

VARIOUS HEROES OF FAITH

TEXT: HEBREWS 11:32

Introduction:

1. We started out in the beginning of Hebrews 11 with some of the heroes from the book of Genesis -- Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph.
2. Then next came Moses and his parents, from the books of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy.
3. Then Joshua and Rahab from the book of Joshua. By now, the author of this epistle has made his point, and so he says, "And what shall I more say?" (Heb. 11:32).
4. But he is not finished yet, and this brings us tonight to the book of Judges (11:32). The names of these heroes are mentioned in verse 32, but nothing is said about their exploits.
5. Then in the following verses, their exploits are mentioned, but not their names.

I. THE JUDGES

1. Gideon is the first judge mentioned in Hebrews 11:32. Gideon came from an unusual background. We read in Judges 6:11 that Gideon was threshing wheat by the winepress, in order to hide it from the Midianites.
2. It was there that the angel of the LORD appeared unto him, and said unto him, "The LORD is with thee, thou mighty man of valour" (Judges 6:12).
3. At that time, the Israelites were being oppressed by the Midianites (Judges 6:1-10). Gideon could not understand why the LORD had hath forsaken Israel, and had delivered them into the hands of the Midianites (6:13).
4. Gideon was an unusual choice for a judge because he said to the angel "Behold, my family is poor in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house" (6:15).
5. But the LORD assured Gideon that he would not fail. "Go in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites: have not I sent thee?" (6:14).
6. Gideon believed God, and by faith he did deliver Israel from the hand of the Midianites. "And the LORD said unto him, Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man" (6:16; cf. Judges 7).
7. Next, Barak is mentioned. Barak actually preceded Gideon, though he is mentioned after him here in Hebrews 11:32 (Judges 4 & 5).
8. God spoke to Barak through Deborah, who was both a prophetess and a judge (Judge 4:4-6).

9. The LORD told Barak and Deborah that He would deliver Sisera, the captain of Jabin's army (the king of Canaan), into Barak's hand (Judges 4:7).
10. The LORD used Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite, to kill Sisera (Judges 4:17-24; cf. 4:9).
11. This is an unusual story, but the book of Judges is full of unusual stories. It was a time of declension and apostasy, but the LORD did not give up on Israel.
12. The LORD raised up judges to deliver Israel from her enemies.
13. The next judge mentioned is Samson, the most unusual hero of them all (11:32). Samson is the most famous and the most prominent of all the judges.
14. Samson is an enigma. He is mentioned as a man of faith here in Hebrews 11:32, yet he is one of the most carnal men in the Bible.
15. Judges 13:24 says, "The LORD blessed him," but Samson was double-minded and unstable. James 1:8 says, "A double minded man is unstable in all his ways." This describes Samson.
16. Before men Samson was the strongest of men, but before women he was weak and could not resist them.
17. Samson was empowered by the Spirit of God, but he constantly yielded his body to the lusts of the flesh.
18. Back in 1939, Winston Churchill described the actions of the Russians as, "a riddle wrapped up in a mystery inside an enigma." He could have been describing the life of Samson.
19. Samson was betrayed by Delilah; he lost his great strength; and he was captured by the Philistines. Despite his sins and frailties, Samson had genuine faith and the LORD used him to defeat the Philistines (cf. Judges 16:20-31).
20. Jephthae (Heb. 11:32) lived before Samson. The names are not listed here in chronological order. He had an unusual background also. Judges 11:1 says, "he was the son of an harlot." He is best remembered for his rash vow, made prior to his battle with the Ammonites (Judges 11:30-33).
21. Through faith Jephthae "subdued kingdoms" (Hebrews 11:33), i.e., the kingdoms of the Amorites, the Ammonites, and the Ephraimites.

II. DAVID

1. David is mentioned before Samuel, though Samuel was older.
2. It was Samuel who anointed David king (I Samuel 16:13).
3. David's faith is seen throughout Scripture. As a young lad, he defeated Goliath, the Philistine giant. He said to King Saul, "The LORD that

delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine" (I Sam. 17:37).

4. Throughout the book of Psalms, we see David saying over and over again, "O LORD my God, in thee do I put my trust" (cf. Psalm 7:1).

III. SAMUEL

1. Samuel is the last hero mentioned by name in this chapter (Heb. 11:32).
2. Samuel was the last of the judges, and he was also a prophet.
3. Samuel was a great man of prayer. First Samuel 7:9 says, "Samuel cried unto the LORD for Israel; and the LORD heard him."
4. Samuel said to the people of Israel, "Moreover as for me, God forbid that I should sin against the LORD in ceasing to pray for you: but I will teach you the good and the right way" (I Sam. 12:23).

CONCLUSION:

1. "And of the prophets" (11:32b). There are so many of them -- Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Elijah, and Elisha -- to name just a few.
2. But none is mentioned by name.
3. Tradition has it that Isaiah was "sawn asunder" (Heb. 11: 37), but Isaiah is not mentioned.
4. Undoubtedly many great men and women of faith have been "sawn asunder." This chapter emphasizes that it was their great faith that enabled them to get through their trials and troubles.