u> by faith)

V. 13

"These all died in faith" - Many times we don't receive all of the rewards of our faith in this life, but god will never fail to reward the faithful. "Pay day some day"

V. 15

"Mindful" - to remember (with a longing to return); to be thinking of something in the past which creates a desire to go back.

V. 13-16

The things of this world never fully satisfy.

Because this world is filled with sin and evil, nothing it has to offer can meet our deepest needs. An emptiness will always follow even the greatest of this world's experiences.

V. 16

Though waiting on the Lord is very hard to do, true faith enables one to wait for the fulfillment of God's promises in God's time (Wiersbe, p. 318).

Though God with an <u>oath</u> promised the land of Canaan to Abraham (Gen. 15:7-18), Abraham, by faith, had his eyes on an eternal, heavenly city.

Dr. George Morrison, a great Scottish preacher, once said, "The important thing is not what we live in, but what we look for." (Wiersbe, p. 319).

"Set your affection on things above . . ." (SEE: Col. 3:1ff)

"Live in the future tense" (Phil. 3:20-21)

Conclusion:

"Trust Him when dark doubts assail thee,
Trust Him when thy strength is small;
Trust Him when to simply trust Him
Seems the hardest thing of all."

"God is greatly honored when, under trial and chastening, we have good thoughts of Him." (Pink, Attributes, p. 56).

Step out by faith (trust and obey whatever God says, even if it looks impossible, and leave the results to Him).

If Israel had understood God's faithfulness, they would not have murmured.
If Thomas had believed Christ, he would not have doubted.

Many times we trust man more than God!
We trust forecasters to predict accurately.
We trust airplanes not to crash.
We trust elevator cables not to snap
We trust social security to provide for retirement.
We trust the U.S. military to protect our country.

"Trust God's wisdom to guide,
Trust His goodness to provide;
Trust His saving love and power,
Trust Him every day and hour;
Trust Him as the only light,
Trust Him in the darkest night;
Trust Him in sickness, trust in health,
Trust in poverty and wealth;
Trust Him living, dying too,
Trust Him all the journey through."