

HEROES OF THE OLD TESTAMENT



Read about some of the amazing heroes of the Old Testament!

Genesis

9

NOAH

Noah did everything just as God commanded him.

GENESIS 6:22

Noah tossed his hammer down. His back was killing him. His hands were sore. His arms were sore—and he had a headache. Day after long day he and his sons worked on the gigantic boat. He looked way up to the top. The boat was almost finished. Just a few more pegs to hammer and a bit more pitch to make it leakproof. Then the rain could come.

Noah knew he looked silly, even stupid, to the people around him. After all, there wasn't any water for miles. But God had said to build a boat. The rain would come and wouldn't stop for days and days. There was going to be a huge flood. God said the people had become so wicked that he decided to start over again with his creation. Only the people and the animals on Noah's boat would survive.

The flood came, just as God had said it would. The water rose until the boat started to float, until all the trees were under water, until the mountains were too. Higher and higher the water went. Their long boat ride had begun . . .

One year later, Noah stepped off his boat onto dry ground. How wonderful to feel solid ground beneath his feet again! As he hugged his wife and family close, Noah gazed at the arch of colors in the sky. The first rainbow! It was God's promise that he would never destroy the people and animals with a flood again. Noah lifted his hands and jumped up and down. He grabbed the hands of his wife and sons. They danced in a circle, praising God for keeping them safe, for keeping his promise.

Be a Noah

Obeying God isn't always easy. Sometimes what he wants you to do is hard. But it's worth it. Noah and his family were blessed because he obeyed God. You will be too!

Read the Whole Story: Genesis 6–9



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ABRAHAM

Abram believed the LORD. The LORD was pleased with Abram because he believed. So Abram's faith made him right with the LORD.

GENESIS 15:6

Abraham was confused. He ran his fingers through his gray hair and rubbed his wrinkled cheek. Could God's messenger be telling him the truth? Behind him, he heard his wife Sarah giggle. *She had heard too.* They both laughed to think they would have a son. They were old enough to be a grandpa and grandma, not a dad and mom!



Abraham and Sarah had both wanted children, more than anything else. But they never had any. Sarah would cry herself to sleep because she had no children. Abraham would cry too. But now they were so happy about the news!

They were old, way past the time when people had babies. But a messenger had come to tell them that God was going to give them a son. God promised that the son of Abraham and Sarah would grow up and have children. And those children would have children, and those children would have children until there were millions—a whole nation of people!

Late that night Abraham sat next to Sarah by the fire outside their tent. A son! They looked up at the millions of stars in the sky. And they remembered that the messenger had said they would have that many children! They sat in comfort and quiet joy. What wonderful news they had had today!

Be an Abraham

Even when you are sad or bad things happen, even when you feel alone, God is there, and you can trust him.

Read the Whole Story: Genesis 18:1–15; 21:1–7

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JOSEPH

Joseph said to [his brothers], “Don’t be afraid . . . You planned to harm me. But God planned it for good. He planned to do what is now being done. He wanted to save many lives.”

GENESIS 50:19–20

Joseph thought back to when he was in prison. What long, dreary days, months, and even years those had been. His brothers had stripped off his beautiful, colorful coat and had sold him as a slave. His own brothers! Joseph wondered what they told their father when Joseph didn’t return with them.

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Little did Joseph know that his brothers had torn his coat and stained it with goat’s blood. Then they had shown it to their father, telling him an animal had killed Joseph. They didn’t want their father to know what a terrible thing they had done.

Now it was years later. Life had gotten better for Joseph. He was out of prison and no longer a slave. In fact, he was now a ruler in Egypt. God had used Joseph to save many people in Egypt from a famine, a time when there was no food to eat. When some men from another country came to Joseph to ask for food, Joseph realized they were his brothers. He was powerful now. He could get back at them for the terrible things they had done. He could have them killed! But did he?

No. Joseph didn’t do any of those things. He knew that everything that had happened was part of God’s plan. When he was in prison and even when he had been sad and hungry, Joseph knew God was working. So instead of hurting his brothers, Joseph forgave them. He told them he loved them anyway, because God had used their awful deeds to save many people.

Be a Joseph

Joseph knew that God had brought good out of the bad things that had happened to him. You can forgive like Joseph. It will take God’s help. But you can forgive those who hurt you.

Read the Whole Story: Genesis 37; 39–48; 50

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MOSES

Moses led the flock to the western side of the desert . . . There the angel of the LORD appeared to him from inside a burning bush . . . God spoke to him from inside the bush. He called out, “Moses! Moses!” “Here I am,” Moses said.

EXODUS 3:1-4

Moses walked with his herd of sheep in the desert area, always searching for grass for them to eat and water to drink. One day, Moses could not believe what he was seeing: a bush that was on fire but didn’t burn up. And he could not believe what he was hearing: the voice of God from within the bush!

God told Moses that he wanted him to lead the people of Israel out of slavery in Egypt. Surely, Moses thought, God doesn’t want me. He told God he was too weak, that he wasn’t a good speaker. But God insisted. God told Moses that he would give him strength and the right words to speak. Then, to convince Moses that God would be with him and would help him, he showed Moses several miracles. God turned Moses’ staff into a snake and then back into a staff. God made Moses’ hand sick with a skin disease and then healed it.

That day Moses decided to obey what God wanted him to do. He went back to Egypt and told the Pharaoh to set the Israelites free from their slavery. It took ten of God’s miracles to make the Pharaoh agree to set the people free. But God had kept his promise. God helped Moses. The people of Israel were no longer slaves. They were free!

Be a Moses

Some people are strong because of their huge muscles. Some people are strong because they are smart. But the best way to be strong is to rely on God’s strength instead of your own. Next time you think you just can’t do something, ask God for his help. He helped Moses. He will help you too.

Read the Whole Story: Exodus 3:1–4:17; 19:1–20:21



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SAMSON

**The woman had a baby boy. She named him Samson.
As he grew up, the LORD blessed him.**

JUDGES 13:24

Samson's strong legs carried him quickly along the path. He swung his muscled arms as he walked. A breeze blew through the seven long braids of his hair. Suddenly, a lion sprang out at him from behind a rock. As it hurtled through the air toward Samson, it opened its huge mouth full of teeth and roared. Samson put up his massive arms and caught the lion. Before it even had time to use its sharp teeth or claws, Samson ripped the lion apart with his bare hands. He didn't even need a weapon to kill a lion!

God had made Samson the strongest man who ever lived. But Samson didn't always do what was right. He was sometimes foolish. He fell in love with a wicked woman. He followed her instead of God. That wicked woman begged and bullied Samson until he told her the secret of his strength. And then she had his hair cut off. With his hair cut short, Samson's strength left him.

Samson's enemies captured him and poked out his eyes. He was weak. He could no longer see. He was a prisoner. Later, Samson stood in a temple and heard the people laughing at him. And at his God.

Samson prayed and asked God for one more blast of strength. Putting a hand on each of the huge pillars that held up the temple, Samson stiffened his legs. He gritted his teeth. And he bravely pushed. God's strength surged into Samson's weakened arms. The pillars started to move. With one last mighty push, the pillars of the temple gave way. The roof of the temple fell. Samson himself died that day. But he took many of God's enemies with him.

Be a Samson

Don't ever forget that Samson's real strength wasn't in his muscles. It was in God. He forgot that. But you don't have to. No matter what size your muscles are, you are someone special and strong in God.

Read the Whole Story: Judges 16:1–31



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RUTH

Ruth replied, “Don’t try to make me leave you and go back. Where you go I’ll go. Where you stay I’ll stay. Your people will be my people. Your God will be my God.”

RUTH 1:16

Ruth was born and raised in Moab. So was Orpah. They both grew up worshiping idols. They each married one of Naomi’s sons. And they each learned about God. God was not an idol made of wood or stone. God was alive and loving. Ruth knew it was true. She left her idols and chose to follow God.



Then terrible things started to happen. Naomi’s husband died. Then Ruth’s husband died. Then Orpah’s husband died. Now all three women were left alone. When Naomi decided to leave Moab and return to Bethlehem, Orpah stayed in Moab. But Ruth told Naomi that she wanted to go with her. She wanted to follow the true God. Without looking back, Ruth went to Bethlehem with Naomi.

Then Ruth worked in the fields of Boaz, a rich relative of Naomi. Ruth rubbed her rough and sore hands together. She stretched her aching back. She continued picking up stalks of grain and putting them into her sack. She was thankful for every piece. She and Naomi would use the grain to make bread. If Ruth didn’t pick up the grain, they would have nothing to eat.

Boaz noticed Ruth as she worked in his fields. He knew she was a good woman, taking care of Naomi and following God faithfully. Soon Boaz married Ruth, and they had a son. When Naomi held little Obed for the first time, she cried tears of joy. God had given her a wonderful daughter-in-law and now a beautiful grandson. All the years of grief were passed. Ruth hugged Naomi, and they smiled. They both looked down at baby Obed and thanked God for his blessings.

Be a Ruth

Most people today don’t worship idols made of wood or stone. But they do worship idols. Perhaps their idol is money or music. Whatever gets between you and God is an idol. Ruth never looked back at the idols she worshiped as a child. She knew that she had met the one true God, and she was following only him.

Read the Whole Story: Ruth 1–4

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DAVID

The LORD doesn't rescue people by using a sword or a spear. And everyone here will know it. The battle belongs to the LORD. He will hand all of you over to us.

1 SAMUEL 17:47

David couldn't believe it. What was the matter with these soldiers? They were afraid of the giant, Goliath. Well, even though David wasn't a soldier, he wasn't afraid. He marched to King Saul's tent.

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"King Saul," he said, "don't worry about that giant. I'll fight him! I've been watching my father's sheep all my life. When a bear or a lion attacked, I killed it. I'll do the same thing to Goliath. The Lord saved me from a bear and a lion. He'll save me from Goliath too."

David walked down into the valley and bent over a small stream. He felt the bottom with his hands. Carefully, he chose five stones. Then he walked toward Goliath.

Goliath turned fierce eyes to David. His voice rumbled with anger. "Come here, you little twerp. I'll make hamburger of you and feed you to the birds and beasts!"

Goliath's words didn't frighten David. He boldly shouted back at Goliath. "You fight with a spear and sword. But I fight in the name of the almighty God!"

As he spoke, David put one stone into his sling. He began to swing it round and round. With a strong twist of his wrist, David flicked the stone out of the sling. It shot straight at Goliath, sinking into his forehead. Goliath's eyes opened wide with surprise and then pain. He wobbled on his feet. He shook. He fell face down in the dirt. Goliath was dead.

David defeated Goliath with a sling and a stone and the might of God. He proved to everyone that day—to the Israelite soldiers and to their enemies—that battles aren't won with spears and swords but with God.

Be a David

David was a brave young man. But he wasn't brave because he was strong or smart. He was brave because he knew God was with him. That's where your courage comes from too. Trust God to help you. He'll always be with you.

Read the Whole Story: 1 Samuel 17

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ELIJAH

Elijah was from Tishbe in the land of Gilead. He said to Ahab, “I serve the LORD. He is the God of Israel. You can be sure that he lives.”

1 KINGS 17:1

God’s prophet Elijah had issued a challenge to the Israelites. Who would they follow? God or Baal? No one answered. They didn’t dare to say they wanted to follow Baal. And they didn’t want to say they would follow God.

Elijah decided to prove to them who they should follow. The prophets of Baal built an altar and put a bull on it. They didn’t light the fire. Instead they prayed to Baal to send fire from heaven on the altar. But no matter what they did, no fire came.

Elijah mocked them. “Maybe your god is sleeping,” he joked. “Or maybe he’s gone on a trip. Maybe you should shout louder!”

So they did. The prophets of Baal shouted and danced and even cut their skin to try to get their god’s attention. But no fire came down on their altar.

Now it was Elijah’s turn. He put his bull on the altar. He dug a ditch around the altar. Then he poured four large jugs of water over the bull and the wood and the altar. The water soaked the animals and the wood and ran down into the ditch. Surely no fire would burn here. But then Elijah repeated the process two more times! Everything on the altar and around it was drenched.

Elijah prayed, confident that God would answer. As soon as the last words were out of his mouth, fire streaked down from heaven. It burned up the bull and the wood and even the stones of the altar.

Now the people knew for certain what Elijah already knew. There was only one God. It wasn’t Baal. It was God Almighty, the God of Israel.

Be an Elijah

What is easier? To do what everyone else is doing? Or to do the right thing, no matter what others do? It is often easier to do what everyone else is doing. If you’re ever in a situation where you want to do what others are doing and you know it isn’t the right thing to do, think of Elijah. Remembering him will help you make the right choice.

Read the Whole Story: 1 Kings 18:16–39



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