

## **EARNESTLY CONTENDING FOR THE FAITH – April 2025**

Southview Bible Church \* 135 Bennett Ave. \* Council Bluffs, IA. 51503  
Phone: (712) 322-5743 E-mail: pastor@southviewbible.org \* Web Site: www.southviewbible.org

### **WHAT FAITH IS**

**FAITH** is taking God at His Word! God said it! That settles it! Apostasy PRETENDS faith for a while but then DEPARTS from the faith. It doesn't continue (cf. 1 Jn. 2:19). After warning of apostasy in Hebrews 10, the writer concludes the chapter with this statement:

#### **Hebrews 10:39 (NKJV)**

**39** But we are not of those who draw back to perdition, but of those who believe to the saving of the soul.

True faith does NOT apostatize! The writer then goes on in Hebrews 11 to describe what true faith is all about. He presents not so much a definition of saving faith but rather a description of it, by giving example after example from the Old Testament. Here at length he depicts the NATURE of true saving faith. In Hebrews 11:1-3, he, in effect, sets the table for the following contents in what is called the "**Hall of Faith**" in Hebrews 11.

#### **Hebrews 11:1–3 (NKJV)**

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

**2** For by it the elders obtained a good testimony.

**3** By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible.

**Hope** in the New Testament has to do with future things; things that we expect God will bring to pass as He has promised. So faith is the stuff of trusting God for future things not yet seen, but promised to us by Him. Faith takes God at His Word concerning the unseen future! Thus, faith is a certain expectation (hope) that God will bring to pass what He has promised.

Not only does faith trust God for the unseen future, but it also takes God at His Word concerning the unknowable past. Only God was there at creation! It is by faith we understand that He created everything we see out of things that are NOT VISIBLE! In fact, God created it ex nihilo "out of nothing" by the power of His Word (cf. Gen. 1; Ps. 33:6). We can't know the beginning nor the ending apart from God's revelation, but BY FAITH, we understand. Faith is taking God at His Word for that which is otherwise unknowable!

Hebrews 11 brings out three key traits of saving faith: 1) Faith takes God at His Word for that which is otherwise unknowable; 2) Faith perseveres as it continues to trust God to the end; and 3) Faith is a life-changing reality which is demonstrated in the life. Without this kind of faith, it is impossible to please God (Heb. 11:6).

Over and over in Hebrews 11, we have the formula, "**by faith**," through which a variety of people are shown to have demonstrated their faith in various ways. In each case, their FAITH was active! At the end of the chapter, he says, "*And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith...*" (Heb. 11:39). Each one of these illustrates the NATURE of a true saving faith.

But here is the MAIN point. Hebrews 11 builds on the rest of the book that has gone before it, in which the WHOLE thrust has been about the greatness of the PERSON of Christ (chapters 1-7) and the greatness of the WORK of Christ (chapters 8-10). The NATURE of saving faith, as illustrated in Hebrews 11, must be applied to the PERSON of Christ!

A true saving faith has as its OBJECT the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. He saves ALL who come to God through Him (Heb. 7:25). A true saving faith takes God at His Word concerning His Son; it continues on and it is a life-changing reality (cf. 1 Jn. 5:9-13).

**Thot:** "Any **faith** in Christ which does not change your life is the **faith of devils**."

— Charles Spurgeon.

***Earnestly Contending, Pastor Dwight J. Oswald***