

Hebrews 11:33-40

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BIG SANDY, Texas—At our Bible study on Wednesday night, I finished my series about Hebrews 11. This installment was a presentation titled "Hebrews 11:33-40." I want to share some of my comments in this article.

Good report

Let me remind you that Hebrews 11 is about mentioning people who received a good report (Hebrews 11:2).

In verses 3-31, the author made brief positive comments about 10 individuals—Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses and Rahab.

In verse 32, the author mentioned the names (without any comments) about six individuals—Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David and Samuel.

The rest of this chapter is referring to them and to all the individuals who followed God.

I want to describe the rest of this chapter in three overall concepts.

- Miraculous deliverance
- Enduring trials
- Receiving the ultimate promise together

Miraculous deliverance

Notice the positive behavior listed in verses 33-35.

Hebrews 11:33-35—"Who through faith subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, became valiant in battle, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. Women received their dead raised to life again . . ."

Endured trials

On the other hand, notice some of the trials that the people of God had to endure. Before we read the whole list of trials, let's focus on the last part of Hebrews 11:35.

Hebrews 11:35—“. . . Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection.”

What was that better resurrection?

Revelation 20:4, 6—“And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years . . . Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.”

Let's return to the list of trials.

Hebrews 11:36-38—“Still others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yes, and of chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, were tempted, were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented—of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, in dens and caves of the earth.”

Ultimate promise together

It is interesting to note that the last two verses in this chapter contradict the narrative of many of my Christian friends—who believe that they will receive their eternal reward immediately after their death.

I do not find it necessary or productive to argue with these friends. We both love God and look forward to spending eternity with Him.

But I happen to believe in a resurrection—when saints will come out of their graves together.

- Acts 2:29—Luke wrote that King David was still in his tomb.

- Acts 2:34—Luke wrote that David did not ascend into the heavens.
- 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17—Paul wrote that the dead in Christ will arise when the Son of God returns.
- Revelation 20:6—John wrote about a first resurrection, when saints will reign with the Son of God for 1,000 years.

Hebrews 11:39-40—“And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise, God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us.”