



HEROES OF FAITH READING PACK



Heroes in the Bible - really?!

Possibly the last thing you might think of when you pick up a Bible is heroes. Surely they are the people in the big films, swooping down with capes and superpowers to save people?!

Well, yes, superheroes do that, and whilst we're not going to read about people with laser eye powers or spiderwebs coming from their hands in the Bible, we can read about a man with super strength, someone who holds back the entire ocean with just a stick, a man who destroys whole armies with just a few empty jars and a boy who destroys a giant with just one small stone!

There are many amazing stories to read in the Bible, it's full of excitement, drama, amazing plot twists and even talking animals!!

In this pack the heroes we will read about are heroes for many reasons, but mostly because they encourage us to trust God in every situation we face. These were ordinary men and women who did extraordinary things not because they had superpowers, but because they trusted God even when everyone else didn't. They saw God do amazing miracles and did things they could never have imagined because God was with them. They remind us that when we put our trust in God and spend time listening and chatting with Him, amazing things can happen.



Fire on the hill

Moses & the burning bush

Exodus 3



One day Moses was taking care of Jethro's sheep. Jethro was the priest of Midian and also Moses' father-in-law. Moses led the sheep to the west side of the desert. He came to Sinai, the mountain of God. There the angel of the Lord appeared to Moses in flames of fire coming out of a bush. Moses saw that the bush was on fire, but it was not burning up. 3 So Moses said, "I will go closer to this strange thing. How can a bush continue burning without burning up?"

The Lord saw Moses was coming to look at the bush. So God called to him from the bush, "Moses, Moses!"

And Moses said, "Here I am."

Then God said, "Do not come any closer. Take off your sandals. You are standing on holy ground. I am the God of your ancestors. I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob." Moses covered his face because he was afraid to look at God.

The Lord said, "I have seen the troubles my people have suffered in Egypt. And I have heard their cries when the Egyptian slave masters hurt them. I am concerned about their pain. I have come down to save them from the Egyptians. I will bring them out of that land. I will lead them to a good land with lots of room. This is a land where much food grows. This is the land of these people: the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites. I have heard the cries of the people of Israel. I have seen the way the Egyptians have made life hard for them. So now I am sending you to the king of Egypt. Go! Bring my people, the Israelites, out of Egypt!"

But Moses said to God, "I am not a great man! Why should I be the one to go to the king and lead the Israelites out of Egypt?"

God said, "I will be with you..."





MY NOTES



Moses had just seen something amazing, he had also been talking with God! Yet despite this his response when God asked him to do something was "...why me? I can't do it I am not a great man!" Many times in the bible we read how God chooses the people who are not the strongest, not the best, not the cleverest even. Why do you think that is?

Chat with God about the things you feel you can't do, ask Him to guide you.

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Owning the ocean

Moses parts the sea

Mark 1: 16-20



The Israelites saw the king and his army coming after them. They were very frightened and cried to the Lord for help. They said to Moses, “What have you done to us? Why did you bring us out of Egypt to die in the desert? There were plenty of graves for us in Egypt. We told you in Egypt, ‘Let us alone! Let us stay and serve the Egyptians.’ Now we will die in the desert.”

But Moses answered, “Don’t be afraid! Stand still and see the Lord save you today. You will never see these Egyptians again after today. You will only need to remain calm. The Lord will fight for you.”

Then the Lord said to Moses, “...Command the people of Israel to start moving. Raise your walking stick and hold it over the sea. The sea will split. Then the people can cross the sea on dry land...”

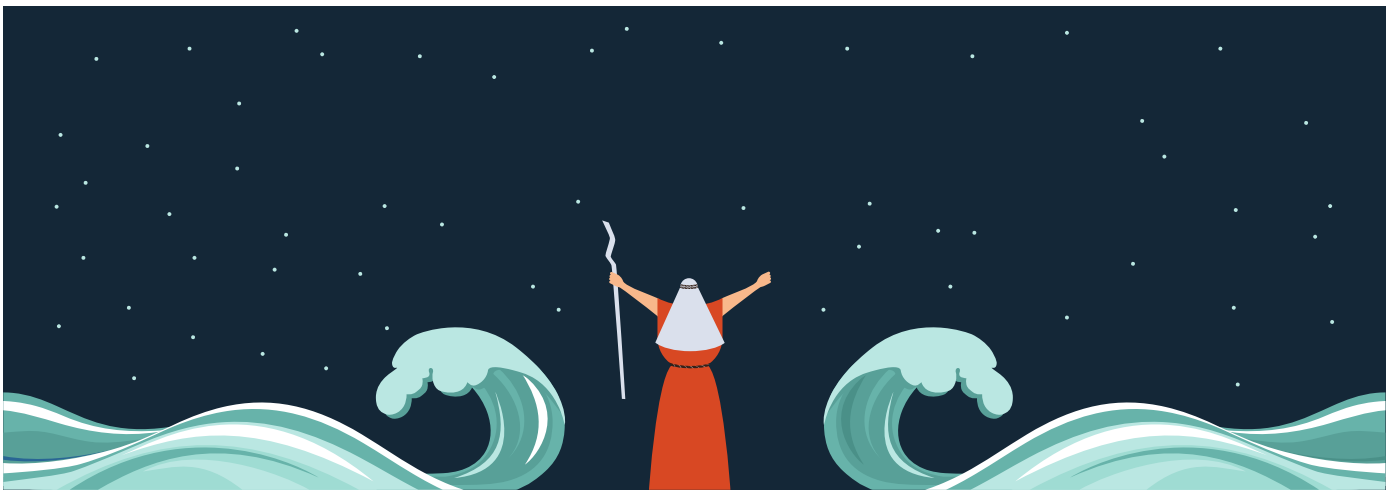
The angel of God usually travelled in front of Israel’s army. Now the angel of God moved behind them. Also, the pillar of cloud moved from in front of the people and stood behind them. So the cloud came between the Egyptians and the people of Israel. The cloud made it dark for the Egyptians. But it gave light to the Israelites. So the cloud kept the two armies apart all night.

Moses held his hand over the sea. All that night the Lord drove back the sea with a strong east wind. And so he made the sea become dry ground. The water was split. And the Israelites went through the sea on dry land. A wall of water was on both sides.

Then all the king's horses, chariots and chariot drivers followed them into the sea. Between two and six o'clock in the morning, the Lord looked down from the pillar of cloud and fire at the Egyptian army. He made them panic. He kept the wheels of the chariots from turning. This made it hard to drive the chariots. The Egyptians shouted, "Let's get away from the Israelites! The Lord is fighting for them and against us Egyptians."

Then the Lord told Moses, "Hold your hand over the sea. Then the water will come back over the Egyptians, their chariots and chariot drivers." So Moses raised his hand over the sea. And at dawn the water became deep again. The Egyptians were trying to run from it. But the Lord swept them away into the sea. The water became deep again. It covered the chariots and chariot drivers. So all the king's army that had followed the Israelites into the sea was covered. Not one of them survived.

But the people of Israel crossed the sea on dry land. There was a wall of water on their right and on their left. So that day the Lord saved the Israelites from the Egyptians.





MY NOTES



I wonder how Moses felt when the people started moaning? I wonder if he thought they were ungrateful - or if he agreed with them? It can't have been easy to keep trusting God when the army was chasing them behind and a huge sea was in front of them. But Moses didn't give up, he kept chatting with God, asking for direction. What things do you need God to help you with? Chat with Him about them now.

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Giant Slayer

David & Goliath

1 Samuel 17



The Philistines had a champion fighter named Goliath. He was about nine feet four inches tall. He came out of the Philistine camp. He had a bronze helmet on his head. And he wore a coat of scale armour. It was made of bronze and weighed about 125 pounds. He wore bronze protectors on his legs. And his blade weighed about 15 pounds. Goliath stood and shouted to the Israelite soldiers, “Choose a man and send him to fight me. If he can fight and kill me, we will become your servants. But if I defeat and kill him, you will become our servants.” When Saul and the Israelites heard the Philistine’s words, they were very afraid.

Now David was the son of Jesse, an Ephrathite. Jesse was from Bethlehem in Judah. David was the youngest son. Jesse’s three oldest sons followed Saul. But David took care of his father’s sheep. Now Jesse said to his son David, “Take this half bushel of cooked grain. And take ten loaves of bread. Take them to your brothers in the camp. Also take ten pieces of cheese. They are fighting against the Philistines.”

David left the food with the man who kept the supplies. Then he ran to the battle line and talked to his brothers. David asked the men who stood near him, “...why does this man think he can speak against the armies of the living God?”

Some men heard what David said and told Saul. Then Saul ordered David to be sent to him. David said to Saul, “Don’t let anyone be discouraged. I, your servant, will go and fight this Philistine!” Saul answered, “You can’t go out against this Philistine and fight him. You’re only a boy. Goliath has been a warrior since he was a young man.”

But David said to Saul, “I, your servant, have been keeping my father’s sheep. When a lion or bear came and took a sheep from the flock, I would chase it. I would attack it and save the sheep from its mouth. The Lord saved me from a lion and a bear. He will also save me from this Philistine.” Saul said to David, “Go, and may the Lord be with you.” Saul put his own clothes on David. He put a bronze helmet on David’s head and armor on his body. David put on Saul’s sword and tried to walk around. He said to Saul, “I can’t go in this. I’m not used to it.” Then David took it all off. He took his stick in his hand. And he chose five smooth stones from a stream. He put them in his pouch and held his sling in his hand. Then he went to meet Goliath.

Goliath looked at David. He saw that David was only a boy. He looked down at David with disgust. But David said to him, “You come to me using a sword, a large spear and a small spear. But I come to you in the name of the Lord of heaven’s armies. He’s the God of the armies of Israel! Everyone gathered here will know the Lord does not need swords or spears to save people. The battle belongs to him! And he will help us defeat all of you.”

As Goliath came near to attack him, David ran quickly to meet him. He took a stone from his pouch. He put it into his sling and slung it. The stone hit the Philistine on his forehead and sank into it. Goliath fell facedown on the ground.

So David defeated the Philistine with only a sling and a stone! He hit him and killed him. He did not even have a sword in his hand.





MY NOTES



David was the youngest in his family, he had no training in battle, his job had been to look after the sheep. But here he was, the only one willing to stand up to the bully Goliath. I wonder if his brothers laughed at him when he said he'd fight the giant? I wonder how they felt when Goliath fell and their little brother was the hero?

The bible says "don't let anyone look down on you because you are young" (1 Timothy 4:12) when we trust God, amazing things can happen.

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A hero Queen

Esther

Esther 1 - 4

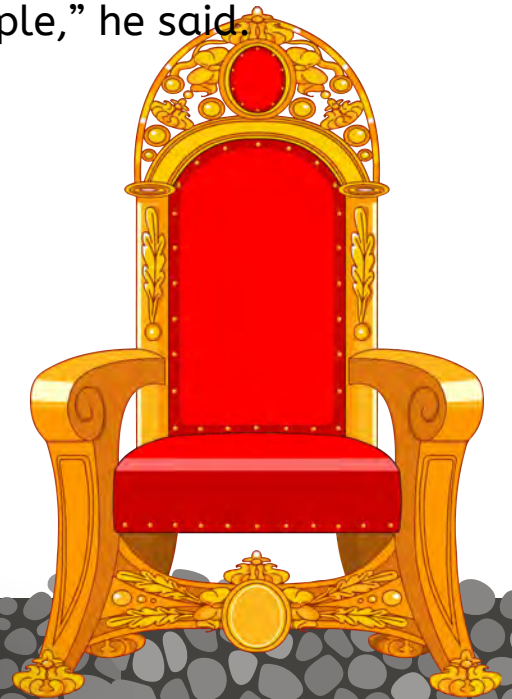


King Xerxes needed a new wife. He brought all the most beautiful girls in the country to his palace. One of them was Esther. She was a Jew, one of God's special people. All the girls were well looked after. They had special treatment to make them more beautiful. Then the king chose one to be his wife. It was Esther. She did not tell the King she was a Jew.

One day, Esther's cousin Mordecai told her that all the Jews were in danger. Their enemy Haman was trying to get rid of them all. Mordecai told her "The King believed Haman's lies. All the Jews will be killed," Esther was upset. She knew that she had to help. "Although I am the queen," she said "I cannot go to the king just when I like. But I will go and see if I can change his mind. Tell all the Jews to pray for me."

Bravely she went to the King. He was not angry, so she said, "Come to a party I am having. It's just for you and Haman." The King was very pleased. At the party, he told Esther she could have anything she wanted. "Then please save my people, the Jews," she said. "Our enemy Haman wants to get rid of us" The King was angry with Haman. "I will stop Haman hurting your people," he said. And he sent Haman away.

Esther had saved God's people.





MY NOTES



"Not all heroes wear capes" - you may have heard that before. In the same way not all the heroes of faith fought against armies - some had 6 months of beauty treatment and lived the life of a princess! Whatever your life is like you can still do amazing things for God. You can stand up for those who are struggling, you can help those who are ill, you can care for God's creation. What ways can you be a hero of faith for those around you?

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A reluctant hero

Gideon's army

Judges 6 & 7



The angel of the Lord came and sat down under an oak tree at Ophrah. Gideon was separating some wheat from the chaff in a winepress.

The angel of the Lord appeared to Gideon and said, “The Lord is with you, mighty warrior! You have the strength to save the people of Israel. Go and save them from the Midianites. I am the one who is sending you.” Then Gideon said, “Pardon me, Lord. How can I save Israel? My family group is the weakest in Manasseh. And I am the least important member of my family.” The Lord answered him, “I will be with you. It will seem as if you are fighting only one man.”

All the Midianites and other peoples from the east joined together. They came across the Jordan River and camped in the Valley of Jezreel. But the Spirit of the Lord entered Gideon! Gideon blew a trumpet to call the men from different tribes to fight with him. Then Gideon said to God, “You said you would help me save Israel. I will put some wool on the threshing floor. Let there be dew only on the wool. But let all of the ground be dry. Then I will know what you said is true. I will know that you will use me to save Israel.” And that is just what happened. Gideon got up early the next morning and squeezed the wool. He got a full bowl of water from the wool. Then Gideon said to God, “Don’t be angry with me. Let me ask just one more thing. Please let me make one more test. Let the wool be dry while the ground around it gets wet with dew.” That night God did that very thing. Just the wool was dry, but the ground around it was wet with dew.

Then the Lord said to Gideon, “You have too many men to defeat the Midianites. I don’t want the Israelites to brag that they saved themselves. So now, announce to the people, ‘Anyone who is afraid go back home.’” And 22,000 men went back home. But 10,000 remained. Then the Lord said to Gideon, “There are still too many men. Take the men down to the water, and I will test them for you there. If I say, ‘This man will go with you,’ he will go. But if I say, ‘That one will not go with you,’ he will not go.” So Gideon led the men down to the water. There the Lord said to him, “Separate them. Those who drink water by lapping it up like a dog will be in one group. Those who bend down to drink will be in the other group.” There were 300 men who used their hands to bring water to their mouths. They lapped it as a dog does. All the rest got down on their knees to drink. Then the Lord said to Gideon, “I will save you, using the 300 men who lapped the water. And I will allow you to defeat Midian. Let all the other men go to their homes.” So Gideon sent the rest of Israel to their homes. But he kept 300 men. He took the jars and the trumpets of those who went home.

Now the camp of Midian was in the valley below Gideon. That night the Lord spoke to Gideon. He said, “Get up. Go down and attack the camp of the Midianites. I will allow you to defeat them. Gideon divided the 300 men into three groups. He gave each man a trumpet and an empty jar. A burning torch was inside each jar. Gideon told the men, “Watch me and do what I do. When I get to the edge of the camp, do what I do. Surround the enemy camp. I and everyone with me will blow our trumpets. When we blow our trumpets, you blow your trumpets, too. Then shout, ‘For the Lord and for Gideon!’”

So Gideon and the 100 men with him came to the edge of the enemy camp. Then Gideon and his men blew their trumpets and smashed their jars. When Gideon’s 300 men blew their trumpets, the Lord caused all the men of Midian to fight each other with their swords! Then the enemy army ran away !





MY NOTES



Gideon is probably the least hero-like guy in history, he even admits it himself! Yet God called him a "mighty warrior" before he'd even lifted a finger! Not only that, even when Gideon had agreed to do what God asked and gathered a big army to fight the Midianites, God told him to get rid of all but 300 men! That's like you and your buddy trying to beat Manchester United with your legs tied together! How amazing is our God that He gives victory to those who trust Him even when it seems impossible!

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