

**Hebrews**



**Promises  
Faithfully  
Kept**

**Hebrews 11.23-40 (CSB)**

**Promises Faithfully Kept: A  
Series of Providential Events**



All good stories are good because they remind us in some way of the Story, the one we are all caught up in, the story of God and His Creation, the story of Christ the Hero who saves by means of His death and resurrection.

Lemony Snicket's series of unfortunate events follows along a string of developing events but that sadly often end up tragic because the adults in them have stopped listening. With increasing clarity, each successive event shows that all the events are connected as part of a grand story with an heir at the center. All the others in the story play a part, some of whom accomplished heroic feats, others who died while keeping faithful to their pledge.

Now, the narrator warns against laziness (books vs. tv) but ironically a movie and then a Netflix series was made based on it. He also warns that the events you are about to take in are difficult and suggests you put the book down if you want simple happy endings to each book. If you persevere in going through the stories you see the evidence from the whole series of events that you can understand what started them all and how they resolve.

Unlike those unfortunate series of events, the Christian life is a happy one, one of greater joy than any other, for we know the King and know that He is with us by the Spirit and is returning for us. By taking in the developing events in Scripture, we see the beginning and the resolution. We see that humanity started burning down the creation by our sin and the only God can save us from the fire of judgment, which He faithfully does for those who trust in His means of salvation, His very Son.

But hopefully you were warned, while it is the only life worth living, the Christian life is not easy.

As we look at the storyline of history, we see how God providentially preserved and led His people, calling them to Himself in Christ. Christ Jesus is the One by whom the Father blesses all nations. It is in Him that we now live and breathe and have life. Let us hold fast to our confidence in Him for our God is not done working through us to show the world His great power and providence, for His glory and our good.



**23 By faith Moses, after he was born, was hidden by his parents for three months, because they saw that the child was beautiful, and they didn't fear the king's edict.**

**24 By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter**

**25 and chose to suffer with the  
people of God rather than to  
enjoy the fleeting pleasure of  
sin.**

**26 For he considered reproach  
for the sake of Christ to be  
greater wealth than the  
treasures of Egypt, since he was  
looking ahead to the reward.**



**27 By faith he left Egypt behind,  
not being afraid of the king's  
anger, for Moses persevered as  
one who sees him who is  
invisible.**

**28 By faith he instituted the  
Passover and the sprinkling of  
the blood, so that the destroyer  
of the firstborn might not touch  
the Israelites.**

**29 By faith they crossed the Red Sea as though they were on dry land. When the Egyptians attempted to do this, they were drowned.**

**30 By faith the walls of Jericho  
fell down after being marched  
around by the Israelites for  
seven days.**

**31 By faith Rahab the prostitute  
welcomed the spies in peace  
and didn't perish with those  
who disobeyed.**

**32 And what more can I say?  
Time is too short for me to tell  
about Gideon, Barak, Samson,  
Jephthah, David, Samuel, and  
the prophets,**

**33 who by faith conquered  
kingdoms, administered justice,  
obtained promises, shut the  
mouths of lions,**

**34 quenched the raging of fire,  
escaped the edge of the sword,  
gained strength in weakness,  
became mighty in battle, and  
put foreign armies to flight.**



**35 Women received their dead,  
raised to life again. Other  
people were tortured, not  
accepting release, so that they  
might gain a better resurrection.**

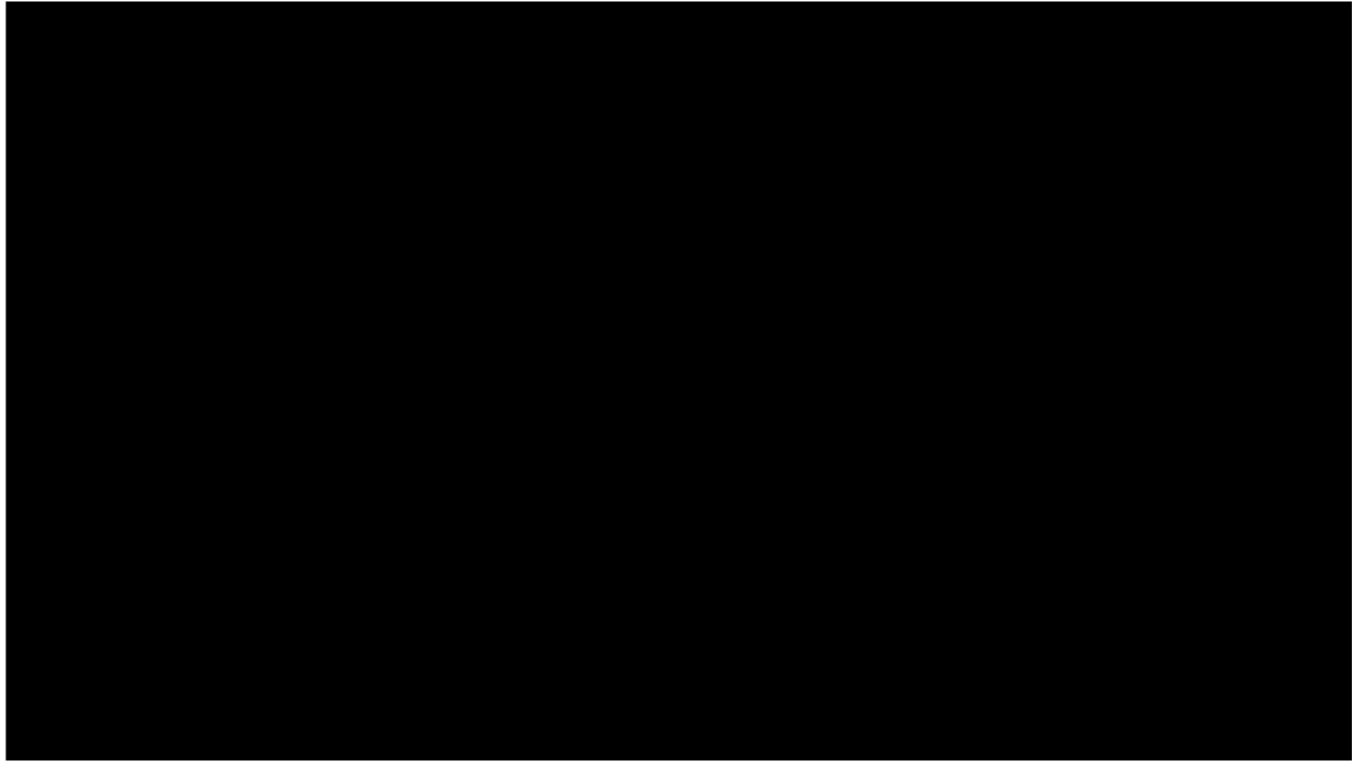
**36 Others experienced mockings and scourgings, as well as bonds and imprisonment.**

**37 They were stoned, they were  
sawed in two, they died by the  
sword, they wandered about in  
sheepskins, in goatskins,  
destitute, afflicted, and  
mistreated.**

**38 The world was not worthy of them. They wandered in deserts and on mountains, hiding in caves and holes in the ground.**

**39 All these were approved  
through their faith, but they did  
not receive what was promised,**

**40 since God had provided something better for us, so that they would not be made perfect without us.**



Pray

**Take in the story of God to know  
that He has providentially  
preserved His people as part of  
His promise. (vv. 23-29)**

- God has always providentially preserved His people as part of his promise.
- 
- Providence is not a word we are accustomed to using these days, but as Christians we should realize the beauty of such a word. Instead of talking about how we had luck or good fortune, we should give credit to God's providence. Here are some definitions and helps to understand the term providence from some confessions of faith: (1689) "God the good Creator of all things, in His infinite power and wisdom, upholds, directs, arranges, and governs all creatures and things, from the greatest to the least, by His perfectly wise and holy providence, to the purpose for which they were created. He governs according to His infallible foreknowledge and the free and unchangeable counsel of His own will. His providence leads to the praise of the glory of His wisdom, power, just, infinite goodness and mercy."
- 
- Another (Bethlehem Baptist) ". . . God upholds and governs all things—from galaxies to subatomic particle, from the forces of nature to the movements of nations, and from the public plans of politicians to the secret acts of solitary persons—all in accord with his eternal, all-wise purpose to glorify Himself, yet in such a way that He never sins, nor ever condemns a person unjustly; but that his ordaining and governing all things is compatible with the moral accountability of all persons created in His image."
- 
- Back to 1689, "The providence of God in a general way includes all creatures, but in a special way it takes care of His church and arranges all things to its good."
- Start with a definition of Providence by Second London and then Bethlehem Baptist
- 
- (Peter in Community Group referencing providence as we express faith in loving obedience in detail—-Peter and the fish of Matt. 17:24-27)
- 
- 
- -Moses's parents (beautiful refers to seeing the potential of God's work through their son) were not afraid disobey their nation's ruler because they trusted in God's



providence.

- -Moses refused to be called son of Pharaoh's daughter. Youth and children: Make faith your own, now not later. Moses recognized that faith requires us to choose sides. We must either choose Christ or the world. Attempting not to choose is still a choice; it is a rejection of Christ Jesus's conditions.

You must realize that up to the point that you respond by faith you have been choosing the world over Christ. But God is gracious and changes your life in your favor by faith.

- 
- Jonathan Leeman writes that in the gospel, "A contraconditionally loving God will take you contrary to what you deserve, and then enable you by the power of the Spirit to become holy and obedient like his Son." (Church Discipline, p. 12) We don't deserve grace, but once we receive it, we can't keep living like the world.
- 
- This is where we clearly see Moses's faith being his own and not just passed on by his birth family. It is this same faith by which God would grow Moses and through which God would bring about His rescue and His ultimate rescuer.
- 
- To have such trust requires that we believe reality includes more than what we can see.
- 
- Illustrations: 1) Jesus and the wind,
- 
- 2) C.S. Lewis: of Aslan and Lucy in the sorcerer's house,
- 
- 3) Parents read Scripture and good stories to your children...develop the appreciation of the abstract and life that is more than just material and of purpose that is more than pursuit of basic desires. If we are to trust in a promise that cannot yet be seen, we must first trust in the unseen God who will fulfill that promise. They must see with their heart and mind that there are things they cannot see with their eyes.
- 
- 3) G.K. Chesterton—>SD Smith "Fairy tales do not give the child his first idea of [the] bogey man (or evil). What fairy tales give the child is his first clear idea of the possible defeat of evil. The baby has known the dragon intimately since he first had an imagination. What the fairy tale provides is a St. George to kill the dragon." S.D. Smith adds, "Children need stories to know that evil can be defeated, and that they have a role in the good work needed in the world."
- 
- Parents, help your children appreciate the world God has made by good stories, but even more so share with them the grand story of Scripture, help them see God's faithfulness and providence. Help them see their place in the biblical storyline of creation to new creation; help them see that the gospel transforms our world from darkness to light; call them into that light; point them to Jesus; help them to start following Christ for themselves; and when the time comes to send them out with the sword of truth and the shield of faith, tell them that you'll be among the cloud of witnesses cheering the loudest.
- 
- Moses trusted that God would surely have His death angel kill every firstborn in every house who did not have the blood of the lamb on the doorpost. Once more there is life with God for those who express true faith by means of loving obedience and death for those who do not. Also, the ultimate lamb who was slain in our place was Christ our Lord. By his faith, Moses anticipated a greater rescuer, One whom he explicitly speaks about in Deut. 18.
- 
- By faith Moses and the people of Israel trusted that God had the power to speak to the sea like a pet and tell it to part and be dry. They showed that faith by walking through. If God is able to make that sea suddenly to be dry ground, He can be trusted to orient our steps, even if it looks like certain death is raised up like a wall on both sides.
- 
- The Egyptians tried to do the same but not according to faith in the God Who Is. God told His guard dogs, the waves, to sick the Egyptians, to sick them and sink

them. And they did.

- 

- God had promised to Abraham that He would bring his descendants back out of Egypt as a great nation and had afterward made clear that He would do so by Moses. God providentially worked through Moses's faith. And He will continue to work through the faith of His people, the church.

**Don't let past inconsistency or  
future turbulence keep you from  
trusting in Christ moving  
forward. (vv. 30-39a)**

God's approval is the only one that matters. So don't let past inconsistency or any future turbulence keep you from trusting in Christ.

I told you when we started this chapter that the people listed in ch. 11 did not seek to be heroes of the faith. They were more so misfits who God chose to work through.

When I was a kid, I loved old rerun Christmas movies.



During the months of November and December, I still get nostalgic for cartoon movies from the 1960s and 70s. It starts with Charlie Brown thanksgiving and runs through claymation Rudolph.

If you know that latter movie, you probably remember the island of misfit toys.

- A Charlie-in-the-Box,
- A spotted elephant,
- A train with square wheels on its caboose,
- A cowboy who rides an ostrich,

Those listed after Moses in Heb. 11 are like those toys. They were the world's throwaways that the Lord gladly took to use for His glory.

**Don't let past inconsistency or future turbulence keep you from trusting in Christ moving forward. (vv. 30-39a)**

Those who were considered weak or outcasts of the world BUT who trusted in God were primed to be used to shame the strong of the world and show God as glorious.

Rahab—was a prostitute but when confronted with judgment from God on Jericho, she placed her faith in YHWH. She was promised salvation for trusting the spies from Israel.

Sampson—adulterer and broke covenant but returned to trust at the end. He was given strength at the end to free Israel from Philistine oppression in a single movement.

Gideon—was a coward who was the least of the least. He didn't trust God when He declared He would use Gideon. Still, God worked through the mustard seed faith of Gideon to defeat the Midianites oppressing His people.

David—Israel's great king and the ancestor of Christ. But remember what he was like when Samuel first met him. God had to tell Samuel that God does not look at the things man looks at. Men tend to focus on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.

When he went against Goliath, he confessed that his hope of victory was not in himself or his strategy. His faith was in YHWH. The very God that Goliath was insulting was the One who would bring the giant down in shame. David would go on to do many more great things, as long as he was acting according to faith.

The author then starts listing some “accomplishments” various OT saints did by faith. But they weren't the ones who were effective in accomplishing the great feats.

Daniel was not a lion tamer. He was one who prayed to and trusted in God. If it were not for God intervening, Daniel would have been done for.

His three friends (Hannaniah, Mishael, and Azariah) refused to bow down to an idol of King Nebuchadnezzar. God responded to their faith by nullifying the effects of fire on them. And One stood among them as a Son of God.

All of these misfits of the world anticipated Christ Jesus because of their faith, giving glimpses through their examples of how God rescues the one who trusts in Him by His might hand.

These all saw great victories, but other misfits of the world did not see great victories in the face of difficulty. These others expressed faith and providentially received tests of extreme suffering. But their suffering glorified God, anticipated the Messiah's suffering, and have served as examples to us.

Have you ever comforted someone going through a breakup? Or had someone comfort you? A line that may be said is that guy or that girl didn't deserve you. It is something you expect a parent to say. But what about when that Father is the God over all creation. The world doesn't deserve you.

When the world rejects us as misfits, the God over all things says the world doesn't deserve you.

**Be confident that God will be faithful to complete His work for those in Christ. (vv. 39b-40)**

If God kept specific promises for those with faith anticipating Christ, be confident that He will be faithful to complete His work for those in Christ.

Realize that we have received God's promises and fulfillment already in Jesus. Have confidence that God will keep us on this path that leads to Christ.

If you have your Bible with you, turn to Acts 13:17-33—promises and providence culminating in Jesus and the gospel; 2 Cor 1:19-20)

17 The God of this people Israel chose our ancestors, made the people prosper during their stay in the land of Egypt, and led them out of it with a mighty arm. 18 And for about forty years he put up with them in the wilderness; 19 and after destroying seven nations in the land of Canaan, he gave them their land as an inheritance. 20 This all took about 450 years. After this, he gave them judges until Samuel the prophet. 21 Then they asked for a king, and God gave them Saul the son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, for forty years. 22 After removing him, he raised up David as their king and testified about him, 'I have found David the son of Jesse to be a man after my own heart, who will carry out all my will.'

23 "From this man's descendants, as he promised, God brought to Israel the Savior, Jesus. 24 Before his coming to public attention, John had previously proclaimed a baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel. 25 Now as John was completing his mission, he said, 'Who do you think I am? I am not the one. But one is coming after me, and I am not worthy to untie the sandals on his feet.'

26 "Brothers and sisters, children of Abraham's race, and those among you who fear God, it is to us that the word of this salvation has been sent. 27 Since the residents of Jerusalem and their rulers did not recognize him or the sayings of the prophets that are read every Sabbath, they have fulfilled their words by condemning him. 28 Though they found no grounds for the death sentence, they asked Pilate to have him killed. 29 When they had carried out all that had been written about him, they took him down from the tree and put him in a tomb. 30 But God raised him from the dead, 31 and he appeared for many days to those who came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are now his witnesses to the people. 32 And we ourselves proclaim to you the good news of the promise that was made to our ancestors. 33 God has fulfilled this for us, their children, by raising up Jesus, as it is written in the second Psalm:

You are my Son;  
today I have become your Father.

2 Cor 1:19-20 For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, whom we proclaimed among you—Silvanus, Timothy, and I—did not become “Yes and no.” On the contrary, in him it is always “Yes.” 20 For every one of God’s promises is “Yes” in him. Therefore, through him we also say “Amen” to the glory of God.

Do not forget that God has already delivered you from the great oppressor that is sin, if you have trusted and obeyed Him by faith. If God is for you by means of Christ Jesus, who can stand against us.

We, like Paul, should live convinced that neither life nor death, neither angel nor demon, neither past nor future, nor any power, neither height nor depth, nor anything in all creation can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus.

Do you ever look back on your life and wonder how you ended up in the exact situation you are in?

If you are a Christian, you should be able to look back through the series of events in your own life, and say, “Man, God has providentially shaped my life for His glory and my good.”

**\*\*Time for renewed joy in this trust\*\*** (song or prayer)



