HEBREWS CHAPTER ELEVEN

1. **The Description of Faith**
   1. **Introduction**:

Hebrews Chapter Eleven is one of the great chapters in the Bible. It is known as *God's Great Hall of Fame*. Men and women who have *believed* God down through the ages are listed as being great men and women of God. The Master key to greatness with God is faith; the person who truly believes God is *great* in the eyes of God. The key to any of us being great in the eyes of God is faith, faith in the Lord Jesus Christ God’s Son. The first part of this great chapter gives us an overall study of faith. It is the *description of faith*.

* + 1. What does faith mean? An absolute trust in God’s Word.

pistiv pis'-tis **Persuasion**, credence; moral conviction (of truth, or the truthfulness of God, especially reliance upon Christ for salvation; abstractly, constancy in such profession; by extension, the system of religious (Gospel) truth itself:--assurance, belief, believe, faith, fidelity. The Bible defines faith as substance and evidence. Time and time again, the Bible discusses faith and the great importance of faith. The Bible tells us that we must have faith—we must believe God—and it tells us the great things that happen to those who do believe God. The Bible also gives example after example of men and women who have and have not believed God and shows in clear terms what happened to them because of their unbelief. It is important that we clearly see just what faith means. The Biblical definition is this;

Hebrews 11:1—*Now faith is the* ***substance*** *of things hoped for, the* ***evidence*** *of things not seen.*

Romans 4:19—*And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sara's womb:*

20 *–He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God;*

21*—And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform.*

* **Faith appropriates the Promise, makes the unseen seen.**
* **Faith trusts in God’s Word that is revealed in the Spirit even though unseen. It is not trust in the unknown, for we know by faith what we cannot see with the eye.**
* **Faith apprehends as a real fact what is not revealed to the senses. It rests on the fact, acts upon it, and is upheld by it in the face of all that seems to contradict it.**
* **Faith is a real seeing in the Spirit of that which not seen by the physical eye.**
* **Faith is the substance, the evidence, the foundation, the title deed, the assurance of things hoped for.**
* Faith and hope go together; and the same things that are the object of our hope are the object of our faith.
* Faith is persuasion and expectation that God will perform all that He has promised to us in Christ; and persuasion is so strong that it gives the soul the possession of those things.

1Peter 1:8—*Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory:*

Eph 3:17—*That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love,*

18*—May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height;*

19*—And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.*

Now, what is faith?

**"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen"**

The word "substance" (*hupostasis*) means the foundation, assurance, title-deed, and guarantee of things hoped for. The word "evidence" (*elegchos*) means conviction.

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

Look closely at what is being said and note that faith is being described as an act, an act of the mind and heart. That is, our heart and mind believe something and we have assurance and conviction that it is true. This is certainly true; faith is an act of the mind and heart. But many of the earlier interpreters understood "substance" (*hupostasis*) to mean *real being, substantial nature, the real nature of a thing*.

Faith is more than an act. Scripture seems to be saying that faith is the *actual possession* of reality. Is this not what the definition "title-deed" is saying? The person who holds the title-deed to property actually *possesses* the property. It is his already. Certainly from God's perspective, we already possess His promises; He has already seated us in the heavenlies, and we already possess eternal life. It is not that we are going to possess it; we already possess it. The point is this: holding the title-deed to property and possessing something is more than assurance and conviction. It is possessing reality, actually holding something that is substantial and real. It is possessing the land, the promises of God.

Faith is possessing the substance of the promises of God, the evidence of things not seen. If I possess them, the substance is there; the evidence is there. The substance and evidence, the fact that I already possess them, are my assurance and conviction. This is important to note and bears repeating: the substance and evidence, the fact that I already possess eternal life, is the basis of my assurance and conviction, of never tasting and experiencing death.

Faith is the substance, the actual possession, of things hoped for, the evidence and reality of things not seen. It is *both an act and a possession* of the thing believed. It is believing and trusting in that which actually exists—in that which we can possess. We may not be able to see it, but it is real and existing, and we can possess it by believing and having faith in it. We can possess it now—we cannot see it, but we can actually possess the very substance of it by believing and entrusting our lives to it.

Faith is *trusting and possessing* all that God is and says.

Faith is *believing and possessing* all that God is and says.

Faith is *having confidence in and possessing* all that God is and says.

Faith is *hoping for something and possessing it* because God is (exists) and has promised it.

Note what Biblical faith is not. It is not...

•  "I think so, I hope so."

•  "It may be so; it may not be so."

•  "It might be true; it might not be true."

Biblical faith does not deal with what is unreal, imaginary, fanciful, visionary, superficial, or deceptive. Biblical faith is the knowledge, experience, and possession of things hoped for. True Biblical faith deals only with truth and reality. It is...

•  knowing what is real.

•  experiencing what is real.

•  possessing what is real.

* + 1. **T**he reward of faith. What is the reward of faith? God's approval.

God is pleased, very pleased, when we believe Him and His promises. This is the point of this verse. The elders, great men of God who lived in the past, believed God and followed God. They turned away from the world and its possessions and pleasures and followed God.

They believed God, that He had much more to offer—that His promises of an eternal land and of eternal life were true. Therefore they staked their lives, all they were and had, upon that hope. And their faith in God pleased God to no end. Therefore, God accepted their faith and has honored them because of it. He has, of course, honored them by recording their faith in His Word and using their example as a challenge to believers of every generation. But God has also honored them by fulfilling their faith; God has taken them on home to be with Him.

The reward of faith is God's approval, and when God approves us, He accepts us into His eternal presence. This simply means that God looks after and cares for us, giving us victory over all the enemies of this world—including death—and He does it for eternity. The approval of God means that God fulfills all His promises to us. The promises of God become a living reality in our experiences, both daily and eternally.

* + 1. **Faith—Creation**: the basic understanding of faith—that God has made the world. Note the word "understanding" (*noeō*).

It means to perceive with the mind, to understand, to know a true fact. Some say the belief that God made the world is only an assumption, that it is the beginning point in building the Christian's beliefs and theology. There is both truth and error in this charge. The error is found in the word assumption. The truth is this: the Christian begins with a fact that is true: *God did create the world*. The Christian believer's starting point is more than an assumption—it is an understanding, a true fact, the very basic fact that God did create the world.