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## Now Faith is the Assurance of Things Hoped For **11: 1-3**

Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for DIG: What were the connections between 10:35-39 and the themes of Chapter 11? In the definition of faith, what two verbs describe it? What is the object of both of these verbs? Is our faith directed toward the future, toward the past, or both? Why do you conclude this? What is the difference between spiritual faith and natural faith? Why must all views on the origin of the universe be based on faith? Write your own definition of faith as you try to capture the meaning of this verse. How is faith a certainty of what we do not see?

REFLECT: What are the invisible things you have faith in? Habakkuk 2:4 says: The just shall live by faith/trust/belief. What does “living by faith,” mean to you? What are some examples of not “living by faith?” Describe a time when you have seen someone’s faith change their circumstances. Give some examples of circumstances you may face this week that will require faith on your part?

Between the statement of the **faith** principle, and the long list of **the righteous of the TaNaKh** who illustrated it, is a brief definition of this **faith**.

In the form of old **Hebrew** poets often used, the writer expresses his definition of **faith** in two parallel and almost identical phrases as seen below. It is not a full theological definition, but it emphasizes certain basic characteristics of **faith** that are important in understanding the message that the writer is trying to get across.



Now **faith** is the assurance of things hoped for (Hebrews 11:1a NASB quoting **Habakkuk 2:4**). The righteous of the TaNaKh had to rest on the promises of **Ha'Shem**. **God** had told them of a coming **Messiah**, a **Deliverer** who would take away **their** sin (see the commentary on **Isaiah, to see link click ly - The Death of the Suffering Servant**). **He** told **them** that one day all Isra'el would be made clean and be ruled by this righteous **Messiah** (see the commentary on **Isaiah Db - The Nine Missing Articles in Messiah's Coming Temple**). **ADONAI's faithful believed** in **His** promises, as incomplete and vague as many of those promises were. They didn't have a great deal of light, by New Covenant standards, but they knew it was **God's** light, and they put their full **trust** and hope in it. That's what **faith** is . . . living in a hope that is so real that it gives absolute **assurance**.<sup>286</sup>

**Faith** is not a wistful longing that something may come to pass in an uncertain future. True **faith** is an absolute certainty, often of **things** that the world considers imaginary and impossible. The **faith** of the **believer** is a hope in **YHVH** against the world - not belief in the improbable against chance. If we follow **God** whose audible voice we have never heard and **believe** in **Yeshua** whose face we have never seen, we do so because our **faith** has a reality, a substance, an assurance that is unshakable. In doing so, **Jesus** said we would be blessed: **Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed (Yochanan 20:29)**.<sup>287</sup>

**Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah**, who had their Hebrew names changed to the Babylonian names **Shadrach, Meshack and Abed-nego**, were confronted with the choice of obeying Nebuchadnezzar, whom they could see very well, or **YHVH**, whom they had never seen. Without hesitation, they chose to obey **ADONAI**. Our

human response is to trust in our physical senses, to put our **faith** in the things that we can hear, see, taste and touch. But as the children of **God** we put our **trust** in something more durable and more dependable than anything **we** will ever experience with the senses. Senses may lie; **God** cannot **lie (Titus 1:2)**.

The word **assurance** deserves our attention. It is *hupostasis*, made up of *stasis*, meaning *to stand*, and *hupo*, meaning *under*, thus, *that which stands under*, or a *foundation*. It speaks of the ground on which we build our **hope**. **Faith**, then, provides the firm *foundation* on which we stand, waiting for the fulfillment of **God's** promise. **Assurance** is not a mere wish, or dream, or fantasy. Our **faith** is the present essence of a future reality. And this reality must have a firm *foundation*, and that *foundation* is **the Word of God**.

**The things hoped for** (Greek: *elpizomenon*) can also be seen in **Romans 8:24-25** where we read: **For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what they already have? But if we hope for what we do not have, we wait for it patiently.** If you **believe** that the future **ADONAI** has promised is **assured**, then you will **wait patiently**. You won't get upset, rattled or worry – you'll just **wait**. That's **faith**.

**Believers** are not masochists. Quite the contrary, we live for ultimate and permanent pleasure. We live in the certainty that whatever discomfort or pain we may have to endure for **Christ's** sake on this earth, will more than be compensated for by an eternity of unending bliss, of pleasure we cannot now imagine.

**The righteous of the TaNaKh were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance (11:13). They** saw the fulfillment of **God's** promise with the eye of **faith**. **They** held on to the promise as their ultimate reality, as the most certain thing in **their** existence.<sup>288</sup>

**And the conviction** (Greek: *elegchos*, meaning *proof, evidence, or that by which a thing is proved or tested*) **of things not seen (Hebrews 11:1b NASB quoting Habakkuk 2:4)**. This **conviction** carries the same truth a bit further, because it implies a response, an outward display of the inward **assurance**. **The children of God** live out **their belief**. **Their** lives are committed to what **their** mind and **their** spirit are **convinced** is true.

**Noah**, for example, truly **believed YHVH**. He could not have started the humanly

ridiculous task **God** gave **him** without having **faith**. When **the LORD** predicted rain, **Noah** had no concept of what rain was because it had never rained before the Flood. But **Noah believed Ha'Shem** and acted on **His** instructions. **He** had both **assurance** and **conviction** - true **faith**. **His** outward display of building the Ark reflected **his** inward **belief** that the rain was coming and that **God's** blueprint was sound and the boat would float. **His faith** was based on the word of **ADONAI**, not on what **he** could see or what **he** had experienced. For 120 years **he** preached in **faith**, **hoped** in **faith**, and built in **faith**.

**The natural man or woman**, however, cannot comprehend that kind of spiritual **faith**. We see **Him who is invisible (Hebrews 11:27)**, but **unbelievers** do not see because **they** are spiritually blind. **The natural man or woman does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned (First Corinthians 2:14 ESV; also see John 1:5)**. Because **they** have no spiritual senses, **they** do not **believe** in **God** or the realities of **God's** Kingdom. **They** are like someone who is blind and refuses to **believe** light because **they** have never seen light.

Yet even **the natural man or woman** operates in the realm of faith. Our society is based on a foundation of faith. We drink out of a public water fountain, with the confidence that it will be safe. We eat food in a restaurant, confident that the food isn't contaminated. We willingly receive our pay in the form of a check or paper money - neither of which has any real value at all. We accept them because of our faith in the person or the company or the government that issues them. We put our faith in a surgeon, and in medical science in general, though we may not have the least training, competence of experience in medicine ourselves. We submit to the surgeon's knife entirely on **faith**. The capacity for faith is created within us.

Spiritual **faith** operates in the same way. **It** willingly accepts and acts on many things **it** does not understand. Spiritual **faith**, however, is radically different from **natural** faith in one important way. It is not natural, as is our trust in water, money, food, or the doctor. **For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith - and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God (Ephesians 2:8)**. Just as **natural** faith comes by a **natural** birth, so a spiritual **faith** comes from a spiritual birth. It comes from **God**.<sup>289</sup>

**Now this faith is what the righteous of the TaNaKh (to be listed shortly) were commended for (Hebrews 11:2 quoting Habakkuk 2:4)**. In Greek, this

statement is passive. This does not mean that **the righteous of the TaNaKh** bore witness of the life of **faith**, but that the life of **faith of the righteous of the TaNaKh** was observed by others, and there was a witness to the fact that **their faith** was genuine. **They** received a promise from **God**; **they** claimed that promise, and, **they** patiently endured until the promise was fulfilled. **ADONAI** also bore witness that **their faith** was genuine.<sup>290</sup>

**By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible (11:3).** The writer finishes his argument with one devastating example of **faith**. Creation is something that must be accepted by **faith** because no one was around to observe it. Moshe was not present to record it. Not only is **faith** to be exercised in a future event like the Second Coming, which cannot be seen; not only is **faith** to be exercised in a present event, which is not seen; but **faith** must also be exercised in a past event which was not seen. Creation shows that something did come out of nothing, but **the physical universe**, is something that only **God** controls.<sup>291</sup>

The writer is saying to the Jews who had not yet trusted in **Messiah**, "You already have a certain **faith** in **ADONAI**. You **believe** that **He** created **the universe** and everything in it" (**Genesis 1:1**). They **believed** this unquestionably, even though they were not there when **God** created it. They could not see **His** act of creating, but they could see **His** creation and they **believed** in **the Creator**. Their own Scriptures taught it and they **believed** it.

The child of **God** insists that all truth is **God's** truth. Some of it - the natural world - we can discover with our eyes, ears, smell, touch and intellect. Much more, however, can only acquire by **faith**, for which **the believer** should make no apology. The very attempt to explain **the universe**, or our own being and nature, apart from **Ha'Shem** is foolish. These things we can only understand by **faith** in the revealed Word of **God**. **Faith** comprehends that which the **human mind**, no matter how brilliant, cannot understand. **What no eye has seen, what no ear has heard, and what no human mind has conceived - the things of God has prepared for those who love Him (First Corinthians 2:9-10).**<sup>292</sup>

As **believers**, our **faith** has context. It is not a blind leap of **faith**, but is based on specific facts, grounded in evidence. How well do you know the facts upon which your **faith** rests? Are you familiar with the evidence showing that **Yeshua** was an actual historical person who rose from the dead? Could you explain to an unbeliever why you accept the reliability of the Scriptures? How would you answer someone



who claimed evolution was a proven scientific fact that makes faith in **God** irrelevant?

**Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for and the conviction of things not seen (Hebrews 11:1 NASB).**

**Faith** is trusting in what the eye can't see.

Eyes see the prowling lion . . . but **faith** sees **Dani'el's** angel.

Eyes see storms . . . but **faith** sees Noah's rainbow.

Eyes see giants . . . but **faith** sees Canaan.

Your eyes see your faults . . . but your **faith** sees your **Savior**.

Your eyes see your guilt . . . but you **faith** sees **His blood**.

Your eyes look in the mirror and see a sinner, a failure, and a promise-breaker. But by **faith** you look in the mirror and see a robed prodigal bearing the ring of grace on your finger and the kiss of your **Father** on your face.<sup>293</sup>