

HEROES OF THE NEW TESTAMENT



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

Matthew

1085

JOHN THE BAPTIST

I baptize you with water, calling you to turn away from your sins. But after me, someone is coming who is more powerful than I am. I'm not worthy to carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.

MATTHEW 3:11

The cool river water rippled around John's legs. A young man who was sorry for his sins went out to John in the water. John dunked him under the water. John called the people to turn away from their sins and to be baptized.

John looked up and saw the crowd of people part to let someone through. *Jesus*. John recognized him immediately. John had been telling the people for a long time about Jesus. Jesus would come and save people from their sins.

John knew what Jesus wanted. Jesus wanted John to baptize him. *No way*, John thought to himself. Then he said, "You are so much more powerful and righteous than I am, Jesus. I'm not good enough to even carry your sandals."

But Jesus insisted. "You must baptize me."

Still hesitating, John tipped Jesus until his head and body both went under water. He lifted Jesus' dripping body up from the water. Then John jumped back as something rustled in front of his face and landed on Jesus' head. It looked like a dove. John and all the people in the crowd grew silent as a voice boomed from the sky. "This is the Son that I love," the voice thundered. "I am pleased with him. I love him."

Be a John

John the Baptist came before Jesus and prepared the people for him. He knew Jesus was the Savior of the world. He told people they needed to follow Jesus. You can be like John, too, and tell your friends about Jesus.

Read the Whole Story: Matthew 3:13–17

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Mark

1141

JESUS LOVES KIDS

Let the little children come to me. Don't keep them away. God's kingdom belongs to people like them.

MARK 10:14

Jesus threw his head back and laughed with the children. Some were just sitting near him. But others raced around in front and behind him. Others couldn't get close enough to him. One hung onto his leg. Another swung on his other leg. Another swung from his arm. What fun children were!

More and more children came to Jesus. Their parents were eager for Jesus to bless their children. The children took turns sitting on his lap. They took turns giving him hugs. He smiled at them and talked and laughed with them. . . . until he heard grumbling in the background. And until he noticed that the children were being pulled away. Jesus' disciples were telling the parents to take their children and go home.

"Jesus doesn't have the time for this!" they said. "He has more important things to do!"

The smile left Jesus' face as he turned to the disciples and said, "Don't you dare send these little children away! They are important to me. You should know that! Everyone should be like these children. See how loving they are? See how they trust me? You should be just like them!"

One by one parents turned around and walked back toward Jesus. As soon as the children saw Jesus, they left their parents and ran toward him again. So many came to him at once that he just sat down in the grass and let them climb all over him. Reaching out his hand, he pulled a shy little girl onto his lap. He smiled at her. He looked over her head and smiled at her parents. He turned and smiled at all the children and their parents.

Be Like Jesus

Every person is important. Jesus took time to pay attention to children. He knew that just because they were little didn't mean they weren't important. Just because someone is small or weak or poor doesn't mean he or she isn't important. You can treat them with love and kindness, just like Jesus did.

Read the Whole Story: Mark 10:13–16

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K



1156

Luke

MARY

“I serve the Lord,” Mary answered. “May it happen to me just as you said it would.” Then the angel left her.

LUKE 1:38

Mary’s stomach growled. She needed some breakfast. A piece of bread, maybe some cheese. Her feet moved more quickly just thinking about it. She adjusted the water jar she carried so that she could walk faster.



Hurrying around the corner of a neighbor’s house, Mary came to a quick stop. An angel stood in front of her on the path. The angel’s eyes glittered. He spoke in a whisper that was as light and as soft as a breeze but as booming as thunder. “Mary, you are a special young woman. God is with you.”



Mary jumped back with fright as soon as she heard the angel speak.



The angel kindly watched her, then spoke again. “Don’t be afraid, Mary. You will have a very special baby. God has chosen you to be the mother of his son, Jesus. He will save people from their sins.”

Now Mary was really afraid. *A baby?* she thought. *But I’m not even married yet. How can I have a baby?*

The angel watched. He knew Mary didn’t know what to think. He knew she didn’t really understand. Gently, the angel told Mary that God’s power would cover Mary and cause her to have a baby. The baby would be God’s son.

Mary only understood one thing. The angel was from God, and what he told her was the truth. She knew it would happen. Although she didn’t completely understand, she wanted to do what God wanted. Mary turned to the angel and looked straight into his glittering eyes. “I’m God’s servant,” she said. “May God do to me everything you have said.”

Be a Mary

Mary was frightened and confused by the angel’s message. But that didn’t matter to her. What mattered was doing what God wanted. She was willing. Be a Mary! When you know God wants you to do something, do it—just because God wants you to.

Read the Whole Story: Luke 1:26–38

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1214

John

BOY WITH A LUNCH

[Andrew said] “Here is a boy with five small loaves of barley bread. He also has two small fish. But how far will that go in such a large crowd?”

JOHN 6:9

The little boy first jumped one way, then another, laughing as his shadow jumped along with him. His mother had put fish and bread in a sack for his lunch. He was off exploring for the day.

Climbing over rocks and running around the hills, he came to a huge crowd of thousands of people. He stopped to listen to the teacher, who was speaking to them. The little boy worked his way right to the front row. He tossed his lunch on the ground and plopped down next to it. Lying back on his arms, he listened to Jesus. He sat up in amazement when Jesus healed some sick people. Wow! If Jesus could make sick people well, he could do anything!



Later that day, Jesus started to talk to his disciples about feeding the people. The boy looked around. How could Jesus feed this many people? He had an idea. He got up and tugged on the robe of a nearby disciple named Andrew. Andrew tried to ignore him. But finally he gave in and bent down to listen.

“Five small loaves of bread and two fish? And you want me to give them to Jesus to feed the crowd?” Andrew looked at the little boy in surprise. But he gave the small lunch to Jesus.

Jesus took the little boy’s lunch and fed not 5 people, not 500 people, but over 5,000 people! The boy watched as the disciples began to hand out the fish and bread. No matter how many people they handed food to, there was still more.

Jesus smiled at the boy, and he smiled back at Jesus. The boy knew Jesus could do anything!

Be Like the Little Boy

Be like the boy. You may think you don’t have much to give. But the amount isn’t what matters. It’s what you know Jesus can do with what you give—whether it’s big or small.

Read the Whole Story: John 6:1–13

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1234

John

MARY MAGDALENE

Mary Magdalene went to the disciples with the news. She said, “I have seen the Lord!”

JOHN 20:18

Mary Magdalene (MAG-duh-leen) walked slowly along the garden path. The sunrise turned the sky from blue to pink. Mary carried a bag of spices and ointment. She wanted to be sure Jesus’ body was properly anointed for burial.

Pushing back her veil, Mary looked at the grave up ahead. The stone had been moved away from the entrance! She dropped her spices and ran to tell the disciples. Scarcely able to catch her breath, she wailed, “Jesus is gone!”

Mary tried to keep up with Peter and John as they ran back to the grave. Pressing her fingers into her aching side, she arrived just as they came out of the empty grave. They looked sadly at her.

Peter and John left, but Mary stood crying outside the grave. After a time she bent her teary face and looked inside. She was shocked to see two angels sitting right where Jesus’ body had been. She shivered as they asked her, “Why are you crying?”

How could they not know? Mary thought to herself. “They’ve taken Jesus’ body away, and I don’t know where it is,” she answered.

Turning at a sound behind her, Mary thought she saw the gardener. Maybe he knew something. “Sir, did you carry Jesus’ body away? Tell me where you have put him!” Instead of answering her, the man gazed into Mary’s eyes. Then he gently said just one word. “Mary!”

Instantly Mary realized this was no gardener. This was Jesus himself! He wasn’t dead. He was alive. She ran as fast as she could to tell the good news to Peter and John.

Be a Mary Magdalene

Mary’s love for Jesus made her eager to do whatever she could to help him. How can you be like Mary? Could you help someone in need? Could you tell someone about Jesus’ love? There are many ways you can be like Mary. Be on the lookout. You’ll find a way!

Read the Whole Story: John 20:1–18

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Acts

1249

STEPHEN

Stephen was full of God's grace and power. He did great wonders and signs among the people.

ACTS 6:8

Stephen stood still in the hot sun and looked at the angry faces that surrounded him on all sides. He took a shaky breath. He watched as the men around him picked up rocks. Small rocks. Big rocks. One man used his foot to dig out a huge rock from the dirt. He tossed it up in the air several times to make sure his aim would be on target.

The target—Stephen—watched as some other men took their coats off and tossed them at the feet of a man named Saul. Sweat dripped down Stephen's face.

They planned to throw their rocks at Stephen and kill him.

Stephen knew what they were planning. But he bravely stood his ground. Instead of looking at all the faces around him, Stephen raised his eyes to the sky. What he saw there amazed him. The sky split open and gave Stephen a view straight into heaven. What a sight! The glory of God was shining right down from heaven onto Stephen. He saw Jesus standing next to God. Stephen burst out, "Look! I see heaven open. The Son of Man is standing at God's right hand."

Now the men around Stephen became even angrier. How dare he claim to see God! A man shouted at Stephen, then threw the first rock. Once it hurled through the air, hundreds more followed, hitting Stephen all over.

One by one the stones wore down Stephen. He sank to his knees. Stephen was dying. He knew it. He prayed one last prayer before he breathed his last breath. "Jesus, take me to be with you. And forgive these men for what they're doing." Then, Stephen died.

Be a Stephen

You will probably never be killed for following Jesus. But you may be mocked or laughed at. Be a Stephen. Be strong and brave in the face of those who make fun of you. When others want you to do things you know you shouldn't do, be a Stephen. Like he did with Stephen, Jesus will give you strength to stand your ground, to stand up for what you believe in. You just have to ask and trust him.

Read the Whole Story: Acts 6:8—8:3

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B



1256

Acts

SAUL/PAUL

Go! I have chosen this man to work for me. He will announce my name to the Gentiles and to their kings. He will also announce my name to the people of Israel.

ACTS 9:15

Saul hurried down the road. He was on his way to Damascus to put some Christians in jail. Saul hated the Christians. They turned everything he knew about God upside-down. *They are wrong, wrong, wrong!* Saul thought to himself.

Suddenly a blinding light flashed around Saul. He fell down with his face in the dirt road. He quickly covered his ears with his hands as a voice from above thundered, “Saul, Saul, what are you doing? Why are you trying to hurt those who follow me?” *Who is calling my name?* Saul wondered with terror. He then managed to whisper this question out loud. The roar of the voice pressed down again on Saul. “I am Jesus. Get up and go into the city. Someone there will tell you what to do.”

When the voice stopped, the silence seemed almost as loud. Saul lay in the road, his ears ringing, unable to move for several minutes. Then slowly he got to his feet and opened his eyes to find the others traveling with him. But he couldn’t see them. It had been so bright when the voice was booming. Now it was so dark—he was blind!

Saul’s frightened friends led him into the city. They too had heard the voice and knew what Saul was supposed to do. After three days, God sent a man named Ananias to Saul. Ananias believed in Jesus. Saul had a bad reputation for hurting and killing Christians. But Ananias trusted that God would keep him safe.

“Saul,” he said, “you have seen Jesus! He has work for you to do. Get up and begin!” Saul began to blink. His eyes itched and soon something like scales fell from each one. He could see again! And he knew what he had to do. Immediately he was baptized. He no longer hated Christians. He became one himself.

Be a Saul

Saul hated Christians. You don’t want to be like that. But Saul immediately followed Jesus when he discovered the truth. Whenever you learn something new, something exciting about God, be like Saul. Follow God and obey him wherever you are.

Read the Whole Story: Acts 9:1–31

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