

deSilva, Hebrews, Session 10b, Resources from Notebooklm

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

1. Abstract of deSilva, Hebrews, Session 10b, Hebrews 11:1-12:3: Faith in Actions (Part 2), Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. deSilva's lecture analyzes Hebrews 11:1-12:3, exploring the concept of faith in action through biblical examples. **He contrasts** figures who achieved miraculous victories with those who suffered martyrdom, highlighting that true worth lies in loyalty to God regardless of worldly outcomes. **The lecture then shifts** to the example of Jesus, presented as the ultimate embodiment of faith, enduring shame for the sake of a greater joy. **Finally**, it urges listeners to emulate these examples, persevering in their faith despite societal opposition and focusing on God's ultimate reward.

2. 18-minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. deSilva's, Hebrews, Session 10b – 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 is a detailed briefing document summarizing the main themes and important ideas from the provided excerpts of Dr. David A. deSilva's "Hebrews, Session 10b":

Briefing Document: DeSilva on Hebrews 11:1-12:3 - Faith in Action

Date: October 26, 2023 (Hypothetical Date) **Subject:** Analysis of Hebrews 11:1-12:3
Based on DeSilva's Lecture

Introduction

This briefing document outlines the key themes and arguments presented by Dr. David A. deSilva in his lecture on Hebrews 11:1-12:3. DeSilva analyzes this passage, which presents a powerful discourse on faith through historical examples culminating in Jesus Christ, emphasizing perseverance, and the reorientation of values from the earthly to the heavenly. The document will explore the author's structure in providing examples, highlighting the significance of Jesus as the ultimate model of faith and how this passage is intended to encourage perseverance amongst the original hearers as well as the implications for contemporary believers.

Main Themes and Key Ideas:

1. The "Endless Parade" of Faithful Examples:

- The author of Hebrews provides a condensed list of Old Testament figures who demonstrated faith, moving rapidly through multiple examples. This is intended to create a strong, vivid impression of the many individuals who could be examined more deeply. This list includes figures like Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, and Samuel, highlighting different types of faith in action such as military conquest, justice, and deliverance.
- DeSilva notes that the list is not exhaustive, but aims to convey a sense of the vast multitude of witnesses to the power of faith.
- **Quote:** "The author's example list closes with an impressive accumulation of examples, compressed and abridged, so as to make a vivid and strong impression of the endless parade of those whose examples could be considered in greater depth if time permitted."

1. Two Categories of Faithful Individuals:

- DeSilva identifies two distinct categories within the examples. The first (Hebrews 11:32-35a) focuses on individuals who experienced miraculous and outward triumphs, such as military victories, deliverance from death, and resurrections.
- The second (Hebrews 11:35b-38) focuses on individuals who experienced suffering, shame, and martyrdom. The author highlights that in the eyes of the world the latter group were failures, but from God's perspective they were just as triumphant and honorable as the first group.
- **Quote:** "The message conveyed here is that, regardless of the external circumstances, it is the posture of loyalty to God and trust in God's word that marks a person's worth, a worth that the rest of the world may indeed fail to recognize."

1. Examples of Deliverance and Achievement:

- The first group illustrates faith in achieving worldly success, such as "conquering kingdoms," "working justice" (referencing the reigns of David and Solomon), "receiving promises" (such as David's dynastic promise), "shutting the mouths of lions" (Daniel), and "quenching the power of fire" (Daniel's three friends).
- These examples showcase God's power to provide victory, protection, and fulfillment of His promises.
- DeSilva notes the sharp contrast between Daniel and his companions and the martyrs who were "saved not from death but through death." He uses this to make the point that vindication by God comes in this life or the next and both scenarios are a sure hope for those with faith.

1. Examples of Suffering and Martyrdom:

- The second group includes individuals who endured torture, mocking, imprisonment, stoning, and execution. They faced extreme marginalization and social disgrace. These examples primarily reference prophets and those who suffered during the Hellenization crisis.
- The author emphasizes that these individuals chose loyalty to God over avoiding suffering and shame, believing in a "better resurrection." Their actions are presented not as defeat, but as a triumph of faith and loyalty.

- The martyrs of the Hellenization crisis, who refused to renounce their faith, are presented as significant examples. Specifically, the stories of Eleazar, the seven brothers, and their mother in 2 and 4 Maccabees are highlighted. These people chose to endure torture and death rather than compromise their beliefs.
- DeSilva emphasizes that the author is careful to present these examples as models for the audience by reminding them of how those who suffered "had a way out from these extremities, a way back into ease and approval." They were not forced by circumstance but by conviction.

1. **Reversal of Values:**

- The author challenges the worldly perspective on success and failure. Those deemed "unworthy" by the world are declared by God as those "of whom the world was not worthy" This is meant to invert worldly values and to validate the experiences of the audience, many of whom were suffering persecution.
- The suffering and marginalized are not to be judged by worldly standards, but rather the world is to be judged by how they treat God's people.
- **Quote:** "The author is basically calling into question who is judging whom when the people of God are pushed out to the margins and treated shabbily."

1. **The Superiority of the Christian Experience:**

- While the heroes of faith in chapter 11 are praised for their faithfulness, they "did not receive the promise." This is because the ultimate promise of God's heavenly kingdom is fulfilled through Jesus Christ. The original hearers of this letter are positioned closer to the fulfillment of the promise than all those who came before them.
- Jesus, as the mediator of a better covenant, brings the promise to its ultimate fulfillment and therefore the audience has a greater responsibility to remain faithful.
- The "something better" mentioned in Hebrews 11:40 refers to Jesus and the salvation He offers. DeSilva emphasizes that Jesus is central to all the "better" aspects of this sermon (better mediator, better covenant, better promises, better country).
- **Quote:** "God has provided something better for us in order that they should not arrive at the goal apart from us."

1. Jesus as the Ultimate Example of Faith:

- DeSilva emphasizes that Jesus is not only an example of faith but the very "pioneer and perfecter of faith." Jesus embodies perfect faith, and his life and death provide the ultimate model for believers. He endured the cross while despising shame for the sake of the joy set before him. This set an example for others to endure present suffering for the sake of future reward.
- Jesus is presented as the one who blazed the path through hardship and shame, demonstrating the right attitude toward worldly opinion.
- **Quote:** "Looking away to the pioneer and perfecter of faith, Jesus, who for the sake of the joy set before him endured a cross, despising shame, and has sat down at the right hand of God's throne."

1. The Athletic Metaphor of the Race:

- The author uses the athletic image of a race to describe the Christian life. The audience is exhorted to "run with endurance" as they are surrounded by a "great cloud of spectators," who are not just observers but "medal winners" from the past. These historical figures serve not only as examples but as a powerful motivator for the audience.
- DeSilva explains that this metaphor emphasizes perseverance and a commitment to duty, just like the athlete who endures the hardship of training to achieve the honor of winning the race. The audience is urged to endure the hardships of being a Christian and not to give up due to social pressures.
- **Quote:** "Having therefore so great a cloud of spectators surrounding us, let us also run with endurance the race laid out before us, putting off every weight and the sin that easily ensnares."

1. Laying Aside Weights and Sin:

- The author urges believers to lay aside every weight and sin that hinders progress in the race. These "weights" are past glories and present concerns including reputation, possessions, and even bodily comforts. These "weights" are things that would have kept the original audience from continued fellowship with the church and are, therefore, impediments to faith.
- DeSilva connects this idea with the call to renounce worldly values and priorities. The author is exhorting the audience to place God's rewards and approval above any earthly consideration.

- He notes that these weights once represented “a way of life before...participation in idolatry” but should not be allowed to hinder their progress now.

1. **Emulation and Transformation of Values:**

- The author’s use of praise and examples from the Old Testament, coupled with the example of Jesus, is designed to evoke emulation, especially because this is typical of a Greco-Roman cultural context. He challenges the audience to reorient their ambitions toward pleasing God and to seek heavenly rewards rather than the recognition of the world.
- DeSilva connects this passage to a larger theme within the letter where the audience is being called to leave behind earthly values and to be re-socialized into the community of faith, even if that appears foolish to outsiders.
- **Quote:** "The heroes of faith pursued this as if their lives and their afterlife depended upon it. Do we?"

1. **Living as Foreigners:**

- DeSilva notes that, like Abraham and Moses, believers should view themselves as foreigners in this world. This should be an ideological departure that shapes the believers' values, ambitions, and priorities according to God’s will.
- This passage challenges believers to embrace disgrace before unbelievers in order to receive the positive attestation of God and share in the honorable destiny of God's people.
- **Quote:** "We are called to leave our native lands, not necessarily in a geographical sense, but certainly in an ideological sense."

Implications for the Original Hearers and Contemporary Believers:

- **Original Hearers:** The original audience, facing persecution and the temptation to compromise their faith, was urged to endure and persevere by seeing their present suffering within the context of the larger story of God’s people. The example of Jesus is meant to offer comfort, encouragement, and an incentive toward continued faithfulness.

- **Contemporary Believers:** For modern believers, the passage poses fundamental questions about what is truly real, the nature of faith, and where our ambitions lie. It encourages us to prioritize God's will over worldly concerns, to live as foreigners within this world, and to fix our eyes on the ultimate reward of a heavenly home, just as Jesus did.

Conclusion

Dr. deSilva's analysis of Hebrews 11:1-12:3 reveals the author's powerful rhetorical strategy of using historical examples to inspire faith and perseverance. The passage moves from highlighting the achievements and suffering of the Old Testament heroes to focusing on Jesus as the ultimate model of faith. It reorients the audience's values from earthly concerns to God's purposes and calls them to embrace hardship in pursuit of a better inheritance, encouraging them not to become weary in their race of faith. The lessons in this passage are as relevant today as they were to the original audience, offering a vision of a life lived for God that extends far beyond the temporal.

4. Hebrews Study Guide: 10b, Hebrews 11:1-12:3, Faith in Actions (Part 2)

Hebrews 11:1-12:3: Faith in Action (Part 2) Study Guide

Quiz

Instructions: Answer each question in 2-3 sentences.

1. How does the author of Hebrews divide the examples of faith in Hebrews 11:32-38?
2. What is the significance of the examples of Daniel and his three friends in the context of Hebrews 11?
3. How do the women who received their dead back by resuscitation differ from the martyrs in the passage?
4. What historical event provides the context for the martyrs described in Hebrews 11:35b-38?
5. According to the text, why were the martyrs willing to endure torture and death?
6. How does the author use athletic imagery in Hebrews 12:1-3?
7. Who are the "cloud of witnesses," and what role do they play in the author's argument?
8. How does the author describe Jesus as the "pioneer and perfecter of faith"?
9. Why is the concept of "despising shame" important in the context of Hebrews 12:2?
10. How does the author connect the example of Jesus to the audience's experience of hostility and marginalization?

Quiz Answer Key

1. The author divides the examples into two parts: verses 32-35a focus on figures who achieved "marvelous and miraculous things" through faith, including military prowess and deliverance from death. Verses 35b-38 focus on those who, though considered losers by the world, were equally triumphant and honorable in God's eyes.

2. Daniel and his three friends serve as examples of those who were delivered from peril because of their faith and loyalty to God. They are contrasted with the martyrs who followed, who are saved not from death but through death. They illustrate that vindication from God can come in this life or the next.
3. The women who received their dead back experienced *resuscitation*, a return to their earthly lives, while the martyrs were offered an opportunity to avoid death but chose instead to remain loyal to God in order to obtain a *better resurrection*, referring to eternal life.
4. The Hellenization crisis under Antiochus IV (167-164 BCE) provides the historical context for the martyrs. During this period, Jewish religious practices were outlawed, and many Jews were tortured and killed for their adherence to the Law.
5. The martyrs were willing to endure torture and death because of their unwavering faith in God and their hope for a better resurrection, a reward in the afterlife. They refused release to remain loyal to God and receive this better promise.
6. The author uses the imagery of a race to illustrate the challenges of discipleship, presenting the Christian life as a path that requires perseverance and endurance. He portrays the believers as athletes in a contest who are to run with courage, and to lay aside all weights that could impede their progress.
7. The “cloud of witnesses” are the heroes of faith from the previous chapter, who serve as spectators of the current believers’ race. Their lives serve as a testament to the possibility of perseverance and a condemnation of failure.
8. Jesus is described as the “pioneer” of faith because he blazed the path through hardship for those who follow, and as the “perfector” of faith because he demonstrated faith in its most complete form, embodying trust and perseverance.
9. “Despising shame” is important because it refers to not being swayed by the opinions of outsiders, particularly those who do not value God’s values. It’s about seeking God’s approval and choosing the path of faith, even when it leads to marginalization or scorn.

10. The author connects Jesus' experience of hostility and marginalization to the audience's own situation to encourage them. Jesus' ultimate victory over shame and hardship serves as a promise that the believers, who also experience this, will also be brought into glory.

Essay Questions

1. Analyze how the author of Hebrews uses the examples of faith in chapter 11 to encourage the audience, focusing on the distinction between the "triumphant" figures and the "martyrs." How does this comparison address the diverse experiences of faith?
2. Discuss the significance of the athletic imagery in Hebrews 12:1-3. How does this imagery reinforce the themes of perseverance, community, and the ultimate goal of the Christian life?
3. Explore the role of Jesus as the "pioneer and perfecter of faith" in Hebrews 12:2. How does the author use Jesus' example to challenge the audience to "despise shame" and persevere in their faith?
4. Examine the concept of "despising shame" in the context of Hebrews 11:32-12:3. Why is this theme central to the author's message, and how does it relate to the challenges the audience faced?
5. Considering the broader message of Hebrews 11-12, how does the author encourage the audience to prioritize spiritual rewards over temporal ones? How does the sermon apply to the contemporary challenges of faith?

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Encomium:** A formal expression of praise, often used in rhetoric to honor a person or group, as used by the author here in Hebrews 11.
- **Hellenization Crisis:** The period in the 2nd century BCE when the Seleucid ruler Antiochus IV Epiphanes attempted to impose Greek culture and religion on the Jewish people.
- **Martyrs:** Individuals who suffer persecution and death for their beliefs, particularly in the context of the Hellenization Crisis. The text highlights those who refused to renounce their faith.
- **Resuscitation:** The act of restoring someone to life, as seen in the examples of the women who received their dead back in 1 Kings 17 and 2 Kings 4, in contrast with *resurrection*.
- **Resurrection:** The act of being raised from the dead into eternal life, specifically in the context of the heavenly kingdom, as described by the author.
- **Pioneer (of faith):** A leader or pathfinder who goes before others, as seen in the text where Jesus "blazed the path" by showing how to persevere through shame and hardship.
- **Perfecter (of faith):** One who brings something to its full and complete form, as in how the author describes Jesus as fully embodying and showing what faith looks like.
- **Despising Shame:** A rejection of the world's standards of honor and shame, focusing instead on God's values and approval, also connected to the concept of enduring marginalization.
- **Cloud of Witnesses:** The collective group of faithful individuals from the Old Testament era, who serve as examples of faith and perseverance, in the passage this is referred to as spectators of the current believers' race.
- **Relay Race:** Metaphorical imagery used by the author to express the continuous nature of faith across generations, where the baton is passed from past figures to the present audience.

5. FAQs on DeSilva, Hebrews, Session 10b, Hebrews 11:1-12:3, Faith in Action (Part 2), Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

FAQ on Faith in Action based on Hebrews 11:1-12:3

1. **What is the main point the author of Hebrews makes by listing various figures from the Old Testament in chapter 11?** The author of Hebrews uses a diverse collection of figures from Israel's history, ranging from the Judges and Kings to prophets and martyrs, to showcase the multifaceted nature of faith. This includes acts of military prowess and deliverance, but also quiet acts of endurance and resistance. The list is not just a record of successful faith, but shows the varying ways in which faith can be expressed - it might lead to victory or it might lead to suffering. The central point is that a posture of loyalty and trust in God's word is what truly matters, regardless of worldly outcomes, and this trust is the defining characteristic of those who are truly worthy in God's eyes.
2. **How does Hebrews 11 distinguish between those who achieved worldly success through faith and those who suffered for their faith?** Hebrews 11 presents two distinct groups: those who, through trust in God, achieved what the world would consider marvelous or miraculous things, such as conquering kingdoms and escaping death (v. 32-35a); and those who were shamed and defeated in the eyes of the world yet remained loyal to God, enduring torture, imprisonment, and martyrdom (v. 35b-38). The author uses this contrast to highlight that faith is not defined by worldly success or lack thereof, but rather by unwavering loyalty and trust in God's promises, whether those promises are fulfilled in this life or the next. Both groups are equally honored in God's eyes.
3. **Why does the author of Hebrews include the stories of women who received their dead back in the examples of faith?** The inclusion of women who received their dead back through resuscitation, such as the widow of Zarephath and the Shunammite woman, highlights God's power over death. These stories act as a bridge between the miraculous achievements of faith and the endurance of those who were martyred for their beliefs. These stories of resuscitation offer further affirmation of God's power, while setting up a contrast with the martyrs. The martyrs did not experience temporal reprieve, they endured death to receive a *better* resurrection. The examples demonstrate that God works in a variety of ways to reward faith.

4. **Who are the martyrs mentioned in Hebrews 11, and why are they significant in the context of the chapter?** The martyrs in Hebrews 11 are those who suffered under Antiochus IV during the Hellenization crisis. They are significant because they represent the extreme end of fidelity to God. They chose to endure torture and death rather than abandon their faith. Their steadfast refusal to compromise, fueled by their hope in a better resurrection, exemplifies the ultimate expression of faith and loyalty, showing that it is the internal commitment to God that counts. These individuals were tortured, mocked, imprisoned and killed, but are presented as equally triumphant as those who experienced more visible successes.
5. **How does Hebrews 11 emphasize the importance of despising shame in the life of faith?** Despising shame is a crucial element for those who follow God. This theme can be seen in the lives of Abraham, Moses, the martyrs, and most prominently, in Jesus. It means not being swayed by the praise or censure of the world, and especially the non-believing world. This involves rejecting the distorted evaluations of the uninitiated, especially those who do not have faith. The author urges the audience to not prioritize worldly standards of honor. For the faithful, it is the approval of God and the community of faith that should be paramount.
6. **What role does Jesus play in the examples of faith presented in Hebrews 11, and how is he described in 12:2?** Jesus is presented as the ultimate example of faith in action. He is not just a figure in a list, but rather the *pioneer and perfecter* of faith. He blazed a path through hardship and shame, enduring the cross for the joy set before him, which was his exaltation to the right hand of God. This act shows that true faith endures suffering, while looking beyond present circumstances to the ultimate reward. As the one who has gone first and further than any other in faith, Jesus is the model by which the community is called to follow, a model which also serves as a guarantee that such a life will lead to honor.

7. **What is the significance of the "cloud of witnesses" mentioned in Hebrews 12:1?** The "cloud of witnesses" are not merely passive observers. They are the heroes of faith from throughout history who have lived exemplary lives of faith. They are now spectators to the present generation's own race of faith. These spectators are not just "fans", but are instead past champions whose lives stand as a testimony to the possibility of perseverance in the life of faith. They are watching how the current community will run, and their own past success serves to challenge the addressees and to condemn any potential failure.
8. **How does the author of Hebrews challenge the audience to think differently about what is "real" in their daily lives?** The author of Hebrews challenges his audience and readers to question what they prioritize in their daily lives. Are worldly concerns and rewards, such as property and security, more "real" than the promises of God and the intangible rewards of pursuing God's agenda? He calls the audience to see the world through God's lens and to recognize the eternal reality of God's promises and rewards. The author challenges the audience to be reshaped by God's priorities rather than the world's, seeing themselves as foreigners in this world on a pilgrimage to their true homeland. The way they spend their time, talents, and resources will reflect what they truly value.