

By Faith...

The People

What role did faith play at Red Sea?

-Ex 14

What About the Wilderness Generation??

-Heb 3:16-19

Walls of Jericho

What did faith cause the children of Israel to do?

-Jos 6

Rahab

Why is her inclusion here significant?

-Jos 2:1-21; 6:17

-Mt 1:5

-Jas 2:25

Sawn in Two

- Likely an allusion to traditions that Isaiah died during Manasseh's reign by being sawn in two

Sheep & Goats

Elijah and Elisha, dressed in animal skins:

-Num 31:20

-2 Kgs 1:8

The Greater Response (Chapters 11 to 13)

29 By faith the people crossed the Red Sea as on dry land, but the Egyptians, when they attempted to do the same, were drowned. 30 By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they had been encircled for seven days. 31 By faith Rahab the prostitute did not perish with those who were disobedient, because she had given a friendly welcome to the spies.

32 And what more shall I say? For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets— 33 who through faith conquered kingdoms, enforced justice, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, 34 quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, were made strong out of weakness, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight.

35 Women received back their dead by resurrection. Some were tortured, refusing to accept release, so that they might rise again to a better life. 36 Others suffered mocking and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment. 37 They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were killed with the sword. They went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, afflicted, mistreated— 38 of whom the world was not worthy—wandering about in deserts and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.

39 And all these, though commended through their faith, did not receive what was promised, 40 since God had provided something better for us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect.

Gideon - Judg 6-8

Barak - Judg 4

Samson - Judg 13-16

Jephthah - Judg 11-12

David -1Sam 16-31 -2Sam 1-24 -1Chr 10-29

Samuel - 1Sam 3-16

Mouths of Lions

-Daniel

-Dan 6

Quenched...Fire

- Shadrach, Meshach, & Abednego

-Dan 3

Received Back...Dead

-Elijah raised the son of the widow of Zarephath:

-1Kgs 17:17-24

-Elisha raised the son of a wealthy Shunammite woman:

-2Kgs 4:18-37

What does it mean to have faith?

- 1. R _____ (vv. Rom 3:9, 19-20, 23; 7:15-20; Matt 5:3-4)
2. R _____ (vv. Rom 3:22a, 26; John 3:16)
3. R _____ (vv. James 1:19-21; Matt 5:5-6)
4. R _____ (vv. Heb 11:1; II Cor 5:7; John 20:29)
5. R _____ (vv. Heb 11; James 2:14-25; 1:22)

(39) The OT figures mentioned in ch. 11 did not experience the salvation of Christ's new covenant during their lifetimes (9:15)

(40) Salvation is social. It concerns the whole people of God. We can experience it only as part of the whole people of God.

Hebrews Chapter 11 - Questions for Discussion

What does it mean to have faith in Jesus Christ?

The Journey to Faith in Jesus:

1. R _____
(vv. Rom 3:9, 19-20, 23; 7:15-20; Matt 5:3-4)

2. R _____
(vv. Rom 3:22a, 26; John 3:16)

3. R _____
(vv. James 1:19-21; Matt 5:5-6)

4. R _____
(vv. **Heb 11:1**; II Cor 5:7; John 20:29)

5. R _____
(vv. **Heb 11**; James 2:14-25; 1:22)

What role did faith play in the great even that happened at the Red Sea? (vv. 29; Ex 14)

The walls of Jericho fell down “by faith.” What did faith cause the children of Israel to do? (vv. 30; Josh 6:1-21)

Why didn't Rahab perish with the others at Jericho? Why is her inclusion here significant? (vv. 31; Josh 2:1-21; Matt 1:5; James 2:25)

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Identify the following men mentioned in Hebrews 11:32. Why are they included in the list of the faithful?

- Gideon (Judges 6-8)
- Barak (Judges 4)
- Samson (Judges 13-16)
- Jephthah (Judges 11-12)
- David (I Samuel 17)
- Samuel

Hebrews 10:33-38 mentions some of the acts of faith of great men and women of the Old Testament. Why was the world “not worthy” of such people?

What did these people fail to receive in their lifetime? (v. 39-40)

Teacher's Notes

By Faith...

THE PEOPLE

Exodus 14 (ESV)

¹ Then the LORD said to Moses, ² “Tell the people of Israel to turn back and encamp in front of Pi-hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea, in front of Baal-zephon; you shall encamp facing it, by the sea. ³ For Pharaoh will say of the people of Israel, ‘They are wandering in the land; the wilderness has shut them in.’ ⁴ And I will harden Pharaoh’s heart, and he will pursue them, and I will get glory over Pharaoh and all his host, and the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD.” And they did so.

⁵ When the king of Egypt was told that the people had fled, the mind of Pharaoh and his servants was changed toward the people, and they said, “What is this we have done, that we have let Israel go from serving us?” ⁶ So he made ready his chariot and took his army with him, ⁷ and took six hundred chosen chariots and all the other chariots of Egypt with officers over all of them. ⁸ And the LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and he pursued the people of Israel while the people of Israel were going out defiantly. ⁹ The Egyptians pursued them, all Pharaoh’s horses and chariots and his horsemen and his army, and overtook them encamped at the sea, by Pi-hahiroth, in front of Baal-zephon.

¹⁰ When Pharaoh drew near, the people of Israel lifted up their eyes, and behold, the Egyptians were marching after them, and they feared greatly. And the people of Israel cried out to the LORD. ¹¹ They said to Moses, “Is it because there are no graves in Egypt that you have taken us away to die in the wilderness? What have you done to us in bringing us out of Egypt? ¹² Is not this what we said to you in Egypt: ‘Leave us alone that we may serve the Egyptians’? For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness.” ¹³ And Moses said to the people, “Fear not, stand firm, and see the salvation of the LORD, which he will work for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall never see again. ¹⁴ The LORD will fight for you, and you have only to be silent.”

¹⁵ The LORD said to Moses, “Why do you cry to me? Tell the people of Israel to go forward. ¹⁶ Lift up your staff, and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it, that the people of Israel may go through the sea on dry ground. ¹⁷ And I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians so that they shall go in after them, and I will get glory over Pharaoh and all his host, his chariots, and his horsemen. ¹⁸ And the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD, when I have gotten glory over Pharaoh, his chariots, and his horsemen.”

¹⁹ Then the angel of God who was going before the host of Israel moved and went behind them, and the pillar of cloud moved from before them and stood behind them,

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²⁰ coming between the host of Egypt and the host of Israel. And there was the cloud and the darkness. And it lit up the night without one coming near the other all night.

²¹ Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and the LORD drove the sea back by a strong east wind all night and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided.

²² And the people of Israel went into the midst of the sea on dry ground, the waters being a wall to them on their right hand and on their left. ²³ The Egyptians pursued and went in after them into the midst of the sea, all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots, and his horsemen. ²⁴ And in the morning watch the LORD in the pillar of fire and of cloud looked down on the Egyptian forces and threw the Egyptian forces into a panic, ²⁵ clogging their chariot wheels so that they drove heavily. And the Egyptians said, "Let us flee from before Israel, for the LORD fights for them against the Egyptians."

²⁶ Then the LORD said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand over the sea, that the water may come back upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots, and upon their horsemen." ²⁷ So Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and the sea returned to its normal course when the morning appeared. And as the Egyptians fled into it, the LORD threw the Egyptians into the midst of the sea. ²⁸ The waters returned and covered the chariots and the horsemen; of all the host of Pharaoh that had followed them into the sea, not one of them remained. ²⁹ But the people of Israel walked on dry ground through the sea, the waters being a wall to them on their right hand and on their left.

³⁰ Thus the LORD saved Israel that day from the hand of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore. ³¹ Israel saw the great power that the LORD used against the Egyptians, so the people feared the LORD, and they believed in the LORD and in his servant Moses.

WHAT ABOUT THE WILDERNESS GENERATION??

Hebrews 3:16–19 (ESV)

¹⁶ For who were those who heard and yet rebelled? Was it not all those who left Egypt led by Moses? ¹⁷ And with whom was he provoked for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the wilderness? ¹⁸ And to whom did he swear that they would not enter his rest, but to those who were disobedient? ¹⁹ So we see that they were unable to enter because of unbelief.

WALLS OF JERICHO

Joshua 6 (ESV)

¹ Now Jericho was shut up inside and outside because of the people of Israel. None went out, and none came in. ² And the LORD said to Joshua, "See, I have given Jericho into your hand, with its king and mighty men of valor. ³ You shall march around the city, all the men of war going around the city once. Thus shall you do for six days. ⁴ Seven priests shall bear seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark. On the seventh day you shall

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march around the city seven times, and the priests shall blow the trumpets. ⁵ And when they make a long blast with the ram's horn, when you hear the sound of the trumpet, then all the people shall shout with a great shout, and the wall of the city will fall down flat, and the people shall go up, everyone straight before him." ⁶ So Joshua the son of Nun called the priests and said to them, "Take up the ark of the covenant and let seven priests bear seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark of the LORD." ⁷ And he said to the people, "Go forward. March around the city and let the armed men pass on before the ark of the LORD."

⁸ And just as Joshua had commanded the people, the seven priests bearing the seven trumpets of rams' horns before the LORD went forward, blowing the trumpets, with the ark of the covenant of the LORD following them. ⁹ The armed men were walking before the priests who were blowing the trumpets, and the rear guard was walking after the ark, while the trumpets blew continually. ¹⁰ But Joshua commanded the people, "You shall not shout or make your voice heard, neither shall any word go out of your mouth, until the day I tell you to shout. Then you shall shout." ¹¹ So he caused the ark of the LORD to circle the city, going about it once. And they came into the camp and spent the night in the camp.

¹² Then Joshua rose early in the morning, and the priests took up the ark of the LORD. ¹³ And the seven priests bearing the seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark of the LORD walked on, and they blew the trumpets continually. And the armed men were walking before them, and the rear guard was walking after the ark of the LORD, while the trumpets blew continually. ¹⁴ And the second day they marched around the city once, and returned into the camp. So they did for six days.

¹⁵ On the seventh day they rose early, at the dawn of day, and marched around the city in the same manner seven times. It was only on that day that they marched around the city seven times. ¹⁶ And at the seventh time, when the priests had blown the trumpets, Joshua said to the people, "Shout, for the LORD has given you the city. ¹⁷ And the city and all that is within it shall be devoted to the LORD for destruction. Only Rahab the prostitute and all who are with her in her house shall live, because she hid the messengers whom we sent. ¹⁸ But you, keep yourselves from the things devoted to destruction, lest when you have devoted them you take any of the devoted things and make the camp of Israel a thing for destruction and bring trouble upon it. ¹⁹ But all silver and gold, and every vessel of bronze and iron, are holy to the LORD; they shall go into the treasury of the LORD." ²⁰ So the people shouted, and the trumpets were blown. As soon as the people heard the sound of the trumpet, the people shouted a great shout, and the wall fell down flat, so that the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they captured the city. ²¹ Then they devoted all in the city to destruction, both men and women, young and old, oxen, sheep, and donkeys, with the edge of the sword.

²² But to the two men who had spied out the land, Joshua said, "Go into the prostitute's house and bring out from there the woman and all who belong to her, as you swore to her." ²³ So the young men who had been spies went in and brought out

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Rahab and her father and mother and brothers and all who belonged to her. And they brought all her relatives and put them outside the camp of Israel. ²⁴ And they burned the city with fire, and everything in it. Only the silver and gold, and the vessels of bronze and of iron, they put into the treasury of the house of the LORD. ²⁵ But Rahab the prostitute and her father's household and all who belonged to her, Joshua saved alive. And she has lived in Israel to this day, because she hid the messengers whom Joshua sent to spy out Jericho.

²⁶ Joshua laid an oath on them at that time, saying, "Cursed before the LORD be the man who rises up and rebuilds this city, Jericho.

"At the cost of his firstborn shall he
lay its foundation,
and at the cost of his youngest son
shall he set up its gates."

²⁷ So the LORD was with Joshua, and his fame was in all the land.

RAHAB

Joshua 2:1–21 (ESV)

¹ And Joshua the son of Nun sent two men secretly from Shittim as spies, saying, "Go, view the land, especially Jericho." And they went and came into the house of a prostitute whose name was Rahab and lodged there. ² And it was told to the king of Jericho, "Behold, men of Israel have come here tonight to search out the land." ³ Then the king of Jericho sent to Rahab, saying, "Bring out the men who have come to you, who entered your house, for they have come to search out all the land." ⁴ But the woman had taken the two men and hidden them. And she said, "True, the men came to me, but I did not know where they were from. ⁵ And when the gate was about to be closed at dark, the men went out. I do not know where the men went. Pursue them quickly, for you will overtake them." ⁶ But she had brought them up to the roof and hid them with the stalks of flax that she had laid in order on the roof. ⁷ So the men pursued after them on the way to the Jordan as far as the fords. And the gate was shut as soon as the pursuers had gone out.

⁸ Before the men lay down, she came up to them on the roof ⁹ and said to the men, "I know that the LORD has given you the land, and that the fear of you has fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land melt away before you. ¹⁰ For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea before you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordan, to Sihon and Og, whom you devoted to destruction. ¹¹ And as soon as we heard it, our hearts melted, and there was no spirit left in any man because of you, for the LORD your God, he is God in the heavens above and on the earth beneath. ¹² Now then, please swear to me by the LORD that, as I have dealt kindly with you, you also will deal kindly with my

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father's house, and give me a sure sign ¹³ that you will save alive my father and mother, my brothers and sisters, and all who belong to them, and deliver our lives from death."

¹⁴ And the men said to her, "Our life for yours even to death! If you do not tell this business of ours, then when the LORD gives us the land we will deal kindly and faithfully with you."

¹⁵ Then she let them down by a rope through the window, for her house was built into the city wall, so that she lived in the wall. ¹⁶ And she said to them, "Go into the hills, or the pursuers will encounter you, and hide there three days until the pursuers have returned. Then afterward you may go your way." ¹⁷ The men said to her, "We will be guiltless with respect to this oath of yours that you have made us swear. ¹⁸ Behold, when we come into the land, you shall tie this scarlet cord in the window through which you let us down, and you shall gather into your house your father and mother, your brothers, and all your father's household. ¹⁹ Then if anyone goes out of the doors of your house into the street, his blood shall be on his own head, and we shall be guiltless. But if a hand is laid on anyone who is with you in the house, his blood shall be on our head. ²⁰ But if you tell this business of ours, then we shall be guiltless with respect to your oath that you have made us swear." ²¹ And she said, "According to your words, so be it." Then she sent them away, and they departed. And she tied the scarlet cord in the window.

Joshua 6:17 (ESV)

¹⁷ And the city and all that is within it shall be devoted to the LORD for destruction. Only Rahab the prostitute and all who are with her in her house shall live, because she hid the messengers whom we sent.

Matthew 1:5 (ESV)

⁵ and Salmon the father of Boaz by Rahab, and Boaz the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse,

James 2:25 (ESV)

²⁵ And in the same way was not also Rahab the prostitute justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way?

Gideon

Gideon (gid'ee-uhn; from the Heb. root meaning 'to cut off'; also called Jerubaal, Judg. 6:32), the son of Joash the Abiezrite of the town of Ophrah in the tribal area of Manasseh. Gideon is counted among the major judges although the narrative describing his exploits (Judg. 6:11-8:32) does not refer to him as such.

There is scholarly disagreement concerning the sources of the Gideon story and their dates of composition. Nonetheless, the placement of Gideon after Deborah appears logical, since Deborah's victory over the Canaanites may have opened the door to

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incursions by desert nomads. These incursions were common in times of political and military weakness. The story of Gideon is prefaced by the camel-mounted invasions of the Midianites, Amalekites, and ‘children of the East’ who looted the Israelite crops and animals (6:1-6).

It is at this time of dire circumstances and impoverishment (6:2, 6, 11) that Gideon receives his call to action by an angel (6:11-23). His hesitancy (6:15-21) is reminiscent of the call to Moses (Exod. 3-4), while his confrontation of the divine ‘face-to-face’ (6:22) recalls Jacob’s wrestling with the angel (Gen. 32:30; thereby, the author indicates to the reader that Gideon will be one of the great heroes of Israel). The building of the altar (6:24) indicates Gideon’s preparedness. His first act is a religious revolt—an attack on the local Baal-Asherah cult (6:25-32), which is deemed to be at the root of Israel’s suffering (6:1, 7-10).

Battle Against the Midianites: After the initial success, Gideon began preparation for his battle against the Midianites, which occupies the main body of the story (6:34-8:21). He gathered together men from the tribes of Manasseh, Asher, Zebulun, and Naphtali (6:36-40). In order to emphasize God’s might (and not the people’s), Gideon’s army was pared down from thirty-three thousand (7:3) to ultimately only three hundred—the most courageous and able warriors (7:2-8). That night Gideon and a servant gathered intelligence information (by way of a dream interpretation, 7:8-15) at the Midianite camp at En-dor between the hill of Moreh and Mt. Tabor (7:1; Ps. 83:11). That same night, using psychological warfare, surprise, and darkness, Gideon and his band attacked the Midianites with maximum effect, causing them to flee toward the Jordan Valley (7:16-22). Soldiers from the tribes of Naphtali, Ephraim, Asher, and Manasseh (the thousands sent back to lie in ambush?) cut the Midianites down at the Jordan fords and two Midianite princes, Oreb and Zeeb, were killed (7:23-25; Ps. 83:12-13). After calming down the Ephraimites who complained of not being included in the initial preparations (8:1-3), Gideon and his three hundred pursued the kings of Midian, Zebah, and Zalmunna beyond the Jordan. On the way, Gideon requested food for his men from Succoth and Penuel but was rebuffed (8:4-9). At Karkor, once again using stealth and surprise, Gideon fell upon the remnants of the Midianites (8:10, fifteen thousand out of a hundred and twenty thousand!) and captured the two kings (8:10-13). After exacting punishment upon Succoth and Penuel (8:14-17), Gideon, acting as the blood-avenger for his brothers’ deaths, killed Zebah and Zalmunna (8:15-21). The fame of this victory over the Midianites is attested by its reference in other Biblical sources (Isa. 9:3; 10:26; Ps. 83:10-12; cf. 1 Sam. 12:11; Heb. 11:12).

Gideon’s humility (cf. 6:15) and religiosity are evinced by his refusal to accept hereditary rulership over Israel with the immortal words, ‘I will not rule over you, and my son will not rule over you; the Lord will rule over you’ (8:23). This incident illustrates the need for a stable leadership that eventually culminated in the monarchy as well as the view of the religious elite during the period of the judges that Israel could have only one king who was the permanent ruler—God; any attempt to create a human kingship

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was perceived as a revolt and rejection of God (1 Sam. 8:7). Despite Gideon's rejection, after his death his son Abimelech tried to take the kingship for himself (Judg. 9).

One element of Gideon's religiosity is criticized: his fashioning of an ephod out of the spoil of the golden earrings (cf. Exod. 32:2-3), which became the people's fetish (8:24-27). The editor's conclusion mentions Gideon's seventy sons and his burial in the crypt of his father (8:29-32). **See also** Abimelech; Chronology, Old Testament; Jotham; Judges, The Book of; Midianites. J.U.¹

Barak

Barak (bay'arak; Heb., 'lightning'), the son of Abinoam. Commander of Israelite militia and subordinate to Deborah in Ephraim in Judges 4 (prose) and 5 (victory song), Barak was among the deliverers of Israel (1 Sam. 12:11 LXX; cf. Heb. 11:32).

The opposition ('kings of Canaan,' Judg. 5:19), headed by Jabin 'king of Canaan at Hazor' (4:2, 23) and led by the nine hundred chariots of Sisera (a non-Semitic name) from Harosheth 'of the nations,' represents domination by other newcomers (Sea Peoples).

When the people sought Deborah's 'judgment,' she recalled Barak from Kedesh (in Naphtali) and outlined her strategy, after which she returned to Kedesh with Barak (Judg. 4:4-9). Barak mustered ten units (not ten thousand!) from Zebulun and Naphtali. Other tribes also responded, according to Judg. 5. At the waters of Megiddo, Barak routed and destroyed the opposition. Sisera fled far north and was slain by another woman, Jael (Judg. 4:17-22).

This account shows how new Israelite settlements throughout the hill country (late twelfth century) had so disrupted commerce that Israel could challenge, with help of a cloudburst, sophisticated armaments of the plains (i.e., chariots). **See also** Army; Judges, The Book of; Sisera. R.B.²

Samson

Samson, an early Israelite hero. The traditions about Samson depict him as a judge who assisted his tribe, the Danites, in their struggle against the Philistines, although most of his heroic exploits were personally motivated and resemble a private vendetta. The stories present him as a Nazirite from birth, but his passion for foreign women compromised the Nazirite vow, which required him to refrain from cutting his hair and to avoid wine and any unclean food. The tales also attribute his extraordinary power to

¹ Achtemeier, P. J., Harper & Row and Society of Biblical Literature. (1985). In [Harper's Bible dictionary](#) (1st ed., pp. 346–347). San Francisco: Harper & Row.

² Achtemeier, P. J., Harper & Row and Society of Biblical Literature. (1985). In [Harper's Bible dictionary](#) (1st ed., p. 93). San Francisco: Harper & Row.

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momentary seizure by the divine spirit, and they thereby point beyond the human hero to the true source of superhuman strength.

A religious spirit colors the stories from first to last, despite their racy theme and legendary character. This exalted tone is greatest in the birth announcement and its sequel, an account of the marvelous disappearance of the revealing angel in the fire of an altar (Judg. 13:1-25). Although the name of Samson's father is given (Manoah), no comparable information is supplied about his mother. Nevertheless, she stands out in the story as the real heroine, and Manoah receives instruction from her.

Mighty Exploits: Samson's mighty exploits were occasioned by his erotic involvement with three women. The first object of his affection was an unnamed woman from Timnah, a few miles southeast of Beth-shemesh (located between Jerusalem and Ashdod). At their wedding festivities a riddle contest had grave consequences. Furious that her countrymen had secured the answer to his riddle by threatening his bride, Samson took revenge on local Askelonites from whom he stole garments to cover his wager. Since Samson then returned alone to his home in Zorah, his bride was given to the best man. This act in turn precipitated further revenge on Samson's part, the destroying of grain fields by catching three hundred foxes and setting fire to their tails, then releasing them in the fields. Angry Philistines retaliated by burning Samson's bride and her father, whereupon Samson smote a large number of them. Naturally, the Philistines sought revenge, and by threatening the local tribe of Judah, obtained its assistance in locating a hiding Samson. Bound by his countrymen, he was turned over to the enemy; but the spirit came upon him and he slew a thousand Philistines with the jawbone of an ass. Samson then composed a victory song and prayed for water to quench his thirst. Appropriate names are given for the sites of battle and prayer: Hill of the Jawbone and Partridge Spring (14:1-15:20).

The second woman with whom Samson became entangled was a harlot in the Philistine city of Gaza (located near the Mediterranean seacoast). The local residents learned of his presence and surrounded her house, anticipating victory over an exhausted Samson. But he arose early and walked off with the doors of the city gate on his shoulders, depositing them some distance away on a hill opposite Hebron (16:1-3).

Samson's downfall came when he fell in love with Delilah, presumably a Philistine. Their innocent flirtation quickly became a serious matter, and she toyed with Samson until he finally divulged the secret of his strength. Delilah's motivation is said to have been greed, and she summoned the Philistine lords to come for a shorn Samson. They put out his eyes and set him to work grinding at a mill in Gaza. In due time they celebrated their good fortune with a victory song and made sport of Samson during a sacrifice to their god, Dagon. Resolving to get revenge once more, Samson asked to be situated by the two pillars holding up the house and prayed for renewed strength just once more. God granted his wish, and Samson died with the multitude of Philistines (16:4-31).

Traditions and Stories: The traditions about Samson have been brought together with great skill; they probably circulated orally for some time before achieving written

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form. Various motifs combine to enhance their popularity: the barren wife, a helpless hero in the arms of a woman, the quest for a deity's hidden name, a hero's death wish, loss of charisma, and terror accompanying a theophany (i.e., the appearance of the divine). The stories also make use of many different literary forms, for example, three prayers, three riddles, two aetiologies, two victory songs, and five heroic deeds, a birth story, and a recognition scene. The stories reflect the period described in Judges, a period when tribal jealousies divided Israelites and when rivalry existed between the Philistine population and Israelite clans.

The figure of Samson presented a problem to many later interpreters, who found it difficult to condone his behavior. Nevertheless, comparisons with Jesus and Heracles became common, and Samson was viewed as a type of Christ. The English poet John Milton's *Samson Agonistes* (1671) transforms Samson into a tragic hero and gives a psychological analysis of suffering. The exploits of this biblical strong man have thus entertained and inspired others throughout the ages, despite Samson's weakness where women were concerned.

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J.L.C.³

Jephthah

Jephthah (jef'thuh; Heb., 'he opens'; cf. the place name Iptahel, 'God opens [the womb?]', Josh. 19:14, 27), a Gileadite who delivered Israel from Ammonite domination. Jephthah sacrificed his daughter to fulfill a vow, suppressed an Ephraimite force in Gilead, and judged Israel six years (Judg. 10:6-12:7).

Born the son of a harlot, Jephthah was disowned and driven out from his family. In the district of Tob near the modern Jordan-Syria border, he gathered a band of mercenaries and was later recalled by the elders of Gilead. Ammonite forces had invaded Gilead and penetrated across the Jordan into Judah, Benjamin, and Ephraim. The elders of Gilead made Jephthah head and ruler, negotiations culminating in Jephthah's vows before Yahweh, at Mizpeh (in the vicinity of Jebel Jal'ad, south of the River Jabbok).

The territory disputed in the negotiations had belonged earlier to the Amorite kingdoms north of the Arnon River, which were defeated by Israel under Moses (Judg. 11:14-28; Num. 21). The territory was subsequently taken by Moab (Judg. 3:12-30). When Ammon became strong enough to press its own claims against Israel, the Ammonite king made claims and charges in the name of Moabite sovereignty over the disputed territory (perhaps claiming to hold it in trust). Jephthah recognized the

³ Achtemeier, P. J., Harper & Row and Society of Biblical Literature. (1985). In [Harper's Bible dictionary](#) (1st ed., pp. 900–901). San Francisco: Harper & Row.

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jurisdiction of Chemosh, god of Moab, for diplomatic purposes, but argued that because God's gift to Israel was far older, Israel had not seized Ammonite land. When negotiations failed, Jephthah toured Gilead and Manasseh, presumably to muster the army, and returned to Mizpeh. From Mizpeh Israel moved to meet the Ammonites, defeating them along a line from southern Aroer (the northern edge of the Arnon gorge) to Abel-keramim (probably Tell el-Umeiri at the northern end of the Madeba plain). As a result, Ammon was pushed back to the desert fringe.

Upon accepting his commission, Jephthah made a vow that if he were to return victorious, he would sacrifice whatever emerged first from his house (Judg. 11:30-31; Iron Age dwellings, like many Palestinian village houses today, incorporated space for small cattle). The first creature to emerge was his only child, a daughter, who refused to let Jephthah break his vow. She requested two months to wander the hills with her dear friends, lamenting her virginity (childlessness; Judg. 11:39-40). The story serves to explain the otherwise obscure four-day rite observed annually by the daughters of Israel. Human sacrifice, a horror neither condoned nor unknown in ancient Israel, is here secondary to the irrevocability of the vow.

In the final story of the Jephthah cycle, Ephraimites crossed into Gilead, complaining that Jephthah had not summoned them to the Ammonite war and threatening to burn his house (Judg. 12:1). Again negotiations failed and Jephthah was victorious in the fighting. Gileadites used a password, *shibboleth*, to betray dialect differences, and many Ephraimites were slain at the Jordan fords (Judg. 12:5-6). Joshua 22 describes an earlier confrontation of Israelite tribes in the same area. **See also** Judges, The Book of; Shibboleth. R.B.⁴

David

David - THE MOST POWERFUL KING of biblical Israel, David ruled from ca. 1010 to 970 B.C. The story of David is recorded in 1 Sam. 16:13-1 Kings 2:12. David belonged to the tribe of Judah and was born in Bethlehem as youngest son of Jesse. He started his career at King Saul's court as player of the lyre, and subsequently became his squire. His courage and leadership in regular skirmishes with the Philistines and the immense popularity he gained as a commander soon earned him great notoriety and caused Saul to feel threatened. A long and complicated process of attraction and repulsion between the two men followed. The psychological scale was turned in favor of David when the old prophet Samuel, who had himself conducted Saul to the first kingship, became disappointed with Saul for theocratical reasons and anointed David as the new favorite of God.

Path to Kingship: David survived attempts on his life made by Saul in bursts of rage and fled the court. In the south he became a war lord with his own army of outlaws and

⁴ Achtemeier, P. J., Harper & Row and Society of Biblical Literature. (1985). In [Harper's Bible dictionary](#) (1st ed., pp. 454–455). San Francisco: Harper & Row.

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performed services of protection. He also fought the enemies of Judah in the west and southwest. Although Saul found no way of eliminating him, the pressure he exerted became so strong that David decided to take refuge in Gath, where he became a vassal of the Philistine king Achish. Playing a double game, David maintained good relations with the tribes in the south: Judah, Cain, Jerachmeel, and Simeon. Because of the Philistine generals' mistrust, David was not called upon to perform his duties as a vassal in the final war against Saul. At this time, Israel was defeated on Mt. Gilboa, Saul and three princes were killed in battle, and the Philistines were left a free hand in Ephraim and Galilee. Saul's tribe, Benjamin, emerged to temporarily fill the power vacuum with the impotent kingship of Esbaal in the Transjordan, but the strong man of this rump state, Abner, soon found out that he could not win the civil war that threatened Judah and concluded a pact with David. Retarded by the base political murders of Abner and Esbaal, this development eventually led to the subjection of the northern tribes to David's rule and to their acceptance of him as a king. David ruled Judah from Hebron for seven years and ruled over the whole of Israel for thirty-three years. David created a unified state which would, however, disintegrate after Solomon. The numbers found in 2 Sam. 5:5 for David's reign are, admittedly, typological (seven and forty are holy numbers), but they nevertheless seem to approximate the historical reality as we know it.

Diplomatically, David chose a neutral city for the new capital of his kingdom: Jerusalem. His conquest of this non-Israelite city-state alarmed the Philistine city confederation, but David was able to repel their attacks and settle matters with this enemy for good. During his reign, David increased the status of 'the city of David' by bringing to it the ancient Ark, once the mobile palladium of the wandering Israelite tribes. His son, Solomon, subsequently carried on this policy by building the central state sanctuary, the famous Temple of Solomon. (Three centuries later the Temple became the only legitimate worship center on account of the religious reforms of Josiah; after the Exile the so-called Second Temple, fifth century B.C.-A.D. 70, was its successor.)

Israel an Empire: In the phase of consolidation following his coronation, David triumphed over nearly all the then neighboring nations in a series of military campaigns. In the north he encountered the Aramaic states, and Damascus, Hamath, and Zobah rendered him tribute; in the east and southeast, David subjected the Ammonites and Moab; in the south he took over Edom; in the southwest he subjected small desert tribes like the Amalekites; and in the west he defeated the Philistines. With the Phoenician states and ports, however, he maintained friendly and noncombative relations. David's great power and military effectiveness were internally founded on good organization and the presence of an experienced standing army consisting mainly of mercenaries under the command of the competent military strategist Joab, while externally his power and effectiveness rested on the impotence of the great powers. In the eleventh century B.C. the civilizations along the Nile and between the Euphrates and Tigris passed through a period of weakness that temporarily spared Palestine (a strategic buffer region and zone of passage for trade routes) their meddling influence.

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Thus, under David and Solomon, Israel was (for a brief century) a powerful empire—for the first and last time.

Faced with Rebellion: This formation of power also had its repercussions. David himself became an absolute ruler after the model of the region, and his place above the law ran counter to the sense of justice and the religious beliefs of many of his subjects. Much discontent was fomented as people viewed the grand court with its predilection for international mores and literature, and especially for its tight administrative grip put on the community in the form of heavy taxes and conscription for purposes hardly understood. The decay of the older tribal and theocratical values and patterns also frightened people. Thus, already during David's lifetime, these growing feelings of discomfort came to a head during Absalom's revolt. This prince made shrewd use of the mood of resistance, suggested political alternatives, and, after thorough preparation, seized power so that David was even forced to leave his own country. When the usurper, however, failed to isolate David at once, the latter gained time to re-align himself with those of his standing army who had remained loyal to him and subsequently to effect a political reversal through a hard battle in the Transjordan. Upon his return to Jerusalem, David discriminated against the northern tribes in favor of his own tribe of Judah and for this he immediately had to pay a high price: a secession of the north under the leadership of Sheba ben Bichri. Once more Joab, who as a statesman had already intervened twice in David's policy toward Absalom, had to save the throne by means of a swift campaign that eliminated Sheba.

Like many great men David omitted arranging for his succession, so that even before his death a vehement struggle broke out at the court. The group around Solomon, headed by his mother, Bathsheba, and the prophet Nathan, appeared to be the strongest and shortly after David's death eliminated the rival prince Adonijah who was supported by Joab. Joab was subsequently eliminated as well.

David was not only a very powerful leader and personality as both soldier and statesman, he was also a first-class poet. He was the author of the poignant dirge in 2 Samuel 1 as well as many of the compositions the book of Psalms ascribed to him. The court established by him and extended by Solomon gave a tremendous spiritual and literary impulse to the literature of biblical Israel, to its many genres, and to the values conveyed by them. The dynasty David founded survived the disruption after Solomon and kept on ruling in Judah until the Exile, which began in 586 B.C. Its prestige inspired later poets to messianic prophecies; and in the NT his royal line is extended to include Jesus of Nazareth, 'the Anointed' (*Christos* in Gk.) as a descendant of David (Matt. 2:6; 21:9; Luke 3:31; 18:38-39). The effect of David's choice of Jerusalem as his city is felt to the present time: in the eyes of the Jews, Christians, and Muslims the city is holy. And the poems of David live on in the liturgy of Jewish and Christian communities, sung to this very day.

The Story of David—the Zenith of Hebrew Narrative: The portrait of David presented here is grounded on the estimate that its only source, 1-2 Samuel, is in outline historically reliable. In any case, the figure of David inspired the narrator(s) to

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such an extent that this text has become the zenith of Hebrew narrative art. It not only draws a picture of the rise of the untouchable favorite of God, but also of the David who, as a king, yielded to the luxury of absolute power and who, as a father, failed toward his overambitious sons Amnon, Absalom, and Adonijah. Thus a detached, highly critical, but certainly not relentless portrait of profound psychological insight and spiritual depth has come down to us.

See also Absalom; Jerusalem; Messiah; Saul; Solomon.

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Samuel

Samuel, a prophet who ruled Israel at the end of the period of the judges and anointed the first two kings. He is the dominant figure at the beginning of the first of the two books of the Bible that bear his name.

Samuel's father, Elkanah, was an Ephraimite from the village of Ramathaim-zophim. Samuel's mother, Hannah, who was barren before his birth, had prayed for a child during a visit to the temple at Shiloh, promising to devote him to the service of Yahweh (1 Sam. 1). The young Samuel, therefore, grew up in Shiloh under the tutelage of Eli, the chief priest. The first oracle he uttered (1 Sam. 3:11-14) was a renunciation of the house of Eli, whose sons had corrupted the cult of Yahweh (cf. 1 Sam. 2:12-17). This marked the beginning of Samuel's career as a prophet (cf. 1 Sam. 3:19-4:1).

Samuel assumed national leadership after a disastrous battle in which the Israelites were routed by the Philistines (1 Sam. 4). Having driven out the enemy and pacified the entire land (1 Sam. 7:13-14), he began periodic visits to a circuit of cities where he passed judgment on cases brought before him (1 Sam. 7:15-17). This pattern continued for most of Samuel's life, but in his old age the men of Israel approached him to request a king (1 Sam. 8). Though angered, he acted on God's instructions and, after warning the people of the burdens a king would impose on them (1 Sam. 8:11-18), he acceded to the request.

Samuel anointed Saul king during a private audience in Samuel's home town (1 Sam. 9:1-10:16). Subsequently, however, he presided over a public ceremony in which Saul was chosen king by casting lots (1 Sam. 10:17-27). After Saul's victorious campaign against the Ammonites (1 Sam. 11) the kingship was ratified in yet another ceremony conducted by Samuel (1 Sam. 11:15). Then in a final public appearance (1 Sam. 12) the

⁵ Achtemeier, P. J., Harper & Row and Society of Biblical Literature. (1985). In [Harper's Bible dictionary](#) (1st ed., pp. 208–211). San Francisco: Harper & Row.

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prophet admonished the people and their new king to obey the commands of God and promised to continue to act on their behalf.

Samuel was also the agent of Saul's rejection as king. Because he did not carry out God's instructions as conveyed by Samuel, Saul's kingship was condemned. Samuel prophesied that he would be removed from office in favor of a new king (1 Sam. 13:7-14; 15:10-29). Then God sent Samuel to Bethlehem, where he anointed David (1 Sam. 16:1-13).

Although Samuel's death is reported in 1 Sam. 25:1, he makes one further appearance in the story. In 1 Samuel 28 we are told that Saul invoked Samuel's ghost before his final battle with the Philistines, hoping for a favorable oracle. The ghost, however, reminded Saul of the divine rejection of his kingship and predicted a Philistine victory in the battle.

The biblical narrative presents Samuel as the last of the heroes of the premonarchical age and the first of the prophets who stand alongside the kings. It is tempting to think of him as having played such a transitional role historically—the last judge and the first prophet. He appears in the story, however, as a typical figure rather than as a historically accessible personality. The account of the rise of kingship in 1 Samuel 1-15 is told from a point of view that is suspicious of the institution of monarchy, to which the direct rule of Israel by God acting through a prophet is preferred. In 1 Samuel 7, Samuel is presented as the ideal prophetic leader, in whom all types of authority—military, judicial, and sacerdotal—are combined. In subsequent chapters, after the reality of kingship has been acknowledged, the portrayal of Samuel amounts to a paradigm for the prophetic office under the monarchy: the prophet will anoint and reject kings, intercede with God on Israel's behalf, and guide the conscience of the people (cf. 1 Sam. 12:23). *See also* David; Eli; Hannah; King; Prophet; Saul; Shiloh. P.K.M.⁶

Mouths of Lions

DANIEL

Daniel 6 (ESV)

¹ It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom 120 satraps, to be throughout the whole kingdom; ² and over them three high officials, of whom Daniel was one, to whom these satraps should give account, so that the king might suffer no loss. ³ Then this Daniel became distinguished above all the other high officials and satraps, because an excellent spirit was in him. And the king planned to set him over the whole kingdom. ⁴ Then the high officials and the satraps sought to find a ground for complaint against Daniel with regard to the kingdom, but they could find no ground for complaint or any fault, because he was faithful, and no error or fault was found in him. ⁵ Then these men said,

⁶ Achtemeier, P. J., Harper & Row and Society of Biblical Literature. (1985). In [Harper's Bible dictionary](#) (1st ed., pp. 901–902). San Francisco: Harper & Row.

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“We shall not find any ground for complaint against this Daniel unless we find it in connection with the law of his God.”

⁶ Then these high officials and satraps came by agreement to the king and said to him, “O King Darius, live forever! ⁷ All the high officials of the kingdom, the prefects and the satraps, the counselors and the governors are agreed that the king should establish an ordinance and enforce an injunction, that whoever makes petition to any god or man for thirty days, except to you, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions. ⁸ Now, O king, establish the injunction and sign the document, so that it cannot be changed, according to the law of the Medes and the Persians, which cannot be revoked.” ⁹ Therefore King Darius signed the document and injunction.

¹⁰ When Daniel knew that the document had been signed, he went to his house where he had windows in his upper chamber open toward Jerusalem. He got down on his knees three times a day and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as he had done previously. ¹¹ Then these men came by agreement and found Daniel making petition and plea before his God. ¹² Then they came near and said before the king, concerning the injunction, “O king! Did you not sign an injunction, that anyone who makes petition to any god or man within thirty days except to you, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions?” The king answered and said, “The thing stands fast, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be revoked.” ¹³ Then they answered and said before the king, “Daniel, who is one of the exiles from Judah, pays no attention to you, O king, or the injunction you have signed, but makes his petition three times a day.”

¹⁴ Then the king, when he heard these words, was much distressed and set his mind to deliver Daniel. And he labored till the sun went down to rescue him. ¹⁵ Then these men came by agreement to the king and said to the king, “Know, O king, that it is a law of the Medes and Persians that no injunction or ordinance that the king establishes can be changed.”

¹⁶ Then the king commanded, and Daniel was brought and cast into the den of lions. The king declared to Daniel, “May your God, whom you serve continually, deliver you!” ¹⁷ And a stone was brought and laid on the mouth of the den, and the king sealed it with his own signet and with the signet of his lords, that nothing might be changed concerning Daniel. ¹⁸ Then the king went to his palace and spent the night fasting; no diversions were brought to him, and sleep fled from him.

¹⁹ Then, at break of day, the king arose and went in haste to the den of lions. ²⁰ As he came near to the den where Daniel was, he cried out in a tone of anguish. The king declared to Daniel, “O Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to deliver you from the lions?” ²¹ Then Daniel said to the king, “O king, live forever! ²² My God sent his angel and shut the lions’ mouths, and they have not harmed me, because I was found blameless before him; and also before you, O king, I have done no harm.” ²³ Then the king was exceedingly glad, and commanded that Daniel be taken up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no kind of harm was found on him, because he had trusted in his God. ²⁴ And the king commanded, and those men who had maliciously accused Daniel were brought and cast into the den

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of lions—they, their children, and their wives. And before they reached the bottom of the den, the lions overpowered them and broke all their bones in pieces.

²⁵ Then King Darius wrote to all the peoples, nations, and languages that dwell in all the earth: “Peace be multiplied to you. ²⁶ I make a decree, that in all my royal dominion people are to tremble and fear before the God of Daniel,

for he is the living God,
enduring forever;
his kingdom shall never be destroyed,
and his dominion shall be to the end.

²⁷ He delivers and rescues;
he works signs and wonders
in heaven and on earth,
he who has saved Daniel
from the power of the lions.”

²⁸ So this Daniel prospered during the reign of Darius and the reign of Cyrus the Persian.

Quenched...Fire

SHADRACH, MESHACH, & ABEDNEGO

Daniel 3 (ESV)

¹ King Nebuchadnezzar made an image of gold, whose height was sixty cubits and its breadth six cubits. He set it up on the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon. ² Then King Nebuchadnezzar sent to gather the satraps, the prefects, and the governors, the counselors, the treasurers, the justices, the magistrates, and all the officials of the provinces to come to the dedication of the image that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up. ³ Then the satraps, the prefects, and the governors, the counselors, the treasurers, the justices, the magistrates, and all the officials of the provinces gathered for the dedication of the image that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up. And they stood before the image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up. ⁴ And the herald proclaimed aloud, “You are commanded, O peoples, nations, and languages, ⁵ that when you hear the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, bagpipe, and every kind of music, you are to fall down and worship the golden image that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up. ⁶ And whoever does not fall down and worship shall immediately be cast into a burning fiery furnace.” ⁷ Therefore, as soon as all the peoples heard the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, bagpipe, and every kind of music, all the peoples, nations, and languages fell down and worshiped the golden image that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

⁸ Therefore at that time certain Chaldeans came forward and maliciously accused the Jews. ⁹ They declared to King Nebuchadnezzar, “O king, live forever! ¹⁰ You, O king, have made a decree, that every man who hears the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon,

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harp, bagpipe, and every kind of music, shall fall down and worship the golden image. ¹¹ And whoever does not fall down and worship shall be cast into a burning fiery furnace.

¹² There are certain Jews whom you have appointed over the affairs of the province of Babylon: Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. These men, O king, pay no attention to you; they do not serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up.”

¹³ Then Nebuchadnezzar in furious rage commanded that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego be brought. So they brought these men before the king. ¹⁴ Nebuchadnezzar answered and said to them, “Is it true, O Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the golden image that I have set up? ¹⁵ Now if you are ready when you hear the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, bagpipe, and every kind of music, to fall down and worship the image that I have made, well and good. But if you do not worship, you shall immediately be cast into a burning fiery furnace. And who is the god who will deliver you out of my hands?”

¹⁶ Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego answered and said to the king, “O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. ¹⁷ If this be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of your hand, O king. ¹⁸ But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up.”

¹⁹ Then Nebuchadnezzar was filled with fury, and the expression of his face was changed against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. He ordered the furnace heated seven times more than it was usually heated. ²⁰ And he ordered some of the mighty men of his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, and to cast them into the burning fiery furnace. ²¹ Then these men were bound in their cloaks, their tunics, their hats, and their other garments, and they were thrown into the burning fiery furnace. ²² Because the king’s order was urgent and the furnace overheated, the flame of the fire killed those men who took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. ²³ And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, fell bound into the burning fiery furnace.

²⁴ Then King Nebuchadnezzar was astonished and rose up in haste. He declared to his counselors, “Did we not cast three men bound into the fire?” They answered and said to the king, “True, O king.” ²⁵ He answered and said, “But I see four men unbound, walking in the midst of the fire, and they are not hurt; and the appearance of the fourth is like a son of the gods.”

²⁶ Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the door of the burning fiery furnace; he declared, “Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, servants of the Most High God, come out, and come here!” Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego came out from the fire. ²⁷ And the satraps, the prefects, the governors, and the king’s counselors gathered together and saw that the fire had not had any power over the bodies of those men. The hair of their heads was not singed, their cloaks were not harmed, and no smell of fire had come upon them. ²⁸ Nebuchadnezzar answered and said, “Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who has sent his angel and delivered his servants, who trusted in him, and set aside the king’s command, and yielded up their bodies rather than serve and worship any god except their own God. ²⁹ Therefore I make a

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decree: Any people, nation, or language that speaks anything against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego shall be torn limb from limb, and their houses laid in ruins, for there is no other god who is able to rescue in this way.”³⁰ Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the province of Babylon.

Received Back...Dead

ELIJAH RAISED THE SON OF THE WIDOW OF ZAREPHATH:

1 Kings 17:17–24 (ESV)

¹⁷ After this the son of the woman, the mistress of the house, became ill. And his illness was so severe that there was no breath left in him. ¹⁸ And she said to Elijah, “What have you against me, O man of God? You have come to me to bring my sin to remembrance and to cause the death of my son!” ¹⁹ And he said to her, “Give me your son.” And he took him from her arms and carried him up into the upper chamber where he lodged, and laid him on his own bed. ²⁰ And he cried to the LORD, “O LORD my God, have you brought calamity even upon the widow with whom I sojourn, by killing her son?” ²¹ Then he stretched himself upon the child three times and cried to the LORD, “O LORD my God, let this child’s life come into him again.” ²² And the LORD listened to the voice of Elijah. And the life of the child came into him again, and he revived. ²³ And Elijah took the child and brought him down from the upper chamber into the house and delivered him to his mother. And Elijah said, “See, your son lives.” ²⁴ And the woman said to Elijah, “Now I know that you are a man of God, and that the word of the LORD in your mouth is truth.”

ELISHA RAISED THE SON OF A WEALTHY SHUNAMMITE WOMAN:

2 Kings 4:18–37 (ESV)

¹⁸ When the child had grown, he went out one day to his father among the reapers. ¹⁹ And he said to his father, “Oh, my head, my head!” The father said to his servant, “Carry him to his mother.” ²⁰ And when he had lifted him and brought him to his mother, the child sat on her lap till noon, and then he died. ²¹ And she went up and laid him on the bed of the man of God and shut the door behind him and went out. ²² Then she called to her husband and said, “Send me one of the servants and one of the donkeys, that I may quickly go to the man of God and come back again.” ²³ And he said, “Why will you go to him today? It is neither new moon nor Sabbath.” She said, “All is well.” ²⁴ Then she saddled the donkey, and she said to her servant, “Urge the animal on; do not slacken the pace for me unless I tell you.” ²⁵ So she set out and came to the man of God at Mount Carmel.

When the man of God saw her coming, he said to Gehazi his servant, “Look, there is the Shunammite. ²⁶ Run at once to meet her and say to her, ‘Is all well with you? Is all well with your husband? Is all well with the child?’ ” And she answered, “All is well.” ²⁷

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And when she came to the mountain to the man of God, she caught hold of his feet. And Gehazi came to push her away. But the man of God said, "Leave her alone, for she is in bitter distress, and the LORD has hidden it from me and has not told me." ²⁸ Then she said, "Did I ask my lord for a son? Did I not say, 'Do not deceive me?'" ²⁹ He said to Gehazi, "Tie up your garment and take my staff in your hand and go. If you meet anyone, do not greet him, and if anyone greets you, do not reply. And lay my staff on the face of the child." ³⁰ Then the mother of the child said, "As the LORD lives and as you yourself live, I will not leave you." So he arose and followed her. ³¹ Gehazi went on ahead and laid the staff on the face of the child, but there was no sound or sign of life. Therefore he returned to meet him and told him, "The child has not awakened."

³² When Elisha came into the house, he saw the child lying dead on his bed. ³³ So he went in and shut the door behind the two of them and prayed to the LORD. ³⁴ Then he went up and lay on the child, putting his mouth on his mouth, his eyes on his eyes, and his hands on his hands. And as he stretched himself upon him, the flesh of the child became warm. ³⁵ Then he got up again and walked once back and forth in the house, and went up and stretched himself upon him. The child sneezed seven times, and the child opened his eyes. ³⁶ Then he summoned Gehazi and said, "Call this Shunammite." So he called her. And when she came to him, he said, "Pick up your son." ³⁷ She came and fell at his feet, bowing to the ground. Then she picked up her son and went out.

Sheep & Goats

ELIJAH AND ELISHA, DRESSED IN ANIMAL SKINS:

Numbers 31:20 (ESV)

²⁰ You shall purify every garment, every article of skin, all work of goats' hair, and every article of wood."

2 Kings 1:8 (ESV)

⁸ They answered him, "He wore a garment of hair, with a belt of leather about his waist." And he said, "It is Elijah the Tishbite."

What Does It Really Mean to Have Faith?

1. Realization

Illustration: *Trying to dunk as a teenager – Did thousands of calf raises and other leg exercises. Couldn't jump high enough, and my hands are too small. Came to the realization that I'm never going to be able to dunk a basketball due to my physical limitations.*

We must realize that it is impossible for us to live a life worthy of justification. Our sin separates us from God.

Romans 3:9

⁹What then? Are we Jews any better off? No, not at all. For we have already charged that all, both Jews and Greeks, are under sin,

Romans 3:19-20

¹⁹Now we know that whatever the law says it speaks to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be stopped, and the whole world may be held accountable to God. ²⁰For by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin.

Romans 3:23

²³for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God

Romans 7:15-20

¹⁵I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. ¹⁶Now if I do what I do not want, I agree with the law, that it is good. ¹⁷So now it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me. ¹⁸For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out. ¹⁹For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing. ²⁰Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me.

Matthew 5:3-4

³"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

⁴"Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

Self-Assessment: *Do we really believe that we need something outside of ourselves, or do we think that we can save ourselves by living a good life?*

2. Refocus

We've spent a lifetime focused on self, now must re-focus on our true source of hope...

Romans 3:22a, 26

²²the righteousness of God through **faith in Jesus Christ** for all who believe.

²⁶It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has **faith in Jesus**.

Jesus must become the new object of our faith, because He is the only source of hope.

John 3:16

¹⁶"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes **in him** should not perish but have eternal life.

"believes in Him..." as opposed to "believes in self..."

Self-Assessment: *Who is our faith truly in? Are we still leaning on ourselves?*

3. Research

Illustration: *Lexus commercial (Self-Gift) – Christmas 2007 – Man receives antlers made out of Christmas bulbs, the exact same sweater he is wearing, and other "gifts" that he doesn't want. Ultimately, he goes out and gets something that he really wants (a Lexus). This often happens in real life. When this happens, people want to do something nice, but they give someone what they want to give, instead of taking the time to research and find out what the other person really wants.*

If we truly believe that Jesus is the only way, then we are going to take the time to find out what his true will is for our lives.

James 1:19-21

¹⁹Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; ²⁰for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness that God requires.

²¹Therefore put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.

Matthew 5:5-6

⁵"Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

⁶"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

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2 Timothy 3:14-17 (ESV)

¹⁴ But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it ¹⁵ and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. ¹⁶ All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, ¹⁷ that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work.

Self-Assessment: *How much do we study God's word? Do we have a desire to study His word? Are we taking the time to find out what Jesus wants, or are we simply giving Him what we want to give?*

4. Reality

As we continue to Refocus and Research, faith in Jesus becomes our new reality. It transforms every aspect of our lives. We walk according to the will of someone we cannot see. We change our mind about how we want to live.

Hebrews 11:1

¹ Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.

II Corinthians 5:7

⁷ for we walk by faith, not by sight.

John 20:29

²⁹ Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

Self-Assessment: *Is this real for us, or is Church more of a social club? Has this truly changed our life? Do we reflect Christ in our family, in our job, with our friends?*

5. Response

Illustration: *Johns Hopkins Doctors – treatment plan – if I didn't follow it, would anyone say that I had faith in those doctors? Of course not. Then why would anyone say that "simple belief" is sufficient for "Faith in Jesus Christ?" Faith requires a response. Faith requires action.*

James 2:14-25

¹⁴ What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? ¹⁵ If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, ¹⁶ and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and filled," without giving

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them the things needed for the body, what good is that? ¹⁷So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.

¹⁸But someone will say, "You have faith and I have works." Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. ¹⁹You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe--and shudder! ²⁰Do you want to be shown, you foolish person, that faith apart from works is useless? ²¹Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up his son Isaac on the altar? ²²You see that faith was active along with his works, and faith was completed by his works; ²³and the Scripture was fulfilled that says, "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness"-- and he was called a friend of God. ²⁴You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone. ²⁵And in the same way was not also Rahab the prostitute justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way? ²⁶For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so also faith apart from works is dead.

James 1:22

²²But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.

Self Assessment: *Have we taken the first step? Are we living a life of faith? What do our actions say about the true object of our faith?*