



What Do the Old Testament Faithful Teach Us?

Hebrews 12:1: (NASB) *Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us.*



As Christians, we are always talking about faith and its indispensable role in our lives, for without it we really are not true Christians at all. We are always looking for ways to inspire our faith towards higher and more mature levels. Finding this motivation does not have to be a difficult task, because the Old Testament is full of individuals whose faith and actions were God-honoring and incredibly heroic. If we observe and study their lives, we will find a treasure trove of faith-strengthening tools and examples for our practical everyday use. How much did they know of God's plan when they were tested? What were the obstacles they were beset

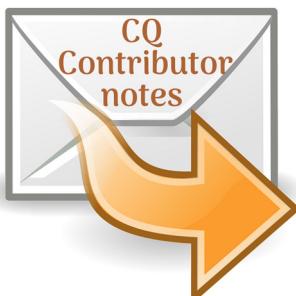
with? What kinds of social pressure did they have to deal with? Were their choices along the lines of "good, better, best" or were they clear black-and-white decisions? What does all of this mean to us?

We asked some of our CQ contributors to share their favorite "hero of faith" in the Old Testament and to give an introduction to their hero.

We have chosen a few select heroes:

**DEBORAH - NOAH
- ABRAHAM -
SHADRACH - MESHACH
- ABEDNEGO - JOSEPH**

- ◆ What did they know?
- ◆ What did they face - what pressures were involved?
- ◆ What did they do?
- ◆ What was the result?



Deb: Deborah is a hero of mine! First, a little background: When I was born, my mother wanted to name me Gloria (not a bad name), but my father was not fond of it. One of the older sisters in our Bible class, who was like a grandmother to me, told my parents to name me Deborah after the leader in the Bible who was strong and relied on the Lord. Deborah was a prophetess, judge and military leader that drew her strength from the Lord. With unwavering courage, because of her confidence in Him, she led an army to battle and won. Imagining how women were considered in her time, I can only marvel at her accomplishment. I try daily to live up to my namesake.



What did she know? Deborah knew she was chosen to give wisdom to the people of God:

Judges 4:4-5: (NASB) ⁴Now Deborah, a prophetess...was judging Israel at that time. ⁵She used to sit under the palm tree of Deborah...and the sons of Israel came up to her for judgment.

Deborah was in a position of wisdom and influence, before the time when Israel had kings. *The sons of Israel (the men) came up to her for judgment.*

The following audio clip gives us a sense of what people look for in a hero:



A hero is, *Uncharted 3, What Makes a Hero, PlayStation Europe*

- *It's hard to answer the question, "What is a hero" because it's such a broad term.*
- *A hero is something that we all ultimately aspire to be. You know, who doesn't want to be hero, who doesn't want to save the day?*
- *Somebody who has the ability to transcend things a normal person is not able to do, or a normal person would be fearful of doing.*
- *A hero is the vessel for our secret wish.*
- *Someone I think who is courageous in spite of their fear.*
- *He's a destroyer. The hero is a destroyer. The hero brings forth the new light. That's why it's that old saying, we run off into the sunset after the hero does his thing. And it's about riding on into the new journey, because you need to transcend.*
- *Somebody who beats the odds. Somebody who goes above and beyond.*

Deborah was one of those individuals - she went above and beyond both as a judge and a prophet.

What did she face - what pressures were involved? She faced inaction and inadequate faith among other leaders in a time of oppression:

Judges 4:6-8: (NASB) ⁶Now she sent and summoned Barak...and said to him, Behold, the LORD, the God of Israel, has commanded, Go and march to Mount Tabor, and take with you ten thousand men...⁷I will draw out to you Sisera, the commander of Jabin's army, with his chariots and his many troops to the river Kishon, and I will give him into your hand. ⁸Then Barak said to her, If you will go with me, then I will go; but if you will not go with me, I will not go.

Deborah, as a woman, stood up for godliness and faced other leaders (men) who did not stand up for godliness. Deborah shared God's prophecy with



Barak, but he was a coward and said - *If you will go with me, then I will go; but if you will not go with me, I will not go.*

What did she do? She not only prophesied victory, she LED the army to victory, which was an unheard-of feat:

Judges 4:9: (NASB) *She said, I will surely go with you; nevertheless, the honor shall not be yours on the journey that you are about to take, for the LORD will sell Sisera into the hands of a woman. Then Deborah arose and went with Barak to Kadesh.*

There was no hesitation in Deborah's judgment over Israel, giving the prophecy or going into battle. She was willing to go into harm's way to fulfill God's word.

What was the result? Complete victory and the praising of God. (The song of Deborah is in Judges 5):

Judges 4:14-15: (NASB) ¹⁴*Deborah said to Barak, Arise! For this is the day in which the LORD has given Sisera into your hands; behold, the LORD has gone out before you. So, Barak went down from Mount Tabor with ten thousand men following him. ¹⁵The LORD routed Sisera and all his chariots and all his army with the edge of the sword before Barak; and Sisera alighted from his chariot and fled away on foot.*

Israel overcomes the enemy because Deborah was the godly leader and hero who helped them.



SEEK GOD FIRST AND ALWAYS, SPEAK HIS WILL, AND LEAD THOSE WHO NEED FOCUS WITH UNFLINCHING COURAGE THROUGH WHATEVER HARDSHIP LIES AHEAD.

When there is a lack of courage or principle, a hero reverently stands up and says, "We should follow God's ways."

**Deborah guided and led her people back to God.
What can we learn from the heroism of Noah?**

One of the big lessons we need to remember is - heroes of faith became heroes within the context of the needs of their time. Deborah was called upon to guide and lead while our next hero, Noah, was called to save the world by doing what seemed ridiculous and impossible.

Tim: Noah is a hero of faith of mine because of his complete devotion to the unseen. God simply told him that it was going to rain and that he needed to build an ark for his family. What even is rain? What is an ark? These probably were some of his first questions. Then, as he started building, everyone would mock him. He and his family were wasting their time building a giant boat.





Despite the ridicule and embarrassment, he kept going nail after nail, board after board, day after day; he fought for God’s vision and warning. What if it does not rain? Can I even afford all this wood? How embarrassing would it be if I am wrong? I will be a laughing stock for the rest of my life! No, God is faithful, and He gave me a command. I will do according to His will. Noah shows me struggling for God is not glorious and rewarding in the beginning but obeying His will to the end grants us the reward. I want to be a hero of faith like Noah.

“Noah is a hero of faith of mine because of his complete devotion to the unseen.” Noah was devoted to something that had never happened, building something that had never been built with a mission that had never been heard of before.



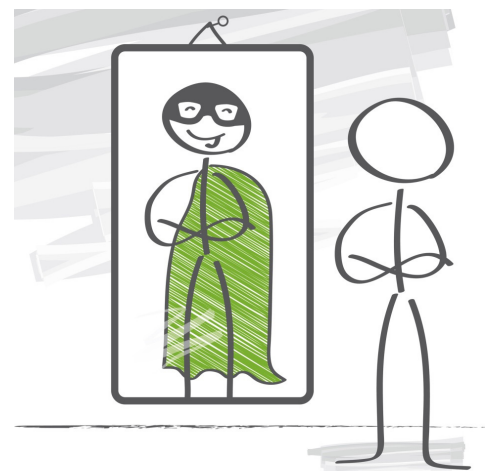
What did he know? **Noah knew and revered God, and he knew what was to come. He knew to obey:**

Hebrews 11:7: (NASB) *By faith Noah, being warned by God about things not yet seen, in reverence prepared an ark for the salvation of his household, by which he condemned the world, and became an heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.*

Noah, in reverence prepared an ark - without complaint. As a result, Noah became an heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.

 **Look in the mirror, What is it to be a Hero, Marvel**

- *What is it to be a hero? Look in the mirror and you'll know.*
- *It's too late for me, but not for you. This is your chance, a chance to earn that look in your daughter's eyes, to become the hero that she already thinks you are. It's not about saving our world, it's about saving theirs.*
- *Look into your own eyes and tell me you are not heroic, that you have not endured, or suffered, or lost the things you care about most.*



Step up if something needs to be done!



What did he face - what pressures were involved? Life and death pressures would have weighed him down for the many years of preaching ahead:

2 Peter 2:5: (NASB) *And did not spare the ancient world, but preserved Noah, a preacher of righteousness, with seven others, when He brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly.*

Noah was a preacher of righteousness - He led his family by example and held up God's standard. Noah faced ridicule from the world around him.

What did he do? God's will - Noah built a massive boat on dry ground:

Genesis 6:11-14: (NASB) *¹¹Now the earth was corrupt in the sight of God, and the earth was filled with violence. ¹²God looked on the earth, and behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way upon the earth. ¹³Then God said to Noah, The end of all flesh has come before Me; for the earth is filled with violence because of them; and behold, I am about to destroy them with the earth. ¹⁴Make for yourself an ark of gopher wood; you shall make the ark with rooms and shall cover it inside and out with pitch.*

The earth was filled with violence. There was a mixing of spirit beings with human beings (a hybrid race) that was not part of God's plan. With such corruption surrounding him, we cannot imagine the magnitude of this project.

What was the result? The ark was ready and boarded, and the flood came:

Genesis 7:1-2: (NASB) *¹Then the LORD said to Noah, Enter the ark, you and all your household, for you alone I have seen to be righteous before Me in this time. ²You shall take with you of every clean animal by sevens...and of the animals that are not clean two, a male and his female.*

Noah continued to work no matter what he was up against. How easily do we get discouraged when going through difficult times in our lives?

What also happened was salvation. God's creation survived because of the heroic faith and continuous actions of Noah:

Genesis 8:16-17, 20-21: (NASB) *¹⁶Go out of the ark, you and your wife and your sons and your sons' wives with you. ¹⁷Bring out with you every living thing of all flesh that is with you...that they may breed abundantly on the earth and be fruitful and multiply on the earth... ²⁰Then Noah built an altar to the LORD and took of every clean animal and of every clean bird and offered burnt offerings on the altar. ²¹The LORD smelled the soothing aroma; and the LORD said to Himself, I will never again curse the ground on account of man, for the intent of man's heart is evil from his youth; and I will never again destroy every living thing, as I have done.*

Noah's incredible faithfulness gave us an opportunity to live and is a picture of Jesus sacrificing his life to save the world. Let's go back to Tim's comment, "Noah shows me that struggling for God is not glorious and rewarding in the beginning but obeying His will to the end grants us the reward. I want to be a hero of faith like Noah."

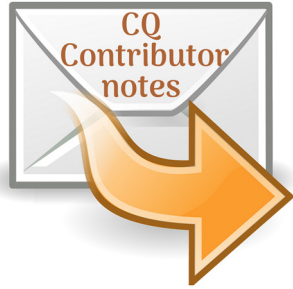


OBEDIENCE TO THAT WHICH IS OF GOD, NO MATTER HOW IMPOSSIBLE OR INCOMPREHENSIBLE IT MAY SEEM, WILL ALWAYS YIELD RIGHTEOUSNESS, REVERENCE, AND EVENTUAL DELIVERANCE.



Whose story would we tell after looking at Noah's faith and action? Who could even come close?

First of all, while comparing the faith in action of godly men and women is not a competition, it is a grand opportunity to see how faith thrives in wildly different circumstances. Our next example is Abraham, and he is often referred to as the “Father of the Faithful.” Why? Jesus, that is why!



Ella: My favorite faith hero is Abraham. He is called the “Father of the Faithful” because he had such faith in God’s promises and through his long-awaited seed, Isaac, all the families of the earth would be blessed. Therefore, if God told him to sacrifice his beloved son of promise, conceived in his old age by his old wife Sarah (truly a miracle), God would surely resurrect him. Abraham did not get that faith overnight. His faith started out when he left the land of Ur and progressed through a series of God’s dealings with him - layers of faith building upon each other. What a great lesson for us in our consecrated lives! I must ask myself, “Am I growing in faith? Do I completely trust Him in all circumstances? Do I internalize the great and precious promises God has given me? Abraham internalized the promises of God. Do I?”



What did he know? **Abram (Abraham) knew God would direct him - he knew to follow, and he knew he would be protected:**

Genesis 12:1-2: (NASB) ¹Now the LORD said to Abram, Go forth from your country, and from your relatives and from your father's house, to the land which I will show you; ²and I will make you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great; and so you shall be a blessing;

God told him - *I will show you - do not worry.*

When no one is looking, *Uncharted 3, What Makes a Hero, PlayStation Europe*

- *Heroism is about what you do when nobody's looking.*
- *He's the person who goes forward when we're afraid.*
- *The hero has to be very dignified.*
- *The soldier who's sent into battle.*
- *Veracity, there is a truth, a very solid truth.*
- *Fighting great villains or fighting great creatures.*
- *The pilot landed in the Hudson.*



- *We look toward heroes to instruct us or to represent us and even to represent our fantasies.*
- *Looking at a hero, you almost escape yourself in some fashion.*
- *Because we want to see the human experience writ large and the way you write that large, is just by telling a story that has externalized violence and conflict in it.*

PlayStation is talking about how they create their hero figures. They use all these qualities we find in actual human heroes of the Bible.

What did he face - what pressures were involved? The pressures included the unknown - uncertainty, potential doubt, disunity within the many whom he uprooted, altercations and fighting from other peoples, impatience and probably fear. It was not just Abram and his wife who left the country - it included his servants, his herds and flocks, his extended family and their herds and flocks. Abram moved hundreds of people and thousands of animals. They did not even know where they were going.

Genesis 12:3: (NASB) *And I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed.*

What did he do? He went, and while he was at it, his faith had room to take Lot and his entire household along with him:

Genesis 12:4: (NASB) *So Abram went forth as the LORD had spoken to him; and Lot went with him. Now Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran.*

Abram had a profound ability to trust God. This first example of his faith in motion set the pattern for a man who would follow God's instructions through amazing difficulties. Ella told us, "Abraham did not get that faith overnight. His faith started out when he left the land of Ur and progressed through a series of God's dealings with him - layers of faith building upon each other."

Heroism does not come upon us in an instant - we grow into it - there is a development process. This is the same with our Christian walk. God helps us through difficulties and we grow stronger and have more confidence and trust.

What was the result? Faithfulness in spite of unclear and unconvincing circumstances. Twenty-four years later, his name was changed, and a year after that his son Isaac, "The Promised One," was born.

Several years later, God tested Abraham and told him to sacrifice his son. Abraham was obedient because he knew the character of God:

Genesis 22:15-18: (NASB) ¹⁵*Then the angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time from heaven, ¹⁶and said, By Myself I have sworn, declares the LORD, because you have done this thing and have not withheld your son, your only son, ¹⁷indeed I will greatly bless you, and I will greatly multiply your seed as the stars of the heavens and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your seed shall possess the gate of their enemies. ¹⁸In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice.*

This was the fourth time this promise was spoken to Abraham. Each time it was spoken there were details added. This shows us how pleased God was with Abraham's faith.



God has promises for those who follow Him. We need to see the repetitions of His promises and the repetitions of His providence, so we can be heroic in our own faith. To be able to step out of our comfort zone, we need to have conviction.

Abraham, in spite of his faith and action, was always a stranger - even in the land he was promised:

Hebrews 11:8-9: (NASB) *⁸By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed by going out to a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing where he was going. ⁹By faith he lived as an alien in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, fellow heirs of the same promise;*

As a Christian, we are ambassadors for Christ living in a foreign land, because our hopes are toward heaven.

Why? His faith was actually leading him beyond where his life would take him:

Hebrews 11:10: (NASB) *For he was looking for the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God.*



That “city” would be the New World Order established by Jesus who was THE promised seed:

John 8:56: (NASB) *Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it and was glad.*

Abraham was able to see beyond the limits of his own life. We want to see beyond the limits of our own lives.

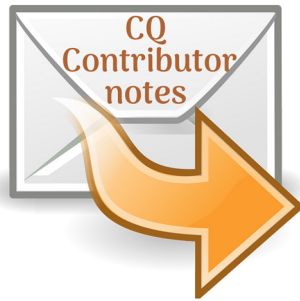


SOMETIMES HEROIC FAITH LEADS US TO ESTABLISH A MERE FOUNDATION FOR OTHERS TO BUILD UPON WHICH MEANS WE DO NOT SEE THE RESULTS OF OUR EFFORTS. ANY HERO OF FAITH REJOICES IN THE SIMPLE FACT THAT THEY CONTRIBUTED TO WHAT WAS BEYOND THEIR REACH.

Deborah delivered a nation, Noah saved humanity and Abraham fathered the faithful. What is next?

Now we follow Abraham’s lineage as Isaac begets Jacob, and Jacob has twelve sons who will establish Israel. It is all fun and family until some get jealous of others. Joseph, the second youngest, is singled out for removal, and this treachery gives birth to another amazing story of faith in action.

To be heroic, we must have faith in action and motion that goes above and beyond and be willing to deny self.




Cindy: Joseph in the Old Testament is a huge favorite of mine because to my mind he is the most personable. He had experiences I can relate to - family struggles, sibling rivalry, being on the receiving end of jealousy (which is as cruel as the grave.) He had the opportunity to revile again but chose to revile not. During all his experiences, Joseph continually called upon the Lord, and the Lord was with him. Perhaps the biggest blessing I have received from Joseph's story is when he said, "You meant it for bad, but God meant it for good." I find that very reassuring in my walk of faith that no matter what happens to me or by whom, God has the matter well in control.



For more on Joseph, please see August 4, 2013, CQ Episode 773 and September 22, 2013, CQ Episode 780: "Who Was that Hero in the Multi-Colored Coat? (Parts I and II)."

What did he know? Joseph knew he had favor in the eyes of God and also his father Abraham. He also knew he was disliked by his ten older brothers. Joseph also knew how to be upright and honest:

Genesis 37:2-4: (NASB) ²Joseph, when seventeen years of age, was pasturing the flock with his brothers...along with the sons of...his father's wives. And Joseph brought back a bad report about them to their father. ³Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his sons, because he was the son of his old age; and he made him a varicolored tunic. ⁴His brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers; and so, they hated him and could not speak to him on friendly terms.

 **We always have a choice, What is it to be a Hero, Marvel**

- *Whatever comes our way, whatever battle we have raging inside us, we always have a choice. My friend Harry taught me that. He chose to be the best of himself. It's the choices that make us who we are, and we can always choose to do what's right.*
- *Everything that happens now is in your hands.*

It is powerful to know you have a choice.



What did he face - what pressures were involved? Peer pressure, rejection, abuse, slavery, false accusations, imprisonment and isolation - to name a few.

Genesis 37:28: (NASB) *Then some Midianite traders passed by, so they pulled him up and lifted Joseph out of the pit and sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty shekels of silver. Thus they brought Joseph into Egypt.*



What did he do? Joseph prospered! No matter the conditions or the years that passed, Joseph ALWAYS applied the grace and wisdom of God he was given, and eventually he was delivered.

In Potiphar's house:

Genesis 39:2-3: (NASB) *²The LORD was with Joseph, so he became a successful man. And he was in the house of his master, the Egyptian. ³Now his master saw that the LORD was with him and how the LORD caused all that he did to prosper in his hand.*

In prison:

Genesis 39:21-22: (NASB) *²¹But the LORD was with Joseph and extended kindness to him, and gave him favor in the sight of the chief jailer. ²²The chief jailer committed to Joseph's charge all the prisoners who were in the jail; so that whatever was done there, he was responsible for it.*

Before Pharaoh:

Genesis 41:38-40: (NASB) *³⁸Then Pharaoh said to his servants, Can we find a man like this, in whom is a divine spirit? ³⁹So Pharaoh said to Joseph, Since God has informed you of all this, there is no one so discerning and wise as you are. ⁴⁰You shall be over my house, and according to your command all my people shall do homage; only in the throne I will be greater than you.*

What was the result? Humble, family saving, world saving leadership and wisdom:

Genesis 50:19-21: (NASB) *¹⁹But Joseph said to them, Do not be afraid, for am I in God's place? ²⁰As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive. ²¹So therefore, do not be afraid; I will provide for you and your little ones. So, he comforted them and spoke kindly to them.*



Cindy (again): Another great lesson I cherish is that when God says, *Dearly Beloved, avenge not yourselves but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord (Romans 12:19)*. This played out when God arranged circumstances for Joseph's brethren when they had to go back and tell their father Jacob that Joseph was indeed still alive and asking for him (*Genesis 45:9, 25-28*). I personally find this very reassuring in that God DOES take into account the wrongs committed against His little ones, and He does make it right, even though we may not see the events playing out, and it may take a long time (as in the case of Joseph). I find it very faith strengthening.





THE TRUE POWER OF A HEROIC LIFE OF WISDOM, INTEGRITY, AND ACTION IS OFTEN NOT NOTICED AS THE HERO AGES BUT IS ONLY EMBRACED AND HONORED AT THE END OF THE HERO'S JOURNEY.

One prophetic and leader, two who saved civilization and the father of the faithful! What could be next?

Next, we honor three relatively unsung heroes of the Old Testament who lived in the shadow of one of the great Old Testament icons. Daniel was in a class of his own as a leader and man of God, and yet the three Hebrew men who are highlighted alongside him were pretty powerful as well.



These are my favorite heroes. There were three of them and they needed to work together. I find deep inspiration in their faith.



What did they know? Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego (and Daniel) grew up faithful to God and His providence. At this time, they had been in respectful Babylonian positions for about twenty years:

Daniel 3:1-6: (NRSV) ¹King Nebuchadnezzar made a golden statue...²(and) sent for...all the officials of the provinces, to assemble and come to the dedication of the statue that (the) King...had set up... ³When they were standing before the statue...⁴the herald proclaimed aloud, You are commanded, O peoples, nations, and languages... ⁵you are to fall down and worship the golden statue...⁶Whoever does not fall down and worship shall immediately be thrown into a furnace of blazing fire.

There was a proclamation that all of Babylon had to bow down to the statue King Nebuchadnezzar built in his honor.



If the chips were down, *Uncharted 3, What Makes a Hero, PlayStation Europe*

- *You know, if the chips were down, would I have the will and the courage and the grace and the wisdom to do the right thing?*
- *I think everybody's got it in them, it's just whether or not you want to exploit that aspect of yourself or not.*
- *You can be greater than yourself, you can defend a cause that is greater than yourself.*
- *All the attributes of that moment gears you to take the leap of faith to do what is great.*
- *Would we do what he does? Would we be capable? And that's why we invest. And that's, I think also, why we are drawn increasingly to heroes who are flawed.*

If the chips were down, would you do what was important? That was the circumstance with the Hebrew's faith in the Babylonian world.

What did they face - what pressures were involved? The pressure of the world's most powerful King, the pressure of public humiliation, peer pressure, and the fact that Daniel was not there:

Daniel 3:8-10,12: (NRSV) ⁸...*certain Chaldeans came forward and denounced the Jews. ⁹They said to (the) King... O king, live forever! ¹⁰You, O king, have made a decree, that everyone...shall fall down and worship the golden statue...¹²There are certain Jews whom you have appointed over the affairs of the province of Babylon: Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. These pay no heed to you, O king. They do not serve your gods and they do not worship the golden statue that you have set up.*

What did they do? They stood! They simply stood for right even in the face of humiliation and death:

Daniel 3:13-15: (NRSV) ¹³Then Nebuchadnezzar in furious rage commanded... (them to) be brought in; so they brought those men before the king... (The King's respect, fury and forgetfulness are all obvious. He verifies the accusation.) ¹⁵Now if you are ready...to fall down and worship the statue that I have made, well and good. But if you do not worship, you shall immediately be thrown into a furnace of blazing fire, and who is the god that will deliver you out of my hands?

The king gives them a second chance - the temptation of rationality. This is no bluff, they are the center of attention:

Daniel 3:16-18: (NRSV) ¹⁶(They)...answered the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to present a defense to you in this matter. ¹⁷If our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the furnace of blazing fire and out of your hand, O king, let him deliver us. ¹⁸But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods and we will not worship the golden statue that you have set up.

They were given the ultimatum to bow down or die. They were in complete harmony with one another - *If our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the furnace of blazing fire and out of your hand, O king, let him deliver us. ¹⁸But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods...*

That is heroism in the face of torture and death.



I appreciate this example of standing together because Christian Questions is a volunteer team effort of many working shoulder-to-shoulder together.



“Jonathan and Rick on a CQ podcast,”
Lego creation
by listener
Jonathan Mezera



This is a powerful example of standing together and saying, “We live for God together and we will die for God together.”

What was the result? God’s impossible and mighty deliverance:

Daniel 3:19, 23-26: (NRSV) ¹⁹Then Nebuchadnezzar was so filled with rage against (them) that his face was distorted. He ordered the furnace heated up seven times more than was customary...²³But the three men...fell down, bound, into the furnace of blazing fire. ²⁴Then King Nebuchadnezzar was astonished and rose up quickly. He said to his counselors, Was it not three men that we threw bound into the fire...²⁵But I see four men unbound, walking in the middle of the fire, and they are not hurt; and the fourth has the appearance of a god. ²⁶Nebuchadnezzar then approached the door of the furnace of blazing fire and said, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, servants of the Most High God, come out! Come here!

It is amazing how quickly Nebuchadnezzar remembered the Most High God when faced with God’s power.

The conclusion:

Daniel 3:28: (NRSV) Nebuchadnezzar said, Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who has sent his angel and delivered his servants who trusted in him. They disobeyed the king’s command and yielded up their bodies rather than serve and worship any god except their own God.

That is what heroism of faith looks like!



SOMETIMES THE HEROISM OF ONE’S ENTIRE LIFE IS ENCAPSULATED IN A SINGLE DECISION AND ACTION. THESE THREE MEN CHOSE TOGETHER TO HONOR GOD IN LIFE AND IN DEATH.



In our examples of “heroes of faith” in the Old Testament, we see those who stood strong with the principles of righteousness and with reverence to choose to follow the will of God no matter what the circumstance. Heroism is not a moment, it is a lifetime. Be a hero by learning what the heroes of the Scriptures did for us.

*So, what do the Old Testament faithful teach us?
For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions...
Think about it...!*



Join us next week for our podcast on December 17, 2018:
Ep. #1052: "Is it God's Fault We Have Evil in This World?"

Bonus Material!

The cave you fear to enter holds the treasure you seek. – Joseph Campbell

Additional details from the end of the story of Joseph

This portion of his story truly shows the results of a life well-lived based on choosing to always do the will of God:

Genesis 41:50-57: (NASB) ⁵⁰Now before the year of famine came, two sons were born to Joseph, whom Asenath, the daughter of Potiphara priest of On, bore to him. ⁵¹Joseph named the firstborn Manasseh, For, he said, God has made me forget all my trouble and all my father's household. ⁵²He named the second Ephraim, For, he said, God has made me fruitful in the land of my affliction.

This is such a great lesson for us to patiently wait for the blessings of God while standing for the truths of God. This took place when Joseph was between 31 and 37 years old which was 14 to 20 years after being sold as a slave:

⁵³When the seven years of plenty which had been in the land of Egypt came to an end, ⁵⁴and the seven years of famine began to come, just as Joseph had said, then there was famine in all the lands, but in all the land of Egypt there was bread. ⁵⁵So when all the land of Egypt was famished, the people cried out to Pharaoh for bread; and Pharaoh said to all the Egyptians, Go to Joseph; whatever he says to you, you shall do. ⁵⁶When the famine was spread over all the face of the earth, then Joseph opened all the storehouses, and sold to the Egyptians; and the



famine was severe in the land of Egypt. ⁵⁷The people of all the earth came to Egypt to buy grain from Joseph, because the famine was severe in all the earth.

Integrity shining through - it is not enough to hear of the plan, one must speak it boldly and act on it with such zeal that those who look for life can plainly see the conduit of God's will:

John 6:68-69: (NASB) ⁶⁸Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? You have words of eternal life. ⁶⁹We have believed and have come to know that you are the Holy One of God.

Genesis 42:1-3,5: (NASB) ¹Now Jacob saw that there was grain in Egypt, and Jacob said to his sons, Why are you staring at one another? ²He said, Behold, I have heard that there is grain in Egypt; go down there and buy some for us from that place, so that we may live and not die. ³Then ten brothers of Joseph went down to buy grain from Egypt...⁵So the sons of Israel came to buy grain among those who were coming, for the famine was in the land of Canaan also.

Need presents opportunity:

Genesis 42:6,8-11,13,15-17: (NASB) ⁶Now Joseph was the ruler over the land; he was the one who sold to all the people of the land. And Joseph's brothers came and bowed down to him with their faces to the ground...⁸But Joseph had recognized his brothers, although they did not recognize him. Joseph remembered the dreams which he had about them, and said to them, You are spies; you have come to look at the undefended parts of our land. ¹⁰Then they said to him, No, my lord, but your servants have come to buy food. ¹¹We are all sons of one man; we are honest men, your servants are not spies... ¹³Your servants are twelve brothers in all, the sons of one man in the land of Canaan; and behold, the youngest is with our father today, and one is no longer alive. ¹⁵By this you will be tested: by the life of Pharaoh, you shall not go from this place unless your youngest brother comes here! ¹⁶Send one of you that he may get your brother, while you remain confined, that your words may be tested, whether there is truth in you. But if not, by the life of Pharaoh, surely you are spies. ¹⁷So he put them all together in prison for three days.

Joseph takes their words and tests them to see if they are in fact sincere:

Genesis 42:23-25: (NASB) ²³They did not know, however, that Joseph understood, for there was an interpreter between them. ²⁴He turned away from them and wept. But when he returned to them and spoke to them, he took Simeon from them and bound him before their eyes. ²⁵Then Joseph gave orders to fill their bags with grain and to restore every man's money in his sack, and to give them provisions for the journey. And thus it was done for them.

(Source: Biblical commentary by Matthew Henry) The imprisonment of Simeon ([Genesis 42:24](#)). He chose him for the hostage probably because he remembered him to have been his most bitter enemy, or because he observed him now to be least humbled and concerned; he bound him before their eyes to affect them all.

The test of integrity continues - Joseph had been tested over twenty years of hardship. Here was the opportunity to see if his brothers had also learned from their experience over those same 20 (plus) years.

They were instructed to bring Benjamin back to Egypt to achieve the release of Simeon - a dilemma for sure:

Genesis 42:35-38: (NASB) ³⁵Now it came about as they were emptying their sacks, that behold, every man's bundle of money was in his sack; and when they and their father saw their bundles of money, they were dismayed. ³⁶Their father Jacob said to them, You have bereaved me of my children: Joseph is no more, and Simeon is no more, and you would take Benjamin; all these things are against me. ³⁷Then Reuben spoke to his father, saying, You may put my two sons to death if I do not bring him back to you; put him in my care, and I will return him to you. ³⁸But Jacob said, My son shall not go down with you; for his brother is dead, and he alone is left. If harm should befall him on the journey you are taking, then you will bring my gray hair down to Sheol in sorrow.

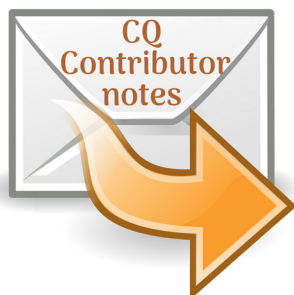


Jacob finally agrees, as the famine continues.

The brothers return to Egypt bearing gifts and double the amount for grain. Joseph receives them and continues to test them. They show honesty and humility when brought to Joseph's house. Joseph again sets them up, and again a brother, this time Judah, offers himself instead of Benjamin.

Joseph the forgiver and preserver of life for his family and the world - a true hero:

Genesis 45:1-15: (NRSV) *¹Then Joseph could no longer control himself before all those who stood by him, and he cried out, Send everyone away from me. So no one stayed with him when Joseph made himself known to his brothers. ²And he wept so loudly that the Egyptians heard it, and the household of Pharaoh heard it. ³Joseph said to his brothers, I am Joseph. Is my father still alive? But his brothers could not answer him, so dismayed were they at his presence. ⁴Then Joseph said to his brothers, Come closer to me. And they came closer. He said, I am your brother, Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt. ⁵And now do not be distressed, or angry with yourselves, because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life. ⁶For the famine has been in the land these two years; and there are five more years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvest. ⁷God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant on earth, and to keep alive for you many survivors. ⁸So it was not you who sent me here, but God; he has made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house and ruler over all the land of Egypt. ⁹Hurry and go up to my father and say to him, Thus says your son Joseph, God has made me lord of all Egypt; come down to me, do not delay. ¹⁰You shall settle in the land of Goshen, and you shall be near me, you and your children and your children's children, as well as your flocks, your herds, and all that you have. ¹¹I will provide for you there-since there are five more years of famine to come-so that you and your household, and all that you have, will not come to poverty. ¹²And now your eyes and the eyes of my brother Benjamin see that it is my own mouth that speaks to you. ¹³You must tell my father how greatly I am honored in Egypt, and all that you have seen. Hurry and bring my father down here. ¹⁴Then he fell upon his brother Benjamin's neck and wept, while Benjamin wept upon his neck. ¹⁵And he kissed all his brothers and wept upon them; and after that his brothers talked with him.*



CQ Contributor Becca: I really love Noah. When you really stop to think about the (actually kind of crazy) circumstances in the life that he lived, it's hard to imagine how he was able to be SO faithful. First of all, the things that God asked him to do made absolutely no sense to him because he had no context for those. He didn't know what rain was, or what it would mean for it to rain and flood the earth, and yet he followed God's directions. Building something as enormous as He was asking, and then on top of it, telling Noah he'd be taking a whole bunch of animals on that boat is also a very strange request that requires a lot of faith that God has a plan that is going to make this all work out.

The fact that Noah was not only able to remain faithful, but that he was not influenced by all of the evil surrounding him is really amazing. It is one thing when you have a job and everyone there is sinning, but to not have any other friends (just immediate family) that you can turn to must have been hard. The other end of that is that these aren't just your average sinners; these are people and beings that God wanted to utterly destroy that He deemed it better to start over and kill all of these people than to try to have Noah just stick it out. Even in today's world where it can feel like sin is oppressing every aspect of our lives/society, there is (at least at this point) nothing like everyone doing evil everywhere all the time. The ability to remain faithful to God and not be influenced by that is really tremendous.



It is really a tremendous thing to so firmly believe in the Lord and in doing what is right that you are not distracted or wooed by other belief systems. In today's world, we see how disbelief in God, in the attractiveness of philosophies of men can creep in and convince even those around us that the knowledge we have is wrong. At that time, Noah had WAY less information about what was happening, or what was going to happen today. Even though we may not know (or understand) details of God's plan we HAVE God's plan! We know there is salvation and redemption because of Jesus, we know that the evil that is here will come to an end, and the opportunity Adam had to live in a perfect world will be restored. We have loads of prophecy and history to look at to encourage our faith, and while Noah had a very different relationship with God than we do today, it's still incredibly impressive and encouraging for me.

One of my favorite parts of Hebrews 11 is verses 13-16 because we are surrounded by so much information and truth, and we can SEE what is going to happen, but these heroes of faith didn't get to see any of it, and yet they believed. It makes me think of people who died fighting for civil rights, like Martin Luther King, Jr. He didn't get to see segregation torn down, but he had a vision, and he believed it was possible. These heroes of faith trusted God and also saw a vision for a better world that God would prepare for them and us.

What I appreciate most about Noah is that he was a man, a sinful man, which means that his level of righteousness and goodness is attainable in our day. We can never be totally like Jesus because he was perfect; however, it is possible to be as good and faithful as Noah (even if it's really hard - it IS possible.)

I find Enoch fascinating - probably because we just do not have a whole lot of information, and he was "taken away" which is a perplexing question.

I appreciate that in the list of Hebrews 11 there are women included. I appreciate Sarah in a different way now that I have experienced my own pain at not being able to have children. Of course, in Sarah's day, things were very different for women and there was definitely a greater stigma at not being able to produce children. I think it's interesting that both she and Abraham knew of God's promise for a son, and when it wasn't happening and wasn't happening, they started to feel like, well, maybe we just need to take things into our own hands and brought Hagar along. Which is such a good lesson for all of us who feel that sometimes it's "up to us" to make things move along in God's plan, when really it was a lesson in patience and trust. While God certainly never promised me a child, there are other promises that I can appreciate and trust He will follow through on, just like He did for Sarah.

Lastly, there is Rahab. I find it tremendous that Rahab is not only named as one of the heroes of faith, but she is also a descendant of Jesus. The fact that she is described as a "harlot" and still regarded with respect in the New Testament says a lot about her actual character, and it also shows how we are all deserving of God's love despite our sin. Rahab must have not only seen something special in the spies, but in Jehovah Himself, to be willing to not only put herself in grave danger but be willing to commit treason and sell out her



own people. What's even more amazing is that it's not as if God had a specific conversation with her, asking her to hide the spies, or that an angel appeared and gave her a hint that this is what she was supposed to do when confronted by two spies. Instead there was something special within her that made her want to rise up out of her own circumstances and acknowledge God during a time where God was not really dealing with anyone who was not an Israelite.

I love Rahab's courage and interest in knowing God. While I don't know that we are confronted with the same kind of situations as Rahab today, it takes courage to stand up for God and to believe that what He says, He will do.



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