

What Does Faith Do?

“By faith” – 18 times, Hb.11

- Jewish converts were tempted to return to Judaism
 1. Do not go back; instead, look back...(to OT examples of faith – Hb.11
 2. God required faith in every age
 3. One way to grow in faith: walk with faithful.
Ac.13...15

I. What Is Faith?

- Used especially of the faith that Jesus is the Messiah...conjoined with obedience to Christ
– Th
- State of believing on the basis of the reliability of the one trusted, trust, confidence... – BDAG
- Ro.1:16
 - Faith is not a blind leap in the dark
 - Pattern of Hb.11 –
 - 1) God spoke
 - 2) They believed / obeyed
 - 3) God blessed

I. What Is Faith?

II. What Produces Faith?

Many wrong ideas

- Univ. of Oxford researchers: £1.9 million grant from Templeton Foundation (~ \$4 million): why do 90% of people believe in God? Does the desire to believe have an evolutionary source? – London Times
- ‘The grace of faith, whereby the elect are enabled to believe to the saving of their souls, is the work of the Sprit of Christ in their hearts...’ – Presbyterian C. of Faith, 77
- Ro.10:17. Jn.20:31. Ac.17:11

Many wrong ideas

- Earthly religious authority
 - [Jer.10:23, way of man is not in himself...]
- Loyola (d. 1556) founded Jesuits –
'We ought always to be ready to believe that what seems to us white is black if the hierarchical Church so defines it'
 - Jesuits believed it was right to do wrong (even murder) in order to accomplish something good – World History
- True faith is based on facts, not fiction

Truth

- Ro.10:17, faith comes by hearing gospel...
- 'Belief, you see, can only come from hearing the message, and the message is the word of Christ' – Phillips
- Lk.16:...27-31, purpose: to persuade
 - How? Word is the means

A confession

- “Alexander, Caesar, Charlemagne, and myself founded empires. But on what did we rest the creations of our genius? Upon force. Jesus Christ alone founded his empire upon love. And at this hour millions of men would die for him” – Napoleon

I. What Is Faith?

II. What Produces Faith?

III. What Kills Faith?

Satan (2 Tim.2:18)

Attacks faith at every opportunity

- 1 Tim.1:5-6, stray – deviate, depart... ‘Taking no pains to aim at the right path.’
- 1 Tim.1:19-20, shipwreck
- 1 Tim.4:1, depart from (falling away from God)
- 2 Tim.2:17-19, overthrow – to overturn, ruin.

I. What Is Faith?

II. What Produces Faith?

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IV. What Do Believers Do?

A. By faith we understand, Hb.11:3

‘Faith means that we are certain of the things we hope for, convinced of the thing we do not see’

(B).

‘Faith has to do with things that are not seen and hope with things that are not at hand’ (Aquinas)

A. By faith we understand, Hb.11:3

- Hope is not wishful thinking, but total conviction. (Why take chances...?)
- God spoke universe into being out of nothing (divine fiat denies eternal matter). Ro.1:20
 - We see the invisible. Hb.11:3
 - Origins, Gn.1. Jn.1
 - Morality, Ep.6:16
 - Bible, 1 Tim.6:20

B. By faith we sacrifice, Hb.11:4

- Sacrifice costs (2 Sm.24)
 1. *Worship*, Hb.11:4, Abel, by faith... 1 Pt.2:5
 2. *Life*, Ro.12:1-2 . . .
 - OT: dead animal
 - NT: Christian himself. Ro.6:13
 3. *Giving*, Ph.4:18; Mk.12:43f.; Mt.6:2
 4. *Praise*, Hb.13:15
 5. *Doing good, sharing*, Hb.13:16

C. By faith we please God, Hb.11:5-6

- Gn.5:24, *walked with God*...
 - By faith (as Abel): God expects same of all
 - Though ancient, still relevant
 - Though dead, he is righteous (not Cain)
 - Though murdered, he is blessed (not Cain)
- Hb.10: persecuted readers need encouragement to keep going
 - Our enemy cannot harm us (cf. Abel)
 - Our enemy can cause us to harm ourselves (ch.10)

C. By faith we please God, Hb.11:5-6

- Jd.14-15, Enoch...
 - Abel saw violent death; Enoch, no death (cf. 1 Th.4)
 - Abel's faith worshipped God; Enoch's faith walked with God [godly life]
 - Hb.11:5, put in another place, *transfer* (Gal.1:6). Enoch pleased God
 - Walked with God in sinful world
 - Without faith, impossible to please God (11:6). 2 Co.5:9

Did Hebrews add *Enoch's translation* to OT?

- Claim: Enoch died and went to God; death was his last step. !X!
- Confusion: The simple statement in Genesis has a kind of mystical quality. In itself it does not say how Enoch died.... !X!
- Certainty: 'By faith Enoch was taken away so that he did not see death, and was not found, because God had taken him; for before he was taken he had this testimony, that he pleased God' – Hb.11:5
- Conclusion: how should we then live?? (v.6)