

## EXPOSITION OF HEBREWS

Message #31

Hebrews 11:32-40

Faith is the dynamic certainty that God will be literally true to His Word in the future even though we do not see everything yet. Faith believes God's Word from Genesis to Revelation.

**FAITH THAT IS HEROIC IS A FAITH THAT CONTINUES TO LITERALLY TRUST THE WORD OF GOD WITH A BELIEF IN THE FACT THAT GOD WILL DO WHAT HE SAYS HE WILL DO IN HIS WORD.**

Now as near as I can determine, there are four final faith points that are made in these verses:

**FAITH POINT #1** – Final heroic faith illustrations . **11:32**

Now I want you to notice how **verse 32** begins, “And what more shall I say ... for time will fail me.” What this means is that the writer is winding down his heroic faith illustrations. He could have written volumes on the subject. In fact, he could write volumes on each of these named here. But he mentions them in somewhat of a passing and concluding way. Unlike the previous people mentioned in which he gives some detail, here he just mentions a name. He mentions seven distinct final faith heroes:

**Final Heroic Illustration Group #1** - Four illustrations from the book of Judges .

During the time of the judges, everyone was doing what was right in their own eyes; so to actually find someone who believed and followed the Word of God was extremely rare. The illustrations used from Judges are not chronologically selected but thematically selected.

- 1) Gideon (Judges 7-8) - By faith believed God's Word and reduced his military to 300 men and went up against the thousands of the Midianites and Amalekites and he won and killed 120,000 enemies.

**Heroic faith does not trust in big numbers for victory; it trusts in God.**

- 2) Barak (Judges 4-5) - By faith Barak would not go up against the Canaanites unless the prophetess of God, Deborah, went with him. He had that much faith in the importance of the presence of the Word of God. He went up against the massive army of Sisera and beat them.

**Heroic faith totally trusts in the Word of God and one who accurately communicates it.**

- 3) Samson (Judges 13-16) - Kent Hughes said normally when you think of Samson, you don't think of him as a great man of faith, but as a great dunce who was a lust-crazed womanizer whose “moral brain waves had gone flat” (*Hebrews*, p. 149). By faith, Sampson, having lost much, regained his spiritual senses and went to war against the Philistines believing that God could and would give him one final victory. In his final moment on earth, he turned to the Lord and trusted the Lord and asked that God give him strength to destroy the Philistines.

**Heroic faith trusts in God until the final moment of life on earth, even when one has made some stupid decisions in life.**

- 4) Jephthah (Judges 11-12) - By faith he was willing to go fight for Israel against the Ammonites believing God would give him victory and that God would make him a leader. Jephthah made a stupid vow and by faith he kept it.

**Final Heroic Illustration Group #2** - Two illustrations from the books of Samuel .

- 5) David is legendary as a great faith warrior starting with the episode with Goliath. He was Israel's greatest king, a writer of Psalms, and a man after God's own heart.
- 6) Samuel was the first of the prophets and last of the judges who lived his entire life devoted to God in the service of God.

**Final Heroic Illustration Group #3** - One illustration from concerning all the prophets .

- 7) The prophets who made prophetic predictions no matter what they faced. Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel just to name a few.

Now each of these mentioned had a real trust and faith in God and His Word when that kind of faith was rare. Each person of faith somewhat stood out and stood alone. None of these mentioned had a perfect faith, because they all had some personal problems. But God considers them heroes because they literally believed and applied His Word.

**FAITH POINT #2** – Worldly accomplishments of these faith heroes. **11:33-35a**

The list of accomplishments covers all those in Hebrews 11 in one way or another. What he specifically mentions is what these people did by faith:

**Worldly Faith Accomplishment #1** - They conquered kingdoms. **11:33a**

Joshua specifically conquered 31 major cities and kings (Joshua 12:9-24) and was by faith still going strong and conquering places in Promised Land matters when he was 85 years old (Joshua 14:10-12). David, almost single-handedly, because of his faith in God conquered the Philistines.

**Worldly Faith Accomplishment #2** - They performed righteous acts. **11:33b**

By faith, righteous judgments were made and idolatrous idols were destroyed.

**Worldly Faith Accomplishment #3** - They obtained fulfillment of many promises. **11:33c**

When you live your life literally believing the Word of God, you will see many wonderful blessings come your way.

**Worldly Faith Accomplishment #4** - They shut the mouths of lions. **11:33d**

Both Sampson and David literally were empowered by God to shut the mouth of a lion by killing it. In the case of Daniel, he spent the night in a lions' den and God protected him.

**Worldly Faith Accomplishment #5** - They quenched the power of fire. **11:34a**

Three great examples of this are Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.

**Worldly Faith Accomplishment #6** - They escaped the edge of the sword. **11:34b**

David, Elijah, Elisha were just some of those who literally escaped the sword.

**Worldly Faith Accomplishment #7** - They were once weak but became strong. **11:34c**

It is not specifically stated what the weakness was. In the case of Gideon it was about weak numbers, in the case of Sampson it was about a weak flesh that left him humiliated. But by faith in God and His Word, the weakness became strength.

**Worldly Faith Accomplishment #8** - They became mighty in war. **11:34d**

The point is they were not mighty in war by themselves, but by faith in God and His Word. Here is the secret to us being mighty in the warfare we are in ourselves. When you realize you are weak and that God is your strength and in His Word is victory, we become mighty in war.

**Worldly Faith Accomplishment #9** - Women received back their dead by resurrection.  
**11:35a**

Not only was heroic faith demonstrated by men but also by women. Women believed God's Word. Both Elijah and Elisha were used by God to bring back one who died. Elijah brought back the son for the widow of Zarephath (I Kings 17:18-24). Elisha brought back the dead son of a Shunammite woman (II Kings 4:8-37). Both women believed in the life-giving power of God and in the Word of God through a prophet.

**FAITH POINT #3** – Faith endurance and mistreatment of some of the faith heroes.  
**11:35b-38**

A switch now takes place with a focus on some who didn't seem to escape anything, but they had an heroic faith. They persevered and endured by trusting in God when facing horrific things. In fact, **verse 35** says that they could have been released from their difficult circumstances if they would denounce their faith, but they would not do it.

By faith they endured, "believing in a better resurrection" that would not bring them back to this sinful temporal world, but would take them to God's eternal world. There are eight kinds of mistreatments that God's people endured by faith:

**Faith Endurance #1** - Some were tortured for their faith. **11:35b**

The word "torture" means to torture by beating or pounding on someone like a drum.

They believed in a better resurrection than one that would bring them back to this lousy world. They believed in one that would take them to God's eternal world.

**Faith Endurance #2** - Some were mocked for their faith. **11:36a**

The word “others” means others of a different kind.

**Faith Endurance #3** - Some were beaten for their faith. **11:36b**

The word “scourge” means to be whipped.

**Faith Endurance #4** - Some were imprisoned for their faith. **11:36c**

Not just prison but also chains.

**Faith Endurance #5** - Some were killed for their faith. **11:37a**

Some were killed by being stoned. The only actual Biblical record we have of an O.T. believer being stoned is Zechariah (II Chronicles 24:20-22). It is said that Jeremiah was stoned and we know Stephen was stoned. Some were killed by being cut in two. Isaiah, according to history, was cut in two by the false prophets of Manasseh who stood by laughing and rejoicing. History says Isaiah did not cry out in pain or weep, but kept speaking until he actually was cut in two (*The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament*, Vol. 2, p. 162). Some were killed with a sword. Paul was one who was killed by a sword as were thousands of other Christians.

By the way notice that **Hebrews 11:34** says some “escaped” the sword and now **Hebrews 11:37** says some were “put to death with the sword.” How do we explain this? The answer is no matter what God permits, it is our faith that makes us heroic. The key to this chapter is that these believers operated by faith in God and in His Word regardless of what they faced. They may live, they may die, but they kept their faith-focus on God and His Word.

God may call us to win battles or He may call us to lose battles. The point is we need to keep our faith focus on Him and His Word. If you face a sickness, believe God can heal you; and if He doesn't heal you, believe God has entrusted you with a trial that will enable you to reflect Jesus Christ (I Pet.4:12-13). Regardless of what God does, we keep our faith-focus on Him and His Word.

**Faith Endurance #6** - Some were totally destitute for their faith. **11:37b**

These faith heroes did not have nice clothing; they wandered around wearing sheepskins and goatskins. This was true of Elijah and Elisha and even John the Baptist. Just before Paul died he just wanted a coat (II Timothy 4:13).

**Faith Endurance #7** - Some were very mistreated for their faith. **11:37c**

They were getting pressed in or boxed in in a very narrow way.

**Faith Endurance #8** - Some did not even have a home for their faith. **11:38b**

They lived in deserts, mountains, caves, and holes in the ground.

You cannot help but see the falsity and the fallacy of the “healthy and wealthy” false prosperity gospel being propagated by many false religious leaders. When you read this chapter, the great heroes of the faith at times had very little but they kept their focus on God.

**FAITH POINT #4** – The heavenly assessment of all these faith heroes. **11:38-40**

It was Jim Elliot who said, “He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep, to gain what he cannot lose.” There are three main assessments that God gives concerning His people who literally take Him at His Word:

**(Heavenly Assessment #1)** - The world was not worthy of any of these people. **11:38a**

Here is the irony of the way things really are. The world rejects God’s people, but God says the world is not worthy of My people.

**(Heavenly Assessment #2)** - All of these gained the approval of God by their faith. **11:39a**

These people do hear, “Well done, good and faithful servant.” If you keep your faith focused on Jesus Christ, and you literally believe and defend the Word of God, you will never be forgotten by God, but will be highly commended by God.

**(Heavenly Assessment #3)** - None of these received everything that had been promised by God. **11:39b**

All of these faith heroes died looking for and longing for the coming Messiah who is Jesus Christ and all of the salvation promises that surrounded Him and His Kingdom.

Now look at **verse 40**; as all of these things were happening, God had us in mind. God has planned and provided something better for us. You see, those O.T. heroes of faith could not die in perfection because Christ had not died. All of these faith heroes looked to the future for a full perfection. We have something better. The something better we have is Jesus Christ. We now have the perfection. Jesus Christ is the author and finisher of our faith. We have a perfect standing with God and that perfection comes by one Person, Jesus Christ. You think about this point. You now have a perfection as you live on this earth that none of those O.T. faith heroes had.

Carefully notice that Hebrews 11 starts with Abel and a blood sacrifice and it ends with believers being made perfect by Jesus Christ and His blood sacrifice.

The resurrection that will one day bring all of us together, both O.T. and N.T. believers, is the first resurrection which will occur after the Great Tribulation.