

August 30, 2015

Heroes of Faith

"The Lord had said to Abram, "Leave your county, your people, and your father's household and go to the land I will show you. I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you and whoever curses you I will curse; and all the peoples of the earth will be blessed through you...To your offspring I will give this land."

Genesis 12:1-9

Among the be called Abraham; greatest religions and the Jewish faith Abraham was just as bad choices.

Remember as looking at four major their call, their call, and finally the



greatest heroes in the Bible is the man who came to the "father of the faithful". Three of the world's trace their origins to Abraham; Christianity, Islam all call him their patriarch. And yet in every way much human as you and me and just as prone to make

we consider these great heroes of faith we are aspects of their faith. These include the nature of response to the call, the cost of obedience to the outcomes of that obedience.

The nature of the call: Abraham was called by God while he lived in Ur of the Chaldees, a great ancient city in what is now Iraq. For its time Ur was highly civilized with a running water, a large library, and well-designed streets. By the standard of the day Ur was very modern, up-to-date, and comfortable. God's call to Abraham included four promises for his obedience. God would make him into a great nation, God would make his name great, God would bless him and protect him, and God would make him the source of a universal blessing. In addition God promised to give the descendants of Abraham the land of Canaan which we now call Israel.

The response to the call: Like all great heroes of faith Abraham chose to obey God's call, sort of...The truth is, Abraham, like a lot of us only partially obeyed God's call. The Lord called Abraham to leave his county which he did, but he was also called to leave his people and his father's household. Abraham took his father with him on the first stages of his travels and he also took his young nephew Lot. Both choices would lead to problems later on. Abraham struggled with faith for a long time and even though God promised him great blessings and protection the Patriarch didn't completely surrender to the Lord's will until late in his life.

The cost of the call: The cost of Abraham's obedience was more often than not the consequence of his own faith struggle. Abraham's father died in Haran not long after he began his travels. Eventually his nephew Lot would lead him into war and finally force the Patriarch to bargain for Lot's deliverance from Sodom and Gomorrah. Because he doubted God's promise to make him a great nation, Abraham fathered Ishmael the ancestor of many of the Arab peoples. And because he doubted God's commitment to protect him Abraham lied to at least two great leaders and alienated himself and his family from those peoples.

The outcome of the call: Despite his weak faith, Abraham led a blessed life amassing huge wealth and great power. As an old man he fathered a child of promise, Isaac, with his beloved wife, Sarah, and although he never owned more than a burial cave in all of the Promised Land, his people would

eventually become a great nation, and certainly the name of Abraham is still important worldwide. Of course the greatest outcome of Abraham's faith is Jesus who was a direct descendent of the great patriarch and the greatest blessing our world has ever received.