

# Hebrews 11:2-7

Faith is “conviction or proof of the things that are not seen”

- Faith has conviction, evidence or proof of what it is trusting in and what it is waiting for.
- Faith is a confidence that something in the future that is not yet seen or measurable that has been promised will “soon” manifest to be experienced and seen.
- Faith is confident trust in God as revealed in his Word.
- Faith trusts in God’s unseen realities. (For example, the universe at one point was an unseen reality only known by God.)
- Faith is NOT blind.
- Faith is NOT contrary to Reality
- Faith is NOT a vague hope based only in your imagination
- Faith is NOT wishful thinking.
- Faith is NOT you wishing the world and situations would match your desires or baseless preconceived expectations.

11:2 – “For by it the people of old received their commendation.

1722 [e]	3778 [e]	1063 [e]	3140 [e]	3588 [e]	4245 [e]
en	tautē	gar	emartyrēthēsan	hoi	presbyteroi
2 ἐν	ταύτη	γὰρ	ἐμαρτυρήθησαν	οἱ	πρεσβύτεροι .
In	this	for	were commended	the	ancients
Prep	DPro-DFS	Conj	V-AIP-3P	Art-NMP	Adj-NMP

<u>ἐν</u>	<u>οὗτος</u>	<u>γὰρ</u>	<u>μαρτυρέω</u>	<u>ὁ</u>	<u>πρεσβύτερος</u>
by	this	for	obtained witness	the	elders

1. “**commended for**” or “obtained witness” is aorist indicative passive which means someone else testified to their faith. That someone else is God.
  - a. People with faith received commendation, or a good recommendation or a good testimony, from God.
  - b. God provided a character witness for these people because of their faith. They believed what God said before they could see it.
2. “**elders**” is the list of names that follows in chapter 11.
3. The author is describing what faith looks like in the life of a believer.

**11:3 – “By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible.**

4102 [e]	3539 [e]	2675 [e]	3588 [e]	165 [e]	4487 [e]	2316 [e]	1519 [e]	3588 [e]	3361 [e]	1537 [e]	5316 [e]	3588 [e]
Pistei	nooumen	katērtisthai	tous	aiōnas	rĕhmati	Theou	eis	to	mĕ	ek	phainomenōn	to
3 Πίστει	νοοῦμεν	κατηρτίσθαι	τοὺς	αἰῶνας	ῥήματι	Θεοῦ	, εἰς	τὸ	μὴ	ἐκ	φαινομένων	, τὸ
By faith	we understand	to have been formed	the	universe	by [the] word	of God	so that	which	not	from [things]	being visible	the things
N-DFS	V-PIA-1P	V-RNM/P	Art-AMP	N-AMP	N-DNS	N-GMS	Prep	Art-ANS	Adv	Prep	V-PPM/P-GNP	Art-ANS

991 [e]	1096 [e]
blepomenon	gegonenai
βλεπόμενον	γεγονέναι .
being seen	have been made
V-PPM/P-ANS	V-RNA

πίστις      νοιέω      καταρτίζω      ὁ      αἰών      ὄημα      θεός  
 by faith      we understand      to have been adjusted      the      ages      word      of God

εἰς ὃ      μὴ      ἐκ      φαίνω      ὃ      βλέπω      γίνομαι  
 so as      not      out      things appearing      the thing      being seen      to have become

1. To understand anything about faith and reality we must understand that it all began when God spoke. Everything that is seen comes from the unseen.
  - a. This is **ex nihilo** (Latin for “from nothing”) which is the doctrine that God made things out of nothing other than his will and his word.
  - b. The Greek/Roman cosmology (the science of the origin and development of the universe) of 63 AD taught that matter existed eternally. And, the gods organized the visible universe out of some kind of visible, preexisting matter.
  - c. Verses that support Hebrews 11:3 are:
    - i. Genesis 1:1 – “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”
    - ii. Psalm 33:6, 9 – “By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, their starry host by the breath of his mouth....For he spoke, and it came to be; iii. he commanded, and it stood firm.
    - iv. Psalm 90:2 – “Before the mountains were born or you brought forth the whole world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.
    - v. John 1:3 – “Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.
    - vi. Acts 14:15 – “Friends, why are you doing this? We too are only human, like you. We are bringing you good news, telling you to turn from these worthless things to the living God, who made the heavens and the earth and the sea and everything in them.”
    - vii. Romans 4:17 – “As it is written: “I have made you a father of many nations.”[a] He is our father in the sight of God, in whom he believed—the God who gives life to the dead and calls into being things that were not.”
    - viii. Colossians 1:16 – “For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him.”
2. Faith is the doorway into reality. Faith is not fantasy, but confidence in the truth. In this case the truth comes to us in the forms of promises or the word of God
3. νοιέω “understand” expresses a mental perception and not a sensuous perception.

4. [καταρτίζω](#) “**was formed**” or “to have been adjusted” speaks of the creation and its vast variety and its unity. The tense of the word indicates this is still seen in creation.
5. [αἰών](#) “**ages**” speaks of Time and Space
6. [ῥῆμα](#) “**Rhema**” or “word” “utterance” is the spoken word and is not *logos*
7. Romans 1:20 Paul says we can perceive or understand the invisible through having seen the visible:  
 “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.”

**11:4 – “By faith Abel offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain, through which he was commended as righteous, God commending him by accepting his gifts. And through his faith, though he died, he still speaks.**

4102 [e]	4119 [e]	2378 [e]	6 [e]	3844 [e]	2535 [e]	4374 [e]	3588 [e]	2316 [e]	1223 [e]	3739 [e]	3140 [e]	1510 [e]	1342 [e]
Pistei	pleiona	thysian	Habel	para	Kain	prosēnenken	tō	Theō	di'	hēs	emartyrēthē	einai	dikaios
4 Πίστει	πλείονα	θυσίαν	Ἄβελ	παρὰ	Καῖν	προσήνεγκεν	τῷ	Θεῷ	, δι'	ἧς	ἐμαρτυρήθη	εἶναι	δίκαιος ,
By faith	a more excellent	sacrifice	Abel	than	Cain	offered	-	to God	through	which	he was testified	to be	righteous
N-DFS	Adj-AFS-C	N-AFS	N-NMS	Prep	N-AMS	V-AIA-3S	Art-DMS	N-DMS	Prep	RelPro-GFS	V-AIP-3S	V-PNA	Adj-NMS

3140 [e]	1909 [e]	3588 [e]	1435 [e]	846 [e]	3588 [e]	2316 [e]	2532 [e]	1223 [e]	846 [e]	599 [e]	2089 [e]	2980 [e]
martyrountos	epi	tois	dōrois	autou	tou	Theou	kai	di'	autēs	apothanōn	eti	lalei
μαρτυροῦντος	ἐπὶ	τοῖς	δώροις	αὐτοῦ	τοῦ	Θεοῦ ;	καὶ	δι'	αὐτῆς ,	ἀποθανῶν ,	ἔτι	λαλεῖ .
bearing witness	to	the	gifts	of him	-	God	and	through	it	having died	still	he speaks
V-PPA-GMS	Prep	Art-DNP	N-DNP	PPro-GM3S	Art-GMS	N-GMS	Conj	Prep	PPro-GF3S	V-APA-NMS	Adv	V-PIA-3S

[πίστις](#)    [πλείων](#)                    [θυσία](#)            [Ἄβελ](#)            [παρὰ](#)            [Καῖν](#)            [προσφέρω](#)    [ὁ](#)  
 By faith    a greater (a better)    sacrifice    Abel            than            Cain            offered

[θεός](#)            [διά](#)            [ὅς](#)            [μαρτυρέω](#)            [εἰμί](#)            [δίκαιος](#)            [μαρτυρέω](#)  
 to God    through    which    he obtained witness    to be            just            witnessing

[ἐπὶ](#) [ὁ](#)            [δῶρον](#)            [αὐτός](#) [ὁ](#)            [θεός](#) [καί](#) [διά](#) [αὐτός](#) [ἀποθνήσκω](#) [ἔτι](#) [λαλέω](#)  
 over the    gifts            of him            God    and    through    it            having died    still    speaks

Genesis 4:3-5 – Abel and Cain brought offerings “in the course of time” which means at the appointed time or appropriate season.

### A Better Sacrifice. But Why Was it Better?

It says in 4:4-5 “The Lord looked with favor on Abel and his offering, but on Cain and his offering he did not look with favor.” There was something favorable about both Abel and his offering. While at the same time something unfavorable about both Cain and his offering. Abel’s sacrifice indicated faith in the sacrifice for sin and Abel’s righteous life indicated his faith was genuine. Cain’s sacrifice was unfavorable because it represented works and Cain’s life was one of sin in attitude and deed. This is a debated statement since there is no clear indication that the sacrifice was a sin offering.

Hebrews 9:22 supports the need for blood in the sacrifice: “without shedding of blood there occurs no forgiveness.”

The writer of Hebrews credits the acceptance of Abel's sacrifice was because of his faith.

The Masoretic text says:

“And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord. And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering; but unto Cain and to his offering He had not respect. And Cain as very wroth, and his countenance fell. And the Lord said unto Cain: ‘Why art thou wroth? And why is thy countenance fallen?’ **If thou doest well. Shall it not be lifted up?** And if thou doest not well, sin croucheth at the door; and unto thee is its desire, but thou mayest rule over it.”

The Septuagint says:

“And it was so after some time that Cain brought of the fruits of the earth a sacrifice to the Lord. And Abel also brought of the firstborn of his sheep and of his fatlings and God looked upon Abel and his gifts, but Cain and his sacrifices he regarded not, and Cain was exceedingly sorrowful and his countenance fell. And the Lord God said to Cain, Why art thou become very sorrowful and why is thy countenance fallen? **Hast thou not sinned if thou hast brought it rightly, but not rightly divided it?** be still, to thee shall be his submission, and thou shalt rule over him.”

Philo says:

“Abel’s offering was living, Cain’s was lifeless. His was prior in age and quality, Cain’s was inferior. His was superior in strength and fatness, Cain’s was weaker.”

Josephus says:

“The brothers having decided to sacrifice to God, Cain brought the fruits of the cultivated ground and of trees, while Abel brought milk and the firstlings of his flocks. This latter offering gave the greater pleasure to God, who is honored by those things which grow spontaneously and in accordance with nature, and not by those things which are forcibly produced by the ingenuity of covetous man.”

Midrash Genesis Tanna says:

“Cain brought of the fruits of the earth, that is to say, less valuable things.”  
*(Midrash is based on the Hebrew word for “interpretation” or “exegesis”. A midrash is a book which contains compilation of teachings on a particular book and its verses. It is a Jewish commentary on the Hebrew scriptures.)*

Palestinian Targum has Abel saying to Cain:

“The fruits of my works were better than yours and took precedence over yours; so it was my sacrifice that was accepted as well-pleasing.”  
*(Targum is a translation of the Hebrew scriptures that reflect the rabbinic interpretation.)*

### **Sin Offering or a Thanksgiving Offering of First Fruits?**

Masoretic text says: “If thou doest well. Shall it not be lifted up?” indicating Abel was accepted based on his actions and Cain was rejected because of his actions.

Abel then is recognized in Genesis 4 as being righteous. This is supported through out the rest of scripture:

Matthew 23:35 – “And so upon you will come all the righteous blood that has been shed on earth, from **the blood of righteous Abel** to the blood of Zechariah son of Berekiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar.”

1 John 3:12 – “Do not be like Cain, who belonged to the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because **his own actions were evil and his brother’s were righteous.**”

Proverb 15:8 – The Lord detests the sacrifice of the **wicked**, but the prayer of the **upright** pleases him.”

### **How Could Righteous Deeds Be Called Faith?**

Hebrews 10:38, “My righteous one will live by faith. If he shrinks back I will not be pleased with him.”

Hebrews 11:6, “Without faith it is impossible to please God.”

Basically, Abel had faith in God and the result was righteous deeds.

This is the basis of the judgment of the sheep and goats in Matthew 25:31. We must assume that the reason the righteous deeds were done to the Jews by the “sheep” was because they received, understood and acted on the knowledge revealed by God.

### **“when God spoke well of his offerings” refers to God’s Approval in Gen. 4**

Fire from the Lord to consume a sacrifice and approve the worship and location:

1. Leviticus 9:24 – the tabernacle
2. Judges 6:21 – Gideon
3. 1 Kings 18:38 – Elijah
4. 1 Chronicles 21:26 – David on Jebusites threshing floor (Mt. Moriah future temple mount)
5. 2 Chronicles 7:1 – Solomon at temple
6. Also, consider Abram’s covenant cutting ceremony with God in Genesis 15:17

### **“by faith he still speaks, even though he is dead”**

In Genesis 4:10, “Your brother’s blood cries out to me from the ground.”

Abel is still speaking to God today by asking for vindication.

This will come on judgment day.

POINT: Abel is still living by faith as he waits for his vindication.

See Revelation 6:9-11

See Hebrews 12:24 – Abel’s blood cries out for justice and judgment. Jesus’ blood cries out or speaks forgiveness and reconciliation.

Death does not stop the voice or the message of faith.

Abel was the first man to die yet his voice of faith is still speaking.

11:5 – “By faith Enoch was taken up so that he should not see death, and he was not found, because God had taken him. Now before he was taken he was commended as having pleased God.

4102 [e]	1802 [e]	3346 [e]	3588 [e]	3361 [e]	3708 [e]	2288 [e]	2532 [e]	3756 [e]	2147 [e]	1360 [e]	3346 [e]	846 [e]
Pistei	Henōch	metotothē	tou	mē	idein	thanaton	kai	ouch	hēurisketo	dioti	metethēken	auton
5 ΠΙΣΤΕΙ	Ἐνώχ	ΜΕΤΕΤΕΘΗ	, τοῦ	μὴ	ἰδεῖν	θάνατον	; καὶ	οὐχ	ἠύρισκετο	, διότι	μετέθηκεν	αὐτὸν
By faith	Enoch	was translated	-	not	to see	death	and	not	was he found	because	had taken up	him
N-DFS	N-NMS	V-AIP-3S	Art-GNS	Adv	V-ANA	N-AMS	Conj	Adv	V-IIMP-3S	Conj	V-AIA-3S	PPro-AM3S

3588 [e]	2316 [e]	4253 [e]	1063 [e]	3588 [e]	3331 [e]	3140 [e]	2100 [e]	3588 [e]	2316 [e]
ho	Theos	pro	gar	tēs	metatheseōs	memartyrētai	euarestēkenai	tō	Theō
ὁ	Θεός	πρὸ	γὰρ	τῆς	μεταθέσεως	, μεμαρτύρηται	εὐαρεστηκέναι	τῷ	Θεῷ
-	God	Before	for	the	translation	he was commended	to have pleased	-	God
Art-NMS	N-NMS	Prep	Conj	Art-GFS	N-GFS	V-RIMP-3S	V-RNA	Art-DMS	N-DMS

[πίστις](#) [Ἐνώχ](#) [μετατίθημι](#) [ὁ](#) [μή](#) [ὄραω](#) [θάνατος](#) [καί](#) [οὐ](#) [εὕρισκω](#) [διότι](#)  
 by faith Enoch was removed not to see death and not was found because

[μετατίθημι](#) [αὐτός](#) [ὁ](#) [θεός](#) [πρό](#) [γάρ](#) [ὁ](#) [μετάθεσις](#) [μαρτυρέω](#)  
 removed him God before for removal he has obtained witness

[εὐαρεστέω](#) [ὁ](#) [θεός](#)  
 to having been well pleasing to God

Genesis 5:18, 21-24

The Septuagint says,

“Enoch was **well-pleasing** to God after his begetting Mathusala . . . And Enoch was **well-pleasing** to God, and was not found, because God translated him.”

The translators of the Septuagint simply interpreted the meaning of the phrase “walked with God”. They correctly took this phrase to mean Enoch lived in a way that pleased God. This is attested to in Micah 6:8. Thus, the writer of Hebrews doesn’t say Enoch “walked with God” but instead says, “[εὐαρεστέω](#)” or “well-pleasing”

The Septuagint also says in Genesis 4:24, “And Enoch was well-pleasing to God, and was not found, because God translated him.”

**Again, the focus is on the righteousness of a man but this righteousness is credited to the man’s faith.**

The word “[μετατίθημι](#)” - *metatithemi* – means to transfer” and “to change”. It is translated “removed” or “translated”. This word is also used in Acts 7:16 – “From there they were removed (carried over) to Shechem.” Galatians 1:6 – “quickly deserting (removed from) Him who called you.” Hebrews 7:12 – “For when the priesthood is changed...”

11:6 – “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.

5565 [e]	1161 [e]	4102 [e]	102 [e]	2100 [e]	4100 [e]	1063 [e]	1163 [e]	3588 [e]	4334 [e]	3588 [e]
chōris	de	pisteōs	adynaton	euarestēsai	pisteusai	gar	dei	ton	proserchomenon	tō
6 χωρίς	δέ	πίστεως	, ἀδύνατον	εὐαρεστήσαι	. πιστεῦσαι	γὰρ	δεῖ	τὸν	προσερχόμενον	τῷ
Without	now	faith	[it is] impossible	to please [Him]	To believe	for	it behooves	the one	drawing near	-
Prep	Conj	N-GFS	Adj-NNS	V-ANA	V-ANA	Conj	V-PIA-3S	Art-AMS	V-PPM/P-AMS	Art-DMS

2316 [e]	3754 [e]	1510 [e]	2532 [e]	3588 [e]	1567 [e]	846 [e]	3406 [e]	1096 [e]
Theō	hoti	estin	kai	tois	ekzētousin	auton	misthapodotēs	ginetai
Θεῷ	, ὅτι	ἔστιν	, καὶ	τοῖς	ἐκζητοῦσιν	αὐτὸν	, μισθαποδότης	γίνεται
to God	that	He exists	and [that]	to those	earnestly seeking out	Him	a rewarder	He becomes
N-DMS	Conj	V-PIA-3S	Conj	Art-DMP	V-PPA-DMP	PPro-AM3S	N-NMS	V-PIM/P-3S

χωρίς δέ πίστις ἀδύνατος εὐαρεστέω πιστεύω γὰρ δεῖ ὁ προσερχομαι  
 without but faith impossible well pleasing to believe for it the approaching

θεός ὅτι εἰμί καί ὁ ἐκζητέω αὐτός μισθαποδότης γίνομαι  
 to God that he is and the seeking out him a rewarder becomes

To live by faith is to be able to produce righteousness in life because of faith in your soul.  
 So, a person of faith must:

1. Believe that there is a God
2. Believe that God fulfills his promises

Once God has spoken his word (or, promises) then:

1. God’s responsibility is to fulfill his word
2. Man’s responsibility is to obey God’s word

Anyone who:

- expects to “come to him” or “**approach God**” (represented by Enoch being taken by God)
- must be “**well-pleasing**” to God.
- To be “well-pleasing” you **must have faith**.
- To have faith you **must believe God is** and that **he keeps his word**.

You cannot trust that God will keep his word:

- If you do not believe God exists.
- If this is the case then you cannot have faith.
- Without faith you cannot live a righteous, “well-pleasing” life.
- If you are not “well-pleasing” to God you cannot and will not approach him.

Approaching God is important to the author of Hebrews.

The application here may be the readers of this letter need to learn how to approach God.

This has been mentioned in: 4:16; 7:25; 10:1, 22.

11:7 –“By faith Noah, being warned by God concerning events as yet unseen, in reverent fear constructed an ark for the saving of his household. By this he condemned the world and became an heir of the righteousness that comes by faith.

4102 [e]	5537 [e]	3575 [e]	4012 [e]	3588 [e]	3369 [e]	991 [e]	2125 [e]
Pistei	chrēmatistheis	Nōe	peri	tōn	mēdepō	blepomenōn	eulabētheis
7 Πίστει	χρηματισθεῖς	Νῶε	περὶ	τῶν	μηδέπω	βλεπομένων	, εὐλαβηθεῖς ,
By faith	having been divinely instructed	Noah	concerning	the things	not yet	seen	having been moved with fear
N-DFS	V-APP-NMS	N-NMS	Prep	Art-GNP	Adv	V-PPMP-GNP	V-APP-NMS

2680 [e]	2787 [e]	1519 [e]	4991 [e]	3588 [e]	3624 [e]	846 [e]	1223 [e]	3739 [e]	2632 [e]	3588 [e]	2889 [e]	2532 [e]
kateskeuasen	kibōton	eis	sōtērian	tou	oikou	autou	di'	hēs	katekrinen	ton	kosmon	kai
κατεσκεύασεν	κιβωτὸν	εἰς	σωτηρίαν	τοῦ	οἴκου	αὐτοῦ	, δι'	ἧς	κατέκρινεν	τὸν	κόσμον	, καὶ
prepared	an ark	for	[the] salvation	of the	household	of him	by	which	he condemned	the	world	and
V-AIA-3S	N-AFS	Prep	N-AFS	Art-GMS	N-GMS	PPro-GM3S	Prep	RelPro-GFS	V-AIA-3S	Art-AMS	N-AMS	Conj

3588 [e]	2596 [e]	4102 [e]	1343 [e]	1096 [e]	2818 [e]
tēs	kata	pistin	dikaiosynēs	egeneto	klēronomos
τῆς	κατὰ	πίστιν	δικαιοσύνης	, ἐγένετο	κληρονόμος
of the	according to	faith	righteousness [that is]	he became	heir
Art-GFS	Prep	N-AFS	N-GFS	V-AIM-3S	N-NMS

[πίστις](#) [χορηματίζω](#) [Νῶε](#) [περὶ](#) [ὁ](#) [μηδέπω](#) [βλέπω](#) [εὐλαβέομαι](#) [κατασκευάζω](#)

[κιβωτός](#) [εἰς](#) [σωτηρία](#) [ὁ](#) [οἶκος](#) [αὐτός](#) [διὰ](#) [ὅς](#) [κατακρίνω](#) [ὁ](#) [κόσμος](#)

[καί](#) [ὁ](#) [κατά](#) [πίστις](#) [δικαιοσύνη](#) [γίνομαι](#) [κληρονόμος](#)

Noah is an example of faith in action.

When warned of the coming judgment Noah:

1. Believed in God
2. Believed God kept his word. In this case his promise to destroy the earth.

This was all accomplished by faith. The result was:

1. the condemnation of his generation
2. became the heir of righteousness

**Faith has been described as:**

1. Proof of the unseen reality (11:1)
2. Mental perception that the seen world exists because of the unseen world (11:3)
3. Basis for righteous actions (11:4)
4. Means of continuing after death (11:4)
5. Resulting in ability to approach God, indeed, being taken to God (11:5)
6. Necessary to please God (11:6)
7. Causes active and passive results (11:7)
  - a. Active – built an ark
  - b. Passive – condemned the world
  - c. Passive – became heir of the righteousness