

# FAITH

## Int.

1. Aim: To describe the Faith that we must have in order to be saved.
2. FAITH is an essential condition of the salvation of our soul.
3. In giving the Great Commission Jesus said "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." Mark 16:15-16
4. It is important therefore that we know what faith is.
5. There are three questions we will discuss in this lesson.
  - (1) What is faith?
  - (2) How do I come by faith?
  - (3) What part does faith play in my salvation.

## Discussion

### I. WHAT IS FAITH

#### A. Definition

1. The whole chapter of Hebrews 11 is devoted to the subject of faith
2. The writer begins by telling us what faith is, and as a good dictionary or lexicon will do, he follows up the statement as to what faith is by a long list of examples.
3. If any one should fail to get the idea from the definition, he would get it from the example.

B. Heb. 11:1 "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." ASV "Now faith is assurance of things hoped for"

1. Substance = Ground, basis, support
  - a. Greek term that means a foundation or that which stands under giving strength, solidity and stability to the superstructure.
  - b. It is that which enables us to feel and act as if they were real
  - c. We believe there is a place called heaven and this leads us to act as if we saw it.
2. Evidence =
  - a. Evidence = proof or evidence ASV = "a conviction of things not seen"
  - b. We have never seen heaven, never seen Christ, never seen a body raised from the grave
  - c. But we have satisfactory evidence from God that there is a heaven, that we will be raised from the grave !
  - d. Faith is not believing in some one or in something for which there is no evidence. It is not a leap in the dark as skeptics have contended. It is not a crutch to uphold weaklings as arrogant infidels have stated. It is well grounded; it is well-founded.
  - e. Evidence of things not seen
    - (1) Proof by demonstration = evidence
    - (2) Conviction that the things not seen as yet, heaven, will be some day
  - f. Faith is our proof or conviction
  - g. "All that I have seen teaches me to trust the Creator for all that I have not seen." [N.D.T. P. 200]

C. Faith is defined as having relation to two classes of objects:

1. (1) Things hoped for, and (2) Things unseen.
2. The later class includes all the former. The reverse is not true. Illustration, Hell is unseen, but not hoped for. Heaven is hoped for and it is unseen to our eyes at present.
3. So faith, then, has a relationship to these two classes of objects.

D. ILLUSTRATIONS

1. With this statement or definition of what faith is- let us go on and look at a few of the illustrations.
2. The first example is the fact that God created the worlds - v. 3.
  - a. KJV "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."
  - b. Hebrews 11:3 (ESV) "By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible."
  - c. Here is an unseen and wondrous event far back in the past. It suits the last part of the definition.
  - d. The creation of the world is not a "hope" with us, so it doesn't fit the first part, but it does fit the second part of the definition.
  - e. Our conviction is that the worlds have been framed by the Word of God, and this is an example of our faith.

3. The next example is the faith of Abel - v. 4. (ESV) "By faith Abel offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain, through which he was commended as righteous, God commending him by accepting his gifts. And through his faith, though he died, he still speaks."
- a. Abel had a confidence that through this sacrifice, God would count it "righteous." This was something hoped for.
  - b. Also he must have had conviction to things unseen. He offered his sacrifice to an invisible God, and probably expected unseen blessings.
4. The next case is that of Enoch - v. 5. He was translated so as to be found. "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." KJV
- a. Enoch walked with God for more than 3 centuries
  - b. He did not die - but God took him at age 365 because he pleased God
  - c. So if Enoch was well pleasing to God, he must have had faith, for the author says in verse 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."
  - d. In these words the writer brings out two elements of Enoch's faith.
    - (1) He believed that God is - the conviction of an un-seen thing
    - (2) He believed that God is the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him-confidence as to a hoped-for reward.
  - e. And under that "conviction" and "confidence" Enoch walked with God.

5. **Noah's faith** is the next example in verse 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;"
- Here the Hebrew writer brings in the very terms of his definition.
  - Here was conviction to an unseen disaster, threatening life.
  - Here was confidence in the hoped-for deliverance of his own family under the promise that God had made- this confidence moves him to build the ark.
6. The next example is that of **Abraham**- in v. 8; v.9-10;
- Verse 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."
- Conviction as to an unseen and unknown country, and a confident hope of possessing it.
  - Abraham was moved by that conviction and confidence to make a journey of some 1300 miles.
  - "This is the land; it shall be thine for an inheritance for thy seed..." (Cf. Gen 28:13)
- He did this because he had faith in God.

## II. HOW DOES ONE COME TO FAITH ?

- How is FAITH born within a man? And then, once it is born, how is it strengthened and deepened until it becomes an absorbing and controlling power? This is our second question. And these same examples give us the answer to this question.

B. First, there is our faith that the worlds were created by the Word of God?

1. How did we come by this FAITH? Not by reasoning about it, nor dreaming, not in answer to prayer.
2. But we read in Genesis 1:1 out of God's Holy Word, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."
3. We came to faith from God's Word!

C. How did Abel come to his conviction and confidence that led him to offer his sacrifice to God?

1. We're not told a lot in Genesis, but a littler more is revealed to us here in Hebrews 11.
2. We are sure Abel's faith didn't spring from his own reasoning, that if he sacrificed a lamb, it would be pleasing to God.
3. He came to understand what he must do by the revelation of God.
4. He heard God's word and he had conviction and confidence in what God revealed to him.

D. Enoch- how did he come to his conviction in regard to the unseen God, and his confident expectation that God would reward him if he served him?

1. He must have come to his FAITH in the same way.
2. Romans 10:17 "Faith comes by hearing, ..."

E. Noah- had a conviction that a flood was coming and his hope of escape from it for himself and his family rested on conviction and confidence in God's word.

1. What a daring and presumptuous thing for Noah to have reached that by reason.
2. Not by workings of his mind, but God told him - Genesis 6:7, 13-14.
3. From God's Word then he come to his conviction and confidence.

- F. Abraham- where did his conviction and confidence come from when he didn't know where he was going?
1. God told him - Gen. 12:1 "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:"
  2. From where did he come to his conviction and confidence of a walled city.
  3. The record is silent about any such city. But his faith came by some revelation from God.
  4. Romans 10:17 "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."
- G. Well, just look into your own mind, and ask yourself how did faith originate in your mind- the conviction that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.
1. Everyone of you must answer, "I came to my FAITH from God's Word."
  2. But for the Word of God, we would not have that faith.
  3. John 5:24 "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life,"
  4. John 6:45 "It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me."
  5. Go to any heathen nation in the world, and no man has ever been found or will be, who has this conviction in him except it arrived at it from the Word of God.
  6. Fiends, if God's Word will not do it, what power is there in heaven or earth that you can conceive of that could?

- H. We come to FAITH from the Word of God; and the more we read and study His Holy Scriptures, the more we lovingly mediate upon them and lay them away in the memory of our heart, the stronger our faith becomes - the better men and women we will be- the better able to stand up against the storms of unbelief that rage around us in this wicked world.
- I. "Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." Romans 10:17.
- J. "Thy word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against Thee." Psalms 119:11.

### **III. HOW DOES FAITH RELATE TO SALVATION ?**

- A. Now for our third point, how does FAITH bring us the blessing of salvation of our souls in deliverance from sin, and life everlasting?
1. Now, this is a practical question.
  2. What part does my FAITH play in my salvation?
  3. How does it contribute to my salvation?
- B. The examples also answer this question.
1. Was it through FAITH ALONE that Abel was counted righteous?
    - a. Would he have been blessed had he believed with all his heart every thing he believed, but never have offered his sacrifices?
    - b. It was because of his faith that he offered his gifts to God and it was said of him that he was righteous.
  2. Did Enoch receive the blessings of translation through FAITH ONLY?
    - a. The language of the scriptures says that Enoch "walked with God."
    - b. His faith caused him to "walk with God" and that resulted in his translation.

3. How is it that Noah and his family were saved?
    - a. Was it by FAITH ONLY?
    - b. Noah's faith led him to cut down some gopher trees and build the ark.
  4. Abraham did not believe God and just remain at home, thinking that God would work it out some way to give the promised land to his heirs.
    - a. When called, Abraham obeyed and went forth,
    - b. He traveled 1300 miles, dwelling in tents looking forward to the city of God.
- C. Now about our faith! How is it going to bring us the forgiveness of our sins and finally bring us through our journey to everlasting life.
1. Not by causing us to offer a lamb, as Abel did. Not by building an ark as Noah did. Nor by taking a long journey as did Abraham.
  2. How then? By causing us to act on the same principles which they acted on! Everyone of these acted in harmony with the object of his faith.
    - a. Abel in harmony with his faith, offered the sacrifices on the altar.
    - b. Enoch, in harmony with his faith, walked with God.
    - c. Noah, in harmony with his faith built the ark.
    - d. Abraham in harmony with his, made a long journey, not even knowing where he was going.
- D. So if our faith is to save us, our faith in Christ, it will be by causing us to act in harmony with that faith. Well, what is that?

- E. If the object of our FAITH is our conviction and confidence that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God, who is ruling over heaven and earth, and if we act in harmony with our conviction, we will surrender our lives and all that we have and are, to His divine guidance and will.
1. Illustration: If we are convinced when a man tells us our house is on fire, we will act according to our convictions.
  2. Now do we believe that Jesus laid down his life to redeem us from sin? If we believe the Bible's message that he was crucified, buried, and resurrected for our benefit, won't we follow him devotedly?
  3. If we believe this, then to act in harmony with our faith, is to love our dear Friend, and render him our life in devotion and service.
  4. And if that FAITH dwells in any man's soul, and he is not living in harmony with it, every day, every time he thinks of it, there is a great antagonism, a great conflict, within his heart, between his FAITH and his LIFE.
  5. Every believer in the assembly today, who has not began living a life in harmony with his faith, feels that antagonism right now. And it gives great unrest to the soul.
  6. Not only are we to act in harmony with our FAITH to receive God's blessings, but our FAITH moves us to act that way. It impels us in that direction.
- F. When a man has to resist it and fight against his FAITH, he doesn't merely become indifferent to his own best feelings, but he tramples them under his feet, and he continues to do so, if he doesn't yield to the power of faith and give himself into the service of the Lord.

## CONCLUSION

1. We do not have to do as the men of our text did, in carrying out our faith, and yet, we come very near it.
  2. We are not called upon to bring a lamb to the altar, and lay our hands upon its head, and shed its blood and burn its flesh... but we do bring to God our sacrifice.
    - a. Romans 12:1. "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, [which is] your reasonable service."
    - b. And after we have confessed our faith, are we not to do as Enoch did, to walk with God the rest of our life... Rev. 2:10b " be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."
    - c. And are we not to act very much as Abraham did, when he was called? My brethren, we have started for a promised land; knowing that God has said, "It is a goodly land, and I will give it to you." How much like Abraham!
  3. How easily we too can live by faith like these great examples. Jesus said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved."
  4. Let your FAITH manifest itself in obedience- come as Christ invites you! Come to confess you faith in Jesus as the Son of God, and be baptized into a new relationship with him as your Lord and Savior.
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**Sources Consulted**

1. Based on a sermon by J.W. McGarvey, Professor of Sacred History, College of the Bible, Lexington, KY, in his book FAITH - Hebrews 11 10 Sermons, delivered in Louisville, Ky, June 25, 1893.
2. Commentaries on Hebrews

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