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OLD TESTAMENT SUPER GRACE HEROES

A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF HEBREWS
NUMBER 113
HEBREWS 11:32-33

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Verse 32 begins with the word kai and connects these verses with what has already been said. The word "more" is an adverb from eti and it means that sufficient information has been given and a summary is now in order. Next we have a present, active, subjunctive of lego and it means that no longer will details be given. Eti lego is a literary and oratorical idiom meaning "What more can I say?" The author of Hebrews says here that it is just not possible to give all the details of all the super grace heroes that have been involved in the history of God's people. Next we have gar plus ho chronos and it refers to time as a succession of events. Next we have "would fail" and this is a future, active, indicative of epileipo and it means that time is insufficient. The point has already been well made in this chapter. Epileipo means to leave behind or to be insufficient. So, it is an idiom and means "for the time will leave me behind for lack of time." Next we have "to tell" which is the present, middle, participle of diegeomai and it means to recount in detail. So, it means "Time would fail me if I would give all the details." From verses 4 through 31 we have had a detailed account of super grace heroes. This is a temporal participle and should be translated "while I go on telling." He would have documented these details if he had had time to do so. Now we have the word "of" from peri and it means concerning.

GIDEON

Gideon came from one of the worst tribes. His tribe had about the worst military record of all the tribes. His was a tribe of deserters and cowards. His tribe was Manasseh and this is one of the tribes that never crossed the Jordan but lived in Gilead on the East bank. The Midianites and Amalekites had invaded and had taken over the land and Gideon was hiding out as was typical of the way a man of his tribe would act. He was down in a ditch but had been running away so fast he hadn't had time to stop and separate the wheat from the chaff. So, he was throwing the wheat up so the wind would blow the chaff away and that was the way he was going to have oatmeal for breakfast. While he was tossing the stuff in the air, the Lord Jesus Christ was standing over there under a tree and called to Gideon, "Hello, Hero?" And Gideon looked up and gave the Lord that "Who, me?" look. This dialogue that took place is recorded in Judges 6:12 and following. That statement includes the phrase, "The Lord is with thee, O brave warrior!" Gideon was not brave, he was not a warrior, but was a coward, was hungry, and didn't understand the statement of the Lord. It was a statement of grace. That statement would become true under the power of the grace of God. He lived in 1250-1190 B.C. The complete story is told in Judges 6 and 7. God and 300 delivered the people.

BARAK

Barak was from the tribe of Naphtali. Barak means "lightning flash," but he was slow and a coward and yellow and a mama's boy. Here is one of those characters where God's sense of humor and God's grace meet and a great hero emerges. He was also from one of the weaker tribes and he was supposed to go out and deliver the Jews from the Canaanites.

The Canaanites were being directed at that time by a very famous soldier of fortune named Sisera. Barak lived between 1195 and 1155 and he was in the generation after Gideon. But he had to have some woman holding his hand and Deborah went out and assisted in the victory. In fact, it was a woman's victory all the way. The little doll got Sisera drunk and drove a nail through his head while he was in the tent. We find this record in Judges 4 and 5.

SAMPSON

Sampson came from the tribe of Dan. Dan is the worst tribe of all. This is always the last tribe mentioned and this is the tribe from which the anti-christ will come. In the new list in Revelation, Dan is not even mentioned. Sampson was famous around 1085 B.C. He was in the process of delivering the Jews from the Philistines. But he got involved in many other things that interfered with this final deliverance.

These Three Judges Had The Same Grace Pattern

1. They all came from inferior tribes. Gideon came from Manasseh, Barak came from Naphtali and Sampson came from Dan. They never did really join with the other tribes in fighting for their country. They ignored the principle of freedom through military victory.
2. They lived in a time of reversionism and national crisis. This is always the time when God reaches out to help the helpless and God always demonstrates who is in charge. They all had doctrine resident in the soul but they allowed human viewpoint to come in and handicap them.
3. In spite of all this, they became super grace heroes and defeated a superior power. They defeated the Midianites, the Amalikites, the Canaanites and the Philistines.

JEPHTHAH

Jephthah followed the same pattern as the three we have just studied. He was born a bastard son from Manasseh. He migrated to Syria and became very bitter because he had had this unfortunate experience of being born a bastard. Quite often the cruelty of the old sin nature causes people to ridicule a person who has been born a bastard. Because of this ridicule about being a bastard, he was driven into the military and he went to the far north and became a great soldier. He collected a non-Jewish army, and when the Jews were attacked by the Ammonites, they looked around for some outside help and they found this well-trained army from the outside directed by Jephthah. They had to crawl on their hands and knees and request help from one they had ridiculed as a bastard. As a result of all this, Jephthah had become a believer. He came to learn some doctrine and lost his bitterness, and as a super grace believer, he went into action to save Israel. While he was in the struggle in a strategic battle, he made that famous vow which you have read about in the Bible. He didn't offer his daughter as a human sacrifice, but he did make a vow that he would keep her single for the rest of her life. She was his only child and a virgin. In this way he ended the possibility of perpetuation of his family line. He ruled from 1105 to 1099 B.C. The story of Jephthah is in Judges 11.

A Picture Of Grace

None of these four we have mentioned above could have made it in the military today. Useless, hopeless, helpless men and no one would ever think of turning to them for help. But God's grace picked them up and gave them a prominent place in the history of Israel. Jesus Christ controls history and can pick up hopeless and helpless men with no talent and no appeal and no character and make them into great super grace heroes. This is what the story of the Judges is all about, grace. These are grace stories all the way. Here we have Jephthah leaning on his vow, and Barak leaning on Deborah, and Sampson leaning on Delilah, and Gideon leaning on oatmeal. It is always great to realize that when things are bad in the nation that Jesus Christ still controls history. All of these judges delivered their country in the time when the fourth cycle of discipline was on the nation.

Next we have the words "David also." That is not quite correct. We have the words "David" and then te kai and it should read, "Both David and Samuel." The greatness of David demanded that the Holy Spirit mention his name. Next to Moses he was the greatest man to have lived for a thousand years. He is one of the greats and the greatest king that ever lived in human history. He was a super grace hero in every sense of the word. Along with David the Holy Spirit mentions Samuel. In his generation Samuel was the greatest and when the nation sank into her deepest reversionism, it was Samuel who stood in the gap and saved the nation. Samuel had to contend with King Saul and his dealing with Saul and the anointing of David in the place of Saul was one of the great acts of his life. Samuel had been fortunate in that he had been well-born. He was the product of prayer from a very Godly mother and his early training bent him in the direction for his life work. One of the tragic pictures of Israel is when Saul, in the hour of decline and disaster, goes to the cave in Endor and calls up the witch and says, "Bring me up Samuel." He had had Samuel but wouldn't listen to him when he had him, and too late he is wishing for the opportunity he had let slip from his hands.

Next we have the adjunctive use of the word kai and it reads, "Also the prophets."

So in this verse, we have, "And what more can I say for time would fail me while I go on telling about Gideon, Barak, Sampson, Jephthah both David and Samuel and also the prophets."

"Also The Prophets"

These are the super grace believers God picked out to communicate to the people his message.

1. The prophets refer to believers of the Old Testament who under the inspiration of God the Holy Spirit communicated to the Jews the will of God, the plan of God, and the future of Israel both in verbal and written form.
2. Excluded from this list are the prophets who existed before David. Such prophets as Moses and Samuel. But these have been mentioned already and not included in the word prophets that we have here.
3. However the category of prophets includes Elijah and Elisha who were verbal communicators. In the Northern Kingdom, we have both verbal and written messages from the prophets Amos and Hosea. In the Southern Kingdom Isaiah, Micah, and Jeremiah.

4. This word "prophets" includes the prophets in exile, both Daniel and Ezekiel. Their ministry was out of the land in exile.
5. The word "prophets" also includes the prophets after the exile. These are Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi.

These are the people included in this word "prophets." Each one was a super grace hero.

In the remainder of this chapter, we have the exploits of super grace heroes without their names being mentioned. We have their activity and their service without the roster being listed. We depart here from having the names of these great super grace heroes with doctrine resident in their souls and come to their accomplishments. We see how they met pressures and trials and handicaps and frustrations and became great faith heroes. These exploits are mentioned in verses 33-38, and in verses 39 and 40, we have the completion of their super grace dissertations.

HEBREWS 11:33 "Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions," In verses 33 and 34 we have a very simple construction. We have nine separate clauses and they are called asyndetons. An asyndeton is a clause joined to another without a conjunction in between to link them together. Here we have nine asyndetons. These are designed to present the importance of doctrine in the soul in the time of adversity and in the historical crisis. These nine clauses have maximum force. By having no conjunction connecting them, each stands on its own with great force. We have a similar asyndeton famous in history from Julius Caesar--"VENI, VIDI, VICI. I came, I saw, I conquered."

The word "who" is from hos and this is the nominative plural of the relative pronoun and this refers to all the great believers of the Old Testament referred to in verses 4-32 which we have studied in detail. So, we have, "Through doctrine resident in the soul these super grace heroes."

Next we have the word "subdued" and this is an aorist, middle, indicative of katagonizomai and it means to defeat by crushing into the ground. This is a constantive aorist and gathers all the great military victories of these great super grace heroes into one great bundle. All of their freedom came through military victory. So this middle voice means this should read, "Who themselves by means of doctrine resident in the soul crushed into the ground." Next we have the word "kingdoms" and this is from basilia and it means they conquered the armies and the land.

1. Doctrine resident in the soul is the secret of military victory.
2. Doctrine in the soul provides the courage to be aggressive in victory. Victory is never won by the defense, it takes the offense to win.
3. There never will be victory apart from taking the offensive.
4. The emphasis in this clause is on military victory as it pertains to national sovereignty. All nations must maintain their sovereignty by military victory.
5. Bible doctrine resident in the soul was the basis of winning victories and wars in this passage we have before us.
6. Bible doctrine resident in the soul is the key to military victory and the maintenance of national sovereignty.

"Wrought Righteousness"

The second asyndeton is "wrought righteousness." This is an aorist, middle, indicative of ergazomai and it means to "accomplish righteousness." The word for righteousness is dikaiosune and this is what they produced in their souls. They themselves allowed doctrine to enter their minds and this is what resulted. This is the righteousness that doctrine builds. Doctrine resident in the soul is the basis for accomplishing righteousness which is acceptable to God.

"Obtained Promises"

This is an aorist, active, indicative of epitugchano and it means to obtain or to attain. The promises referred to here are the paragraphs God wrote in eternity past for every believer. One is for time and the other paragraph is for eternity. These paragraphs were designed by God in eternity past. They include provision for all we will ever need, both in time and in eternity. The word "promises" is from epaggelia. This is not referring to promises about the Messiah. So it reads, "Who themselves, by means of doctrine resident in the soul conquered kingdoms, accomplished righteousness, attained promises."

"Stopped the mouths of lions"

The word "stopped" is the aorist, active, indicative of phrasso and it really means "shut." This is a culminative aorist and gives emphasis to the existing results. Daniel saw God shut the mouths of lions and in that den he had one of the most comfortable nights in his life. There was absolute comfort in that lions' den and there was misery in the king's palace. If you are thinking of an ideal burglar alarm, he had it. He had a soft pillow and he had a warm bed by those lions. You can read this story in Daniel 6 and especially verses 21 and 22. Darius Saraxares II heard Daniel say, "My God has sent his angels and has shut the mouths of the lions." And remember, these were hungry lions. The word "mouth" is stoma and it refers to the dangerous, hungry mouths of these lions.

Summary

1. The ebb and flow of empires radically changes history, but this does not change the believer's faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Daniel lived in a time when the empires were rising and falling but Daniel remained the same. Unstable conditions in history do not change the believer's objective in history. The fall of Babylon and the rise of Persia did not change Daniel's objective one iota.
2. God promotes super grace believers like Daniel. Maximum doctrine in the soul of Daniel prepared Daniel for the Lion's den experience and out of this he became a very powerful man in the Babylonian empire.
3. Super grace prosperity causes reaction from others. There was a personality conflict between the 300 princes in Babylon and Daniel. Super grace prosperity causes jealousy, bitterness, and implacability. But Daniel was not petty and never stooped to retaliation. He left it in the Lord's hands. These were hungry lions and hungry lions shut their mouths only in the presence of greatness.

4. For super grace believers, the principle of Romans 8:28 applies every time.
5. Darius was trapped by his own approbation lust by signing a phony decree. Darius became arrogant and bypassed the law. In the place of the right kind of law, he established a phony law.
6. Legislation must be designed to protect the freedom of the individual. Legislation cannot solve social problems. Only God can do that. When legislation is distorted, it always destroys freedom. It often does this under the phrase, "The greatest good for the greatest number."

So, we have here the picture of a happy super grace believer in the den of lions and the lions with their mouths shut by the power of God. Sooner or later every believer must face his own lion's den. How you face your lion's den depends on the amount of doctrine you have in your mind. With super grace doctrine in Daniel, those lions never had a chance to open their mouths. Maximum doctrine in the soul gives you the ability never to compromise the grace of God.