

**Hebrews 11:1-3**  
**“A different drummer”**

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**I. Introduction**

As a young man in the 70’s I became captivated by that TV show that started every program with the same monolog: *“These are the voyages of the starship Enterprise. Its five-year mission: to explore strange new worlds, to seek out new life and new civilizations, **to boldly go where no man has gone before.**”* The eleventh chapter of Hebrews describes a group of folks on just such a journey. Their mission wasn’t five-years, it was a life time of exploration seeking out NEW LIFE and creating a NEW CIVILIZATION boldly going where only few dared to go before. The 11th chapter enshrines them as they are commonly called the *“**Heroes of faith**”*. All of these folks mentioned in this chapter were triumphant because of one simple fact: **They trusted God!** There is no *“element”* more essential for the maturity of the believer in the **“NEW LIFE IN CHRIST”** than **“FAITH”**! It is what separates the Christian from the non-Christian. Henry David Thoreau, once said, **“If a man does not keep pace with his companions, perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer. Let him step to the music he hears, however measured or far away.”** **That statement by Thoreau accurately describes Christians as we are walking differently in this world because we are listening to a different drummer!** Before we examine these wonderful saints the writer will need to clarify what he means by faith. There is a great deal of confusion when it comes to the

meaning of this word, *faith!* *Because of this confusion it is best to start with four things that faith is not even though these four things are often identified as faith:*

- **It is not positive thinking!**
- **It is not a hunch that is followed!**
- **It is not hoping for the best!**
- **It is not a feeling of optimism!**

Since those four things aren't a description of what faith is, the writer in the first seven verses describes for us the true definition of faith is. Then the rest of the 11<sup>th</sup> chapter goes on to demonstrate how faith works. **The writer of Hebrews is not writing about faith in general but specific faith in God.** The context of this passage on faith follows the author's plea to trust Jesus; it is clear that he realized that by this time Judaism no longer had need of "faith" as it had been replaced by a system of religious works and legalistic requirements that boasted on self-effort, self-salvation and self-glorification. It had become nothing more than a religious cult built upon works. But that is not what God had intended as Habakkuk wrote in 2:4 "*But the just shall live by faith.*" God has never redeemed man by works, but always by faith. This chapter will continue on by showing this starting with Adam. Works have always been a by-product of faith and never a means to salvation.

## II. Vs. 1 No child atheists

Vs. 1 The first thing I notice is that the author gives the reader a definition in which we see *three ingredients of faith.* These three ingredients of faith are visible but are in the midst of things that are unseen and unknowable. Because we have trusted God and His word we have three ingredients that make us different than the rest of the unbelieving world:

- **Substance:** *Of things hoped for*
- **Evidence:** *Of things not seen*

- **Understanding:** *That the worlds were framed by the Word of God*  
**This is the only definition of faith in the Bible. Faith apprehends as real fact that which is not revealed to the natural senses.**

In Hebrew poetry we call this Parallelism where the same thing is stated two similar ways. The point the writer is establishing is the nature of faith. Faith, is a living hope that is so real that it gives “absolute substance”. It is not wistful longing that something may come to pass but absolute certainty in what the world often considers impossible. The reason for this is found in Titus words in chapter 1:2 where he emphatically states that, “**God cannot lie**”! The word “substance” in the Greek means “**to stand under**” and as such speaks of a foundation or reality. It is used else where in a legal sense to mean a “title deed”, so faith is the title deed for things hoped for. **The truth is, Faith offers better vision of reality than the best eyesight!** Notice how faith commences with “*things hoped for*”. Faith starts with providing “**substance**” when a person is “**dissatisfied**” with the way things are NOW and are “hoping” for something better! **No person ever has need of faith in God until they have become “dissatisfied” with the way they are.** This might sound familiar; in Jesus’ sermon on the mount He said, “*Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven*”. That is why through out the Bible, **the great enemy of faith is a complacent spirit, an attitude of self-satisfaction with the status quo.** I believe that this answers the great questions we have as to why trials and tribulations come into our lives at times: **They are allowed into our lives so that we can become dissatisfied with the status quo and begin to long for something better than just existing!** This is why verse 6 says that “*without faith it is impossible to please God*”. Religion, by it’s very nature, seeks to be luck warm and comfortable but in that sate a person will never please God because they are satisfied with the way they are. Ah, but when we demand more out of life than just existing and hope for something better faith

becomes engaged! That's when verse 6 again kicks in as it is in this "*dissatisfied moment*" that "*we come to God*" looking for Him to deepen the veneer of life that we have been satisfied with.

Next the writer says that "Faith" is the "*the evidence of things not seen*". The Greek word implies a response an outward manifestation to the reality mentioned above. A person not only has to have a desire for "*something better*", but they have to have an "*awareness that there is of something better*". **Faith comes in, as a person becomes aware that there is an invisible kingdom and that which our sense detect is NOT the whole explanation of life! These invisible realities are as real and vital as anything our senses can detect. In fact, according to this statement, they are more real because they are the explanation of the things which can be seen.** We see this in the words and teachings of Jesus as He spoke to the Father as though he were standing right there, invisible and yet present. Jesus didn't see the universe as an impersonal machine, he saw it as an invisible, spiritual kingdom.

Verse 6 says it this way: "*He who comes to God must believe that He is..*", that is to say **that God exists**. Some folks will argue and tell us that believing that God exists is just too hard. But that's the easiest part as it requires much more "faith" to disbelieve as it defies logic. The truth is **everyone in the world starts out believing God exists!** No one starts out believing that God doesn't exist. Disbelief only begins when people become carefully taught to disbelieve. The only way a person can not see "the light" that is all around them is to willingly be blind and every moment of the day reject the "LIGHT". Light from God is streaming everywhere and all a person has to do is open their eyes to know that God is. That's why children have no problem the concept of God! ***If the***

*existence of God was so difficult to believe than you would rationally think that all Children would start out and remain atheists!*

### III. Vs. 2 The testimony of faith

Vs. 2 Next we read of the “*testimony*” of faith as we are told that “*For by it (faith) the elders obtained a good testimony*”. The writer speaks of the saints of old that gained their reputation not from works but rather from faith. The point he is making is that God has always approved “faith” and not works as the sole basis of righteousness! Faith is **NOT** “one way to God”, it is the **ONLY** way to God! Verse 6 affirms this truth as we read “*Without faith it is impossible to please God, for he who comes to God must believe that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him*”.

### IV. Vs. 3 Thank God I’m an atheist

Vs. 3 There is a third ingredient of faith, “*By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God*”.

1. Faith kicks in when a person becomes dissatisfied with the status quo in their life and begins to hope for being someone better.
2. Then faith draws them to seeing what previously they were unaware of; **an invisible kingdom that is the explanation of everything our senses had detected**. It is here that the “substance of things hoped for”; **the things we are longing to for**, to be a better person than we have been, will be achieved by acting on the revelation of the things unseen. As we act on that revelation we become the things hoped for, someone better. That is the story of the whole eleventh chapter of Hebrews, the story of faith. The cool thing is that this same story is being repeated in us at this very moment!

Ah but the skeptic replies; “*What about the person who never hears the gospel?*” Well the answer is right in verse 6 as they have the opportunity to exercise faith at its simplest level as the writer declares, “*He who comes to God must believe that He is, and that he is a rewarder of those that diligently seek him*.” Any person who wants to be better, who believes that God exists and who will obey that revelation and is expecting God to

change them will come to the place of knowing Jesus Christ. Because as we are told  
“*Without that faith it is impossible to please God.*”

Verse 3 also introduces us to a very amazing deduction which reveals the implications of faith. This statement, by the writer, was made in the 1st century when the best scientific minds of the day believed that the explanation of matter was fourfold: fire, water, soil and air. Now, after thousands years of human endeavor in exploring the secrets of the origin of matter, this view has not changed. The writer explains why, “*By FAITH we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible*”. The writer says that, **we can never explain the things which are seen till we come to grips with the things that are unseen.** The person of faith arrived at exactly the same conclusion as the man of science, only two thousand years earlier? Faith puts a person immediately in touch with reality. Faith deals with facts, truths that were very clearly stated for any person who reads the very first sentence in the Bible, “*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.*” Faith grounds one immediately on reality.

- *Science, cannot tell how human history is going to end, but by faith I know.*
- *Science cannot tell us what's wrong with humanity, why people through out time continue to act the way they do, but by faith we know.*
- *Science cannot tell us what lies beyond our earthly existence, but by faith we know what lies beyond.*
- *Science cannot explain our subconscious, how to realize our dreams, but faith can.*

This is why faith always pleases God, because it comes to grips with reality that God is the Ultimate Realist.