



Hebrews 11:33-35b-40

# OUTLINE

- Main Point
- The Trials of the Faithful (v. 35-38)
- Did Not Accept Deliverance (v. 35)
- A Better Resurrection (v. 35)
- World Was Not Worthy (v. 38)
- “Wandered” (v. 38)
- “Did Not Receive The Promise” (v. 39)
- Why Do Christians Have Trials?
- “Something Better” and Perfection (v. 40)
- Story Time: Albert Roche

# MAIN POINT

- God does not save everyone out of distress
  - The people of faith did not always have God rescue them at the last minute
  - They still had to endure; and they did it in **obedience and by faith**
- The people of **Hebrews** may very well experience the same thing, but are still called to **faithful obedience**
  - Very likely they would die, be shunned, or otherwise experience hardship
  - God expects **faithful obedience** regardless of the circumstances and regardless of the outcome He brings about
- Do not get discouraged when suffering comes to us
  - Do not get discouraged or think it is strange if we are not rescued from our suffering
  - If we serve God when he rescues us, will we serve Him when He does not?
  - May not know or even understand the reason for suffering
  - Still called to **obedience**
- A new perspective on how we behave when others are suffering
  - Comfort is more than waiting to spout our favorite Bible verse
  - Listening is more than the silence before we speak

# THE TRIALS OF THE FAITHFUL (V. 35-38)

- Tortured, Mocking, Scourging, Chains and Imprisonment, Stoned, Affliction, Torment
  - Basically, everything that could be done to them
  - But they were still faithful, and the faithful often suffer
  - Suffering is not always an indication of sin
  - They felt the pain, sorrow, loneliness, isolation, and all the cruelty
  - God did not magically shield them or make it go away
- Sawn in Two
  - Traditionally this is Isaiah, as per Jerome
- Destitute
  - Lack of clothing and/or housing
  - Describes the church of Smyrna (**Revelation 2:9**)
  - God will provide all our needs?
- Contrast from v. 33-34
  - Escaping the sword, vs. killed by the sword
  - **Egypt vs. Israel:** Same action, different internal condition
  - **The Faithful:** Same internal condition, different action
- “Others” (v. 36) = “others from a different land”
  - List includes Jews and Gentiles, regardless of ethnic or national background
  - God has only ever had one way of dealing with people for Justification; by grace through faith (**Ephesians 2:8**)
- God did not physically save everyone from suffering
  - For His glory
  - For our learning
  - An example and testimony to others
- This should also dispel the idea that God heals everyone, etc.
- It takes more faith to endure suffering without deliverance than to be removed from it
  - This was the attitude of Daniel’s Three Friends (**Daniel 3:16-18**)
  - Lack of deliverance is not a sign of a lack of faith
  - God has His goals in mind; we are the ones He chose to carry it out

# DID NOT ACCEPT DELIVERANCE (V. 35)

- Greek is *prosdechomai*
  - Can also be translated as look for (x4) or wait for (x4)
- The idea is that they were not looking for the issue to be resolved; certainly not in human terms
  - Realized that suffering came
  - There was a reason for it
  - Have a good testimony through it
  - Not about getting out of trials, but what to do *in* trials
  - Content to live in suffering knowing that it was for God
    - They still felt pain, loneliness, suffering, etc., but they kept on where they were and did not try to get out
- It is easy to quote **Psalm 34:7,17** and claim that promise, but what happens when we are part of the “others” that did not get delivered
  - How strong is our faith then?
- God may remove us from trial or “fix” the problem
  - Probably not supposed to be our first reaction
    - We often “miss the point” because we do not want to be where we are
    - God has allowed something into our lives, so we should learn from it and accept the “mission”
  - The early Church did not pray for their suffering to abate (**Acts 4:29**)
- We can be very cruel in the way we respond to the suffering of other Christians
  - ‘Oh, God is testing you,’ or ‘oh, you must have such great faith to go through that,’ etc.
  - We may condemn Job’s friends, but they sat in silence with him and mourned
  - When we are worse than them, there is a serious problem
- Do we help those in trials? (e.g. **James 2:14-17**)
  - If not, what does that say about our faith?

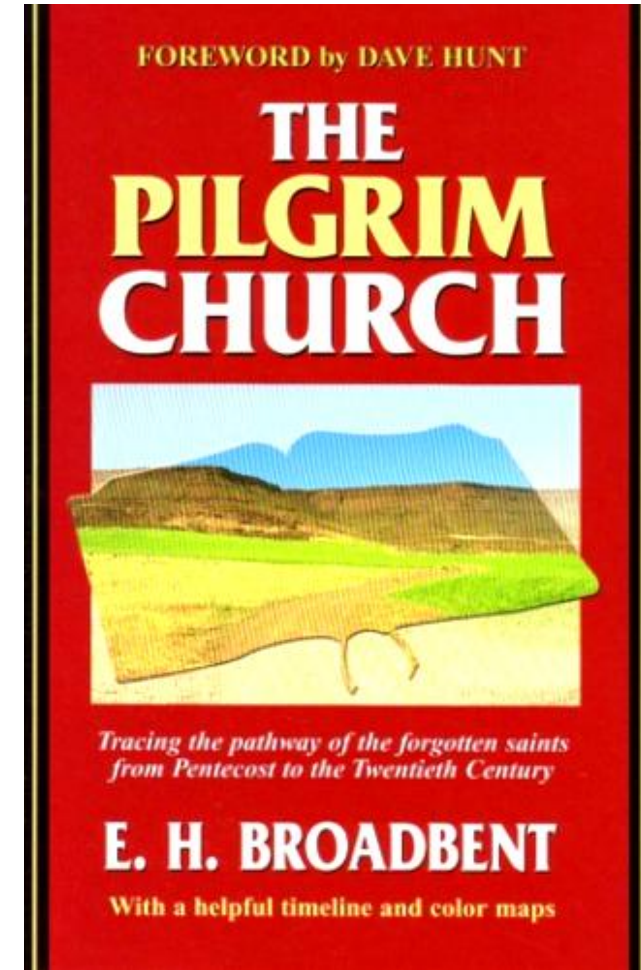
# A BETTER RESURRECTION (V. 35)

- Can be seen as a continuation of **Hebrews 11:13-16**
  - We are speaking of resurrection in the ultimate sense
  - A “better resurrection” because they were faithful in their suffering
    - Someone who is faithful when things are easy has not shown their character as much as one who is faithful when things are hard
    - Has not had their character “refined” as much
- Peter’s view on the matter (**1 Peter 4:12-13**); Pauls’ view (**Colossians 1:24**)
  - Partaking of Christ’s suffering?
  - Analogy: Battlefield Reenactment
    - Not there for the real thing, but by going through a part of it, we have a better appreciation of what happened and those there
    - A better understanding of the suffering of others when we suffer and are not delivered; Leads to less pride (J. Vernon McGee)
- From God’s perspective, these were some of the best because of their faith and walk
  - The World, by its rejection and harsh treatment of them, demonstrates that they do not want, need, or deserve such people
  - They were lowly and mistreated people who should have been great
  - God sees them as great, and they will be great in the Kingdom
  - Paul was a good example of this: Rejected by his people; Called a madman (**Acts 26:24**)
- It is easy to say we do not care about what people think, it is another to truly live that when it happens
  - Social needs; Physical needs. What do we do when people are not having their needs met (see also **1 Timothy 5:8**)
  - Not just the job of the “church” as an organization, but the job of the Church in the spiritual/corporate sense



# “WANDERED” (V. 38)

- Refers to real, physical condition and suffering of some through time
- Can also be seen as “strangers, sojourners” (**Genesis 23:4**) and “strangers and pilgrims” (**1 Peter 2:11**)
  - Did not look at this world as anything to hold onto
  - Commanded not to be drawn in by the sin and temptation of the world (**1 Peter 2:11**)
- ‘God will supply all our needs’ (**Philippians 4:19**)
  - Note that this verse is in the context of material needs, it is not talking about spiritual things (though it can be applied that way)
  - Were they being met for the people that did not see deliverance?
  - What are our needs? Probably less than we think
  - It is not a sign of faith, but a demonstration of a lack of faith, if we expect to be provided for without taking the steps needed to bring about that provision
- Issue is an old and present one
  - Waldensians, Albigenses, Huguenot, Scottish Covenanters, etc.
    - Some genuine doctrinal issues with some of these groups
    - But the key ideas they shared was a rejection of Papal authority and a desire to study the Scriptures for themselves
  - Crusades were not just in the Middle East, but often happened in Europe against those opposed to Catholic teaching



# “DID NOT RECEIVE THE PROMISE” (V. 39)

- What promise?
  - In the ultimate sense, it is the appearance of Jesus and the Messianic Kingdom
  - Prophet's spoke of the eventual deliverance of Israel and did not see it
  - People went their whole lives not receiving what God promised
    - Were still faithful and obedient in what God called them to
    - It is possible to get a promise from God and die before that promise is fulfilled
    - Will you still be faithful under circumstances like that?
- Went their whole lives and did not get what *should* have been theirs
  - They suffered and died without relief
  - Recall that the world was not worthy of them
    - It does not end here, even if it feels like it does
- Endured because the Eternal and spiritual was more important than the temporal and physical
- We often speak about ‘claiming the promises of God,’ but what do we say when that does not happen?
  - What about Jeremiah, Job, or the countless others that suffered without relief
- We are told to “live by faith” (**Galatians 3:11**)
  - Not only in the sense of Justification, but also moment by moment and day by day living our lives by and through faith
  - Our every action should be taken in faith and trusting in God



# WHY DO CHRISTIANS HAVE TRIALS?

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- To glorify God (**Daniel 3:16-18, 24-25**)
- Discipline for known sin (**Hebrews 12:5-11; James 4:17; Romans 14:23; 1 John 1:9**)
- To prevent us from falling into sin (**1 Peter 4:1-2**)
- To keep us from Pride (**2 Corinthians 12:7-10**)
- To build faith (**1 Peter 1:6-7**)
- To cause growth (**Romans 5:3-5**)
- To teach obedience and discipline (**Acts 9:15-16; Philippians 4:11-13**)
- To equip us to comfort others (**2 Corinthians 1:3-4**)
- To prove the reality of Christ in us (**2 Corinthians 4:7-11**)
- For testimony to the angels (**Job 1:8; Ephesians 3:8-11; 1 Peter 1:12**)

# “SOMETHING BETTER” AND PERFECTION (V. 40)

- They are “perfect” in the sense that they have been Justified (**Hebrews 12:23**)
  - This references the ultimate perfection of them and completion of all things is yet future
- This life is not the end of all things
  - Promises to Old Testament believers are different than the Church
    - Israel gets the Land; but we get much more
    - Further, our status/inheritance is determined by our actions here (e.g. **Hebrews 12:1**; **1 Corinthians 3:12-15**)
  - If all things wrapped up then, then we would have nothing/very little to inherit or look forward to
- Note again the use of “us”
  - Writer of **Hebrews** puts himself in the same category as the those he writes to
  - Important to recall given some of the warning in the book (e.g. **6:4-6**; **10:26-30**)
  - Great faith is not reserved to a handful of “great believers;” it is something that God enables, and expects, from everyone
  - That great faith will someday be rewarded
  - Thus, God in His grace, has enabled all of us, small and great, to partake in the same blessings in Eternity
- Will we ‘run the race’ today to achieve the most that God can give us from the Eternal perspective?

## STORY TIME: ALBERT ROCHE

