

Hebrews

Chapter 11:1-40

¹Now **faith** is the **certainty** of things **hoped for**, a **proof** of things not seen.

Guthrie > There is no break between this verse and the previous one. The following survey of the effectiveness of faith in the history of the people of God is intended to provide an exposition based on 'those who have faith and keep their souls'.

Hebrews 10:39 – 11:1 >³⁹ *But we are not among those who shrink back to destruction, but of those who have faith for the safekeeping of the soul.* ¹Now faith is the certainty of things hoped for, a proof of things not seen.

Faith > Vincent > *Faith* without the article, indicating that it is treated in its abstract conception, and not merely as Christian faith

Rhee > *Pistis* ("faith") occurs 18 times without an article (anarthrous) in verses 3-31 but nowhere else in Hebrews. This literary device serves to stress the importance of faith and to unite the chapter.

Guthrie > The statement, *Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for*, introduces the word 'faith' (*pistis*) without the article, which shows that the writer is thinking of faith in general and not specifically Christian faith. It has certain qualities which apply to both the pre-Christian and Christian eras.

Wiersbe > True Bible faith is **confident obedience to God's Word in spite of circumstances and consequences**.

Certainty > Strong's > *hupostasis* > a support, substance, steadiness, assurance

HELPS > (from *hupó*, "under" and *hístēmi*, "to stand") – properly, (to possess) *standing under* a guaranteed agreement ("title-deed"); (figuratively) "title" to a promise or property, i.e. a legitimate *claim* (because it literally is, "*under* a legal-standing")

Wiersbe > The word translated "substance" ("certainty" here) means literally "to stand under, to support." Faith is to a Christian what a foundation is to a house:

Utley > This Greek term for "assurance" (*hupostasis*) ("certainty" here) basically means "to place under" or "to stand under" thereby giving the underlying basis or foundation of something. It, therefore, had a wide variety of meanings in the ancient world. It was especially common in Greek philosophical writings to denote the clear manifestation of something. It was that which was real and true versus the unrealized.

Morris > "Faith is the basis, the substructure (hypostasis means lit. 'that which stands under') of all that the Christian life means, all that the Christian hopes for."

Pink > Faith provides a firm standing ground while I await the fulfillment of God's promises.

Robertson > He has just said that "we are of faith" (**Hebrews 10:39**), not of apostasy. Now he proceeds in a chapter of great eloquence and passion to illustrate his point by a recital of the heroes of faith whose example should spur them to like loyalty now.

Hebrews 10:39 > ³⁹ *But we are not among those who shrink back to destruction, but of those who have faith for the safekeeping of the soul.*

Hoped for > Strong's > to expect, to hope (for).

- From *elpizo* > *hope, expect*
- From > *elpis* > *expectation, hope*
- From a primary *elpo* > to anticipate, usually with pleasure); expectation (abstractly or concretely) or confidence

Proof > Precept Austin > (*elegchos* from *elegcho* = bringing to the light, to expose, to convict [Jn 3:20, Ep 5:11, 13], to convict) strictly speaking is a "bringing to the light."

Robertson > Old and common word from *elegchō* (Mt 18:15) for "proof" and then for "conviction." Both uses occur in the papyri and either makes sense here, perhaps "conviction" suiting better though not in the older Greek.

Wiersbe > Dr. J. Oswald Sanders put it perfectly: "Faith enables the believing soul to treat the future as present and the invisible as seen."

² **For by it the people of old gained approval.**

For by it > Vincent > Lit. for in this.

Approval > Strong's > *martureó* > to bear witness, testify

Barnes > Literally, "were witnessed of;"

Wuest notes that *martureo* "is in the passive voice. Literally "*for by it the elders were borne witness to.*" In each example cited, God gave witness to that person's faith. This witness was His divine approval on their lives and ministries.

In each instance, you will find the same elements of faith: (1) God spoke to them through His Word; (2) their inner selves were stirred in different ways; (3) they obeyed God; (4) He bore witness about them.

³ ***By faith we understand*** that the world has been ***created*** by the ***word*** of God so that what is seen has not been made out of things that are visible.

By faith we understand ... > Guthrie > The result of faith is stated to be that what is seen came into being out of things which do not appear.

Understand > Wuest > The word *understand* is the translation of *noeo* which means "to perceive with the reflective intelligence." It is distinguished from the mere physical act of seeing. It is the perception of the mind consequent upon seeing. In the New Testament it is never used of mere physical sight.

Vincent > *noeo* in this verse means "the inward perception and apprehension of the visible creation as the work of God, which follows the sight of the phenomena of nature."

Romans 1:20 > ²⁰ *For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, that is, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, being understood (noeo) by what has been made, so that they are without excuse.*

Created > Strong's > *katartizō* > to complete, prepare

Precept Austin > (KJV = "framed" like framers of a house)

Barnes > It is observable that the apostle does not here use the word "make or create." That which he does use means to put in order, to arrange, to complete, and may be applied to that which before had an existence, and which is to be put in order, or re-fitted; Matthew 4:24; ***Mark 1:19***; Matthew 21:6; Hebrews 10:5.

Mark 1:19 > ¹⁹ *And going on a little farther, He saw James the son of Zebedee, and his brother John, who were also in the boat mending the nets.*

Vincent > Put together; adjusted; the parts fitted to each other.

Utley > This faith affirmation becomes the worldview out of which believers live their earthly lives. This does not reject scientific research, but puts it within a faith perspective. Believers allow science to discover the mechanisms of the created order (natural revelation), but affirm ultimacy to God alone Who is revealed in the Bible and supremely in Jesus Christ.

Word > HELPS > (from *rhéō*, "to speak") – a *spoken* word,

Wuest's translation of this verse > *By means of faith we perceive that the material universe and the God-appointed ages of time were equipped and fitted by God's word for the purpose for which they were intended, and it follows therefore that that which we see did not come into being out of that which is visible.*

(For a very practical understanding of "faith" in action – please take a look at the end of this lesson for the wonderful article regarding Billy Graham's "Tree Stump Prayer".)

⁴ *By faith Abel offered to God a **better** sacrifice than Cain, through which he was attested to be righteous, God testifying about his gifts, and through faith, though he is dead, he still speaks.*

Pink > The 11th chapter of Hebrews has three divisions.

1. The first, which comprises verses 1-3, is introductory, setting forth *the excellency of faith*.
2. The second, which is covered by verses 4 to 7, outlines *the life of faith*.
3. The third, which begins at verse 8 and runs to the end of the chapter, fills in that outline, and, as well, describes *the achievements of faith*.

Better > Strong's > (interesting!) *polus* > much, many

HELPS > *many* (high in *number*); multitudinous, plenteous, "much"; "great" in *amount (extent)*. *polys* ("much in number") emphasizes the *quantity* involved.

Robertson > Literally, "more sacrifice"

Genesis 4:2-7 > ² *And again, she gave birth to his brother Abel. Now Abel was a keeper of flocks, but Cain was a cultivator of the ground.* ³ *So it came about in the course of time that Cain brought an offering to the LORD from the fruit of the ground.* ⁴ *Abel, on his part also brought an offering, **from the firstborn of his flock and from their fat portions**. And the LORD had regard for Abel and his offering;* ⁵ *but for Cain and his offering He had no regard. So Cain became very angry and his face was gloomy.* ⁶ *Then the LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry (Strong's > burn with anger)? And why is your face gloomy (Strong's > face fallen)?"* ⁷ *If you do well (Strong's > to be good, well, glad, or pleasing), will your ~~face~~ not be cheerful (Strong's > lifted up)? And if you do not do well, sin is lurking at the door; and its desire is for you, but you must master it."*

Take a look above as you read the following from Precept Austin > **Genesis 4:7** indicates that when Cain learned that his offering was not pleasing to God he became angry and rebellious, thus confirming the attitude of His heart toward the sovereign will of God. But even in **Genesis 4:7** God provided a "way of escape" so to speak.

⁵ *By faith Enoch was **taken up** so that he would not see death; and he was not found because God **took him up**; for before he was **taken up**, he was attested to have been pleasing to God.*

Pink > Having reminded them of what the faith-obedience of Abel procured, namely, the obtaining of a witness from God that he was righteous, the apostle cites the case of Enoch who exemplifies another aspect and consequent of faith ... in Abel we see faith's worship, in Enoch faith's walk, in Noah faith's witness.

Taken up > Strong's > to transfer, change

Precept Austin > (*Metatithemi* from *meta* = change of place or condition + *tithemi* = to put or place) literally means to put in another place, as used here in Heb 11:5, the passive since meaning to be taken or transferred.

Zuck > Enoch reflected the kind of life that pleases God since he walked with God by faith. If Christ had come in their lifetimes (cf. 10:37), the readers also would not have experienced death.

Genesis 5:21-24 > ²¹ *Now Enoch lived sixty-five years, and fathered Methuselah.*

²² *Then Enoch walked with God three hundred years after he fathered Methuselah, and he fathered other sons and daughters.* ²³ *So all the days of Enoch were 365 years.*

²⁴ *Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him.*

Pink relays a wonderful blessing in blending the messages of verses 4 and 5 together > When a sinner, by surrender to God and faith in the sacrifice of Christ, is pronounced righteous by the Judge of all, he is made an heir of eternal life, and sin and death can no more have dominion over him: that is, no longer have any legal claim upon him. It is this which is illustrated here: the very next saint who is mentioned after Abel, was taken to Heaven without dying, thereby demonstrating that the power of "death" over the Christian has been annulled.

Wuest's translation of verse 5 > *By faith Enoch was conveyed to another place, with the result that he did not see death, and he was not found because God had conveyed him to another place. For before his removal he had witness borne, that testimony still being on record, to the effect that he pleased God.*

⁶ **And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for the one who comes to God must believe that He exists, and that He proves to be One who rewards those who seek Him.**

And > Precept Austin > *de* > *but*

Without faith it is impossible to please Him > Pink points us to **Romans 4:5** > ⁵ *But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness,*

Impossible > Strong's > *adunatos* > *a* (negates) + *dunatos* > *strong, mighty, powerful* > therefore > *unable, powerless*

Comes > (We've seen this word before ... "approach" in 10:1) > Precept Austin > (*proserchomai* from *prós* = facing + *érchomai* = come) means literally to come facing toward and so to approach or come near.

Must believe > Utley > The Greek word *pistis* is translated by three English terms: "faith," "believe," and "trust."

Stedman > The concept of God ought to be one of the most difficult ideas for children to grasp, since God cannot be seen. But the amazing thing is that children have no difficulty at all in believing that God exists. It requires long and careful effort to train the mind to reject this evidence and explain it on other terms.

And that He proves to be One who rewards those who seek Him > Constable > The original readers faced the temptation to abandon that hope.

Rewarder > Precept Austin > (*misthapodotes* from *misthos* = reward + *apodídomi* = render) is the only NT example of this word which means "recompenser." It means properly, someone "paying what is due; a rewarder"

Those who seek Him > Vincent > Literally, *unto them that seek him out*

⁷ *By faith Noah, being **warned** (by God) about things not yet seen, **in reverence prepared** an **ark** for the salvation of his household, by which he **condemned** the world, and became an heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.*

Warned > Strong's > to transact business, to make answer

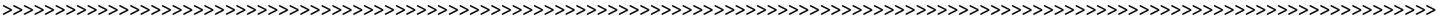
HELPS > *xrēmatízō* (from *xrēma*, "a legal agreement for transacting business") – properly, to admonish on the basis of a valid standard (what has true worth); used of God admonishing (warning) people

In reverence prepared > Guthrie > The nature of Noah's faith is seen in his response to the warning. The former of these two verbs, which occurs only here in the New Testament, has the sense of reverential awe. Such godly fear formed an important element in Noah's faith. It was linked with immediate obedience to God's specific commands regarding the ark. Noah's faith, moreover, was not only effective on his own behalf but also on behalf of his household.

Ark > Strong's > a wooden box

Utlely > This was not a maneuverable boat, but a vessel meant to float like a log. The term was used of a "chest" like the ark of the covenant.

Condemned > Strong's > to give judgment against



The Tree Stump Prayer: When Billy Graham Overcame Doubt
By Will Graham • July 9, 2014

As such, now seemed like the right time to share the story of the evangelist named Billy Graham, a discouraged young man searching for answers and direction in his life, unsure of God's plan for him.

At the mid-point of the 20th century, he had already been an evangelist with Youth For Christ and had preached across Europe in the aftermath of World War II. He had held his first "Billy Graham Crusades" in places like Charlotte, N.C, and Grand Rapids, Mich. He was also the president of Northwestern College in St. Paul, Minn., the youngest college president in the country.

Not everything had gone as planned, however. His crusade in Altoona, Pa., had been—in his own words—"a flop." It was spiritually difficult and he felt things had gone poorly, and it left him questioning whether or not evangelism should be his focus.

At the same time, a very good friend and contemporary of my grandfather's, a man named Charles Templeton, had begun challenging my granddaddy's way of thinking. Mr. Templeton, who had preached with Youth For Christ as well, had gone on to study at Princeton, where he began to believe that the Bible was flawed and that academia—not Jesus—was the answer to life's problems. He tried to convince my grandfather that his way of thinking was outdated and the Bible couldn't be trusted.

My grandfather had more questions than answers.

As a young man in his early-30s, all of these things were swirling in his mind when he traveled to California in 1949. Should he invest fully in the college, which he knew meant seeking further education for himself? At the time Northwestern wasn't accredited, and for it to become so he—as president—would need to get an advanced degree, which would require taking several years off from preaching.

Should he leave the school and follow the calling of an evangelist, even though Altoona had gone so poorly?

Did he even believe the Bible from which he was preaching, or should he follow Templeton in questioning its validity?

It was at this time that my discouraged grandfather reluctantly accepted the invitation of Henrietta Mears to visit and speak at a Christian retreat center called Forest Home. Mears had worked at First Baptist Church in Minneapolis for Pastor Riley, who was also my grandfather's predecessor at Northwestern, and she was a very well-known and godly woman. She would end up having a huge impact in Hollywood, Calif., as she served as the director of Christian Education at First Presbyterian Church of Hollywood. She took grief for inviting him to speak because he was not part of the camp's denomination, but God had a plan in all of this.

As I toured Forest Home last year, it moved me greatly to walk the paths that my grandfather walked as he struggled with the Lord, and ultimately had the experience that would change the course of his ministry and the eternities of millions.

You see, while he was at Forest Home, he spent a great deal of time studying the Bible, and he kept seeing the same phrase pop up. "Thus sayeth the Lord... Thus sayeth the Lord..." While my grandfather had always accepted in his head the authority of the Scripture, this became the turning point as he realized in his heart that God's Word is divinely inspired, eternal and powerful!

One night at Forest Home, he walked out into the woods and set his Bible on a stump—more an altar than a pulpit—and he cried out: "O God! There are many things in this book I do not understand. There are many problems with it for which I have no solution. There are many seeming contradictions. There are some areas in it that do not seem to correlate with modern science. I can't answer some of the philosophical and psychological questions Chuck and others are raising."

And then, my grandfather fell to his knees and the Holy Spirit moved in him as he said, "Father, I am going to accept this as Thy Word—by faith! I'm going to allow faith to go beyond my intellectual questions and doubts, and I will believe this to be Your inspired Word!"

My granddaddy wrote in his autobiography that as he stood up his eyes stung with tears, but he felt the power and presence of God in a way he hadn't in months. "A major bridge had been crossed," he said.

The resulting change did not go unnoticed. The next day my granddaddy spoke at Forest Home, and 400 people made a commitment to Christ. Henrietta Mears remarked that he "preached with authority" that she hadn't seen before from him.

This was August 1949, and mere weeks later Billy Graham would go on to hold the historic 1949 Los Angeles Crusade in the tent erected on the corner of Washington and Hill Streets. That outreach was scheduled to last three weeks and ended up going for eight weeks as people packed the "Canvas Cathedral", and media outlets nationwide began talking about the upstart evangelist.