

# How strong is your faith religion essay



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Biblical character Job placed much faith in his lord. He kept his faith despite some of the harshest of circumstances. Job had immense resources that provided for him and his family until Satan challenged God to a test of Job's faith. It was then that great tragedy befell Job and his family. Further testing his faith, God disfigured Job's face by giving him welts. Through this entire calamity, Job's faith grew even stronger, proving Satan wrong. God then replaced Job's health, job, land, and even provided with him a better wife. Confused, Job wondered why he experienced such a dramatic rollercoaster of life. Job asked God " why did this all happen?", and God replied: ..." Because I'm God". That's was all the answer he needed.

God can easily take back everything that he created at any time, which causes man to fear God. People of the purest faith realize this and repay God with a lifetime of homage and servitude. This is usually the key behind all religions were there's a God. For example, in the Hindu faith they have a God in which goes by the name of Shiva, believed to be the " restorer and destroyer of worlds", which gives Shiva the persona of being one of the most temperamental gods of any faith. Shiva has the power to destroy the world on a simple whim. To prove his power, Shiva once cut his own son's head and replaced it with an Elephant's head. Once there was a story of a man whom desired power more than anything in the world. He had to obtain sacred weapons from

Craig Peitz How strong is your faith? Page3

which were created by Shiva. Through deep meditation that went on till he clouded the heavens that eventually angered Shiva. Shiva then challenged

the man to a battle, in which he was easily conquered. Shiva was still impressed by the will and determination of this man, so Shiva ended providing him with the weapons that he desired so much. Shiva requires the type of faith that is strong enough that man would even challenge God himself, which would make him the ideal Hindu.

Religion is a part of everyone's life; throughout history, in art, in music, and especially in literature. It's something that could even be traced back to man's earliest presence in this world. Some people's faith extends further than others, but does this really matter? When comparing the stories of Job and Jonah, faith seems to no make a difference to God. Job being someone who had strong, pure, and unfaltering faith, and on the other hand, Jonah had such faltering faith. Yet Job was punished when God tested his faith, and at the same time Jonah just fled from God, and yet he was forgiven. Faith seems not to really matter to God in the long run. Between these stories' it seems that the good man ends up getting screwed in the end, while the bad guy seems to be rewarded. With that being said, doe's one man who truly worships God and pure end up weighing more in the eyes of God than an apathetic Hindu?

Man having the need to believe that there is something out there that might superior to him with some type of explanation for our presence on this world. God having such an unimaginable popularity to mankind makes him necessary to mankind, definitely having lasted this long. We want to believe and find something that proves there is something more than just a void when it's all over. Subconsciously, we even realize there actually was no God, and no afterlife, there would be no consequences, and the basic

goodness within man would come to a fault which would take away from us maintaining the little order we have, and would promote chaos all around.

Craig Peitz How strong is your faith? Page4

The amazing part of our world is that everyone has unique gifts, skills, and abilities. One man may end up as smart as Albert Einstein with a body like the Hulk, and his brother would have the mind of the Rain-Man and the body of Moby Dick. God seems to reward us in a variety of ways. Some of us are blessed spiritually, some physically, some mentally, when some are all rounded. Rewards could be proportional to faith. A man with wealth may be a strong believer, while a man with nothing may be a blasphemer. But there might be no connection between the amount of faith you have and how you're rewarded. This would make it much easier to believe, when some of the wealthiest people out there are usually sinful or have their hands something that is. People who believe might not be any better off than people who don't believe. But there's a question that still remains; is religion actually good or bad? In Moby Dick, questions of faith, reward, and reason, floats about subliminally in the lives and fates of all the players.

The Pulpit:

“ At my first glimpse of the pulpit, it had not escaped me

that however convenient for a ship, these joints in

the present instance seemed unnecessary. For I was not prepared

to see Father Mapple after gaining the height, slowly turn

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around, and stooping over the pulpit, deliberately drag up the ladder step by step, till the whole was deposited within, leaving him impregnable in his little Quebec.”

Things like isolation, and alienation could end up being the result of strong faith. This causes you to be set apart from the crowd, making you an outcast. Father Mapple being one of the truest believers in this novel

Craig Peitz How strong is your faith? Page5

sets himself up at a distant, higher, and more protected place. Mapple believes he is a direct messenger from God. In this chapter The Pulpit is built unlike any other. According to Mapple’s specifications, it was extremely tall with a long rope ladder leading to his platform; this setup was very similar to boarding a vessel. Once Mapple withdraws the ladder, he goes to an isolated world of his own, taking him away from the city where he’s an extremely popular whale man. He feels to have such a necessity of going away to an isolated island away from the real world so then he can communicate with God. Being on a nearly empty, isolated ship seems to be all that’s left of his religion. This can be taken to mean that while Mapple is alone on his vessel and silence is surrounding him, he must climb up the simple ladder toward heaven in order to escape the land of the sinners so he can communicate God’s word. He then pulls up the ladder to prevent any distractions, visitors, or invaders. Usually a real vessel would be set off to sea, which spiritually Mapple has to do. He then stands up high, looking down on the congregation, he feels he is superior. He has a painting at the

foot of the Pulpit of this ship fighting off a colossal storm, and through the clouds is an Angel that is creating light to guide the lonely vessel home. The vessel in the painting is also the same as the vessel represented by the Pulpit and Mapple is at the Helm. Now at the top of the Pulpit is a podium where Mapple reads his bible. His bible in which guides his ship through the storms of evil. Now the resemblance of all this is that religion represents this lonely vessel, which must break through these storms of evil before the world can be holy, and Mapple is the only crewmember on this vessel, who represents mankind.

Religion is being a lonely vessel, and man stays alone on this vessel. The tale from Coleridge, “ The Rime of the Ancient Mariner” further expresses this solitude. The mariner, who was a man that was cursed to walk the earth, telling his tale to those that he felt were fit.

Craig Peitz How strong is your faith? Page6

Rhyme of the Ancient Mariner:

“ I pass, like night, from land to land;

I have strange power of speech

the moment that his face I see

I know the man that must hear me;

to him my tale I teach”

It was tale of a seaman whose crew had encountered some grilling times during their voyage. They discovered salvation in a special Albatross that helped guide their path with swift wind to clear their passage. Once they were out in the clear, they witnessed that there blessed creature was killed by the mariner. In an instant the situation deteriorated and all two-hundred crew members suddenly dropped dead, with the mariner left all alone in the freezing, stormy weather. Once repented, the vessel was guided by all the ghosts of his crew members to an old hermit who sent him on a solitary quest. The quest he was sent on was for him to spend the rest of his life traveling the world, while telling his tale to all he felt fit. This could very well be Elijah's predicament in (Moby-Dick), someone who appears to be an old insane bum that won't stop trailing Ishmael and Queequeg. It all started when the Pequod's papers were signed and that moment Ishmael and Queequeg have in effect signed their souls away. He moved on talking of a prophecy concerning Ahab's fate. Ishmael saw him as a senile fool, but Elijah has a purpose, he is a prophet. He brought about a sense of pessimism before the journey ever started. He was much like the Ancient Mariner in that he was damned to eternity of prophecy and warning. This is a warning that concerns a mistake which will lie ahead on their hunt. To the mariner, the Albatross is hunted despite the fact that it was their salvation sent by god. Elijah might be warning the deaf Ishmael that Moby Dick is actually the Albatross that was sent from god. In any case, Elijah's fate was sealed

Craig Peitz How strong is your faith? Page7

forcing him into a life of solitude. He definitely is a true believer, a prophet, and perhaps even some incarnation of God. Once again someone's faith leads them to solitude.

Elijah's life may just be the ending to Jonah's story. After Jonah repented he was forgiven and reborn as a prophet. As a prophet or even a direct servant of god, his journey will end up being a solitary one; he will have to fend for himself much like Elijah was. Everyone seems to look upon Elijah with suspicion and ridicule, but this comes with the territory. Although Jonah's story never really ended, his fate was still written in stone, and Elijah's life is that fate. Faith destines him to live a life of solitude.

Just like Elijah and Jonah, Ishmael is also left to a fate of spreading his tales to those he felt fit. He is the mariner, in which his voyage killed the albatross and he ended up paying the full price left alone in an empty ocean with nothing but a coffin as a life buoy. In all likelihood, God did not allow Ishmael to just shake it off and move on. This tragedy will end up consuming him for the rest of his life, and this cycle will never end because there will always be another Ishmael and his Pequods.

Starbuck on the other hand, is one of the most faithful Christians on the Pequod. He is actually the voice of reason out of the whole crew and always maintains his faith while the majority of the crew ends up disregarding it. Like so many others, his religious faith ends up leading him to solitude. Now in 'The Quarter-deck', Ahab actually describes his experiences with Moby Dick and then announces the goal of his mission, and the entire crew becomes truly excited in which they all end up going along on his insane



quest. Through all of this, Starbuck ended up being the only crew member to realize that Ahab had actually changed and became obsessive after this incident.

Craig Peitz How strong is your faith? Page8

The Quarter-deck:

“ Vengeance on a dumb brute!” cried Starbuck, “ that simply smote thee from blindest instinct! Madness!

To be enraged with a dumb thing, Captain Ahab, seems blasphemous.”

Even from the beginning, Starbuck's faith isolated him from the rest, he could have easily decided to follow the crew, but that would falter his faith. He realizes he is completely different from the rest of the crew. He refused to drink sinfully with the rest, due to the crazed and absurd quest of Ahab. Ishmael described the whole crew as being detestable, but Starbuck is actually the ideal man; maybe even God's blueprint. Now this is quite a difference. Yet the only factor that separates Starbuck from the whole crew is his faith, but his beliefs end up isolating him from the crew. His faith is truly pure but eventually it ends up faltering. He soon realizes that Ahab's obsession has been growing with each passing day and eventually it will kill them all. At point Ahab actually threatens Starbuck's life with a musket over a difference of opinions. Starbuck ends up obtaining the musket and is forced to make a decision between his faith and justice. Starbuck being a

man of faith knew that no matter the outcome, it will always end up being God's will.

A difference of faiths caused Queequeg to be alienated from the crew. Queequeg was a prince who came from the island of Kokovoko. Over time he developed an interest with Christianity and later ended up finding himself onboard an English whaling vessel. Although he did attempt to be assimilated into Christian society, but he eventually lost interest and ended up returning back to his own faith. The only thing truly learned were just the skills of whaling. Felling like Christianity had actually made him less than pure he decided not return to his Island to claim his throne. Even though he was greatly respected by the crew, they isolated him for his unique

Craig Peitz How strong is your faith? Page9

faith and culture. During Queequeg's Ramadan, he was in a deep meditation didn't move for a full day while worshipping his God. Ishmael had never seen anyone do anything like this before, so to get Queequeg's attention he tried his hardest to knock down the door.

Ishmael- The Ramadan:

" I then went on, beginning with the rise and progress

of the primitive religions and coming down to the

various religions of the present time, during which time

I labored to show Queequeg that all these Lents, Ramadans,

and prolonged ham-squatting's in cold, cheerless rooms were stark nonsense; bad for the health; useless for the soul; opposed, in short, to the obvious laws of Hygiene and common sense. I told him, too, that he being in other things such as an extremely sensible and sagacious savage, it pained me, very badly pained me, to see him now so deplorably foolish about this ridiculous Ramadan of his."

Ishmael being the fool tries his hardest to cover it by mocking Queequeg's god. He questions what kind of savage religion would require your loyalty and discipline. In comparison to other faiths Ishmael's negative reaction indicates the lack of respect Christianity has for their God. Now Queequeg is definitely not the inferior one in this case. It seems that Ishmael's faith may be so weak and insecure that he feels he must convert and condemn every "savage" he sees. Even though he says that Christianity has "progressed," it seems he may very

Craig Peitz How strong is your faith? Page10

well may be using a different dictionary than the rest of the world. Unless "progressed" actually means to be declined to such an extent that a faithful Christian and a prophet are considered freaks and are shunned and isolated from the world. Ishmael's prayers to Yojo showed that he himself believes

that Queequeg's faith is inferior to his. Ishmael and Queequeg underwent a pagan ritual, smoking to the doll, in order to confirm their marriage.

Ishmael -A Bosom Friend:

“ I was a good Christian; born and bred in the bosom of the infallible Presbyterian Church. How then could I unite with this wild idolater in worshipping his piece of wood? But what is worship? , thought I. Do you suppose now, Ishmael, that the magnanimous God of heaven and earth- pagans and all included-can be possibly be jealous of an insignificant bit of black wood? Impossible!”

Ishmael is in denial and doesn't realize it. He has troubles excepting that the Christian's God and Queequeg's God are the same being but in different forms. His faith is not strong enough to see the idol as nothing more than just a piece of wood. This is exactly where the relationship starts to have problems. Ishmael feels church is “ infallible” and lacks any solid proof. He feels this was due to it being forced and installed into him his whole life. On the other hand, Queequeg has spent ample amount of time worshipping his God to where he truly believes. Ishmael being so close-minded, he refuses to accept that Queequeg's faith as anything

Craig Peitz How strong is your faith? Page11

more than inferior, therefore making him more isolated from Ishmael than a normal from what “ Christian” standards of friendship are. In other words, Queequeg’s faith makes Ishmael see him more as a pet than a friend.

Queequeg is much like the character that goes by the name of” John the savage” from Huxley’s “ Brave New World”. John was raised away from new civilization, therefore he the opportunity to have his own opinions, ideas, and ideals. Now on the other hand, everybody that lives in this new society were brain washed from when they were children in order to fit into their assigned classes. Just like Ishmael and the Christians, they were raised believed that everything that they thought they knew was infallible. They believed in their somas, a drug, as a means to escape from their reality, while John knows that the somas were only just a diversion. They believed that the Feelies, a form of entertainment, was the only form of art, while john knew that was wrong for a fact. He was well aware of literature, poetry, and Shakespeare. John was very open-minded because he wasn’t like everyone else, a brainwashed conformist. So do you think if Ishmael would have become more open if he wasn’t raised by the church?

Queequeg was discriminated against by everyone, because of his faith when he first boarded the ship. There is one criterion for working aboard the Pequod, it was that you were a Christian. It didn’t matter if you were a Killer, thief, or even an overall scum. All types were welcome with open arms as long as you were Christian. On the other hand, Queequeg must prove himself to everyone before he can work with them. It took a very dramatic experience for Queequeg in order to prove his worth to the crew. This all occurred when a foolish man who ridiculed Queequeg was knocked

overboard due to a loose post that knocked him into the ocean. Queequeg immediately dove into the icy water without any hesitation at all in order to save this man, and he succeeded. Since his beliefs differed from the others, he was required prove himself to his shipmates even though it wasn't necessary for others, Christians, to do so. Unfortunately Queequeg's faith separated him from

Craig Peitz How strong is your faith? Page12

his shipmates. In a way it seems Christianity really screwed Queequeg over. He was completely rejected by the others, even though his interests in Christianity lead him to leave his people. He was driven away from Christianity from all the corruption that came with it. Since his purity was tainted by Christianity, it made him unworthy to be able to return home and claim his throne.

So far the strong faith that was in the lives of these mentioned believers has not yet been a positive factor in their lives. We have Job who endured a humiliating test by the God he loved. Then there's Mapple who felt that in order to communicate with God he had to be isolated upon a pulpit. Then we have Elijah, the mariner, who preach the word of God to everyone he saw even though they deemed him a humbug. Now we can't forget about Queequeg who was discriminated against by everyone, even his own tribe, just because he was involved in two faiths. These stories make it seem like there is no advantage to having any faith at all. In fact, in the long run no matter whom they were and how strong their faith was, the entire crew ended up having the same fate: a watery death. All except for Ishmael, who

was supposedly left to live his life as prophet spreading the word of God? The only affect religion seemed to actually have on these lives, was nothing more than pain and isolation. No one was rewarded nor did they receive any advantages just for loving God. In which seemed to have the opposite effect for the non-believers, they had a clear advantage to not having any religion at all.

A life spent without religion is a life spent with leisure. The second mate of the Pequod was Stubb, and he was the complete opposite of Starbuck. Starbuck started this voyage to earn a living, in which Stubb just joined for the thrill of the hunt. Through this entire voyage, Stubb really enjoyed himself. His days are now worried free. His supper is one example of his impertinence and carefree attitude. He and the black cook,

Craig Peitz How strong is your faith? Page13

Fleece, have a conversation that leads to questions about death. Stubb asks Fleece where he plans on going after his death, and Fleece just subtly points up. Which was quite funny since Stubb didn't understand this so he told Fleece that we definitely don't need a corpse just hanging from their masthead.

Stubb -Stubb's Supper:

" You said up there, didn't you? And now look at yourself, and see where your tongs are pointing. But, perhaps you expect to get into

heaven crawling through the lubber's hole,

cook; but, no, no, cook, you don't get

there, except you go the regular way, round

by the rigging. It's a ticklish business, but must

be done, or else it's no go. None of us

are in heaven yet."

He might have some belief in heaven, but it's definitely in a very distant corner of his mind. He lives his life without worry of heaven at least until the last possible moment. He thinks faith is nothing but useless, he's a non-believer. He asks Fleece how he intends to get into heaven since it seems the effort is more trouble than it is actually worth. On the other hand, the "regular way" in Stubb's mind involves a Starbuck-type loyalty, which he doesn't want to give. When he says "none of us are in heaven yet" he is basically saying: why bother? There is no proof and no live person can be sure that heaven even exists until they die. Therefore, his life is full of enjoyment having no religion, and yet he shares the same fate of "God's blueprint." Starbuck doesn't consider or

Craig Peitz How strong is your faith? Page14

fear death at all, and this is how he lives without any worries, superstitions.

One example Ishmael give for Stubb's lack of religion and faith, is his pipe. It was described as a part of his face, he thought of it to be some kind of "disinfectant" that would protect him from God's wrath. Ishmael doesn't want

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to believe that there will be no consequences for your decisions in life. Yet some having no religious conviction at all easily lives his life freely, unlike most other Christians. I feel we all have the opportunity to make our own “Blue Prints” of life regardless of our beliefs and or faith. The only things that all humans have in common is suffering, which brings us together, but yet we all are destined to the fate of death some just sooner than others.

These two monolithic figures from literary history lived two very similar lives despite their differences in faith and styles of coping. Both were beset by great tragedy, and endured in their own way. Perhaps there is something to be said of the captain’s demise when compared to Job’s perseverance, but a faith in something greater is what bound them together.