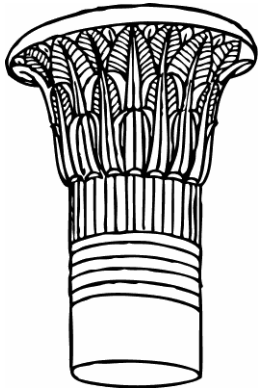


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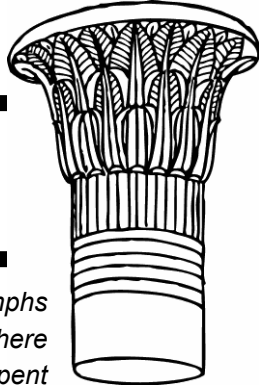
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No King in Israel

Lesson One Joshua 1



When we consider the nearly unbroken string of triumphs that the book of Joshua records, it's easy to forget where the children of Israel have just been. They've just spent forty years in one of the most miserable places on earth, all because they wouldn't have faith in God despite numerous proofs of His abilities. It took those forty years of failure to produce the successes of Joshua. The same can hold true for us. If we want to see spiritual success, either in our lives or in our church, maybe we need to clean up our act first.

1. When does Joshua 1:1 occur? What happens in it? What command does God give in 1:2? According to 1:2-3, why should Joshua even believe this is possible? What does this tell us about the promises of God?

2. What prediction about the future does God make in 1:5? On what does He base this? What corresponding command appears in 1:6? What will happen if Joshua obeys? What does this tell us about the importance of leaders to God's people?

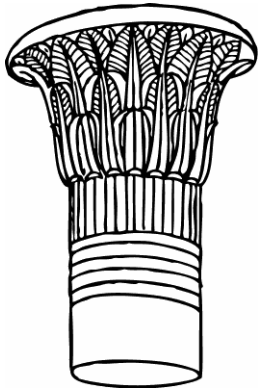
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3. What does God tell Joshua to be courageous about in 1:7? According to 1:8, how is he to accomplish this? What will happen if he does? What application can we make from these things today?

 4. How does God describe His exhortation in 1:9? What specifically is commanded? Why is this possible? What can we take from this?

 5. What command does Joshua give in 1:10-11? According to Deuteronomy 34:8, what has Israel been doing immediately before this? In Joshua 1:11, why does Joshua say he gives the command? What do we need to understand and do to imitate Joshua and Israel in this?

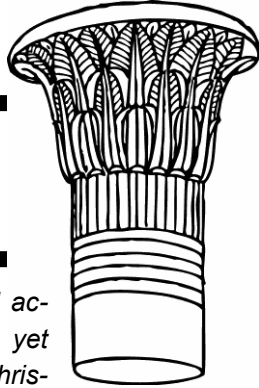
 6. To whom does Joshua speak in 1:12? In 1:13-15, what does he tell them? What occurred in Numbers 32:1-5 to make this instruction important? How can we be like the people of Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh today?

 7. In Joshua 1:16-17, what do the people promise Joshua? According to 1:18, what will happen to anyone who disobeys? What is the only thing the people ask in return? What can we learn from this about leaders and followers in the church today?



No King in Israel

Lesson Two Joshua 2



Some parts of the Bible are easy to understand and accept. When we read accounts of Jesus socking it yet again to the corrupt, deceitful Pharisees, every true Christian cheers inside, even if just a little bit. Some Bible characters, though, are harder to deal with. Rahab, for instance, was a prostitute, a liar, and a traitor, yet appears in the Heroes' Hall of Faith in Hebrews 11. What are we to make of that? Perhaps the most important message is that we, despite our ambiguities and flaws, can still manage to be pleasing to God.

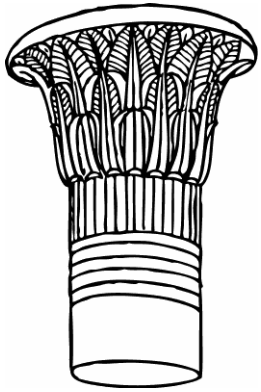
1. What does Joshua do in Joshua 2:1? How do those men obey him? According to 2:2, who finds out? How does he react in 2:3?
2. According to 2:4, how does Rahab react when the searchers come to her door? What does she say to the searchers in 2:4-5? How would we characterize this statement? How do we reconcile Rahab's behavior with passages like John 8:44?

3. Judges 15-21

4. Ruth

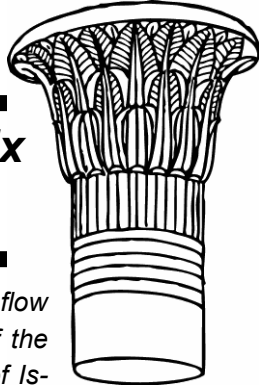
5. 1 Samuel 1-3

6. 1 Samuel 4-7



No King in Israel

Lesson Twenty-Six Review 2



Although many verses aptly summarize the ebb and flow of the historical period of the judges, perhaps one of the most pertinent is Matthew 6:33. When the children of Israel sought God first, regardless of what else happened around them, they prospered and were provided for. When they sought other priorities—pleasure, safety, and so on—is when they lost both God and the things they valued so much. We can fall into the same trap. The truth is quite simple: if we serve God, everything will work out. If we don't, it won't.

Summarize each of the contexts listed below, and explain what makes it relevant today.

1. Judges 7-8

2. Judges 10-14

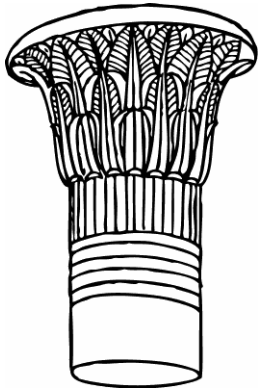
3. According to 2:6, what had Rahab done with the spies? What explanation of her conduct does she give in 2:9-11? Was this something the spies were expecting? What does this tell us about the reach of the power of God?

4. In 2:12-13, what does Rahab seek in return? How do the spies respond in 2:14? What does Rahab do in 2:15-16? What advice does she additionally offer?

5. What pledge do the spies offer Rahab in 2:17-20? Is Rahab's safety unconditional? If not, what conditions are placed on her? What will happen if she disobeys? According to 2:21, how does Rahab react? What should we take from this?

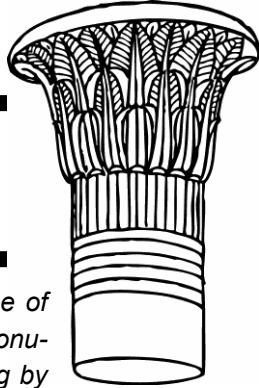
6. According to 2:22-23, what ultimately happens to the spies? What report do they give in 2:24? How does this contrast with the spies' report in Numbers 13:25-33? What does this teach us about the effect our words can have?

7. Where else in Scripture do we see Rahab mentioned, particularly in the New Testament? Why is this significant?



No King in Israel

Lesson Three Joshua 3-5



In the story of the crossing of the Jordan, we find one of the first Biblical instances of the memorial stone: a monument erected so that when the Israelites were passing by it with their children and the children asked about the big heap of rocks, the parents could take the opportunity to explain what God had done for their people. Today's parents need to be on the lookout for memorial stones too, everyday things that they can use to glorify God to their children. Only if we are more diligent in this than Israel will we do better with our children.

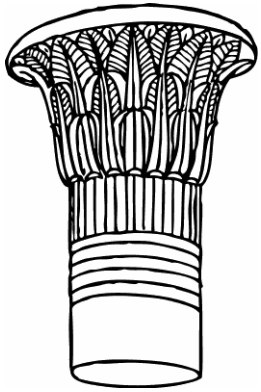
1. In Joshua 3:1, where do we find the children of Israel? What commands does Joshua give in 3:3-5, particularly vs. 5? What explanation does he give for this latter command? What can this teach us today?
2. What does Joshua promise Israel that they will see in 3:13? What meaning does Joshua say they should ascribe to this in 3:10? Is this general connection between miracle and promise similar to anything we see in the New Testament? If so, what?

3. Joshua 7-10.

4. Joshua 11-24

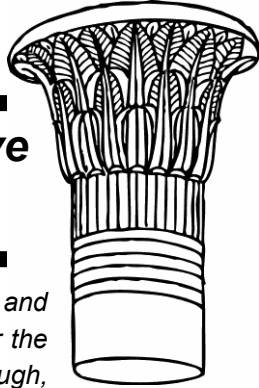
5. Judges 1-4

6. Judges 6



No King in Israel

Lesson Twenty-Five Review 1



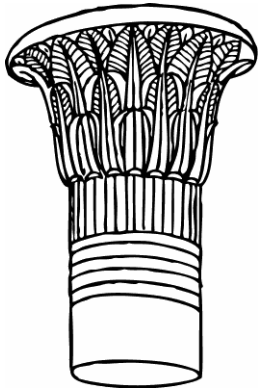
In retrospect, we take many of the marvels of Joshua and Judges for granted. We yawn at the fall of Jericho or the victories of Gideon. What we need to remember, though, is that those victories so predictable in retrospect were much less obvious at the time. 2/3 of Gideon's original army was convinced he wasn't going to win. So it is with our battles. Satan is good at bluffing. He can make the obstacles in front of us look insurmountable too. That's when we need to remember that the God of Gideon is our God too, and that's all that matters.

Summarize each of the contexts listed below, and explain what makes it relevant to us today.

1. Joshua 1-2

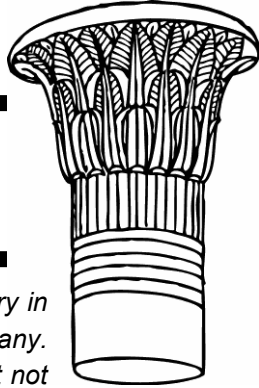
2. Joshua 3-6

3. According to 3:15-17, what did happen when the priests' feet touched the edge of the water? What fact cited in 3:15 makes this display of God's power even more impressive? According to 5:1, what effect did this have on the nations of Canaan? What should we take from it?
4. What command does God give in 4:1-3? What reason for this command does Joshua reveal in 4:5-7? Can we do similar things today? If so, how?
5. According to 4:15-18, what happened to the waters of the Jordan once Israel finished crossing? Is there any other explanation for this besides the hand of God? If not, why is this important?
6. What does Joshua do in 5:2? According to 5:3-7, why was this necessary? Once this action has been carried out, what does God say about it in 5:9? What lesson can we draw from this today?
7. In 5:13-15, whom does Joshua encounter? What does this person command him to do? Why is such a command significant?



No King in Israel

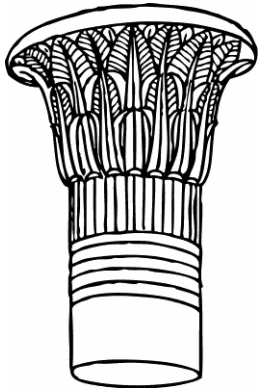
Lesson Four Joshua 6



The story of the fall of Jericho is the most famous story in the entire book of Joshua, yet its point is lost on so many. Joshua and the Israelites succeeded in their conquest not because of their great strength or their great wisdom, but because of their steadfast adherence to the plan of God, even though that plan could have made little earthly sense. In our journey to heaven, we need to adopt the same attitude. We can't lay hold of eternal life by doing what seems right to us. Instead, we must look to God and gain His victory by doing His will.

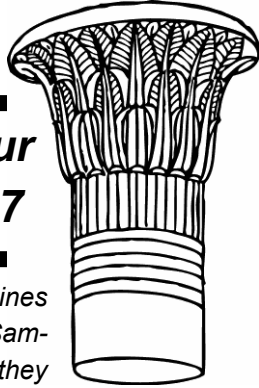
1. According to Joshua 6:1, what is Jericho's situation when the children of Israel come to it? What does God tell Joshua about it in 6:2? Was that true? Was it immediately obvious that it was true? What does this tell us about the promises of God today?
2. What does God tell Joshua to do in 6:3-5? What result does He promise at the end? In human terms, does God's plan make a lick of sense? What should we take from this?

3. What do the men of Beth-shemesh do in 6:21? How do the people of Kiriath-jearim deal with the ark in 7:1? What is the result of all this, according to 7:2? What does this teach us about the consequences of ignorance in serving God?
4. What does Samuel say to the people in 7:3? What does he promise will result from their obedience? How does Israel respond to his words in 7:4? What should we learn from this about the nature of God?
5. What does Samuel command in 7:5? What do the Israelites do there in 7:6? Why is this an important step? How do we need to put this into practice?
6. What do the Philistines do in reaction, according to 7:7? How do the Israelites take this in 7:7-8? What does Samuel do in 7:9? What occurs as a result in 7:10-11? How does Samuel commemorate this event, according to 7:12? What can we take from this?
7. According to 7:13-14, what are the results of what Samuel and Israel did? What is Samuel depicted as doing in 7:15-17? What does this teach us about the importance of godly leaders and people who listen to them?



No King in Israel

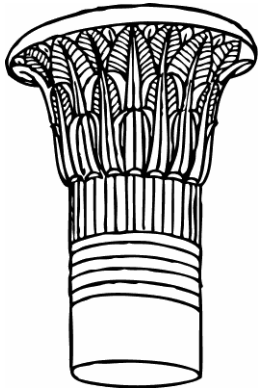
Lesson Twenty-Four 1 Samuel 6:13-7:17



Of all the regional enemies of the Israelites, the Philistines were perhaps the most stubborn. Even the efforts of Samson didn't cramp their style much, and at other times, they positively dominated the Israelites. Interestingly enough, the first complete victory over them comes during the judgeship of Samuel, who was not particularly warlike. The key, though, was that the Israelites confessed their sins and dedicated themselves to the Lord before battle. We can learn much from that. Victory will only come to us if we are righteous.

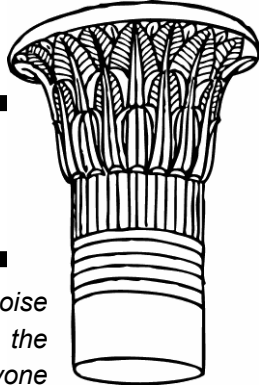
1. How do the people of Beth-shemesh react to the appearance of the ark in 1 Samuel 6:13? What happens to the ark in 6:14? What do the people do with it in 6:14-15? As all this is going on, what do the lords of the Philistines do in 6:16? What did this teach the Philistines? What, then, was the result of this whole sad tale? Why is this important?
2. What mistake do the men of Beth-shemesh make in 6:19? What result does this have? How do the people react? What do they say in 6:20? Was this really God's fault? If not, whose fault was it? Do people make the same mistake today? When? What should this teach us?

3. According to 6:6-14, how carefully do Joshua and the rest of the children of Israel follow God's plan? Where do we see evidence of that concern? Would this have been tedious to do? Would it have been obvious to the Israelites that their actions had any effect? Why did they do it anyway? How can we do likewise?
4. What final step in the plan do the children of Israel follow in 6:20? What happened as a result? Did they see this good result before they followed every step? Why not? Why is this important to us today?
5. What command does Joshua give in 6:18? By contrast, according to 6:19, what happens to all the metal? Does it seem logical for a victorious army to deal with the spoils from a captured city in this way? Once again, what can we take from this?
6. According to 6:21, what happens to all the people of Jericho? By contrast, in 6:25, what happens to Rahab and her family? Why? What makes this stark difference significant?
7. In 6:26, what oath does Joshua make Israel take? Does anyone ever test this oath? If so, what happens? (1 Kings 16:34 may help you here) Why is this important?



No King in Israel

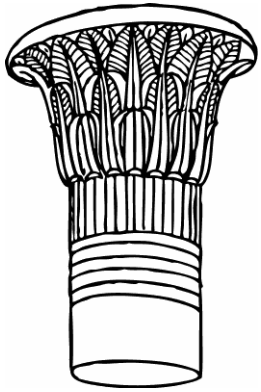
Lesson Five Joshua 7-8



In our day and age, libertarians like to make a lot of noise about “victimless crimes.” They argue that because the drug user or patron of prostitutes does not injure anyone else in his chosen activity, the government should not prevent him from doing that. Regardless of the merits of such an argument, the story of Achan shows that there are no victimless sins. When we transgress, we harm not only ourselves, but also the righteous people of which we are a part. We must shun evil not only for love of God, but for love of our brother too.

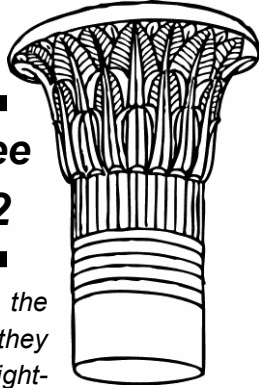
1. What does Joshua do in Joshua 7:2? What report do these men return to him in 7:3? According to 4-5, what happens with the plan? What effect does this have on the morale of the children of Israel? What can we take from this today?
2. How does Joshua react to this in 7:6-9? According to 7:10, how does God reply? What explanation does He give in 7:11-12? What important insight does this give us into the nature of God?

3. Where do we find Eli in 4:13? Why? What does he learn in 4:17? What happens in 4:18? What do we need to learn from the life of Eli?
4. In 5:1-2, what do the Philistines do with the captured ark? What result does this have in 5:3-4? According to 5:5, what did the Philistines do in response? What did they not do that they should have done? Are there times when we see those around us making similar mistakes today? When? What should this teach us?
5. What event does 5:6 describe? In 5:7-8, what do the Ashdodites do about it? What happens in Gath in 5:9? How do the people of Gath deal with this problem in 5:10? What do the people of Ekron think about this solution? In 5:11-12, what do the lords of the Philistines eventually decide to do about it? Why? Why is this story included?
6. According to 6:1, how long do the Philistines keep possession of the ark? What do they do in 6:2? What answer do the diviners make in 6:3-5? What important question do they ask in 6:6? What should we learn from this question?
7. What transportation arrangements do the Philistines make in 6:7-8? What test do they propose in 6:9? According to 6:12, what is the result of the test? What should we learn from this?



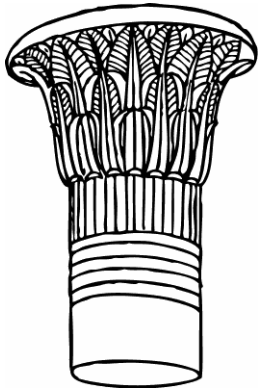
No King in Israel

Lesson Twenty-Three 1 Samuel 4:1-6:12



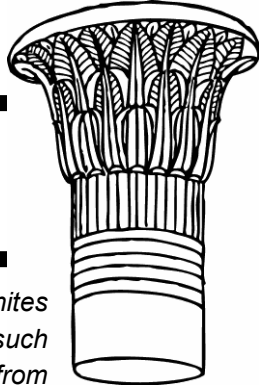
Perhaps more than anything else, what determined the spiritual condition of Israel was the kind of leaders they had. When men like Samuel led them, they were righteous and successful. When evil men like Hophni and Phinehas took the lead, the result was disaster. Godly leaders are just as important in the church today, and in just as short a supply. If we are leaders, we must resolve to do the best job possible, and if in a supporting role, we must follow the godly leaders we have. Only then can we achieve success.

1. What familiar foe appears in 1 Samuel 4:1? What happens in the resulting battle in 4:2? What bright idea do the elders of Israel get in 4:3-4? How do the common people receive this idea in 4:5? What does this tell us about how well our bright ideas for serving God will work if we are not righteous?
2. What do the Philistines do in 4:6? In 4:7-8, what is their initial reaction to the news of the ark? What do they ultimately decide to do in 4:9? According to 4:10-11, what is the result of the ensuing battle? Why did this result occur? What does this teach us about the consequences of our own personal sin?
3. What solution to the problem does God describe in 7:13-15? According to 7:18, whom does the process select? What does this man reveal about himself in 7:20-21? What important lesson about sin does this teach?
4. How is Achan's story confirmed in 7:21-23? In 7:24-26, what happens to him as a result? How does God react? Would this seem harsh to many today? Was it actually harsh? What can we learn from it?
5. What does God tell Joshua in 8:1-2? How are His words similar to what He said before Jericho? How are they different? What does this teach us about God?
6. What plan does Joshua set up in 8:4-8? According to 8:18-22, what happens as a result? Is the handiwork of God as obvious in this story? Who was responsible for the Israelites' victory anyway? Why do we need to understand this?
7. What does Joshua do in 8:30-32? What does Israel do in 8:33? According to 8:34-35, what happens next? Why is this significant?



No King in Israel

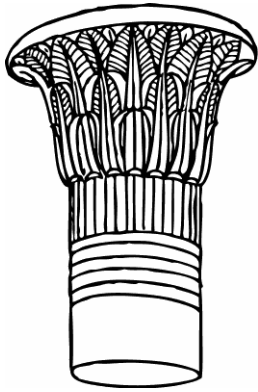
Lesson Six Joshua 9-10



As the twin stories of the Gibeonites and the Canaanites show, when the power of God is revealed, there is no such thing as indifference. Either you seek to be protected from it, or you rebel against it. The same was true throughout the first century. When Paul left a city, it was filled with friends and enemies, but not with fence-sitters. If people today can come into contact with us and remain indifferent to our faith, that's a sign we're doing something wrong. The plain gospel will make enemies, but it is our responsibility to reveal it anyway.

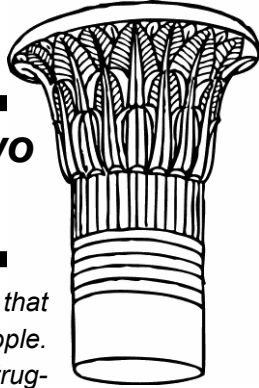
1. What reaction do Joshua's victories generate in Joshua 9:1-2? What different reaction do they generate in 9:3-5? Can we easily see the same two reactions in our work for the Lord? What, then, should we take from this?
2. What do the Gibeonites tell Joshua they want in 9:6? What response does Israel make in 9:7? In 9:9-13, what do the Gibeonites say that is true? What do they say that is not true? What application can we make from this today?

3. What does Eli hear in 2:22? What does he say about it in 2:23-25? What response do his words meet with? Why? What does this mean? A comparison of this text with 2 Thessalonians 2:9-12 may help.
4. Who appears in 1 Samuel 2:27? What problem does he point out in 2:29-30? What does he prophesy will happen in 2:31-36? What does this teach us about the way we need to serve God?
5. Where do we find Samuel in 3:1? What is true at this time? What arrangement is described in 3:2-3? What happens in 3:4-8? What does Eli finally figure out in 3:9? What does he tell Samuel to say? How can we learn to say the same thing?
6. What happens in 3:10? What does Samuel do? What prophecy does he hear in 3:11-14? How does Samuel respond in 3:15? What does Eli do in 3:16-17? How does he take what is said in 3:18? What can this text teach us about revealing unpleasant truths from God's word?
7. How is Samuel described in 3:19? What result does this have in 3:20? What situation is described in 3:21? How can we use this standard to evaluate "prophets" today?



No King in Israel

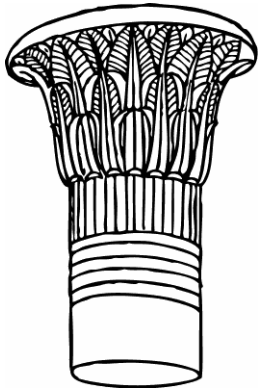
Lesson Twenty-Two 1 Samuel 2-3



One of the truly great things about the Bible is the way that it faithfully records the flaws and frailties of God's people. We see men and women three thousand years ago struggling with the same problems that we face. In this instance, we see Samuel with a familiar quandary: having an unpleasant truth to tell someone. When we deal with our ungodly family members, friends, and co-workers, we encounter the same challenge. Like Samuel, we are often tempted to remain silent, but the only godly way out is to speak the truth in love.

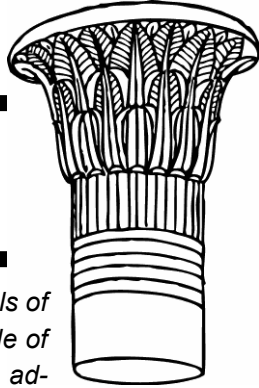
1. What is Hannah doing in 1 Samuel 2:1-10? Summarize the content of her words. What other song in Scripture is this one like? Luke 1:46-55 may help. How does this text help us understand God?
2. How are Eli's sons described in 1 Samuel 2:12? What crimes of theirs are outlined in 2:13-16? What judgment is pronounced against them in 2:17? What does this teach us about God?

3. What does Israel do in 9:14? What do Joshua and the leaders of Israel do in 9:15? What do they fail to do? What lesson is there in this for us?
4. What do the Israelites discover in 9:16? According to 9:18, how does the congregation react to this? What reply do the leaders make in 9:19-21? How do we need to imitate their actions today?
5. According to 9:22-23, what eventually happens to the Gibeonites? How do the Gibeonites feel about this, according to 9:24-26? How should we be like the Gibeonites today? How seriously did God take the oath that Israel swore? 2 Samuel 21:1-6 may help here.
6. According to Joshua 10:1-5, when the kings of Canaan hear about the Gibeonites, how do they respond? What do the Gibeonites do about this in 10:6? According to 10:8-9, how do Joshua and the Israelite army respond? In 10:10-14, how does God respond? What's the point of all this for us?
7. After their defeat, what do the five Canaanite kings do in 10:16? According to 10:18-23, what does Joshua do when he learns of it? What does Joshua have the leaders of Israel do in 10:24? How does he explain himself in 10:25? What lesson like this do we have today?



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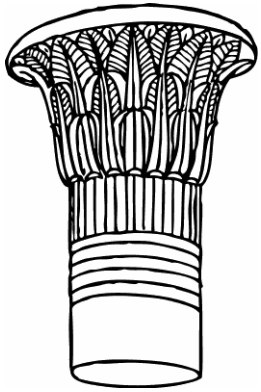
Lesson Seven Joshua 11-21



The story of Joshua is one of the strangest in the annals of military history. The Israelites were an untrained rabble of peasants seeking to subdue a more technologically advanced realm populated with soldiers more numerous than they. God's people should have been thrust back into the desert to die, but instead, they conquered an adversary who had every reason to be confident. Our spiritual battles today may be no easier. We may face foes that appear beyond our abilities too, but no matter who they are, they are no match for God.

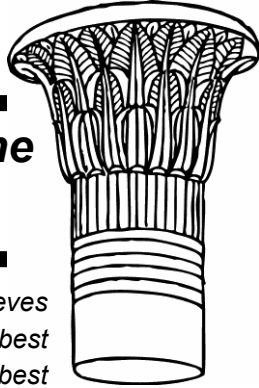
1. According to Joshua 11:1-3, how do the kings of northern Canaan react to the news from the south? How impressive is their army, as described in 11:4? Did they think they had a chance of beating Joshua? Did they really have a chance? What's the point for us?
2. What promise does God make in 11:6? In 11:7-9, what does Joshua do about this? What is the significance of Joshua hocking the horses and burning the chariots? What lesson does this teach us?

3. What is the situation described in 1 Samuel 1:9-10? What vow does Hannah make in 1:11? What is the significance of this vow? What can we learn, then, from the way Hannah understood gratitude?
4. What does Eli see in 1:12-13? What conclusion does he leap to in 1:14? How does Hannah reply to him in 1:15-16? What final reply does Eli make in 1:17? What can we learn from this, both about jumping to conclusions and responding to insult from others?
5. What attitude do we see from Hannah in 1:18? What happens in 1:19-20? How does this justify her attitude? What does she say about her child in 1:20? What about Hannah's mindset do we need to adopt for our own?
6. What yearly event is described in 1:21? According to 1:22, who doesn't take part in it? What explanation for this is given in 1:22-23? How much did Samuel matter to Hannah? What does this teach us about the way we should deal with God in the things that matter?
7. How is the process of surrendering Samuel to Eli described in 1:24-25? What does Hannah say to Eli in 1:26-28? How should Hannah's attitude toward Samuel inform our attitude toward ourselves? Why?



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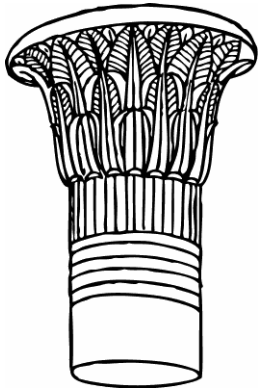
Lesson Twenty-One 1 Samuel 1



In 1 Corinthians 13:7, Paul notes that love both believes and hopes all things. As part of this, love puts the best spin on anything that happens and assumes the best about another. Sadly, many Christians are more likely to follow the example of Eli by jumping to gossipy conclusions about a brother or sister before all the facts are in. Such behavior can lead to either a foolish-looking retraction or prolonged conflict, but perhaps the worst part is that it is unloving. If we truly love, we will hesitate to condemn rather than rushing to it.

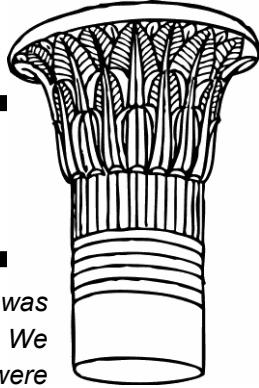
1. Whom do we meet in 1 Samuel 1:1? According to 1:2, what is his family situation? What sign of favoritism do we see from him in 1:3-5? According to 1:6, how does Peninnah react to this? What can we learn from this scenario?
2. According to 1:7, how does Hannah handle all of this? What unhelpful response does Elkanah offer in 1:8? How does this relate to Peter's injunction in 1 Peter 3:7? What does it teach us?

3. Many scholars dispute the date of Joshua's invasion as it is presented in the Bible (approximately 1400 BC). They base their challenge on the lack in the archaeological record of burned cities in Palestine dating from that time. How does 11:13 help to explain that lack? Why is this important to our understanding of the Bible?
4. How is Joshua's war with the Canaanites described in 11:18? According to 11:19, how have the Canaanites reacted to the Israelites? What explanation for this is given in 11:20? What does this mean?
5. What problem do the people of Israel and Manasseh bring to Joshua in 17:14? What response does he make in 17:15? How do they reply to this, according to 17:16? As described in 17:17-18, what is Joshua's final word on the subject? What should we take from this today?
6. What problem appears in 18:2? What does Joshua say about it in 18:3? What solution does he present in 18:4? How does this help to illuminate the later struggles of Israel?
7. According to 21:43-44, what does God do? Why? According to 21:45, what is true of the promises that God made? Why is this important?



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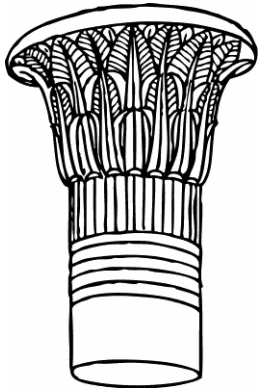
Lesson Eight Joshua 23-24



One of the things I most treasure about my upbringing was the total lack of family debate about serving God. We were going to go to church every time the doors were open, and that was the way it was going to be. We were going to help out by cleaning the building or mowing the lawn, and that was the way it was going to be. Joshua makes a statement like that in Joshua 24:15. It's a statement that every Christian parent needs to make, for their children's lives will be transformed either by its presence or by its absence.

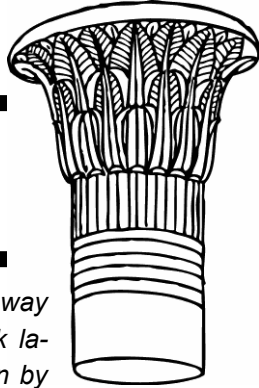
1. When does Joshua 23:1 occur? According to 23:2-3, what does Joshua say to the people then? What does this tell us about Joshua? What does this tell us about the successes of God's people generally?
2. What does Joshua say he has done in 23:4? What does he predict will happen in 23:5? According to 23:6, how can the Israelites ensure that this will happen? What can we learn from this today?

3. What does Ruth do in 3:14? What does Boaz say as she's doing it? What's apparently going on here? What else does Boaz do for her in 3:15-17? What does this teach us about the character of Boaz?
4. What does Naomi tell Ruth to do in 3:18? Why? How do Boaz's actions bear this out in 4:1-2? Judging from passages like Joshua 20:5, what does it appear Boaz is doing? What else does this tell us about Boaz?
5. In Ruth 4:3-4, what does Boaz say to his relative? What initial response does he receive? What additional information does Boaz contribute in 4:5? What does this mean? What new response does he get in 4:6? Why? How do Boaz and his relative seal the deal in 4:7? Why is all of this important?
6. What does Boaz say he is doing in 4:9-11? Why is this important? What blessing do the elders pronounce on this couple in 4:11-12? How does this blessing turn out? What lesson is in this for us?
7. What happens in 4:13? According to 4:14-16, what does this mean for Naomi? According to 4:17, what is its meaning to us? Overall, what should we get out of this account?



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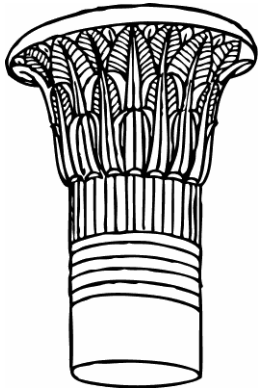
Lesson Twenty Ruth 3-4



One of the more amusing things about Ruth is the way that Naomi's attitude changes. She begins the book lamenting the way that God has wronged her, but even by the second chapter, we see her attitude changing. By the end, we see her utterly content with where she is. Her earlier problem was that she was complaining about the outcome of the story before the story ended. In the same way, we need to be careful not to complain about what God is doing before He's done. Only then can we assess whether He has dealt fairly.

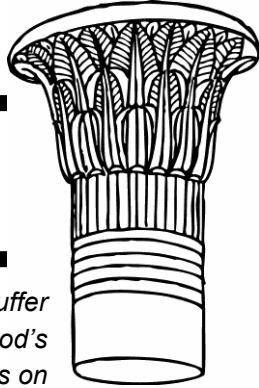
1. What desire of Naomi's does she express in Ruth 3:1? In 3:2-4, what does she instruct Ruth to do to reach this goal? According to 3:4-6, how does Ruth receive this advice? What does this teach us about the way we should listen to older family members today?
2. What does Ruth do in 3:7? In 3:10, how does Boaz describe her when he finds out her identity? What does he evidently think she is doing? What promise does he make in 3:11-13? What can those looking for a godly spouse today learn from Ruth and Boaz?

3. What commandment does Joshua issue in 23:11? What path to disobedience does he outline in 23:12? According to 23:13, what does Joshua say the result of disobedience will be? Historically speaking, what actually happened? What can we learn from this today?
4. According to Joshua in 23:14, what do the children of Israel know? What does Joshua tell them the flip side of the coin is in 23:15? In 23:16, what does he say will bring about that bad outcome? Why is this important for us to understand?
5. What instruction does Joshua offer in 24:14? What alternative does he present in 24:15? What decision does he say he has made for his household? What should we learn from this?
6. What response do the people make in 24:16-18? What rather brusque reply does Joshua give in 24:19-20? What do the people decide in 24:21? What similar warning to all of this do we see in the New Testament?
7. What do the people agree to in 24:22-24? What does Joshua do in response in 24:25? What does Joshua do to remind the people of their commitment in 24:26? What effect will this reminder have, according to 24:27? What should we learn from the solemnity of this ceremony?



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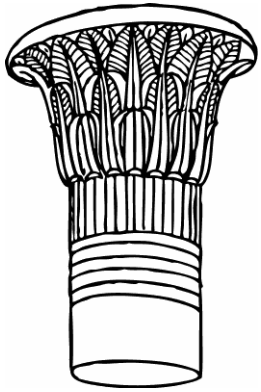
Lesson Nine Judges 1-2



In the beginning of Judges, we see the Israelites suffer from a familiar problem: lack of resolution in doing God's will. During the time of Joshua, they had their enemies on the run, but they failed to follow up on the victories that God won for them. As a result, some of the foes they should have defeated went on to plague them for hundreds of years. We can make a similar mistake in our spiritual struggles, with equally depressing results. We need to remember, then, that victory is not a time for rest, but for renewed effort until the end.

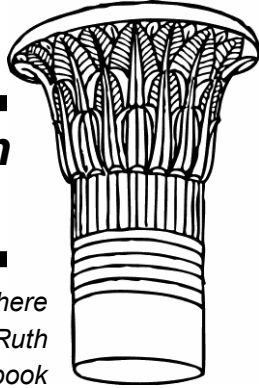
1. What recurring problem is described in Judges 1:27-34? What did Israel do? What did Israel not do? Can we suffer from similar problems today? If so, how?
2. Who appears in 2:1? What does he say about the actions of God? What does he say Israel was supposed to do in return, according to 2:2? What did Israel actually do? What does he say the result will be in 2:3? What application can we make of this to today?

3. What does Naomi say to Ruth in 1:15? What response does Ruth give her, according to 1:16-17? What does Naomi eventually do about this in 1:18? What does this reveal about the character of Ruth that we should emulate?
4. What does Ruth ask to do in 2:2? According to 2:3, in whose field does she end up? What information pointed out in 2:1 makes this significant? Is it just coincidence that this happens? Why should we care?
5. How does Boaz learn about Ruth in 2:5-7? What does he learn? What does he tell her in 2:8-9? What does she ask him in 2:10? How does he reply in 2:11-12? What does this tell us about one of the side effects of righteousness?
6. What other provisions does Boaz make for Ruth in 2:14-16? What was required of him legally by passages like Deuteronomy 24:19-22? Why do you think he behaves as he does? What can we learn from his example?
7. According to Ruth 2:17-18, what is the result of Ruth's work for the day? What does Naomi conclude in 2:19 from Ruth's success? How does she react in 2:20 when she finds out Boaz is responsible? Why? How does this differ from her words in 1:21? What should this teach us?



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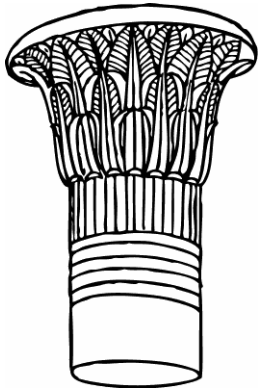
Lesson Nineteen Ruth 1-2



After slogging through the book of Judges, in which there are few, if any, people we wholeheartedly admire, Ruth comes to us as a breath of fresh air. Admittedly, the book contains no spectacular miracles, no great victories over the enemies of Israel, but despite its short length, it has no shortage of good, decent people in a setting that is perhaps more relevant to us. We may never be a leader of God's people, but we can be loyal to our families and treat the poor with decency. We have much to learn from Boaz and Ruth.

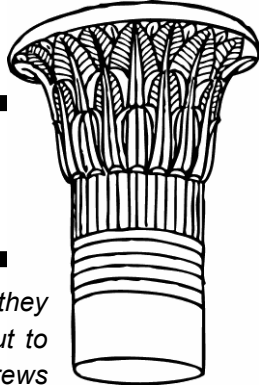
1. According to Ruth 1:1, when does the book take place? What happens to Israel? What result does this produce in 1:1-2? In 1:3-4, what losses does Naomi suffer? Is there any indication she deserved this? What, then, should we take from it?
2. What does Naomi do in 1:6-7? What does she say to her two Moabite daughters-in-law in 1:8-9? Ultimately, what decision do the daughters-in-law make, as revealed by 1:14?

3. According to 2:3-4, how do the people react to this unwelcome announcement? Does this change the decree of God? What lesson does this teach us today?
4. What does Joshua do in 2:6? According to 2:7, what do those people do? What changes in 2:10? Why should we care about this historical pattern?
5. What does 2:11-13 reveal about the conduct of Israel? According to 2:14, what effect does this have on God? As presented in 2:14-15, what does He do as a result? What effect does this have on Israel? What should we learn from this?
6. What does God do in 2:16? What do these judges do once they are raised up? According to 2:17-19, what problems arise despite God's solution? What does this teach us about what leaders can and cannot do today?
7. What effect does this behavior have on God, according to 2:20? What does He decree in 2:21-22? What result does this have in 2:23? What should we take from this today?



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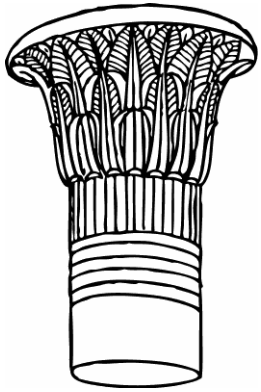
Lesson Ten Judges 4



One of the trademarks of God's plans is that when they succeed, they bring the glory not to His servants, but to Him. This is certainly true in the case of Barak. Hebrews 11 describes him as a man of faith, but during his time, the greatest enemy of God's people was overcome by a woman armed with a hammer and tent peg. The true victor was obviously God. Likewise, in our lives, we should not expect to succeed in the Lord's service in a way that brings praise to us. Instead, if we are doing what we should, God should receive the praise.

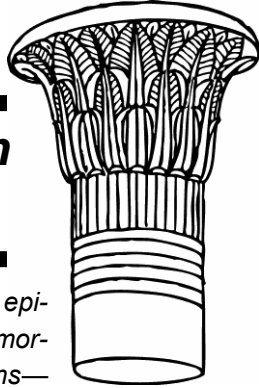
1. According to Judges 4:1, how does the story of Deborah and Barak begin? In 4:2-3, what happens as a result? How long does it take for God to rescue Israel? What can we learn from all this?
2. What character is introduced in 4:4? What is her office? How is she depicted in 4:5? What does this tell us about women in positions of secular authority?

3. Where do the Levite and his concubine end up going in 19:14? What doesn't happen in 19:15? What help do they receive in 19:16-20? Where is this helper from? What does this tell us about the people of Gibeah? Why is this significant?
4. What happens in 19:22? Where else in Scripture do we see a similar occurrence? What offer does the master of the house make in 19:23-24? What results from this in 19:25-28? What does the Levite do about this in 19:29? What reaction does this generate, according to 19:30? What should we take from this?
5. In 20:8-11, what does Israel resolve to do? According to 20:12-14, how do the people of Benjamin react to this? What eventually happens to Benjamin as a result, according to 20:46-48? What does this teach us about having a double standard for the behavior of our relatives?
6. What problem manifests itself in 21:1-7? What first solution does Israel come up with in 21:8-12? What second solution do they take advantage of in 21:16-23? What should we take from this?
7. What final statement is made about this episode, and indeed the entire book of Judges, in 21:25? What's the significance of this statement? What should we learn from it?



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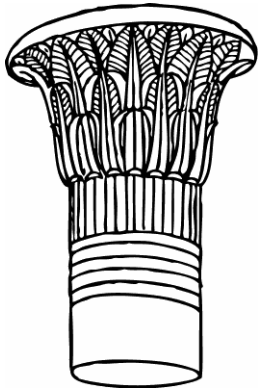
Lesson Eighteen Judges 19-21



Judges 19-21 contains perhaps the most wretched episode in a very wretched book. Lack of hospitality, immorality, murder, foolish oaths, and generally bad decisions—this story has them all! Why? Because there was no king in Israel, or rather, because the Israelites didn't listen to the King they had as they should. This story gives us needed perspective on the importance of God in our lives. We aren't people who are going to do just fine without Him in our lives. Instead, we will fall into all sorts of evil because we have no King.

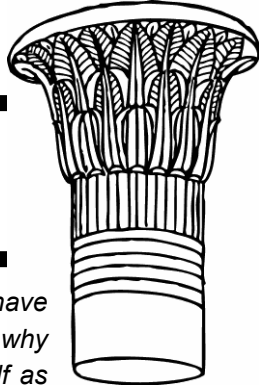
1. What do we see an unnamed Levite doing in Judges 19:1? What does the concubine do in 19:2? How does the Levite react in 19:3-9?
2. What decision does the Levite make in 19:10? What does the servant say to him in 19:11? What reply does the Levite give in 19:12? What's the irony of this reply? How can we avoid being responsible for similar irony today?

3. Whom does Deborah summon in 4:6? What does she tell him in 4:6-7? According to 4:8, what does he think of all this? What does she say to him in 4:9? How does this show us what God thinks of those who only work for Him reluctantly?
4. In 4:13, how is Sisera's army described? What is significant about the mention of the iron chariots, which we saw earlier in Joshua 17:16-18? How does Deborah respond to their presence in Judges 4:14? What does this teach us?
5. Who won the battle described in 4:15? Why? According to 4:16, how great was the victory? What can we learn from this today?
6. According to 4:17, where does Sisera go after the battle? In 4:18-20, how is he initially received? What happens to him in 4:21? How does this match up with Deborah's prediction in 4:9? Why is this important?
7. How does Barak finally encounter his great enemy in 4:22? Was this likely to have been the meeting he envisioned? According to 4:23-24, what was the result of this story? What does all of this tell us about God's ability to accomplish His will, versus seeing that man is glorified because of it?



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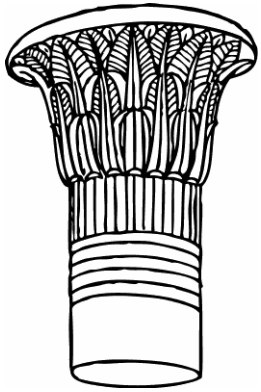
Lesson Eleven Judges 6:1-24



Throughout the history of God's people, His servants have invested great ingenuity in coming up with reasons why they shouldn't serve. If Gideon had defended himself as well from the Midianites as he did from God's call to action, God might not have needed to say anything in the first place! Sadly, such behavior is alive and well in the church today. Each of us as Christians needs to be honest in our evaluation of our service. Where are we? Are we working for God, or are we sitting at home compiling lists of excuses why we shouldn't?

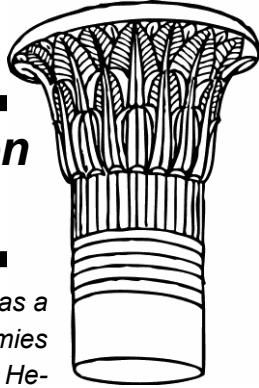
1. In Judges 6:1, what does Israel start doing again? What happens as a result? Was this any different from what happened before? What does this tell us about Israel's ability to learn from past mistakes? What should we take from it?
2. As described in 6:2-5, how bad is Israel's plight? In 6:6, what does Israel do in consequence? Do we ever see people doing similar things today? What should we learn from it?

3. What three answers does Samson give to Delilah's questioning in 16:7-14? What does Delilah do with those three answers? What happens to Samson as a result? What should Samson have done after this? How does Delilah spin it to him? What can we learn from this?
4. What does Delilah do to Samson in 16:15-16? What does he tell her in 16:17? Even on the basis of what Samson already knew, was this a particularly good idea? What does all of this teach us about the promise of Numbers 32:23?
5. How does Delilah deal with her discovery in 16:18-19? In 16:20, what result does this have? According to 16:21-22, what happens to Samson? How does this relate to what we learned from 13:12-14? What's the point for us?
6. What do the Philistines do in 16:23? What do they say about Samson in 16:23-25? What does Samson ask in 16:26? How is this gathering described in 16:27? How does all of this relate to Romans 2:24? How can we avoid finding ourselves in a similar position?
7. In Judges 16:28-30, what does Samson do that he hasn't done before? What does he ask? What happens? What results? At the end, what do we get out of the story of Samson?



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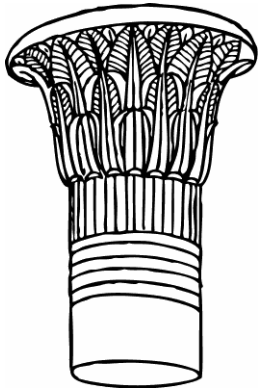
Lesson Seventeen Judges 16



When we consider the life of Samson, we think of him as a winner. We think of his many victories over the enemies of God's people, and we think of his inclusion in the Hebrews 11 roll call. What we often don't think of, though, is what might have been. If Samson had been righteous or wise enough to resist Delilah, how much might he have accomplished for the Lord? We should ask the same question of ourselves. Where are our sins preventing us from doing more for God? Only as we honestly address them can we truly imitate Christ.

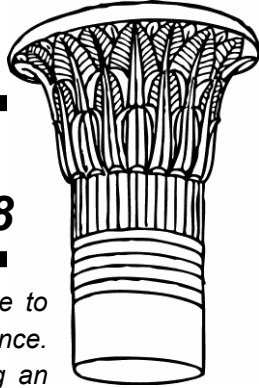
1. What does Samson do in Judges 16:1? How do the people of Gaza respond in 16:2? According to 16:3, how does Samson escape from their trap? What are we to make of all this?
2. What does Samson do in 16:4? What do the Philistines say to her in 16:5? In 16:6, what does she do about that? Is this a familiar problem? What does that teach us?

3. In 6:7-8, how does God respond to the cries of the Israelites? How does 6:8-10 describe God? Who, then, is responsible for the Israelites' problems? What does this teach us about God?
4. What Bible character makes his appearance in 6:11? What is he doing? Who appears to him in 6:12? What does he say? Does this seem like an appropriate description? What lesson should we learn from this?
5. What does Gideon say to the angel of the Lord in 6:13? What does the Lord say in reply in 6:14? What does this tell us about God's will for us when we see a problem?
6. What excuse does Gideon offer to the Lord in 6:15? What answer does the Lord give him in 6:16? What's the point of this for us?
7. In 6:17-18, what does Gideon ask for? What offering does he present in 6:19-20? What happens to the offering in 6:21? How does Gideon react in 6:22? According to 6:23, how does the Lord deal with this? What can we learn from this?



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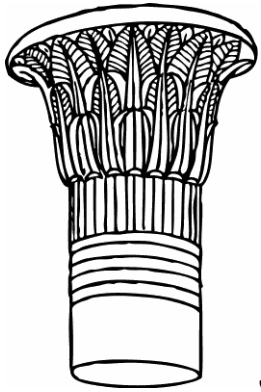
Lesson Twelve Judges 6:25-7:18



One of the hallmarks of Gideon's peculiar reluctance to lead the Israelites is his constant search for reassurance. He doesn't really show much concern about fighting an enemy as powerful as the Midianites as he does about making sure for the fourteenth time that God is really, really with him. Many Christians have the same problem. We spend more time worrying about whether God is really, really going to bless our work than we do about the problems before us. Like Gideon, we can only find a solution not in worrying, but in faith in God.

1. In Judges 6:25-26, what is the Lord's first command for Gideon? According to 6:27, does Gideon do it? How? Why? What does this tell us about Gideon's mental state still? Can we have the same problem? What should we do about it?
2. Despite Gideon's precautions, did the men of the town have any trouble unmasking him in 6:28-29? What does 6:30 say they want? What reply does Joash make in 6:31? In 6:32, what name does Gideon acquire as a result?

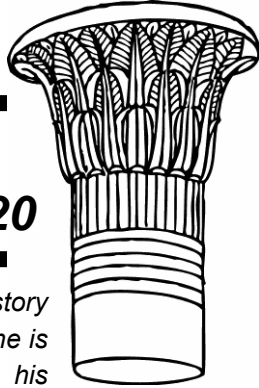
3. In 14:18, what is the conclusion of the riddle game? How does Samson react? According to 14:19, how does he pay his forfeit? What is ultimately done with his wife here?
4. What do we see Samson doing in 15:1? Judging from passages like Genesis 38:15-17, what is the significance of the young goat? What reply does the woman's father make to Samson in Judges 15:2? How does Samson react to this in 15:3-5? How does this encounter shape our understanding of providence?
5. According to 15:6, how do the Philistines react to Samson's latest exploit? What does Samson do in return in 15:7? How does this relate to the admonition of passages like Romans 12:19?
6. What do the Philistines do in Judges 15:9? What do they say to the men of Judah in 15:10? What do the men of Judah do about this in 15:11-13? Do they seem to be a little unclear about whose side they're on? How can we have this problem today? How do we solve it?
7. According to 15:14, how do the Philistines feel when they see Samson? In 15:14-16, what does Samson do? In what sense was this outcome unpredictable? In what sense was it predictable? In 15:20, where does Samson end up? What can we take from all this?



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Lesson Sixteen

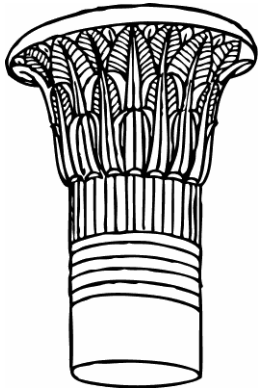
Judges 14:10-15:20



One of the particularly telling things about Samson's story is the way that his flaw is always present, even when he is winning heroic victories in God's name. He begins his one-man war against the Philistines because he couldn't keep a secret from his betrothed, and he carries the gates of Gath to a hilltop because he was trapped inside them while visiting a prostitute. Likewise, our flaws are always visible. If we watch, we can tell where Satan is going to sting us even when things are going well. We must change if we want to avoid disaster.

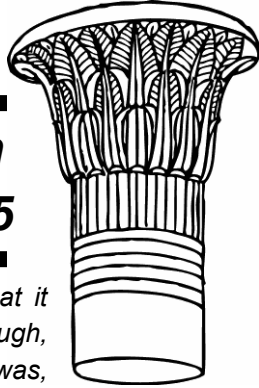
1. What does Samson do in Judges 14:10? What contest does he propose in 14:11-13? What is the riddle? What is the initial result of the contest? What does this tell us about the character of Samson?
2. What do the 30 companions say to Samson's wife in 14:15? What does she do in 14:16-17? What is Samson's initial response? What is his eventual response? What flaw in his character does this highlight? Is this going to be trouble later on? What do we learn from this?

3. According to 6:34-35, how does Gideon react to the yearly Midianite invasion? Despite this, how confident does he seem in 6:36-40? Why? How does God answer him? Why is this significant?
4. What problem does the Lord identify in 7:2? What first solution does He propose in 7:3? What results? Can we have a similar problem today? What can we do to solve it?
5. According to 7:4, what does God think of the results of His selection process? What further solution does He propose in 7:5-8? What result does this have? How does Gideon's army compare to the Midianite army described in 7:12? What should we take from this?
6. What does the Lord tell Gideon in 7:9-11? What does Gideon do? What does this tell us about him? What does he hear in 7:13? What is its meaning, as described in 7:14? What does this teach us?
7. How does Gideon react to this revelation in 7:15? What does he tell his little band of troops? Does this sound familiar? What plan does he propose in 7:16-18? From a purely human perspective, does this sound like a good plan? Why or why not? What's the lesson here for us?



No King in Israel

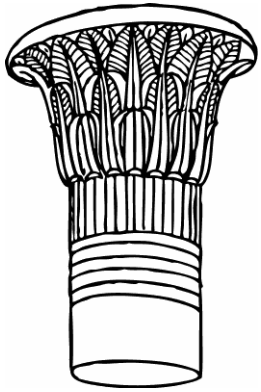
Lesson Thirteen Judges 7:19-8:35



God devised Gideon's plan of battle precisely so that it would glorify not the Israelites, but Him. Ironically enough, despite the blatant obviousness of who the true victor was, the children of Israel miss it. Rather than reaffirming God as their King, they ask Gideon to be king. Sometimes, we make a similar mistake. We attach to a particular preacher or elder the glory that belongs to God. When we do that, we glorify the tool over the One that wields it. Instead, let us not marvel at what a man may do, but at what God has done through him.

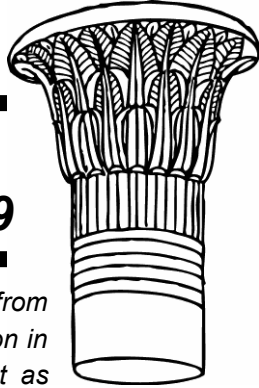
1. According to Judges 7:19-20, how do Gideon and his men carry out God's plan? What happens as a result in 7:21-22? Why? What encouragement can we take from this?
2. What reaction does the victorious Gideon meet with in 8:1? Judging from the Israelites mentioned in 7:3, would Ephraim really have been that eager for battle? How does Gideon respond to them in 8:2-3? How do they take his words? What can we learn from this encounter?

3. In 13:8, what does Manoah pray for? In 13:12-14, what answer does he receive when he asks? What can we learn from this about our mission?
4. What does Manoah do in 13:19? What does the angel of the Lord do in 13:20? How does Manoah react to this in 13:22? According to 13:23, what reply does his wife sensibly make? What does all of this teach us about God?
5. Who appears in 14:1? What does he do? What does this move him to say to his parents in 14:2? According to 14:3, what do they think of this? How does he respond? What does 14:4 tell us about what's happening behind the scenes here? What sense can we make of all this?
6. According to 14:5, what does Samson encounter while traveling to Timnah? According to 14:6, what is the result of this encounter? What does this tell us about Samson's abilities? Why is this important?
7. In 14:8, what does Samson see? In 14:9, what does he do as a result? Was this something he should have done? Leviticus 11:27 may help you answer. What does this episode tell us about God's use of Samson as His instrument?



No King in Israel

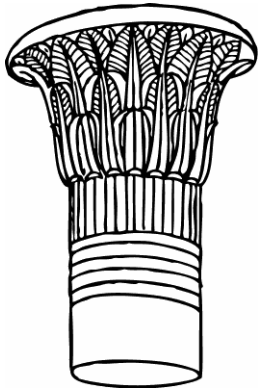
Lesson Fifteen Judges 13:1-14:9



Samson is yet another morally ambiguous character from this period of Israel's history. He has a good reputation in the five-year-old classes—strong guy, long hair—but as our perspective on him matures, we see that this hero has feet of clay, particularly when it comes to women. However, just as Samson was, we are heir to our own weaknesses. We too combine amazing spiritual potential with shocking flaws. What shaped Samson's story, and what will shape ours, is the way that we wrestle with those flaws as we strive to serve God.

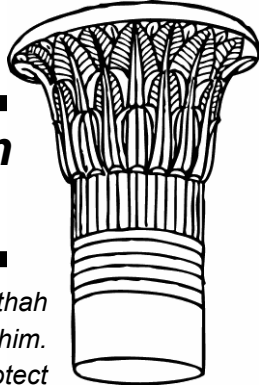
1. In Judges 13:1, what does Israel do? What happens to them as a result? How long does this last? Does reading this get monotonous? How monotonous must it have been to God? What can we take from this?
2. What man do we meet in 13:2? What is true of his wife? What promise does the angel of the Lord make to her in 13:3? What requirements does the angel of the Lord impose on the child in 13:4-5? What is the child's purpose to be? What can we learn from this?

3. In 8:4, in what situation are Gideon and his men? What do they ask for in 8:5? With what response do they meet in 8:6? What promise does Gideon make to that in 8:7? According to 8:13-16, what happens as a result? Are there people today who behave similarly to the elders of Succoth? What lesson is there in this for us?
4. In 8:10, how many men are left of the army of the East? According to 8:4, how many men does Gideon have with him? In 8:11, what does Gideon do anyway? How does 8:12 describe the results? Is God mentioned in this context? Is He clearly active anyway? What, then, should we learn from this?
5. What do the people ask of Gideon in 8:22? What answer does Gideon give them in 8:23? Why is this important to us?
6. What request does Gideon make in 8:24? In 8:25-26, how do the people react? What does Gideon do with what he received in 8:27? Is this what we would expect from Gideon? What's the lesson for us today?
7. What happens in the first part of 8:33? How does Israel respond to it? What failings of theirs does 8:34-35 record? Is any of this surprising? What should we take from it?



No King in Israel

Lesson Fourteen Judges 10-12



One of the overlooked lessons from the story of Jephthah comes from the way that the elders of Gilead treated him. They were polite enough when they needed him to protect them from the Ammonites, but before that, when he was just another harlot's son, they cast him out. We need to be careful lest we make the same mistake. Too often, when it comes time to choose elders, Christians reject a man based not on God's standards, but on their own. Such behavior can only hurt the kingdom. If a man satisfies God, who are we to oppose him?

1. How is Israel described in Judges 10:6? In this description, what appears to be unique about the Lord? In 10:7-9, what predictably happens? How can we avoid being so perverse today?
2. How does Israel react to their plight in 10:10? In 10:11-14, what answer does God give them? Are there people today who would get a similar answer from God? What lesson should this teach us?

3. How do the Israelites react to God's dismissal in 10:15-16? What effect does this ultimately have on God? What does that tell us about His nature?
4. Whom do we meet in 11:1? How is he described? What do the leaders of Gilead want from him in 11:5-6? What reply does he give them in 11:7? What finally persuades him in 11:9-11? What can we learn from this today?
5. What does Jephthah do in 11:30? Is this something that is obviously headed for trouble? What are the results of his battle with the Ammonites in 11:33? Was it necessary for him to make that vow to get that result? What should we learn from his behavior?
6. According to 11:34, when Jephthah returns, who comes out the door of his house to meet him? In 11:35, how does he react to this? What does his daughter say to him in 11:36-37? What eventually happens in 11:39? What are we to make of all this?
7. Whom do we see causing trouble again in 12:1? What does Jephthah say about their supposed valor in 12:2-3? What ensues in 12:4-6? What's the point of all this for us?