

"Things Not Seen"

(by Bob Pulliam)

Here is one of those little noted aspects of the scriptures that is truly interesting. In Hebrews 11:1 we read that "faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." You've seen that many times, but had you noticed that this one verse establishes the tone for the remainder of the chapter, not just in the word faith, but also in hope and things not seen...? Let's skim the chapter and pull out a few points regarding things not seen.

In verse three what may be seen was made of what may not be seen. Noah was divinely warned of things "not yet seen" (v7). In Abraham's going out, not knowing where he was going, we find one who went not having seen (v8). These died in faith "not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off" (v13). What they saw, they saw by faith. They actually had not seen. Skipping to Moses we find one who "endured as seeing Him who is invisible" (v27). And we could go back and do the same with the idea of hope.

Now I ask, where are we to cast our gaze? These ancients were all looking to what could not be seen. Their gaze was provoked by their faith. Their faith allowed them to see what could not be seen with the eyes of flesh. Does our author tell us where to look?... "Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God." (Heb 12:1f) Many evidences exist for what we see as we look to Jesus. And while we cannot see Him with our physical eyes, we have the greatest and clearest of subjects on which to fix our gaze. Of all mentioned in chapter eleven, none had as clear a point of reference as we have in Jesus.

What should that tell us about the life we live, and the faith we exhibit?