

Hebrews 11:7

In chapter 11, **the author of Hebrews** characterizes some key aspects of the faith of the OT witnesses (**Heb 11:1**) in connection with which God testified of the invisible objects of hope to the saints of old (**Heb 11:2**), who responded with persevering faith and became “a cloud of witnesses” to us (**Heb 12:1**).

Summary

In Hebrews 11:7, the author of Hebrews gives another condensed account of an OT witness to the reality of the world to come.

1. Future Events vs. 7a

The author of Hebrews gives another condensed account of an OT witness to the reality of the world to come - Noah.

First, the author confirms that the “things not seen” (**Heb 11:1**) are future events. Noah received divine warning (i.e. testimony) “concerning events as yet unseen” (**Heb 11:7**).

Likewise, other patriarchs understood and embraced future events by faith: e.g. Joseph with the Exodus (**Heb 11:22**), though it was “from afar” (**Heb 11:13**).

Christians today do not see the full consummation of these future realities (**Heb 2:8**), but we do see them having come to fuller revelation and fulfillment in the coming of the Son, Jesus Christ (**Heb 2:9; cf. Heb 1:1–3; 9:28**).

Hence, it was in reverent faith that Noah acted upon the divine testimony he received; a divine warning of the coming judgment by building the ark.

2. Deliverance and Condemnation vs. 7b

As with Abel, Enoch, and others, the author of Hebrews deduces Noah’s faith from a Genesis narrative which does not explicitly say that he believed. It is the nature of Hebrew historical narrative to demonstrate faith or unbelief by the actions of the subjects of the narrative (**E.g. Heb 3:12-19**).

Noah’s preparation of the ark resulted in the deliverance of his household and the condemnation of the world through faith (**Heb 11:7b**).

These connected points help us understand the author’s view of redemptive revelation with regard to typology and the organic, progressive development of revelation.

Typology has to do with people and patterns in the Old Testament which serve as pre-figured pointers to what Christ would do (E.g. Adam). When Hebrews mentions that Noah's acts of faith resulted in the salvation of his house, there is an echo with the Christ's actions on behalf of His house (**Heb 3:1-6; 9:26-28**).

So, Noah is presented as a type of Christ, the Savior of God's household.

Similarly, the deliverance of God's people in Noah's day spelt the destruction of the unbelieving world in divine wrath.

Seeing Noah as a type of Christ works within a broader principle of the organic development of redemptive revelation; out of the seed, the mature plant is produced. This is seen in the author's focus on Noah's becoming an heir of that righteousness which is "according to faith" (**Heb 11:7c; c.f Gen 6:9; 7:1**).

Noah's faithfulness in building the ark may have been the basis of the physical deliverance of himself and of his household in the temporal judgement of the flood, but it was not the perfect righteousness required for him to qualify as an heir of the world to come (**Heb 2:5**) and of the kingdom which cannot be shaken (**Heb 12:28**), or the surety of the new covenant (**Heb 7:22**).

Noah's righteous standing in Genesis points to the greater righteousness needed for deliverance of Christ's household from the coming judgment (**Heb 10:30-31**), of which household Noah was himself a member as are Christians today (**Heb 3:1-6**). Noah became an heir of this righteousness as something not yet seen (**Gal 5:5**).

The last phrase in **Heb 11:7** shows that this broad OT stream of redemptive revelation reveals in outline all the parts of the covenant of grace which come to fulfillment in the Christ, the Son, as the covenant mediator.

This is how Noah acts as witness to a righteousness which is one of the "things not yet seen", of the world to come, which "comes by faith".

3. Heir of Righteousness vs. 7c

This righteousness came to Noah by means of inheritance.

Inheritance means that the source of the gift was not his own resources, but the one who granted the inheritance.

This is how the righteousness of Christ comes to people like us: as an inheritance from God to His children and not from ourselves as an achievement (**Rom 4:16**).

When we receive righteousness as an inheritance, by the open hands of faith, it is afterward possessed as a right. Believers' righteousness in Christ, received as an inheritance by faith, cannot be lost or taken away.