

HEBREWS

Handout

THE OLD AND NEW COVENANTS

THE OLD COVENANT (Heb. 9:1-10)	THE NEW COVENANT (Heb. 9:11-28)
Obsolete now that Christ has come (Heb. 8:13)	A better covenant brought about by <u>Christ</u> (Heb. 7:19; 8:6-7)
Originated at <u>Mt. Sinai</u> (Gal. 4:24-25)	Originated from the <u>Jerusalem above</u> (Gal. 4:26-27)
Brought <u>death</u> and condemnation (2 Cor. 3:7-9)	<u>Brings life</u> (Eph. 2:1-13)
<u>Impossible to obey perfectly</u> because of human weakness and sin (Rom. 8:3)	Fulfilled perfectly by Christ (Luke 22:20; 1 Cor. 11:25)
Required annual atonement for sins (Heb. 9:7-8; 10:1-4)	Removes sin <u>once for all</u> and cleanses the conscience (Heb. 9:12; 10:2, 22)
<u>Restricted</u> access to God (Heb. 9:7, 8)	<u>Opened</u> access to God for all (Heb. 9:15-16)

Chart by Dean Niforatos

ASSURANCE OF SALVATION AND PERSEVERANCE

Welcome to the debate that has been going on for centuries! There are two schools of thought regarding whether or not one is “once saved, always saved.” One side believes that because salvation is only possible through Christ’s grace, then there is no human element which can save or endanger one’s salvation. When Christ saves a person, it is done once and for all, no matter what someone does in their life following salvation.

The other side argues that while salvation is through Christ alone, it is an interdependent relationship based on covenant faithfulness. Therefore, it is possible to jeopardize one’s salvation through intentional and continued sinful lifestyles because of the nature of broken covenant.

These two schools of thought must be looked at together in light of Scripture. Both sides have vast amounts of Scripture passages to back up their position. The book of Hebrews includes elements from both sides, but does present a stronger emphasis upon faithful perseverance to prevent “falling away” (Heb. 3:12-19; 6:4-6).

Here is a thought to consider: **Assurance of salvation without perseverance in faith can degenerate into presumption of salvation. Perseverance without assurance becomes salvation by human effort, rather than through God's grace.** In other words, elements of both are necessary per Scripture. Human effort will not save anyone, but neither can God's grace be presumed upon.

The author of Hebrews addresses a situation where faithfulness and endurance were needed. The readers had professed faith in the past, yet evidences of such faith were waning. The author feared what they would do when faced with life-or-death persecutions and pressures, warning them not to presume on their professed faith alone, but to demonstrate forward movement in faith and faithfulness despite circumstances, pressures, and potential persecutions.

With this in mind, the **warnings in Hebrews 6:4-6 and 10:26-31** become very pointed. Those who experienced salvation and:

- Intentionally & repeatedly turn from fellowship with Christ,
- Continue in sin with no remorse,
- May reach a place where forgiveness is no longer an option!
- See also Ezekiel 18:19-26; 33:12-20

We must remember the great cost of God's grace through Christ's crucifixion and sacrifice! Profession of faith in Christ without transformation and Christ-likeness mocks His sacrifice and grace!

These warnings **ARE NOT** meant to cause believers to doubt their salvation. **THEY ARE** meant to cause believers to continue in a proper fear of the Lord and repentance for sin. God's grace through Christ does not allow us to sin without consequence, but instead empowers us to live free from sin's power as we maintain faithful relationship with Him and His power to save and deliver us!

HOW FAITH WORKS

Hebrews 11:1-3 defines faith and Hebrews 11:4-40 gives illustrations of such faith from those who have gone before. The list of names and examples in the faith "hall of fame" should encourage us to adopt the faith that focuses upon Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith" (Heb. 12:2).

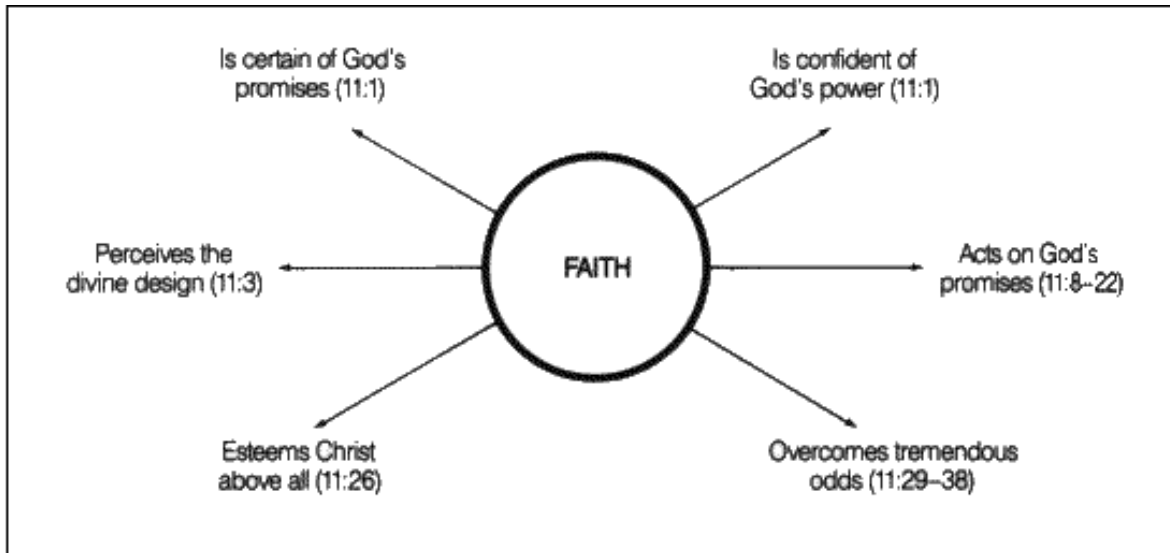


Diagram Source Unknown

ABOUT THAT "HALL OF FAME"

The list of faithful heroes is laid out in a very specific way & includes some surprising names. In the case of victims, there is a surprising lack of names mentioned, but all still known to God. Let the list encourage you to live a life of active faith regardless of whatever situations you face!

- Pre-Flood (Heb. 11:4-7)
- Patriarchs (Heb. 11:8-22)
- Exodus (Heb. 11:23-29)
- Conquest of Promised Land (Heb. 11:30-31)
- Victors (Heb. 11:33-35a)
- Victims (Heb. 11:35b-38)