

Introduction

Hebrews 11:1-6 - 1 Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. 2 For by it the people of old received their commendation. 3 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. 4 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. 5 By faith Enoch was taken up so that he should not see death, and he was not found, because God had taken him. Now before he was taken he was commended as having pleased God. 6 And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.

There is a Biblical definition for faith.

Hebrews 11:1 - Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.

- assurance (*hypostasis* ὑπόστασις) - a standing under. You may recognize the prefix in the anglicized form – *hypo*, which means “under”. For low blood sugar in Type I diabetics, the medical term is hypoglycemia.
 - In this building, we stand (or sit) under a roof, with assurance that the structure will support the roof. We are confident that the roof will not collapse.
- things hoped for (*elpizomenōn* ἐλπίζομένων) - hope for, put hope in, expect, an attitude of confidently looking forward to what is good and beneficial.
 - hope (*elpis* ἐλπίς) – expectation.
 - Biblical hope is not wishful thinking; it is expectation.
- conviction (*elenchos* ἔλεγχος) - certainty, proof.

- The second element of faith is the assurance that things not yet seen will happen.

Hebrews 11:6 - And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.

- impossible (*adynaton* ἀδύνατον) - impotent, weak, powerless. It simply cannot be done!
- please (*euarestēsai* εὐαρεστῆσαι) - to please. That is the result of faith that acts!
- draw near (*proserchomenon* προσερχόμενον) - to come to, approach, draw near;
 - Hebrews 4:14-16 – 14 Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. 15 For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. 16 Let us then with confidence **draw near** to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.
 - Since – Since in the sense of “because”, or “for this reason”. The reason is that Jesus has passed through the heavens. He came from God, lived on this earth, endured all that we endure and even more than we endure, and has returned to sit at the right hand of God.
 - *Confidence*. We can be sure of drawing near to God because Jesus has opened the way for us.
 - James 4:8 - Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.
- rewards (*misthapodotēs* μισθαποδότης) – bestows remuneration; recompenses.
- seek (*ekzētousin* ἐκζητοῦσιν) - seek earnestly, seek diligently, as a thing that is very valuable.
 - If you lose a wallet or purse, or the keys to your car, you put a lot of effort into finding them.
 - If you understand the reward that God offers, would you make every effort to seek Him?

- Two very essential elements of faith are that He exists, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek him.
 - Without the belief that He exists, who would seek Him diligently?
 - The reward is not monetary.
 - Abel's sacrifice was acceptable – Abel's reward.
 - Enoch was taken up to God without dying – Enoch's reward.
 - Noah's household was saved from the flood – Noah's reward.
 - Our reward? Expectation of a reward in this life will surely bring disappointment. We have illnesses, hardships, loss of jobs, illness and death of loved ones, and this list could be very long. But freedom from all that happens to us on this earth is not our reward.
 - Hebrews 11:13 - These all died in faith, not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth.
- Hebrews chapter 11 has been called the "hall of faith". Different sports and entertainment venues have a "hall of fame".
- In reading of many examples of faith, look for this common element: those who are cited as having faith *did* something.
 - 11:4 By faith Abel **offered** to God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain
 - 11:7 By faith Noah, being warned by God concerning events as yet unseen, in reverent fear **constructed an ark** for the saving of his household. (see Genesis 1:6-7, Genesis 2:5-6)
 - 11:8 By faith Abraham **obeyed** when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance.
 - 11:24 By faith Moses, when he was grown up, **refused** to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter,

Romans 4:3 - For what does the Scripture say? "ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS ACCOUNTED TO HIM FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS."

- Hebrews 11:8 By faith Abraham **obeyed** when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance.
- Hebrews 11:17-19 - 17 By faith Abraham, when he was tested, **offered** up Isaac, and he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, 18 of whom it was said, "IN ISAAC YOUR SEED

SHALL BE CALLED," 19 concluding that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead, from which he also received him in a figurative sense.

- Something important to ask is this: What if Abraham had not followed God's instructions? Could it have been said that he had faith?

The Faith.

- Acts 6:7 - Then the word of God spread, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith.
 - obedient (*hypēkouon* ὑπήκουον) – submission, implied by the root of hypo, to be under or below.
 - the faith (*pistei* πίστει) –
 - Faith has a verb form - believe.
 - Mark 16:16 - He who **believes** and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.
 - Faith has a noun form, usually with the definite article “the” in which “the faith” can be the subject of a sentence, or it can be an object.

Obedience of faith! Obedience to the faith!

- The faith is something which can be obeyed.
 - Acts 6:7 Then the word of God spread, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were **obedient to the faith**.
 - Romans 1:5 Through Him we have received grace and apostleship for **obedience to the faith** among all nations for His name,
 - Romans 16:26 but now made manifest, and by the prophetic Scriptures made known to all nations, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, for **obedience to the faith—**
- The faith is something which one can be turned away from.
 - Acts 13:8 But Elymas the sorcerer (for so his name is translated) withstood them, seeking to **turn the proconsul away from the faith**.
- The faith is something which can be continued in.

- Acts 14:22 strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to **continue in the faith**, and saying, "We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God."
- Colossians 1:23 if indeed you **continue in the faith**, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard, which was preached to every creature under heaven, of which I, Paul, became a minister.
- The faith is something that churches can be strengthened in.
 - Acts 16:5 So the churches were **strengthened in the faith**, and increased in number daily.
- The faith is something in which one can be weak.
 - Romans 14:1 Receive one who is **weak in the faith**, but not to disputes over doubtful things.
- The faith is something which can be denied.
 - 1 Timothy 5:8 But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has **denied the faith** and is worse than an unbeliever.
- The faith is something which can be overthrown.
 - 2 Timothy 2:15-18 - 15 Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. 16 But shun profane and idle babblings, for they will increase to more ungodliness. 17 And their message will spread like cancer. Hymenaeus and Philetus are of this sort, 18 who have strayed concerning the truth, saying that the resurrection is already past; and **they overthrow the faith** of some.
- The faith is something in which one can stand fast.
 - 1 Corinthians 16:13 Watch, **stand fast in the faith**, be brave, be strong.
- The faith is something that one can be in. By implication, one can also be out.
 - 2 Corinthians 13:5 Examine yourselves as to whether **you are in the faith**. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you are disqualified.
- The faith is something which can be preached. It can also be destroyed (or destruction can be attempted).

- Galatians 1:23 But they were hearing only, "He who formerly persecuted us now **preaches the faith which he once tried to destroy.**"
- The faith is something in which there can be unity.
 - Ephesians 4:13 till we all come **to the unity of the faith** and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ;
- The faith is something to strive for, or contend for.
 - Philippians 1:27 Only let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of your affairs, that you stand fast in one spirit, with one mind **striving together for the faith** of the gospel,
 - Jude 1:3 Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you **to contend earnestly for the faith** which was once for all delivered to the saints.
- The faith is something in which one can be established.
 - Colossians 2:7 rooted and built up in Him and **established in the faith**, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving.
- The faith is something from which one can depart, or stray from.
 - 1 Timothy 4:1 Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will **depart from the faith**, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons,
 - 1 Timothy 6:10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have **strayed from the faith** in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.
 - 1 Timothy 6:20-21 - 20 O Timothy! Guard what was committed to your trust, avoiding the profane and idle babblings and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge— 21 by professing it some have **strayed concerning the faith**. Grace be with you. Amen.
- The faith was once for all delivered to the saints.
 - Jude 1:3 Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for **the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.**

What is “the faith”?

- There is one event which only occurred one time and need never be repeated.
 - 1 Corinthians 15:1-4 - 1 Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the **gospel which I preached to you**, which also you received and **in which you stand**, 2 by which also you are saved, if you **hold fast** that word which I preached to you—unless you believed in vain. 3 For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, 4 and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures,
 - The death, burial, and resurrection are a firm foundation for everything that “the faith” includes.
 - Christians remember it on the first day of every week, in the Lord’s supper.
- Matthew 28:16-20 - 16 Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus had appointed for them. 17 When they saw Him, they worshiped Him; but some doubted. 18 And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 **teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you**; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen.
 - The eleven are the remaining apostles – Judas had betrayed him.
 - The mission – go to all nations, make disciples by baptizing them, teach them to observe all that Jesus commanded them.
 - The teaching of the apostles is included in “the faith” – all that Jesus commanded.
- 2 Corinthians 13:5 - Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you are disqualified.
 - We have an examination guide – God’s word. Concerning “the faith”, or being “in the faith”, those words do not appear before the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. Today we have the privilege of reading the words of Jesus, and the words of His

witnesses and messengers – the apostles – in the words of the New Testament.

- Hebrews 1:1-4 - 1 God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, 2 has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; 3 who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, 4 having become so much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.
- Matthew 17:1-5 – 1 Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, led them up on a high mountain by themselves; 2 and He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light. 3 And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him. 4 Then Peter answered and said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here; if You wish, let us make here three tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." 5 While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and suddenly a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!"
 - Moses and Elijah are two of the greatest men in the Old Testament. When Peter was wanting to make a place for each both them and Jesus. But God interrupted him in mid-sentence. "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!"