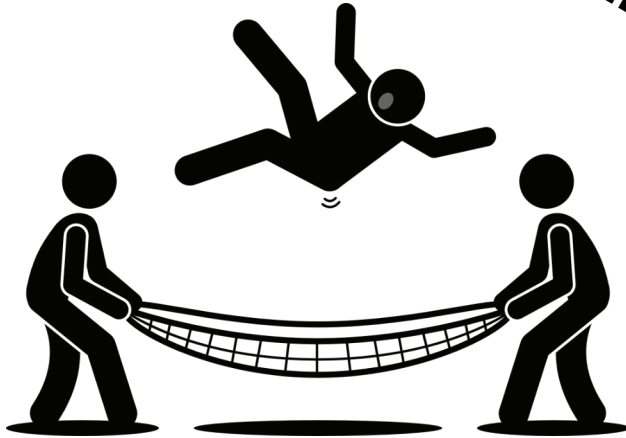


IS MY FAITH SAVING FAITH?



SAVING FAITH

WILL MY FAITH SAVE ME?



1. Defining saving faith.

Saving faith is faith that saves us from hell and gives us eternal life. Saving faith is believing in, trusting in and relying on Jesus Christ to save us from our sins and to rescue us from the impending judgment of the lake of fire and to one day bring us to himself in glory. Saving faith is based fully and completely on the person (who he is) and work (the gospel) of Jesus Christ alone.

EXCURSUS: A timely overview of the person and work of Jesus Christ in Hebrews to set our context.

Since saving faith is based on the person and work of Jesus Christ it would seem to be very profitable for us to review these important truths as presented and proclaimed in the letter to the Hebrews.

PART ONE: The Person of Jesus Christ

I. Jesus is announced officially and publicly as the Son of God by God himself.

- (Hebrews 1:1–3a LSB) God, having spoken long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, 2 in these last days spoke to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds, 3 who is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature.

A. Jesus is the mouthpiece of God and has been appointed the heir of all things.

B. The worlds were created through him.

- (John 1:2–3 LSB) He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.

C. Jesus Son of God is God—the radiance of his glory and the exact representation of his nature.

II. Jesus is announced as God who rules forever.

- (Hebrews 1:8 ESV) But of the Son he says, “Your throne, O God, is forever and ever, the scepter of uprightness is the scepter of your kingdom.”

III. Jesus is our merciful and faithful high priest.

- (Hebrews 2:17 LSB) Therefore, He had to be made like His brothers in all things, so

that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.

IV. Jesus is our perfect high priest.

- (Hebrews 7:26, 28b LSB) For it was fitting for us to have such a high priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from inners and exalted above the heavens ... but the word of the oath, which came after the Law, appoints a Son, who has been made perfect forever.

PART TWO: The Work of Jesus Christ

I. Jesus upholds all things and accomplished cleansing for sins.

- (Hebrews 1:3b LSB) ... and upholds all things by the word of His power; who, having accomplished cleansing for sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.

II. Jesus rendered the devil powerless.

- (Hebrews 2:14 LSB) Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil.

III. Jesus became the source of eternal salvation.

- (Hebrews 5:9 LSB) And having been made perfect, He became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation.

IV. Jesus became the guarantee of a better covenant through his eternal priesthood.

- (Hebrews 7:22, 24 LSB) so much more Jesus also has become the guarantee of a better covenant. ... but Jesus, on the other hand, because He continues forever, holds His priesthood permanently.

V. Jesus saves forever those who draw near to God through Him.

- (Hebrews 7:25 LSB) Therefore He is able also to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.

VI. Through his own blood he entered the holy places and obtained eternal redemption.

- (Hebrews 9:12 LSB) And not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered the holy places once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.

VII. Jesus did the will of the Father and offered his body as a single sacrifice for sins.

- (Hebrews 10:9a, 10, -12 ESV) Then he added, “Behold, I have come to do your will.” ... 10 And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. ... 12 But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God.
- (Hebrews 10:14 ESV) For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified.

END EXCURSUS

2. Here is a definition of saving faith based on our context in Hebrews 10:39.

Saving faith is faith that does not shrink back from the conflict but preserves the soul.

3. The preserving work of God through saving faith prevents the recipient from shrinking back to destruction.

- (Hebrews 10:39 LSB) But we are not of those who shrink back to destruction, but of those who have faith to the preserving of the soul.
- A. This is not a contrast between faith and unfaith but between faith that saves and faith that does not save.
 - B. Those who shrink back to destruction have faith but it is not faith that endures and saves.
 - C. This is the same misleading faith as in Matthew 7 that thrives on the easy way that leads to destruction.
 - (Matthew 7:13 ESV) Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many.

The same word for destruction is used in Hebrews 10:39 Matthew 7:13. This destruction speaks of perishing, ruined vessels; it is eternal misery in hell.

- D. Many on a coming day who have faith that is not saving faith will be rejected by the Lord.
 - (Matthew 7:22-23 ESV)22 On that day many will say to me, “Lord, Lord, did we not

prophecy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?” 23 And then will I declare to them, “I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.”

E. The person who has saving faith does not shrink back but presses on toward the upward call of God.

- (Philippians 3:13-14 LSB) Brothers, I do not consider myself as having laid hold of it yet, but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, 14 I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

4. Saving faith is strong, confident faith that trusts God to preserve the soul.

- (Hebrews 10:39 LSB) But we are not of those who shrink back to destruction, but of those who have faith to the preserving of the soul.
- A. Saving faith maintains strong confidence in Jesus Christ and the work he accomplished on the cross.
 - B. Faith ... πίστις [pistis] ... means conviction of ... belief in something.
 - C. Saving faith means belief, trust, confidence in and reliance upon God to save us from our sins.
 - D. Saving faith preserves the possessor by protecting him from loss or danger—in this case eternal misery in hell.

5. We need to understand that in the context the faith referenced in Hebrews 11:1 is saving faith.

- A. Saving faith not only saves us but reveals the reality of what we actually have faith in.
- B. Saving faith not only saves us but provides evidence of what we believe through the Holy Spirit.
- C. The one who possesses saving faith receives evidence in his spirit by the witness of the Holy Spirit of the reality in which and by which he lives—that for which he truly hopes.
 - (Hebrews 11:1 CSB) Now faith is the reality of what is hoped for, the proof of what is not seen.
 - (Hebrews 11:1 NLT) Faith shows the reality of what we hope for; it is the evidence of things we cannot see.
- D. This is why we have such assurance and confidence in the work of Christ and the promises of God.
- E. This assurance and conviction demonstrate the

active, ongoing nature of saving faith in relationship to the Spirit's work in our lives.

- (Hebrews 11:1 LSB) Now faith is the **assurance** of things hoped for, the **conviction** of things not seen.

11:1 assurance ... title deed — a legal document to effect a transfer of property and to show the legal right to possess it.

The philosophers used this term to distinguish "reality" from mere "appearance." [Cockerill, G. L. (2012). *The Epistle to the Hebrews* (pp. 520-521). William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.]

Assurance ... that which has foundation, is firm; that which has actual existence; a substance, real being; the substantial quality, nature, of a person or thing; the steadfastness of mind, firmness, courage, resolution.

Conviction ... convicting evidence – evidence that makes someone fully agree, understand, and realize the truth or validity of something; especially based on argument or discussion.

F. This assurance and conviction are imbedded deep in our soul as a result of the work of the Holy Spirit.

G. This is why the person who has saving faith knows without a doubt that he is one of God's very own by the witness of the Spirit.

- (Romans 8:15–16 LSB) **For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again**, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons by whom we cry out, "Abba! Father!" 16 **The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God.**

H. The person who has saving faith has this knowledge and this assurance **only** because the Spirit of God is revealing the thoughts of God to him.

- (1 Corinthians 2:9–12 ESV) But, as it is written, "What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him"— 10 **these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God.** 11 For who knows a person's thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. 12 **Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but**

the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God.

I. Saving faith provides such compelling evidence to the possessor that he looks past the temporal and lives in the reality of the eternal.

- (Hebrews 11:1 NKJV) Now faith is the **substance** of things hoped for, the **evidence** of things not seen.
- (2 Corinthians 4:17–18 LSB) For our momentary, light affliction is working out for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, 18 **while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen**; for the things which are seen are temporal, **but the things which are not seen are eternal.**

Look in 2 Corinthians 4:18 ... means to look at, observe, contemplate; to mark; to fix one's eyes upon, direct one's attention to; to turn one's interests or expectations towards something and respond accordingly.

TEST: IS MY FAITH SAVING FAITH?

- (2 Corinthians 13:5 LSB) **Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves!** Or do you not recognize about yourselves that Jesus Christ is in you—unless indeed you fail the test?

