

RIGHTLY DIVIDING[©]

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TITLE: Faith is the Existence of God

HEBREWS 11:1

“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.”

CONTEXT:

Hebrews was written because Jewish Christians were in danger of apostasy from Christ back to Moses. This condition of apostasy was an immediate danger (2:1) based on neglect of the scriptures (2:1), unbelief (3:12), refusal to teach others (5:12), conduct (5:13-14), neglect of public worship (10:25), weakness in prayer (12:12), and instability in doctrine (13:9). The author of Hebrews stressed the superiority of Christ to show the inferiority of Judaism. The line of reasoning – If following Christ brought persecution and Jewish practice did not, why not return to Judaism and be free from persecution? The answer is set forth in the Epistle as the superiority of Christ is argued point by point against the claims of Judaism.

The argument of the Epistle can be captured in two main ideas: (1) consider Christ and (2) exhortation. The whole purpose of the letter was to inform the discouraged Christians and to encourage them to support both approaches by innumerable examples of Christ and of those who had successfully lived by faith.

HISTORICAL FACTS

A number of factors regulate the date for the Epistle. The most important factors are the Jewish-Roman conflict after A.D. 68 and destruction of the Temple in A.D. 70. Because nothing is mentioned concerning the conflict, the Temple, or the destruction of Jerusalem, the letter could have been written before 68 or after 80. The earlier date is preferred because of the mention of Timothy and “they of Italy”. Who wrote Hebrews still remains unclear. The authorship has been attributed to Apostle Paul, Apollos, Barnabas, Luke, Timothy, Aquila and Priscilla, Silas, Aristion, and Philip. However, the Alexandrian tradition and influence, based on use of the Old Testament in a typological manner leaves Philo of Alexandria as a likely candidate of authorship (ref. KJV Bible 1142)

HEBREWS 11:1

“NOW FAITH IS THE SUBSTANCE OF THINGS HOPED FOR, THE EVIDENCE OF THINGS NOT SEEN.”

INTRODUCTION:

Hebrews 11 is a conversation about “what is faith”. Many Christians are challenged with the understanding of faith. However, the writer of Hebrews has challenged the believer to understand the nature of faith by formulating a definition that is profound but yet delicate to grasp. Hebrews 11 gives specific examples of the believer’s faith and that it took something different for every believer suggesting that no two people’s faith is alike. We understand from the Apostle Paul in the Epistle to the Romans that God has dealt to every man a measure of faith (12:3).

Hebrews 10 prepares us in that it expresses the elements of the faith life and gives us a description of the new and living way. To understand faith, believers must recognize the failure of the old covenant and the purpose of Christ as the new covenant (i.e. high priest who shed his blood for the remission of sin that we may enter into the presence of God). Believers are given a plea to hold

to the new faith – “Let us hold fast (be persistent in) the profession of our faith without wavering; for he is faithful that promised” (10:23). Hebrews 10 also gives a prerequisite of faith – “Now the just shall live by faith; but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him” (10:38). This prerequisite is a recitation of Habakkuk 2:4 – “behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him; but the just shall live by his faith.” Therefore, we understand that just (righteous) believers live by faith.

MESSAGE:

In the review of faith, believers are given an opportunity to see the *existence of God* as it pertains to our faith and the need to please God because by faith. Scripture states, “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” (11:6). In coming to God, you must believe that He is i.e. you must believe that He exist.

And, you must believe that God rewards those that diligently seek Him. The reward is faith. You will learn from this message that faith is a promise and the promise is rewarded to those in faith.

Let’s begin by carefully examining Hebrew 11:1 and search for the existence of

God as it pertains to our faith. To be in faith, we must be **JUST** which is **RIGHT STANDING** with God, diligently **SEEK HIM** and a **HEARER** of things God has spoken.

“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.”

Up to this point, Hebrews has dealt with doctrinal issues and now it approaches something very practical – faith. Faith has substance and evidence, which implies that it rest on a foundation of something tangible. Therefore Pastors, you must talk about what faith is not in

HEBREWS 11:1

What is Faith?

Faith is the Existence of God!

By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac; and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, of whom it was said, that in Isaac shall thy seed be called;

Hebrews 11:17-18

order to be clear concerning its foundation. Faith is not: (1) a leap into the unknown, (2) uncertainty, (3) a holy gamble, (4) clairvoyance, (5) a sixth sense, (6) instinct, (7) God's wishbone, and (8) a secret order into the promise of heaven. Faith for the believer is that which looks to the Lord Jesus Christ – the very existence of God.

In the Greek, *faith* [*pistis*] means belief, trust, confidence, fidelity, and faithfulness. *Faith* [*pistis*] is persuasion that is come to trust and be persuaded.

Scholars suggest that *faith* is always a gift from God and never something that can be produced by people. The production of faith by people i.e. faith that is produced by self-desire is secular faith. According to scholars, *faith* is God's divine persuasion and therefore distinct from human belief yet involving it. Scholars believe that the Lord continuously births faith in the yielded believer so they can know what He prefers i.e. the persuasion of His will. However, *faith* in antiquity referred to a guarantee (warranty). Therefore, in scripture faith is God's warranty certifying that the revelation He in-birthed will come to pass (His way). *Faith* is also used collectively of all the times God has revealed His will through the full revelation of Scripture (Jude 3). In Jude 3 believers are asked to contend for the faith meaning the divine revelation of all scripture by that be

persuaded. Lastly, *faith* is God's preferred will.

When the author speaks "*now faith*", the Hebrew reader can form an opinion that the author has previously spoken of things that were contrary to faith. We understand from Hebrews 10, that the author had just spoken of willful sin, the great fight of afflictions, their need of patience, and keeping their confidence that brings reward. Therefore, the author must redirect the hearer to what will help their confidence and their moral conduct of abstaining from willful sin.

"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."

Faith [*pistis*] is trust, confidence, belief, fidelity, faithfulness, and persuasion. Believers approach faith from the idea of hoping for what does not exist. As a reminder, faith rests on the foundation of substance and evidence.

In the Greek, *substance* [*hupostasis*] means confidence and assurance. Faith rests on substance – confidence and assurance for that which is hoped. *Hupostasis* is a scientific term and is the opposite of hypothesis. In statistics, hypothesis requires proof at a desired confidence level to determine if the hypothesis is true or false. The difference here is – believers do not examine faith by true or false.

Scholars also suggest that *substance*

HEBREWS 11:1

What is Faith?

Faith is Substance!

Through faith also Sarah herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised.

Hebrews 11:11

[*hupostasis*] from 5259 *hypó* – “under” and 2476 *histēmi* “to stand” – properly means to possess standing under a guaranteed agreement thus having a title-deed. Figuratively *hypóstasis* is “title” to a promise or property i.e. a legitimate claim because it literally is “under a legal-standing” entitling someone to what is guaranteed under the particular agreement. For the believer, 5287 *hyópstasis* – “title of possession” is the Lord’s guarantee to fulfill the faith He inbirths. Indeed we are only entitled to what God grants faith for – Roman 14:23 (b) “for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.

For example, the scripture states, “By faith Able 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” which means faith (i.e. the trust and belief in God Abel activated) creates the substance (i.e. the foundation of confidence and assurance) that is needed to prove righteousness. Therefore, whatever the believer is hoping for, it takes faith (trust and belief in God) resting upon its foundation of substance (confidence and assurance that is activated by faith) to prove your righteousness (right standing) before God to receive what is hoped (promised).

Scholars suggest that faith is divine persuasion – God’s warranty that guarantees the fulfillment of revelation He births within the receptive believer. Therefore, the believer becomes divinely persuaded that God will deliver that which he has revealed. The

believer walks in faith (trust and belief) until the manifestation of what God has revealed or promised comes. To understand this statement of being divinely persuaded, we must confer with I John 5:4 – “For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world; and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.” It takes our faith to be born of God’s Spirit – to accept God’s Spirit and not ever having seen Him. It takes our faith, which is of God to overcome the world. By activating our faith (trust and belief) in God’s Spirit and that He is produces the substance (confidence and assurance), which aids in the manifestation of victory. It is this victory (belief in God – being born of God) to overcome the world.

Faith is the substance of things *hoped* for. In the Greek [*hope – elpis*] means expectation, trust, and confidence. *Elpis* is from *elpō* which means “to anticipate – welcome”. Properly *hope – elpis* is an expectation of what is sure and certain. *Hope* is having expectation that is activated through trust and confidence. For example, scripture states in Hebrews 11:11 “Through faith also Sarah herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised” which is an example of waiting through faith having an expectation for what is sure and certain. When something is *through faith* people believe continuing in time toward

HEBREWS 11:1

What is Faith?

Faith is Evidence!

By faith Noah being warned of God of things not seen as yet (rain), 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.

Hebrews 11:7

completion of a process or period. Therefore, **through faith** (through trust, belief, and persuasion) Sarah believed continuing in time with expectation and anticipation that what God spoke (promised seed) would be completed. Sarah welcomed God's promise and continued in time with sure certainty that He would complete that (baby delivered), which was promised because of His faithfulness.

Substance (confidence and assurance) with hope (expectation, sure certainty) is not alone in the foundation for faith. Faith also has its foundation resting on evidence. Therefore, faith is evidence!

“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.”

In examining **evidence** as it relates to Hebrews 11:1, scholars suggest that we explore the definition of reproof. In the Greek **reproof** [**elenchos**] means proof, proving, test, or conviction. In this case, **reproof** is an internal persuasion from God i.e. an inner conviction that focuses on God confirming His inbirthing of faith. **Evidence** is a legal term meaning evidence that is accepted for conviction. The writer of Hebrews suggests that faith is resting upon a foundation of **evidence** – proof, proving, test, or conviction. Faith is the **evidence** (proving or testing) of things that are not seen. Let's confer to II Corinthians 5:7 to explore evidence further.

II Corinthians 5:7 read, “For we walk by faith, not

by sight.” In this passage of scripture, the Apostle Paul is expressing to the church that we walk (believe) by faith (trust and confidence) in the Lord and not by having seen Him. Paul is speaking with Corinth about not being present with the Lord and that not being present with the Lord requires trust and confidence. He suggests that regardless of the labor, whether present or absent, the desire is to be accepted of him.

As believers, the evidence (proof, test, conviction) of things not seen is our ability to believe by faith (trust, confidence, persuasion) until the manifestation of God's existence is present. Hebrews 11:7 reads, “By faith Noah being warned of God of things not seen as yet (rain), 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.” Noah had to build the ark to save his household and remnant of animals. Noah had been warned of God regarding the great flood that would destroy the earth. Having never seen such a thing, Noah was moved with fear of the great flood and by faith (trust, confidence, and persuasion in God) he prepared the ark. The **evidence** (proof, test, conviction) was the actual flood. It was the flood that showed the existence of God and Noah building the ark by faith shows his righteousness (i.e. his right standing with God to operate in faith).

HEBREWS 11:1

What is Faith?

Faith is Trust!

By faith, the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace.

Hebrews 11:31

As faith relates to evidence, it has a requirement to prove like in the court of law. We are certain that the word of God tells us to prove (i.e. look for the evidence – the existence of God). The scripture states, “Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house and **prove** me now herewith saith the Lord of host, if I will not open you the windows of heaven and pour you out a blessing that there shall not be room enough to receive it” (Malachi 3:10). The author of Malachi 3 suggests that we prove God. Look for the evidence of the windows of heaven opening to pour out the blessings because we have brought the tithe into the storehouse. Evidence is also “not having enough room for that which is being poured out”. There should be abundance! Faith is evidence (proof of a believers righteousness).

Faith is the evidence of the unseen. In the Greek, unseen [aoratos] means unseen and invisible (from A “not” and horáō “see”). Properly not seen as invisible to the physical (naked) eye and figuratively a spiritual reality as perceived through God’s inbirthing of faith. Therefore, faith being evidence of the unseen suggests that believers can not physically see what God has promised, which requires the inbirthing of faith for proving what God will perform.

The author of Hebrews has suggested many things to define faith. Faith is – (1) trust, (2) confidence, (3) belief, (4) fidelity, and (5) persuasion. Faith is – (1) substance, (2) confidence, and (3) assurance. Faith is – (1) divine persuasion and (2) internal

persuasion. Faith is – (1) evidence, (2) proof, (3) proving, (4) test, and (5) conviction. Faith is – (1) righteousness. Faith is also (1) standing under a guaranteed agreement and (2) title deed. Faith is (1) title to a promise and (2) legitimate claim. Faith is - (1) an in-birthing and (2) entitlement to what God grants. Faith is – (1) a gift, (2) God’s preferred will, and (3) pleasing God. Faith is – (1) a response to divine revelation.

Faith is responsible for – (1) good reports, (2) the framing of this world, (3) inheritance, (4) conception, and (5) salvation. The believer waits with substance (accepted confidence). The believer looks for evidence (proof) of the existence of God in what they are hoping.

Faith is not wishing or lacking confidence, but rather an assured knowing that God will show His existence in the revealed promise. I want to settle on one fact: faith is the existence of God and that everything the believer hopes for expresses their righteousness (right standing) with the existing God. Because of this righteousness, God delivers the unseen, which is what the believer anticipates, expects, and welcomes.

Clear theory and principles of faith – (1) faith operates in you but is not your faith in that it is never generated by the recipient, (2) faith is established by God speaking, (3) we function by or through faith (4) faith is attached to a God given promise, (5) you can not be weak in faith, (6) you can not stagger (doubt - unbelief) in faith,

HEBREWS 11:1

What is Faith?

Faith is a Gift!

By faith E'-noch was translated that he should not see death and was not found because God has translated him; for before his translation he had this testimony that he pleased God.

Hebrews 11:31

(7) you must be strong in faith giving glory to God, and (8) faith requires full persuasion.

MESSAGE POINTS:

- 1. Faith begins with the acceptance of Jesus Christ as Lord.
- 2. Faith has a formula that is important to understanding it's full potential. Faith (Substance + Evidence) = Existence of God (Promise)
- 3. Every believer is given a measure of faith. The measure of faith is predicated upon your relationship and walk with the Lord.
- 4. The Bible is full of examples of faith. Use these examples to better understand the faith requirement.
- 5. Examine your life for examples of faith that you can use to encourage others in their faith.
- 6. Faith has to produce evidence to be effective. It is this evidence that let's the believer know the existence of God.

PERSONAL MESSAGE NOTES:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

MESSAGE ILLUSTRATIONS:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Concluding Thoughts...

Faith rests upon the foundation of substance and evidence. But, ultimately faith rests upon God and His word. We have to believe that God exist in order to experience faith. The bible tells us that we cannot please God unless we have faith in Him. Believers must ask themselves, do you believe in God? If you believe in God, then you certainly have faith.

God wants our faith to rest upon the word of God. The word of God is all that is revealed to the believer by Him. If a believer is challenged in their faith, then it is important to build your faith by reviewing faith examples in the word and cultivating your relationship with God. The better you know God, the easier it becomes to have faith in Him. It becomes easier to trust Him because you are familiar with Him and His ways. Faith comes in measures! Therefore, believers must grow in their faith. I invite you to give your congregation a faith challenge to help with cultivating their faith that would move them to the next level of faith. The bible declares in Romans 1:17 – “For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, the just shall live by faith.”



*Sermons for Pastors and
Leaders of the Christian
faith!*

The scripture and above material has been taken from the King James Version of the Holy Bible, Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words, O'Michel Dictionary of New Testament Theology, Berkof's Systematic Theology, and other bible resources. The opinions of this sermon are from Dr. Evette Hyder-Davis and should be researched further by the recipient. Rightly Dividing sermon series is a copyright of Dr. Evette Hyder-Davis with permission for use but not distribution.

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