

# Hebrews 11:2

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For by it the elders obtained a good report.

## Analysis

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**For by it the elders obtained a good report.** The pronoun 'it' refers to faith defined in verse 1. The 'elders' (presbyteroi, πρεσβύτεροι) denotes the Old Testament saints whose testimonies fill this chapter—patriarchs, prophets, and heroes of faith. They 'obtained a good report' (emartyrethesan, ἐμαρτυρήθησαν), literally 'were witnessed to' or 'received divine testimony.' God Himself bore witness to their faith through Scripture's inspired record.

This establishes the continuity of salvation history: justification by faith alone is not a New Testament innovation but God's unchanging principle from the beginning. The Old Testament saints were saved by grace through faith in God's promises, looking forward to the Messiah as we look back. Romans 4 confirms this, showing Abraham justified by faith centuries before the Law. The 'hall of faith' demonstrates that true religion has always centered on trusting God's Word rather than human works or ritual.

God's testimony to these faithful ones reveals what He values and honors. Their examples, preserved in inspired Scripture, instruct and encourage believers across all ages. The 'cloud of witnesses' (Hebrews 12:1) proves that faith in God's promises produces endurance, obedience, and divine approval despite earthly suffering. Reformed theology emphasizes that this faith is itself God's gift (Ephesians 2:8-9), ensuring that salvation remains entirely of grace from first to last.

## Historical Context

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Hebrews was written to first-century Jewish Christians facing severe persecution and temptation to abandon Christianity for Judaism. By systematically presenting Old Testament heroes of faith, the author demonstrates that genuine Judaism always centered on faith in God's promises, fulfilled ultimately in Christ. The original readers needed assurance that trusting Christ didn't contradict their ancestral faith but fulfilled it. This chapter would have powerfully encouraged wavering believers to persevere, seeing themselves in continuity with Abraham, Moses, and the prophets.

## Related Passages

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**Matthew 25:31** — Final judgment

**Romans 2:1** — Judging others

## Study Questions

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1. How does recognizing faith as the consistent principle throughout all Scripture strengthen your confidence in the gospel?
2. What does God's testimony to the elders teach about what He values and notices in believers' lives today?
3. In what ways do Old Testament examples of faith encourage you to persevere in your current trials?

## Interlinear Text

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ἐν ταύτῃ γὰρ ἐμαρτυρήθησαν οἱ πρεσβύτεροι  
by G3778 For G1063 obtained a good report G3140 G3588 the elders G4245

## Additional Cross-References

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**Hebrews 11:39** (Good): And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise:

**Hebrews 11:4** (Parallel theme): By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh.

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