The Forgotten Foundations of Faith

What is “Faith?”

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Hebrews 11:1-3, 6

◊ “Now faith is the reality/substance/confidence of what is hoped for, the proof/evidence of what is not seen. For by this our ancestors were approved. ³ By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was made from things that are not visible...⁶ And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that He rewards those who seek him.”

A) WHAT FAITH IS NOT

B) WHAT IS NEEDED FOR REAL FAITH/COMPONENTS

C) INVISIBLE EVIDENCE or EVIDENCE OF THE INVISIBLE?

Common Misconceptions on what is meant by “faith”/wrong definitions of “faith”:

1) Un-evidenced (NO evidence/reason)

2) Anti-Evidence (AGAINST evidence/reason)

3) Belief v. Knowledge

4) Must be held with ABSOLUTE certainty


All those descriptions are used of the faithful, and that’s just in that one book! On top of that, the most frequent description used in the New Testament to refer to someone’s conversion to Christianity is to say they were “persuaded.”

“FAITH” WORD IN THE NT (Greek) – pistis and nomitzo – not William James “Believin’ what you know ain’t true real hard!” or PENTECOSTALS “just believe”

FAITH is NOT a blind leap.
BIBLICAL FAITH is an informed, evidenced TRUST (Marriage analogy/Bank $ analogy).

ROMAN CENTURION “greatest faith in all of Israel” (shocking) was based on the evidence of Jesus miracle work in Palestine during that time.

Verse 6 says that you cannot only believe “that it is true for you” (whatever that means – that is just not the way truth works logically), but you must believe God is true for everyone, even the ones who deny Him! To say, “I think God and Christianity is true for me, but I cannot say that it is true period - objectively true for all - I cannot proclaim or defend or confess/profess that!” is to introduce a foreign, non-biblical view of faith in God and Christ! Greg Koukl, “Christianity is INSULIN not ICE CREAM – it makes objective truth statements about reality and offers an external, real cure for a real spiritual disease of pathological self-centeredness – SIN and REBELLION.”

Biblical Faith makes us reach & look for realities that EVENTUALLY surpass our natural abilities of discovery.

WHAT IS BASIC to FAITH? Heb. 11

◊ THAT GOD EXISTS (vs.6)

◊ THAT GOD HAS A WILL/THAT GOD CAN MAKE DECISIONS/CHOICES (vs. 3,6)

◊ THAT GOD DESIRES RELATIONSHIP (vs.6)

◊ SUBTEXT – “SEEK HIM” - That GOD has good reasons to currently remain largely hidden to us

◊ There have always really only been two BASIC FAITH/TRUST premises/ideas:

1. There is no God so the universe is self-explanatory/matter is ultimate/there is nothing but the visible

& on the other hand...
2. God exists & created it.

Romans 1:18-20

18 “The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the
godlessness and wickedness of people, who suppress the truth
by their wickedness, 19 since what may be known about God is
PLAIN (obvious) to them, because God has made it PLAIN
(obvious) to them. 20 For since the creation of the world God’s
invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature — have
been clearly seen, being understood from what has been
made, so that people are without excuse.”

Christians are people who look at the seen world, and CONCLUDE THAT
the material world/the visible world is not self-explanatory - it doesn't
explain itself! We understand that the world, the universe, all that
is seen did not create itself - that which is seen did not come from that
which is visible!

If there is a God, then the universe, the material order and the cosmos makes
sense! But if there is no God and all there is...is matter (things that have
weight, mass and are spatially extended), then the universe doesn't make
sense! Christians are not ones who have skipped over thinking but rather
those who have reflected and concentrated and reasoned about the
universe/our world and have concluded that if all that exists is that which
we can see, then the world life makes little sense.
The Case for the Existence of God

www.ColdCaseChristianity.com  www.str.org

(1) The Temporal Nature of the Cosmos (Cosmological)
(a) The Universe began to exist
(b) Anything that begins to exist must have a cause
(c) Therefore, the Universe must have a cause
(d) This cause must be eternal (uncaused), non-spatial, immaterial, atemporal, and personal (having the ability to willfully cause the beginning of the universe)
(e) The cause fits the description we typically assign to God

(2) The Appearance of Design (Teleological)
(a) Human artifacts (like watches) are products of intelligent design
(b) Many aspects and elements of our universe resemble human artifacts
(c) Like effects typically have like causes
(d) Therefore, it is highly probable the appearance of design in the Universe is simply the reflection of an intelligent designer
(d) Given the complexity and expansive nature of the Universe, this designer must be incredibly intelligent and powerful (God)

(3) The Existence of Objective Moral Truth (Axiological)
(a) There is an objective (transcendent) moral law
(b) Every law has a law giver
(c) Therefore, there is an objective (transcendent) moral law giver
(d) The best explanation for this objective (transcendent) law giver is God

(4) The Existence of Absolute Laws of Logic (Transcendent)
(a) The laws of logic exist
   i. The laws of logic are conceptual laws
   ii. The laws of logic are transcendent
   iii. The laws of logic pre-existed humans
(b) All conceptual laws reflect the mind of a law giver
(c) The best and most reasonable explanation for the kind of mind necessary for the existence of the transcendent, objective, conceptual laws of logic is a transcendent, objective, eternal Being (God)

(5) The Unique Nature of Our World and Universe (Anthropic)
(a) Our universe appears uniquely designed so:
   i. Life can exist
   ii. This same life can examine the universe
(b) This unique design cannot be the result of random chance or unguided probabilities
(c) There is, therefore, a God who designed the universe to support human life and reveal His existence as creator of the Cosmos

COLD-CASE CHRISTIANITY:
A Homicide Detective Investigates the Claims of the Gospels
DESIGN ARGUMENTS & EVIDENCES

BASED ON THE DETECTION (in nature/the world) OF:

- PLANNING,
- PURPOSE,
- INTENTION,
- FORSIGHT,
- INTELLIGENCE,
- INFORMATION

I simply do not have the time to do even a cursory run of the evidences and reasons for God’s existence in our allotted time – so I will instead give a brutally basic summary (I usually lay this one out over about 25 hours of in-class instruction) of what is conceded by our loudest opponents as the evidence/argument for God they fear most – by their estimation the most powerful data points of the ensemble of evidences (and it is an ensemble) is #2 below...

Cambridge’s Stephen Meyer puts it this way, “Three key scientific discoveries that I thought jointly supported theistic belief GOD exists and ACTS — what I call ‘the return of the God hypothesis’:

- **(1)** evidence from cosmology suggesting that the material universe had a beginning;
- **(2)** evidence from physics showing that from the beginning the universe has been “finely tuned” to allow for the possibility of life; and
- **(3)** evidence from biology establishing that since the beginning large amounts of new functional genetic information have arisen in our biosphere to make new forms of life possible—implying, as I had argued before, the activity of a designing intelligence.” Meyer then goes on to sustain the claim and anticipate and dispatch with objections.
BASIC DESIGN ARGUMENT - FAMILY/GROUP OF TELEOLOGICAL ARGUMENTS
(Dr. J.P. Moreland - The God Question) “The Human ear can discriminate among some 400,000 different sounds within the span of about ten octaves and can make the subtle distinction between music played by violin or viola. The human heart pumps roughly a million barrels of blood during a normal lifetime, which would fill more than three supertankers. Human eyes are composed of more than two million working parts and can, under the right conditions, discern the light of a candle at a distance of 14 miles. The eye bears a striking analogy to a telescope: the eye was made for vision, the telescope, for assisting it. Both utilize a sophisticated lens. Both reflect and manipulate light. Both are able to bring an object into proper focus. The muscles surrounding the soft lens of the eye move to bring an object into focus, and a telescope uses dials to move the lens. What are we to make of these facts? These and myriads of additional facts confirm what is obvious, that we are the handiwork of a wise Designer. In fact, the evidence for God from design is most likely the most popular argument for God. The design argument goes something like this: certain facts about the world cannot be explained by impersonal physical causes, conditions, forces and laws of nature. But a personal, intelligent, mind explanation works perfectly.” We have no reason to think of these facts about the world as unexplainable. It is better to use a form of explanation, personal intelligent explanation, to explain them. Moreover, some of these facts have characteristics that clearly point to only one source, an enormously powerful intelligent agent.
“GOLDILOCKS EFFECT” – we live in a “just right” universe

- WHETHER it is the GRAND RULES OF EXISTENCE (physics) – MACRO
- OR the information contained in our cells/basic building blocks of life (microbiology) - MICRO

- In ALL of our experience,
- CODES have coders,
- PROGRAMS have programmers,
- Things that exhibit a “TUNED” quality have TUNERS,
- Events and Results that appear PLANNED normally have PLANNERS.
- Things that look “overwhelmingly designed” likely are designed by a Being (GOD) who could account for the EFFECT in question.
- These parameters or conditions and micro entities are largely invisible to us but are measurable and speak to us of GOD!
Atheist Oxford philosopher Peter Millican: “The argument is worth taking very seriously. I am a fan of the argument...the fine-tuning argument has the right structure to deliver the conclusion that theists want...The argument points to at least deism, and possibly theism...The argument is not based on ignorance; it is rooted in the latest results from the frontiers of science.”

As theoretical physicist Paul Davies (former agnostic TURNED DEIST) puts it: "It is hard to resist the impression that the present structure of the universe, apparently so sensitive to minor alterations in the numbers, has been rather carefully thought out ... the seemingly miraculous concurrence of [these] numerical values must remain the most compelling evidence for cosmic design...There is for me powerful evidence that there is something going on behind it all...It seems as though somebody has fine tuned nature’s numbers to make the Universe...The impression of design is overwhelming.

These inferences and conclusions (from what we can see to what we cannot) are based on:

- COMMON SENSE (reason/logic),
- EVIDENCE
- and EXPERIENCE – not a lack of these
BIBLICAL CONVICTION/KNOWLEDGE that matches evidence → THE VISIBLE
DID NOT ORIGINATE FROM THE VISIBLE – THERE ARE REALITIES THAT
AFFECT MATTER BUT ARE NOT THEMSELVES MADE OF MATTER –
faith extends beyond what we can learn through our five senses – “substance
of things hoped for…” – substance = GRK - hypostasis = that which stands
under – that which is foundational supportive/undergirding

So you can reject a God behind the universe but not without losing the
foundations that make sense of value, rights, morality, order, choice, logic
and reason (connecting your thoughts to reality) - just the features that make
life worth living! But...

If you start with a premise to your theory that leads you to the belief
(philosophers tell us these are the logical implications and entailments) that
order is incoherent, reason is untrustworthy, choice is an illusion, value
and love (just chemical reactions) are unreal or foolish because they
cannot be measured like a liquid...THEN FRIENDS, it is time to change
your premise or primary idea (time to jettison the awful incoherent idea
that visible is self-explanatory - the only things that are real are things that
can be explained by the laws of physics and chemistry or detected with your
five senses -

An idea (materialism) that leads you to believe logically that my loves,
my thoughts, my trust, my plans, my ethics are all imaginary or unreal
is one that needs to be discarded.

If your premise leads you to conclusions you know are wrong, then it is time
to change your premise or primary idea.

CONCLUSION: THIS HEBREWS SECTION reaches its climax with Jesus in 12.2,
and then urges the readers to live within the story for themselves (12.4-17),
before declaring what the goal of the journey is (12.18-24) and what will
happen at the end (12.25-29). Chapters 11 and 12, taken together, thus tell the
story from creation (11.3) to new creation (12.28), from covenant (11.8-29)
to new covenant (12.24).
The question we should all be asking is: “How can I please this awesome God who is loving and just?” There was only one person who was well pleasing to God (Jesus at baptism) - so that we could be well pleasing to God.

God was so mindful of us that He came to us to save us and set aside His glory so that we could have reunion with Him. We live in a world in which our students are going to a psychology class and a sociology class in college, and they're told their big problem and everyone's problem is “a lack of self-esteem and secret forces that thwart their dreams by others”...this is confusing and incorrect, but it's doubly confusing when they go into the philosophy and biology courses and they're told they're “really nothing with no purpose and no direction except perhaps survival!”

The gospel tells us a radically different way of viewing the world and viewing ourselves; we look around at the trees, the stars, the moon, the grass, the sky and the clouds, and they sing to us two things:

one, God is a great unimaginably powerful Creator and supremely intelligent and two, He loves us and He's mindful of us, and we can see in the fine-tuning of our universe and solar system the great care that this world should express to us from our loving Creator. HE was mindful of us?? What is man, that you are mindful of him? (Ps. 8:4-8)

Psalm 19:1 – 4

1 The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands.
2 Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they reveal knowledge.
3 They have no speech, they use no words; no sound is heard from them.
4 Yet their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world.