

Book of Hebrews

Living by Faith

Hebrews 11

Defining our Terms

Hebrews 11:1-2

Generic Faith

A basic definition of faith would be that we are certain of something even though there is no visible evidence for that certainty.

Saving Faith

- Saving faith is the certainty that Jesus paid for all of my sins by his death on the cross.
John 3:16
- Saving faith can also be viewed as the ability to take the God of Scripture at his word.
Hebrews 11:6
- That is why true saving faith is always accompanied by assurance of salvation.
Romans 8:15-16

On-Going Faith of a Believer

A believer in Jesus Christ exercises faith when he accepts what Scripture says as God's word and lives according to that belief. *Romans 8:28*

Faith in Hebrews 11

Context

- The book of Hebrews is a letter about professed Jewish believers who are in danger of losing their saving faith. *Hebrews 3:14*
- The close context of *Hebrews 10:32-39* calls on the professed believers to not throw away their confidence or trust in the saving work of Jesus Christ.
- The immediate context of *Hebrews 11* is calling the professed believers to live by faith and trust in the work and teaching of Jesus Christ even though they are living in difficult times.
- The immediate context of *Hebrews 11* uses Old Testament examples of living by faith.

Examples of Living by Faith

- Most of the examples of living by faith in the Old Testament would seem to be examples of true believers. *Hebrews 11:8-16* (the example of Abraham)
- All of the examples of living by faith in *Hebrews 11* are not those of true believers.
- In *Hebrews 11:29* the author of the book of Hebrews uses as an example the Israelites that Moses led out of Egypt through the Red Sea. The problem with using these Israelites as his example is that the earlier portion of Hebrews describes this generation as unbelieving. *Hebrews 3:19, Hebrews 8:7, 2 Kings 21:14-15, Matthew 8:10-12*
- In *Hebrews 11:30* the Israelites that marched around the walls of Jericho are spoken of as unbelievers. *Judges 2:11-13*

The Sum of the Matter

- The author Hebrews uses examples of living by faith in the Old Testament to encourage believers to exercise their saving faith so that they will persevere to the end and be saved.
- The Old Testament examples of faith, believing and unbelieving, are to be viewed in that light.