

Faith in What We Don't See

"(v.1) The fundamental fact of existence is that this trust in God, this faith, is the firm foundation under everything that makes life worth living. It's our handle on what we can't see. The act of faith is what distinguished our ancestors, set them above the crowd.

By faith, we see the world called into existence by God's word, what we see created by what we don't see.

By an act of faith, Abel brought a better sacrifice to God than Cain. It was what he believed not what he brought, that made the difference. That's what God noticed and approved as righteous. After all these centuries, that belief continues to catch our notice.

By an act of faith, Enoch skipped death completely. 'They looked all over and couldn't find him because God had taken him.' We know on the basis of reliable testimony that before he was taken 'he pleased God.' It's impossible to please God apart from faith. And why? Because anyone who wants to approach God must believe both that he exists and that he cares enough to respond to those who seek him.

By faith, Noah built a ship in the middle of dry land. He was warned about something he couldn't see, and acted on what he was told. The result? His family was saved. His act of faith drew a sharp line between the evil of the unbelieving world and the rightness of the believing world. As a result, Noah became intimate with God.

By an act of faith, Abraham said yes to God's call to travel to an unknown place that would become his home. When he left he had no idea where he was going.

By an act of faith he lived in the country promised him, lived as a stranger camping in tents. Isaac and Jacob did the same, living under the same promise.

Abraham did it by keeping his eye on an unseen city with real, eternal foundations—the City designed and built by God.

By faith, barren Sarah was able to become pregnant, old woman as she was at the time, because she believed that One who made a promise would do what he said.

That's how it happened that from one man's dead and shriveled loins there are now people numbering into the millions."

Hebrews 11:1-12—(The Message)

Misunderstandings of "faith."

1-Faith is not a blind leap into the dark—It is not wishful thinking.

Many people misunderstand faith as the antithesis of scientific endeavor.

2-Faith is faith in God's goodness to me.

Many of the health and wealth corners of Christendom hold this idea.

3-Faith is a life of reflective devotion to any good or god.

A set of beliefs is in essence unimportant. What matters is sincerity.

"Faith" defined by the words from Hebrews.

1-Faith involves confident action.

2-Solid faith is action taken in response to the unseen God and His promises.

3-Faith works in a variety of situations.

4-Faith is rewarded by God.

Three Examples of "faith."

1-Abel, the shepherd. "By an act of faith, Abel brought a better sacrifice to God than Cain." (v.4)

2-Enoch, the preacher. "By faith Enoch pleased God." (v.5)

3-Noah, the builder. "By faith, Noah revered God's will." (v.7)

A Definition of "faith."

George Guthrie, in his study on Hebrews, offers this working definition of faith:

"Faith is confidence that results in action carried out in a variety of situations by ordinary people in response to the unseen God and his promises, with various earthly outcomes but always the ultimate outcome of God's commendation and reward."

The NIV Application Commentary by George Guthrie, p.390

Thinking about our "faith."

How is it working for you?

"Who is Jesus" # 12; 3-30-08