

deSilva, Hebrews, Session 10a, Resources from Notebooklm

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Study Guide, 4) Briefing Document, and 5) FAQs

1. Abstract of deSilva, Hebrews, Session 10a, Hebrews 11:1-12:3: Faith in Actions (Part 1), Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. deSilva's lecture analyzes Hebrews 11-12, focusing on the author's portrayal of faith. **He argues** that the chapter's examples of faith—including Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, and Moses—are not merely historical accounts but persuasive tools designed to encourage the audience to prioritize God's approval over worldly acceptance. **DeSilva draws parallels** between the text's structure and that of ancient example lists, noting the use of anaphora and concluding exhortations. **The lecture further explains** the author's definition of faith as both the "substance of things hoped for" and "proof of things not seen," emphasizing its practical implications for the audience's actions and choices. **Ultimately**, the text highlights the importance of perseverance in faith despite hardship, emphasizing the superior value of God's eternal promises.

2. 15-minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. deSilva's, Hebrews, Session 10a – Double click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (New Testament → General Epistles → Hebrews).



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3. Briefing Document

Okay, here's a detailed briefing document summarizing the main themes and ideas from the provided excerpt of Dr. David A. deSilva's "Hebrews, Session 10a":

Briefing Document: Dr. David A. deSilva on Hebrews 11:1-12:3

Subject: An Analysis of Faith in Action: Hebrews 11 and 12:1-3

Introduction:

This document summarizes the key arguments and interpretations presented by Dr. David A. deSilva regarding Hebrews 11:1-12:3, focusing on the theme of faith as demonstrated through various examples. DeSilva argues that this section of Hebrews functions as a persuasive example list, drawing parallels to ancient rhetorical practices like those found in Seneca, designed to motivate the audience towards faithful living. He emphasizes that the author of Hebrews crafts these examples to specifically address the challenges and circumstances faced by his intended audience.

Main Themes and Ideas:

- **Faith as a Defining Value:** DeSilva positions faith as the central virtue in Hebrews, essential for "preserving one's life or one's soul." (referencing 10:39).
- He sees Hebrews 11:1-12:3 as a continuous unit, culminating in the example of Jesus as the "pioneer and perfecter of faith" (Heb 12:2), offering a powerful model for the audience.
- **Hebrews 11 as an Ancient Example List:** DeSilva highlights the structural similarities between Hebrews 11 and ancient example lists, particularly those found in Seneca's *On Benefits*.
- The use of anaphora ("by faith," or *piste* in Greek) in Hebrews 11 serves to emphasize each example of faith.
- Similar to Seneca's lists, Hebrews concludes with a summary statement acknowledging that there are many more examples than can be named (11:32) and an exhortation to imitate the positive examples.
- **Purpose of the Examples:** The examples demonstrate that "the way of faith is indeed the path to receiving the character witness of God" and "attaining a praiseworthy remembrance." This is crucial because the audience's association with Christianity has damaged their social standing.

- The examples are carefully selected and shaped to address the audience's specific circumstances, encouraging them to persevere despite "reproach, shame, loss, and hostility."
- **Characteristics of Faith:Future Orientation:** Faithful people look towards God's promises and future rewards. They orient their lives based on their knowledge of God's future plans. They prioritize these eternal realities over earthly concerns.
- **Prioritization of Eternal Rewards:** They make decisions that advance their attainment of God's promised benefits, even if it means suffering worldly loss (status, wealth, homeland, life).
- **Sojourner Mentality:** Faithful individuals view this world as temporary and look towards a lasting "city and homeland" prepared by God. They live in a way consistent with their future welcome there.
- **Definition of Faith in 11:1:Hypostasis:** DeSilva analyzes the use of *hypostasis*, which can mean both "substance" or "underlying essence" and "title deed" or "guarantee." He states: "Those who trust have in their possession, in effect, the title deed to what the person whom they trust will provide. They already have the underlying essence of the future good that they are hoping for."
- This definition stresses the objective nature of faith, not just a subjective feeling or conviction. It's a real claim on promised future blessings.
- **Elenchos:** The second part of the definition uses *elenchos*, meaning "irrefutable fact" or "proof." DeSilva explains that in a legal context, this word denotes something which establishes a case beyond doubt. Faith, therefore, demonstrates the reality of unseen goods. "Without trust, the latter never materializes, whereas by trust, the reality of these as-yet-unseen goods is demonstrated in the here and now."
- **Faith and Hope (linking to 6:19-20):**Faith is presented as the title deed to the eternal inheritance, while hope acts as the "tether" to the eternal harbor. They are interlinked, with both orienting believers towards their future in Christ.
- **Attestation (marturia):**The concept of *marturia* (attestation or endorsement) is crucial. Faithful individuals receive God's approval or "testimony to their worth and a grant of eternal honor." This concept is important because the believers are facing social rejection and are being viewed as dishonorable by their neighbors. This serves as a powerful counter to their present situation.

- **Examples of Faith Before the Flood: Abel:** His superior sacrifice is attributed to his faith (rather than any intrinsic qualities of the offering itself), and through this, though dead, he still "speaks". This emphasizes that faith leads to transcendence of death. "Abel becomes the first example of one who, by faith, lives beyond the grave, just as all who trust God shall live."
- **Enoch:** His translation is due to his pleasing God, which is a result of his faith. DeSilva emphasizes that "without faith it is impossible to be pleasing to God." This further supports the idea of faithful people transcending death.
- **Noah:** His reverent obedience in building the ark, despite the lack of evidence for an upcoming flood, is an example of faith that "condemned the world and became an heir of the righteousness that comes with trust". This shows that acting based on God's unseen word is true wisdom.
- **Abraham as a Key Example: Departure from Homeland:** DeSilva emphasizes Abraham's willingness to leave his native land as the cornerstone of his faith, rather than focusing on the promise of offspring. The author stresses that people of faith "willingly leave their comfortable rootedness in their native land in order to follow the call and promise of God, accepting the status of aliens and foreigners in any earthly locale." The audience would have immediately found this relevant.
- **Sojourner Mentality:** Abraham's tent-dwelling shows he was seeking "the city having foundations, whose craftsman and builder is God" and that he viewed Canaan as temporary.
- **Eternal Homeland:** The true promise to Abraham was of a "heavenly abiding homeland," positioning the audience as "fellow heirs of the same promise."
- **Power for Procreation:** God's power to bring forth life from Abraham's "dead" body emphasized God's ability to deliver on his promises even in the face of death.
- **Emphasis on the Patriarchs (Isaac, Jacob, & Joseph):** These examples demonstrate that all the patriarchs shared the same confession that they were sojourners on the earth and they looked toward an eternal homeland. These individuals also show that the "heavenly country" is superior because God's realm is eternal.

- **Abraham's Offering of Isaac:** Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son demonstrates faith in God's power to raise Isaac from the dead and still fulfill his promises.
- **Moses as a Model of Faith: Renunciation of Status:** DeSilva highlights Moses' refusal to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter and his choice to identify with the mistreated people of God. This is an example of trading temporary pleasure and earthly honors for eternal ones. "Moses renounced that destiny, a destiny that was his by virtue of being a member in the unbelieving dominant culture, his earthly heritage, in favor of a new spiritual heritage that came from belonging to the people of God."
- **Reproach of Christ:** Moses' evaluation of the "reproach of Christ" as more valuable than the treasures of Egypt serves as a model for the audience, who also face reproach for their faith. "Faith causes one to evaluate worldly realities in light of eternal realities, such that even reproach and dishonor before the world's court, endured on account of walking in obedience to God, can be transformed into the path to honor before God's court and be itself valued as possessing greater worth than worldly treasures."
- **Seeing the Invisible:** Moses' perseverance came from "seeing the invisible" – a focus on God.
- **Exodus and Conquest: Passover and the Red Sea:** The Passover and the crossing of the Red Sea demonstrate faith in God's promises and power. The Red Sea event is a type of judgment – deliverance for the faithful, destruction for the unfaithful.
- **Fall of Jericho:** The fall of Jericho's walls shows faith's power even in unconventional means.
- **Rahab:** Rahab's decision to side with the Israelites demonstrates recognition of God's design and a wise course of action in light of coming judgment. She recognized that earthly cities are impermanent.

Conclusion:

DeSilva's analysis of Hebrews 11:1-12:3 underscores that faith is not merely a passive belief, but an active orientation of life towards God's future promises. Through carefully selected and crafted examples, the author of Hebrews encourages his audience to persevere through hardship, focusing on eternal realities rather than fleeting earthly gains. The emphasis is on living as sojourners, prioritizing heavenly citizenship over earthly comforts, and trusting in God's reliability even in the face of death.

This briefing doc provides a clear outline of the major themes and ideas presented in Dr. DeSilva's analysis of Hebrews 11:1-12:3, highlighting his perspective on faith as an active force, the rhetorical function of the examples, and the pastoral relevance to the original audience.

4. Hebrews Study Guide: 10a, Hebrews 11:1-12:3, Faith in Actions (Part 1)

Hebrews 11:1-12:3: Faith in Action Study Guide

Quiz

Instructions: Answer each question in 2-3 complete sentences.

1. How does the author of Hebrews use anaphora in chapters 11 and 12?
2. According to the author of Hebrews, what is the significance of the examples provided in the text, particularly Noah, Abraham, and Moses?
3. What is the dual meaning of the word *hypostasis* in the context of the definition of faith in Hebrews 11:1?
4. How does the author use *elenchos* to define faith, and how does this definition relate to legal proceedings of the time?
5. What is the significance of Abel and Enoch as examples of faith?
6. How does the author portray Abraham's faith in the context of leaving his native land, and how does this connect to the experiences of the audience of Hebrews?
7. How does the author of Hebrews understand the heavenly homeland?
8. How does the author of Hebrews depict Moses' faith in Hebrews 11, and what aspects are emphasized?
9. What is the significance of the Passover and crossing the Red Sea in the context of faith?
10. Why is Rahab's story important to the overall message in Hebrews 11, and what does it reveal about the nature of faith?

Quiz Answer Key

1. The author uses the phrase "by faith" (or the single Greek word *piste*) to begin multiple sentences, structuring the list of examples and emphasizing the centrality of faith in the actions of these figures. This repetition serves to highlight the common thread of faith that ties the various examples together.

2. These examples of faith, particularly Noah, Abraham, and Moses, serve to demonstrate how faith looks in action. They show how these figures were able to be honored and remembered through centuries. These figures also reveal the importance of placing trust in God's promises, even when it means sacrificing one's worldly status and comfort.
3. In philosophical language, *hypostasis* signifies the substance or underlying essence of something. In everyday legal language, it designates a title deed or guarantee. Both senses emphasize that faith is not just a feeling or a mental conviction but possession of what is promised by the one trusted.
4. The author uses *elenchos* to signify that faith is proof of things not seen. He likens it to a necessary fact or a court-established truth which provides evidence for something beyond sensory experience and that establishes the believer's case in God's court.
5. Abel and Enoch are presented as examples of those who, by faith, transcend death. Abel's blood continues to speak, suggesting a life beyond death, and Enoch was taken, indicating that pleasing God leads to life outside of the visible realm.
6. Abraham's faith is shown in his willingness to leave his native land and embrace a lower status in order to follow God's call, a willingness that mirrors the audience of Hebrews who have also socially removed themselves from their native land for Christ. This highlights the necessity of embracing the role of a sojourner.
7. The author understands the heavenly homeland to be a better and lasting home that is superior to any earthly place. It is the true object of God's promise, representing eternal rest and a city built by God and that is beyond human constructs.
8. The author emphasizes Moses' renunciation of worldly honor and his choice to identify with God's people and not the Egyptian elite, even if it results in mistreatment. Moses' faith is characterized by his vision of the invisible God and not by his role as a law giver.
9. The Passover meal and the crossing of the Red Sea are presented as acts of faith in God's promise of deliverance. These examples demonstrate that even before an event happens faith will put trust in its completion, and the act of crossing the Red Sea is another example of the faithful acting on their faith.

10. Rahab's story is crucial because it demonstrates that even outsiders can gain salvation through faith in God. By choosing to align herself with God's people, she chose her safety over her own city.

Essay Questions

Instructions: Answer each of the following essay questions in a well-organized essay format of approximately 500 words. Use supporting evidence from the text to defend your position.

1. Analyze the author of Hebrews' use of Old Testament figures to define and illustrate the concept of faith. How does the author use these figures to encourage his audience to persevere in their own faith?
2. Discuss the significance of the concepts of *hypostasis* and *elenchos* in Hebrews 11:1. How do these terms shape our understanding of faith, and why are these meanings important in the context of the letter to the Hebrews?
3. How does the author of Hebrews develop the idea of a heavenly homeland? How does the concept relate to his audience's experiences, and how does he use the examples of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob to emphasize the importance of this homeland?
4. Compare and contrast the author of Hebrews' presentation of Moses with the traditional view of Moses. What specific elements of Moses' life and actions does the author highlight and what message is the author trying to convey with his specific choices in the story of Moses?
5. How does the author of Hebrews use the examples of the Passover, the crossing of the Red Sea, and the fall of Jericho to illustrate the themes of faith and judgment? How do these examples encourage the audience to trust in God's promises and warnings?

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Anaphora:** A rhetorical device where a word or phrase is repeated at the beginning of successive clauses or sentences.
- **Elenchos:** A Greek term that signifies an irrefutable or necessary fact, often used in legal contexts to denote proof or evidence.
- **Encomium:** A formal expression of praise or admiration.
- **Hypostasis:** A Greek term that can refer to the substance or essence of something, or in a legal context, a title deed or guarantee.
- **Marturia:** A Greek term that signifies attestation, testimony, or endorsement.
- **Piste/Pistis:** A Greek term commonly translated as "faith" or "trust."
- **Septuagint:** The Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible.
- **Sojourner:** A person who resides temporarily in a place.

5. FAQs on DeSilva, Hebrews, Session 10a, Hebrews 11:1-12:3, Faith in Action (Part 1), Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Frequently Asked Questions on Faith in Hebrews 11:1-12:3

1. **How does the author of Hebrews define faith, and why is this definition significant?** The author defines faith as "the substance of things hoped for, the proof of things not seen" (Hebrews 11:1). This definition uses the Greek words *hypostasis*, which means both "substance" or "essence" and "title deed," and *elenchos*, meaning "proof" or "conviction." This suggests faith is not merely a feeling but a tangible assurance and present possession of future promises. It is both the foundation of what we hope for and the evidence that makes the unseen realm a present reality, urging believers to hold onto their trust in God's promises.
2. **What is the purpose of the "Hall of Faith" in Hebrews 11, and what does it demonstrate?** The "Hall of Faith" (Hebrews 11:1-12:3) functions as an example list, similar to those found in ancient philosophical texts. It highlights individuals from the Old Testament who demonstrated faith in action, seeking to persuade the readers to imitate their behaviors and avoid the mistakes of others. The chapter aims to show that the way of faith leads to receiving divine approval and a lasting, praiseworthy remembrance. It emphasizes that true faith involves orienting oneself towards God's future promises, even at the cost of temporal losses. It is a call to perseverance and imitation.
3. **What are some key characteristics of faith as portrayed in the examples of Hebrews 11?** The examples in Hebrews 11 illustrate several key characteristics of faith: (1) It looks forward to God's reward and the fulfillment of his promises; (2) it orients life based on the knowledge of God's future; (3) it makes choices aligned with God's purposes, even when those choices entail personal loss or hardship; (4) it prioritizes the unseen and eternal realm over the visible and temporary one, leading to a willingness to be a "sojourner" in this world; and (5) it results in God's attestation or approval and a transcendence of death.

4. **How do the examples of Abel and Enoch demonstrate the concept of living beyond death through faith?** Abel's sacrifice, accepted by God due to faith, leads to him being declared righteous and even speaking beyond death (Hebrews 11:4), signaling life beyond the grave. Enoch, who was "translated" so that he would not experience death, shows that pleasing God through faith results in crossing over from death into life (Hebrews 11:5-6). Both of these examples highlight that faith enables individuals to transcend death's limitations and experience the promises of God in full.
5. **How is Abraham's faith portrayed in Hebrews 11, and what makes his example relevant to the audience?** Abraham's faith is shown through his willingness to leave his native land, embrace a lower social status as a sojourner, and look forward to a better, heavenly homeland. The author emphasizes that he wasn't seeking a worldly promised land but a heavenly one (Hebrews 11:8-10). This resonates with the audience, who have also experienced social displacement because of their Christian faith. It is also portrayed as Abraham trusting that even his "dead" reproductive capabilities could produce descendants (11:11-12). The author emphasizes not only that God keeps his promises, but that he can bring life out of deadness.
6. **What is the significance of the patriarchs' (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob) confession of being "strangers and resident aliens on earth"?** The patriarchs' confession (Hebrews 11:13-16) underscores their focus on a heavenly homeland rather than their earthly one. They willingly embraced their status as foreigners and sojourners, demonstrating their commitment to God's promises and their rejection of returning to their former lives and status. This example is meant to inspire the audience to persevere in their Christian journey without longing for their previous standing in the unbelieving society and focus instead on the eternal reward.
7. **How is Moses' faith portrayed in Hebrews 11, and what choices illustrate his faith?** Moses' faith is highlighted through his renunciation of his place of honor in Egypt (Hebrews 11:24-27), choosing solidarity with the people of God even when it brought mistreatment and the reproach of Christ. His choice of mistreatment with God's people over the temporary pleasures of sin and the treasures of Egypt, along with his leaving Egypt behind, demonstrates his evaluation of worldly versus eternal realities. Moses's ability to see the invisible God and focus on the reward enabled him to persevere.

8. **How do the examples of the Passover, crossing of the Red Sea, fall of Jericho, and Rahab demonstrate the forward-looking nature of faith?** The Passover (Hebrews 11:28) demonstrates faith as a celebration of future freedom before it is realized. The crossing of the Red Sea (Hebrews 11:29) was a step taken in full reliance on God's power, prefiguring eschatological judgment. The fall of Jericho (Hebrews 11:30) showed how faithful obedience to God can appear foolish but is ultimately wise. Rahab's (Hebrews 11:31) story emphasized that joining God's people, even when it means betraying a native city, can lead to salvation. These examples all highlight that faith sees beyond current circumstances to God's future actions, which are the true source of safety and deliverance.