

The Witness of Faith Series – Hebrews 11:1-4 - “The Anatomy of Faith: its object”

Intro: what is biblical faith? What are the elements that constitute biblical faith? What is faith good for? What does God pursue by highlighting the witness of faith in our lives?

- 1) Biblical faith is Gospel/Christ faith, namely, it has as the objective ground/reality for our trust and assurance God’s fulfilled promises in Christ for salvation. Biblical faith looks to God’s fulfilled covenantal promises of redemption in Christ as announced, prophesied, and typified throughout the OT. The author of Hebrews wants to highlight this connection.
- 2) Biblical faith can only be created, nourished, sustained, and increased by the continual faithful proclamation of the Gospel to simultaneously lead sinners to saving faith as well as mature believers in perseverance to the end. The author of Hebrews is pursuing such goals for this church which accords with God’s agenda for His whole church.
- 3) Biblical faith makes present today by the Spirit the hope about the future based or ensured by God’s redemptive act/work of Christ in the past. God delivers through the means of grace Christ crucified/the mercy of a Savior to further ground believers in their union with Christ and his benefits for our sanctification, although not yet glorified. The author of Hebrews wants to explain this - already but not yet - nature of our salvation so they may be assured in trials.
- 4) Biblical faith necessitates the objective/historical knowledge (notitia) of Christ’s person and work as well as the understanding of its redemptive significance/implication for sinners (notitia-assensus); yet, it only rises to become biblical saving faith as we embrace such facts and their spiritual redemptive significance in Christ with personal trust/faith (fiducia). The author of Hebrews explains the knowledge/understanding component in light of the personal embrace, trust, and affectation such knowledge/understanding produces.
- 5) Biblical faith has both an objective assurance and grounding in the promise as well as a subjective sense and manifestation. The objective assurance presents and magnifies the Gospel Promise to feed and strengthen the subjective sense of assurance. The latter depends on the former and is always reflectively secondary to the Gospel objective promise. The author wants to encourage the Hebrews through such primary objective assurance as of the essence of faith.
- 6) Biblical faith has the gospel in its narrow sense as the object of trust and assurance, namely, the legal-forensic substitution/representation of Christ for us before God under the law. While many benefits accrue to believers from such forensic-legal gospel core, these benefits are all consequent/resultant /derivative conditions of salvation.
- 7) Biblical faith maintains a clear distinction of law and gospel both covenantally and experientially. Abel’s more excellent sacrifice testifies to our covenantal head in His sufficient and exclusive representation before God for us wherein we are both declared righteous and consequently witness and exalt the victory of the Gospel promise with our lives.