

Hebrews 11:35

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection:

Analysis

Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection:

This verse presents faith's two contrasting outcomes. First, miraculous deliverance: 'women received their dead raised' references the widow of Zarephath (1 Kings 17:17-24) and Shunammite woman (2 Kings 4:18-37) whose sons Elijah and Elisha raised. These resurrections demonstrated God's power over death and foreshadowed Christ's resurrection power. Faith sometimes receives dramatic deliverance even from death itself.

However, the verse pivots dramatically with 'and others'—faith doesn't always produce earthly deliverance. Some were 'tortured' (etympanisthēsan, ἐτυμπανίσθησαν, likely referring to being stretched on a rack or beaten to death), 'not accepting deliverance' (ou prosdexamenoi tēn apolytrōsin). They could have renounced faith to escape torment but refused, demonstrating faith that values eternal reward above temporary life.

The phrase 'that they might obtain a better resurrection' (hina kreittonos anastaseōs tychōsin) reveals their motivation. Those who avoided martyrdom through recantation might preserve physical life temporarily but lose eternal reward. Those who endured torture without compromise would experience 'better resurrection' to eternal glory. This echoes Christ's teaching: 'He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal'

(John 12:25). True faith values eternal over temporal, choosing persecution over compromise.

Historical Context

Jewish martyrdom under persecution features prominently in intertestamental period, especially during Maccabean era (167-160 BC) under Antiochus Epiphanes. 2 Maccabees 6-7 describes martyrs tortured for refusing to eat pork or abandon Torah, explicitly mentioning hope of resurrection as motivation. These accounts would have been well-known to first-century Jewish readers. The Maccabean martyrs became models of faithful endurance under persecution. Early Christian martyrs followed this pattern, refusing to renounce Christ despite torture, trusting in resurrection hope. The contrast in verse 35 shows faith produces both miraculous deliverance and patient endurance unto death, depending on God's sovereign purposes.

Related Passages

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. How does this verse challenge any prosperity gospel that promises faith always produces earthly deliverance?
2. What would you refuse to compromise even under threat of torture, and what does this reveal about your ultimate values?
3. In what ways does resurrection hope enable believers to endure suffering and even martyrdom rather than deny Christ?

Interlinear Text

ἔλαβον	γυναῖκες	ἐξ	ἀναστάσεως	τοὺς	νεκροὺς
received	Women	raised to life again	resurrection	G3588	dead
G2983	G1135	G1537	G386		G3498
αὐτῶν·	ἄλλοι	δὲ	ἐτυμπανίσθησαν	οὐ	προσδεξάμενοι
G846	others	and	were tortured	not	accepting
	G243	G1161	G5178	G3756	G4327
τὴν	ἀπολύτρωσιν	ἵνα	κρείττονος	ἀναστάσεως	
G3588	deliverance	that	a better	resurrection	
	G629	G2443	G2909	G386	
τύχωσιν·					
they might obtain					
G5177					

Additional Cross-References

Philippians 3:11 (Resurrection): If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.

Acts 23:6 (Resurrection): But when Paul perceived that the one part were Sadducees, and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, Men and brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee: of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question.

Acts 24:15 (Resurrection): And have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust.

Acts 22:29 (Parallel theme): Then straightway they departed from him which should have examined him: and the chief captain also was afraid, after he knew that he was a Roman, and because he had bound him.

Acts 9:41 (Parallel theme): And he gave her his hand, and lifted her up, and when he had called the saints and widows, presented her alive.

