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THE BEREANS

ACTS 17:11

*Hebrews 11:1-2
Lesson #25
Faith in Promises
06/30/2024*

1

The majesty of Christ

HEBREWS

11:1-2

Faith in the Promises

(What is the faith that justifies?)

2

A robust, healthy faith is:



- ✓ Intellectually **convincing**.
- ✓ Spiritually **satisfying**.
- ✓ Morally **transforming**.
- ✓ Socially **connecting**.
- ✓ Culturally **inspiring**.

3

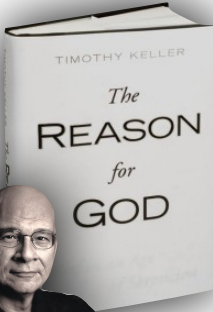
Three intellectual challenges to the Christian Faith

- 1. Is God there?**
(the challenge of **naturalism**)
- 2. Does God care?**
(the challenge of **deism**)
- 3. Is God fair?**
(the challenge of **pluralism**)



4

1. Is God there?
(next week)




The difference between Science and Christianity is not **reason and faith**.

It is the **breadth of data and faith assumptions**.

We have **Clues & Theories** (not Proofs)

Proof is a function of a **Faith Commitment**.



5

2.3. Does God care & is He fair?
(Jesus enlightens humanity as to who God is and who we are.)

John

“1:9 enlightens every man.”
(Jesus reveals the Image of God and its shadow in every person.)

“3:16 For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son.”
(We do not merit salvation but are worth saving.)

6



**IMAGO
DEI**

Genesis 1:27
“God created man in His own image,”

antenna **faith** respect
 appetite **reason** response
 ability responsibility

7

Hebrews 11

“1 Now faith is the **assurance** of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.

Faith as Commitment.

- Without faith (presuppositions) **we have no certainty of anything.**
- Proof comes from faith commitments **to rational conclusions from a defined data base.**

8

2 For by it (faith) the men of old gained **approval.**”


Faith as Justifying

- Salvation is based on **God’s grace in Christ’s merit and our faith response.**
- Saving faith is a gift from God only **in the sense that it comes from God’s Image in each of us.**
- The object of our faith is **the God who promises a Messianic Gospel.**

9

Satan doesn’t want to take away our faith, hope, and love.

He just wants to control the **subject & object** of our faith, hope and love.



10

Hebrews 11

“1 Now faith is the **assurance** of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.

Faith as Commitment

2 For by it (faith) the men of old gained **approval.**”

Faith as Justifying

vs.3-40 pictures faith as trusting a God who promises an unfolding Gospel of grace.

11

There are Scriptural clues suggesting that the Image of God is alive in all humanity **and that Faith and Reason are part of that image.**

Romans 2

“14 For when Gentiles who do not have the Law **do instinctively the things of the Law**, these, not having the Law, are a law to themselves, 15 in that they **show the work of the Law written in their hearts**, their **conscience bearing witness**, and their thoughts alternately accusing or else defending them,”

12

Romans 1

“18 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.”

13

Romans 10

“6 But the righteousness based on faith speaks thus, 8 ... “*The word is **near you, in your mouth and in your heart***” - that is, the word of faith which we are preaching, ... 11 For the Scripture says, “*Whoever believes in Him will not be disappointed.*”...13 for “*Whoever will **call upon the name of the Lord will be saved.***” ... 18 ... “*Their voice has gone out into all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world.*” ... 20 And Isaiah is very bold and says, “*I was found by those who sought Me not, I became manifest to those who did not ask for Me.*””

14

All evangelicals agree that:

1. **Jesus Christ is the only way of salvation.**

John 14:6 “Jesus said to him, I am the way, and the truth, and the life; **no one comes to the Father, but through Me.**”

2. “Justifying faith” rests on trusting God’s Promises **to the degree that we know them.** *Gen. 15:6, Rom. 4:16-25*

The Gospel in Mark 1:14-15 is based on the same PROMISE displayed in 1 Cor.15:1-4.

15

Romans 4

“20 yet, with respect to the promise of God, he did not waver in unbelief, but grew strong in faith, giving glory to God, 21 and **being fully assured that what He had promised, He was able also to perform.** 22 **Therefore also it was reckoned to him as righteousness.** 23 Now not for his sake only was it written, that it was reckoned to him, 24 but for our sake also, to whom it will be reckoned, as those **who believe in Him** who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead,”

Justifying faith is in the God who promised to bless the world.

16

Nearly all Christians recognize certain special cases.

The Saved



17

Is justifying faith possible among people who may not have heard the name of Christ or know the Gospel story?

Acts 10:34-35

“I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism but **accepts men from every nation who fear Him and do what is right.**”

Romans 10

“17 So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ. 18 **But I say, surely they have never heard, have they? Indeed they have;** “*Their voice has gone out into all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world.*”

18

Saving faith is the humble heart responding to God's promises to the extent they are revealed to that person.

Context - Context - Context

1. Justifying faith before and after Jesus?
2. Circumstances, both within and environmental.

Note

- Abraham was justified by faith, not knowing of Jesus.
- We know that the inclusion of Gentiles in God's grace was a mystery unknown to Israel before Pentecost.
- We see subtle clues of "extended mercy" in Scripture.

Clue #1 The Old Testament examples of God's grace going beyond the Abrahamic covenant.

- **Holy Pagans** - Job, Abimelech (king of Gerar - Gen.20:1-18), Jethro (a priest of Midian - Ex.18:1-12),
- **Abraham** - Believing Jews who lived before Jesus was born.
- The people of **Nineveh** (Jonah) God received their repentance.
- **Abel, Enoch, Noah, Daniel** pleased God because they sought God with the faith response which pleases God (Heb.11:6)
- **Malachi 1:11** "From the rising of the sun to its setting, my name is great among **the nations**, and in every place incense is offered to my name and a pure offering; for my name is great among **the nations**, says the Lord of hosts."
- **Isaiah 19:25** "Blessed be **Egypt** my people, and **Assyria** my handiwork, and Israel my inheritance."

Clue #2 The New Testament examples of God's grace going beyond the Abrahamic covenant.

- **Melchizedek** (a Canaanite priest - Gen.14:17-24) Heb.6:20-
- The **Magi** (wise men - Matt.2:1-12)
- **Luke 18:9-14** God forgives the publican who simply asks for mercy. Acts 17:27, Heb.11:6, Rom.1:19, 2:7-8,12-16, Matt.6:33
- **Matthew 10:15; 11:22; 12:41-42** Some of the unexpected inhabitants of heaven - the Ninevites, the queen of Sheba, the inhabitants of Tyre and Sidon, Sodom and Gomorrah.
- **Acts 10:34-35** "I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism but accepts men from every nation who fear him and do what is right."
- **Acts 14:16-17** "In the past, He let all nations go their own way. Yet He has not left Himself without testimony."

"Implicit faith"

(trust in a Gracious Redeemer God without knowing the details)

Justin Martyr, John Wesley, C.S. Lewis, Vatican II

The Saved

The Lost

Believers in Christ as the Redeemer

Special dispensations

Confessional Christians

Those with faith in a gracious redeemer God but don't know Christ

Those with a heart for God, who would believe if they were made aware of the Gospel.

Is God's grace broader than we can see?

1. Salvation is inseparable from the **redemptive work of Christ.**
2. Salvation is inseparable from the **penitent, humble, heart of faith in God's unfolding promises.**
3. Many die **without hearing what God has done through Christ.** Are they left outside saving faith?
4. When we face **theological paradoxes** we fall back on what we know about the **nature and heart of God as revealed in Christ Jesus.**
5. We who know the Gospel message, **should eagerly share it with the world.**
6. Many mysteries remain unsolved, to which we must humbly confess **we just don't know the answer.**

Acts 17

"23 For while I was passing through and examining the objects of your worship, I also found an altar with this inscription, 'TO AN UNKNOWN GOD.' What therefore **you worship in ignorance, this I proclaim to you.** ... 26 and He (God) made from one, every nation of mankind ... 27 that they should seek God, if perhaps they might grope for Him and find Him, though **He is not far from each one of us;** 28 **for in Him we live and move and exist,** as even some of your own poets have said, **'For we also are His offspring.'** ... 30 Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all everywhere should repent."

“I have never been able to conjure up (as some great evangelical missionaries have) the appalling vision of the millions who are not only perishing but who will inevitably perish. On the other hand, as I have said, I cannot be a universalist. Between these extremes I cherish the hope that the majority of the human race will be saved.”

John Stott

Essentials: a Liberal-Evangelical Dialogue p327

25

The Lord of Mysteries

Israel knew God's covenant
The mercies of the Lord divine
Not seeing clear God's mystery
Of Gentiles grafted to His vine.



But when the light of God's broad plan
The mystery hid in ages past
Is brought to light at Calvary
A new perspective then is cast.



So when we contemplate the host
Who know not Christ but fear God still
We can't but wonder at the thought
Is another mystery in His will?

26



27

Hebrews

Next week
11:3

Faith and
Science

28