

TEMMIT! FOR CHILDREN

Bible Lesson Quarterly

Year 2 - 4th Quarter - "FROM THE WILDERNESS TO CANAAN"

We are going to continue our stories about the Children of Israel as they journey to Canaan.

For our Bible lessons we are going to use the King James Version of the Bible, just like the boys and girls used to use to learn to read from in the pioneer days.

There will be some texts to look up for each day and you should practice your memory verse until you can say it without looking. Don't forget to learn the text too.

Weekly Bible Lesson #1: "REBELLION"

MEMORY VERSE: "For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry." 1Samuel 15:23a

Sunday

Text: Numbers 16:1, 2 "Now Korah, the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, and Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, and On, the son of Peleth, sons of Reuben, took men: And they rose up before Moses, with certain of the children of Israel, two hundred and fifty princes of the assembly, famous in the congregation, men of renown."

This quarter we are going to continue the stories of Israel on their way to the Promised Land. After their army had been beaten so badly, they had to move back into the wilderness because the enemies, who were not afraid of them any more, would soon come to attack them.

But there was still a bad, grumbly spirit in their hearts and trouble soon came again. It wasn't long before a real rebellion happened.

Korah, was a Levite, and a cousin of Moses. He was a smart man and the people

admired him. He was part of the family that had a special job in the care of the tabernacle. They were the ones who cared for the Ark and the furniture.

It was an important job, but Korah decided he wanted more. He wanted to be the High Priest. God had chosen Aaron and his sons to be the high priests and no other family was to do this job. But Korah decided that Moses had just made Aaron High Priest because he was Moses' brother.

He was jealous and always did what he could to get the people to ignore the guidance of Moses and Aaron. He was sneaky about it, and just talked to his friends and anyone he could get to listen to him. He would try to get others to have this same grumbly spirit and ignore their leaders. Soon lots of people agreed with him and thought he was right.

Close to Korah's tent, on the south side of the tabernacle, was the tents of the tribe of Reuben, the tents of Dathan and Abiram, two princes of this tribe, were close to that

of Korah. As Korah decided to lead a rebellion and refuse to follow Moses and Aaron any more, these men agreed with him and joined in his plans.

They decided that they deserved the place of Moses as leader, because they were the son's of Rueben, Jacob's 1st son. They decided that Korah should be the High Priest.

Thought – Korah worked just like Satan did to make rebellion in heaven. He was sneaky and got others to agree with him and then said the idea was theirs.

Monday

Text: Numbers 16:3,4 “And they gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron, and said unto them, Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the LORD is among them: wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the LORD? And when Moses heard it, he fell upon his face.”

Finally all these grumblers got together in a big group and accused Moses and Aaron. They said that Moses and Aaron had put their own selves in as rulers of the people. They said all the people were just as good as they were, and others should have a chance to rule.

They said that the problems were all because of Moses and Aaron, that if they had done better they could all be happy in the Promised Land already. Over and over God had tried to show them that it was He that was leading them, Moses was just obeying Him.

But they refused to accept this truth. It did not please them to think that they did not have just as much right to rule as Moses did, and that their own ideas were not just as good as the Words of God. When people refuse truth that God tries to show them, after a while they will not believe even if an angel shouted in their ears.

Now here Korah was with the great, big,

grumbly group claiming that all their problems were because Moses kept telling them about their sins. They said it wasn't because of the people's grumbling that problems had come to them. They said that what had happened was not because of the wrong the people had done. It was because Moses was always accusing them as sinners, when they were a holy people, and the Lord was among them.

He told the people that if it had not been for Moses, they would have had a peaceful journey right into the Promised Land. What they needed was a leader who would praise their good points instead of telling them about their sins.

Korah sympathized with the people and told them they were good. Now when people have done wrong and know it, but refuse to repent, they just love someone who will flatter them and tell them how good they are.

Thought – Poor Moses; he would have been happier to have stayed working as a shepherd the rest of his life. But when God gives someone a job to do, they dare not leave that job until God tells them to.

Tuesday

Text: Numbers 16:5-7 “And he spake unto Korah and unto all his company, saying, Even to morrow the LORD will shew who are his, and who is holy; and will cause him to come near unto him: even him whom he hath chosen will he cause to come near unto him. This do; Take you censers, Korah, and all his company; And put fire therein, and put incense in them before the LORD to morrow: and it shall be that the man whom the LORD doth choose, he shall be holy: ye take too much upon you, ye sons of Levi.”

Some though did not go along with this because they remembered how patient and kind Moses had been. So Korah and his friends made up a wicked lie about Moses and Aaron and said they just wanted the

people to die in the wilderness so they could have all their things for themselves.

What a wicked lie against one who over and over had pleaded for them when God might have destroyed them. Even when God said He would make a new nation out of Moses' children, Moses had even offered to give up his eternal life for these people.

Now Moses talked to Korah and told him that he already had a special job for the Lord, and why wasn't he happy with that? He told them to come the next day with their censers and God would show whom He wanted for High Priest.

Then Moses called for Dathan and Abiram to come and talk to him. He hoped they could talk together and solve their problems. But these men refused to come.

In fact they said the most wicked thing you could ever think of. They said that Moses wanted them to come so he could put out their eyes! Here are their words:

“Is it a small thing that thou hast brought us up out of a land that floweth with milk and honey, to kill us in the wilderness, except thou make thyself altogether a prince over us? Moreover thou hast not brought us into a land that floweth with milk and honey, or given us inheritance of fields and vineyards: wilt thou put out the eyes of these men? we will not come up.” Numbers 16:13, 14

Here they said that Moses had taken them out of a 'Land flowing with milk and honey' to let them die in the wilderness. They said that Egypt, where they had been slaves and treated so cruel, was the good land, and Moses had tricked them into leaving it!

Thought – By rejecting God's truth when it showed them their sins, these men had put out their own eyes and were blind to the terrible thing they were doing.

Wednesday

Text: Numbers 16:18,19 “And they took every man his censer, and put fire in them, and laid incense thereon, and stood

in the door of the tabernacle of the congregation with Moses and Aaron. And Korah gathered all the congregation against them unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation: and the glory of the LORD appeared unto all the congregation.”

The next day all the 250 princes who wanted to be the priests came to the courtyard of the sanctuary with censers to see what the Lord would do. Korah had told all the people to come and watch as these people really thought they were going to be honored of God and at last they would have their rights and get rid of the voices that kept telling them they were sinners and needed to repent. (a censer is a brass pot on a chain that they used to burn incense in)

It is a sad truth that when we refuse to believe when God tells us about our sins, after a while the Holy Spirit can do no more for us, and He leaves. When this happens, people feel real good about themselves because their conscience no longer bothers them. What a sad, sad thing- to think you are all right when you are all wrong!

When all these men that wanted to be priests were standing there with their censers the brightness of God appeared in the sanctuary. Korah and his partners fled to their tents. And God said to Moses and Aaron, “Separate yourselves from among this congregation, that I may consume them in a moment.”

Again Moses and Aaron pleaded for God to save the people, that all of them would not die because of the wicked ones. Moses went to the tents of these men to warn the people.

Moses told the people that God said for them to get right away from the tents of Korah, Dathan and Abiram, so they would not perish with them. So the people obeyed and these rebels saw all their followers leave them. But they still did not repent of their wrong doing.

Thought – We need to be careful that we obey what we know is right and not make

up excuses and refuse truth.

Thursday

Text: Numbers 16:28-30 “**And Moses said, Hereby ye shall know that the LORD hath sent me to do all these works; for I have not done them of mine own mind. If these men die the common death of all men, or if they be visited after the visitation of all men; then the LORD hath not sent me. But if the LORD make a new thing, and the earth open her mouth, and swallow them up, with all that appertain unto them, and they go down quick into the pit; then ye shall understand that these men have provoked the LORD.**”

When Moses warned the people to get away from the tents of these men, they still could have repented and God would have spared them but they boldly insisted they were right.

Now Moses said a strange thing, but it was what God told him to say. He said that if what these men had done was wrong, that God would make the earth to open up and swallow them down. God wanted to show that it was not Moses they were dealing with but God. How could Moses make the earth open up and swallow people?

Sure enough, when Moses finished speaking, all at once there was a terrible noise and a great big hole opened up right under the tents of these people and they all fell right down and were gone forever and the hole closed up again.

Now the people in the camp were afraid and began to run away. They knew they had done wrong in listening to Korah and his friends, and they thought they would all get swallowed up.

Now the 250 men who were in the sanctuary court, saw what had happened to their leaders. There was a short time given that they could have repented. They could have dropped their censers and run away, but

they still boldly stood there thinking they were perfectly right.

Suddenly God sent fire out and they were burned up. Nothing was left but 250 brass pots smoking away on the ground. Moses was told that those 250 pots were to be made into plates and put on the altar to remind the people forever that only those God chose, were to be priests before Him.

Now the people fled to their tents, but even though God had given them the clearest evidence that Korah was wrong and Moses was right, they still refused to believe. They returned to their tents that night afraid, but still not sorry for their sins.

Thought – If they believed, they would have accept that they were sinners and that they were all going to have to stay in the wilderness for forty years until all the adults were dead. They did not want to believe this, so no evidence could prove it to them.

Friday

Text: Numbers 16:41,42 “**But on the morrow all the congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron, saying, Ye have killed the people of the LORD. And it came to pass, when the congregation was gathered against Moses and against Aaron, that they looked toward the tabernacle of the congregation: and, behold, the cloud covered it, and the glory of the LORD appeared.**”

The people had been flattered by Korah and his company until they really believed themselves to be very good people, and that they had been wronged and abused by Moses. If they would admit that Korah and his company were wrong, and Moses right, then they would have to accept as from God the sentence that they must die in the wilderness.

The men who had perished had spoken flattering words and talked to them of love and told them they were good people and not sinners. The people felt that Korah and

his friends must have been good men, and that Moses had by some means been the cause of their destruction.

Believe it or not, the very next day the people came to Moses and Aaron and said, "You killed God's people!" And they were ready to do violence to Moses and Aaron, even to kill them.

Now, how could Moses and Aaron make the earth open up or fire come down to destroy anyone? But the people were still in rebellion. They still refused to admit they had been wrong and that Korah and his gang were evil, and not their friends like they had believed.

Moses and Aaron went to the sanctuary and again God said He would destroy all the people, again Moses and Aaron fell on their faces and pleaded for the people. They were pleading for the very ones who wanted to kill them.

Now a plague broke out, and the people were dying like flies before it. Moses told

Aaron to take his censer and take fire from the altar and put incense on it and run into the camp and stand between the living and the dead so the plague would stop.

He did this, and the plague stopped, but 14,700 people died, besides the families of Korah, Dathan and Abiram and the 250 princes. What a terrible price of rebellion against the Word of God.

It was now clear that Moses and Aaron had spoken by God, and the people had to believe the sad truth that they were to die in the wilderness. "Behold," they exclaimed, "we die, we perish, we all perish." They confessed that they had sinned in rebelling against their leaders, and that Korah and his company had suffered the just judgment of God.

Thought – In the rebellion of Korah we see the same spirit that led to the rebellion of Satan in heaven. It was pride and ambition that led Lucifer to complain of the government of God, and to seek to overthrow it. = ^ .. ^ =

Weekly Bible Lesson #2: "THE WILDERNESS"

MEMORY VERSE: "For the LORD thy God hath blessed thee in all the works of thy hand: he knoweth thy walking through this great wilderness: these forty years the LORD thy God hath been with thee; thou hast lacked nothing." Deuteronomy 2:7

Sunday

Text: Numbers 17:7-10 "And Moses laid up the rods before the LORD in the tabernacle of witness. And it came to pass, that on the morrow Moses went into the tabernacle of witness; and, behold, the rod of Aaron for the house of Levi was budded, and brought forth buds, and bloomed blossoms, and yielded almonds. And Moses brought out all the rods from before the LORD unto all the children of Israel: and they looked, and took every man his rod. And the LORD said unto Moses, Bring Aaron's rod again before the testimony, to

be kept for a token against the rebels; and thou shalt quite take away their murmurings from me, that they die not."

After the 250 princes, who decided to make themselves Priests, had all died before the Lord, the people were still wondering whether it was really true that Aaron and his family were the only ones God wanted to be the High Priests.

God doesn't mind at all answering questions, if people have an honest heart and really want to know His will. So He decided to give Israel a lesson that they could see to help them to know what His will for them was.

He told Moses to tell the people to bring some walking sticks. Each leader of a tribe was to bring a walking stick or 'rod' and it was to have the name of the leader and his tribe's name carved onto it.

Then Moses took all the rods and placed them in the sanctuary in the room where the Ark was with the 10 commandment stones in it. He told the people that God was going to show them His choice for High Priest by a miracle.

The next morning all the people gathered round to see what would be decided. Moses came out of the sanctuary carrying twelve rods, with the names on them. But one of them was no longer a dead stick, it had leaves and flowers and even some almonds growing on it!

But when they looked at it they saw the name of Aaron of the tribe of Levi carved there. So they knew for sure that God wanted Aaron to continue as High Priest. This 'rod that blossomed' was kept always in the sanctuary and now and then it would be brought out to show the people again, so there was never any more doubt who was to be the High Priest.

Thought - If we are honest in heart and want to know God's truth, He is happy to teach it to us.

Monday

Text: Nehemiah 9:17 "And refused to obey, neither were mindful of thy wonders that thou didst among them; but hardened their necks, and in their rebellion appointed a captain to return to their bondage: but thou art a God ready to pardon, gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and forsookest them not."

For almost 40 years we hear little about the Children of Israel as they wander homeless in the wilderness. During these years the people were always reminded that God was displeased with them. In the rebellion they had rejected God, and God had for the

time rejected them. Since they had not kept His covenant, they were not to receive the sign of the covenant. Because they had wanted to return to the land of slavery, they showed they did not deserve freedom and so they were not allowed to keep the Passover, which was to remember the deliverance from bondage.

And yet God did not completely cast them off, or they all would have died. Every day saw the miracles of God for their needs. The manna fell 6 days a week. Wherever they camped, water came from a rock nearby for them and their animals to wash and drink.

The most wonderful kindness that God showed to these rebels was that the daily and weekly services of the sanctuary did not stop. The way was kept open for all those who wanted to be forgiven of their sins, put away their sins and serve the Lord and be saved at last in His heavenly kingdom. Maybe we will meet some of those people in heaven and hear their stories.

God had two reasons for having them stay in the wilderness for this time. One reason was that their rebellion and disobedience was so great He could not bless these people with the Promised Land. Another reason was that the wilderness life, as the children were growing up, helped them to learn better, more obedient ways.

Every day they were seeing the works of God for their good, and God hoped they would come to know Him better than did their parents.

Thought - I have read or seen many stories of people taking disobedient boys and girls out to a camp or a ranch, where they were out in nature. In this way sometimes they learn lessons they can't seem to learn otherwise. If you have ever camped out in a tent, you know there are a lot of chores for you to do to stay comfortable.

Tuesday

Text: Nehemiah 9:19-21 "Yet thou in thy manifold mercies forsookest them not

in the wilderness: the pillar of the cloud departed not from them by day, to lead them in the way; neither the pillar of fire by night, to shew them light, and the way wherein they should go. Thou gavest also thy good spirit to instruct them, and withheldest not thy manna from their mouth, and gavest them water for their thirst. Yea, forty years didst thou sustain them in the wilderness, so that they lacked nothing; their clothes waxed not old, and their feet swelled not."

There were even more miracles that God did for them. Their clothes and their shoes did not wear out! Now you all know that if you have a nice pair of jeans or a dress, after a while it gets thin and shabby and if you wear it long enough, it falls to pieces. But these people wore their clothes for forty years, passing the small clothes down to other children as they grew up and so on, and the clothes and shoes did not wear out!

Also they did not get sick and their feet did not swell. If you are wandering about in a hot, dry desert, you can get sick, and your feet get sore and tired, and even swell up. But this did not happen to them.

The pillar of cloud was there in the daytime and it acted like a shade for them, if it was terrible hot. At night the pillar was a fire, it kept away the chill and lighted the camp with a soft glow.

God is so good to us, even when we must suffer the results of our wrongdoing, He comes near to comfort and help us. He lets us know He loves us and will forgive us, if we come to Him truly sorry for our sins and allow Him to remove them from our lives.

Thought – Spend a little time thinking about what it would have been like to grow up there in the camp of Israel. What kind of chores would you do? What things would you enjoy?

Wednesday

Text: Deuteronomy 32:10 "He found him in a desert land, and in the waste

howling wilderness; He led him about, He instructed him, He kept him as the apple of His eyes." Isaiah 63:9 "In all their affliction He was afflicted, and the Angel of His presence saved them; in His love and in His pity He redeemed them; and He bare them, and carried them all the days of old."

The Pillar of Cloud and Fire also guided them and protected them in those years. But the sad thing is, that the few stories that come to us of those times, are stories of rebellion and disobedience against God. It seems that some people just refuse to learn no matter what God does to try and teach them.

We want to make sure not to be stubborn like that, but to learn the lessons God wants us to learn, don't we?

There was a young man that had been born in a family where the mother was an Israelite and the father was an Egyptian. Now these kinds of people were called the 'Mixed Multitude' and they were given permission to put their tents outside of the main camp of Israel.

They still got the Manna and other blessings, but they were not to be part of the main group until 3 generations, then if they truly served the Lord, they could be part of Israel.

Now this young man decided that he was going to put his tent right in with the Israelites anyway. He did not think that God was actually being very kind to him, to even let him be a part of Israel at all.

When a man from Israel came and told him he was not allowed to be there, he would not leave. So the matter went to the judge. He said the young man was wrong, and was to go back to his proper place.

Now everything would have been fine, but this young man was stubborn, and he cursed the judge, AND he cursed God for making the rules! This was such a wrong thing, that the young man was made a prisoner until Moses could ask God what to do about this wicked deed.

There were laws that if a person cursed their Mother or Father, they were to be stoned to death. Then came the word from God, the young man was to die for his wicked deed. So he was stoned and the law stood that if anyone cursed God, or his Father and Mother, he was to die.

Thought – Nobody said, “Well, he just lost his temper, he didn’t really mean it.” No way! If we lose our temper, we are still to blame for what we say or do. Remember that, if you feel like losing your temper. There is never any excuse for sin. Talk to Jesus and He will keep you from ever losing your temper.

Thursday

Text: Numbers 15:32,33 “And while the children of Israel were in the wilderness, they found a man that gathered sticks upon the sabbath day. And they that found him gathering sticks brought him unto Moses and Aaron, and unto all the congregation.”

Still many of the people had great anger and rebellion in their hearts towards God because they didn’t get to go into the Land of Promise. One of these people decided to show God just how he felt about His laws, by breaking the Sabbath.

Now it is important to understand that this man didn’t ‘just forget’, or ‘get mixed up’ or have any other reason for doing this. He did it to show that he wasn’t going to obey God, because he was rebellious in heart.

The people were not to make fires, or cook anything on the Sabbath. Out there in the wilderness, fires were not needed, as it was a hot country. Later when they were in Canaan, they could make fires, if they needed to for warmth in the winter.

He even could have been sneaky about it, and do it where nobody could see, but he did it out in plain sight, because he wanted people to see that he was not going to go along with these rules any more.

He was kept in ward until Moses could ask God what was to be done with him. God said the man was to be stoned for his breaking the law so boldly. So his rebellion cost him his life.

In our day we think that such things were very hard, but if the man had not been punished, the whole camp would have rebelled too. God used some cases to set an example that He means what He says.

Thought – Now today, people don’t get stoned for breaking the Sabbath or cursing God. People sometimes think that God is not so fussy now, but God is the same yesterday, today and always. If we rebel and refuse to give our hearts to Jesus and obey Him, the day will come when we will be lost and die forever.

Friday

Text: Ezekiel 20:12,13 “Moreover also I gave them my sabbaths, to be a sign between me and them, that they might know that I am the LORD that sanctify them. But the house of Israel rebelled against me in the wilderness: they walked not in my statutes, and they despised my judgments, which if a man do, he shall even live in them; and my sabbaths they greatly polluted: then I said, I would pour out my fury upon them in the wilderness, to consume them.”

The Bible tells us that even though the rest of the people were not so bold as to go out and gather sticks on the Sabbath, and they all had the lesson that every week there would be double manna on Friday and none on Sabbath, yet they still didn’t really keep God’s Sabbath right.

Perhaps they sat around talking about their weekly work or telling silly stories. Perhaps they just felt all grumbly in their hearts that they couldn’t do what they felt like doing on that day. We don’t know. But we do know that because they didn’t truly keep the Sabbath as God wanted them to, He was

not able to bless them like He wanted to.

There are some very special blessings promised to people who really keep the Sabbath right. You can read about them in Isaiah 58:13, 14 "If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the LORD, honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: Then shalt thou delight thyself in the LORD; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it."

Boys and girls, these blessings are for us if we truly obey God with a happy heart. Keeping Sabbath is much more than just not working, or putting away our toys on that day. It is a time when God wants to specially be close to us and bless us.

If we treat the day like we would if someone very special were coming to visit us, then we start to understand the Sabbath a bit. If the Queen or the President were coming, we

would prepare our house; we would have our clothes nice and our bodies sweet and clean. Then when they came, we would sit down and pay attention to what they would say to us.

Now if we would do that to a human guest, should we not do the same and more for our Heavenly Guest? This is a special time when we can learn about God's Word, and also lessons from the things He made in nature.

Notice it says we are not to speak our own words or do our own ways or pleasures on that day. We are not to talk about our work or worldly things, school or play. But if we really love Jesus, we will love to talk about Him and Sabbath will truly be a delight. When Sabbath is our delight, God will be able to give us special blessings.

Thought – You can tell how much you truly love Jesus by which time you feel the happiest, Friday sundown when Sabbath starts, or Sabbath sundown, when it ends. If you are counting the minutes until Sabbath is over so you can turn on the TV or run off to some entertainment... you have a serious problem. Pray about it! = ^.. ^ =

Weekly Bible Lesson #3: "ONWARD TO CANAAN"

MEMORY VERSE: "They drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ." 1 Corinthians 10:4.

Sunday

Text: Numbers 20:1 "Then came the children of Israel, even the whole congregation, into the desert of Zin in the first month: and the people abode in Kadesh; and Miriam died there, and was buried there."

The forty years were almost over, and now the cloudy pillar led them back towards Canaan and they camped in Kadesh. There it was that Miriam, Moses' dear sister that had watched over him in the basket boat by the River all those long years ago, died and was buried.

She had come out of Egypt with the others when all had high hopes of a wonderful future. After the Egyptian army had been destroyed, Miriam had led the women in song and dance to express their hope and joy. But now, after a life of wandering, it had ended in a desert grave. Nearly all the older generation had ended their course in wilderness graves.

Why? Because sin and rebellion had made it impossible for God to bless them like He wanted so much to do. Would the next generation, the children growing up in the wilderness, learn the lesson and choose to follow and obey God completely?

There are many today who like to tell you that it doesn't matter what we do from day to day. Our bad habits, quick tempers, love of worldly entertainment and unhealthy appetites are all OK, as long as we 'believe' in Jesus and belong to the 'church'.

They tell you that 'Jesus understands' and 'God is not particular about these things'. But look at what the Bible tells us. Look at the children of Israel. Did God just say, "Oh, it's OK, I love them so much I will overlook their sins"?

There are several places in the Bible where God tells us something about His wonderful love and promise to save those who come to Him. But in these same places He reminds us that He will not excuse sin. Look at this one:

Ex 34:7 "Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and **that will by no means clear the guilty.**"

So does that mean He won't forgive us? No, but it does mean He won't forgive us if we are not truly sorry for our sins AND allow Him to give us power to STOP doing these sins.

Thought - If you ask Jesus to forgive you for something, and you don't want and choose to stop doing this sin, Jesus does not hear that kind of prayer. But when we choose to get rid of all our sins, He will send all the power needed to overcome and beat those sins.

Monday

Text: Numbers 20:2-5 "And there was no water for the congregation: and they gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron. And the people chode with Moses, and spake, saying, Would God that we had died when our brethren died before the LORD! And why have ye brought up the congregation of the LORD into this wilderness, that we and our cattle should die there? And wherefore have ye made us to come up out of Egypt, to bring us in unto

this evil place? it is no place of seed, or of figs, or of vines, or of pomegranates; neither is there any water to drink."

For almost 40 years the younger generation had learned the truth that their parents had been shut out of the Promised Land because of the sins of grumbling, rebellion and disobedience and not trusting God. Now here they were back on the borders of Canaan and God decided to test them. Would they trust Him? Or be like their parents?

Ever since Moses had struck the rock all those years ago, the water had kept flowing for the people. It did not always flow from that same rock, but wherever they camped, it would come pouring out of a rock or cliff nearby.

Remember that it took a lot of water to be enough for all those people and their animals. Also the area they were in had to be watered enough so grass could grow to feed the animals.

So year in and year out the manna came 6 days a week and the water kept coming. What a kind and loving God to do this for His unthankful people.

Now, God tested them. The water stopped. Would they remember to Trust Him and come and ask for the water? Would they be patient and not grumble?

Oh, dear no! Right away they grumbled just like their parents and came to Moses and Aaron and said, "Why did YOU bring us out here so we and our animals will all die?" Now they had been in the desert for almost 40 years, and had not starved or thirsted. How could they be so blind?

Thought - Oh how important it is that we learn to trust God and never complain and grumble! Whether you are little, a teenager or a big person, or an old granny like me, we must always believe and trust in God.

Tuesday

Text: Numbers 20:6-8 "And Moses and Aaron went from the presence of the

assembly unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and they fell upon their faces: and the glory of the LORD appeared unto them. And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Take the rod, and gather thou the assembly together, thou, and Aaron thy brother, and speak ye unto the rock before their eyes; and it shall give forth his water, and thou shalt bring forth to them water out of the rock: so thou shalt give the congregation and their beasts drink.”

Something very interesting is in this story for us to learn. Jesus was giving them a special story picture about Himself and if they would have just trusted Him, they would have seen a most beautiful lesson.

You see; Jesus is the Rock of Ages for us. When Moses struck the Rock and the water came out to give life to all the people and animals, it was showing that Jesus would have to be ‘struck’ so that people could have a chance to be saved.

But Jesus was only to die once for the price to be paid, after that, all we have to do is believe on Him, and ask for what we need. We ask Him and trust Him to give us what we need to live; food, clothes, and shelter, and we ask Him for what we need for to overcome sin and be ready for heaven. Everything that we need comes from that Rock that was struck for us.

There is another lesson in the water from the Rock. The water was enough to save everybody’s life. But each person and animal had to drink it for himself. It would not save your life, if your Mom drank water and you did not bother.

It would not help you to be a part of a group where everybody drank water- but you didn’t. Those who would not drink the water for themselves would still die, even though there was plenty of water there for them.

Jesus death bought for us all the blessings we need to live and be ready to go home with Him when he comes. But if we don’t each one of us, take hold of these blessings

and promises and make them our own, we will not be saved.

Now Jesus was wanting to show them the second part, that we only need to ask the Rock for what we need. So He told Moses to go and SPEAK to the rock and the water would come out.

Thought – Do you ‘Speak to the Rock’ every day and tell Him all your needs?

Wednesday

Text: Numbers 20:9-11 “And Moses took the rod from before the LORD, as he commanded him. And Moses and Aaron gathered the congregation together before the rock, and he said unto them, Hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock? And Moses lifted up his hand, and with his rod he smote the rock twice: and the water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their beasts also.”

Poor Moses and Aaron. They were now old men. Moses was close to 120 years old! For all those years they had put up with this disobedient and grumbly people, trying patiently to help them learn about the Lord and trust Him and obey Him.

They too were disappointed in their hope that it would only be a short time from when they left Egypt until they were all settled nicely in the Promised Land. They had believed God and yet they had to suffer along with the rest of the people.

Now, when they had such high hopes that they could soon enter Canaan and surely these people had learned their lessons, now here the people were acting exactly the same as had their parents! They were about to travel through an area that had lots of water and they could get what they needed, they were only a few days from Canaan!

Moses and Aaron gave in to discouragement. For a brief moment Moses allowed doubt and distrust of God’s Word to come into his heart and he disobeyed God. Weary of the doubts and grumbling, Moses did not

try to tell the people they were wrong to do this- instead he let some of their doubts and complaints get into his own heart.

First he said, "Must WE bring forth water from this rock." He took the credit for doing something that only God could do. Then he spoiled the important lesson that God wanted to teach the people. He took the rod and struck the rock again, not once but twice. God was kind enough to let the water come out for the people, but a great wrong had been done.

Thought – When Moses and Aaron angrily cried, "Must we fetch you water out of this rock?" they put themselves in God's place, as though the power lay in them. When people praise us, we need to tell them that any good we ever have in us, is from God. By ourselves, people have no good in them at all!

Thursday

Text: Numbers 20:12 "And the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron, Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them."

This is a very sad story, here was Moses, who had been patient through so many years, and now he gave way to doubt and distrust of God and failed to obey Him. Did God say, "Oh, that's alright Moses, you have done so much good that this little sin doesn't matter"? No, God can never excuse sin, and there is never any excuse for anybody to sin.

Moses could have kept his eyes on God and refused to let doubts and anger come into his heart. There is enough power available that no-one ever has to sin if he will trust in Jesus.

Some people say, well, that was a hard God back then, Jesus is different. Boys and girls, that God that spoke to the people back then, WAS the same Jesus who later, when the time came, died for the sins of the world.

He came to this earth to save people, not IN their sins but FROM their sins.

God knew that people, once they had obeyed Satan and gone into sin, could not after that obey God, even if they wanted to. BUT Jesus made a way that the power of God can join with us. That power will beat Satan and sin in our lives, if we want it to and choose to have it.

Jesus was human, and He was tempted by Satan harder than anybody, but Jesus depended on His Father in Heaven for power to win over it all. He won the battle, and his victory is what he gives to us. When we are tempted, Jesus says to us, "Here, I beat that sin, I overcame Satan on that one, you can have my victory, and I will take away your sin. There was no need or excuse for Moses to sin.

Sadly Jesus had to say to him, because of the wrong you did, and the really bad example you set for the people, you will have to die in the wilderness, you cannot take the people to the Promised Land."

Thought – Moses and Aaron had not planned to dishonor God, they had been careless with their thoughts and then suddenly a temptation knocked them over. But it was still sin, and God cannot overlook sin, especially not in leaders. Both of them were very sorry and repented that they had set such a bad example.

Friday

Text: Deuteronomy 3: 23-26 "And I besought the LORD at that time, saying, O Lord GOD, thou hast begun to shew thy servant thy greatness, and thy mighty hand: for what God is there in heaven or in earth, that can do according to thy works, and according to thy might? I pray thee, let me go over, and see the good land that is beyond Jordan, that goodly mountain, and Lebanon. But the LORD was wroth with me for your sakes, and would not hear me: and the LORD

said unto me, Let it suffice thee; speak no more unto me of this matter."

Moses was truly sorry for his sin. He truly repented of it, and God did forgive him. BUT we must realize, that just because God forgives a sin, that does not mean that everything is back like it was- and there are no bad effects from that sin.

Once a sin is done, the bad effects keep rolling on. This is why it is so important that we work with Jesus, us making the choices, Him giving the power, and get sin out of our lives. God could not just let Moses go on as if nothing had happened. That would cause the people to think that sin didn't matter at all.

We are told that if Moses had not failed there, God would have punished the grumblers and Moses would have taken the people into the Promised Land and then he would have went to heaven without dying, like Elijah did later.

So many times Moses had pleaded for God to spare the wicked, rebellious people, now he pleaded for his own self. "Please, just

let me go in and see the land", he asked. But God replied, "No, don't talk any more to me about this matter!"

Now Moses could have rebelled, but he did not. He showed that he was truly sorry for his sin and would obey God always. He kept right on working to help the people and to give them the guidance they needed so they could go and have what he was not to be allowed to have.

Boys and girls, does sin matter? Is it just a little thing? Sin always matters. But Jesus can break the chains of sin for you!

Thought – When Satan comes along to you and whispers; "You're tired, and you are not feeling good, it is OK for you to be grouchy." Or; "that person was mean to you, you have a right to get mad at them!" Or he says; "You don't always have to obey Mommy and Daddy, they don't understand how much you want to do this or that, just go ahead and do it anyway." Remember Moses- sin always brings bad effects, and even if it is forgiven, the effects are still sad and bad.
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Weekly Bible Lesson #4: "SNAKES AND GIANTS"

MEMORY VERSE: "And 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. " John 3:14,15

Sunday

Text: Numbers 20:14,17 "And Moses sent messengers from Kadesh unto the king of Edom, Thus saith thy brother Israel, Thou knowest all the travail that hath befallen us: 17 Let us pass, I pray thee, through thy country: we will not pass through the fields, or through the vineyards, neither will we drink of the water of the wells: we will go by the king's high way, we will not turn to the right hand nor to the left, until we have passed thy borders."

There was only a short journey between the camp of the Israelites and the borders of Canaan, but the land of Edom, the descendants of Esau, Jacob's brother lay between. God had told them they were not to attack Edom or take their land in any way. But he did tell them to go ahead and march through Edom.

God had told them to send a courteous request to the king of Edom and so they did. But the king sent back a nasty reply: "Thou shalt not pass by me, lest I come out against thee with the sword."

Now this is where Israel should have

trusted God and just marched through anyway, as God had told them. He would have sent His angels to protect them and the Edomites would have been made afraid to attack them. But instead, they hesitated and sent another request, and this gave Satan time to stir up trouble against them. The King gathered his soldiers and was determined to attack them if they came into the land.

Now God did not want Israel to fight with Edom, even though the king was nasty; so after he had gathered his soldiers to fight with Israel, they had no choice but to go around the country, which would be a long, hard journey.

Thought - When we clearly know what God wants us to do, we should go right ahead and do it. If we think about it, or try and find out if we can do it or not, Satan takes advantage of our doubting, to try and stop us.

Monday

Text: Numbers 20:23-24 “**And the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron in mount Hor, by the coast of the land of Edom, saying, Aaron shall be gathered unto his people: for he shall not enter into the land which I have given unto the children of Israel, because ye rebelled against my word at the water of Meribah.**”

The people had to turn south now and begin the long trip around the land of Edom. At their first camp, God told Moses that it was time for Aaron to die and that he was to go with him up into the mountain, and Aaron's son Eliazar was to go with them.

Together these two old men and the younger one climbed slowly up the mountain. The heads of Moses and Aaron were white with the snows of 120 winters. Their life had been spent in unselfish labor for God and their fellow men; their faces showed great wisdom, firmness and nobility of purpose, and strong affections.

It was a hard climb and they often stopped to rest and talk about the past. Aaron's work for Israel was done and when they got to the mountaintop, Moses took the special priest's clothes off of Aaron and put them on his son Eleazar. This was how God showed that Eliazar was to be the next High Priest for Israel.

When this was done the Bible tells us, “There Aaron died, and there he was buried.” Deuteronomy 10:6. Moses and Eliazar came back to the camp and told the people that Aaron had died in Moses' arms and they had buried him on the mountain.

The people felt sad. They thought about their murmuring and how Moses and Aaron were not allowed to go with them into Canaan. They wept and mourned for Aaron for 30 days. Moses must now continue the work alone; but he knew that God was his friend, and upon Him he leaned more heavily.

Thought – To be 120 years old and still able to climb a mountain is very wonderful. When we give our whole heart to God, we live wonderful lives.

Tuesday

Text: Numbers 21:4-6 “**And they journeyed from mount Hor by the way of the Red sea, to compass the land of Edom: and the soul of the people was much discouraged because of the way. And the people spake against God, and against Moses, Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? for there is no bread, neither is there any water; and our soul loatheth this light bread. And the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died.**”

After they left and traveled on, king Arad the Canaanite attacked them and took some people prisoner. This time the people turned to God and prayed to have the victory over this king and his cities. God answered their

prayer and he was defeated and Israel took the cities for their own.

But as they kept on their journey through the hot desert, they got tired and again forgot their lessons and began to grumble. They decided that they could have fought with Edom and beaten them and had their land too. They began to complain about their food and water again and say the Manna wasn't good enough for them.

Now we don't know how much God's blessing and protecting us, gives us what peace we have in this life. So it was with the children of Israel, God was helping them a lot, but when they began to grumble and complain, He could not help them so much and things got much worse for them.

In that area there were a lot of poisonous snakes and scorpions. The snakes were called fiery serpents because their bite was so painful and deadly. God had been protecting them from these hurtful things. Now when they began to sin with their words against God, He could not continue to protect them and He allowed the nasty snakes to come in and attack the people.

Satan was very happy that they had fallen for his temptations again. You see, the wicked people that lived in Canaan were servants of Satan, and he did not want God's people to come in and spoil his fun. So he was tempting them to do things that would make it impossible for God to bless them.

So in came the serpents, people began to get bitten and some began to get sick and die. Soon nearly every tent had someone sick or dying. If they thought they had trouble before; they really had a problem now! They stopped grumbling and came to Moses saying, "We have sinned, for we have spoken against the Lord, and against thee."

Thought – When you are tempted to complain, sing a song of praise to Jesus instead. Satan will be defeated and things will get better for you and you will have strength to bear the problems.

Wednesday

Text: Numbers 21:8,9 "And the LORD said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole: and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live. And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole, and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived."

When the people came to Moses and were sorry for their sin of grumbling, Moses asked God what to do. God told him a strange thing. He said for Moses to make a brass snake and put it up on a pole and then carry it through the camp.

The people were told that if they were bitten and dying, if they would just look at this serpent in faith, they would be healed. This was to be a special lesson for the people helping them to know more about Jesus. It was in obeying God and trusting Him they were to have help.

The people knew that there was no power in the serpent of brass to make them well by just looking at it. The healing power was from God alone. In His wisdom He chose this way so the people could see that this trouble came to them because of their sins. They were also told for sure that while obeying God they had no reason to fear, for He would keep them.

The joyful news spread through the camp, that all who had been bitten might look upon the brazen serpent and live. Many had already died, and when Moses raised the serpent upon the pole, some would not believe that merely gazing upon that metallic image would heal them; they died in their unbelief. Yet there were many who had faith in what God said. Fathers, mothers, brothers, and sisters tried hard to help their suffering, dying friends to fix their eyes upon the serpent. If they, though faint and dying, could only once look, they were made well.

Thought – This is the way we are to work

for our family and friends. We are to try and get them to see Jesus and give their hearts to Him and be saved from sin.

Thursday

Text: John 3:14-16 “And 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. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

The lifting up of the brazen serpent was to teach Israel an important lesson. They could not save themselves from the poison in their wounds. God alone was able to heal them. Yet they had to show their faith in the help God had made. They must look in order to live. It was their faith that God accepted, and they showed they believed God when they obeyed and looked upon the serpent.

The serpent was a symbol of Christ; and how He would one day take on him the sins of the world and die for man. He would become sin for us. The people were used to bringing their lambs for the sin offering and thinking that by doing this they were paying for their sins by giving God the lamb.

They did not see that the offerings were only to show the great price that God was paying for them. The Lord would now teach them that their sacrifices, by themselves, had no more power to save than the serpent of brass, but were to lead their minds to Christ, the great sin offering.

Everyone who has ever lived has been bitten by that old serpent, called the devil, and Satan.” Revelation 12:9. The deadly effects of sin can be removed only in the way that God has made. The Israelites saved their lives by looking upon the uplifted serpent. That look meant they believed God. They lived because they believed God’s Word, and trusted Him to heal them.

Jesus has the power to save all who come to Him. We must come by faith, “Him that cometh to Me,” says Christ, “I will in no wise cast out.” John 6:37. But we must come to Him; and when we repent of our sins, we must believe that He accepts and pardons us. Faith is the gift of God, but the power to exercise it is ours. Faith is the hand by which we take hold of God’s promises to save us.

Thought – How sad that some of the people would not even try to look at the brass snake. It didn’t make any sense to them that just looking could help, they couldn’t explain it, so they refused. They did not believe God and they could not be helped.

Friday

Text: Numbers 21:21,22 “And Israel sent messengers unto Sihon king of the Amorites, saying, Let me pass through thy land: we will not turn into the fields, or into the vineyards; we will not drink of the waters of the well: but we will go along by the king’s high way, until we be past thy borders.”

The people were now traveling through a nicer area and making progress towards Canaan. God told them to leave Moab and Ammon alone as He would not give their land to them, and so soon they came up to the land of Sihon, king of the Amorites.

They sent a nice message asking permission to travel through this land. This was a last test for these people, if they would have been kind and allowed Israel to pass through, they would have been allowed to stay there. But the king refused and brought out his army to fight. God had been kind to these people, trying to give them a chance to turn from their evil ways but they refused and now God led Israel against them. Quickly they were beaten and Israel captured their land.

Next they came to the land of Bashan, whose king was Og, and he was a giant! The Bible tells us in Deuteronomy 3:11, “For only

Og king of Bashan remained of the remnant of giants; behold, his bedstead was a bedstead of iron; is it not in Rabbath of the children of Ammon? nine cubits was the length thereof, and four cubits the breadth of it, after the cubit of a man.”

Nine cubits; thirteen and a half feet. And Four cubits; six feet. That was a very big bed! And we know that Og was a very big giant, at least as big as Goliath and maybe even bigger.

Some of the people remembered how forty years before, they had gone out to fight when God told them not to and had been defeated. But now, Moses was with them and the pil-

lar of cloud was leading them so they knew it was God’s will. They went forward by faith against the Giants and the walled cities and they won in the name of the Lord!

No matter how big an enemy of God is; he cannot win against God. God may in His mercy allow wicked men to prosper for a while, as He tries to get them to repent so He can save them; but if God’s goodness does not lead them to repentance, they will perish. So Og was defeated and the Israelites took over all the land of Bashan.

Thought – Remember the story of young David? No Giant can defeat us when we trust and obey Jesus! = ^ .. ^ =

Weekly Bible Lesson #5: “THE SONG OF MOSES”

MEMORY VERSE: “He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he.” Deuteronomy 32:4

Sunday

Text: Deuteronomy 31:1-3 “And Moses went and spake these words unto all Israel. And he said unto them, I am an hundred and twenty years old this day; I can no more go out and come in: also the LORD hath said unto me, Thou shalt not go over this Jordan. The LORD thy God, he will go over before thee, and he will destroy these nations from before thee, and thou shalt possess them: and Joshua, he shall go over before thee, as the LORD hath said.”

In series 6, we told the story of Balaam and his donkey. This happened about now in our series so we will go on from that. (If you want to read that story go to Quarterly #6 – lesson 4.) Terrible trouble came to Israel and thousands died, because they listened to Balaam and joined in with the Pagan Holiday Celebrations and worshipped the idols and went out with wicked women. After this it was not long before they came to the Jordan River. Here God told Moses he was not going to cross the river but was to

soon die.

Ever since Moses had known that he was not going to be allowed to go with Israel over the Jordan River and into Canaan, he had shown a very unselfish spirit as he worked hard to teach the people all he could to help them, and tried to give Joshua as much encouragement as he could. Never once did he grumble, complain or pout, even though he was very disappointed.

God called Moses and Joshua to come before the tabernacle and He would talk to them. He told Moses that He knew that the people, after they went into Canaan and after God had done so much for them, would still forget Him and worship the heathen gods. He gave Moses a song to teach to the people that told what would happen to them because they would do this wickedness.

The Holy Spirit was really with Moses in those last hours of his life, and God helped him to write down all the information in books for the Children of Israel to keep forever.

God also told Joshua not to worry that He would be with him, just like He had been

with Moses. God said; "Be strong and of a good courage: for thou shalt bring the children of Israel into the land which I sware unto them: and I will be with thee."

Thought - It was the fancy celebrations and holiday feasts, that looked like exciting fun, that led Israel, time after time, to join in worshipping heathen idols instead of staying with the true God. Holidays can do that to us too, if we are not careful!

Monday

Text: Deuteronomy 31:19, 20 "Now therefore write ye this song for you, and teach it the children of Israel: put it in their mouths, that this song may be a witness for me against the children of Israel. For when I shall have brought them into the land which I sware unto their fathers, that floweth with milk and honey; and they shall have eaten and filled themselves, and waxen fat; then will they turn unto other gods, and serve them, and provoke me, and break my covenant."

Moses wrote all the laws in books and when he knew it was time for him to say goodbye to Israel, he called all the people together and he gave the Levites the books that he had written, and he wrote the song for the people and taught it to them.

You may have heard about the 'Song of Moses', but did you know there are two Songs of Moses? Most people know about the one that he sang when the Egyptian army was drowned in the Red Sea, but the other one is found in Deuteronomy 32:1-43.

You can read this song and think about what it means. In this song God is telling the people that if they would obey Him and keep His Commandments that they would be a happy, holy people and all what God wanted to do for them. And the song also tells that God knew that they would forget Him and all the trouble that would come when they did.

It was a Prophecy Song. The people learned the song and years later when it was sung; the truth of it was seen as everything happened just like the song said!

Moses called the people together for his last sermon to them, and he went through all of their history from the time of leaving Egypt to that time and he reminded them of how they had so often failed to obey God and so brought so much suffering and misery to themselves.

Finally he was finished with all he had to tell the people and on that same day, God told him to go alone up into the mountain and die there.

Thought - Moses told them especially to teach these laws to their children. "...ye shall command your children to observe to do, all the words of this law."

Tuesday

Text: Deuteronomy 32:49,50,52 "Get thee up into this mountain Abarim, unto mount Nebo, which is in the land of Moab, that is over against Jericho; and behold the land of Canaan, which I give unto the children of Israel for a possession: And die in the mount whither thou goest up, and be gathered unto thy people; as Aaron thy brother died in mount Hor, and was gathered unto his people: Yet thou shalt see the land before thee; but thou shalt not go thither unto the land which I give the children of Israel."

Just before Moses left them forever, he gave them a special prophecy blessing. You can read it in Deuteronomy 33. It ended, "Happy art thou, O Israel: who is like unto thee, O people saved by the LORD, the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thy excellency! and thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee; and thou shalt tread upon their high places."

Then he turned and went to the mountain. He was 120 years old, but still strong,

Up and up he climbed to the part called 'Pisgah'. When he got there he thought about all his life.

Then God told him to look and see the land that Israel was going to have. He looked and saw a beautiful land. But we are told that he saw more than just the land stretched out below him there; God showed him like a movie all the details of the land. Then He showed him the future and he saw what the children of Israel would do down through the ages.

Moses even saw the birth and life of Jesus, the Messiah, and how the people would reject Him and put Him to death. Then he saw more - he saw history down to the very end of time on earth and the Second Coming of Jesus.

Then like a tired warrior, he laid down there and fell asleep in death. "So Moses the servant of the LORD died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the LORD." Deut. 34:5 And the Angels buried him in a valley.

Thought – Later Jesus came and called Moses back to life and took him to heaven. So even though he had not been allowed to go into the Land of Promise, God had something even better for him.

Wednesday

Text: Joshua 1:1,2 "Now after the death of Moses the servant of the LORD it came to pass, that the LORD spake unto Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' minister, saying, Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel."

After the people mourned for Moses for 30 days, it was time for them to go over the Jordan and enter the Land of Promise. God told Joshua to read and obey the laws that had been written in the books and He would go with him and help him.

Now the tribe of Rueben and Gad and

half of Manasseh were to have their lands on the wilderness side of Jordan and so their wives and children were left behind in the houses they had got there. The men went on to help the rest of Israel to get their lands.

While they camped beside the Jordan River, Joshua send 2 men to go over and spy out the city of Jericho, which was a strong city with thick, high walls. However would they be able to capture that city? Joshua knew that God would tell him what to do.

The two spies went into the city to a lady's house named Rahab. They found out from her that the people were very afraid of the Israelites because they knew that the God of heaven was fighting for them.

Thought – Remember that Joshua was one of the faithful ones of the 12 spies that were send 40 years before. He believed then that they could take Jericho!

Thursday

Text: Joshua 2:3-5 "And the king of Jericho sent unto Rahab, saying, Bring forth the men that are come to thee, which are entered into thine house: for they be come to search out all the country. And the woman took the two men, and hid them, and said thus, There came men unto me, but I wist not whence they were: And it came to pass about the time of shutting of the gate, when it was dark, that the men went out: whither the men went I wot not: pursue after them quickly; for ye shall overtake them."

Rahab heard the soldiers were coming and she hid the two spies under the flax piles that she had drying on the rooftop. Then later on that night, she used a scarlet cord to let them down out of her window, because she lived on the wall of the town.

Before the two spies left, Rahab asked them for a favor. She asked that they would spare her and all her family when they came to capture Jericho. So they said they would but she was to have them all there in the

house with her, and to tie the scarlet cord in her window for a marker.

Rahab told the spies to hide in the mountains for three days and then the soldiers that were looking for them would come back and they could get back to camp safely. They did this and soon were back in the camp of Israel. Rahab later became a worshipper of the God of heaven and is even one of the ancestors of Mary, Jesus' Mother.

The spies reported to Joshua that God was certainly going to deliver Jericho into their hands because the people were all afraid of them. Then Joshua told the people to get ready three days of food and be ready for the Lord was going to do great works for them.

Thought – Some of them must have thought about how they were all going to get across that river which was very deep at that time of year.

Friday

Text: Joshua 3:15-17 “And as they that bare the ark were come unto Jordan, and the feet of the priests that bare the ark were dipped in the brim of the water, (for Jordan overfloweth all his banks all the time of harvest,) That the waters which came down from above stood and rose up upon an heap very far from the city Adam, that is beside Zaretan: and those that came down toward the sea of the plain, even the salt sea, failed, and were cut off: and the people passed over right against Jericho. And the priests that bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD 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.”

Careful instruction was given to the people. The special priests who were carrying the Ark of God where to go first. As soon as their feet touched the water it piled up on

one side and flowed away on the other until there was a great dry place.

The priests marched to the middle of the riverbed and there they stood holding the covered Ark on its golden poles. Now the other people were to march through. They were told to not get too close to the Ark.

On and on the people marched through the dry riverbed until all were gone over. Then Joshua told them to have one man from each tribe go back into the riverbed and each one was to pick up a big rock and carry it back. After this was done, the priests slowly marched out of the river and as soon as they were all safe on the shore, the water rushed back as deep and fast as ever.

Then they took the twelve big rocks and piled them up to make a monument in a place called Gilgal, where they camped. Joshua told them that this monument was to remind them to tell their children the story of how God had divided the Jordan River and let them walk through with dry feet.

Thought – God wanted parents to always tell the stories of how God led and blessed them to their children, so the children would learn to love and trust Him too. Why do you think this is so very important? = ^ .. ^ =



Weekly Bible Lesson #6: "THE WALLS FELL DOWN"

MEMORY VERSE: "Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts." Zechariah 4:6B

Sunday

Text: Joshua 5:13-15 "And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, behold, there stood a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand: and Joshua went unto him, and said unto him, Art thou for us, or for our adversaries? And he said, Nay; but as captain of the host of the LORD am I now come. And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship, and said unto him, What saith my lord unto his servant? And the captain of the LORD'S host said unto Joshua, Loose thy shoe from off thy foot; for the place whereon thou standest is holy. And Joshua did so."

Joshua knew it was time to capture the city of Jericho. It seemed impossible, but he knew God would show them how. He went into a quiet place where he could pray and ask the Lord for orders.

All at once a big, strong soldier appeared with a sword in his hand. Joshua was startled, and asked this soldier if he was on their side or the side of the enemy. As soon as the 'man' answered, Joshua knew it was the Lord and bowed down and worshipped him.

It was Jesus that appeared to Joshua, just like He had appeared to Moses at the burning bush. Now he would tell Joshua how he was to capture the city. What strange directions He gave him!

For six days they were to go out and march around the city once. First the mightiest warriors, followed by the Priests carrying the ark ahead of them, and then quietly march back to camp. They were not to talk or make noise.

On the seventh day they were to march

around it seven times, and the Lord said the city would be given to them. He did not say how, again this was a test of faith for Joshua and the Children of Israel. Would they believe and obey?

The Lord also told him that when they got the city, they were to destroy every person and even the animals, and burn up the city, and the gold and silver and metal pots and dishes were all to be given to the priests and they could be used in the sanctuary.

God was telling them that this was to be all His, it was the first city and they were not to take for themselves anything out of it. Later they could take things from other cities for themselves.

The Lord also told them that Jericho was never to be rebuilt, and there was a curse for anyone who did rebuild it; their oldest son would die when they started and their youngest would die when they finished. Many years later someone did rebuild and this happened exactly as the Lord had warned.

It seems strange that God, who we know is so very kind and loving, would have all these people killed. But these people knew about God, but still lived only to do evil and cruel things. It was time they had to be removed.

Thought - It is very important for us to learn and remember that God means exactly what He says, even if it doesn't make sense to us.

Monday

Text: Joshua 6:1 "Now Jericho was straitly shut up because of the children of Israel: none went out, and none came in." "By faith the walls of Jericho fell down." Hebrews 11:30

Just imagine the people of Jericho, they

○ knew the Israelites had come through the river by a miracle, but still they felt sure in their hearts that nobody could capture their city. “Look at these big, thick walls, so high that nobody could climb over them. Look at our big strong gates with mighty men guarding them. We don’t have to worry about those silly God worshippers getting in here!” they said.

Everything was ready, all the soldiers in the city had their weapons all shined up and their armor on. They checked and rechecked the gates, it was all solid. Only one family in Jericho knew that those walls meant nothing to the God of Heaven-Rahab believed in God, and knew the city was doomed. She had gathered all her family into her little house on the wall and carefully tied the red rope in the window. Inside they waited quietly to see what would happen.

○ All at once the word was shouted that the Israelites were marching towards them. Quickly they double-check their weapons and gates. Then they peek out from the high walls and watch.

Silently and in perfect order the Israelite army marched toward the city. In front following a band of mighty warriors, was the Ark carried by the Priests. A glow of light was all around it. Then all the rest of the army followed silently.

They march all around the city and then go back to their camp. The people in Jericho do not understand it, it seems silly; but down in their hearts they feel afraid. The next day the same thing happened, and so on for six days.

○ Then on the seventh day after the army had gone around the city once and the people of Jericho expected to see them turn back to the camp, instead they marched around again! Terror came into the hearts of the people watching. Again they check their walls, weapons and gates. All safe; but still that terror eats at their hearts. Again they march around, and again; five, six and finally seven times.

All at once after the seventh time the Israelites stop and lift up their trumpets and blow a blast that pierces through the silence and at the same time the whole army shouts for victory! It took faith to shout the victory when so far, nothing had happened.

But just as they did this, those mighty walls, suddenly break and fall apart falling outward away from the city. Mighty angels that could not be seen, pulled those walls down. There stood the people of Jericho with no walls anymore to protect them. Quickly the army rushed in and soon everyone was destroyed and the city burned. All except Rahab and her family who were taken safely out and brought to the camp of Israel.

Thought – I think the Lord gave the people of Jericho time to think, but they did not repent or stop their wicked rebellion against God. It is interesting that when archeologists dug up the city of Jericho, they could see the walls had fallen outwards away from the center of the city, but if the walls had been knocked down by an attacking army, they would have fallen inward.

Tuesday

Text: Joshua 7:4,5 “So there went up thither of the people about three thousand men: and they fled before the men of Ai. And the men of Ai smote of them about thirty and six men: for they chased them from before the gate even unto Shebarim, and smote them in the going down: wherefore the hearts of the people melted, and became as water.”

The taking of Jericho was such a wonderful miracle from God. He showed Israel that if they would obey Him and trust His word, He would do mighty things for them. But sad to say, something happened in the hearts of the people.

It is so easy for us, if the Lord works for us and answers our prayers in a wonderful way, that we start and feel that we are pretty good people, and much more important than

other people are. When this happens, we are not so close to God anymore, and sometimes we forget we need God to guide us.

This happened in Israel. Joshua sent some men out to see the next city, called Ai and they came back all confident and said, "Oh, we don't even need to send the whole army out to get that city, it is just small, we will send only part of the army.

Now notice that Joshua did not ask the Lord about this, he did not pray for special guidance; he thought he didn't need any help from God for such a small city. So without any blessing from God, off they went.

But soon they were back again, wailing, wounded and terrified and 36 men of them were dead. The men of Ai had fought with them and beaten them and chased them away!

Thought – It does not ever pay to forget that we need God's blessing and His guidance for the 'little' jobs as well as for the big ones.

Wednesday

Text: Joshua 7:1 "But the children of Israel committed a trespass in the accursed thing: for Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took of the accursed thing: and the anger of the LORD was kindled against the children of Israel."

Now there was a problem in Israel, and if Joshua and the others had not got so sure of themselves, that they thought they didn't need to ask God's blessing, He would have told them about it and those 36 men would never have been killed. But when people get too cocky, then God can't talk to them very well, because they aren't listening. What had happened was interesting and there are some great lessons for our day in the story.

A man named Achan had been one of the soldiers in the army as Jericho was destroyed. As the people were obeying God's orders, and destroying and burning all the

city and gathering up the gold and metal things for the sanctuary, he came into a place and saw what he later called 'a wedge of gold, 200 shekels of silver, and a goodly Babylonish garment.'

Awe, he thought, I would like to have that gold and silver, just in case I might need it, and wouldn't I look good in that fancy robe, just like a king!" So he took them and hid them in his clothes and when he got back to the camp, when everybody else was praising God for the wonderful victory, he was digging a hole and hiding these things in the ground floor of his tent.

Now the gold and silver was supposed to go to the sanctuary, so in taking that, he was stealing from God, just like we do today when we don't return God's tithe that is to be used to support ministers who do the Lord's work, and preach his truth in the world, and offerings to support His work. He was robbing God.

The 'Babylonish garment' is very interesting. In the Bible Jesus' righteousness is called 'white raiment' and it is what we must be wearing on our hearts if we ever hope to be saved. Remember the story Jesus told about the man who went to the wedding but he did not wear the wedding garment? He was thrown out. (Matthew 22:11)

Now we learned that the Bible calls the fallen churches Babylon, and so this garment Achan wanted, represents the false righteousness of the churches of the world. It is a false worship system, and it looks very fancy, but it can't save anyone. The Bible tells us that Babylon is to be burned with fire.

So this garment that God said was to be burned, Achan called 'goodly'. Was it goodly? No, it was not! Is the false worship that the churches of Babylon teach, goodly? No, it is not at all goodly; all who follow it will be lost.

The only garment for our hearts that is 'goodly', is the obedient character of Jesus and He will give it to those who surrender all to Him and choose to obey Him in all things.

Thought – There are many people now with us, which think that the way the worldly churches do things, and what they teach about salvation, is ‘goodly’. But God says it is all to be burned up in the last days, and those who trust in it will be burned up too!

Thursday

Text: Joshua 7:10,11 “And the LORD said unto Joshua, Get thee up; wherefore liest thou thus upon thy face? Israel hath sinned, and they have also transgressed my covenant which I commanded them: for they have even taken of the accursed thing, and have also stolen, and dissembled also, and they have put it even among their own stuff.”

Now, Joshua tore his clothes and fell on his face and cried to God to find out what was wrong. He should have remembered to do that first. But God said to him, Get up, why are you on your face? It is time now for you to do something. There is sin in the camp and you must get it out, or I can’t bless you any more!”

God even told them what the sin was, stealing, and he said for the whole camp to get ready and on the next day, He would show them who did it. First He would show the tribe, then the family, then the household and finally the man would be shown.

Now why did God do it this way? Why did He not simply tell Joshua who it was? It shows His great mercy that He did this, He was giving Achan a chance to repent and confess his sin, and then he would not have to die but could be forgiven.

The next day the solemn ceremony began, first the Tribe was shown, the tribe of Judah. Achan knew that was his tribe all right, but still he did not confess. You see, when we choose to disobey God, our idea of His power and greatness gets much less, and he thought nobody would find out. The fact that 36 people had died as a result of his sin, did not seem to worry him, perhaps he

felt it was nothing to do with him but was just an accident.

Now his family was pointed out by God; maybe he felt a bit worried, but still he didn’t repent or confess. Next his very household! But still he refused to speak up. When finally God point out the very man himself; even then he did not open up and repent.

When Joshua ordered him to tell what he had done, he said he had taken a wedge of gold, some silver coins, and a ‘goodly’ garment. It was hid in his tent, he told Joshua. It was still ‘goodly’ to him even though he was going to die for it! The way he told about it was as if he were saying, “It is no big deal! Why make such a fuss over a little thing like that?”

But as we have learned in our other lessons, no sin is ‘little’ with God. Messengers were sent to look in the floor of the tent and sure enough in a little while they were back and the wedge of gold, the silver coins, and the garment were with them.

Thought – If you think when someone points out to you that you have done wrong, that it is just little and unimportant, and why make such a big deal out of it, remember Achan, and pray that God will open your eyes so you can see there is no such thing as a ‘little sin’.

Friday

Text: Joshua 7:5 “And Joshua said, Why hast thou troubled us? the LORD shall trouble thee this day. And all Israel stoned him with stones, and burned them with fire, after they had stoned them with stones.”

It seems like a terrible punishment to us maybe, but that is because we have gotten used to sin and sometimes we no longer see how wicked it really is. Out of all the millions of Israel that day, only one man was so selfish as to steal what belonged to the Lord.

The fact he did that, when God had done so great a miracle for them, made it even worse. Right at the time that God had

showed His mighty power, one man thought he could rob God and God would not find out!

Achan's deadly sin was covetousness, he broke the tenth commandment, and then he broke others as he stole and lied and was responsible for people getting killed. Then he made it worse by not repenting or confessing until he had no choice at all.

Coveting means to want something that is not yours and something you have no right

to have. It seems to be the sin that hardly anybody ever admits.

People will confess and say, "Oh, I was a thief", or "I have a problem with swearing or lying", but very few people will tell you that they have a problem with coveting. And yet it is probably the most common sin of all.

Thought – Always remember too, that something that God says is cursed, is not 'Goodly'! Also remember that our sins do affect other people. = ^ .. ^ =

Weekly Bible Lesson #7: "A TRICKY DEAL"

MEMORY VERSE: "Deliver my soul, O LORD, from lying lips, and from a deceitful tongue." Psalms 120:2

Sunday

Text: Joshua 8:1 "And the LORD said unto Joshua, Fear not, neither be thou dismayed: take all the people of war with thee, and arise, go up to Ai: see, I have given into thy hand the king of Ai, and his people, and his city, and his land."

Now that the sin was put out of the camp and Joshua and the people were again taking their directions from God, the Lord told them that Ai would be given to them and they were to destroy it all, but this time they could keep the animals and treasures for themselves.

Joshua made a very clever plan. He divided his army into sections and most of them he sent to hide in different places away from the city of Ai. Then he took a small group and came up where they king of Ai saw him coming.

The king of course thought he could chase them away as he did before-but this time God was with His people. Out came the Ai army after Joshua and his small band and they pretended to run away as before. Further and further from the city the enemy chased after the Israelites running in front of them.

All at once a cry from the enemy soldiers

was heard. Someone had looked behind and saw their city was on fire. One of the groups Joshua had hidden had attacked the city while the army was chasing Joshua's group.

Very quickly the other hidden groups attacked the Ai army and very soon it was destroyed. The king was buried under a huge pile of rocks that made a monument in the entrance of the city. This was to remind people in future years of the power of God and what He can do for His people when they obey His commandments.

Thought - It does make a difference whether we obey the Lord or not.

Monday

Text: Joshua 8:30,31 "Then Joshua built an altar unto the LORD God of Israel in mount Ebal, As Moses the servant of the LORD commanded the children of Israel, as it is written in the book of the law of Moses, an altar of whole stones, over which no man hath lift up any iron: and they offered thereon burnt offerings unto the LORD, and sacrificed peace offerings."

Now the people were ready to go right on into the land of Canaan, capturing cities and driving out the people of that land. But first

God ordered them to have a very special ceremony, one that they were never to forget.

All of the people, men and women, boys and girls, now marched a long ways to two mountains in the land of Canaan. God was with them as they did this and their enemies were not at all able to bother them or attack them.

When they got to Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim, they were divided into 2 parts by tribes. Half the tribes were sent to Mount Ebal and half to Mount Gerizim. Joshua followed the directions that Moses had given him from God just before he died.

This place was where that Abraham made his first altar to Jehovah in the land of Canaan. Here both Abraham and Jacob had pitched their tents. Here Jacob bought the field where the tribes buried the body of Joseph also where he dug a well. It was a beautiful spot with a lovely valley and green fields dotted with olive groves, and flowers.

Ebal and Gerizim, upon opposite sides of this valley, make a natural pulpit, every word spoken on one side can be heard on the other and there was lots of room between for the people.

Joshua built an altar to God on Mount Ebal and offered sacrifices. Then they made a huge monument of plastered stones and they wrote all the Law of God upon them. They wrote the Ten Commandments and all the other laws that Moses had written for them as God had given them to him for the people.

Thought – The altar of sacrifice was put on Mount Ebal, to show that if it wasn't for the promised Messiah that was to give His life for sin, because they had broken those laws, they would all die.

Tuesday

Text: Joshua 8:33-35 “And all Israel, and their elders, and officers, and their judges, stood on this side the ark and on that side before the priests the Levites,

which bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD, as well the stranger, as he that was born among them; half of them over against mount Gerizim, and half of them over against mount Ebal; as Moses the servant of the LORD had commanded before, that they should bless the people of Israel. And afterward he read all the words of the law, the blessings and cursings, according to all that is written in the book of the law. There was not a word of all that Moses commanded, which Joshua read not before all the congregation of Israel, with the women, and the little ones, and the strangers that were conversant among them.”

There all of Israel stood, half the tribes on Mount Ebal and half on Mount Gerizim. In the valley between was the Ark of the Covenant carried by the Priests. Joshua stood near the Ark. A trumpet was sounded and everyone was quiet. Then Joshua read the Blessings that would come to those who obey God's laws. All the tribes on Mount Gerizim shouted “AMEN!”

Then he read the curses that would come if they did not obey God's laws and all the tribes on Mount Gerizim shouted “AMEN!”

Joshua not only wrote the laws on the great monument where all could read them, but he read every word of them to the people as they listened on either side. It was God's will that every seven years all the people should come together in some place that He would choose, and there the Law would be read to the people.

You can read the Blessings and the Curses for yourself in Deuteronomy 28. Remember that they are for us too. God is the same yesterday, now and forever and He does not change His laws. He does not break His promises either. Those who keep all His commandments through the power of Jesus and the Holy Spirit living in their hearts, will have blessings today.

Thought – Even the children were all

there to hear the words of the Law of God. It is important that we all spend time learning to understand what God wants us to do. Obedience is the way to happiness, now and forever.

Wednesday

Text: Joshua 9:3-6 “And when the inhabitants of Gibeon heard what Joshua had done unto Jericho and to Ai, They did work wilily, and went and made as if they had been ambassadors, and took old sacks upon their asses, and wine bottles, old, and rent, and bound up; And old shoes and clouted upon their feet, and old garments upon them; and all the bread of their provision was dry and mouldy. And they went to Joshua unto the camp at Gilgal, and said unto him, and to the men of Israel, We be come from a far country: now therefore make ye a league with us.”

After the special ceremony was over, Israel went back to their camp at Gilgal. Many of the kings of the nations in Canaan thought they had a good idea about how to beat the Israelites and save their lands. They made an agreement together to fight as one big army. ‘That will beat those Israelites’, they thought.

But one of the nations, the Gibeonites, weren’t so sure. They were a bit like Rahab had been. They realized that if the God of heaven was fighting for the Israelites, it wouldn’t matter how many people joined together, they would still lose!

They decided that if they were going to make an agreement, they wanted to make it with Israel, not the Canaanites. Now, God had told the people of Israel that they were to make no deals with the nations of Canaan. God did not want those nations to remain there and He did not want Israel mixing with them and learning their ways.

So these leaders of Gibeon decided to pull a sneaky trick. They took some moldy bread

and some old wine-skins and put on old raggy clothes and worn out shoes. They put some old sacks on some tired old donkeys and like this they marched one day into the camp of Israel and asked to see Joshua.

Thought – They thought they were real smart to tell lies, but their lies were found out.

Thursday

Text: Joshua 9:8,9 “And they said unto Joshua, We are thy servants. And Joshua said unto them, Who are ye? and from whence come ye? And they said unto him, From a very far country thy servants are come because of the name of the LORD thy God: for we have heard the fame of him, and all that he did in Egypt.”

As soon as these ambassadors said they wanted to make a deal with Joshua, he said, “Maybe you live right here near us, and we are not to make deals with the people here.”

But the men said, “Look at us, how ragged and old our things are and our shoes all worn out. Look at our wineskins that were new when we left home, and our bread that was fresh baked the day we left. We come from a far away land, not near here at all.”

Now Joshua made a mistake again, the same one he made at Ai. He forgot to ask God about these men and find out from Him what he was to do about them. If he would have asked God, He would have showed him the men were lying. God will show us many things if we remember to ask Him. But Joshua forgot.

So when he saw all the old things and heard the lying story, he believed it. I think he was also fooled by the flattering words these sneaky men told him about how great Israel was.

Anyway they made dinner for these men and all the leaders got together and made a deal, and swore to God, that they would not kill these people but let them live and have their lands.

Three days later they found out the truth as they marched on and found the Gibeonite's lands right in the middle of Canaan! Now what would Israel and Joshua do about these tricky people? The people of Israel were angry with their leaders for making this deal but the leaders said they had to keep their word.

He called them before him and asked, "Why did you lie to us?" They said they did it because they were afraid, and they knew Israel would destroy all the nations in Canaan.

Now Joshua told them that they would be allowed to live, but because they had said they were Israel's servants and they had dressed in old clothes to fool him, from now on they would always be servants to Israel and cut wood and carry water and do hard work. They would always be poor but they would be allowed to live and keep their four cities.

Thought – God expects us to keep our promises even if we were tricked into making them. The only time we break a promise, is if we find out that it would be breaking God's Law to keep it.

Friday

Text: Joshua 9:27 "And Joshua made them that day hewers of wood and drawers of water for the congregation, and for the altar of the LORD, even unto this day, in the place which he should choose."

Now if the men would have been honest and came and said they wanted to stop worshipping their heathen gods and become worshippers of the true God of heaven, they would have been spared and be allowed to be part of Israel, and would not have ended up a cursed people. Lying is never smart.

Now when the kings of Canaan heard about how Gibeon was now working for Israel, they were afraid and angry. Five kings of the Amorites got together and marched out to attack and destroy the Gibeonites.

Quickly the Gibeonites sent the message to Joshua to come and rescue them as they had promised they would. This time Joshua asked God about it and God said go ahead, they will not stand against thee.

By marching hard and fast Joshua and his army got to Gibeon just as the five kings had surrounded it and were ready to attack it. The armies of the five kings turned and ran away with Israel chasing them.

Up one side of a mountain they went and down the other side trying to escape. When they got to the other side of the mountain, God sent a terrible hailstorm and great chunks of ice fell from the sky and killed more than the Israelites killed with their weapons.

Now Joshua looked up and saw that the day would end before he could destroy this entire enemy and they would get away into the hills and be a bother to Israel. So then he did an amazing thing. He looked up at the sun and the moon and told them to stay where they were!

Now we all know that is impossible, don't we? But God did it! Nothing is impossible with God! This became the longest day ever on earth. For a whole day the sun stood still!

The five kings hid in a cave, but they were captured and slain and soon all this great army was wiped out and Israel went back to Gilgal again.

Thought – God is a God of mercy, even though these Gibeonites had cheated and lied, they were sorry and repented and God forgave them and worked mighty miracles for Israel as they defended them. = ^ .. ^ =

Weekly Bible Lesson #8: "LAND OF GIANTS"

MEMORY VERSE: "Some trust in chariots, and some in horses: but we will remember the name of the LORD our God." Psalms 20:7

Sunday

Text: Joshua 11:18, 23 "Joshua made war a long time with all those kings. 23 So Joshua took the whole land, according to all that the LORD said unto Moses; and Joshua gave it for an inheritance unto Israel according to their divisions by their tribes. And the land rested from war."

After Israel had destroyed the five kings that came to attack the people of Gibeon, the rest of the kings in Canaan were really afraid and got together in one army to try and defeat Joshua and his army.

The leader of this group was Jabin, king of Hazor. "And they went out, they and all their hosts with them." This army was much larger than any that the Israelites had fought before in Canaan—"much people, even as the sand that is upon the seashore in multitude, with horses and chariots very many. And when all these kings were met together, they came and pitched together at the waters of Merom, to fight against Israel." Again God told Joshua: "Be not afraid because of them: for tomorrow about this time will I deliver them up all slain before Israel."

Near Lake Merom Joshua attacked the camp of the allies and soon they were running away. "The Lord delivered them into the hand of Israel, who smote them, and chased them . . . until they left them none remaining." The chariots and horses that had been the pride and boast of the Canaanites were not to be used by Israel. God told Joshua to burn the chariots and make the horses lame, so they could be used for work, but not for battle. Israel was not to put their trust in chariots or horses, but "in the name of the Lord their God."

The Lord was with the hosts of Israel and city after city and land after land was cap-

tured until all the middle part of Canaan was conquered. There were still lands all around that God wanted Israel to capture and have for their own, but Joshua was now an old man and there was another important job to do.

The different tribes were to be given their own lands and cities to live in. Before Moses died he had made a map that showed where each tribe was to have their lands.

Thought - It is far more important to trust in God's than to have help from people.

Monday

Text: Joshua 14:10-12 "And now, behold, the LORD hath kept me alive, as he said, these forty and five years, even since the LORD spake this word unto Moses, while the children of Israel wandered in the wilderness: and now, lo, I am this day fourscore and five years old. As yet I am as strong this day as I was in the day that Moses sent me: as my strength was then, even so is my strength now, for war, both to go out, and to come in. Now therefore give me this mountain, whereof the LORD spake in that day; for thou heardest in that day how the Anakims were there, and that the cities were great and fenced: if so be the LORD will be with me, then I shall be able to drive them out, as the LORD said."

You remember that there were two faithful spies way back when the 12 spies were sent to see the land? They were Joshua and Caleb. We have been hearing lots about Joshua, but what about dear old Caleb?

When Israel had to go back into the wilderness for forty years, Caleb had remained faithful. He did not grumble that he had to

suffer along with the guilty; he just kept on serving the Lord. Now he comes to Joshua, who was in the same tribe as himself, the tribe of Judah, and he asks to be given for his tribe the part of the land where the giants still lived that had caused the other spies to feel like 'grasshoppers'!

Imagine the faith of this man, now 85 years old! He wanted to honor God by showing once and for all that Israel need not have been afraid, and they could have had the land forty years before! He was going to show them that with God, even an old man could whip the giants and destroy them all!

He also honored God by telling how the Lord had kept him and he was just as strong then at 85 and he was at 45, when he brought back the faithful report along with Joshua.

Joshua knew he could safely give this land to Caleb, and he would be sure to conquer and destroy the wicked giants that lived there; he gladly agreed to give him that land. This was a special part of Canaan that had been for many years the home of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and here, in the cave of Machpelah, they were buried.

All through the hardships of his long time in the wilderness, Caleb kept his hope on the mountain he would one day have for his own, because God had promised it to him.

So you see, the ones who did not believe, never got to eat of the fruit of the land; but those who believed and obeyed, did. So they each got according to their faith. The ten believed they couldn't, and they didn't; the two believed with God they could, and they did!

Thought – We need to keep our hopes on the wonderful new earth that Jesus has promised will one day be ours.

Tuesday

Text: Joshua 17:14-15 “**And the children of Joseph spake unto Joshua, saying, Why hast thou given me but one lot**

and one portion to inherit, seeing I am a great people, forasmuch as the LORD hath blessed me hitherto? And Joshua answered them, If thou be a great people, then get thee up to the wood country, and cut down for thyself there in the land of the Perizzites and of the giants, if mount Ephraim be too narrow for thee.”

Now came a very different kind of request from Ephraim, who were part of the children of Joseph. They came to Joshua demanding that because they were bigger and more important than the other tribes, they should have two parts of the land and not just one part.

But Joshua had a good answer for them; his answer was, “If thou be a great people, then get thee up to the wood country, and cut down for thyself there in the land of the Perizzites and of the giants, if Mount Ephraim be too narrow for thee.”

Their reply showed the real cause of complaint. They didn't have faith and courage to drive out the Canaanites. “The hill is not enough for us,” they said; “and all the Canaanites that dwell in the land of the valley have chariots of iron.”

The power of the God of Israel had been pledged to His people, and had the children of Ephraim possessed the courage and faith of Caleb, no enemy could have stood before them. They wanted to have things easy and just handed to them with no effort. But Joshua said, “Thou art a great people, and hast great power, thou shalt drive out the Canaanites, though they have iron chariots, and though they be strong.” Thus their own arguments were turned against them. Being a great people, as they claimed, they were fully able to make their own way, as did their brethren. With the help of God they need not fear the chariots of iron.

See the difference, Caleb had faith and he was not afraid of giants, even at 85 years old. The younger people of Ephraim were afraid of iron chariots, because they did not

put their faith in God.

Thought – What man cannot believe, God cannot do for them.

Wednesday

Text: Joshua 18:1 “And the whole congregation of the children of Israel assembled together at Shiloh, and set up the tabernacle of the congregation there. And the land was subdued before them.”

Up until now in our story, Gilgal had been the headquarters of Israel, this was where the tabernacle tent was and where the Ark of God was. Now as the people prepared to go and settle in their own lands given to them, they moved the tabernacle to the place chosen for it.

The place was called Shiloh, in the area of Ephraim. Maybe God chose to put the tabernacle in Ephraim to help those people have more faith? It was also near the center of Israel and so easy for all tribes to come to. They had made sure all the enemies were driven out of that area, so people coming there to worship God, did not have to be afraid of being attacked.

“And the whole congregation of the children of Israel assembled together at Shiloh, and set up the tabernacle of the congregation there.” The tribes that were still encamped when the tabernacle was removed from Gilgal followed it, and camped near Shiloh. Here these tribes stayed until they went to their lands.

The ark remained at Shiloh for three hundred years, until, because of the sins of Eli’s house, it fell into the hands of the Philistines, and Shiloh was ruined. The ark was never came back to the tabernacle here, the sanctuary service was finally moved to the temple at Jerusalem, and Shiloh fell into unimportance. There are only ruins to mark the spot where it once stood.

Thought – God warns that if His people refuse to obey Him, they shall be like Shiloh, forgotten and destroyed.

Thursday

Text: Joshua 19:49,50 “When they had made an end of dividing the land for inheritance by their coasts, the children of Israel gave an inheritance to Joshua the son of Nun among them: According to the word of the LORD they gave him the city which he asked, even Timnathserah in mount Ephraim: and he built the city, and dwelt therein.”

Now, after all the other tribes had been given their lands, Joshua finally asked for something for himself. But this unselfish man did not ask for much, only one city, and he had to build it up himself. And when they gave it to him it was called **Timnathserah**, which means ‘what remains’ or ‘what was left over’.

So after everybody else had their portions, then Joshua humbly asked for what was left, and was happy with that.

Now there was one tribe that did not receive any section of land to be their own. This was the tribe of Levi. God had chosen them to be the priests and teachers of the law for Israel. God was to be their inheritance.

But in each of the lands of the different tribes, some cities with grazing land around them were given to the Levites. This was so they would be found in each part of the land, and could set up schools and teach the people.

Now six of the cities that were given to the Levites were to be something very special to Israel. Three on each side of the Jordan river were chosen and they were called ‘cities of refuge’.

Thought –Today we are to be ‘a royal Priesthood’; God is our inheritance!

Friday

Text: Joshua 20:2-4 “Speak to the children of Israel, saying, Appoint out for

you cities of refuge, whereof I spake unto you by the hand of Moses: That the slayer that killeth any person unawares and unwittingly may flee thither: and they shall be your refuge from the avenger of blood. And when he that doth flee unto one of those cities shall stand at the entering of the gate of the city, and shall declare his cause in the ears of the elders of that city, they shall take him into the city unto them, and give him a place, that he may dwell among them."

These 'Cities of Refuge' represented what Jesus is to the sinner. When someone accidentally killed a person, he had to run very fast to one of the cities of refuge. If he did not go right away, the relatives of the dead person could catch him and kill him.

When he got to the city of refuge, he was taken in and no one could harm him while he was there. He was also given a trial to see if it was really an accident that he killed someone. If it wasn't, then he was not allowed to stay, but would be executed. If it was an accident, he had to stay in the city until the death of the High Priest, then he could be free.

This is like the sinner and Jesus. We must run quickly to Jesus who is our City of refuge. It is the same merciful Saviour, who set

up those cities of refuge, Who has by the shedding of His own blood made a refuge for us, where we may flee for safety from the second death. No power can take out of His hands the souls that go to Jesus for pardon.

He who fled to the city of refuge had to hurry. Family and job were left behind. There was no time to say goodbye to loved ones. His life was at stake, and all that mattered was to reach the place of safety. Weariness was forgotten, difficulties were unheeded. He dared not for one moment slow down until he was within the wall of the city.

We too must not allow anything to keep us from going to Jesus and giving our hearts over to Him and asking Him to forgive all our sins. Satan, is on the track of every transgressor of God's holy law, if they don't run to Jesus they will get caught by the destroyer.

The prisoner, who at any time went outside the city of refuge, could be killed by the avenger of blood. Even so with us, it is not enough for the sinner to believe in Christ for the pardon of sin; he must, by faith and obedience, abide in Him. We are to live each day trusting and obeying Jesus. If we leave Him and wander out into the world, we will be in great danger.

Thought – No power can take us out of the hands of Jesus our Saviour- if we choose to stay there. = ^ .. ^ =

Weekly Bible Lesson #9: "JOSHUA'S LAST WORDS"**MEMORY VERSE: "...Choose you this day whom ye will serve; ... but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD." Joshua 24:15****Sunday**

Text: Joshua 22:9-11 "And the children of Reuben and the children of Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh returned, and departed from the children of Israel out of Shiloh, which is in the land of Canaan, to go unto the country of Gilead, to the land of their possession, whereof they were possessed, according to the word of the LORD by the hand of Moses. And when they came unto the borders of Jordan, that are in the land of Canaan, the children of Reuben and the children of Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh built there an altar by Jordan, a great altar to see to. And the children of Israel heard say, Behold, the children of Reuben and the children of Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh have built an altar over against the land of Canaan, in the borders of Jordan, at the passage of the children of Israel."

After Israel had received their land, the men of the tribes of Gad and Reuben and half of Manasseh were given permission to return to their land that had been given them on the other side of the Jordan River. Faithfully these men had left their wives and children and continued to travel and fight with the rest of Israel until they too should have their lands.

Now when these men went to their lands they built a large altar on the other side of the river. When the rest of Israel heard about it, many were all ready to go and attack their brothers and destroy them, because they said that God commanded not to build other altars, only where the sanctuary is, was there to be sacrifices offered.

Some of the people were more wise though, and they decided to send some of the leaders and princes of the tribes and ask the tribes on the other side of the river why they had done this and give them a chance to explain before any action was taken.

So they did this, and the tribes explained they had only done this to have something to show to their children that they were also a part of Israel and worshippers of the True God of Heaven. They said they would not offer any sacrifices there but come over to worship on the special times at the Sanctuary in Shiloh.

"And the children of Reuben and the children of Gad called the altar Ed: for it shall be a witness between us that the LORD is God." Joshua 22:34

So the people were happy about this and very glad that they had not attacked their brothers by mistake. There were two mistakes here that we need to learn about; first the tribes over the river should have told what they were planning to do first, before they did it. This would prevent any question of evil.

The second mistake was in those who wanted to rush right out and attack without talking to their brethren first to find out the truth. It is so easy for us to see someone do something we think is wrong and right away turn against them. We need to go and kindly ask the person about it and hear what he has to say, before we stop being their friend.

Thought - This is what Jesus said; if your friend or brother does something bad to you, you need to talk to them about it, maybe they did not mean it like you think, or maybe they did not realize it hurt you.

Monday

Text: Joshua 23:4-7 “Behold, I have divided unto you by lot these nations that remain, to be an inheritance for your tribes, from Jordan, with all the nations that I have cut off, even unto the great sea westward. And the LORD your God, he shall expel them from before you, and drive them from out of your sight; and ye shall possess their land, as the LORD your God hath promised unto you. 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 there from 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.”

Israel had been helped by the Lord in a mighty way to drive out and destroy the wicked nations of Canaan as God had commanded until they had enough land to settle into. Sadly, then they did not continue to drive them out until they had all the land God told them to take.

Each tribe had been ordered to fight and defeat the heathen still in their areas, and God had promised to give them total victory. God also warned them that if they did not obey Him and drive out ALL the heathen, that they would be a snare to the children of Israel, to tempt them to wrong. God warned them not to join or copy any of the ways of the heathen. They were not to join in with their holidays or even learn about them.

Sadly Israel settled down to enjoy what they had and did not go on to do the rest of the work God had given them to do. If they would have driven them all out, there would have been no wicked Philistines and others to come and make slaves of the Israelites as we know happened later on.

We easily can make the same mistake today. When a person first learns about Jesus and decides to give their hearts to Him, they need to give all their hearts. And right away get busy and ‘drive out’ with the help of Jesus, all the ‘heathen’ and worldly things from their lives and their homes.

If we don’t get rid of the fiction books, games, cartoons and movies, and the wrong kinds of music, later these things are a snare to us, and we gradually settle down and think, “Oh these things aren’t so bad. I don’t need to be so fussy, I gave my heart to Jesus, but He doesn’t expect me to give up all my fun.”

As long as any worldly habits and entertainments are in our lives, we have not given ALL our hearts to Jesus.

Thought – Jesus will not live in a corner of our hearts, or even in ‘most’ of our hearts. To have His power and protection and guidance, we must give Him ALL our heart!

Tuesday

Text: Joshua 23:1,2 “And it came to pass a long time after that the LORD had given rest unto Israel from all their enemies round about, that Joshua waxed old and stricken in age. And Joshua called for all Israel, and for their elders, and for their heads, and for their judges, and for their officers, and said unto them, I am old and stricken in age.”

You remember that Caleb and Joshua were the oldest men in Israel now. After many years, Joshua knew he was soon going to die. He was very old and also very worried. He saw that the children of Israel had not obeyed God to drive out the rest of the heathen from their lands. Already he saw signs that the heathen practices were affecting Israel.

You know that if we do not stay away from evil things, driving them out of our lives and refusing to have anything to do with them, not choosing for our friends anyone who does

them, we start to think that these things are not so bad after all. Bit by bit our eyes get blinded until we say that bad things are OK and soon we say that good things are bad.

Like I said, if we don't follow Jesus ALL the way and choose to obey Him in ALL things, He does not live in our hearts. We may go to church and call ourselves Christians, but Jesus is not in total charge of our lives. This leaves Satan able to come close to us and harm us and tempt us and trick us. Sooner or later one of two things has to happen; either we repent and turn to Jesus and give Him ALL our heart so he can move in and throw all the sin out, or we will gradually go closer to Satan and the worldly things, until we are not all that interested in Jesus anymore and we really belong fully to Satan.

Many people today are like this, and yet they often still go to church! But when somebody points out that they should not play certain games, or watch or read fiction and listen to Rock music, they get angry and refuse to listen to the warning. It will be very sad for these people in the judgment when Jesus says, "Go away from Me, I don't know you. You have chosen the world and must perish with the world."

Thought – How easy it would have been for Israel to obey God and get rid of the wicked nations right away! How easy it is for us to get rid of all the wrong things in our lives and give Jesus ALL our hearts. But later on, if we wait, like Israel of old, these things destroy us.

Wednesday

Text: Joshua 23:12-14 "Else if ye do in any wise go back, and cleave unto the remnant of these nations, even these that remain among you, and shall make marriages with them, and go in unto them, and they to you: Know for a certainty that the LORD your God will no more drive out any of these nations from before you; but they shall be

snakes and traps unto you, and scourges in your sides, and thorns in your eyes, until ye perish from off this good land which the LORD your God hath given you. And, behold, this day I am going the way of all the earth: and ye know in all your hearts and in all your souls, that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the LORD your God spake concerning you; all are come to pass unto you, and not one thing hath failed thereof."

Joshua did just like Moses had done just before he died. He called the people together and he reminded them of all their history. He told them about how God have fought for them and showed them how God had kept every one of His promises to them.

Then he urged them to keep their promises to God. To drive out the heathen, to have nothing to do with their idols or their holiday feasts. To refuse to even learn about their false religions.

And just as Moses did, he told them of the promised blessings to the obedient and he warned them that if they failed to obey and follow the Lord, the curses would come to them until they were destroyed.

Joshua knew that Satan fools many with the idea that God's love for His people is so great that He will excuse their sins. He tells them that God does not really mean it when He says He will punish and destroy those that cling to sin. Satan says that God's love is so great He would never destroy those He loves.

But always God has shown mankind that sin's sure result is misery and death. Sins that are not given up and gotten out of our lives by the power of Jesus' blood and the Holy Spirit living inside us are not forgiven and can't be forgiven. God cannot lay aside His law, if He did that, the whole creation would soon be destroyed by sin.

People think God is too loving to punish sin and destroy those who refuse at last to give it up, But God is too loving not to up-

hold the Law which keeps the whole universe safe. A Law with no penalty for breaking it is worthless.

Think about it this way, if there was a large family of children and the bigger ones would hurt the little ones. What would you think of the parents who just let this happen and said, "Oh, I love my children so much, I can't punish any of them!" That would not be real love, would it? Real love and justice have to live together. What would happen to us if God allowed Satan to do whatever he wanted to?

Thought – God has given for us everything we need to be free from sin and ready to live in Heaven, but one thing we have to do, we have to choose to Trust and Obey.

Thursday

Text: Joshua 24:14-16 "Now therefore fear the LORD, and serve him in sincerity and in truth: and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt; and serve ye the LORD. And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD. And the people answered and said, God forbid that we should forsake the LORD, to serve other gods."

Joshua had asked the priests to bring the Ark of God to the place where he was giving his final sermon and guidance to the people. The Ark being there made the people realize how important and solemn this meeting was.

Now after the people had said that they would serve the Lord, Joshua told them something very important.

"Ye cannot serve the Lord," said Joshua: "for He is a holy God; . . . He will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins."

He told them that they could not serve the Lord even if they wanted to! They needed to repent of their sins and trust in the coming Messiah for forgiveness and power to live a life obeying God's Laws. They had broken His law, it condemned them as transgressors, and it gave no way of escape. They must not rely upon their own efforts for salvation, they must trust wholly in the promised Saviour, if they would be accepted of God.

Joshua tried to get them to see that they could not just 'say so' and it would magically 'be so' - that they would follow God, because without the Power of God in their hearts by faith in the coming Saviour, they could not obey God.

With deep earnestness the people said again: "Nay; but we will serve the Lord." and once more replied: "The Lord our God will we serve, and His voice will we obey."

Joshua knew that most of them were making the same mistake their fathers made at Mount Sinai, thinking that they were 'basically good people' and could keep the Law of God by themselves. He set up a huge rock as a pillar to remind them of their promise and let them go to their homes. There was no more he could do. His work for Israel was now finished; he had been faithful to the end.

Thought – Always remember, it is only by Jesus living in our hearts that we can do right, there is no good in any of us, except in Jesus.

Friday

Text: Joshua 24:29 "And it came to pass after these things, that Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died, being an hundred and ten years old. And they buried him in the border of his inheritance in Timnathserah, which is in mount Ephraim, on the north side of the hill of Gaash. And Israel served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that overlived Joshua, and which had known all the works of the LORD, that he had done for Israel."

Time passed and one by one the elders who had seen the mighty works of God died and were laid to rest. The people of Israel while they were strong could have driven out and destroyed the Canaanites out of the land, but they did not do it.

They liked their ease and their pleasure. It was too much work to get busy and obey the Lord and get the job finished that he had asked them to do. So instead they made these people pay them money, a tax for being able to live in the land. In this way they used disobedience to God as a way of making money for themselves.

But it was cursed money. Just as God had warned and Joshua and Moses had reminded them, these heathen people were a danger and a snare to them. It was like keeping a bunch of poisonous serpents around them; sooner or later, someone would be bitten.

As the Elders died, the strong voices warning the people against heathen worship stopped one by one. The younger generations

had made deals with the heathen and as they associated with them bit by bit the idol worship and heathen worship did not seem so bad after all.

The pagan holidays were exciting and interesting times, with pageants and feasts, special music and dancing, plays and celebrations. As the Israelites saw these things, after a while they began to join in, just to be friendly of course.

Then they began to bring some of the false ways into their own worship, after all, they thought, 'we can have a feast like that and say it is for our God'. But as they did this little by little, more and more the protection of God was removed, and the heathen got stronger, and Israel got weaker. It happened so slowly that few noticed the change.

Thought – Boys and girls, if you want to have the real power of Jesus in your life, get busy today and get all the 'heathen idols' out of your life and out of your house too! Don't choose for your close friends people who do not know and love Jesus with all their hearts. = ^ .. ^ =

Weekly Bible Lesson #10: "THE CANAANITES RETURN"

MEMORY VERSE: "For if ye shall diligently keep all these commandments which I command you, to do them, to love the LORD your God, to walk in all his ways, and to cleave unto him; Then will the LORD drive out all these nations from before you, and ye shall possess greater nations and mightier than yourselves." Deuteronomy 11:22,23

Sunday

Text: Judges 1:28 "And it came to pass, when Israel was strong, that they put the Canaanites to tribute, and did not utterly drive them out."

As we learned last week, Israel was commanded by God to continue to drive out the wicked idol worshippers from the lands that the Lord had told them they were to have. God told them that if they did not do this completely, they would soon start copying the ways of these idol worshippers and they would become weak and weaker until they

were destroyed from off the land.

God also promised them total victory and all the help they needed. He was going to do the work if they were willing to believe Him and go out to obey Him and do it. If only they would have totally obeyed God, they would have had a huge land area and been completely free from the influence of idol worship.

But God will not force anyone to obey Him. He tells us what He wants us to do, He gives us all kinds of promises that He will give us power to do it, He warns us what will happen if we don't obey Him, and then He

leaves us to make our choice.

○ He did that with Israel back then and He is the same today. BUT we need to remember that He means what He says! If we do not obey, He is not going to work some kind of magic so the bad things won't happen to us.

Some of the tribes of Israel did a lot of driving out of enemies, others did some, and some tribes hardly bothered to even try. Judah was the tribe that drove out the most, but even they did not finish the job. It is interesting that Judah lasted longer than the other tribes.

Notice God had told them NOT to make any deals with the people of that land. But Israel directly disobeyed God by letting the Canaanites remain in their lands and pay 'tribute' a kind of tax, to Israel. Thus they found a way to make money by disobeying God! No doubt they excused their wickedness by giving some of the money to the Lord. Oh how often that happens today!

○ **Thought** - Many people seem willing to claim to obey God, many like Israel don't mind saying, "We will obey the Lord"; but oh so few choose to really obey Him and believe Him ALL the way. Only the last group will ever see heaven!

Monday

Text: Judges 2:1-3 "And an angel of the LORD came up from Gilgal to Bochim, and said, I made you to go up out of Egypt, and have brought you unto the land which I swear unto your fathers; and I said, I will never break my covenant with you. And ye shall make no league with the inhabitants of this land; ye shall throw down their altars: but ye have not obeyed my voice: why have ye done this? Wherefore I also said, I will not drive them out from before you; but they shall be as thorns in your sides, and their gods shall be a snare unto you."

○ Finally God drew the line. Israel was all

settled down, they were rich from all the money coming in from their disobeying God's orders. No one was even bothering to get rid of the heathen in their areas. Besides, how could they drive out people who they had already made a deal with not to drive them out?

Oh how sad it is when we decided to disobey God! We end up getting ourselves so tangled up with the world that it is almost impossible for us to turn around and repent and follow God's orders.

One day an angel appeared and he had a message that made Israel weep. Too bad they didn't weep and repent sooner, but now it was too late. God took away the promise that He would drive out the people of the land. He told them that these people would now be there always to be a trouble to them and a snare. No longer would Israel be stronger than the heathen!

The people wept and were sorry, but they had made their own free choice. God was just letting them have what they had chosen instead of obeying Him and having the blessing He had wanted so much to give them.

Thought - Then it says they made sacrifices to the Lord. Do you think God was pleased with sacrifices from people who refused to obey Him?

Tuesday

Text: Judges 2:12-14 "And they forsook the LORD God of their fathers, which brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods, of the gods of the people that were round about them, and bowed themselves unto them, and provoked the LORD to anger. And they forsook the LORD, and served Baal and Ashtaroth. And the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel, and he delivered them into the hands of spoilers that spoiled them, and he sold them into the hands of their enemies round about, so that they could not any longer stand before their enemies."

Soon the very words of God came true. He had told them that they would turn around and do the same wicked things the people of the land were doing. Israel had said they would not. They had said they would serve the Lord. But even while they were saying that, they were disobeying God by not driving out the heathen and making deals with them.

Bit by bit the Israelites got caught up in the fun and holidays of the idol worshippers. First they began to practice some of the customs in their own worship, thinking they could add things to make their religion even better. They thought they could take the heathen holidays and the heathen music and say it was for God, and put other words to it and it was OK.

More and more they moved away from true godliness and closer to the heathen. Remember that what God has not commanded is from Satan, and the heathen worship has a hypnotic power to put the mind to sleep and make people feel that it is just fine to disobey God. Soon they were doing things they would have been shocked at earlier.

Now the Canaanites got stronger and Israel got weaker. How God wanted to bless them and protect them! But He could not, because they were sinning before His face! Now they found the heathen to be a real problem. Soon the day came when the Canaanites stopped paying tribute and forced the Israelites to pay to them!

Times were hard then, gone were the happy days of freedom in the Lord. Soon they found they were working hard and all the food and nice things they should have for themselves were going to the heathen.

Thought – So it is in our churches today, worldly practices and music that comes from heathen devil worship has been brought into many of our churches. The hypnotic power of Satan puts the people's minds to sleep and they feel all safe and happy when they are really worshipping Satan and think-

ing they are still the special people of the Lord!!

Wednesday

Text: Judges: 2:18-19 “**And when the LORD raised them up judges, then the LORD was with the judge, and delivered them out of the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge: for it repented the LORD because of their groanings by reason of them that oppressed them and vexed them. And it came to pass, when the judge was dead, that they returned, and corrupted themselves more than their fathers, in following other gods to serve them, and to bow down unto them; they ceased not from their own doings, nor from their stubborn way.”**

It is a sad fact that often what we will not learn by God's blessings, we have to learn by trouble and pain. So to try and save Israel from being entirely destroyed, God allowed their enemies to rule over them and they suffered greatly. When they would suffer, then they would remember God and pray to Him, and repent and He would hear them and send someone to help them. They would smarten up for a while but as soon as the Judge God had sent to help them was dead they went right back to their evil ways!

Notice the list of enemies that came to oppress Israel. 1st - Chushanrishathaim [*koo-shan' rish-aw-thah'-yim*] king of Mesopotamia for 8 years (what a big name! It means Cushan, of double wickedness. Othniel, who God raised up to defeat that king, means 'force of God').

Then Eglon, king of Moab for 18 years.

Then the Philistines, and the Canaanites of Hazor, led by Sisera, in turn became the oppressors of Israel. Othniel, Shamgar, and Ehud, Deborah and Barak, were raised up as deliverers of their people. But again “the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord; and the Lord delivered them into the hand of Midian.”

It is interesting that Deborah, was a lady prophet and she was one of the Judges of Israel and helped deliver the people from cruel General Sisera. When this enemy leader was fleeing from the armies of Israel, he got so tired and did not know where to hide. A lady named Jael told him to come into her tent and she gave him warm milk and covered him with a coat. He was so tired he fell sound asleep and she nailed him with a tent-peg. The Lord had told Deborah and Barak that Sisera would be killed by a woman.

Soon Israel under Deborah and Barak had defeated the enemies and there was peace for a while as Israel returned to serve the Lord. But again they went back again to heathen ways.

Thought – Oh why is it that only when we suffer do we choose to seek the Lord? Wouldn't it be much better to serve Him all the time so we could be blessed?

Thursday

Text: Jeremiah 10:2 “Thus saith the LORD, Learn not the way of the heathen, and be not dismayed at the signs of heaven; for the heathen are dismayed at them.”

Jeremiah 7:18 “The children gather wood, and the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead their dough, to make cakes to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto other gods, that they may provoke me to anger.”

What were some of the heathen holidays that Israel began to follow so God could not bless them?

All of the heathen worship goes back to ancient Babel and Nimrod and his clever but wicked wife Semarimis. It all centered on the worship of the sun and moon and sometimes stars as well. Nimrod was said to be the sun god, but after he died, the queen had a baby and said it was Nimrod born again from the rays of the sun. The Baby was called Tammuz.

In Jeremiah we read about the people making cakes to the ‘Queen of Heaven’. These were what we now call hot-cross buns. They were made in honor of Tammuz, the son of Semeramis, who was killed by a wild pig. The buns had a cross on them for the letter T and also the cross was a symbol of the sun god.

The people used to weep each year for forty days for Tammuz's death. Today the churches celebrate these forty days as ‘Lent’. See Ezekiel 8:13-14 and see what God says about this. Remember a woman means a church in prophecy.

Semeramis was shown as a virgin mother with a baby in her arms who was the ‘son of the sun god’. We have this now in churches that worship the statue of Mary with baby Jesus. In fact there is a statue in the Vatican that shows Mary with a real Sun-disk in her arms and not baby Jesus at all!

What about holidays? The birth of the sun god was celebrated on December 25th and in the spring, there was the feast of Ashtoreth, called Easter where they worshipped the sun god and the moon goddess, who they said caused the earth to grow food. They worshipped the symbols of eggs, rabbits and chicks.

The old Babel Queen was known by many names, Ashtoreth, Astarte, Isis, and now, the Virgin Mary- but it is all the same old Babel heathenism.

The music of these celebrations had a hypnotic beat that made those who heard it want to dance and clap. It was designed to cause the mind to become hypnotized so the demons could more easily control the people.

Thought – Let us not go along with these worldly ways, but learn to worship God in quietness, reverence and truth, as He has asked us to.

Friday

Text: Text: Judges 6:3-6 “And so it was, when Israel had sown, that the Midianites came up, and the Amalekites, and

the children of the east, even they came up against them; And they encamped against them, and destroyed the increase of the earth, till thou come unto Gaza, and left no sustenance for Israel, neither sheep, nor ox, nor ass. For they came up with their cattle and their tents, and they came as grasshoppers for multitude; for both they and their camels were without number: and they entered into the land to destroy it."

Soon Israel was back in trouble again. The Midianites this time were the enemies, and they would come and take everything Israel could grow or raise, so the people were almost starving to death. They hid in caves in the mountains to try and get away from the heathen hordes, which were like grasshoppers!

If only Israel would have obeyed God and driven out these cruel people while they had the chance. Now they saw the results of disobeying God, just what He had said would

happen, and they cried to God for help.

But time after time, when they would repent and cry to God, He would raise up someone to help, but as soon as things were OK with them again- they would go right back to their heathen holidays and worshipping idols again. How very patient God is to us and how very foolish and stubborn are the ways of people.

In many places in the Bible God says His people are like a stubborn, stiff-necked cow or ox. Even when they are punished, they still won't listen and do right. God is so patient, but there does come a time when He says, "No more!" Notice this verse: "Ephraim is joined to idols: let him alone." Hosea 4:17 Here God tells the angels not to bother to try and help those people any more. How sad!

Thought – Let us ask Jesus to take away all that stubborn, selfish ways out of our hearts, so we will listen to Him and obey Him. Then we can have all His promised blessings and power in our lives to do good!
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Weekly Bible Lesson #11: "GIDEON'S BAND"

MEMORY VERSE: "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come."

1 Corinthians 10:11

Sunday

Text: Judges 6:1,3,5,6 "And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD: and the LORD delivered them into the hand of Midian seven years. . . And so it was, when Israel had sown, that the Midianites came up, and the Amalekites, and the children of the east, even they came up against them;... and they entered into the land to destroy it. And Israel was greatly impoverished because of the Midianites; and the children of Israel cried unto the LORD."

As we learned last week, Israel had be-

gun to worship the gods of the heathen in who still lived in the land and God could no longer bless them and protect them. One after another, wicked and cruel nations rose up to afflict Israel.

When they would be suffering and oppressed then they would remember the Lord and start to cry to Him for help. When they did this, time after time He would send someone to act as a deliverer and the enemies would be defeated for a while.

Even though Israel usually would smarten up and serve the Lord during the years of that Judge that rescued them, after the Judge died, they went right back to heathen

idolatry. How very, very sad!

In this lesson we are going to start the amazing story of Gideon and we are going to look at it in a different way. Many, if not all of the stories that are recorded in the Bible for us have a prophecy meaning as well. These stories have been kept safe through thousands of years so we can read them today. In these stories we can learn lessons that apply to God's people in the last days.

Notice carefully our memory verse and this note from the writings of Ellen White God's special messenger for today:

"Each of the ancient prophets spoke less for their own time than for ours, so that their prophesying is in force for us. ...The Bible has accumulated and bound up together its treasures for this last generation. All the great events and solemn transactions of Old Testament history have been, and are, repeating themselves in the church in these last days." Selected Messages, book 3, 338-339.

When we know this, we start to see the Bible, not as a book of interesting old stories, but as telling us what is actually happening today and how we can stay away from making the same mistakes of the past.

Thought - Some people do not like to hear the Bible stories applied to our people and us today, but God says they do apply and so we better learn the lessons!

Monday

Text: Judges 6:7-10 "And it came to pass, when the children of Israel cried unto the LORD because of the Midianites, That the LORD sent a prophet unto the children of Israel, which said unto them, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, I brought you up from Egypt, and brought you forth out of the house of bondage; And I delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of all that oppressed you, and drave them out from before you, and gave you their

land; And I said unto you, I am the LORD your God; fear not the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but ye have not obeyed my voice."

Times were terrible! The people would work and struggle to raise or grow some food and just at the time when they were gathering it up, along would come the wicked heathen and snatch it out of their hands. And yet, as we will learn, even though the people were suffering and crying to God, they still had images of Baal in fancy gardens and were worshipping them! How strange!

Notice that it says 'God sent them a prophet'; He has sent one to help us too.

Now I want you to see how many times the word 'hand' is used in this story. The 'hand' in Bible prophecy means to be under the power of something. Israel was under the 'hand' of these three wicked powers. When we choose to belong all the way to God, we are in His hand, and in His hand we are very safe.

But if we refuse to listen or obey God, it is like we refuse to stay in His hand, and we end up in the hand of Satan and God's enemies. Notice God reminding them He had rescued them from the hand of Egypt. Then in other places it tells us that He took them in His hand and kept them safe. But now they refused to stay in his hand and they get right out and back into the hand of enemies of God.

Notice in the verse for Sunday that there are three powers that are hurting Israel; 'Midianites, (Midian: strife) and the Amalekites, (Amal: trouble or warlike) and the children of the east'. Two powers are single and one is plural (more than one). We find this pattern in a lot of prophecy of the last days, because there are three powers that get together to fight against God at the end time. The three that get together to make Babylon in the end are:

Beast: Catholicism

False prophet: Apostate Protestantism

Dragon: Spiritualism like New age, Hin-

duism, Buddhism and so on. Revelation 16:12-13

Now the reason these powers get so strong and put out their 'hand' to try and harm God's church, starts because God's people, like the Israelites back then, have refused to stay safe in God's hand and have not obeyed His prophets and stayed in God's hand, but have chosen to do things like the world does them.

Each one of us needs to learn how God wants us to do things and do them that way. We need to tell God we are truly sorry for not obeying Him and that we each one want to be in His hand, not the hand of Satan and the enemies of God.

Thought – You see, there are only two places we can be; either safe in God's loving hand or under the cruel hand of Satan and his helpers, both men and fallen angels. We are never in our own hand.

Tuesday

Text: Judges 6:11 “**And there came an angel of the LORD, and sat under an oak which was in Ophrah, that pertained unto Joash the Abiezrite: and his son Gideon threshed wheat by the winepress, to hide it from the Midianites.**

It was after seven years and God had made a rule that every seven years, the slaves were to be set free. Now God was following the rule and sending help to set Israel, slaves to the heathen, free.

Our story opens with a youth named Gideon and he is hiding by the wine press and he is threshing wheat. The name Gideon, means one who cuts down, thresher or feller of trees. So here is Gideon the thresher, hidden by the wine press, and he is threshing grain, separating the chaff from the good grain.

Now we will look and see what these things mean to us. He was hidden away- we are told that God has a people that are hidden away and He is going to use them in a

special work in the last days. These few special ones are not going along with the popular ideas in the churches and doing after the world. No they are choosing to follow God's truth.

It is the harvest time and we know that Jesus calls the end of the world, the Harvest. He is near the 'wine press'. We are told in revelation that the wine press represents the time when God's anger will finally fall on the wicked who refuse all His efforts to get them to obey Him. It means the 7 last plagues.

So Gideon stands for the hidden people of God, at the Harvest time, the end of the world, very close to the time of the 7 last plagues. God is clear that His people that stand for Him in the end, the 144,000 are the tools in His hands that are His threshing instrument. Gideon is representing these people.

And what is he doing? He is threshing grain. This represents someone who is really earnestly studying to know God's truth. A person that is searching the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy, and trying to find out God's will and get rid of the 'chaff', which is man's teachings and ideas. These people want to know truth and they are working very hard to find out what it is.

They will find it. We know that, because suddenly Gideon hears a voice speak to him and a Heavenly Being is sitting under the big oak tree there!

Thought – Those of us who want to be part of the Lord's special ones in the last times, had better be 'threshing' now too; studying and learning God's truth and getting rid of chaff- the false ideas that have come into the churches.

Wednesday

Text: Judges: 6:12, 13 “**And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him, and said unto him, The LORD is with thee, thou mighty man of valour. And Gideon said unto**

him, **Oh my Lord, if the LORD be with us, why then is all this befallen us? and where be all his miracles which our fathers told us of, saying, Did not the LORD bring us up from Egypt? but now the LORD hath forsaken us, and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites.**"

Here Gideon is told that the Lord is with him, and he says, "If the Lord is with us, why are we in this trouble? Where is the power of the Lord?"

God's people know that in the end times, God is going to finish His work with a special gift of the Holy Spirit on the faithful ones. We call this the 'latter Rain'. Gideon is like God's true people today who are saying, "Where is the power of the Latter Rain?"

Then the Lord, for this is who is talking to Gideon, says "Go in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites: have not I sent thee?"

Now what does Gideon say? Does he say, "Oh, yes, I am your man, I can save Israel! I am strong and smart and I have a degree from the universities. It is certainly me that will save Israel!"

Oh, No! Look at his words: "And he said unto him, Oh my Lord, wherewith shall I save Israel? Behold, my family is poor in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house. (6:15)

Right away Gideon says, "No, my family is not important and I am the least important on in my whole family! I can't save anybody!"

He wasn't a boaster; he was humble and meek. It is people like this that are going to be used by God to finish the work. The ones that are proud and boastful will not be used. Why? Because they are so important in their own eyes, that they don't listen to God!

Thought – "In the last solemn work few great men will be engaged. They are self-sufficient, independent of God, and He cannot use them. The Lord has faithful servants, who in the shaking, testing time will be dis-

closed to view. There are precious ones now hidden who have not bowed the knee to Baal." 5T 80, (1882).

Thursday

Text: Judges 6:16-18 "And the LORD said unto him, Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man. And he said unto him, If now I have found grace in thy sight, then shew me a sign that thou talkest with me. Depart not hence, I pray thee, until I come unto thee, and bring forth my present, and set it before thee. And he said, I will tarry until thou come again.

The Lord assures Gideon that if he trusts in God, he will smite the Midianites as 'one man'. The faithful will work together in the end times because they will all be guided, not by a human leader but by God's Holy Spirit.

Now Gideon asks the Lord to show him a sign that He is really the Lord. He asks him to wait until he can prepare a meal and bring it to Him. He says he will wait.

Gideon brings a meal and the Lord tells him to place it on the rock. Then He touches it with His staff and it burns up like a burnt offering. Then the Heavenly Being disappears.

When Gideon sees this, he is afraid and cries out, "Alas, O Lord GOD! for because I have seen an angel of the LORD face to face."

He thinks he will certainly die because he sees the greatness of God. But the voice of the Lord assures him, "Peace be unto thee; fear not: thou shalt not die."

So Gideon built an altar there in that spot to honour the Lord and called the altar, 'Jehovahshalom, The LORD send peace.

Now this shows a very important thing to us today. All of God's true people in the last days will have had a personal experience with Jesus Christ for themselves. They will have experienced seeing Jesus in the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy. As they learn about His character, they will see how sinful they are

and how much they deserve to die.

They will 'cry out' to God, being truly sorry for their sins and feeling great fear, knowing they cannot save themselves. They will also have heard the voice of the Lord in His promises saying, "Fear not, trust in Me and thou shalt not die".

Now after this happened, Gideon was told to do a work before God could help him deliver Israel. He had to go to his father's house, to the garden where an altar and an idol of Baal were set up. He was to break down that idol and altar!

Now notice: Gideon was NOT the leader of his family, his father was the leader. And his father had set up the idol of Baal! There it was in his 'father's house'. But God told Gideon, who was the 'least' of his family to get that altar out of there!

In this we see that the humble people Gideon represents in these days, are not 'church leaders'. Oh, No! Instead we see the real leaders are the ones who set up the idol in the 'father's house'.

Thought – Before God could help Israel, the Idols had to be removed. The 'leaders' would not remove them, so God sends a humble man, who is seeking to know and obey the truth, to remove the idols.

Friday

Text: Judges 6:25-27 **"And it came to pass the same night, that the LORD said unto him, Take thy father's young bullock, even the second bullock of seven years old, and throw down the altar of Baal that thy father hath, and cut down the grove that is by it: And build an altar unto the LORD thy God upon the top of this rock, in the ordered place, and take the second bullock, and offer a burnt sacrifice with the wood of the grove**

which thou shalt cut down. Then Gideon took ten men of his servants, and did as the LORD had said unto him: and so it was, because he feared his father's household, and the men of the city, that he could not do it by day, that he did it by night."

So Gideon did what God said and took the young ox and threw down the idol and the altar and offered the sacrifice. He did it at night because he knew if he tried in the day, the people would stop him. Notice that God knows all the details about us; he even knew how old the second ox was.

Now the next day, the people came out for morning worship and found the idol and the idol's altar and grove all destroyed. They were hopping mad! So they came to Gideon's father and said they were going to kill Gideon because he destroyed the Idol.

They came all angry to Gideon's father's house and said, "Bring out your son so we can kill him for this what he did to Baal!"

But God gave a bit of wisdom to Joash, Gideon's father, and he realized that if the idol Baal was really a god, he could have protected his own altar and garden! So he said, "Are you going to plead for Baal? Let Baal plead for himself, if he be a god."

It was sort of what Elijah later said to Israel, "If Baal be god let him prove it!" So the people thought about it and decided if Baal could not even defend himself, he wasn't much of a god and they let Gideon go.

Gideon's father changed his name to 'Jeru-Baal' which means 'let Baal plead'. In other words, let Baal prove he is a god by defending himself. Of course, Baal was just an idol. So the people turned away from worshipping Baal that day.

Thought – Let us do what we can to remove idols from our lives so we can truly worship the Lord and encourage others to do this too! = ^ .. ^ =

Weekly Bible Lesson #12: "GIDEON'S BAND 2"

MEMORY VERSE: "For many are called, but few are chosen." Matthew 22:14

Sunday

Text: Judges 6:33-35 "Then all the Midianites and the Amalekites and the children of the east were gathered together, and went over, and pitched in the valley of Jezreel. But the Spirit of the LORD came upon Gideon, and he blew a trumpet; and Abiezer was gathered after him. And he sent messengers throughout all Manasseh; who also was gathered after him: and he sent messengers unto Asher, and unto Zebulun, and unto Naphtali; and they came up to meet them."

It wasn't long after Gideon's special experience with the Lord that the three enemies together came to attack Israel. The Spirit of the Lord came upon him and he blew a trumpet in Israel. Now in prophecy a trumpet being blown means a warning message going out.

So the first thing we see here is Gideon, who represents God's faithful people in the last days, sees all this three-fold enemies joined together to fight against God's people, so he sounds a message of warning. This is what the faithful are doing in our day as we see the Beast power, the Dragon power and the False Prophet power getting together and growing mighty, we are to sound a warning message and urge people to seek the Lord.

Now the verse says that Abiezer came to join Gideon; this name means 'father of help'. So as the faithful see the enemy gathering and they sound the warning-help is given to them from God.

Then we see that he sends four messages, and they are named as one and three, Manasseh; ...Asher, Zebulun, and Naphtali. In prophecy when we see this three and then one or one and then three, it is showing us

the three angel's messages and then the fourth angel who joins near the end. These three and then one more messages will have results and many gather to stand for the Lord.

So now Gideon has an army. But he is still not sure that God really wants him to be the one to lead against the enemy, he still feels unworthy. So he prays to the Lord and asks for a sign that God will really use him to save Israel.

Thought - We are not always to ask for signs from the Lord to know what we are to do, but there are times when it is right to do this. It is never right to ask for a sign to prove you are to obey something the inspired writings clearly tell us to do!

Monday

Text: Judges 6:36-37 "And Gideon said unto God, If thou wilt save Israel by mine hand, as thou hast said, Behold, I will put a fleece of wool in the floor; and if the dew be on the fleece only, and it be dry upon all the earth beside, then shall I know that thou wilt save Israel by mine hand, as thou hast said."

Gideon took a fleece of wool that had been clipped from a sheep and he prayed and asked the Lord to have the wool be wet and the ground around it dry.

The next day, sure enough the fleece was full of water and the ground was dry. But then Gideon had a second thought; it could be natural for the wool to get wet from the night air. So he prayed again and asked for God to do it the other way, let the fleece be dry and the ground wet. This would certainly be a miracle.

Again he laid out his fleece and the next

morning there it was totally dry and the ground very wet. So Gideon headed out to gather his army together.

Now there is an interesting meaning in prophecy for this sign of Gideon's. A Fleece is a sheep's clothing, Jesus is the Lamb of God; so it represents those who claim to have on the robe of Jesus' righteousness, the White Raiment.

Now in the end time we are promised that a special gift of the Holy Spirit is to come to God's people to give power to finish warning the world and stand through the last days. It is called the latter Rain.

We are told that when this comes there will be people who receive it while all those around them will not receive it. Also there will be people who do not receive it when all those around them are receiving it. So there will be fleeces who are wet when all the professed around them are dry, and there will be fleeces that stay dry even though all around them are wet with the dew from heaven.

Thought – We must make sure by the help of Jesus that we will be wet fleeces in that day when the special gift is given.

Tuesday

Text: Judges 7:1,2 “Then Jerubbaal, who is Gideon, and all the people that were with him, rose up early, and pitched beside the well of Harod: so that the host of the Midianites were on the north side of them, by the hill of Moreh, in the valley. And the LORD said unto Gideon, The people that are with thee are too many for me to give the Midianites into their hands, lest Israel vaunt themselves against me, saying, Mine own hand hath saved me.”

Now Gideon has his army gathered together and it is 32,000 men. It is a very small army to go and fight with the three enemies who are like grasshoppers there are so many. Gideon is worried that his army is too small.

The men are worried too; Harod, where they were camped, means ‘fountain of trembling’.

But here comes an order from the Lord, “Gideon, your army is too big. If I deliver the enemies to this army they will boast about how great an army they are and will not honor Me! Tell the army that everyone who is afraid is to go back home.”

Now it was a rule given to Israel that anytime an army was called to go to war, the leader was to make this announcement and allow the ones who were afraid, newly married, had a new house or had just planted a new vineyard that they could go back home. Gideon had not done this because he thought his army was too small to start with. But now he obeyed God and 22,000 men went home!

Gideon was shocked; but here comes another order from God; “There are still too many! Take the army down to the water for a drink and I will tell you who to keep and who to send home”.

Send home more people!! Surely not! Gideon thought, but he obeyed and took the army to the water to get a drink. Now God told him to watch carefully how the men drank the water and the ones that got right down on their hands and knees and drank and drank-they went in one group and the ones that lapped as a dog, ‘putting their hands to their mouths’ went into the other group.

These men were really interested in getting to the battle. They did not get down on their hands and knees, they just scooped up some water in their hands and drank it quickly. The others were more interested in their own comfort so they took time and drank all they wanted. That group was sent home and Gideon was left with only 300 men!

God can only work through those who truly trust in Him and obey Him. He can do more with a little group of these faithful ones that with thousands who claim to believe in Him, but refuse to obey Him.

Thought – Today, many are afraid as they

see the forces of the world getting ready to destroy God's faithful. But we can choose to Trust in God and believe in Him, and then we will be part of Gideon's band!

Wednesday

Text: Judges: 6:9-11 "And it came to pass the same night, that the LORD said unto him, Arise, get thee down unto the host; for I have delivered it into thine hand. But if thou fear to go down, go thou with Phurah thy servant down to the host: And thou shalt hear what they say; and afterward shall thine hands be strengthened to go down unto the host. Then went he down with Phurah his servant unto the outside of the armed men that were in the host."

Now Gideon is not a fearful man, but here God sends him and his servant down to hear a special message that will give them courage. The reason this is here is more for us in the last days, because it is showing something to us about the final message.

Remember, these three enemies camped in the valley in the story, stand for the final battle between the forces of Satan and the faithful followers of the Lord. This battle is called in Revelation, the 'Battle of Armageddon'. It is a prophecy symbol of what happens as the powers of the world get together to enforce the Sunday Law.

The name Purah means leaves or something living green. Living green leaves stand for faith. So Jeru-baal 'let Baal plead', let him prove he is a god; goes into the valley, the final battle, with his servant 'living faith'!

Here we are seeing a special message that helps the faithful at the end to know that God is with them. Gideon and his servant goes down and in a tent he hears two men talking. One says, "I had a weird dream." And he tells that he saw a loaf of barley bread fall down into the valley and knock over the head general's tent and all the other tents fell down too.

The other man says, "I know what that means; it is the sword of Gideon- for God has delivered all this army into his hands." So Gideon and his servant felt more courage.

Now what message is giving courage to us today to know that God is going to deliver His people from the terrible three enemies? Do you know about any prophecy dream that talks about something hitting the enemies of God and they are overthrown? Yes, it is the dream in Daniel 2. It was a heathen king that had the dream there and in this story it was a heathen also who had the dream.

One of the places that God's people are going to find courage to stand for God is the study of the prophecies of Daniel and the other prophets. These prophecies show that the faithful, though only a tiny group compared with the 'three enemies', will triumph in the power of the Lord!

Thought – As we study prophecies that show us that the Lord knows all about what is happening and has told us about it; we find courage to trust in Him, because we can see that He is in charge even though it doesn't always look like it.

Thursday

Text: Judges 7:16-18 "And he divided the three hundred men into three companies, and he put a trumpet in every man's hand, with empty pitchers, and lamps within the pitchers. And he said unto them, Look on me, and do likewise: and, behold, when I come to the outside of the camp, it shall be that, as I do, so shall ye do. When I blow with a trumpet, I and all that are with me, then blow ye the trumpets also on every side of all the camp, and say, The sword of the LORD, and of Gideon."

Gideon divides his army of 300 into three groups. So we see again three plus one, three groups and Gideon himself. He gives each of

the men two things, a trumpet and a clay pitcher or pot with a lamp hidden in it. Now I know many people talk about a torch, but you could not hide a torch in a pot. The Bible says a lamp.

Now these things have much meaning. The trumpet is again a warning message. In one place in Ellen White's writings she says, "Trumpet after trumpet is yet to sound". This means God's faithful will be giving many warning messages to the church and the world.

The lamp we see also in the story of the five wise and five foolish girls that Jesus told about. It stands for the true message of the Word of God. It is the only 'weapon' of the faithful against the hosts of darkness. But just as no amount of 'dark' can put out even a tiny light, so Satan will not be able to destroy God's faithful ones and stop God's message of truth.

Now what about the clay pot or pitcher? That stands for us weak human beings, children of clay and dust. They have the light of God's truth inside them, but it is only when they are broken that the light shines out.

What does it mean for God's faithful ones to be broken? Jesus talks about it: "Whosoever shall fall upon that stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder." Luke 20:18. It means they surrender all to Jesus, they repent and give Him all their hearts and allow Him to get rid of their selfish hearts. Those who do not surrender all to Jesus, will be the ones that the Rock or in this story, the loaf of Bread, falls on and they are destroyed.

Thought – Sometimes we just want to hide the light of truth inside and not show it to others. We must ask Jesus to help us 'break' our selfishness, trust Him and let our lights shine out!

Friday

Text: Judges 7:20-22 "And the three companies blew the trumpets, and brake the pitchers, and held the lamps in their left

hands, and the trumpets in their right hands to blow withal: and they cried, The sword of the LORD, and of Gideon. And they stood every man in his place round about the camp: and all the host ran, and cried, and fled. And the three hundred blew the trumpets, and the LORD set every man's sword against his fellow, even throughout all the host: and the host fled to Bethshittah in Zererath, and to the border of Abelmeholah, unto Tabbath."

The three groups went to the different sides of the huge camp and just before the dawning of the day, when all the three enemies were sound asleep thinking they were quite safe; Suddenly Gideon gave the signal on his trumpet and all the men broke their pitchers and help up their lamps! Then they all shouted "The Sword of the Lord and of Gideon!"

This made a loud noise as the smashing pots and the trumpets and the shouting all came together and the enemies woke up in confusion! They saw the lights and thought they were surrounded. Their first thought was that Israel had got other armies to fight for them, and they were so afraid and mixed up they grabbed their weapons and began to kill each other!

Remember that Gideon's men just had their lamps in one hand and the warning trumpet in the other; It was the enemies own weapons that killed them. This has great meaning in the last days. The very plans that the enemies of God make, to try and destroy God's faithful ones, will actually result in destroying themselves.

We are also told that there will come a time after the close of probation when those who realize that their leaders have lied to them and fooled them into disobeying God, will be so angry about being lost they will go after their ministers and leaders and want to tear them to bits!

Those who didn't get killed right away began to run for their lives. Then the ones of

Israel who had been afraid came out and joined with Gideon and his men as they chased the enemies and wiped them out.

In the end time the brightness of the Lord's coming with all the angels will destroy whatever is left of the 'three enemies'.

Thought – What is the Sword of the Lord

and Gideon? It is the inspired messages God has sent us through the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy. We need to spend much time now learning these truths and obeying them. In the last days we must have our Lamps with oil in them, our warning trumpets and the Word of the Lord in our hearts and minds.

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Weekly Bible Lesson #13: "GIDEON'S BAND 3"

MEMORY VERSE: "Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them: for the LORD thy God, he it is that doth go with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee." Deuteronomy 31:6

Sunday

Text: Judges 7:25 "And they took two princes of the Midianites, Oreb and Zeeb; and they slew Oreb upon the rock Oreb, and Zeeb they slew at the winepress of Zeeb, and pursued Midian, and brought the heads of Oreb and Zeeb to Gideon on the other side Jordan."

Last week we saw the amazing little army of Gideon, by following what God told them to do, send the host of enemies running like scared rabbits and fighting each other in sheer terror. They blew the trumpets, which in prophecy stands for the final warning message, and they shouted, 'The Sword of the Lord and of Gideon!' This shout represents the Loud Cry of the fourth angel in Revelation 18 that comes to 'lighten the earth with his glory'.

Boys and girls, there is no question about whether God is going to win in the last days! The only question for us to answer, each one of us, is 'Am I going to be with God when He wins?' There is no problem on God's side; He wants you with Him and He will do everything needed to save you and make you ready so you will be with Him!

The question is for you; will you choose to give your whole heart to Jesus and cooperate with Him as He teaches and leads you? Or do the silly things of this world seem more

important to you; TV and movies, games and sports, fiction and fantasy, worldly friends, parties and foolishness?

When we first think about choosing to follow Jesus all the way, it sometimes seems we are giving up a lot; but when we really seek Him and learn about Him and get to have the Holy Spirit as our special helper and teacher and really know He is with us, we look back at those worldly things and wonder what we ever saw in them!

Now in this part of the story we see two princes of the enemy captured and slain. Their names are Oreb and Zeeb. As I have been showing you, when we are looking for the prophecy meaning in a Bible story, we use a book like a Bible Dictionary or concordance to tell us what these names mean. Then we get clues about the prophecy from the names. Oreb means a raven and Zeeb means a wolf. Oreb dies at the Rock and Zeeb at the Winepress.

These names are mentioned three places in the Bible, in Psalms 86 and in Isaiah 10:1. In those verses it talks about people making 'unrighteous decrees' and gathering together against God. These two names stand for that great Babylon that in the last days comes together to fight against the Lord and His truth. It has three parts, the Beast, the Dragon and the False Prophet.

The raven is an unclean bird and in Revelation 18 we see the Lord saying Babylon

has become a cage of unclean birds. The wolf goes in packs and stands for these powers gathering together against God. One dies at the Rock and the other at the winepress and this stands for the final spiritual battle when God overthrows these wicked powers.

Thought - It is always safe to be on God's side!

Monday

Text: Judges 8:1-3 "And the men of Ephraim said unto him, Why hast thou served us thus, that thou calledst us not, when thou wentest to fight with the Midianites? And they did chide with him sharply. And he said unto them, What have I done now in comparison of you? Is not the gleaning of the grapes of Ephraim better than the vintage of Abiezer? God hath delivered into your hands the princes of Midian, Oreb and Zeeb: and what was I able to do in comparison of you? Then their anger was abated toward him, when he had said that."

When the heads of these evil princes were brought to Gideon, the men of Ephraim were mad at him because he had not called them to come and fight with him. Now here we see Gideon's humble character. He could have said things that would have caused a fight to start, but instead he answered, "Well you have done much more than I have anyway. You captured these princes, what I have done is nothing along side of that!"

One thing that God's true children will all have is a kind and courteous spirit. They will always be ready to give honor to someone else and will be very courteous and kind.

A boastful spirit, a person that is always bragging about what he can do or has done and wanting people to look at him and praise him is not at all what the true child of God will be like. Neither is a person who is always trying to make what someone else does seem no good.

If we have this habit, we must go to Jesus in prayer and tell Him we are sorry and ask Him to forgive us and take away that wrong spirit and instead give us His meek and quiet spirit. You will find you will be much happier when these boastful, proud, jealous habits are all gone.

Thought - When tempted so say something mean or nasty about someone, find something nice to say instead and see how much better you feel.

Tuesday

Text: Judges 8:22,23 "Then the men of Israel said unto Gideon, Rule thou over us, both thou, and thy son, and thy son's son also: for thou hast delivered us from the hand of Midian. And Gideon said unto them, I will not rule over you, neither shall my son rule over you: the LORD shall rule over you."

Gideon now chases after two heathen kings named Zeeba and Zalmuna. Finally they are captured and executed. Before they are executed, Gideon asked them who were the people they had been killing. They answered that they were like him and looked like the children of a king.

Now this is what the faithful ones who stand for God in the time of trouble will be like- the world will see they are the Children of King Jesus. They will see the lovely character of Jesus in each one of them. Even though some of them may die for Jesus, they will not be at all afraid, because Jesus will be with them, and give them all the strength and courage that they need.

The people of Israel were so happy to be free of the enemies who had made them so miserable. Now they came to Gideon and asked him to be their king and rule over them and his sons after him. But Gideon showed a faithful and true spirit when he said, "No, I will not rule over you, and my sons won't rule over you, God will rule over you."

Thought – Wouldn't it be wonderful if when people see us and notice that we are like Jesus, could say of us, they are like the Children of a King?

Wednesday

Text: Psalm: 83:11,12 “Make their nobles like Oreb, and like Zeeb: yea, all their princes as Zebah, and as Zalmunna: Who said, Let us take to ourselves the houses of God in possession.”

So what prophecy meaning do these names, Zebah and Zalmunna have? Well it is really more than we can have room for in our lesson to tell it all, but Zebah means, “born in the day of sacrifice.”

There are places in the prophecies where the Lord calls the last great battle ‘the Day of the Lord’s sacrifice.’ Here is one of them: “And it shall come to pass in the day of the LORD’S sacrifice, that I will punish the princes, and the king’s children, and all such as are clothed with strange apparel.” Zephaniah 1:8

Do you remember a certain parable that Jesus told where He said a King had made a feast and invited the people to come and they refused and even killed his servants? (Matt. 22) Yes, in that parable He says the King will destroy those wicked men and burn up their city. But this parable has a second part to it. It has the King coming in to see the guests to see if they have on the wedding garment.

Now this wedding garment is the Righteousness of Jesus and we must have it on or we can never go to heaven. The King coming into look at the guests, shows us that before Jesus comes to take His people home, there is a special judgment in heaven and the names of all the people who ever claimed to belong to the Lord are being looked at.

In the story, the King gives the beautiful and rich wedding garment to each guest. None of them could afford such a wonderful garment, but all they have to do is accept it and put it on. Garments in the story repre-

sent character. The question is ‘have they allowed Jesus to take away their sin and put His pure character into them?’

The story says a man was there who did not have the garment on. He decided his own clothes were good enough for the wedding, and would not even put on the garment the king had given to him.

This is like people who think they are pretty good themselves; they are just as good as the next guy; they don’t need to confess their sins and have Jesus take them out of their lives and put His character into their hearts. These people look at those who are studying and praying to be ready to meet Jesus as silly fanatics.

They say everything was all done at the cross and it doesn’t matter at all what they do or don’t do. This in the story would be like saying that when the King had the Garments made, that was all that was needed. But it wasn’t true, was it? The people had to choose to come to the wedding, receive the garment and put the garment on.

But what happened to the man without the Wedding Garment on? “And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless. Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” Matthew 22:12,13

Thought – Did you know that all Jesus’ parables are also prophecies? Yes, and they also fit with prophecies in the Old Testament to show us clear pictures of our days and what is coming in the end time. We just have to prayerfully study them.

Thursday

Text: Psalm 91:4 “He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy shield and buckler.” Zephaniah 2:3 “Seek ye the LORD, all ye meek of the earth, which have wrought

his judgment; seek righteousness, seek meekness: it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the LORD'S anger."

What do we learn from the name Zalmunna? Well, it means; "Shadow of protection is withheld" This name represents something very sad and solemn. Like the name Zebah, it also is telling us about a certain group of people in the last great battle where God destroys the wicked and rescues His people from their cruel plans.

Maybe if you carefully read the two texts for today and then the meaning of the name- you will figure out a bit about what these people are. It is good for us to use our brains to try and understand deeper meanings in the Bible. It is because too many people just listen to the 'leaders' and believe what they tell them is true and don't study it out for themselves, that so many people are being tricked by Satan these days.

Zalmunna stands for a group of people who have claimed to be under God's protection but they have not bothered to get their characters right with God while the power of Jesus is available to make it possible. Jesus today is still ministering in the Heavenly Sanctuary for us.

When we pray and call for help to get rid of sin, and for His character to take the place of our wicked characters, He presents our prayers before the Father mixed with His goodness and obedience and pleads His shed blood for us. The Father then accepts our prayers as from Jesus and all the guidance and help and protection we need is sent to us.

But here is a group of people that don't bother with such stuff. They just live from day to day to get all the fun and pleasure in life that they can- and yet they are sure they are on their way to heaven. Some of them plan later on to study more and pray more, but they are not all that worried about it. These people are not out in the world; they are in the church!

The day is soon coming when people will

wake up and find they need to get ready to meet Jesus and probation is closed and it is too late. Once Jesus leaves the Sanctuary and isn't there to plead for us any more, nobody then can change their characters.

The faithful people, who have loved Jesus and trusted in Him and allowed Him to give them His own lovely character garment in place of their own sinful one, will be ready, and God will protect them as the psalm and our hymn says, "Under His Wings". But the careless ones will not be under the protection of God.

Thought – If you don't memorize any other chapter in the Bible, make sure you know all of Psalms 91 and understand what it means to us.

Friday

Text: Judges 8:24 & 27 "And Gideon said unto them, I would desire a request of you, that ye would give me every man the earrings of his prey. (For they had golden earrings, because they were Ishmaelites.) 27 And Gideon made an ephod thereof, and put it in his city, even in Ophrah: and all Israel went thither a whoring after it: which thing became a snare unto Gideon, and to his house."

Sometimes it is easy to stand true when a lot of things are happening and we are very busy and everyone is looking at us. But later when everything is quiet and we get rested up a bit, we can get restless for some excitement again. This is a dangerous thing and is what happened to Gideon.

The battle was won, things had settled down and were quiet and he started to think about something special he could do to have the attention of the people again. Now Satan was right ready to give him an idea that seemed very good, but was really very bad.

Gideon decided to make himself a special priest's robe, called an ephod, and a golden breastplate to wear on it and act as a Priest of God in his own area. He even began

to perform special ceremonies and have feasts where the people came to worship.

Now they may have thought they were worshipping God, but God had never told Gideon to do this, in fact there were warnings in the scriptures that they were not to do anything like this. It was true God had called Gideon to do a special job for Him, but this did not make him free to do whatever he thought of -and call it God's work!

It often happens today that people get an idea to do something 'special' for God but it is something God has not asked them to do and even sometimes something He has told them not to do. If you try to tell them it is not right, sometimes they will say, 'You can-

not judge me, I can worship God however I please'.

This may be true, but God does not accept what WE please, He only accepts what He pleases! This 'special idea' that Gideon got- claiming to honor God- really ended up later getting his family whipped out and all of the ten tribes of Israel destroyed by God for their idolatry.

Thought – It is when we think we are 'bored' and restless for some excitement, that Satan can most easily get us into doing wrong things. This is why we are told the faithful in the last days will be 'patient'. "Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus." Revelation 14:12

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