
The Bible and Its Influence: “The Promised Land”

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The Book of Joshua

- Joshua, Moses' assistant, is chosen by God to lead the Israelites to the Promised Land after Moses died
- Known for his courage and military prowess
- Undivided faithfulness in the covenant
 - Different from others, like Moses, who question God
- "Only be strong and resolute"
 - "Be strong and courageous"

God of Battles

- The Book of Joshua recounts military history from the Israelites point of view
- God gets credit for military victory
- Faithless humans are blamed for military defeat
 - Caused because humans desert God, not the other way around



Rahab of Jericho

- “Earliest example in literature of the prostitute with a heart of gold”
- She hears of the events in Egypt and converts
- She hides Israelite spies, and they promise to spare her family in the siege if she marked her house with a red cord hanging from the window
- This leads to the first major conquest lead by Joshua and the Israelites

The Time of Judges

- Success depended on faith
- Joshua had no successor and decided to split authority between the 12 tribes
- After his death, there was no unity and the Promised Land was filled with chaos
- Judges (“deliverers”) appear over the years to provide guidance
 - Earned God’s favor and people’s support by exhibiting certain virtues and characteristics

Deborah

- First figure in the Book of Judges
- One of the only Judges to mediate legal disputes
- Virtues: courage and wisdom
 - A Prophet- wisdom was divine
 - Lead Israelite troops alongside General Barak
- Heavily associated with Jael
 - Lured their enemy, General Sisera, to her tent
 - Killed him by driving a peg through his skull



Gideon

- 40 years after Deborah's victory, the Israelites are attacked by the Midianites
- God sends an angel to Gideon, but he doesn't believe the angel is from God so he tests the angel until he's sure
- Gideon summons a huge army but only goes to battle with 300 men
 - God did not want the might of the soldiers to be a sign that they won without God's help
- Surrounded the enemy, blew horns, broke jars, and screamed, which scared them off
- Virtues: Willingness and humility

Jephthah

- 40 more years, more trouble for the Israelites
 - This time, they fight the Ammonites!
- Son of a prostitute, a good fighter, not necessarily a good person
- In return for support, he promised God he'd sacrifice the first living thing he'd see once he got home
 - His daughter
- Virtues (?): lack of faith in God leads to strife



Samson and Delilah

- Best resembles the hero's journey
- His mother vowed to dedicate him to God's service as a nazirite
 - God gifted him with immense physical strength that he used self-indulgently
 - "The sweetness of deliverance would come from his strength, tempered in captivity"
- Delilah agreed to discover the secret of Samson's strength for money
 - Sampson reveals that his powers come from God and are symbolized by his uncut hair of the Nazarite
 - She cuts his hair, and he is captured and blinded by the Philistines
- Samson asks for just enough strength to take down their temple
- Taking God's power for granted blinds you from God's protection and you can be lured into temptation from other gods



Samuel

- Israelites are in a constant flux of war and anarchy with no moral compass/figurehead
- Samuel's mother, Hannah, was barren and directly asked God for a son in exchange for his service to God
- Samuel lived with the high priest, Eli, and received a call from God
 - God doesn't speak to chosen Israelites as often as he did in the times of Moses and his ancestors
- Samuel is declared as a prophet

Influence

- MLK, “I Have a Dream” Speech
 - “I just want to do God’s will. And He’s allowed me to go up to the mountain. And I’ve looked over it. And I’ve seen the Promised Land.”
- William Shakespeare, *Henry V*
 - “O God of Battles”
- William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*
 - Act 2, Scene 2: Polonius compared to Judge Jephthah
- Oratorios (2 Act, sung biblical stories) and Operas
 - *Messiah* by George Friedrich Handel, *Samson et Dalila* by Camille Saint-Saens
- Philistine– used to describe an uncouth or uncultured person