

ST. JOHN DISTRICT ASSOCIATION

August 11-13, 2020

WHAT WE BELIEVE

Series Subject:

What We Believe About Faith (8/12/2020)

A DEVELOPMENT OF FAITH (8/12/2020)

Hebrews 11: 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.*” (KJV)

We commenced by focusing upon **A Description of Faith** (Heb. 11: 1-2). Today we zoom in upon **A DEVELOPMENT OF FAITH** (Heb. 11: 3). Under this subject I want to point to what I believe that text highlights, which are two things to consider---1. **The Origin of Things** and 2. **The Order of Things**.

I. Let’s look, first, then, at THE ORIGIN OF THINGS. The J. B. Philips translation reads, “*And it is only by faith that our minds accept as fact that the whole universe was **formed by God’s command***”.

1. Now, as relates to the ‘*origin of things*’, two things surface in this phenomenal passage and they are **Perception** and **Power**.
2. As far as **Perception** goes, these words, “*we understand*”, stand out in marked relief.
3. The word ‘**understand**’ is the translation of a word (*noeo*), which means, *to perceive with reflective intelligence*.
 - A. It is the *perception* of the mind consequent upon seeing.
 - B. Faith gives us a perceptive mind.
 - C. In other words, **faith** is not blind reliance on the Word of God but **faith is an intelligent persuasion of its truth, wisdom and beauty**.
4. So far from Christians being the credulous fools the world deems us; we are the wisest of earth’s inhabitants.
5. **Faith** employs *our faculties* rather than *ignoring them*. It is unbelief that has produced so many stupid and nonsensical explanations of creation, such as evolution or the big bang theory. And believing in the big bang theory as an explanation for the origin of things is as foolish as believing that a paper and ink company could explode and create books from the explosion.

- A. Without revelation the best philosophy can do is make verbal squiggles.
- B. Some philosophies are more impressive than others but none can lay claim to the truth or to ultimate understanding.
- C. And science has done no better than philosophy in offering answers to **the origin of the universe**. Scientists, like philosophers, have assumed a burden far beyond their competence and resources.

[Physics professor T. L. Moore of the University of Cincinnati has said, “*To talk of evolution of thought from sea slime to amoeba, from amoeba to a self-conscious thinking person, means nothing. It is the easy solution of a thoughtless brain.*”]

6. But we, who know God in Christ and are born of the Spirit, **understand and/or perceive through faith**, what science or philosophy never could nor shall.

- A. That is, by faith we are able to perceive or understand that the Word of God caused the creation.
- B. Having faith never means being without any understanding...it just purports that we do not and cannot understand every thing about anything.

C. We are ***limited*** but not senseless. This all has to do with **Perception---God-given understanding through faith**.

*** **And then, as far as Power goes**---By way of faith in God, we understand that the entire universe was framed...was formed...was fashioned by the Word of God.

1. These tremendous and transforming truths most brilliant thinkers have not discovered and cannot discover on their own.

2. It is beyond the realm of scientific investigation; but it is not beyond knowing---if we are willing to be taught by the Word of God.

3. God’s greatest truths are discovered by way of simple

faith. And here is one of the greatest of God’s truths---**God created everything by His powerful Word or by the Word of His power!** That’s it, sisters and brothers---that’s it!

A. Believing this fact requires **spiritual perception**, that we receive only by faith and this separates us from the entire unbelieving world!

B. And the word used for “Word” of God is not the Greek word ‘logos’; “representing God in Christ (the Word becoming flesh)”---discussed in John chapter 1.

C. This word (Hebrews 11: 3) is rather the Greek word *'rhema'* and refers to **God's spoken Word...God's divine utterance!**

a. In other words, the entire creation was formed, fashioned, framed---**at God's command.**

b. God simply said the words, "**Let there be...and what He wanted came into being**" (Genesis 1).

c. **God created the worlds--the entire universe--by His Word alone.** What **power**...what **precision**...**what power exercised with perfect and peerless precision!** "Through faith, we understand that the worlds were framed, fashioned, formed, fitted--by the Word of God!"

II. **And look, finally at THE ORDER OF THINGS.** The second portion, then, of Hebrews 11:3 reads (KJV)---"so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear".

This final phrase of Hebrews 11:3 refers to two things---**the**

Physical and **the Pre-existent**. And this doctrine is so important because it relates rightly to the creation as well as **the Creator**.

1) **Notice, first, the matter of the Physical**---it is pondered in the

words---"So that things which are seen".

A) Everything that is visible to and seen by us humans is ranked in

the physical realm, including us. The world(s)---the universe---was framed...fitted out, equipped...set in order for the purpose for which it was made.

B) The universe can and should cause us to praise God---the creation ought to cause us to praise our Creator. Psalm 33: 6 and following says---"By the Word of the Lord were the heavens made, their starry hosts by the breath of His mouth...for He spoke and it came to be; He commanded, and it stood firm." All that I have referred to relates to **the Physical**.

2) But notice, finally, the Pre-existent! Let's look, finally, today, at the last portion of our text of attention---Hebrews 11: 3...KJV---"were not made of things which do appear."

A) The bold and bodacious bottom line, here, is that **God used no pre-existent materials to make anything that physically exists!**

B) God used nothing that was already in existence to make anything that is here! I know that this is deep, **but it is not nearly as deep as God is!**

C) No wonder Paul broke out in song in Romans 11:33---"O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!" But, we believers...we Christians...we born again creations of God...receive it all **through faith!**

- God created all things “ex nihilo” ---that is---out of nothing!
- As a matter of fact, that word created---in Genesis 1---is the word ‘barauch’---and means to make something out of nothing!

- If any material or force existed prior to creation, then that material
or force would also be eternal and therefore on the same level with God!

- **But by faith we understand that only God is eternal!** The
physical is not eternal! The Bible shows one supreme God creating the worlds by His Word alone

We believe God not only as to the **Origin** of the material universe but also as to its **Order.**

Through faith we understand that all matter is simply energy passing into motion and motion passing into phenomena.

Through faith we understand that at the core of all material things---all physical things---we find nothing but sheer energy---God’s boundless, inexhaustible, resistless, relentless energy!

Through faith we understand that even the material things are made up of something akin to the spiritual. Faith is the eye with which we see God, not only over all, but also in all!