

Text— Hebrews 11:1-16

Fellow redeemed sinners, redeemed by the blood of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ,

There are many differing beliefs among people residing in our country. A recent news poll reported that the percentage of Americans professing Christianity and organized religion has drastically dropped during the past 20 years.

Not surprisingly, one of the many modern perversions of the Holy Bible – the New Revised Standard Version, NRSV – is becoming even worse as 20,000 additional changes are being introduced in cooperation with the ultra liberal National Council of Churches along with a number of today's so-called scholars. Sadly, the existing NRSV and its predecessor the RSV are already terrible since they are based upon false Hebrew and Greek texts rather than the true God-given and preserved Hebrew Masoretic text and Greek Textus Receptus.

The deity of Christ is routinely attacked in all the perversions of God's Word. However, we should not be surprised since the Gospel of Christ has been attacked many times over many years, for even the Apostle Paul wrote in Galatians 1:6-9 to the early Christian congregation in Galatia, saying, "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed."

Yes, Christ Jesus, the God/man, is the ONLY SAVIOR from sin, death and hell, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." (John 3:16; Mark 16:16)

Therefore, take it to heart that there are NOT many ways to God and heaven; there are NOT many belief-systems leading to salvation. The reality of things is that which is revealed to us in Romans 3:23; 6:23 and Habakkuk 2:4, where we read, "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; [and] the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him: but the just shall live by his faith." Hence, faith must have the right object if it is to be:

"TRUE FAITH"

With that as our theme, may we, in view of our text and with the help of the Holy Ghost, see—

- 1) What true faith is
- 2) What are some examples of true faith in the Lord and why such faith is vital

-1-

Verses 1 & 2, ----- (Hebrews 11:1-2)

There is a common saying which is false, that being: seeing is believing. My friends, seeing IS SEEING; seeing is NOT believing, for Romans 8:24 states, "we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?" So, our sermon text opens by informing us: *Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. For by it the elders obtained a good report.*

The elders are the believers in the Lord who have gone before us. Scripture speaks highly of past men and women of faith, giving them a good report, as we shall observe when reviewing some of their cases later in this sermon.

Think about the fact that *faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.* We Christians have not yet beheld Jesus our Savior with our physical eyes; and yet, we know that He exists and we will surely behold Him with our physical eyes when He resurrects us in our bodies

at the end of days. WE Christians KNOW we shall see the LORD because He has gifted us with TRUE FAITH in Him, “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.” (Ephesians 2:8-9) “For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known,” adds the apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 13:12. Thus, true *faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen*; true faith is full trust and confidence in the true God and in His true Word, for 1 John 5:20 states, “we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life.”

Verse 3, ----- (Hebrews 11:3)

Here we are supplied with an example of the true faith all real Christians possess, for our text reports: *Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.*

Note well that a person with true faith does NOT believe in evolution— things seen changing into other things. Rather, a person with true faith believes what Psalm 33:6 relates: “By the word of the LORD were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth.” Yes, the Triune God is Creator— Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost is the “breath” – the Spirit – of God’s mouth; God the Son, Jesus Christ, is the “word” of the LORD, Jehovah God, who is our heavenly Father. It’s as we read in John 1:1-3, 14, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.” And, 1 John 5:7 informs us, “there are three that bear record in heaven, the

Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.” Hence, it is a fact that ALL real Christians, ALL people with TRUE FAITH, believe in the one true God, the Triune God; and, ALL real Christians, ALL people with TRUE FAITH, believe in creation and reject ALL forms of evolution together with all the other lies of man’s science-falsely-so-called. Yes, ALL who have TRUE FAITH believe that, “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth,” exactly as Genesis 1:1 reports.

All real Christians have true faith, and through that *faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.* We were not present to see creation taking place by the Word of God; nevertheless, we understand that all things were made by the Lord because He tells us that it took place in His pure preserved Holy Word. Let us never forget that TRUE FAITH is true to the true God and His true Word.

-2-

As we continue to ponder our sermon text to its conclusion, let us see what are some examples of true faith in the Lord and why such faith is vital.

Verse 4, ----- (Hebrews 11:4)

We read in Genesis 4:1-5, “And Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man from the LORD. And she again bare his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the LORD. And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering: But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell.”

So, our first parents had sons by the names of Cain and Abel. When they grew up, both men brought offerings to the Lord; but, note that while Cain brought of the fruit of the ground, it is not said

that he brought the best of the fruit of the ground; on the other hand, Abel brought of the best of his flock. Accordingly, the two men's differing actions reflected the fact that one had true faith and one did not, for we just read from the book of Genesis, that "the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering: But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect." Note well that both the men and the offerings made by them is what the Lord looked at, "for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart," as 1 Samuel 16:7 remarks. Thus it was, *By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh.*

Cain's offering did not displease the Lord because it was fruits and/or vegetables rather than meat; Cain's offering was unacceptable because it was NOT offered in TRUE FAITH. Abel's offering was acceptable because Abel had righteousness, "Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe," as Romans 3:22 puts it. Abel had true faith.

Verses 5 & 6, -----. (Hebrews 11:5-6)

Think about the case with Enoch. Enoch did not physically die but was translated right into heaven, for Genesis 5:21-24 reports, "Enoch lived sixty and five years, and begat Methuselah: And Enoch walked with God after he begat Methuselah three hundred years, and begat sons and daughters: And all the days of Enoch were three hundred sixty and five years: And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him." Enoch walked with God in this world in that Enoch had faith in the Lord, thereby pleasing God, for our sermon text's sixth verse relates that *without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.* Enoch's full trust and confidence was in God and was not in any of his own works; therefore, God graciously took the man straight into heaven. Enoch had true faith.

Verse 7, -----. (Hebrews 11:7)

Think about Noah and the condition of the world in his day, for we read in Genesis 6:5-14, "GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them. But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD. These are the generations of Noah: Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God. And Noah begat three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth. The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth. And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth. Make thee an ark of gopher wood; rooms shalt thou make in the ark, and shalt pitch it within and without with pitch." Observe that Noah found grace in the Lord's eyes; Noah was therefore just as he walked with God by God-given faith in the Lord. Noah had the forgiveness of sins by God's grace through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ who was then yet to come. Noah, being a man of true faith, had Christ's perfect righteousness imputed to him.

Noah's true faith was fruitful, for *By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.* We see from Genesis 6:3 that it was 120 years Noah was in preparation for the world-wide flood by which God wiped out every human being which was not on the ark. Can you imagine how Noah must have been mocked as he built the ark on dry land surrounded by unbelievers? Well, they stopped laughing when they drowned because of

their unbelief, while only Noah and his wife and his three sons with their wives were saved alive on the ark.

My friends, let us never forget that our Lord Jesus tells us in Luke 17:26-27, "as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all." Yeah, the earth will be quite corrupt and there will be few folks remaining with true faith when Jesus visibly comes in glory to judge the quick and the dead, and to destroy this earth with fervent heat. Let us cling to the Lord Jesus Christ in sincere heart-deep faith as we await His return.

Verses 8-12, ----- (Hebrews 11:8-12)

Abraham was a man of true faith which he showed by his trust and confidence in the Lord and in the Lord's Word, for Genesis 15:6 informs us concerning Abraham, "he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness." Abraham's wife Sarah was a woman of true faith, for she miraculously gave birth to Isaac their son in her old age. Isaac was a man of true faith, for his wife gave birth to Jacob who was also a man of true faith, *heirs with him of the same promise: For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.* Yes, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, are fathers, "of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen." — as Romans 9:5 informs us.

Abraham, Sarah, Isaac and Jacob were all people of true faith: they all believed in the promised Messiah, Christ the Lord, who would and did pay for all the sins of all people with His own holy and precious blood that He shed while nailed to the cross of Calvary. The Lord Jesus Christ has opened heaven to us; consequently, all people with true faith look forward to entering the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of glory above whose builder and Maker is God Himself.

Abraham and Sarah were quite old and well past the normal age when people can have children, but they believed in the Lord and trusted His words of promise, *Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, so many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable.* Oh beloved, God's Word is sure and certain!

Verses 13-16, ----- (Hebrews 11:13-16)

Looking back at the faithful folks of old, such as Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Isaac and Jacob, we note that *These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city.*

Note well that the believers of old, the people of old with true faith, did NOT seek a country of earthly wealth and health and notoriety in this world, as the millenialists of the past and present dream about; rather, the people of the past with true faith and those today with true faith *desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city.* Indeed, God has prepared for all people of true faith – all real Christians – a heavenly country with a wonderfully perfect glorious city.

It's as Jesus once told His followers, as recorded in John 14:2, 3 & 6, "In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."

Hence, God grant that we cling to Christ Jesus in heart-deep faith as our personal Savior and Lord.

Let us daily and sincerely repent of our sins. Let us keep our full trust and confidence in the true God and in His true Word. Yes, let us by God's grace, mercy and power go forward continuing in true faith, "For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come." (Hebrews 13:14) Amen.

m.e.l.