

GOD'S PRESENCE OUR VICTORY

JACKIE OESCH

THE BOOKS OF JOSHUA AND JUDGES

LESSON 1: *BE BOLD AND COURAGEOUS* – NEW LEADERSHIP

LESSON 2: *I HAVE GIVEN JERICHO INTO YOUR HAND* – JERICHO

LESSON 3: *THE LORD GOD FOUGHT FOR ISRAEL* – CONQUEST OF THE LAND

LESSON 4: *THE PEOPLE DID WHAT WAS EVIL* – TIME OF THE JUDGES

LESSON 5: *YOU SHALL CONCEIVE AND BEAR A SON* – A NAZIRITE

LESSON 6: *THE LORD HAD LEFT HIM* – SAMSON AND DELILAH

“...I have stored up your word in my heart...”

Psalm 119:11

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GETTING STARTED

You are embarking on an adventure that will shape the rest of your life. Your journey will be unique to you and will be determined in part by your eager and enthusiastic desire to grow in your understanding of the Book called The Holy Bible. Your commitment to the study promises to enrich your life as God speaks to you through His Word.

As you study you are encouraged to have some recommended supplies on hand:

1. This Bible study unit: *God's Presence, Our Victory*
2. English Standard Version of the Holy Bible (ESV). Note: If you are making a new purchase, look for a Bible, if possible, that has:
 - a. a cross-reference column preferably down the center of each page,
 - b. a Concordance usually found in the back of the Bible, and
 - c. a few basic maps also found in the back.
3. Pen or pencil
4. 3x5 or 4x6 index cards

With the three features listed in #2 you will adequately supplied for your study and be ready to successfully navigate through these lessons. If, however, this is your first exposure to the Bible, you may want to consider beginning with the study entitled *Navigating the Bible*. This study provides navigational tools designed to help you develop skills and make you a more confident Bible student. *Navigating the Bible* may be downloaded at no cost or obligation on the CrossConnect web site at www.crosscm.org. Although this study is recommended, it is not essential for success in studying *God's Presence, Our Victory*.

Do not hesitate to mark up your Bible. It's your Bible to study. Make it your own with your notes, your underlining, highlighting, circling and arrows! You may choose to use a notebook or tablet for recording thoughts, questions, and tracking your journey through the study.

The study material is written so that you are able to learn on your own. With a degree of self-discipline you will cover the material with little or no difficulty. At the same time, you will acquire new information, share new insights, and ask some challenging questions that will beg for answers. Anticipating this response you are encouraged to seriously consider inviting a couple of friends to study with you.

May you find joy in your study. May your heart be receptive as God speaks to you through His Word. May these Bible stories reassure you of His great love given to you through His Son Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior.

Editor's note: For clarification, capitalized pronouns reference God. i.e. "...what He said.

UNIT INTRODUCTION

Israel has finally arrived at the gateway to the Promised Land. The journey has been long and difficult. Family and friends have died along the way. A new generation has been born, a generation that never knew its forefathers. They weren't in the caravan going into Egypt to buy food from Pharaoh nor were they in the mass that fled Egypt after the plague of death had killed the firstborn sons of the Egyptians but passed over the homes of their ancestors.

Moses had been the only leader they knew and now he was dead. Joshua had been appointed his successor and now awaits the Lord's direction to cross the Jordan River into the land that he had given to them in the covenant He made with Abraham. Time has passed. People have come and gone. Leaders have died and new ones appointed. But throughout the centuries, regardless of the time, the God of Israel did not change. He remembered his covenant promise to deliver Israel from the Egyptians and give to them the land flowing with milk and honey.

This unit of study entitled *God's Presence, Our Victory* will introduce you to characters and events in Israel's history that enabled the Israelites to take possession of the land that God had given to them. The study will also reveal the consequences of their disobedience when they failed to take complete possession and rid the land of all other people. The Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, and all the other "ites" were to be annihilated. Their failure to obey this command brought other gods, idols made of wood and stone, into the culture and environment of God's people. The Book of Judges paints a disturbing picture of Israel during this period of their history.

You will be challenged with reflective time and encouraged to find ways in which these stories have application in your own life as you live in this 21st Century. You may ask: How can stories that happened thousands of years ago have any relevance for my life? Be open as the Spirit of the Lord comes on you with His power. May you be open to receive His message of truth believing that He will never leave or forsake you and with His presence with you, you will never need fear the battles of life but will find your victory in Him and Him alone.

LESSON ONE

BE BOLD AND COURAGEOUS

JOSHUA 1-3 – NEW LEADERSHIP

OVERVIEW OF LESSON 1

Overview	5
Introduction	6
Lesson 1: Joshua 1-3	
• God’s Promise for Israel’s New Leader	7
• Two Spies on a Mission	9
• Meet Rahab	10
• Ark of the Covenant	11
• God’s People Living in Community	12

INTRODUCTION

A good leader is one who follows well. Joshua was a good leader who listened to the instruction of the Lord and followed His commands. This was a very unstable time in Israel's history. They not only have a new leader but they have a new land to conquer and possess. This land was God's promised inheritance to Abraham hundreds of years before.

As you study Lesson One watch for the words of exhortation the Lord shares with Joshua and the words which the Israelites use to communicate their support and encouragement to their new leader. These words demonstrated the character of God as His people put their faith and trust in Him who promised His presence to be with them wherever they went.

Watch God's amazing victory over the city of Jericho and observe the preparation of the people for their victory. Observe Rahab's display of faith as she sheltered the spies. Use colored pencils and mark words and phrases used repeatedly to alert each of us to the spiritual condition of the people. And, finally, use your creativity and imagine yourself as these different characters. Then consider how your response to your given situation might reflect the character of God?

Part 1

INTRODUCTION: Joshua is Israel’s new leader. For forty years Moses had led the people through the wilderness. Now his aide had the position and all the responsibility for leading this great multitude into the land God had promised to their forefathers. The promise God had made hundreds of years ago was to become a reality for these people, descendants that never new Abraham, Isaac, or Jacob. These patriarchs believed the promise of God and their descendants were about to receive the fulfillment of that promise.

Finally, after all the years of wandering in the wilderness the people arrived at the entrance to this land. They were eager to cross the Jordan River and enter the land that was occupied by many different kings and their people—the Hittites, Canaanites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites; however, taking possession of the land would mean war! Battles would rage; blood would be shed, lives would be lost and yet victory would belong to Israel as one kingdom after another would be destroyed.

ASSIGNMENT: Read Joshua 1. Watch for these four points:

- The borders of the land
- The promise of God to Joshua
- The words of encouragement repeated in this chapter
- The response of the people to Joshua’s orders

EXERCISE: What did you discover?

1. What borders defined the Promised Land (verse 4)?
 - a. To the south? _____
 - b. To the north? _____
 - c. To the east? _____
 - d. To the west? _____
2. What was God’s promise to Joshua (verse 5a)? _____

3. Why would no one be able to stand up against Joshua? Was it because there were so many Israelites? Was it because of their strength? Was it because they had the latest weapons of war? The answer is in God’s promise. What was His promise (verse 5b)? _____

4. What words are repeated four times in this chapter? _____

Use a colored pencil or marker and highlight these words.

- a. Why does the Lord use these words in verse 6? _____

 - b. He uses them again in verse 7. Where is Joshua to use strength and courage according to verses 7 and 8? _____
 - c. In verse 9 the Lord commands Joshua to be _____ and _____
What are the antonyms? _____ and _____
Why was there no place for fear and discouragement? _____

5. In verses 10 and 11 Joshua gives his first instruction to the people. What is their response in verses 16-18?
- a. Whatever you *command* we will _____
 - b. Wherever you *send* us we will _____
 - c. Just as we *obeyed* Moses we will _____
6. What was their prayer of blessing in verse 17b? _____
7. According to verse 18a rebellion and disobedience against Joshua's leadership would be punished by _____
8. What were the words of encouragement they gave to their leader (verse 18b)? _____

REFLECTION: Take a moment to reflect on what is happening in this chapter. Generations have lived and died since the Lord first promised this land to Abraham and his descendants. Abraham, his son Isaac, and grandson Jacob have all died. Joseph, the great leader in Egypt and all of his brothers are dead and God's promise has been passed to their children. Then after all the years in Egypt and the oppressive years under Pharaoh's bondage God raised up Moses to lead them out of Egypt. Forty years they wandered in the desert while another generation of Israelites died along the way. And now, even Moses is dead.

Yet God has not changed. The promise He made is the promise that he will keep. He provided the leadership and His abiding presence. As God was with Abraham and Moses He now promises to be with Joshua and His people. The ones to whom He made the promise were not present to give witness to its fulfillment, nevertheless, God was faithful and kept His word. God didn't age. God didn't forget. God didn't change His mind. He was faithful to His promise. Its fulfillment was not based on Israel's behavior or on their faithfulness to Him. His goodness to them was based on who He is. As Israel could rely on His Word to be true, so can we thousands of years later rely on His Word as Truth.

APPLICATION: “Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.”

1. Believing God’s Word is Truth, what application do these words have for your life? _____

2. What do strength and courage reflect? _____

PRAYER: O Lord, You are the same Lord who promised Abraham, reassured Isaac and Jacob, called Moses and declared Your presence to Joshua. You are the same Lord that promises me Your presence, reassures me of Your promises, and offers me hope. Thank You for Your goodness and faithfulness that do not change. In spite of my unfaithfulness to You, You are good and faithful to me. Thank You for never leaving or forsaking me. My heart rests in You. _____

Part 2

INTRODUCTION: In Joshua 2 the Israelites begin preparation for taking possession of the land. If you were the one leading these people into a new and strange land, what steps do you think you would take to prepare for this unknown land? Study maps? Visit AAA? Read tour books? Check out Google?

ASSIGNMENT: Read Joshua 2. Things to note:

- What was the mission?
- Who was the central character?
- How did she provide for the spies?
- What did she know?
- What was the agreement?
- What was the report to Joshua?

EXERCISE: Shittim, the place from where Joshua sent out the spies, can be located on an early map at the north end of the Dead Sea and to the east of Jericho.

1. The mission is simple: Joshua sent out two spies to _____
2. He was especially interested in _____ (verse 1). This would be the first major city of conquest.
3. List words and phrases that describe Rahab. For example, we know that she was a prostitute but also that she most likely served as an innkeeper. How did she respond to the presence of the

Israelites in her house? Contrast her response to the response of Jericho's king. She hid the men, lied for them, negotiated, bound them to an oath, helped them escape, and sent them away. What kind of woman would do all that? Get to know Rahab!

4. In verses 8-11 mark the references that speak of fear, melting hearts, and courage that failed.
 - a. _____ (verse 9)
 - b. _____ (verse 9)
 - c. _____ (verse 11)
 - d. _____ (verse 11)
5. Take a moment and turn to Exodus 15:13-16. Israel has just crossed the Red Sea on dry ground and these verses are from the song Moses and the Israelites sang to the Lord. These four verses speak of what is happening to the people of Jericho. Underline all the words that speak of the fear of the nations (Philistia, Edom, Moab, and Canaan). Note: All of these nations can be identified on an early map showing the conquest of Canaan.
6. Rahab was a strong and courageous woman. Her strength and courage came because of what she knew to be true.
 - a. Fact: What were the events (verse 10)? _____

 - b. Fact: What did she know about Israel's God (verse 11)? _____

7. What was her request in verses 12-13? _____

8. What was the response of the spies? _____
9. Rahab helped them escape and gave them instructions so they wouldn't be discovered. The parting words of the spies were that whoever is in your house with you will be spared but we will have no responsibility for anyone outside and, in addition, the oath would be null and void if she told anyone what they were doing.
 - a. Rehab's home became a shelter, a refuge, an impenetrable fortress. A simple scarlet cord tied in the window marked her home. The spies promised that her house would be passed over.
 - b. Do you recall another "pass over" in Israel's history that took place on the night before they left Egypt? Do you remember the blood on the doorframes of the homes that kept death from coming to those within that home? See Exodus 12.
10. The spies return safely to Joshua.
 - a. What did they report (verses 23-24)? _____

b. What did they declare? _____

APPLICATION: In verse 8 Rahab declares what she knows and then acts according to what she knows. She says, “I *know* that the Lord has given this land to you...” She also *knows* that a great fear of you has fallen on us...” Have you ever ask yourself what you *know*?

1. What do you know to be true about the Lord your God? _____

2. How does what you know affect your level of courage and strength or does it cause your heart to melt in fear and trembling? _____

3. The spies and Rahab knew the Lord and acted with strength and courage. The spies declared to Joshua, “Truly _____.” And what about all the inhabitants of the land? _____

Part 3

INTRODUCTION: The spies returned with an exciting report (Joshua 2:24) and now the time has come for the Israelites to break camp at Shittim, move on, and set up camp by the waters of the Jordan River. The next tree chapters give much detail but for our study we will give attention to these four points:

1. Crossing the Jordan
2. The Ark of the Covenant
3. The Community of Israel
4. The Covenant of Circumcision

ASSIGNMENT: Carefully read Joshua 3-4:24. Look for the following:

- The orders given to the people
- The role of the Ark of the Covenant
- The recognition of Israel as a community

EXERCISE:

1. What orders were given to the people?
 - a. Joshua 3:3 _____
 - b. Joshua 3:5 _____
 - c. Joshua 3:9 _____

2. The Ark of the Covenant would now go before the people. We hear no more about the pillars of fire and cloud, the pillars that led the people and gave them light during their time in the wilderness (Exodus 13:21-22). Recall what was kept in the Ark of the Covenant (Hebrews 9:4).
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____

3. The Ark had been kept in the tabernacle as a visible reminder to the people of God’s living presence among them.
 - a. Who would be carrying the Ark of the Covenant (verse 3)? _____
 - b. What were the people to do? _____
 - c. What would the people know (verse 4)? _____
 - d. What was the special instruction? _____

Part 4

TEACHING: Consider the word “community.” This group of people was not governed as a democratic society. It was not a society in which every individual could give his or her opinion, vote, and then give a thumbs up or thumbs down as to what the leader should or shouldn’t do. These people lived as a theocratic society in which God gave the commands. They lived as His people and were to obey the instructions He gave to them.

Throughout their wilderness experience God shaped His people into community by reminding them of the covenant he had made with Abraham. He was their God and they were His people. He called them to rise up and accept the high calling to live lives holy and consecrated, set apart for His purposes. In spite of what the Israelites did during these forty years, God remained faithful to them. His love for them never failed. And we saw that when a part of the community grumbled against the Lord, everyone suffered the consequences (Numbers 14:34-35), when they sinned everyone endured the punishment (Exodus 32:19-20), and when God gave the Ten Commandments He called the whole community of Israel to obedience and promised blessings for obedience and curses for disobedience. There were no exceptions. All were treated as his people belonging to this community.

EXERCISE: Identify in these verses listed below words that indicate they were part of a whole community and not individuals out there to do their own thing. Look for words like “all” and “among,” words that offer a sense of belonging to the larger community.

Reference	Words that indicate community
Joshua 3:5	
Joshua 3:9, 10	
Joshua 4:1	
Joshua 4:4-7	
Joshua 4:13	
Joshua 4:14	

APPLICATION: As individuals we desire to belong to a community. Most people are born into the family community. We become involved in different social environments, for example, school, church, work, and volunteer organizations. As participants we agree to the purpose and goals, the ethical and moral structure of the community. Identify a community environment in which you participate or belong.

1. How did you become a part of the community? When did you sense that you belonged? _____

2. What is the purpose of community? Why does it exist? _____

3. What do you contribute and how are you valued by the community of which you are a part?

PRAYER: Write your own prayer as you seek to serve the Lord through your community(ies).

1. Identify the community(ies) in which you live and work.
2. Share with Him your thoughts and desires for your community.
3. Talk to Him about His intent and purposes for community.
4. Share your desire to serve others as you live in community with them.
5. Express your gratitude for the blessings that become yours through your community (ies):

LESSON TWO

I HAVE GIVEN JERICHO INTO YOUR HAND

JOSHUA 5-7 – JERICHO

OVERVIEW OF LESSON 2

Overview	15
Introduction	16
Lesson 2: Joshua 5-7	
• Covenant, Circumcision, and Community	17
• God’s Plan	18
• Israel’s Victory	19
• Joshua’s Oath	19
• Rahab’s Faith	20
• Consequences of Disobedience	21

INTRODUCTION

God was Israel's leader. God gave His instructions to Joshua and the Joshua the Israelites were expected to be obedient to God's commands. This story of Jericho's destruction has been told throughout history. The simplicity of what happened makes Israel's victory seem unbelievable. Observe the preparation orders God required of His people. Certain things needed to be done. They would be conquerors and take the land God had promised.

Listen carefully as God shares with Joshua what He intends to do. The instructions may pose some challenges. We may want to ask God to repeat His instructions because they seem strange to our ears. Watch carefully how Joshua as Israel's leader responds and follows his leader, God Almighty.

God pours out on Israel His grace, His love for them. He grants victory in battle. At the same time, He also demonstrates His justice when His commands are disobeyed. What went wrong? Who did what? What command was broken? We may think God's actions were too severe but He is holy and demands obedience. His people need to be taught that they live in community. The actions of one person affect the life of all.

Finally, as you discover personal application from this story, consider how you approach insurmountable difficulties you may face. Are you willing to just walk around them for a few days and then ultimately let the Lord take care of the impossible? What do you do at such times? Faith in the Lord becomes more than some abstract idea when His Word finds application in our own lives.

TEACHING: Genesis 17:7-14 speaks of the everlasting covenant God made with Abraham, the covenant that God would be Abraham's God and the God of his descendants. The covenant initiated by God established the relationship between Him and His people. He would be their God and they would be His people. The sign of this covenant relationship between God and Abraham was the circumcision of every male. Now, at this point in Israel's history (Joshua 3-5) it is interesting to note God's promise to Abraham in Genesis 17:8 when He tells Abraham that the land of Canaan would be an everlasting possession to him and his descendants.

In Joshua 5:1-12 two important community events took place. The first was the circumcision of all men born in the desert since the Israelites had left Egypt. Circumcision declared to the community that we are all a part of the eternal covenant in which God declared Himself to be our God and made us His people. Circumcision said to the people that we have been set apart and belong to God and this community He had established. He also said that anyone not circumcised was to be "cut off from His people" and was not a part of the eternal covenant.

The other event of the community was the celebration of the Passover. This was an act of obedience. They had learned the story of the Lord passing over the community of Israel when back in Egypt the blood of a slaughtered lamb was painted on the doorframes of their homes (Exodus 12). The meal was to be a lasting ordinance for the generations to come. Exodus 12:24-25 makes it very clear that they were to obey these instructions and when they entered the Promised land of Canaan they were to observe this ceremony.

Part 1

INTRODUCTION: We are about to embark on one of the most familiar battle stories ever told. Songs have been sung about it. Children have been taught the story. School plays have been written in an attempt to recreate the event. This Old Testament battle occurs in Joshua 6.

The Israelites are in position. They have consecrated themselves and are prepared for the amazing things the Lord has in store for them. They waited for the Ark of the Covenant to lead them across the Jordan. Once again, all of the Israelites experienced crossing through on dry ground as the water upstream stopped flowing. Immediately after they crossed the men were circumcised, the Passover was celebrated on the plains of Jericho at Gilgal, and the manna stopped the day after they began eating the produce from the land.

God's people are prepared, fed, rested, and refreshed and are now ready to do battle with Jericho. Joshua's experiences an encounter with the Lord very similar to the one Moses did in Exodus 3:5. God wanted no doubt in Joshua's mind that He would be with him and that there would be no misgivings about who was the commander of the army of the Lord. Joshua could only fall facedown to the ground in reverence.

ASSIGNMENT: Read Joshua 6. As you read watch for the following:

- God's plan
- Joshua's instructions
- Israel's execution of the plan
- Joshua's warnings regarding Rahab and the devoted things
- Rahab's rescue and Jericho's destruction
- Joshua's curse on Jericho

EXERCISE:

1. What does God reveal to Joshua already in verses 1 and 2? _____

He has already delivered Jericho into Israel's hands. What caused Jericho's inhabitants' fear? Was it anything that the Israelites had done? Reread Joshua 5:1. _____

2. Very simply, what was God's plan (Joshua 6:3-5)?
 - a. What were the armed men instructed to do? _____
 - b. The seven priests? _____
What were they to do on the seventh day? _____
 - c. What were the people to do? _____
 - d. What was the wall to do? _____
3. So the armed guard of the seven priests all blowing their trumpets led the procession. They were followed by the priests carrying the Ark of the Covenant and the people following as the rear guard. What were Joshua's specific instructions to the people in verse 10?
 - a. Do not _____
 - b. Do not _____
 - c. Do not _____
4. Then we learn that when the people had marched around the city once they all went home! What a spectacle that must have been! And they did it for six days!

- a. If you had been the king of Jericho what might have gone through your mind? _____

 - b. If you had been a citizen or a soldier looking out through a peep hole watching this march, what might have gone through your mind? _____

 - c. If you had been Rahab with a house full of relatives clinging to a promise and feeling the earth shake as this mighty army circled the city every day, what might have gone through your mind? _____

5. But the seventh day was different. What happened that was different?
 - a. How many times did they march around the city? _____
 - b. The priests sounded the trumpet blast. What did Joshua command?
 - i. Verse 16b _____
 - ii. Verse 17a _____
 - iii. Verse 17b _____
 - iv. Verses 18-19 _____
 6. Then the victory came! The people shouted. The walls collapsed and the Israelites moved in and captured the city (verse 20). Everything that had life they killed. What did they do with all the silver and gold, bronze and iron (verse 24)? _____
 7. What happened to Rahab and her family (verses 22-23)? _____

 8. In verses 26 and 27 Joshua made an oath and cursed anyone who would attempt to rebuild Jericho. In case you are interested in what happened to someone who did try, look up the cross-reference following the word “gates” in verse 26. (Note: If your Bible does not have a cross-reference, the reference is 1 Kings 16:34.) What was the curse? _____

Part 2

REFLECTION: What a victory for Israel! It seems as though taking possession of the land was not going to be difficult; in fact, it would be a piece of cake, if all the other battles were like this one! All they had to do was follow the Ark around, listen for the trumpet blast, and then shout! Of course, the shouting would not drop the walls but God used the strength of His army, honored the faithful obedience of His people to His command, and proceeded to fight their battle for them. All this He did because He

was their God and they were His people. He wanted the world to know that He was the God of Israel, their Commander-in-Chief!

APPLICATION: Let's consider Rahab...

1. She entrusted herself to her only hope for salvation. Where does your hope for salvation rest?

2. She kept her part of the oath and as a result provided safety for her family. In what way might your home become an inviting place of safety for your family, friends, and neighborhood? _____

3. Read Hebrews 11:30-31. What are we told about her? _____

4. Because of her faith in the God of the Israelites and because she welcomed the spies, God acted graciously towards her. Consider God's undeserved, loving activity in your life. _____

TEACHING: Passing through the water at the Red Sea and now at the Jordan River mark significant times in the history of the Israelites. At the first crossing in Exodus 14 their life of slavery to the Egyptians was over and done. The army was drowned and Israel continued their journey to the Promised Land. A new life was before them. God reminded them that he was their God and that they were His people. He gave them certain stipulations for their life together as a community. God's relationship with His people would not be that of a slave driver but that of a leader. He was not to be feared but someone whom they could love and trust, serve and obey. God's relationship with them was based on love. He wanted only His best for His people.

As the Israelites passed through the waters of the Jordan they left behind their life of aimless wandering, the consequences of their disobedience and rebellion against God. He shaped and molded them into a people united in heart and purpose, a people ready to take possession of the land that was part of the eternal covenant.

This passing through the water has significance for people throughout history. In the New Testament the passing through the water happened to Jesus when He was baptized (Matthew 3:13-17). At the end of Jesus' earthly ministry He commissioned His disciples telling them that all people of all nations are to be baptized (Matthew 28:19). The early church established by Jesus' disciples continued the ministry of preaching the Gospel and baptizing people in the name of Jesus (Acts 2:38).

Baptism is initiated by God. God chooses to make us His by pronouncing the forgiveness of sins and offering life everlasting. Passing through the waters of baptism brings us under the eternal covenant in which God declares Himself to be our God and makes us His people. A life of slavery to sin is left behind. We are able to live free and forgiven in this love relationship that has been established by God. Baptism brings us under new ownership, under new authority, and into a new relationship. We have been redeemed. Our lives have been bought back by God. We have been bought as a price; the price is the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, the Lamb of God. Now God Himself chooses to live within us. Our bodies become His dwelling place.

Have you been baptized in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit? Is baptism a new concept for you? What do you know about what God offers to you in baptism? _____

Passing through the waters offers a life filled with purpose and meaning. Passing through the waters makes you a child of the King!

Part 3

INTRODUCTION: After the battle of Jericho one would think taking possession of the land was going to be easy. In Joshua 7 we learn that all the battles didn't occur against the enemy nations living within the Promised Land. Ongoing battles also rage within God's people as the disobedience and rebellion of individuals affect the whole community.

ASSIGNMENT: Read Joshua 7 and discover...

1. What went wrong?
2. Who was guilty?
3. What were the consequences?
4. What was the punishment?

EXERCISE:

1. The story of Israel's victory over Jericho has just concluded in chapter 6. Now Joshua 7:1 reveals some bad news. What has gone wrong?
 - a. Who was the culprit? _____
 - b. What was taken? _____
 - c. What was the Lord's reaction? _____
2. Look closely.

- a. Was Achan the guilty one? Who does the verse say acted unfaithfully? _____
 - b. The Lord's anger burned. Against whom? _____
- Remember, in an earlier lesson we considered Israel to be a *community*. God declared the community to be guilty. Achan was a part of the community of Israel and what he did as an individual God regarded as an act of the community. Continue with the story and observe the consequences to the community that one man's act caused.
3. Joshua was looking ahead to the next place Israel would possess. Where is the next place he had the spies check out (verse 2)? _____ What report did the spies give and what was their recommendation (verse 3)? _____

 4. They went into battle.
 - a. What happened in verses 4 and 5? _____

 - b. What happened to the hearts of the people? _____
 - c. What was the reaction of Joshua _____ (verse 8a) and the elders? _____
 - d. Notice Joshua's prayer (verses 7-9):
 - i. Why have You _____
 - ii. Would that we had (if only) _____
 - iii. What can I say _____
 - iv. The Canaanites and the inhabitants _____

 - v. Question: _____
 5. What did God say to Joshua (verse 11a)? _____
 6. What sin had Israel committed (verse 11b)?
 - a. They have _____
 - b. They have _____
 - c. They have _____
 - d. and _____
 - e. and _____
 7. Not only had they sinned but how had they acted in battle (verse 12)? _____

 8. On top of everything else, what does God declare at the end of verse 12? _____

9. Reread Joshua 6:18. What was Joshua’s instruction and warning to the people? _____

10. In verse 13-15 Joshua instructs the people and has them prepare for the discovery of the devoted things. He acknowledged that the covenant of the Lord had been violated and an outrageous thing had been done in Israel. The devoted things belonged to the Lord. They were His. He commanded that all of His devoted things were to be destroyed. In verse 15 Joshua verbalized contempt for what had been done. The severe consequence would be severe. The consequence was _____.
11. In the morning Achan is found out. What had he taken and done with all of the devoted things (verse 20-21)? _____

12. Everything was discovered and brought to Joshua. All of his sin was exposed before the Israelites (verses 22-23). All of Israel carried out the punishment (verse 25). What do we learn in verse 26? “Then the Lord _____.”

Part 4

APPLICATION: The consequence of sin is death. Achan, his family, and all of his possessions were stoned, burned, and buried. It took complete annihilation in order to remove the sin from the community.

1. Oftentimes we attempt to hide or cover up our sin. We speak of having “skeletons in our closets.” What are those sins that I choose to keep hidden as secrets within my life? What do I keep “swept under the carpet,” so to speak, never to be revealed? _____

2. As community how do we deal with sin? _____

3. How do my secrets affect the way I live in the community of family, friends, and associates? _____

PRAYER: O Lord, as a community we must confess our sin before You. We often deny our sinfulness by ignoring the wrongs that are committed. We have become weak in fighting our enemies that would lead us into sin. We surrender to evil rather than do good. Forgive us. Be merciful to us. Forgive us for all that we deny, avoid, ignore, and hide. Free us from this filth and the shameful disgrace we live in and grant us Your grace and mercy in Christ Jesus our Lord. _____

LESSON THREE

THE LORD GOD FOUGHT FOR ISRAEL

JOSHUA 8-24 – CONQUEST OF THE LAND

OVERVIEW OF LESSON 3

Overview	25
Introduction	26
Lesson 3: Joshua 8-24	
• Ai Defeated	27
• The Law Is Given	27
• Battles for Possession	29
• Cleansing the Land	31
• Allotment of the Land	32
• Joshua's Farewell	33

INTRODUCTION

Jericho had been destroyed. Justice had been executed for the sin of Achan. It was a new day. Israel was ready for its next conquest. The land was theirs. God reassured Joshua that He had given the land to His people; however, considering what had happened with the Achan debacle, how would you expect him to proceed with conquering the land and defeating its inhabitants? Learn what the Lord does through His servant Joshua.

The kings of the land conspired together against Israel. The inhabitants fear greatly for their lives. The leaders sought to make peace with Israel. What was the outcome? Watch for words and phrases that are repeated over and over in these chapters. Joshua's faith never wavered. He was a warrior. What was his reaction when he saw the enemy numbering as many as sand on the seashore? What would your reaction be? Joshua knew that the Lord God of Israel was fighting for Israel!

Consider all that needed to happen for the words to be said, "And the land had rest from war." Now the land is dispersed. Each tribe had been allotted its land. This was their inheritance. Why was it theirs? What gave them the right to have this land? What had God promised? What did God do?

There was much unfinished business but the time had come for Joshua's farewell address to the people. Note those things that Joshua mentions. Consider what you might say to those you are leaving with unfinished business at hand.

Part 1

INTRODUCTION: Achan and his sin were discovered. He and all he had were removed from the Israelite community. They were stoned, burned, and buried, and then God turned His anger away from the people. God forgives. The Israelite community is cleansed, restitution is made, and the conquest of the land continues again. If you were Joshua, would you be a little hesitant to lead the people into battle again after they had been routed and defeated by the men of Ai? See Joshua 8:1.

ASSIGNMENT: Read Joshua 8:1-29.

EXERCISE:

1. What was God's instruction to Joshua in verses 1 and 2? _____

2. What was the plan for taking Ai (verse 3-8)? _____

3. What was the outcome (verse 9-29)? _____

ASSIGNMENT: Read Joshua 8:30-35. Reread Deuteronomy 11:26-32.

EXERCISE:

1. From Ai Israel moved north. If you have a Bible with maps, locate Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim on a map that shows the land designated to each of the twelve tribes. In Joshua 8:30 what did Joshua build? _____
 - a. What are we told about this altar? _____
 - b. Note the cross-reference verse in Exodus 20:25. What additional information do we learn? _____
2. They offered sacrifices to the Lord. What did Joshua do next in verse 32? _____

Envision the scene: Half of Israel standing in front of Mount Ebal (Deuteronomy 27:13) with the other half standing in front of Mount Gerizim (Deuteronomy 27:12). Between them was placed the Ark of the Covenant and the Levi priests. In the presence of everyone he copies on stone the Law of Moses. We can ask why Joshua did this. The cross-reference verse takes us back to Deuteronomy 27:8.

3. Then what does Joshua do in Joshua 8:34? _____

TEACHING: This event took place in the valley between these two mountains. The mountains were the witnesses of the promise the people made to God. This is a covenant renewal. People who have been baptized are renewed daily in God’s covenant. All of the past is forgiven and all of the future is a clean slate. God gives us a new beginning in which we have His promise, the promise of His presence. In the Book of Jeremiah the prophet reminds us “I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more (Jeremiah 31:34).” What good news!

Part 2

REFLECTION: Be honest with yourself. If you were a member of one particular tribe and told to stand in front of one of those two mountains, how attentive do you think you would be as Joshua copied on stones all the Law of Moses and then read all the words of the Law to the people? What might be going through your mind? _____

It is the desert. Undoubtedly, the people are warm, if not hot and tired. But everyone heard everything! The whole assembly (verse 35) of men, women and children, plus those who were aliens living among them heard every word of the Law of Moses. Again, Joshua was only doing what Moses commanded. See Deuteronomy 31:1-13. Why was reading the words of the Law so important? _____

APPLICATION: The whole community of Israel needed to hear the Book of the Law, the Law of the land. These mountains gave witness to this event and were the visible reminder to the people of the blessings of obedience and the consequences of disobedience. How this community lived life in obedience to God’s Law would be the declaration as His people of their love for Him who was their God.

1. Consider your own regard for God’s Word. If the mountains or plains where you live could speak out and give testimony to the value you have regarding God’s Word, what might they say?

2. What are things you do and the words you speak that give testimony to your relationship with God? _____
3. Does your life give witness to what you believe? _____

4. What is an area of your life that you want the Lord to make more authentic? _____

MEMORIZATION: Psalm 1 speaks about delighting in God’s Word and having it become the essence of one’s being. If you have not already done so, take time and put this Psalm into your memory library. These six verses communicate the message with picture imagery. Be sure to write these verses on an index card. As you memorize watch for the blessings of those who delight in God’s Word. Write notes throughout these next days of things you learn about your relationship with God, the One who watches over you.

PRAYER: O Lord, I want to be like Joshua and the Israelites who delighted in You and taught Your Word to their children. I want my relationship with You to be evident to others that they may come to know You as their God and see themselves as Your people. Thank You for giving Your Law which guides me and keeps me aligned to Your will. Forgive me for my past disobedience and disregard for Your Word. Thank You for forgiving me and for never leaving or forsaking me. Thank You for being my God, for making me Your child, and for giving me a new beginning. _____

Part 3

INTRODUCTION: The battles at Jericho and Ai were extremely important. These battles established Israel’s God and put fear into the hearts of the kings in parts of the land yet to be conquered. Some kings joined forces to make war against Joshua and the Israelites (Joshua 9:1-2). The people of Gibeon resorted to a ruse (Joshua 9). Reports had traveled throughout the land that Israel was to wipe out all of its inhabitants. People feared for their lives.

We will cover several chapters in this part of the lesson. These chapters contain war stories. Joshua led Israel on a war campaign that annihilated one kingdom after the next. As the Lord was with Moses He was with Joshua.

ASSIGNMENT: Read Joshua 9-11. As you read these three chapters underline reoccurring words and phrases. Identify the means God used to give Israel their inheritance.

EXERCISE:

1. Did you notice these repeated words and phrases? What point do they make?
 - a. “Do not be afraid” _____
 - b. “Left no survivors” _____
 - c. “Totally destroyed” _____

2. What were the unusual means God used to bring defeat?
 - a. Joshua 10:11 _____
 - b. Joshua 10:12-14 _____
 - c. Joshua 11:20 _____
3. In chapter 9 the deceptive Gibeonites resorted to a ruse. When other kings were joining forces against Israel, what did the people of Gibeon decide to do? _____

4. What was the final outcome of their plan (Joshua 9:26-27)? _____

5. Because of the oath that Israel made with the Gibeonites (Joshua 9:14-15) the Israelites were committed to waging war with them against the five Amorite kings. Joshua brought the best of his army and took them by surprise. What did the Lord do?
 - a. Verse 8 _____
 - b. Verse 10 _____
 - c. Verse 11 _____
 - d. Verses 12-13 _____
6. What was declared in verse 14? _____
7. What happened to the five kings (verses 16-27)? _____

8. Joshua 10:28 begins the mantra that continues through chapter 11. We are told that Joshua was devoted to the destruction of every person and left none remaining. The battles rage on with Joshua leading the Israelites advance against one city after the next. But we dare not overlook the words used throughout these chapters that remind us who Israel's Commander-in-Chief was.
 - a. Joshua 10:30 _____
 - b. Joshua 10:32 _____
 - c. Joshua 10:42 _____
9. It's interesting to note that the God of Israel fought *for* Israel. He was their Champion! Recall Joshua 10:8. What did God want Joshua to know? _____
10. What does Joshua tell the people in verse 25? _____

11. Look ahead to chapter 11. What does the Lord tell Joshua in verse 6 when the enemy comes out with such a huge army that appears as numerous as the sand on the seashore? _____

12. What are we told about Joshua?

- a. Joshua 10:40 _____
- b. Joshua 11:15 _____
- c. Joshua 11:23 _____

13. At last, Joshua 11 ends with these words: _____

Part 4

TEACHING: In the Exercise that we have completed we learned the facts of the story. We looked at the battles of Israel against the people and kings of the land they were to possess. We saw Israel always victorious as they followed Joshua’s leadership. The country, however, was drenched in the blood of those that God defeated. He showed no mercy to one kingdom after the next. Was all of the bloodshed necessary? Couldn’t the people have lived as slaves to Israel? Did they have to die?

We need to remember that the shedding of the blood was the means God used to cleanse the land of all the idolatry and wickedness of these kingdoms. Israel’s God was not like the gods of wood and stone. Israel’s God covenanted with them to be their God, the One whom they were to worship. Because He knew that His people would be prone to disobedience, grumble, complain, and seek to have their own way, He needed to remove from the land all that would defile them and entice them away from Him. His holiness demanded that all who were not His covenant people were to be destroyed without mercy. His holiness demanded that the land be cleansed and purified. He called His people to holiness. Before Him they were to be blameless (Deuteronomy 18:9-13).

REFLECTION: One can’t help but take some time to reflect on holiness. Consider these reflective questions and jot in your notebook some of the thoughts that come to mind.

1. What does it mean to be holy or blameless?
2. Is holiness possible? How does one become holy?
3. Does blood need to be shed in order for one to be made holy or is there another way?
4. Does our world strive for holiness? Does our world strive for purity?
5. What does it mean that I am to be blameless before God?
6. Blood was shed throughout Israel’s history. They offered animal sacrifices, fought battles, and died. Where does blood intersect with my life? Do I believe that Jesus died for my unholiness, my ungodliness, my sin? Do I believe that His shed blood on the cross was enough to make me holy before God my Heavenly Father?

PRAYER: O Lord God my God, I can only thank You for making me holy by the blood Your Son Jesus shed on the cross. When You look at me You see His blood that covers me and makes me blameless

before You. You have acted in mercy towards me by not giving me what I deserve. Jesus is my Champion! Jesus is the One who has given me Life forever with you. Thank You for His sacrifice on my behalf _____

Part 5

INRODUCTION: Joshua 11 ends with the words, “And the land had rest from war.” War, war, and more war! All the Israelites had experienced since they set foot in the land was war and all for the sake of taking possession of the land that God had promised. In Joshua 12 all the kings whom the Israelites defeated are listed, all 31 of them. Then chapter 13 begins with the Lord telling Joshua who was well advanced in years that “there remains yet very much land to possess.” In verses 1-7 we learn:

1. What land remained to be taken over (verse 2-5)
2. What God would do (verse 6)
3. What Joshua would do (verse 6 and 7)

Moses promised to three tribes (Gad, Reuben, and the half-tribe of Manasseh) that land on the east side of the Jordan would become theirs once the Promised Land had been subdued (Numbers 32). In Joshua 13:8-32 we are given the boundaries of the land each of these three tribes was to receive.

In Joshua 14 we learn how the land west of the Jordan was divided and allotted to each of the remaining tribes and what portion became Caleb’s, the other spy who was permitted to enter the Promised Land (Numbers 14:23-25). Once again, we read the words in verse 15, “And the land had rest from war.”

ASSIGNMENT: Joshua 15-21 records what land was distributed to each of the tribes. The only tribe that received no allotment of land was the tribe of Levi.

1. What was their inheritance (Joshua 13:14, 33)? _____
2. Numbers 18:20-21 gives more information. How did God provide for them? _____

3. Read Joshua 21:43-45.
 - a. The Lord gave Israel _____
 - b. The Lord gave _____
 - c. The Lord kept _____

God fulfilled all that He said He would do. His faithfulness to His people has been more than evident through all these many, many years. Those who initially received the promise were not

the ones who entered the land. The promise was given to them but fully realized by their descendants.

REFLECTION: Consider the many stories and experiences that brought Israel to this point in their history. All through the centuries God remembered the covenant promise He made to his people. They knew that although they would never enter the land, their descendants would. The fulfillment of God's promise rested in His Word. This was His covenant that He made with his people. God's promise for Abraham and his descendants for generations to come rested on God's commitment to His covenant (Genesis 17:7). Take time to review some of the stories we have studied in previous lessons in this Bible study series and begin to list them in your notebook. List the stories that were especially meaningful to you and ask yourself why you consider them so important.

Before we move on in our study it is important that we note three different verses in these last chapters. God commanded that every nation inhabiting the land was to be totally destroyed. There were to be no survivors. What do we learn in the following verses?

1. Joshua 13:13 _____
2. Joshua 15:63 _____
3. Joshua 16:10 _____

We will not pursue studying these verses at this time but they are raised up for our awareness as we conclude the study of the Book of Joshua and begin the study of Judges.

Part 6

ASSIGNMENT: Read Joshua 23. Note the content of Joshua's farewell address to the people—their elders, leaders, judges, and officials.

1. What was the unfinished business?
2. What was his exhortation regarding the Law of Moses?
3. What were the blessings?
4. What were the curses?

EXERCISE:

1. What was the work that remained to be done (Joshua 23:3-5)? _____
2. What was Joshua's command in verses 6-8? _____
3. Their obedience would include four demands in verse 7:
 - a. _____
 - b. _____

- c. _____
 - d. _____
4. If they obeyed what would be the blessing (verses 9-11)? _____

 5. What would be the consequences of their disobedience (verse 12-16)? _____

 6. In summary, Joshua reminds them of God's faithfulness to them. To what did he call the Israelites? _____

ASSIGNMENT: Read Joshua 24.

REVIEW:

1. Joshua reviews some of Israel's history. List the stories the people, and what God did that he raises up for everyone to hear:
 - a. Verses 2-4 speak of the Genesis stories: _____

 - b. Verses 5-7 speak of the Exodus stories: _____

 - c. Verses 8-10 speak of Israel's experience east of the Jordan: _____

 - d. Verses 11-13 speak of Israel's conquest of the land: _____

All of these stories tell Israel's history. In all of their stories God is the main character. *God* gave Abraham... *God* sent Moses and Aaron... *God* brought Israel... *God* gave the citizens of the many nations into your hands... What does verse 13 say? _____

2. Joshua lays before them all that God had done and calls them to make a declaration before all the community of Israel (verse 14). What is the declaration he asks them make? _____

3. What is Joshua bold to declare? _____
4. What was the declaration of the people in verse 21? _____
The people gave witness to the testimony they gave one another to serve the Lord and obey Him. As a community they were to give an account and then to hold one another to that account. This meant in verse 23 that the community had to _____

5. Joshua died (verse 29). We are told that Israel served the Lord in verse 31. How long do we know they served the Lord? _____

REFLECTION: Israel arrived in Canaan at last. God’s faithful presence throughout their wilderness wanderings safely brought His people to the land promised so long ago. The land was theirs to possess. Things would be different. Community life would change as each tribe dispersed to its allotted land. Their leader was about to die and the future held uncertainty. Aliens and foreigners still living in the land needed to be destroyed. Now in Lesson 4, Part 1 we consider Joshua’s last declaration...

Part 7

REFLECTION: We’ve come to the end of the life of Joshua. The Israelites are sent to the land they have inherited and are ready to begin life in their new land. Joshua dies at the age of 110 years. He has experienced more life with God than any other Israelite, except Caleb.

His farewell reminds us of Moses’ farewell to the people before he died. The blessings and curses remained. If the people chose to obey, they would be blessed. If they chose to disobey, they would be cursed. Joshua reminded them of the blessings of obedience and the consequences of disobedience because he knew the people. He knew that they would serve other gods because of the experience on Mount Sinai. He knew that God would not withhold His wrath if they would forsake Him and serve foreign gods (Joshua 24:20).

1. If you are young, it may be difficult for you to understand the reason why a parent or grandparent might speak about such things to you. Their life experiences, however, have taught them many things. Their wisdom speaks to those who follow after them. What has an older person said to you that you remember? _____
2. The wisdom they share is your blessing. Can you think of times when you have said, “I remember...?” Remembering is what keeps mistakes of the past from being repeated. What has someone encouraged you to remember? _____
3. Now consider the time when you come to the end of your life. What would you want others to remember that you know to be true because of what your life experiences have taught you?

MEMORIZATION: A passage for memorization is Joshua 24:15b. It reads, “But _____
_____.” Let this verse grow in its significance for your life as you give witness to what you believe. Take a few minutes to write this verse

on an index card and on the back of the card express your desire to take a stand and serve Him out of gratitude for His faithfulness to you. He has declared Himself to be your God and calls you to be His child forever. He has promised heaven to all who believe that Jesus is the One who enables us to stand holy and victorious before God our Father. Because of Jesus we are eager to say, “As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.”

PRAYER: I want to be bold like Joshua and take my stand to serve You all the days of my life. You have been faithful to me. Enable me to serve you faithfully. Things of this world offer countless alluring choices. In my heart I know these choices draw me away from You. Strengthen my heart to declare my service to You and You alone. Especially help me in these areas that I confess are temptations in my heart:

- _____
- _____

LESSON FOUR

THE PEOPLE DID WHAT WAS EVIL

JUDGES 1-13 – TIME OF THE JUDGES

OVERVIEW OF LESSON 4

Overview	37
Introduction	38
Lesson 4: Judges 1-13	
• Transition from Joshua to Judges	39
• Israel Tolerates the Enemy	39
• God Raises Up Judges	41
• God Tests Israel	43
• Israel's Pattern of Behavior	44
• Remember!	46

INTRODUCTION

The Book of Joshua ends with Joshua's declaration: "Choose this day whom you will serve...but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." And all the people responded, "We also will serve the Lord, for He is our God." Joshua gave his final instruction to the people and then this servant of the Lord died.

In this lesson we transition from Israel's style of leadership under Joshua to a different leadership design. No longer was there to be a Moses or Joshua-type of leader. The tribes of Israel were dispersed to their designated land assignments. What would happen now? How would these vulnerable tribes defend themselves against their enemies?

It's disheartening to watch Israel's spiritual decay. What caused it? How do we know it occurred? What were the signs? What were the consequences? As you study, watch God's response to Israel's behavior. How would you expect God to respond?

Like Israel we have been called to serve the Lord. Like Israel we have been called to worship the Lord and Him only. This lesson gives us the opportunity to consider those things that can hinder our own spiritual development and manage to deflect our thoughts so that we lose focus on the Lord and His Will for our lives.

TRANSITION FROM THE BOOK OF JOSHUA TO THE BOOK OF JUDGES: Joshua is dead. They have no leader. There's no succession plan. A chapter in Israel's history has ended. Their deliverance from Egypt, the forty years of life in the wilderness, and the conquest of the Promised Land have all been achieved. The tribes have all been disbursed and live in the regions allotted to them. The land was at rest from war.

Did they need a leader now? Traveling was no longer an issue. They had arrived! So, what's next? Their life has been nomadic but now they are able to establish themselves and put down roots in this new land. They no longer appear dependent on one leader. No longer are they one mass of people on the move. Now they are spread far and wide living as tribal people.

At the same time we need to remember that God regarded them as His covenant people, as a community belonging to Him. Both Moses and Joshua reminded the Israelites of the blessings that would always be theirs if they lived in obedience to God. They also declared the consequences of disobedience to God's Law, the curses for their rebellion if they worshipped other gods. The Law had been given to Israel as a people belonging to God. The Law was what God intended them to obey wherever they lived in the land.

Now we are about to continue our Bible study with the Book of Judges. What will happen to the Israelites now that they have no leader and yet have large areas of land to be conquered?

Part 1

ASSIGNMENT: Read Judges 1:19-36.

EXERCISE: God's command was that all who occupied the land were to be totally destroyed. The Israelites were to leave no survivors. Note with the following table what the Israelites actually did as we are told in Judges 1.

Reference	Israel's actions against those living in the land
Judges 1:19	
Judges 1:21	
Judges 1:25	

Judges 1:27	
Judges 1:28	
Judges 1:29, 30, 31, 33	
Judges 1:34	

Israel tolerated rather than annihilated their enemies. They compromised God’s command with their own waning passion to take possession of the land. They had land for their tribe. They were happy and contented because those they did not drive out, they subjected to forced labor. So, what’s the big deal? Couldn’t they all live peaceably together?

ASSIGNMENT: Read Judges 2:1-5.

EXERCISE:

1. What did the angel of the Lord tell them He had done (verse 1)? _____

2. What were they to do (verse 2)? _____
3. What did they actually do? _____
4. What would be the consequences (verse 3)? _____

5. How did the people respond (verse 4-5)? _____

These verses reveal the source of the problems that plagued Israel throughout its history. They compromised their position by failing to take ownership of their possession. The rest of chapter two summarizes what happened to Israel after Joshua died.

ASSIGNMENT: Read Judges 2:6-23. Look for answers to these questions:

1. What did the Israelites do throughout Joshua’s lifetime?
2. How did the following generation live?
3. What was the Lord’s response?
4. What was Israel’s response to the judges that the Lord raised up?
5. What was God’s curse upon the people?

EXERCISE:

1. How did the people live throughout Joshua’s lifetime (verse 6-7)? _____

This was a good time, a time of peace as they served the Lord for they had “seen all the great things the Lord had done for Israel.” Then, Joshua died.

2. But the story takes a critical turn. What is mentioned in verse 10? _____

An immediate question might be: Why didn't the following generation know the Lord or what He had done for Israel? How would you respond? _____

REFLECTION: How quickly we forget. Unless we are reminded and remember we will forget! What has been your experience?

1. Did someone remind you of what God has done? Who was/were that/those person(s)? _____

2. Did the generations before you know the Lord?

- a. Were you told about Him? _____
- b. What were you told? _____
- c. Or, maybe you were never told and therefore never knew about God's great love for you. If so, what is a permanent memory of life without knowing God's love? _____

Part 2

EXERCISE:

1. What does Judges 2:11-12 tell us that Israel did?
- a. They did what was _____ in the sight of the Lord and _____ the _____ (These were the foreign gods.)
- b. They _____ the Lord who had _____
- c. They _____ other gods and _____ to them.
2. What was the Lord's response to their behavior (verses 12-16)?
- a. They _____ the Lord to _____.
- b. Why? Because they _____ the Lord and _____ the Baals and the Ashtaroth.
3. What did the Lord do?
- a. Verse 14 _____

- b. Verse 15a _____

- c. Verse 15b ...they were in terrible _____.
4. The Lord raised up _____ (verse 16). What did the judges do? _____

- Note:* The judges were leaders often military-type leaders whom God raised up to deliver the Israelites from the oppressive powers of their enemies.
5. How did the people respond to the judges (verse 17)? _____

6. Describe the relationship God had with the judges that He raised up: _____

7. What happened to the relationship between God and His people (verse 20)? _____

8. What did God determine to do (verses 21-23)? _____

REFLECTION: It was not a pretty picture. God’s faithfulness to those who had gone before this generation had been ignored and forgotten. Their rebellion against God and disobedience to His covenant caused them to prostitute themselves before the gods of wood and stone, before the gods of those not eradicated from the land, the Baals, the Semitic deity, and the Ashtaroth, the fertility goddess. They turned away from their loving, saving God and chose the bondage and slavery of other gods. These gods were created by the imaginations of man’s own thinking. Their gods were worthless idols that had no life or breath, gods which offered only death. Moses and Joshua warned them about forsaking the Lord their God and the people boldly declared, “We will serve the Lord (Joshua 24:21).” Did they remember? Did they remember their promise and keep it?

APPLICATION: As we look at our own lives and the lives of others in the world around us, we can ask ourselves, “Do we remember or have we forgotten?”

1. What are the things I am learning that God has done for me? Do I remember that He has created me? That He has called and delivered me, redeemed me, and made me His child? That He has promised to be my God and has made me His people? What do I remember? _____

2. Do I remember that He has called me to be holy and blameless before Him? Do I remember that He is the One who has made me blameless by the blood Jesus shed for me? Do I remember that in my baptism the passing through the water, that He has made me His child and heir of eternal

life? What have I remembered?

3. Do those after me remember who they are? Do they know the story? Do they know of God's great love for them? Do I remember to tell them everything that God has done for them in order that they never forget? What must I remember to tell them?

PRAYER: Take time to write your prayer asking God to keep you mindful of Him. Share with Him your concern for others who have not heard the story of His great love. Lift up the different individuals that come to mind and ask Him to instill in you a passion to tell others what He has done. _____

Part 3

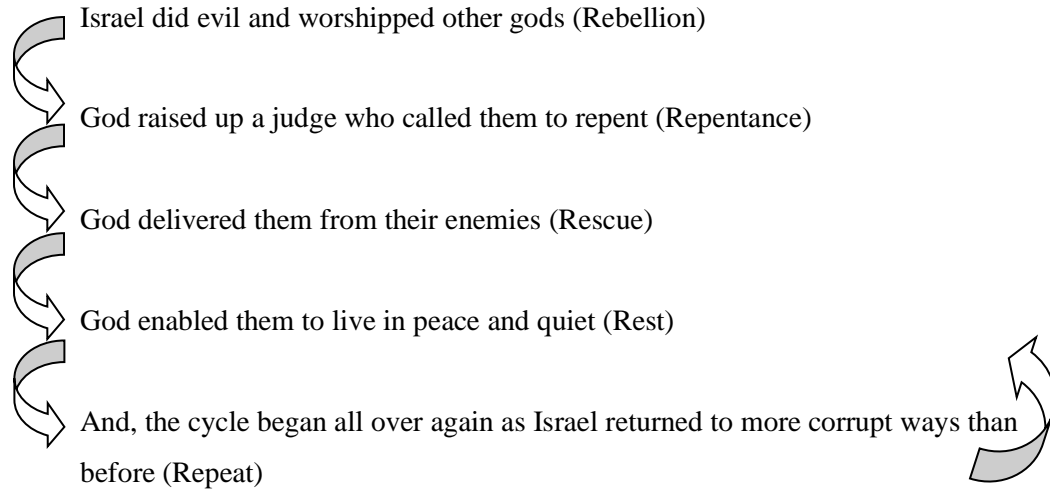
ASSIGNMENT: Read Judges 3:1-5.

EXERCISE:

1. This chapter begins by listing the nations that the Lord left to test those Israelites who had no previous battle experience. The nations were (verse 3): _____, _____, _____, and the _____.
2. According to verse 4 why did God want to test them? _____
3. What did the Israelites end up doing (verse 5-6)?
 - a. Verse 5 _____
 - b. Verse 6 _____
 - c. Verse 6b _____
4. In Psalm 106:34-39 the psalmist gives a summary of what was going on during this time in Israel's history. Consider what these six verses tell us about the choices Israel made:
 - a. Verses 34-35: What was their act of disobedience? _____
What did they choose to do instead? _____
 - b. And what about their idolatry?
 - i. Verse 36: _____
 - ii. Verse 37: _____
 - iii. Verse 38 _____

- iv. Verse 39: They became _____ by their _____, and played the _____ in their _____.

TEACHING: A pattern of Israel's behavior began to unfold as one judge after the next was raised up. Earlier in this study we looked at Judges 2:16-19. The cycle went something like this:



Since we can't delve into the details of each chapter we will simply identify some of the judges and consider Israel's pattern of behavior. You are encouraged to use colored markers to give attention to the people's refusal to give up their evil practices and stubborn ways.

EXERCISE: Immediately in Judges 3:7-11 the pattern of behavior is established.

1. What did Israel do (verse 7)?
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____

They *forgot the Lord* and exchanged Him for other gods.

2. What was God's reaction to their behavior (verse 8)?
 - a. _____
 - b. _____

He made Israel subject to the foreign kings.

3. How did the Israelites respond to their bondage (verse 9)?

Living uncomfortably they cried out to the Lord.

4. How did God respond (verse 9)?

God raised up a judge who saved them.

5. There was _____ in the land until the judge _____ (verse 11).

Part 4

ASSIGNMENT: Read Judges 3:12-16, 30 and Judges 4:1. It's a sad picture but verse 12 begins with the words, "And the people of Israel _____ did..."

EXERCISE:

1. In your Bible underline with different colored markers each of the following parts to Israel's behavioral cycle:
 - What did Israel do?
 - What was the Lord's response?
 - What happened to the Israelites?
 - What did Israel do?
 - What did the Lord do?
 - What was the new condition of the land?
 - What happened to the judge? And, *once again*...
2. Othniel, Ehud, Deborah and Gideon were all judges. In Judges 8:33-35 we read that as soon as Gideon died the people of Israel _____ and _____ after the Baals. One can ask:
 - a. What was so appealing about the foreign gods that they would defile themselves by worshipping them? _____
 - b. Why would they abandon the God who had rescued them from the hands of all their enemies on every side (verse 34)? _____
 - c. Why would they fail to show kindness to their leader for all the good things that he had done for them (verse 35)? _____
3. Four different words and phrases give us a clue as to why they did what they did. What are the words and phrases in the following verses?
 - a. Judges 2:2 _____
 - b. Judges 2:17 _____
 - c. Judges 3:7 _____
 - d. Judges 8:33-34 _____

APPLICATION: These instructions are for us as well. Look at each of these references. Read the Old Testament reference that gives instruction to Israel and then read the New Testament reference that gives instruction to us. What is the instruction?

Instruction	Old Testament Reference	New Testament reference
Obey	Deuteronomy 6:5-6	John 14:15, 23
Listen	Deuteronomy 30:20	John 10:27-28
Do not forget	Deuteronomy 4:9	James 1:25
Remember	Psalm 105:5	Luke 22:19

1. How do we demonstrate our love for the Lord? _____
2. Not only are we called to listen but also to _____
3. To keep from forgetting what we have heard we are encouraged to _____
4. What does Jesus offer in order that we might remember Him? _____

5. Practical instruction is given for us regarding the generations yet to come:
 - a. Psalm 78:5-7 _____
 - b. Psalm 145:4-7 _____
 - i. Tell _____
 - ii. Speak of _____
 - iii. Meditate _____
 - iv. Proclaim _____
 - v. Celebrate _____
6. How might you strengthen your memory in order that you never forget? _____

7. How might you help to strengthen someone else in order that they may come to know the Lord and never forget Him? _____

Part 5

WHAT WE LEARN ABOUT GOD: The Good News is for all of us.

1. In Psalm 106:40-46 we are reminded of God's anger and wrath towards His people, His inheritance. But take a moment and look closely at verses 44-46. In spite of rebellion He heard their cry and for their sake He _____ His covenant.
2. Psalm 111:5b reminds us again that He _____ His covenant, not just for the moment but _____! Just as He remembered the covenant He made with Abraham, He remembers the covenant He made with us in our baptism. He is our God and we are His people... forever!
3. Jeremiah 31:33-34 tells us that in spite of our wickedness, He not only forgives but He _____ our sin no more. He forgets our sin!

PRAYER: Praise the Lord, O my soul, and do not forget all His benefits—who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with love and compassion, who satisfies your desires with good things so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's. Thank You, Lord for remembering the eternal covenant that You made with Your people. Thank You for forgetting my sin, for remembering it no more. _____

DIGGING DEEPER: The Book of Judges documents several stories about the judges whom God raised up following the deaths of Joshua and the whole generation who knew the Lord and what He had done for Israel. These judges were raised up to save Israel from the hands of those who oppressed them even though Israel would not listen to the judges but continued to prostitute themselves before other gods. Some of these historical stories are gruesome. One example is recorded in Judges 3, the story of Ehud the left-handed deliverer. Another ghoulish event took place in Judges 4 during the time when Deborah served as judge in Israel. Judges 6 begins the story of another prominent judge Gideon. In Judges 11 we read about Jephthah, the man who made a foolish vow. You are encouraged to read and begin to familiarize yourself with the facts of these stories.

LESSON FIVE

YOU SHALL CONCEIVE AND BEAR A SON

JUDGES 13-15 – A NAZIRITE

OVERVIEW OF LESSON 5

Overview	49
Introduction	50
Lesson 5: Judges 13-15	
• Samson, the Nazirite	51
• Manoah's Pursuit of Instruction	52
• Samson's Character	53
• God's Power	54
• Samson's Appetite for Revenge	56

INTRODUCTION

Many people have heard the story of Samson but not in its entirety. In Lesson 5 you will learn about Samson, the Nazirite. Earlier in the Old Testament the Israelites were given instructions for those who took the Nazirite vow. Learn what those instructions were and watch how Samson would apply these Nazirite instructions to his role and responsibilities as Israel's new judge.

Consider your own reaction to Samson's character. He revealed who he was in the way he interacted with his parents, the way he responded to situations, and through the demands he made on the Lord Himself. Decide for yourself which of his character traits you admire ones and which you would like to emulate.

His physical strength was great when "the Spirit of the Lord rushed on him." God used the strength He gave to Samson as a means of beginning to save His people from the hand of the Philistines, Israel's enemy. Samson, however, was a man who believed in doing to others what they had first done to him. He revenge and used his great strength to payback his enemies with vengeance. Consider if his vengeful spirit was a godly response to his circumstances.

As you study Lesson 5 remember that this is not the end of the story. God has chosen Samson to be Israel's judge. God has empowered Samson to do mighty things. God has chosen to use Samson to rout and begin the defeat of the Philistines, His enemies.

Part 1

INTRODUCTION: Probably the most familiar character in the Book of Judges is Samson, the Nazirite, the man known for both his strength and his weaknesses. His story begins in Judges 13.

ASSIGNMENT: Read Judges 13. As you read, identify the following:

1. The characters in the story
2. The problem
3. Facts about the Nazirites
4. The encounter with the angel of the Lord
5. The answered prayer

EXERCISE:

1. Who had control over the Israelites? According to verse 1 why did this happen? _____

2. Who are the primary characters in the story? _____
3. What was the problem? _____
4. In spite of the woman's problem, what was the angel's message to her? _____

TEACHING: What was a Nazirite? The Nazirites were people "set apart to God." The angel of the Lord gave the woman specific instructions that were to be implemented immediately and continued through the pregnancy. What were these instructions (verse 4-5)?

1. _____
2. _____

These instructions were established already in Numbers 6:1-21. Compare the regulations and stipulations of the Nazirite with words spoken by the angel of the Lord in Judges 13:3-7. _____

The Nazirite was one who separated himself to the Lord. His presence served as a visible reminder to the people that God had called His people to holiness by separating themselves from the gods of those around them and to live set apart as children of the eternal covenant.

EXERCISE: Judges 13

1. What was Manoah’s prayer? What was his request (verse 8)? _____

2. Manoah invites the visitor to stay and have dinner. Then he asks the angel of the Lord, “What is your name? What was the reply? _____
3. Then, how did the angel of the Lord reveal Himself in verses 19-21? _____

4. What was the response of Manoah and his wife (verses 22-23)? _____

5. The Lord kept His promise to Manoah and his wife. Samson _____ and the Lord _____ him, and the _____ began to _____ in him.

REFLECTION: From everything we can tell this baby was something special. He was conceived by a woman who was barren. All of his life he would be a Nazirite, set apart to God. His parents were godly people asking God to teach them how to bring up the child and inquiring what would be the rule for the boy’s life and work. They believed what they were told and acted accordingly.

Parents-to-be often read books that tell the mother what to expect during the pregnancy or what the child will need once it is born or what the different stages the child will go through as it passes from infancy to early childhood. These parents-to-be in Judges 13 had different concerns. They asked the Lord to teach them how to bring up the child who was to be born. If you were the one who was the parent-to-be, what would you ask the Lord to teach you? _____

EXERCISE: What is the instruction given in each of these verses?

1. Genesis 18:19 _____
2. Deuteronomy 6:5-9 _____

3. Proverbs 22:6 _____
4. Ephesians 6:4 _____

APPLICATION: Whether a parent-to-be, single, childless, young or old, Manoah’s pursuit of instruction for living our lives is just as important for us.

1. What does it mean to me that I am set apart to God? _____

2. Assuming that it's never too late, what teaching and instruction do I want and need as I consider living out the rest of my life? _____

3. What is the purpose statement for my life? What is at the core and essence of my being that determines what my life is all about? _____

PRAYER: Write out your prayer asking the Lord to guide you in the way that you should go. _____

Part 2

INTRODUCTION: At the end of Judges 13 we thought we had the perfect child, a child who loved and honored his parents, a child who grew up as one blessed by the Lord and in whom the Spirit of the Lord was beginning to stir. Chapter 14 begins to tell us about the life of this child who has now become a man. As we continue our study of Samson's life keep in mind the reason God had Samson set apart.

The end of Judges 13:5 tells us that "he shall begin to _____ Israel from the _____ of the _____."

ASSIGNMENT: Read Judges 14. Watch for the following:

1. What Samson wanted
2. What was the argument
3. What happened on the road to Timnah
4. Consider the incident of the carcass and the honey
5. What happened at the feast
6. How the story ended

EXERCISE:

1. Keep in mind that Samson would begin to deliver Israel from the Philistines. Now read through chapter 14 once again and identify some of the more important *facts* of the story:
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____

- d. _____
- e. _____

Write additional facts in your notebook.

2. Samson demanded that his parents secure a particular _____ woman for him as his wife (verse 2). Why did his parents object strongly to his demand? _____

3. The Spirit of the Lord came upon him in power. This is the first incident in which his physical strength is displayed. What was so important about the honey taken from the carcass of the lion? What do you recall from Numbers 6:6-7? _____

4. Samson's wife was threatened by the bridegroom's companions. What did they threaten to do (verse 15)? _____
5. So Samson's wife went home and then sobbed and whined and continued to press Samson until he can stand it no longer. He confided in her the answer to the riddle. What was the consequence because Samson gave his wife the answer? _____
6. Samson knew how they got the answer because she was the only one who knew. What is Samson's reply to their correct answer? _____
7. Once again, the Spirit of the Lord came upon him in power (verse 19). What did he do? _____

Samson was furious. Where did he go? _____
What happened to his wife? _____
8. How did you expect the story to end? _____

Part 3

WHAT WE LEARN ABOUT GOD: Judges 14

1. At the beginning of this chapter Samson was portrayed as a demanding and disrespectful son. He refused to follow the laws of God and marry only an Israelite woman. Instead, he insisted on taking a Philistine woman to be his wife. Then we read verse 4: His parents did not know that this was from the Lord for He was seeking an opportunity against the Philistines. And, we're puzzled. Is this what God is like? Does this mean that God sometimes even leads a child to be demanding and disrespectful? Or, might this mean that God can use and even create situations that allow Him to accomplish His righteous purposes? _____

2. Twice in this chapter we read that “the Spirit of the Lord rushed upon him.” Each time Samson demonstrated extraordinary physical strength. The first experience was told in verses 5-6 and the second was in verse 19. One was against a _____ and the other against _____

God chose to use Samson to display His strength. Consider times when you have been made aware or even observed God’s power and strength displayed through the life of another. The use of extraordinary strength is also evident when adrenal glands have been activated by an emergency situation.

3. Does this extraordinary strength mean only physical power? What do we learn about God when the Word says that the Spirit of the Lord came upon him in power? _____
-

TEACHING: Experiencing the Spirit of God may be something unfamiliar to you. Samson was an extraordinary man. Not only was he conceived by a barren woman but he was set apart as a Nazirite. He was raised in a godly home to parents who called on the Lord for wisdom as they brought up the boy for the life and work God had for him to do.

You may be wondering: If I haven’t experienced the Spirit of God does that mean something is wrong with me? The Spirit of God is not a feeling. It’s not waiting for an emotional experience. The Spirit of God comes upon our lives in powerful ways that are quite ordinary. Bringing His love and compassion to a lonely, hurting friend, listening attentively to the disappointment and fear of someone who has lost a job or missed a promotion, and celebrating an accomplishment, a birth or an engagement are all examples of ordinary ways in which the Spirit of the Lord comes in power.

For those who have been made His in baptism, the Spirit of the Lord comes in power as He claims them to be His own. He sets them apart for His holy purposes. The use of ordinary water and His holy Word combine to give us an extraordinary experience. In baptism He makes us His children, heirs of His Kingdom and offers life everlasting with Him. In baptism He takes the pollution of our sin and gives us an extraordinary measure of His grace and mercy through the forgiveness of all our sins. If you have not experienced the extraordinary gift of His grace and mercy, the forgiveness of all you sins through faith in Jesus, my prayer for you is that the Spirit of the Lord will come to you in power in this moment.

PRAYER: O Jesus, You have died for me. You are my Savior. May Your Spirit come to me in power, in that power which comes from only knowing You. Keep me from looking for an extraordinary experience filled with emotion and feeling but rather open my eyes to see Your Spirit at work in the

ordinary ways in which You choose to use me. Today I especially offer to You my prayer of praise and thanksgiving for all the blessings You have so graciously poured out on my life. _____

Part 4

REVIEW: Even before Samson was born, we learned that he was to be a Nazirite. He would begin the deliverance of the Israelites from the Philistines. We learned that Samson chose to marry a Philistine woman who was a means God used to confront the Philistines. In his anger and because of her manipulation Samson returned to his father's house. His wife was given to his wedding attendant.

ASSIGNMENT: Read Judges 15. Once again you will be looking for the facts of the story.

- What did Samson learn when he returned to his wife?
- What was Samson's revenge?
- What was the response of the Philistines?
- How did the Israelites get involved?
- What was God's response to Samson's need?

EXERCISE:

1. What happened when Samson returned to be with his Philistine wife (verses 1-2)? _____

2. What was her father's solution to the problem? _____
3. Samson felt that his revenge on the Philistines was justified. What did he decide to do (verses 4-5)? _____

4. How did the Philistines respond (verse 6)? _____
5. What was Samson's response (verses 7-8)? _____

6. The rock of Etam was located in the territory of the tribe of Judah. In order to capture Samson the Philistines camped out in Judah. What did Judah do once they understood what the Philistines wanted (verse 11-13)? _____

7. Once again, what happened in verse 14? _____

8. It appears that Samson's revenge on the Philistines was completed. He was satisfied. The place was called _____ (verse 17).
9. Samson has a real need in verse 18. What is it? _____
10. How did the Lord respond? _____
And Samson was strengthened and revived.
11. Israel was under the rule of the Philistines. Samson, however, served as judge and led the Israelites during this period of time. How long? _____

TEACHING: This chapter is about revenge. Revenge is getting even with an individual or group. Revenge becomes like an insatiable appetite. It is never satisfied. Revenge is the attempt to get the upper hand. "It's payback time! I will retaliate. I will get back at you." "I won't let this pass without retribution." "You caused me pain and now I'm going to see to it that you experience pain." And, each infliction is worse than the one before. "I won't rest until you get what I believe you deserve." It insinuates that I am right and you are wrong.

CHALLENGE QUESTIONS:

1. What is the antidote to revenge? _____

2. How is the antidote acquired? _____

LESSON SIX

THE LORD HAD LEFT HIM

JUDGES 16 – SAMSON AND DELILAH

OVERVIEW OF LESSON 6

Overview	59
Introduction	60
Lesson 6: Judges 16	
• Responding to Injustice	61
• God is the Judge	62
• The Story of Samson and Delilah Begins	63
• Samson’s Strength Is Gone	64
• Real Strength	66
• Samson’s Loss of Sight	67
• Samson’s Death	68
• Conclusion to the Book of Judges	69

INTRODUCTION

God had been patient with Samson for many years. And then in Judges 16:20 we read these disparaging words, “The Lord had left him.” What did the Philistines want to know about Samson? What was the obstacle to their success? What was the secret he kept hidden and finally revealed?

Samson lived a life quite contrary to the life of a Nazirite. A Nazirite was one who was devoted, or dedicated, to the Lord. Recall from Lesson 5 some of the discrepancies between Samson’s lifestyle and the lifestyle commitment of the Nazirite. Yet, regardless of the discrepancies, we don’t sense God’s impatience with Samson. In spite of how he acted, God used him for the deliverance of Israel from the Philistines.

Judges 16 once again reveals Samson’s heart filled with revenge. What had revenge done to him? What was the driving force in his life? What motivated him to action? Throughout this lesson ask yourself the question: What is the driving force in your life that motivates you to action?

Watch how his twenty years as a judge ended. We can’t help but consider our own life. We can ask, “Will I be foolishly entertaining people, being the brunt of everyone’s laughter, the source of everyone’s joke.” What will be my last request? Will it be filled with vengeance? Or, we can ask, “What changes might I make in the way I live my life that will give credibility to my life and give an accurate witness to the One who lives in me?” Will I be bold to proclaim that without You, O Lord, I can do nothing but with you I can do all things?

Part 1

WHAT WE LEARN ABOUT GOD:

1. What do these verses tell us about God and vengeance?
 - a. Deuteronomy 32:35 _____
 - b. Isaiah 2:12, 17-18 _____

 - c. Leviticus 19:18 _____

 - d. Romans 12:17-21 _____

2. Write a summary statement. What do we learn about God and vengeance from these passages?

APPLICATION: We must take time to consider our own response to the evil that may be done to us whether intentional or not. Unjust things happen every day. Some things just don't seem fair.

1. Certain actions and responses are just not right. How do we respond? Samson felt justified in seeking revenge for the wrong that had been done to him by the Philistines and vice versa. From our teaching, what have we learned is the godly response to revenge? _____

2. Does a particular injustice come to your mind, something done to you or by you? What are God's instructions for living at such times as this? _____

3. When do you find it difficult to respond in a godly manner to an injustice? _____

4. The newspapers are filled with incidences of people acting revengefully against others. During this next week clip out articles that the media considers worthy of attention but in essence are only stories of vengeance. What might we learn from these outcomes? _____

MEMORIZATION: Read Psalm 94. Pay back is God’s job. God is the Judge. He is the One who is our fortress and our rock, a place where we can run to and hide. Samson hid in the cleft of the rock of Etam (Judges 15:8). The Lord our God is our rock in whom we can take refuge. He will payback and destroy the wicked. This is His promise. Write Psalm 94:1-2, 22-23 on an index card. Memorize it! Keep the card handy and note the different times when you observe revenge or when you yourself wanted retribution.

Part 2

TEACHING: Dealing with revenge, as God would have us do, is beyond our human ability. Our inclination is to pay back evil for evil. Jesus Himself gives us the example of the ultimate cost for not rendering evil for evil. Look up the following references and consider the truths these passages teach.

Reference	Teaching
Matthew 5:44-45	
Luke 23:34	
Acts 7:59-60	
Romans 12:14-21	
1 Peter 2:23-24	
1 Peter 3:9	

Write a summary of what these references teach regarding our response to those who mistreat us:

PRAYER: O Lord, often I find myself in situations when I feel that others have treated me unjustly. You must have felt that way when you were crucified on the cross. What had you done to deserve such punishment, even death? You were silent. You didn’t see retribution or revenge. You never asked the Father to pay back evil for evil. You kept silent for my sake. Give me an extra measure of Your power.

May Your Spirit of power come on me, Lord, so that rather than seek revenge I am able to love others as You have loved me. _____

Part 3

INTRODUCTION: Judges 16:1-22 begins and ends in Gaza, a town situated in the southern part of Philistine territory. Locate this town on the map just off the Mediterranean coast due west of the Dead Sea. The story of Samson and Delilah reveals the vulnerability of this man to the deception of sin. Remember that God had given the instruction to Manoah and his wife that their son Samson was to be a Nazirite. One distinguishing stipulation for Samson was that his hair was not to be cut (Judges 13:5).

Another important fact to remember is that as a Nazirite Samson was set apart to begin the deliverance of the Israelites from the Philistines. We learned that once again Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord who delivered them into the hands of the Philistines (Judges 13:1). The Philistines were intimidating because of their advanced use of iron. For much of Israel's history these people remained a menacing threat. They were a remnant of those who occupied the Promised Land at the time Israel began to take possession. Now during the time of Samson's leadership they continued to be a threat to the Israelites.

The relationship between Samson and Delilah is familiar. Hollywood has made movies about this story; however, many people do not understand that Samson had been set apart to God for His righteous purposes. As you read the story consider the relationship between these two characters and consider whether or not this truly is a love story.

ASSIGNMENT: Read Judges 16:1-22. Watch for the *facts* of the story.

- Who are the characters in the story?
- What is the plot?
- How does the story end?

EXERCISE:

1. What do the people of Gaza, the Philistines, set out to accomplish (verses 1-2)? _____

a. Where was Samson? _____
b. How did he escape? _____

2. Delilah is the new love of Samson's life (verse 4). She was cunning and conniving. What was the scheme she agrees to with the Philistine rulers (verse 5)?
 - a. What was she to do? _____
 - b. What would be her compensation? _____
3. Three times Delilah asked Samson to reveal the secret of his strength and three times he deceived her. Note the progression of her crafty approaches:
 - a. Verse 6: _____
 - b. Verse 10: _____
 - c. Verse 13: _____

Delilah was persistent in her ploy for her personal and selfish gain.
4. And three times Samson gave flippant and frivolous responses:
 - a. Verse 7: _____
 - b. Verse 11: _____
 - c. Verse 13: _____

Samson enjoyed withholding the secret of his strength from Delilah.
5. What were Delilah's accusations (verses 10, 13, 15)? _____

6. What means did Delilah use to finally discover the secret of his great strength (verse 16)? _____

7. With nagging and prodding she wore Samson down and he told her everything. Delilah succeeded. She got the information she needed, told the Philistine rulers who came running with their payoff of silver, cut his hair while he was sleeping, and _____ (verse 19).
8. What happens when Samson awakens (verse 20)? _____

 - a. The Philistines seized him. What did they do to him? _____
 - b. Where did they take him? _____
 - c. What did they make him do? _____
9. What does verse 22 say that seems to offer a small ray of hope? _____

REFLECTION: One can't help but ask the question: What went wrong? Here was a man who had supernatural physical power, a man who had been set apart to God from birth, who led Israel for twenty years, and who was to begin Israel's deliverance from their oppressor. Now this same man is weak, blind, and has been set to grinding in the prison. The oppressor he had been sent to destroy seemingly has destroyed him.

Samson’s uncontrolled sexual appetites ultimately led to his ruin. He demanded that his parents get a Philistine woman for his wife (Judges 14:2). He took a prostitute (Judges 16:1) and now has fallen in love with another woman (Judges 16:4). Serious consequences followed each relationship. With his wife the situation had to do with a riddle and the consequence was giving thirty garments and sets of clothes. With the prostitute it had to do with the people of Gaza attempting to kill him and the city gates were destroyed, and with Delilah his strength was gone and the Lord also left him. What more would it take for this man to learn the foolishness of his ways?

In many ways Samson appears to be childlike having the body and strength of an adult man but living as foolishly as a child who lacks discipline and maturity. His appetites determine his actions. His character lacks strength. As a result, he is vulnerable to his own appetites and lacks discernment and fortitude to respond wisely to the temptations posed by others.

One can’t help but wonder what he thought about all day shackled and grinding in prison. If you had the opportunity to interview Samson one morning while he was at the wheel, what are three questions you would like to ask him? Your questions are not to be answered with a “yes” or “no.” Your questions are not to begin with the word “why?”

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Part 4

APPLICATION: We cannot look critically at Samson if we are not willing to look critically at our own lives. Take time to consider those things that make you vulnerable to poor judgment and discretion.

Consider the appetites that expose weaknesses in your character: _____

What do you hear them saying to you as they wear you down with their nagging and prodding? _____

In what ways do they accuse you of lying and foolishness? _____

What strength is yours as you determine how to handle the onslaught of temptation? _____

EXERCISE: If we draw on our strength alone we lack the strength God makes available to us. What do these verses teach us about real strength?

Reference	Teaching
Exodus 15:2	
2 Samuel 22:33	
Psalms 46:1	
Isaiah 40:31	
1 Corinthians 1:25	
1 Peter 4:11	

MEMORIZATION: Philippians 4:13 is a short verse to memorize. This verse, however, holds truth. It reminds us that we can do all things, even when faced with the impossible. The word “everything” includes all things. The source of all strength is the Lord. I can do everything through Him! He is the provider of all strength. Once again, you are encouraged to write this passage on an index card. Enjoy the exercise of memorizing it. Practice drawing on the strength of the Lord for all of your strength whether physical, mental, emotional, or spiritual.

PRAYER: Write your prayer using Ephesians 3:16 and Colossians 1:11. Change pronouns to make your prayer personal. God wants to hear you use His Word as you speak to Him in the same way a parent enjoys hearing a child use words and concepts that the parent has taught the child. _____

Part 5

INTRODUCTION: Samson was captured; his eyes were gouged out, and now the Philistines have him in Gaza grinding in the prison. Judges 16:22 says that his hair began to grow again. His strength was returning.

ASSIGNMENT: Read Judges 16:23-31. Be on the lookout for the following:

- Why were the Philistines celebrating?
- What was their entertainment?
- What was Samson’s prayer?
- How did God answer Samson’s prayer?

EXERCISE:

1. What did the Philistine rulers decide to do (verse 23)? _____

2. Who did they credit for the capture of Samson? _____

3. Their revenge was fulfilled. What had Samson done that made him their enemy (verse 24)?

Review these references:

a. Judges 14:19 _____

b. Judges 15:3-5 _____

c. Judges 15:14-15 _____

4. The crowd had been eating and drinking and now they called for Samson. What did they want him to do (verse 25)? _____

5. What did Samson ask a servant to do (verse 26)? _____

6. What do we learn about Dagon’s temple in verse 27? Who had gathered to watch Samson perform? _____

7. What was Samson’s prayer (verse 28)? _____

8. Samson placed his hands on each of the two central pillars of the temple. What were his final words? _____

a. He pushed with all his might and _____

b. Who was killed with him? _____

9. What are we told in verse 31? _____

REFLECTION: The Philistine rulers believed that the ultimate revenge was theirs. They sacrificed and feasted confident that their god Dagon had delivered Samson into their hands. But Samson continued to seek revenge—one last time. In verse 28 he asked the Sovereign Lord for the strength to execute one blow that would give him revenge for the loss of his eyes. In a physical sense he had lost his eyesight. One can’t help but ask if he hadn’t also lost his spiritual eyesight. The people had been feasting and

celebrating their deliverance of Samson into their hands. They were giving Dagon the credit for their success and offered a great sacrifice to this god of theirs. Worshipping this false god, however, was not what caused Samson to call upon the Lord asking for one more extraordinary display of strength. Rather he sought to revenge the Philistines for the loss of his two eyes.

1. What had caused Samson to lose his perspective? What caused him to forget that God had set him apart for His own righteous purposes? _____

2. How had Samson's vengeance on the Philistines replaced his ability to see things from God's perspective? _____

3. Did blind Samson see things quite clearly and calling on the Lord bring God's vengeance on the Philistines who were celebrating Dagon's victory? Support your answer. _____

4. Take a few minutes and write some of your own reflections on this critical ending to Samson's life according to these verses in Judges 16:23-31. _____

PRAYER: O Sovereign Lord, through the life of Samson we see the destruction of vengeance. Ultimately, we see the destruction it causes, the loss of life—death. Samson lost a perspective on life that ended in death. Take the destruction of hatred from my life and replace it with Your love and forgiveness. Enable me to see life from Your perspective for You constantly forgive and grant to me Your grace and mercy. At all times keep my eyes focused on You, the Giver of every good and perfect gift. Fill me with Your compassion and empower me to respond to all of life with grace and mercy, not repaying evil for evil but repaying evil with good. _____

THE BOOK OF JUDGES CONCLUDES:

1. Although we will not be looking with detail on the remaining chapter in the Book of Judges, one sentence remains that is repeated several times. What are we told in Judges 17:6, 18:1, 19:1 and Judges 21:25? _____
2. Corruption was rampant. Above all else, idols and other images were made, worshipped and kept within the homes of the Israelites. In addition, the priests were crooked, seeking their own things rather than the things of God. The lifestyle of the times is summarized in this repeated sentence:

“In those days, there was no king in Israel. _____.”

The Book of Judges ends with these words.

3. Without obedience to God’s commands and laws the Israelites made for themselves their own laws. They made themselves the god who governed their lives. Their law was that there was no law. They lost their identity as God’s people. They blended in and looked like everyone else. They no longer lived as people set apart to God. They abandoned their responsibilities to the community and regarded themselves as individuals of greater importance.
4. Consider ways in which “everyone did as he saw fit” can be observed and one change you can make that would make a difference:
 - a. Within society? _____
 - b. Within the family? _____
 - c. Within yourself? _____

UNIT REVIEW

**GOD'S PRESENCE,
OUR VICTORY**

REVIEW

Identify the names of the people you recall from your study. What are a couple of things you remember about these individuals? Don't be discouraged if you don't remember all of them. This isn't a test, so take time to look up references to trigger your memory!

Name	Words of Recollection	Reference
Joshua		Joshua 1
Rahab		Joshua 2
Achan		Joshua 7
Ehud, Deborah, and Gideon		Judges 3-6
Nazirites		Judges 13:7
Samson		Judges 13
Philistines		Judges 13:1
Delilah		Judges 16

A few phrases and sentences were repeated in our study. List those you remember. References are given to help you get started.

1. Joshua 1:6 _____
2. Joshua 10:28 _____
3. Joshua 11:23 _____
4. Judges 1:19 _____
5. Judges 2:11 _____
6. Judges 14:19 _____

Write three or four sentences that describe what has happened to the Israelites in the Books of Joshua and Judges. What has happened to them in regards to the land, their leadership, taking possession of the land, living without a king, and the ongoing rise and decline of their spiritual lives as they related to God and worshipped other gods? _____

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