



INTRODUCTION

Hebrews 11:35b-40

“All these” refers to both groups. They all gained approval (or “a testimony”) through their faith, yet none received “the promise” (literal translation). Abraham received the promise of Isaac (11:17). Others “obtained promises” by faith (11:33). But none received the promise, which refers to Christ. They saw Him from afar in types and shadows, but we see Him clearly revealed in the New Testament. Most of them were under the old covenant, but God “provided something better for us, so that apart from us they would not be made perfect.” That something better is the new covenant in Christ’s blood. The old covenant with its sacrifices could not make the worshipers perfect (10:1). But the new covenant has sanctified us “through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all” (10:10). The Old Testament saints were saved, but their salvation was not complete until the cross. Ours is complete because Jesus is the perfect sacrifice.

The author’s point is that if the Old Testament saints were faithful through all of these trials, even though they didn’t receive the promise of Christ in the flesh, how much more should we be faithful, since we have Christ! John Calvin (Calvin’s Commentaries [Baker], p. 308) put it, “A small spark of light led them to heaven; when the sun of righteousness shines over us, with what pretense can we excuse ourselves if we still cleave to the earth?”

And yet, although we have the promise of Christ, we do not yet have the full experience of the glory that is to be revealed with Him in heaven. And so we must, like the Old Testament saints, live by faith in God’s promise as we await the final consummation when Jesus returns. We must endure whatever trials come, even persecution, by fixing our eyes on Jesus (12:1-3).¹

Watch It Bible Principles

Watch Bible Principles #17; Heb. 11:1-40 www.villagebible.church/bibleprinciples

Open it

1. What is your most valuable material possession? What steps have you taken to protect and care for it?

¹ Sermon by Steven Cole found at <https://bible.org/seriespage/lesson-43-faith%E2%80%99s-reward-hebrews-1132-40>

Apply it

These saints only had preliminary glimpses of God's wondrous fulfillment of his promises. They did not live to see the coronation of King Jesus on the cross of Calvary. Still, they are commended for their extraordinary faith in God's promise. They did not receive the ultimate fulfillment of that promise, but they recognized that they would experience it eschatologically. Their faith, like that of those the author discussed earlier, was a future-looking faith.²

- 7. The Christian faith today involves both looking back at Christ's once-for-all sacrifice and looking ahead to His promised return. How do these different perspectives work together to give you a firmly rooted faith in the gospel?**

The reason these saints suffered so faithfully is not only because they had faith but because of the object of their faith. Their willingness to endure such persecutions is because of the great certainty they had in the promises of God. Therefore, their faith doesn't serve merely to magnify themselves and their own sufferings, but their faith serves to magnify the promises of God – which they counted as worthy of such suffering.

- 8. How has your faith in God fortified your life in the midst of trials you have faced over time?**

- 9. What are the top five things you place your faith in both spiritually and physically?**

² Mohler, R. Albert. Exalting Jesus in Hebrews (Christ-Centered Exposition Commentary) (p. 192). B&H Publishing Group. Kindle Edition.

10. In what ways have you counted the gospel worthy of personal sacrifice in your own life? To what extent would you be willing to suffer on account of the gospel of Jesus Christ?

Faith is a dynamic certainty made up of two certitudes: a future certitude that makes one sure of the future as if it were present, and a visual certitude that brings the invisible within view. One hears God's Word and so believes it that its future fulfillment becomes subjectively present and visible to the spiritual eye.³

11. Faith is built on certainty and conviction. In what ways can doubts be helpful and dangerous for a Christian?

12. What doubts do you find yourself wrestling with in regards to your faith? How can you leverage these doubts to be fruitful to your faith? What next steps should you take as you wrestle with these doubts?

³ Hughes, R. Kent. Hebrews (2 volumes in 1 / ESV Edition) (Preaching the Word) (Kindle Locations 6469-6471). Crossway. Kindle Edition.

Faith enables us to turn from the approval of the world and seek only the approval of God. If God is glorified by delivering His people, He will do it. If He sees fit to be glorified by not delivering His people, then He will do that. But we must never conclude that the absence of deliverance means a lack of faith on the part of God's children.⁴

13. What common pitfalls do Christians fall into when discussing God's faithfulness? How should we define God's faithfulness?

14. What does it look like to live for God's glory and approval above all things?

Our text refutes the health and wealth heresy, to say the least! It shows us the fierce opposition that Satan has towards the faithful people of God. It reveals the irrational evil that consumes wicked people to inflict such atrocities on the godly. And, it should encourage us to endure rejection, ill-treatment, injustice, and even torture and death, if need be, for the sake of the gospel.⁵

15. Read Ephesians 6:12. How does this understanding influence your perspective on persecution and suffering for the sake of Christ?

⁴ Wiersbe, Warren W.. Be Confident (Hebrews): Live by Faith, Not by Sight (The BE Series Commentary) (p. 153). David C Cook. Kindle Edition.

⁵ Sermon by Steven Cole found at <https://bible.org/seriespage/lesson-43-faith%E2%80%99s-reward-hebrews-1132-40>

16. How does faith enable you to suffer well for Christ?

They could not hope to experience personally the inward purification, freedom from fear, immediate help, timely grace, present and eternal salvation, certain hope, clear conscience, assured pardon and constant access which we have in Christ. The richer provision ought surely to inspire us to better faith and more costly sacrifice. If these courageous and devout sufferers achieved so much when, comparatively speaking, they had so little, then there must be no limit to our service. The opportunities are innumerable, and the resources are limitless. ⁶

17. Is there anything in your life that is keeping you from fully relying on and serving Christ? Is there anything you would be unwilling to sacrifice for the sake of the gospel?

⁶ Brown, Raymond. The Message of Hebrews (The Bible Speaks Today Series) . InterVarsity Press. Kindle Edition.