
PODCAST START:

Brian: Welcome to the Queer Theology podcast!

Fr. Shay: Where each episode, we take a queer look at the week's lectionary readings. We're the co-founders of QueerTheology.com and the hosts for this podcast. I'm Father Shay Kearns

B: And I'm Brian G. Murphy.

B: Hello, hello, hello. Today is Sunday, August 18th we are going to take a look at Hebrews 11:29-12:2 I will read it to you now.

By faith they crossed the Red Sea as if they were on dry land, but when the Egyptians tried it, they were drowned.

By faith Jericho's walls fell after the people marched around them for seven days.

By faith Rahab the prostitute wasn't killed with the disobedient because she welcomed the spies in peace.

What more can I say? I would run out of time if I told you about Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel, and the prophets. Through faith they conquered kingdoms, brought about justice, realized promises, shut the mouths of lions, put out raging fires, escaped from the edge of the sword, found strength in weakness, were mighty in war, and routed foreign armies. Women received back their dead by resurrection. Others were tortured and refused to be released so they could gain a better resurrection.

But others experienced public shame by being taunted and whipped; they were even put in chains and in prison. They were stoned to death, they were cut in two, and they died by being murdered with swords. They went around wearing the skins of sheep and goats, needy, oppressed, and mistreated. The world didn't deserve them. They wandered around in deserts, mountains, caves, and holes in the ground.

All these people didn't receive what was promised, though they were given approval for their faith. God provided something better for us so they wouldn't be made perfect without us.

So then, with endurance, let's also run the race that is laid out in front of us, since we have such a great cloud of witnesses surrounding us. Let's throw off any extra baggage, get rid of the sin that trips us up, and fix our eyes on Jesus, faith's pioneer and perfecter. He endured the cross, ignoring the shame, for the sake of the joy that was laid out in front of him, and sat down at the right side of God's throne.

B: Shay, there's a lot of stuff in here. Where do we begin to make sense of this passage?

FS: I mean one of the things that sticks out to me first off is this way that the author of this passage is reinterpreting their own texts and stories for a new context and a new community. By telling all of these older stories, the author is saying, "Look! This is our tradition, this is what we are part of, this is what we are doing, and this is how we can change it and understand it now and continue at forward." This idea that scripture tells only one story is really false. In here, we have this narrative of how these things get repackaged and reframed and retaught. I think that that's what we're still doing today, and it's really important that we use this as an instructive way of how to read scripture, through scripture. That's the first thing that sticks out to me, what about you?

B: What I notice in this passage is that, some churches that I've been to, the idea that you needed Jesus and the Christian writings in order to really understand the Hebrew bible. That almost the New Testament is like this secret key that unlocks the hidden meaning of the Hebrew scriptures. Even like Jonah and the whale being about Jesus and all of this stuff. But what I'm realizing is that this passage makes clear is that actually you need the Hebrew scriptures in order to understand the Christian ones. You need to understand the captivity of the Hebrew people, and their escape, and exile. You need to understand all of these about Jericho and Rahab, this forms the foundation of what the Christian authors are talking about. Then, they take it a step forward and repackag it and make new meaning out of it. But if you don't understand the foundation, you're not going to get sturdy walls, my guess is. What I would say. There's this need to not just take everything at face value and think like, "I can just flip open to any page of the bible and read it, and that's all that i need to know in order to understand this." Or that being alive is all that you need to do to make sense of this ancient text.

FS: Yeah. And we're gonna be launching a course really soon here about how to read the bible and how to really understand it. You know, I went to seminary and spent years, and years, and years studying the scripture. I think that that was a fantastic experience and also, I think that there's a lot of things that you can learn by being in community with other people. By dipping into resources that exist, and dipping into the resources that we are going to provide. That will help you get a really much sense of how to read the bible even without going to seminary. So we are super excited to be launching that course really soon.

B: Yeah. So if you're interested in that, you can hop on the waitlist, be the first to find out about it at queertheology.com/biblewaitlist. And Shay, can you just give us one example, from this passage, what you might learn in this course would help you understand this passage a little bit better.

FS: I mean, you were talking earlier about needing to understand like exile. I think that that's one of the big things that we're gonna talk about in this course about how the political experiences of the Hebrew people, and also of the early Jesus followers. The historical context that they were living in drastically shaped their understanding of themselves, of their communities, of their approach to the divine. You have to understand those historical realities in

order to really get at some of the things that people are talking about. So when we talk about Jericho or the time of the prophets, you really have to understand what's happening historically and politically in those times to understand the spiritual implications.

B: So I'm super excited that that course is starting very soon. Again, you can find out more and be the first to find out how to sign up at queertheology.com/biblewaitlist.

[outro music plays]

B: The Queer Theology podcast is just one of many things that we do at QueerTheology.com which provides resources, community, and inspiration for LGBTQ Christians and straight cisgender supporters.

FS: To dive into more of the action, visit us at QueerTheology.com. You can also connect with us online: on Facebook, Tumbler, Twitter, and Instagram.

B: We'll see you next week.

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