

Hebrews 11:30-40<sup>1</sup>

## VERSE 30-31

By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they had been encircled for seven days. <sup>31</sup> By faith Rahab the harlot did not perish along with those who were disobedient, after she had welcomed the spies in peace.

*Romans 10:17*

*So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God (the glad tidings of good things...the good news).*

1. **God brings GOOD NEWS to Joshua. Faith comes by hearing the GOOD NEWS.** The promises he made to Joshua would also be true for these Hebrews. "Enter the land of your promised Messiah!" They are the same promises He gives us!
  - *I am giving the land I promised to the children of Israel. (The Promised "Land" here in the letter to the Hebrews represents the promised Messiah.)*
  - *No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life (Isa. 54:17).<sup>2</sup>*
  - *As I was with Moses, so I will be with you (1 Jn. 4:17).<sup>3</sup>*
  - *I will not leave you nor forsake you (Heb. 13:5).<sup>4</sup>*
  - *If you obey my commands, I will make your way prosperous (1 Jn. 3:22-23).<sup>5</sup>*
  - *You will have good success (3 Jn. 1:2).<sup>6</sup>*
  - *I am with you wherever you go (Mt. 28:20).<sup>7</sup>*

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<sup>2</sup> **Isaiah 54:17**

*No weapon formed against you shall prosper,  
And every tongue which rises against you in judgment  
You shall condemn.*

*This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD,  
And their righteousness is from Me,"*

*Says the LORD.*

<sup>3</sup> **1 John 4:17**

*Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as He is, so are we in this world.*

<sup>4</sup> **Hebrews 13:5**

*Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you."*

<sup>5</sup> **1 John 3:22-23**

*And whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight. <sup>23</sup> And this is His commandment: that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ and love one another, as He gave us commandment.*

<sup>6</sup> **3 John 1:2**

*Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers.*

<sup>7</sup> **Matthew 28:20**

*Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."*

**Joshua 1:1-9**

After the death of Moses the servant of the LORD, it came to pass that the LORD spoke to Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' assistant, saying: <sup>2</sup> "Moses My servant is dead. Now therefore, arise, go over this Jordan, you and all this people, to the land which I am giving to them—the children of Israel. <sup>3</sup> Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given you, as I said to Moses. <sup>4</sup> From the wilderness and this Lebanon as far as the great river, the River Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and to the Great Sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your territory. <sup>5</sup> No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life; as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you nor forsake you. <sup>6</sup> Be strong and of good courage, for to this people you shall divide as an inheritance the land which I swore to their fathers to give them. <sup>7</sup> Only be strong and very courageous, that you may observe to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may prosper wherever you go. <sup>8</sup> This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success. <sup>9</sup> Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go."

2. **Would these Hebrews be strong and of good courage? Would they believe as did Joshua or follow the example of the inhabitants of Jericho?**

*(11:31) The word translated "believed not" is not the simple word for "faith," but **apeitheo** which means "to be disobedient." It speaks of disbelief manifesting itself in disobedience. The word here speaks of the failure on the part of the inhabitants of Jericho, to be persuaded that God had given the land to the Israelites, and the consequent refusal to surrender Jericho. Rahab's faith is shown in that she harbored the spies. The word "received" is **dechomai**, which was used in the sense of the friendly reception of a guest. The words "with peace" speak of the act of Rahab in receiving the spies without enmity, and in not allowing them to suffer harm from others. - Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament - Volume 2.*

3. **God gives GOOD NEWS to the spies through Rahab. Faith comes by hearing the GOOD NEWS.**
- The people of Jericho were fainthearted because of Israel.
  - They'd heard of the miracles God had done.
  - They'd heard that they'd been victorious against the Amorites.
  - The people of Jericho were afraid and had no courage.
4. **Rahab confesses her faith saying, "For the LORD your God, He is God in heaven above and on earth beneath." God gives GOOD NEWS to Rahab via the spies she saves.**
- If you bind this scarlet cord in your window, we will save you and your family.
  - Rahab did as she was told.
5. **God gives GOOD NEWS to the people via the spies.**
- Surely God has delivered Jericho to us.
  - All the inhabitants of the land are afraid of us.

**Joshua 2**

Now Joshua the son of Nun sent out two men from Acacia Grove to spy secretly, saying, "Go, view the land, especially Jericho." So they went, and came to the house of a harlot named Rahab, and lodged there. <sup>2</sup> And it was told the king of Jericho, saying, "Behold, men have come here tonight from the children of Israel to search out the country."

<sup>3</sup> So the king of Jericho sent to Rahab, saying, "Bring out the men who have come to you, who have entered your house, for they have come to search out all the country."

<sup>4</sup> Then the woman took the two men and hid them. So she said, “Yes, the men came to me, but I did not know where they were from. <sup>5</sup> And it happened as the gate was being shut, when it was dark, that the men went out. Where the men went I do not know; pursue them quickly, for you may overtake them.”<sup>6</sup> (But she had brought them up to the roof and hidden them with the stalks of flax, which she had laid in order on the roof.) <sup>7</sup> Then the men pursued them by the road to the Jordan, to the fords. And as soon as those who pursued them had gone out, they shut the gate.

<sup>8</sup> Now before they lay down, she came up to them on the roof, <sup>9</sup> and said to the men: “I know that the LORD has given you the land, that the terror of you has fallen on us, and that all the inhabitants of the land are fainthearted because of you. <sup>10</sup> For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea for you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites who were on the other side of the Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom you utterly destroyed. <sup>11</sup> And as soon as we heard these things, our hearts melted; neither did there remain any more courage in anyone because of you, for the LORD your God, He is God in heaven above and on earth beneath. <sup>12</sup> Now therefore, I beg you, swear to me by the LORD, since I have shown you kindness, that you also will show kindness to my father’s house, and give me a true token, <sup>13</sup> and spare my father, my mother, my brothers, my sisters, and all that they have, and deliver our lives from death.”

<sup>14</sup> So the men answered her, “Our lives for yours, if none of you tell this business of ours. And it shall be, when the LORD has given us the land, that we will deal kindly and truly with you.”

<sup>15</sup> Then she let them down by a rope through the window, for her house was on the city wall; she dwelt on the wall. <sup>16</sup> And she said to them, “Get to the mountain, lest the pursuers meet you. Hide there three days, until the pursuers have returned. Afterward you may go your way.”

<sup>17</sup> So the men said to her: “We will be blameless of this oath of yours which you have made us swear, <sup>18</sup> unless, when we come into the land, you bind this line of scarlet cord in the window through which you let us down, and unless you bring your father, your mother, your brothers, and all your father’s household to your own home. <sup>19</sup> So it shall be that whoever goes outside the doors of your house into the street, his blood shall be on his own head, and we will be guiltless. And whoever is with you in the house, his blood shall be on our head if a hand is laid on him. <sup>20</sup> And if you tell this business of ours, then we will be free from your oath which you made us swear.”

<sup>21</sup> Then she said, “According to your words, so be it.” And she sent them away, and they departed. And she bound the scarlet cord in the window.

<sup>22</sup> They departed and went to the mountain, and stayed there three days until the pursuers returned. The pursuers sought them all along the way, but did not find them. <sup>23</sup> So the two men returned, descended from the mountain, and crossed over; and they came to Joshua the son of Nun, and told him all that had befallen them. <sup>24</sup> And they said to Joshua, “Truly the LORD has delivered all the land into our hands, for indeed all the inhabitants of the country are fainthearted because of us.”

6. **God showed His might (and the authority of Joshua) by the miraculous crossing of the Jordan River.** It is not a coincidence that this is so much like the crossing of the Red Sea. The crossing of the Red Sea should have been good news to the Jews. It was a means of faith to the people—to show them the power of their God to destroy their enemies, but they refused to believe and enter the Promised Land. Remember this has already been spoken of in the book of Hebrews. Their “evil heart of unbelief” kept them from entering and taking the land GOD PROMISED TO THEM. None of those adults who refused to go in lived to cross the Jordan. YET AGAIN, God shows His miraculous power to the children of Israel. This time, the people responded IN FAITH. **The writer of Hebrews is skillfully encouraging them not to be like the children of Israel who refused to believe God and enter the Promised Land, but to rather be like Joshua and Israel who did believe and entered.**

**Hebrews 3:13-19**

Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God; <sup>13</sup> but exhort one another daily, while it is called “Today,” lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. <sup>14</sup> For we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end, <sup>15</sup> while it is said:

“Today, if you will hear His voice,

*Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion.”*

*<sup>16</sup>For who, having heard, rebelled? Indeed, was it not all who came out of Egypt, led by Moses? <sup>17</sup>Now with whom was He angry forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose corpses fell in the wilderness? <sup>18</sup>And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who did not obey? <sup>19</sup>So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.*

**Joshua 3:14-17**

*So it was, when the people set out from their camp to cross over the Jordan, with the priests bearing the ark of the covenant before the people, <sup>15</sup>and as those who bore the ark came to the Jordan, and the feet of the priests who bore the ark dipped in the edge of the water (for the Jordan overflows all its banks during the whole time of harvest), <sup>16</sup>that the waters which came down from upstream stood still, and rose in a heap very far away at Adam, the city that is beside Zaretan. So the waters that went down into the Sea of the Arabah, the Salt Sea, failed, and were cut off; and the people crossed over opposite Jericho. <sup>17</sup>Then the priests who bore the ark of the covenant of the LORD stood firm on dry ground in the midst of the Jordan; and all Israel crossed over on dry ground, until all the people had crossed completely over the Jordan.*

7. **God encouraged Joshua with more GOOD NEWS. The Commander of the army of the Lord would be with him. He was FOR THEM NOT AGAINST THEM. Faith grew.**

**Joshua 5:13-15 and 6:1-7, 15-25**

*And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted his eyes and looked, and behold, a Man stood opposite him with His sword drawn in His hand. And Joshua went to Him and said to Him, “Are You for us or for our adversaries?”*

*<sup>14</sup>So He said, “No, but as Commander of the army of the LORD I have now come.”*

*And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshiped, and said to Him, “What does my Lord say to His servant?”*

*<sup>15</sup>Then the Commander of the LORD’s army said to Joshua, “Take your sandal off your foot, for the place where you stand is holy.” And Joshua did so.*

**Joshua 6:1-7**

*<sup>1</sup>Now Jericho was securely shut up because of the children of Israel; none went out, and none came in. <sup>2</sup>And the LORD said to Joshua: “**See! I have given Jericho into your hand, its king, and the mighty men of valor.** <sup>3</sup>You shall march around the city, all you men of war; you shall go all around the city once. This you shall do six days. <sup>4</sup>And seven priests shall bear seven trumpets of rams’ horns before the ark. But the seventh day you shall march around the city seven times, and the priests shall blow the trumpets. <sup>5</sup>It shall come to pass, when they make a long blast with the ram’s horn, and when you hear the sound of the trumpet, that all the people shall shout with a great shout; **then the wall of the city will fall down flat. And the people shall go up every man straight before him.**”*

*<sup>6</sup>Then Joshua the son of Nun called the priests and said to them, “Take up the ark of the covenant, and let seven priests bear seven trumpets of rams’ horns before the ark of the LORD.” <sup>7</sup>And he said to the people, “Proceed, and march around the city, and let him who is armed advance before the ark of the LORD.”*

8. **The children of Israel and Joshua BELIEVED and DID as God commanded. God then did as HE PROMISED.** If they had not believed AND had not done what He told them to do, Jericho would NOT have been given into their hands. Faith comes by hearing of God’s faithfulness and promised good news. **Faith is then followed by actions/confession. THEN MIRACLES HAPPEN. THIS IS GOD’S FAITH PRINCIPLE.** There is NOT ONE EXPRESSION of unbelief among them. In fact, God had given them a command NOT TO TALK while circling the city. Coincidence? Random command? No. God knew the tendency of men to talk themselves out of a miracle.

**Joshua 6:10**

*Now Joshua had commanded the people, saying, “You shall not shout or make any noise with your voice, nor shall a word proceed out of your mouth, until the day I say to you, ‘Shout!’ Then you shall shout.”*

**Joshua 6:15-25**

*But it came to pass on the seventh day that they rose early, about the dawning of the day, and marched around the city seven times in the same manner. On that day only they marched around the city seven*

times. <sup>16</sup> And the seventh time it happened, when the priests blew the trumpets, that Joshua said to the people: "Shout, for the LORD has given you the city! <sup>17</sup> Now the city shall be doomed by the LORD to destruction, it and all who are in it. **Only Rahab the harlot shall live, she and all who are with her in the house, because she hid the messengers that we sent.** <sup>18</sup> And you, by all means abstain from the accursed things, lest you become accursed when you take of the accursed things, and make the camp of Israel a curse, and trouble it. <sup>19</sup> But all the silver and gold, and vessels of bronze and iron, are consecrated to the LORD; they shall come into the treasury of the LORD."

<sup>20</sup> So the people shouted when the priests blew the trumpets. And it happened when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, and the people shouted with a great shout, that the wall fell down flat. Then the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they took the city. <sup>21</sup> And they utterly destroyed all that was in the city, both man and woman, young and old, ox and sheep and donkey, with the edge of the sword.

9. **Rahab believed AND put the scarlet cord in her window. She made sure her family was with her in the house as she'd been commanded. HER FAITH LED TO OBEDIENCE WHICH LED TO HER DELIVERANCE—NOT JUST HERS BUT HER WHOLE FAMILY'S.**

**Joshua 6:22-25**

But Joshua had said to the two men who had spied out the country, "Go into the harlot's house, and from there bring out the woman and all that she has, as you swore to her." <sup>23</sup> And the young men who had been spies went in and brought out Rahab, her father, her mother, her brothers, and all that she had. **So they brought out all her relatives and left them outside the camp of Israel.** <sup>24</sup> But they burned the city and all that was in it with fire. Only the silver and gold, and the vessels of bronze and iron, they put into the treasury of the house of the LORD. <sup>25</sup> **And Joshua spared Rahab the harlot, her father's household, and all that she had. So she dwells in Israel to this day, because she hid the messengers whom Joshua sent to spy out Jericho.**

Now, have you ever felt that it is a very hard thing to have a singular faith? It is the easiest thing in the world to believe as everybody else believes, but the difficulty is to believe a thing alone, when no one else thinks as you think; to be the solitary champion of a righteous cause, when the enemy mustereth his thousands to the battle. Now this was the faith of Rahab. She had not one who felt as she did, who could enter into her feelings and realize the value of her faith. She stood alone. A.W. Pink

In such cases as Rahab and Ruth God gave early intimations that His redemptive purpose was not confined to a single people, but that it would reach out unto individuals among all nations. A.W. Pink

10. **Rahab became the great-great grandmother of King David AND is one of the few women mentioned in the genealogy of Jesus Christ.** She was a harlot in Jericho. She heard of the God of Israel and believed in Him. He honored her faith by giving her a place of honor.

**Matthew 1:1-5**

The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham:

<sup>2</sup> Abraham begot Isaac, Isaac begot Jacob, and Jacob begot Judah and his brothers. <sup>3</sup> Judah begot Perez and Zerah by Tamar, Perez begot Hezron, and Hezron begot Ram. <sup>4</sup> Ram begot Amminadab, Amminadab begot Nahshon, and Nahshon begot Salmon. <sup>5</sup> **Salmon begot Boaz by Rahab, Boaz begot Obed by Ruth, Obed begot Jesse,** <sup>6</sup> **and Jesse begot David the king.**

VERSES 32-35a

And what more shall I say? For time will fail me if I tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets, <sup>33</sup> who by faith conquered kingdoms, performed acts of righteousness, obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions, <sup>34</sup> quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, from weakness were

made strong, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight.<sup>35</sup> Women received back their dead by resurrection;

*The order in which they are mentioned is not that of time, but of dignity, for Barak lived before Gideon, Jephthah before Samson, and Samuel before David: God reckons those most excellent who bring forth the best fruits of faith— the more we excel in faith, the more God will honor us. Where faith shines the brightest the least are accounted the greatest, and the last become first; A.W. Pink*

*The faith of these men was very far from being perfect, either in degree, stability, or unmingled purity. Like ours so often is, their faith was mingled with fear, oppressed by unbelief, hard beset by carnal reasonings. A.W. Pink*

**1. By faith in God Gideon: Judges 6-8**

Gideon did not instantly believe. God had to give him many signs to confirm the good news to him. He was victorious because He believed, but in the end caused the people to stumble. What did God see? His fears? His doubts? Yes, He saw those, but God kept giving Gideon good news, and eventually Gideon believed and acted on that faith and was victorious! Does this passage bring up the fact that Gideon did not instantly have faith to concur the enemy?

*The Lord has only one response unto acknowledged helplessness: “Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man” (verse 16). A.W. Pink*

*From that assuring word of the Almighty Gideon knew that he had “found grace” in His sight, and asked for a sign: “Not because he doubted, but because he believed; not to prove the truth of Jehovah’s word, but because he would prove the truth of Jehovah’s grace, in the acceptance of his offerings which he proposed to go and fetch:” verses 17, 18 (E.W.B.). A.W. Pink*

**2. By faith in God Barak: Judges 4**

Barak, by the word of God through Deborah the judge of Israel and with her leadership and courage in battle, defeated Israel’s enemies. Does it mention that he refused to go into battle without her? No.

*For Barak refused to take the field against Sisera when Deborah commanded him, in Yahweh’s name, to do so, unless she went with him. Yet his very refusal may have been, in its way, a token of faith; his insistence on having Deborah with him was perhaps an expression of his faith in the God whose servant and spokeswoman Deborah was. And when he was told by her that the expedition which he was undertaking would not be for his own honor, he led it nonetheless; it was not his own honor, but the triumph of Yahweh and his people, that he sought. F.F. Bruce*

**3. By faith in God Samson: Judges 13-16**

Samson, physically strong by God’s empowerment and calling to rescue Israel, but mentally and spiritually weak, did just about everything wrong that a person could do. In the end he had faith to bring down the temple walls—even though it was “for my eyes” and not for God’s glory. What did God see? His flaws? Yes, he saw those. But He also saw His faith as evidenced by giving him back his physical strength. Are his flaws mentioned in Hebrews 11? No. It only says that by faith he was victorious. **What a great demonstration of the grace of God! Despite Samson’s flaws, the gifts of God were without repentance, and God honored Samson’s faith.**

*Judges 16:22*

*However, the hair of his head began to grow again after it was shaved off.*

**4. By faith in God David: Surely, the “time would fail” the author to speak of all the things David did by faith. Again, his serious mistakes are not mentioned.**

5. **By faith in God Samuel:** The stories of Samuel are also replete with examples of his faith and obedience.
6. **By faith in God “the prophets”:** This truly is abbreviating the subject. Yet the readers of this letter knew well about the faith of the prophets.
7. **By faith in God they conquered (subdued) kingdoms:** Some mentioned above conquered kingdoms.

*(11:33) The word "subdued" is katagonizomai which means literally "to fight down," thus, "to struggle against, to overcome." The word signifies a desperate contest. - Wuest*

*The important point to recognize is that the “kingdoms” here “subdued” were those which sought to prevent the people of God (Israel) from entering into and enjoying their rightful inheritance. A.W. Pink*

*The Christian has been begotten “unto an inheritance” (1 Pet. 1: 3, 4): that “inheritance” is to be enjoyed now, by faith, for “faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” But there are powerful enemies seeking to harass and hinder us, and they must be “subdued.” A.W. Pink*

*There is also a “kingdom” without, which the Christian must “subdue,” And how is the “world” to be “subdued?” 1 John 5: 4 gives us the answer: “This is the victory that overcometh the world, our faith.” A.W. Pink*

8. **By faith in God they performed acts of righteousness:** This would refer to any act of obedience in faith.
9. **By faith in God they obtained promises:** They obtained promises given in the immediate sense, but some of the promises were not fulfilled immediately.
10. **By faith in God they shut the mouth of lions:** Daniel

*The ultimate reference in our text is to him of whom it is said, “The devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour” (1 Pet. 5: 8). His mouth is opened against many a child of God, uttering lies, telling him that his profession is an empty one. A.W. Pink*

11. **By faith in God they quenched the power of fire:** Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego

*Had they received a special revelation that their lives would be preserved, it would have called for considerable faith to act upon it in face of the burning fiery furnace; but to behave as they did without any revelation of the kind called for much greater faith. F.F. Bruce*

*The people to whom this epistle was sent might well have a fiery ordeal to face in the near future, but whether life or death was their portion they could be sure of divine companionship in the midst of it such as the three Hebrews enjoyed. F.F. Bruce*

*“Quenched the violence of fire.” A twofold spiritual application may be made of these words. First, we read of “the fiery darts of the wicked” (Eph. 6: 16), and these are to be “quenched” by “taking the shield of faith.” A.W. Pink*

12. **Escaped the edge of the sword:** Many examples, including several listed above
13. **From weakness were made strong.** Almost every example of faith involves God making someone who is weak strong. God was able to do it for these heroes of faith. He was able to do it for the weak Hebrews. He is able to do it for us!

**1 Corinthians 1:26-31**

*For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. <sup>27</sup> But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; <sup>28</sup> and*

*the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, <sup>29</sup> that no flesh should glory in His presence. <sup>30</sup> But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God—and righteousness and sanctification and redemption— <sup>31</sup> that, as it is written, “He who glories, let him glory in the LORD.”*

14. By faith in God they became mighty in war and put foreign armies to flight.

15. By faith women received their dead back by resurrection (1 Kings 17).

**VERSES 35b-38**

And others were tortured, not accepting their release, so that they might obtain a better resurrection; <sup>36</sup> and others experienced mockings and scourgings, yes, also chains and imprisonment. <sup>37</sup> They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were tempted, they were put to death with the sword; they went about in sheepskins, in goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, ill-treated <sup>38</sup> **(men of whom the world was not worthy)**, wandering in deserts and mountains and caves and holes in the ground.

1. Some of the recipients of this letter were being tempted to return to the Old Covenant temple worship. They were surely being persecuted and rejected by dear family and friends for embracing Jesus Christ as the Messiah. The author of Hebrews is showing them, that whether in victory or what looks like defeat, just like these examples of faith, they need to choose to BELIEVE IN JESUS AND NOT TURN BACK. No matter what was ahead of them, FAITH IS WHAT WOULD PLEASE GOD. Turning back would be evil—apostasy.

*The word "tortured" is **tumpanizo** "to torture with the **tumpanum**." The latter seems to have been a wheel-shaped instrument of torture, over which criminals were stretched as though they were skins, and then horribly beaten with clubs or thongs. The word "deliverance" is preceded by the article. It was the deliverance offered at the price of denying their faith, that was refused. They did this in order that they might attain to a better resurrection than the one mentioned above, namely, a mere continuation of life on earth. These were looking forward to the resurrection that would be unto glory. - Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament - Volume 2.*

**All history, sacred and secular— is harmonious on this point: the most merciless, conscienceless, cruel, and inveterate persecutors of God's elect have been religious people! A.W. Pink**

*If Jeremiah was delivered from Jehoiakim when that king sought his life, his fellow-prophet Uriah was not so fortunate; he foretold the doom of Judah and Jerusalem in similar terms to those of Jeremiah, and when he fled to Egypt he was extradited from there and brought before Jehoiakim, "who slew him with the sword, and cast his dead body into the burial place of the common people" (Jer. 26:23). By faith one lived, and by faith the other died. So too in the apostolic age Herod Agrippa I "killed James the brother of John with the sword" (Acts 12:2); but when he tried to do the same to Peter, Peter escaped his hands. F.F. Bruce*

2. The above verses don't fit tidily with our concept of someone who has faith. Faith is not only the means by which we obtain promises and are victorious, but also the means by which we endure suffering during times of persecution.

**Romans 8:37**

*Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.*

(11:36) The word "others" is the translation of *heteros* which means "another of a different kind." This word introduces a different class of victories achieved by faith, although mockings and scourgings were endured by the martyrs just mentioned. The words "yea, moreover" (*eti de*) are used commonly to express a climax. Such imprisonment as was endured by Jeremiah (38:9), was certainly to be dreaded even more than scourging. - *Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament - Volume 2.*

(11:37) Stoning was a characteristic Jewish punishment. Tradition has it that Isaiah was sawn asunder with a wooden saw by Manasseh. The fact of being tempted, appearing in the midst of these terrible tortures, has given expositors some surprise. They have various solutions, taking it out of the text entirely as a spurious reading, or substituting some other Greek word somewhat like it and of a different meaning. It is probably best to leave it as it is, and suggest that one of the most fiendish tortures was not that of the body but of the conscience, when the torturer would offer the victim opportunity to recant and thus obtain his freedom. The Greek has it that they "died by sword-slaughter," indicating mass-slaughters. Examples of this abound in the Maccabean period. The dress of sheepskin, and that of the still rougher material, that of goatskins, was worn, not as a professional uniform, but because they had no other material for clothing. The word "afflicted" is the translation of *thlibo* "to press hard upon." Thus, the idea is that they were hard-pressed by their foes. "Tormented" is the translation of *kakoukeo*, "to maltreat, oppress, plague." - *Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament - Volume 2.*

**3. God does NOT send sickness and hard times to teach His children "lessons", but believers will suffer difficulty in ministry and even persecution.**

**2 Timothy 3:10-12**

But you have carefully followed my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, love, perseverance, <sup>11</sup> persecutions, afflictions, which happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra— what persecutions I endured. And out of them all the Lord delivered me. <sup>12</sup> Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.

**2 Corinthians 11:24-33**

From the Jews five times I received forty stripes minus one. <sup>25</sup> Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been in the deep; <sup>26</sup> in journeys often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils of my own countrymen, in perils of the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; <sup>27</sup> in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness— <sup>28</sup> besides the other things, what comes upon me daily: my deep concern for all the churches. <sup>29</sup> Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is made to stumble, and I do not burn with indignation?

<sup>30</sup> If I must boast, I will boast in the things which concern my infirmity. <sup>31</sup> The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is blessed forever, knows that I am not lying. <sup>32</sup> In Damascus the governor, under Aretas the king, was guarding the city of the Damascenes with a garrison, desiring to arrest me; <sup>33</sup> but I was let down in a basket through a window in the wall, and escaped from his hands.

**4. Hear the Holy Spirit's evaluation of these who suffered. The world was not worthy to even have them in its presence. These who suffered for Christ are here exalted above all inhabitants of the earth.**

(11:38) The word "world" (*kosmos*) does not refer here to the corrupt world system, but to the world considered as an economy which was unworthy of these, because it was an economy ruled by sense, the world of the martyrs being an economy ruled by faith. The plane of life of the martyrs was higher. Expositor's quotes Davidson: "The world drove them out, thinking them unworthy to live in it, while in truth it was unworthy to have them living in it." The word "caves" is the translation of *ope* which means "a hole," primarily a

*place through which one can see. It is used in the LXX of the cleft in the rock in which God placed Moses (Ex. 33:22) - Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament - Vol. 2.*

## VERSES 39-40

And all these, having gained approval through their faith, did not receive what was promised, <sup>40</sup> because God had provided something better for us, so that apart from us they would not be made perfect.

1. "And all of these, though they won divine approval by [means of] their faith," AMP
  - a. God honors you when you live and walk in faith. We have his divine approval.
2. It appears that the many of the people mentioned in this chapter DID receive many promises, so what does the author mean when he says they did NOT obtain the promises? In the context of Hebrews, the promise they did not yet receive referred to the promise of the Messiah and the better promises of the New Covenant.

*(11:39, 40) Expositor's has a good note on these verses: " 'And these all,' that is, those who have been named in this chapter, 'although they had witness borne to them through their faith,' as has been recorded (vv. 2-38), 'did not receive the promise,' that is, as already said in verse 13, they only foresaw that it would be fulfilled and died in that faith. But this failure to obtain the fulfilment of the promise was not due to any slackness on the part of God nor to any defect in their faith; there was a good reason for it, and that reason was that 'God had in view some better thing for us, that without us they should not be perfected.' The 'better thing' is that which this Epistle has made it its business to expound, the perfecting (teleiōthōsin) of God's people by full communion with Him mediated by the perfect revelation (1:1) of the Son and His perfect covenant (8:7-13), and His better sacrifice (9:23). And the perfecting of the people of God under the Old Testament is said to have been impossible, not as might have been expected 'apart from the Son,' but 'without us,' because the writer has in view the history of the Church, the relation of the people of God in former times to the same people in Messianic times." Alford adds: "The Advent and work of Christ has changed the estate of the Old Testament fathers and saints into greater and perfect bliss; an inference which is forced on us by many other places in Scripture. So, that their perfection was dependent on our perfection: their perfection and our perfection were all brought in at the same time, when Christ 'by one offering perfected forever those who are sanctified.' So that the result with regard to them is, that their spirits, from the time when Christ descended into Hades and ascended up into heaven, enjoy heavenly blessedness, and are waiting with all who have followed their glorified High Priest within the veil, for the resurrection of their bodies, the Regeneration, the renovation of all things." - Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament - Volume 2.*

*From righteous Abel to those whose faith was so nobly manifested on the very eve of the coming of Christ, they all "won their record for faith" (Moffatt). Some of them, as we were told in v. 33, "obtained promises," but none of them received the promise in the sense of witnessing its fulfilment. F.F. Bruce*

*"Received not the promise." The singular number here implies some pre-eminent excellent thing promised, and this is Jesus Christ, the Divine Savior. He is said to be given according to "the promise" (Acts 13: 23). A.W. Pink*

*They did not live to see historically accomplished that which their faith specifically embraced. As the Lord Jesus declared to His disciples, "Many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them, and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them" (Matthew 13: 17). A.W. Pink*

*They and we together now enjoy unrestricted access to God through Christ, as fellow-citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem. The "better plan" which God had made embraces the better hope, the better promises, the better covenant, the better sacrifices, the better and abiding possession, and the better resurrection which is their heritage, and ours. F.F. Bruce*

3. **Faith is not a mystic power or feeling.** It is not something we conjure up. It is a fruit of the Spirit that grows as we understand that He is faithful to do what He has promised. When we know AND believe God loves us, we quite naturally have faith.
4. **Faith is not just something we feel, but it actually gives us the confidence to take action.** James 2:14-26 makes much more sense when we realize that James is not saying that works alone would save anyone, but that true faith is evidenced in action. Again, faith is not some force we simply possess, but always leads to some response. When James says that "faith without works is dead", he was making reference to the fact that faith results in a corresponding action. If we have faith, we will give to those in need and not just wish them well. True faith will result in good deeds. If it doesn't, then it is safe to conclude that there is no true faith.
  - *For example, one may say he believes in Jesus but refuse to confess Him as Lord. We may rightly challenge that this person has faith.*
  - *You might believe that God will bless your business, but if you don't step forward, it is unlikely you will prosper.*
5. **The writer of Hebrews is showing the readers that true faith acts on the promises of God.** It doesn't look back. It believes against evidence to the contrary and in the face of persecution. AND...it brings great results. If they will continue in the faith, not looking back, they will enjoy this new and better covenant based on new and better promises.

#### FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

*Faith pleases God. This cannot be overemphasized. Let us take this personally. When you express your belief that God loves you by thanking him for loving you or refusing to believe any lie to the contrary, God is pleased. He is smiling at you. He's proud of you as His child. You have gained His approval because of your faith in Him.*

*Believing He loves you no matter what others say, how unworthy of His love you might esteem yourself, and even when your "feelings" don't coincide—when you choose to BELIEVE that God loves you, it fills Him with pleasure. When you believe in His goodness and benevolent character, He is full of joy.*

*When you believe you are who He declares you to be, even when bombarded, especially when falsely accused, He is pleased with you. This can add a new dimension to your worship/prayer. "God you see me right here and right now. I choose to believe that You love me, that You are for me not against me, that You are working this situation together for my good, that You have not and will not ever forsake me, that You are the loving benevolent God that You declare yourself to be, that I am who You say that I am, that You will do what You have promised to do. I refuse to be anxious. I refuse to fear. I refuse to doubt. I choose to hope in You—to joyfully anticipate the good that You will do for me. I thank You that You see this faith of mine and it brings You joy. You are smiling down on me right now. You are releasing Your grace and favor on me. I bring You joy. You are pleased with my faith. You will do what You have promised. You will be in my life the great and good God that You are. So, instead of folding, I will have faith in You. I will praise You because I trust in You. You are worthy of my praise, and YOU are worthy to have me receive everything You have promised and provided." Then, "make your request to be made known unto God".*

*Tell Him what you want and need. Then thank Him for the good things to come. When we pray this way, we preach good news to ourselves, and more faith comes. We resist the enemy “steadfast in the faith”. We find the peace that passes understanding-C. D. Hildebrand*

6. There are no chapter divisions in the original Greek, and the writer comes to his conclusion in chapter 12.

**Hebrews 12:1-3 (Hildebrand Expanded Version<sup>8</sup>)**

Therefore (because of everything the author has just said) we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses (those awesome examples he has shown above), let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us (just as those above did BY FAITH...and ONCE AGAIN, HE IS REFERRING TO THE SIN OF UNBELIEF in the promised Messiah) and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us (not just mental faith, but faith that results in actions; namely, running with endurance and doing what God has called each one to do even in the face of opposition), <sup>2</sup> looking unto Jesus (Jesus is set forth as our ultimate example), the author and finisher of our faith (Jesus began our faith and HE will finish it) who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross (Jesus also suffered in his race), despising the shame (Jesus also demonstrated His faith in His Father by enduring the cross), and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God (His suffering brought great results and so will any sacrifice we make).

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<sup>8</sup> Based on the context and Greek meanings of words