

# Hebrews 11:23-40: Why Keep Trusting God When Your Life Falls Apart?

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## I. Introduction

It's easy to trust God when He makes everything go right or right after He rescues you. At that moment you love God and praise Him for delivering you. But how quickly we turn on Him when our life falls apart. When things go horribly wrong, when we need help and don't get it, we get angry and depressed. We're furious at God for leaving us. Why should we keep trusting Him?

## II. Hebrews 11:23-40: Why Should You Keep Trusting God When Your Life Falls Apart?

The author of Hebrews rounds off the list of people who trusted God. Many of them saw miraculous deliverances from incredible odds and difficulties, including death. Their faith paid off, God delivered them. But he closes with another list of people who weren't delivered yet still chose to trust God even though it meant their sure death! Why did they trust Him, why should we?

**11:23**, the discussion of Moses' faith begins with his parents' faith. They risked their lives and hid baby Moses (all male Israelite babies were to be killed, Exodus 1:16, 22). They had no fear of Pharaoh's command. Why not? The original text literally says that Moses' mom hid Moses when she saw that he was a "good" baby (Exodus 2:2), a Hebrew word that can mean "beautiful," "attractive," or "handsome." So if Moses was an ugly baby, his parents would've handed him over to be killed? Never. Acts 7:20 shows that it had nothing to do with Moses' looks. Moses was "well pleasing to God," i.e., God had a special plan for Moses and his parents knew this.

**11:24-28**, when Moses was 40 yrs old (Acts 7:23), as a prince of Egypt he could've followed this path to fame, fortune, possibly even king of Egypt. But instead of enjoying "the passing pleasures of sin" he refused the title of prince and aligned himself with the people of God, who were the slaves of Egypt. Why would he give up everything for this? He considered carefully and concluded that the treasures in Egypt were no match for the future reward God would give him. He saw that the sufferings Messiah was inviting him into would result in something far greater than all the riches in Egypt. Hebrews says that Moses had no fear of Pharaoh's wrath, but the original account says he did (Exodus 2:14). Moses didn't flee Egypt because he feared Pharaoh but because the Israelites rejected him as their deliverer (Exodus 2:11-14; Acts 7:23-25). Moses endured, forsaking everything in Egypt, because he could see God crystal clearly though He was invisible. This is why he instructed Israel to keep the Passover; he knew that God's angel of death would kill every firstborn, whether Israelite or Egyptian, who was not protected by the blood of the lamb (Exodus 11-12).

**11:29-31**, Israel's and Rahab's faith is mentioned next. The author notes the beginning and end of Israel's Wilderness Wanderings. The beginning was when they crossed the Red Sea: Israel faced certain death, but then God parted the Red Sea and crossed on dry ground, thus escaping Pharaoh's army who was drowned when they tried to follow (Exodus 14). The falling of Jericho's walls marked the end of the Wilderness Wanderings. This was again an incredible show of faith by Joshua and Israel. God gave them the most ridiculous military tactic to follow: they were to march around the city seven times, which would make the walls collapse. But they didn't flinch, they did as God said and they conquered Jericho exactly the way God said they would (Joshua 6).

Next we have the faith of another heroine, the prostitute Rahab. All of Jericho knew of Israel's God (Joshua 2:8-14) but they refused to believe in Him. Rahab, however, put her faith in Him and His salvation and not only did God reward her faith by saving her and her family (Joshua 6:22-23), she, a Gentile prostitute, became part of the Messianic line (Matthew 1:5).

**11:32-35a**, next we have a list of men and women whom God miraculously delivered. The author could go on listing more faithful men and women but instead decides to briefly mention those who subdued kingdoms (Joshua, David), worked righteousness (David, Samuel), obtained promises (Gideon, Barak), stopped the mouths of lions (Daniel: Daniel 6, Samson: Judges 14:5-6, David: 1 Samuel 17:34-35), quenched the violence of fire (Daniel's three friends: Daniel 3:18!), escaped the edge of the sword (Moses, David), out of weakness were made strong (Gideon, Samson), became valiant in battle (Jonathan: 1 Samuel 14, Barak: Judges 4), turned to fight the armies of the aliens (David), and women who received their dead raised to life again (Widow of Zarephath: 1 Kings 17:8-24, Widow of Nain: Luke 7:11-17).

**11:35b-40**, but then the author mentions others who in fact God did not deliver, who in fact died. These were tortured (and could have escaped had they renounced their faith but they didn't), had trials of mockings and scourgings (Jeremiah), chains and imprisonment (Joseph). They were stoned (Zechariah), sawn in two (possibly Isaiah, by Jewish tradition), tempted (Joseph), slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins (Elijah), being destitute, afflicted, tormented (the prophets). They wandered in deserts and mountains, in dens and caves of earth (the prophets hidden by Obadiah: 1 Kings 18:4). Why would God not deliver these individuals who were so faithful to Him? In fact, the text indicates that their faith never wavered, even though they "did not receive the promise" (Hebrews 11:39). So why would they remain so loyal to Him? You can see worshipping a God who makes all your problems go away. But why would you worship a God who doesn't deliver you? Because to these faithful ones God was more concrete than their circumstances. They endured because they worshipped a God who was going to grant them a "better resurrection," i.e., they were absolutely certain that in the future God was going to make everything brand new (Revelation 21:1-4). In fact, God plans to bless them and us together.

**Why should you keep trusting God when your life falls apart?** Because the God you worship has the power to bring EVERYTHING back to life! Case in point: Moses (Exodus 2-4—whose voice do you listen to in those crucial moments, Jesus' or Satan's?). But what if God doesn't deliver you in this life? Which God do you worship, the God of the Bible as He is or one of your own creation? Do you demand that God save you from everything and if He doesn't, He doesn't love you? How do we explain God letting His only Son suffer so brutally without rescue? Why would a loving God do that? Without suffering there is no salvation for us. Suffering allows us to get the smallest glimpse of His immeasurable love for us (John 3:16). He suffered so that we wouldn't have to. He suffered to teach us how to suffer for those we love. He suffered to set everything right and He invites us to follow Him in that suffering because it will perfect us as it did Him (Philippians 2:3-11; James 1:4). God calls us to cling to His Son because He's better than everything, living or dead, better than our highest high or lowest low (Hebrews 1-10) and He's always there, especially when He doesn't remove our suffering (Hebrews 2:18; 4:15).

### III. Conclusion

*Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection....And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise, God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us.*