

Faith

**HEBREWS 11: 3-4**

# Hebrews 11: 1-5

- 1 Now faith is the assurance (substance) of things hoped for, the conviction (evidence) of things not seen. 2 For by it the men of old gained approval. 3 By faith we understand that the worlds (the ages) were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible. 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. 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.

# Evidence

- “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. <sup>2</sup> For by it the elders obtained a good testimony.” (NKJV)
- Physical eyesight produces conviction or evidence of visible things
- And faith is the sensory mechanism which enables human beings to see the invisible order
- This conviction of things not seen embraces things which are invisible because they belong to the spiritual order.

# Epistemology – Theory of Knowledge

- How can we know what we know?
- **Empiricism** – knowledge that comes from perception using the 5 senses (some would add extra sensory perception)
- **Rationalism** – reason is the source of knowledge, knowledge starts with mental awareness of yourself, independent of observation (“I think therefore I am”)
- Empiricism and Rationalism are based upon one’s own capacity to observe, interpret, reason and therefore, give credit to or glorifies the subject (man), therefore, they bring merit to the knowledge

# Faith – A Theory of Knowledge

- Faith brings no merit to the subject, the one who is claiming the knowledge
- It is called a “non-meritorious system of perception”
- Rationalism and empiricism focus on the one who expresses the knowledge
- Rationalism and empiricism are a basis of exercising power and they depend on the person exercising the knowledge

# Faith – A Theory of Knowledge

- Faith brings merit to the object of the knowledge. It also brings power and authority to the object - God
- Faith is based on the object of the belief, in this case --- Bible teaching and specifically Hebrews 11 – faith is believing in God
- It is not merit based because one cannot deploy the knowledge without the grace of God
- Faith in God can be exercised by a little child – not smart, not wise, not experienced, not capable of reason, not filled with observations about the world.
- Therefore – in exercising faith **NO ONE CAN BOAST**

# So Faith is Not Based on Your Skill, Talent Knowledge – But on God

- faith is the ***substance*** by which the future things, that are hoped for, are represented (vividly realized), or are set before us as present
- and the same (faith) is the ***proof***, by which those things which are not seen are set before us as solid realities
- What are the 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.”
- Hope vs. faith
- Hope = for the good to come in the future
- Faith = belief in things either past, present or future

# Things Not Seen

- What are the things not seen?
- The spiritual realm.
- <sup>17</sup> And Elisha prayed, and said, “LORD, I pray, open his eyes that he may see.” Then the LORD opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw. And behold, the mountain *was* full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.

# Things Not Seen - Creation

- Things in the past, reported by God in His word, i.e. history and pre-history
- the creation of the world without any pre-existing matter to form it (ex nihilo)

# Things Not Seen - Creation

- the creation of the world without any pre-existing matter to form it (ex nihilo)
- Scripture teaches that there was nothing but God, and that God by means of his incalculable wisdom and infinite power alone brought the universe (all matter, energy, time, and space) into existence from nothing. There was no preexistent physical reality; therefore *nothing* should not be understood as an actual *something*.
- God spoke (His word) and creation began

# Things Not Seen - Creation

- the creation of the world without any pre-existing matter to form it (ex nihilo)
- Genesis 1:1 - Implies a singular beginning and that God created everything in its totality
- Proverbs 3:19 - By His wisdom God created the heavens and the earth
- Psalms 90:2 - Only God is eternal; the created order had a distinct beginning
- John 1:3 - Jesus Christ, who shares the divine nature, identified as taking part in the work of creation
- Romans 4:17 - God calls things into existence
- Colossians 1:16 - God created all things visible and invisible

# Things Not Seen - Creation

- No use of preexisting materials
- Nor did God create the cosmos out of His own being
- Therefore, by faith we reject that the world is God's being i.e. nature is in itself God or worthy of worship (pantheism)
- The creation IS NOT EQUIVALENT TO GOD
- To non-believers, the creation can and often does seem that way (Romans 1)

## Romans 1: 17 - 21

- “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, 19 because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. 20 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse. 21 For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened”

# Things Not Seen – God's Sustaining Power

- Creation teaches not only that the universe had a singular beginning but also that the created order is **continually dependent upon God's sustaining power.**
- He (Jesus Christ) is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.<sup>16</sup> For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him.<sup>17</sup> He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. (Colossians 1: 15-17)

# Things Not Seen – The Testimony Regarding the Past

- the destruction of the old world by the flood;
- the glory which Christ had with his Father before the world began;
- his miraculous conception in the womb of His mother;
- His resurrection from the dead, his exaltation in the human nature to the government of the universe;
- the sin and punishment of the angels

# Things Not Seen

- What are the things not seen?
- The future
- I Cor. 15 the resurrection and glorification of our bodies
- The places or mansion that God has prepared for you
  - “In My Father’s house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you.” John 14:2

# Things Not Seen

- What are the things not seen?
- Gods ways
- God is great and God is good
- The higher ways of God when the human perspective is impossible
- Meribah (water in the desert) (Numbers 20)
- Kadesh Barnea (the spies in the land) (Numbers 13 & 14)

# Things Not Seen

- Seeing beyond the world and the things in the world
- Seeing beyond the dominance of the present culture

“The world is too much with us; late and soon,  
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers;—  
Little we see in Nature that is ours;  
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!”  
(William Wordsworth)

# Things Not Seen – God’s Eye View

- The world presses us into its mold.
- “Be not conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind”  
(Romans 12:2)
- **Push back** against the world and the things in the world
- Use God as your template, your model.
- Measure that world and the things of the world by God and His Word

# Things Not Seen – God's Eye View

- The non-believers overlay or framework
  - God not only does not exist – He cannot exist
  - This is the unspoken premise that underlies all of their understanding
- Our premise (the foundation for all Christians), that underlies all of our understanding, is the opposite: we believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.
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# Thanksgiving

- “O give thanks to the LORD, for He is good; For His lovingkindness is everlasting.” (I Chronicles 16:34)
- Give thanks for the SOURCE (the Lord God) first, and then give God thanks for the RESOURCE.