

## VILLAINS AND HEROES

Why does the Bible record the sometimes gruesome details of heroes of the faith, as well as those who are enemies of God? Obviously, all the heroes were mere human beings subject to the weakness of the flesh, and often failed to live a perfect life. Only Enoch and Elijah's lives were such that God excused them from the penalty of physical death. Then, there is the perfect example of the perfect life of the Son of God, our Savior. God did not try to hide the ugly side of men of faith, as human writers might be prone to do. This is one of the marks of Bible accuracy, inspiration and fairness. God held back nothing that He wanted man to know. His heroes of faith illustrate how man can repent and overcome the weakness of the flesh to please Him.

**Moses** disobeyed God, and was not allowed to enter Canaan, yet was kept in Heaven to appear with righteous Elijah to Jesus on the mount of Transfiguration. **Abraham** lied, and we see how God dealt with it, and he ultimately became prominent in Hades, as well as being the one through whose seed the Savior entered the world. **Noah** found grace in God's eyes so as to be used to save the world from full destruction, yet his drunkenness is revealed to us. Even king **David**, a man after God's own heart, erred greatly, yet God established the kingdom of Judah through his seed, and ultimately the Son of God sprang from him. Their errors remind us that we too often fail to do right, but we can be inspired by the good example of repentance these heroes left us.

What about the villains? First, in the Old Testament record. The lives of wicked kings in and out of the kingdom of God are revealed to us. Think of wicked **Ahab**, who was about as bad as a king could be. Then there was wicked **Jeroboam**. These men were involved in the overall plan of God in the development of His plan of redemption.

Then, in the New Testament record, just before the Lord's death, there was the betrayal by **Judas** and denial by **Peter**. It had been foretold that a "friend" of the Lord would be the one who would betray the Lord (Psa. 41:9). This was fulfilled in Judas whom Jesus called His "friend" (Matt. 26:50), and "all this was done" that the scripture might be fulfilled (Matt. 26:56). Judas was a wicked man whom the Lord obviously knew he either was or was the kind of man to betray Him. Some say that the derogative things said about Judas were the result of the bad feelings and hatred that the other disciples had of Judas, but this is not the case. To say such is to give "bad" credit to the judgment of the gospel writers, and to take away from the "good" wisdom of God, who obviously chose to have these things revealed, as guided by the Holy Spirit in the inspiration of the scripture. To define Judas as the Judas "who also betrayed him" (Matt. 10:4) was **not** said to get a dig in at old Judas, or to show hatred, but merely to distinguish him from other Judas' of the Bible. True, there was a time when the disciples were troubled about Judas, but what one or two of them actually "wrote" about Judas was not to get even with him.

What about Peter? Does the record of his denial by Matthew, Mark, Luke and John intended to show any "hatred" they had toward Peter? *Certainly not!!* To attribute any "hatred" against Judas or Peter to the judgment of New Testament writers is in essence a denial of the inspiration of scripture. They did not include their own bitter thoughts unless God wanted it done, but inspiration guided men in the exact words that God wanted revealed, as "every word of God" (Prov. 30:5-6; Matt. 4:4; 2 Tim. 3:16-17).

The facts about villains or friends of the Lord are all recorded for our learning (Rom. 15:4).

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