

“Now Faith Is ...”

“... the assurance of things hoped for, a conviction of things not seen. For therein the elders had witness borne to them. By faith we understand that the worlds have been framed by the word of God, so that what is seen hath not been made of things which appear” (Heb. 11:1-3).

Occasionally, in the scriptures, passages will occur which cause the reader to tremble with the force of the words and language. What wonders are produced by such passages as 1 Cor. 13? How comforting and consoling to believers is the shepherd psalm (Psa. 23)! The resurrection chapter (1 Cor. 15); and the excerpt of Paul’s revelation to the Thessalonians of what will occur at Christ’s return (1 Thess. 4:13-18). All these passages rise to exhilarating heights. Surely, no chapter is more eloquent than the chapter we have now reached in our short discussions of different, thought-provoking passages. This chapter of faith names 14 men from the distant past who excelled in the challenges of life through their faith. But excellent faith is not confined simply to men; it thrives also in women to an admirable degree so our writer calls two women to the forefront to bear witness of things which can be wrought through faith.

This chapter was prompted because the writer had expressed his confidence in the steadfastness of those to whom he wrote. Thus he said, *“But we are not of them that shrink back unto perdition; but of them that have faith unto the saving of the soul” (Heb. 10:39)*. So our author launched into examples of faith of their ancestors, showing the many and varied accomplishments of the distant past wrought by the faith of these worthies.

First, he defines faith. *“Now faith is assurance of things hoped for, a conviction of things not seen ...”* While I prefer the American Standard translation above all other translations of our scriptures, the King James Version translation of the verse seems more meaningful. *“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.”* Substance and assurance carry similar thoughts and faith is the substance, assurance of things hoped for. Hope cannot exist when one holds possession of what he might hope for. *“Hope that is seen is not hope for who hopeth for that which he seeth?” (Rom. 8:24)*. On the other hand, one does not hope if he does not have faith that the thing he might hope for is attainable. That which hope rests upon is faith for faith is the conviction of things not seen.

How important is faith! We are saved by faith and justified by faith (Acts 16:30f; Rom. 5:1). We live by faith (Rom. 1:17). We walk by faith (2 Cor. 5:7). Faith is the victory which overcomes the world (1 Jn. 5:4). The believer

is give the right to become a son of God (Jn. 1:12). Those who believe are walking in the steps of Abraham (Rom. 4:12). The chapter which stretches before us (Hebrews 11) is a grand chapter to review. Continue with us as we look at the wondrous examples of faith that moved the men (and women) of old, and should move us today!

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