

Hebrews 11:32

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BIG SANDY, Texas—On June 22, I began a Bible study series on Wednesday night about Hebrews 11, and I gave five consecutive studies until July 20. After each study, I wrote a short article for the congregation. (Since other individuals have given the Wednesday-night study for the past seven weeks, my series was put on hold.)

This past Wednesday night, I continued with my series about Hebrews 11. This installment was a presentation titled "Hebrews 11:32." I want to share some of my comments in this article.

Items about 10 people

Hebrews 11:1 provided a brief introduction to the subject of faith and hope.

Hebrews 11:2 mentioned that some people in the Old Testament obtained a good testimony.

Hebrews 11:3-31 proceeded to mention 10 individuals who received a good testimony. Since this chapter is relatively short, the comments about the individuals were relatively short.

The 10 individuals were Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses and Rahab.

Brief mention of 6 individuals

Hebrews 11:32 then briefly mentioned six other people—without giving any examples of their faith.

The six individuals were Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David and Samuel.

Gideon

Gideon was mentioned 39 times in the Old Testament.

Gideon was involved in Judges 7 when God reduced the number of Israelites from 32,000 down to 300 men.

Judges 7:3—"Now therefore, proclaim in the hearing of the people, saying, 'Whoever is fearful and afraid, let him turn and depart at once from Mount Gilead.' And twenty-two thousand of the people returned, and ten thousand remained."

Judges 7:6—"And the number of those who lapped, putting their hand to their mouth, was three hundred men; but all the rest of the people got down on their knees to drink water."

When the men of Israel asked Gideon to rule over them, notice his wonderful response.

Judges 8:22-23—"Then the men of Israel said to Gideon, 'Rule over us, both you and your son, and your grandson also; for you have delivered us from the hand of Midian.' But Gideon said to them, 'I will not rule over you, nor shall my son rule over you; the Lord shall rule over you.' "

After such a wonderful response, it is interesting to note that Gideon proceeded to make a mistake.

Judges 8:24, 27—"Then Gideon said to them, 'I would like to make a request of you, that each of you would give me the earrings from his plunder.' For they had golden earrings, because they *were* Ishmaelites . . . Then Gideon made it into an ephod and set it up in his city, Ophrah. And all Israel played the harlot with it there. It became a snare to Gideon and to his house."

Barak

Barak was mentioned 13 times in the Old Testament.

When a person looks for some history of Barak in the Bible, he can easily be surprised about the lack of mention.

Notice 1 Samuel 12:11.

1 Samuel 12:11—“And the Lord sent Jerubbaal [Gideon], Bedan [Barak], Jephthah and Samuel, and delivered you out of the hand of your enemies on every side; and you dwelt in safety.”

Samson

Samson was mentioned 48 times in the Old Testament.

The story of Samson has been taught many times in sermons and in church classrooms for children.

Judges 16:28-29—“Then Samson called to the Lord, saying, ‘O Lord God, remember me, I pray! Strengthen me, I pray, just this once, O God, that I may with one blow take vengeance on the Philistines for my two eyes!’ And Samson took hold of the two middle pillars which supported the temple, and he braced himself against them, one on his right and the other on his left.”

Samson's strength was a result of his being filled with the Spirit of the Lord. (Notice Judges 14:6, Judges 14:19 and Judges 15:14.)

Jephthah

Jephthah was mentioned 29 times in the Old Testament.

Jephthah is most famous for a vow that he made.

Judges 11:30-31—“And Jephthah made a vow to the Lord, and said, ‘If You will indeed deliver the people of Ammon into my hands, then it will be that whatever comes out of the doors of my house to meet me, when I return in peace from the people of Ammon, shall surely be the Lord’s, and I will offer it up as a burnt offering.’ ”

After his victory over the people of Ammon (verses 32-33), his daughter came out of the house to greet him (verse 34).

Jephthah's grief was powerful (verse 35).

Jephthah sent his daughter away for two months (verses 36-38).

When she returned, Jephthah "carried out his vow" (verse 39).

There are two common teachings about what occurred in verse 39.

- Some Bible students believe that Jephthah killed his daughter.
- Other Bible students believe that she continued living a life as a perpetual virgin.

Judges 11:39—“And it was so at the end of two months that she returned to her father, and he carried out his vow with her which he had vowed. She knew no man.”

David

David was mentioned 1,075 times in the Old Testament and 59 times in the New Testament.

Samuel

Samuel was mentioned 137 times in the Old Testament.

Prophets

After those six individuals were specifically mentioned, the entire group of prophets was also listed.

The group of prophets was mentioned 312 times in the Old Testament and 148 times in the New Testament.

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