



The Happiness of the Christ: Introduction; the Great Battalion of Witnesses, Heb 10:35-11:38;
the Depravations of *Hoi Polloi*, Heb 11:39-40

The Happiness of the Christ

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The Happiness of the Christ

Introduction

1. Many of you may have recently seen the movie, *The Passion of the Christ*, which dramatized the events that surrounded our Lord's arrest, trials, crucifixion, and death.
2. In our study this week we will emphasize the mental attitude that sustained our Lord's work on the cross.
3. We will introduce our study with an overview of the great cloud of witnesses in Hebrews 11 followed by an exegetical analysis of Hebrews 12:1-2.
4. Jesus Christ fulfilled the salvation plan of God by performing His earthly ministry inside the prototype spiritual life invented by God for the Lord's use during the Incarnation.
5. This system sustained Him during the thirty-three years of His earthly ministry and enabled Him to remain impeccable.
6. His impeccability was manifest to the highest degree when on the cross He received the imputation of all human sins and their subsequent judgment while simultaneously maintaining perfect happiness.
7. Hebrews 12:2 documents this, however, we must first study the context in order to understand the potential impact the happiness of the Christ has on believers in the Church Age.
8. The context begins in Hebrews 10:35 and continues through chapter 11 where we will briefly observe historical illustrations of faith-rest under pressure.

I. The Great Battalion of Witnesses

Hebrews 10:35 - Therefore, do not throw away as worthless your confidence which keeps having a rich distribution of escrow blessings.

v. 36 - For you keep on having need of perseverance so that when you have executed the will of God [**the sophisticated spiritual life**], you may receive the deposit which was promised to you [**conveyance of the escrow account in time and eternity**].

v. 37 - [**Habakkuk 2:3**] For yet in a little while, He who is coming will come and will not delay [**Old Testament application is the Second Advent but the writer of Hebrews applies this prophecy to the imminency of the rapture**].

v. 38 - [**Habakkuk 2:4**] But My righteous one [δικαιος, *dikaïos*] shall live by means of doctrine [πίστις, *pistis*]; and if He retreats from doing so, My soul [**God's**] will not have pleasure in Him.

v. 39 - But we are not of those who retreat to the point of destruction [**sin unto death**], but rather of those who preserve their souls through doctrine.

1. The Greek word *pistis* in Hebrews 10:38 is repeated throughout chapter 11 and the English translation of "doctrine" needs to be clarified. It must be recognized that the noun carries with it several meanings dependent upon its use.



2. There are three grammatical situations that govern how the word *pistis* should be translated:
 - a. When used as an attribute that causes trust or faith: faithfulness, reliability, proof.
 - b. When faith is referred to in the active sense, for example, the act of believing: faith, trust, confidence.
 - c. When used in the instrumental case it refers to that which is believed and is best translated “doctrine.”
3. In this case the writer of Hebrews cites one of Habakkuk’s most oft quoted verses, “The just shall live by faith” (KJV).
4. In verse 38 the adjective *dikaïos* is translated by the King James as “just” but the modern English versions use “righteous.”
5. The word refers to one who is in accordance with *δίκη, dikē*, which denotes that which is right.
6. The believer’s obligation is to organize his spiritual life in accordance with righteous standards of thought, decision, and action. These divine standards are revealed through the canon of Scripture and are referred to by the word *pistis* when used in the instrumental of means.
7. Therefore, the righteous one shall live his life my means of faith, or better: “My righteous one shall live by means of doctrine.”
8. The writer of Hebrews now gives us a roll call of faith-rest heroes who under extreme testing were able to achieve great spiritual victories by means of doctrine:

Hebrews 11:1 -Now doctrine [*πίστις, pistis*] is the assurance [*ὑπόστασις, hypostasis*] of our confidence [*ἐλπίζω, elpizō*] and the evidence [*ἔλεγχος, elenchos*] of things we do not see [*οὐ βλέπω, ou blepō*].

1. To endure testing, the believer must first place faith in the doctrines of the Word of God: *pistis*. To do so, he must not only accept the premise that the Bible is the only revelation from God but that its message is inerrant, complete, and trustworthy.
2. Consequently, subsequent study of the Bible results in the discovery of a guarantee or assurance. If God said it, then it must be true. This assurance is *hypostasis* and produces confidence: *elpizō*.
3. And one’s confidence of the guarantees contained in biblical doctrines produces evidence—*elenchos*—of things which cannot be seen: *ou blepō*.

v. 2 - For by means of doctrine did the heroes of old gain approval.

v. 3 - By means of doctrine we understand that the dispensations were organized by the divine decree so that things which are seen [**the flow of human history**] are not under the control of human power and authority.

9. The writer of Hebrews now includes a list of illustrations contained in a parenthesis that runs from verse 4 through 40. Presented are Old Testament heroes who lived by means of doctrine in order to overcome the challenges of the Invisible War.



10. They were successful not because of confidence in those things that are seen but the unseen. Because they depended upon the faithfulness of God under pressure, the divine decree insured that they each would be honored from the source of the doctrine they knew and applied under pressure.
11. This list of faith-rest heroes is contained in the following verses, each of which begins with the instrumental of means from *pisits*: **πίστις**, *pistei*: “By means of doctrine ... ”:
- v. 4: **Abel** by means of doctrine offered the better sacrifice through which he demonstrated that he was **righteous**: *dikaios*.
 - vv. 5-6: **Enoch** by means of doctrine was transferred into heaven without physical death demonstrating that God considered him to be *dikaios*. He believed in God through faith and was rewarded.
 - v. 7: **Noah** by means of doctrine built an ark in order to avoid an unseen danger revealed by God.
 - v. 8: **Abraham** by means of doctrine, left his home in Ur to look for a place he didn't know depending on God to reveal it to him. He sought the city of the eternal state and with patience dwelt in tents until his death.
 - v. 11: **Sarah** by means of doctrine had confidence that although barren, she would conceive a son whose descendants would be innumerable.
 - v. 17: **Abraham** by means of doctrine was willing to offer up Isaac since he believed God would resurrect his son into eternal life.
 - v. 20: **Isaac** by means of doctrine blessed Jacob and Esau with regard to their future life, Isaac with abundance and Esau with depravity.
 - v. 21: **Jacob** by means of doctrine blessed Ephraim and Manasseh, the sons of Joseph with regard to the Abrahamic and Palestinian covenants.
 - v. 22: **Joseph** by means of doctrine ordered his bones returned from Egypt to Canaan so that he could accompany his fathers in the resurrection.
 - v. 23: The **parents of Moses (Amram and Jochebed** \jok' e-bed\ Exodus 6:20) by means of doctrine hid infant Moses for three months unafraid of Pharaoh Thutmose I.
 - v. 24 : **Moses** by means of doctrine passed up rulership of Egypt looking toward the greater riches in Messiah. By means of faith he left Egypt: he kept the Passover and crossed the Red Sea.
 - v. 30: **Joshua** by means of doctrine encircled Jericho for seven days in order to bring down its walls.
 - v. 31: **Rahab** by means of doctrine protected the Israelite spies and was spared by God.
 - v. 32: **Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah** \jef' tha\, **David, Samuel**, and the **prophets** ...
 - v. 33: by means of doctrine conquered kingdoms, performed acts of righteousness, obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions,
 - v. 34: quenched the power of fire, escaped the sword, were strong in weakness, were mighty in war, and put armies to flight.
 - v. 35: **Women** by means of doctrine received back loved ones from the dead and endured torture.
 - v. 36: **Others** by means of doctrine endured mockings, scourgings, chains, and imprisonment.
 - v. 37: They were stoned (**Zechariah**, son of Jehoiada), sawn in two (**Isaiah**), put to death with the sword (**Uriah** the prophet and **Gedaliah** \ged-a-li' a\, the governor of Judea) ...



12. These faith-rest heroes have endured much because they chose to take a stand for doctrine in the face of violent, cruel, and lethal opposition from the Dark Side.
13. The motivation for taking such a courageous stand was the promise of an eternal future filled with rewards and blessings for loyalty to truth under pressure.
14. However, the perfect plan of God is designed to advance in stages. Therefore, these Old Testament winners although qualified for eternal blessings are still awaiting the fulfillment of the promises.
15. The reason for the delay is revealed in the last two verses of the chapter.

II. *The Depravations of Hoi Polloi*

1. The last two verses of chapter 11 need special treatment so here is how they read in the King James Version:

Hebrews 11:39 - And these all, having obtained a good report through their faith, received not the promise:

v. 40 - God having provided some better thing for us, so that they without us should not be made perfect.

2. Verse 39 opens with the conjunction **καί, kai** which introduces the result of these Old Testament heroes' advance to spiritual maturity and we translate: "And so."
3. This is followed by the nominative masculine plurals of:
πᾶς, pas and **οὗτος, houtos** - "all these"
4. This refers back to the list of heroes listed in verses 4-38. They are referred to in the text by the aorist passive participle of the verb:
μαρτυρέω, martureō - KJV: "having obtained a good report."
5. **Martureō** has an interesting and important etymology. It is a development from the Classical Greek noun, **μάρτυς, martus**, which means "witness." The verb form is defined for us by:

Liddell, Henry George and Robert Scott. *A Greek-English Lexicon*. 9th ed. Rev by Henry Stuart Jones. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 1082:

μαρτυρέω (martureō): bear witness; give evidence; bear witness to or in favor of another, confirm what he says; to give a good report of a person. To testify that a thing is; to acknowledge the value of. Men whose character is approved by testimony.

Kittel, Gerhard (ed.). *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*. Translated by Geoffrey W. Bromiley. (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1967), 4:476; 496-97:

The proper sphere of **μάρτυς** is the legal where it denotes one who can and does speak from personal experience about actions in which he took part and which happened to him. (p. 476)

The Use of μαρτυρέω in the New Testament. Declaration or confirmation on the basis of first-hand knowledge, of individual acts or general facts of experience. "To give a good report," whether actively or passively in the sense of receiving a good report. The meaning is always that on the basis of direct observation the nature or conduct of those concerned is said to be satisfactory and the one who judges is ready in some sense to vouch for it. (496-97)



A special group is formed by passages in which God, the Holy Spirit, or Scripture is the subject of such judgments (Hebrews 11:39) or guarantees the correctness of specific statements. Thus the term can often mean “to declare emphatically, on the guarantee of an existing authority.” (p. 497)

6. The bottom line definition of *martureō* is “to bear witness on behalf of someone or something.” In the case of the roll call of heroes the witness was on behalf of *YHWH* and His Word. These men and women who stood firm in the face of despair, danger, or death are testimonies to their unflinching belief in the absolute rightness of God and the faithfulness of His promises to those who believe and defend them.
7. When faced with varied exigencies these individuals proved to be worthy of blessing and reward in the eternal future. They were so confident in what the Word of God said to them that they were willing to become living testimony to the truth of divine promises.
8. In the context of Hebrews 11:39, *martureō* is in the passive voice. The people who were witnesses testified that the Word of God received their approval. The record proves their loyalty to truth. Therefore they receive back from God His approval of their efforts.
9. It is from the *martureō* word group that we derive the English word “martyr”: a person who voluntarily suffers death as the penalty of witnessing to and refusing to renounce a religion; a person who sacrifices something of great value and especially life itself for the sake of principle.
10. The verb *martureō* is the aorist active participle:

aorist:	Culminative; views the life of these Old Testament martyrs in their entirety but emphasizes the results: Spiritual maturity produces loyalty to truth under pressure which produces rewards and blessing in time and eternity.
	The aorist also emphasizes that these heroes have been approved for blessings in time. Most of the ones mentioned have their names written for all eternity in the Word of God, many were famous and some rich. All experienced dying grace.
	However we will soon learn that these temporal blessings have not yet been parlayed into eternal rewards and blessings.
passive:	These heroes received the action of the verb: they have been divinely approved as martyrs or “good witnesses for the prosecution.”
participle:	Circumstantial; indicates that these martyrs reached spiritual maturity and went out under dying grace.
	How they were able to accomplish all these things is brought out by the prepositional phrase:
	δία, <i>dia</i> plus the instrumental of means of πίστις, <i>pistis</i> : “by means of doctrine”
11. Hebrews 11:6 has already established the fact that doctrine is the key to obtaining approval from God:



Hebrews 11:6 -Without doctrine it is impossible to please God because anyone who comes to Him must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who earnestly seek Him.

12. Expanded translation for as far as we have gone in:

Hebrews 11:39 - And so, as a result of these witnesses [**martyrs**], having received divine approval by means of doctrine ...

13. Next comes what at first appears to be a miscarriage of justice but we will learn that it actually confirms the fact that Jesus Christ controls history and the plan of God moves forward on God's schedule not man's. We have the negative conjunction **οὐκ, ouk** which negates the action of the verb which follows: the aorist middle indicative of:

κομίζω, komizō - "to receive something that is owed to you"; "to receive what is promised"; "to receive as payment for what one has done during his life in the body."

14. God designed eternal blessings for Old Testament winners in eternity past. Once these believers attained spiritual maturity in time, God owed them these rewards and blessings in eternity. However, the negative **ouk** tells us that they have still not received these blessings.

aorist: Constantive; gathers up into one entirety the eternal blessings for Old Testament winners.

middle: Direct; refers the results of the action directly to the agent with reflexive force.

indicative: With the negative **ouk** indicates the reality of the fact these blessings have not been conveyed as yet in eternity.

That which has not yet been conveyed is identified next by the accusative singular direct object:

ἐπαγγελία, epangelia - "promises"

15. The corrected and expanded translation of the verse reads as follows:

Hebrews 11:39 - And so, as a result of these witnesses [**martyrs**], having received divine approval by means of doctrine, did not receive to themselves the promise.

16. The basic promise to Old Testament saints is the kingdom to be introduced and then governed by the Messiah. Those who believe this testimony and put their lives on the line to defend it not only become martyrs but also earn blessings and rewards when the fulfillment of the promise becomes an historical reality.