

Faith Of The Elders

Introduction:

A Concise Outline of the Epistle to the Hebrews

- . Doctrinal Introduction – Hebrews 1:1,2
 - b. The Mission of Christ – Hebrews 1:3 – 4:13
 - i. General Application – Hebrews 4:14 – 16
 - ii. (Having Therefore...) Boldness of access to God in heaven.
 - c. The Priesthood of Christ – Hebrews 5:1 – 10:18
 - i. Particular Application – Hebrews 10:19 – 12:29
 - ii. (Having Therefore...) Boldness of access to God in heaven.
- . Practical Conclusion – Hebrews 13

Purpose for the writing of the Epistle to the Hebrews

- The Epistle was written primarily for the benefit of certain Jews who had become followers of Christ, and who were then in danger of apostatizing, through the manifold trials and temptations which they were at that time enduring.
- It was written to persuade the Hebrew brethren in Christ to persevere to the end in their Christian walk; and not to fall back again to Judaism.
- In doing so, the writing clearly demonstrates the infinite superiority of Christianity over Judaism; and shows that the Gospel plan is really the only plan by which a person can be saved from their sins.

- i. Particular Application – Hebrews 10:19 – 12:29
- ii. (Having Therefore...) Boldness of access to God in heaven.

The scope of the whole section is an exhortation and warning against apostasy;

“Having Therefore, Brethren, Boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus.”

- Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith...
- Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering...
- Let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works.
- Cast not away their confidence.
- They were to develop patience.

And the words immediately preceding are, *“We are not of those drawing back to destruction, but of faith, to the saving of the soul.”*

Heb 11:1-3

1 Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

2 For by it the elders obtained a good report.

3 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.

The Elders

The scope of the whole passage is an exhortation to patience in the view of the great tribulations these Hebrew believers were passing through, and of the faithfulness of God to His promises which He had made to them.

**God's word was the foundation of all that they hoped for.
His faithfulness was all that they had to rest upon.**

The readers are pointed back to the great cloud of witnesses who had borne such wondrous testimony to the power of a living faith in the living God: to those who had borne witness, not only in their faithful life, but in their martyr-death.

This list of "elders" was picked by the Holy Spirit. We may have picked different ones, especially after studying their lives in the scriptures. But the Holy Spirit picked these and we can learn something from each of the elders He chose.

Those whom are called "the elders", in verse 2 are also "the great cloud of witnesses" of 12:1.

- "**Obtained a good report**" in Heb. 11:2, 39 and "**witnesses**" in Heb. 12:1 are similar, using the same base Greek word.
- In Heb. 11:2, 39 – verb; Heb. 12:1 – noun. There is no word in the original about "good".

Witness – (*Martus*) and is always used of a *judicial witness*, or *testifying witness*; i.e. one who witnessed with his lips and not with his eyes; one who signs an affidavit or testifies under oath. Hence the word comes to be limited, to-day, to the greatest of all such witness, a martyr's death.

This is the same word that is used in Acts 1:8.

Acts 1:8 – "*But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.*"

Verse 2 tells us that by (or through) this faith; or by such a faith as this, they were *made witness* (by God), or *became witnesses* (for God), and could be called a "*great cloud of witnesses*", by faith in the promises which they had received from God, and believing what they had "*heard*".

Verse 3

3 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.

**There are four (4) words that have been translated
“worlds” within the New Testament.**

- 1. Cosmos – the created world**
- 2. The inhabited world**
- 3. The ploughed or trodden earth**
- 4. Aion – age, ages, or dispensations.**

Heb 9:26 – *“For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world (cosmos): but now once in the end of the world (aion) hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.*

Framed – (katartizoo) to fit out, equip, put in order, arrange, adjust, to render fit or complete: **Prepared.**

“...so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.”

It is by faith we perceive that the events we see happening around us do not happen by chance; but are prepared, ruled or over-ruled by God. We take Ancient World History in high school or college.

- Babylon replacing Israel
- Medo-Persia replacing Babylon
- Greece succeeding Persia.
- Alexander the Great conquered the known world by age 32.
- Rome replacing Greece
- Julius Caesar fought against the Roman General Pompey
- Became emperor over Rome and the Roman Senate – proclaimed himself a god.
- Killed on the Ides of March.
- Before his death, he gave his name to his adopted son, Octavian.
- Octavian would join forces with Mark Anthony, defeating the Brutus and Caspious and their armies.
- Octavian would later defeat Mark Anthony and seize control of Rome.
- Octavian would change his name to Caesar Augustus, and proclaim himself a god.

This would seem to be nothing but Ancient World History to the world, but the eye of faith, it is much, much more than that.

Luke 2:1-7 – *“And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed. (And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.) And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:) To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child. And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.”*

Gal 4:4 – *“But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law,”*

Eph 1:10 – *“That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him:”*

**This is the secret of the elders’ wondrous witness –
they walked by faith and not by sight!**

They did not look on the outward appearance or judge by outward phenomena; but, understanding that the ages and dispensations were all prepared by God, **they rested on the word of God, and believed that He was over-ruling all for His eternal purpose.**

Conclusion

- We all will one day take our last breath.
- That is inevitable unless Christ comes back first.

Heb 9:27 – *“And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:”*

What witness will you leave?

