



A Systematic Expository Study of the Word of God

Study 11:

WINNING IN WARFARE BY FAITH

Hebrews 11:32

The verse begins with the question: "**And what shall I more say?**" Having spoken of the challenging examples and extraordinary exploits of faith, the Apostle now gives a summary of actions of faith, grouping some men of faith together. He does not mention all men or women that could have been mentioned. He passes over individuals such as Caleb, Deborah, Hannah, Ruth, Job and some others. Rather the Holy Spirit presents before us Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel and the prophets. The order in which they are mentioned is not that of time, for Barak lived before Gideon, Jephthah before Samson, and Samuel before David. God reckons according to His evaluation of the fruits of our faith, not according to age. With true faith in them, they fought the Lord's battles with courage and conviction and brought deliverance, truth and revival to God's people.

GIDEON: WINNING WITH THE COURAGEOUS FEW

Hebrews 11:32; Judges 6:11-16; 7:1-8; 8:4,22-23; 1 Samuel 14:6; 2 Chronicles 14:11-12; Luke 12:32.

Gideon was called to deliver and judge the nation of Israel when they were under the fierce oppression of the Midianites and the Amalekites (Judges 6:1-4). The Israelites were poor and fearful. When God called Gideon, he felt inadequate and wondered how he could defeat the oppressors and deliver the oppressed (Judges 6:11-16). With such a great challenge before him, he needed assurance from the Lord. Given some initial assurance (Judges 6:19-24), his faith was strong enough to destroy the idolatrous altar of his father (Judges 6:25-27). "**The Spirit of the LORD**" soon came upon him so he could begin the great work God had called him to. His faith was growing; he did not immediately or instantly come into strong, unshakable, extraordinary faith. With divine responses that cleared all his doubts (Judges 6:36-40; 7:13-15), his faith became firm and his victory certain. "**Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God**" (Romans 10:17). What words ministered faith to him? "**Surely 1 will be with thee and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man**" (Judges 6:16). Though the enemies were many - "**without number, as the sand by the sea side for multitude**" (Judges 7:12), Gideon defeated them with only 300 men in his army (Judges 7:7). Few with faith can defeat many with might.

BARAK: WEAPON AGAINST CRUEL FOES

Hebrews 11:32; Judges 4:4-9,14-24; Zechariah 4:6; 2 Corinthians 10:4-5; Mark 9:23.

The period of the judges was an era of repeated backsliding for Israel. "**The children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord**" (Judges 2:11,17, 19; 3:7,12; 4:1). Their backsliding brought "**the anger of the LORD**" upon them (Judges 2:14,20; 3:8). Sin, disobedience and rebellion had brought Israel under powerful enemies. In God's mercy, He raised up Barak to deliver Israel from 20 years of servitude. Barak believed God's promise given through Deborah. The fact that he wanted Deborah, the Lord's special representative at that time, to go with him to battle meant that his trust was in the Lord, not in his wisdom or ability. God's presence was of more value to him than his 10,000 men. Faith for victory over cruel foes came by hearing the Word: "**I will deliver him into thine hand**" (Judges 4:6,7).

SAMSON: WEAKNESS OVERCOME BY CONQUERING FAITH

Hebrews 11:32; Judges 13:1-5,24-25; 14:5-6; 15:14-16; 16:4-5,15-30; Isaiah 40:28-31.

Samson was a judge in Israel and his special task was that of fighting against the Philistines. He is remembered most for his moral weakness, backsliding and loss of God's power. Yet, his last exploit of faith shows that he overcame weakness by conquering faith. Throughout his life, he fought and defeated thousands of Philistines single-handedly. Many mighty deeds are recorded of him – rending a lion to pieces, slaying the nation's enemies with the jawbone of an ass, carrying the gates of Gaza on his shoulders, breaking the strongest cords when bound by his enemies, pulling down the great temple containing thousands of the Philistines. The instantaneous answer to his final prayer concludes his mighty acts by faith and by the Spirit.

JEPHTHAH: WILLINGNESS WITH CONSECRATED FAITHFULNESS

Hebrews 11:32; Judges 11:4-6,11-15,27-33,35; Psalm 50:14-15; Revelation 3:8-10.

Jephthah's calling and involvement was not only because of his faith but because of God's grace. His birth was dishonourable (Judges 11:1,2). The Mosaic law excluded such from the congregation of the LORD (Deuteronomy 23:2) but grace brought him in not just as a member but even a deliverer and a judge. He feared the Lord and was willing to deliver God's people and serve them. He believed God with a strong faith. He ascribed Israel's victories to the Lord (Judges 11:12,14,21-23). He made an extraordinary vow before the Lord and faithfully kept it by keeping his daughter in continual virginity. After the victory, he faithfully maintained his consecration.

DAVID: WARRIOR WITH COURAGEOUS FAITH

Hebrews 11:32; 1 Samuel 17:32-37,45-50; Psalms 71:7,17,18; 18:32-35; 27:3; 1 Timothy 6:12.

David stands out as a great man of faith in the Bible. From his youth, he trusted in the Lord. When he was still young, he killed a lion and a bear while taking care of his father's sheep. He fought and had victory over Goliath. He had faith in God and spoke words of faith: ***"Thou comest to me with a sword... but I come to thee in the name of the LORD. This day will the LORD deliver thee into mine hand... for the battle is the LORD'S, and He will give you into our hands"*** (1 Samuel 17:45-47). David overcame in many battles of life by faith. The battles were many and varied, in his family and from the king of the nation, friends and foes; yet, he always fought with courageous faith. The Psalms are full of expressions and confessions of his faith (Psalms 3:6; 4:8; 9:9,10; 18:2,17,19; 23:4; 27:1,3; 32:7; 44:5-8; 56:3-5,11; etc.).

SAMUEL AND THE PROPHETS: WITNESSES OF OUR COVENANT-KEEPING FATHER

Hebrews 11:32; 1 Samuel 3:10,19; 7:7-10;12:16-19; Psalm 99:6.

Only Samuel is named among ***"the prophets"***. The prophets were all men of faith and they bore witness to the unfailing, unchanging nature of the Word of our covenant-keeping God. The prophets reminded God's people of the trustworthiness of the promises of God. These prophets also fought valiantly against idolatry and immorality in the nation. Samuel was an outstanding prophet of God. From his youth, he had the presence of God and the prophetic Word. God's power was demonstrated in his life (1 Samuel 12:16-18). Through the prophets, Israel was taught to maintain faith in God – ***"for I am the LORD, I change not"*** (Malachi 3:6).

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