

# Hebrews 11:1-2 Commentary

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CONSIDER JESUS OUR GREAT HIGH PRIEST

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**The Epistle  
to the Hebrews**

| INSTRUCTION<br>Hebrews 1-10:18                   |  |                                  |                                      | EXHORTATION<br>Hebrews 10:19-13:25                |
|--|--|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---|
| Superior Person<br>of Christ<br>Hebrews 1:1-4:13 | Superior Priest<br>in Christ<br>Hebrews 4:14-10:18 |                                  |                                      | Superior Life<br>In Christ<br>Hebrews 10:19-13:25 |
| BETTER THAN<br>PERSON<br>Hebrews 1:1-4:13        | BETTER<br>PRIESTHOOD<br>Heb 4:14-7:28              | BETTER<br>COVENANT<br>Heb 8:1-13 | BETTER<br>SACRIFICE<br>Heb 9:1-10:18 | BETTER<br>LIFE                                    |
| MAJESTY<br>OF<br>CHRIST                          | MINISTRY<br>OF<br>CHRIST                           |                                  |                                      | MINISTERS<br>FOR<br>CHRIST                        |
| DOCTRINE   |  |                                  |                                      | DUTY  |
| DATE WRITTEN:<br>ca. 64-68AD                     |  |                                  |                                      |   |

See [ESV Study Bible "Introduction to Hebrews"](#)  
(See also [MacArthur's Introduction to Hebrews](#))

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Hebrews 11:1 **Now faith** is the **assurance** of things **hoped** for, the **conviction** of **things** not **seen**. ([NASB: Lockman](#))

**Greek:** [Estin](#) (3SPAI) [de](#) [pistis](#) [elpizomenon](#) (PPPNSG) [upostasis](#), [pragmaton](#) [elegchos](#) [ou](#) [blepomenon](#). (PPPNSG)

**Amplified:** NOW FAITH is the assurance (the confirmation, the title deed) of the things [we] hope for, being the proof of things [we] do not see and the conviction of their reality [faith perceiving as real fact what is not revealed to the senses]. ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

**Jerusalem Bible:** Only faith can guarantee the blessings that we hope for, or prove the existence of the realities that at present remain unseen.

**KJV:** Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

**NLT:** What is faith? It is the confident assurance that what we hope for is going to happen. It is the evidence of things we cannot yet see. ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

**Phillips:** Now faith means putting our full confidence in the things we hope for, it means being certain of things we cannot see. ([Phillips: Touchstone](#))

**Wuest:** Now faith is the title deed of things hoped for, the proof of things which are not being seen.

**Young's Literal:** And faith is of things hoped for a confidence, of matters not seen a conviction,

**NOW FAITH IS THE ASSURANCE OF THINGS HOPED FOR:** [Estin](#) (3SPAI) [de](#) [pistis](#) [elpizomenon](#) (PPPNSG) [hupostasis](#):

- **Now faith** - He 11:13; 10:22,39; Acts 20:21; 1 Co 13:13; Gal 5:6; Titus 1:1; 1Pe 1:7; 2Pe 1:1
- **Is the** Ps 27:13; 42:11
- **Assurance** - He 2:3; 3:14; 2 Co 9:4; 11:17
- **Hoped for** - Heb 6:12,18,19
- Hebrews 11 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## INTRODUCTION TO

## HEBREWS "HALL OF FAITH"

**THOUGHT - Faith is a Key Word in Hebrews** - Dear child of God, let me encourage you to take a moment and observe each of the following Hebrews passages that mention faith or faithful, taking care to observe the associations, actions, etc (you might also consider recording your observations and using them to offer a prayer of praise and thanksgiving to the Most High God) (*your faith* will be thereby be increased just as God promises in Romans 10:17-note. *Do you believe that Paul's inspired declaration?*...

**Faith - 33 times in 31 verses** - Heb 4:2; 6:1, 12; 10:22, 38, 39; 11:1, 3, 4 (2x), He 11:5, 6, 7 (2x), He 11:8, 9, 11, 13, 17, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 33, 39; 12:2; 13:7

**Faithful** - 6 times in 6 verses - Heb 2:17; 3:2, 5, 6; 10:23; 11:11

**Related verb pisteuo = believe** - Heb 4:3, Heb 11:6.

**Note** - Picture above is from [keepbelieving.com](http://keepbelieving.com)

**Wuest** - The mention of a **faith** that is answered by salvation (Heb 10:39), leads the writer to speak about it now in detail. The word "**faith**" occurs without the article here, indicating that it is treated in its abstract conception, not particularly as New Testament faith.

**Phil Newton** - Faith is the most prominent word in religion. Often used to describe one's entire religious persuasion, faith can get lost in the shuffle of religious jargon and have little meaning in daily life. One's faith might vaguely refer to his conception of spiritual realities but have nothing to do with the way he lives his life. Not so with our text. Here the writer shows that faith must be more than mental assent to a few religious propositions. Faith lives, breathes, and exercises in dependence upon the living Lord. Hebrews 11 is known as "the faith chapter," and rightly so. But it is not disconnected with the teaching before and after or its context. Chapter divisions are sometimes helpful and sometimes an obstacle to understanding what the biblical writer intends. In this case, to chop off Hebrews 11 from its context is to lose some of the practical luster of rich application it offers. We can profit from reading it apart from context; but we cannot understand the full implications of it without the context. The idea of perseverance in the exercise of faith dominates the emphasis of this chapter, coming as an explanation of what the writer states in 10:39, that we are "of those who have faith to the preserving of the soul." Keep in mind the struggles the first century audience faced, as they were in the throes of opposition and imminent persecution. How would they be able to make it through without abandoning their faith for that which had no power to eternally save them? They might escape immediate danger but their souls would suffer the fate of those who reject the gospel. So our writer calls for the kind of faith that preserves the soul through the most demanding circumstances. Such faith enables the believer in the midst of trials to "run with endurance the race that is set before" him (12:1). We know very well the opening words of chapter 12 and the crescendo that sets our attention upon our exalted Lord. Exercising faith fixes the eyes on Jesus and endures even hostility in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ. Faith aims for soul preservation-that's perseverance in concept; and it runs with endurance-that's perseverance in process. Exercising faith in Christ stands at the heart of persevering as Christians. ([Hebrews 11:1-3 What Is Faith?](#))

**The Bible Background Commentary** - In form, the chapter is a literary masterpiece. It follows the frequent literary practice called historical retrospective, a summary of Jewish history to make a particular point, as in texts like Acts 7, 1 Macc. 2:49-69 and Sirach 44-50. The retrospective consists of encomiastic biographies (favorable accounts of virtuous lives). (Ancient moralists normally used examples of people who embodied the virtue they advocated, and sometimes wrote biographies for this purpose.) The writer builds the chapter around a literary device called anaphora, beginning each new account with the same Greek word, "by faith."

**The Baker NT Commentary** has an interesting comment that

Although the brief statement on **faith** consists of only two phrases, they are perfectly balanced. Note the structure... In short, **assurance** is balanced by **certainty**.

### Faith is

being sure of what we hope for

certain of what we do not see

**Pfeiffer** rightly notes that "The guiding principle of the Christian life is faith. This is not simply a psychological factor, however. To some people faith means believing that you can do a job better than you have done it in the past, or believing that a loved one will rise from his bed of sickness. There may be real value in such "positive thinking," but this is not the meaning of faith. True Biblical faith has God as its object. We believe God and trust His Word. That Word does not tell us that we have any reason to expect to be the richest merchant on Main Street. It tells us, on the contrary, that we will have tribulations and that as Jesus' disciples we will have crosses to bear. It assures us, however, of grace to bear them. Faith has a backward look. It declares that God has done mighty acts in days gone by. Faith also has a forward look. It declares that He can be trusted for the future... Faith is the firm assurance, the conviction, that God will do what He has promised to do. It would, of course, be presumption to insist that He must do

what we want done. Many Christians grow disillusioned in their Christian lives because God does not conform to their wills. Faith takes God at His word; faith does not insist that He conform to our ideas. (Pfeiffer, C. F. The Epistle to the Hebrews. Chicago, IL: Moody Press)

**Warren Wiersbe** adds that Hebrews 11:1 is "not a definition of faith but a description of what faith does and how it works. True Bible faith is not blind optimism or a manufactured "hope-so" feeling. Neither is it an intellectual assent to a doctrine. It is certainly not believing in spite of evidence! That would be superstition.

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

Read that last sentence again and let it soak into your mind and heart. This faith operates quite simply. God speaks and we hear His Word. We trust His Word and act on it no matter what the circumstances are or what the consequences may be. The circumstances may be impossible, and the consequences frightening and unknown; but we obey God's Word just the same and believe Him to do what is right and what is best. The unsaved world does not understand true Bible faith, probably because it sees so little faith in action in the church today. The cynical editor H.L. Mencken defined faith as "illogical belief in the occurrence of the impossible." The world fails to realize that faith is only as good as its object, and the object of our faith is God. Faith is not some "feeling" that we manufacture. It is our total response to what God has revealed in His Word. ([Wiersbe, W: Bible Exposition Commentary - New Testament. 1989. Victor](#))

**ILLUSTRATION** - Perhaps you are here today and you say, why sure I would believe in Jesus if I saw Him today or saw Him do a miracle like the people did in the first century. Really? Are you sure? In John 2:23 we read "Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed in His name, observing His signs which He was doing." Okay, now why did "many" believe? They observed the signs He was doing. You are saying, "You see there it is, they saw miracles and they believed! So if I see some miracles today I will believe in Jesus too!" O really? Well, we always have to be careful not to take a text out of context lest we misinterpret the meaning of the text. That's just a basic rule of good inductive Bible study, don't you agree? Okay let's keep reading the following context (John 2:24-25) "But Jesus, on His part, was not entrusting Himself to them, for He knew all men, and because He did not need anyone to testify concerning man, for He Himself knew what was in man." The famous old Baptist preacher W A Criswell put it this way "The contrast is between people who put their trust (pisteuo, Gk.) in Jesus, and Jesus, who does not put His trust in people because He knows their motives and thoughts. Enthusiasm for the spectacular is present in them, but Jesus looks for genuine faith." The Bible Knowledge Commentary (Edwin Blum) agrees - "This was not necessarily saving faith as the next verse implies. They believed He was a great Healer, but not necessarily a great Savior from sin."

Faith must go beyond fact to commitment. Even demons believe. (Jas 2:19) "Easy-believism."

**Marvin Vincent** on **faith** - Without the article, indicating that it is treated in its abstract conception, and not merely as Christian faith. It is important that the preliminary definition should be clearly understood, since the following examples illustrate it. The key is furnished by Heb 11:27, as seeing him who is invisible. Faith apprehends as a real fact what is not revealed to the senses. It rests on that fact, acts upon it, and is upheld by it in the face of all that seems to contradict it. Faith is a real seeing.

**Cathers** follows up Vincent's statement - Keep this in mind as we study the various examples of faith. We're not talking about men who had some spiritual force called faith, but we're talking about men who trusted in the unseen, who trusted in God's promises, who based their lives on hope. Faith is more than just being sure about God's promises, but it is an awareness of the entire invisible realm all around us. 2Co 5:7 For we walk by faith, not by sight: We need to learn to not depend as much on what we see in our circumstances, but more and more on trusting in the unseen, in the great hand of God. Looks can be deceiving. Our problem is we don't like to go where we don't see where we're going.

**Illustration**: The African impala can jump to a height of over 10 feet and cover a distance of greater than 30 feet. Yet these magnificent creatures can be kept in an enclosure in any zoo with a 3 foot wall. The animals will not jump it they cannot see where their feet will fall. Faith is the ability to trust what we cannot see, and with faith we are freed from the flimsy enclosures of life that only fear allows to entrap us.

**R W Dale** gives us an interesting cultural/historical comment - Hitherto the Jewish Christians had continued to celebrate the ancient ritual, and their presence in the temple and the synagogue had been tolerated by their unbelieving countrymen; but now they were in danger of excommunication, and it is hardly possible for us to conceive their distress and dismay. Their veneration for the institutions of Moses had not been diminished by their acknowledgment of the Messiahship of the Lord Jesus; for them, as well as for the rest of their race, an awful sanctity rested on the ceremonies from which they were threatened with exclusion. Therefore, the writer of this Epistle calls up the most glorious names of Jewish history to confirm his vacillating brethren in their fidelity to the Lord Jesus Christ. It was not by offering sacrifices, nor by attending festivals, nor by the pomp and exactness with which they had celebrated any external rites and ceremonies, that the noblest of their forefathers had won their greatness, but by their firm and steadfast trust in

God.

**The ESV Study Bible** has an excellent comment on Biblical **faith** - By defining **faith** (Gk. *pistis*) as “assurance” and “conviction,” the author indicates that biblical faith is not a vague hope grounded in imaginary, wishful thinking. Instead, faith is a settled confidence that something in the future—something that is not yet seen but has been promised by God—will actually come to pass because God will bring it about. Thus biblical faith is not blind trust in the face of contrary evidence, not an unknowable “leap in the dark”; rather, biblical faith is a confident trust in the eternal God who is all-powerful, infinitely wise, eternally trustworthy—the God who has revealed himself in his word and in the person of Jesus Christ, whose promises have proven true from generation to generation, and who will “never leave nor forsake” his own (Heb 13:5). ([Crossway](#))

**Brian Bell** introduces his sermon on the Hebrews **"hall of faith"** chapter with two illustrations...

The mighty Niagara River plummets some 180 feet at the American and Horseshoe Falls. Before the falls, there are violent, turbulent rapids. Farther upstream, however, where the river's current flows more gently, boats are able to navigate. Just before the Welland River empties into the Niagara, a pedestrian walkway spans the river. Posted on this bridge's pylons is a warning sign for all boaters: "Do you have an anchor?" followed by, "Do you know how to use it?" **Faith**, like an anchor, is something we need to **have** and **use** to avoid spiritual catastrophe!

For centuries the islands of New Zealand were unpopulated. No human had ever set foot on them. Then the first settlers arrived. They were Polynesians from other Pacific islands who had sailed a thousand miles in outrigger canoes (Maori). The Polynesians came with the purpose of settling in New Zealand. How did they know the land was there? How did they know they would not simply sail across empty seas until food and water ran out and they perished? - The Polynesians had known for generations that land was there because their voyagers had seen a long white cloud on the distant horizon. They knew that when a cloud stayed in one place over a very long period of time, there was land beneath it. They called New Zealand the Land of the *Long White Cloud*. Faith is like that. It is voyaging to an unseen land, journeying to an unknown future **Ed**: Albeit believers know a number of truths about their glorious future!). But it is not mere guesswork, or chance, or superstition. There are facts behind **faith**, facts that suggest conclusions!

Some give as a definition of faith, “just take it on faith!” What they’re really saying is “trust me”, “put your faith in me & what I tell you, w/o any reason for believing what I tell you.” They are admitting, “I can’t really tell you why to repent & believe on Christ.” This is credulity! {A disposition to believe too readily, gullible}. This is “blind faith”, “a superstitious faith”, “a faith w/o any rational to it!” Example: This “type of faith” is most blatantly & unashamedly promoted w/the “faith healers” today who tell us, “that you are to believe you are healed, before you are healed!” You claim the promise! – “You believe you can see when you can’t see.” Did God ever ask people to believe they were healed when they really weren’t? “Believe you have an arm when you don’t”? - “Believe your cold is gone, even though you still have a runny nose & cough.” (just symptoms) No folks, Faith is trust...not magic! (Hebrews:11:1-7 Sermon Notes)

**Henry Alford** opens this great chapter with the following comments - **‘We are of FAITH,’** concluded the last chapter (Heb 10:39). And now this great word comes before the mind of the Writer for its *definition*, its *exemplification*, its *triumphs*. By this, all the servants of God from the first have been **upheld**, and **stimulated**, and **carried through** their glorious course (**Ed: This begs the question - Is this true in your life? Are you learning more and more to walk by faith, not sight, fixated on the things unseen, not the things seen? You can dear child of God for that is our Father's will for your life. May He by His spirit make it an ever increasing reality in your life through Christ Jesus. Amen**). By this exemplification the Writer evermore warmed and carried forward breaks out at last into a strain of sublime eloquence, in which he gathers together in one (chapter) the many noble deeds of faith which time and space would not allow of his specifying severally. That this word (*pistis*) **‘describes’** is perhaps more strictly correct than **‘defines:’** for the words which follow are not a definition of that in which faith consists, but of that which faith serves as and secures to us. A definition would approach rather from the side of the subjective phenomena of faith. Yet when speaking broadly and not strictly, we may well call this the definition of faith.

**Vincent** observes that the writer “has just said that **“we are of faith”** (Heb 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.

Our senses may lie; God cannot (Titus 1:2). People fail; God does not (Nu 23:19). Circumstances change; God never does (Mal 3:6). So the faith described in Hebrews 11 is focused on an infinitely more dependable object than any of the day-to-day varieties of faith. Real faith, however, is a divinely implanted assurance that rises above the natural functioning of the human mind. After all, the natural man cannot see Him who is unseen (v. 27).

If we commit ourselves to Christ  
And follow in His way,  
He'll give us life that satisfies  
With purpose for each day. --Sper

Max Alderman...

"Now faith is." How much more can be given, in such few words, the meaning of faith than by just simply stating that "faith is"? We are destined for spiritual ruin when we live as though faith is not. Strong's said this about faith as it is used in this first verse: "conviction of the truth of anything, belief; in the NT of a conviction or belief respecting man's relationship to God and divine things, generally with the included idea of trust and holy fervor born of faith and joined with it." We shall build upon that definition, complementing as we do the Holy Scriptures definition of faith. "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."(V.1). We could just as accurately say that "faith is actuality" or perhaps, we could say that "faith is reality." We can say this because faith is real. It is not real in the sense that it can be tested or proven in a laboratory. It is real in the sense that it is something that God can detect and recognize. He approves when one has it and does not approve when one does not have it. (Heb 11:6)

Faith is the result of teaching (Romans 10:14-17). Knowledge is an essential element in all faith, and is sometimes spoken of as an equivalent to faith (John 10:38; 1 John 2:3). Yet the two are distinguished in this respect, that faith includes in it assent, which is an act of the will in addition to the act of the understanding. Assent to the truth is of the essence of faith, and the ultimate ground on which our assent to any revealed truth rests is the veracity (truthfulness or accuracy) of God. Faith in Christ secures for the believer freedom from condemnation, or justification before God; a participation in the life that is in Christ, the divine life (John 14:19; Romans 6:4-10; Ephesians 4:15-16); "peace with God" (Romans 5:1); and sanctification (Acts 26:18; Galatians 5:6; Acts 15:9). ([Hebrews 11 Faith's Hall of Fame go to page 298](#))

J Ligon Duncan explains Hebrews 11 in light of what the writer has just stated in chapter 10...

Turn with me to Hebrews 11. In Hebrews 11 we begin to have illustrations given of a point that was made back in Hebrews 10:39. Hebrews 10:26-39 begins with another one of the warnings in the book of Hebrews. The warning against defecting from our allegiance to the Lord Jesus Christ, the warning against our turning our backs on Christ and seeking to fellowship with God in some other way. A warning against our taking lightly the person and work of Christ, a warning against our spurning the blood of the covenant.

But the end of that passage ends rather optimistically. Having given a very stern warning to the congregation, the preacher then says, "But look, I am hoping, I am expecting better things of you." And as he explains that if you will cast your eyes on Hebrews 10:39, he says this. "We are not of those who shrink back to destruction." He is expressing his hope for the congregation. "We are not the ones who are going to fall away from the faith along the way." He goes on to say, "But of those who have faith to the persevering of the soul." And it is phrase that he is going to spend a chapter illustrating. He is saying,

**Now, look, I'm not just talking about some abstract concept that ever existed in real humanity. I am going to show you person after person from the Old Testament, from the time before the Flood, from the times of the Patriarchs, from the times of Moses, and from the times after Moses, in the Old Testament, of people who lived by faith, persevering to the end of their course, even though they didn't have some of the advantages that you and I have as Christians.**

So Hebrews 11:1 and everything that follows in that chapter is directly connected to Hebrews 10:39. The author is going to give you a gigantic illustration of that phrase, "those who have faith to the persevering of the soul." And simultaneously, it is an exhortation for us to exercise that faith which perseveres to the end. So let's see God's holy and inspired word in Hebrews 11... But first I would direct your attention to verses 1 and 2. And in those passages, the author teaches us that we must know what faith means and realize how important a role it has in our perseverance. Look at those words again: "Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. For by it men of old gained approval."

That passage is as close as any passage in the New Testament to a definition of faith. But it is really not a definition. It is more of a description of one aspect of saving faith. If we were going to give a fuller definition of saving faith, we would actually have to go to several different passages in the New Testament and put them together to speak about the different aspects of saving faith. Those aspects include a knowledge of the truth, a sure, a firm embrace of that knowledge; in other words, it is not just knowing the truths of the gospel so that



you could list them. It is a real, personal embrace of those truths. You are not just saying, "Oh, I know that the church says that." You are embracing those truths as something which you do not merely give assent to, but which you believe with conviction...

The author takes us back to the Old Testament and makes it clear that these saints are precursors of us as believers in Christ. That is important because you remember throughout the Book of Hebrews, the concern is that some of these people are considering, like other friends of theirs, remitting their faith in Christ and going back to some form of Judaism. You see, in their minds they could say, "Okay, we are going to lay down this particular belief that we have had in Jesus as the Messiah and we are going to go back to the faith of our fathers." The author of Hebrews in this chapter pulls that argument out from under them. He says that if you go back to the faith of your fathers, you will find that that faith is in the Lord Jesus Christ. If you depart from Christ, you are not departing from Christ to the patriarchs, you are departing from Christ and the patriarchs to something else. He is going to argue in all these passages that these believers believed in the promises of God which were ultimately fulfilled in Jesus Christ. He says, you can't say I am departing from Christ and going back to the Old Testament. If you do that you are departing from the Old Testament too. Because Old Testament believers believed in the promises of God for the Messiah. It's a brilliant argument for people who are wavering in this area. ([Hebrews 11:1-7](#))

**Comment:** Notice that Duncan rightly emphasizes the saints of the OT were saved by faith in the Messiah (what they knew and understood of Him and the Gospel at their time - eg, see the "father of faith" Abraham, Gal 3:8, 16). OT believers were saved by faith not works or keeping the law or carrying out the prescribed sacrifices and offerings. Don't miss this truth. Many in the church today misunderstand and think that because the event of the crucifixion had not yet occurred, the OT saints could not have been saved by faith in the Messiah. To reiterate, there has always been only one Name under heaven by which men must be saved and that name is Jesus!

**Charles Simeon** observes that "CONSIDERING how much the Scriptures speak of faith, one is surprised that the subject of faith so little occupies the attention of the world at large, or even of the religious world. But the truth is, that the nature of faith is but little known. The world at large consider it as no more than assent upon evidence; whilst the religious world confine their views of it almost exclusively to the office of justifying the soul before God. But faith is of a far more comprehensive nature than even good men generally suppose. It extends to every thing that has been revealed; and is the one principle that actuates the Christian in every part of the divine life. ([The Nature of Faith - Hebrews 11:1](#))

**John Phillips** explains that "**Faith** gives substance to the unseen realities. The believer hopes in these things and proves their reality in his personal experience by faith. **Faith** is a kind of spiritual "sixth sense" that enables the believer to take a firm hold upon the unseen world and bring it into the realm of experience. All our senses do this. The eye takes hold upon the light waves that pulsate through space and make real to a person the things he sees. The ear picks up the sound waves and translates them into hearing. But there is a whole spectrum of waves beyond the range of the senses. We cannot see them or hear them or taste them or smell them or feel them. But they are real, nevertheless, and, with the aid of modern instruments, we can pick them up and translate them into phenomena that our senses can handle. **Faith** reaches out into the spiritual dimension and gives form and substance to heavenly and spiritual realities in such a way that the soul can appreciate them and grasp them and live in the enjoyment of them. ([The John Phillips Commentary Series](#))

**James Smith** writes that faith "is the substance or ground of things hoped for; it is neither a shadow nor a feeling; it is the evidence of things not seen. Jacob exercised it when he prized the birthright and sold the pottage. He laid hold on the promise, and made no provision for the flesh, so by faith he obtained a good report. **Faith** gives a good report of God, and gains a good report for the believer (Heb 11:2). (Handfuls on Purpose)

### FAITH...

Sees the invisible

Believes the incredible

Receives the impossible

**Faith** ([4102](#))(**pistis**) is synonymous with trust or belief and is the conviction of the truth of anything, but in Scripture speaks of belief respecting man's relationship to God and divine things, generally with the included idea of trust and holy fervor born of faith and joined with it. As **pistis** relates to God, it is the conviction that God exists and is the Creator and Ruler of all things well as the Provider and Bestower of eternal salvation through Christ. As faith relates to Christ it represents a strong and welcome conviction or belief that Jesus is the Messiah, through Whom we obtain eternal salvation and entrance into the Kingdom of Heaven. Stated another way, eternal salvation comes **only** through belief in Jesus Christ and no other way. **Faith** is founded on divine truth (God's promise) and is witnessed to by the Spirit in the heart. It has both objective and subjective aspects, and both are essential!

## Forsaking All I Trust Him

Acrostic: F-A-I-T-H

**For more discussion of faith see commentary on Hebrews 11:1-2.**

**Faith** is *believing* that God will keep His promises, *despite* circumstances that seem to be to the contrary! **True faith that saves one's soul** includes at least three main elements - (1) firm persuasion or firm conviction, (2) a surrender to that truth and (3) a conduct emanating from that surrender. In sum, faith shows itself genuine by a changed life. ([Click](#) for **W E Vine's** definition of **faith**)

**Faith** in simple terms is *believing* that God will keep His promises, *despite* circumstances that seem to be to the contrary! In short, "looks can be deceiving!" We have not seen the end of the story. More specifically and more personally, we have not see the end of God's story in our life (cp Php 1:6-note). **Faith** takes God at His Word, even when the odds seemed to be stacked against His Word. However, keep in mind that **faith** is NOT *faith in faith*, but is faith in God and in His Word. Faith is resting one's heart and mind on God's immutable, faithful (trustworthy) character. **Faith** is seeing the eternal in the now and choosing to live accordingly, doing so in dependence on the enabling power of the Holy Spirit (cp Our Responsibility in Php 2:12-note and God's Provision in Php 2:13-note).

**Subjectively faith** is firm persuasion, conviction, belief in the truth, veracity, reality or faithfulness (though rare). **Objectively faith** is that which is believed (usually designated as "the faith"), doctrine, the received articles of faith. Click separate study of "**the faith (pistis)**"

**Biblical faith** is not based on empirical evidence but on divine assurance.

**Rich Cathers** - Summary: Faith is that deep assurance inside you that God is going to keep His promises to You.

**Faith**, like grace, is not static. Saving faith is more than just understanding the facts and mentally acquiescing. It is inseparable from repentance, surrender, and a supernatural longing to obey. None of those responses can be classified exclusively as a human work, any more than believing itself is solely a human effort.

**True faith that saves one's soul** includes at least three main elements - (1) firm persuasion or firm conviction, (2) a surrender to that truth and (3) a conduct emanating from that surrender. In sum, faith shows itself genuine by a changed life. ([Click](#) for **W E Vine's** definition of **faith**)

Respected theologian **Louis Berkhof** defines genuine faith in essentially the same way noting that it includes an intellectual element (notitia), which is "a positive recognition of the truth"; an emotional element (assensus), which includes "a deep conviction of the truth"; and a volitional element (fiducia), which involves "a personal trust in Christ as Savior and Lord, including a surrender ... to Christ." ([Louis Berkhof, Systematic Theology. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1939](#))

**Faith** is relying on what God has done rather than on one's own efforts. In the Old Testament, faith is rarely mentioned. The word **trust** is used frequently, and verbs like **believe** and **rely** are used to express the right attitude to God. The classic example is Abraham, whose **faith** was reckoned as righteousness (Ge 15:6). At the heart of the Christian message is the story of the cross: Christ's dying to bring salvation. **Faith** is an attitude of trust in which a believer receives God's good gift of salvation (Acts 16:30,31) and lives in that awareness thereafter (Gal 2:20; cf. Heb 11:1).

**Spurgeon** - Faith is the foot of the soul by which it can march along the road of the commandments. Faith is reason at rest in God.

**A H Strong** - Faith is the grip which connects us with the moving energy of God.

Faith is to the soul what a mainspring is to a watch.

**John Calvin** defined **faith** as "a steady and certain knowledge of the Divine benevolence towards us, which, being founded on the truth of the gratuitous promise in Christ, is both revealed to our minds, and confirmed to our hearts, by the Holy Spirit."

I like **Jerry Bridges** practical definition of **faith** as that which "involves both a **renunciation** and a **reliance**. First, we must **renounce** any trust in our own performance as the basis of our acceptance before God. We trust in our own performance when we believe we've earned God's acceptance by our good works. But we also trust in our own performance when we believe we've lost God's acceptance by our bad works—by our sin. So we must **renounce** any consideration of either our bad works or our good works as the means of relating to God. Second, we must place our **reliance** entirely on the perfect obedience and sin-bearing death of Christ as the sole basis of our standing before God—on our best days as well as our worst. ([The Bookends of the Christian Life](#)).

**Bridges** goes on to emphasize that faith is dynamic, and just as we needed faith to be saved the first time (justification), we need faith to be saved every day (sanctification) - (In regard to justification) The gospel of justification by faith in Christ is the mainspring of the Christian life. And like the mainspring in old watches, it must be wound every day. Because we have a natural tendency to look



within ourselves for the basis of God's approval or disapproval, we must make a conscious daily effort to look outside ourselves to the righteousness of Christ, then to stand in the present reality of our justification... (In regard to sanctification) Faith involves both **renunciation** and **reliance**. We have to first **renounce** all confidence in our own power and then **rely** entirely on the power of the Holy Spirit. We must be **enabled**, not merely **helped**. What's the difference? The word **help** implies we have some ability but not enough; we need someone else to supplement our partially adequate ability. By contrast, **enablement** implies that we have no ability whatsoever. We're entirely powerless. We can do nothing. But when by faith we **renounce** self-sufficiency and embrace **reliance** on the power of the Holy Spirit, we receive divine empowerment, enablement, and strength for personal transformation and ministry. (I **highly recommend** his book [The Bookends of the Christian Life](#)).

**Maclaren** (in a sermon on "work of faith" in 1Thes 1:3) writes that "**Faith is the hand that grasps**. It is the means of communication, it is the channel through which the grace which is the life, or, rather, I should say, the life which is the grace, comes to us. It is the open door by which the angel of God comes in with his gifts. It is like the petals of the flowers, opening when the sunshine kisses them, and, by opening, laying bare the depths of their calyxes to be illuminated and coloured, and made to grow by the sunshine which itself has opened them, and without the presence of which, within the cup, there would have been neither life nor beauty. So faith is the basis of everything; the first shoot from which all the others ascend... **Faith works**. It is the foundation of all true work; even in the lowest sense of the word we might almost say that. But in the Christian scheme it is eminently the underlying requisite for all work which God does not consider as busy idleness... **Your work of faith**. There is the whole of the thorny subject of the relation of faith and works packed into a nutshell. It is exactly what James said and it is exactly what a better than James said. When the Jews came to Him with their externalism, and thought that God was to be pleased by a whole rabble of separate good actions, and so said, 'What shall we do that we might work the works of God?' Jesus said, 'Never mind about Works. This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent,' and out of that will come all the rest. That is the mother tincture; everything will flow from that. So Paul says, 'Your work of faith.' Does your faith work? Perhaps I should ask other people rather than you. Do men see that your faith works; that its output is different from the output of men who are not possessors of a 'like precious faith'? Ask yourselves the question, and God help you to answer it. (Read full sermon on **1 Thessalonians 1:3**)

It is notable that only the book of Romans surpasses the book of Hebrews (He 4:2; 6:1, 12; 10:22, 38, 39; 11:1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 11, 13, 17, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 33, 39; 12:2; 13:7) in the number of uses of **pistis** (Romans = 35, Hebrews = 31, out of 243 NT uses)

**Faith** is relying on what God has done rather than on our own efforts. It may surprise you that the word **faith** is rarely mentioned in the Old Testament (only 4x in NAS = Dt 32:51 Job 39:12 Ps 146:6 Hab 2:4). The word **trust** is used frequently (79x in 78v in NAS). In addition, and verbs like **believe** (39x in 38v in NAS) and **rely** (14x in 11v in NAS) are used to express the right attitude to God. The classic example is Abraham, whose **faith** was reckoned as righteousness (Ge 15:6 - See word study on Hebrew word for "believe" = **'aman [word study]**). At the heart of the Christian message is the story of the cross: Christ's dying to bring salvation. **Faith** is an attitude of trust in which a believer receives God's good gift of salvation (Acts 16:30,31) and lives in that awareness thereafter (Gal 2:20-note; cp He 11:1-note).

**Bob Utley** comments that Hebrews 11:1 "is not a theological definition of faith, but a picture of the practical outworking of it. The term (**pistis**) is used twenty four times in this chapter. From the OT the primary idea is "faithfulness" or "trustworthy." This is the opposite of apostasy (**Ed**: Literally a "standing away from" - An abandonment of what one has professed; a total desertion, or departure from one's faith). The Greek term for "faith" (**pistis**) is translated by three English terms: "faith," "belief," and "trust." Faith is a human response to God's faithfulness and His promise. We trust His trustworthiness, not our own. His character is the key. ([Hebrews 11 Commentary](#))

**Steven Cole** - It is essential for every believer to understand the nature of enduring faith. As we saw last week, there is a type of faith that does not endure trials and temptations. The seed sown on the rocky ground sprang up quickly, but it also quickly withered and died when trials hit. The seed on the thorny ground may have lasted a bit longer, but eventually it was strangled by the temptations of worries, riches, and the pleasures of this life. Neither type of faith brought forth fruit to maturity. Only the seed on the good ground bore fruit with perseverance ([Luke 8:11-15](#)). That parable serves as a useful backdrop to our text last week (10:32-29), where the author urges his readers on to enduring faith. He cites Habakkuk 2:4, "But My righteous one shall live by faith, and if he shrinks back, My soul has no pleasure in him." Then he expresses his confidence in his readers (Heb 10:39), "But we are not of those who shrink back to destruction, but of those who have faith to the preserving of the soul." His subject is "enduring faith." Some of his readers were in danger of shrinking back to destruction. With the threat of persecution looming over them, the Hebrew believers needed to be steeled to endure the coming trials by faith. He wants them to become "imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises" (Heb 6:12). To that end, he devotes chapter 11 to an explanation and illustration of genuine faith that endures. He is not focusing on the aspect of justification by faith, as Paul does in Romans 3. Rather, his emphasis is more on the operation and outworking of justifying faith in the face of trials (John Owen, *An Exposition of Hebrews* [The National Foundation for Christian Education], VII:5, 7). This faith lays hold of God's promises and the reality of the unseen world, obediently applying those realities to present trials. ([By Faith Hebrews 11:1-3](#))

**Cole** goes on to add summarize the first 3 verses - **Faith** is the means of realizing spiritual reality, of gaining God's approval, and of understanding the origin of all that is. Before we look at these three aspects of faith, it may be helpful to explain something about the **nature of faith with reference to relationships**. What I am about to say will probably sound obvious ("Duh!"). But I often see people violate this principle in their personal relationships, causing much damage. The principle is this: **Trust is essential for close personal relationships**. If you do not trust someone, you will not allow yourself to get close to that person. You will not share personal information because you are afraid that the person will use it in a way that damages you. You will not believe the personal information that the person shares with you, because you think, "I don't trust this guy!" **Here is a second principle for close relationships: Truth is the basis for trust**. If someone lies to you or deceives you, you will not trust what he says or does. You will always be on guard. If you sense that the person is a hypocrite, conveying that he is something that he really is not, you will keep your distance. A lack of truth erodes trust and causes distance in relationships. **There is a third principle for close relationships: Truth must be expressed in love**. By love, I mean, "seeking the highest good of the other person." The highest good for every person is to be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ. This motive of love must undergird all verbal expressions of truth (Eph. 4:15). To blast a person may be truthful, but it is not loving. You may say, "That's just the way I feel," and that's true. But you have not said it to build the other person in Christ, and so it is not loving. On the other hand, to deceive someone under the guise of love is to deny truth. Ultimately, this will undermine the relationship, because it erodes trust. **How does all of this relate to Hebrews 11?** These elements of relationships also apply to our relationship with God. **Faith or trust in God is at the foundation of a relationship with Him**. "Without faith it is impossible to please God" (Heb 11:6). You are calling God a liar if you do not trust Him, and you cannot be close to a liar. Truth is the basis for trust. If you doubt the truth of God's Word, including His promises for the future, you cannot trust Him and thus will be distant from Him. Some of the things that God says are not easy to accept. For example, God confronts our unbelief and sin. But He always relates to us in love. When He sends difficult trials into our lives, whether persecution, the loss of our health, or the loss of a loved one, we have to trust Him, believing that He is acting in love to form Christ in us. If the enemy can get us to doubt God's love in a time of trials, we will draw away from God and disobey His Word of truth. To draw near to God, we "must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him" (11:6). Understanding these principles—trust is essential for close personal relationships; truth is the basis for trust; and, truth must be expressed in love, which means, "seeking the highest good of the other person"—shows why faith (trust) is at the heart of a relationship with God. ([By Faith Hebrews 11:1-3](#))

**Simon J. Kistemaker** - **Faith**... radiates from man's inner being where hope resides to riches that are beyond his purview. **Faith** demonstrates itself in confident assurance and convincing certainty. (Baker New Testament Commentary)

**F B Meyer** - Faith is the power of putting self aside that God may work unhindered. (In Meyer's Commentary he goes on to add) SOCIETY rests on the faith which man has in man. The workman, toiling through the week for the wage which he believes he will receive; the passenger, procuring a ticket for a distant town, because he believes the statements of the time-tables; the sailor, steering his bark with unerring accuracy in murky weather, because he believes in the mercantile charts and tables; the entire system of monetary credit, by which vast sums circulate from hand to hand without the use of a single coin—all these are illustrations of the immense importance of faith in the affairs of men. Nothing, therefore, is more disastrous for an individual or a community than for its credit to be impaired, or its confidence shaken. There seem to be three necessary preliminaries in order to faith. First, some one must make an engagement or promise. Second, there must be good reason for believing in the integrity and sufficiency of the person by whom the engagement has been made. Third, there follows a comfortable assurance that it will be even so; in fact, the believer is able to count on the object promised as being not less sure than if it had already come into actual possession. And this latter frame of mind is precisely the one indicated by the writer of this Epistle, when, guided by the Holy Spirit, he affirms that faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the persuasion or conviction of things not seen. In other words, faith is the faculty of realizing the unseen. These three conditions are fulfilled in Christian faith. ([Way Into the Holiest](#))

#### **A Few Quotes on Faith:**

- True faith is ever connected with hope. John Calvin
- Believing and obeying always run side by side. C. H. Spurgeon
- Faith and obedience are bound up in the same bundle. He that obeys God, trusts God; and he that trusts God, obeys God. C. H. Spurgeon
- Obedience is the hallmark of faith. C. H. Spurgeon
- What saves is faith alone, but the faith that saves is never alone. J. I. Packer
- Faith that saves has one distinguishing quality; saving faith is a faith that produces obedience, it is a faith that brings about a way of life. Billy Graham
- Trusting means drawing on the inexhaustible resources of God.
- What is faith, unless it is to believe what you do not see? Augustine
- Walking by faith means being prepared to trust where we are not permitted to see. John Blanchard

- Faith is a living, daring confidence in God's grace. It is so sure and certain that a man could stake his life on it a thousand times. Martin Luther
- Faith is our acceptance of God's acceptance of us. Adrian Rogers

**William Newell** - "Hoping for something is not yet faith! Faith says, "I have it!" Things not seen shows there is no consulting of human faculties or "feelings." The ark is the test of faith. When Noah entered the ark, there was the same conviction of the fact of the coming flood that he had during the years of building the ark. God had spoken! That was all that was before his mind. He never looked at the sky. Faith is a conviction of things when they are not seen! a giving-substance-to (Greek, = *hupostasis*) things hoped for. ([Hebrews 11 Commentary](#))

**Andrew Murray** emphasizes that... The previous chapter closed with the solemn lesson: There is no alternative, believing or drawing back; there is no safety or strength for the Christian, but to be strong in faith; there is no way of pleasing God, of abiding in His presence and favour, but by faith. If any man draw back, My soul hath no pleasure in him. And so, after the teaching of the Epistle as to what God hath done, we are now to see that for our enjoyment of its power and blessing but one thing is needed--the fulness of faith. The writer begins by a general statement of what faith really is in its nature and action. Now **faith** is the assurance of things hoped for, the proving of things not seen. **Faith is the spiritual faculty of the soul which deals with the spiritual realities of the future and the unseen.** Just as we have our senses, through which we hold communication with the physical universe, so faith is the spiritual sense or organ through which the soul comes into contact with and is affected by the spiritual world. Just as the sense of seeing or hearing is a dormant power till the objective reality, the light or the sound, strikes it, so faith in itself is a sense with no power beyond the possibility or capacity of receiving the impressions of the eternal. It is as an empty vessel which wants to be filled with its unseen contents. ([The Holiest of All - Hebrews 11 "Faith - The Sense for the Unseen"](#))

It is notable that only the book of Romans surpasses the book of Hebrews ([click to study the uses of pistis in Hebrews](#)) in the number of uses of **pistis** (Romans = 35, Hebrews = 31, out of 243 NT uses) [Click](#) for links to all **243 uses of pistis** (NAS) which is translated: faith, 238; faithfulness, 3; pledge, 1; proof, 1.

As **pistis** relates to God, it is the conviction that God exists and is the Creator and Ruler of all things well as the Provider and Bestower of eternal salvation through Christ. As faith relates to Christ it represents a strong and welcome conviction or belief that Jesus is the Messiah, through Whom we obtain eternal salvation and entrance into the Kingdom of Heaven. Stated another way, eternal salvation comes **only** through belief in Jesus Christ and no other way.

**Illustration** - A mother once asked her six-year old son what he had learned in Sunday School. He said the teacher had talked about 'faith.' "And what is faith?" the mother asked. And her son responded, "I think it's believing in what you know ain't so." Of course that is not what Hebrews 11:1 is saying but it is largely what the skeptical world says about our Christian beliefs -- "Are you kidding! A dead man coming back to life? Ridiculous!" (cp 1Cor 15:19, 20, 21, 22 is the truth!)

#### Related Resources:

- "the faith"
- the "obedience of faith".
- Study on pistos

**J. B. Lightfoot** discusses the concept of faith in his commentary on Galatians. He notes that in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, the definition of the word for **faith** "hovers between two meanings: trustfulness, the frame of mind which relies on another; and trustworthiness, the frame of mind which can be relied upon... the senses will at times be so blended together that they can only be separated by some arbitrary distinction. The loss in grammatical precision is often more than compensated by the gain in theological depth... They who have faith in God are steadfast and immovable in the path of duty."

**Faith** is manifest by not believing in spite of evidence but obeying in spite of consequence. John uses the related verb *pisteuo* to demonstrate the relationship between genuine faith and obedience writing ""He who **believes** (present tense = continuous) in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him." (John 3:36)

**Charles Swindoll** commenting on faith and obedience in **John 3:36** concludes that "In Jn 3:36 the one who "believes in the Son has eternal life" as a present possession. But the one who "does not obey the Son shall not see life." To **disbelieve** Christ is to **disobey** Him. And logically, to **believe** in Christ is to **obey** Him. As I have noted elsewhere, "This verse clearly indicates that **belief** is not a matter of passive opinion, but decisive and obedient action." (quoting J. Carl Laney)... Tragically many people are convinced that it doesn't really matter what you believe, so long as you are sincere. This reminds me of a Peanuts cartoon in which Charlie Brown is returning from a disastrous baseball game. The caption read, "174 to nothing! How could we lose when we were so sincere?" The reality is, Charlie Brown, that it takes more than sincerity to win the game of life. Many people are sincere about their beliefs, but

they are sincerely wrong!" ([Swindoll, C. R., & Zuck, R. B. Understanding Christian Theology.: Thomas Nelson Publishers](#)) (This book is recommended if you are looking for a very readable, non-compromising work on "systematic theology". Wayne Grudem's Systematic Theology is comparable. [Click for Grudem's online outline of Conversion](#) and/or [Listen to the Mp3 of Conversion](#))

**Easton's 1897 Bible Dictionary - Faith** is in general the persuasion of the mind that a certain statement is true (Phil 1:27; 2Th 2:13). Its primary idea is **trust**. A thing is true, and therefore worthy of trust. It admits of many degrees up to full assurance of faith, in accordance with the evidence on which it rests. (**Ed: Trust** is defined as "a reliance or resting of the mind on the integrity, veracity, justice, friendship or other sound principle of another person" in this case the Person is God, Who cannot lie - from Webster's 1828 Dictionary).

#### Related Resources:

- [What is the definition of faith?](#)
- [What does the Bible say about faith?](#)
- [What is a leap of faith?](#)
- [What is faith in God?](#)
- [What does it mean that salvation is by grace through faith?](#)
- [What does it mean that the righteous will live by faith \(Habakkuk 2:4\)?](#)
- [What does it mean to have faith in Jesus?](#)
- [How can you believe in salvation by faith alone when the only occurrence of 'faith alone' in the Bible \(Jas 2:24\) says salvation is not by faith alone?](#)
- [Why is faith without works dead?](#)
- [Why do so many people struggle with a lack of faith?](#)
- [How can I overcome the fact that I am struggling with faith?](#)
- [Where does faith come from?](#)
- [How can I keep the faith?](#)
- [What is a profession of faith?](#)
- [Does God expect us to have blind faith?](#)
- [What is the shield of faith \(Ephesians 6:16\)?](#)
- [What is the difference between faith and hope?](#)
- [Is salvation by faith alone, or by faith plus works?](#)
- [What is the relationship of faith, works, and security in salvation?](#)
- [What does it mean to have mustard seed faith?](#)
- [Faith vs. fear - what does the Bible say?](#)
- [Does the Bible instruct us to have childlike faith?](#)
- [How can I increase my faith?](#)
- [Can faith really move mountains?](#)
- [What does it mean to walk by faith not by sight?](#)

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**ILLUSTRATION OF FAITH** - When missionary [John Paton](#) was translating the Scripture for the South Sea islanders (New Hebrides islands), he was unable to find a word in their vocabulary for the concept of believing, trusting, or having faith. He had no idea how he would convey that to them. One day while he was in his hut translating, a native came running up the stairs into Paton's study and flopped in a chair, exhausted after a long jungle hunting excursion. He said to Paton something like this...

"It's so good to stretch myself out and rest my whole weight in this chair."

John Paton had his word: **Faith** is resting your whole weight on God. That word went into the translation of their New Testament and helped bring that civilization of natives to Christ. Believing is putting your whole weight on God. If God said it, then it's true, and we're to believe it. By faith, the weary sinner stretches out to rest on Jesus Christ, upheld by His glorious gospel. Substituting Paton's translation, the loose paraphrase would sound something like this...

"Stretch yourself out" on the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved (Acts 16:31).

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever "stretches out" on Him shall not perish but have eternal life (John 3:16)

Nothing before, nothing behind,  
The steps of faith  
Fall on the seeming void, and find  
The rock beneath

Clearly **faith** is a key word in Hebrews. Study the 31 uses of **pistis** in Hebrews in context ...click the links to go to the respective notes...

**Hebrews 4:2** - For indeed we have had good news preached to us, just as they also; but the word they heard did not profit them, because it was not united by faith in those who heard.

**Hebrews 6:1** - Therefore leaving the elementary teaching about the Christ, let us press on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God,

**Hebrews 6:12** -so that you will not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

**Hebrews 10:22** - let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.

**Hebrews 10:38** - BUT MY RIGHTEOUS ONE SHALL LIVE BY FAITH; AND IF HE SHRINKS BACK, MY SOUL HAS NO PLEASURE IN

**Hebrews 10:39** - But we are not of those who shrink back to destruction, but of those who have faith to the preserving of the soul.

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

**Hebrews 11:3** - By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible.

**Hebrews 11:4** - By faith Abel offered to God a better sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained the testimony that he was righteous, God testifying about his gifts, and through faith, though he is dead, he still speaks.

**Hebrews 11:5** - By faith Enoch was taken up so that he would not see death; AND HE WAS NOT FOUND BECAUSE GOD TOOK HIM UP; for he obtained the witness that before his being taken up he was pleasing to God.

**Hebrews 11:6** - 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.

**Hebrews 11:7** - 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.

**Hebrews 11:8** - By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed by going out to a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing where he was going.

**Hebrews 11:9** - By faith he lived as an alien in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, fellow heirs of the same promise;

**Hebrews 11:11** - By faith even Sarah herself received ability to conceive, even beyond the proper time of life, since she considered Him faithful who had promised.

**Hebrews 11:13** - All these died in faith, without receiving the promises, but having seen them and having welcomed them from a distance, and having confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth.

**Hebrews 11:17** - By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was offering up his only begotten son;

**Hebrews 11:20** - By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau, even regarding things to come.

**Hebrews 11:21** - By faith Jacob, as he was dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, and worshiped, leaning on the top of his staff.

**Hebrews 11:22** - By faith Joseph, when he was dying, made mention of the exodus of the sons of Israel, and gave orders concerning his bones.

**Hebrews 11:23** - By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden for three months by his parents, because they saw he was a beautiful child; and they were not afraid of the king's edict.

**Hebrews 11:24** - By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter,

**Hebrews 11:27** - By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured, as seeing Him who is unseen.

**Hebrews 11:28** - By faith he kept the Passover and the sprinkling of the blood, so that he who destroyed the firstborn would not touch them.

**Hebrews 11:29** -By faith they passed through the Red Sea as though they were passing through dry land; and the Egyptians, when they attempted it, were drowned.

**Hebrews 11:30** - By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they had been encircled for seven days.

**Hebrews 11:31** - By faith Rahab the harlot did not perish along with those who were disobedient, after she had welcomed the spies in peace.

**Hebrews 11:33** -who by faith conquered kingdoms, performed acts of righteousness, obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions,

**Hebrews 11:39** - And all these, having gained approval through their faith, did not receive what was promised,

**Hebrews 12:2** - fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

**Hebrews 13:7** - Remember those who led you, who spoke the word of God to you; and considering the result of their conduct, imitate their faith.

**James McConkey** - "Faith is dependence upon God. And this God-dependence only begins when self-dependence ends. And self-dependence only comes to its end, with some of us, when sorrow, suffering, affliction, broken plans and hopes bring us to that place of self-helplessness and defeat. And only then do we find that we have learned the lesson of faith; to find our tiny craft of life rushing onward to a blessed victory of life and power and service undreamt of in the days of fleshly strength and self-reliance."

**J. B. Stoney** - "It is a great thing to learn faith: that is, simple dependence upon God. It will comfort you much to be assured that the Lord is teaching you dependence upon Himself, and it is very remarkable that faith is necessary in everything. 'The just shall live by faith,' not only in your circumstances, but in everything. I believe the Lord allows many things to happen on purpose to make us feel our need of Him. The more you find Him in your sorrows or wants, the more you will be attached to Him and drawn away from this place where the sorrows are, to Him in the place where He is." "Set your affection on things above" (see **note** Colossians 3:2).

**John MacArthur** explains that the phrase "**Conviction of things not seen** carries the same truth (**assurance of things hoped for**) a bit further, because it implies a response, an outward manifestation of the inward assurance. The person of faith lives his belief. **His life is committed to what his mind and his spirit are convinced is true.** Noah, for example, truly believed God. He could not possibly have embarked on the stupendous, demanding, and humanly ridiculous task God gave him without having had absolute faith. When God predicted rain, Noah had no concept of what rain was, because rain did not exist before the Flood. It is possible that Noah did not even know how to construct a boat, much less a gigantic ark. But Noah believed God and acted on His instructions. He had both assurance and conviction—true faith. His outward building of the ark bore out his inward belief that the rain was coming and that God's plan was correct for constructing a boat that would float. His faith was based on God's word, not on what he could see or on what he had experienced. For 120 years he preached in faith, hoped in faith, and built in faith. The natural man cannot comprehend that kind of spiritual faith. We see Him who is invisible (Heb 11:27-note), but the unsaved man does not, because he has no means of perception. Because he has no spiritual senses, he does not believe in God or the realities of God's realm. He is like a blind man who refuses to believe there is such a thing as light because he has never seen light. ([MacArthur, John: Hebrews. Moody Press](#))

**John Henry Jowett** says...

I LIKE the marginal rendering of the introductory sentence of this great chapter. **Faith** is the giving substance to things hoped for."

**Faith** converts cloudy castles into substantial homes.

**Faith** substantiates the unseen.

**Faith** sucks the energy out of splendid ideals, and incorporates it in present and immediate life.

**Faith** unfolds the eternal in the moment, the infinite in the trifle, the divine in the commonplace.

**Faith** incorporates God and man.



Yes, **faith** gives substance to “things hoped for,” it brings them out of the air, and gives them reality and movement in the hard and common ways of earth and time.

And **faith** is also “the test (see note on cognate noun **elegcho**) of things not seen.” By a test faith gains a conquest. By an experiment faith acquires an experience. By a great speculation faith makes a great discovery. “Try me now herewith, and prove Me!” It is an invitation to humble and sincere assumption. Try if it works! Make a hallowed experiment with the powers of grace.

Lord, incline me to make the gracious test! Let me stake my all upon the venture! Let me dare all in order that I may gain all! Let me sow bountifully, and so reap a bountiful harvest. (Daily Meditation)

**John Stevenson** notes that...

It was following the American War Between the States that a day was instituted as the American Memorial Day. It is a time for remembering those who have fallen. There is something good and noble about remembering. Hebrews 11 is a Christian memorial. It stands as a memorial to those who took a stand in faith.

The Christian life is a life of faith. But it is not an ethereal faith in nothing or a faith in faith. The faith to which we hold is anchored in reality. It is a faith which is rooted and centered in the person of Jesus.

Throughout the previous chapter, we have been impressed with the importance of holding on to Jesus rather than submitting to the temptation to turn away from Him. It is in this vein that the author says that we are not of those who shrink back to destruction, but of those who have FAITH to the preserving of the soul (Hebrews 10:39). He now goes on to define and to illustrate that faith.

There is an unseen quality about faith. You don't use faith when you can use your senses. If I hear your voice behind me, I am not exercising faith when I come to the conclusion that you are there.

Remember the case of Thomas? He had been away picking up hamburgers when Jesus made His first appearance to the disciples following the resurrection. Thomas had come back to find the other disciples excited about having seen Jesus. But he did not believe. He was more sophisticated than that. He would not be swayed by an optical illusion. He would not believe unless he felt the nail holes and the wound in the side of Jesus.

And then, a week later, Jesus was standing there. And Thomas saw. And Thomas believed. But was it real faith? Not in the sense that we have described here.

Jesus said to him, "Because you have seen Me, have you believed? Blessed are they who did not see, and yet believed." (John 20:29).

Once you have seen, it is easy to believe. Real faith is believing without seeing. It is the conviction of things not seen. And it is living on the basis of that conviction. That is going to be the message which we shall see throughout this chapter. Christians believe God to the point of banking their lives upon His promises. ([The Hall of Faith](#))

**The Heidelberg Catechism** (as quoted by Kistemaker) has this answer to the question of **what is true faith**...

**True faith—**

created in me by the Holy Spirit through the Gospel—

is not only a knowledge and conviction

that everything that God reveals in his Word is true,

but also a deep-rooted assurance

that not only others, but I too,

have had my sins forgiven,

have been made forever right with God,

and have been granted salvation.

These are gifts of sheer grace

earned for us by Christ.

**Dr. Harry A Ironside** wrote these notes on faith in the margin of his Bible...

**Saving faith—**

**not:**

- 1—A mere historical faith.
- 2—Faith in ordinances or sacramental observances.
- 3—In the Church.
- 4—In one's self.
- 5—In experiences.

**but:**

- Confidence in what God has revealed.
- It is grounded in repentance.
- Christ is its Object.
- The Word of God is its authority.
- It is a personal interest in the Lord Jesus Christ.

**Steven Cole on Hebrews 11:1** - The difficulty of the verse lies in the meaning of the words translated (NASB) as "assurance" ("being certain of," NIV) and (NASB) "conviction" ("certain," NIV). The KJV and NKJV translate these words as "substance" and "evidence." The NASB and NIV understand the words as subjective, whereas the KJV and NKJV take them as objective. The subjective understanding is, "faith means being confident of what we hope for, convinced of what we do not see." An objective understanding is, faith means "the reality of the goods hoped for," (Helmut Koster, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. by Gerhard Friedrich [Eerdmans], VIII:586), "the proof of things unseen." The Bauer, Arndt, & Gingrich Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament [University of Chicago Press, 2nd ed.] takes both words in an objective sense. It renders the first phrase (p. 847), "in faith things hoped for become realized" (or, "reality"). The second is (p. 249), "a proving of (or conviction about) unseen things." All of the patristic and medieval scholars understood the words in the objective sense, but Melancthon advised Luther to render it, "sure confidence." Luther's interpretation has influenced most scholarship since the Reformation (Koster, *ibid.*). The Greek word, hypostasis, occurs twice in Paul in the sense of "confidence" (2 Cor. 9:4; 11:17), and three times in Hebrews (Heb 1:3; 3:14; and here). All scholars agree that the word is used objectively in 1:3, which states that Christ is the exact representation of God's nature (essence, or reality). Most scholars take the second instance (Heb. 3:14) as subjective, "hold fast the beginning of our assurance firm until the end." But the respected *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (*ibid.*, VII:587) argues that it does not refer there to subjective assurance, which rests within us, but to the objective reality of the faith. In this sense, the phrase is parallel to "our confession" (Active sense in Heb 11:1: "faith is the reality of the goods hoped for." "Faith is the reality of what is hoped for in exactly the sense in which Jesus is called the [exact representation] of the reality of the transcendent God in Heb 1:3" (*ibid.*). Since the two halves of Heb 11:1 seem to be parallel, "conviction" (Greek, elenchos) would need to be taken in an objective sense, also, as "proof of things one cannot see" (*ibid.*, VII:586). Donald Hagner puts it this way (*Encountering the Book of Hebrews* [Baker], p. 142): *"From the examples of faith lifted up in this chapter it seems clear that what is not primarily in view is what we feel or possess—assurance, confidence—but rather, how faith substantiates, or gives substance to, what is promised, how it provides evidence of what is believed about unseen and hoped-for realities. Faith, indeed, has a way of making the future present and the unseen visible."* There is, of course, overlap between the objective and subjective senses of these words. Our faith substantiates what we hope for, thus giving us assurance that they are true. Faith proves or gives evidence for the things that we cannot see, thus giving us a conviction that these unseen things are true. I suggest this expanded paraphrase of Heb 11:1, "Faith makes real in our experience the promises that God has given about the future. Faith proves to us the fact that the things we presently cannot see—God, angels, demons, heaven, hell—are very much true and real." In other words, faith applies the reality of God's promises and the unseen world to life in the present, visible world. **A. W. Pink** (*An Exposition of Hebrews*) uses the analogy of two men standing on the deck of a ship, looking in the same direction. One sees nothing, but the other man sees a distant steamer. The difference is, the first man is looking with his unaided eye, whereas the second man is looking through a telescope. Faith is the telescope that brings the future promises of God into present focus. Faith enables us to see the unseen world that the natural man cannot see. ([By Faith Hebrews 11:1-3](#))

**Scott Grant** - The word for "assurance" was used in legal circles of a "guarantee" and of a "title deed" to property. We already have seen the author use it as describing the "nature," or substance, of God. Faith provides a guarantee that the things it hopes for are real, and the guarantee in itself is the substance of those things. The guarantee is similar to the function of a down payment. A down

payment guarantees that more will be coming - more of the same. The writer is saying that those who have faith already have a percentage, so to speak, of the **"things hoped for"** and that this possession serves as a guarantee that 100 percent of the things will one day be possessed. The word "hope" implies goodness. One only hopes for good things. The things hoped for concern our eternal inheritance, the heavenly and eternal country that is filled with the presence of God (Heb 9:15, 10:34, 11:16). The "things hoped for" will enable us to enjoy God forever. To some degree we can enjoy God now, and that enjoyment is a guarantee that one day we will enjoy him completely. In this sense, the writer agrees with Paul, who says the Holy Spirit, who reveals God to us and nurtures our relationship with God, has been given to us as a pledge, or a down payment, of our inheritance (Ephesians 1:13-14).

([Sermon](#))

**Assurance** (5287) (**hupostasis/hypostasis** from **hupo/hypo** = under + **histemi** = stand) is a literally a standing or setting under and thus describes a support, a confidence, a steadiness, a foundation (refers to ground on which something is built = the foundation of things for which we hope) and as used in Scripture represents a solid, unshakable confidence in God (that He Who has promised is faithful). Stated another way **hupostasis** is that which underlies the apparent and which therefore is the reality, the essence or the substance. It came to denote essence, substance or the inner nature and as discussed below is used with that meaning in **Hebrews 1:3** (verse notes).

**P E Hughes** writes that - The term **hupostasis**... is susceptible of a variety of connotations, but, despite the different interpretations proposed, there is in all cases, as **Moulton and Milligan** point out, "the same central idea of something that underlies visible conditions and guarantees a future possession." (A Commentary On The Epistle To The Hebrews)

**Hupostasis** is a very common word from Aristotle on and was used in Greek to describe that which stands under anything such as a building, a contract, a promise. It is common in the papyri in **business documents** as the basis or guarantee of transactions or with the meaning of a **title deed**. Thus one translation renders it "Faith is the title-deed of things hoped for."

**A T Robertson** on **hupostasis** - It is common in the papyri in business documents as the basis or guarantee of transactions."

**George Brooks** adds that "Faith does not put all its confidence in the present and the visible. Faith is to our hopes what a deed is to a piece of property. The deed guarantees ownership for the owner."

**Wiersbe** - The word translated "substance" (assurance) means literally "to stand under, to support." Faith is to a Christian what a foundation is to a house: it gives confidence and assurance that he will stand. (Ibid)

**IVP Background Commentary**- This hope is, however, an unshakable conviction in the present: "assurance" (NASB, NRSV; "being sure"—NIV) appears in Greek business documents with the meaning **"title deed."**

**Hupostasis** is used 19 times in the **Septuagint (LXX)** and 5 times in the NT...

**2Cor 9:4** (3 But I have sent the brethren, that our boasting about you may not be made empty in this case, that, as I was saying, you may be prepared) 4 lest if any Macedonians come with me and find you unprepared, we (not to speak of you) should be put to shame by this **confidence**.

**2Cor 11:17** That which I am speaking, I am not speaking as the Lord would, but as in foolishness, in this **confidence** of boasting.

**Hebrews 1:3** And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His **nature** (hupostasis, and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high;

**Hebrews 3:14** For we have become partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our **assurance** firm until the end;

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

Considering these meanings of **hupostasis** in Hebrews 11:1 one could paraphrase this verse as follows...

Faith is the title-deed of things hoped for.

Faith is the foundation, the quality of confidence which leads one to stand under, endure, or undertake anything.

Faith involves the most solid possible conviction, the God-given present assurance of a future reality.

Thus **hupostasis** has as it's etymological equivalent in English the word **"substance"** which describes that which stands under a thing or that which makes it what it is.

In **Hebrews 1:3** the Son is such a revelation of the Father that when we see Jesus, we see what God's real being is.

**Hebrews 1:3** (note) And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high. (**Comment:** Christ is the very representation of the divine essence. The author is conveying the truth that whatever the divine essence is, Jesus is said to be its perfect expression and in so doing affirms the deity of Jesus Christ. The etymological equivalent of **hupostasis** in English is "**substance**" or that which stands under a thing and which makes it what it is. The Son is such a revelation of the Father that when we see Jesus, we see what God's real being is.)

**Robertson** commenting on the use of **hupostasis** in **Hebrews 1:3** says that "**hupostasis** for the being or essence of God "is a philosophical rather than a religious term" (Moffatt). Etymologically it is the sediment or foundation under a building (for instance). In Hebrews 11:1 **hupostasis** is like the "title-deed" idea found in the papyri. Athanasius rightly used Heb. 1:1-4 in his controversy with Arius. (Robertson, A. Word Pictures in the New Testament)

**Wuest** writes that "The word "**substance**" deserves careful treatment. It is **hupostasis**, made up of stasis "to stand," and hupo "under," thus "that which stands under, a foundation." Thus it speaks of the ground on which one builds a hope. **Moulton and Milligan** report its use as a legal term. They say that it stands for "the whole body of documents bearing on the ownership of a person's property, deposited in archives, and forming the evidence of ownership." They suggest the translation, "Faith is the title-deed of things hoped for." **The Holy Spirit energized act of faith which a believer exercises in the Lord Jesus is the title-deed which God puts in his hand, guaranteeing to him the possession of the thing for which he trusted Him. In the case of this first-century Jew, his act of faith in Messiah as High Priest would be the title-deed which God would give him, guaranteeing to him the possession of the salvation for which he trusted God. Thus, he would have assurance.** Vincent translates, "Faith is the assurance of things hoped for." He says that "It is the firm grasp of faith on unseen fact." ([Hebrews Commentary](#))

**Vincent** commenting on **hupostasis** in **Hebrews 1:3** notes that... The primary sense of **hupostasis** or **substance** is something which stands underneath; foundation, ground of hope or confidence, and so, assurance itself. In a philosophical sense, substantial nature; the real nature of anything which underlies and supports its outward form and properties. In N. T., 2 Cor. 9:4; 11:17; Heb. 3:14; 11:1, signifying in every instance ground of confidence or confidence. In **LXX**, it represents fifteen different words, and, in some cases, it is hard to understand its meaning, notably 1Sa 13:21. In Ruth 1:12 ("*Return, my daughters! Go, for I am too old to have a husband. If I said I have hope, if I should even have a husband tonight and also bear sons*"); Ps. 39:7 ("*And now, Lord, for what do I wait? My hope [my ground, my foundation... for hope] is in Thee.*"); Ezek. 19:5, it means **ground of hope**: in Jdg. 6:4 ("*So they would camp against them and destroy the produce of the earth as far as Gaza, and leave no sustenance [Lxx - hupostasis + zoe ~ no support or foundation of life] in Israel as well as no sheep, ox, or donkey.*"); Wisd. 16:21, sustenance: in Ps. 39:5 ("*Behold, Thou hast made my days as handbreadths, And my lifetime [Lxx = hupostasis ~ my existence] as nothing in Thy sight, Surely every man at his best is a mere breath. Selah.*"); Ps 139:15, the substance or material of the human frame: in 1Sa 13:23 ("*and the garrison of the Philistines*"); Ezek. 26:11, an outpost or garrison: in Deut. 11:6; Job 22:20 ("*and their abundance the fire has consumed*"), possessions. The theological sense, person, is later than the apostolic age. In **Hebrews 1:3**, substantial nature, essence. ([Adapted and amplified from Vincent's Word Studies in the New Testament](#))

**Cathers** on phrase - **of things hoped for**. Things like the promises of God. Having that deep assurance that the things God has promised, He will do. See Ro 8:24-25. Here's the hard thing about faith. We aren't supposed to be trusting only in things we can see and things that have already happened, but also in things that haven't yet happened. We not only trust in the finished, completed work of Jesus Christ on the cross for our sins, but we are also trusting that He will come again to judge the living and the dead! Summary: Faith is that deep assurance inside you that God is going to keep His promises to You.

**Scott Grant** - Faith not only provides a guarantee of things hoped for, it provides evidence of things not seen. The word translated "things" here is different from the word that implies "things" in the first part of the verse. The word is used of "events" later on in this passage, in verse 7. The events not seen are those that will bring about the things hoped for. Faith provides the evidence that those events are real, and that they will happen. ([Sermon](#))

**Things** (4229) (**pragma** from **práссо** = to do, perform where suffix **-ma** = the result of; English = pragmatic [dealing with things in a way that is based on practical rather than theoretical considerations: practical as opposed to idealistic]; derivative words = pragmateia = affairs in 2Ti 2:4, pragmateuomai = trade, do business, put capital to work, Lu 19:13) describes that which has been done or that which happens (a happening), and thus a deed, a thing, an event, an occurrence or an accomplished fact. In this meaning **pragma** speaks of something in the past. When speaking of something in the present or future, **pragma** means that which occurs as a result of activity -- the thing being done or to be done (in secular Greek in the phrase "great **undertakings**", "the **tasks** of everyday life"), matter, business, affair.

**Vincent** adds that **pragma** "is, strictly, a thing done; an accomplished fact. It introduces a wider conception than *things hoped for*, embracing not only future realities, but all that does not fall under the cognizance of the senses, whether past, present, or future.

**Spurgeon** - Though the "things" are only "**hoped for**" and "**not seen**" at present, the eye of faith can **see** them, and the hand of faith can **grasp** them. Faith is more mighty than any of our senses, or than all our senses combined. We do see by faith. We see by faith what cannot be seen by our eyes; we grasp by faith what cannot be grasped with our hands. A strange mystery is the simple act of faith.

**Hoped** (1679) (**elpizo** from **elpis** = hope) means to look forward w confidence to that which is good and beneficial. It means to expect, with implication of some benefit. Note hope is in the **present tense** which speaks of a continuous action, or better a continual attitude of hoping (realizing that attitudes always precede actions).

#### Related Resources:

- Our Blessed Hope - 2 part study - in depth
- Quotes by C H Spurgeon on Hope
- Our Daily Bread Devotionals on Hope
- Devotionals on Hope by F B Meyer

**Hope** in Scripture is not the world's definition of "I **hope** so", with a few rare exceptions (e.g., Acts 27:20.) **Hope** is defined as a desire for some future good with the expectation of obtaining it. **Hope** is confident expectancy. **Hope** is the looking forward to something with some reason for confidence respecting fulfillment. Peter encouraged suffering saints writing

"Therefore (on the basis of the salvation and the "living hope" they now possessed) (to) gird your minds for action, keep sober in spirit, **fix your hope** (elpizo - verb form of elpis - in the **aoist imperative** = Do this now, without delay. It is urgent!) completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ." (see **note 1** Peter 1:13)

**Hope** as the world typically defines it is a desire for some future occurrence of which one is not assured of attaining. The ancient world did not generally regard **hope** as a virtue, but merely as a temporary illusion. Historians tell us that a great cloud of **hopelessness** covered the ancient world. Philosophies were empty; traditions were disappearing; religions were powerless to help men face either life or death. People longed to pierce the veil and get some message of hope from the other side, but there is none outside of Christ.

The hope we have in Jesus Christ  
Replaces all despair;  
He fills us with His joy and peace  
And shows His love and care. --Sper

**Gabriel Marcel** - **Hope** is for the soul what breathing is for the living organism.

A study of concentration camp survivors found that those prisoners who were able to hold onto their sense of hope ('things are going to get better' or 'we're going to get out of here one day' ) were much more likely to survive. Hope then is not optional but for these prisoners proved to be a matter of life and death.

**Vincent** writes that **hope** "in classical Greek, has the general signification of expectancy, relating to evil as well as to good. Thus Plato speaks of living in evil hope ("Republic," i., 330); i.e., in the apprehension of evil; and Thucydides, of the hope of evils to come; i.e., the expectation or apprehension. In the New Testament the word always relates to a future good." (Vincent, M. R. Word Studies in the New Testament Vol. 1)

Seneca, Rome's leading intellectual figure, tutor of the depraved emperor Nero (who forced Seneca to commit suicide!) and contemporary of Paul tragically defined **hope** as "an uncertain good", the antithesis of Biblical **hope**! What a difference the new birth in Christ makes in one's perspective.

The cynical editor **H. L. Mencken** also inaccurately defined **hope** as "a pathological belief in the occurrence of the impossible." His cynical definition does not even agree with the secular Webster's Collegiate dictionary which defines "**Hope**" much like the NT declaring that hope means "to cherish a desire with anticipation, desire with expectation of obtainment, expect with confidence."

Biblical **hope** is not "finger crossing", but is alive and certain because of the **resurrection of Jesus Christ** from the dead. Life without Christ is a hopeless end whereas life in Christ is an endless hope.

A **living hope** should motivate a "**looking**" **hope**, so that we are waiting anxiously for Christ's return at any time, this event providing great incentive to "discipline (one's self) for the purpose of godliness" (1Ti 4:7-note) knowing that godliness "is profitable for all things, since it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come." (1Ti 4:8-note)

**A. Faith Is Not A Blind Leap** - There are those who feel that a life lived by faith is the life of a fool. They speculate that faith is nothing more than a leap into the dark. However, faith is much more than just walking around blind waiting for providence to bump into you. Faith is your response to the promises of God for your life. (God says, "I will lead you." Faith responds, "I will follow." God says, "I will feed you." Faith says, "I will eat." God says, "I will meet your need." Faith says, "It is done.") Faith is never a leap into the dark, it is always based upon the firmest of foundations, The Word Of God. The person who really walks in faith never walks through life blind. He always knows what is ahead

**B. Faith Is Not A Blank Check** - (III. The "Name it and claim it" philosophy that permeates much of the church in our day. People have been taught that if they want something from God, then they are to pray about it and believe it than look for it to happen.) (III. There are many who have become discouraged in their faith and disappointed with God because He didn't do it like they were told He would.) Faith is not a blank check! God is not our little cosmic Santa Clause just waiting for us to place our orders and then drive away with anything and everything we desire.

(III. The implications of this way of thinking! If this is true then God is not more than a genie who has no other purpose than to grant our wishes by the thousands. May I remind you that this Charismatic, Name and Claim it crowd have missed the mark! God's is about far larger and greater things than just waiting for me to come up with a new want for my wish list)

**C. Faith Is Not A Bad Choice** - III. There are those who would say that it is foolish to walk in total and utter dependence upon the Lord. These people argue that God is an unknown. That He is an unseen force with which man cannot interact and have fellowship. They call the Christian who lives by faith a fool! However, the Christian who determines to truly live his life by total faith in his Heavenly Father will never be disappointed with God, nor will he struggle through life blindly. There will be a deep settled assurance that God is in absolute control of all situations and the His will shall always be accomplished in the life of the believer. (III. As believers, we can either choose to please the Lord, or we can choose to please ourselves. If we are determined that we are going to please the Lord, then we are going to have to walk by faith in Him and in His Word and will.)

D. These are a few of the things that faith is not. Allow me to take just a few minutes to look at what faith is. We have seen the **Fallacies** surrounding faith, now let's look for a moment at the **Facts** surrounding faith.

In verse 2, the writer speaks of the elders and says that by their faith, they earned a good report from God. Then, he goes on to speak of their faith and in every instance, either stated, or implied is the promise of God. Notice:

1. V. 3 The Creation account is reliable because it is based upon the Word of God.
2. V. 4 Abel offered a more pleasing sacrifice because of faith in a promise.
3. V. 5-6 Enoch received the first plain air ride because he had faith in the promises of God.
4. V. 7 Noah built the Ark and survived the flood because his faith floated on the promise of the Lord.
5. V. 8-19 Abraham left home and country, sojourned in a foreign land, offered his son as a sacrifice to God and looked for an eternal city. His faith was based on the unshakeable foundation of the Word of God.
6. V. 20-22 Isaac, Jacob and Joseph all died in faith looking to the fulfillment of the promises of the Lord.
7. V. 23-29 Moses forsook Egypt, led Israel, did the will of the Lord, all in response to the promises of God.
8. V. 30 Israel conquered Jericho because of faith in a promise from God.
9. V. 31 Rahab was saved because of her faith in the Lord's promises.



10. V. 32-40 Thousands down through the ages have responded to God's promises with faith and they have seen Him do great wonders.

C. With these facts in mind, what is faith? Faith is the assurance that God will do exactly what He has promised to do! (III. Anything based on guesswork, peace of heart, wishful thinking ECT., will end in failure. God is a God who responds to a people's faith in Himself and His promises.

(III. If you climbed up on top of this building and said, "I am going to jump off of here and not hit the ground. I believe that God is going to make me fly. I have prayed for it and asked Him to hold me up. I have peace in my heart that He will make me fly. I believe that this is His will, so I am going to leap off this building and He will make me fly." Before you jump, please tell us what to do with the body, because you are probably going to die!)

(III. Many people have become disappointed with God because He didn't do something they told Him to do. We must remember that faith is not a lasso which we throw around God's neck to make Him do our will. It is not some button we push to force God into doing what we want. Many have prayed for things they wanted or thought they needed and their requests were denied. Many of these people become bitter against God and cease to follow Him. Sometimes, the things they prayed for were legitimate, like the healing of a relative, a new job, some problem, etc. However, when they forget that they haven't been given a clear promise from God concerning that situation, they are in for disappointment. **We can pray about anything we want to, then we can hope that it will come to pass, but we can only have faith in those things which God has already promised to bring to pass. When I expect God to do as He has promised, that is faith. When I expect Him to do as I wish, then that is presumption!** God will honor the first and ignore the second!)

(III. Our prayers of hope versus the prayer of faith! When I pray that my neighbor will be saved, I can have faith that God will save him, if he will turn to Jesus. However, I can only hope that he will be saved, because he may decide not to receive Christ.

When I pray that my need might be met, I can believe that it will be met because God has promised to meet it - Phil. 4:19.

When I pray that a person will be healed, I can hope that it will happen. I know God has the power to heal, but I do not know that it is His will. I do not have His promise in the matter.

When I pray for the safety of my children, I can hope they will be safe, but I cannot have the absolute assurance that they will be safe, because I do not have the Lord's Word on it!

However, when God says it will be a certain way in His Word, then you can count on it being just as He has said. Therefore, anything that is promised in the Book can serve as the basis for genuine faith.)

D. So, what is faith? Faith is simply the deep settled assurance that God will do exactly what He has promised to do.

**THE FUNCTION OF FAITH** What exactly will faith do for you? After we are saved, there are certain functions which faith performs in our lives. As I look at these things, I cannot help but be encouraged.

**A. Faith Calms Our Fears** - I am not sheltered from bad things, but in the midst of them I have His promise - Rom. 8:28; 1 Cor. 15:57; 2 Cor. 4:17. (III. Phil. 4:6-7)

**B. Faith Cushions Our Falls** - I am not immune from sin and temptations, but when and if I fall, I have His promise! It is possible for the Child of God to fall down, but we can never fall out - John 10:28. If we do fall, we have His Word that we will be forgiven when we turn to Him in repentance, 1 John 1:9. This is not an excuse to fall, but it is an encouragement to those who have and those who will!

**C. Faith Confirms Our Future** - I do not know what I will face tomorrow, but I know that when all my tomorrow's are finished, I have a future secured in the Lord Jesus Christ, John 14:1-3.

**D. Faith Claims God's Finest** - Faith doesn't gorge itself on the slop of the world. It sets its sights higher. Faith believes that God will be true to His Word and there, faith responds to that Word, acts upon that Word and receives the fulfillment of that Word, Rom. 4:21; Heb. 6:18. (III. There are many who never learn what God can do because they are never willing to believe that God can do!)

**E. Faith Challenges Our Failures** - What I mean by that is that faith believes Phil. 4:13. Faith says that we can be all that God wants us to be. Faith accepts the notion that we do not have to settle for second best. Faith says that we can have everything that God has for us and that we can have it right now. Faith says that

we do not have to live to the lower standard of the world. Faith just takes God at His Word and serves Him.

**F. Faith Calls Our Friends** - Faith says to those around us that what God has done here, He can do in your life too. Faith reaches out to those in sin because it knows that everyone who turns to Jesus for salvation will be saved. Faith believes God's promises concerning salvation by faith

God's will is that we live by faith! Not the blind leap of the foolish, not the blank check of the misinformed, but the deep settled assurance that what God has said He would do, He is more than able and willing to do. Does that describe your life? ([Sermon](#))

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## HERE ARE SOME COMMON SAYINGS THAT ARE NOT FAITH

(1) Biblical faith is not simply INTELLECTUAL ASSENT TO A DOCTRINE.

For example: Most everyone in America has some intellectual knowledge of Who Jesus is but they don't really know Him in the sense of having a relationship with Him by grace through faith. As Spurgeon said "It will not save me to know that Christ is a Saviour; but it will save me to trust him to be my Saviour."

(2) Biblical faith is not BELIEVING IN SPITE OF EVIDENCE! That would be superstition.

(3) Biblical faith is not BLIND OPTIMISM or a MANUFACTURED "HOPE-SO" FEELING.

(4) "FAITH IS A LEAP INTO THE DARK" (or the unknown).

Nothing could be further from the truth. Faith is not a leap into the dark or unknown - If you take a leap in the dark or a leap into the unknown, you do something without having any knowledge of it. To the contrary, genuine Biblical faith is a leap into the light, and the Light is Jesus, who said (John 8:12) "'I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life.'"

(5) "JUST TAKE IT ON FAITH"

The dictionary of idioms defines "take it on faith" as "to accept something without further verifying or investigating, to believe something on the basis of little or no evidence.

"JUST TAKE IT ON FAITH!" What they're really saying is "trust me", "put your faith in me and what I tell you, w/o any reason for believing what I tell you." They are admitting, "I can't really tell you why to repent & believe on Christ." This is credulity! CREDULITY is a disposition to believe on little evidence, too readily. A synonym is gullible or gullibility which describes a person who is easily tricked or deceived because they are too trusting.

This is "BLIND FAITH", "A SUPERSTITIOUS FAITH", "A FAITH W/O ANY RATIONALE TO IT!"

The faith that will shut the mouth of lions must be more than a pious hope that they will not bite.

Example: This "type of faith" is most blatantly & unashamedly promoted w/the "FAITH HEALERS" today who tell us, "that you are to believe you are healed, before you are healed!" You claim the promise! - "You believe you can see when you can't see." Did God ever ask people to believe they were healed when they really weren't? "Believe you have an arm when you don't"? - "Believe your cold is gone, even though you still have a runny nose & cough." (just symptoms) No folks, FAITH IS TRUST...NOT MAGIC! As Spurgeon warned "Never make a Christ out of your faith, nor think of it as if it were the independent source of your salvation." A H Strong adds that "What saves us is faith in Christ, not faith in our faith, or faith in the faith."

(6) FAITH IS NOT A FEELING - There are even times when I don't feel very loved by God for example, but is that true? Of course not. God loves me unconditionally. Now if I sin He may discipline me, but He still loves me. So Biblical faith is not based on our FEELINGS but on God's FAITHFULNESS.

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**Steven Cole Illustration** - Before we leave verse 1, let's apply it by illustrating how faith worked in the lives of three Hebrew young men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego (Daniel 3). The author refers to them, although not by name, in 11:34 ("quenched the power of fire"). They refused to bow down to Nebuchadnezzar's idol, which caused the offended king to threaten to throw them into the blazing furnace. Their response shows that by faith, they were making real in their present crisis the future promises of God regarding eternal life. By faith they saw the unseen God as more real than the enraged king standing in front of them, threatening to roast them alive. Their answer (Dan. 3:16-18) oozes with faith in the unseen God: "*O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to give you an answer concerning this matter. If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the furnace of blazing fire; and He will deliver us out of your hand, O king. But even if He does not, let it be known to you, O king, that we are not going to serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up.*" You may think, "**That's a great story, but what if God hadn't delivered**

**them? What if they had been burned to death?"** The answer is, they would have died in faith and God would reward them abundantly throughout eternity in heaven. Many martyrs have died at the stake because of their faith. The Roman Catholic Church promised **Jan Hus** (see [youtube video](#) or [another video](#)) ([Watch John MacArthur speak of John Hus](#)), the brave Czech martyr, safe passage to a hearing. After he arrived, they said, "*We promised you safe passage here, but not a safe return.*" They threw him in prison and condemned him to death because he condemned many of their corrupt practices, which were contrary to Scripture. **As they burned him at the stake, he died singing!** How could he do that? His faith made real in the present the future promises of God. His faith proved the reality of the unseen God as greater than the reality of the flames that burned him to death.

[George Muller \(biographical movie\)](#) was another man who made God's promises real by faith, and proved in a visible way the reality of the invisible God. He literally gave away all of his money and possessions and, by faith, founded an orphanage in Bristol, England. Eventually that orphanage grew to 2,000 children who needed food, clothing, and shelter every day. Muller had no savings accounts and he refused to make the needs of the ministry known, even to potential donors. He wanted to prove to the world that there is reality in dealing with the living God. He saw thousands of specific answers to prayer, which he carefully recorded and later published. Concerning faith, he wrote ([George Muller of Bristol, A. T. Pierson](#) online book): *It is the very time for faith to work, when sight ceases. The greater the difficulties, the easier for faith. As long as there remain certain natural prospects, faith does not get on even as easily (if I may say so), as when all natural prospects fail.* So in developing the theme of enduring faith, our author's first point is that faith is the means of realizing spiritual reality. ([By Faith Hebrews 11:1-3](#))

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**G K Chesterton** said that "**Hope** means hoping when things are hopeless or it is no virtue at all... As long as matters are really hopeful, hope is mere flattery or platitude. It is only when everything is hopeless that hope begins to be a strength."

Lord, give us grace to trust You when  
Life's burdens seem too much to bear;  
Dispel the darkness with new hope  
And help us rise above despair.  
--Sper

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**Illustration** - Years ago the captain of a large vessel set sail with his family from Liverpool. His destination was New York. One night when everyone was asleep, a sudden squall arose. The wind came sweeping over the water, struck the vessel and almost capsized it. Everything movable was sent tumbling and crashing, and the passengers became aware that they were in imminent peril. Everyone was alarmed, and many sprang from their berths and began to dress. The captain's little daughter, just 8 years old, was awakened and cried with fright, "What's the matter?" When they told her about the storm she asked, "Is Father on deck?" Assured that he was, the little one dropped back onto her pillow without a fear. In spite of the howling winds and crashing waves, she was soon fast asleep. This ought to be the attitude of every Christian as we face the rough seas and stormy days of life. The Bible tells us that we are to "live by faith." ([An Anatomy of Faith-Alan Carr](#))

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**MAILBOX FAITH** - Whenever I mail a letter, it's an exercise of trust. Let me explain what I mean. When I write to a distant friend, it's impossible to deliver the letter myself. I need the help of the postal service. But for them to do their part, I have to drop my letter in the mailbox first. I can't hang on to it. I have to place it in the mail slot and let go. Then I must trust the postal service to take over until my letter is delivered to my friend's home. Although I can't see what happens to it, my faith in the postal service assures me that my letter is as good as there!

Likewise, whenever we're faced with a problem, our faith is challenged. Knowing that it's impossible to resolve the difficulty ourselves, we recognize our need of God's help. First, though, we must go to Him in prayer. Until that moment, we're still holding on to our problem. We know the situation won't get resolved until we let go and commit it into God's hands. Once we let go, we then must trust God to take over until the problem is resolved in His way. Although we can't see what He's doing, our faith is "the evidence of things not seen" (Heb. 11:1), the assurance that His work is as good as done!

Have you exercised trust in Him today? ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Help us, Lord, to give our burdens  
To Your tender, loving care;  
Grant us faith to trust You fully,  
Knowing that each one You bear.  
—DJD

**Trusting God  
turns problems into opportunities.**

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**WHAT FAITH IS AND DOES** - When I was in my mid-teens, I sometimes wondered if my faith was real. I had sincerely placed my trust in Jesus Christ, yet the injustices in society and writings of unbelievers raised doubts in my mind. I didn't dare mention this to anybody. However, I repeatedly committed myself anew to Christ and to His teachings for my life.

Since then, many have told me that they are troubled by the description of faith in Hebrews 11:1. To them it defines faith as absolute intellectual certainty—something they do not always have. But in its context, this verse explains both what faith is and what it does. It affirms the certainty that comes as we continue in our commitment to trust Jesus and His Word. As we do, we become assured of the reality of God and the heaven that awaits us.

To test the validity of this statement, consider the steadfast faith of elderly believers who have continued trusting Jesus through great trials, sorrow, and pain. They will tell you that Jesus has become so real and precious to them that they are absolutely sure of Him and the truthfulness of His promises.

Don't let times of doubt discourage you. Keep trusting and obeying the Lord Jesus and His Word. As you do, your confidence will grow. —Herbert Vander Lugt ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

There can be those times when our minds are in doubt,  
Times when we ask what our faith is about;  
But we can believe Him, we know that He cares  
For our God is real, as the Bible declares.  
—Fitzhugh

**Feed your faith  
and your doubts will starve.  
AMEN!**

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**SEEING THE UNSEEN** - In a materialistic world like ours, we are tempted to conclude that the only real things are those we experience with our five senses. Yet “there are things we cannot see: things behind our backs or far away and all things in the dark,” said C. S. Lewis.

There is another realm of reality, just as actual, just as factual, just as substantial as anything we see, hear, touch, taste, or smell in this world. It exists all around us—not out there “somewhere,” but “here.” There are legions of angels helping us, for which the world has no counter-measures (Hebrews 1:14). The psalmist David referred to them as a force of thousands of thousands of chariots (Psalm 68:17). We cannot see God nor His angels with our natural eyes. But they are there, whether we see them or not. I believe the world is filled with them.

Faith is the means by which we are able to “see” this invisible world. That is belief’s true function. Faith is to the spiritual realm what the five senses are to the natural realm. The writer of Hebrews says that faith is “the evidence of things not seen” (Hebrews 11:1). By faith we recognize the existence of the spiritual world and learn to depend on the Lord for His help in our daily life. Our goal, then, as George MacDonald once said, is to “grow eyes” to see the unseen. ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

At times our fears may loom so large,  
We long for proof that God is near;  
It's then our Father says to us,  
"Have faith, My child, and do not fear."  
—DJD

**Faith sees things that are out of sight.**

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**THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT-FAITH** (F B Meyer - Our Daily Walk) - FAITH IS an attribute of the heart, rather than of the head. It is largely intuitive in its first promptings. It is impossible to argue men into faith. Do not think, discuss, or reason too much about Faith, or you will miss it. It is like Love in this, that when you turn the dissecting knife on it for the purpose of analysis, its spirit and life

vanish, leaving only the faded relics of what was once a thing of beauty and a joy for ever. If, however, turning from Faith to any object which is worthy of it, you concentrate heart and mind there, almost unconsciously Faith will have arisen and thriven to Maturity.

Faith has two kinds of objective, first a person, and secondly a statement. When we are drawn powerfully towards a person, so as to feel able to entrust our soul, our destiny, our most precious possessions to His care, with an inward feeling of tranquility and certainty that all is safe with Him, and that He will do better for us than we could do for ourselves, that is faith.

We may be attracted by a statement, which appeals to our moral sense; it is consistent with the decisions of our conscience; or perhaps, as the utterance of One in whom we repose utter confidence, it commends itself to us for His sake. We accept that statement; we rest on it. We believe that what it attests as fact either did happen or will happen. We are as sure of it as though we have been able to attest it by our senses of sight, hearing, or touch. That also is faith.

Faith is a well grounded assurance of that for which we hope, and a conviction of the reality of the unseen  
(Heb 11:1 Weymouth).

We must indicate a difference between this faith and "the faith once delivered to the saints." The former is the heart that accepts, and the hand that reaches out to obtain; the latter is the body of Truth to be accepted.

Out of faith comes faithfulness. Faith is your trust in another; faithfulness is your worthiness to be trusted. A faithful soul, one that can be absolutely relied upon, is of great price. Nothing so quickens our faith as to meditate on God's absolute trustworthiness.

"Blessed is the man that trusteth in Him."  
Psalm 34:8KJV-note

PRAYER - Give us faith in Thy love that never wearies or faints. Whatever else we doubt, may we never question the perfectness of Thy lovingkindness. Fulfil in US the good pleasure of Thy will, and the work of faith with power. AMEN.

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A new poll has discovered that while eight in ten Americans claim to believe in God, only three out of five can say they are "absolutely certain" that God exists. Specifically, the Harris Interactive Poll found 59 percent of Americans are "absolutely certain" there is a God, and 15 percent claim to be "somewhat certain" God exists. The strongest "absolutely certain" belief in God and other areas came from respondents who claimed to be born again Christians. Overall, the survey also found 13 percent of Americans believe there is no God, and 7 percent said they were "absolutely certain" about those beliefs. Most Americans say God exists; fewer are 'absolutely certain', (Jim L. Wilson and Jim Sandell)

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In his book, [What Bothers Me Most about Christianity Honest Reflections from an Open-Minded Christ Follower](#) pastor Ed Gungor asks the question, "why would God hide?" As he reflects on the question, Gungor explores the possibility that this is part of God's plan regarding faith. Gungor writes, "Perhaps God hides because he has chosen to establish a relationship with humanity through the pathway of faith. In order for faith to be faith, God must remain invisible and unprovable to the senses. If God could be seen as plainly as the sun or experienced as unquestionably as gravity, faith would not be required. God's existence would be an undisputed fact. The pathway of faith insists that relationship with God is a matter of human free will and not forced or involuntary. Faith can only exist in freedom, where we can choose to believe or not to believe. Because God uses faith as the only modality for connection with him, any relational connection between us has to be the result of choice or free will. He wants authentic relationship with us, so he honors our right to ignore him. Authentic relationships require choice." (Jim L. Wilson and Jim Sandell)

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C H. Spurgeon – Faith and obedience are bound up in the same bundle; he that obeys God trusts God; and he that trusts God obeys God.

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**PLEASING GOD, NOT MEN** - Andy Warhol, the pop-art painter of such American images as the Campbell's soup can, once said, "In the future everyone will be famous for 15 minutes." But he was wrong. There are millions of people who will never grab their moment in the spotlight. Some of them are the men and women who spend their lives doing things like working hard, raising godly children, faithfully praying for others, sharing their faith with those who don't yet know Jesus. They teach Sunday school, bring meals to the sick, drive senior citizens to doctors' appointments, and do countless other kindnesses.

These people may never be recognized outside their circle of family and friends. Certainly, their names aren't well known. And although they willingly, and often sacrificially, give of themselves, they may not receive a whole lot of thanks or praise for their service. Yet God knows of their faithfulness and is pleased by their obedience.

2Corinthians 5:9 (note) teaches us to "make it our aim... to be well pleasing" to God. As we, by faith, believe in Him and give our lives in service to Him, He is pleased (Heb 11:6-note). That's our reward, because **God's approval is always sweeter than the applause of the crowd.** - by Cindy Hess Kasper ([Our Daily Bread](#))

Look not to the people around you,  
Nor wait for their laurels of praise;  
Enough that the Savior has found you  
And calls you to serve all your days.  
—Hess

**The deeds God finds pleasing  
are those done in service for Him.**  
(Ed: As initiated & enabled by His Spirit!)

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**Scott Grant** - In Psalm 34:8, David says, "O taste and see that the Lord is good." He compares the Lord to a good meal. The first bite is a good sign that the entire meal will be delicious. People with faith have tasted of the Lord, and they have seen that he is good. Having seen that he is good, they want the whole meal, so to speak. They want all of the Lord. Although they taste the Lord now, they know that the entire meal is yet to be served, and they await a heavenly feast. The fact that they have tasted of the Lord proves that there is more to come, just like an appetizer is the advertisement for more to come. So they live their lives on this earth based on that future reality. This is the message of Hebrews 11:1-7, which describes the function and strength of faith. By faith we taste of the Lord, and that taste is the guarantee of more to come,

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**YOU'RE NOT HOME YET** - The idea that we are not home yet is one we all would do well to keep foremost in our mind as illustrated by the true story of **Henry C. Morrison** a little known "hardworking farmer" (2Ti 2:6-note) in God's missionary fields, toiling some forty years in the difficult fields of Africa. As the story is told, he became sick and had to return home to America, and as providence would have it, the boat he returned on was also carrying a well known guest. As the great ocean liner docked in New York Harbor there was a great crowd gathered to greet President Teddy Roosevelt who received a grand welcome-home-party after his widely publicized African Safari. **Two men in Africa, one hunting to kill wild animals, the other seeking to save wicked men!** Resentment seized the "hardworking farmer", Henry Morrison, and he turned to God saying "I have come back home after all this time and service to the church and there is no one, not even one person here to welcome me home." Then a still small voice (cp Elijah's experience = 1Ki 19:12, 13, 14, 15ff) came to Morrison reminding him "**You're not home yet.**" Our ultimate harvest is yet future and our future reward is "out of this world!" Ready to be revealed in the last time(1Pe 1:5-note)! Praise the Lord.

**Live today for that great tomorrow!**

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**WAITING EAGERLY** - Our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. --Php 3:20-note (Dearly beloved, member of the Bride of Christ, are you "eagerly waiting" for your Bridegroom, keeping your garments spotless and blameless [2Pe 3:14-note, cp Rev 19:7-note, Rev 19:8-note]? )

In the 1940s, Samuel Beckett wrote a play called [Waiting for Godot](#) which is now regarded as a classic. Two men stand on an empty stage, hands in their pockets, staring at each other. All they do is stand and stare. There is no action, no plot, they just stand there waiting for Godot to come.

But who is Godot? Is he a person? Does he represent God? Christian ethicist Lewis Smedes suggests, Godot "stands for the pipe dreams that a lot of people hang on to as an escape." As the play ends, those men are still standing on the stage doing nothing, just waiting.

When the 50th anniversary of that play was celebrated, someone asked Beckett, "Now will you tell us who Godot is?" He answered, "How should I know?"

Waiting for Godot is a parable of many people's lives--empty and meaningless, a pointless matter of waiting.  
And if there's no God of love, grace, and wisdom, then life really is a hopeless waiting for empty time to pass.  
(cp King Solomon's words - Eccl 1:1,2, 3, 4, 9)

How totally different, though, is Christian hope! We're waiting and "looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ" (Titus 2:13-note). That hope sustains us--a hope that beyond this world lies a life of indescribable blessing. —Vernon C Grounds



We're waiting for You, Lord, to come  
And take us home to be with You;  
Your promise to return for us  
Gives hope because we know it's true. --Sper

**The greatest joy on earth is to have  
the sure hope of heaven.**

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**NEVER HOPELESS** - William Wordsworth wrote, "The world is too much with us." He meant that too often we get caught up in the world's mad rush and fail to appreciate God's creation. But it's also easy to feel that the world is too much with us when we see people suffer for their faith in God.

The world is too much with us when we read the tragic story of a missionary family in India devastated by the murder of the father and two sons at the hands of people who hate Christians. And this world can overwhelm us when we think of the three missionary families in Colombia whose fathers and husbands were kidnapped and held for years. Added to these stories could be your own account of unjust treatment because of your faith. It happens in every country of the world.

Despite these sad situations, though, we have hope. We have the hope that comes from being God's children (Ro 8:16, 17-note). We can call our Creator, "Abba, Father" (Ro 8:15-note). We have His promise of future glory--a glory that far overshadows "the sufferings of this present time" (Ro 8:18-note).

Are the burdens of this world too much with you? Look to your heavenly Father. He lovingly offers help and hope to His struggling children. —Dave Branon

There is coming a day when no heartaches shall come,  
No more clouds in the sky, no more tears to dim the eye;  
All is peace forevermore on that happy golden shore--  
What a day, glorious day that will be! --Hill

**No one is hopeless  
who knows the God of hope.**

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**THE CURE FOR FUTILITY** - A terminally ill man in the hospital told me that life had given him a raw deal. He felt cheated because he had worked hard but would not be able to enjoy retirement. Besides, he was lonely. He and his wife didn't have a good relationship, and his children and grandchildren seldom visited him. His former business associates ignored him. He was bitter and didn't want to hear about God.

The writer of Ecclesiastes also felt a sense of futility. He observed hardworking people caught up in a monotonous and pointless cycle, only to die and be forgotten. He wrote, "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity." (Eccl 1:2). But he recognized that this was not the whole picture. Throughout the book he said that life gains meaning when God is acknowledged.

And the writer of Hebrews, penning his words after the life, death, burial, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ, declared that **faith** instills hope and helps us to understand the truths that give meaning and purpose to life.

Do you feel as if life has cheated you? If you do, look in faith to Jesus. He was unjustly nailed to a cross so you could be forgiven of your sin and have a life that is fulfilling (Jn 3:16; 10:10). As you choose to live by faith for Him, He will deliver you from those feelings of futility.-- Herbert Vander Lugt

Jesus is all the world to me,  
My life, my joy, my all;  
He is my strength from day to day,  
Without Him I would fall  
- Thompson

**Christ turns life right-side-up  
in an upside-down-world.**

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**CLOSED GATES** - Songwriter Oscar Eliason wrote,

Got any rivers you think are uncrossable?  
Got any mountains you can't tunnel through?

He responded to these questions by saying,

God specializes in things thought impossible.

Every Christian faces obstacles along life's pathway, and walking in God's will doesn't guarantee that our way will be easy. But no matter how difficult, we can trust God and go forward in faith.

At the entrance to a local hospital is an automatic gate designed to rise when a car activates a hidden sensor near the entrance. When I drive up the ramp toward the gate, it remains down, blocking the entrance. But as I get closer, the arm swings up, allowing me to proceed. If I were to park my car a few yards from the entrance, the gate would stay closed. Only when I move forward does it open.

Someone said, "If God built a bridge a yard ahead, it could not be a bridge of faith." It's the first step into the unseen that proves we have faith. Abraham, for example, "went out, not knowing where he was going" (Heb. 11:8). He obeyed God and relied on Him to clear the path.

When we walk in obedience to the Lord and come upon a closed gate, we can confidently take the next step of faith. As we move forward we will see God open the way. —P. R. Van Gorder

**Faith is the gate between  
our peril and God's power.**

#### THE CONVICTION OF THINGS NOT SEEN: *pragmaton elegchos ou blepomenon* (PPNSG):

- He 11:7-note, He 11:27-note; Ro 8:24,25-note; 2Co 4:18; 2Co 5:17-note; 1Peter 1:8-note
- Hebrews 11 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**Rich Cathers** - The writer is going to show these Jewish believers that faith is nothing new, that even their own forefathers had to learn to walk by faith. That's what the rest of this chapter is all about.

**Henry Alford** notes that...

There is no ground whatever for saying that our Writer makes faith identical with hope. **Faith** is the *confidence of things hoped for*. **Hope** exists independently of it, but derives its reality, and is ripened into confidence, by its means. And faith is the demonstration to us of that which we do not see: cf. the beautiful words of **Calvin**:

Eternal life is promised to us, but after death: we are told of a blessed resurrection, but we meantime become the prey of decay: we are pronounced righteous, and yet sin dwells in us: we hear ourselves called blessed, and meantime are overwhelmed with infinite miseries: we are promised affluence of all good things, but we are all our days in hunger and thirst: God proclaims that He will be ever present to help us, but seems deaf to our miseries. What would become of us if we leant not on hope, and unless our mind, guided by the Word and Spirit of God, emerged through the midst of the shades, above this present world?

True faith is NOT based on empirical evidence but on divine assurance, and is a gift of God (Eph 2:8-note "faith... is the gift of God")

Our goal as **George MacDonald** once said, is to "grow eyes" to see the unseen (cp 2Cor 4:18-note).

This verse is written in a style of Hebrew poetry (cf. Psalms), in which two parallel and nearly identical phrases are used to state the same thing ("Parallelism"). Cf. 1Peter 1:7-note—God tests our faith in the crucible of life with a mixture of trials and afflictions, divinely calculated to remove the "dross" from our character and make us more like His Son.

**Conviction** (1650) (*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." **Elegchos** indicates an inner conviction that is not based on visible matters. In this passage the believer is convinced that the things he or she is unable to see are real.

**Elegchos** is translated variously:

- "proof" (HCSB, Wuest),
- "evidence" (Geneva, Wesley),
- "to be certain" (TEV),
- "being certain" (Phillips),
- "prove the existence" (NJB),
- "certain" (NIV),
- "being convinced of" (NET),
- "persuasion" (Mace NT),
- "convinces us" (GWT),
- "the putting to the proof" (Centenary Translation of the NT),
- "the proof of the reality of the things" (Williams)

**Aristotle** wrote that "**Elegchos** is the proof that a thing cannot be otherwise than we say."

**A T Robertson** on **elegchos** - 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.

**Wuest** adds that "The word "**evidence**" is the translation of **elegchos** which means, "a proof, that by which a thing is proved or tested." **Thayer** in commenting on its use here defines it as follows: "*that by which invisible things are proved and we are convinced of their reality.*" His second definition of the word is "**conviction**."

**Vincent** on **elegchos** - Quite often in LXX for נָחַם to reprove, rebuke, punish, blame. See Pr. 1:23; Wisd 2:14; Sir. 16:12. See especially on the kindred verb elegcho, John 3:20. Rend. conviction. Observe that **hupostasis** and **elegchos** are not two distinct and independent conceptions, in which case kai (and) would have been added; but they stand in apposition. Elegchos is really included in hupostasis, but adds to the simple idea of assurance a suggestion of influences operating to produce conviction which carry the force of demonstration. The word often signifies a process of proof or demonstration. So yon Soden: "*a being convinced. Therefore not a rash, feebly-grounded hypothesis, a dream of hope, the child of a wish.*"

**Leon Morris** writes that the exact meaning of **elegchos** in the present context is somewhat ambiguous for it...

usually signifies a "proof" or "test." It may be used as a legal term with a meaning like "cross examining" (Liddell-Scott). Some take it here as "test" and some see its legal use, while many prefer to understand it in much the same sense as the preceding expression (e.g., NIV "*certain of what we do not see*"). This may well be the right way to take it, though "test" is far from impossible. The meaning would then be that faith, in addition to being the basis of all that we hope for, is that by which we test things unseen. We have no material way of assessing the significance of the immaterial. But Christians are not helpless. They have faith and by this they test all things.

**Gromacki** writes that **elegchos** describes...

the inner conviction of the heart whereby one knows that God, heaven, hell, sin, and forgiveness are just as real as rocks and trees. Biblical faith fosters this intrinsic certainty. (Gromacki – Stand Bold in Grace: An Exposition of Hebrews)

**P E Hughes** comments that **elegchos** conveys the idea...

Though the blessings promised are not yet revealed, the man of faith is **convinced** of their reality... the "**conviction**" of this phrase has a dynamic quality. It is not a static emotion of complacency but something lively and active, not just a state of immovable dogmatism but a vital certainty which impels the believer to stretch out his hand, as it were, and lay hold of those realities on which his hope is fixed and which, though unseen, are already his in Christ. In striking contrast to the man whose values are entirely those of this present world, the Christian is animated by the conviction that it is the very things which are not (yet) seen, those things which he appropriates by faith, that are real and permanent; he walks by faith, not sight (2Cor 4:18-note; 2Cor 5:7-note). (A Commentary On The Epistle To The Hebrews)

**BDAG** gives three basic meanings of **elegchos**...

- (1) the act of presenting evidence for the truth of something... (Here in Hebrews 11:1)**faith** is a proving (or conviction about) unseen things = faith means to be sure about things unseen (in contrast to confidence in the temporal)
- (2) the act of charging a person with wrongdoing (Lxx of Hab 2:1)

(3) expression of strong disapproval, reproof, censure, correction (Lxx of Job 6:26, variant reading of NA26 of 2Ti 3:16).

**Elegchos** is used only here in the NT if one examines the Nestle-Aland Greek Text. However the Textus Receptus (used for the KJV) and a variant reading of the Nestle-Aland uses **elegchos** in 2Ti 3:16 describing Scripture as profitable for "reproof."

**Conviction** is a firmly held belief which implies a deeper manifestation of the inward assurance. People of faith are prepared to live out their belief. If you believe truth, your behavior should manifest your belief. In other words, our lives should reflect a commitment to what our minds and hearts are assured is true. We should be so sure of God's promises and blessings which are future that we behave as if those promises were already realized (see Heb 11:7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13; cf. Ro 4:17, 18, 19, 20, 21).

**Wiersbe** adds that **elegchos**...

is the inward conviction from God that what He has promised, He will perform. The presence of God-given faith in one's heart is conviction enough that He will keep His Word. (Ibid)

As **Butler** emphasizes that...

Those who walk by faith in the Word of God will be people of conviction. Not surprisingly, unbelief, which walks in uncertainty, mocks conviction, telling us we cannot know for certain, etc. (Analytical Bible Expositor – Hebrews to Revelation)

**F F Bruce** adds that...

Physical eyesight produces conviction or evidence of visible things; faith is the organ which enables people (like Moses in Heb 11:27) to see the invisible order. (The New International Commentary on the New Testament – The Epistle to the Hebrews)

**Vincent** has a lengthy discussion of the meaning of the root **verbelegcho** explaining that it

has several phases of meaning. In earlier classical Greek it signifies **to disgrace or put to shame**. Thus Ulysses, having succeeded in the trial of the bow, says to Telemachus, "the stranger who sits in thy halls disgraces (elegchei) thee not" ("Odyssey, xxi., 424). Then, to **cross-examine or question**, for the purpose of **convincing, convicting, or refuting**; to **censure, accuse**. So Herodotus: "In his reply Alexander became confused, and diverged from the truth, whereon the slaves interposed, **confuted** his statements (elegchon, cross-questioned and caught him in falsehood), and told the whole history of the crime" (1:115). The messenger in the "Antigone" of Sophocles, describing the consternation of the watchmen at finding Polynices' body buried, says: "Evil words were bandied among them, guard **accusing** (elegchon) guard" (260). **Of arguments, to bring to the proof; prove; prove by a chain of reasoning**. It occurs in Pindar in the general sense of to conquer or surpass. "Having descended into the naked race they surpassed (elegzan) the Grecian band in speed ("Pythia," xi., 75). (**Bolding added**. Vincent, M. R. Word studies in the New Testament. Vol. 2, Page 1-102)

**Elegchos** - 11x in the non-apocryphal Septuagint - Lev 19:17; Nu 5:18, 19, 23, 24, 27; 2 Kgs 19:3; Ps 38:14; 39:11; 149:7; Isa 37:3. Most of these uses are to convey the idea of reproof (BDAG meaning #3 above).

**Albert Barnes** on **elegchos**...

It means, properly, proof, or means of proving, to wit, evidence; then proof which convinces another of error or guilt; then vindication or defense; then summary or contents. The idea of evidence which goes to demonstrate the thing under consideration, or which is adapted to produce conviction in the mind, seems to be the elementary idea in the word. So when a proposition is demonstrated; when a man is arraigned, and evidence is furnished of his guilt, or when he establishes his innocence; or when one by argument refutes his adversaries, the idea of convincing argument enters into the use of the word in each case. This, I think, is clearly the meaning of the word here.

"Faith in the Divine declarations answers all the purposes of a convincing argument, or is itself a convincing argument to the mind, of the real existence of those things which are not seen." But is it a good argument? Is it rational to rely on such a means of being convinced? Is mere faith a consideration which should ever convince a rational mind? The infidel says no; and we know there may be a faith which is no argument of the truth of what is believed. But when a man who has never seen it believes that there is such a place as London, his belief in the numerous testimonies respecting it which he has heard and read is, to his mind, a good and rational proof of its existence, and he would act on that belief without hesitation. When a son credits the

declaration or the promise of a father who has never deceived him, and acts as though that declaration and promise were true, his faith is to him a ground of conviction and of action, and he will act as if these things were so. In like manner the Christian believes what God says. He has never seen heaven; he has never seen an angel; he has never seen the Redeemer; he has never seen a body raised from the grave; but he has evidence which is satisfactory to his mind that God has spoken on these subjects, and his very nature prompts him to confide in the declarations of his Creator. Those declarations are, to his mind, more **convincing proof** than anything else would be. They are more **conclusive evidence** than would be the deductions on his own reason; far better and more rational than all the reasonings and declarations of the infidel to the contrary. He feels and acts, therefore, as if these things were so-for his faith in the declarations of God has convinced him that they are so. The object of the apostle, in this chapter, is not to illustrate the nature of what is called saving faith, but to show the power of unwavering confidence in God in sustaining the soul, especially in times of trial; and particularly in leading us to act, in view of promises and of things not seen, as if they were so. "Saving faith" is the same kind of confidence directed to the Messiah-the Lord Jesus-as the Saviour of the soul. Notes on the New Testament Explanatory and Practical.

**Brian Bell** on the phrase "**faith is the... conviction of things not seen**"...

Faith is learning to live by **insight** rather than by **sight**... "For we walk by faith, not by sight." (2Cor 5:7) Some see faith contrasted by sight, or contrasted with empirical evidence (something based on experiment or experience). We have a saying, "Seeing is what?... believing!" Don't see faith as the opposite of sight, or in contrast to it. Then what's he saying here? It is dealing with future issues! – What we have seen in the past gives us faith to believe in the future, though we haven't seen it.. Example: How visible was God to the children of Israel? God showed Himself visible through: "the 10 plagues, the parting of the red Sea, the drowning of Pharaoh's men, the manna, earth opening, the shining face of Moses, etc." Now, all that happened yesterday!... Now, here's what's going to happen tomorrow! – "You will possess the land, it will be flowing with milk & honey, it will be your inheritance, etc." I know you saw giants but have faith! Could any Jew see tomorrow, look into the future? Can you? Now we are confident these things WILL come to pass, because we have faith, we trust God, & we trust God will honor His word! "So, true biblical faith is believing what has already been shown in the past; which causes us to have faith in His future promises, though we haven't seen them yet!"... Faith is confidence in God that leads to obedience to God. As seen in the rest of the chapter! To illustrate true faith, the writer points to some Old & New testament believers, showing how they trusted God to bless, provide, protect, lead, conquer, & give life...even in the most dire circumstances. (Hebrews:11:1-7 Sermon Notes)

**Augustine** asked "What is faith, unless it is to believe what you do not see?"

Someone wrote that "The best definition I ever saw outside the Bible is: Dependence on the veracity of another. In other words, **Faith** says **Amen** to **everything that God says**. **Faith** takes God without any **'if's'**. If God says it, **Faith** says, **"I believe it"**; **Faith** says **"Amen"** to it."

**Not seen** - "**Not**" is Greek word **"ou"** signifying absolute negation. Faith has **absolutely not** yet seen what it will one day possess (Jesus, His Kingdom, etc).

**Holman New Testament Commentary** Eyesight produces a conviction about objects in the physical world. **Faith** produces the same convictions for the invisible order.

**Seen** (991) (**blepo**) basically means to have sight, to see, to look at, then to observe, to discern, to perceive with the eye, and frequently implies special contemplation.

**The Wycliffe Bible Commentary**...**Faith** is trust in the unseen. It is not trust in the unknown, for we may know by faith what we cannot see with the eye.

**Scott Grant** - In putting together the entire verse, we can say that faith provides the evidence that events that we cannot yet see will in fact happen. We can also say that those events will bring about our complete enjoyment of God, the partial enjoyment of whom guarantees that we will one day completely enjoy him. Faith provides the guarantee of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen. Faith believes in things that are real, and faith is, in fact, evidence of the reality of those things. We can also say that faith is forward-looking. It banks on things hoped for and things not seen - things that haven't happened yet. The forward-looking faith the writer speaks of gives us a taste of what it will be like to be with God forever. When we taste something good, we want more of it. Tasting the guarantee and seeing the evidence, we are motivated to pursue God, the one who satisfies in the deep and eternal places of our souls - the one who will do so forever. The more we "taste and see that the Lord is good," the more we long to dwell in

the better country. The more we long to dwell in the better country, the more we are able to suffer loss in this country. In fact, the more we are liable to make radical decisions to intentionally let go of seemingly invaluable earthly possessions, dispositions and relationships. The examples that the writer highlights in Hebrews 11 show people doing precisely that. Earthly loss is nothing in comparison to heavenly gain, and those who have faith know that and are thereby liberated to live outrageous lives of obedience to the heavenly call of God. We'll see numerous examples of such obedience as we move through Hebrews 11, beginning in verse 4. It's important to understand that faith does not create reality; faith responds to reality. Something exists or something will happen; therefore, we believe it exists or will happen. Faith is not believing that something exists or that something will happen and thereby compelling something to exist or to happen. That is a pagan understanding of faith, one that the current New Age movement holds, but one that has also infiltrated the church. ([Sermon](#))

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**David Jeremiah** - In a day of material prosperity, when it seems that we have no lack of anything, there is one thing we are missing: heroes. Too often, those we traditionally look to as heroes end up being tarnished in some way—leaving us to search again. Some people are designated as heroes during their lifetimes for achieving great things. But those enshrined in Hebrews 11 are remembered for their faith—faith by which they changed the world of their day. The most compelling thing about the people listed in Hebrews 11 is that they were ordinary people—people like you and me. The only thing they had going for them is the same thing available to us: faith.

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### **HEBREWS 11:1—Does this verse indicate that faith is an actual substance that God used to create the universe, as Word-Faith teachers argue?**

**MISINTERPRETATION:** Hebrews 11:1 says, “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen” (KJV). Word-Faith teachers think this means that faith is an actual substance. **Kenneth Copeland** says that faith is a substance and “has the ability to effect natural substance” (“Forces of the Recreated Human Spirit,” 1982, 8). Moreover, “faith was the raw material substance that the Spirit of God used to form the universe” (“Authority of the Believer II,” 1987, audio tape).

**ED:** Some other things Copeland said - Here's a phrase that's currently being shredded by the "faith teachers". They say, "There you have it, faith is a substance!" Copeland: "Faith is a power force. It is a tangible force. It is a conductive force." Copeland again: "Faith was the raw material substance that the Spirit of God use to form the universe."

**CORRECTING THE MISINTERPRETATION:** This verse does not indicate that faith is an actual substance. The Greek word translated “substance” in the King James Version is hypostasis, and literally means “assurance,” “confidence,” “confident expectation,” or “being sure.” Hence, Hebrews 11:1 teaches that faith is the certainty or assurance that God will do as he promises. Our hope for those things is a certainty in the person with faith (2 Peter 1:4). (Norman Geisler - When Cultist Ask)

### **Hebrews 11:2 For by it the men of old gained approval. ([NASB: Lockman](#))**

**Greek:** [en taute gar emarturethesan \(3PAPI\) oi presbuteroi.](#)

**Amplified:** For by [faith—trust and holy fervor born of faith] the men of old had divine testimony borne to them and obtained a good report. ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

**KJV:** For by it the elders obtained a good report.

**NLT:** God gave his approval to people in days of old because of their faith. ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

**Phillips:** It was this kind of faith that won their reputation for the saints of old. ([Phillips: Touchstone](#))

**Wuest:** For by means of this the elders had witness borne to them.

**Young's Literal:** for in this were the elders testified of;

### **FOR BY IT THE MEN OF OLD GAINED APPROVAL: en taute gar en taute gar emarturethesan (3PAPI) oi presbuteroi**

- Hebrews 11 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**MEN OF OLD**



## THOSE IN HEBREWS 11

Isn't this question one so many of us wrestle with, and the goal that motivates so many of our words and actions. We say things we think others would like to hear so they will approve us. We do things for the same reason. Not always, but this is certainly an underlying "current" flowing from our hearts (cf Pr 4:23+)! So if you are prone to the seeking of men's approval (who are visible) over God's approval (who is not visible) this verse may be short, but it is worth memorizing, so that our Teacher the Spirit can illuminate the truth and renew our minds as we meditate on the passage. In so doing we will be able to think more with the "mind of Christ" which Paul says we have been given. (1 Cor 2:16).

**For** ([1063](#)) (**gar**) introduces proof of the preceding statement regarding the nature of faith. In other words the writer provides further evidence for the validity of faith. For is a **term of explanation** and should always prompt one to interrogate the text asking questions like "What is the author explaining?", etc.

**Scott Grant** - The evidence for the **validity of faith** is the way these people lived, which received God's endorsement. Where do we find evidence of God? We find it in creation (Psalm 19:1), and we find it in the scriptures. We also find it in people of faith. The way they live speaks of the reality - and of the greatness - of what they believe. The evidence of the reality and greatness of God is the faith that another has. (APPLICATION) This encourages us on several fronts. First, if the people in the scriptures provide evidence for faith, it behooves us to become familiar with them. Study them. Feel with them. Live with them. Make them your friends. Their faith will become your faith. Second, do the same thing with living people of faith. Find some people of faith to observe. Watch how they live, and for the evidence of faith. If possible, become their friends. Third, this tells us how our lives can have lasting impact, and that it isn't so complicated as we make it out to be. The men of old in the scriptures were commended for their faith, and their faith had a lasting impact. It endures to this day. So, if you want to have a lasting impact, what should you do? Have faith! Believe God's promise of heaven and live based on that promise. Others will notice. ([Sermon](#))

**Vincent** - **For** introduces a proof of the preceding statement concerning the nature of faith. Faith has power to see and realise the unseen, for the experience of the fathers proves it.

**Wuest** - The word "**for**" introduces proof of the preceding statement regarding the nature of faith. The words "**by it**" are in the Greek text *en tautei*, literally, "*in this*," that is, "*in the sphere and exercise of faith*." The locative of sphere, "*in this*," approaches in meaning the instrumental of means, "*by means of*." "*Faith has power to see and realize the unseen, for the experience of the fathers proves it.*"

**Henry Alford** explains **for** this way '*and so high a description of faith is not undeserved, seeing that..*' The **gar** ("for") does not bring in any *proof* of the foregoing description, only shows that faith is noble enough to be dignified with the offices just named (i.e., '*the assurance of things hoped for...*')

**Steven Cole** - "For by it the men of old gained approval." The clear implication is that the approval comes from God, as the rest of the chapter shows (Heb 11:4, 5, 6, 39). The world often ridicules or despises the person who lives by faith. The author mentions Moses (Heb 11:24-26), who "refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to endure ill-treatment with the people of God." He considered "the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; ...." Imagine what those in the Egyptian court must have said about Moses: "He walked away from the wealth and prestige of being the son of Pharaoh's daughter to lead a ragtag bunch of common slaves out into the Judean wilderness! Why? Because he believes that God has called him to do it! Ha! Ha! What a loony tune!" Why did Moses do what he did? Because "he was looking to the reward" (Heb 11:26). "By faith ...he endured, as seeing Him who is unseen" (Heb 11:27). By faith Moses gained God's approval, even though he received the world's scorn. And it is God's approval that counts, since He is the judge of the living and the dead! We need to recognize that faith is not a meritorious work that we do to gain rewards from God. That would conflict with the entire teaching of the New Testament, that faith is simply the channel through which God's blessings flow. Two seemingly paradoxical things are true of faith: On the one hand, it is our responsibility to believe the gospel, because God commands us to believe (Mark 1:15). On the other hand, sinners are unable to believe because of spiritual blindness (2 Cor. 4:4). Saving faith comes as God's gift, not as a human effort (Eph. 2:8-9). Jesus is both the author and perfecter of faith (Heb. 12:2). Good works flow from saving faith as their source and give proof of genuine faith (Eph. 2:10; James 2:14-26). Both faith and works come from God. ([Sermon](#))

**By it** (*en tautei*) is more literally "**in this**" that is, in the sphere and exercise of faith. The preposition *in* introduces a construction referred to as the locative of sphere. However, in this context, "*in this*," also approaches in meaning the instrumental of means, "*by means of*." **Alford** - "Not, *by*, merely: but elemental; *in* the domain, or region, or matter of".

Someone has written that "**Faith** has power to see and realize the unseen, **for** the experience of the fathers proves it."

**Johann Bengel** - Paul shows the nature of faith from the examples of men in the times of old. Many things, which they hoped for

and did not see, subsequently came to pass and were conspicuously seen, the event confirming faith.

**Wuest** - "Men of old" used here instead of the more common expression, "the fathers," refers to the saints of the Old Testament dispensation, many of whose names are recorded in this chapter. ([Hebrews Commentary](#))

**Men of old** (4245) (**presbuteros** is a comparative of **présbus** = an old man) refers first to older men, those with seniority but in this context is in the **plural** which refers to the ancients, the fathers, ancestors.

In **context** "men of old" refers to all saints, genuine believers, who lived in the old covenant times, a select few of whom are described to encourage us to run the race with endurance and not to shrink back to destruction but maintain a faith that preserves our soul. It was difficult to be a true believer for the first century Jew, and it is becoming more and more difficult to be a true follower of Christ for the 21st century Gentile, especially in post-Christian America! Read through these "snippets of OT saints" and expand them by going back to read their full stories. Remember that faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of Christ (Ro 10:17) in the Old and New Testaments. As you read and study the saints of the OT, your faith will grow and be encouraged.

**Gained approval** - Literally reads "*were testified to*" or "*had witness given about them*". The **NET Note** says they "*were attested*" or "*received commendation*". Hebrews 11:4-6 goes on to explain that this **approval** was not from men but from God Almighty.

**THOUGHT** - Beloved, is this not the desire of your heart to gain the approval of the King of kings and hear "Well done my good and faithful servant?" If not then you might ask God to make that the desire of your heart and then by His Spirit to cause you to delight in Him and in His approval not in the approval of men. (cp Gal 1:10, 1Th 2:4-note, 2Ti 2:4, 2Cor 5:9-note, 2Cor 5:10-note) The psalmist explains that if we "delight ourselves in the LORD He will give us the desires of our heart." (Ps 37:4-[read Spurgeon's excellent note](#)). ([See related devotional](#))

## FAITH PLEASES OUR FATHER

As **Butler** observes "Faith brings praise from God. If you want praise from God, believe His Word. You may be praised to the skies by men in your unbelief, but God will not praise you unless you believe His Word, for "without faith it is impossible to please him" (Hebrews 11:6). (Ibid)

**Spurgeon** - So it was written, in the olden time, that believers "were approved." This second verse shows that they were approved by their faith. The best part of the report about them is that they believed their God, and believed all that was revealed to them by His Word and His Spirit.

The writer uses **martureo** 4 times in Hebrews 11 to make his point that **faith pleases God** and **gains His approval**...

Hebrews 11:4-note By faith Abel offered to God a better sacrifice than Cain, through which he **obtained the testimony** (**martureo**) that he was righteous, God testifying about his gifts, and through faith, though he is dead, he still speaks.

Hebrews 11:5-note By faith Enoch was taken up so that he should not see death; AND HE WAS NOT FOUND BECAUSE GOD TOOK HIM UP; for he **obtained the witness** (**martureo**) that before his being taken up he was pleasing to God.

Hebrews 11:39-note And all these (**Who?** [Alwa ys remember to pause and interrogate with the 5W/H'S] Especially refers to Heb 11:32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38), **having gained approval** (**martureo**) through their faith (Which was manifest by their obedience, sometimes even unto death - see related discussion "**Obedience of faith**"), did not receive what was promised (They looked with eyes of faith and thus had a "conviction of things not yet seen."

**PRAYER** - Father, give our wandering eyes, which are so prone to look at the temporal and worldly, Spirit enabled vision to see the unseen, the eternal, the blessed, sure, stabilizing hope found only in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen) (cp 2Cor 4:18-note)

**Gained approval** (3140) (**martureo** from **mártus** = witness = one who has information or knowledge of something and can bring to light or confirm something. English = **martyr**) in its most basic sense refers to a legal witness. Thus the verb **martureo** means to be a witness, to testify, to give evidence, to give testimony, to bear record, to affirm that one has seen or heard or experienced something. The words testified related to fact, not opinion, as in a courtroom setting. As discussed below in the **passive voice martureo** takes on the sense of to be well testified of or to have a good report.

Literally gained approval could be rendered "they were witnessed."

**Steven Cole** - The clear implication is that the approval comes *from God*, as the rest of the chapter shows (Heb 11:4, 5, 6, 39). The world often ridicules or despises the person who lives by faith.

**Wuest** notes that **martureo** "is in the passive voice. Literally *"for by it the elders were borne witness to."* God **bore witness** to them that their faith gained victory for them over all obstacles. It is well to notice that the statement in this verse does not begin the list of examples which starts in verse four, but is still attached to the definition of faith in verse one, and is a justification of it (cp **"For by it (faith)... "**). ([Hebrews Commentary](#))

**F F Bruce**... It was for faith of this kind (Heb 11:1) that men and women of old received the **divine commendation**, and this has been placed on permanent record as an example to their descendants. (Ibid)

**Marvin Vincent** notes that literally **martureo** in this passage means *were borne witness to*... God bore witness to them in the victory of their faith over all obstacles, and their characters and deeds as men of faith were recorded in Scripture. For this use of *marturein* in the passive, see Acts 6:3; 10:22; 16:12; Ro 3:21; Heb. 7:8, 17. Notice that the statement in this verse does not begin the list of examples, which commences with Heb 11:4, but is closely attached to the definition in Heb 11:1 as a comprehensive justification of it.

**TDNT** discusses the etymology of this word group (**martus, martureo, marturia**) and notes that... The root would seem to be *smer*, "to bear in mind," "to be concerned." The *mártus* would thus be one who remembers and can tell about something, i.e., a witness.

**Wayne Detzler** notes that... In ancient Greek literature the bearing of witness was related to the confirmation of an event. One bore witness to support the truth of an event. The term was connected to the verb *merimnao* (that which requires the agreement of many minds). As many minds were brought to bear on a subject, the truth was established. Later on a witness was seen as presenting valid legal evidence. Plato insisted that such evidence must be given freely, without coercion. In the writings of the Stoics, this word came to mean evidence for certain beliefs and convictions. Thus the root of religious testimony was planted. (New Testament Words in Today's Language)

**Lawrence Richards** makes the point that... The emphasis in Greek culture and in the Bible on one's personal experience of objective reality as a basis for one's **witness** or **testimony**, makes an important statement about Christian faith. Our **faith** is based on historic events. The resurrection of Jesus was not some subjective experience but an objective event that took place in the real world. ([Richards, L O: Expository Dictionary of Bible Words: Regency](#))

This word group (**martus, martureo, marturia**, derivative verb = **diamarturomai** = to solemnly testify - 15x = Acts 2:40 8:25 10:42 18:5 20:21 20:23 20:24 23:11 28:23 1Th 4:6 1Ti 5:21 2Ti 2:14 4:1 Heb 2:6) gives us our English word **martyr** which in the Christian context is defined as one who witnesses or bears testimony especially by his or her death because of their faith in Christ. In other words, when commanded to recant (withdraw or repudiate a belief formally and publicly) Christ or die, they choose to die, giving the **ultimate testimony** that Jesus is Who He said He was (is)! A man named Saul was a firsthand witness to the ultimate testimony of Stephen, a martyrdom (see Acts 7:57, 58, 59, 60 and compare Acts 8:1) which undoubtedly impacted Saul, who in turn became the greatest witness for the Gospel of Jesus Christ ultimately laying down His life as a martyr (2Ti 4:6-note). Beloved follower of Christ, you may not literally become a **martyr**, but you can rest assured that when you stand for Christ, the world will stand against your **testimony** and will vilify you. However you can also be assured that your **witness** for Jesus will have the effect God intended (cp 2Cor 2:14, 15, 16). Let your life be nothing but a visible representation (and fragrance) of Christ! In light of that truth don't compromise your witness but remain continually "steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord." (1Cor 15:58-note).

**Martureo** is used with two basic meanings depending on the context...

**(1) To confirm or attest something on the basis of personal knowledge or belief.** To make a "declaration of ascertainable facts based on firsthand knowledge or experience" (Friberg). To bear witness (Ro 10:2). To confirm. To be a witness. All of the uses of **martureo** in the Gospel of John fall into this category of meaning.

**Webster's 1828** says that to **testify** means "To make a solemn declaration, verbal or written, to establish some fact; to give testimony for the purpose of communicating to others a knowledge of something not known to them."

A witness in a court of law has to *give* evidence; a Christian witness has to *be* evidence. It is the difference between law and grace! (G R King)

When a witness is summoned to court but refuses to testify, he is held in contempt by the judge. When you stand before Jesus Christ, will He hold you in contempt of court because you refused to testify? (Tony Evans)

**Theological Lexicon of the New Testament** - "A witness is a person who was present at a material fact or at

the accomplishment of a legal action. He is informed because he was there; he saw or heard... it is not only oral testimony; actions also are part of the act of testifying— (see "works" in Jn 10:25). The supreme testimony, leaving no room for discussion, is the "testimony" of the self, the giving up of life: martyrdom. At the end of the first century, the name *martus* was given to the Christian who had sealed his profession of faith with his blood; for example, at Pergamum, there was "Antipas, my faithful **witness**, who was killed among you."

The apostle John uses **martureo** 33 times in his Gospel for his main purpose is to give a clear **witness** or **testimony** that Jesus is the Messiah so that the reader would believe in Him and receive eternal life (Jn 20:31). **Let me encourage you to read through the uses of martureo in the passages below and observe how many different ways (or "witnesses") John presents to his readers in order to make his case for Christ absolutely "watertight"!** (At the end of the list is a summary to help you "check your observations.") One can read John's Gospel and deny Christ and not believe in Him, but he cannot honestly read John and argue that the testimony was unclear! It follows that John's Gospel is one of the best books for your unsaved friends or relatives to read that the Spirit of God might open the eyes of their heart to see and then believe that Jesus is the promised Redeemer and that they might be saved eternally.

**Illustration of the Importance of Being a Witness** - WHEN the Titanic went under, three messages had been sent that said to watch out for the icebergs. Because everything looked all right, the folks taking the message never passed it on. They never sent the warning out to people who needed to hear and, as a result, over fifteen hundred people lost their lives. The folks who knew kept quiet. Another tragedy of the Titanic was that the lifeboats, designed to carry people away from the sinking ship, were only half full. People who had made it to safety in the lifeboats didn't want to turn around and go pick up people who were dying. They didn't want to take the risk of panicking people flipping over their boat. So the people who were saved and safe kept on going. Fifteen hundred people didn't have to die, but they did. The folks who were saved didn't want to go back because it was risky. Sharing the Gospel has risks—the risk of rejection, the risk of being made fun of, the risk of being called "holier than thou," the risk of being called "Reverend," the risk of being avoided, the risk of being asked questions you don't know the answer to. **Yes, there are risks, but when someone is dying, offering them the gift of salvation is worth the risk.** (Tony Evans)

To quote the words of St. Francis of Assisi "Preach the gospel at all times. When necessary use words."

**(2) To affirm in a supportive manner.** To testify favorably. To speak well of or give a good report (Of Jesus in Lk 4:22). To approve. A description of those who are approved (as here in Hebrews 11:2). Good reputation (Qualification of men who were to serve widows = Acts 6:3, Description of the Gentile Cornelius = Acts 10:22; Acts 22:12).

Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament adds that "The frequent passive voice in Acts means that someone "has received a good witness" or "has a good reputation" (Acts 6:3, the seven; Acts 10:22, Cornelius; Acts 16:2, Timothy; Acts 22:12, Ananias).

In summary, as used in Hebrews 11:2, **martureo** means to be **well–testified about**, to have good witness, to be spoken well of or in a manner of speaking to be "applauded". God Himself bears witness on the behalf of these saints that they lived by faith and divine approval is granted to them. God bore witness to them that their faith gained victory for them over all obstacles (cp the definition of an "Overcomer" in 1Jn 5:4,5).

It is notable in Hebrews 12:1 the writer calls our attention to a "**great cloud of witnesses**" (witnesses = root noun = **martus**). Where do we see the teaching about those witnesses? Is he (as it is often interpreted) referring to the saints in the heavenlies looking down as we run the our spiritual race? Remember that in **inductive Bible study** one of the key "*tools*" to facilitate accurate **Interpretation** is to observe the word or phrase in question (in this case "cloud of witnesses") in it's proper **context**. The context for Hebrews 12:1 is clearly Hebrews 11 (remember that the original Greek texts had no chapter breaks-these uninspired divisions were added by men) where we find that the verb **martureo** is used 4 times in chapter 11, the so called Hebrew's "**hall of faith**". Clearly in context the **witnesses** in Hebrews 12:1 refer to the saints who have run the race successfully, leaving us a clear and vibrant witness by their obedient lives that their faith was genuine. Some of the **witnesses** in Hebrews 11 in fact were literally **martyred** for their faith.

So let our lips and lives express  
The holy Gospel we profess;  
So let our works and virtues shine  
To prove the doctrine all divine.  
—Watts

**The Christian's life is the world's Bible.**

**Martureo** - 76x in 74v. **NAS** translates it as follows: add... testimony(1), attested(1), bear... witness(1), bear witness(1), continued to testify(1), gained approval(2), given(1), gives(1), good reputation(1), having a reputation(1), obtained the testimony(1), obtained the witness(1), received a good testimony(1), speaking well(1), testified(17), testifies(7), testify(25), testifying(5), testimony(5), well spoken(3), witness(1), witnessed(2), witnesses(1).

**Martureo** is used in 8 verses in the Non-apocryphal Septuagint - Gen 31:46, 48; Num 35:30; Deut 19:15, 18; 31:21; 2Chr 28:10; Lam 2:13.

Genesis 31:48 Laban said, "This heap is a **witness** between you and me this day." Therefore it was named Galeed,

**Comment:** In cutting a covenant with Jacob, Laban followed the custom in the ancient world of using an object to testify that the binding agreement had been consummated. In this case it was a pile of rocks that indicated the ratification of the covenant (See Ge 31:46, 48, 51, 52). (**Related Resource: Covenant in the Bible - see especially the column labeled "Is There a Sign or Witness?"**)

Here are all the NT uses of **martureo**...

Matthew 23:31 "So you **testify** against yourselves, that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets.

**Comment:** Here **martureo** has a legal significance: "The scribes witness against themselves that they are the sons of those who murdered the prophets" (Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament). Jesus implication of course is that these unbelieving religious leaders were guilty by virtue of their own testimony!

Luke 4:22 And all were **speaking well** of Him, and wondering at the gracious words which were falling from His lips; and they were saying, "Is this not Joseph's son?"

**A T Robertson:** (Martureo is in the) Imperfect active, perhaps inchoative. They all began to bear witness that the rumors were not exaggerations (Lk 4:14) as they had supposed, but had foundation in fact if this discourse or its start was a fair sample of his teaching.

John 1:7 He (John the Baptist) came as a **witness** (marturia), to **testify** about the Light, so that (What is the purpose?) all might believe through him. 8 He was not the Light, but he came to **testify** about the Light.

**Comment:** It is worth noting that not only does the apostle John use the verb **martureo** more than any other NT writer, he also uses the related (cognate) noun **marturia** (testimony) 26 out of 33 uses in the NT (14x in John's Gospel, 4x in his epistles and 8x in his final work, the Revelation - Jn 1:7,19 3:11,32,33 5:31,32, 34, 36 8:13, 14, 17 19:35 21:24 1Jn 5:9,10,11 3Jn 1:12 Rev 1:2-[note](#), Re 1:9-[note](#), Re 6:9-[note](#) Re 11:7-[note](#) Re 12:11-[note](#), Re 12:17-[note](#) Re 19:10-[note](#) Re 20:4-[note](#) - observe the five fold repetition of the phrase "testimony of Jesus" in the Revelation.). Clearly, the concept of bearing witness or giving an accurate testimony is of paramount importance to John and rightly so, for the eternal destiny of every man and woman hangs in the balance, depending on how they respond to the testimony of the truth about Jesus Christ. And as alluded to earlier don't miss the fact that John, like a good lawyer who desires to leave no doubt as to the truth regarding his client, calls a number of "witnesses to the stand"

THOUGHT - Who or what were they? Read the uses of Martureo in John's Gospel and make a list of those who "testified." At the end of this note on "martureo" you will find Vine's definition which gives us a list of "witnesses" - but make your observations before looking at his!).

**A T Robertson** notes that the phrase "**Through him**" (through John the Baptist) means "As the intermediate agent in winning men to believe in Christ (the Logos) as the Light and the Life of men. This is likewise the purpose of the author (John the Apostle) of this book (Jn 20:31). The preacher is merely the herald to point men to Christ."

THOUGHT - Dear Christ follower, to whom has your life pointed this past week? When others know Whose we are (1Cor 6:19, 20), we are continually witnesses of Christ's life within us - may the witness of our lives open doors to witness with our lips! Remember that every Christian occupies some kind of pulpit and preaches some kind of Gospel. We are not Christ's lawyers. We are his witnesses, so if we want the lost around us to know what Christ can do for them, we need to let them see what Christ has done for us.

John 1:15 John **testified** about Him and cried out, saying, "This was He of whom I said, 'He who comes after me has a higher rank than I, for He existed before me.'"

John 1:32 John **testified** saying, "I have seen the Spirit descending as a dove out of heaven, and He remained upon Him.

John 1:34 "I myself have seen, and have **testified** that this is the Son of God."

John 2:25 and because He did not need anyone to **testify** concerning man, for He Himself knew what was in man.

John 3:11 "Truly, truly, I say to you, we speak of what we know and **testify** of what we have seen, and you do not accept our testimony (marturia).

John 3:26 And they came to John and said to him, "Rabbi, He who was with you beyond the Jordan, to whom you **have testified**, behold, He is baptizing and all are coming to Him."

John 3:28 "You yourselves **are** my **witnesses** that I said, 'I am not the Christ,' but, 'I have been sent ahead of Him.'

John 3:32 "What He has seen and heard, of that He **testifies**; and no one receives His testimony (marturia).

John 4:39 From that city many of the Samaritans believed in Him because of the word of the woman who **testified**, "He told me all the things that I have done."

John 4:44 For Jesus Himself **testified** that a prophet has no honor in his own country.

John 5:31 "If I alone **testify** (martureo) about Myself, My testimony (marturia) is not true. 32 "There is another who **testifies** (martureo) of Me, and I know that the testimony (marturia) which He gives about Me is true. 33 "You have sent to John, and he has **testified** (martureo) to the truth.

John 5:36 "But the testimony (marturia) which I have is greater than the testimony (marturia) of John (referring to John the Baptist); for the works which the Father has given Me to accomplish-- the very works that I do (e.g., His miracles)-- **testify** about Me, that the Father has sent Me. 37 "And the Father who sent Me, He has **testified** of Me. You have neither heard His voice at any time nor seen His form... 39 "You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that **testify** about Me;

Comment - Observe that the **Scripture** is personified as one who witnesses of Christ. It follows that when we have an opportunity to witness with our lips, we stay close to the Word. **Donald S. Whitney** wrote that "The most powerful ongoing Christian witness has always been the speaking of God's Word by one who is living in God's Word."

John 7:7 "The world cannot hate you, but it hates Me because I **testify** of it, that its deeds are evil.

John 8:13 So the Pharisees said to Him, "You are **testifying** about Yourself; Your testimony (marturia) is not true." 14 Jesus answered and said to them, "Even if I **testify** about Myself, My testimony (marturia) is true, for I know where I came from and where I am going; but you do not know where I come from or where I am going... 18 "I am He who **testifies** about Myself, and the Father who sent Me **testifies** about Me."

John 10:25 Jesus answered them, "I told you, and you do not believe; the works that I do in My Father's name, these **testify** of Me.

John 12:17 So the people, who were with Him when He called Lazarus out of the tomb and raised him from the dead, continued to **testify** about Him.

John 13:21 When Jesus had said this, He became troubled in spirit, and **testified** and said, "Truly, truly, I say to you, that one of you will betray Me."

John 15:26 "When the Helper (the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Christ) comes, Whom I will send to you from the Father, that is the Spirit of truth Who proceeds from the Father, He will **testify** about Me, 27 and you will **testify** also, because you have been with Me from the beginning.

**Comment:** Beloved, praise God for the Divine Person of the Holy Spirit Who not only testifies that Jesus is the Christ but also opens the eyes of our heart to see and that life saving Truth! Jesus' statement that "you will testify also" parallels His final instructions to the disciples in Acts 1:8 that they would "receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon (them); and (they were to) be My **witnesses** (**martus**) both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth." Notice that Jesus teaches that witnessing is not something we **do**; it is something we **are**. Augustine alluded to this when he said "*What I live by, I impart.*"

The famous preacher **Donald Grey Barnhouse** once said that "Men may not read the gospel in seal-skin, or the gospel in morocco, or the gospel in cloth covers; but they can't get away from the Gospel in shoe leather!"

John 18:23 Jesus answered him, "If I have spoken wrongly, **testify** of the wrong; but if rightly, why do you strike Me?"

John 18:37 Therefore Pilate said to Him, "So You are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say correctly that I am a king. For this I have



been born, and for this I have come into the world, to **testify** to the truth (He was the personification of Truth - Jn 14:6!). Everyone who is of the truth hears (Not just physically hears but hears with understanding, belief and obedience) My voice."

John 19:35 And he who has seen (John the writer of this Gospel) has **testified**, and his testimony (marturia) is true; and he knows that he is telling the truth, so that (purpose statement - compare the purpose statement in John 20:31 below) you also may believe.

John 21:24 This is the disciple who is **testifying** to these things and wrote these things, and we know that his testimony is true.

**Comment:** John is the disciple who is referred to in this passage. And like a witness on the stand where a life or death verdict was in the balance, John used *martureo* more than any other Gospel writer clearly giving an accurate testimony about Jesus stating that "these (the things that bear witness) have been written (and remain written) that (Here is the reason, so that) you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name." (Jn 20:31)

Acts 6:3 "Therefore, brethren, select from among you seven men of **good reputation** (present tense = describes their reputation as their lifestyle!), full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may put in charge of this task.

**Comment:** Reputation is what other men think about you. Character is what God knows to be true about you. H W Beecher said that "Reputation is sometimes as wide as the horizon when character is the point of a needle."

1828 Webster's says **Reputation** is a valuable species of property or right, which should never be violated. With the loss of reputation, a man and especially a woman, loses most of the enjoyments of life."

Nelson New Illustrated Bible Dictionary says **reputation** is - the general estimation in which a person is held by others. A person's reputation may be ruined by careless deeds or words (Pr 25:8-10).

Acts 10:22 They said, "Cornelius, a centurion, a righteous and God-fearing man **well spoken** of by the entire nation of the Jews, was divinely directed by a holy angel to send for you to come to his house and hear a message from you."

**NET Note:** The long introduction of Cornelius by his messengers is an attempt to commend this Gentile to his Jewish counterpart, which would normally be important to do in the culture of the time.

Acts 10:43 "Of Him (Jesus) all the prophets **bear witness** that through His name everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins."

**Comment:** All the Old Testament prophets testified through Messianic prophecies that Messiah would come and pay the redemption price (His precious blood) that men might be set free from the guilt and condemnation of power of sin. In fact the entire OT was like a giant "finger" pointing to the "Lamb of God Who takes away the sin of the world." (Jn 1:29). **Dear reader, make sure you do not miss the clear Old Testament testimony of Jesus, lest you miss heaven!**

Acts 13:22 "After He had removed him, He raised up David to be their king, concerning whom He also **testified** and said, 'I HAVE FOUND DAVID the son of Jesse, A MAN AFTER MY HEART, who will do all My will.'

Acts 14:3 Therefore they spent a long time there speaking boldly with reliance upon the Lord, who was **testifying** to the word of His grace, granting that signs and wonders be done by their hands.

Acts 15:8 "And God, who knows the heart, **testified** to them giving them the Holy Spirit, just as He also did to us;

Acts 16:2 and he was **well spoken** of by the brethren who were in Lystra and Iconium.

Acts 22:5 as also the high priest and all the Council of the elders can **testify**. From them I also received letters to the brethren, and started off for Damascus in order to bring even those who were there to Jerusalem as prisoners to be punished.

Acts 22:12 "A certain Ananias, a man who was devout by the standard of the Law, and **well spoken** of by all the Jews who lived there,

Acts 23:11 But on the night immediately following, the Lord stood at his side and said, "Take courage; for as you have solemnly witnessed to My cause at Jerusalem, so you must **witness** at Rome also."

Acts 26:5 since they have known about me for a long time, if they are willing **to testify**, that I lived as a Pharisee according to the strictest sect of our religion.

Romans 3:21-note But now apart from the Law the righteousness of God has been manifested, **being witnessed** by the Law and the Prophets,

Romans 10:2-note For I **testify** about them that they have a zeal for God, but not in accordance with knowledge.

1 Corinthians 15:15 Moreover we are even found to be false witnesses of God, because we **testified** against God that He raised Christ, whom He did not raise, if in fact the dead are not raised.

2 Corinthians 8:3 For I **testify** that according to their ability, and beyond their ability, they gave of their own accord

**Comment:** Paul's use of *martureo* indicates that he had firsthand experience of the generous giving of the Macedonians (cp Php 4:15–18). They gave not a portion of but in proportion to what they had, according to their ability (*dunamis* = power - see similar use in Mt 25:14).

Galatians 4:15 Where then is that sense of blessing you had? For I **bear** you **witness** that, if possible, you would have plucked out your eyes and given them to me.

Colossians 4:13-note For I **testify** for him that he has a deep concern for you and for those who are in Laodicea and Hierapolis.

1 Timothy 5:10 **having** a **reputation** for good works; and if she has brought up children, if she has shown hospitality to strangers, if she has washed the saints' feet, if she has assisted those in distress, and if she has devoted herself to every good work.

1 Timothy 6:13 I charge you in the presence of God, who gives life to all things, and of Christ Jesus, who **testified** the good confession before Pontius Pilate,

**Hebrews 7:8** (note) And in this case mortal men receive tithes, but in that case one receives them, of whom it is **witnessed** that he lives on.

**Hebrews 7:17** (note) For it is **witnessed** of Him, "THOU ART A PRIEST FOREVER ACCORDING TO THE ORDER OF MELCHIZEDEK."

**Hebrews 10:15** (note) And the Holy Spirit also bears witness to us; for after saying,

Hebrews 11:2 For by it the men of old gained approval.

**Hebrews 11:4** (note) By faith Abel offered to God a better sacrifice than Cain, through which he **obtained the testimony** that he was righteous, God testifying about his gifts, and through faith, though he is dead, he still speaks.

**Hebrews 11:5** (note) By faith Enoch was taken up so that he should not see death; AND HE WAS NOT FOUND BECAUSE GOD TOOK HIM UP; for he **obtained the witness** that before his being taken up he was pleasing to God.

**Hebrews 11:39** (note) And all these, **having gained approval** through their faith, did not receive what was promised

1 John 1:2 and the life was manifested, and we have seen and **testify** and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us--

**Comment:** John was a first hand witness and as a result gives personal testimony of existence and actual events that related to Jesus Christ.

1 John 4:14 We have seen and **testify** that the Father has sent the Son to be the Savior of the world.

1 John 5:6 This is the One who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ; not with the water only, but with the water and with the blood. It is the Spirit who **testifies**, because the Spirit is the truth. **7** For there are three that **testify**:... **9** If we receive the testimony (*marturia*) of men, the testimony (*marturia*) of God is greater; for the testimony (*marturia*) of God is this, that He has **testified** concerning His Son. **10** The one who believes in the Son of God has the testimony (*marturia*) in himself; the one who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed in the testimony (*marturia*) that God **has given** (literally "has testified" = *martureo*) concerning His Son.

3 John 1:3 For I was very glad when brethren came and **testified** to your truth, that is, how you are walking in truth... **6** and they have **testified** to your love before the church. You will do well to send them on their way in a manner worthy of God... **12** Demetrius has received a *good testimony* (*martureo*) from everyone, and from the truth itself; and we add our testimony (*martureo*), and you know that our testimony is true.

Revelation 1:2-note (The apostle John) who **testified** to the word of God and to the testimony (*marturia*) of Jesus Christ, even to all that he saw.

Revelation 22:16-note "I, Jesus, have sent My angel to **testify** to you these things for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star."

Revelation 22:18-note I **testify** to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues which are written in this book;

Revelation 22:20-note He (Jesus) who **testifies** to these things says, "Yes, I am coming quickly." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

**Comment:** How fitting that the Bible ends with the greatest Witness Himself giving us the last and greatest promise of His Second Coming. And all the saints echo John's prayer "Amen. Come, Lord Jesus."

## VINE'S SUMMARY OF MARTUREO

Below is **Vine's** (modified) summary of **martureo** (Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words online)...

**(I) To be a martus, to bear witness to, to testify. Martureo is used of both divine and human witnesses who bear witness or testify to the truth, especially to the truth of Jesus Christ..**

(a) **God the Father...**

**to Christ**, John 5:32, 5:37; John 8:18 (2nd part); 1 John 5:9-10;

**to others**, Acts 13:22; Acts 15:8; Hebrews 11:2, Hebrews 11:4, Hebrews 11:5, Hebrews 11:39;

(b1) **Christ**, John 3:11, John 3:32; John 4:44; John 5:31; John 7:7; John 8:13-John 8:14, John 8:18 (1st part); John 13:21; John 18:37; Acts 14:3; 1 Timothy 6:13; Revelation 22:18, Revelation 22:20;

(b2) **The Holy Spirit to Christ**, John 15:26; Hebrews 10:15; 1 John 5:7-8

(c) **The Scriptures to Christ**, John 5:39; Hebrews 7:8, Hebrews 7:17;

(d) **The works of Christ to Himself**, an of the circumstances connected with His Death, John 5:36; John 10:25; 1 John 5:8;

(e) **The prophets and apostles...**

**to the righteousness of God**, Romans 3:21

**to Christ**, John 1:7-8, John 1:15, John 1:32, John 1:34; John 3:26; John 5:33, John 15:27; John 19:35; John 21:24; Acts 10:43; Acts 23:11; 1 Corinthians 15:15; 1 John 1:2; 1 John 4:14; Revelation 1:2

**to doctrine; to the Word of God**, Revelation 1:2;

(f) **Others**, concerning **Christ**, Luke 4:22; John 4:39; John 12:17;

(g) **Believers** to one another, John 3:28; 2 Corinthians 8:3; Galatians 4:15; Colossians 4:13; 3 John 1:3, 3 John 1:6, 3

(h) **Apostle Paul** concerning Israel, Romans 10:2;

(i) **An angel**, to the churches, Revelation 22:16;

(j) **Unbelievers...**

**concerning** themselves, Matthew 23:31;

**concerning Christ**, John 18:23;

**concerning** others, John 2:25; Acts 22:5; Acts 26:5;

**(II) "To give a good report, to approve of,"** - Acts 6:3; Acts 10:22; Acts 16:2; Acts 22:12; 1 Timothy 5:10; 3 John 1:12 (1st part); some would put Luke 4:22 here.

**Utley** summarizes the various witnesses to Jesus in the Gospel of John (this list includes both the noun and verb)...

The noun (**marturia**) and its verb (**martureo**) "witness" is a key term in John. There are many witnesses to Jesus:

1. John the Baptist (cf. John 1:7, 8, 15; 3:26, 28; 5:33)
2. Jesus Himself (cf. John 3:11; 5:31; 8:13–14)
3. the Samaritan woman (cf. John 4:39)
4. God the Father (cf. John 5:32, 34, 37; 8:18; 1 John 5:9)
5. Scripture (cf. John 5:39)
6. the crowd at Lazarus' raising (cf. John 12:17)
7. the Spirit (cf. John 15:26, 27; 1 John 5:10, 11)
8. the disciples (cf. John 15:27; 19:35; 1 John 1:2; 4:14)
9. the author himself (cf. John 21:24)

**Steven Cole** in his sermon on Heb 11:1-3 comments on the phrase "by faith men of old gained approval" explaining that...

the approval comes from God, as the rest of the chapter shows (He 11:4, 5, 6, 39)...

**Let me apply verse 2 in two ways.**

**First, have you gained God's approval by putting your trust in Christ alone as your only hope of heaven?** As we saw in chapter 10, Christ's sacrifice on the cross is the only basis for forgiveness of sins. Don't hope in your good works, because all the good works in the world can never erase the debt of sin that you owe. Don't hope in your faith, because faith in your faith can't save you. Put your faith in Jesus Christ! He will save all that come to Him in faith.

**Second, if you have trusted in Christ as Savior, live each day to seek His approval.** "Without faith it is impossible to please Him" (He 11:6). While we should never be needlessly offensive toward people, our focus should not be on pleasing people, but on pleasing God, who examines our hearts (1 Th 2:4).

Although I am not an example of great faith, I can share a personal example. Just after I became here, I had to take a stand on a matter that resulted in a lot of conflict. I did what I did because I believed it to be biblical and thus pleasing to God, but it resulted in a number of people trying to get me fired. At one point before we knew how things would turn out, I said to Marla, "I am at peace that even if I get fired, God will take care of us, because I did the right thing." Live to please God and you will know His peace, even if people angrily oppose you.