

Hebrews 11:4-7

(4) By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and through it, though he died, *he* is yet speaking. (5) By faith Enoch was transported so that he would not look upon death, and was not found because God had transported him; for before his departure it was testified of him that he pleased God. (6) Now without faith *it is* impossible to please *God*. For it is mandatory *for* the one who comes to God to believe *that* He exists, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. (7) By faith Noah, after being divinely instructed by God about the things *he could* not yet see, was moved with fear *and* prepared an ark for *the* salvation of his house; through which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.

A Faithful Version

[Hebrews 11:4-7](#) clearly teaches that [God](#) chooses to bless with rewards those who by [faith](#) choose to cooperate with Him in His spiritual creation. Abel, Enoch, and Noah are proofs of this fact. Thus, three major factors are linked in the spiritual creation process leading to salvation: grace, works, and rewards.

We can watch this unfold in Noah's experience with God. This is of particular importance to us living in the end time because both [Jesus](#) and Peter state that the end time would bear a similarity to Noah's day. Peter specifically shows in [II Peter 2:5-6](#) that the Flood is a strong witness against the doctrine of uniformitarianism, the idea that earth's history has passed without variation through the ages:

. . . and [God] did not spare the ancient world, but saved Noah, one of eight people, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood on [the world](#) of the ungodly; and turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemned them to destruction, making them an example to those who afterward would live ungodly. . . .

If God is the Savior and Rewarder of those who obey Him, then the opposite must be true: that He is the Punisher of those who despise Him. The Flood and Sodom are witnesses of this truth. Not all things have continued as they always have. The godly lived; the ungodly died. Despite what men say and think, God moved to punish mankind's sins in the [days of Noah](#). That punishment came in the form of the Flood, which wiped out all land-based mammal and bird life except for Noah, his family, and the animals in the ark.

[Genesis 6:8](#) reveals the beginning of Noah's salvation. It began in God's mind. It was absolutely unearned, being an act of God's [kindness](#). This is step one.

[Hebrews 11:7](#) says that Noah believed God's warning. This, combined with God's grace, becomes the foundation for Noah's reaction. Noah's belief is step two.

Next comes the effect of this combination: Internally, Noah "moved with fear." He was motivated—he felt an urge—due to his deep respect for God. The external effect was that he built the ark. This is step three.

The consequences of his foundation of grace and faith plus the impulse to move with fear comprise step four. He and his house were saved from the Flood, the world was condemned by his witness, and he became an heir of the righteousness that is by faith.

Did Noah's works save him? The answer is both yes and no. Consider: If Noah, not believing, had failed to prepare the ark, would he not have perished in the Flood along with everyone else? Certainly. Did his own efforts in building the ark, then, save him from the Deluge? No, they did not, because we have not yet considered all the parts God played in this scenario. He did far more than just warn Noah to build an ark.

[Philippians 4:19](#) promises, "God will supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus." This does not at all mean that we can do anything we want to, and that God will take up the slack. It means that God will supply all our needs within the project He has us working on.

[Genesis 6:13-16](#); [7:14-16](#); [8:1](#); and other verses show God's oversight, guidance, and providence. Genesis [8:1](#) is especially important: "Then God remembered Noah, and every living thing, and all the animals that were with him in the ark. And God made a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters subsided."

"Remembered" indicates His special attention during the entire project, but it especially focuses on the time following the shutting of the door when those in the ark were helpless before the overwhelming onslaught of water. Huge torrents of water gushed from the earth, as well as fell from the heavens. This must have created huge waves. There is no indication that the ark had mast, sail, rudder, or wheel for navigation. Nevertheless, God was with them from beginning to end, giving them His special attention to preserve them and see His purpose accomplished.

This illustrates God working in them both to will and to do as they cooperated in their human, weak ways. This combination of God's grace and human cooperation produced their salvation.

— John W. Ritenbaugh

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