

## **Faith Founded On Assurance**

### **By Faith**

The church, which includes you and me, is engaged in battle with the forces of darkness. This battle does not let up, it does not take a vacation and it does not sleep. Our struggle with Satan consists mainly in the realm of faith. He assaults our beliefs and does everything he can to weaken our faith. Everywhere we turn the evil one and his demons place stumbling blocks in our way. Our arch enemy, the destroyer of souls wants our faith to be weak and inoperative. My beloved, if you are not having some spiritual warfare and battles in your life you need to ask the question, “Why?” Let me be clear, the evil one does not attack those whose faith is weak and ineffective for the gospel of Christ, for they are no threat to him. He attacks those who are battling the world for the glory of Christ. The evil one’s battle plan has not changed over the millennia; he works to take people’s eyes off of Christ and fix them on the present world and material needs and desires – he wants people to be concerned with their daily world and not see eternity. When we focus on the here and now and the things we see, we are **not** walking by faith but we walk by sight, which is the opposite of what Paul instructed believers, <sup>6</sup>“So we are always of good courage. We know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord, <sup>7</sup> for **we walk by faith, not by sight.** <sup>8</sup> Yes, we are of good courage, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord. <sup>9</sup> So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him.” (2 Corinthians 5:6-9) Do you live by faith to please and give honor to Christ?

The subject of faith runs throughout the New Testament and is the main concern of the Letter to the Hebrews. It is critically important that we understand what faith is and how it is lived out. The writer of Hebrews gives us the definition of faith later in chapter 11, “**Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.**” (v.1) The writer is echoing passages found in Romans, Corinthians and Peter’s letters. Paul wrote, “**For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.**” (2 Corinthians 4:18) As we think about this definition, we understand that faith really is not a thing to hold or to look at or intellectual knowledge in isolation, but it is the inclination and attraction of the heart to the promises made to us in the Bible as eternal truth. Faith sets our minds and hearts to believe so strongly that we live in the promises of the Bible even though we have not seen Jesus firsthand. True faith in Jesus, guides everything about our lives and gives us a desire for His glory and for the lost to know Him as their Savior. The writer gives us as great example of faith lived a little later in chapter 11, speaking about the believing descendants of Abraham who died not seeing the promised Messiah, “**These all died in faith, not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth.**” (v. 13) These saints of old lived their lives in the light of the promises God gave to Abraham. They all died without receiving the fulfillment of these promises, but they believed so strongly that these promises would come to pass in the future they lived their lives believing and knowing that the earth was not their real home. Their faith assured them that what man lost through sin - the Messiah would regain through obedience. We who have the completed Word of God then know this to be true; what mankind lost through sin; Jesus the Messiah, the Christ, has regained and brought salvation for mankind through obedience, the atoning sacrifice of His death and His resurrection to life eternal. As modern-day believers our faith is

founded on promises fulfilled and promises yet to be fulfilled, proofs of God's Word verified throughout history, the truths of Jesus and knowing He sits at the right hand of the Father and will return in glory. My beloved, with all of this we should possess a faith that is not easily shaken, a faith built upon the rock of ages, Jesus Christ and this is a faith that will endure.

The writer of the Book of Hebrews challenges us by asserting things about Christ and asking what is it we believe. Hebrews shows us that Jesus is superior to the rituals of Judaism. He is superior to the prophets, angels, tabernacle, temple and mankind. Jesus is far and away superior to anything in the universe for He is the Creator of everything in the universe.

Let me pray for our time in God's Word.

### **Unredeemed Assurance Paradise Lost** (v. 5-8)

The Puritan poet John Milton wrote the classic poem called *Paradise Lost* about the fall of Adam and Eve and the work of Satan that caused them to fall. As Scripture reveals, Satan is the great usurper of man's privilege to rule this planet. With the following lines Milton begins his great work written in 1667,

*Of Man's First Disobedience, and the Fruit  
Of that Forbidden Tree, whose mortal taste  
Brought Death into the World, and all our woe,  
With loss of Eden, till **one** greater Man  
Restore us, and regain the blissful Seat ...*

When God created man, He placed man in charge over this earth. Reading from Genesis, chapter 1, beginning at verse 26, "Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the

sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.’<sup>27</sup> So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.<sup>28</sup> And God blessed them. And God said to them, **‘Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.’**” (v. 26-28) Compare Milton’s opening lines and Genesis chapter 1 with what we are taught in Hebrews chapter 2, verses 5 to 8, “For it was not to angels that God subjected the world to come, of which we are speaking.<sup>6</sup> It has been testified somewhere, ‘What is man, that you are mindful of him, or the son of man (*Jesus*), that you care for him?’<sup>7</sup> You made him (*Jesus*) for a little while lower than the angels; you have crowned him with glory and honor,<sup>8</sup> putting everything in subjection under his feet.’ (Psalms 8:4-6) Now in putting everything in subjection to him, he left nothing outside his control. At present, we do not yet see everything in subjection to him.” While history is completed, we do not see Jesus directly.

Originally, mankind was given dominion and control of this earth. He was to rule over it and have influence and dominion over this planet. When Satan tempted Adam and Eve, they fell from that role, the result was Satan took what was theirs. He usurped their role as rulers of this earth. Paradise was lost. Eden is gone and the world as we know it is being influenced by evil because Satan is wreaking havoc over planet earth.

Between the time of the fall and the time of a new heaven and new earth when Jesus returns as the conquering King, Satan’s influence is felt everywhere. This why the writer tells us in verse 8, “**At present, we do not yet see everything in subjection to him**”, meaning to Jesus. Not everything now bows to Christ but will when He returns.

Man was commanded by God to subdue the earth, to shepherd and care for it and to bring about order. God's creation order in Genesis chapter 1 He gave man authority over the earth. However, because of the fall, Satan is corrupting the order meant for the earth. Evil is bringing about disorder as a result of his influence. Daniel wrote of Satan in chapter 10 as the prince of Persia whose evil influence is felt throughout the earth and we, my beloved, observe everywhere the corruption and conflict of the lost world.

Follow the flow of the Hebrew text and how Milton saw it when he penned his poem. God creates man and gives him rule over planet earth and everything in it. The writer of Hebrews puts forth that it was not the angels who were originally given this privilege to rule of the earth, but mankind. The writer uses Psalm 8 to show that man was made of flesh and blood, meaning a little lower than the angels until Jesus' return. At the same time, mankind is crowned and is set in place to rule over this world, having everything placed under mankind's authority and yet because of the fall what we see is something different develops. So, John Milton had it right; paradise is currently lost.

However, something happened 2000 years ago that disrupted Satan's scheme. When Jesus came to earth and lived a sinless life and died the sacrificial death to pay for the sin of His people, He began to put things back in order. Jesus began to subdue the earth. Jesus was taking on the command that was given to Adam. He would carry out Adam's failed task. The second Adam as Paul calls Jesus Christ began to put things back in order and the evil one's influence is no longer unchallenged. Satan may have convinced Adam and Eve to sin and fall but he cannot stop God's plan of redemption that will be carried out as history prepares for Jesus' return.

When Jesus appeared on earth 2000 years ago, He began in many ways to reign over the world. He spoke to sicknesses and diseases and they obeyed. He rebuked demons and cast them out. He even showed that He had power over death as he raised people from the dead. He multiplied the loaves and fishes and turned water into wine, He had control over the elements of nature. The return of the Kingdom of God began when Jesus first came to earth; the foundation was reestablished. Jesus is the Lord over the current world and the world to come. This present world is in rebellion to His reign. For whatever reason this current situation will work to bring Him the most glory. The chaos of this world, the corruption, and yes, even evil, demonstrates to the world their desperate need for a Savior. It is obvious mankind cannot save itself. But we must also understand this obvious need for a Savior is only obvious to those whom God has awoken their souls. Satan is still working hard to keep people in spiritual darkness.

This is why the Kingdom of God is not fully seen at present. There is coming a day when the earth will be made new. It will be renovated and Jesus the Messiah will fully reign. The question we should ask in light of what verse 5 reads, “For it was not to angels that God subjected the world to come” then who has authority over the world to come? It can only be Jesus Christ the Son of God. Angels will not govern the new heavens and new earth. They may have influence given by God today but they will not rule over the new earth. Only Jesus will be King and rule for all eternity. To follow Christ while living in this broken has a cost and the cost will be extracted until Jesus’ return.

What is the cost of giving one’s life to Jesus as their Savior? This is the question Peter asked Jesus, saying, “ ‘See, we have left everything and followed you. What then will we have?’ ”<sup>28</sup> Jesus said to them, ‘Truly, I say to you, in the new world, when the Son of Man will sit on his glorious throne, you who have

followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

<sup>29</sup> And **everyone** who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or lands, for my name's sake, will receive a hundredfold and will inherit eternal life. <sup>30</sup> But many who are first will be last, and the last first.” (Matthew 19:27-30)

Jesus Christ will reign over the world to come. So, as Peter asked and Jesus answered, what is at stake in neglecting so great a salvation? If one denies Jesus they die an eternal death. Unbelievers will spend eternity apart from the true King. Those who remain under the influence of the evil one instead of believing in Jesus as their Savior will lose everything promised by God in His Word.

The heroes in the Book of Hebrews saw through the eyes of faith God's promises that would come to pass. They believed God and lived lives in such a manner that they proved they believed God. They lived for the future day when King Jesus would reign. They did not place their trust in this current world that Satan's is corrupting. Here are the heroes; “**These all died in faith, not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth.**” (Hebrews 11:13) What does this mean for you and those we call brothers and sisters in Christ? We need to strive to live lives fully believing and bringing glory to Christ.

### **Assurance Redeemed** (v. 9)

My beloved, now observe with me what the writer wants us to understand as he finishes this passage with verse 9, “**But we see him who for a little while was made lower than the angels, namely Jesus, crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.**” (Hebrews 2:9) When Jesus was incarnate, meaning He was fully God and chose to take on flesh and blood of a human; He also experienced the humiliation

of fallen mankind, but did not as the rest of mankind, sin. He walked the earth as God and man. Scripture teaches that in the garden of Eden man was made in the image and likeness of God, but Adam bought Satan's lies and sinned against God. To redeem mankind, who God had made in His image, He sent His Son and for 33 years, Jesus "was made lower than the angels" – for 33 years Jesus was earthly and not heavenly so God's plan of redemption could begin. Paradise is being redeemed by King Jesus.

Man, originally was crowned with glory and honor by God. Man was to rule this planet. However, all that was lost when Adam and Eve fell into temptation and sin. Now Jesus has been crowned with glory and honor. Now He is the One who will subdue the earth. Because of the death and resurrection of Christ and His complete obedience to the Father's will He has been crowned with honor and glory. Mankind's only hope is Jesus! Now, we understand God will **not** reply on weak and sinful humans but "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Jesus." Jesus as the Christ commands His followers to <sup>19</sup> "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup> teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." (Matthew 28:18-20) Jesus brought salvation by perfect obedience and He calls us to obedience, though not perfect, we are to strive for obedience for this brings Jesus glory and declares Him before mankind and calls the world to repent and be saved. Know this truth – Our Lord Jesus is not only King of heaven, but He is also King of earth and will soon return to rule for all eternity.

Man was originally crowned with glory and honor. Satan steals it and places it on his own head, he is the usurper. Jesus came to earth and through His suffering and death and resurrection crushed the head of the serpent and reclaims the



crown. He was made man so that the crown could be given back to man – the God-man! As Paul preached and also I implore, take to heart and know that because Jesus was both God and man, He is capable to “reconciled *people to God*.<sup>21</sup> For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.” (2 Corinthians 5:20-21)

Jesus lived a perfectly righteous life. His life is credited to all His people. Jesus died our death for us. As verse 9 says, “by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.” What does “he might taste death for everyone” mean? This is an important question for us to consider. To take this truth out of context one might believe a universal view of the atonement. That all people are saved by some process. If the writer had in mind everyone on earth, he would be teaching a universal view of the atonement. We know that it cannot mean everyone because scripture teaches not everyone will be saved.

When one takes scripture out of context, they can work at making it mean almost anything. When we take God’s Word in context the answer is revealed. Let me put verse 9 in context, reading beginning at verse 9, “But we see him who for a little while was made lower than the angels, namely Jesus, crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.<sup>10</sup> For it was fitting that he, for whom and by whom all things exist, in bringing many sons to glory, should make the founder of their salvation perfect through suffering.<sup>11</sup> For he who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one source. That is why he is not ashamed to call them brothers,<sup>12</sup> saying, quoting Psalm 22, ‘I will tell of your name to my brothers; in the midst of the congregation I will sing your praise.’<sup>13</sup> And again, ‘I will put my trust in him.’ And again, ‘Behold, I and the children God has given me.’” (Hebrews 2:9-13)

Understand this truth, even though Jesus tasted death for every person only those

who believe in Him as Lord and Savior benefit from His sacrifice. So, we understand, that every one of the children given to Christ by the Father will be saved through the atoning work of Christ. **Christ's death saves all of the elect.** As we take to heart this amazing truth that is taking place in this text we should be personally and corporately affected by the work of Christ.

Jesus is reclaiming everything that Adam lost. He has taken the false crown off the head of Satan and has placed God the Father's true crown upon His head. If you are in Christ today you will partake of the eternal joy along with all the redeemed. Those who are in Christ will be restored to our rightful role in the new earth. Jesus will reign supreme and sin and death will be gone.

So, you have heard God's truth, **"Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen."** (v.1) Do you believe this with your heart mind and soul? If so, you need to live knowing we do not belong to this world and heaven is your rightful home. Are you compelled, are you driven to live by faith in the unseen Christ? Does the world see Christ in you?

If you are committed to live by faith in Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior then we need to take to heart and live the words of God given to the Apostle Paul, **"Therefore, having this ministry by the mercy of God, we do not lose heart. <sup>2</sup>But we have renounced disgraceful, underhanded ways. We refuse to practice cunning or to tamper with God's word, but by the open statement of the truth we would commend ourselves to everyone's conscience in the sight of God. <sup>3</sup>And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. <sup>4</sup>In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. <sup>5</sup>For what we proclaim is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as**

**your servants for Jesus' sake.** <sup>6</sup> For God, who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' has shone in our hearts to **give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.**" (2 Corinthians 2:1-6) Give the light of Christ to the lost world, stand firm and true to the Word of God. Prepare for spiritual battle using the truth of God with love, grace and mercy to push back the darkness of the evil one. Let us advance and take territory back for the glory of our King! Amen!