

Hebrews 11 'By' & 'Through' Faith

Unlike other translations, the translators of the King James Bible were very methodical about the usage of the prepositions 'by' & 'through' in Hebrews 11, the faith chapter. We'll demonstrate this followed by an important deduction.

First, honing in on 'by faith', the expression is used repeatedly with something in common to each and that being a verb designating action on behalf of those mentioned.

- 4 By faith Abel offered
- 5 By faith Enoch pleased
- 7 By faith Noah prepared
- 8 By faith Abraham obeyed
- 9 By faith he sojourned
- 17 By faith Abraham offered
- 20 By faith Isaac blessed
- 21 By faith Jacob blessed
- 22 By faith Joseph made mention
- 23 By faith Moses was hid
- 24 By faith Moses refused
- 27 By faith he forsook
- 29 By faith they passed
- 30 By faith the walls were compassed
- 31 By faith the harlot Rahab had received

For sake of condensing the length of this study, we're going to select only four of these in demonstrating results.

Hebrews 11:4 BY FAITH ABEL OFFERED unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that HE WAS RIGHTEOUS, God TESTIFYING OF HIS GIFTS: and by it he being dead yet speaketh.

Hebrews 11:5 BY FAITH ENOCH was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation HE HAD THIS TESTIMONY, that he PLEASSED God.

Hebrews 11:7 BY FAITH NOAH, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, PREPARED an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and BECAME HEIR OF THE RIGHTEOUSNESS WHICH IS BY FAITH.

Hebrews 11:8-9 BY FAITH ABRAHAM, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, OBEYED; and he WENT OUT, not knowing whither he went. **9** BY FAITH HE SOJOURNED in the land of promise, as *in* a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise:

We'll now turn to the expression 'through faith' in listing several passages.

Hebrews 11:1-3 Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. **2** For by it the elders obtained a good report. **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.

Hebrews 11:11 THROUGH FAITH also SARA herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because SHE JUDGED HIM FAITHFUL who had promised.

Hebrews 11:32-33 And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gedeon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets: **33** Who THROUGH FAITH subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions,... **39** And these all, having obtained a good report THROUGH FAITH, RECEIVED NOT THE PROMISE:"

A good definition of 'faith' is given in verse 1 as being... "the substance of things hoped for".

Notice carefully how that simply understanding the framing of our worlds and judging God as one who is faithful is tied to 'through' faith, WITHOUT action on our part. Through faith is merely acceptance of what is obvious and taking God at His word! The chapter ends listing lives lived based on acceptance of reward yet not seen.

An excellent illustration as to how 'through faith' is used in the KJB is found in the healing of a lame man.

Acts 3:11-16 And as the lame man which was healed held Peter and John, all the people ran together unto them in the porch that is called Solomon's, greatly wondering. And when Peter saw *it*, he answered unto the people, Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk? The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let *him* go. But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you; And killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses. And his name through faith in his name hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know: yea, the faith which is by him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.

The result of the healing of the lame man had absolutely NOTHING TO DO WITH THE ACTIONS of either the APOSTLES or the LAME MAN, outside of 'through faith' (believing) in His name!

Whether 'by faith' or 'through faith', Hebrews 11:6 applies to both... "But without faith *it is* impossible to please *him*: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and *that* he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." **Hebrews 11:6**

Here we can give KJB definitions to both 'by' & 'through' faith:

KJB Definition: 'By faith' – A believing diligence (faithfulness) towards a faithful God of reward.

KJB definition: 'Through faith' – believing (trusting) a faithful God for a reward promised.

Now, for our deduction. Why is it essential to understand the difference between 'by faith' & 'through faith', as in a KJB? Romans is a book of distinctions and one of the main contrasts Paul makes is discernment between God justifying the circumcision (Jew) 'by faith' and the uncircumcision (Gentile) 'through faith'... "*Is he* the God of the Jews only? *is he* not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also:

Seeing *it is* one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith.”

Romans 3:29-30

Abraham was a bonafide O.T. saint living ‘by faith’ in Genesis 12 (Hebrews 11:8), as a Jew understood and adhered to a justification that had faithful obedience (works) tied to it. However, an experience of Abraham, that Paul ties a Gentiles’ justification to, is found in Genesis 15 where imputed righteousness was applied when Abraham simply believed a promise of God... “And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be. And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness.” **Genesis 15:5-6** The scripture actually foresaw the day in which God would choose to justify the heathen ‘through faith’... “And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, *saying*, In thee shall all nations be blessed. So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham.” **Galatians 3:8-9**

Paul goes into great detail as to the HOW & WHY of Abraham’s experience in Genesis 15 and it’s to our benefit!

Romans 4:18-25 Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations; according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be. And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sara's womb: He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but WAS STRONG IN FAITH, giving glory to God; And BEING FULLY PERSUADED THAT, WHAT HE HAD PROMISED, HE WAS ABLE ALSO TO PERFORM. AND THEREFORE IT WAS IMPUTED TO HIM FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS. Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; But FOR US ALSO, TO WHOM IT SHALL BE IMPUTED, IF WE BELIEVE ON HIM THAT RAISED UP JESUS OUR LORD FROM THE DEAD; WHO WAS DELIVERED FOR OUR OFFENCES, AND WAS RAISED AGAIN FOR OUR JUSTIFICATION.

Today, in this dispensation of the grace of God for Gentiles (Eph 3:1-8), a believer is justified (saved) ‘through faith’, by faith in Jesus Christ... “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth *to be* a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, *I say*, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. Where *is* boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the LAW OF FAITH. Therefore we conclude that a man IS JUSTIFIED BY FAITH WITHOUT THE DEEDS OF THE LAW.” **Romans 3:23-28**

Paul wrote to converted non-covenanted Gentiles... “For BY GRACE are YE saved THROUGH FAITH; and that not of YOURSELVES: *it is* the gift of God: **9** Not of works, lest any man should boast.” **Ephesians 2:8-9**

Once one comes to understanding the difference between justification ‘by faith’ & ‘through faith’, as presented in a KJB, they’ll begin to recognize contradictions as found in other translations; e.g. “since there is only one God, who will justify the CIRCUMCISED BY FAITH and the UNCIRCUMCISED THROUGH THAT SAME FAITH.” Romans 3:30 (**NIV**). Paul’s case proves exactly the opposite!