

Hebrews 11:36

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment:

Analysis

And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: This continues cataloging faith's costly consequences. 'Cruel mockings' (empaigmōn, ἐμπαιγμῶν, 'ridicule' or 'jeering') describes psychological torture and public humiliation endured by prophets like Jeremiah, mocked by false prophets and faithless leaders (Jeremiah 20:7). 'Scourgings' (mastigōn, μαστίγων, 'whippings') references physical beatings like those Paul later experienced (2 Corinthians 11:24-25).

'Bonds and imprisonment' describes prolonged captivity like Jeremiah's (Jeremiah 37:15-21; 38:6), Joseph's false accusation and imprisonment (Genesis 39:20), and numerous prophets who suffered incarceration for proclaiming God's word. Faith doesn't exempt believers from suffering but often attracts it, as the world hates those who testify to truth (John 15:18-20).

These sufferings demonstrate that visible circumstances don't indicate God's favor or displeasure. The faithful often suffer precisely because of their faithfulness. This corrects prosperity theology's error that equates earthly comfort with divine approval. Instead, Scripture presents suffering as normative for faith (2 Timothy 3:12), refining character and proving genuine trust in God independent of circumstances. The same faith that accomplishes miracles (verses 33-34) also endures persecution (verses 35-38) without wavering.

Historical Context

Old Testament prophets frequently faced persecution for delivering unwelcome messages. Jeremiah was beaten, put in stocks (Jeremiah 20:2), imprisoned in dungeon (Jeremiah 37:15), and lowered into muddy cistern (Jeremiah 38:6). Tradition holds that Isaiah was sawn in two (referenced in verse 37) during Manasseh's reign. Micaiah was imprisoned for prophesying against Ahab (1 Kings 22:26-27). These prophets' suffering validated their messages' authenticity—false prophets prospered by telling people what they wanted to hear, while true prophets suffered for declaring uncomfortable truth. First-century readers facing persecution would find encouragement that their suffering placed them in continuity with faithful prophets.

Related Passages

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How does this passage prepare you for potential mockery, rejection, or persecution for following Christ?
2. What does the faithful endurance of imprisonment and suffering teach about measuring spiritual success by outcomes versus faithfulness?
3. In what ways should you support and remember those currently imprisoned or persecuted for their faith?

Interlinear Text

ἔτεροι	δὲ	ἐμπαιγμῶν	καὶ	μαστίγων	πεῖραν	ἔλαβον
others	And	of cruel mockings	and	scourgings	trial	had
G2087	G1161	G1701	G2532	G3148	G3984	G2983
ἔτι	δὲ	δεσμῶν	καὶ	φυλακῆς		
moreover	And	of bonds	and	imprisonment		
G2089	G1161	G1199	G2532	G5438		

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 20:2 (Parallel theme): Then Pashur smote Jeremiah the prophet, and put him in the stocks that were in the high gate of Benjamin, which was by the house of the LORD.

Genesis 39:20 (Kingdom): And Joseph's master took him, and put him into the prison, a place where the king's prisoners were bound: and he was there in the prison.

2 Chronicles 30:10 (Parallel theme): So the posts passed from city to city through the country of Ephraim and Manasseh even unto Zebulun: but they laughed them to scorn, and mocked them.

Jeremiah 20:7 (Parallel theme): O LORD, thou hast deceived me, and I was deceived: thou art stronger than I, and hast prevailed: I am in derision daily, every one mocketh me.

2 Chronicles 36:16 (Parallel theme): But they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the LORD arose against his people, till there was no remedy.

2 Chronicles 16:10 (Parallel theme): Then Asa was wroth with the seer, and put him in a prison house; for he was in a rage with him because of this thing. And Asa oppressed some of the people the same time.