

Heroes 2

Did you know that a 16 year old out-rose Paul Revere? It's true! By the name of Ludington, lived on a farm in New York with a father who was a captain in the state militia.

On the night of April 27, 1777, a messenger arrived on the Ludington farm with the urgent news that the British, in a surprise attack from Long Island, had burned the city of Danbury, Connecticut and were advancing on the country-side. Every farmer must be called out immediately. Because the senior Ludington had to stay for military duty, the 16 year old volunteered for the job of riding and calling the farmers to fight.

Grabbing a big stick, the young Ludington leaped on a horse and galloped off into the darkness. It was an all night ride with pauses only long enough at each farm house to crash the stick against the door and shout a warning, "The British are coming! Get out and fight!"

And they did. Ludington mustered out enough men to not only stop the British- but send them running back to their boats in defeat.

Ludington far out-did Paul Revere's famous ride. Revere only got about 10 miles before he was captured by the British at Lexington. Ludington covered a staggering 40 miles of hard riding.

It's interesting to note that one of America's first heroes was a 16 year old girl named Sybil Ludington.

I realize that if this had been a modern invasion, Sybil would have sent a text to all her friends and posted on Facebook and Twitter reaching millions of people within a few minutes amassing a huge response from the comfort of her air conditioned home. But what all those communication methods would have missed would have been the urgency and passion in the human voice of Sybil Ludington. I can imagine the hard riding coupled with fear and grave concern caused the shrill of Sybil's voice to pierce the calm tranquility of darkness and rouse up slumbering households to join the fight for freedom called the American Revolution.

I'm sure the last thing on Sybil Ludington's mind was the desire or even thought that she would be one of America's first heroes. She just did what had to be done. That's what American heroes are made of.

Hero Qualities-

Willing available

Fearless- night, on horseback, where was the enemy?

Passionate- roused a volunteer army!

Endurance 40 miles!

There was a young man a great number of years prior, probably close to the same age as Sybil Ludington, who went by the name of Belteshazzar most of his life, who found himself in a very difficult situation through no apparent fault of his own. The

nation of Israel once again had forsaken God. And because of their unfaithfulness, God allowed a ruthless enemy to invade and conquer the lands of the region of Judah and even Jerusalem itself. The tribes of Israel to the north had already been conquered by other enemies.

Many of the Israelites died in the invasion. A few fled to the mountains and caves. This teenaged boy, and some others, escaped the destruction and death of the invasion only to be carried back to his captor's capitol- Babylon. His Hebrew name was Daniel.

If anyone had a "right" to whine and complain, it was Daniel. If anyone ever had a "reasonable excuse" not to be faithful to his God and forsake his faith, it was Daniel. If anyone ever had a just cause to blend in with the culture for his very life's sake, it was Daniel. But that is not what Daniel did.

³ The king ordered Ashpenaz, the chief of his court officials, to bring some of the Israelites from the royal family and from the nobility— ⁴ young men without any physical defect, good-looking, suitable for instruction in all wisdom, knowledgeable, perceptive, and capable of serving in the king's palace—and to teach them the Chaldean language and literature. ⁵ The king assigned them daily provisions from the royal food and from the wine that he drank. They were to be trained for three years, and at the end of that time they were to serve in the king's court. ⁶ Among them, from the descendants of Judah, were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. ⁷ The chief official gave them [different] names: to Daniel, he gave the name Belteshazzar; to Hananiah, Shadrach; to Mishael, Meshach; and to Azariah, Abednego.

⁸ Daniel determined that he would not defile himself with the king's food or with the wine he drank. So he asked permission from the chief official not to defile himself. ⁹ God had granted Daniel favor and compassion from the chief official, ¹⁰ yet he said to Daniel, "My lord the king assigned your food and drink. I'm afraid [of what would happen] if he saw your faces looking thinner than those of the other young men your age. You would endanger my life with the king." ¹¹ So Daniel said to the guard whom the chief official had assigned to Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, ¹² "Please test your servants for 10 days. Let us be given vegetables to eat and water to drink. ¹³ Then examine our appearance and the appearance of the young men who are eating the king's food, and deal with your servants based on what you see." ¹⁴ He agreed with them in this matter and tested them for 10 days. ¹⁵ At the end of 10 days they looked better and healthier than all the young men who were eating the king's food. ¹⁶ So the guard continued to remove their food and the wine they were to drink and gave them vegetables.

¹⁷ God gave these four young men knowledge and understanding in every kind of literature and wisdom. Daniel also understood visions and dreams of every kind. ¹⁸ At the end of the time that the king had said to present them, the chief official presented them to Nebuchadnezzar. ¹⁹ The king interviewed them, and among all of them, no one was found equal to Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. So they began to serve in the king's court. ²⁰ In every matter of wisdom and understanding that the king consulted them about, he found them 10 times better than all the diviner-priests and mediums in his entire kingdom. ²¹ Daniel remained there until the first year of King Cyrus. Dan 1:3-21 (HCSB)

Daniel- potential whine factors

Parents were likely dead

Forcedly taken from his home and homeland

Enslaved as a teenager

Forced to go to school and study a foreign language

Where was God? (like Gideon)

Daniel- hero factors one of the truly greatest bible heroes.

We don't have time or space to cover all the factors that made Daniel such an amazing hero of the faith, but let's consider a few.....

1. Obeyed God (in the "little" things- like Gideon) Refused to drink the king's wine and eat the fatty food. Would he have risen to such power and respect had he not obeyed in the "little things?" Daniel's rise to power, fame and influence was born in his rejection of the king's wine and greasy meat.

⁸ Daniel determined that he would not defile himself with the king's food or with the wine he drank. So he asked permission from the chief official not to defile himself. **D**aniel 1:8

2. Remained humble/gave God glory (Nebuchadnezzar's dream)

²⁵ Then Arioch quickly brought Daniel before the king and said to him, "I have found a man among the Judean exiles who can let the king know the interpretation." ²⁶ The king said in reply to Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, "Are you able to tell me

the dream I had and its interpretation?”²⁷ Daniel answered the king: “No wise man, medium, diviner-priest, or astrologer is able to make known to the king the mystery he asked about.²⁸ But there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries, and He has let King Nebuchadnezzar know what will happen in the last days. Your dream and the visions [that came into] your mind [as you lay] in bed were these:²⁹ Your Majesty, while you were in your bed, thoughts came [to your mind] about what will happen in the future. The revealer of mysteries has let you know what will happen.³⁰ As for me, this mystery has been revealed to me, not because I have more wisdom than anyone living, but in order that the interpretation might be made known to the king, and that you may understand the thoughts of your mind. **Dan 2:25-30** (HCSB)

3. Impacted heathen king and nation Daniel’s enemies had tricked the king into condemning Daniel to death in the lions’ den.

19 At the first light of dawn the king got up and hurried to the lions’ den.²⁰ When he reached the den, he cried out in anguish to Daniel. “Daniel, servant of the living God,” the king said, “has your God whom you serve continually been able to rescue you from the lions?”²¹ Then Daniel spoke with the king: “May the king live forever.²² My God sent His angel and shut the lions’ mouths. They haven’t hurt me, for I was found innocent before Him. Also, I have not committed a crime against you my king.”²³ The king was overjoyed and gave orders to take Daniel out of the den. So Daniel was taken out of the den, uninjured, for he trusted in his God.²⁴ The king then gave the command, and those men who had maliciously accused Daniel were brought and thrown into the lions’ den—they, their children, and their

wives. They had not reached the bottom of the den before the lions overpowered them and crushed all their bones.

²⁵ Then King Darius wrote to those of every people, nation, and language who live in all the earth: “May your prosperity abound.

²⁶ I issue a decree that in all my royal dominion, people must tremble in fear before the God of Daniel: For He is the living God, and He endures forever; His kingdom will never be destroyed, and His dominion has no end. ²⁷ He rescues and delivers; He performs signs and wonders in the heavens and on the earth, for He has rescued Daniel from the power of the lions.” ²⁸ So Daniel prospered during the reign of Darius and the reign of Cyrus the Persian. Dan 6:19-28 (HCSB)

4. Faithful from youth to old age God has always been brutally honest about even the greatest biblical heroes. The miserable sins, disobedience, and failures of Moses, Saul, David, Solomon, Peter, Paul and others are revealed in great detail to us, but what about Daniel? Nothing, nada, zilch.... I have no bible verse to read to you about when Daniel stumbled, gave in to temptation, or acted foolishly. There aren't any!

Daniel is one of my all time favorite heroes biblical and secular. He may not have led a couple of million people through the desert or killed any Philistines with the jaw bone of a donkey but

Daniel was such a solid, faithful, consistent servant of God, from childhood to old age that he was a world changer.

Great Christian heroes: (you and me)

1. Available Nathan Hale, Gideon, Sybil Ludington, and Daniel were available to do the extraordinary. No particular talent, skill, experience or training was required. They were willing and available.

2. Obey God Heroes of the faith like Gideon and Daniel began by being obedient to God in the “little things.” The truth is- no command of God is a little thing. We have our pet/private sins that we think won’t harm anyone but they can keep us from being heroes in the faith.

3. Faithful- There are way too many fallen heroes and way too many fly by night heroes. True heroes don’t take of the costume and hang it in a closet. They wear the garment of faithfulness in and out of the limelight of good deeds.

4. Impact community Heroes of the faith will always impact those around them, intentionally and incidentally, for the kingdom of God. How many people today would consider you a kingdom hero? It’s not too late. The world is desperately seeking heroes. We need to point them to Jesus.