

Hebrews 11:32

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gedeon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets:

Analysis

And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gedeon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets: The author accelerates his survey, acknowledging he could continue indefinitely cataloging faithful heroes. The rhetorical question 'what shall I more say?' introduces a rapid summary of additional examples—judges (Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah), kings (David), prophets (Samuel and others). Each name represents detailed Old Testament accounts of faith triumphing through God's power despite human weakness.

Significantly, this list includes deeply flawed individuals. Gideon doubted and demanded signs; Barak required Deborah's presence; Samson repeatedly violated his Nazirite vow; Jephthah made a rash vow resulting in tragedy; David committed adultery and murder. Yet all are commended for faith, demonstrating that God's grace works through imperfect vessels. Faith isn't perfection but persistent trust in God despite personal failures. These heroes' lives testify that justification comes through faith, not moral perfection.

The phrase 'time would fail me' (epileisei me ho chronos, ἐπιλείψει με ὁ χρόνος) shows the author's awareness of Scripture's abundant testimony to faith. He could have written volumes but selected representative examples. This implies that all of Scripture, properly understood, is the story of God's faithfulness and the faith He

produces in His people. The Old Testament, far from being obsolete, remains vital testimony to the same faith that saves in the New Covenant era.

Historical Context

The judges period (approximately 1375-1050 BC) featured cyclical apostasy and deliverance as Israel repeatedly abandoned God, suffered oppression, cried for help, and received divinely appointed deliverers. Gideon defeated Midianites with 300 men (Judges 7); Barak and Deborah defeated Canaanites (Judges 4-5); Samson harassed Philistines despite personal moral failures (Judges 13-16); Jephthah defeated Ammonites (Judges 11). David (c. 1040-970 BC) united Israel and established the Davidic covenant. Samuel (c. 1100-1020 BC) served as prophet transitioning from judges to monarchy. All these flawed individuals accomplished God's purposes through faith, providing rich Old Testament testimony to grace.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. How does the inclusion of flawed heroes like Samson and David encourage you that God works through imperfect people?
2. What does this rapid summary teach about Scripture's consistent testimony to salvation by faith across all eras?
3. In what ways should the 'great cloud of witnesses' (Hebrews 12:1) motivate your own persevering faith?

Interlinear Text

καὶ τί ἔτι λέγω ἐπιλείψει γὰρ με διηγούμενον ὁ
And what more say would fail for me to tell G3588
G2532 G5101 G2089 G3004 G1952 G1063 G3165 G1334

χρόνος περὶ Γεδεών Βαράκ τε καὶ Σαμψών καὶ
the time of Gedeon of Barak and And of Samson And
G5550 G4012 G1066 G913 G5037 G2532 G4546 G2532

Ἰεφθάε Δαβίδ τε καὶ Σαμουὴλ καὶ τῶν προφητῶν
of Jephthae of David and And Samuel And G3588 of the prophets
G2422 G1138 G5037 G2532 G4545 G2532 G3588 G4396

Additional Cross-References

1 Samuel 16:1 (Parallel theme): And the LORD said unto Samuel, How long wilt thou mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel? fill thine horn with oil, and go, I will send thee to Jesse the Beth-lehemite: for I have provided me a king among his sons.

1 Samuel 1:20 (Parallel theme): Wherefore it came to pass, when the time was come about after Hannah had conceived, that she bare a son, and called his name Samuel, saying, Because I have asked him of the LORD.

1 Samuel 16:13 (References David): Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren: and the Spirit of the LORD came upon David from that day forward. So Samuel rose up, and went to Ramah.

Acts 3:24 (Prophecy): Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days.

Acts 13:20 (Prophecy): And after that he gave unto them judges about the space of four hundred and fifty years, until Samuel the prophet.

Acts 10:43 (Prophecy): To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.

2 Peter 1:21 (Prophecy): For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

Romans 4:1 (Parallel theme): What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found?

Romans 7:7 (Parallel theme): What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.

1 Samuel 12:11 (Parallel theme): And the LORD sent Jerubbaal, and Bedan, and Jephthah, and Samuel, and delivered you out of the hand of your enemies on every side, and ye dwelled safe.

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