

# We See Jesus (8): Living in the Real World

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(Hebrews 11)

## I. Introduction

- A. Remember the day Saddam Hussein's regime fell? Great celebration throughout all Iraq!
1. The next day was a lot different— there was widespread looting throughout Bagdad
    - a. The message was clear—freedom is great and all, but a free TV was much better!
    - b. Real world is about money and the things of money; real world what you cash in.
    - c. As it turned out in Iraq, “freedom” was just another word for nothing left to lose
  2. A preacher I admire just retired after 40 years at same church (*that's why I admire him*)
    - a. I thought of sermon I heard him preach when I heard he retired (**Mt 6:25,31-32**)
      - 1) The KJV says “*take no thought.*” Material things are what pagans think about
      - 2) So he cashed in 401k and gave it to the poor (*Jesus and the Rich Young Ruler*)
    - b. He was trusting God to take care of his future—that future is here for him now
    - c. Maybe he softened his views on stewardship investment— *must admire his faith!*
- B. We tend to dismiss people like him and say, “*They just don't live in the real world.*”
1. But if money is the real world, then why in the name of Fort Knox are we here today?
    - a. If the material world is real world, doesn't that mean that the world of faith isn't
    - b. Is what we do in church really taking something of a break from the real world
      - 1) We sing some songs, read scripture, eat at symbolic meal at symbolic table
      - 2) And then with our faith bolster a bit, we're ready to return to the real world
    - c. Is that right? Is the world of money and the things of money really the real world?
  2. Have you ever wanted God to break in to world in a Sinai moment... one more time?
    - a. Just once, that He'd make mountains quake, lightning brake, and the earth shake?
    - b. Just at that moment when something offensive is done (*last week in Charlottesville*)
      - 1) His voice would boom from heaven, “*I am the Lord!*” Wouldn't that be great?
      - 2) Well, when that exact things happen, it wasn't see as so great! (**Exo 20:18-20**)
- C. We walk by faith and not sight (**2 Cor 5:7**). Faith for us is always about an unseen world
1. And maybe for some of us, it's also an unreal world; the real world is the seen world.
  2. So we hedge our bets. We go to church, sing the songs, and give lip service to faith
    - a. All the while what we focus on is the material. “*Business is business*” so they say
    - b. What captures our attention and is the focus of our life is the world of the seen.

## II. Hebrews and the Real World

- A. This was the basic struggle for the first readers of the book of Hebrews.
1. They faltered between Judaism and Christianity; at some level Judaism was more real
    - a. Judaism was their history and their heritage; a way of life for their family & friends.
    - b. Judaism was filled with pomp and circumstance liturgy, a religion that was seen.
  2. For struggling Jewish believers, Judaism must have seemed more like a real world
  3. So what the writer will do at this point in his book is to point to the nature of faith
- B. I imagine that **Hebrews 11** is the best known part of Hebrews, “*Hall of Fame of Faith.*”
1. Writer begins this roll call with a definition of faith (**Heb 11:1**). *Two words pop out*
    - a. First is **hypostasis**, “*confidence*” (NIV), “*reality*” (CSB) or “*being sure*” (NET)
      - 1) It meant “*that which stands under*” and suggests a solid foundation to stand on
      - 2) For the Christian, that solid foundation, that place to stand is our faith in Jesus
    - b. Second is **elegchos**, “*assurance*” (NIV), “*conviction*” (ESV) or “*evidence*” (NLT)
      - 1) This was legal term for evidence presented in court & ruling made on evidence
      - 2) Faith is unseen; we walk by faith, not sight, but it about evidence & conviction
  2. Jesus puts his blessing on us when He speaking of faith in the unseen (**John 20:29**)
    - a. Faith is in things not yet seen to be sure; it is also in evidence and a place to stand.
    - b. Archimedes famous line, “*Give me a place to stand and I will move the world.*”
    - c. For us, that solid place cannot be seen, but faith boldly proclaims it is real world.

## III. Living in the Real World: Heroes of the Faith

- A. My major influences as a kid were of course Mom and Dad, but I did have my heroes
1. We just lost one— Glen Campbell; he was from Mom’s hometown of Delight, AR
    - a. Heard him in concert as a kid; Dad got us backstage and we hung out for 15 min
    - b. Family legend is that I didn’t wash my hand for two weeks after shaking Glen’s
    - c. **Factoid:** Did you know Glen’s best and golfing buddy was rocker Alice Cooper?
  2. OK, hero worship is childish, but then it is a childishness that prepares us for life  
*“If I have never been fascinated in my childhood by my heroes and the wonders of life, it is harder to fascinate me later with the call to duty. (Josiah Royce)*
  3. So maybe a little “*hero worship*” when directed properly can be a productive thing.
    - a. **Problem:** Who do kids have today? Self-absorbed movie, music and sports stars
    - b. Charles Barclay’s old line, “*I ain’t no role model.*” He was, just a really bad one!
    - c. Well, now that Glen is gone— I guess there is always Alice Cooper!

- B. Childish or not, these discouraged Hebrew believers needed to see their heroes of old
1. They needed to see men and women of the past who lived what it meant to be faithful.
    - a. They needed to see lives of hardship and victory so they'd encouraged by both.
    - b. These "*feeble arms and weak knees*" needed examples of real lives of real faith.
  2. The theme that runs through this text on faith is that the faithful see what can't be
    - a. Remember, he has already said faith is "*assurance of what we do not see*" (**11:1**).
    - b. Over and over, that is the characteristic the writer highlights— seeing the unseen
- C. Notice the example the some of the more prominent of these heroes of faith
1. **Noah** was faithful because he trusted God in things "*not yet seen*" (**Hebrews 11:7**).
    - a. God told Noah to build an ark because there would be a great coming flood
      - 1) Problem: Noah had never seen an ark or a flood. He had never seen it rain!
      - 2) He trusted God, and he was able to see what was unseen except through faith
    - b. Noah's peers thought he needed to live in real world; he was the only one who did
  2. **Abraham** was faithful because he a city that could not be seen (**Hebrews 11:8-10**).
    - a. Abraham wasn't looking for an earthly city; he left Ur, the greatest city on earth
    - b. Abraham looked for a city that could not be seen— whose builder was God himself
      - 1) Because he looked for that city, he never quite fit in to the world around him.
      - 2) He was a pilgrim and stranger in world—he never fit in the world of the junk
  3. **Moses** was able to see "*him who is invisible*" (**Hebrews 11:24-27**).
    - a. Moses makes a choice which on the surface seems to make no sense at all
    - b. Why would he give up status, power, fame fortune to identity with bunch of slaves?
    - c. Because faith lets you see the real world, a world unseen by the world of junk
- D. The writer points us to these examples of the greatest heroes of the faith.
1. He wants his readers and us to understand two great things about these heroes—
    - a. **First**, they saw the unseen world of faith as beings the real world.
    - b. **Second**, they never quite fit into the seen world of the here and now
  2. This was instructive to a church that was about to give up on faith.
    - a. Those who live in the world of faith will never fully fit into this world!
    - b. We sing "*This world is not my home...*," but do we sing it like we mean it?
      - 1) Noah, Abraham and Moses certainly did! They lived in the real world of faith.
      - 2) And they found their city... and we can too (**Reading: Hebrews 11:13-16**)

## IV. Conclusion:

A. *The Gods Must Be Crazy* is story of a tribe in Africa that never contacted outside world.

1. One day an airplane flew over their village and someone threw a coke bottle.
  - a. They decided that the bottle was a gift from the gods and thus was of great value
  - b. They found many uses for great gift—pounding meal, curing skins, making music
    - 1) In their culture, there was no personal property; everything was shared equally
    - 2) The gods gave them only one of the great gift, and they starting fighting over it
2. It tore community apart; what they thought was of great value was really just junk!
  - a. They decided that the gods must have been crazy to have given the gift to them
  - b. They began a great journey to the edge of the world to throw it back to the gods
  - c. I guess they didn't really the bottle was no deposit, no return!

B. Faith is the ability to see what is true and real in a world that is filled with junk

1. Those that live in the real world of faith will be pilgrims and strangers here
  - a. That will mean we may not seem to quite fit into the world of junk around us
  - b. That was true of Noah, Abraham, Moses and the other heroes of the faith
  - c. It will be true of us as well when find ourselves living in the real world of faith
2. What are we going to see as the real world today? Are we going to settle for junk?
  - a. Many of us, like the Hebrew Christians, have already seemed to have settled
  - b. We seem to see the junk more clearly than we see the things of faith and of God
    - 1) We spend our time and attention on things that really won't matter very long
    - 2) We let slip by things that will matter for all eternity. We settle for junk!
  - c. Faith is what gives us the ability to see that which cannot be seen with material eye.
    - 1) Faith lets us look beyond the garbage to a city whose builder & maker is God.
    - 2) We must follow in steps of heroes and not settle for anything less than that city

C. We live here and now in what is not the real world and is not the end game

1. God gives us blessings to enjoy, an identity embrace, and a mission to live
  - a. But we enjoy material blessings with the certainty they will not last—they are junk
  - b. They are but tool we are to use as we live out our identity and fulfill our mission
2. The real world is the world of faith—that world is the only world that can last.
  - a. Such a vision of the real world will change our lives and change our focus
  - b. And that is the challenge for you and I today... and that is our invitation!