

Hebrews Chapter 11 The Hall of Faith

Hebrews 11:1 is a description of faith more than a definition of faith. It is the confidence that things yet future and unseen will happen as God has revealed they will.

Verses 1-2 Introduction

Key words:

Assurance = Confidence or literally, “under pinning or foundational essence.” It is used two other times in Hebrews, once of Christ’s “foundational nature” (1:3), and once of our assurance of which we need to hold fast (3:14).

Things hoped for – The coming kingdom and the promised reward (10:35-39).

Conviction = The inward conviction that what God has promised, He will perform.

Things not seen = The realities of God’s Word that are not yet visible.

Men of old = Greek *presbyteros* meaning “elders or ancients.” Men and women of the O.T.

Gained approval = Greek *martyreo* meaning “witness.” It occurs eight times in Hebrews and five of the occurrences are in this chapter (verse 4, two times, verse 5, verse 39).

Verses 3-12 First “by faith” series

By faith we understand – That is, in the sphere of faith, we grasp intellectually.

That the worlds (literally – ages) *were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible.* God created *Ex Nihilo* – out of nothing.

By faith Abel offered to God a better sacrifice... Genesis 4

By faith Enoch was taken up...for he was pleasing to God. Genesis 5

And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.

By faith Noah...in reverence prepared an ark...

-Being warned about things not yet seen...

-By which he condemned the world...

-And became an heir of the righteousness which is according to faith

By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed...

-Going out to a place...

-Not knowing where he was going...

-Lived as an alien in the land of promise...

-Dwelling in tents...

-For he was looking for the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God.

By faith Sarah received the ability to conceive...

-Since she considered Him faithful who had promised

Therefore, also, there was born of one man...as many descendants as the stars of heaven...

Verses 13-16 Interim comment

All these died in faith – The patriarchs: Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

-Without receiving the promises

-Having seen them...from a distance

-Having confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth

-They are seeking a country of their own

That country from which they went out – Chaldea was the most sophisticated country of its day.

They desire a better country – They were looking for the heavenly city prepared by God.

Their faith was *an assurance of things hoped for and the conviction of things not seen!*

Verses 17-31 Second “by faith” series

By faith Abraham...offered up Isaac...

-His only begotten son

-The one to whom the promise depended on

-Knowing somehow (resurrection) God would be faithful to His word.

-He was received back as a type (a picture of Christ’s sacrificial death/resurrection).

By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau...

By faith Jacob blessed...each of the sons of Joseph (Ephraim & Manasseh)

By faith Joseph...gave orders concerning his bones (he knew Egypt was not his home even though he had spent most of his life there).

By faith Moses... was hidden...

-Refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter

-Choosing to endure the ill-treatment with the people of God, than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin.

-Considered the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt

-He was looking to the reward

-Left Egypt

-Not fearing the wrath of the king

- He endured, as seeing Him who is unseen
- Kept the Passover...
- Passed through the Red sea...

By faith the walls of Jericho fell down...

By faith Rahab the harlot did not perish

- After she had welcomed the spies in peace

Verses 32-38 Rapid Survey

By faith...

Gideon (Judges 6-8)

Barak (Judges 4-5)

Sampson (Judges 13-14)

Jephthah (Judges 11-12)

David (1&2 Samuel)

Samuel (1&2 Samuel)

The prophets:

Isaiah

Jeremiah

Ezekiel

Daniel

Hosea...

By faith...

-Conquered kingdoms

-Performed acts of righteousness

-Obtained promises

-Shut the mouths of lions

-Quenched the power of fire

-Escaped the edge of the sword

-From weakness were made strong

-Became mighty in war

-Put foreign armies to flight

-Women received back their dead by resurrection

However, others by faith...

-Were tortured... that they might receive a better resurrection

-Experienced mockings and scourgings

-Experienced chains and imprisonment

-They were stoned

-They were sawn in two

-They were tempted

-They were put to death with the sword

-Went about in sheepskins & goatskins

-Being destitute, afflicted, ill-treated

Men of whom the world was not worthy!

- Wandering in deserts and mountains and caves and holes in the ground

Verses 39-40 Final Comment

And all these having gained approval through their faith, did not receive what was promised. The promise (*singular*) relates to all that the Old Testament promised in the Messiah. It would include His coming, His suffering and His Millennial kingdom. All the great heroes of faith died without receiving the promises they lived their lives for.

Why?

Because God had provided something better for us, so that apart from us they should not be made perfect.

The *something better* speaks of the salvation brought to all believers in Christ.

“The full value of God’s plan of salvation could not be affected by Old covenant sacrifices: it awaited the sacrifice of the Messiah... Old Covenant believers are perfected by Messiah’s sacrifice just as we are. They looked forward to it in faith: we look back in faith.”

Ron Merryman (Hebrews)