

## THE EPISTLES TO THE HEBREWS

### HEBREWS 10:19-13:19, THE SUPERIORITY OF FAITH IN CHRIST

#### INTRODUCTION

- A. An outline of Hebrews
1. The superiority of the person of Christ (1:1-4:13)
  2. The superiority of the work of Christ (4:14-10:18)
  3. The superiority of faith in Christ (10:19-13:19)
    - a. The assurance of faith (10:19-39)
    - b. The reality of faith (11:1-40)
    - c. The endurance of faith (12:1-29)
    - d. The outworking of faith (13:1-19)
  4. Conclusion (13:20-25)
    - a. Benediction (13:20-21)
    - b. Final greetings (13:22-25)
- B. Review of Hebrews 10:19-39
1. William Barclay, *The writer to the Hebrews now comes to the practical implication of all that he has been saying. From theology, he turns to practical exhortation. He is one of the most profound theologians in the New Testament, but all his theology is governed by the pastoral instinct. He does not think merely for the thrill of intellectual satisfaction, but only that he may more forcibly appeal to men and women to enter into the presence of God.*
  2. Raymond Brown, *When we look back over the pastoral exhortation found in this passage, two features of its teaching about the person of Christ call for practical application in our own everyday lives. One relates to the future, the other to the present. They concern the Lord's promised return and his present ministry.*
- C. Introductory comments on Hebrews 11
1. Zane Hodges, *This section—the final major portion of the epistle—constitutes a call to respond in the only appropriate way, namely, by faith, to the realities the writer has discussed.*
  2. Raymond Brown, *We have now come to one of the most familiar chapters of the Bible. Even Christians who find some of the earlier teaching of this letter difficult to understand turn to this chapter for help, especially in times of crisis or when their own faith seems weak. And they do not go away disappointed..*
  3. Donald Hagner, *This list of heroes is meant to provide the readers with strength and encouragement in their own difficult circumstances. According to our author, if there is a key to unlock the gate to effective Christian existence, it is to be found in the reality and the motivating power of faith.*
  4. William Barclay, *This Christian hope is such that it dictates every aspect of the way Christians conduct themselves. They live in it and they die in it; and it is the possession of it which makes them act as they do.*

### HEBREWS 11:1-40, THE REALITY OF FAITH

- A. A description of faith (1-3)
1. A contextual connection (1a), **Now**
    - a. The writer introduces this section by describing faith as that which keeps Christians from apostasy.
    - b. Note Hebrews 10:39, *But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who have faith and preserve their souls.*
    - c. Zane Hodges, *In concluding the previous warning section, the writer touched on the theme of living by faith (cf. 10:37–39) . . . it is faith that underlies the experience of the heroes of Old Testament history. Since these people experienced faith, so could his readers.*
    - d. Raymond Brown, *It is a vigorous exposition of what it means to have faith and obtain life . . . Those with true faith accept God's word, win his approval and recognize his power.*
    - e. William L. Lane, *The declaration in v 1 . . . offers not a formal definition but a recommendation and celebration of the faith that results in the acquisition of life (10:39).*

2. Defining faith (1b), **faith**
  - a. R. Kent Hughes, *As we take up verses 1–3 and the theme of what “faith is,” we must keep in mind that this is not an exhaustive definition, but rather a description of a faith that perseveres.*
  - b. Louw-Nida, (Faith) . . . *to believe to the extent of complete trust and reliance . . .*
  - c. Zane Hodges, *In its essence faith is being sure . . .*
  - d. Leon Morris, *Faith is the basis, the substructure . . . of all that the Christian life means, all that the Christian hopes for.*
  - e. Raymond Brown, *In this chapter, as elsewhere, faith is man’s response to what God has said. It takes seriously the message of God’s revealed truth in holy Scripture. It does not merely agree with God’s word, but acts upon it.*
  - f. Ray Stedman, *Faith . . . is always two things: (1) a sense of assurance within us (being sure of what we hope for) and (2) a certainty that there are realities which we cannot see with our physical eyes (certain of what we do not see).*
  - g. William Barclay, *It is easy to argue: ‘Why should I refuse the pleasure of the moment for an uncertain future?’ The Christian answer is that the future is not uncertain because it belongs to God; and it is enough that God has commanded and that God has promised.*
  
3. Some components of faith (1b), **is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.**
  - a. Understanding interpretive differences concerning.
    - 1) Assurance and conviction can have objective or subjective meanings.
      - a) *assurance*
        - 1] Subjective meaning (*assurance*): an inner certainty of things hoped for.
        - 2] Objective meaning (*substance*): the basis or foundation of things hoped for.
      - b) *conviction*
        - 1] Subjective meaning (*conviction*): an inner certainty of things not seen.
        - 2] Objective meaning (*evidence*): the action produced by faith proves the reality of things not seen.
    - 2) Some believe the words have objective meaning as does William L. Lane, *Faith provides the objective ground upon which others may base their subjective confidence.*
    - 3) Some believe the words of subjective meaning, especially based on Hebrews 3:14, *For we have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original confidence firm to the end.*
    - 4) I believe there is room for both an objective and subjective meaning. Of course, faith is founded on fact but faith must also be appropriated which develops confidence.
    - 5) The following examination of these words should help one better understand what the writer wants the readers to know concerning a believer’s walk of faith.
  - b. *assurance of things hoped for*
    - 1) *Assurance* in Greek can have several meaning with the best understanding here, *realization, trust, confidence.* Note 1 Timothy 3:13, *For those who serve well as deacons gain a good standing for themselves and also great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus.*
    - 2) *Things hoped for* (God’s promises for His people) become reality.
    - 3) Raymond Brown, *It (faith) does not place its reliance on that which is merely visible to our physical sight.*
    - 4) William L. Lane, . . . *the blessings for which they hope are firmly secured by the promise of God . . .*
    - 5) Raymond Brown, *The ‘faithful’ characters arrayed in chapter 11 did not simply live for the passing moment; they realized that there was far more to life than the immediate and temporary scene.*
    - 6) Some things for which Christians hope.
      - a) Christ’s return, Titus 2:13, *waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ,*
      - b) Resurrection, 1 Peter 1:3, *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,*
      - c) Glorification, 1 John 3:2, *Beloved, we are God’s children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is.*

- c. *conviction of things not seen*
- 1) Corinthians 4:18, *as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.*
  - 2) 1 Peter 1:8, *Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory,*
  - 3) *Conviction means proof about something, evidence based on argument or discussion as to reality of something.*
  - 4) Raymond Brown, . . . *the man or woman of faith possesses the conviction of things not seen. Such people look beyond the situation as it can be perceived by natural vision or enjoyed by the physical appetites. They do not look simply at their circumstances; they discern the activity of the invisible God (11:27) in their present situation and are able to endure.*
  - 5) Warren Wiersbe, *The presence of God-given faith in one's heart is conviction enough that He will keep His Word.*
  - 6) **Comments on the future aspect of faith**
    - a) William L. Lane, *The forward-looking capacity of faith enables an individual to venture courageously and serenely into an unseen future, supported only by the word of God. As a positive orientation of life toward God and his word, faith has the capacity to unveil the future so that the solid reality of events as yet unseen can be grasped by the believer.*
    - b) B. F. Westcott, . . . *the future and the unseen can be made real by faith.*
    - c) William Barclay, *The Christian attitude is that, in terms of eternity, it is better to stake everything on God than to trust to the rewards of the world.*
    - d) R. Kent Hughes, . . . *a humble Christian was brought before the judges. He told them that nothing they could do could shake him because he believed that if he were true to God, God would be true to him. "Do you really think," asked the judge, "that the like of you will go to God and His glory?" "I do not think," said the man. "I know."*
4. A commendation for faith (2), ***For by it the people of old received their commendation.***
- a. *For by it*
    - 1) The writer is speaking of faith described in verses 1-3.
    - 2) It is faith that provides assurance of things hoped for and conviction of things not seen.
    - 2) H. D. M. Spence, . . . *it was in respect of their faith, which inspired their deeds, that they were praised.*
    - 3) Raymond Brown, *Without this kind of faith man cannot please God (11:6) nor have the satisfaction of knowing that his life has the divine favour.*
  - b. *the people of old received their commendation*
    - 1) These are the men and women in verses 4-40 who are examples of those who walked by faith.
    - 2) *Commendation means well attested of, be approved, good reputation.*
    - 3) 1 Timothy 5:10, *and having a reputation for good works: if she has brought up children, has shown hospitality, has washed the feet of the saints, has cared for the afflicted, and has devoted herself to every good work.*
    - 4) Zane Hodges, *That this is honorable is seen in the fact that Old Testament worthies, the ancients, were commended for it.*
    - 5) William L. Lane, *Their decisions and actions reflected a stance of life that is the hallmark of faith and demonstrated the capacity of faith to sustain steadfast commitment to God.*
    - 6) Raymond Brown, *For the Christian, pleasing God is of the greatest possible importance. He does not set his heart on gaining human approval; that can be dangerous. He longs that at this present moment he is earning God's approval and that in the end God will express it. Note Matthew 25:21, His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.'*

5. An example of faith (3), *By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible.*
- a. The creation of the universe by the word of God is an example of faith in the unseen. Note Genesis 1:1-3, *In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light.*
  - b. Leon Morris, *Belief in the existence of the world is not faith, nor is it faith when men hold that the world was made out of some preexisting 'stuff' . . . But when we understand that it was the Word of God ('God's command,' NIV) that produced all things, that is faith.*
  - c. Ray Stedman, *Faith in God's revelation is a way of grasping reality, without necessarily comprehending all the steps that may be involved.*
  - d. Douglas Mangum, *At its most basic core, Christian faith is rooted in God as Creator. Everything that is now visible was once invisible. All that exists came into existence by the sovereign word of the Lord. The only way to understand these profound cosmic realities is by faith.*
  - e. William Barclay, *If we believe that this is God's world, then into our lives comes a new sense of responsibility and with it a new power of acceptance, for everything belongs to God and all is in his hands.*
  - f. J. Oswald Sanders, *Faith enables the believing soul to treat the future as present and the invisible as seen.*

***TO BE CONTINUED, LORD WILLING***

- B. Some examples of faith (4-38)
- C. The Fulfillment of Faith (39-40)