

Wow! I do not want to try to be too precise, but it is going on seventy years ago that Walt Disney brought Davy Crockett so prominently into public view, though history had recognized him for years.

And if you were not around when Disney's version of Crockett first hit, you might never have heard the song, "Born on a mountain top in Tennessee, Greenest state in the land of the free. Raised in the woods so he knew every tree, killed him a b'ar, when he was only three!"

How a three year-old Davy Crockett would have killed a "b'ar" a *bear*, the song did not say, but the Disney series on Crockett ended at the Alamo, that famous battle at which Crockett was apparently among those killed, but that was after a career that included a stint in the US House of Representatives.

Crockett was a real person, but the legend, the folklore about him plays a role in our memory of him. Today I want to compare how we talk about Davy — born "David" — Crockett with how we talk about a different David, the second and last and highly idealized king of the United Kingdom of Israel and Judah, the young fellow we have encountered in our Hebrew Bible readings these past two weeks. I do not want to use the word "myth" about Davy Crockett to avoid getting into discussions of how *myth does not necessarily mean fiction*.

So there was indeed a real person, Davy Crockett, a hero of sorts around whom *folklore* and *legend* came to embellish our image of him.

Until about thirty years ago there were definite and legitimate doubts among scholars and stories about the other David, King David, whether there was merely a fairly elaborate *myth* in which he figured prominently, but about thirty years ago, some archaeological evidence was found— a coin in particular — to support that there was indeed a real person, King David.

Despite the increasing Biblical *illiteracy* of much of society, the story of David and Goliath, I would suspect, is still reasonably well known, but because I want to compare Davy Crockett to this other David for whom the legend seems almost as important as the fact, I'll stay away from the word, *myth*, and say this:

There was indeed a King David, but whether the story of this fellow Goliath is legend and folklore — like the story of three-year-old Davy's killing a bear — or history, well . . . and before anyone starts heresy proceedings against me, give me some time to expand.

One thing we know from the history of the world is that the ancient land on which were established the kingdoms of Israel and Judah saw numerous conquering efforts, a number of which were successful, conquering efforts by powers such as Egypt and later by Assyria and Babylon and Macedonia and so on, and we know as well, which is to say, the Bible tells us, that the ancient Hebrews themselves did not enter an uninhabited land but occupied it after fighting conquering battles against others who wished to retain — or themselves establish — occupancy.

A result of all this warfare was that Israel and Judah did have to fight against other powers, and, importantly, so far as we know and are told, did have to fight against stronger and better armed powers with more numerous soldiers at their — the opponents' — service.

So the people of Judah and Israel needed reason to believe that they could prevail against powers bigger and apparently stronger than themselves. The people of Israel and Judah needed to know that despite not being the most populous or most powerful, most belligerent, of nations, they could prevail.

And what better way to tell them that they could win than to appeal to their “history,” or at least to their *folklore*, of how a Hebrew boy slew an enemy giant.

It was not a bear, but a giant this David killed, or at least hearing that he had done so could serve as *reassurance*, as a battle or rallying cry, to help the Hebrews of Israel and Judah defeat their enemies. ‘If David could do it . . .’ or as the second part of today’s 1 Samuel reading suggests, “If David is on our side, we can do it.”

I am not saying that the story of David and Goliath is simply legend and folklore, but it could be, and if it is, it is folklore that was told to serve a purpose, dare I say, *God’s purpose*, to provide *reassurance* that God had been and God will be on the side of this not-all-that-powerful a collection of tribes.

The tale of David’s victory over Goliath gave reassurance; the success of the Davy Crockett of Judah, as I might call him, against the giant Goliath was reassurance that the God of Israel would not abandon Israel and Judah just as that same God had not abandoned David; the God of Israel would not abandon them *even in the face of powerful enemies*.

*Reassurance.*

Our Gospel reading today, and there are other versions of essentially the same story, in one of which Jesus walks across the water, our Gospel reading today is, I believe, *not* a story about a miracle, about the water’s obeying Jesus, but a story of *reassurance*.

Put differently, as I also say about the story in which Jesus walks on water, I ask you this question: *Is this a story about Jesus’ calming a storm 2000 years ago, or is it a story about how Jesus is here, Now, when we need Him, in the stormy waters of our personal lives?*

Like the story of Davy Crockett and the bear — oops, David and Goliath — the Gospel story is a story about reassurance, reassurance that we are not alone when there are troubled waters — gad, I feel like I should be Paul Simon or Art Garfunkel about now —

we are not alone when there are troubled waters all around us, for Jesus is there — here — with us.

And to put it short — which this message today is — and sweet, if that is your thing, *that* Jesus is here with us when we need Him is the “Good News” I have to offer. 3000 years ago, even 2000 years ago, the people of Judah needed some reassurance as they faced hostility after hostility, occupation after occupation, and the remembrance that they were a people whose leader had slain a giant, even if folklore, provided some of just that.

People probably did not and do not need but certainly took and take comfort from the stories of heroes such as Davy Crocket.

But in point of fact, heroes, whether they kill giants or b’ars, while we seem to lack them, are not what we truly need, today. Today, we know that human heroes are, well, only human, not merely prone to sin, but prone to the same weaknesses to which we are prone, prone to the same mental and psychological challenges as are we.

Heroes are not what we need to help us to deal with these challenges, with the ups and downs, the uncertainties, the occasional loneliness we feel as we encounter, well, as we encounter those troubled waters.

We do not need Davy Crockett; we do not need King David. It is not bears nor giants that cause us trouble. Neither of these David’s provides us what we need. Jesus does. We can call on Him to calm *our* storms, to still *our* troubled waters.

Jesus, the same Jesus who died on our behalf lives to help us. Call on Him; He won’t disappoint.

In His name. Amen.