



The Establishment of the Kingdom

JUNIOR NOTES — 9 to 12 Years

STAGE TWO OF FIVE STAGES

CHRISTADELPHIAN SUNDAY SCHOOL ASSOCIATION
P.O. BOX 20, MODBURY NORTH, 5092, SOUTH AUSTRALIA.

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Foreword

These notes are the second stage in a series of five stages of lessons covering the general theme of "The Kingdom of God". In these studies we follow the Children of Israel out of the wilderness after forty years of trial and into the Land of Promise. They face just as many problems there, but God never forsakes them. Whenever they are in need He raises up faithful leaders to deliver them from their enemies.

There are stories from the books of Joshua, Judges, Ruth and Samuel. The men and women we read of are very real and interesting characters, whose lives are full of lessons for us. This is most important - that we should learn from their experiences what we must do in our lives to please the God of heaven and earth. Great men and women such as Joshua, Gideon, Hannah, Samuel and David were trying hard all their lives to develop a character that gave honour to God. And this is what God wants us to do too.

We hope you will use these notes as the first step to understanding this important period of Israel's history - from entering the Land to the establishment of the Kingdom under David.

Further searching of the Scriptures with the aid of maps and such Christadelphian books as H.P. Mansfield's *Story of the Bible*, will make your studies even more enjoyable. If you need any advice or extra information, the committee will be pleased to help.

The questions at the end of each lesson are meant to help your revision of what you have learned. Make sure you can answer them satisfactorily before moving onto the next lesson.

May God bless your efforts to search out His wonderful ways, so that you will learn now what you must do to find a place in His kingdom, when the Lord Jesus Christ returns to establish it in glory.

The Committee

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"I come to thee in the name of Yahweh of Hosts, the God of the Armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied"
1 Samuel 17:45

1. MEAT FOR ISRAEL

“Who shall give us flesh to eat?”

Aim

To show that God will always provide our needs. He is able to do everything and will look after those who love Him.

Synopsis

God had brought His chosen people out of Egypt and given them a Law and a great leader. They became a nation, the nation of Israel, and Yahweh was their King. The people set to work to build a Tabernacle *“according to the pattern”* given to Moses, so that the God of their Fathers might dwell with them. They were to worship only Him. They were to be *“holy,”* or *“set apart”*, and were to live according to His Law, showing to the nations round about that they were the people of Yahweh – called by His Name (Deut. 28:9-10). God promised: *“If ye will obey My voice indeed, and keep My covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto Me above all people, for all the earth is Mine”* (Exod. 19:5-8).

Numbers 9:15-23; 10, 11 and 12

THE TABERNACLE ERECTED

Num. 9:15-23

After six months spent in carrying out God’s instructions for the making of the Tabernacle and its furniture, everything was ready.

On the first day of the first month, in the second year after leaving Egypt, the Tabernacle was set up at Mt. Sinai (Exod. 40:17-19).

God showed His presence among His people by a cloud above the Tabernacle during the day and the appearance of fire over it by night (Exod. 13:21-22). *“When the cloud was taken up from over the Tabernacle, the children of Israel went onward in their journeys; but if the cloud was not taken up, then they journeyed not till the day that it was taken up”* (Exod. 40:36-37).

ISRAEL DEPARTS FROM SINAI

Num. 10:1-13, 33-36

Moses had been told by God to make two silver trumpets, which the priests would blow to gather the people together for various reasons. They were blown, for example, to give them the signal to set out on their journeys.

“On the twentieth day of the second month, in the second year after leaving Egypt, the cloud was taken up from off the Tabernacle.” This was a sign to Israel that they were to leave Sinai, where they had spent eleven months (Exod. 19:1; Num. 10:11). The Ark and all the pieces of furniture were carefully covered by Aaron and his sons. No-one else was to touch them or to look at them. The Tabernacle was taken down piece by piece and all the parts were carried by the Levites (Num. 4:15, 20).

When the people heard the sound of the silver trumpets, they had to get ready to go on their journey. The cloud would lead them and show them the way. Israel always moved in a special order as commanded by God, each group of the tribes under the standard (flag) of their leader. Judah always led the way and the Ark was carried in the midst of the marching people. Whenever they marched, they began and ended the day with a prayer to God given by Moses (Num. 10:35-36).

ISRAEL COMPLAINS ABOUT THE MANNA AND LONGS FOR THE THINGS OF EGYPT

Num. 11:4-5, 31-33

It was only an eleven days' journey by way of Mt. Seir to the border of Canaan (Deut. 1:2), but it took Israel about ten months to travel from Sinai to Kadesh on the southern border (compare Num. 10:11 with Deut. 2:14).

The way was through dry, harsh desert country and the people became discouraged and discontented. They forgot that God had given them freedom from slavery and had brought them out of Egypt. And they stopped thinking about the Promised Land ahead – *“a good land and a large land flowing with milk and honey”* (Exod. 3:8). They began to complain.

They complained about the manna and longed for all the different foods they had enjoyed in Egypt. *“There is nothing at all beside this manna before our eyes”*, they grumbled. *“Who shall give us flesh to eat?”* (Num. 11:4-6). They looked back to Egypt instead of forward to the Promised Land. Moses was displeased and troubled when he heard the people actually weeping in their tents. God was angry with them and their complaining. If it was flesh they wanted, He would give it to them. Not just for one day or two days or five days or ten days or twenty days but for a *“whole month until it come out at your nostrils and it be loathsome unto you”* (v19-20). He sent a strong wind that brought quails to their camp. Eagerly they gathered them up and began to eat, but they ate greedily, forgetting that God had given them this food and that they should thank Him for it. While the food was still in their mouths, God showed His anger by sending a plague among them and many of the people died. The name of this place was called Kibroth-Hattaavah, which means “the graves of the greedy”.

THE JEALOUSY OF MIRIAM AND AARON **Num. 12**

Even Miriam and Aaron were caught up in the mood of the people. They made up a complaint about Moses' wife, because she was not a Hebrew. They were really trying to find fault with Moses and make themselves more important. So they said, *“Hath Yahweh indeed spoken only by Moses? Hath He not spoken also by us?”* (v2). God heard them and was very angry. Suddenly He called Moses, Aaron and Miriam to come to the Tabernacle and He spoke to them from the pillar of cloud by the door. Calling Miriam and Aaron to step forward, God told them what He thought of Moses. *“My servant Moses ... is faithful in all My house. With him will I speak mouth to mouth”* (v7-8). He spoke to Moses *“as a man speaketh unto his friend”* (Exod. 33:11). What an honour that was for Moses. What a great man of faith he was to have the God of heaven speak so highly of him. *“Why then”*, God asked Miriam and Aaron, *“were*

ye not afraid to speak against My servant Moses?" (v8). Suddenly Aaron looked at his sister and was horrified to see a dreadful change come over her. As a sign of God's anger, Miriam was struck with leprosy! Straight away Aaron realised how foolish they had both been and pleaded for their sin to be forgiven. Moses too cried out to God to heal his sister. God commanded that Miriam should be shut out of the camp for seven days and bear her shame. After that she could be accepted back and Israel could take up their journey again.

Moses showed true meekness – he knew that God had chosen him as the leader of Israel, but he was not proud or boastful at all. He only did what God said. He did not get angry with his jealous brother and sister, but trusted in God to put things right. Aaron and Miriam learned their lesson, for they never again questioned the authority of Moses.

LESSON FOR US

God requires **faith** (which means we must **believe** what God says) and **obedience** to His commands. Let us not be faithless and complaining, as the Israelites were in the wilderness. Let us rather be like Moses, God's servant, who never doubted that God would care for Israel.

QUESTIONS DIV. 9-12

Short Answers

1. *Who was the man appointed by God as the leader over Israel?*
- ② *How did Israel know when to set out on their journey through the wilderness?*
- ③ *What tribe always went first when Israel journeyed?*
4. *Who carried all the parts of the Tabernacle and its furniture?*
5. *How did God show the people the way?*
6. *What did God send for the people to eat when they complained about the manna?*
- ⑦ *Why did God send a plague upon the children of Israel as they went gathering and eating the quails?*

8. *What did Miriam and Aaron say when they spoke against Moses?*
9. *What kind of man was Moses?*

Detailed Answers

1. *When the cloud lifted up from the Tabernacle it was time for Israel to set off on their journey. Tell the story of how they got ready and how they marched.*
2. *Why did the children of Israel complain about the manna? Tell what happened when God provided meat to eat as well.*

Additional Answers (Div. 11-12 only)

- ③ *Miriam and Aaron were jealous of Moses. Tell what happened and what God had to say about Moses.*



2. TWELVE SPIES IN THE LAND

“They brought up an evil report of the Land”

Aim

To show that we should believe in what God has promised because He will help us if we put our faith and trust in Him.

Synopsis

Israel came to Kadesh-Barnea, on the border of the Promised Land. Moses told them to go in and possess the land God had promised to give them, saying, *“Fear not, neither be discouraged”* (Deut. 1:20-21) but they lacked faith. They forgot God’s promise at Sinai: *“Behold I send an angel before thee”* and *“I will make all thine enemies turn their backs unto thee”* (Exod. 23:20-27). They did not believe God could do this for them. The people came to Moses asking that men be sent to spy out the land, and God allowed this, although it showed their lack of trust.

Numbers 13 and 14

THE LAND SPIED OUT

Num. 13:17-25

Moses sent twelve men, one from each tribe, to spy out the land. For forty days they went through the land of Canaan and then came back with their report. It was summer time and they brought with them some of the fruits of the land – figs, pomegranates and a huge bunch of grapes from Eshcol (the name means “a cluster of grapes”).

THE SPIES REPORT

Num. 13:26-33

The men reported that the land was *“a good land”* just as God had told them – *“surely it floweth with milk and honey”*. They were all agreed on this. But ten of the spies were anxious to tell what else they had seen! They said that the cities had strong, high walls and giants lived there. The hearts of all the people sank. All their hopes of possessing the land now were gone. How discouraged they felt. But two of the spies, Caleb and Joshua, had enough faith to believe that God would keep His promise to overthrow these cities and give them the land.

Caleb said, *“Let us go up at once and possess it, for we are well able to overcome it”*. But the ten spies said, *“We are not able to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we. There we saw the giants, the sons of Anak ... and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight”*. They thought only of the difficulties to be overcome – the strong cities and the huge men they had seen. They forgot that their **God** would fight for them.

THE PEOPLE TURNED BACK INTO THE WILDERNESS

Numbers 14

The hearts of the people were filled with fear when they heard the report of the ten spies. They did not believe God's promise that all the land would be theirs. They murmured against Moses and Aaron and wanted to choose a new captain to lead them back to Egypt! Joshua and Caleb tried to change their minds by saying, *“If Yahweh delight in us, then He will bring us into this land, and give it us ... only rebel not ye against Yahweh”* (v7–9). The people turned on them, ready to stone them, but suddenly God's glory appeared. Then His mighty voice was heard: *“How long will this people provoke me?...I will smite them with pestilence and will make of thee (Moses) a greater nation and mightier than they”* (v11–12). But Moses was anxious for God's Name. He pleaded with God to forgive His people for the sake of His Name and His honour among the surrounding nations. He did not want anything for himself. He thought only of God's promise to Israel and what the other nations would say if it were not fulfilled. God heard Moses and said, *“I have pardoned according to thy word; **but as truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of Yahweh**”* (v20-21). God would not destroy the nation altogether but He would punish their disobedience and their unbelief. All the faithless people who were twenty years old or more at that time would die in the wilderness. They would not enter the Promised Land. *“After the number of the days in*

which ye searched the land, even forty days, each day for a year, shall ye bear your iniquities, even forty years” (v34). It was two years since they had left Egypt. Now they must wander for a further thirty-eight years (Deut. 2:14), until all the men who had rebelled and would not believe had died. The ten spies who had discouraged the people died of a plague sent by God (v37).

When they heard these terrible words and saw what happened to the ten men, the people were very upset. They realised they had sinned. So they got up early next morning and decided to go up straight away and take the land. Moses warned them not to do so, because God was not with them. Still they took no notice, but they had not gone very far when they were attacked by Amalekites and had to flee back to the camp. So they were forced to wander in the wilderness as God had said they must.

The only two faithful spies, Joshua and Caleb, were given a promise that they would live to enter the land, together with the children of those who had rebelled and died.

LESSON FOR US

Even though most of Israel lacked faith in the promise of God, Caleb and Joshua stood fast to their belief that God would do what He had promised. This is an example for us to follow in these days when so many people take no notice of God’s Word. It takes courage to stand up for one’s faith when surrounded by people who laugh at what the Bible says, but God is pleased when we do this.

ADDITIONAL NOTES (Div. 11–12 only)

We have seen how God chose Israel, guided them and brought them to Sinai. There He told them that it was His purpose to make them a “*holy nation*”, to keep them separate unto Himself. They would be called by His Name and must keep His commandments. Then the nations around them

would say, “Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people” (Deut. 4:6) and they would praise the God of Israel. But though God did wonderful things in the midst of them (such as bread from heaven, quails, water out of the rock) they did not believe His words. Because of Israel’s lack of faith, God would not let any of them enter the Promised Land. Yet He told Moses: “As truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of Yahweh” (Num. 14:21). This is still God’s purpose with the earth. Thousands of years have passed since God spoke these wonderful words to Moses and we do not yet see the earth filled with His glory. Because few of the children of Israel have been faithful to their God down through the ages, He has graciously called men and women out of other nations to share that glorious future with “*the seed of Abraham*”. He is today still calling out of the Gentiles a people for His Name (Acts 15:14). Those who **believe His Word and obey His commandments** can, **by baptism** into the Lord Jesus Christ, become “*the seed of Abraham and heirs according to the promise*” (Gal. 3:26-29). When the Lord Jesus Christ returns (Acts 1:11) to set up His Kingdom (Dan. 2:44) the wonderful hope God promised Israel will be fulfilled.

QUESTIONS DIV. 9-12

Short Answers

1. *How many Israelites were sent into the land to see what it was like?*
2. *What were all the spies agreed on when they returned from spying the land?*
3. *What else did ten of the spies say about the land?*
4. *What were the names of the two faithful spies?*
5. *What did Caleb and Joshua say that Israel should do?*
6. *Why was God angry with the people when they listened to the report of the twelve spies?*
7. *What happened to the ten spies?*

8. *How were the people punished for their unbelief when the spies returned?*

Detailed Answers

1. *Tell the story of the spies going into the land of Canaan and what they said when they came back.*
2. *How did God punish the ten faithless spies? What did God say would happen to the rest of Israel? What did they try to do the next morning?*
3. *Tell how different Joshua and Caleb's report was. How can we follow their example?*

Additional Answers (Div. 11-12 only)

4. *“But as truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with My Glory”. On the basis of these words, can you explain:*
 - (a) *What was the purpose of God with His people Israel?*
 - (b) *What would the nations around them think?*
 - (c) *What did most of Israel fail to do?*
 - (d) *God is calling people out of the nations today. What does He want them to do?*



3. REBELLION IN ISRAEL

“The earth opened her mouth and swallowed them up.”

Aim

To show that God will destroy those who rebel against Him.

Synopsis

Israel were not allowed to go straight up into the Land of Promise. They had been made to go back into the wilderness and wander there for a further 38 years until all those who had sinned against God had died (Deut. 1:35-37). One man tried to put the blame on Moses and challenged him for the leadership, but God soon put a stop to that.

Numbers 16 and 17

KORAH PLANS A REBELLION

Num. 16:1-14

Korah was a first cousin to Moses and Aaron. Izhar, his father, and Amram, father of Moses and Aaron, were both sons of Kohath (Exod. 6:18, 20, 21). For this reason Korah considered he had equal right to be leader or High Priest of Israel. He had convinced 250 Levites who were well known as princes in the camp to support him. The fact that they were Levites and specially chosen by God to serve at the Tabernacle did not seem to satisfy them. Among the tribe of Reuben he found followers as well, including Dathan and Abiram (v1-2).

They gathered together and challenged Moses and Aaron. They said, *“Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them”* (v3). This is what Korah **said**, but he really envied them and wanted to have the leadership himself.

Moses was very distressed. *“Tomorrow”,* he said, *“Yahweh will shew who are His and who is holy”* (v5-7). Then Moses called for Dathan and Abiram, but they refused to come. They sent a message criticising Moses and saying it was his fault that they had not yet gone up into the land (v12-14).

HOW THE REBELLION WAS PUT DOWN Num. 16:15-40

Moses was very angry when he heard these wicked words. He called the children of Israel to assemble the next day in front of the Tabernacle. Korah and the 250 princes, and Aaron too, were to bring their censers with them. The censers were brass pans which held live coals of fire upon which incense was burnt to give off a sweet perfume.

So on the following day the princes came with their censers and stood near the door of the Tabernacle. Korah came too. He had *“gathered all the congregation against Moses and Aaron”*. The people waited in front of the Tabernacle to see what God’s answer would be.

Suddenly the people saw the glory of God shining above the Tabernacle and God spoke to Moses and Aaron: *“Separate yourselves from among this congregation, that I may consume them in a moment”*. God was very angry with the people. Moses and Aaron were shocked. They fell down before God and pleaded with Him not to punish all Israel because of the wickedness of a few. God heard their prayer but He was determined to put an end to this rebellion. He told Moses to make the people get right away from the tents of those wicked men, or they would be destroyed with them. Most of the people obeyed Moses and separated themselves. Even the sons of Korah moved away, showing that they did not agree with their father’s rebellious words. (We are told in Num. 26:11 that they did not perish with their father. In fact, the sons of Korah remained very faithful for many generations. Some of them wrote beautiful psalms such as Psalms 42 to 49.)

Then Moses spoke to the people (v28). *“If these men die the common death of all men ... then Yahweh hath not sent me. But if Yahweh make a new thing, and the earth open her mouth, and swallow them up ... then ye shall understand that these men have provoked Yahweh”* (v29-30). No sooner had he finished speaking than God acted. The ground split open and

the rebels and all that belonged to them, their tents and all their goods, were swallowed up in a great pit, and the ground closed over them again.

The 250 princes who had been with the leaders in the rebellion did not escape God's anger. "*A fire from Yahweh*" flashed out fiercely and destroyed them. Nothing was left except their brass censers. Eleazar, Aaron's son, had to collect these up and have them beaten into plates to make a covering for the altar of burnt offering. This was to be a reminder to Israel that only Aaron and his sons could "*come near to offer incense before Yahweh*" (v40. See also Num. 26:9-11).

FURTHER REBELLION

Num. 16:41-50

We can well imagine how horrified the people would have been as they saw how God suddenly and furiously destroyed those who had dared to rebel. Yet the children of Israel had not learned the lesson. They still felt angry and rebellious. The very next day they accused Moses and Aaron of causing the death of those men. "*Ye have killed the people of Yahweh*", they said (v41). As they gathered together and threatened Moses and Aaron, the glory of God appeared over the Tabernacle. He spoke to Moses and Aaron: "*Get you up from among this congregation, that I may consume them in a moment*" (v45). Now they would all die! Straight away Moses and Aaron acted to save the people. But God had already started a great plague among the people and 14,700 died for their sin. Only when Moses and Aaron pleaded on behalf of the people did God stop the plague.

AARON'S ROD THAT BUDDER: A SIGN SHOWING GOD'S CHOICE OF HIGH PRIEST

Num. 17

How patient God is with His people. He had punished the rebels, but now He gives a clear sign that He has chosen Aaron as the High Priest over the House of Israel. The leader of each tribe was to bring his own rod to Moses. Moses was told to "*write*

every man's name upon his rod: and thou shalt write Aaron's name upon the rod of Levi... and thou shalt lay them up in the Tabernacle of the congregation ... and it shall come to pass, that the man's rod, whom I shall choose, shall blossom" (v2-5). God would show by a miracle which man He had chosen—one rod would suddenly “*come to life*”. So the rods were placed in the Tabernacle as God had directed. The next morning Moses went into the Tabernacle and found that **Aaron's rod** had budded, blossomed and brought forth almonds! The other rods remained dead sticks. By this miracle God showed all Israel that **Aaron was His appointed High Priest**. He was chosen to “*keep the charge of the sanctuary and the charge of the altar*”. The rod that budded was to be kept “*as a token against the rebels*” and was later placed in the Ark (Heb. 9:4).

LESSON FOR US

God loves all those who do their best in His service, however unimportant the work may appear to be. These are the people in whom He finds pleasure, but there is no room for the envious spirit of Korah, Dathan and Abiram. Those who love and obey God *now* will become kings and priests in His kingdom, when His Son, Jesus Christ, returns to rule over all the earth.

ADDITIONAL NOTES (Div. 11-12 only)

The rod that budded clearly teaches us of the **resurrection from the dead**. It had been a dead stick, just like the other rods, but God made it burst into life. It makes us think of the one man who died and has been raised from the dead, Jesus Christ, the Son of God. It also points to the time when the Lord Jesus Christ will return to the earth, and “*the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised*”. At that time, those who have been raised from the dead and those who are alive, who know the Gospel, will be judged by the Lord Jesus Christ. The faithful amongst them will then all be changed (I Cor. 15:52). Their mortal bodies will be made immortal, never to die again,

just like Jesus Christ and the angels (Luke 20:35-36).

What a glorious hope is before us if we are faithful! So, whenever we see an almond tree blossom at the end of winter, it will remind us of the coming of Christ and the resurrection.

QUESTIONS DIV. 9-12

Short Answers

1. *Who was Korah?*
2. *What did Korah say about Moses and Aaron?*
3. *Who joined with Korah when he spoke against the leaders God had chosen?*
4. *What did Moses tell Korah to be sure to do on the next day?*
5. *What happened to Korah, Dathan and Abiram?*
6. *What happened to the 250 princes who followed Korah?*
7. *What did God tell Moses to make out of the censers of brass?*
8. *What did the people accuse Moses and Aaron of the next day?*
9. *What sign did God give to show that He had chosen Aaron to be High Priest?*

Detailed Answers

1. (a) *Tell how Korah, Dathan and Abiram made trouble in the camp of Israel.*
(b) *How did God punish them?*
2. *How did God show that Aaron was his chosen High Priest?*
3. *God punished all those who rebelled against Him and challenged Moses. How did He punish-*
 - (a) *Korah, Dathan and Abiram?*
 - (b) *The 250 princes?*
 - (c) *The disobedient people who the very next day threatened Moses and Aaron?*

Additional Answers (Div. 11-12 only)

4. *Explain the meaning of Aaron's rod that budded.*

4. NEAR THE END OF THE JOURNEY – FIERY SERPENTS

“When he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived”

Aim

*To show that we must do exactly as God commands and
always give Him honour for His goodness to us.*

Synopsis

The wanderings of the children of Israel were nearly over. Most of the older people had died, and the new generation was about to enter the Promised Land. There were still terrible trials to be faced but now they travelled north to the borders of Canaan.

Numbers 20; 21:4-9; Deut. 8:15-16

MOSES SMITES THE ROCK

Num. 20:1-13

It was the beginning of the fortieth year since the children of Israel had left Egypt on that dark Passover night. Now they were back at Kadesh again. Here, in the first month, Miriam died and Moses and Aaron buried their sister, on the edge of the Land of Promise. She had been a great help to Moses through the long years of trouble and would now sleep in the grave to await the glorious resurrection morning. Those who died in faith will be raised to life when Jesus Christ returns to set up His kingdom (I Thess. 4:16).

Over the long years of wandering in the wilderness, the children of Israel had often been anxious about finding water to drink and now again they were very thirsty. They grew impatient and began to despair, fearing that they would die in this barren land. Their faith failed and they could only think of Egypt. Moses and Aaron became very angry with them, remembering that their fathers had acted in the same way thirty eight years earlier (Exod. 17).

For all this, God did not forsake them. He knew they must have water and once again He would provide for their need.

So God commanded Moses to take Aaron's rod in his hand and said to him: "*Speak ye unto the rock before their eyes; and it shall give forth water, and thou shalt bring forth to them water out of the rock*" (v8).

But Moses in his anger took the rod and instead of **speaking** to the rock as God had commanded, struck the rock twice and said, "*Hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock?*" (v10). In his anger, Moses forgot to obey God exactly as commanded. It was wrong for him to smite the rock. He should have spoken to it as commanded. He did not give the glory to God either. It was God who had caused the water to flow, and Moses should have made sure the people understood this, so that they would thank God for His help. Because of this, Moses was not allowed to enter the Promised Land. God told Moses and Aaron, "*Ye shall not bring this congregation into the land*" (v12).

After all those years of patiently leading God's stubborn and rebellious people, this great man and prophet was not allowed to take them right into the Land. It was a great disappointment to him, but he had sinned and must wait until Christ returns and raises the dead. Then he will enter into that land in triumph and glory.

THE DEATH OF AARON

Num. 20:12-29

The time had come for Aaron, the brother of Moses, to die. God told Moses to take Aaron and Eleazar his son up to Mt Hor. There, according to God's command, Moses took off Aaron's priestly garments and put them on Eleazar, who would be the next High Priest. So Aaron died there, on the top of the mount, on the first day of the fifth month of the fortieth year after leaving Egypt, at the age of 123 years (Num. 33:38-39). The children of Israel mourned for him for thirty days. He still sleeps in the grave awaiting the resurrection and the establishment of God's Kingdom.

THE PLAGUE OF DEADLY SERPENTS Num. 21:4-9; Deut. 8:15-16

Moses had sent messengers from Kadesh to the King of Edom asking for permission to pass through his land on their way to Canaan. He refused and so Israel had to make a long and tiring journey through desert country to avoid going through Edom. Water was scarce and they were tired of manna. Once again they became discouraged and their faith failed. They spoke against God and Moses saying, *“Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? There is no bread, neither is there any water; and we loathe this light bread”* (v4,5). There were many times like this when things were difficult that they grumbled and blamed God for their troubles.

God sent a plague of *“fiery serpents”* among them which had a poisonous bite, causing burning fever and death. When the people saw how many died they were very distressed and came to Moses and said, *“We have sinned. Pray unto Yahweh, that He take away the serpents from us”* (v7). Moses was always ready to help when they were in trouble. So he prayed for them and God told him to make a serpent of brass and put it on a pole. *“Everyone that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live.”* Once again, God was merciful to His people. All those who looked on the brazen serpent in faith, believing His word, were healed (v8,9).

LESSON FOR US

Even such great men as Moses and Aaron sometimes sinned against God. In Psalm 106:22-33 we read that the people provoked Moses and made him angry. As a result, he spoke very foolishly and did not give God the glory. We must always be careful of the way we speak and not give way to anger. It is best to think before we speak. We are reminded of this by the apostle James, who said, *“Let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath”* (James 1:19).

ADDITIONAL NOTES (Div. 11-12 only)
THE SPIRITUAL LESSON OF THE SERPENT OF BRASS

John 3:14-15

There was a difference between the serpents on the ground and the brazen one on the pole. The fiery serpents had a poisonous bite and the people died. There was no poison in the serpent on the pole and the people who looked up *in faith* to the brazen serpent were saved from death. **By faith** they were saved from the poisonous serpent bite.

In John 3:14-15 we read: *“as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life”*.

The Lord Jesus Christ used this incident to show that **faith** saved the people in the wilderness from death by serpent bite and **faith** will save us too. Like the serpent on the pole, Jesus was lifted up when wicked men crucified him, nailing him to a pole. But God raised him from the dead and he will never die again. Those who look to him in faith will see in his life, death and resurrection, the way to be saved. *“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved”* (Acts 16:30-33). Believing the gospel and being baptised is the only way to salvation (Mark 16:16).

QUESTIONS DIV. 9-12

Short Answers

1. *Which two people do we know died in the fortieth year of Israel's journey?*
2. *How did God tell Moses to bring forth water from the rock at Kadesh?*
3. *What did Moses say before the water came out of the rock at Kadesh?*
4. *What did Moses do with his rod?*
5. *What did God say to Moses and Aaron after the water came forth?*

6. *Who was to be High Priest after Aaron?*
7. *Why did God send fiery serpents among the people?*
8. *What did God tell Moses to do to save some of the people from the fiery serpents?*
9. *What did the people have to do to be saved from the serpent bite?*

Detailed Answers

1. *Once at Kadesh, Moses did not carefully obey all God's instructions.*
 - (a) *Tell what he did that was wrong.*
 - (b) *Why was God angry with Moses and Aaron?*
 - (c) *What did God say would happen to them because of this?*
2. (a) *Tell why God sent fiery serpents among the children of Israel.*
 - (b) *How could the people be saved from death when they were bitten by the serpents?*

Additional Answers (Div. 11-12 only)

3. *Jesus said: "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up".*
 - (a) *In a couple of sentences tell what happened when God sent the plague of fiery serpents.*
 - (b) *What one thing did the people have to do to be saved?*
 - (c) *What did Jesus mean about "the Son of man" being "lifted up"?*
 - (d) *What do we have to do to be saved?*

5. MOSES

“His eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated”

Aim

To show what a great man Moses was and some of the lessons we can learn from his life.

Synopsis

Moses was born to deliver his people from slavery in Egypt and bring them to the Promised Land. However, we have seen from our last lesson that God would not allow Moses to lead Israel into the land, because he had not given Him the glory when the water came forth from the rock at Kadesh. Apart from this, Moses was a true and faithful servant of God. *“There arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses”* (Deut. 34:10). He asked nothing for himself, but wanted only to see God’s promises to Israel fulfilled.

Deuteronomy 30 and 34

THE FINAL MESSAGE OF MOSES **Deut. 29, 30 and 31**

Moses was 120 years old and God had told him that the end of his life was near. He pleaded with God to let him go into the Promised Land, but he was only allowed to see it from the top of Mt Nebo, in the land of Moab (Deut 32:48-52). Of those who came out of Egypt (that is, of the *“men of war”* Num. 14:29; Deut 2:16) only Joshua and Caleb would enter the Promised Land. The rest had died in the wilderness. Joshua would lead their children, now grown up, into the land itself (Deut. 1:34-39).

Israel had come to the border of Canaan and God commanded Moses to make a covenant there with this new generation. *“Ye stand this day all of you before Yahweh your God”*, said Moses. There they all stood—the elders, the men of war, their wives and their little ones. It was a very solemn occasion. They had to listen carefully to all that was said, for they were soon to cross over into the land, which God had promised to their forefathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Deut. 29:10-13). If they lived in obedience to God’s commandments

He would bless them, but if they disobeyed, many curses would come upon them. *“I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing”,* Moses told them, *“Therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live: that thou mayest love Yahweh thy God and obey His voice”* (Deut. 30:19-20).

While the people stood there, Moses told them of his great disappointment that he was not allowed to go over Jordan with them. Yet God would not desert them now. He would go over before them and destroy the nations of Canaan as He had already destroyed the kings of the Amorites (v4). *“Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid, for Yahweh thy God doth go with thee: He will not fail thee nor forsake thee”* (v6). What encouraging words these were and still are for us today.

Moses wrote in a book all the Law which God had given him. This was to be kept by the priests and read to the people every seven years, at the time of the Feast of Tabernacles (Deut. 31:9-13, 26). It would remind them of the covenant, or agreement, made between them and God. God told Moses to write a song and teach it to Israel, so that they would not forget the wonderful things He had done for their nation (Deut. 31:19; 32:46-47). It would help them remember His commandments and their promise to obey all that God had said. Not only must the people listen carefully to God’s Law and keep it, but they must teach it diligently to their children every day of their lives, so that they too would learn to fear and honour Him. *“Thou shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up”* (Deut. 6:6-7). Think how many opportunities we have to speak to each other about the Bible—it certainly is “our life”.

THE NEW LEADER APPOINTED

Num. 27:18-23

God had already chosen Joshua to take Moses’ place and lead Israel across Jordan into the Land (Deut 3:28). He had been publicly appointed to his office by Moses in front of all the people. *“Be strong and of a good courage”,* Moses said, *“for*

thou must go with this people unto the land ... and thou shalt cause them to inherit it. Yahweh will go before thee, He will not fail thee, nor forsake thee” (Deut 32:7-8).

MOSES DIES

Deut. 34

The other great leaders of Israel – Aaron the High Priest, and Miriam, a prophetess – had died in the fortieth year of Israel’s wanderings. Now, at the end of that same year, the time had come for Moses to die too. These still sleep in their graves waiting for the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, who will raise them from the dead. (Refer to Sunday School Instructor Question No. 132).

Although Moses was 120 years old his body had not grown feeble, nor had his eyes grown dim, but his work was finished. God commanded him to climb Mt Nebo. From that high mountain he could see the Promised Land stretched out before him. *“I have caused thee to see it with thine eyes, but thou shalt not go over thither”,* God said. *“So Moses the servant of Yahweh died there in the land of Moab”* and he was buried in a valley by an angel but *“no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day”* (v5–6). When the Israelites learned that Moses was dead, they wept and mourned for thirty days.

Like many others, Moses *“died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off”* (Heb. 11:13). The fact that he did not tread on the soil of the land in his own lifetime was not really important. He was absolutely certain that God would give him, after the resurrection, a glorious inheritance in the land that he had so wanted to see.

SUMMARY AND LESSON FOR US

Moses was a very meek man, a very humble man. Today, people would not think that these were the qualities of a great leader. Yet they are qualities which God loves to see in His servants. Throughout his life he endured with patience the trials and sufferings that came upon him. The life of the great

prophet can teach us many lessons. When the people grumbled and rebelled, and even his own family envied him and spoke against him, he did not complain, but trusted in God. He spoke quietly and wisely, leaving it to God to settle his problems. He loved God's people and prayed for them whenever God was angry with them. We too must love the family of God and always find ways to help each other to the Kingdom. It was a very great disappointment to him when God said he could not go into the land. We must have the same longing for Christ to come and raise the dead, so that we too can enter the Promised Land and share with Moses the joys of the Kingdom of God.

ADDITIONAL NOTES (Div. 11-12 only)

MOSES WAS LIKE THE LORD JESUS CHRIST IN MANY WAYS

Deuteronomy 34:10 says, "*And there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses*". But God had said, "*I will raise them up **a prophet** from among their brethren, **like unto thee**, and will put My words in his mouth*" (Deut. 18:15, 18). There was one to come who would be even greater. The Lord Jesus Christ was the one spoken of here, the prophet like Moses (See Acts 3:20-22). He was greater than Moses and all the prophets.

1. • **Moses** led the people of God as a good shepherd, caring for all their needs (Psa. 77:20).
 - **Jesus** was the Good Shepherd who even gave his life for his sheep (John 10:11).
2. • **Moses** was a meek man (Num. 12:3). When the people found fault with him, and even his own brother and sister, he did not complain, but trusted in God.
 - **Jesus** was the meekest of all men (Matt. 11:29). The leaders of the Jews envied him, and his family did not at first believe in him. But he never wavered from trusting in God (1 Pet. 2:22-23)
3. • **Moses** loved his people and pleaded with God many times to forgive the people (Num. 14:19).

- **Jesus** loved us and gave his life that we might receive forgiveness of sins forever (John 3:16, 17).
- 4. • **Moses** was a great teacher. God spoke to Israel through him. The law of God which he taught the people became known as the Law of Moses (Exod. 24:12)
- **The Lord Jesus Christ** was the greatest teacher of all (Matt. 7:28-29; Lk. 4:22, 32). God speaks to us through His Son (Heb. 1:2). He always spoke the words of God (John 14:24).

QUESTIONS DIV. 9-12

Short Answers

1. *How old was Moses when he spoke his last message to the people of Israel?*
2. *What did Moses write in a book?*
3. *When was the book of the law to be read out to the people?*
4. *Why did God tell Moses to write a song and teach it to Israel?*
5. *What did Moses see from Mount Nebo?*
6. *Where is Moses buried?*
7. *When will Moses awake and come out of the grave?*
8. *Who was chosen to lead the children of Israel after Moses died?*

Detailed Answers

1. *Moses wrote a book and a song.*
 - (a) *What were these for?*
 - (b) *What did Moses say about teaching the Law of God to their children?*
 - (c) *Why was it important for them to teach all these words to their children?*
2. (a) *Why was Moses not allowed to enter the Promised Land?*
 - (b) *Who was the new leader and how did Moses encourage him before all the people?*
 - (c) *What was unusual about Moses' death?*
3. *What sort of man was Moses? How can we be like this great man?*



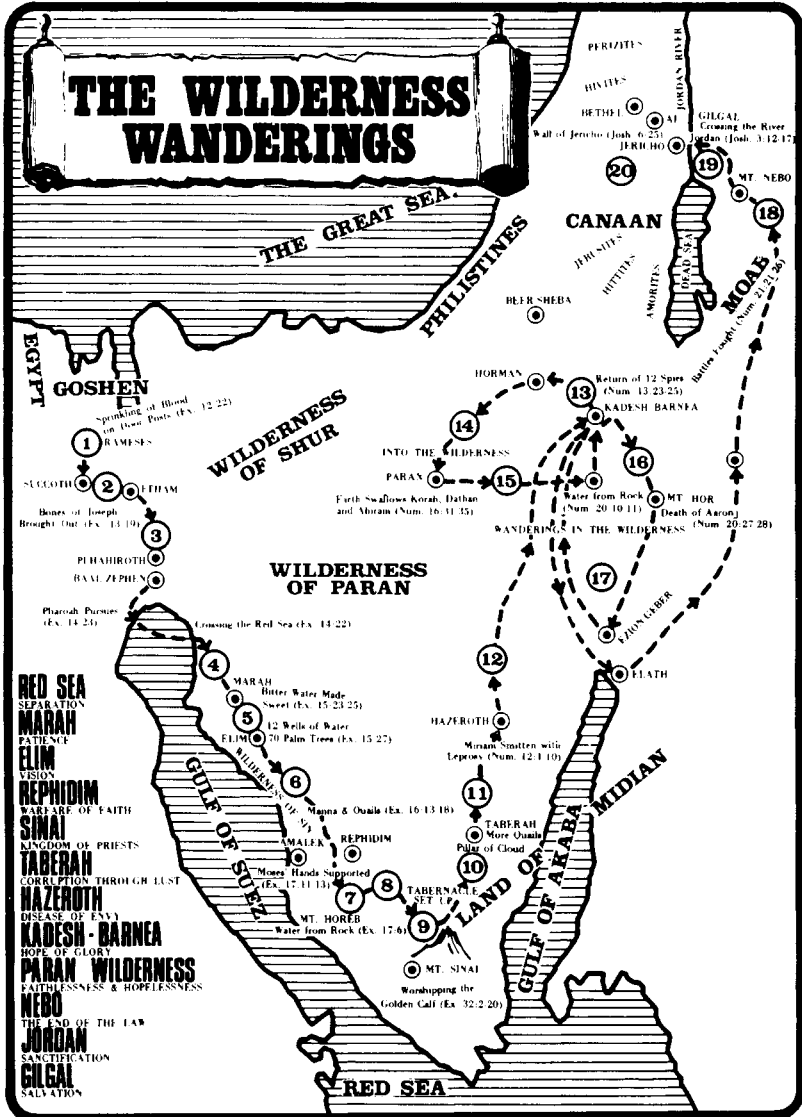
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Additional Answers (Div. 11-12 only)

4. God said He would raise up a prophet like Moses. This was the Lord Jesus Christ. Compare the **work** of Moses and his **character** with that of the Lord Jesus Christ.



6. TWO MEN IN JERICHO

“Yahweh hath given you the Land”

Aim

To show how God cares for those who believe in Him and trust Him.

Synopsis

At last Israel had reached the borders of the land, the land promised to Abraham. It was to be their land for as long as they obeyed God. But first the inhabitants of the land had to be conquered. Joshua was the right man to lead them. His faith and courage were just what they needed to help them overcome their enemies.

Joshua 2

JERICHO

Jericho was the first city which would have to be taken. It was not large, but was very strongly fortified, having two walls, one two metres thick and an inner one four metres thick. Houses were built on top of the walls. Archaeologists who have discovered the remains of the ancient city tell us that these walls would have been at least nine metres high. Most of the people worked in the fields and lived outside the city, but in times of danger they gathered inside, relying on the high, thick walls for safety. Before Israel could safely enter the land, they must conquer Jericho.

SPIES SENT TO JERICHO

Joshua 2:1-3

From the camp at Shittim on the other side (the eastern side) of the river Jordan, Joshua sent out two men to spy out Jericho. Their job was to find out all they could about the city and the people who lived there.

In the outer wall was a gate which was open during the day but closed at night, so that no enemy could enter and make a surprise attack. The spies secretly entered the city to explore

it and were given shelter by a woman named Rahab, whose house was one of those built on top of the walls. Someone, however, had noticed the men and thought they must be spies, for they had all seen the Israelite camp on the other side of the Jordan. The King of Jericho was told that they had been seen going into Rahab's house and he immediately sent men to capture them.

RAHAB HELPS THE SPIES

Joshua 2:4-7

Rahab had heard the stories of the many amazing things done by the God of Israel. *"We have heard how Yahweh dried up the water of the Red Sea for you, when ye came out of Egypt; and what ye did unto the two kings of the Amorites"*, she said (v10). Now Israel was camped opposite Jericho on the other side of Jordan and Rahab felt sure that Jericho would fall to the Israelites too. So as soon as she knew that the king's men were searching for the two strangers who were in her house, she took them up to the flat roof-top and hid them among the stalks of flax there. When the king's messengers came she told them that the men had indeed come to her house, but she did not know where they came from. They had gone out when it was dark, at about the time when the gate was shut. If the king's men went after them quickly she was sure they would catch them. So the messengers hurried off to chase the spies, going towards a part of the Jordan where there were fords (shallower places for crossing). The river was in flood and they expected the spies to be returning to the camp across this part of the river. But, of course, they saw no sign of them.

THE SPIES ESCAPE

Joshua 2:8-24

Meanwhile, Rahab went up and spoke to the two spies. *"I know that Yahweh hath given you the land"*, she said, *"and that your terror is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you"* (v9). The reports of Israel's wonderful crossing of the Red Sea and victories over the

Amorite kings had made the people of Jericho afraid of what might happen to them and their *“hearts did melt”* (v11). Rahab **believed** in the greatness of Israel’s God—*“Yahweh your God, He is God in heaven above and in earth beneath”* (v11).

Rahab had shown great kindness to the men and in return she asked them to save her and her family when Jericho was taken, for she was convinced that Israel’s God had *“given them the land”* (v9). The men promised to do this if she told no one what she knew about them. She helped them to escape by letting them down by a rope through the window of her house on the wall. She warned them not to make straight for the camp of Israel because if they crossed the flat country to the River Jordan they could be clearly seen from Jericho. They should go to the mountain on the west of the city and hide there for three days until the king’s men returned. Then they could safely go back to the camp of Israel. The spies were very grateful for Rahab’s help and promised that she would be rewarded for her kindness. They told her to bind a line of scarlet cord in the window. When the Israelites came against Jericho she must gather all her family into her house and keep them inside. If she did this, all those in the house marked out by the red cord would be saved.

After three days in hiding, the spies returned to Joshua and reported, *“Truly Yahweh hath delivered into our hands all the land; for even all the inhabitants of the country do faint because of us”* (v24).

LESSON FOR US

Rahab had heard with her ears true reports of Yahweh’s great power, shown on behalf of His people Israel. She **believed** and was prepared to put her trust in Him. She **obeyed** and she will be rewarded with eternal life in His Kingdom, for her name is recorded along with many other faithful men and women of old in Hebrews 11. What a wonderful example Rahab is for us. We too, must **believe** the things we hear from God’s

Word. If we **obey** His words, then we too shall have the same reward as faithful Rahab. Soon God will show His great power again in the earth and His people Israel will dwell in the Land forever.

ADDITIONAL NOTES (Div. 11-12 only)

Like Moses and Joshua, Rahab showed great faith. She was not an Israelite by birth, but a Gentile, like ourselves, but her **faith** brought her the great honour of becoming an ancestor of the Lord Jesus Christ.

After the conquest of Jericho she was received into the camp of Israel and later married Salmon of the tribe of Judah, and became the great-grandmother of David (Ruth 4:21-22). Hundreds of years later the Lord Jesus Christ was born in Bethlehem, "*in the city of David, because he was of the house and lineage of David*" (Lk. 2:4). We too can become related to Jesus Christ **by faith**, that is, **by believing the gospel and being baptised** into His Name. We then become children of God and heirs of the promise God made to Abraham (Gal. 3:26-29; see Gen. 12:1-3).

QUESTIONS DIV. 9-12

Short Answers

1. *What was the name of the first city in Canaan which the Israelites were to conquer?*
2. *Who did Joshua send into the city of Jericho?*
3. *Who hid the spies in the city of Jericho?*
4. *Where in the city was Rahab's house built?*
5. *Where did Rahab hide the spies?*
6. *Why did Rahab hide the spies?*
7. *What did Rahab ask for in return for her kindness?*
8. *How did Rahab help the spies escape?*
9. *How would the Israelites know which house was Rahab's?*

Detailed Answers

1. (a) Tell how Rahab hid the two spies who came to Jericho.
(b) How was she to be rewarded for helping them?
2. Rahab told the spies that the people were afraid.
(a) What had they heard that made them afraid?
(b) What did Rahab think of Israel's God?
(c) How can we be like Rahab?

Additional Answers (Div. 11-12 only)

3. Rahab lived in a house on the wall of Jericho.
(a) How did Rahab show her faith in Israel's God?
(b) What did she have to do to be saved when the Israelites captured Jericho?
(c) How can we become related to the Lord Jesus Christ?



7. ISRAEL CROSSES JORDAN

“What mean ye by these stones?”

Aim

To show that by following God’s commandments the people of Israel were brought safely across the River Jordan.

Synopsis

To enter the Land of Canaan the children of Israel must cross the River Jordan. It was spring time and the melting snow from Mt Hermon caused the Jordan to *“overflow all its banks all the time of harvest”* (3:15). The camp of Israel moved from Shittim to the banks of the river and there Joshua told them that in three days they would pass over to the other side. When they saw the priests lift up the ark and go forward, that would be the sign for them all to pick up their belongings and follow.

Joshua 3 and 4

ISRAEL PREPARES – JORDAN CROSSED Joshua 3

“This day”, God said to Joshua, “will I begin to magnify thee in the sight of all Israel, that they may know that, as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee” (v7).

Joshua had given instructions to the people to sanctify themselves, *“for tomorrow Yahweh will do wonders among you”*, he said (v5). They were to put away all thought of themselves and give their whole heart and mind to doing as God commanded. The people were well prepared. Joshua had explained to them what would happen. *“The Ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth passeth over before you into Jordan”* (v11). The Ark, covered by a cloth of blue and carried on the shoulders of the priests, would lead the way. The people were to follow at a distance of 2,000 cubits (about 800 metres).

At Joshua’s command the priests moved forward. The people watched, waiting to see the wonderful miracle which God had promised (v9–13).

The Jordan was in flood, a very wide stretch of water at this point, but as soon as the priests dipped their feet in the brim of the water, the flooded river was “*driven back*” (Psalm 114:3-5). God made the water bank up in a heap a long way off near the city called Adam! The waters of the river on the lower side drained away, leaving a dry path which they could walk across safely. What an amazing miracle this was! How it must have thrilled the people of Israel, and strengthened their faith, making them realise, as Joshua had told them – “*the living God is among you*” (v10). The priests went forward and stopped with the Ark in the middle of the river bed. There they stood firm on dry ground in the midst of Jordan, and all the Israelites passed over on dry ground, until “*all the people were passed clean over Jordan*” (v17).

TWO MEMORIALS

Joshua 4:1-9, 20-24

So that they would always remember this wonderful event, Joshua was told by God to appoint twelve men, one from each tribe, to take twelve stones from the place where the priests stood and carry them to the west bank of the river. These were set up at Gilgal, not far from Jericho, where the Israelites camped. A second memorial of twelve stones was set up right in the middle of the river bed of Jordan, “*in the place where the feet of the priests which bare the Ark of the Covenant stood*” (v9).

These two memorials were to remind the people of the wonderful miracle performed by their God. In time to come, when their children asked, “*What mean these stones?*” they were to tell them, “*Israel came over this Jordan on dry land*” (v22). They were never to forget how God brought them into the Land. So God’s mighty power would become known to “*all the people of the earth*” (v21-24)

SAFELY IN THE PROMISED LAND

Josh. 4:14-19

The people hurried across the Jordan (v10). Then, when the

last person was on the other side, Joshua told the priests to come across too. As soon as their feet came up onto the dry ground on the other side, the water flowed back! God was certainly in control! Israel could not turn back now. The waters of Jordan came down and it overflowed its banks again as it had done before. Israel were safely in the Promised Land!

LESSON FOR US

We can learn important lessons from Israel's experience at the crossing of Jordan. There was no other way to get into the Promised Land, but to cross the flooded river. They had to trust in God. It seemed impossible, but God could make a way. Without God's help we would never get into the Kingdom. We too must trust Him to help us and guide us. "*Trust in Yahweh with all thine heart ... and He shall direct thy steps*" (Prov 3:5-6).

The twelve stones set up near Gilgal were always a reminder of God's mighty power to save His people. Each family had to tell their children the story. It is lovely to hear children asking their parents to tell them the stories of the Bible. This is how you learn to know our heavenly Father; so that you will grow up wanting to obey Him and find a place in His kingdom.

ADDITIONAL NOTES (Div. 11-12 only)

JOSHUA'S WORK POINTS FORWARD TO THE WORK OF JESUS CHRIST

Joshua is a Hebrew name meaning 'Yahweh saves' and 'Jesus' is the Greek form of the same name (Acts 7:45; Heb. 4:8 margin). Both have the same meaning, for both men were saviours of their people. Joshua led his people into the Promised Land to take up their inheritance. The Lord Jesus Christ will do a similar but greater work when he comes to be the ruler or "*Lord of all the earth*", as "*King of kings and Lord of lords*" (Rev. 17:14). His people, all the faithful people who have ever lived, will be raised from the dead and given

immortality. They will cross from death to life, and inherit all the land, as God promised to Abraham (Gen 13:14-17; Gal 3:29).

QUESTIONS DIV. 9-12

Short Answers

1. *What did the people have to do before they crossed the Jordan?*
2. *What did the river Jordan look like at this time of the year?*
3. *Who carried the Ark?*
4. *About how far did the people have to be from the Ark?*
5. *What happened when the priests' feet touched the brim of the water?*
6. *What was the name of the town where the waters heaped up?*
7. *What did Joshua say had to be set up on the other side of the river Jordan?*
8. *Where else was a memorial of the crossing of the Jordan set up?*
9. *What did the people have to tell their children when they asked, "What mean these stones?"?*

Detailed Answers

1. *Tell the story of how God dried up the river Jordan and the Israelites crossed over into the land of Canaan.*
2. (a) *What two memorial's were set up when the children of Israel crossed over the River Jordan?*
(b) *What did the families have to tell their children?*
(c) *What lesson can you learn from this?*

Additional Questions (Div. 11-12 only)

3. *How was Joshua's work of bringing Israel across Jordan similar to the work of the Lord Jesus Christ?*

8. JERICO

“The wall fell down flat”

Aim

To show that Israel was able to capture Jericho because they believed what God said and obeyed His commands

Synopsis

The people of Canaan heard how Israel’s God had made a dry path for them to cross over the River Jordan, and *“their heart melted, neither was there spirit in them any more, because of the children of Israel”* (Josh.5:1). It was as Rahab had told the spies: *“all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you”* . So the Israelites only had to wait for God’s direction and faithfully obey His commands in order to overthrow their enemies.

Joshua 5:12-15: 6

JOSHUA MEETS THE CAPTAIN OF GOD’S ARMY

Josh. 5:12-15; 6:1-6

For some weeks the children of Israel camped at Gilgal not far from Jericho. The manna which God had given them to eat every day for forty years in the wilderness suddenly ceased. Now they were going to eat the good things that grew in the land of Canaan (Josh. 5:12). Above the palm trees they could see the strong walls of Jericho. They had no heavy weapons such as battering rams, to make a hole in such high walls. Here was something to test their faith and courage. How were they going to succeed? Joshua, however, was quite certain of victory and had every confidence that God was with him.

He decided to have a closer look at Jericho, no doubt wondering just how God would deliver the city into their hands. Suddenly he noticed a warrior facing him with his sword drawn. Fearlessly Joshua stepped forward and challenged him, *“Are you for us, or for our adversaries (our enemies)?”* He answered, *“No. I am the captain of the army of Yahweh”*. Faithful Joshua knew straight away that this was no ordinary soldier, but an

angel of God sent to strengthen him. In the presence of God's messenger, Joshua bowed down to the ground and asked, "*What saith my lord unto his servant?*" Before giving any instructions the angel told him to remove his shoes, "*for the place whereon thou standest is holy*" (v15).

The angel then began his message with these thrilling words: "*See, I have given into thine hand Jericho, and the king thereof, and the mighty men of valour*" (v2). Then he went on to tell Joshua how the city would be taken. It was to be a victory gained by **faith** not with weapons of war (v3-5).

Inside the city the people waited fearfully for the expected attack by Israel. The gate was kept shut day and night now, instead of only at night time. No one went out or came in. They could do nothing but wait and rely on the strength of Jericho's high walls for protection. Anxiously they watched for any movement from the camp of Israel and must have been very puzzled by what they saw.

Once each day for the next six days the Israelites left their camp and marched around the city. First came the armed men, then seven priests blowing on seven trumpets of rams' horns, and next came the Ark carried by the priests, followed by more men of war. The whole company then returned to the camp. On the seventh day the march began as usual, but this time they circled the city seven times.

JERICO'S WALLS FALL FLAT

Josh. 6:1

God's instructions were faithfully followed and every day went according to plan. For the first six days the soldiers marched around in silence, broken only by the sounding of the priests' trumpets. The Israelites had been warned that they must not speak or make any noise until Joshua gave the command. When the time came Joshua would give the signal and the priests would blow a blast on the trumpets. Then all the people must give a great shout. The success of the whole

operation depended on their absolute **obedience** in carrying out God's commands.

At dawn on the seventh day the people commenced their march and continued until they had gone around the city seven times. Then the priests blew a long blast on the trumpets and Joshua gave the command: "*Shout, for Yahweh hath given you the city*" (v16). As the people shouted with a great shout and the trumpets sounded, God caused the walls of Jericho to topple and fall, leaving the way open for the soldiers to go straight in and take the city and carry out God's judgments on the wicked people (Deut. 7:2-4; 9:5).

RAHAB SAVED

Josh. 6:21-27

"The wall fell down flat", but one small part remained standing—that part of the wall where Rahab's house stood. God had told Joshua that everything in the city was to be destroyed. Only Rahab and all in her house would be saved because she hid the spies and showed faith in the God of Israel. During those last seven days Rahab had gathered her family inside and had tied the line of scarlet cord in the window. So she and all in the house were saved, as the spies had promised. All the other people and the animals were slain by the sword. This was God's victory.

The Israelites had been warned not to take anything out of Jericho for themselves. Soldiers usually took spoil from an army or city they had conquered, but this time God had given clear instructions. Anyone who disobeyed would cause trouble for the whole camp of Israel. The city was devoted to God. He had given them the victory, and everything in it was His. This meant that the silver, gold, brass and iron were to be placed in the treasury and everything else was to be utterly destroyed by fire. Jericho was the first city in Canaan to be taken and the victory was Yahweh's. Israel had to learn that they must not take for themselves what belonged to God.

LESSON FOR US

The most important lessons for us from this story are the lessons of **faith** and **obedience**. The soldiers and the priests who circled the city could not treat God's instructions lightly. They had to trust God and believe that His way was best. However strange it might seem to march around a city in silence for six days, they had to do exactly as He commanded. Rahab also, who had heard about Israel's God, believed and acted upon her faith. So God saved her. We, too, must listen to God's instructions in the Bible and believe that God means what He says. Only by doing exactly as He has commanded us will we be saved.

ADDITIONAL NOTES (Div. 11-12 only)

In Hebrews 11:6 we read that *"without faith it is impossible to please God"*. This story teaches us that lesson very clearly (Remember: "faith" means "believing"). When Joshua took over as leader of Israel, God told him to read the book of the Law of Moses every day. *"This book of the Law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night ... then thou shalt have good success"* (Josh. 1:8). Joshua had seen the many wonderful things God had done for His people from the time they had left Egypt. Remember that he was one of the two faithful spies. Reading God's Law every day and *"observing all that is written"* made his faith strong. Both Joshua and all the Israelites had to have faith that God could destroy Jericho. *"By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they were compassed about seven days"* (Heb. 11:30). It was God's work. He caused the walls to fall down. But they had to believe and obey. It was God who saved Rahab's house from destruction when the rest of the wall fell down flat—because she too believed and obeyed (Heb. 11:31).

How can we have such great faith? Paul tells us that **faith comes by hearing the Word of God** (Rom.10;17). So *reading and believing the Word of God* is the first thing we

must do to please Him. This is how we learn to love Him. By birth we are Gentiles (like Rahab) but God accepts us as belonging to the family of Israel by faith and baptism (Gal. 3:26–29).

QUESTIONS DIV. 9–12

Short Answers

1. *Where did Israel make camp after they crossed the Jordan?*
2. *What did Joshua say to the warrior he met near Jericho?*
3. *Who did the warrior say he was?*
4. *How many times did the people march around the city?*
5. *What happened to the walls of Jericho?*
6. *What was left standing when the great walls of Jericho fell?*
7. *Who was saved when Jericho was conquered?*
8. *What were the Israelites to do to the city of Jericho?*
9. *What was to be done with the spoil from Jericho?*

Detailed Answers

1. *Tell the story of how Jericho was destroyed. (Begin by telling what Israel did each day).*
2. *What important lessons do we learn from the story of the destruction of Jericho?*

Additional Questions (Div. 11-12 only)

3. *Tell what happened when Joshua met the angel near Jericho.*
4. (a) *Why is faith important?*
(b) *How can we have faith like Joshua?*
(c) *How can we become part of the family of Israel?*

9. ATTACK ON AI

“Israel hath sinned and they have also transgressed My covenant”

Aim

To show that the disobedience of Achan was not hidden from God. All Israel had to learn the lesson.

Synopsis

Israel had seen God’s power when He destroyed Jericho and allowed them to win the battle. Because they had put their trust in Him, God had given them the victory. Everyone had done exactly as Joshua had told them—except for one man. This is a sad story because it spoiled the success of victory over Jericho.

Joshua 7 and 8

THE FIRST ATTACK ON AI

Josh. 7:2-5

When Israel entered Canaan, it was inhabited by wicked and idolatrous people. God said that they must be *“utterly destroyed”*. The successful attack on Jericho encouraged the people of Israel. It seemed as though all would go well for them now. So they looked with confidence to the next battle. The city which now had to be overthrown was Ai, about 19 km away from Jericho. It was an important city because it was on the main route into the Land of Promise and they were anxious now to take up their inheritance.

Joshua sent out spies to have a closer look at Ai. They reported that it was only a small town. It would not be necessary to send all the soldiers against it – just *“two or three thousand men”* (v3). So the men of war were chosen and readily marched into the attack. To their surprise and Israel’s dismay they were quickly beaten by the men of Ai and chased back to the camp. What is more, thirty-six Israelites died in this short battle! What a disaster! There was panic in the camp. *“The hearts of the people melted and became as water”* (v5).

THE REASON FOR FAILURE

Josh. 7:6-15

As captain of his people, Joshua was dismayed. He rent his clothes and fell down in prayer to God. Why had this happened? What could he do if Israel turned their backs on their enemies? The Canaanites would get to hear of it and come and destroy them. And what would happen to God's great name! *"Israel hath sinned"*, said God. *"Neither will I be with you any more"* (v11-12). Something had been taken from Jericho and hidden among their own stuff in the camp. This had been strictly forbidden as Joshua knew. It should all have been destroyed by fire or put into the treasury of God (Josh. 6:17-19). In the morning Joshua must make all the people come forward tribe by tribe, and family by family. God would reveal the guilty person. *"He that is taken with the accursed thing shall be burnt with fire, he and all that he hath."*

THE REMEDY

Josh. 7:16-26

"So Joshua rose early in the morning and brought Israel by their tribes" (v16). God, of course, knew who had sinned. He knows everything we do, whether it is right or wrong.

The tribe of Judah was singled out, probably by lot. From the families of Judah a man called Achan was taken. It was very serious and all Israel watched sadly as Achan stood before Joshua and confessed the things he had done. *"Indeed I have sinned against Yahweh, God of Israel. When I **saw** among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment, and two hundred shekels of silver and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight, then I **coveted** them and **took** them; and, behold, they are hid in the earth in the midst of my tent and the silver under it"* (v20).

Achan had taken for himself what belonged to God. For his disobedience, he and all those who helped him were stoned to death and afterward burned with fire. Where they died a great heap of stones was piled up and the place was called 'The Valley of Achor', that is, The Valley of Trouble.

LESSON FOR US

It was hard for Israel to learn that God meant every word He said. Achan should have understood this and given glory to God by obeying His word. The name 'Achan' means 'Trouble' and we see how the sin of this one man brought great trouble on Israel. Achan broke the tenth commandment: "*Thou shalt not covet*". He then went a step further and stole the things he coveted, thus breaking the eighth commandment: "*Thou shalt not steal*". One sin leads to another and the things Achan stole belonged to God (Josh. 7:1).

How important it is to be honest and trustworthy. We must never be deceitful and do things we know are wrong. God's eyes see us all the time. He loves us and wants us to please Him by doing what is right at all times.

ADDITIONAL NOTES (Div. 11-12 only)

AI TAKEN

Josh. 8

After the sin of Achan had been dealt with, God said to Joshua, "*Fear not ... I have given Ai into thy hands and the king and his people and his land*" (v1). The plan of attack was a simple one and was to give them complete victory. In the darkness of the night Joshua took 5,000 men of war and hid them behind the city on the west side, between Ai and Bethel. In the morning he led 25,000 men of war against Ai from the north. When the men of Ai came out to fight, the Israelites pretended to run away and the enemy chased them as they had done the first time. The men of Bethel had come to help Ai in the battle and they joined in the chase, leaving the two cities without men to defend them. God told Joshua, "*Stretch out the spear that is in thine hand toward Ai*" (v18). This was the signal for the 5,000 men in hiding to come out. They ran to the city, which had been left open and defenceless, and set it alight. The smoke was seen by the men of Ai, who left off chasing Israel and started to run back towards their own city, only to be met by the soldiers who had been in ambush. Then

Joshua's main army turned upon them and they were trapped between the two companies. Joshua stood on a hill with his spear outstretched and as long as he did so, Israel continued victorious in battle. Israel had been commanded to destroy the people of Ai, but this time they were allowed to take the cattle and goods for themselves. Then the city was completely burnt.

After this, Joshua built an altar in Mt Ebal and offered sacrifices to Yahweh there. Then he gathered all Israel. Half the tribes stood on Mt Gerizim and half stood opposite them on Mt Ebal, while he read the blessings and cursings written in the book of the law, as Moses had commanded before he died (Josh. 8:35; Deut 27:1-13).

QUESTIONS DIV. 9-12

Short Answers

1. *After Jericho had been destroyed, what was the next city to be conquered?*
2. *Where was Ai?*
3. *How many Israelites went up to fight against Ai the first time?*
4. *What happened to the army of Israel when they first went up against Ai?*
5. *Why was Israel beaten at the battle of Ai?*
6. *How did Joshua find the guilty man?*
7. *How was Achan punished?*
8. *What commandments did Achan break?*

Detailed Answers

1. *When Israel first attacked the city of Ai, they were defeated.*
 - (a) *What happened?*
 - (b) *Joshua was very distressed. What did he do?*
 - (c) *What did God tell Joshua to do?*
2. (a) *Tell what Achan had done wrong.*
(b) *How was he punished?*

3. (a) *What commandments of God did Achan break?*
(b) *What lesson do we learn from the story of Achan's sin?*

Additional Answers (Div. 11-12 only)

4. *Tell how the Israelites defeated the men of Ai in the end.*



10. JOSHUA OVERCOMES THE CITIES OF THE SOUTH

“Yahweh fought for Israel”

Aim

To show how Joshua succeeded in overthrowing the cities of the south only when he asked God for guidance.

Synopsis

When Jericho was taken and destroyed, the Canaanites realised that Joshua and the army of Israel would soon attack them as well. Five kings in the south of Canaan decided to join together and try to defeat the Israelites. But the Gibeonites had a better plan.

THE GIBEONITES TRICK ISRAEL

Joshua 9

After Ai had been left in ruins, Joshua led the people into the south of the land. The people of Gibeon realised that their city would probably be next in Joshua's line of attack. So, instead of joining with the neighbouring kings, they worked out a plan which they hoped would trick Joshua and the children of Israel into making an agreement with them. They sent some of their people to Israel's camp at Gilgal, dressed in old ragged clothes and worn-out patched old shoes. The bread in their sacks was dry and mouldy, and the sacks themselves were worn-out. Their wine-skins had burst and been mended. These men came to Joshua and said, *“We be come from a far country; now therefore, make ye a league with us”* (v6).

Joshua had been commanded that he was not to make any agreement with the people of Canaan. God had said, *“thou shalt make no covenant with them”* (Deut. 7:2). So he was very wary. He asked the men where they came from and they told him they had come from a very far country—*“because of the name of Yahweh thy God: for we have heard the fame of Him, and all that He did in Egypt”* (v9). As proof they showed Joshua their tattered clothes and shoes worn-out from the long journey.

They showed him the dry, mouldy bread and the old wine-skins, which they said were new when they first started out. Joshua and the elders of Israel were completely deceived by this trick. Believing the men had indeed come from a far country, they made an agreement of friendship with them, promising to let them live.

This was a great mistake. They had not asked God first, but had made their own decision, because of what the men had told them. *“They asked not counsel at the mouth of Yahweh”* (v4).

Three days later Israel came within sight of Gibeon and the surrounding cities. It was only then that they found that the strange men *“from a very far country”* were really inhabitants of the land. When they found they had been tricked the people were very angry. However, once they had made a promise it could not be broken. So the Gibeonites were allowed to live, but as a punishment for deceiving Joshua and the Israelites, they were made slaves to the whole nation. They became *“hewers of wood and drawers of water”* for the Israelites for ever. The men of Gibeon accepted this, because at least their lives had been saved (v25–27).

THE BATTLE OF BETH-HORON

Josh. 10:1-14

Joshua had been successful so far in his campaigns. The whole of central Canaan was in his hands. But now the five kings of the south, headed by Adoni-zedec, King of Jerusalem, gathered in an effort to defeat Israel. First, they decided to attack Gibeon, because the people of that city had made an agreement with Israel. Leading a great army, the kings of the Amorites marched to Gibeon and camped before the city. The Gibeonites sent urgently to Joshua for help. This time he asked God for guidance first. *“Fear them not”,* God said, *“for I have delivered them into thine hand; there shall not a man of them stand before thee”* (v8).

Joshua decided to surprise the enemy. He and his men travelled all night from Gilgal to Gibeon. Early the next morning they came suddenly upon the armies of the five kings. With God's help the battle was soon over and those who were left alive fled in panic up the long rocky hill that led to Beth-horon. The broken army reached the top of the hill and as they began to rush down the other side, hoping to escape from the Israelites, God fought for His people. He sent a terrific storm with great hailstones, which killed more of the enemy than were slain in battle. As the day was now drawing to a close, Joshua was afraid that some of the enemy would escape. So he prayed for God to show His mighty power once more. In front of the soldiers he asked God to make the sun stand still and to stop the moon, *"until the people have avenged themselves upon their enemies. So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and hasted not to go down about a whole day. And there was no day like that before it or after it, that Yahweh hearkened unto the voice of a man: for Yahweh fought for Israel"* (v12-14).

This was an amazing miracle and a triumph for Joshua, who through **faith** and **prayer**, overcame his enemies.

LESSON FOR US

This lesson teaches us that our thoughts need to be guided by God's Word at all times. We are quite often very wise in our own eyes and think that we do not need to ask anybody what to do. It is easy to be led into doing wrong, just because someone makes it sound all right. The wise man, Solomon, said: *"Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear Yahweh and depart from evil"* (Prov. 3:5-7).

QUESTIONS DIV. 9–12

Short Answers

1. *After leaving Ai in ruins, where did Joshua go next?*
2. *Why did the Gibeonites want to trick Joshua?*
3. *What had God said about making agreements with the people of the Land?*
4. *What made the Gibeonites look like people from a far country?*
5. *When did Joshua find out that they had been tricked?*
6. *How did Joshua punish the Gibeonites for their trickery?*
7. *Who came to fight against Gibeon after they had made an agreement with Israel?*
8. *How did God help Joshua to destroy the Amorites as they fled to Beth-horon?*
9. *What miracle did Joshua pray for so that all the armies of the five kings could be destroyed?*

Detailed Answers

1. *When Joshua led the Israelites south the people of the land became afraid. Tell how the Gibeonites tricked Joshua into making an agreement with them.*

Additional Answers (Div. 11-12 only)

2. *After Joshua had made an agreement with the people of Gibeon, five kings gathered their armies to make war against Gibeon. Tell how Joshua came to help and defeated the enemy at Beth-horon.*

II. JOSHUA TURNS NORTHWARD

“And the land rested from war.”

Aim

To show that we must be diligent in obeying the commandments of God if we desire to enter into the Kingdom

Synopsis

The seven nations of Canaan had to be overcome before Israel could settle in the land God was giving them. The Canaanites were strong enemies, but after about six years of war, the final campaign was fought and Joshua *“took the whole land, according to all that Yahweh said unto Moses”*.

Joshua 11; 14 and 18:1-10

A THREAT FROM THE NORTH

Josh. 11:1-5

Though Israel had succeeded in conquering the cities in the south and centre of the land, the most powerful forces of all still had to be faced in the north. When Jabin, King of Hazor, heard of the victories of Joshua, he sent out messages to all the kings over whom he was head, gathering them together to fight against Israel. A huge army assembled, *“as many as the sand that is upon the seashore in multitude, with horses and chariots very many”* (v4), and pitched by the waters of Merom. This army was greater than anything Israel had ever faced. Not only were there many more soldiers, but they had horses and chariots of iron, whereas Israel's fighting men were all on foot. Without God's help Israel was no match for such an army as this.

JOSHUA ENCOURAGED BY GOD

Josh. 11:6

Before they entered Canaan, Moses had told the people not to be afraid when they went out to battle, even though the enemy might seem stronger than they. *“For Yahweh your God is He that goeth with you, to fight for you against your enemies, to save you”* (Deut. 20:1-4). Joshua believed God and trusted

Him, but it still took a lot of courage to put his faith into action. God realised that he needed encouragement and said, "*Be not afraid because of them, for tomorrow about this time I will deliver them up all slain before Israel*" (v6).

JOSHUA'S SURPRISE ATTACK

Josh. 11:7-9

Jabin's army was camped near the waters of Merom, in the far north. The country was very flat there, a good place for horses and chariots. Joshua decided once again to take the enemy by surprise, as he had done at Gibeon. So his army marched northwards through the night as quickly as possible and came suddenly upon the Canaanites, who were quite unprepared for the attack. They had no time to use their chariots and were scattered in confusion. "*Yahweh delivered them into the hand of Israel, who smote them and chased them until they left none remaining*" (v8). The horses were destroyed and the chariots burned, as God had commanded. [To "hough", pronounced "hock" means to maim or destroy.]

Here was a lesson for Israel too. "*Some trust in chariots and some in horses: but we will remember the Name of Yahweh our God*" (Psa. 20:7). Israel were not to put their trust in horses and chariots, but were to remember that it is God who gives the victory.

THE LAND AT REST

Josh. 11:10-23

After defeating Jabin's army, Joshua took the cities of the kings who had joined forces with Jabin and destroyed the wicked inhabitants, as God had commanded Moses. Joshua had conquered the strongest of the Canaanites and "*the land had rest from war*" (v23). Now it remained for Joshua to divide the land among the tribes and every tribe could go in and settle in their inheritance.

THE DIVISION OF THE LAND

Josh. 18

Before entering Canaan, the tribes of Reuben and Gad and

the half-tribe of Manasseh had asked Moses if they could settle on the eastern side of the River Jordan, because it was a good land for cattle. Moses had agreed, providing they first of all sent their fighting men across Jordan to help their brethren overthrow the cities of Canaan (Num 32:16-22). So two and a half tribes had already received their portion (Josh. 12:6). Now God told Joshua to divide the land by lot between the remaining nine and a half tribes. (Remember that Joseph became two tribes, Ephraim and Manasseh—Josh. 14:4). The Levites were not given any portion of the land as an inheritance, “for the priesthood of Yahweh is their inheritance” (Josh. 18:7). They were given 48 cities throughout the country, some in each tribe. They had cities and some surrounding land for their cattle (Josh. 21:1-3). They lived among the people because they were the teachers in Israel, who taught the people God’s ways and laws.

LESSON FOR US

So Joshua did all that God asked of him, just as Moses had said— “*he left nothing undone of all that Yahweh commanded Moses*” (Josh. 11:15). It was now up to each tribe to follow his faithful example, and take possession of their inheritance.

The God who helped Joshua is the same God who will help us in all our troubles today. Joshua was single-minded in his obedience to God. So God never failed him. This was exactly what Moses had said (Deut. 31:6). We can have the same confidence in God today if we do what Joshua did: show faith and courage no matter what problems we have to face.

We hope to dwell in that very land forever soon, when the Lord Jesus Christ comes to set up the Kingdom. Joshua’s hope is our hope and he can be our example. It took many years to conquer the land, but he did not hesitate or lose confidence in God.

ADDITIONAL NOTES (Div. 11-12 only)

CALEB – A MAN OF FAITH

Josh. 14

After the tribes had been given their portions of land they were told to go and take possession of their inheritance. They had to go and settle there and keep it free from Canaanites. Many lacked the faith and courage to do this, but there was one man who showed wonderful faith. About 45 years earlier, Caleb had been one of the two faithful spies who returned to Moses with a good report of the Land. Because of his faith, God promised that Caleb should live to see the Land and take his own inheritance there (Deut. 1:36; Josh. 14:9). We read that “Joshua blessed him, and gave to Caleb the son of Jephunneh, Hebron for an inheritance” (v13). Now, at the age of 85 years, he did not hesitate to go in and take his inheritance. The task was not easy, but he trusted in God’s help and succeeded (v12). “As yet I am as strong this day as I was in the day that Moses sent me”, said Caleb, “If Yahweh will be with me, then I shall be able to drive them out” (v11, 12).

QUESTIONS DIV. 9–12

Short Answers

1. What did Jabin, King of Hazor, do when he heard of Joshua’s victories?
2. Where was Jabin’s army gathered together?
3. How was Jabin’s army different from the army of Israel?
4. How did Joshua decide to attack Jabin?
5. What did Joshua do to Jabin’s horses and chariots?
6. After Joshua had conquered the Canaanites, what was the next thing he had to do?
8. How many tribes received portions in the Land of Canaan?
9. How many cities were given to the Levites?
10. Why did the Levites live among the other tribes?

Detailed Answers

1. *Joshua's final battle was fought in the north of Canaan.*
 - (a) *What was the difference between Joshua's army and the army of Jabin, King of Hazor?*
 - (b) *Tell how Israel won the battle.*
2. *When Joshua had overcome the Canaanites, his next work was to divide the land among the tribes.*
 - (a) *How many tribes received portions in the land of Canaan?*
 - (b) *Why did some of the tribes want to settle on the east of the River Jordan?*
 - (c) *How did God provide for the Levites?*

Additional Answers (Div. 11-12 only)

3. *Who was Caleb, and how did he show his faith and courage?*

12. JOSHUA DIES

“As for me and my house we will serve Yahweh”

Aim

To show how faithful Joshua encouraged the people to serve God, but after he died they soon forgot his example and turned to idols.

Synopsis

A long time after God had given rest to Israel from all their enemies round about, Joshua gathered all Israel together. He had some sober words to say to them before he died. He was an old man and his work was almost finished, but he wanted to give Israel words of warning and encouragement to strengthen them for the days ahead.

Joshua 23 and 24

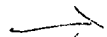
JOSHUA'S WARNING TO ISRAEL

Josh. 23

In his last words to the children of Israel, Moses had commanded them that, when they entered the land, they must destroy the Canaanites. They were to make no covenant with them nor marry them (Deut. 7:1-4). Moses knew very well that any agreement between the Canaanites and the Israelites would only end in God's people worshipping their idols.

Joshua had always reminded them *“to be very courageous to keep and to do all that is written in the book of the Law of Moses”* (Josh. 23:6). Israel had so far followed Joshua faithfully and were at last settled in the land. But Joshua knew that there was only one way in which they could keep themselves separate and continue to receive God's blessing. They must do what Joshua had always done – **they must read God's Word every day and obey it** (see Josh. 1:8).

He called the leaders of the nation together to tell them plainly of their responsibilities. | *“Be ye therefore very courageous to keep and to do all that is written in the book of the Law of Moses, that ye turn not aside therefrom to the right hand or to*



the left; that ye come not among these nations, these that remain among you, neither make mention of the name of their gods, nor cause to swear by them, neither serve them, nor bow yourselves unto them: But cleave unto Yahweh your God, as ye have done unto this day (vv6-8).

Joshua told Israel that if they ever turned back and mixed with any of the nations who were left and made marriages with them, God would no longer drive those nations out of the land and they would become snares to them. They would find themselves tangled up with people who did not know God and who would only cause them harm. Here was a sober warning of how easily they could be turned away from worshipping Yahweh their God, who had brought them in and given them this land. They must be careful. God meant what He said. If they took no notice they would lose it all. *"It shall come to pass that as all good things are come upon you, which Yahweh your God promised you; so shall Yahweh bring upon you all evil things, until He have destroyed you from off this good land"* (vv12-15).

Obedience would bring blessings and happiness but disobedience would make God angry and He would punish them. It was up to them to choose between good and evil.

THE COVENANT RENEWED AT SHECHEM **Josh. 24**

Finally Joshua summoned all the tribes to Shechem to hear his **last** message. It was in fact a message from God to His people. They were reminded of how God had taken their father Abraham out of the idolatrous city of Ur and brought him into this very land, where he worshipped the one true God. He went back over their family history, showing how God had blessed their forefathers as long as they had trusted in Him. The words were very stirring. And now, God said, *"I have given you a land for which ye did not labour, and cities which ye built not, and of the vineyards and oliveyards which ye planted not do ye eat"*.

So what must they do? How could they show God how

thankful they were? *“Fear Yahweh”* said Joshua, *“and serve Him in sincerity and in truth”*.

“Choose you this day whom ye will serve ... but as for me and my house, we will serve Yahweh” (v15).

The people were moved by Joshua’s speech and realised that they must never turn back to idolatry. *“God forbid that we should forsake Yahweh, to serve other gods. Yahweh our God will we serve, and His voice will we obey”* (v16, 24). Joshua then made a solemn covenant with the people and wrote their words of agreement in the Book of the Law of God. He took a large stone and set it up under an oak. *“This stone”,* he said, *“shall be a witness unto us; for it hath heard all the words of Yahweh which he spoke to us”* (v27). The stone was to be a reminder to them of their promise to *“serve Yahweh”*.

JOSHUA’S DEATH

Joshua 24:29-30

So Joshua fulfilled the work God had given him of bringing the children of Israel into the Promised Land.

Now the time had come for him to *“go the way of all the earth”* (Josh. 23:14). He was 110 years old when he died, having faithfully and courageously followed in the footsteps of Moses. They buried him in his inheritance in Timnath-serah.

LESSON FOR US

There will come a time when each one of us must consciously choose whom we will serve. Idolatry is the thing that will lead us away from God. Most of us would not even think of bowing down to a statue or image. But idolatry means more than that. It shows where our heart really is. It is loving something—anything—more than God. It is putting something or someone other than God in first place in our life.

We may, for example, love to play sport. This can be good, healthy fun – but sport can easily become the thing we enjoy doing most of the time. If we are not careful, we may soon be pushing God’s Word into second place in our lives. Bible

readings, Sunday School lessons, helping others, both old and young in the ecclesia, by kindly actions or friendly letters – these are the things God wants us to do. These are the things that build our character, making us good and faithful servants like Joshua. If we have any spare time after that, then whatever we do must be done in a way that will please Him, whether playing games or just doing things with our friends.

QUESTIONS DIV. 9-12

Short Answers

- ① *Why did Moses warn Israel not to make any agreement with the Canaanites?*
2. *What must the people of Israel do each day to help them keep separate from the Canaanites?*
3. *When Joshua was old, he called Israel together. Where did they meet to hear his last message to them?*
4. *Complete Joshua's words – "As for me ..."*
- ⑤ *What answer did Israel give when they heard Joshua's words?*
6. *Where did Joshua place a great stone?*
- ⑦ *Why was the great stone set up at Shechem?*

Detailed Answers

- ① *Joshua gave Israel a warning to keep separate from the Canaanites.*
 - (a) *What must they always do?*
 - (b) *What did he say would happen if they did not?*

Additional Answers (Div. 11-12 only)

2. *In his last words, Joshua warned Israel against idolatry.*
 - (a) *Suggest some ways in which we might become idolators today.*
 - (b) *What should we do instead?*
 - (c) *What good example did Joshua set that we can follow?*

13. DEBORAH AND BARAK

*“There arose another generation after them,
which knew not Yahweh”*

Aim

*To show that the problems that faced the children of Israel
in the times of the Judges are no different from
those we face today.*

Synopsis

Although Israel were continually unfaithful and disobedient, God was merciful and forgiving. When they were in trouble and turned to Him, He saved them from their enemies.

Judges 2, 4 and 5

THE TIME WHEN “EVERY MAN DID THAT WHICH WAS RIGHT IN HIS OWN EYES”

The history of Israel in the time of the Judges is summed up in the last verse of the Book of Judges: *“In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes”* (Judges 21:25). When men take no notice of the Word of God and go their own way, they end up bringing trouble upon themselves. So it was with Israel.

All the days of Joshua, and all the days of the leaders who had been appointed by Joshua, Israel served Yahweh. But the next generation who had not seen His miracles, turned away from serving the God of their fathers and worshipped Baal and Ashtaroth, the gods of the heathen nations round about them (Judges 2:7-13). This was **exactly** what Joshua had warned them about (see Josh. 23:12-13).

It made God very angry. Instead of the peace and happiness He had promised Israel if they obeyed Him, they suffered at the hands of the heathen nations because God no longer fought for them.

THE CAUSE OF ISRAEL'S SUFFERING

Judges 2

The new generation quickly learned the ways of the wicked people of the land and soon were no better than they.

When Israel departed from God's way, God departed from them. They found that "*they could not any longer stand before their enemies*" (v.14). Their enemies grew stronger and Israel grew weaker. The Canaanites, for example, treated them cruelly and made the families of Israel thoroughly miserable. Only then did they remember their God and cry unto Him to save them. God heard their prayers and was merciful and chose judges (leaders) to deliver them. During the lifetime of the judge, Israel felt greatly relieved and served God because He saved them from their enemies. But when the judge died, they quickly slipped back into their evil ways. This happened so many times that God said He would not drive out the nations before them any more. He would leave those nations in the land to test Israel, to see if they would keep His way or not (v 18-22).

All through the book of Judges we see this pattern: Israel sinned against God, and this brought suffering upon them. When they repented and turned to God, He provided a deliverer to save them from their enemies.

***Sin** led to SUFFERING

***Seeking God** led to SALVATION.

DEBORAH THE PROPHETESS

Judges 4:1-9

Israel had enjoyed a long period of peace under Ehud, one of their judges. During that happier time they should have taken a firm hold on the land God had allotted to them. It would have been a wonderful opportunity to study the Law of Moses and return to worshipping Yahweh their God in the right way. Instead, "*They chose new gods*"! (Judg. 5:8). This time God punished them by allowing the powerful King of Canaan to terrify them. The captain of his army was a cruel man

named Sisera, but what frightened them most were his nine hundred chariots of iron! Sisera “*mightily oppressed the children of Israel*” for twenty years There was no-one they could turn to for help but Yahweh their God.

This time God sent a woman to help them — **Deborah, the prophetess**, who lived in Ephraim. Through her the Word of God came to Israel. All Israel came to her for judgment for she was a faithful woman, who tried to guide the people in right ways.

God told Deborah that Barak was the one to lead the Israelites to victory over Sisera. So she called Barak and told him what God wanted him to do. He was to march to Mount Tabor with 10,000 Israelites and Sisera and his army would be delivered into his hand. What a challenge that was for Barak! But he was faithful and did not shrink from the task — only he knew that he needed Deborah’s full support. “*If thou wilt go with me*”, he said to Deborah, “*I will go, but if thou wilt not go with me, then I will not go*”. Deborah was willing to go but told Barak that he would not be the one to have the honour of the victory, for God would “*sell Sisera into the hand of a woman*” (v9).

HOW SISERA WAS DEFEATED **Judges 4:10-24; 5:20-22**

Deborah and Barak sent out a message to all the tribes of Israel to come and join an army to fight against Sisera. Altogether 10,000 men, mostly of the tribes who lived in the area, gathered under the leadership of Barak and marched towards Mount Tabor to meet Sisera’s mighty army. Sisera had been warned of their approach by a man named Heber and hastily assembled his huge army with all their 900 chariots of iron.

Then came the command of God through Deborah: “*Up; for this is the day in which Yahweh hath delivered Sisera into thine hand: is not Yahweh gone out before thee?*” (v14). He was to charge down the mountain side and meet the enemy on

the plain. This appeared to be just the wrong thing to do. On the flat country below the mountain Sisera could easily drive his iron chariots against the foot soldiers of Israel. What hope would Israel have! But Deborah was right, for God was in control. He was fighting for Israel. So brave Barak did as God commanded and the 10,000 men followed him down the mountain side. Just then God sent a mighty storm! The river Kishon that flows through the valley came down in a flash flood and the flat land became a quagmire. Horses and chariots soon became bogged in the mud. The foot soldiers of Israel now had the advantage and were able to defeat the Canaanites, until there was “*not a man left*” (v16).

One man, however, did manage to escape – Sisera, the captain of the defeated army. He left his chariot and fled away on foot. He was tired and beaten and wanted to hide from Barak. So he went and found the tent of Heber. Heber’s wife, **Jael**, went out when she saw him coming and invited him in. When he asked for a drink of water, she gave him milk and covered him with a blanket as he lay down to rest. He asked her to stand guard at the door of the tent and let no one know that he was there. Then he fell asleep, for he was tired out. Although her husband was friendly with Sisera, Jael sympathised with the Israelites, who had been terribly ill-treated by the Canaanites. Using a tent peg and a hammer, she crept up to Sisera while he slept soundly and dealt him a terrible blow in the head, which killed him. So this enemy of Israel died at the hand of a faithful woman, as Deborah had prophesied (v9).

DEBORAH’S SONG OF VICTORY

Judges 5

The defeat of the Canaanites caused great joy in Israel, but without God’s help, it would not have been possible. Deborah and Barak celebrated the victory in the words of a song, giving praise to Yahweh who had fought for them and delivered them from their oppressors. The song records also

the faithful acts of Jael, who overcame the enemy of the people— “*Blessed above women shall Jael the wife of Heber the Kenite be*” (v24).

After this, “*the land had rest forty years*” (v31).

LESSON FOR US

During the period of the Judges, “*every man did that which was right in his own eyes*”. When men walked in God’s way all went well, but when Israel forgot their God and chose new gods, only trouble and wickedness followed. Their “new gods” were only idols of wood and stone, that could do nothing to help them.

The people in the world today “*do that which is right in their own eyes*” and put their trust in riches and worship the idols of this world. They have no thought for the true and living God. This is the cause of wickedness and violence everywhere.

We must stand aside from this. It is not God’s way. We find good advice in the Bible: “*Trust in Yahweh with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths*” (Prov. 3:5-6). As we learn from the record of Judges:

- **Sin brings suffering**
- **Seeking God brings salvation.**

QUESTIONS DIV. 9-12

Short Answers

- ① *In the time of the Judges what happened to Israel when they departed from God’s way?*
- ② *Finish the quotation: “In those days there was no king in Israel...”*
3. *When Israel cried to God for help, what did He do?*
4. *Who was Deborah?*
5. *Who did Deborah call to lead the Israelites against Sisera?*

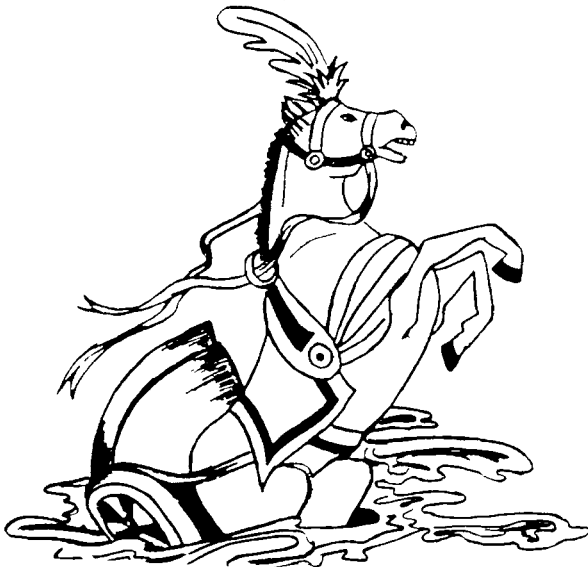
6. *How did God help Israel when they charged down Mt. Tabor to fight against Sisera?*
7. *What happened to the chariots of Sisera?*
8. *Where did Sisera flee to when his army was defeated?*
9. *What did faithful Jael do to Sisera?*
10. *Finish this sentence — “Sin leads to... but seeking God leads to...”*

Detailed Answers

1. (a) *What happened in Israel after Joshua died?*
(b) *How did God help Israel when they cried to Him?*
(c) *What do we find happening over and over again in the book of Judges?*
2. *Tell the story of how Deborah and Barak helped to save Israel. (Don't forget to mention what Jael did too.)*

Additional Answers (Div. 11-12 only)

3. *What lesson do we learn from the record of the Judges that will help us please God?*



14. GIDEON

“The sword of Yahweh and of Gideon”

Aim

To show that God always cared for His people. When they turned to Him, He gave them leaders to guide them.

Synopsis

Following the victory over the army of the King of Canaan, the land had rest for forty years (Judges 5:31). During this time of peace, Israel soon forgot all that God had done for them in the past and turned again to the false worship and evil ways of the Canaanites. As a punishment, God delivered them into the hand of the Midianites, who oppressed them for seven years.

Judges 6 and 7

THE MIDIANITES

The Midianites were a warlike people who over-ran the land of Israel like a swarm of grasshoppers, destroying the crops and herds which should have provided food for Israel and spreading terror among the people. As a result, Israel fled to dens and caves in the mountains, where they tried to hide from their enemies. In the midst of their terror and distress they remembered their God and cried unto Him for help. This time He chose a faithful man named Gideon to be their judge. It was Gideon who would turn them back to their God and help them win a mighty victory over the Midianites.

THE CALL OF GIDEON

Judges 6:11-12

Gideon lived in Ophrah and although his father Joash and the people of his city were worshippers of Baal, Gideon still remained faithful to Yahweh, God of Israel. He had managed to save some wheat from the Midianites and used to thresh it secretly. One day as he was doing this, he suddenly heard a voice behind him saying, *“Yahweh is with thee, thou mighty*

man of valour” (v12). Gideon looked up startled to see a man (who was really an angel) sitting under an oak nearby. Gideon said to him, *“Oh my Lord, if Yahweh be with us, why then is all this befallen us?”* (v13). Gideon had really been hoping for a miracle to happen to save Israel, just as God had saved them in times past. He knew only too well **why** these troubles had come. Israel was suffering because they had turned away from God to worship idols. Even his own father’s house was a centre for the worship of Baal.

Looking steadily at Gideon, the angel told him that **he** was the one God had chosen to deliver Israel. Gideon was amazed and asked, *“How shall I save Israel?”* *“Surely I will be with thee”* the angel of God said, *“and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man”* (v16). Gideon could scarcely believe that **he** would be able to gather Israel and lead them to such a great victory.

He asked for a sign that this message was from God and begged the angel to wait until he had prepared an offering. As soon as it was ready he brought a kid, unleavened cakes and broth and presented it to the angel, who told him to lay the food on a rock and pour out the broth. The angel touched the offering with his staff, and instantly fire came from the rock and consumed the food. Then suddenly the angel disappeared! So Gideon knew that it had truly been an angel that had spoken to him. God had given him the sign he had asked for. But then Gideon felt afraid, because he realised he had seen an angel of God *“face to face”* (v22). God spoke to him and said, *“Fear not, thou shalt not die”* (v23).

From that time on Gideon began to prepare himself for the great work of leading God’s people to victory against their enemies.

THE TWO SIGNS OF THE FLEECE **Judges 6:34-40**

The Midianites had collected together a mighty army and camped in the valley of Jezreel. Meanwhile Gideon sent messages to the tribes of Manasseh, Asher, Zebulun and

Naphtali, asking them to join him in this great battle against their enemies. He then prayed to God for a sign, that he might be sure that God was with him. “Behold, I will put a fleece of wool on the (threshing) floor, and if **the dew be on the fleece only**, and it be dry upon all the ground beside, then shall I know that thou wilt save Israel by mine hand, as thou hast said.” (v37). In the morning Gideon found that it was just as he had asked.

The next night he prayed again, “Let it now be **dry only upon the fleece**, and upon all the ground let there be dew” (v59). “And God did so that night” (v40). Gideon was now confident that God would give Israel the victory. He, Gideon, would lead them and show them that their strength came from Yahweh, not from Baal.

CHOOSING GIDEON’S ARMY

Judges 7:1-8

Altogether 32,000 men joined Gideon, ready to make war on the Midianites, but God said that 32,000 were too many! The Midianites had an army of 135,000 (Judges 8:10) – a huge army! But **God** would give Israel the victory. He did not need a great army and He did not want Israel to say, “*mine own arm hath saved me*” (v2).

So God told Gideon to say to the men who were with him, “Whosoever is fearful and afraid, let him return and depart early” – and 22,000 returned home. That left only 10,000 to face the Midianite army of 135,000! But even this number was too many for God’s purpose. So He told Gideon to take the men down to the water for a drink and Gideon had to watch *how* they drank. He noticed that some lifted the water in their hands and lapped it as a dog does. Others knelt down to drink straight from the water. Those who lapped were set on one side – there were 300 of them. While they drank this way, they had been able to watch what was going on around them. No doubt this was the reason why these men were set aside. They were careful men, who would not be taken unawares by the enemy. God said

that **by these 300 men** He would give Israel victory over the mighty army of the Midianites. The rest of the men were sent home to their tents (v7).

THE SWORD OF YAHWEH AND OF GIDEON Judges 7:15-23

That night Gideon was further encouraged by a conversation he overheard in the camp of Midian (v 9-15). What he heard made him realise that the Midianites were growing afraid of the Israelites. (See Additional Notes Div. 11-12 only). So he divided his soldiers into three companies of 100 and gave each man a trumpet and a lamp hidden inside a pitcher (a kind of earthenware jar). The time of the attack was "*in the beginning of the middle watch*" (between 10 pm and 1 am). Under cover of darkness the Israelites surrounded the Midianite camp. At a signal from Gideon his men blew the trumpets, broke the pitchers, held up the torches and gave a great shout: "*The sword of Yahweh and of Gideon*" (v20). The army of Midian, awakened by all the noise, saw the blazing torches of the men of Israel all round their camp. Thinking they were surrounded by a huge army, the soldiers panicked and started to run. It was impossible to tell friend from enemy in the darkness. They were afraid of every movement and ended up turning their swords on each other. So Gideon and his small band of soldiers gained a great victory, because they followed God's commands and put their trust in Him.

LESSON FOR US

Gideon had continued to worship Yahweh while most of Israel, and even his own father's house, worshipped Baal. When the angel spoke to him, he was obviously thinking about the things God had done for Israel in the past and praying for God to show His power to save them once more. We must be like that too. We can see how good God has been to us in the past, in showing us the Truth in the Bible and showering us

with daily blessings (see Psalm 68:19-20). From the Bible we learn that God will soon show His power in the earth once again. This time, He will send the Lord Jesus Christ to punish the wicked and cleanse the world of all filthiness. He will set up a righteous kingdom and be king over all the earth. This is the great hope set before us. We must read about it and look forward to it every day. Then, when Christ does return, how happy we shall be.

ADDITIONAL NOTES (Div. 11-12 only)

THE DREAM

Judges 7:9-14

God had shown Gideon how to choose the men that were to go with him, and that same night God spoke to him, saying, *“Arise, get thee down unto the host (the army of Midian): for I have delivered it into thine hand”* (v9). God knew what great courage was needed for a small band of 300 men to go out confidently against such a huge army. So He told Gideon that, if he was afraid, he should go with his servant, Phurah, and spy on the camp of Midian. There he would overhear something which would give him the strength and courage to go and defeat the Midianites.

Down they crept in the dark of night and, sure enough, they overheard one soldier telling another soldier of a frightening dream he had had. *“Lo, a cake of barley bread tumbled into the host of Midian, and came unto a tent, and smote it that it fell, and overturned it”* (v13). The reply of his companion startled Gideon. *“This is nothing else but the sword of Gideon ... for into his hand hath God delivered Midian and all the host”* (v14).

When he heard that, Gideon could not help but bow his head and praise and thank his God. Then he hurried back to his 300 men and said, *“Arise: for Yahweh hath delivered into your hand the host of Midian”* (v15). Now Gideon felt confident of victory and praised God for helping him in this way.

QUESTIONS DIV. 9-12

Short Answers

- ① Whom did God choose to deliver Israel from the Midianites?
- ② What were the angel's first words to Gideon when God called him to save Israel from their enemies?
- ③ What was the sign God gave to Gideon to prove it was an angel that spoke to him?
- ④ What two signs did Gideon ask God to show with the fleece?
5. How many men did God choose in the end to go with Gideon?
6. How could Gideon tell which men God had chosen to go with him?
7. What did Gideon and his men take with them when they surprised the Midianites?
8. What did Gideon and his men shout as they frightened the Midianites?

Detailed Answers

1. Gideon could hardly believe that God wanted **him** to lead Israel against the Midianites.
 - (a) Tell what the angel said and how Gideon knew it was really an angel.
 - (b) What were the other two signs Gideon asked for so that he could be sure God was with him?
- ② God told Gideon that 32,000 men were too many to fight the Midianites.
 - ① (a) Why?
 - (b) Tell how the army of Gideon was chosen.
3. "The sword of Yahweh and of Gideon". Tell the story of how God chose the men to go with Gideon and how they defeated the Midianites.

Additional Answers (Div. 11-12 only)

- ④ Tell how God encouraged Gideon by a conversation he overheard in the camp of Midian.

15. SAMSON

“He shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines.”

Aim

To show that Samson’s strength came from God.

Synopsis

Many times God delivered His people from their enemies by raising up judges to lead them. This time it was the Philistines who made life hard for Israel and God chose Samson to save them.

Judges 13:1-7; 16

THE PHILISTINES

For forty years Israel suffered under the Philistines, who lived in a strip of country along the southern sea-coast of the Land. They were a powerful, warlike people who had not been conquered when Israel first occupied the land of Canaan. Their main cities were Gaza, Gath, Ashkelon, Ashdod and Ekron. Each city had its ruler and these were called *“the five lords of the Philistines”*. Israel had not yet learned the art of the blacksmith and so they could not make swords or spears (1 Sam. 13:19-20), but the Philistines were clever at it. So without God’s help Israel were no match for their enemies, who fought them with iron weapons.

SAMSON IS BORN

Judges 13:1-7

Part of the inheritance of the tribe of Dan was close to where the warlike Philistines lived. Manoah and his wife lived in Zorah near the Philistines’ cities. They were faithful Israelites and as yet they had no children. One day God sent an angel to the woman to tell her that she was going to have a son! He was to be a very special child, for God had already planned that he would grow up to be the one who would *“begin to deliver Israel from the hand of the Philistines”* (v5). His mother must

take special care before he was born. She was not to drink wine nor any strong drink, nor eat anything described in the Law of Moses as “unclean” (v4).

Her son was to be a “Nazarite” (see Numbers 6). A Nazarite is someone who makes a vow to separate himself to serve God. Samson’s whole life was to be spent in God’s service. As a sign of this his hair must never be cut, he was not to drink wine nor any strong drink, nor eat anything “unclean” (v5).

SAMSON – THE JUDGE

Judges 16:1-3

When Samson grew up, God’s spirit moved him to try to help his people. The Philistines learnt to fear him because he was incredibly strong and on several occasions he killed many of them. This great strength was given to him by God for the special work he had to do— “*begin to deliver Israel from the Philistines*”.

Samson made regular trips into Philistine country. On one occasion, when he was in Gaza, the Philistines lay in wait for him all night by the gate of the city. “*In the morning*”, they said, “*we shall kill him*”. At midnight Samson decided to go home but the gates were shut. So he dragged the gate and the two posts from the wall and carried them all on his shoulders to the top of a hill on the road leading to Hebron. This was a much bigger gate than we can imagine. It was the gateway to the city. The Philistines were amazed at his great strength and wondered how they could possibly overcome him.

SAMSON AND DELILAH

Judges 16:4-20

About this time Samson fell in love with a Philistine woman named Delilah. The lords of the Philistines at last thought of a good plan to find out the secret of Samson’s great strength. They offered Delilah a large sum of money to “*entice him and see wherein his great strength lieth*” (v5). She agreed to help them, for it would make her very rich.

So when Samson came to visit her, she said, “*Tell me, I pray*

thee, wherein thy great strength lieth” (v6). Samson pretended to tell her on three occasions, and each time the Philistines found he was still as strong as ever. Day after day Delilah begged him to tell her his secret, until at last he told her “all his heart” (v17) — he had been a Nazarite from birth and his hair had never been cut as a sign of his separateness from other men. “If I be shaven,” he said, “then my strength will go from me, and I shall become weak, and be like any other man.” Delilah could see that this time Samson had told her the truth. Quickly she called the lords of the Philistines to come and be ready to take Samson. She waited until Samson was asleep and then told a man to shave his head – “and his strength went from him” (v19).

Do not imagine that the great strength of Samson lay in his hair. While it remained long it was a sign of his obedience to God’s command (Judg. 13:5), and God gave him the strength for his work of opposing the Philistines. But when Samson’s hair was cut, the Nazarite vow was broken. Samson had forsaken God’s law, and God took his strength away.

THE DEATH OF SAMSON

Judges 16:21-31

The Philistines were now easily able to overcome Samson. They put out his eyes and brought him to Gaza, binding him with fetters of brass and put him to work grinding corn in the prison house. As Samson worked in darkness in the prison house, he had plenty of time to think about the foolish things he had done. God had justly punished him for his disobedience. His hair, of course, began to grow again and his strength returned.

The Philistines were very glad to have Samson out of the way. They thought their god had delivered him into their hands. So they arranged a feast day to offer a great sacrifice unto Dagon, the fish god. Samson was brought out for the occasion as thousands of people gathered at the temple of Dagon. “*Call for Samson, that he may make us sport*”, they

said. Here was a great opportunity to mock the fallen hero of Israel. As he came into the temple of Dagon, Samson asked the lad who guided him to let him feel the main pillars on which the house stood, that he might lean on them. Then he prayed, “O Lord Yahweh, remember me, I pray thee, and strengthen me” (v28). Taking hold of the pillars he said, “Let me die with the Philistines” (v30). Gathering all his strength, he strained on the pillars until they gave way and the whole building collapsed. All the people there, including the lords of the Philistines, died. God had heard Samson’s prayer. Those that he slew at his death were more than he slew during his life (v30).

It is recorded that Samson judged Israel twenty years, and although he did not always live in a way that pleased God, he carried out the work of “*beginning to deliver Israel from the Philistines*”.

LESSON FOR US

Samson was betrayed by a woman who *looked* beautiful, but had an evil mind. She pretended to love him, but it was only to destroy him. Had Samson obeyed God, he would not have had anything to do with her and he would not have suffered and died as he did.

Samson was strong as long as he kept his vow, that is, his promise to serve God. His love for Delilah blinded him to the wickedness of breaking his promise. When the Philistines put his eyes out and he became truly blind, then he could at last see clearly how foolish he had been. Let us be wise and make sure that nothing distracts us from obeying God at all times.

ADDITIONAL NOTES (Div. 11-12 only)

Samson was just like Israel as a nation. They were supposed to keep themselves **separate for God**, as they had vowed to do. (See Josh. 24:24).

Samson was a Nazarite from his birth, but broke his vow

(Judg. 16:17).

Israel was not to make marriages with any of the people of Canaan (Josh. 23:12-23) but they did; and so did Samson. God said they would be led astray by the gods of those nations if they mixed with them and that is just what happened, as we see many times in the Book of Judges (see Judg. 2:11-13). When Samson fell in love with Delilah, she took away his strength by enticing him to break his vow. Then the Philistines thought their god, Dagon, had won a victory over Yahweh. So Samson brought shame on God's name.

When he was blinded, he was at last able to see clearly (in his mind), what a terrible thing he had done. He cried to God, as Israel did in times of trouble, and God heard his prayer and delivered him (see also Judg. 4:1,3,23; 6:1,6-8; 13:1,5). Then Yahweh showed His great power in giving Samson the strength to kill so many Philistines and destroy the temple of their god.

In Hebrews 11:32 Samson is counted among the worthies of faith. He learned to overcome his weaknesses and trust in God in the end. We should learn from Samson's life that God's laws must be obeyed and we must keep separate from the world if we wish to please Him.

QUESTIONS DIV. 9-12

Short Answers

1. *Who was Samson's father?*
2. *God had a special work for Samson to do when he grew up. What was this work?*
3. *What is a Nazarite?*
4. *What were the signs that Samson was a Nazarite?*
5. *Why was Samson so strong?*
6. *What did Samson do one night when he was locked in the city of Gaza?*
7. *What did Delilah want Samson to tell her, and why?*
8. *What did Delilah do when she found out Samson's secret?*

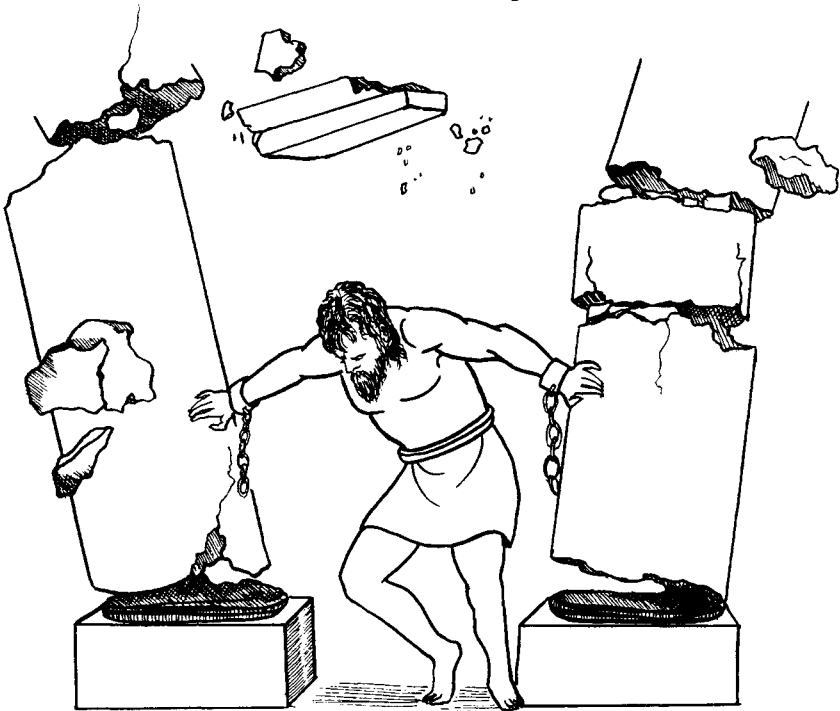
9. What did the Philistines do to Samson after his hair was cut off?
10. How did Samson die?

Detailed Answers

1. Samson was chosen by God before he was born to live in a very special way for God.
 - (a) Tell how Samson was different from other men right from the time he was born.
 - (b) What work did Samson do for God?
2. Tell the story of Samson and Delilah.

Additional Answers (Div. 11-12 only)

3. Tell what happened to Samson after he broke his vow and told the secret of his great strength.
4. How was Samson like the nation of Israel?



16. RUTH

“Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God”

Aim

To show that God watches over His children and guides them when they trust in Him.

Synopsis

The book of Ruth belongs to the times when the judges ruled. There are always a few people who are faithful to God, even when everyone else is wicked. In the book of Ruth we learn of a few lovely people who served God even when so many had departed from His way. This book shows how a Gentile woman became part of the nation of Israel and shared in their blessings. It is particularly interesting, because Ruth became the great-grandmother of king David, in whose family line Jesus was born.

Ruth 1; 2:1-12; 4:9-22

RUTH – THE MOABITNESS

Ruth 1

During a time of famine in the land, Elimelech, a man of Bethlehem, left his home and crossed the Jordan to live in Moab. He took with him his wife Naomi and their two sons, Mahlon and Chilion. After they had been settled a while in Moab, Elimelech died and Mahlon and Chilion married Ruth and Orpah, two Moabite women. During the next ten years both of Naomi's sons died and she was left with her two daughters-in-law.

When Naomi heard that the famine had ended in her own country she decided to return home. She set out with Ruth and Orpah, who evidently loved her very much. As they went along the way towards Judah, Naomi advised her daughters-in-law to go back to their own people, for she had nothing to offer them. They should both stay in their own country and marry. Yet they could not bear the thought of parting from her. Finally Orpah was persuaded to return to her own family in Moab. Ruth, however, still refused to leave Naomi and

pleaded to be allowed to go with her. *“Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee, for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God...”* (v16,17). How Naomi’s heart must have warmed when she heard her daughter-in-law’s lovely words. *“So Naomi returned, and Ruth the Moabitess, her daughter-in-law, with her, which returned out of the country of Moab, and they came to Bethlehem in the beginning of barley harvest”* (v22).

GOD DIRECTS RUTH

Ruth 2:1-12

Ruth realised that on their return to Bethlehem she would have to look after Naomi, because they were both widows and very poor. God, in His goodness, had made provision in the Law of Moses that poor people might gather enough to eat from those who had plenty (Deut. 24:19-21). The reapers were to leave enough in the fields for the poor to gather – *“thou shalt not wholly reap the corners of thy field, neither shalt thou gather the gleanings of thy harvest ... thou shalt leave them for the poor and stranger”* (Lev. 19:9-10).

Ruth asked Naomi to let her go and glean corn in the fields. (To *glean* means to gather corn or barley that the reapers have left. It was the only way they could survive. They had no husband or father to care for them now.) As it happened, Ruth went to a field belonging to Boaz, a rich relative of Elimelech. Unknown to Ruth at this time, it was God who led her to that field, for she had learned already to trust in Him. Boaz was a good man who loved God and gave thanks for his bountiful harvest. He questioned his reapers about the young woman who was gleaning in his field. When he heard who she was, he spoke kindly to her and told her not to go anywhere else to glean. Ruth was very grateful, though she could not understand why he had favoured her, seeing she was a stranger. Boaz explained kindly that he had heard all she had done for Naomi, and of the new life that she had chosen

with a people unknown to her. Graciously he said, “*Yahweh recompense thy work and a full reward be given thee of Yahweh God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to trust*” (v12). The blessing of the God of Israel had rested on Ruth and directed her steps to the field of Boaz.

BOAZ MARRIES RUTH—A HAPPY ENDING **Ruth 4:9-22**

This story had a happy ending in the marriage of Ruth and Boaz. In due time a baby boy was born and they called him Obed. Obed later became the father of Jesse, whose youngest son was David, later to become king over all Israel (v22). A long family line can be followed on from here and hundreds of years later the greatest man who ever lived was born into this family. His name, of course, was Jesus, who one day will be king over all the earth.

LESSON FOR US

This is a beautiful story that seems to shine like a light in the dark days of the judges. It is full of love and kindness. Such a love we see in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was descended from the family of Ruth and Boaz. He gave His life that we might live. Paul speaks of the love God wants us to show in I Corinthians 13. It suffers long and is kind; it does not envy what others have; is not impatient; and it is not selfish but thinks of others. These qualities in Ruth attracted Boaz to her. Such love, one toward another, will develop a character which the Lord Jesus Christ will be pleased to see.

One of the most important ways we can show our love for God is to be very caring to the fatherless and the widows. In doing that we are acting like our heavenly Father.

ADDITIONAL NOTES (Div. 11-12 only)

Once again, the merciful provision for those who had been widowed was shown in the Law which God gave to Moses. If a man died and had no children, his brother or nearest relative

was to marry the widow of that dead man, so that children would be born to take his name and keep his inheritance. In that way, the man's name would not be forgotten and the widow would be cared for (Deut. 25:5-6). It was God who directed Ruth to the field of Boaz but she only found out later from Naomi that he was "*one of our next kinsmen*" (2:20). Boaz could **redeem** Ruth—he could **marry** her. So she would have a husband to care for her and, of course, for Naomi too.

There was, however, a nearer relative who had the right to marry Ruth, but he did not wish to. So the right passed to Boaz. He was in a position to marry her and have children, so that there would be someone to carry on the family name. In Israel this was called "the Law of Redemption". Boaz grew to love Ruth and they were married.

Such is the story of the Gentile woman, Ruth, who came to love the God of Israel. She was cared for and protected by her **redeemer**, Boaz, who became her husband. In turn, they looked after Naomi, who had great joy in her grandson, Obed.

QUESTIONS DIV. 9–12

Short Answers

1. *Why did Elimelech and his family leave Bethlehem?*
2. *What happened to Elimelech and his sons in the land of Moab?*
3. *Who stayed with Naomi when she journeyed back to her own land?*
4. *At what time of the year did Naomi and Ruth return to Bethlehem?*
5. *Who owned the field where Ruth went to glean?*
6. *Who directed Ruth's steps to that field?*
7. *What did Ruth do in the field of Boaz?*
8. *A son was born to Ruth and Boaz. What was his name?*
9. *Can you name some of the great people who came from the family of Ruth and Boaz?*

Detailed Answers

1. (a) *Tell what made Elimelech and his family go into the land of Moab and what happened to them while they were there.*
(b) *Why did Naomi decide to go back to Israel?*
2. *When Naomi decided to return to Israel, what did her daughters-in-law do? Tell what lovely words Ruth said to Naomi.*
3. (a) *Tell how Ruth cared for Naomi when they arrived back in Bethlehem.*
(b) *What did Boaz think of Ruth?*

Additional Answers (Div. 11-12 only)

4. *How did God's law provide for poor people and strangers like Naomi and Ruth? What lesson can we learn from this about the way we should act?*
5. *God's law made a special provision for widows. Tell how Boaz became a redeemer for Ruth?*



17. SAMUEL

“Speak, Yahweh, for thy servant heareth”

Aim

To show that God takes delight in faithful and obedient children, but will punish those who disgrace His Name.

Synopsis

Israel's high priest, Eli, had two wicked sons, Hophni and Phineas. Being priests, they should have kept the law and set a good example to the people, but they had no regard at all for God's commandments. When people came to worship, these faithless men took the best part of the sacrifices for themselves before the offering was made to God. They were so vile that they made other people do wrong as well, and many others no longer wanted to come and worship God at all. So God decided to replace these wicked priests with one who would do His will (1 Sam. 2:35).

1 Samuel 1; 2:1-26; 3 and 4

THE BIRTH OF SAMUEL

1 Samuel 1:9-20

Hannah lived with her husband Elkanah in Ramah. Each year they went to the Tabernacle at Shiloh to worship and offer sacrifices to God. Hannah was very unhappy because she had no children. It used to make Elkanah sad to see his wife so unhappy. *“Am not I better to thee than ten sons?”* he used to say. Hannah knew that only God could help her, so she took her problem before God in prayer. As she prayed at the Tabernacle, she did not realise that Eli, the high priest, was watching her. She was so agitated that Eli was sure she must have drunk too much wine. *“No, my lord”*, said Hannah when he questioned her, *“I am a woman of a sorrowful spirit”*. She explained the reason for her prayer. She had been praying earnestly for a son. If God should answer her prayer she had promised to give him to God to work in His service all the days of his life. He would be a Nazarite, like Samson, a man set apart for the work of God (v11).

Eli could tell from this that Hannah was a godly woman.

“Go in peace”, he said kindly, “and the God of Israel grant thee thy petition that thou hast asked of Him” (v17).

God did answer Hannah’s prayer and she had a baby boy. She called him **Samuel**, which means *Asked of God*—she had asked and God had answered. He became one of the most important men in Israel’s history and is mentioned in Hebrews 11:32 as one of the faithful men of God.

SAMUEL GOES TO LIVE WITH ELI

I Sam. 1:23-28

Hannah cared for Samuel at home until he was old enough to go to the Tabernacle. Then she and Elkanah went to Shiloh and presented their little son to Eli. She was prepared to fulfil her promise and give her son into the care of the High Priest to help him in his service to God. She told Eli: “*O my lord, as thy soul liveth, I am the woman that stood by thee here, praying unto Yahweh. For this child I prayed; and Yahweh hath given me my petition which I asked of Him. Therefore also I have lent him to Yahweh; as long as he liveth he shall be lent to Yahweh*” (v26-28)

THE WORK OF SAMUEL

I Sam. 3:1-21

Samuel now lived with Eli the High Priest, who taught him all he knew about God. Each year, as he grew, Hannah brought a new coat for him when she came to the Tabernacle with her husband to offer sacrifice. Samuel saw the evil example of Eli’s two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, but he loved God and followed His ways, growing up in favour with God and men (I Sam. 2:26).

One night as Samuel was sleeping, he was woken by a voice calling his name. Thinking it was Eli, he ran to find out what he wanted, but Eli had not called him. When this happened three times it was clear to Eli that Yahweh, the living God, was calling Samuel. He told the boy to go back to bed and, if he heard the voice again, to answer: “*Speak, Yahweh, for thy*

servant heareth”.

In the silence of the night, God spoke to Samuel and gave him a message about Eli and his sons. *“I will judge his (Eli’s) house for ever for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not”* (v13). God would not allow the sons of Eli to be priests in his house because of their wickedness and because Eli had not stopped them. It was a sad duty that fell to Samuel to tell his beloved teacher God’s message.

From this point on, a great change took place in the life of this young man who was given to God. *“Samuel grew, and Yahweh was with him, and did let none of his words fall to the ground. And all Israel from Dan even to Beersheba knew that Samuel was established a prophet of Yahweh”* (v 19-20).

THE DEATH OF ELI AND HIS SONS

I Samuel 4

Eli was now a very old man, 98 years of age. Once again there was war with the Philistines and this time thousands of Israelites were slain. Among those killed were Hophni and Phinehas, who had taken the Ark of God out of the Tabernacle and into the midst of the battle, hoping that this would make God help them. But God would not help them, for they had not obeyed Him and the Ark itself was captured by the Philistines. A man brought this news to Eli, and when he heard that the Ark had been taken by the Philistines, Eli was so shocked that he fell backward off his seat *“and his neck brake, and he died”*.

Samuel now became a leader and prophet in Israel. He organised the worship of God so that men and women could worship in the right way. The good that he did lasted many years. He himself was upright and noble and saw to it that Israel’s sacrifices were offered to God in the correct way. David, who later became king, spent a lot of time with Samuel, learning from this faithful prophet and planning with him things which would improve the people’s worship of God.

LESSON FOR US

People who are evil have no part in God's plan and purpose with the earth (Psa. 145:20). The Bible tells us that we can please God by obeying our parents (Eph. 6:1). As children, we are corrected and shown the right way by our parents. Sometimes this seems hard but God expects parents to discipline their children and to *"bring them up in the nurture (discipline) and admonition (instruction) of the Lord"* (Eph 1:4). The wise man Solomon said: *"He that loveth his son chasteneth him"* (Prov. 13:24). God was angry with Eli because he was not firm with his sons and He rejected Hophni and Phinehas. We must all learn, when we are children, to listen to our parents and obey them, so that we may be guided in God's way.

QUESTIONS DIV. 9-12

Short Answers

1. *What did Hannah pray for at the Tabernacle?*
2. *What did Eli think about Hannah when he saw her praying?*
3. *What promise did Hannah make to God about her baby boy?*
4. *What does 'Samuel' mean?*
5. *Samuel went to live with Eli. Who spoke to him one night?*
6. *What answer did Samuel give when God spoke to him in the night?*
7. *What were the names of the wicked sons of Eli the priest?*
8. *Why was God angry with Eli?*
9. *What was the terrible news brought back to Eli from the battle?*
10. *How did Eli die?*
11. *Who became leader in Israel after Eli died?*

Detailed Answers

1. (a) *Tell what Hannah prayed for and how God answered her prayer.*
(b) *How did she keep her promise?*

2. (a) *Why was God angry with Eli and his sons?*
(b) *Tell how they died.*

Additional Answers (Div. 11-12 only)

3. *What was the message God gave to Samuel in the night?*



18. A KING FOR ISRAEL

“Behold the king whom ye have chosen”

Aim

To show how Israel asked for a king to be like the people around them, instead of having God only to rule them.

Synopsis

Samuel judged Israel for many years and during this time the Philistines were subdued. The people of Israel settled down in their inheritance. Each year Samuel travelled from town to town teaching them God’s ways and encouraging them to worship Him with all their heart. Now Samuel was growing old and his sons were not fit to take his place. The people wanted a change and came to Samuel with their request.

I Samuel 8, 9 and 10

ISRAEL ASKS FOR A KING

I Samuel 8

The elders of Israel came to Samuel at Ramah, where he lived, and said, *“Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways: now make us a king to judge us like all the nations”* (v5). They wanted a different kind of ruler, not only because Samuel’s sons were wicked, but because they had seen the nations around them being led out to battle by their king and were impressed. They wanted to be like other people. They forgot that God wanted them to be different, for they were His specially chosen people.

Samuel was not at all pleased. He was sure it was not a good idea. So he turned to God in prayer. God said, *“Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected Me, that I should not reign over them”* (v7). God had been their king, leading them victoriously into battle and defeating their enemies, but now they were asking for a king they could see—one they could admire and follow proudly to battle.

God knew exactly what they wanted. He told Samuel to warn

the people how different things would be if they had a king. A king would take their sons to be his soldiers and workmen, and their daughters to be cooks and bakers. He would want a tenth of all their animals and crops and he would take the best of their fields and vineyards for his servants.

But the people had already made up their minds. They listened to Samuel politely and said: *“Nay, but we will have a king over us; that we also may be like all the nations; and that our king may judge us, and go out before us and fight our battles”* (v19-20).

SAUL ANOINTED AS KING

I Samuel 9:1

Saul was just the kind of man the people of Israel wanted for a king. He was tall and handsome. He was of the tribe of Benjamin and his father’s name was Kish. The name **Saul** means *Asked*, and he was just what the people had asked for. We first hear of Saul searching for his father’s lost asses. He and his servant spent days looking for them but could not find them. At last Saul decided to go home. *“Come and let us return”*, he said, *“lest my father leave caring for the asses, and take thought for us”* (v5). Then his servant remembered that Samuel the prophet lived nearby. Perhaps he could help them. Now God had told Samuel to expect that day the one who was to be their chosen king. So Samuel had a feast ready, waiting to see who it was that God would send. When Saul arrived, God pointed him out to Samuel — *“Behold the man whom I spake to thee of. This is the one who shall reign over my people”* (v17). Samuel invited Saul and his servant to the feast. To their surprise Samuel told them that his father’s asses had been found! At the feast Saul was given the most honoured place and the best portion of the meat had been set aside especially for him, though he did not yet know why. That night Samuel spent a long time talking to Saul, no doubt telling him that God had chosen him to be king. Early next morning when Saul was ready to leave, Samuel told him to send the servant

on ahead. Then Samuel took a vial (flask) of oil and poured it on Saul's head. This was called *anointing* and it meant that Saul had been chosen by God to be king of Israel.

Then Samuel kissed Saul and said, "*Is it not because Yahweh hath **anointed** thee to be captain over His inheritance?*"

The young man Saul returned to his father's house wondering about Samuel's words, but when he got home he did not tell anyone what Samuel had said about the kingdom.

SAUL DECLARED TO BE KING

I Samuel 10:17-25

Now Samuel knew what to do. He called all the people to come together at Mizpeh. A special announcement was going to be made. First Samuel reminded the people how foolish they were to reject God, who had brought them out of Egypt and given them this land. "*Ye have this day rejected your God, who himself saved you out of all your troubles*" (v19). Then he called all the people to stand in their tribes. The tribe of Benjamin was called forward. Then Saul the son of Kish was called—but he could not be found! Knowing that Samuel was going to present him to the people as their king, Saul had hidden himself among the baggage. Finally, he was found and Samuel said, "*See ye him whom Yahweh hath chosen*" (v24). What a fine looking man he was, taller than any of the people. God knew just the kind of man they wanted and the people were pleased. They all shouted, "*Long live the king*". Then Samuel told the people how the kingdom would be arranged and wrote it down in a book. After that they all went home.

LESSON FOR US

Israel found it hard to believe in the living God, because they could not see Him. We must have greater faith than that. We must have the same faith as Samuel, who always prayed to God for help and guidance. He knew He was the true and living God even though he could not see Him. He speaks to us as clearly as He spoke to Samuel—we cannot hear His voice but

we can read His words in the Bible. We must find out every day what He wants us to do and choose the ways of God, whom we cannot see, rather than the ways of those we see around us. He knows what is good for us and will guide us safely and surely if we trust Him. Whatever trials may come upon us, we will be brought at last to the glorious kingdom of God on earth.

God did not want His people to be like the nations around them. They were special to Him and so are we. So we must separate ourselves from the things they do, for their ways are not His ways. We want to walk in God's ways, following all that is good and true, as we learn from the Bible. The world will not understand, but God in heaven will see us and be pleased.

ADDITIONAL NOTES (Div. 11-12 only)

The oil that was used for anointing was a very special oil—*“a holy anointing oil”*. The recipe for it is found in Exodus 30:22-33 but the children of Israel were forbidden to make it for themselves or to use it—it was only to be used for anointing:

- **Priests**—*“Aaron and his sons”* (Exod. 30:30)
- **Kings**—*“the priests took a horn of oil out of the tabernacle, and anointed Solomon”* (I Kings 1:39)
- **Prophets**—*“Elisha ... shalt thou anoint to be prophet”* (I Kings 19:16).

It was a **holy oil**. It set them apart for special work in God's service. (We learned last year that *holy* means *set apart* by God, eg. Holy Bible – the Book God has set apart from all others because it is His words and His thoughts).

This holy oil, made according to God's recipe, pointed forward to the Holy Spirit with which Jesus was anointed at his baptism. *“The Holy Spirit descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art My beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased”* (Luke 3:22).

The word “Christ” means *anointed*. At his baptism he became Jesus **Christ** — Jesus anointed by God, to be the one

who would save all who believe and obey the Gospel. We will see the lesson of the anointing oil in a later lesson, when David was chosen by God to be His anointed king instead of Saul.

QUESTIONS DIV. 9–12

Short Answers

1. *What were Samuel's sons like?*
2. *Why did the people want a king to reign over them?*
3. *When the people asked for a king, who had they really rejected?*
4. *What were Saul and his servant doing before Samuel met them?*
5. *How did Samuel know that Saul was the one God had chosen to be king?*
6. *Samuel invited Saul to a feast. How was he treated?*
7. *What did Samuel do to Saul next morning?*
8. *Samuel called the people together at Mizpeh to present their king to them. Where was Saul?*
9. *What did the people think of Saul?*
10. *How did the people show they were pleased?*

Detailed Answers

1. (a) *Complete the following verse – “They have not rejected thee, but...”*
 - (b) *Who said these words to Samuel?*
 - (c) *Samuel warned the people that things would be different if they had a king. What did he say a king would do?*
 - (d) *What did the people say then?*
2. *The people of Israel asked for a king.*
 - (a) *Who did God choose for them?*
 - (b) *What was he like?*
 - (c) *Tell what happened when Samuel gathered the people to present their king.*

Additional Answers (Div. 11-12 only)

3. *Saul was anointed with oil by Samuel.*
- (a) *What does "anointing" mean?*
 - (b) *What kind of people were anointed?*
 - (c) *What were they anointed with?*
 - (d) *How was Jesus anointed?*
 - (e) *What was Jesus called after he was anointed?*



19. GOD REJECTS SAUL

“To obey is better than sacrifice”

Aim

To show that God requires complete obedience to all His commands.

Synopsis

Saul was a shy unknown farmer who suddenly found himself chosen as the first king in Israel to rule over God’s people. Now that he was king he must show himself worthy of it.

1 Samuel 13:8-14 and 15.

KING SAUL TAKES UP HIS DUTIES

It was not long before Saul realised that he would have to leave his father’s house and lead God’s people into battle against their enemies. As captain over the army of Israel, Saul began well and led the people to victory. It was not long though, before it became easy to see that Saul was not a man of faith like the captains before him (for example, Joshua, Gideon, etc.). He did not seem to realise that his army was **God’s** army and God would give the victory, if only they would obey Him and trust Him.

Once , Samuel told Saul to wait for him at Gilgal seven days. Then Samuel would offer sacrifices to God for the people before the battle. As the Philistines drew near, Saul became afraid and impatient because Samuel had not yet come. He decided to offer the sacrifices himself – and just then Samuel came. Samuel was very angry when he saw that Saul had disobeyed. *“Thou hast done foolishly”,* Samuel said, *“Now thy kingdom shall not continue”* (1 Sam. 13:13-14). God would not establish the kingdom in the family of Saul, but would look for *“a man after his own heart...to be captain over his people”* (v14). Later that is just what happened.

THE AMALEKITES MUST BE DESTROYED 1 Sam. 15:1-9

Samuel continued to try and teach Saul the simple lesson of **listening carefully** and **obeying**. “*Yahweh sent me to anoint thee king over His people, over Israel; now therefore hearken thou unto the voice of the words of Yahweh*” (v1).

About four hundred years earlier the Amalekites had cruelly and cowardly attacked the children of Israel as they struggled across the wilderness on their way to Sinai (Deut. 25:17-19). God had never forgotten this – “*I remember that which Amalek did to Israel*”, were God’s words to Saul, “*Now, go and smite Amalek and **utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not***” (v 2,3).

Here was Saul’s chance to show that he could be a faithful king by obeying God’s clear instructions.

Saul did not hesitate. Off he went to gather his army and march against the Amalekites. The attack was successful and Saul “*utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword*” (v8)—except Agag, the king of the Amalekites, who was taken alive. They kept the best of the sheep, oxen and lambs as well and utterly destroyed the rest (v9).

Well, what had Saul done wrong? He had not passed the test. He had not utterly destroyed the Amalekites—he had spared some.

SAUL FAILS TO OBEY

1 Samuel 15:13-23

When Samuel arrived on the scene next morning and saw the animals, which had not been destroyed, he was very angry and demanded of Saul what this meant. “*What meaneth this bleating of the sheep in mine ears and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?*” Saul was surprised. He thought he had done just what God had wanted. Of course, the animals were there, but Saul blamed the people for that—“*the people spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen, to sacrifice unto Yahweh*” (v15). This was no excuse. God had said, “*spare them not*” (v3).

Samuel said, “*Hath Yahweh as great delight in burnt*

offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of Yahweh? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken that the fat of rams” (v22). God does not want sacrifices from those who are rebellious at heart and who disobey His commands. He wants the obedience of a true and honest heart. As for Agag, their king, Samuel himself killed him.

GOD REJECTS SAUL

1 Samuel 15:35

From this time forward, God was not with Saul and Samuel would have nothing more to do with him. Samuel was very sad, but Saul had done what was right in his own eyes and had not obeyed God.

LESSON FOR US

When God gives a command, He expects it to be carried out completely. He always means exactly what He says. When He said, “*utterly destroy, and spare not*”, He meant just that. We are often very much like Saul. It is not good enough to obey some of God’s laws and think others are not quite so important. We, like Saul, must learn that **complete** obedience is what God requires. We need to be honest because God knows just what we are thinking.

It is very important to remember these words: “*Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing unto the Lord*” (Col. 3:20). If we learn to be obedient to our parents then, when we grow to be men and women, we will understand that we must obey our Heavenly Father in everything.

ADDITIONAL NOTES (Div. 11-12 only)

Samuel told Saul that God had rejected him from being king (v26). Slowly Saul began to see what he had done wrong. He confessed that he had sinned but asked Samuel to forgive him and come with him to worship God. Samuel refused. As he turned to go away Saul caught hold of his robe and it tore. “*Yahweh hath rent (torn) the kingdom of Israel from thee this day*”, Samuel said to him, “*and hath given it to a*

neighbour of thine that is better than thou” (v28). Saul liked being king and did not want to be ashamed in front of the people. He felt very sorry for himself. But what God wanted was a change of heart. Though he remained as king for some time, God was no longer helping him. God had found “a man after His own heart” and sent Samuel to Bethlehem to anoint David, the youngest son of Jesse, to be the future king in Saul’s place.

QUESTIONS DIV. 9–12

Short Answers

1. *How long did Samuel tell Saul to wait for him before going into battle?*
2. *What was Samuel going to do when he came to Gilgal?*
3. *Why did Saul offer the sacrifice instead?*
4. *What commandment did God give to Saul about the Amalekites?*
5. *Did the army of Saul defeat the Amalekites?*
6. *Did Saul utterly destroy all the Amalekites as God had commanded?*
7. *What was the name of the king of the Amalekites?*
8. *Who did Saul blame for saving some of the animals captured from the Amalekites?*
9. *What did Samuel tell Saul was “better than sacrifice”?*
10. *What was Saul’s punishment for his disobedience?*

Detailed Answers

1. *When God commanded king Saul to fight against the Amalekites He commanded him to utterly destroy them.*
 - (a) *Why did God tell Saul to utterly destroy the Amalekites?*
 - (b) *In what way did Saul disobey this command? Tell what happened.*
2. *Saul said that the people wanted to offer the animals they had spared as sacrifices.*

- (a) Why was God not pleased with this?
- (b) What lesson do we learn from this which helps us learn to please God?

Additional Answers (Div. 11-12 only)

- 3. When Saul made an excuse for saving the animals of the Amalekites, what did Samuel say? (1 Samuel 15:22)
- 4. (a) What happened when Saul tried to stop Samuel from leaving him?
 - (b) Tell what Samuel said to him.
 - (c) How did Saul feel when he heard these words?
 - (d) What did God really want him to do?



20. GOD CHOOSES DAVID

“Yahweh hath sought Him a man after His own heart”

Aim

To show that God looks upon the heart and does not judge by outward appearance.

Synopsis

Saul had not proved to be a faithful king. He did not believe that God meant what He said. So God chose another man to replace him as king – a man who loved God and wanted to obey Him.

I Samuel 16:1-13

GOD CHOOSES THE RIGHT KING

Because Israel wanted to be like other nations, they had asked for a king. God let them have what they asked for and gave them Saul. He was just the sort of king they wanted – tall, strong and handsome. His appearance impressed the people very much. But God, who looked into his heart and mind, saw that he was really vain and self-centred, more interested in pleasing the people than in obeying God. These faults made Saul unfit to rule God’s people. Israel needed a Godly king. So God’s prophet, Samuel, told him: *“Yahweh hath rent the kingdom of Israel from thee this day, and hath given it to a neighbour of thine, that is better than thou”* (I Sam. 15:28). This was not the first time that Samuel had given Saul a message from God (see Lesson 19), but he had not changed.

It had not been easy for Samuel to turn away from Saul. He had tried to help him and was really sorry that Saul had failed. Now God wanted him to anoint a new king. *“Fill thine horn with oil and go, I will send thee to Jesse the Bethlehemite for I have provided me a king among his sons.”* Jesse, grandson of Boaz and Ruth the Moabitess, was of the tribe of Judah. He had eight sons, the youngest of whom was David (Ruth 4:21-22; I Sam. 16:11).

SAMUEL IS SENT TO BETHLEHEM **I Samuel 16:1-12**

Samuel went to Bethlehem. The elders of the city were anxious when they saw him. He did not usually come to Bethlehem and perhaps there was something wrong. But Samuel re-assured them that he had come to offer a sacrifice. He particularly invited Jesse and his sons to come too (I Sam. 16:2-5). When they arrived, Samuel noticed Eliab, Jesse's eldest son, and saw that he was tall and handsome. "*Surely Yahweh's anointed is before me*", Samuel thought (v6), but he was mistaken. God said to Samuel, "*Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for Yahweh seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but Yahweh looketh on the heart*" (v7).

Six more of Jesse's sons then passed before Samuel one by one, but God chose none of them. Naturally Samuel was puzzled and asked Jesse, "*Are all thy children here?*" Only the youngest was missing for he was out minding the sheep. Samuel told Jesse to send for him. When Jesse brought in David, Samuel saw that he was a healthy, bright-eyed, pleasant looking young man. Immediately God said, "*Arise, anoint him, for this is he*" (v12).

THE NEW KING ANOINTED **I Samuel 16:13**

David was only a lad, a shepherd boy, but God had watched him grow to be faithful and thoughtful and full of courage. He knew what was in his heart and chose him because he had qualities which would make him a good and wise king. Samuel lifted the horn of oil and, as all David's brothers watched, anointed him to be Israel's next king. The spirit of God immediately came upon David and remained with him from that day on. This showed those who had witnessed the anointing, that God approved what Samuel had done. In Acts 13:22 God tells us why He chose David instead of Saul: "*I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after my own heart, which shall fulfil all my will*".

David did not immediately become king. Years had yet to pass before he began the great task of leading God’s people, years in which he would learn valuable lessons to help him be just the kind of king God wanted.

LESSON FOR US

What a great lesson for Samuel – and for us – that God “*looketh on the heart*”. Since God sees us at all times as we really are, deep within our minds, how important it is to make sure that what He sees pleases Him. God knows even the very thoughts of our hearts even if we say nothing about them (Psa. 139:1-2; Psa. 44:21). We cannot hide our thoughts or feelings from Him. If we remember this at all times, it will help us to be honest and true in all our ways.

When the Lord Jesus Christ returns to the earth to be king, he will punish or reward us according to whether our thoughts and actions have been bad or good (I Cor. 4:5). So things we *do*, *say* and *think* are all important. If our thoughts are good, our words and actions will be too (see Instructor Question 19).

ADDITIONAL NOTES (Div. 11-12 only)

In Lesson 5 we saw how the life of Moses was like Jesus’ life in many ways. Now we see, as David is chosen to be king, that his life from the very beginning is “a type” of the life of the Lord Jesus Christ.

David was born in Bethlehem of the tribe of Judah (I Samuel 16:1)

Jesus was born in Bethlehem “*the city of David*” of the tribe Judah (Luke 2:4, 11)

God set David apart to be king over Israel by anointing him with oil (I Samuel 16:13)

God chose Jesus to be the Christ and anointed him with the Holy Spirit at his baptism (John 1:32, 49)

David was a shepherd
(I Samuel 16:11)

Jesus was “*the good shepherd*” (John 10:11)

David was “*a man after
God’s own heart*”
(Acts 13:22)

Jesus was God’s “*beloved
son in whom I am well
pleased*” (Luke 3:22)

We will find many more examples like this in following lessons. They help us to understand how God taught His people to be waiting always for Messiah to come.

QUESTIONS DIV. 9–12

Short Answers

1. *Who was the first king of Israel?*
2. *What kind of man was chosen to replace Saul as king?*
3. *Whose house was Samuel sent to with a horn of oil?*
4. *How many sons did Jesse have?*
5. *Which son of Jesse did God choose?*
6. *How did Samuel know which son of Jesse to anoint?*
7. *How did Samuel anoint David?*
8. *Did David become king straight away after he was anointed?*

Detailed Answers

1. *Tell the story of what happened when God sent Samuel to Jesse’s house.*
2. (a) *Complete the following quotation – “for Yahweh seeth not as man seeth ...” (I Sam. 16:7).*
(b) *What great lesson do we learn from this?*

Additional Answers (Div. 11-12 only)

3. *Write down four ways in which the early life of David was a type of the life of the Lord Jesus Christ? (Make two columns, one for David and one next to it for Christ.)*

21. DAVID AND GOLIATH

“The battle is Yahweh’s”

Aim

To show how David trusted in God to help him kill Goliath.

Synopsis

The life of a shepherd, in David’s time, was a lonely one and sometimes dangerous. He had to protect his flock from wild animals, as well as lead them to good pasture. One day, a lion came and took a lamb out of David’s flock; another time a bear did the same (I Sam. 17:34, 35). But David trusted in God to help him kill those wild beasts and save his sheep. God was being a shepherd to David, just as David was to his sheep (Psa. 23). God taught David to rely on Him for protection and this was why he was not afraid even of Goliath.

I Samuel 17

THE PHILISTINE GIANT’S CHALLENGE I Sam. 17:1-11

The Philistines were old enemies of Israel. In the days when Samuel was judge, God helped Israel against them and they were beaten and kept away from the cities of the Israelites. Some time after Samuel anointed David, however, these Philistines invaded Israel again. King Saul, therefore, gathered together his army to defend the people of God against their enemy. In the army were Jesse’s three oldest sons.

The two armies were camped on the slopes of two mountains, facing each other across the Valley of Elah. A giant Philistine from Gath, named Goliath, came out to the front of the Philistine army to challenge the Israelites. *“I defy the armies of Israel this day”*, he shouted out. *“Give me a man that we may fight together”* (v10). Day after day for forty days he did this, but no Israelite dared to accept his challenge. Goliath was a giant, about three metres tall. He was an experienced soldier (v 4,33), covered in armour of brass from head to toe. Even King Saul, who was *“head and shoulders above the*

people”, was not brave enough to face him.

About that time Jesse sent David to see how his three brothers were getting on and to give them some food. Soon after David arrived, Goliath came out, shouting his challenge (v23). When the Israelites heard him they fled away, “*greatly afraid*”. But David heard the giant’s boastful words and asked the soldiers what was going on.

DAVID ACCEPTS THE CHALLENGE I Samuel 17:32-40

When David heard Goliath’s words, he could see at once how insulting they were to the God of Israel. How dare this Philistine “*defy the armies of the living God*”! (v26). Goliath did not know Israel’s God. He did not realise that He was “*the living God*”, who could easily save Israel from their enemies, if they had enough faith in Him. But no-one in the whole army of Israel, camped in the valley of Elah, had enough faith in God to go and face Goliath.

David was not a soldier, but he was full of faith. He had learned to trust in God on the hills of Bethlehem. He knew what had to be done. So he went to King Saul and said, “*Let no man’s heart fail because of him; thy servant will go and fight with this Philistine*” (v32). He told Saul how God had helped him save his own sheep from a lion and a bear. He would kill this giant, just as he had killed those wild beasts. “*Yahweh that delivered me out of the paw of the lion and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine*” (v37).

Seeing David’s great faith, Saul agreed. “Go”, he said, “*and Yahweh be with thee*”. He gave David his own armour to put on to protect him, but it was useless to David because he could not move properly with such heavy armour. He needed only his staff, his sling and “*five smooth stones out of the brook*” (v40). He trusted in God to protect him.

FIGHTING GOD'S WARS BY FAITH **I Samuel 17:41-52**

David went straight out to meet Goliath (v40). The Philistine was amazed that someone had at last dared to come and fight him, but when he saw only a young lad coming out to meet him, with a stick and a sling, he sneered at David. “*Am I a dog*”, he roared, “*that thou comest out to me with staves?*” – “*And the Philistine cursed David by his gods*” (v43). The battle had now become a battle between the God of Israel and the gods of the Philistines. This is how David saw it, too, for he said, “*Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of Yahweh of armies, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied. This day will Yahweh deliver thee into my hand*” (v45). David wanted everyone to know that it was not for his own honour, but for the honour of Israel's God that he was fighting – “*that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel. And all this assembly (that is, the people of Israel) shall know that Yahweh saveth not with sword and spear: for the battle is Yahweh's, and He will give you into our hand*” (v46-47).

No doubt David's bold words made Goliath angry. He got up and lumbered across in his heavy armour towards David. David ran towards his enemy, fitting a stone to his sling as he went. He whirled it round and round and slung it, trusting God to guide it. And so God did, to show that David's faith was better protection than sword and spear (v47). The stone hurtled into the giant's forehead and he fell down heavily. Then, with Goliath's own sword, David cut off the giant's head.

When the Philistines saw that their champion was dead they fled in terror. The Israelites leaped up, shouting with excitement. David had conquered by faith and this encouraged them all. Confident now of victory, they chased the Philistines right to the gates of Ekron, slaying many on the way. God's victory was complete. Now all knew “*that there is a God in Israel*” (v46).

David was greatly honoured by king Saul who took him into his army. He became a great leader among men and the soldiers were glad to follow him into battle. Many years later, after Saul had died, David became king over Israel.

LESSON FOR US

David's victory over Goliath teaches us one of the greatest lessons found in the Bible – faith in the true God has real power. God does not ask us to go and slay a giant, but He does want us to show the same *faith* as David. David really believed in “*the living God*” and was able to show it by his courage in fighting God's enemies. We can show our faith in the living God in the things we do and say each day. Every time we decide to do what pleases God, then we have won a battle – because when we disobey God, we are His enemies. Let us obey God and learn to have faith in Him just as David did.

ADDITIONAL NOTES (Div. 11-12 only)

We can very easily be enemies of God ourselves, just like Goliath. It is not a nice thought, is it, because really we want to love God. He has done so much for us. But, if we are honest with ourselves, we will admit that we sometimes think unkind thoughts, or behave foolishly or disobey our parents or teachers. Sometimes we forget to do good things, which is just as bad. In all these ways we are being God's enemies. The only way to be faithful, like David, is to fill our minds with God's thoughts from the Bible and learn the lessons from the examples of the faithful men and women, whom we read about there. This is just what the Lord Jesus Christ did – all the time. Never once did he slip and sin against God. He never had a fleshly mind, wanting to please himself; he had a spiritual mind – his thoughts were always God's thoughts. It was a battle all his life and, with God's help, he won that battle and now lives forever at God's right hand.

We must see our daily lives just like that – a battle in our minds of God’s thoughts against *selfish* thoughts. The Apostle Paul in his letter to Timothy mentioned many of the wicked things that he had seen people doing and told Timothy: “*But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience and meekness. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called*” (I Tim. 6:11-12). If we keep on trying, God will help us. He has a wonderful blessing to give those who keep trying—everlasting life in the kingdom when the Lord Jesus Christ returns.

QUESTIONS DIV. 9–12

Short Answers

- ① *How did God help David protect his father’s sheep from attack by wild beasts?*
2. *Who faced each other across the valley of Elah?*
- ③ *How many days did Goliath challenge Israel?*
4. *What did Goliath shout out every day?*
5. *What did the Israelites do when they saw Goliath?*
6. *What did Goliath look like?*
- ⑦ *What weapons did Goliath have?*
- ⑧ *What weapons did David choose?*
- ⑨ *How did David kill Goliath?*
10. *What did the Philistines do when they saw that their champion was dead?*

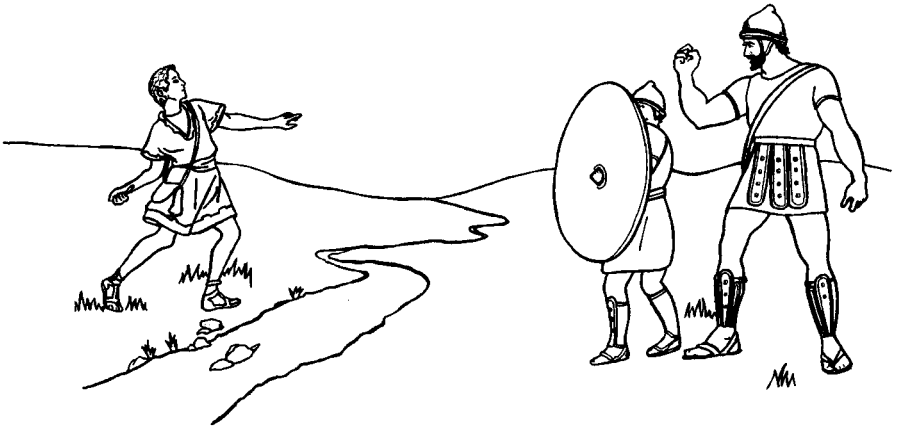
Detailed Answers

1. (a) *How did David feel when he heard Goliath’s words?*
(b) *How did David know that he could defeat Goliath?*
(c) *What armour did Saul offer him?*
(d) *What did David take?*
- ② (a) *What did Goliath say when he first saw David?*
(b) *Was this just a battle between David and the giant?*

- (c) What did David want “all the earth” to know?
(d) What did David want all the people of Israel to know?
3. Complete the following quotation: “Thou comest to me with a sword ...” (1 Sam. 17:45). Tell what happened after that.

Additional Answers (Div. 11-12 only)

4. Tell the story of David’s battle with Goliath. (Begin with David coming down to the camp of Israel to see his brothers).
5. We have a battle in our minds every day.
(a) How can we be faithful, like David?
(b) What will God give us if we keep trying to please Him?



22. DAVID AND JONATHAN

“Jonathan loved him as his own soul”

Aim

To show the unselfish love of Jonathan and the meaning of true friendship.

Synopsis

All the people of Israel admired David and sang his praises because of his great victory over Goliath. When they saw how well he behaved himself, they began to love him (v16). Jonathan, Saul’s son, a godly, faithful man, loved David deeply; but Saul was jealous and began to hate David.

I Samuel 18:1-16; 19

JONATHAN AND DAVID BECOME CLOSE FRIENDS

I Samuel 18:1-4

Because he was Saul’s eldest son, Jonathan was heir to the throne of Israel. Everyone expected that he would be the next king. There are many stories in the first book of Samuel of Jonathan’s outstanding faith and courage and God would have really loved him. Saul, however, had been rejected by God because he was stubborn and disobedient (see Lesson 19). God had instead chosen another man to be king, *“a man after His own heart”* – David the son of Jesse, of the tribe of Judah. From that tribe Messiah (that is, Christ) would later come (Luke 2:11).

The news that God had chosen David gradually spread throughout all Israel. When Jonathan realised that David would be king he was pleased. It never occurred to him to be angry or jealous (I Sam. 23:17). From the time of their first meeting, when David was the hero of all Israel, Jonathan became very fond of the young shepherd boy, for Jonathan could see how much he loved God. He was obviously very impressed by David’s faith and courage in boldly facing the giant Goliath, and in fearlessly going out to slay him. As a sign of his respect

and love he took off his own royal robe and girdle and gave them to David to wear. Jonathan was a great soldier, but he gave his sword and his bow to David too, to show how much he loved him (v4).

KING SAUL'S JEALOUS HATRED **I Samuel 18:5-16**

King Saul was easily depressed and moody. The real cause was that he had refused to listen to God and obey Him. One of his servants, however, suggested that he find someone to come and play some soothing music on the harp. So it was that David, a very skilful musician, first came into the king's house (16:14-18). David, of course, was now also a fearless soldier and the men of Israel gladly followed him into battle.

After one battle with the Philistines, Saul heard the singing of the women of Israel, as they sang and danced for joy that Israel had won. He should have been glad, but he heard their song – *“Saul hath slain his thousands and David his ten thousands”* (v7). This made Saul very angry and he made up his mind to kill David.

It never occurred to Jonathan that his father would hate such a lovely young man as David. It was not long though before Saul's actions showed that he was extremely jealous of David. *“What can he have more but the kingdom?”* he said (v8).

The next day, while David played on his harp to soothe him, Saul threw a spear at him to kill him. Twice, this happened and twice David escaped (v11). Saul became afraid of David, because he saw that God was with him. But God had deserted Saul because he was still stubborn and rebellious. Time and again he plotted to destroy David. As each plot failed, Saul hated him more and more (v29). *“And Saul spake to Jonathan his son, and to all his servants that they should kill David”* (19:1).

“But all Israel and Judah loved David” (18:16).

Jonathan was a very loyal son, but he knew that God had chosen David to be king over Israel. So he protected David even

when Saul was plotting to kill him. It made Jonathan very unhappy and he warned David of his father's wicked plans. Then he went back to his father to reason with him. He pleaded with him not to return evil for the good that David had always done to him. Jonathan's words were so kind and so true that Saul "*hearkened unto the voice of Jonathan: and Saul sware* (that is, promised), *As Yahweh liveth he shall not be slain*" (I Sam. 19:4–6).

Jonathan really did believe that his father had changed his mind and so David was brought again to the king's palace. But Saul had not changed at all. Once again he took up a javelin to throw at David. This time David fled to his old friend, the prophet Samuel and stayed with him at Ramah (I Sam. 19:10, 18).

DAVID GOES INTO HIDING

I Samuel 20:11-42

David decided to go secretly and tell Jonathan that he was afraid for his life. The two friends met together without anyone knowing. They made a covenant together out in the field, a promise to remain true and faithful to each other. Jonathan made David promise also that, when he became king, he would continue to show kindness to his family.

David now felt sure that Saul would not rest till he had killed him. "*There is but a step between me and death*", he told Jonathan. He had thought of a plan to test if this was true. The next day was the time of "*the new moon*", the beginning of the month, and David should have joined the king's household for the celebration. But David was hiding in the field and did not turn up. At first, Saul pretended not to notice, but on the second day he asked Jonathan why "*the son of Jesse*" had not come to the feast. Jonathan told his father that he had given David permission to join his own family in Bethlehem for a sacrifice there. Saul could see that Jonathan was protecting David, for he knew there was a strong bond of friendship between them. Now Saul's anger turned on Jonathan, his own

faithful son. *“As long as the son of Jesse liveth upon the ground, thou shalt not be established, nor thy kingdom. Wherefore now send and fetch him unto me, for he shall surely die”* (v31).

Jonathan tried to speak up for David, but Saul was so furious that he hurled a javelin at him—his own son! Jonathan could see that words were useless any longer. Blinded by jealousy, his father would not rest until he had killed David. *“So Jonathan arose from the table in fierce anger ... for he was grieved for David”*. His father had treated him shamefully (v34). He had arranged beforehand to meet David in the field and let him know whether Saul’s anger had passed or not. So next morning Jonathan went out with his bow and arrows and took a lad to fetch the arrows as he shot them. As the boy ran to pick them up, Jonathan called out, *“Is not the arrow beyond thee? Make speed, haste, stay not”*. This was really the signal to David that **he** must make haste and flee. The lad did not know that David was hiding nearby and it was only when he went off back to the city with Jonathan’s weapons that David came forward to thank his friend.

Sadly they said goodbye, for it was not safe for David any longer. He must flee for his life. They had made a covenant with each other before God, saying, *“Yahweh be between me and thee, and between my seed and thy seed forever”* (v42). *“Go in peace”*, said Jonathan to his young friend as they parted. They only saw each other once more, when Jonathan went secretly to encourage David as he hid from Saul (23:16–18).

LESSON FOR US

Jealousy may seem to start off as a small thing but so often it can lead to anger and hatred. Because he was jealous of David, Saul tried to stop him from becoming king. His hatred drove him to anger and lying and even to trying to murder David. God would not help such a man. Saul, therefore, is a warning to us against envy or hatred of others. Envy quickly turns to hatred, and that is as bad as murder in God’s eyes (I

John 3:15).

David and Jonathan were both loyal and faithful to Saul – David, because Saul was his king, and Jonathan, because Saul was his father. God will be pleased with us, too, if we behave as they did.

Jonathan was a true friend. So was David. Their love was generous and never failed. They are both splendid examples to us of unselfish love and that is just what God wants us to show – love for God and love for the brethren and sisters of Christ and their children; not thinking of ourselves, but of others. Ask your parents or teacher to help you understand the beautiful words Paul wrote about love in I Corinthians 13:4–8. The Lord Jesus Christ alone has loved us in that way. We must try every day to show the same love to others.

QUESTIONS DIV. 9–12

Short Answers

1. *Which of Saul's sons loved David?*
2. *What presents did Jonathan give to David to show his love?*
3. *When God chose David to be king what did Jonathan think of that?*
4. *What was the song which Saul heard which made him jealous of David?*
5. *What did Saul do to David one day when David was playing softly to him?*
6. *When David and Jonathan met out in the field, what did Jonathan make him promise?*
7. *When Jonathan told Saul why David was not at the feast, what did Saul do?*
8. *What did Jonathan call out when the boy went to fetch the arrows?*
9. *What did David understand by the words Jonathan called out?*
10. *What can jealousy easily lead to?*

Detailed Answers

1. (a) *What made Saul jealous of David? (Give two reasons)*
 - (b) *What did Saul's jealousy lead to?*
 - (c) *Did David act the same way towards Saul?*
2. (a) *Why did Jonathan love David?*
 - (b) *What did Jonathan give to David to show that he loved and admired him?*
 - (c) *What lessons can we learn from the lovely friendship of David and Jonathan?*
3. *David feared for his life and came and told Jonathan.*
 - (a) *Tell how they tested whether Saul really meant to kill David.*
 - (b) *What did David have to do after that?*



23. DAVID RETURNS GOOD FOR EVIL

“Yahweh judge between me and thee...and deliver me out of thine hand”

Aim

To show how David always returned good for the evil that Saul did to him.

Synopsis

The lessons David had learned when he was young of honouring God and the king were now able to help him behave in a Godly way toward Saul. He did not want to die at Saul's hand but he refused to take what seemed to be the easy way out—he refused to kill God's anointed king.

I Samuel 24, 26

DAVID SPARES SAUL'S LIFE: AT ENGEDI I Sam. 24

Saul now hunted David like an animal. With a small band of followers David hid in the forests and caves in the hills of Judah. Soon 400 men joined him and he became their captain. While Saul pursued him, God protected him, sometimes warning him of danger in time for him to escape (I Sam. 22:5; 23:9-12).

On one occasion Saul heard that he was hiding in the rugged rocks at Engedi, where the wild goats live. Taking 3000 of his best soldiers, off he went to catch David there. Now it happened that David and his men were hiding very quietly in a cave as Saul's soldiers came by. Who should come in to the cave but Saul—alone, to rest. David's men whispered to him that now was his chance to kill the king. This surely was an opportunity sent from God. But David honoured Saul still as the king and would not do it, for Saul was God's anointed. Nevertheless he crept up behind Saul and cut off a piece from the hem of his robe. As soon as he had crept back to his men with the piece of Saul's robe in his hand, David was sorry for doing even this. Suspecting nothing, Saul arose and left the

cave. Then David too went out after him and called out, “*My lord, the king*” (v8). When Saul turned, David bowed down before him.

“*Why do you listen to men who tell you that David means to harm you?*” David said, “*Behold, this day thine eyes have seen how that Yahweh had delivered thee today into mine hand in the cave: and some bade me kill thee: but mine eye spared thee: and I said, I will not put forth mine hand against my lord; for he is Yahweh’s anointed*” (24:10). And he held up the piece of Saul’s robe.

King Saul could see how sincere David was. “*Thou art more righteous than I*”, said Saul to David, “*for thou hast rewarded me good, whereas I have rewarded thee evil. And now, behold I know well that thou shalt surely be king and that the kingdom of Israel shall be established in thine hand*” (v17-20). He pleaded with David not to harm anyone in his family when he became king. David gladly promised to do as Saul asked and so they parted. Saul went home, but David and his men returned to the caves and the hills of Israel.

Saul’s repentance, as always, did not last long. Soon he was out hunting David again, until David was forced to flee to the Philistines’ land.

DAVID SPARES SAUL’S LIFE: IN THE WILDERNESS OF ZIPH

1 Sam 26

Another time Saul went hunting for David with his special band of 3000 men. This time David was hiding in the wilderness of Ziph. He sent out spies from his hiding place to see where Saul was camped. It was night time. Saul lay asleep in the middle of his camp and Abner, the captain of his army, and all his men lay around him asleep.

Then David said to the men who were with him, “*Who will go down with me to Saul to the camp?*” and Abishai said, “*I will go down with thee*” (v6).

So David and Abishai crept down to the camp of Saul.

There was Saul sound asleep and beside his pillow was his spear stuck in the ground. All was quiet as the camp slept.

“God hath delivered thine enemy into thine hand this day”, Abishai said to David, *“Let me smite him, I pray thee, with the spear even to the earth at once, and I will not smite him the second time”* (v8). But David was firm. *“Destroy him not: for who can stretch forth his hand against Yahweh’s anointed and be guiltless?”* (v9).

One day Saul would die, but that was in God’s hands. David would do him no harm. But he had a daring plan. He and Abishai crept right into the middle of the sleeping camp and took Saul’s spear and the cruse (jar) of water which were right beside him. They got back safely without anyone stirring.

This had been a very bold and dangerous plan. Neither David nor Abishai realised just how much God had helped them. *“No man saw it, nor knew it, neither awaked; for they were all asleep; because a deep sleep from Yahweh was fallen upon them”* (v12).

When they had got a long way off, they stopped on the top of a hill and David called out with a loud voice in the stillness of the night. Abner woke up with a start, *“Who art thou that criest to the king?”*

“You are a valiant man, aren’t you Abner? Why haven’t you been guarding the king? Someone came into your camp to kill the king, Abner, and you haven’t been keeping a careful watch over your master, Yahweh’s anointed—you should die for this Abner. Where has the king’s spear gone and his cruse of water that was right next to his pillow?”

David taunted Abner but really he wanted them to realise that once again he could easily have killed Saul, but would not. Saul recognised his voice. *“Is this thy voice, my son David?”* He could tell straightaway what danger he had been in and how David had spared his life. *“I have sinned”,* he said, *“Re-*

turn, my son David: for I will no more do thee harm". If only this was true. Too many times he had promised and yet had hunted David again and again. "*Behold the king's spear! Let one of the young men come over and fetch it*", David said.

Saul went home, but David said in his heart, "*I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul*". So until the day that Saul died in battle with the Philistines, David went from place to place keeping well hidden, waiting for God to choose the right time when he should become king.

LESSON FOR US

Returning good for evil is one of the most important lessons we can learn. The Lord Jesus Christ reminds us of this: "*I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you*" (Matt. 5:44).

The important thing is that our attitude is right. We must remain kind even when others are unkind to us. In this way we are showing that we really hope that they will change and become our friend and honour God with us.

ADDITIONAL NOTES (Div. 11-12 only)

SAUL AND JONATHAN DIE IN BATTLE: I Samuel 31

The last battle of Saul's life was fought on Mount Gilboa. The Israelites fled before the Philistines and many of Saul's soldiers were slain. Saddest of all, brave and faithful Jonathan was killed too. Saul was badly wounded by arrows and the Philistines were fast overtaking him. Saul was desperate. He could not escape and God would no longer help him. He asked his armour-bearer to kill him, so that he would not suffer the shame of being slain by the Philistines. But his armour-bearer was afraid and would not kill him. So Saul took his sword and killed himself.

David was grief-stricken when he heard the news. His grief was for Saul as well as for Jonathan (2 Sam. 1:12 and 17).

How easy it would have been to rejoice at the death of his enemy. But David was loyal to God's anointed and very forgiving. David had learned that just as God had been very merciful to him, so he should be merciful to others, even though they might not deserve it (Matt. 5:43-48). Above all, David was distressed by the loss of Jonathan, his closest friend. You can read David's sad and beautiful lament for Saul and Jonathan in 2 Samuel 1:17-27. David later showed his love for Jonathan when he cared for Mephibosheth, Jonathan's son (2 Sam. 9:7).

QUESTIONS (Div. 9-12)

Short Answers

1. *When Saul came into the cave at Engedi where were David's men hiding?*
2. *What did David's men tell him to do to Saul?*
3. *What did David do to Saul in the cave?*
4. *What did David do when Saul went out of the cave?*
5. *When David was hiding in the wilderness of Ziph, who agreed to go with him to Saul's camp?*
6. *What were Saul and his men doing in the camp?*
7. *What did David and Abishai take from Saul's camp?*
8. *How did God help David and Abishai when they went down into Saul's camp?*

Detailed Answers

1. *Saul came hunting for David at Engedi. Tell how David spared Saul's life.*
2. *Saul came to look for David in the wilderness of Ziph. Tell how David showed Saul that he meant him no harm.*

Additional Answers (Div. 11-12 only)

3. *Tell how Saul and Jonathan died. How did David feel when he heard?*

24. DAVID—THE KING

“Then came all the tribes of Israel to David ... and they anointed David king over Israel”

Aim

To show how God’s promise to David that he should be king was fulfilled.

Synopsis

In all his troubles David learned to rely on God. In the Psalms he writes of the faith which helped him to wait patiently for God to rescue him. (Some of these Psalms are: 34, 54, 56, 57, 59, 63.) It is good for us to learn this lesson of faith in God, and reading those Psalms will help us to do so.

2 Samuel 2:1-4; 5:1-10; 1 Chronicles 13

DAVID IS CROWNED KING OF JUDAH 2 Samuel 2:1-4

David was now thirty years old and had learned many valuable lessons, both as a young shepherd looking after his father’s sheep, and after that as a soldier and leader of men. God had sent Samuel to anoint David king more than ten years before. So it was to God that David now turned for advice. “*Shall I go up into any of the cities of Judah?*” he asked, and God told him to go to Hebron. At last his days of exile from his own country and the hillsides of Bethlehem, which he had loved as a lad, were over.

So David came to Hebron with his family and the men who had remained faithful to him over the years when he had fled from Saul. There at Hebron the men of Judah anointed him king over Judah. God had already shown that this was the man He had chosen, when He sent Samuel to anoint him at his father’s house. Young David had only been a shepherd boy then. Now Judah had a God-fearing and courageous king—one who had learned faith, patience, kindness and wise leadership during the troubled days of his exile. For seven years and six months David ruled Judah, but the other tribes

refused to have him as their king. Finally they came to him and asked him to be their king too. So David was anointed king over all Israel (2 Sam. 5:1-3). At last, his patient waiting for God to fulfil His purpose was rewarded.

JERUSALEM, DAVID'S ROYAL CITY **2 Samuel 5:6-10**

After David had been anointed king over all Israel, he went to take the city of Jerusalem (at that time called Jebus) from the Jebusites. They were one of the Canaanite nations whom God had told Israel to destroy. For a long time this city had defied the armies of Israel. Joshua had slain its king, but had not conquered the city. Long before Joshua, Melchizedek, priest of the most high God, who blessed Abraham, had lived in this city, which at that time was called Salem (Gen. 14:18-19). David wanted it for his royal city, as the capital of Israel, and for a place of rest for the Ark of the Covenant which the children of Israel had carried with them on their wanderings through the wilderness many years before.

Jerusalem was built on a hill and protected by high walls. In it the Jebusites felt safe. So when they saw David's army around the city, they laughed (v6). David promised that the man who was brave enough to enter into the city and take it for him, would be captain over his army (v8). Then Joab, one of the bravest of David's soldiers, made his way secretly into the city by an underground tunnel which brought water up into the city from the spring Gihon outside. It was a long tunnel ending in a narrow shaft, like a well, that went straight up into the fortress above. Water was drawn up from this well in a bucket into the city. It was certainly very difficult and very dangerous, but Joab succeeded and David made him captain over his army. God was with David as before and his army took the city. From that time on it was called "*The city of David*" (v9). David built a palace for himself there and many other buildings. "*And David went on, and grew great, and Yahweh God of hosts was with him*" (v10).

TRAGEDY THROUGH IGNORING GOD'S WORD 1Chron. 13

Since its return from the Philistines, the Ark of the Covenant had never been put back in its proper place in the Tabernacle. David now wished to give it a special place in Jerusalem. So he made a new tent for it on Mount Zion. Then he asked the help of all the leaders of Israel to bring the Ark to Zion (v 1,2). A new cart was made especially to carry the Ark. The sons of Abinadab, Uzza and Ahio, drove the cart out of their father's house in a procession towards Jerusalem. *"And David and all Israel played before God with all their might, and with singing, and with harps, and with psalteries, and with timbrels, and with cymbals, and with trumpets"* (v8).

On the way the oxen stumbled and Uzza put out his hand to steady the Ark. It was quite a natural thing to do, but it was totally forbidden that anyone should touch it. Instantly God struck Uzza and he died. You can imagine how the singing and dancing suddenly stopped. The people were shocked and afraid that such a thing should happen in the midst of their rejoicing. David was horrified. What had gone wrong? God smote Uzza *"because he put his hand to the ark"* (v10). According to God's law no-one must touch the Ark but the sons of Aaron (Num. 4:15).

In their eagerness to bring the Ark to Zion, everyone had forgotten the vital thing – to find out from the Book of the Law what God's special instructions were. The Ark should not have been carried on a cart at all, not even a new one especially made for it. God had said that two poles were to be slipped through rings on each side of the Ark and it was to be carried upon the shoulders of the Levites (Num 4:15). Uzza's death was a warning to everyone of the importance of learning and doing the will of God.

At the next attempt, about three months later, all went well because God's word was obeyed (1 Chron. 15:2, 13–14). This time the Levites of the family of Kohath carried the Ark. As it

was brought to Mount Zion and placed in the tent David had prepared, all Israel rejoiced with singing and dancing.

LESSON FOR US

Times of trouble teach us how much we need God. They teach us to rely on Him for help and protection. This is why we are told in God's Word, that "*we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God*" (Acts 14:22). Such troubles teach us to "*commit our ways unto the Lord and trust also in Him*" (Psa. 37:5-7). But it is not only in times of trouble and sadness that we must turn to Him. We are glad to be able to do that, because we know that He can always help. God wants us to turn to Him even in times of happiness and rejoicing. If David had first looked at God's Word and learned what God had wanted, the procession to Jerusalem with the Ark would have been happy all the way.

Let us remember then, to read God's Word every day to learn what we must do to please Him, as well as to seek help and strength and comfort.

ADDITIONAL NOTES (Div. 11-12 only)

David waited many years from his anointing until at last he was made king. In this he showed great patience even when his life was in danger, as it was many times. He trusted that God would do all He had promised, but in His own time. David's great descendant, Jesus Christ, also waited long and patiently for God to fulfil His promises. God had promised before his birth, that he would receive David's throne and rule over Israel (Luke 1:31-33). He lived a perfect life and suffered patiently, but died without receiving the fulfilment of the promise. He trusted God to raise him from the dead and then, at the time appointed by God, to send him back from heaven to the earth and receive and rebuild the kingdom of David (Acts 3:20-21).

David knew that God had chosen Jerusalem as a place "to

put His Name” (Deut. 12:5). “Yahweh hath chosen Zion; he hath desired it for his habitation” (Psa. 132:13). This was why David was so anxious to take Jerusalem from the Jebusites and to bring the Ark of God to rest there. David made Jerusalem his capital city and the Lord Jesus Christ later called it “*the city of the great king*” (Matt. 5:35). It is from Jerusalem that Christ will rule the world. People from all nations in the earth will go up to Jerusalem to worship and to learn God’s laws (Isa.2:2-4; Psa.48:1,2). The return of Jews to the land of Israel and especially to Jerusalem reminds us that the time of Christ’s return is very near (Luke 21:24-28).

What greater happiness can we have than to live in the kingdom of God on the earth, with the Lord Jesus Christ as a wise and just king, showing kindness to all people. Psalm 72 describes many of the blessings of that kingdom. If we obey God now and believe His word, that will be our blessing – life eternal in the Kingdom of God on earth (Rev. 5:9-10; Rom. 2:7).

QUESTIONS DIV. 9-12

Short Answers

1. *How long did David have to wait from the time when Samuel anointed him until he was crowned king of Judah?*
2. *After Saul’s death what did David do before going to Hebron?*
3. *Over which tribe did David first become king?*
4. *How long was David king of Judah?*
5. *What city did David take from the Jebusites?*
6. *What did David promise to the man who could get up inside the city?*
7. *What had David forgotten to do before moving the Ark?*
8. *Why did God kill Uzza?*
9. *Who carried the Ark when it was safely taken to Zion?*

Detailed Answers

1. *Tell how Jerusalem was taken from the Jebusites.*

2. *David wanted to bring the Ark of God to Jerusalem.*
 - (a) *What happened the first time?*
 - (b) *What did they do the second time?*
3. *What lesson do we learn from the tragedy that happened the first time the Ark was moved?*

Additional Answers (Div. 11-12 only)

4. (a) *Tell how David captured Jerusalem (or Jebus).*
(b) *Why was Jerusalem so important to David?*
5. (a) *How important will Jerusalem become when Christ returns?*
(b) *What must we do, if we wish to share the kingdom with David and the Lord Jesus Christ?*



25. GOD'S PROMISE TO DAVID

"Thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee."

Aim

To show that the promises made to David will be fulfilled by the Lord Jesus Christ.

Synopsis

Long ago, God told Moses of His great purpose with the world. *"As truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of Yahweh"* (Num 14:21). God will bring this to pass when He sends the Lord Jesus Christ back to the earth to rule as king on David's throne.

2 Samuel 7:1-17

DAVID'S WISH DENIED

2 Samuel 7:1-7

Now that he was king over all Israel and God had given him rest from all his enemies, David realised how wonderfully God had blessed him. He wanted to do something to show God how grateful he was. It distressed David to think that, while he lived in a beautiful palace of cedar wood, the Ark of God rested in a tent. It was a special tent which he had pitched for it on Mount Zion, but David longed to build a great and beautiful temple, in which to place the Ark of God, *"the living God"*, whom he worshipped.

He told Nathan the prophet what he planned to do. Nathan thought it was a good idea and told David to go ahead. *"Do all that is in thine heart,"* Nathan said, *"for Yahweh is with thee"* (v3). But Nathan was wrong. That night God spoke to Nathan and told him that David was **not** to build Him a temple. David had been a warrior and had slain many men in his battles. It was not fitting that such a man of war should build a house of worship for God. Instead, God promised to give David a son who would be a man of peace, and this son would build a house for God (1 Chron. 22:7-9). This son was Solomon, who built the Temple that David had planned and put in it the Ark of God.

God was not displeased with David though. God showed just how pleased He was with David's whole attitude by giving a most wonderful promise. This promise was about another son of David, one who was "*greater than Solomon*" (Matt 12:42).

GOD'S WONDERFUL PLAN

God had always planned to set up His kingdom on earth. He said long ago that He would fill the earth with His glory (Num. 14:21)—that is, all creation will give glory and praise to Him for ever (Psalm 145:10–12). Not only will He cleanse the world of all the pollution that men have filled it with, but He wants to put an end to wars and sickness and disease, all those things which cause pain and sadness (Rev. 21:4). He wants to put an end to death too, and fill the earth with people who love Him and obey Him all the time. These people will never die. God will make them immortal (1 Cor. 15:26, 52).

A SON OF DAVID WHO IS SON OF GOD 2 Samuel 7:12-17

Since God intends to set up a kingdom, it will, of course, need a king. Since it is to be the Kingdom of God, its king must be pure and righteous. So in this promise to David, God spoke of just such a man who would rule over His kingdom. He promised that this king would be a direct descendant of David. Many hundreds of years would pass before the promised king would be born and David by that time would be dead (v12). The most remarkable thing about this promise is that this descendant of David would also be **the Son of God**. He would never "*commit iniquity*", that is, he would never sin; but he would suffer and die to save others who do sin (v14). God promised to make this wonderful king immortal, so that he would rule over the kingdom of God for ever (v13,16). It will be the work of this king to build a temple for God as well (v13), a huge temple where everyone in the world will go to worship (Isa. 2:3). It will be "*a house of prayer*" for all nations (Isa. 56:7). The "*house*" that God promised to David is more

than just a building. It is **also the people who live in the house**, the family of God—the brethren and sisters of the Lord Jesus Christ.

All these things will be fulfilled in the Lord Jesus Christ. This was what the angel Gabriel told Mary, the mother of Jesus, before he was born. Jesus is **the son of David** who was promised and he is also **the son of God** (Luke 1:32,35). He is the great King of Israel who is to rule over the Kingdom of God for ever (Luke 1:33).

JESUS CHRIST WILL RETURN

2 Sam. 7:16

Jesus is not yet ruling as king of Israel and he is not yet sitting on the throne of David (Matt 25:31). After his crucifixion, God raised him from the dead and he is now in heaven, waiting until the time when God will send him back to the earth (Acts 3:20-21). Only then will he sit on David's throne and rule over the Kingdom of God upon earth. God said, "*Sit thou at my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool*" (Psa 110:1).

The Lord Jesus Christ has been in heaven a long time, but the time for him to return is close at hand (Luke 21:27-28). As we read in Lesson 24 (Additional Notes), the return of the Jews to the land of Israel is a sure sign to us that he is coming soon.

When Jesus returns the first thing he will do is raise the dead. David will be among the faithful who are raised and he will see his son, the one mentioned in this promise, the Lord Jesus Christ. This is part of the meaning of the promise, for, while 2 Samuel 7:12 promises that the kingdom of God will be set up after David's death, verse 16 says the promised kingdom will be established "*for ever before thee*". That means before David's very eyes. For this to happen he must be raised from the grave (Psa 71:20).

SUMMARY

Let us go over the wonderful points of this promise God made to David.

- **v12** After David's death one of his descendants would be **king** over the Kingdom of God.
- **v13** He would build a **house** for God's Name, that is, a temple where everyone would come to worship God; and a **household**, the family of God.
- **v13** He would reign **for ever**.
- **v14** This special son of David would also be the **Son of God**— the Lord Jesus Christ.
- **v14** He **would not sin**, but would suffer and die to save others.
- **v16** David would be **raised from the dead** to see Jesus Christ established as king forever on his throne in Jerusalem.

LESSON FOR US

God has made wonderful promises to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and also to David. These promises are called "*the hope of Israel*" (Acts 28:20) and "*the promise made of God unto our fathers*" (Acts 26:6). It is a Jewish hope, for these men were all Jews. But even though we may be Gentiles, God has made it possible for us to share in this hope. Anyone who **believes** in these promises, **and is baptised**, can share in the happiness of immortality in the kingdom of God (Gal 3:26-29). This is how we can be part of the "*house for God's Name*", part of God's family.

What marvellous kindness God has shown to us, in giving us such great and precious promises. He offers us the same hope that He offered David – hope of eternal life in His wonderful kingdom (2Pet 1:2-4; John 3:16).

We must try to please God in our thoughts and words and actions, just as David did, that God may think of us as He thought of David, as "*a man after mine own heart*" (Acts 13:22).

ADDITIONAL NOTES (Div. 11-12 only)

Some parts of the promise applied to Solomon, David's son,

but it can only be properly fulfilled by Christ. Although Solomon, who reigned after David, did build God a temple, he was not the promised son of God. He became king while David was still alive (1 Chron. 29:20-24), and his kingdom did not last forever (1 Kings 11:11). He did commit iniquity so that God's mercy departed from him (1 Kings 11:9). In each of these things, Solomon did not fulfil the promise, proving that its complete fulfilment can only be brought about by the Lord Jesus Christ.

QUESTIONS DIV. 9-12

Short Answers

1. When David became king, what did he wish to do for God?
2. Why was David not allowed to build God a temple?
3. Who built the temple that David planned?
4. Who is the one spoken of in God's promises to David who is both son of David and son of God?
5. When will Jesus begin to rule on the throne of David?
6. Who will go and worship at the Temple Jesus Christ will build?
7. What else can the "house" of God mean?
8. What is the first thing Christ will do when he returns?
9. Why must David be raised from the dead?
10. What two things must we do if we want to share David's hope?

Detailed Answers

1. When David became king he wanted to do something special for God.
 - (a) What did he want to do?
 - (b) Why was he not allowed to?
 - (c) Who would do it instead?
2. God was so pleased with David's attitude that He made him a wonderful promise.

- (a) *Who was this promise about?*
 - (b) *Where is he now?*
 - (c) *When will David see him?*
3. *The special son promised to David will build a "house" for God's name.*
- (a) *What will this building be like?*
 - (b) *What else does this "house" mean?*
 - (c) *How can we be part of God's "house"?*

Additional Answers (Div. 11-12 only)

4. *The promises God made to David in 2 Samuel 7 did not really apply to Solomon. Give three reasons why Solomon was not the son of the promise.*

