## Prayer - Boldness to Enter In

**Hebrews 10:19-25, 35-39**

***19.*** *Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the Blood of Jesus,*

***20.*** *By a new and living way, which He has consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh;*

***21.*** *And having an high priest over the house of God;*

***22.*** *Let us draw near with a* ***true heart in full assurance of faith****, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.*

***23.*** *Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for He is faithful that promised;)*

***24.*** *And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works:*

***25.*** *Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.*

----and--------

***35.*** *Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward.*

***36.*** *For you have need of patience, that, after you have done the will of God, you might receive the promise.*

***38.*** *Now the just shall live by faith: But if any man draw back, My soul shall have no pleasure in him.*

***39.*** *But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.*

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**Key Details of the Passage**

• **Boldness to Enter:** Believers have confidence and direct access into the presence of God because of the sacrifice and blood of Jesus.

• **A New and Living Way:** Access is opened through the veil, which is explicitly compared to Jesus' own flesh.

• **The High Priest:** Jesus acts as the great High Priest over God's house, securing this access.

• **The Call to Draw Near:** Christians are exhorted to approach God sincerely, with complete assurance of faith and cleansed heart

**What verse 19 "*therefore*" is looking back at**

• **The Superior Priesthood** (Hebrews 7): Under the old system, priests died and had to be replaced constantly. Jesus holds a permanent priesthood in the order of Melchizedek, meaning His representation of us never expires.

• **The Better Covenant** (Hebrews 8): God promised through Jeremiah a "New Covenant" written on the heart rather than on stone tablets, rendering the old, fading temple system obsolete.

• **The Once-For-All Sacrifice** (Hebrews 9:11-14): Old Testament high priests entered the earthly Holy of Holies year after year with the blood of bulls and goats. Jesus entered the true heavenly sanctuary once for all with His own blood, securing eternal redemption.

• **The Ineffectiveness of Repeats** (Hebrews 10:1-18): Animal sacrifices could never actually take away sin; they were just a yearly reminder of guilt. Verse 17 seals the argument: "And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more."

**Key Greek Verbiage**

• **Boldness** (*Parrhesia*, v. 19): Literally means "freedom of speech" or "unrestricted confidence." In the ancient Greco-Roman world, it was the right of a free citizen to walk right into the king's throne room without an appointment and speak openly. You aren't sneaking into the back of God's house as a terrified trespasser; you walk in as a welcomed child.

• **New and Living Way** (*Prosphaton kai zosan*, v. 20): "New" (*prosphaton*) literally means "newly slain" or "fresh", like blood or a sacrifice just offered. "Living" means it imparts life rather than leading to a dead ritual.

• **The Veil / His Flesh** (v. 20): The heavy curtain in the temple kept people out. When Jesus' body was broken on the cross, the physical veil tore, and His flesh became the very pathway into God's presence.

• **Sprinkled and Washed** (v. 22): Uses language straight from Levitical priest ordination (Exodus 29 / Leviticus 8). Just as priests had to be ceremonially washed and consecrated before serving God, believers are spiritually scrubbed clean at the core of their conscience

**A DEEP DIVE INTO THIS SECTION**

**Part 1: The Open Door (Hebrews 10:19-22)** *Focus: Our position and privilege in Christ.*

**Verse 19:** "*Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the Blood of Jesus*,"

Under the Old Covenant, only the High Priest could enter the Holy of Holies, and only once a year with intense fear. Today, every believer has "boldness" (free, unhindered access) and our Heavenly Father doesn't depend on how good your week was; it depends entirely on the pure *Blood of Jesus.*

Hebrews 10:19 is the hinge of the entire letter to the Hebrews, marking the point where chapters 1-10 of heavy theology ("what Christ has done") pivot into practical action ("what we must now do").

**Verse 20:** "*By a new and living way, which He hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh*;"

When Jesus died, the thick temple veil tore from top to bottom. His torn flesh opened a permanent, vibrant path to God. It is a living way, our faith isn't a dead ritual or a static system; it's an active, daily relationship with a living God. The phrase "*the veil, that is to say, his flesh*" means that just as the physical curtain in the temple barred ordinary people from God's presence, Jesus' earthly body had to be "torn" or sacrificed on the cross to open a permanent path into God's presence, meaning His sacrifice didn't just push a curtain aside; it gave us active, breathing, unhindered communion with God.

**Verse 21:** "*And having an high priest over the house of God*;"

We don't advocate for ourselves. Jesus is our ultimate representative and advocate in the heavenly places. In Hebrews 9:24 makes clear that Jesus did not enter an earthly, human-made sanctuary, but "*into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us*". As High Priest, Jesus presides over the ultimate, cosmic house of God where the Father dwells. The church is not a place you go; it is a people you belong to. Believers are called "*living stones*" built into a spiritual house (1 Peter 2:5) and the household of God (Ephesians 2:19). Jesus acts as the chief Shepherd and High Priest over His people.

**Verse 22:** "*Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil (or guilty) conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water*."

This is an invitation. Because of Jesus' work, our inner guilt (evil conscience) is completely cleansed, and our outer lives are washed. Earlier in Hebrews 9:14, the author of Hebrews asks: "How much more shall the blood of Christ... purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" So, stop listening to the voice of condemnation. God has completely cleared your record!

The phrase '*washed with pure water*' uses completed past-tense action (having had your heart sprinkled... having had your body washed) right before the main command (let us draw near), representing the foundational events of conversion and baptism at the start of the Christian life.

By pairing hearts sprinkled (the inner spirit) with bodies washed (the outer person), the author describes a total, complete cleansing that leaves no part of the believer contaminated.

In Ephesians 5:26, Paul speaks of Christ sanctifying the church "*with the washing of water by the word*." Jesus also told his disciples in John 15:3, "Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you." Hearing and receiving the truth physically washes away the grime of the world's thinking.

• **The Inside Job:** Our hearts are sprinkled with the Blood of Jesus, completely silencing the courtroom of a guilty conscience.

• **The Outside Clean:** The Greek word for pure/clean is ***katharō***. While tradition often jumps straight to water baptism, Jesus defines this cleansing in John 15:3: "*Now you are clean [katharoi] through the word which I have spoken unto you.*"

• **The Takeaway:** Physical H2O can't purge a human soul. The active agent of our deep, external cleansing is the Word of God. The truth has washed over our lives and changed our walk.

**The Greek word does not differentiate between "pure" and "clean" here because the exact Greek word used is *katharō* (from *katharos*)**, which carries both meanings simultaneously.

When you read verse 22, the writer is throwing a massive bucket of Old Testament imagery at us. He talks about hearts being sprinkled and bodies being bathed in pure water. If you try to turn this into a technical debate about the mechanics of baptism vs. Old Testament sprinkling, you miss the poetry.

Here is the simple point: In the Old Covenant, priests had to be sprinkled with blood and physically scrubbed down with pure water before they could even look at God's house. In Christ, He has done both for you. Your inside is perfectly sprinkled by His Blood, and your outside is completely washed and you are fully prepared to meet God.

A lot of times people read 'bodies washed with pure water' and immediately think of Christian baptism. And while baptism is a beautiful, necessary outward sign of our faith, the writer here is actually doing something deeper.

He is quoting Ezekiel 36 and the ancient Levitical law. He is telling a room full of people who knew the Old Testament inside and out: 'Remember how the priests had to meticulously wash with clean water at the bronze basin before they could step into the tabernacle? What they did externally with physical water as a shadow, Jesus has done for you perfectly on the inside by the Holy Spirit and His Word'.

Jesus didn't become the High Priest just to go into the room alone; He became the High Priest so He could bring the whole family in with Him.

While Jesus holds the unique office of Great High Priest over God's house (v. 21), the New Testament explicitly states that His sacrifice transformed every single believer into a priest who can serve in that house.

**1 Peter 2:9** "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation..."

**Revelation 1:6** "[Jesus] hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father..."

So, when Calvin and other theologians look at the "*hearts sprinkled and bodies washed*" imagery in verse 22, they aren't saying you are the High Priest. They are saying you have been consecrated as an ordinary priest under the leadership of your High Priest, Jesus.

Because we are now invited into the inner sanctuary to offer sacrifices of praise and prayer, we undergo the spiritual version of the priestly preparation: our hearts are sprinkled clean from guilt, and our outer lives are washed pure by His grace.

The true, ultimate catharsis, the deep purge of human guilt and sin, is accomplished exclusively by the Word of God and the Blood of Christ, applied directly to the human heart by the Holy Spirit.

**John 15:3:** "*Now ye are clean **[katharoi]** through the word which I have spoken unto you."*

• The Context: Jesus uses the exact same root word (**katharos**). He tells His disciples that they have undergone a deep, spiritual pruning and cleansing, and the mechanism that achieved it was His spoken truth.

**Ephesians 5:26:** "...that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,"

• The Context: Paul explicitly shows that when the New Testament uses "water" as a metaphor for spiritual scrubbing, the actual detergent doing the work is the Word (the spoken, alive truth of God).

**1 Peter 1:22–23:** "*Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth... Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever*."

• The Context: Peter matches your thought exactly. The purification of the soul happens when a person collides with and obeys the external truth of the Gospel.

**1 Peter 3:21:** "The like figure where option even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ:"

• The Definition: Peter explicitly clarifies that water baptism is a "like figure" (a symbol or shadow). He screams from the page: It does not wash physical or spiritual dirt off your body! Instead, it is the public, visible "answer" or pledge of a conscience that has already been made good inside by faith in the resurrection.

**Part 2: The Community Pivot (Hebrews 10:23-25)**

*Focus: How we live this out together - highly relevant for our group!*

**Verse 23:** "*Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for He is faithful that promised;)*"

In Hebrews 6:18 and Titus 1:2 says *it is impossible for God to lie*, providing the rock-solid foundation for why believers can hold fast. Numbers 23:19 *God is not a man, that He should lie* Our stability doesn't come from our own grip strength; it comes from the absolute trustworthiness of the One who made the promises. We don't hold fast based on our own willpower. We hold fast because God cannot lie.

**1 Corinthians 1:9:** "God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord."

**1 Thessalonians 5:24:** "Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it."

**2 Thessalonians 3:3:** "But the Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you, and keep you from evil."

**Hebrews 11:11:** "Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised

**Verse 24:** "*And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works:*"

"*Provoke*" (Paroxysmos) usually means to irritate, but here it means to actively stir up, kindle, or incite. We are called to intentionally think about how to spark love in each other. Don't just log into Zoom to receive; look at the zoom squares on the screen and consider how to encourage that person. • Provoke is a sharp, aggressive word usually meant for friction or medical spasms.

Apollos weaponizes it for good. We are called to intently study each other (consider) and throw creative sparks at one another until we are shocked into doing good works.

**Verse 25:** "*Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching*."

Even in the first century, people were tempted to drift away from community. The antidote to a hard world is regular, intentional gathering and mutual encouragement ("exhorting"). Validate your presence here in Zoom, think about it, we are gathering virtually counts as anchoring one another as we see the world getting closer to "the day" of His return.

This isn't a rigid attendance spreadsheet. Forsaking means to desert or abandon an army line during a battle. Isolation is where the enemy wins. We gather on Zoom to exhort to call each other to our sides and breathe life back into the huddle as the world gets darker.

**Part 3: The Call to Endurance (Hebrews 10:35–39)**

Focus: Don't give up right before the finish line.

**Verse 35:** "*Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward*."

"Cast not away" implies a deliberate choice to throw something valuable overboard during a storm. Your confidence in Christ is your treasure - don't ditch it when things get heavy.

**Verse 36:** "*For you have need of patience, that, after you have done the will of God, you might receive the promise."*

"*Patience*" here is ***hypomone*** - a heroic, stubborn, cheerful endurance. There is often a gap between doing God's will and seeing the final promise. It bridges the frustrating gap between doing God's will and finally seeing the breakthrough.

In Hebrews 10:36, "the will of God" (*to thelema tou theou*) is not a vague or generic cliché; the author has already explicitly defined what God's will is just a few verses earlier in Hebrews 10:7-10.

**How Hebrews Defines "The Will of God" in this Context**

• The Blueprint (Hebrews 10:7-9): The author quotes Psalm 40:8, where Jesus enters the world saying, "Behold, I have come... to do your will, O God."

• The Definition (Hebrews 10:10): The author immediately spells out what that will actually is: "By which will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all."

• The Believer's Application (Hebrews 10:36-39): When verse 36 says you need endurance "after you have done the will of God," it isn't telling you to go figure out a mysterious, hidden career or lifestyle checklist. It means remaining steadfast in God's stated will, which is trusting in Christ's once-for-all sacrifice and refusing to "shrink back" into old habits or unbelief (v. 38-39).

**The Greek Mechanics**

• *Thelema* (2307): Means God's settled desire, decree, or plan, not a vague guess-work exercise.

• *Poiēsantes* (4160): An aorist participle meaning "having accomplished" or "having carried out".

• The Flow: Because Christ already did God's ultimate will by finishing the sacrifice, our "doing of the will of God" is simply living out that reality—clinging to Him in faith rather than drifting away.

As Habakkuk sat in that tense, silent waiting room, God spoke the words that Apollos copies down in Hebrews 10:

> *"For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry. Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him: but the just shall live by his faith."*

**Verse 37-38:** "*For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry. Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him*."

God quotes Habakkuk to show that history is on a strict timeline. Deliverance is coming. Our only job in the meantime is to live by trust, refusing to shrink back.

This verse is a direct quote/allusion to Habakkuk 2:3, which originally spoke of the vision or the coming deliverer/judgment, and the New Testament writer applies it explicitly to the second coming of Jesus.

**The Drama of Habakkuk (The Forest View)**

To paint the picture of what Habakkuk was actually going through:

1. The Panic: Habakkuk looked around his world and saw absolute chaos, violence, and corruption. He cried out to God, "How long shall I cry, and thou wilt not hear?" (Habakkuk 1:2).

2. The Confusing Answer: God replied to Habakkuk, but His answer was terrifying. God basically said, "I am bringing the brutal, ruthless Babylonians to execute judgment." (Habakkuk 1:6).

3. The Watchtower: Confused and overwhelmed, Habakkuk did something profound. He basically said, "I don't understand what You are doing, God, but I am going to climb up into my watchtower, sit down, and wait to see what You have to say to me." (Habakkuk 2:1).

In Hebrews 10:38, the phrase "*the just shall live by faith*" utilizes the Greek word ***pistis*** (πίστις). Far from the Word of Faith (WoF) TV concept of "faith" as a cosmic force or a tool to manifest material wealth and physical ease, the true meaning in this passage, especially through an Alexandrian or Apollos-style lens, signifies endurance, fidelity, and unwavering loyalty to God through suffering.

The author of Hebrews quotes Habakkuk 2:4 from the Septuagint (the Greek Old Testament).

• The Original Context: In Habakkuk, the Babylonian army is invading, and the prophet is told that while the proud collapse, the righteous person will survive and live by their emunah (Hebrew for faithfulness, stability, or reliability).

• The Greek Pistis: When translated into Greek as pistis, it carries the weight of trustworthiness, allegiance, and conviction. In the context of Hebrews 10, pistis is defined not as a tool to change your circumstances, but as the grid through which you endure them. It is the exact opposite of the word used in the next line: ypostello (ὑποστέλλω), which means to shrink back, cower, or withdraw

**• Verse 39:** "*But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul."*

Look at how beautifully this maps onto your framework of "doing God's will" and refusing to hit the panic button:

• The Tarrying Room: God explicitly admits that from a human perspective, it is going to look like the promise is lagging ("though it tarry"). God validates the waiting room! He says, “I know it feels like I’m late.”

• The Guarantee: But then He locks it in: “...but it will surely come, it will not tarry.” On the celestial clock, God is exactly on time.

• The Living by Faith: In that exact gap—between the chaos Habakkuk saw and the victory God promised—God drops the line: "The just shall live by faith."

This is the ultimate punchline of encouragement. The author of Hebrews (Appollos?) shifts from warning to absolute confidence in his people. We are not the kind of people who shrink back when the going gets tough. We are the people who press in, believe, and see God rescue us!"

The text doesn't say "Please try not to shrink back." It declares who you are: "That is simply not our DNA." We are the people who press in, believe, and see God rescue us.

Your inside is perfectly sprinkled by His blood, and your life is thoroughly washed by His living Word. You are fully dressed and ready to sit with the King. Because that is our identity, we don't pull the blankets over our heads when the week gets overwhelming. We don't shrink back. We are the ones who hold the line, throw sparks of love at each other, and press forward together!"

**Contrast: Biblical Faith vs. WoF Preaching**

| Aspect | Word of Faith (WoF) Preaching | The Greek / Alexandrian Meaning (*Pistis*) |
|---|---|---|
| **Object of Faith** | Faith in your own words, formulas, or "**the force of faith**." | Absolute reliance on **God's character and faithfulness**. |
| **The Goal** | To **escape suffering**, manifest wealth, and achieve temporal comfort. | To **endure suffering** without shrinking back, prioritizing eternal rewards. |
| **The Outcome** | Changes your **material** circumstances. | Sustain your **spirit** *regardless* of your material circumstances. |

Because the Bible was written without modern chapter and verse divisions, **Hebrews 11:1** is not a brand-new thought. It is the immediate, direct explanation of the "faith" (*pistis*) mentioned in the previous sentence (Hebrews 10:39: *"But we are not of those who shrink back... but of those who have faith"*). The author transitions smoothly to define this endurance-based faith: *"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."*

If we look closely at the Greek text, the author uses highly technical, philosophical language, very fitting for the Alexandrian style of Apollos, to explain exactly how this works.

**1. The Greek Vocabulary: *Hypostasis* and *Elenchos***

To understand how this fits into the argument of enduring persecution, we have to look at the two core Greek words used here:

- **"Substance" (*Hypostasis* / ὑπόστασις):**
  - **The Meaning:** In ancient Greek literature and philosophy, *hypostasis* meant **the underlying reality**, the concrete essence, or the bedrock that stands beneath a surface appearance. In legal/business papyri of that era, it was also used to mean a title deed, the document providing proof of ownership before you actually take possession of the property.
  - **The Fit:** The author is telling the suffering believers that *pistis* acts as the spiritual "title deed" or the rock-solid reality of the future promises they cannot yet touch. It gives future hope a present reality.
- **"Evidence" (*Elenchos* / ἔλεγχος):**
  - **The Meaning:** This is a legal and rhetorical term. It means proof, conviction, or cross-examination that brings hidden truth to light.
  - **The Fit:** Faith is the internal conviction that acts as proof of things our physical eyes cannot see. It is the absolute certainty that God's invisible reality is more real than the visible trials (like persecution or losing property) happening right in front of them.

**2. How it Fits the Immediate Context**

When read as a continuous letter directly following Hebrews 10:37-39, the logic flows perfectly:

1. **The Problem (10:37-38):** Facing intense pressure. Jesus is coming, but in the meantime, you need to survive without shrinking back (*ypostello*). You must live by your loyal endurance (*pistis*).
2. **The Definition (11:1):** How do you do that? By operating on a different grid. *Pistis* is the mechanism that makes your future hope a present reality (*hypostasis*) and makes the invisible kingdom of God more convincing to you than the visible threats of Rome or the temple authorities (*elenchos*).
3. **The Proof (11:2+):** The author immediately says, *"For by it the elders obtained a good testimony."* He then spends the rest of Chapter 11 proving this point by listing Old Testament saints who suffered, waited, or died without seeing the final fulfillment, yet held onto the "invisible reality" of God's promise.

**The Contrast with Materialistic Interpretations**

In Word of Faith theology, Hebrews 11:1 is often taught as a metaphysical formula: *"Faith is the substance... it's the raw spiritual material you use to create a physical car or a big house."*

But in the actual text, the "*things hoped for*" are not temporal comforts. The context of Hebrews defines them as the return of Christ (10:37), the preservation of the soul (10:39), a better and enduring possession in heaven (10:34), and the heavenly city built by God (11:10).

The author uses brilliant Greek rhetoric to show that faith is not a tool to get things from God; it is the spiritual capacity to see what is eternal, allowing you to let go of what is temporal.

Would you like to examine **Hebrews 11:3**, which takes this concept back to the very creation of the universe, or jump down to a specific hero of faith in the list?

In **Hebrews 11:3**, the author brilliantly anchors his argument. After telling these suffering believers that faith deals with things "not seen" (Hebrews 11:1), he uses the ultimate example that *every* reader would agree on: **the creation of the universe.**

> *"By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible."*

If we look at the Greek text, the choice of words perfectly counters modern Word of Faith (WoF) misinterpretations and reinforces the theme of steadfast endurance.

**1. The Greek Vocabulary: *Aionas*, *Katartizo*, and *Rhema***

Rather than using standard Greek words for a physical, material building, the author uses expansive, philosophical terms highly typical of an Alexandrian (Apollos-style) style:

- **"The Worlds" (*Tous Aionas* / τοὺς αἰῶνας):**
    - Instead of using *kosmos* (which refers to the physical earth or planet), the author uses *aionas*, the plural of *aion*, meaning **"the ages"**.
    - He isn't just talking about rocks, dirt, and stars. He is saying that God framed **time, history, eras, and space**.
    - **The Fit:** For a persecuted believer, this is a massive comfort. It means the specific "age" of Roman oppression they are living in is not random. God designed and ordered the ages of history.
- **"Were Framed" (*Katartizo* / κατηρτίσθαι):**
    - This word means to **put in order, fit together perfectly, mend, or equip for a purpose**. (In the Gospels, it is used for fishermen *mending* their nets).
    - It means the universe is an intricately ordered system, purposefully fitted together by an unseen hand.
- **"By the Word of God" (*Rhema Theou* / ῥήματι θεοῦ):**
    - The author uses *rhema* (the spoken, commanded word) rather than *logos*. This is a direct nod to Genesis 1: *"And God said, 'Let there be light'..."*

**2. How it Connects to the Argument on Endurance**

The logic flow from the end of Chapter 10 into 11:3 is seamless:

1. **The Premise (11:1):** Faith is being absolutely convinced of realities you cannot physically see.
2. **The Proof (11:3):** Think about creation. Look at the physical world around you—trees, buildings, oceans. None of it was made out of preexisting, visible matter. It came out of the completely invisible realm of God's spoken command.

3. **The Conclusion:** If the entire tangible universe was produced by and rests upon an *invisible* reality, then **the invisible realm is superior to the visible realm.** Therefore, you can trust God with your invisible future, even if your visible present looks bleak.

**The Word of Faith (WoF) Abuse vs. The Text**

This verse is frequently twisted in WoF theology to teach "creative visualization" or the "law of attraction." Preachers often claim: *"See? God used the 'force of faith' and spoke words to create the physical world. Therefore, you can speak faith-filled words to manifest money or health out of the spirit realm."*

The text completely flatlines this idea:

- **Who has the faith?** The verse does *not* say God created the world *by His own faith*. It says, **"By faith *WE* understand..."** Faith is the human instrument of understanding, not God's magic ingredient for creation.
- **Who speaks?** The universe responds exclusively to the *Rhema* of **God** (*rhema theou*), not the spoken words of humans.

The author's point is not *"go create your own reality."* His point is *"stop panicking about your temporary, physical trials, because the invisible God who ordered history by His spoken word has your eternal future completely secure."*

Let's look at **Hebrews 11:4**, the very first human example on his list:

> *"By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and through it he, being dead, still speaks."*

Through our Alexandrian/Apollos lens, this verse carries an incredibly profound, encouraging, and sobering message for a persecuted church.

**1. The Greek Focus: Why was Abel's sacrifice "more excellent"?**

People often debate *why* Abel's offering was better than Cain's (was it because it was blood vs. vegetables?). While Genesis implies a heart issue, the author of Hebrews gives the definitive answer in the first two words: **"By faith"** (*Pistei* / Πίστει).

- **The Reality Matrix:** Abel wasn't just following a ritual. Because he had *pistis* (that "title deed" of the invisible reality from verse 1), his heart was aligned with God. Cain offered a token of his own labor from the visible world; Abel offered a sacrifice that acknowledged the invisible sovereignty of God.
- **"Obtained Witness" (*Emartyrethe* / ἐμαρτυρήθη):** This Greek word shares the same root as our modern word **"martyr."** It means to have a legal testimony or verification borne about you. God Himself stepped into the courtroom of history and certified Abel as "righteous" (*dikaios*).

**2. The Apollos Touch: "He, being dead, still speaks"**

Look at the phrase: *"and through it he, being dead, still speaks"* (*apothanōn eti lalei*). This is a masterstroke of Greek rhetoric.

If Apollos is writing to Jewish believers who are facing martyrdom, imprisonment, and the loss of everything, why start with **Abel**? Think about Abel's story:

- Did Abel's faith save him from being murdered? **No.**
- Did Abel's faith manifest a long, wealthy, physically comfortable life? **No.** He was the very first murder victim in human history.

By starting with Abel, the author shatters the idea that faith is a shield against physical suffering or earthly injustice. He is telling his readers: *"You are terrified of dying for your faith. But look at Abel. He died for his faith, yet his life was not a tragedy. God vindicated him, entered his righteousness into the eternal record, and thousands of years later, his voice is still echoing."*

**The Ultimate Contrast with Word of Faith Preaching**

In prosperity theology, the "gifts" and "sacrifices" are often twisted into a formula: *"Give your seed-faith offering to God, and He will testify of your gifts by multiplying your bank account."*

But Hebrews 11:4 presents a completely different economy:

- **The Seed:** Abel's faith didn't bring him earthly wealth; it cost him his earthly life.
- **The Return:** His reward was not a breakthrough in his circumstances, but a **divine testimony** that outlasted his earthly breath.

For the original readers, this was a massive shift in perspective. The author is saying: *"Even if they kill you, you win. Your life is anchored in an invisible, eternal kingdom where your faithfulness will speak forever."*

🏛️ **The Core Context: Hebrews 10:37-39**

- **The Situation:** Early Jewish believers facing intense social and political persecution. They were tempted to shrink back into old, comfortable rituals to save their skin.
- **The Call:** Hold fast. True faith is not a tool to change your circumstances; it is the spiritual grit required to endure them.

📜 **Key Greek Word Studies**

- **Faith (*Pistis* / πίστις) - *Hebrews 10:38-39***
  - **Not:** A cosmic force, visualization tool, or a mechanism to manifest wealth (shattering the Word of Faith twist).
  - **Instead: Loyal endurance, fidelity, and absolute allegiance** to God. It is the exact opposite of shrinking back (*ypostello*).
- **Substance (*Hypostasis* / ὑπόστασις) - *Hebrews 11:1***
  - **Ancient Meaning:** The underlying bedrock, concrete essence, or an **ancient title deed**.
  - **The Zoom Insight:** Faith acts as your legal title deed for future promises that you cannot yet physically touch. It brings future certainty into present reality.
- **Evidence (*Elenchos* / ἔλεγχος) - *Hebrews 11:1***
  - **Ancient Meaning:** A legal term for **cross-examination or proof** that brings hidden truths to light in a courtroom.
  - **The Zoom Insight:** Faith is the internal conviction that acts as a legal proof. It makes the invisible kingdom more convincing to you than the visible trials right in front of your face.
- **The Worlds (*Tous Aionas* / τοὺς αἰῶνας) - *Hebrews 11:3***
  - **Ancient Meaning:** Literally **"the ages"** (plural), rather than just the physical planet (*kosmos*).
  - **The Zoom Insight:** God didn't just build rocks; He perfectly ordered and framed time, history, and eras by His spoken word (*rhema*). If God frames the ages, your current trial isn't an accident.

🩸 **The First Witness: Abel (*Hebrews 11:4*)**

- **The Ultimate Counter-Argument:** The author deliberately starts the "Hall of Faith" with a man who was murdered.
- **The Zoom Insight:** Abel's ***pistis*** did not manifest wealth, a long life, or an escape from suffering. It cost him his earthly life. Yet, God legally certified (*emartyrethe* / "martyred") his righteousness.
- **The Takeaway:** Even when the faithful die, they win. Abel's voice still echoes through history because his life was anchored in an eternal reality.

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Martin Luther popularized the theory that Apollos wrote Hebrews because the author was "an eloquent man, well-versed in the Scriptures" (Acts 18:24) and clearly trained in Alexandrian rhetoric. Looking at Hebrews 10:38 through that specific cultural lens reveals deep layers:

The Target Audience: Alexandrian Jewish believers were highly intellectual but under intense social and political pressure to abandon Christ and slide back into traditional Judaism to avoid persecution.

Faith as a Moral Anchor: In Alexandrian philosophical theology (like the writings of Philo of Alexandria), *pistis* was viewed as the ultimate virtue because it anchored the volatile human mind to the unchanging, eternal reality of God.

The Argument: If Apollos wrote this, he is using his elite training in Greek rhetoric to argue that faith is an anchor of steadfastness. He is telling his readers: "True intellect and spiritual maturity do not pull back to save your skin; they hold fast to eternal reality, even if it costs you your earthly possessions." (Which aligns with Hebrews 10:34, where they joyfully accepted the plundering of their property).