

SABBATH SCHOOL LESSONS

First Half 2025

GOD'S WORK THROUGH THE JUDGES

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625 West Avenue / Cedartown, GA 30125
Telephone 770-748-0077 / Fax 770-748-0095
Email: info@sda1844.org / Internet: www.sda1844.org

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Author: Antonino Di Franca

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4243 US Highway 319 North

Norman Park, GA 31771

info@sda1888.org

www.sda1888.org

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INTRODUCTION

Right after the Bible book of Joshua, the book of Judges tells the story of Israel's division and conquest of the promised land. This was not completed in the time of Joshua, so the individual tribes were responsible to face the Canaanites and dispossess them. However, Biblical history shows that not all of the tribes were able to overcome the remaining Canaanites who inhabited the territories assigned to them. Some persevered and completed the work, but others were weak and failed to take charge of their areas. This led to very difficult consequences, for some Israelites lived in close proximity to the pagans and even practiced their cult worship, forgetting the true God and being dominated by them.

The judges were active in the middle period between the entrance into and occupation of the promised land under Moses and Joshua and the time of the kings. Four tendencies were continually repeated during this period: (1) Apostasy from God and His will, (2) invasion or occupation by foreign nations that gained dominion over Israel for many years, (3) cries to the Lord for help and deliverance from their enemies, and (4) the Lord's call of a judge to lead the people and free the country from invaders. This continued for a few centuries, from approximately 1400 to 1050 B.C.

Something else that characterized the time of the judges was a lack of continuity. When one judge died, the next one did not immediately succeed him. There were often gaps as long as decades, when there was no individual to whom the people turned for national guidance. On one hand, this caused them to depend more on God than on man; but on the other hand, it often led to instability and confusion. When a judge failed to carry out his office properly, it did not take long for the people's loyalty to fail. This is why the Scriptures often said, after telling about difficult and questionable situations: "In those days there was no king in Israel, but every man did that which was right in his own eyes." Judges 17:6; 21:25.

Therefore, we see, as when the people were in the wilderness, that the period of the judges was one of both light and darkness. God performed extraordinary, miraculous events for His people; and then, as soon as the strong man that the Lord used was gone, the people fell back into apostasy. We can say that this was the history, on one hand, of the weakness and fragility of man, who promised faithfulness and obedience but did not keep his word, while on the other hand God's faithfulness was seen in keeping His promises despite the people's unworthiness. In this sense, the lesson to be learned from the book of judges—swinging from adversity to deliverance—is the practical carrying out of the verse: "And call upon Me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me." Psalm 50:15.

In this phase, the people of Israel were led by leaders who were called by God and through His power brought about the deliverance of His people. Such events did not appear as miraculous as those that took place during the exodus; but this was still a period in which God's hand was seen repeatedly in amazing events. The story of Deborah and Barak, the victory of Gideon with only 300 men, the experience of Samson, who received supernatural power to be able to liberate Israel, and other miracles occurred during this period.

However, when we study about the judges, we should not think of officials such as we are familiar with today—those who have studied law for many years and then, after obtaining their certification, work in court systems to administer the laws of the state. The judges in the Bible were charismatic people whom God called directly; they were invested with courage, faith, and sometimes even extraordinary strength to demonstrate that salvation, liberation, and independence come exclusively from God. The following verses explain how these men were called, guided, and qualified by God. “Nevertheless the Lord raised up judges, which delivered them out of the hand of those that spoiled them. And yet they would not hearken unto their judges, but they went a whoring after other gods, and bowed themselves unto them: they turned quickly out of the way which their fathers walked in, obeying the commandments of the Lord; but they did not so. 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.” Judges 2:16-18.

This is astounding. Today the problem of the world's influence on God's people is no less than that of the pagan Canaanites on the people of Israel. Then, the judges and the people had enemies to defeat; and we have enemies as well. How will we relate to this situation? Will we be like the tribes, which gave up and lost the certainty of divine election, or like those who relied on God's help and worked hard to achieve victory? The Lord, who called the judges at that time and invested them with His power, can and will do the same thing in our day.

Therefore, may the experiences presented in the Book of Judges and studied in the Sabbath school in the coming half year bring us closer to the Lord so that we, too, will be overcomers and in the end say like them and like the apostle Paul: “I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing.” 2 Timothy 4:7, 8.

*—The brothers and sisters of the
General Conference and the Ministerial Department*

**SPECIAL SABBATH SCHOOL OFFERING
FOR the BOLIVIAN FIELD**

Give your offering from your heart as God has blessed you!

1

Sabbath, January 4, 2025

The People's Promises

“Promises are estimated by the truth of the one who makes them. Many men make promises only to break them, to mock the heart that trusted in them. Those who lean upon such men lean upon broken reeds. But God is behind the promises He makes. He is ever mindful of His covenant, and His truth endureth to all generations.” –Manuscript, 23, 1899.

SUNDAY

GOD'S BLESSINGS ON HIS PEOPLE

1. Looking back at the past, at what point did Joshua begin recording the blessings that God had given to His people?

JOSHUA 24:3, 4, FIRST PART *And I took your father Abraham from the other side of the flood, and led him throughout all the land of Canaan, and multiplied his seed, and gave him Isaac. ⁴And I gave unto Isaac Jacob and Esau:...*

“God dispenses His gifts as it pleases Him. He bestows one gift upon one, and another gift upon another, but all for the good of the whole body. It is in God’s order that some shall be of service in one line of work, and others in other lines—all working under the selfsame Spirit. The recognition of this plan will be a safeguard against emulation, pride, envy, or contempt of one another. It will strengthen unity and mutual love.”
–*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, pp. 314, 315.

MONDAY

2. How did He intervene when, after His miraculous deliverance of Israel, the Egyptians wanted to return them to slavery?

JOSHUA 24:6, 7 *And I brought your fathers out of Egypt: and ye came unto the sea; and the Egyptians pursued after your fathers with chariots and horsemen unto the Red sea. ⁷And when they cried unto the Lord, he put darkness between you and the Egyptians, and brought the sea upon them, and covered them; and your eyes have seen what I have done in Egypt: and ye dwelt in the wilderness a long season.*

“That Lamb whose wrath will be so terrible to the scorers of His grace will be grace and righteousness and love and blessing to all who have

received Him. The pillar of cloud that was dark with terror and avenging wrath to the Egyptians, was to the people of God a pillar of fire for brightness. So will it be to the Lord's people in these last days. The light and glory of God to His commandment-keeping people are darkness to the unbelieving. They see that it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. The arm, long stretched, strong to save all who come unto Him, is strong to execute His judgment upon all who would not come unto Him that they might have life. God grant that while mercy still lingers, while the voice of invitation is still heard, there will be a turning unto the Lord. The sure provision has been made to shelter every soul and shield those who have kept His commandments until the indignation be overpast." —*That I May Know Him*, p. 356.

TUESDAY

3. What did the Lord promise so that Canaan would be freed from its corrupt inhabitants?

JOSHUA 24:12 *And I sent the hornet before you, which drave them out from before you, even the two kings of the Amorites; but not with thy sword, nor with thy bow.*

"God had placed His people in Canaan as a mighty breastwork to stay the tide of moral evil, that it might not flood the world. If faithful to Him, God intended that Israel should go on conquering and to conquer. He would give into their hands nations greater and more powerful than the Canaanites. The promise was: 'If ye shall diligently keep all these commandments which I command you,... then will the Lord drive out all these nations from before you, and ye shall possess greater nations and mightier than yourselves. Every place whereon the soles of your feet shall tread shall be yours: from the wilderness and Lebanon, from the river, the river Euphrates, even unto the uttermost sea shall your coast be. There shall no man be able to stand before you: for the Lord your God shall lay the fear of you and the dread of you upon all the land that ye shall tread upon, as He hath said unto you.' Deuteronomy 11:22-25." —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 544.

WEDNESDAY

4. What did God say about how they received their possessions in Canaan?

JOSHUA 24:13 *And I have given you a land for which ye did not labour, and cities which ye built not, and ye dwell in them; of the vineyards and oliveyards which ye planted not do ye eat.*

"The Hebrew nation was taken into close relation to God, as a peculiar people, a holy nation. The Lord gave to Israel evidences of His presence, that they might fear His name and obey His voice, and that they might know that He was leading them to the promised land. The power of God, which was revealed in so remarkable a manner in their deliverance from Egypt, was seen from time to time through all their journeyings." —*Signs of the Times*, July 19, 1899.

"As a pledge of this covenant of God with men, a smoking furnace and a burning lamp, symbols of the divine presence, passed between the severed victims, totally consuming them. And again a voice was heard by

Abraham, confirming the gift of the land of Canaan to his descendants, 'from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates.'" –*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 137.

THURSDAY

IDOLS PUT AWAY

5. In harmony with Joshua's appeal, what should the people have removed from their lives and country?

JOSHUA 24:14, 15 *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. ¹⁵And 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.*

"The worship of idols was still to some extent secretly practiced, and Joshua endeavored now to bring them to a decision that should banish this sin from Israel." –*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 523.

"When Joshua was nearing the close of his life he took up a review of the past for two reasons—to lead the Israel of God to gratitude for the marked manifestation of God's presence in all their travels, and to lead them to humility of mind under a sense of their unjust murmurings and repinings and their neglect to follow out the revealed will of God. Joshua goes on to warn them in a most earnest manner against the idolatry around them. They were warned not to have any connection with idolaters, not to intermarry with them, nor in any way put themselves in danger of being affected and corrupted by their abominations. They were counseled to shun the very appearance of evil, not to dabble around the borders of sin, for this was the surest way to be engulfed in sin and ruin. He showed them that desolation would be the result of their departing from God, and as God was faithful to His promise He would also be faithful in executing His threatenings." –Letter 3, 1879.

FRIDAY

6. Hearing such a heartfelt appeal, what did the people promise? How conscious were they of their own moral weakness?

JOSHUA 24:16-18 *And the people answered and said, God forbid that we should forsake the Lord, to serve other gods; ¹⁷For the Lord our God, he it is that brought us up and our fathers out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage, and which did those great signs in our sight, and preserved us in all the way wherein we went, and among all the people through whom we passed: ¹⁸And the Lord drave out from before us all the people, even the Amorites which dwelt in the land: therefore will we also serve the Lord; for he is our God.*

"Before there could be any permanent reformation the people must be led to feel their utter inability in themselves to render obedience to God. They had broken His law, it condemned them as transgressors, and it provided no way of escape. While they trusted in their own strength

and righteousness, it was impossible for them to secure the pardon of their sins; they could not meet the claims of God's perfect law, and it was in vain that they pledged themselves to serve God. It was only by faith in Christ that they could secure pardon of sin and receive strength to obey God's law. They must cease to rely upon their own efforts for salvation, they must trust wholly in the merits of the promised Saviour, if they would be accepted of God....

"Joshua endeavored to lead his hearers to weigh well their words, and refrain from vows which they would be unprepared to fulfill. With deep earnestness they repeated the declaration: 'Nay; but we will serve the Lord.' Solemnly consenting to the witness against themselves that they had chosen Jehovah, they once more reiterated their pledge of loyalty: 'The Lord our God will we serve, and His voice will we obey.'" —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 524.

SABBATH

TESTIMONY OF THEIR PROMISES

7. When Joshua was no longer alive, how would they be reminded of their promises of faithfulness and commitment to God?

JOSHUA 24:24, 25, 27 *And the people said unto Joshua, The Lord our God will we serve, and his voice will we obey.* ²⁵*So Joshua made a covenant with the people that day, and set them a statute and an ordinance in Shechem....* ²⁷*And Joshua said unto all the people, Behold, this stone shall be a witness unto us; for it hath heard all the words of the Lord which he spake unto us: it shall be therefore a witness unto you, lest ye deny your God.*

"Joshua plainly declares that his instructions and warnings to the people were not his own words, but the words of God. This great stone would stand to testify to succeeding generations of the event which it was set up to commemorate, and would be a witness against the people, should they ever again degenerate into idolatry.... If it was necessary for God's ancient people to often call to mind His dealings with them in mercy and judgment, in counsel and reproof, it is equally important that we contemplate the truths delivered to us in His Word—truth which, if heeded, will lead us to humility and submission, and obedience to God. We are to be sanctified through the truth. The Word of God presents special truths for every age. The dealings of God with His people in the past should receive our careful attention. We should learn the lessons which they are designed to teach us. But we are not to rest content with them. God is leading out His people step by step. Truth is progressive. The earnest seeker will be constantly receiving light from heaven. What is truth? should ever be our inquiry." —*Signs of the Times*, May 26, 1881.

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

"Before there could be any permanent reformation the people must be led to feel their utter inability in themselves to render obedience to God.... While they trusted in their own strength and righteousness, it was impossible for them to secure the pardon of their sins; they could not meet the claims of God's perfect law, and it was in vain that they pledged themselves to serve

God. It was only by faith in Christ that they could secure pardon of sin and receive strength to obey God's law. They must cease to rely upon their own efforts for salvation, they must trust wholly in the merits of the promised Saviour, if they would be accepted of God." –*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 524.

* * *

2

Sabbath, January 11, 2025

An Incomplete Conquest

"After the settlement in Canaan the tribes made no vigorous effort to complete the conquest of the land. Satisfied with the territory already gained, their zeal soon flagged, and the war was discontinued. 'When Israel was strong,... they put the Canaanites to tribute, and did not utterly drive them out.' Judges 1:28." –*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 543.

SUNDAY

1. What is written about Israel's obedience and service to the Lord during Joshua's life?

JOSHUA 24:29, 31 *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... ³¹And 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.*

"The revival was genuine. It wrought a reformation among the people. They remained true to the covenant they had made. The people served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua, who had seen the great works of the Lord. Their sins were repented of and forgiven, but the seed of evil had been sown, and it sprang up to bear fruit. Joshua's life of steadfast integrity closed. His voice was no longer heard in reproof and warning. One by one the faithful sentinels who had crossed the Jordan laid off their armor." –*Review and Herald*, September 25, 1900.

MONDAY

INQUIRING OF THE LORD

2. Despite being without a leader, what did the Israelites continue to promote? What did they ask the Lord before making the first step?

JUDGES 1:1, 2 *Now after the death of Joshua it came to pass, that the children of Israel asked the Lord, saying, Who shall go up for us against the*

Canaanites first, to fight against them? ²And the Lord said, Judah shall go up: behold, I have delivered the land into his hand.

"Believe ye receive the things ye ask for and ye shall have them. Come with humble heart, but presenting the promise. Then believe you do receive. The name, the all-prevailing name of our Saviour, is our assurance and our boldness. God presents Himself to us as a hearer of prayer. Keep on right ground with God, so that you may have the witness of the Spirit that you are one of His elect and faithful, trusting ones....

"The Lord would have us ask that we may receive.... Then let your whole souls go out after God. Wait on the Lord.... If you ask believing you will receive." –*This Day with God*, p. 22.

TUESDAY

3. What people did the Lord first give into the hands of the tribes of Judah and Simeon?

JUDGES 1:3, 4 *And Judah said unto Simeon his brother, Come up with me into my lot, that we may fight against the Canaanites; and I likewise will go with thee into thy lot. So Simeon went with him. ⁴And Judah went up; and the Lord delivered the Canaanites and the Perizzites into their hand:...*

"God had placed His people in Canaan as a mighty breastwork to stay the tide of moral evil, that it might not flood the world. If faithful to Him, God intended that Israel should go on conquering and to conquer. He would give into their hands nations greater and more powerful than the Canaanites. The promise was: 'If ye shall diligently keep all these commandments which I command you..., then will the Lord drive out all these nations from before you, and ye shall possess greater nations and mightier than yourselves. Every place whereon the soles of your feet shall tread shall be yours: from the wilderness and Lebanon, from the river, the river Euphrates, even unto the uttermost sea shall your coast be. There shall no man be able to stand before you: for the Lord your God shall lay the fear of you and the dread of you upon all the land that ye shall tread upon, as He hath said unto you.' Deuteronomy 11:22-25." –*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 544.

WEDNESDAY

4. What famous city, which was still in the hands of the heathen, did the children of Judah conquer? Into what other territories did they go?

JUDGES 1:8-11 *Now the children of Judah had fought against Jerusalem, and had taken it, and smitten it with the edge of the sword, and set the city on fire. ⁹And afterward the children of Judah went down to fight against the Canaanites, that dwelt in the mountain, and in the south, and in the valley. ¹⁰And Judah went against the Canaanites that dwelt in Hebron: (now the name of Hebron before was Kirjatharba:) and they slew Sheshai, and Ahiman, and Talmi. ¹¹And from thence he went against the inhabitants of Debir: and the name of Debir before was Kirjathsepher.*

"The Lord had faithfully fulfilled, on His part, the promises made to Israel; Joshua had broken the power of the Canaanites, and had distrib-

uted the land to the tribes. It only remained for them, trusting in the assurance of divine aid, to complete the work of dispossessing the inhabitants of the land." –*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 543.

THURSDAY

5. Did the tribes of Manasseh and Ephraim also carry out the plan to remove the pagans from the territory of Canaan?

JUDGES 1:27-29 *Neither did Manasseh drive out the inhabitants of Bethshean and her towns, nor Taanach and her towns, nor the inhabitants of Dor and her towns, nor the inhabitants of Ibleam and her towns, nor the inhabitants of Megiddo and her towns: but the Canaanites would dwell in that land. ²⁸And it came to pass, when Israel was strong, that they put the Canaanites to tribute, and did not utterly drive them out. ²⁹Neither did Ephraim drive out the Canaanites that dwelt in Gezer; but the Canaanites dwelt in Gezer among them.*

"The people in general were slow to complete the work of driving out the heathen. The tribes had dispersed to their possessions, the army had disbanded, and it was looked upon as a difficult and doubtful undertaking to renew the war. But Joshua declared: '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 therefrom to the right hand or to the left.'" –*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 521.

FRIDAY

UNCONQUERED CITIES

6. What is recorded about the tribes of Zebulun, Asher, and Naphtali in connection with God's divine plan for the land of Canaan?

JUDGES 1:30-33 *Neither did Zebulun drive out the inhabitants of Kitron, nor the inhabitants of Nahalol; but the Canaanites dwelt among them, and became tributaries. ³¹Neither did Asher drive out the inhabitants of Accho, nor the inhabitants of Zidon, nor of Ahlab, nor of Achzib, nor of Helbah, nor of Aphik, nor of Rehob: ³²But the Asherites dwelt among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land: for they did not drive them out. ³³Neither did Naphtali drive out the inhabitants of Bethshemesh, nor the inhabitants of Bethanath; but he dwelt among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land: nevertheless the inhabitants of Bethshemesh and of Bethanath became tributaries unto them.*

"When the Israelites entered Canaan, they did not fulfill God's purpose by taking possession of the whole land. After making a partial conquest, they settled down to enjoy the fruit of their victories. In their unbelief and love of ease, they congregated in the portions already conquered instead of pushing forward to occupy new territory. Thus they began to depart from God. By their failure to carry out His purpose, they made it impossible for Him to fulfill to them His promise of blessing. Is not the church of today doing the same thing?" –*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 303.

7. What happened when the Israelites, instead of continuing to conquer the territories assigned to them by God, stopped and lived among the pagans?

JUDGES 3:5-7 *And the children of Israel dwelt among the Canaanites, Hittites, and Amorites, and Perizzites, and Hivites, and Jebusites: ⁶And they took their daughters to be their wives, and gave their daughters to their sons, and served their gods. ⁷And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and forgot the Lord their God, and served Baalim and the groves.*

"Some years had passed since the people had settled in their possessions, and already could be seen cropping out the same evils that had heretofore brought judgments upon Israel. As Joshua felt the infirmities of age stealing upon him, and realized that his work must soon close, he was filled with anxiety for the future of his people. It was with more than a father's interest that he addressed them, as they gathered once more about their aged chief.... Although the Canaanites had been subdued, they still possessed a considerable portion of the land promised to Israel, and Joshua exhorted his people not to settle down at ease and forget the Lord's command to utterly dispossess these idolatrous nations....

"But this they failed to do. By entering into league with the Canaanites they directly transgressed the command of God, and thus failed to fulfill the condition on which He had promised to place them in possession of Canaan." —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 521, 543.

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

"It was a singular way of going to battle against the enemy's army—praising the Lord with singing, and exalting the God of Israel. This was their battle song. They possessed the beauty of holiness. If more praising of God were engaged in now, hope and courage and faith would steadily increase. And would not this strengthen the hands of the valiant soldiers who today are standing in defense of truth?" —*Prophets and Kings*, p. 202.

"The true Witness presents encouragements to all who are seeking to walk in the path of humble obedience, through faith in His name. He declares, 'To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His throne.'" —*Review and Herald*, July 24, 1888.

* * *

Israel Put to the Test

“God will not be trifled with. It is in the time of conflict that the true colors should be flung to the breeze. It is then that the standard-bearers need to be firm and let their true position be known. It is then that the skill of every true soldier for the right is tested. Shirkers can never wear the laurels of victory. Those who are true and loyal will not conceal the fact, but will put heart and might into the work, and venture their all in the struggle, let the battle turn as it will. God is a sin-hating God. And those who encourage the sinner, saying, It is well with thee, God will curse.” –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, p. 272.

SUNDAY

1. When the Angel of the Lord appeared to them, how did He begin His message to the people?

JUDGES 2:1 *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.*

“Our God is a tender, merciful Father. His service should not be looked upon as a heart-saddening, distressing exercise. It should be a pleasure to worship the Lord and to take part in His work. God would not have His children, for whom so great salvation has been provided, act as if He were a hard, exacting taskmaster. He is their best friend; and when they worship Him, He expects to be with them, to bless and comfort them, filling their hearts with joy and love. The Lord desires His children to take comfort in His service and to find more pleasure than hardship in His work. He desires that those who come to worship Him shall carry away with them precious thoughts of His care and love, that they may be cheered in all the employments of daily life, that they may have grace to deal honestly and faithfully in all things.” –*Steps to Christ*, p. 103.

MONDAY

PROMISES AND DISOBEDIENCE

2. On what condition were the Lord’s promises based? How did the people comply with this condition?

JUDGES 2:2 *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?*

“God then charged Moses to make no covenant with the inhabitants of the land whither they should go, lest they should be ensnared thereby.

But they should destroy their idol altars, break their images, and cut down their groves, which were dedicated to their idols, and where the people assembled to hold their idolatrous feasts, given in honor of their idol gods. He then said to them, 'Thou shalt worship no other god; for the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God.'" —*The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 1, p. 258.

TUESDAY

3. Because of the Israelites' lack of adherence to this condition, what was not going happen to the Canaanites from that point on? What would the pagan groups of people become for Israel?

JUDGES 2:3 *So now I say, I will not drive them out before you, but they shall become thorns in your sides, and their gods shall be a snare to you.*

"The Lord mercifully set before His people the terrible results that would follow association with the idolatrous Canaanites: 'But if ye will not drive out the inhabitants of the land from before you, then it shall come to pass that those which ye let remain of them shall be pricks in your eyes and thorns in your sides, and shall vex you in the land wherein ye dwell. Moreover, it shall come to pass that I shall do unto you as I thought to do unto them.' By mingling with the heathen, Israel would become estranged from God, and would finally pursue the same course which had provoked His wrath against the Canaanites.

"The after-history of God's chosen people shows that these warnings were real prophecies, which have been most strikingly fulfilled. The Israelites yielded only a partial obedience to the command of God, and for many generations they were afflicted by a remnant of the idolatrous nation, who were spared as the prophets had foretold, as 'pricks in their eyes, and as thorns in their side.'" —*Signs of the Times*, January 13, 1881.

WEDNESDAY

SORROW WITHOUT REPENTANCE

4. What effect did this message have on the Israelites?

JUDGES 2:4, 5 *And it came to pass, when the angel of the Lord spake these words unto all the children of Israel, that the people lifted up their voice, and wept. ⁵And they called the name of that place Bochim: and they sacrificed there unto the Lord.*

"But there are also those who go on frowardly in their own way. The Lord says to them, 'Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.' Let those who name the name of God search their hearts to see whether they be in the faith. Let them search the word carefully, reviewing the experience of God's ancient people.... The people bowed before God in contrition and repentance. They offered sacrifice, and confessed to God and to one another. The sacrifices they offered would have been of no value if they had not shown true repentance. Their contrition was genuine. The grace of Christ wrought in their hearts as they confessed their sins and offered sacrifice, and God forgave them." —*Review and Herald*, September 25, 1900.

5. If an individual or people are doing evil and continue in that frame of mind, what can be expected of the Lord?

JEREMIAH 18:9, 10 *And at what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it; ¹⁰If it do evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice, then I will repent of the good, wherewith I said I would benefit them.*

EZEKIEL 33:12, 13 *Therefore, thou son of man, say unto the children of thy people, The righteousness of the righteous shall not deliver him in the day of his transgression: as for the wickedness of the wicked, he shall not fall thereby in the day that he turneth from his wickedness; neither shall the righteous be able to live for his righteousness in the day that he sinneth. ¹³When I shall say to the righteous, that he shall surely live; if he trust to his own righteousness, and commit iniquity, all his righteousnesses shall not be remembered; but for his iniquity that he hath committed, he shall die for it.*

“Confession will not be acceptable to God without sincere repentance and reformation. There must be decided changes in the life; everything offensive to God must be put away. This will be the result of genuine sorrow for sin. The work that we have to do on our part is plainly set before us: ‘Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before Mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.’ Isaiah 1:16, 17.

“‘If the wicked restore the pledge, give again that he had robbed, walk in the statutes of life, without committing iniquity; he shall surely live, he shall not die.’ Ezekiel 33:15. Paul says, speaking of the work of repentance: ‘Ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge! In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter.’ 2 Corinthians 7:11.”
—*Steps to Christ*, p. 39.

FRIDAY

6. How permanent are God’s decisions concerning mankind? What does He do in His interactions with people and nations?

JEREMIAH 18:7, 8 *At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it; ⁸If that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them.*

“The Lord had through Moses set before His people the result of unfaithfulness. By refusing to keep His covenant, they would cut themselves off from the life of God, and His blessing could not come upon them. ‘Beware,’ said Moses, ‘that thou forget not the Lord thy God, in not keeping His commandments, and His judgments, and His statutes, which I command thee this day: lest when thou hast eaten and art full, and hast built goodly houses, and dwelt therein; and when thy herds and thy flocks multiply, and thy silver and thy gold is multiplied, and all that thou hast is multiplied; then thine heart be lifted up, and thou forget the Lord thy God.... And thou say in thine heart, My power and the might of mine

hand hath gotten me this wealth.... And it shall be, if thou do at all forget the Lord thy God, and walk after other gods, and serve them, and worship them, I testify against you this day that ye shall surely perish. As the nations which the Lord destroyeth before your face, so shall ye perish; because ye would not be obedient unto the voice of the Lord your God.' Deuteronomy 8:11-14, 17, 19, 20." –*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 291.

SABBATH

GOD'S WILLINGNESS TO FORGIVE AND MODIFY HIS PLANS

7. When a sinner genuinely repents, how will the Lord change His plans for him?

EZEKIEL 33:14-16 *Again, when I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; if he turn from his sin, and do that which is lawful and right; ¹⁵If the wicked restore the pledge, give again that he had robbed, walk in the statutes of life, without committing iniquity; he shall surely live, he shall not die. ¹⁶None of his sins that he hath committed shall be mentioned unto him: he hath done that which is lawful and right; he shall surely live.*

"Said Jesus: 'I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.' And again: 'I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance.' Will you not believe these precious words? Will you not receive them into your heart? 'Seek ye the Lord while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near: let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon.' Is not this promise broad and deep and full? Can you ask more? Will you not allow the Lord right here to erect a standard for you against the enemy? Satan is ready to steal away the blessed assurances of God. He desires to take every glimmer of hope and every ray of light from the soul; but you must not permit him to do this. Exercise faith; fight the good fight of faith; wrestle with these doubts; become acquainted with the promises." –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 629.

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

"The Christian in his business life is to represent to the world the manner in which our Lord would conduct business enterprises. In every transaction he is to make it manifest that God is his teacher. 'Holiness unto the Lord' is to be written upon daybooks and ledgers, on deeds, receipts, and bills of exchange. Those who profess to be followers of Christ, and who deal in an unrighteous manner, are bearing false witness against the character of a holy, just, and merciful God.... If we have injured others through any unjust business transaction, if we have overreached in trade, or defrauded any man, even though it be within the pale of the law, we should confess our wrong, and make restitution as far as lies in our power. It is right for us to restore not only that which we have taken, but all that it would have accumulated if put to a right and wise use during the time it has been in our possession." –*The Desire of Ages*, p. 556.

* * *

Israel's Unfaithfulness

"And also all that generation were gathered unto their fathers: and there arose another generation after them, which knew not the Lord, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel." Judges 2:10.

"But regardless of their high destiny, they chose the course of ease and self-indulgence; they let slip their opportunities for completing the conquest of the land; and for many generations they were afflicted by the remnant of these idolatrous peoples, that were, as the prophet had foretold, as 'pricks' in their eyes, and as 'thorns' in their sides. Numbers 33:55.

"The Israelites were 'mingled among the heathen, and learned their works.' Psalm 106:35. They intermarried with the Canaanites, and idolatry spread like a plague throughout the land. 'They served their idols: which were a snare unto them. Yea, they sacrificed their sons and their daughters unto devils,... and the land was polluted with blood.... Therefore was the wrath of the Lord kindled against His people, insomuch that He abhorred His own inheritance.' Psalm 106:36-40." *—Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 544.

SUNDAY

1. When they turned away from the true God, whom were the Israelites following in the religious realm?

JUDGES 2:11-13 *And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and served Baalim: ¹²And 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. ¹³And they forsook the Lord, and served Baal and Ashtaroth.*

"Until the generation that had received instruction from Joshua became extinct, idolatry made little headway; but the parents had prepared the way for the apostasy of their children. The disregard of the Lord's restrictions on the part of those who came in possession of Canaan sowed seed of evil that continued to bring forth bitter fruit for many generations. The simple habits of the Hebrews had secured them physical health; but association with the heathen led to the indulgence of appetite and passion, which gradually lessened physical strength and enfeebled the mental and moral powers.... 'They forsook the Lord God of their fathers, which brought them out of the land of Egypt,' 'and guided them in the wilderness like a flock.'" *—Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 544, 545.

"The reason why the children of Israel forsook Jehovah was that the generation rose up that had not been instructed concerning the great deliverance from Egypt by the hand of Jesus Christ. Their fathers had not rehearsed to them the history of the divine guardianship that had

been over the children of Israel through all their travels in the wilderness.”
—*Review and Herald*, May 21, 1895.

MONDAY

PLUNDERED AND DEFEATED

2. What grave consequences resulted from abandoning the true God and following one’s own sinful tendencies?

JUDGES 2:14, 15 *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. ¹⁵Whithersoever they went out, the hand of the Lord was against them for evil, as the Lord had said, and as the Lord had sworn unto them: and they were greatly distressed.*

“They were to present to their children tokens of the power of God, and to perform ceremonies that would provoke inquiry, and give them an opportunity of repeating the works of God in dealing with His people. But the parents failed to act the part that God had assigned them in diligently teaching their children, so that they might have been intelligent in regard to the works of God in leading His people through the wilderness.... The parents neglected the very work that the Lord had charged them to do, and failed to instruct them in regard to God’s purpose toward His chosen people. They did not keep before them the fact that idolatry was sin, and that to worship other gods meant to forsake Jehovah. If parents had fulfilled their duty, we should never have the record of the generation that knew not God, and were therefore given into the hands of the spoilers.”
—*Review and Herald*, May 21, 1895.

“By their sins the Israelites were separated from God; His strength was removed from them, and they could no longer prevail against their enemies. Thus they were brought into subjection to the very nations that through God they might have subdued.” —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 545.

TUESDAY

3. Although at various times the Lord raised up judges and deliverers to be a blessing to Israel, how firm was the people’s commitment to obey the Lord?

JUDGES 2:16, 17 *Nevertheless the Lord raised up judges, which delivered them out of the hand of those that spoiled them. ¹⁷And yet they would not hearken unto their judges, but they went a whoring after other gods, and bowed themselves unto them: they turned quickly out of the way which their fathers walked in, obeying the commandments of the Lord; but they did not so.*

“Yet He did not utterly forsake His people. There was ever a remnant who were true to Jehovah; and from time to time the Lord raised up faithful and valiant men to put down idolatry and to deliver the Israelites from their enemies. But when the deliverer was dead, and the people were released from his authority, they would gradually return to their idols. And thus the story of backsliding and chastisement, of confession and deliverance, was repeated again and again.” —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 545.

THE ISRAELITES LOST THEIR SPIRITUAL IDENTITY

4. What was indicated by the fact that as soon as a judge died, the people's loyalty to God ended?

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. ¹⁹And 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.*

"If God had no law, there could be no judgment, and the cases of men and women would not be called into the solemn tribunal, before the righteous Judge. If we have not been found in harmony with God's requirements in this life, we will be no more in harmony with His requirements in the future life. What excuse can we plead for disobedience to the law of God's government?... You will be convicted of guilt before the revelation of your own life. Everyone unsaved will see where he departed from right, and will realize the influence his life of disobedience exerted to turn others from the way of truth. 'Every one of us shall give account of himself to God,' and the quick and the dead shall stand before the judgment seat of Christ. The secret things will be made known." —*Signs of the Times*, December 29, 1887.

THURSDAY

5. Why could the promise that was made to them previously not be fulfilled?

EXODUS 23:22 *But if thou shalt indeed obey his voice, and do all that I speak; then I will be an enemy unto thine enemies, and an adversary unto thine adversaries.*

JUDGES 2:20, 21 *And the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel; and he said, Because that this people hath transgressed my covenant which I commanded their fathers, and have not hearkened unto my voice; ²¹I also will not henceforth drive out any from before them of the nations which Joshua left when he died.*

"They ceased not from their own doings, nor from their stubborn way. And the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel; and he said, Because that this people hath transgressed my covenant which I commanded their fathers, and have not hearkened unto my voice; I also will not henceforth drive out any from before them of the nations which Joshua left when he died.'

"The Lord sought to bring His people into a position where He could manifest His power in their behalf; but their hearts were set to depart from God, and they would not submit to His requirements. What blindness! what inexplicable folly! and equally incomprehensible is the course of those whom God has endowed with intellectual gifts and surrounded

with temporal blessings, yet who will prefer worldly gain, and even the indulgence of debasing passions, to the favor of God and His infinite love." –*Signs of the Times*, June 9, 1881.

FRIDAY

6. What did it mean that the Lord left the nations to test Israel? How able are we in recognizing what the Lord is currently allowing to test us?

JUDGES 2:23; 3:1, 4-6 *Therefore the Lord left those nations, without driving them out hastily; neither delivered he them into the hand of Joshua....^{3:1}Now these are the nations which the Lord left, to prove Israel by them, even as many of Israel as had not known all the wars of Canaan;...⁴And they were to prove Israel by them, to know whether they would hearken unto the commandments of the Lord, which he commanded their fathers by the hand of Moses.⁵And the children of Israel dwelt among the Canaanites, Hittites, and Amorites, and Perizzites, and Hivites, and Jebusites: ⁶And they took their daughters to be their wives, and gave their daughters to their sons, and served their gods.*

"But though the power of the Canaanites had been broken, they had not been fully dispossessed. On the west the Philistines still held a fertile plain along the seacoast, while north of them was the territory of the Sidonians. Lebanon also was in the possession of the latter people; and to the south, toward Egypt, the land was still occupied by the enemies of Israel." –*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 511.

SABBATH

EACH TRIBE'S RESPONSIBILITY

7. Why did the Lord not allow Joshua to drive the heathen nations completely out of the territories received by the tribes? What was the responsibility of each?

JUDGES 2:22 *That through them I may prove Israel, whether they will keep the way of the Lord to walk therein, as their fathers did keep it, or not.*

"The whole land, both the parts already conquered and that which was yet unsubdued, was to be apportioned among the tribes. And it was the duty of each tribe to fully subdue its own inheritance. If the people should prove faithful to God, He would drive out their enemies from before them; and He promised to give them still greater possessions if they would but be true to His covenant." –*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 511.

"But unless we give ourselves unreservedly to His service, and walk in obedience to His commandments, we can bring no proof that we are members of the royal family. Would that we could ever realize the love which God has manifested toward us fallen sinners, in giving His only Son for our salvation! We should never lose sight of the fact that those whom Christ redeems at such an infinite price are to be purified, that they may be unto Him a peculiar people, zealous of good works. We should feel that Christ has placed upon us special honors in thus distinguishing us from the world, when He might have left us to perish in our sins." –*Signs of the Times*, June 9, 1881.

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

“God had placed His people in Canaan as a mighty breastwork to stay the tide of moral evil, that it might not flood the world. If faithful to Him, God intended that Israel should go on conquering and to conquer. He would give into their hands nations greater and more powerful than the Canaanites. The promise was: ‘If ye shall diligently keep all these commandments which I command you,... then will the Lord drive out all these nations from before you, and ye shall possess greater nations and mightier than yourselves. Every place whereon the soles of your feet shall tread shall be yours: from the wilderness and Lebanon, from the river, the river Euphrates, even unto the uttermost sea shall your coast be.’ Deuteronomy 11:22-24.” –*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 544.

“God would have His people present a marked contrast, in character and conduct, to the unbelieving world. We are to be ‘a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people....’ Only by constant watchfulness and earnest prayer, mingled with faith, can we preserve our peculiar, holy character as sons and daughters of God.” –*Signs of the Times*, June 9, 1881.

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5

Sabbath, February 1, 2025

Othniel, Ehud, and Shamgar

“The king of Mesopotamia, the king of Moab, and after them 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.’ Herebefore the hand of the oppressor had fallen but lightly on the tribes dwelling east of the Jordan, but in the present calamities they were the first sufferers.” –*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 545.

SUNDAY

1. What did the Lord do because of Israel’s disobedience?

JUDGES 3:7, 8 *And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and forgot the Lord their God, and served Baalim and the groves. ⁸Therefore the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel, and he sold them into the hand of Chushanrishathaim king of Mesopotamia: and the children of Israel served Chushanrishathaim eight years.*

“In their prosperity, Israel forgot God, as they had been warned that they would do. But reverses came. The Hebrews were subdued by the king of Mesopotamia, and held in severe bondage for eight years. In their distress, they found that their idolatrous connection could not help them.

Then they remembered the wonderful works of God, and began to cry unto Him, and the Lord raised up a deliverer for them, Othniel, Caleb's younger brother. The Spirit of the Lord rested upon him, and he judged Israel, and went out to war, and the Lord delivered the king of Mesopotamia into his hand." —*Signs of the Times*, June 9, 1881.

MONDAY

EMPOWERED BY THE SPIRIT

2. Whom did the Lord raise up as an instrument of liberation when the people turned to Him in prayer and with sincere, earnest cries? How did he have sufficient strength to resist the invaders and enable the people of Israel to defeat their enemy?

JUDGES 3:9-11 *And when the children of Israel cried unto the Lord, the Lord raised up a deliverer to the children of Israel, who delivered them, even Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother. ¹⁰And the Spirit of the Lord came upon him, and he judged Israel, and went out to war: and the Lord delivered Chushanrishathaim king of Mesopotamia into his hand; and his hand prevailed against Chushanrishathaim. ¹¹And the land had rest forty years. And Othniel the son of Kenaz died.*

"When Othniel was designated as the man whom God had chosen to lead and deliver Israel, he did not refuse to take the responsibility. In the strength of God he at once commenced to repress idolatry as the Lord had commanded, to administer justice, and to elevate the standard of morality and religion. As Israel repented of their sins, the Lord manifested His great mercy toward them, and wrought for their deliverance.

"For forty years Othniel ruled in Israel. During this time the people remained faithful to the divine law, and consequently enjoyed peace and prosperity. But when his judicious and salutary control ceased with his death, the Israelites again relapsed into idolatry. And thus the story of backsliding and chastisement, of confession and deliverance, was repeated again and again." —*Signs of the Times*, June 9, 1881.

TUESDAY

3. What happened when Israel again did that which was evil in the Lord's sight? How long did the people serve the king of Moab?

JUDGES 3:12-14 *And the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the Lord: and the Lord strengthened Eglon the king of Moab against Israel, because they had done evil in the sight of the Lord. ¹³And he gathered unto him the children of Ammon and Amalek, and went and smote Israel, and possessed the city of palm trees. ¹⁴So the children of Israel served Eglon the king of Moab eighteen years.*

"I was shown that Satan's power is especially exercised upon the people of God. Many were presented before me in a doubting, despairing condition. The infirmities of the body affect the mind. A cunning and powerful enemy attends our steps and employs his strength and skill in trying to turn us out of the right way. And it is too often the case that the people of God are not on their watch, therefore are ignorant of his

devices. He works by means which will best conceal himself from view, and he often gains his object." –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, p. 304.

WEDNESDAY

GOD MADE EHUD THE DELIVERER

4. When the people cried for relief, whom did the Lord raise up to deliver them?

JUDGES 3:15-17 *But when the children of Israel cried unto the Lord, the Lord raised them up a deliverer, Ehud the son of Gera, a Benjamite, a man left-handed: and by him the children of Israel sent a present unto Eglon the king of Moab. ¹⁶But Ehud made him a dagger which had two edges, of a cubit length; and he did gird it under his raiment upon his right thigh. ¹⁷And he brought the present unto Eglon king of Moab: and Eglon was a very fat man.*

"God will do marvelous things for those who trust in Him. It is because His professed people trust so much to their own wisdom, and do not give the Lord an opportunity to reveal His power in their behalf, that they have no more strength. He will help His believing children in every emergency if they will place their entire confidence in Him and implicitly obey Him.... Many who profess our faith are in this position. They are weak and powerless because they trust in their own strength. God works mightily for a faithful people who obey His word without questioning or doubt." –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, pp. 163, 164.

THURSDAY

5. What stratagem did Ehud devise and implement to carry out his plan to free Israel from their oppressors?

JUDGES 3:18-23 *And when he had made an end to offer the present, he sent away the people that bare the present. ¹⁹But he himself turned again from the quarries that were by Gilgal, and said, I have a secret errand unto thee, O king: who said, Keep silence. And all that stood by him went out from him. ²⁰And Ehud came unto him; and he was sitting in a summer parlour, which he had for himself alone. And Ehud said, I have a message from God unto thee. And he arose out of his seat. ²¹And Ehud put forth his left hand, and took the dagger from his right thigh, and thrust it into his belly: ²²And the haft also went in after the blade; and the fat closed upon the blade, so that he could not draw the dagger out of his belly; and the dirt came out. ²³Then Ehud went forth through the porch, and shut the doors of the parlour upon him, and locked them. See also Judges 3:24, 25.*

"Solemn are the lessons of Israel's failure during the years when ruler and people turned from the high purpose they had been called to fulfill. Wherein they were weak, even to the point of failure, the Israel of God today, the representatives of heaven that make up the true church of Christ, must be strong; for upon them devolves the task of finishing the work that has been committed to man, and of ushering in the day of final awards.... The forces of the enemy of all righteousness are strongly entrenched; only by the power of God can the victory be gained." –*Prophecies and Kings*, p. 74.

6. How did he call the Ephraimites to assist him in fighting against the invaders?

JUDGES 3:26-30 *And Ehud escaped while they tarried, and passed beyond the quarries, and escaped unto Seirath. ²⁷And it came to pass, when he was come, that he blew a trumpet in the mountain of Ephraim, and the children of Israel went down with him from the mount, and he before them. ²⁸And he said unto them, Follow after me: for the Lord hath delivered your enemies the Moabites into your hand. And they went down after him, and took the fords of Jordan toward Moab, and suffered not a man to pass over. ²⁹And they slew of Moab at that time about ten thousand men, all lusty, and all men of valour; and there escaped not a man. ³⁰So Moab was subdued that day under the hand of Israel. And the land had rest fourscore years.*

“The conflict before us calls for the exercise of a spirit of self-denial, for distrust of self and for dependence on God alone, for the wise use of every opportunity for the saving of souls. The Lord’s blessing will attend His church as they advance unitedly, revealing to a world lying in the darkness of error the beauty of holiness as manifested in a Christlike spirit of self-sacrifice, in an exaltation of the divine rather than the human, and in loving and untiring service for those so much in need of the blessings of the gospel.” —*Prophets and Kings*, p. 74.

SABBATH

SHAMGAR CHALLENGED THE PHILISTINES

7. In another circumstance in which the invaders came from the southeast, whom did the Lord use to free His people?

JUDGES 3:31 *And after him was Shamgar the son of Anath, which slew of the Philistines six hundred men with an ox goad: and he also delivered Israel.*

“The work rests upon us to perfect holiness. When God sees us doing all we can on our part, then He will help us. Angels will aid us, and we shall be strong through Christ strengthening us. Do not neglect secret prayer. Pray for yourself. Grow in grace. Advance. Don’t stand still, don’t go back. Onward to victory. Courage in the Lord.... Battle with the great adversary only a little longer, and then release will come, and the armor will be laid off at the feet of our dear Redeemer. Press through every obstacle. If the future looks somewhat clouded, hope on, believe on. The clouds will disappear, and light again shine.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, p. 663.

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

“He who has become a partaker of the divine nature knows that his citizenship is above. He catches the inspiration from the Spirit of Christ. His soul is hid with Christ in God. Such a man Satan can no longer employ as his instrumentality to insinuate himself into the very sanctuary of God, to defile the temple of God. He gains victories at every step. He is filled with ennobling thoughts. He regards every human being as precious, because Christ has died for every soul.

“They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles.’ The man who waits upon the Lord is strong in his strength, strong enough to hold firm under great pressure. Yet he is easy to be entreated on the side of mercy and compassion, which is the side of Christ. The soul that is submissive to God is ready to do the will of God; he diligently and humbly seeks to know that will. He accepts discipline, and is afraid to walk according to his own finite judgment. He communes with God, and his conversation is in heaven.” —*My Life Today*, p. 277.

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6

Sabbath, February 8, 2025

Deborah and Barak

“God will not give His Spirit to those who make no use of the heavenly gift. But those who are drawn out of and away from themselves, seeking to enlighten, encourage, and bless others, will have increased ability and energy to expend. The more light they give, the more they receive.” —*Reflecting Christ*, p. 319.

SUNDAY

1. After Ehud passed away, what did the Israelites do? How long did this deplorable situation continue?

JUDGES 4:1-3 *And the children of Israel again did evil in the sight of the Lord, when Ehud was dead. ²And the Lord sold them into the hand of Jabin king of Canaan, that reigned in Hazor; the captain of whose host was Sisera, which dwelt in Harosheth of the Gentiles. ³And the children of Israel cried unto the Lord: for he had nine hundred chariots of iron; and twenty years he mightily oppressed the children of Israel.*

“The Israelites, having again separated themselves from God by idolatry, were grievously oppressed by [their] enemies. The property and even the lives of the people were in constant danger. Hence the villages and lonely dwellings were deserted, and the people congregated in the walled cities. The highroads were unoccupied, and the people went from place to place by unfrequented byways. At the places for drawing water, many were robbed and even murdered, and to add to their distress, the Israelites were unarmed. Among forty thousand men, not a sword or a spear could be found.” —*Daughters of God*, p. 37.

MONDAY

DEBORAH, A COURAGEOUS WOMAN

2. While the people suffered under such horrible conditions, whom did Deborah, the prophetess and judge, call to help? What great task did she ask him to carry out?

JUDGES 4:4-7 *And Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lapidoth, she judged Israel at that time. ⁵And she dwelt under the palm tree of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in mount Ephraim: and the children of Israel came up to her for judgment. ⁶And she sent and called Barak the son of Abinoam out of Kedeshnaphtali, and said unto him, Hath not the Lord God of Israel commended, saying, Go and draw toward mount Tabor, and take with thee ten thousand men of the children of Naphtali and of the children of Zebulun? ⁷And I will draw unto thee to the river Kishon Sisera, the captain of Jabin's army, with his chariots and his multitude; and I will deliver him into thine hand.*

"For twenty years, the Israelites groaned under the yoke of the oppressor; then they turned from their idolatry, and with humiliation and repentance cried unto the Lord for deliverance. They did not cry in vain. There was dwelling in Israel a woman illustrious for her piety, and through her the Lord chose to deliver His people. Her name was Deborah. She was known as a prophetess, and in the absence of the usual magistrates, the people had sought to her for counsel and justice." —*Signs of the Times*, June 16, 1881.

TUESDAY

3. On what condition did Barak agree to assume the task? Whom did he call to help him against the oppressor?

JUDGES 4:8-10 *And Barak said unto her, If thou wilt go with me, then I will go: but if thou wilt not go with me, then I will not go. ⁹And she said, I will surely go with thee: notwithstanding the journey that thou takest shall not be for thine honour; for the Lord shall sell Sisera into the hand of a woman. And Deborah arose, and went with Barak to Kedesh. ¹⁰And Barak called Zebulun and Naphtali to Kedesh; and he went up with ten thousand men at his feet: and Deborah went up with him.*

"Barak knew the scattered, disheartened, and unarmed condition of the Hebrews, and the strength and skill of their enemies. Although he had been designated by the Lord Himself as the one chosen to deliver Israel, and had received the assurance that God would go with him and subdue their enemies, yet he was timid and distrustful. He accepted the message from Deborah as the word of God, but he had little confidence in Israel, and feared that they would not obey his call. He refused to engage in such a doubtful undertaking unless Deborah would accompany him, and thus support his efforts by her influence and counsel....

"The Lord communicated to Deborah His purpose to destroy the enemies of Israel, and bade her send for a man named Barak ... and make known to him the instructions which she had received. She accordingly sent for Barak, and directed him to assemble ten thousand men of the tribes of Naphtali and Zebulun, and make war upon the armies of King Jabin." —*Signs of the Times*, June 16, 1881.

WEDNESDAY

GENERAL SISERA DEPLOYED HIS CHARIOTS

4. Aware of the challenge, whom did Sisera bring together, believing that he would be victorious over the subjugated Israelites?

JUDGES 4:11-13 Now Heber the Kenite, which was of the children of Hobab the father in law of Moses, had severed himself from the Kenites, and pitched his tent unto the plain of Zaanaim, which is by Kedesh. ¹²And they shewed Sisera that Barak the son of Abinoam was gone up to mount Tabor. ¹³And Sisera gathered together all his chariots, even nine hundred chariots of iron, and all the people that were with him, from Harosheth of the Gentiles unto the river of Kishon.

"Barak now marshaled an army of ten thousand men, and marched to Mount Tabor, as the Lord had directed. Sisera immediately assembled an immense and well-equipped force, expecting to surround the Hebrews and make them an easy prey. The Israelites were but poorly prepared for an encounter, and looked with terror upon the vast armies spread out in the plain beneath them, equipped with all the implements of warfare, and provided with the dreaded chariots of iron. These were so constructed as to be terribly destructive. Large, scythe-like knives were fastened to the axles, so that the chariots, being driven through the ranks of the enemy, would cut them down like wheat before the sickle." —*Signs of the Times*, June 16, 1881.

THURSDAY

5. Through the prophetess Deborah, what command did the Lord give to Barak? Who actually defeated the general Sisera and his armies?

JUDGES 4:14-16 And Deborah said unto Barak, Up; for this is the day in which the Lord hath delivered Sisera into thine hand: is not the Lord gone out before thee? So Barak went down from mount Tabor, and ten thousand men after him. ¹⁵And the Lord discomfited Sisera, and all his chariots, and all his host, with the edge of the sword before Barak; so that Sisera lighted down off his chariot, and fled away on his feet. ¹⁶But Barak pursued after the chariots, and after the host, unto Harosheth of the Gentiles: and all the host of Sisera fell upon the edge of the sword; and there was not a man left.

"The Israelites had established themselves in a strong position in the mountains to await a favorable opportunity for an attack. Encouraged by Deborah's assurance that the very day had come for signal victory, Barak led his army down into the open plain, and boldly made a charge upon the enemy. The God of battle fought for Israel and neither skill in warfare, nor superiority of numbers and equipment, could withstand them. The hosts of Sisera were panic-stricken.... God alone could have discomfited the enemy, and the victory could be ascribed to Him alone." —*Reflecting Christ*, p. 329.

FRIDAY

6. Completely defeated, where did Sisera seek refuge and relief? Who was Jael?

JUDGES 4:11, 17-20 Now Heber the Kenite, which was of the children of Hobab the father in law of Moses, had severed himself from the Kenites, and pitched his tent unto the plain of Zaanaim, which is by Kedesh.... ¹⁷Howbeit Sisera fled away on his feet to the tent of Jael the wife of Heber

the Kenite: for there was peace between Jabin the king of Hazor and the house of Heber the Kenite. ¹⁸And Jael went out to meet Sisera, and said unto him, Turn in, my lord, turn in to me; fear not. And when he had turned in unto her into the tent, she covered him with a mantle. ¹⁹And he said unto her, Give me, I pray thee, a little water to drink; for I am thirsty. And she opened a bottle of milk, and gave him drink, and covered him. ²⁰Again he said unto her, Stand in the door of the tent, and it shall be, when any man doth come and enquire of thee, and say, Is there any man here? that thou shalt say, No.

“When Sisera saw that his army was defeated, he left his chariot, and endeavored to make his escape on foot, as a common soldier. Approaching the tent of Heber, one of the descendants of Jethro, the fugitive was invited to find shelter there. In the absence of Heber, Jael, his wife, courteously offered Sisera a refreshing draught and opportunity for repose, and the weary general soon fell asleep.” —*Daughters of God*, p. 38.

SABBATH

SISERA LOST THE BATTLE AND LIFE

7. What was the ignoble end of this warrior who fought against God and His people?

JUDGES 4:21-24 Then Jael Heber's wife took a nail of the tent, and took an hammer in her hand, and went softly unto him, and smote the nail into his temples, and fastened it into the ground: for he was fast asleep and weary. So he died. ²²And, behold, as Barak pursued Sisera, Jael came out to meet him, and said unto him, Come, and I will shew thee the man whom thou seekest. And when he came into her tent, behold, Sisera lay dead, and the nail was in his temples. ²³So God subdued on that day Jabin the king of Canaan before the children of Israel. ²⁴And the hand of the children of Israel prospered, and prevailed against Jabin the king of Canaan, until they had destroyed Jabin king of Canaan.

“Jael was at first ignorant of the character of her guest, and she resolved to conceal him; but when she afterward learned that he was Sisera, the enemy of God and of His people, her purpose changed. As he lay before her asleep, she overcame her natural reluctance to such an act, and slew him by driving a nail through his temples, pinning him to the earth. As Barak, in pursuit of his enemy, passed that way, he was called in by Jael to behold the vain-glorious captain dead at his feet—slain by the hand of a woman.” —*Signs of the Times*, June 16, 1881.

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

“A soul united with Christ, eating His flesh and drinking His blood, in accepting and living by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God will war against all transgression and every approach of sin. He becomes every day more like a bright and shining light, and more victorious. He goes on from strength to strength, not from weakness to weakness.” —*Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, p. 441.

* * *

Song of Liberation

“Curse ye Meroz, said the angel of the Lord, curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof; because they came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty.’ What had Meroz done? Nothing. This was their sin. The curse of God came upon them for what they had not done. The man with a selfish, narrow mind is responsible for his niggardliness, but those who have kindly affections, generous impulses, and a love for souls are laid under weighty responsibilities; for if they allow these talents to remain unemployed and to waste, they are classed with unfaithful servants. The mere possession of these gifts is not enough. Those who have them should realize that their obligations and responsibilities are increased.” –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, p. 284.

SUNDAY

PRAISE TO THE LORD

1. How did Deborah and Barak express their great joy for the result of the battle? Who rightly received the glory and honor for Israel’s victory over their oppressors?

JUDGES 5:1-5 *Then sang Deborah and Barak the son of Abinoam on that day, saying, ²Praise ye the Lord for the avenging of Israel, when the people willingly offered themselves. ³Hear, O ye kings; give ear, O ye princes; I, even I, will sing unto the Lord; I will sing praise to the Lord God of Israel. ⁴Lord, when thou wentest out of Seir, when thou marchest out of the field of Edom, the earth trembled, and the heavens dropped, the clouds also dropped water. ⁵The mountains melted from before the Lord, even that Sinai from before the Lord God of Israel.*

“To praise God in fullness and sincerity of heart is as much a duty as is prayer. We are to show to the world and to all the heavenly intelligences that we appreciate the wonderful love of God for fallen humanity and that we are expecting larger and yet larger blessings from His infinite fullness. Far more than we do, we need to speak of the precious chapters in our experience. After a special outpouring of the Holy Spirit, our joy in the Lord and our efficiency in His service would be greatly increased by recounting His goodness and His wonderful works in behalf of His children.” –*Christ’s Object Lessons*, pp. 299, 300.

MONDAY

2. What thought comes to mind in regard to Deborah’s calling herself a mother in Israel? What was the implication of her statement that before her there was no shield or spear among forty thousand in Israel?

JUDGES 5:6-10 *In the days of Shamgar the son of Anath, in the days of Jael, the highways were unoccupied, and the travellers walked through byways. ⁷The inhabitants of the villages ceased, they ceased in Israel, until that I Deborah arose, that I arose a mother in Israel. ⁸They chose new gods; then was war in the gates: was there a shield or spear seen among forty thousand in Israel? ⁹My heart is toward the governors of Israel, that offered themselves willingly among the people. Bless ye the Lord. ¹⁰Speak, ye that ride on white asses, ye that sit in judgment, and walk by the way.*

“For twenty years, the Israelites groaned under the yoke of the oppressor; then they turned from their idolatry, and with humiliation and repentance cried unto the Lord for deliverance. They did not cry in vain. There was dwelling in Israel a woman illustrious for her piety, and through her the Lord chose to deliver His people. Her name was Deborah. She was known as a prophetess, and in the absence of the usual magistrates, the people had sought to her for counsel and justice.” —*Reflecting Christ*, p. 329.

TUESDAY

BLESSING OF COOPERATION

3. What did the song say about the various tribes' responses and the people's actions? What does this teach about dealing with problems?

JUDGES 5:13-16 *Then he made him that remaineth have dominion over the nobles among the people: the Lord made me have dominion over the mighty. ¹⁴Out of Ephraim was there a root of them against Amalek; after thee, Benjamin, among thy people; out of Machir came down governors, and out of Zebulun they that handle the pen of the writer. ¹⁵And the princes of Issachar were with Deborah; even Issachar, and also Barak: he was sent on foot into the valley. For the divisions of Reuben there were great thoughts of heart. ¹⁶Why abodest thou among the sheepfolds, to hear the bleatings of the flocks? For the divisions of Reuben there were great searchings of heart.*

“The Lord sets men in positions of responsibility to carry out not their own will, but God's will. He gives wisdom to those who seek Him and depend upon Him as their Counselor. So long as men represent the pure principles of His government, He will continue to bless and maintain them as His instrumentalities to carry out His purposes concerning His people. He cooperates with those who cooperate with Him.” —*Christian Leadership*, p. 60.

“The will of men, women, and children must be trained by cooperation with God.... The melody of spiritual joy, and spiritual as well as physical health, will be revealed and will promote that blessedness that the Lord Jesus came to our world to impart to every individual who will believe.” —*Christ Triumphant*, p. 239.

WEDNESDAY

4. How did all of the tribes contribute to the battle against Israel's enemies? What especially significant aspect was recorded in the song of victory?

JUDGES 5:17-21 *Gilead abode beyond Jordan: and why did Dan remain in ships? Asher continued on the sea shore, and abode in his breaches. ¹⁸Zebulun and Naphtali were a people that jeopardated their lives unto the death in the high places of the field. ¹⁹The kings came and fought, then fought the kings of Canaan in Taanach by the waters of Megiddo; they took no gain of money. ²⁰They fought from heaven; the stars in their courses fought against Sisera. ²¹The river of Kishon swept them away, that ancient river, the river Kishon. O my soul, thou hast trodden down strength.*

THURSDAY

5. What was told in the Scriptures about the city whose inhabitants did not lend a helping hand? On the other hand, what blessing was sung about Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite, who was not strictly an Israelite?

JUDGES 5:23-27 *Curse ye Meroz, said the angel of the Lord, curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof; because they came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty. ²⁴Blessed above women shall Jael the wife of Heber the Kenite be, blessed shall she be above women in the tent. ²⁵He asked water, and she gave him milk; she brought forth butter in a lordly dish. ²⁶She put her hand to the nail, and her right hand to the workmen's hammer; and with the hammer she smote Sisera, she smote off his head, when she had pierced and stricken through his temples. ²⁷At her feet he bowed, he fell, he lay down: at her feet he bowed, he fell: where he bowed, there he fell down dead.*

"Said the Judge, 'All will be justified by their faith, and judged by their works.' How vividly then appeared their neglect, and how wise the arrangement of God in giving to every man a work to do to promote the cause and save his fellow men. Each was to demonstrate a living faith in his family and in his neighborhood, by showing kindness to the poor, sympathizing with the afflicted, engaging in missionary labor, and by aiding the cause of God with his means. But, like Meroz, the curse of God rested upon them for what they had not done. They had loved that work which would bring the greatest profit in this life; and opposite their names in the ledger devoted to good works there was a mournful blank." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 386.

FRIDAY

DO NOT BECOME ENTANGLED IN QUESTIONABLE MATTERS

6. What must those who cooperate in an evil cause expect, even if they use all of their strength?

JUDGES 5:28-30 *The mother of Sisera looked out at a window, and cried through the lattice, Why is his chariot so long in coming? why tarry the wheels of his chariots? ²⁹Her wise ladies answered her, yea, she returned answer to herself, ³⁰Have they not sped? have they not divided the prey; to every man a damsel or two; to Sisera a prey of divers colours, a prey of divers colours of needlework, of divers colours of needlework on both sides, meet for the necks of them that take the spoil?*

"It is important that all now come up to the work and act as though they were living men, laboring for the salvation of souls who are perishing. If all in the church would come up to the help of the Lord, we would see such a revival of His work as we have not hitherto witnessed. God requires this of you and of each member of the church.... Obedience is required; and unless you obey you will stand on worse than neutral ground. Unless you are favored with the blessing of God, you have His curse. He requires you to be willing and obedient, and says that you shall eat the good of the land. A bitter curse is pronounced on those who come not to the help of the Lord. 'Curse ye Meroz,'... Satan and his angels are in the field to oppose every advance step that God's people take, therefore the help of everyone is required." –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, pp. 165, 166.

"There is a class that are represented by Meroz. The missionary spirit has never taken hold of their souls. The calls of foreign missions have not stirred them to action. What account will those render to God, who are doing nothing in his cause—nothing to win souls to Christ? Such will receive the denunciation, 'Thou wicked and slothful servant.'" –*Historical Sketches of the Foreign Missions of the Seventh-day Adventists*, p. 290.

SABBATH

7. What did the song pray would happen to Israel's enemies? What desire was expressed for those who loved God and His work?

JUDGES 5:31 *So let all thine enemies perish, O Lord: but let them that love him be as the sun when he goeth forth in his might. And the land had rest forty years.*

"Our work is incomplete if we do not educate others to be laborers together with God, visiting and praying with families, showing to the world what Jesus has done for us. God's word declares, 'Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.' James 1:27. These words are spoken to every follower of Christ. Not only the minister, but every soul connected with Him, is to be a worker in His vineyard. 'Herein is My Father glorified,' Christ said, 'that ye bear much fruit.' John 15:8. By His own life Christ has paid for your earnest, hearty cooperation. If you do not work as faithful missionaries, you are untrue to your trust, and you disappoint your Saviour." –*This Day with God*, p. 370.

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

"Temporal and spiritual prosperity are made conditional upon obedience to the law of God. But we do not read God's word, and thus become familiar with the terms of the blessing that is to be given to all who hearken diligently to God's law and teach it diligently in their families. Obedience to God's word is our life, our happiness. We look upon the world and see it groaning under the wickedness and violence of men who have degraded the law of God. He has withdrawn His blessing from orchard and vineyard. Were it not for His commandment-keeping people who live upon the earth, He would not stay His judgments. He extends His mercy because of the righteous, who love and fear Him." –*Child Guidance*, p. 80.

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The Call of Gideon

"Gideon deeply felt his own insufficiency for the great work before him.... The Lord does not always choose for His work men of the greatest talents, but He selects those whom He can best use. Individuals who might do good service for God, may for a time be left in obscurity, apparently unnoticed and unemployed by their Master. But if they faithfully perform the duties of their humble position, cherishing a willingness to labor and to sacrifice for Him, He will in His own time entrust them with greater responsibilities." –*Conflict and Courage*, p. 126.

SUNDAY

1. What did the Lord permit to happen when Israel again did that which was evil in His sight?

JUDGES 6:1-4, 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. ²And the hand of Midian prevailed against Israel: and because of the Midianites the children of Israel made them the dens which are in the mountains, and caves, and strong holds. ³And 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; ⁴And 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.... ⁶And Israel was greatly impoverished because of the Midianites; and the children of Israel cried unto the Lord.*

"The children of Israel made a solemn vow to God that they would be obedient; but they disregarded the Lord's requirements. Some remained loyal to God, but the majority disregarded the word. They set the law of God at defiance, and taught for doctrines the commandments of men. Because of their transgression, the Lord was about to divorce Himself from the disobedient nation. He had spoken to them through the prophets, and through Christ, the great Teacher, the light of the world. If they desired to do right, the way was plainly revealed to them." –*Review and Herald*, February 27, 1900.

MONDAY

THE PEOPLE WERE WARNED

2. What message did He send to the people so that they would understand their serious responsibilities?

JUDGES 6:7-10 *And it came to pass, when the children of Israel cried unto the Lord because of the Midianites, ⁸That 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; ⁹And 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; ¹⁰And 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.*

“If the requirements of a good and wise father, who took the best and most effectual means to secure his posterity against the evils of intemperance, were worthy of strict obedience, surely God’s authority should be held in as much greater reverence as He is holier than man. Our Creator and our Commander, infinite in power, terrible in judgment, seeks by every means to bring men to see and repent of their sins. By the mouth of His servants He predicts the dangers of disobedience; He sounds the note of warning and faithfully reproveth sin. His people are kept in prosperity only by His mercy, through the vigilant watchcare of chosen instrumentalities. He cannot uphold and guard a people who reject His counsel and despise His reproofs. For a time He may withhold His retributive judgments; yet He cannot always stay His hand.” —*Conflict and Courage*, p. 238.

TUESDAY

THE LORD CHOSE GIDEON

3. What did the Angel of the Lord say to Gideon when He appeared to him?

JUDGES 6:11-13 *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 oak Gideon threshed wheat by the winepress, to hide it from the Midianites. ¹²And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him, and said unto him, The Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valour. ¹³And 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.*

“Gideon was the son of Joash, of the tribe of Manasseh. The division to which this family belonged held no leading position, but the household of Joash was distinguished for courage and integrity. Of his brave sons it is said, ‘Each one resembled the children of a king.’ All but one had fallen in the struggles against the Midianites, and he had caused his name to be feared by the invaders. To Gideon came the divine call to deliver his people. He was engaged at the time in threshing wheat. A small quantity of grain had been concealed, and not daring to beat it out on the ordinary threshing floor, he had resorted to a spot near the winepress; for the season of ripe grapes being still far off, little notice was now taken of the vineyards. As Gideon labored in secrecy and silence, he sadly pondered upon the condition of Israel and considered how the oppressor’s yoke might be broken from off his people.” —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 546.

4. What great task did the Lord ask Gideon to perform? What promise did He make to him when he expressed his belief that he was not sufficient for the task?

JUDGES 6:14-16 *And the Lord looked upon him, and said, Go in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites: have not I sent thee? ¹⁵And 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. ¹⁶And the Lord said unto him, Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man.*

"Suddenly the 'Angel of the Lord' appeared and addressed him with the words, 'Jehovah is with thee, thou mighty man of valor.'

"'O my Lord,' was his answer, '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.'

"The Messenger of heaven replied, 'Go in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites: have not I sent thee?'" –*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 546, 547.

THURSDAY

5. What did it mean that he had to tear down one altar and build another?

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: ²⁶And 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. ²⁷Then 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.*

"God then charged Moses to make no covenant with the inhabitants of the land whither they should go, lest they should be ensnared thereby. But they should destroy their idol altars, break their images, and cut down their groves, which were dedicated to their idols, and where the people assembled to hold their idolatrous feasts, given in honor of their idol gods. He then said to them, 'Thou shalt worship no other god, for the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God.'" –*Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 3, p. 292.

FRIDAY

GIDEON THREATENED

6. What did the people of the city want to do with Gideon when they learned that he was the one who tore down the altar of Baal and cut down the statue of Asherah?

JUDGES 6:30-32 *Then the men of the city said unto Joash, Bring out thy son, that he may die: because he hath cast down the altar of Baal, and because he hath cut down the grove that was by it. ³¹And Joash said unto all that stood against him, Will ye plead for Baal? will ye save him? he that will plead for him, let him be put to death whilst it is yet morning: if he be a god, let him plead for himself, because one hath cast down his altar. ³²Therefore on that day he called him Jerubbaal, saying, Let Baal plead against him, because he hath thrown down his altar.*

“The divine direction was faithfully carried out. Knowing that he would be opposed if it were attempted openly, Gideon performed the work in secret; with the aid of his servants, accomplishing the whole in one night. Great was the rage of the men of Ophrah when they came next morning to pay their devotions to Baal. They would have taken Gideon’s life had not Joash—who had been told of the Angel’s visit—stood in defense of his son. ‘Will ye plead for Baal?’ said Joash. ‘Will ye save him? he that will plead for him, let him be put to death whilst it is yet morning: if he be a god, let him plead for himself, because one hath cast down his altar.’ If Baal could not defend his own altar, how could he be trusted to protect his worshippers?” —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 547, 548.

SABBATH

7. What did Gideon ask for to be sure that it was God’s will to save Israel through him?

JUDGES 6:36-40 *And Gideon said unto God, If thou wilt save Israel by mine hand, as thou hast said, ³⁷Behold, 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. ³⁸And it was so: for he rose up early on the morrow, and thrust the fleece together, and wringed the dew out of the fleece, a bowl full of water. ³⁹And Gideon said unto God, Let not thine anger be hot against me, and I will speak but this once: let me prove, I pray thee, but this once with the fleece; let it now be dry only upon the fleece, and upon all the ground let there be dew. ⁴⁰And God did so that night: for it was dry upon the fleece only, and there was dew on all the ground.*

“Gideon dared not place himself at the head of the army without still further evidence that God had called him to his work, and that He would be with him. He prayed, ‘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 besides, then shall I know that Thou wilt save Israel by mine hand, as Thou hast said.’ In the morning the fleece was wet, while the ground was dry. But now a doubt arose, since wool naturally absorbs moisture when there is any in the air; the test might not be decisive. Hence he asked that the sign be reversed, pleading that his extreme caution might not displease the Lord. His request was granted.” —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 548.

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

“In all ages, God has wrought through holy angels for the succor and deliverance of His people. Celestial beings have taken an active part in the

affairs of men. They have appeared clothed in garments that shone as the lightning; they have come as men in the garb of wayfarers. Angels have appeared in human form to men of God. They have rested, as if weary, under the oaks at noon. They have accepted the hospitalities of human homes. They have acted as guides to benighted travelers. They have, with their own hands, kindled the fires at the altar. They have opened prison doors and set free the servants of the Lord. Clothed with the panoply of heaven, they came to roll away the stone from the Saviour's tomb." —*The Great Controversy*, p. 631.

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MISSIONARY REPORT FROM THE GENERAL CONFERENCE EVANGELISM DEPARTMENT

To be read on Sabbath, February 22, 2025

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, Jesus charged His followers with the great gospel commission in Mark 16:15: "And He said unto them, Go ye into *all the world*, and preach the gospel to every creature."

Through the work of the Holy Spirit and the efforts and sacrifice of the pioneers and messengers of God, the church has members in 162 countries, as well as contacts who are receiving Bible studies presenting the truth of the Reformation. The United Nations lists 193 official countries in the world along with approximately 50 independent and semi-independent territories.

The countries and territories that have not yet been reached are in North Africa, Asia, part of Europe, and many islands in the different seas. They include mostly Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, and other pagan or atheist religions. There is also an enormous language barrier, for there are 7,100 different languages and dialects spoken in the world.

But, even though there are many barriers, Jesus promised to be with His people and guide them by the wonderful gift of the Holy Spirit.

Under the theme RESCUE, the General Conference Evangelism Department is focusing efforts in especially two areas:

Work in social media, thus reaching individuals in the most remote, darkest corners of earth where workers are not able to go.

Mobilize the believers by creating and training teams of responders or lay missionaries to share God's word in cooperation with the church's leaders.

WORK IN SOCIAL MEDIA

Over the last few years, the Lord in His grace has opened new doors through social media networks to reach the world with the present truth. The Evangelism Department has created and continues to create social media accounts and websites in different languages, such as **labibliatienerazon.org** in Spanish, **biblewell.org** in English, **labiblearaison.org** in French, and others on Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram.

Through the important donations of several brethren, in 2020 paid notifications were purchased to promote Bible courses through social networks in different countries. More than 120 million people have been reached through these social networks, and thousands of

requests for the Bible course have been received. Language correspondence teams were created to respond to these requests. It takes \$300-\$500 to run a good promotional campaign on social media in a new country to offer Bible courses and spiritual topics that reach millions of people with the message. Through the work of God, many people have already completed Bible studies, and some have made a covenant with God.

But we have received requests in many other languages and Macedonian calls from every continent to visit interested souls who are taking Bible studies and want be confirmed in the truth. Therefore, the Evangelism Department has the following goals for responding to requests for Bible courses in the following 12 main languages that are spoken in multiple countries:

- English: 1.452 billion
- Chinese (Mandarin): 1.118 billion
- Hindi: 602 million
- Spanish: 548 million
- French: 280 million
- Arabic: 274 million
- Bengali: 272 million
- Russian: 258 million
- Portuguese: 257 million
- Urdu (Pakistan, India): 231 million
- Swahili: 200 million
- German: 134 million

About \$5,000 per year is required to support a person who can assist with the correspondence needed to reach a new country. In addition, an investment has to be made in equipment and software to prepare videos and messages in multiple languages and be able to reach the greatest number of people possible with the eternal gospel.

Furthermore, new series of interesting documentaries with Biblical themes are planned in multiple languages that inspire the listener to subscribe to the Bible course. A new documentary series costs close to \$10,000 for personnel, editing, production, rights, equipment, and other expenses.

We also want to share the present truth on the channels that the new smart TV screens use. About \$10,000 is required to cover one TV channel per year per region. Expenses are much higher for satellite TV.

MOBILIZE THE BELIEVERS TO DO LAY WORK

“The Lord calls for volunteers now. Go forth, workers for God, weeping, carrying precious seed; for doubtless you will return with rejoicing.

ing, bringing your sheaves with you.” -*Review and Herald*, December 15, 1885.

Dear brothers and sisters, by working together we can achieve much more than if we work alone. Beginning with the support of your prayers, remember to “like” social media presentations when a new video comes out so that it can have greater reach, and please share the links with friends and contacts.

In 2024, new RESCUE challenges were prepared to unite the believers in outreach:

1. **Team Rescue**—Be part of a team of volunteers who work together in personal missionary activities.
2. **Home Rescue**—Join a team of people who open their homes to share the word of God with neighbors and friends.
3. **Mission Rescue**—Be part of a team that develops public evangelism activities.
4. **Service Rescue**—Join those who place their talents at the service of their peers.

You will find more information about the RESCUE plan on the following website: www.planrescate.org.

Join these challenges of the RESCUE plan to reach souls for the kingdom of God. You may also make contributions so that the message can enter a new country and help to cover the whole planet in preparation for the coming of the Lord Jesus.

“And this gospel of the kingdom shall be *preached* in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and *then shall the end come.*” Matthew 24:14.

Thank you in advance for your contributions. We pray that God will multiply the means of each joyful donor.

Your brother in Christ,

Pastor Pablo Hunger
General Conference Evangelism Department Leader

**SPECIAL SABBATH SCHOOL OFFERING
FOR the GENERAL CONFERENCE
EVANGELISM DEPARTMENT**

May God multiply your generous gifts!

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Sabbath, March 1, 2025

Victory with Few

“True Christian character is marked by a singleness of purpose, an indomitable determination, which refuses to yield to worldly influences, which will aim at nothing short of the Bible standard. If men will permit themselves to become discouraged in the service of God, the great adversary will present abundant reasons to turn them from the plain path of duty to one of ease and irresponsibility. Those who can be bribed or seduced, discouraged or terrified, will be of no service in the Christian warfare. Those who set their affections on worldly treasures or worldly honors, will not push the battle against principalities and powers, and spiritual wickedness in high places.” —*Signs of the Times*, June 30, 1881.

SUNDAY

1. Knowing that three nations had banded together, were already in Israel’s territory, and were about to attack, what appeal did Gideon send to four tribes?

JUDGES 6:33-35; 7:1 *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. ³⁴But the Spirit of the Lord came upon Gideon, and he blew a trumpet; and Abiezer was gathered after him. ³⁵And 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.... ^{7:1}Then Jerubbaal (that is, Gideon) and all the people who were with him rose early and encamped beside the spring of Harod. And the camp of Midian was north of them, by the hill of Moreh, in the valley.*

“All who would be soldiers of the cross of Christ, must gird on the armor and prepare for conflict. They should not be intimidated by threats, or terrified by dangers. They must be cautious in peril, yet firm and brave in facing the foe and doing battle for God. The consecration of Christ’s follower must be complete. Father, mother, wife, children, houses, lands, everything, must be held secondary to the work and cause of God. He must be willing to bear patiently, cheerfully, joyfully, whatever in God’s providence he may be called to suffer. His final reward will be to share

with Christ the throne of immortal glory. [Judges 7:4 quoted.]” –*Signs of the Times*, June 30, 1881.

MONDAY

REDUCING THE NUMBER OF FIGHTING MEN

2. What instructions did Gideon receive from God just when he had a good number of volunteers who were ready to defend Israel? Why did the Lord require this?

JUDGES 7:2, 3 *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. ³Now therefore go to, proclaim in the ears of the people, saying, Whosoever is fearful and afraid, let him return and depart early from mount Gilead. And there returned of the people twenty and two thousand; and there remained ten thousand.*

“Because his numbers were so few compared with those of the enemy, Gideon had refrained from making the usual proclamation. He was filled with astonishment at the declaration that his army was too large. But the Lord saw the pride and unbelief existing in the hearts of His people. Aroused by the stirring appeals of Gideon, they had readily enlisted; but many were filled with fear when they saw the multitudes of the Midianites. Yet, had Israel triumphed, those very ones would have taken the glory to themselves instead of ascribing the victory to God.” –*Conflict and Courage*, p. 127.

TUESDAY

3. Having to face an army like locusts in number, how logical did it appear to Gideon to reduce the number to even fewer men? What could he expect from such a small number?

JUDGES 7:4-8 *And the Lord said unto Gideon, The people are yet too many; bring them down unto the water, and I will try them for thee there: and it shall be, that of whom I say unto thee, This shall go with thee, the same shall go with thee; and of whomsoever I say unto thee, This shall not go with thee, the same shall not go. ⁵So he brought down the people unto the water: and the Lord said unto Gideon, Every one that lappeth of the water with his tongue, as a dog lappeth, him shalt thou set by himself; likewise every one that boweth down upon his knees to drink. ⁶And the number of them that lapped, putting their hand to their mouth, were three hundred men: but all the rest of the people bowed down upon their knees to drink water. ⁷And the Lord said unto Gideon, By the three hundred men that lapped will I save you, and deliver the Midianites into thine hand: and let all the other people go every man unto his place. ⁸So the people took victuals in their hand, and their trumpets: and he sent all the rest of Israel every man unto his tent, and retained those three hundred men: and the host of Midian was beneath him in the valley.*

“Gideon obeyed the Lord’s direction, and with a heavy heart he saw twenty-two thousand, or more than two thirds of his entire force, depart for their homes.

"The Lord is willing to do great things for us. We shall not gain the victory through numbers, but through the full surrender of the soul to Jesus. We are to go forward in His strength, trusting in the mighty God of Israel. There is a lesson for us in the story of Gideon's army.... The Lord is just as willing to work through human efforts now, and to accomplish great things through weak instrumentalities." –*Conflict and Courage*, p. 127.

WEDNESDAY

ENCOURAGEMENT FROM A DREAM

4. What courage did Gideon gain? What did he hear after God told him to go into the enemy camp?

JUDGES 7:9-14 *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. ¹⁰But if thou fear to go down, go thou with Phurah thy servant down to the host: ¹¹And 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. ¹²And the Midianites and the Amalekites and all the children of the east lay along in the valley like grasshoppers for multitude; and their camels were without number, as the sand by the sea side for multitude. ¹³And when Gideon was come, behold, there was a man that told a dream unto his fellow, and said, Behold, I dreamed a dream, and, lo, a cake of barley bread tumbled into the host of Midian, and came unto a tent, and smote it that it fell, and overturned it, that the tent lay along. ¹⁴And his fellow answered and said, This is nothing else save the sword of Gideon the son of Joash, a man of Israel: for into his hand hath God delivered Midian, and all the host.*

"The Lord is willing to do great things for us. We shall not gain the victory through numbers, but through the full surrender of the soul to Jesus. We are to go forward in His strength, trusting in the mighty God of Israel.

"There is a lesson for us in the story of Gideon's army.... The Lord is just as willing to work through human efforts now, and to accomplish great things through weak instrumentalities. It is essential to have an intelligent knowledge of the truth; for how else could we meet its wily opponents? The Bible must be studied, not alone for the doctrines it teaches, but for its practical lessons. You should never be surprised; you should never be without your armor on. Be prepared for any emergency, for any call of duty. Be waiting, watching for every opportunity to present the truth, familiar with the prophecies, familiar with the lessons of Christ. But do not trust in well-prepared arguments. Argument alone is not enough. God must be sought on your knees; you must go forth to meet the people through the power and influence of His Spirit." –*Review and Herald*, July 1, 1884.

THURSDAY

5. What convinced Gideon that the Lord would deliver the enemies into his hands?

JUDGES 7:15-18 *And it was so, when Gideon heard the telling of the dream, and the interpretation thereof, that he worshipped, and returned*

into the host of Israel, and said, Arise; for the Lord hath delivered into your hand the host of Midian. ¹⁶And 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. ¹⁷And 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. ¹⁸When 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.

"The Lord works in His own way, and according to His own devising. Let men pray that they may be divested of self, and may be in harmony with heaven. Let them pray, 'Not my will, but Thine, O God, be done.' Let men bear in mind that God's ways are not their ways, nor His thoughts their thoughts.... In the instruction that the Lord gave Gideon when he was about to fight with the Midianites,... these precise, methodical, formal men would see nothing but inconsistency and confusion. They would start back with determined protest and resistance. They would have held long controversies to show the inconsistency and the dangers that would accompany the carrying on of the warfare in such an extreme way, and in their finite judgment they would pronounce all such movements as utterly ridiculous and unreasonable. How unscientific, how inconsistent, would they have thought the movements of Joshua and his army at the taking of Jericho!" —*Review and Herald*, May 5, 1896.

FRIDAY

TORCHES, PITCHERS, AND TRUMPETS

6. What happened when the men joined Gideon in blowing the trumpets? Who performed a miracle at that moment?

JUDGES 7:19, LAST PART-23 ... And they blew the trumpets, and brake the pitchers that were in their hands. ²⁰And 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. ²¹And they stood every man in his place round about the camp; and all the host ran, and cried, and fled. ²²And 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 Beth-shittah in Zererath, and to the border of Abelmeholah, unto Tabbath. ²³And the men of Israel gathered themselves together out of Naphtali, and out of Asher, and out of all Manasseh, and pursued after the Midianites.

"The sleeping army was suddenly aroused. Upon every side was seen the light of the flaming torches. In every direction was heard the sound of trumpets, with the cry of the assailants. Believing themselves at the mercy of an overwhelming force, the Midianites were panic stricken. With wild cries of alarm they fled for life, and, mistaking their own companions for enemies, they slew one another. As news of the victory spread, thousands of the men of Israel who had been dismissed to their homes returned and joined in pursuit of their fleeing enemies. The Midianites were making their way toward the Jordan, hoping to reach their own territory, beyond the river." —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 550-553.

7. What appeal did Gideon send to the Ephraimites? What did their positive response lead to?

JUDGES 7:24, 25 *And Gideon sent messengers throughout all mount Ephraim, saying, come down against the Midianites, and take before them the waters unto Bethbarah and Jordan. Then all the men of Ephraim gathered themselves together, and took the waters unto Bethbarah and Jordan. ²⁵And 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.*

“Gideon sent messengers to the tribe of Ephraim, rousing them to intercept the fugitives at the southern fords. Meanwhile, with his three hundred, ‘faint, yet pursuing,’ Gideon crossed the stream hard after those who had already gained the farther side. The two princes, Zebah and Zalmunna, who had been over the entire host, and who had escaped with an army of fifteen thousand men, were overtaken by Gideon, their force completely scattered, and the leaders captured and slain.

“In this signal defeat not less than one hundred and twenty thousand of the invaders perished. The power of the Midianites was broken, so that they were never again able to make war upon Israel. The tidings spread swiftly far and wide, that Israel’s God had again fought for His people. No words can describe the terror of the surrounding nations when they learned what simple means had prevailed against the power of a bold, warlike people.” —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 553.

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

“The leader whom God chose to overthrow the Midianites occupied no prominent position in Israel. He was not a ruler, a priest, or a Levite. He thought himself the least in his father’s house. But God saw in him a man of courage and integrity. He was distrustful of himself and willing to follow the guidance of the Lord. God does not always choose for His work men of the greatest talents, but He selects those whom He can best use. ‘Before honor is humility.’ Proverbs 15:33. The Lord can work most effectually through those who are most sensible of their own insufficiency, and who will rely upon Him as their leader and source of strength. He will make them strong by uniting their weakness to His might, and wise by connecting their ignorance with His wisdom.” —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 553.

* * *

Internal and External Conflict

“And Gideon said unto them, I will not rule over you, neither shall my son rule over you: the Lord shall rule over you.” Judges 8:23.

“Before honor is humility. The Lord can use most effectually those who are most sensible of their own unworthiness and inefficiency. He will teach them to exercise the courage of faith. He will make them strong by uniting their weakness to His might, wise by connecting their ignorance with His wisdom.”
—*Conflict and Courage*, p.126.

SUNDAY

1. What complaint did the men of Ephraim bring to Gideon? How humbly and wisely did he answer them, thus calming their anger?

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. ²And 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? ³God 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.*

“Gideon’s modest and prudent answer appeased the anger of the men of Ephraim, and they returned in peace to their homes. How much of the trouble that exists in the world today, springs from the same evil traits that actuated the men of Ephraim, and how many evils might be avoided if all who are unjustly accused or censured would manifest the meek, self-forgetful spirit of Gideon.” —*Signs of the Times*, July 21, 1881.

MONDAY

2. What did Gideon appropriately request of the men of Succoth? How did they respond to this?

JUDGES 8:4-9 *And Gideon came to Jordan, and passed over, he, and the three hundred men that were with him, faint, yet pursuing them. ⁵And he said unto the men of Succoth, Give, I pray you, loaves of bread unto the people that follow me; for they be faint, and I am pursuing after Zebah and Zalmunna, kings of Midian. ⁶And the princes of Succoth said, Are the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna now in thine hand, that we should give bread unto thine army? ⁷And Gideon said, Therefore when the Lord hath delivered Zebah and Zalmunna into mine hand, then I will tear your flesh with the thorns of the wilderness and with briers. ⁸And he went up thence to Penuel, and spake unto them likewise: and the men of Penuel answered him as the*

men of Succoth had answered him. ⁹And he spake also unto the men of Penuel, saying, When I come again in peace, I will break down this tower.

TUESDAY

DEFEAT OF THE MIDIANITE KINGS

3. What happened to the two kings of Midian and their armies after they failed to defeat Israel?

JUDGES 8:10-12 *Now Zebah and Zalmunna were in Karkor, and their hosts with them, about fifteen thousand men, all that were left of all the hosts of the children of the east: for there fell an hundred and twenty thousand men that drew sword. ¹¹And Gideon went up by the way of them that dwelt in tents on the east of Nobah and Jogbehah, and smote the host; for the host was secure. ¹²And when Zebah and Zalmunna fled, he pursued after them, and took the two kings of Midian, Zebah and Zalmunna, and discomfited all the host.*

“No one can practice real benevolence without self-denial. Only by a life of simplicity, self-denial, and close economy is it possible for us to accomplish the work appointed us as Christ’s representatives. Pride and worldly ambition must be put out of our hearts. In all our work the principle of unselfishness revealed in Christ’s life is to be carried out. Upon the walls of our homes, the pictures, the furnishings, we are to read, ‘Bring the poor that are cast out to thy house.’ On our wardrobes we are to see written, as with the finger of God, ‘Clothe the naked.’ In the dining room, on the table laden with abundant food, we should see traced, ‘Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry?’ Isaiah 58:7.” –*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 206.

WEDNESDAY

4. What happened to the inhabitants of Succoth who a few days earlier had refused to give food to the exhausted soldiers of Israel?

JUDGES 8:13-17 *And Gideon the son of Joash returned from battle before the sun was up, ¹⁴And caught a young man of the men of Succoth, and enquired of him: and he described unto him the princes of Succoth, and the elders thereof, even threescore and seventeen men. ¹⁵And he came unto the men of Succoth, and said, Behold Zebah and Zalmunna, with whom ye did upbraid me, saying, Are the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna now in thine hand, that we should give bread unto thy men that are weary? ¹⁶And he took the elders of the city, and thorns of the wilderness and briers, and with them he taught the men of Succoth. ¹⁷And he beat down the tower of Penuel, and slew the men of the city.*

“Good deeds are the fruit that Christ requires us to bear: kind words, deeds of benevolence, of tender regard for the poor, the needy, the afflicted. When hearts sympathize with hearts burdened with discouragement and grief, when the hand dispenses to the needy, when the naked are clothed, the stranger made welcome to a seat in your parlor and a place in your heart, angels are coming very near, and an answering strain is responded to in heaven. Every act of justice, mercy, and benevolence makes melody in heaven. The Father from His throne beholds those who do these

acts of mercy, and numbers them with His most precious treasures. 'And they shall be Mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up My jewels.' Every merciful act to the needy, the suffering, is regarded as though done to Jesus. When you succor the poor, sympathize with the afflicted and oppressed, and befriend the orphan, you bring yourselves into a closer relationship to Jesus." –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, p. 25.

THURSDAY

5. Since they had previously killed all of Gideon's brothers, what fate befell the two Midianite kings?

JUDGES 8:18-21 *Then said he unto Zebah and Zalmunna, What manner of men were they whom ye slew at Tabor? And they answered, As thou art, so were they; each one resembled the children of a king. ¹⁹And he said, They were my brethren, even the sons of my mother: as the Lord liveth, if ye had saved them alive, I would not slay you. ²⁰And he said unto Jether his firstborn, Up, and slay them. But the youth drew not his sword: for he feared, because he was yet a youth. ²¹Then Zebah and Zalmunna said, Rise thou, and fall upon us: for as the man is, so is his strength. And Gideon arose, and slew Zebah and Zalmunna, and took away the ornaments that were on their camels' necks.*

"Believing themselves at the mercy of an overwhelming force, the Midianites were panic-stricken. With wild cries of alarm they fled for life, and, mistaking their own companions for enemies, they slew one another. As news of the victory spread, thousands of the men of Israel who had been dismissed to their homes returned and joined in pursuit of their fleeing enemies. The Midianites were making their way toward the Jordan, hoping to reach their own territory, beyond the river. Gideon sent messengers to the tribe of Ephraim, rousing them to intercept the fugitives at the southern fords. Meanwhile, with his three hundred, 'faint, yet pursuing,' Gideon crossed the stream hard after those who had already gained the farther side. The two princes, Zebah and Zalmunna, who had been over the entire host, and who had escaped with an army of fifteen thousand men, were overtaken by Gideon, their force completely scattered, and the leaders captured and slain." –*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 550.

FRIDAY

GIDEON'S HUMILITY AND MODESTY

6. When the men of Israel asked Gideon to rule over them, what did his answer reveal about his character? To whom did he direct the people's minds?

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. ²³And Gideon said unto them, I will not rule over you, neither shall my son rule over you: the Lord shall rule over you.*

"The leader whom God chose to overthrow the Midianites occupied no prominent position in Israel. He was not a ruler, a priest, or a Levite. He thought himself the least in his father's house. But God saw in him a man of courage and integrity. He was distrustful of himself and willing to

follow the guidance of the Lord. God does not always choose for His work men of the greatest talents, but He selects those whom He can best use. 'Before honor is humility.' Proverbs 15:33. The Lord can work most effectually through those who are most sensible of their own insufficiency, and who will rely upon Him as their leader and source of strength. He will make them strong by uniting their weakness to His might, and wise by connecting their ignorance with His wisdom." —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 553.

SABBATH

7. Although Gideon was courageous and faithful in setting Israel free from the Midianites under God's hand, what serious mistake did he make later? What did this become for Israel and his house?

JUDGES 8:24-27, 32 *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.)* ²⁵*And they answered, We will willingly give them. And they spread a garment, and did cast therein every man the earrings of his prey.* ²⁶*And the weight of the golden earrings that he requested was a thousand and seven hundred shekels of gold; beside ornaments, and collars, and purple raiment that was on the kings of Midian, and beside the chains that were about their camels' necks.* 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....* ³²*And Gideon the son of Joash died in a good old age, and was buried in the sepulchre of Joash his father, in Ophrah of the Abiezrites.*

"Satan is never idle. He is filled with hatred against God, and is constantly enticing men into a wrong course of action. After the armies of the Lord have gained a signal victory, the great adversary is especially busy. He comes disguised as an angel of light, and as such he endeavors to overthrow the work of God. Thus thoughts and plans were suggested to the mind of Gideon, by which Israel were led astray." —*Signs of the Times*, July 28, 1881.

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

"Those who are placed in the highest positions may lead astray, especially if they feel that there is no danger. The wisest err; the strongest grow weary. Excess of caution is often attended with as great danger as excess of confidence. To go forward without stumbling, we must have the assurance that a hand all-powerful will hold us up, and an infinite pity be exercised toward us if we fall. God alone can at all times hear our cry for help.

"It is a solemn thought that the removal of one safeguard from the conscience, the failure to fulfill one good resolution, the formation of one wrong habit, may result not only in our own ruin, but in the ruin of those who have put confidence in us. Our only safety is to follow where the steps of the Master lead the way, to trust for protection implicitly to Him who says, 'Follow Me.' Our constant prayer should be, 'Hold up my goings in Thy path, O Lord, that my footsteps slip not.'" —*Signs of the Times*, July 28, 1881.

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Abimelech and Jotham

"The great sin of Israel had ever been that of departing from God, forgetting His matchless love and His mighty power as revealed again and again in their deliverance. An appreciation of the Lord's mercy and goodness will lead to an appreciation of those who, like Gideon, have been employed as instruments to bless His people. The cruel course of Israel toward the house of Gideon was what might be expected from a people who manifested such base ingratitude to God." —*Signs of the Times*, August 4, 1881.

SUNDAY

1. What did the people of Israel do after Gideon passed away?

JUDGES 8:33-35 *And it came to pass, as soon as Gideon was dead, that the children of Israel turned again, and went a whoring after Baalim, and made Baalberith their god. ³⁴And the children of Israel remembered not the Lord their God, who had delivered them out of the hands of all their enemies on every side: ³⁵Neither shewed they kindness to the house of Jerubbaal, namely, Gideon, according to all the goodness which he had shewed unto Israel.*

"Had the Israelites preserved a clear perception of right and wrong, they would have seen the fallacy of Abimelech's reasoning, and the injustice of his claims. They would have seen that he was filled with envy, and actuated by a base ambition to exalt himself by the ruin of his brethren. Those who are controlled by policy rather than by principle are not to be trusted. They will pervert the truth, conceal facts, and construe the words of others to mean that which was never intended. They will employ flattering words, while the poison of asps is under their tongue. He who does not earnestly seek the divine guidance will be deceived by their smooth words and their artful plans." —*Signs of the Times*, August 4, 1881.

MONDAY

ABIMELECH'S AMBITION AND INTRIGUE

2. What deceptive speech did Abimelech, Gideon's son by a concubine, give his mother's relatives in Shechem? How did his attitude differ greatly from that of his father?

JUDGES 8:31; 9:1-3 *And his concubine that was in Shechem, she also bare him a son, whose name he called Abimelech.... ^{2:1}And Abimelech the son of Jerubbaal went to Shechem unto his mother's brethren, and communed with them, and with all the family of the house of his mother's father, saying, ²Speak, I pray you, in the ears of all the men of Shechem, Whether is better*

for you, either that all the sons of Jerubbaal, which are threescore and ten persons, reign over you, or that one reign over you? remember also that I am your bone and your flesh. ³And his mother's brethren spake of him in the ears of all the men of Shechem all these words: and their hearts inclined to follow Abimelech; for they said, He is our brother.

"According to the evil custom of those days, Gideon had taken numerous wives, and at his death he left no less than seventy sons. Besides these, there was another, Abimelech, 'the son of a strange woman.' This person had no right in the inheritance with Gideon's lawful children, and his debased character rendered him still more unworthy to be numbered with the descendants of the illustrious leader. The sons of Gideon had concurred in their father's refusal to accept the throne of Israel, but Abimelech determined to secure the position for himself. Being a native of Shechem, where his mother's relatives dwelt, he induced them to influence the Shechemites in his favor. He endeavored to advance his own interests by basely misrepresenting his brethren. He accused them of designing to seize upon the government and unite in its administration, and he sought to convince the people that it would be much better for them to be ruled by one of their own number than by such a band of tyrants." —*Signs of the Times*, August 4, 1881.

TUESDAY

3. Secure in the sympathy and support of the Shechemites, what treacherous brutality did Abimelech commit against his half brothers?

JUDGES 9:4-6 *And they gave him threescore and ten pieces of silver out of the house of Baalberith, wherewith Abimelech hired vain and light persons, which followed him. ⁵And he went unto his father's house at Ophrah, and slew his brethren the sons of Jerubbaal, being threescore and ten persons, upon one stone: notwithstanding yet Jotham the youngest son of Jerubbaal was left; for he hid himself. ⁶And all the men of Shechem gathered together, and all the house of Millo, and went, and made Abimelech king, by the plain of the pillar that was in Shechem.*

"Abimelech was successful in his schemes, and was accepted, at first by the Shechemites, and afterward by the people generally, as the ruler of Israel. But while thus exalted to the highest position ... of the nation, he was utterly unworthy of the trust. His birth was ignoble, his character vicious. The higher and nobler qualities—virtue, integrity, and truth—he had never cherished. He possessed a strong will and indomitable perseverance, and thus, by the most unscrupulous measures, he accomplished his purposes. The Israelites, blinded by their own sinful course of apostasy, were acting directly contrary to God's express commands, and he left them to reap the results of their own folly. It was not God's will that Israel should have a king. But in case they desired to be thus governed, the Lord, understanding the pride and perversity of the human heart, had reserved to Himself the right to appoint a king over them." —*Signs of the Times*, August 4, 1881.

JOTHAM'S PARABLE**4. How did Jotham, Gideon's only surviving son, react to Abimelech's brutality and arbitrariness? What parable did he give to show that Abimelech did not deserve to be the king of Israel?**

JUDGES 9:7-16, 21 *And when they told it to Jotham, he went and stood in the top of mount Gerizim, and lifted up his voice, and cried, and said unto them, Hearken unto me, ye men of Shechem, that God may hearken unto you. ⁸The trees went forth on a time to anoint a king over them; and they said unto the olive tree, Reign thou over us. ⁹But the olive tree said unto them, Should I leave my fatness, wherewith by me they honour God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees? ¹⁰And the trees said to the fig tree, Come thou, and reign over us. ¹¹But the fig tree said unto them, Should I forsake my sweetness, and my good fruit, and go to be promoted over the trees? ¹²Then said the trees unto the vine, Come thou, and reign over us. ¹³And the vine said unto them, Should I leave my wine, which cheereth God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees? ¹⁴Then said all the trees unto the bramble, Come thou, and reign over us. ¹⁵And the bramble said unto the trees, If in truth ye anoint me king over you, then come and put your trust in my shadow: and if not, let fire come out of the bramble, and devour the cedars of Lebanon. ¹⁶Now therefore, if ye have done truly and sincerely, in that ye have made Abimelech king, and if ye have dealt well with Jerubbaal and his house, and have done unto him according to the deserving of his hands;... ²¹And Jotham ran away, and fled, and went to Beer, and dwelt there, for fear of Abimelech his brother.*

"When Jotham was informed of this, he immediately repaired to Shechem. Burning with a sense of the horrible injustice and cruelty heaped upon his family, he determined at all hazards to present it before the people in its true light.... Jotham ascended Mount Gerizim to a position where he could be seen and heard by all the people, and addressed them in words of keen reproof. In a most fitting and beautiful parable, he presented before them the folly and injustice of their course. He represented the trees as seeking to make one of their number king over them....

"The unselfish, unambitious conduct of Gideon and his sons was then forcibly portrayed, and also the ingratitude of the Shechemites. Jotham then concluded in words which proved to be a prophecy: 'If ye then have dealt truly and sincerely with Jerubbaal and with his house this day, then rejoice ye in Abimelech, and let him also rejoice in you. But if not let fire come out from Abimelech and devour the men of Shechem and the house of Millo; and let fire come out from the men of Shechem, and from the house of Millo, and devour Abimelech.'" —*Signs of the Times*, August 4, 1881.

THURSDAY

5. Despite all of his shameful abuses, how many years did Abimelech reign over Israel? What did the Lord do, after all that this man had done, to hinder him from ruling over Israel any longer?

JUDGES 9:22-24 *When Abimelech had reigned three years over Israel, ²³Then God sent an evil spirit between Abimelech and the men of Shechem; and the men of Shechem dealt treacherously with Abimelech: ²⁴That the cruelty done to the threescore and ten sons of Jerubbaal might come, and their blood be laid upon Abimelech their brother, which slew them; and upon the men of Shechem, which aided him in the killing of his brethren.*

“The transaction of making Abimelech their king, shows how low Israel had fallen. What a contrast between their humble, God-fearing leader, Moses, who had felt wholly unworthy to occupy his position, and this upstart king, who had secured the throne by treachery, and established himself by violence and bloodshed. It should send terror to our souls when we reflect to what lengths men may go in crime, when they have rejected the influence of God’s Spirit. A despot, a murderer, was placed as commander-in-chief of Israel....

“Truly what a striking contrast between the self-sacrificing, devoted leader whom God appointed, and the monster of ingratitude and cruelty whom Israel had now placed upon the throne. By the olive, the fig-tree, and the vine, in Jotham’s parable, were represented such noble, upright characters as Moses and Joshua, who had been a living illustration of what a leader of Israel should be. Such men claimed no kingly honors. It was their work to bless their fellow-men, and they did not aspire to rank or power.” –*Signs of the Times*, August 4, 1881.

FRIDAY

6. What did Abimelech do to the inhabitants of Shechem, whom he considered traitors? What other city did he attack and take?

JUDGES 9:42-45, 50 *And it came to pass on the morrow, that the people went out into the field; and they told Abimelech. ⁴³And he took the people, and divided them into three companies, and laid wait in the field, and looked, and, behold, the people were come forth out of the city; and he rose up against them, and smote them. ⁴⁴And Abimelech, and the company that was with him, rushed forward, and stood in the entering of the gate of the city: and the two other companies ran upon all the people that were in the fields, and slew them. ⁴⁵And Abimelech fought against the city all that day; and he took the city, and slew the people that was therein, and beat down the city, and sowed it with salt.... ⁵⁰Then went Abimelech to Thebez, and encamped against Thebez, and took it.*

“For three years this wicked man’s reign continued, and then the Lord sent trouble among those who had united in an evil course. The very men who had made Abimelech king became disgusted with his demoralizing rule, and his heartless tyranny. By treachery he had gained the throne, and now by treachery they determined to remove him. The words of Jotham were fulfilled. Discord, strife, and hatred prevailed between Abimelech and his subjects. The king’s cruelty had not ended with the sons of Gideon. Everyone who opposed his will was summarily put to death. But the time of retribution, both for Abimelech and for the Shechemites who had sustained him, was at hand. The city of Shechem having rebelled, it was attacked by the king’s forces, [and] the inhabitants were slain....

"A neighboring city united with Shechem in the insurrection, and Abimelech proceeded next to attack this place also. Having gained possession, he determined to burn the inhabitants with the tower, as he had done at Shechem. But the wicked king had passed the limits of divine forbearance. He had been permitted to execute the vengeance of God upon Israel, and his career of crime was now to be cut short." —*Signs of the Times*, August 4, 1881.

SABBATH

FROM CONFLICT TO DEATH

7. How did the life of this abusive, antagonistic man end? What lesson can be learned from what was written about him?

JUDGES 9:52-57 *And Abimelech came unto the tower, and fought against it, and went hard unto the door of the tower to burn it with fire. ⁵³And a certain woman cast a piece of a millstone upon Abimelech's head, and all to brake his skull. ⁵⁴Then he called hastily unto the young man his armour-bearer, and said unto him, Draw thy sword, and slay me, that men say not of me, A women slew him. And his young man thrust him through, and he died. ⁵⁵And when the men of Israel saw that Abimelech was dead, they departed every man unto his place. ⁵⁶Thus God rendered the wickedness of Abimelech, which he did unto his father, in slaying his seventy brethren: ⁵⁷And all the evil of the men of Shechem did God render upon their heads: and upon them came the curse of Jotham the son of Jerubbaal.*

MATTHEW 7:2 *For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.*

"Thus the justice of God punished both Abimelech and the Shechemites. This terrible history should teach us the lesson that sin will never go unpunished, and it should impress upon our minds the danger of entering upon the path of disobedience. All true greatness of character, all peace and joy of soul, must come from entire conformity to the will of God. The path of cheerful obedience is the path of safety and happiness. Messages of mercy are sent from heaven, to teach us the right way. Strength for the conflict of life is ever awaiting us. With the help of God we may gain the victory." —*Signs of the Times*, August 4, 1881.

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

"When men cast away the fear of God, we need not be surprised to see them departing from the path of honor and integrity. They are following another guide. They hurry on in the journey of life, heedless, presumptuous, yet ever fearful and dissatisfied; for they have left the only one who can give them rest and security. When once started in a wrong path, many press on as if infatuated, although every step leads them farther from the Source of light and the Tower of strength.... There are many who would scorn the appellation of policy men, yet who will stoop to concealment, evasion, and even misrepresentation, to accomplish their purposes. He who, in a matter of right and wrong, remains noncommittal that he may retain the friendship of all; he who seeks to secure by evasion of truth what should be won by courage; he who waits for others to take the lead, when he should go forward himself, and then

feels at liberty to censure their course—all these are in God’s sight numbered as deceivers.” —*Signs of the Times*, August 4, 1881.

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12

Sabbath, March 22, 2025

Tola and Jair—Judges of Israel

“True confession is always of a specific character, and acknowledges particular sins. They may be of such a nature as only to be brought before God, they may be wrongs that should be confessed before individuals who have suffered injury through them, or they may be of a general kind that should be made known in the congregation of the people. But all confession should be definite and to the point, acknowledging the very sins of which you are guilty.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 639.

SUNDAY

1. What judge did the Lord raise up to defend Israel, and how many years did he bear the responsibility?

JUDGES 10:1, 2 *And after Abimelech there arose to defend Israel Tola the son of Puah, the son of Dodo, a man of Issachar; and he dwelt in Shamir in mount Ephraim. ²And he judged Israel twenty and three years, and died, and was buried in Shamir.*

“After the death of Abimelech, the usurper, the Lord raised up Tola to judge Israel. His peaceful reign presented a happy contrast to the stormy scenes through which the nation had been passing. It was not his work to lead armies to battle and to achieve victories over the enemies of Israel, as the former rulers had done; but his influence effected a closer union among the people, and established the government upon a firmer basis. He restored order, law, and justice.

“Unlike the proud and envious Abimelech, Tola’s great desire was, not to secure position or honor for himself, but to improve the condition of his people. A man of deep humility, he felt that he could accomplish no great work, but he determined to perform with faithfulness his duty to God and to the people. He highly valued the privilege of divine worship, and chose to dwell near the tabernacle, that he might oftener attend upon the services there performed.” —*Signs of the Times*, August 11, 1881.

MONDAY

2. After him, whom did the Lord raise up? What was his mission?

JUDGES 10:3-5 *And after him arose Jair, a Gileadite, and judged Israel twenty and two years. ⁴And he had thirty sons that rode on thirty ass colts, and they had thirty cities, which are called Havothjair unto this day, which are in the land of Gilead. ⁵And Jair died, and was buried in Camon.*

"Tola governed Israel twenty-three years, and was succeeded by Jair. This ruler also feared the Lord and endeavored to maintain His worship among the people. In conducting the affairs of the government, he was assisted by his sons, who acted as magistrates, and went from place to place to administer justice." —*Signs of the Times*, August 11, 1881.

TUESDAY

MORE DISOBEDIENCE AND OPPRESSION

3. Although divine providence continued to work to free Israel from its enemies, what did the people do when they were no longer under the guidance of a judge?

JUDGES 10:6 *And the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the Lord, and served Baalim, and Ashtaroth, and the gods of Syria, and the gods of Zidon, and the gods of Moab, and the gods of the children of Ammon, and the gods of the Philistines, and forsook the Lord, and served not him.*

"... They provoked Him to anger with their high places, and moved Him to jealousy with their graven images.' Therefore the Lord 'forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh, the tent which He placed among men; and delivered His strength into captivity, and His glory into the enemy's hand.' Psalm 78:58, 60, 61. Yet He did not utterly forsake His people. There was ever a remnant who were true to Jehovah; and from time to time the Lord raised up faithful and valiant men to put down idolatry and to deliver the Israelites from their enemies. But when the deliverer was dead, and the people were released from his authority, they would gradually return to their idols. And thus the story of backsliding and chastisement, of confession and deliverance, was repeated again and again." —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 545.

"To some extent, during the latter part of Jair's reign, and more generally after his death, the Israelites again relapsed into idolatry." —*Signs of the Times*, August 11, 1881.

WEDNESDAY

4. Therefore, what happened again? How widely did the problems that were encountered by the tribes east of the Jordan extend to other areas?

JUDGES 10:7-9 *And the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel, and he sold them into the hands of the Philistines, and into the hands of the children of Ammon. ⁸And that year they vexed and oppressed the children of Israel: eighteen years, all the children of Israel that were on the other side Jordan in the land of the Amorites, which is in Gilead. ⁹Moreover the children of Ammon passed over Jordan to fight also against Judah, and against Benjamin, and against the house of Ephraim; so that Israel was sore distressed.*

"After the death of Abimelech, the rule of judges who feared the Lord served for a time to put a check upon idolatry, but ere long the people returned to the practices of the heathen communities around them. Among the northern tribes the gods of Syria and Sidon had many wor-

shippers. On the southwest the idols of the Philistines, and on the east those of Moab and Ammon, had turned the hearts of Israel from the God of their fathers. But apostasy speedily brought its punishment. The Ammonites subdued the eastern tribes and, crossing the Jordan, invaded the territory of Judah and Ephraim. On the west the Philistines came up from their plain beside the sea, burning and pillaging far and near. Again Israel seemed to be abandoned to the power of relentless foes." —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 557.

THURSDAY

RETICENCE TO HEAR THEIR REQUESTS

5. From what different enemies had the Lord freed Israel every time the people called on Him in repentance?

JUDGES 10:10-12 *And the children of Israel cried unto the Lord, saying, We have sinned against thee, both because we have forsaken our God, and also served Baalim. ¹¹And the Lord said unto the children of Israel, Did not I deliver you from the Egyptians, and from the Amorites, from the children of Ammon, and from the Philistines? ¹²The Zidonians also, and the Amalekites, and the Maonites, did oppress you; and ye cried to me, and I delivered you out of their hand.*

"Again the people sought help from Him whom they had so forsaken and insulted. 'The children of Israel cried unto the Lord, saying, We have sinned against Thee, both because we have forsaken our God, and also served Baalim.' But sorrow had not worked true repentance. The people mourned because their sins had brought suffering upon themselves, but not because they had dishonored God by transgression of His holy law. True repentance is more than sorrow for sin. It is a resolute turning away from evil." —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 557.

FRIDAY

6. Having already freed them from the oppression of various nations, what did the Lord reply when they called upon Him to free them from the Philistines and Ammonites?

JUDGES 10:13, 14 *Yet ye have forsaken me, and served other gods: wherefore I will deliver you no more. ¹⁴Go and cry unto the gods which ye have chosen; let them deliver you in the time of your tribulation.*

"These solemn and fearful words carry the mind forward to another scene—the great day of final judgment—when the rejecters of God's mercy and the despisers of His grace shall be brought face to face with His justice. At that tribunal must they render an account who have devoted their God-given talents of time, of means, or of intellect, to serving the gods of this world. They have forsaken their true and loving Friend, to follow the path of convenience and worldly pleasure. They intended at some time to return to God; but the world with its follies and deceptions absorbed the attention. Frivolous amusements, pride of dress, indulgence of appetite, hardened the heart and benumbed the conscience, so that the voice of truth was not heard. Duty was despised. Things of infinite value were lightly esteemed, until the heart lost all desire to sacrifice for Him who has

given so much for man. But in the reaping time they will gather that which they have sown." —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 557, 558.

SABBATH

SUPPLICATION AND REFORMATION

7. Finding themselves in great difficulty, for what did Israel ask once again? What reformation took place even though it was not a particular judgment who urged it?

JUDGES 10:15, 16 *And the children of Israel said unto the Lord, We have sinned: do thou unto us whatsoever seemeth good unto thee; deliver us only, we pray thee, this day. ¹⁶And they put away the strange gods from among them, and served the Lord: and his soul was grieved for the misery of Israel.*

"Oh, the longsuffering mercy of our God! When His people put away the sins that had shut out His presence, He heard their prayers and at once began to work for them." —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 558.

"Those who think of the result of hastening or hindering the gospel think of it in relation to themselves and to the world. Few think of its relation to God. Few give thought to the suffering that sin has caused our Creator. All heaven suffered in Christ's agony; but that suffering did not begin or end with His manifestation in humanity. The cross is a revelation to our dull senses of the pain that, from its very inception, sin has brought to the heart of God. Every departure from the right, every deed of cruelty, every failure of humanity to reach His ideal, brings grief to Him. When there came upon Israel the calamities that were the sure result of separation from God—subjugation by their enemies, cruelty, and death—it is said that 'His soul was grieved for the misery of Israel.' 'In all their affliction He was afflicted:... and He bare them, and carried them all the days of old.' Judges 10:16; Isaiah 63:9." —*Education*, p. 263.

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

"Confession will not be acceptable to God without sincere repentance and reformation. There must be decided changes in the life; everything offensive to God must be put away. This will be the result of genuine sorrow for sin. Says Paul, speaking of the work of repentance: 'Ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge! In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter.' 2 Corinthians 7:11." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 640.

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God Used Jephthah to Deliver Israel

"By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace. And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gedeon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets: Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions. Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens." Hebrews 11:31-34.

SUNDAY

SUPPLICATION AND REFORMATION

1. What was recorded in the Scriptures about Jephthah's background and the way his brothers treated him?

JUDGES 11:1-3 *Now Jephthah the Gileadite was a mighty man of valour, and he was the son of an harlot: and Gilead begat Jephthah. ²And Gilead's wife bare him sons; and his wife's sons grew up, and they thrust out Jephthah, and said unto him, Thou shalt not inherit in our father's house; for thou art the son of a strange woman. ³Then Jephthah fled from his brethren, and dwelt in the land of Tob; and there were gathered vain men to Jephthah, and went out with him.*

"The unfaltering servants of God have usually suffered the bitterest persecution from false teachers of religion. But the true prophets will ever prefer reproach, and even death, rather than unfaithfulness to God. The Infinite Eye is upon the instruments of divine reproof, and they bear a heavy responsibility. But God regards the injury done to them through misrepresentation, falsehood, or abuse as though it were done unto Himself, and will punish accordingly." –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 167.

MONDAY

2. What enemies went to war against Israel? To whom did the Israelites turn to find a way out of this terrible problem?

JUDGES 11:4-7 *And it came to pass in process of time, that the children of Ammon made war against Israel. ⁵And it was so, that when the children of Ammon made war against Israel, the elders of Gilead went to fetch Jephthah out of the land of Tob: ⁶And they said unto Jephthah, Come, and be our captain, that we may fight with the children of Ammon. ⁷And*

Jephthah said unto the elders of Gilead, Did not ye hate me, and expel me out of my father's house? and why are ye come unto me now when ye are in distress?

“Satan delights in war, for it excites the worst passions of the soul and then sweeps into eternity its victims steeped in vice and blood. It is his object to incite the nations to war against one another, for he can thus divert the minds of the people from the work of preparation to stand in the day of God.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 589.

TUESDAY

JEPHTHAH CALLED TO LEAD

3. As a result of the agreement that was made, in what position did Jephthah find himself?

JUDGES 11:8-11 *And the elders of Gilead said unto Jephthah, Therefore we turn again to thee now, that thou mayest go with us, and fight against the children of Ammon, and be our head over all the inhabitants of Gilead. ⁹And Jephthah said unto the elders of Gilead, If ye bring me home again to fight against the children of Ammon, and the Lord deliver them before me, shall I be your head? ¹⁰And the elders of Gilead said unto Jephthah, The Lord be witness between us, if we do not so according to thy words. ¹¹Then Jephthah went with the elders of Gilead, and the people made him head and captain over them: and Jephthah uttered all his words before the Lord in Mizpeh.*

“The Israelites now humbled themselves before the Lord. ‘And they put away the strange gods from among them, and served Jehovah.’ And the Lord’s heart of love was grieved—‘was grieved for the misery of Israel.’ Oh, the longsuffering mercy of our God! When His people put away the sins that had shut out His presence, He heard their prayers and at once began to work for them.

“A deliverer was raised up in the person of Jephthah, a Gileadite, who made war upon the Ammonites and effectually destroyed their power. For eighteen years at this time Israel had suffered under the oppression of her foes, yet again the lesson taught by suffering was forgotten.” —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 558.

WEDNESDAY

4. What convincing arguments did Jephthah present in writing to persuade the king of the Ammonites not to attack Israel?

JUDGES 11:12, 26-28 *And Jephthah sent messengers unto the king of the children of Ammon, saying, What hast thou to do with me, that thou art come against me to fight in my land?... ²⁶While Israel dwelt in Heshbon and her towns, and in Aroer and her towns, and in all the cities that be along by the coasts of Arnon, three hundred years? why therefore did ye not recover them within that time? ²⁷Wherefore I have not sinned against thee, but thou doest me wrong to war against me: the Lord the Judge be judge this day between the children of Israel and the children of Ammon. ²⁸Howbeit the king of the children of Ammon hearkened not unto the words of Jephthah which he sent him.*

“Difficult points of present truth have been reached by the earnest efforts of a few who were devoted to the work. Fasting and fervent prayer to God have moved the Lord to unlock His treasuries of truth to their understanding. Wily opponents and boasting Goliaths have had to be met, sometimes face to face, but more frequently with the pen. Satan has urged men on to fierce opposition, to blind the eyes and darken the understanding of the people. The few who had the interest of the cause and truth of God at heart were aroused to its defense. They did not seek for ease, but were willing to venture even their lives for the truth’s sake.”
–*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, pp. 650, 651.

THURSDAY

CONFLICT AND VICTORY

5. What happened to the Ammonites when they refused to accept Jephthah’s message of peace?

JUDGES 11:32, 33 *So Jephthah passed over unto the children of Ammon to fight against them; and the Lord delivered them into his hands. ³³And he smote them from Aroer, even till thou come to Minnith, even twenty cities, and unto the plain of the vineyards, with a very great slaughter. Thus the children of Ammon were subdued before the children of Israel.*

“God is slow to anger. He gave the wicked nations a time of probation that they might become acquainted with Him and His character. According to the light given was their condemnation for refusing to receive the light and choosing their own ways rather than God’s ways. God gave the reason why He did not at once dispossess the Canaanites. The iniquity of the Amorites was not full. Through their iniquity they were gradually bringing themselves to the point where God’s forbearance could no longer be exercised and they would be exterminated. Until the point was reached and their iniquity was full, the vengeance of God would be delayed. All nations had a period of probation. Those who made void God’s law would advance from one degree of wickedness to another. Children would inherit the rebellious spirit of their parents and do worse than their fathers before them until God’s wrath would fall upon them. The punishment was not less because deferred.” –Manuscript 58, 1900.

FRIDAY

6. What promise did Jephthah make before the victorious battle against the Ammonites?

JUDGES 11:29-31 *Then the Spirit of the Lord came upon Jephthah, and he passed over Gilead, and Manasseh, and passed over Mizpeh of Gilead, and from Mizpeh of Gilead he passed over unto the children of Ammon. ³⁰And Jephthah vowed a vow unto the Lord, and said, If thou shalt without fail deliver the children of Ammon into mine hands, ³¹Then it shall be, that whatsoever cometh forth of the doors of my house to meet me, when I return in peace from the children of Ammon, shall surely be the Lord’s, and I will offer it up for a burnt offering.*

DEUTERONOMY 23:21-23 *When thou shalt vow a vow unto the Lord thy God, thou shalt not slack to pay it: for the Lord thy God will surely require*

it of thee; and it would be sin in thee. ²²But if thou shalt forbear to vow, it shall be no sin in thee. ²³That which is gone out of thy lips thou shalt keep and perform; even a freewill offering, according as thou hast vowed unto the Lord thy God, which thou hast promised with thy mouth.

ECCLESIASTES 5:4-6 *When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for He hath no pleasure in fools: pay that which thou hast vowed. ⁵Better is it that thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest vow and not pay. ⁶Suffer not thy mouth to cause thy flesh to sin; neither say thou before the angel, that it was an error: wherefore should God be angry at thy voice, and destroy the work of thine hands?*

“Promises of this kind made to men would be considered binding. Are they not more sacred and binding when made to God? Are promises tried in the court of conscience less binding than written agreements with men?” –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 149.

SABBATH

7. When Jephthah returned from war with the Ammonites, who was the first to greet and congratulate him on the victory that the Lord had given him? What was his daughter’s response when she learned about her father’s vow?

JUDGES 11:34-36, 39 *And Jephthah came to Mizpeh unto his house, and, behold, his daughter came out to meet him with timbrels and with dances: and she was his only child; beside her he had neither son nor daughter. ³⁵And it came to pass, when he saw her, that he rent his clothes, and said, Alas, my daughter! thou hast brought me very low, and thou art one of them that trouble me: for I have opened my mouth unto the Lord, and I cannot go back. ³⁶And she said unto him, My father, if thou hast opened thy mouth unto the Lord, do to me according to that which hath proceeded out of thy mouth; forasmuch as the Lord hath taken vengeance for thee of thine enemies, even of the children of Ammon.... ³⁹And it came to pass at the end of two months, that she returned unto her father, who did with her according to his vow which he had vowed: and she knew no man.*

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

“Often their sins had sold them into the power of their enemies, but no sooner did they turn from their evil ways than God’s mercy raised up a deliverer. The Lord sent Gideon and Barak, and Jephthah, and Samuel, and delivered you out of the hand of your enemies on every side, and ye dwelt safe.’ 1 Samuel 12:21.” –*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 614, 615.

* * *

Jephthah, Ibzan, Elon, and Abdon

"... It is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful." 1 Corinthians 4:2.

"By the terms of our stewardship we are placed under obligation, not only to God, but to man. To the infinite love of the Redeemer every human being is indebted for the gifts of life. Food and raiment and shelter, body and mind and soul—all are the purchase of His blood. And by the obligation of gratitude and service thus imposed, Christ has bound us to our fellow men. He bids us, 'By love serve one another.' Galatians 5:13. 'Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me.' Matthew 25:40." —*Education*, p. 139.

SUNDAY

CONFLICT BETWEEN JEPHTHAH AND EPHRAIM

1. What question that was full of suspicion and threats did the men of Ephraim ask Jephthah?

JUDGES 12:1 *And the men of Ephraim gathered themselves together, and went northward, and said unto Jephthah, Wherefore passedst thou over to fight against the children of Ammon, and didst not call us to go with thee? we will burn thine house upon thee with fire.*

"Prejudice and unbelief sprang up in the heart of Nathanael, but Philip did not try to combat it. He said, 'Come and see. Jesus saw Nathanael coming to Him, and saith of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile! Nathanael saith unto Him, Whence knowest Thou me? Jesus answered and said unto him, Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee. Nathanael answered and saith unto him, Rabbi, Thou art the Son of God; Thou art the King of Israel.' John 1:46-49....

"God never honors unbelief and questioning and doubt. When He speaks, His word is to be recognized and carried out in the daily actions. And if the heart of man is in living connection with God, the voice that cometh from above will be recognized." —*Counsels on Sabbath School Work*, pp. 26, 27.

MONDAY

2. How did he respond to the men's threats?

JUDGES 12:2, 3 *And Jephthah said unto them, I and my people were at great strife with the children of Ammon; and when I called you, ye delivered me not out of their hands. ³And when I saw that ye delivered me not,*

I put my life in my hands, and passed over against the children of Ammon, and the Lord delivered them into my hand: wherefore then are ye come up unto me this day, to fight against me?

"Mild measures, soft answers, and pleasant words are much better fitted to reform and save, than severity and harshness. A little too much unkindness may place persons beyond your reach, while a conciliatory spirit would be the means of binding them to you, and you might then establish them in the right way. You should be actuated by a forgiving spirit also, and give due credit to every good purpose and action of those around you. Speak words of commendation to your husband, your child, your sister, and to all with whom you are associated. Continual censure blights and darkens the life of anyone." –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 65.

TUESDAY

3. What unfortunate dispute arose between the two parties? How far did they go in that atmosphere of high tension, even though they were relatives and members of two tribes in Israel?

JUDGES 12:4-6 *Then Jephthah gathered together all the men of Gilead, and fought with Ephraim: and the men of Gilead smote Ephraim, because they said, Ye Gileadites are fugitives of Ephraim among the Ephraimites, and among the Manassites. ⁵And the Gileadites took the passages of Jordan before the Ephraimites: and it was so, that when those Ephraimites which were escaped said, Let me go over; that the men of Gilead said unto him, Art thou an Ephraimite? If he said, Nay; ⁶Then said they unto him, Say now Shibboleth: and he said Sibboleth: for he could not frame to pronounce it right. Then they took him, and slew him at the passages of Jordan: and there fell at that time of the Ephraimites forty and two thousand.*

"It is impossible for anyone to become a true follower of Jesus Christ without distinguishing himself from the worldly mass of unbelievers. If the world would accept of Jesus, then there would be no sword of dissension; for all would be disciples of Christ and in fellowship one with another, and their unity would be unbroken. But this is not the case. Here and there an individual member of a family is true to the convictions of his conscience, and is compelled to stand alone.... The line of demarcation is made distinct. One stands upon the word of God, the others upon the traditions and sayings of men....

"The peace that Christ gave to His disciples, and for which we pray, is the peace that is born of truth, a peace that is not to be quenched because of division. Without may be wars and fightings, jealousies, envies, hatred, strife; but the peace of Christ is not that which the world giveth or taketh away." –*Our High Calling*, p. 328.

WEDNESDAY

4. In total, for how many years did Jephthah judge Israel?

JUDGES 12:7 *And Jephthah judged Israel six years. Then died Jephthah the Gileadite, and was buried in one of the cities of Gilead.*

"We cannot but look forward to new perplexities in the coming conflict, but we may look on what is past as well as on what is to come, and say, 'Hitherto hath the Lord helped us.' 'As thy days, so shall thy strength be.' Deuteronomy 33:25. The trial will not exceed the strength that shall be given us to bear it. Then let us take up our work just where we find it, believing that whatever may come, strength proportionate to the trial will be given." —*Steps to Christ*, p. 125.

THURSDAY

IBZAN JUDGED ISRAEL

5. What was the Biblical record about the judge or leader Ibzan?

JUDGES 12:8-10 *And after him Ibzan of Bethlehem judged Israel. ⁹And he had thirty sons, and thirty daughters, whom he sent abroad, and took in thirty daughters from abroad for his sons. And he judged Israel seven years. ¹⁰Then died Ibzan, and was buried at Bethlehem.*

"We are stewards, entrusted by our absent Lord with the care of His household and His interests, which He came to this world to serve. He has returned to heaven, leaving us in charge, and He expects us to watch and wait for His appearing. Let us be faithful to our trust, lest coming suddenly He find us sleeping." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8, p. 37.

FRIDAY

ELON FROM ZEBULON

6. Although the Scriptures do not list any special accomplishments of the judge Elon, what information was provided about him?

JUDGES 12:11, 12 *And after him Elon, a Zebulonite, judged Israel; and he judged Israel ten years. ¹²And Elon the Zebulonite died, and was buried in Aijalon in the country of Zebulun.*

"We are living in the closing scenes of this earth's history. Prophecy is rapidly fulfilling. The hours of probation are fast passing. We have no time—not a moment—to lose. Let us not be found sleeping on guard. Let no one say in his heart or by his works, 'My Lord delayeth His coming.' Let the message of Christ's soon return sound forth in earnest words of warning. Let us persuade men and women everywhere to repent, and flee from the wrath to come. Let us arouse them to immediate preparation; for we little know what is before us. Let ministers and lay members go forth into the ripening fields." *Maranatha*, p. 106.

SABBATH

ABDON, ANOTHER JUDGE IN ISRAEL

7. How many years did this prolific judge govern?

JUDGES 12:13-15 *And after him Abdon the son of Hillel, a Pirathonite, judged Israel. ¹⁴And he had forty sons and thirty nephews, that rode on threescore and ten ass colts: and he judged Israel eight years. ¹⁵And Abdon the son of Hillel the Pirathonite died, and was buried in Pirathon in the land of Ephraim, in the mount of the Amalekites.*

“The Lord says to the people of the earth, ‘Choose you this day whom ye will serve.’ All are now deciding their eternal destiny. Men need to be aroused to realize the solemnity of the time, the nearness of the day when human probation shall be ended. God gives no man a message that it will be five years or ten years or twenty years before this earth’s history shall close. He would not give any living being an excuse for delaying the preparation for His appearing. He would have no one say, as did the unfaithful servant, ‘My Lord delayeth His coming;’ for this leads to reckless neglect of the opportunities and privileges given to prepare us for that great day. Everyone who claims to be a servant of God is called to do His service as if each day might be the last.” –*Maranatha*, p. 108.

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

“It is not to be looked upon as a trifling matter to have the light of present truth, and yet to be noncommittal. It is no trifling thing to say by attitude and sentiment, even though that sentiment is not expressed in words, ‘My Lord delayeth His coming.’... We must speak forth the truth, we must let our light shine forth in clear, steady rays, lest some soul shall stumble and fall because our light is eclipsed.” –*That I May Know Him*, p. 215.

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15

Sabbath, April 12, 2025

Samson’s Miraculous Birth

“I was shown that when God sent His angels anciently to minister or communicate to individuals, and these persons learned that they had seen and talked with an angel, they were struck with awe and were afraid that they should die. They had so exalted views of the terrible majesty and power of God that they thought it would destroy them to be brought into close connection with one direct from His holy presence. I was referred to Judges 13:21, 22: ‘Then Manoah knew that He was an angel of the Lord. And Manoah said unto his wife, We shall surely die, because we have seen God.’ Judges 6:22, 23: ‘And when Gideon perceived that He was an angel of the Lord, Gideon said, Alas, O Lord God! for because I have seen an angel of the Lord face to face. And the Lord said unto him, Peace be unto thee; fear not: thou shalt not die.’” –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, p. 410.

SUNDAY

1. In what situation were the people of Israel again after many experiences?

JUDGES 13:1 *And the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the Lord; and the Lord delivered them into the hand of the Philistines forty years.*

"Amid the widespread apostasy the faithful worshipers of God continued to plead with Him for the deliverance of Israel. Though there was apparently no response, though year after year the power of the oppressor continued to rest more heavily upon the land, God's providence was preparing help for them. Even in the early years of the Philistine oppression a child was born through whom God designed to humble the power of these mighty foes." —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 560.

MONDAY

APPEARANCE OF THE ANGEL OF JEHOVAH

2. While the people were under these terrible conditions, who appeared to a childless woman? What joyful message did He give her?

JUDGES 13:2, 3 *And there was a certain man of Zorah, of the family of the Danites, whose name was Manoah; and his wife was barren, and bare not. ³And the angel of the Lord appeared unto the woman, and said unto her, Behold now, thou art barren, and bearest not: but thou shalt conceive, and bear a son.*

"On the border of the hill country overlooking the Philistine plain was the little town of Zorah. Here dwelt the family of Manoah, of the tribe of Dan, one of the few households that amid the general defection had remained true to Jehovah. To the childless wife of Manoah 'the Angel of Jehovah' appeared with the message that she should have a son, through whom God would begin to deliver Israel. In view of this the Angel gave her instruction concerning her own habits, and also for the treatment of her child: 'Now therefore beware, I pray thee, and drink not wine nor strong drink, and eat not any unclean thing.' And the same prohibition was to be imposed, from the first, upon the child, with the addition that his hair should not be cut; for he was to be consecrated to God as a Nazarite from his birth." —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 560.

TUESDAY

3. What kind of person did the Angel say that their child would be? What precise instructions did He give to the woman?

JUDGES 13:4-7 *Now therefore beware, I pray thee, and drink not wine nor strong drink, and eat not any unclean thing: ⁵For, lo, thou shalt conceive, and bear a son; and no razor shall come on his head: for the child shall be a Nazarite unto God from the womb: and he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines. ⁶Then the woman came and told her husband, saying, A man of God came unto me, and his countenance was like the countenance of an angel of God, very terrible: but I asked him not whence he was, neither told he me his name: ⁷But he said unto me, Behold, thou shalt conceive, and bear a son; and now drink no wine nor strong drink, neither eat any unclean thing: for the child shall be a Nazarite to God from the womb to the day of his death.*

"It was Christ who in the Old Testament gave the warning to Israel, 'Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise.' Proverbs 20:1. And He Himself provided no such beverage. Satan tempts men to indulgence that will becloud reason and benumb

the spiritual perceptions, but Christ teaches us to bring the lower nature into subjection. His whole life was an example of self-denial. In order to break the power of appetite, He suffered in our behalf the severest test that humanity could endure. It was Christ who directed that John the Baptist should drink neither wine nor strong drink. It was He who enjoined similar abstinence upon the wife of Manoah. And He pronounced a curse upon the man who should put the bottle to his neighbor's lips. Christ did not contradict His own teaching." —*Desire of Ages*, p. 149.

WEDNESDAY

THE CHILD'S EDUCATION

4. Realizing that this birth would be a true miracle, what was Manoah's first interest concerning their child?

JUDGES 13:8-14 *Then Manoah intreated the Lord, and said, O my Lord, let the man of God which thou didst send come again unto us, and teach us what we shall do unto the child that shall be born. ⁹And God hearkened to the voice of Manoah; and the angel of God came again unto the woman as she sat in the field: but Manoah her husband was not with her. ¹⁰And the woman made haste, and ran, and shewed her husband, and said unto him, Behold, the man hath appeared unto me, that came unto me the other day. ¹¹And Manoah arose, and went after his wife, and came to the man, and said unto him, Art thou the man that spakest unto the woman? And he said, I am. ¹²And Manoah said, Now let thy words come to pass. How shall we order the child, and how shall we do unto him? ¹³And the angel of the Lord said unto Manoah, Of all that I said unto the woman let her beware. ¹⁴She may not eat of any thing that cometh of the vine, neither let her drink wine or strong drink, nor eat any unclean thing: all that I commanded her let her observe.*

"God had an important work for the promised child of Manoah to do, and it was to secure for him the qualifications necessary for this work that the habits of both the mother and the child were to be carefully regulated. 'Neither let her drink wine or strong drink,' was the Angel's instruction for the wife of Manoah, 'nor eat any unclean thing. All that I commanded her let her observe.' The child will be affected for good or for evil by the habits of the mother. She must herself be controlled by principle and must practice temperance and self-denial, if she would seek the welfare of her child. Unwise advisers will urge upon the mother the necessity of gratifying every wish and impulse, but such teaching is false and mischievous. The mother is by the command of God Himself placed under the most solemn obligation to exercise self-control." —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 561.

THURSDAY

5. What further evidence did Manoah and his wife have that the message was from heaven?

JUDGES 13:15-20 *And Manoah said unto the angel of the Lord, I pray thee, let us detain thee, until we shall have made ready a kid for thee. ¹⁶And the angel of the Lord said unto Manoah, Though thou detain me, I will not eat of thy bread: and if thou wilt offer a burnt offering, thou must offer it unto the Lord. For Manoah knew not that he was an angel of the Lord. ¹⁷And Manoah said unto the angel of the Lord, What is thy name, that when thy*

sayings come to pass we may do thee honour? ¹⁸And the angel of the Lord said unto him, Why askest thou thus after my name, seeing it is secret? ¹⁹So Manoah took a kid with a meat offering, and offered it upon a rock unto the Lord: and the angel did wonderously; and Manoah and his wife looked on. ²⁰For it came to pass, when the flame went up toward heaven from off the altar, that the angel of the Lord ascended in the flame of the altar. And Manoah and his wife looked on it, and fell on their faces to the ground.

"And fathers as well as mothers are involved in this responsibility. Both parents transmit their own characteristics, mental and physical, their dispositions and appetites, to their children. As the result of parental intemperance children often lack physical strength and mental and moral power. Liquor drinkers and tobacco users may, and do, transmit their insatiable craving, their inflamed blood and irritable nerves, to their children. The licentious often bequeath their unholy desires, and even loathsome diseases, as a legacy to their offspring. And as the children have less power to resist temptation than had the parents, the tendency is for each generation to fall lower and lower. To a great degree parents are responsible not only for the violent passions and perverted appetites of their children but for the infirmities of the thousands born deaf, blind, diseased, or idiotic." —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 561.

FRIDAY

6. How did Manoah and his wife differ in their understanding of whom they had seen?

JUDGES 13:21-23 *But the angel of the Lord did no more appear to Manoah and to his wife. Then Manoah knew that he was an angel of the Lord. ²²And Manoah said unto his wife, We shall surely die, because we have seen God. ²³But his wife said unto him, If the Lord were pleased to kill us, he would not have received a burnt offering and a meat offering at our hands, neither would he have shewed us all these things, nor would as at this time have told us such things as these.*

"Manoah and his wife knew not that the One thus addressing them was Jesus Christ. They looked upon Him as the Lord's messenger, but whether a prophet or an angel, they were at a loss to determine. Wishing to manifest hospitality toward their guest, they entreated Him to remain while they should prepare for Him a kid. But in their ignorance of His character, they knew not whether to offer it for a burnt offering or to place it before Him as food." —*Signs of the Times*, September 15, 1881.

SABBATH

MOVED BY GOD'S SPIRIT

7. When everything came true as was prophesied, who was guiding the child?

JUDGES 13:24, 25 *And the woman bare a son, and called his name Samson: and the child grew, and the Lord blessed him. ²⁵And the Spirit of the Lord began to move him at times in the camp of Dan between Zorah and Eshtaol.*

"The divine promise to Manoah was in due time fulfilled in the birth of a son, to whom the name of Samson was given. As the boy grew up it

became evident that he possessed extraordinary physical strength. This was not, however, as Samson and his parents well knew, dependent upon his well-knit sinews, but upon his condition as a Nazarite, of which his unshorn hair was a symbol." —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 562.

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

"He who will observe simplicity in all his habits, restricting the appetite and controlling the passions, may preserve his mental powers strong, active, and vigorous, quick to perceive everything which demands thought or action, keen to discriminate between the holy and the unholy, and ready to engage in every enterprise for the glory of God and the benefit of humanity." —*Signs of the Times*, September 29, 1881.

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16

Sabbath, April 19, 2025

Samson's Marriage Feast

"Had Samson obeyed the divine commands as faithfully as his parents had done, his would have been a nobler and happier destiny. But association with idolaters corrupted him. The town of Zorah being near the country of the Philistines, Samson came to mingle with them on friendly terms. Thus in his youth intimacies sprang up, the influence of which darkened his whole life. A young woman dwelling in the Philistine town of Timnath engaged Samson's affections, and he determined to make her his wife. To his God-fearing parents, who endeavored to dissuade him from his purpose, his only answer was, 'She pleaseth me well.' The parents at last yielded to his wishes, and the marriage took place." —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 562.

SUNDAY

1. After associating with the Philistines, what desire did Samson express to his parents one day? What did they do?

JUDGES 14:1-3 *And Samson went down to Timnath, and saw a woman in Timnath of the daughters of the Philistines. ²And he came up, and told his father and his mother, and said, I have seen a woman in Timnath of the daughters of the Philistines: now therefore get her for me to wife. ³Then his father and his mother said unto him, Is there never a woman among the daughters of thy brethren, or among all my people, that thou goest to take a wife of the uncircumcised Philistines? And Samson said unto his father, Get her for me; for she pleaseth me well.*

DEUTERONOMY 7:2, 3 *And when the Lord thy God shall deliver them before thee; thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy them; thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor shew mercy unto them: ³Neither shalt thou make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son.*

“The Lord has in His word plainly instructed His people not to unite themselves with those who have not His love and fear before them. Such companions will seldom be satisfied with the love and respect which are justly theirs. They will constantly seek to gain from the God-fearing wife or husband some favor which shall involve a disregard of the divine requirements. To a godly man, and to the church with which he is connected, a worldly wife or a worldly friend is as a spy in the camp, who will watch every opportunity to betray the servant of Christ, and expose him to the enemy’s attacks.” –*Signs of the Times*, September 27, 1910.

MONDAY

OPPORTUNITY AMONG THE PHILISTINES

2. While the Philistines were ruling over Israel, what was Samson looking for?

JUDGES 14:4 *But his father and his mother knew not that it was of the Lord, that he sought an occasion against the Philistines: for at that time the Philistines had dominion over Israel.*

TUESDAY

SAMSON FACED A LION

3. What violent attack did Samson experience when he approached Timnath? How did the incident reveal the great gift that God had given to him?

JUDGES 14:5-7 *Then went Samson down, and his father and his mother, to Timnath, and came to the vineyards of Timnath: and, behold, a young lion roared against him. ⁶And the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him, and he rent him as he would have rent a kid, and he had nothing in his hand: but he told not his father or his mother what he had done. ⁷And he went down, and talked with the woman; and she pleased Samson well.*

WEDNESDAY

4. What did Samson see a few days later when he passed the place where the lion’s carcass lay?

JUDGES 14:8, 9 *And after a time he returned to take her, and he turned aside to see the carcase of the lion: and, behold, there was a swarm of bees and honey in the carcase of the lion. ⁹And he took thereof in his hands, and went on eating, and came to his father and mother, and he gave them, and they did eat: but he told not them that he had taken the honey out of the carcase of the lion.*

THURSDAY

5. What riddle did Samson give to the Philistines to solve? After three days, what happened?

JUDGES 14:10-14 *So his father went down unto the woman: and Samson made there a feast; for so used the young men to do. ¹¹And it came to pass, when they saw him, that they brought thirty companions to be with him. ¹²And Samson said unto them, I will now put forth a riddle unto you: if ye can certainly declare it me within the seven days of the feast, and find*

it out, then I will give you thirty sheets and thirty change of garments: ¹³But if ye cannot declare it me, then shall ye give me thirty sheets and thirty change of garments. And they said unto him, Put forth thy riddle, that we may hear it. ¹⁴And he said unto them, Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness. And they could not in three days expound the riddle.

“At his marriage feast Samson was brought into familiar association with those who hated the God of Israel. Whoever voluntarily enters into such relations will feel it necessary to conform, to some degree, to the habits and customs of his companions. The time thus spent is worse than wasted. Thoughts are entertained and words are spoken that tend to break down the strongholds of principle and to weaken the citadel of the soul.” —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 563.

FRIDAY

6. Not wanting to spend the enormous sum to purchase so many linen garments, what stratagem did the Philistines devise?

JUDGES 14:15-18 *And it came to pass on the seventh day, that they said unto Samson's wife, Entice thy husband, that he may declare unto us the riddle, lest we burn thee and thy father's house with fire: have ye called us to take that we have? is it not so?* ¹⁶*And Samson's wife wept before him, and said, Thou dost but hate me, and lovest me not: thou hast put forth a riddle unto the children of my people, and hast not told it me. And he said unto her, Behold, I have not told it my father nor my mother, and shall I tell it thee?* ¹⁷*And she wept before him the seven days, while their feast lasted: and it came to pass on the seventh day, that he told her, because she lay sore upon him: and she told the riddle to the children of her people.* ¹⁸*And the men of the city said unto him on the seventh day before the sun went down, What is sweeter than honey? And what is stronger than a lion? and he said unto them, If ye had not plowed with my heifer, ye had not found out my riddle.*

SABBATH

TREACHERY AGAINST HIS WIFE

7. What did Samson do to get the clothing promised in the agreement concerning the riddle? Because of that, what happened after the marriage feast when he should have received the woman he had married?

JUDGES 14:19, 20 *And the Spirit of the Lord came upon him, and he went down to Ashkelon, and slew thirty men of them, and took their spoil, and gave change of garments unto them which expounded the riddle. And his anger was kindled, and he went up to his father's house. ²⁰But Samson's wife was given to his companion, whom he had used as his friend.*

“The wife, to obtain whom Samson had transgressed the command of God, proved treacherous to her husband before the close of the marriage feast. Incensed at her perfidy, Samson forsook her for the time, and went alone to his home at Zorah. When, afterward relenting, he returned for his bride, he found her the wife of another. His revenge, in the wasting of all the fields and vineyards of the Philistines, provoked them to murder her,

although their threats had driven her to the deceit with which the trouble began. Samson had already given evidence of his marvelous strength by slaying, singlehanded, a young lion, and by killing thirty of the men of Ashkelon. Now, moved to anger by the barbarous murder of his wife, he attacked the Philistines and smote them 'with a great slaughter.' Then, wishing a safe retreat from his enemies, he withdrew to 'the rock Etam,' in the tribe of Judah." —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 563, 564.

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

"How many are pursuing the same course as did Samson! How often marriages are formed between the godly and the ungodly, because inclination governs in the selection of husband or wife! The parties do not ask counsel of God, nor have His glory in view. Christianity ought to have a controlling influence upon the marriage relation, but it is too often the case that the motives which lead to this union are not in keeping with Christian principles. Satan is constantly seeking to strengthen his power over the people of God by inducing them to enter into alliance with his subjects; and in order to accomplish this he endeavors to arouse unsanctified passions in the heart. But the Lord has in His word plainly instructed His people not to unite themselves with those who have not His love abiding in them. 'What concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? and what agreement hath the temple of God with idols?' 2 Corinthians 6:15, 16." —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 563.

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***Please read the Missionary Report
from Curaçao on page 79***

17

Sabbath, April 26, 2025

Samson Judged Israel for Twenty Years

"Physically, Samson was the strongest man upon the earth; but in self-control, integrity, and firmness, he was one of the weakest of men. Many mistake strong passions for a strong character, but the truth is that he who is mastered by his passions is a weak man. The real greatness of the man is measured by the power of the feelings that he controls, not by those that control him." —*Conflict and Courage*, p. 132.

SUNDAY

- 1. What bitter news did Samson receive from his father-in-law when he went to visit his wife?**

JUDGES 15:1, 2 *But it came to pass within a while after, in the time of wheat harvest, that Samson visited his wife with a kid; and he said, I will go in to my wife into the chamber. But her father would not suffer him to go in. ²And her father said, I verily thought that thou hadst utterly hated her; therefore I gave her to thy companion: is not her younger sister fairer than she? take her, I pray thee, instead of her.*

MONDAY

2. How did he take revenge on the Philistines when he learned that his father-in-law had given his wife to someone else?

JUDGES 15:3-5 *And Samson said concerning them, Now shall I be more blameless than the Philistines, though I do them a displeasure. ⁴And Samson went and caught three hundred foxes, and took firebrands, and turned tail to tail, and put a firebrand in the midst between two tails. ⁵And when he had set the brands on fire, he let them go into the standing corn of the Philistines, and burnt up both the shocks, and also the standing corn, with the vineyards and olives.*

TUESDAY

RETALIATION AGAINST THE PHILISTINES

3. What treachery did the Philistines commit against Samson's wife and father-in-law? How did react Samson to what they did?

JUDGES 15:6-8 *Then the Philistines said, Who hath done this? And they answered, Samson, the son in law of the Timnite, because he had taken his wife, and given her to his companion. And the Philistines came up, and burnt her and her father with fire. ⁷And Samson said unto them, Though ye have done this, yet will I be avenged of you, and after that I will cease. ⁸And he smote them hip and thigh with a great slaughter: and he went down and dwelt in the top of the rock Etam.*

"The wife, to obtain whom Samson had transgressed the command of God, proved treacherous to her husband before the close of the marriage feast. Incensed at her perfidy, Samson forsook her for the time, and went alone to his home at Zorah. When, afterward relenting, he returned for his bride, he found her the wife of another. His revenge, in the wasting of all the fields and vineyards of the Philistines, provoked them to murder her, although their threats had driven her to the deceit with which the trouble began. Samson had already given evidence of his marvelous strength by slaying, singlehanded, a young lion, and by killing thirty of the men of Ashkelon. Now, moved to anger by the barbarous murder of his wife, he attacked the Philistines and smote them 'with a great slaughter.' Then, wishing a safe retreat from his enemies, he withdrew to 'the rock Etam,' in the tribe of Judah." —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 563, 564.

WEDNESDAY

4. What was the Philistines' next move? Where did they camp in an attempt to capture Samson?

JUDGES 15:9, 10 *Then the Philistines went up, and pitched in Judah, and spread themselves in Lehi. ¹⁰And the men of Judah said, Why are ye come*

up against us? And they answered, To bind Samson are we come up, to do to him as he hath done to us.

THURSDAY

INTERVENTION OF THE MEN OF JUDAH

5. What did the men of Judah do to keep from becoming the target of the Philistines' ire over Samson's attacks?

JUDGES 15:11-13 *Then three thousand men of Judah went to the top of the rock Etam, and said to Samson, Knowest thou not that the Philistines are rulers over us? what is this that thou hast done unto us? And he said unto them, As they did unto me, so have I done unto them. ¹²And they said unto him, We are come down to bind thee, that we may deliver thee into the hand of the Philistines. And Samson said unto them, Swear unto me, that ye will not fall upon me yourselves. ¹³And they spake unto him, saying, No; but we will bind thee fast, and deliver thee into their hand: but surely we will not kill thee. And they bound him with two new cords, and brought him up from the rock.*

"Thousands of Israelites witnessed Samson's defeat of the Philistines, yet no voice was raised in triumph, till the hero, elated at his marvelous success, celebrated his own victory. But he praised himself, instead of ascribing the glory to God. No sooner had he ceased than he was reminded of his weakness by a most intense and painful thirst. He had become exhausted by his prodigious labors, and no means of supplying his need was at hand. He began to feel his utter dependence upon God, and to be convinced that he had not triumphed by his own power, but in the strength of the Omnipotent One.

"He then gave God the praise for his deliverance, and offered an earnest prayer for relief from his present suffering. The Lord hearkened to his petition and opened for him a spring of water. In token of his gratitude Samson called the name of the place En-hakkore, or 'the well of him that cried.'" —*Signs of the Times*, October 6, 1881.

FRIDAY

6. When the Philistines were already shouting about their victory, what power did God give to Samson? What happened to the ropes that bound him?

JUDGES 15:14-17 *And when he came unto Lehi, the Philistines shouted against him: and the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him, and the cords that were upon his arms became as flax that was burnt with fire, and his bands loosed from off his hands. ¹⁵And he found a new jawbone of an ass, and put forth his hand, and took it, and slew a thousand men therewith. ¹⁶And Samson said, With the jawbone of an ass, heaps upon heaps, with the jaw of an ass have I slain a thousand men. ¹⁷And it came to pass, when he had made an end of speaking, that he cast away the jawbone out of his hand, and called that place Ramathlehi.*

"But while their shouts were waking the echoes of the hills, 'the Spirit of Jehovah came mightily upon him.' He burst asunder the strong new cords as if they had been flax burned in the fire. Then seizing the first

weapon at hand, which, though only the jawbone of an ass, was rendered more effective than sword or spear, he smote the Philistines until they fled in terror, leaving a thousand men dead upon the field." —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 564.

SABBATH

DIVINE GRACE FOR SAMSON

7. After the great humiliation of the Philistines, what miracle did the Lord work to relieve Samson's thirst? How long did his leadership bless Israel?

JUDGES 15:18-20 *And he was sore athirst, and called on the Lord, and said, Thou hast given this great deliverance into the hand of thy servant: and now shall I die for thirst, and fall into the hand of the uncircumcised? ¹⁹But God clave an hollow place that was in the jaw, and there came water thereout; and when he had drunk, his spirit came again, and he revived: wherefore he called the name thereof Enhakkore, which is in Lehi unto this day. ²⁰And he judged Israel in the days of the Philistines twenty years.*

"Had the Israelites been ready to unite with Samson and follow up the victory, they might at this time have freed themselves from the power of their oppressors. But they had become dispirited and cowardly. They had neglected the work which God commanded them to perform, in dispossessing the heathen, and had united with them in their degrading practices, tolerating their cruelty, and, so long as it was not directed against themselves, even countenancing their injustice. When themselves brought under the power of the oppressor, they tamely submitted to the degradation which they might have escaped, had they only obeyed God. Even when the Lord raised up a deliverer for them, they would, not infrequently, desert him and unite with their enemies.

"After his victory the Israelites made Samson judge, and he ruled Israel for twenty years. But one wrong step prepares the way for another." —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 564, 565.

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

"Just as he was entering upon manhood, the time when he must execute his divine mission—the time above all others when he should have been true to God—Samson connected himself with the enemies of Israel. He did not ask whether he could better glorify God when united with the object of his choice, or whether he was placing himself in a position where he could not fulfill the purpose to be accomplished by his life. To all who seek first to honor Him, God has promised wisdom; but there is no promise to those who are bent upon self-pleasing." —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 563.

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MISSIONARY REPORT FROM CURAÇAO

To be read on Sabbath, April 26, 2025

*The Special Sabbath School Offering
will be gathered on Sabbath, May 3, 2025*

The church of Curaçao greets the brethren around the world with the word of God in Jeremiah 26:2: *“Thus, saith the Lord; stand in the court of the Lord’s house, and speak unto all the cities of Judah, which come to worship in the Lord’s house, all the words that I command thee to speak unto them; diminish not a word.”*

Curaçao is a semi-arid island in the Caribbean Sea and a country within the Kingdom of the Netherlands. It is located about 37 miles (60 km) north of the coast of Venezuela. Although geographically part of the South American continental shelf, Curaçao and the neighboring islands off the northern coast of South America are usually considered to constitute the southwestern arc of the Lesser Antilles. The capital is Willemstad.

The island was settled by Arawak people from the South American mainland. It was first visited by Europeans in 1499 and was settled by the Spanish and, later, by the Dutch, who established it as a major center of trade for the Dutch West India Company. The Spanish deported the entire indigenous population as slaves to Hispaniola in 1515. This beautiful island is the home of the oldest continuously inhabited Jewish community in the Western Hemisphere, originally formed by Sephardic Jews who emigrated from Portugal in the 1500s.

The population is 147,300. According to the latest statistics, this includes 91.8 percent Black, 2.9 percent Surinamese, and 5.3 percent Dutch. The official language is Dutch. Papiamentu is the native language, but most of the population can also speak English and Spanish. There are various religious affiliations: 72.8 percent Roman Catholic, 6.6 percent Pentecostal, 3 percent Seventh-day Adventist, 8.4 percent other or unknown, and 6 percent none.

The message of the Reform Movement reached Curaçao for the first time in 1978 through the outreach of Sister Rita Virginie (who is resting in the grave until the resurrection), who received the message from the Donderwinkel family in Holland. In 1980, Sister Pura and Pastor Torres from Colombia came to Curaçao to help with the missionary work.

By the grace of our Lord, there are now two churches in Curaçao, one on the western end of the island, and the other on the eastern end. There is a great need for a building to stand as a witness for the truth on the eastern end.

“When an interest is aroused in any town or city, that interest should be followed up. The place should be thoroughly worked until a humble house of worship stands as a sign, a memorial of God’s Sabbath, a light amid the moral darkness. These memorials are to stand in many places as witnesses to the truth. God in His mercy has provided that the messengers of the gospel shall go to all countries, tongues, and peoples until the standard of truth shall be established in all parts of the inhabited world.

“Wherever a company of believers is raised up, a house of worship should be built. Let not the workers leave the place without accomplishing this.

“In many places where the message has been preached and souls have accepted it, they are in limited circumstances and can do but little toward securing advantages that would give character to the work. Often this renders it difficult to extend the work. As persons become interested in the truth, they are told by the ministers of other churches—and these words are echoed by the church members: ‘These people have no church, and you have no place of worship. You are a small company, poor and unlearned. In a short time the ministers will go away, and then the interest will die down. Then you will give up all these new ideas which you have received.’” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 100.

The church of Santa Rosa has no permanent building in which to worship and has had to conduct services in various places. Therefore, with this report, we turn to all our brethren around the world and ask for your assistance. Your freewill donations will be of great help to purchase a place of worship. We pray that the Lord will bless and multiply your generosity.

Jesus will return soon. Therefore, in fulfillment of the mission given by the Lord Jesus Christ to preach the gospel to every nation, tribe, people, and language, and trusting in His promise that He would be with His people until the end of the world, we are to dedicate everything to Him that He has given to us. The Lord has done great things and will do many more as we trust Him and do His will. In advance, we express our gratitude to all the brethren who will give a generous offering for the Santa Rosa church.

“And, behold, I come quickly; and My reward is with Me, to give every man according as his work shall be. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.” Revelation 22:12-14.

All honor and glory be to our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen!

—*The Curaçao Field*

**SPECIAL SABBATH SCHOOL OFFERING
FOR THE CURAÇAO FIELD**

Let your offerings reflect the heavenly blessings you have received!

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Sabbath, May 3, 2025

Samson's Failure and Death

"Samson's infatuation seems almost incredible. At first he was not so wholly enthralled as to reveal the secret; but he had deliberately walked into the net of the betrayer of souls, and its meshes were drawing close about him at every step." —*Conflict and Courage*, p. 133.

SUNDAY

- 1. When Samson went to the city of Gaza, which belonged to the Philistines, what ambush did his enemies plan for Samson, hoping to capture and kill him? What happened?**

JUDGES 16:2, 3 *And it was told the Gazites, saying, Samson is come hither. And they compassed him in, and laid wait for him all night in the gate of the city, and were quiet all the night, saying, In the morning, when it is day, we shall kill him. ³And Samson lay till midnight, and arose at midnight, and took the doors of the gate of the city, and the two posts, and went away with them, bar and all, and put them upon his shoulders, and carried them up to the top of an hill that is before Hebron.*

"Samson in his peril had the same source of strength as had Joseph. He could choose the right or the wrong as he pleased. But instead of taking hold of the strength of God, he permitted the wild passions of his nature to have full sway. The reasoning powers were perverted, the morals corrupted. God had called Samson to a position of great responsibility, honor, and usefulness; but he must first learn to govern by first learning to obey the laws of God. Joseph was a free moral agent. Good and evil were before him. He could choose the path of purity, holiness, and honor, or the path of immorality and degradation. He chose the right way, and God approved. Samson, under similar temptations, which he had brought upon himself, gave loose rein to passion. The path which he entered upon he found to end in shame, disaster, and death. What a contrast to the history of Joseph!" —*Conflict and Courage*, p. 135.

MONDAY

- 2. Continuing to demonstrate his weakness for strange women, what did Samson do? Taking advantage of this, what traps did the Philistines lay for him?**

JUDGES 16:4-6 *And it came to pass afterward, that he loved a woman in the valley of Sorek, whose name was Delilah. ⁵And the lords of the Philistines came up unto her, and said unto her, Entice him, and see wherein his great strength lieth, and by what means we may prevail against him, that we may bind him to afflict him; and we will give thee every one of us eleven hundred pieces of silver. ⁶And Delilah said to Samson, Tell me, I pray thee, wherein thy great strength lieth, and wherewith thou mightest be bound to afflict thee.*

“Had Samson’s head been shaven without fault on his part, his strength would have remained. But his course had shown contempt for the favor and authority of God as much as if he had in disdain himself severed his locks from his head. Therefore God left him to endure the results of his own folly.” —*Conflict and Courage*, p. 134.

TUESDAY

3. What position did Delilah take between Samson and the Philistines?

JUDGES 16:13-14 *And Delilah said unto Samson, Hitherto thou hast mocked me, and told me lies: tell me wherewith thou mightest be bound. And he said unto her, If thou weavest the seven locks of my head with the web. ¹⁴And she fastened it with the pin, and said unto him, The Philistines be upon thee, Samson. And he awaked out of his sleep, and went away with the pin of the beam, and with the web.*

“In the society of this enchantress, the judge of Israel squandered precious hours that should have been sacredly devoted to the welfare of his people. But the blinding passions which make even the strongest weak, had gained control of reason and of conscience.” —*Conflict and Courage*, p. 133.

WEDNESDAY

SAMSON BETRAYED GOD

4. How far did Delilah influence Samson with her insidious insistance? Was Samson aware of the consequences he was facing by revealing the mystery of his strength to a pagan belonging to an enemy nation?

JUDGES 16:15-17 *And she said unto him, How canst thou say, I love thee, when thine heart is not with me? thou hast mocked me these three times, and hast not told me wherein thy great strength lieth. ¹⁶And it came to pass, when she pressed him daily with her words, and urged him, so that his soul was vexed unto death; ¹⁷That he told her all his heart, and said unto her, There hath not come a razor upon mine head; for I have been a Nazarite unto God from my mother’s womb: if I be shaven, then my strength will go from me, and I shall become weak, and be like any other man.*

“Day by day Delilah urged him, until ‘his soul was vexed unto death;’ yet a subtle power kept him by her side. Overcome at last, Samson made known the secret: ‘There hath not come a razor upon mine head; for I have been a Nazarite unto God from my mother’s womb: If I be shaven, then my strength will go from me, and I shall become weak, and be like any other man.’ A messenger was immediately dispatched to the lords

of the Philistines, urging them to come to her without delay. While the warrior slept, the heavy masses of his hair were severed from his head. Then, as she had done three times before, she called, 'The Philistines be upon thee, Samson!' Suddenly awaking, he thought to exert his strength as before, and destroy them; but his powerless arms refused to do his bidding, and he knew that 'Jehovah was departed from him.'" –*Conflict and Courage*, p. 134.

THURSDAY

5. With her pretended love, what did Delilah prepare for Samson? Once he revealed the secret of his strength, what was the result?

JUDGES 16:18-22 *And when Delilah saw that he had told her all his heart, she sent and called for the lords of the Philistines, saying, Come up this once, for he hath shewed me all his heart. Then the lords of the Philistines came up unto her, and brought money in their hand. ¹⁹And she made him sleep upon her knees; and she called for a man, and she caused him to shave off the seven locks of his head; and she began to afflict him, and his strength went from him. ²⁰And she said, The Philistines be upon thee, Samson. And he awoke out of his sleep, and said, I will go out as at other times before, and shake myself. And he wist not that the Lord was departed from him. ²¹But the Philistines took him, and put out his eyes, and brought him down to Gaza, and bound him with fetters of brass; and he did grind in the prison house. ²²Howbeit the hair of his head began to grow again after he was shaven.*

"As the betrayer plied Samson with her questions, he deceived her by declaring that the weakness of other men would come upon him if certain processes were tried. When she put the matter to the test, the cheat was discovered. Then she accused him of falsehood, saying, 'How canst thou say, I love thee, when thine heart is not with me?'... Three times Samson had the clearest evidence that the Philistines had leagued with his charmer to destroy him; but when her purpose failed, she treated the matter as a jest, and he blindly banished fear." –*Conflict and Courage*, p. 133.

FRIDAY

6. How far did the Philistines go to boast of their victory and humiliate Samson?

JUDGES 16:23-25 *Then the lords of the Philistines gathered them together for to offer a great sacrifice unto Dagon their god, and to rejoice: for they said, Our god hath delivered Samson our enemy into our hand. ²⁴And when the people saw him, they praised their god: for they said, Our god hath delivered into our hands our enemy, and the destroyer of our country, which slew many of us. ²⁵And it came to pass, when their hearts were merry, that they said, Call for Samson, that he may make us sport. And they called for Samson out of the prison house; and he made them sport: and they set him between the pillars.*

"The Lord has in His word plainly instructed His people not to unite themselves with those who have not His love and fear before them. Such companions will seldom be satisfied with the love and respect which are

justly theirs. They will constantly seek to gain from the God-fearing wife or husband some favor which shall involve a disregard of the divine requirements. To a godly man, and to the church with which he is connected, a worldly wife or a worldly friend is as a spy in the camp, who will watch every opportunity to betray the servant of Christ, and expose him to the enemy's attacks.

"The history of Samson conveys a lesson for those whose characters are yet unformed, who have not yet entered upon the stage of active life. The youth who enter our schools and colleges will find there every class of mind. If they desire sport and folly, if they seek to shun the good and unite with the evil, they have the opportunity. Sin and righteousness are before them, and they are to choose for themselves. But let them remember that 'Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap.'" —*Conflict and Courage*, p. 135.

SABBATH

SINNERS PAY THE PRICE

7. Although mocked by all, how did Samson take revenge on the Philistines who had blinded him? How did he inflict on them the punishment that they deserved?

JUDGES 16:26-30 *And Samson said unto the lad that held him by the hand, Suffer me that I may feel the pillars whereupon the house standeth, that I may lean upon them. ²⁷Now the house was full of men and women; and all the lords of the Philistines were there; and there were upon the roof about three thousand men and women, that beheld while Samson made sport. ²⁸And Samson called unto the Lord, and said, O Lord God, remember me, I pray thee, and strengthen me, I pray thee, only this once, O God, that I may be at once avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes. ²⁹And Samson took hold of the two middle pillars upon which the house stood, and on which it was borne up, of the one with his right hand, and of the other with his left. ³⁰And Samson said, Let me die with the Philistines. And he bowed himself with all his might; and the house fell upon the lords, and upon all the people that were therein. So the dead which he slew at his death were more than they which he slew in his life.*

"What a change to him who had been the judge and champion of Israel—now weak, blind, imprisoned, degraded to the most menial service! Little by little he had violated the conditions of his sacred calling. God had borne long with him; but when he had so yielded himself to the power of sin as to betray his secret, the Lord departed from him. There was no virtue in his long hair merely, but it was a token of his loyalty to God; and when the symbol was sacrificed in the indulgence of passion, the blessings of which it was a token were also forfeited." —*Conflict and Courage*, p. 134.

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

"The Israelites made Samson judge, and he ruled Israel for twenty years. But one wrong step prepares the way for another.... He continued to seek those sensuous pleasures that were luring him to ruin. 'He loved a woman in the valley of Sorek,' not far from his own birthplace. Her name was Delilah, 'the

consumer.'... The Philistines kept a vigilant watch over the movements of their enemy, and when he degraded himself by this new attachment, they determined, through Delilah, to accomplish his ruin." —*Conflict and Courage*, p. 133.

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19

Sabbath, May 10, 2025

Private Idolatries and Priest

"Man is not to presume to put aside God's great moral standard and erect a standard according to his own finite judgment. It is because men are measuring themselves among themselves and living according to their own standard that iniquity abounds, and the love of many waxes cold. Contempt is shown to the law of God, and because of this many presume to transgress, and even those who have had the light of truth are wavering in their allegiance to the law of God. Will the current of evil that is setting so strongly toward perdition sweep them away? or will they, with courage and fidelity, stem the tide and maintain loyalty to God amid the prevailing evil? Will they not with zeal and pure-hearted devotion say, 'I have kept the ways of the Lord, and have not wickedly departed from my God. For all His judgments were before me, and I did not put away His statutes from me. I was also upright before Him, and I kept myself from mine iniquity?'" —*Review and Herald*, June 12, 1894.

SUNDAY

1. What did a man named Micah steal from his mother? What did he do when he became convinced that the money was not really his?

JUDGES 17:1, 2 *And there was a man of mount Ephraim, whose name was Micah. ²And he said unto his mother, The eleven hundred shekels of silver that were taken from thee, about which thou cursedst, and spakest of also in mine ears, behold, the silver is with me; I took it. And his mother said, Blessed be thou of the Lord, my son.*

"In consideration of their superior numbers, these tribes demanded a double portion of territory. The lot designated for them was the richest in the land, including the fertile plain of Sharon; but many of the principal towns in the valley were still in possession of the Canaanites, and the tribes shrank from the toil and danger of conquering their possessions, and desired an additional portion in territory already subdued. The tribe of Ephraim was one of the largest in Israel, as well as the one to which Joshua himself belonged, and its members naturally regarded themselves as entitled to special consideration. 'Why hast thou given me but one lot and one portion to inherit,' they said, 'seeing I am a great people?' But no departure from strict justice could be won from the inflexible leader." —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 513.

MADE-TO-ORDER GOD**2. Was the man's mother materialistic or a believer? What did she do with 200 pieces of silver once she had them again?**

JUDGES 17:3, 4 *And when he had restored the eleven hundred shekels of silver to his mother, his mother said, I had wholly dedicated the silver unto the Lord from my hand for my son, to make a graven image and a molten image: now therefore I will restore it unto thee. ⁴Yet he restored the money unto his mother; and his mother took two hundred shekels of silver, and gave them to the founder, who made thereof a graven image and a molten image: and they were in the house of Micah.*

"The power of the God of Israel had been pledged to His people, and had the Ephraimites possessed the courage and faith of Caleb, no enemy could have stood before them. Their evident desire to shun hardship and danger was firmly met by Joshua. 'Thou art a great people, and hast great power,' he said; '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." —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 514.

TUESDAY

3. What does the phrase, "every man did that which was right in his own eyes," make one think of? What did the Scriptures say about the worship of false pagan gods?

JUDGES 17:5, 6 *And the man Micah had an house of gods, and made an ephod, and teraphim, and consecrated one of his sons, who became his priest. ⁶In those days there was no king in Israel, but every man did that which was right in his own eyes.*

1 KINGS 11:7 *Then did Solomon build an high place for Chemosh, the abomination of Moab, in the hill that is before Jerusalem, and for Molech, the abomination of the children of Ammon.*

"God has given men no liberty to depart from His requirements. The Lord had declared to Israel, 'Ye shall not do ... every man whatsoever is right in his own eyes;' but ye shall 'observe and hear all these words which I command thee.' Deuteronomy 12:8, 28. In deciding upon any course of action we are not to ask whether we can see that harm will result from it, but whether it is in keeping with the will of God. 'There is a way which seemeth right unto a man; but the end thereof are the ways of death.' Proverbs 14:12." —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 634.

WEDNESDAY

ORDINATION OF ONE'S OWN PRIEST**4. In the meantime, who came to Micah's house in the hill country of Ephraim?**

JUDGES 17:7, 8 *And there was a young man out of Bethlehemjudah of the family of Judah, who was a Levite, and he sojourned there. ⁸And the man departed out of the city from Bethlehemjudah to sojourn where he could find a place: and he came to mount Ephraim to the house of Micah, as he journeyed.*

"Your position has led many in and about ___ to think less highly of the Review than they otherwise would have done, and they have held very lightly the truths found in it. Thus the Review failed to have the influence upon them that God designed it should have. And everyone has followed his own course, and done that which seemed right in his own eyes; hence all are far upon the background, and unless there is a thorough work accomplished for them, they will be weighed in the balance and found wanting." –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, pp. 316, 317.

THURSDAY

5. What should one think about a person's making someone his private priest? How is that any different from someone having a dream and, on that basis, declaring himself to be a prophet?

JUDGES 17:9, 10 *And Micah said unto him, Whence comest thou? And he said unto him, I am a Levite of Bethlehemjudah, and I go to sojourn where I may find a place. ¹⁰And Micah said unto him, Dwell with me, and be unto me a father and a priest, and I will give thee ten shekels of silver by the year, and a suit of apparel, and thy victuals. So the Levite went in.*

"Therefore shall ye lay up these My words in your heart and in your soul, and bind them for a sign upon your hand, that they may be as frontlets between your eyes....

"Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse; A blessing, if ye obey the commandments of the Lord your God, which I command you this day: and a curse, if ye will not obey the commandments of the Lord your God, but turn aside out of the way which I command you this day, to go after other gods, which ye have not known....

"Ye shall not do after all the things that we do here this day, every man whatsoever is right in his own eyes,' but 'ye shall observe to do all the statutes and judgments which I set before you this day.' Deuteronomy 11:18, 26-28; 12:8; 11:32." –*Review and Herald*, June 12, 1894.

FRIDAY

A SELF-MADE RELIGION

6. What authority did Micah have to ordain a person as a priest? How does that compare to a person today who presents himself as a teacher of the truth and appoints himself as the Lord's messenger?

JUDGES 17:11, 12 *And the Levite was content to dwell with the man; and the young man was unto him as one of his sons. ¹²And Micah consecrated the Levite; and the young man became his priest, and was in the house of Micah.*

"To obey is better than sacrifice.' The sacrificial offerings were in themselves of no value in the sight of God. They were designed to express on

the part of the offerer penitence for sin and faith in Christ and to pledge future obedience to the law of God. But without penitence, faith, and an obedient heart, the offerings were worthless. When, in direct violation of God's command, Saul proposed to present a sacrifice of that which God had devoted to destruction, open contempt was shown for the divine authority. The service would have been an insult to heaven. Yet with the sin of Saul and its result before us, how many are pursuing a similar course. While they refuse to believe and obey some requirement of the Lord, they persevere in offering up to God their formal services of religion. There is no response of the Spirit of God to such service. No matter how zealous men may be in their observance of religious ceremonies, the Lord cannot accept them if they persist in willful violation of one of His commands." —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 634.

SABBATH

7. Being an idolater, what kind of religion did Micah have, since he was convinced that he would receive God's blessing by having a Levite as his private priest?

JUDGES 17:13 *Then said Micah, Now know I that the Lord will do me good, seeing I have a Levite to my priest.*

"The Lord assured them that they must dispossess the land of those who were a snare to them, who would be thorns in their side. This was the word of the Lord, and His plan was that under His guardianship His people should have larger and still larger territory. Wherever they should build houses and cultivate the land, business firms should be established, that they would not have to borrow from their neighbors, but their neighbors from them. Their possessions were to enlarge, and they were to become a great and powerful people. But they stopped halfway. They consulted their own convenience, and the very work God could have done for them by placing them where the knowledge of God should be made known and the abominable practices of the heathen banished from the land, was not done." —Manuscript 126, 1899.

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

"Many evils exist in the church, and they blind the eye and benumb the spiritual senses. The conscience becomes deadened, and does not discern the abhorrent character of sin. We are closely to examine ourselves. Paul says: 'Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?' 'The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another.' We should plead with God for spiritual eyesight, that we may discern our mistakes and understand our defection of character." —*Review and Herald*, June 12, 1894.

* * *

The Danites' Search for Territory

"Those who would be soldiers for Christ should closely estimate what will be the influence of accepting positions of trust in advancing worldly enterprises. They should consult the Lord Jesus, and at every step ask Him, Will this work serve to advance, to save, my spiritual interest, or will it hinder me from attaining perfection of character? If large gain is presented as an inducement to entangle you and imperil your soul, you have but one answer to give; 'What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?'" —*Review and Herald*, June 16, 1896.

SUNDAY

1. Since there was at that time no king in Israel, what did some individuals and even entire tribes dare to do? Whom did some in the tribe of Dan send to explore the country and find suitable territory for themselves?

JUDGES 18:1-3 *In those days there was no king in Israel: and in those days the tribe of the Danites sought them an inheritance to dwell in; for unto that day all their inheritance had not fallen unto them among the tribes of Israel. ²And the children of Dan sent of their family five men from their coasts, men of valour, from Zorah, and from Eshtaol, to spy out the land, and to search it; and they said unto them, Go, search the land: who when they came to mount Ephraim, to the house of Micah, they lodged there. ³When they were by the house of Micah, they knew the voice of the young man the Levite: and they turned in thither, and said unto him, Who brought thee hither? and what makest thou in this place? and what hast thou here?*

"'Ye shall not do after all the things that we do here this day, every man whatsoever is right in his own eyes,' but 'ye shall observe to do all the statutes and judgments which I set before you this day.' Man is not to presume to put aside God's great moral standard and erect a standard according to his own finite judgment. It is because men are measuring themselves among themselves and living according to their own standard that iniquity abounds, and the love of many waxes cold. Contempt is shown to the law of God, and because of this many presume to transgress, and even those who have had the light of truth are wavering in their allegiance to the law of God." —*Review and Herald*, June 12, 1894.

"The inheritance of the tribe of Dan, to which Manoah's family belonged, was adjacent to the country of the Philistines. Indeed, the little town of Zorah, which was Samson's early home, was in close proximity to the dwelling-places of this alien race...." —*Signs of the Times*, October 6, 1881.

THE DANITES CONSULTED MICAH'S PRIEST

2. When they came to Micah's house and spoke with the priest, what did they ask him?

JUDGES 18:4-6 *And he said unto them, Thus and thus dealeth Micah with me, and hath hired me, and I am his priest. ⁵And they said unto him, Ask counsel, we pray thee, of God, that we may know whether our way which we go shall be prosperous. ⁶And the priest said unto them, Go in peace: before the Lord is your way wherein ye go.*

"In no conference should propositions be rushed through without time being taken by the brethren to carefully weigh all sides of the question. Because the president of a conference suggested certain plans, it has sometimes been considered unnecessary to consult the Lord about them. Thus propositions have been accepted that were not for the spiritual benefit of believers, and which involved far more than was apparent at the first casual consideration. Such movements are not in the order of God. Many, very many matters have been taken up and carried by vote, that have involved far more than was anticipated and far more than those who voted would have been willing to assent to, had they taken time to consider the question from all sides." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, p. 278.

TUESDAY

3. What was the outcome of their journey? What report did they give when they returned?

JUDGES 18:7-10 *Then the five men departed, and came to Laish, and saw the people that were therein, how they dwelt careless, after the manner of the Zidonians, quiet and secure; and there was no magistrate in the land, that might put them to shame in any thing; and they were far from the Zidonians, and had no business with any man. ⁸And they came unto their brethren to Zorah and Eshtaol: and their brethren said unto them, What say ye? ⁹And they said, Arise, that we may go up against them: for we have seen the land, and, behold, it is very good: and are ye still? be not slothful to go, and to enter to possess the land. ¹⁰When ye go, ye shall come unto a people secure, and to a large land: for God hath given it into your hands; a place where there is no want of any thing that is in the earth.*

"The Lord has sought to show us how ready is God to hear and answer our request by the use of a most familiar and commonplace occurrence. He said: 'What man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask Him?' Matthew 7:9-11. Christ made an appeal to us concerning the willingness of God to help, arguing from the natural love of the parent to his offspring. What father could turn from his son who asks bread? Should anyone dishonor God by imagining that He will not respond to the call of His children?... The Lord assures those that ask Him that He will give them the Holy Spirit." —*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 329.

4. Since the Lord had anciently promised to give Israel the land of Canaan, what did the people of Dan do?

EXODUS 13:11 *And it shall be when the Lord shall bring thee into the land of the Canaanites, as he sware unto thee and to thy fathers, and shall give it thee.*

JUDGES 18:11-13 *And there went from thence of the family of the Danites, out of Zorah and out of Eshtaol, six hundred men appointed with weapons of war. ¹²And they went up, and pitched in Kirjathjearim, in Judah: wherefore they called that place Mahanehdan unto this day: behold, it is behind Kirjathjearim. ¹³And they passed thence unto mount Ephraim, and came unto the house of Micah.*

“Their service was an imposing one, and testified to the truth of a living God. Their sacrifices pointed to a coming Saviour, who would take the kingdoms under the whole heaven, and possess them forever and ever. Evidence had been given of His power to do this, for as their invisible Leader had He not subdued their enemies and made a way for His church in the wilderness? His people would never know defeat if they would abide under the shadow of the Almighty; for One mightier than angels would fight by their side in every battle.” –Manuscript 134, 1899.

THURSDAY

5. When they reached Micah’s house, what did they take from him? What did such actions reveal?

JUDGES 18:16-20 *And the six hundred men appointed with their weapons of war, which were of the children of Dan, stood by the entering of the gate. ¹⁷And the five men that went to spy out the land went up, and came in thither, and took the graven image, and the ephod, and the teraphim, and the molten image: and the priest stood in the entering of the gate with the six hundred men that were appointed with weapons of war. ¹⁸And these went into Micah’s house, and fetched the carved image, the ephod, and the teraphim, and the molten image. Then said the priest unto them, What do ye? ¹⁹And they said unto him, Hold thy peace, lay thine hand upon thy mouth, and go with us, and be to us a father and a priest: is it better for thee to be a priest unto the house of one man, or that thou be a priest unto a tribe and a family in Israel? ²⁰And the priest’s heart was glad, and he took the ephod, and the teraphim, and the graven image, and went in the midst of the people.*

“If we would be spiritual worshipers of Jesus Christ, we must sacrifice every idol and fully obey the first four commandments. Matthew 22:37, 38: ‘Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment.’ The first four commandments allow no separation of the affections from God. Nor is anything allowed to divide, or share, our supreme delight in Him. Whatever divides the affections, and takes away from the soul supreme love to God, assumes the form of an idol. Our carnal hearts would cling to our idols and seek to carry them along; but we cannot advance until we put them away, for they separate

us from God. The great Head of the church has chosen His people out of the world and requires them to be separate. He designs that the spirit of His commandments shall draw them to Himself and separate them from the elements of the world. To love God and keep His commandments is far from loving the world's pleasures and friendship. There is no concord between Christ and Belial. The people of God may safely trust in Him alone and without fear press on in the way of obedience." –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, p. 289.

FRIDAY

6. How did Micah react when he realized that he had been robbed? What did the Danites threaten?

JUDGES 18:21-26 *So they turned and departed, and put the little ones and the cattle and the carriage before them. ²²And when they were a good way from the house of Micah, the men that were in the houses near to Micah's house were gathered together, and overtook the children of Dan. ²³And they cried unto the children of Dan. And they turned their faces, and said unto Micah, What aileth thee, that thou comest with such a company? ²⁴And he said, Ye have taken away my gods which I made, and the priest, and ye are gone away: and what have I more? and what is this that ye say unto me, What aileth thee? ²⁵And the children of Dan said unto him, Let not thy voice be heard among us, lest angry fellows run upon thee, and thou lose thy life, with the lives of thy household. ²⁶And the children of Dan went their way: and when Micah saw that they were too strong for him, he turned and went back unto his house.*

"In ancient times it was customary for men to hide their treasures in the earth. Thefts and robberies were frequent. And whenever there was a change in the ruling power, those who had large possessions were liable to be put under heavy tribute. Moreover the country was in constant danger of invasion by marauding armies." –*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 103.

SABBATH

THE DANITES SETTLED IN LAISH

7. What did the Danites establish once they conquered Laish in the far north of Canaan? Who served as the tribe's priest?

JUDGES 18:27, 29-31 *And they took the things which Micah had made, and the priest which he had, and came unto Laish, unto a people that were at quiet and secure: and they smote them with the edge of the sword, and burnt the city with fire.... ²⁹And they called the name of the city Dan, after the name of Dan their father, who was born unto Israel: howbeit the name of the city was Laish at the first. ³⁰And the children of Dan set up the graven image: and Jonathan, the son of Gershom, the son of Manasseh, he and his sons were priests to the tribe of Dan until the day of the captivity of the land. ³¹And they set them up Micah's graven image, which he made, all the time that the house of God was in Shiloh.*

"Let us take in the idea of the privilege we have. There are so many who, when they are in trouble, fall into temptation and lose their bearings. They forget the invitations God has abundantly given, and begin to look and plan for human help. They go to human beings for aid, and this is the way

in which their experience becomes feeble, and confused. In all our trials we are directed to seek the Lord most earnestly, remembering that we are His property, His children by adoption. No human being can understand our necessities as Christ. We shall receive help if we ask Him in faith. We are His by creation, we are His by redemption. By the cords of divine love we are bound to the Source of all power and strength. If we will only make God our dependence, asking Him for what we want as a little child asks His father for what he wants, we shall obtain a rich experience. We shall learn that God is the source of all strength and power." –*Lift Him Up*, p. 55.

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

"We cannot at this time afford to be careless or negligent in the work of God. We must seek the Lord earnestly every day if we would be prepared for the experiences that come to us. Our hearts are to be cleansed from every feeling of superiority, and the living principles of the truth are to be planted in the soul. Young and aged and middle-aged should now be practicing the virtues of Christ's character. They should daily be making spiritual development, that they may become vessels unto honor in the Master's service." –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, p. 278.

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21

Sabbath, May 24, 2025

Forgiveness and Hospitality

"He who is unforgiving cuts off the very channel through which alone he can receive mercy from God. We should not think that unless those who have injured us confess the wrong we are justified in withholding from them our forgiveness. It is their part, no doubt, to humble their hearts by repentance and confession; but we are to have a spirit of compassion toward those who have trespassed against us, whether or not they confess their faults. However sorely they may have wounded us, we are not to cherish our grievances and sympathize with ourselves over our injuries; but as we hope to be pardoned for our offenses against God, we are to pardon all who have done evil to us." –*Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 113, 114.

SUNDAY

1. What grave sin did the concubine of a Levite commit? When he learned about this infidelity, what did he do?

JUDGES 19:1-4 *And it came to pass in those days, when there was no king in Israel, that there was a certain Levite sojourning on the side of mount Ephraim, who took to him a concubine out of Bethlehemjudah. ²And his concubine played the whore against him, and went away from him unto her father's house to Bethlehemjudah, and was there four whole months. ³And her husband arose, and went after her, to speak friendly unto her,*

and to bring her again, having his servant with him, and a couple of asses: and she brought him into her father's house: and when the father of the damsel saw him, he rejoiced to meet him. ⁴And his father in law, the damsel's father, retained him; and he abode with him three days: so they did eat and drink, and lodged there.

"How often we feel that we have been dealt with unjustly, that things have been said concerning us that were untrue, and that we have been set in a false light before others. When we are thus tried, we shall need to keep strict guard over our spirit and our words. We shall need to have the love of Christ, that we may not cherish an unforgiving spirit. Let us not think that unless those who have injured us confess their wrongs, we are justified in withholding from them our forgiveness. We should not accumulate our grievances, holding them to our hearts until the one we think guilty has humbled his heart by repentance and confession." –*Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 144.

MONDAY

HOSPITALITY AND A CHRISTIAN SPIRIT

2. What warm welcome did the girl's father give to his betrayed son-in-law, who was looking for reconciliation with the woman?

JUDGES 19:8, 9 *And he arose early in the morning on the fifth day to depart; and the damsel's father said, Comfort thine heart, I pray thee. And they tarried until afternoon, and they did eat both of them. ⁹And when the man rose up to depart, he, and his concubine, and his servant, his father in law, the damsel's father, said unto him, Behold, now the day draweth toward evening, I pray you tarry all night: behold, the day groweth to an end, lodge here, that thine heart may be merry; and to morrow get you early on your way, that thou mayest go home.*

"Jesus has given us an example that we should follow in His steps, and manifest compassion and love and goodwill toward all. Let us cultivate a kind spirit, a spirit of forbearance, and tender, pitying love.... The Lord delights to bestow His blessings upon those who will honor Him, who will acknowledge His mercy, and show that they appreciate His love to them by manifesting the same gracious characteristic to those around them." –*Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 144.

TUESDAY

3. Where did the Levite propose to seek lodging on the way home?

JUDGES 19:10-12 *But the man would not tarry that night, but he rose up and departed, and came over against Jebus, which is Jerusalem; and there were with him two asses saddled, his concubine also was with him. ¹¹And when they were by Jebus, the day was far spent; and the servant said unto his master, Come, I pray thee, and let us turn in into this city of the Jebusites, and lodge in it. ¹²And his master said unto him, We will not turn aside hither into the city of a stranger, that is not of the children of Israel; we will pass over to Gibeah.*

PSALM 1:1 *Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.*

"In our institutions, where many are laboring together, the influence of association is very great. It is natural to seek companionship. Everyone will find companions or make them. And just in proportion to the strength of the friendship, will be the amount of influence which friends will exert over one another for good or for evil. All will have associates, and will influence and be influenced in their turn.

"The link is a mysterious one which binds human hearts together, so that the feelings, tastes, and principles of two individuals are closely blended. One catches the spirit, and copies the ways and acts, of the other. As wax retains the figure of the seal, so the mind retains the impression produced by intercourse and association. The influence may be unconscious, yet it is no less powerful." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 587.

WEDNESDAY

4. Even though they were Israelites and saw the travelers in the square, what did the inhabitants of Gibeah refuse to do?

JUDGES 19:13-15 *And he said unto his servant, Come, and let us draw near to one of these places to lodge all night, in Gibeah, or in Ramah. ¹⁴And they passed on and went their way; and the sun went down upon them when they were by Gibeah, which belongeth to Benjamin. ¹⁵And they turned aside thither, to go in and to lodge in Gibeah: and when he went in, he sat him down in a street of the city: for there was no man that took them into his house to lodging.*

"I am acquainted with persons who make a high profession, whose hearts are so encased in self-love and selfishness that they cannot appreciate what I am writing. They have all their lives thought and lived only for self. To make a sacrifice to do others good, to disadvantage themselves to advantage others, is out of the question with them. They have not the least idea that God requires this of them. Self is their idol. Precious weeks, months, and years pass into eternity, but they have no record in heaven of kindly acts, of sacrificing for others' good, of feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, or taking in the stranger. This entertaining strangers at a venture is not agreeable. If they knew that all who sought to share their bounty were worthy, then they might be induced to do something in this direction. But there is virtue in venturing something. Perchance we may entertain angels." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, p. 26.

THURSDAY

A STRANGER'S KINDNESS

5. Who in Gibeah saw the travelers and took an interest in them?

JUDGES 19:16-19 *And, behold, there came an old man from his work out of the field at even, which was also of mount Ephraim; and he sojourned in Gibeah: but the men of the place were Benjamites. ¹⁷And when he had lifted up his eyes, he saw a wayfaring man in the street of the city: and the old man said, Whither goest thou? and whence comest thou? ¹⁸And he said unto him, We are passing from Bethlehemjudah toward the side of*

mount Ephraim; from thence am I: and I went to Bethlehemjudah, but I am now going to the house of the Lord; and there is no man that receiveth me to house.¹⁹ Yet there is both straw and provender for our asses; and there is bread and wine also for me, and for thy handmaid, and for the young man which is with thy servants: there is no want of any thing.

“Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.’ Hebrews 13:2. These words have lost none of their force through the lapse of time. Our heavenly Father still continues to place in the pathway of His children opportunities that are blessings in disguise; and those who improve these opportunities find great joy. ‘If thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul; then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noonday: and the Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not.’ Isaiah 58:10, 11.” —*Prophets and Kings*, p. 132.

FRIDAY

6. How did the foreign Israelite who lived in Gibeah interact with the travelers?

JUDGES 19:20, 21 *And the old man said, Peace be with thee; howsoever let all thy wants lie upon me; only lodge not in the street.²¹ So he brought him into his house, and gave provender unto the asses: and they washed their feet, and did eat and drink.*

“To His faithful servants today Christ says, ‘He that receiveth you receiveth Me, and he that receiveth Me receiveth Him that sent Me.’ No act of kindness shown in His name will fail to be recognized and rewarded. And in the same tender recognition Christ includes even the feeblest and lowliest of the family of God. ‘Whosoever shall give to drink,’ He says, ‘unto one of these little ones’—those who are as children in their faith and their knowledge of Christ—a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward.’ Matthew 10:40, 42.” —*Prophets and Kings*, p. 132.

SABBATH

EXAMPLES FOR TODAY

7. Why did the Holy Scriptures record such happenings as well as the sadder ones that are found in the rest of Judges 19? What purpose do they have today?

1 CORINTHIANS 10:5-8 *But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness.⁶ Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted.⁷ Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.⁸ Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand.*

“The Lord hath set apart him that is godly for Himself; this consecration to God and separation from the world is plainly and positively enjoined in both the Old and the New Testament. There is a wall of separation which

the Lord Himself has established between the things of the world and the things He has chosen out of the world and sanctified unto Himself. The calling and character of God's people are peculiar, their prospects are peculiar, and these peculiarities distinguish them from all other people. All of God's people upon the earth are one body, from the beginning to the end of time. They have one Head that directs and governs the body. The same injunctions that rested upon ancient Israel, rest upon God's people now, to be separate from the world. The great Head of the church has not changed. The experience of Christians in these days is much like the travels of ancient Israel." –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, pp. 283, 284.

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

"There are orphans that should be cared for; but some will not venture to undertake this, for it would bring them more work than they care to do, leaving them but little time to please themselves. But when the King shall make investigation, these do-nothing, illiberal, selfish souls will learn that heaven is for those who have been workers, those who have denied themselves for Christ's sake. No provisions have been made for those who have ever taken such special care in loving and looking out for themselves. The terrible punishment which the King threatens those on His left hand, in this case, is not because of their great crimes. They are not condemned for the things which they did do, but for that which they did not do. You did not those things which Heaven assigned you to do. You pleased yourself, and can take your portion with self-pleasers." –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, p. 27.

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22

Sabbath, May 31, 2025

When Evil Is Not Corrected

"The path is so narrow, so holy, that sin cannot be tolerated therein, yet access to the path has been made for all, and not one desponding, doubting, trembling soul needs to say, 'God cares nought for me.' Every soul is precious in His sight.... When Satan was triumphing as the prince of the world, when he claimed the world as his kingdom, when we were all marred and corrupted with sin, God sent His messenger from heaven, even His only begotten Son, to proclaim to all the inhabitants of the world, 'I have found a ransom. I have made a way of escape for all the perishing. I have your emancipation papers provided for you, sealed by the Lord of heaven and earth.'" –*Our High Calling*, p. 38.

SUNDAY

- 1. What did the Israelites—eleven tribes—decide to do as a result of the grave immorality that was committed in Gibeah, a city in the territory of Benjamin?**

JUDGES 20:8-10 *And all the people arose as one man, saying, We will not any of us go to his tent, neither will we any of us turn into his house. ⁹But now this shall be the thing which we will do to Gibeah; we will go up by lot against it; ¹⁰And we will take ten men of an hundred throughout all the tribes of Israel, and an hundred of a thousand, and a thousand out of ten thousand, to fetch victual for the people, that they may do, when they come to Gibeah of Benjamin, according to all the folly that they have wrought in Israel.*

"Many need to make a decided change in the tenor of their thoughts and actions, if they would please Jesus. We can seldom see our sins in the grievous light that God can. Many have habituated themselves to pursue a course of sin, and their hearts harden, under the influence of the power of Satan....

"But when in the strength and grace of God they place their minds against the temptations of Satan, their minds are made clear, their hearts and consciences by being influenced by the Spirit of God are made sensitive, and then sin appears as it is—exceedingly sinful." —*God's Amazing Grace*, p. 264.

MONDAY

FIRST ATTEMPTING PEACEFUL MEANS

2. Not wishing to take up arms against the entire tribe of Benjamin, what question did the eleven tribes ask?

JUDGES 20:11-13 *So all the men of Israel were gathered against the city, knit together as one man. ¹²And the tribes of Israel sent men through all the tribe of Benjamin, saying, What wickedness is this that is done among you? ¹³Now therefore deliver us the men, the children of Belial, which are in Gibeah, that we may put them to death, and put away evil from Israel. But the children of Benjamin would not hearken to the voice of their brethren the children of Israel.*

ISAIAH 1:18 *Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.*

"Christ was manifested as the Saviour of men. The people were not to trust in their own works, in their own righteousness, or in themselves in any way, but in the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world. In Him the Advocate with the Father was revealed. Through Him the invitation was given, 'Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.' This invitation comes sounding down along the lines to us today. Let not pride, or self-esteem, or self-righteousness keep any one from confessing his sins, that he may claim the promise: 'He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.' Keep nothing back from God, and neglect not the confession of your faults to the brethren when they have a connection with them." —*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 239.

TUESDAY

3. How ready were the Benjamites to admit and correct the evil that was done in Gibeah? What were the consequences?

JUDGES 20:13-17 Now therefore deliver us the men, the children of Belial, which are in Gibeah, that we may put them to death, and put away evil from Israel. But the children of Benjamin would not hearken to the voice of their brethren the children of Israel. ¹⁴But the children of Benjamin gathered themselves together out of the cities unto Gibeah, to go out to battle against the children of Israel. ¹⁵And the children of Benjamin were numbered at that time out of the cities twenty and six thousand men that drew sword, beside the inhabitants of Gibeah, which were numbered seven hundred chosen men. ¹⁶Among all this people there were seven hundred chosen men lefthanded; every one could sling stones at an hair breadth, and not miss. ¹⁷And the men of Israel, beside Benjamin, were numbered four hundred thousand men that drew sword: all these were men of war.

“Some who profess righteousness will, like Judas, betray their Lord into the hands of His bitterest enemies. These self-confident ones, determined to have their own way and to advocate their own ideas, will go on from bad to worse, until they will pursue any course rather than to give up their own will. They will go on blindly in the way of evil, but, like the deluded Pharisees, so self-deceived that they think they are doing God’s service. Christ portrayed the course which a certain class will take when they have a chance to develop their true character: ‘And ye shall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolks, and friends; and some of you shall they cause to be put to death.’” –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, pp. 690, 691.

“We are to surrender our hearts to God, that He may renew and sanctify us, and fit us for His heavenly court. We are not to wait for some special time, but today we are to give ourselves to Him, refusing to be the servants of sin. Do you imagine you can leave off sin a little at a time? Oh, leave the accursed thing at once! Hate the things that Christ hates, love the things that Christ loves. Has He not by His death and suffering made provision for your cleansing from sin? When we begin to realize that we are sinners, and fall on the Rock to be broken, the everlasting arms are placed about us, and we are brought close to the heart of Jesus. Then we shall be charmed with His loveliness, and disgusted with our own righteousness. We need to come close to the foot of the cross. The more we humble ourselves there, the more exalted will God’s love appear. The grace and righteousness of Christ will not avail for him who feels whole, for him who thinks he is reasonably good, who is contented with his own condition. There is no room for Christ in the heart of him who does not realize his need of divine light and aid.” –*Selected Messages*, book 1, pp. 327, 328.

WEDNESDAY

THE TRIBE OF BENJAMIN GAINED PARTIAL VICTORY

4. Even though they were in the wrong, what did the Benjamites repeatedly inflict on the Israelites from the other tribes?

JUDGES 20:20, 21, 24, 25 And the men of Israel went out to battle against Benjamin; and the men of Israel put themselves in array to fight against them at Gibeah. ²¹And the children of Benjamin came forth out of Gibeah, and destroyed down to the ground of the Israelites that day twenty and two thousand men.... ²⁴And the children of Israel came near against the chil-

dren of Benjamin the second day. ²⁵And Benjamin went forth against them out of Gibeah the second day, and destroyed down to the ground of the children of Israel again eighteen thousand men; all these drew the sword.

“In the warfare ensuing, Satan for a time seemed to hold the advantage. He could lie; God could not lie. He could move in a thousand crooked and deceiving ways to gain a desired object; God must pursue the straightforward course of truth and righteousness. For a time Satan triumphed in an apparent victory. But God would unmask the enemy and reveal him in his true character.” —*The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 3, p. 77.

THURSDAY

5. Why were there such great defeats? Where did the initiative to wage war against one's brothers in the tribe of Benjamin come from?

JUDGES 20:18, 23 *And the children of Israel arose, and went up to the house of God, and asked counsel of God, and said, Which of us shall go up first to the battle against the children of Benjamin? And the Lord said, Judah shall go up first....* ²³*And the children of Israel went up and wept before the Lord until even, and asked counsel of the Lord, saying, Shall I go up again to battle against the children of Benjamin my brother? And the Lord said, Go up against him.*

“To dwell upon the beauty, goodness, mercy, and love of Jesus is strengthening to the mental and moral powers, and while the mind is kept trained to do the works of Christ, to be obedient children, you will habitually inquire, Is this the way of the Lord? Will Jesus be pleased to have me do this?...” —*God's Amazing Grace*, p. 264.

FRIDAY

CONSULTING THE LORD AGAIN

6. What did the Israelites do after being defeated twice?

JUDGES 20:26-28 *Then all the children of Israel, and all the people, went up, and came unto the house of God, and wept, and sat there before the Lord, and fasted that day until even, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the Lord.* ²⁷*And the children of Israel enquired of the Lord, (for the ark of the covenant of God was there in those days,* ²⁸*And Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron, stood before it in those days,) saying, Shall I yet again go out to battle against the children of Benjamin my brother, or shall I cease? And the Lord said, Go up; for to morrow I will deliver them into thine hand.*

“When one who professes to serve God wrongs or injures a brother, he misrepresents the character of God to that brother, and the wrong must be confessed, he must acknowledge it to be sin, in order to be in harmony with God. Our brother may have done us a greater wrong than we have done him, but this does not lessen our responsibility. If when we come before God we remember that another has aught against us, we are to leave our gift of prayer, of thanksgiving, of freewill offering, and go to the brother with whom we are at variance, and in humility confess our own sin and ask to be forgiven.” —*Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 58, 59.

7. What resulted from the conflict between the eleven tribes and that of Benjamin? What lesson for today is there in this story?

JUDGES 20:34-36 *And there came against Gibeah ten thousand chosen men out of all Israel, and the battle was sore: but they knew not that evil was near them. ³⁵And the Lord smote Benjamin before Israel: and the children of Israel destroyed of the Benjamites that day twenty and five thousand and an hundred men: all these drew the sword. ³⁶So the children of Benjamin saw that they were smitten:...*

DEUTERONOMY 32:30 *How should one chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight, except their Rock had sold them, and the Lord had shut them up?*

1 SAMUEL 14:6, LAST PART ... *It may be that the Lord will work for us: for there is no restraint to the Lord to save by many or by few.*

"Every act of obedience to Christ, every act of self-denial for His sake, every trial well endured, every victory gained over temptation, is a step in the march to the glory of final victory. If we take Christ for our guide, He will lead us safely. The veriest sinner need not miss his way. Not one trembling seeker need fail of walking in pure and holy light. Though the path is so narrow, so holy that sin cannot be tolerated therein, yet access has been secured for all, and not one doubting, trembling soul need say, 'God cares nought for me.'" —*God's Amazing Grace*, p. 264.

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

"Do not merely assent to the truth, and fail to be a doer of the words of Christ. The truth must be applied to self; it must bring men and women who receive it to the Rock, that they may fall upon the Rock and be broken. Then Jesus can mold and fashion their characters after His own divine character. If we would listen to His voice, we must let silence reign in the heart. The clamors of self, its pretensions, its lusts, must be rebuked, and we must put on the robe of humility, and take our place as humble learners in the school of Christ....

"Truth is efficient only as it is carried out in practical life. If the word of God condemns some habit you have indulged, a feeling you have cherished, a spirit you have manifested, turn not from the word of God, but turn away from the evil of your doings, and let Jesus cleanse and sanctify your heart. Confess your faults, and forsake them....

"We are living in the last days, when error of a most deceptive character is accepted and believed, while truth is discarded. Many are drifting into darkness and infidelity, picking flaws with the Bible, bringing in superstitious inventions, unscriptural theories, and speculations of vain philosophy; but it is the duty of everyone to seek a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures." —*Our High Calling*, p. 37.

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Excess and Regret

“Not once should feeling be allowed to get the mastery over judgment. There is danger of excess in that which is lawful, and that which is not lawful will surely lead into false paths. If there is not careful, earnest, sensible work, solid as a rock in the advancement of every idea and principle, and in every representation given, souls will be ruined.” —*Selected Messages*, book 2, p. 18.

SUNDAY

1. Was the vow made in Mizpeh inspired and appropriate? What remorse did the Israelites feel after going too far in the punishment of the Benjamites?

JUDGES 21:1-3 *Now the men of Israel had sworn in Mizpeh, saying, There shall not any of us give his daughter unto Benjamin to wife. ²And the people came to the house of God, and abode there till even before God, and lifted up their voices, and wept sore; ³And said, O Lord God of Israel, why is this come to pass in Israel, that there should be to day one tribe lacking in Israel?*

“It is carrying that which is lawful to excess that makes it a grievous sin.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 505.

“Satan studies every indication of the frailty of human nature, he marks the sins which each individual is inclined to commit, and then he takes care that opportunities shall not be wanting to gratify the tendency to evil. He tempts men to excess in that which is in itself lawful.... Multitudes eagerly accept teachings that leave them at liberty to obey the promptings of the carnal heart.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 555.

“We should strive to understand the weakness of others. We know little of the heart trials of those who have been bound in chains of darkness and who lack resolution and moral power. Most pitiable is the condition of him who is suffering under remorse; he is as one stunned, staggering, sinking into the dust. He can see nothing clearly. The mind is beclouded, he knows not what steps to take. Many a poor soul is misunderstood, unappreciated, full of distress and agony—a lost, straying sheep. He cannot find God, yet he has an intense longing for pardon and peace.” —*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 168.

MONDAY

BE CAREFUL OF TAKING OATHS

2. In their zeal to punish the Benjamites, what oath did the Israelites take? What enormous regret did they have after causing so many deaths in the tribe of Benjamin?

JUDGES 21:4-7 *And it came to pass on the morrow, that the people rose early, and built there an altar, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings. ⁵And the children of Israel said, Who is there among all the tribes of Israel that came not up with the congregation unto the Lord? For they had made a great oath concerning him that came not up to the Lord to Mizpeh, saying, He shall surely be put to death. ⁶And the children of Israel repented them for Benjamin their brother, and said, There is one tribe cut off from Israel this day. ⁷How shall we do for wives for them that remain, seeing we have sworn by the Lord that we will not give them of our daughters to wives?*

"I saw that some of God's children have made a mistake in regard to oath taking, and Satan has taken advantage of this to oppress them, and take from them their Lord's money. I saw that the words of our Lord, 'Swear not at all,' do not touch the judicial oath. 'Let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.' This refers to common conversation. Some exaggerate in their language. Some swear by their own life; others swear by their head—as sure as they live; as sure as they have a head. Some take heaven and earth to witness that such things are so. Some hope that God will strike them out of existence if what they are saying is not true. It is this kind of common swearing against which Jesus warns His disciples." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, p. 201.

TUESDAY

3. What other arbitrary, unjust order did the assembly impose? If they regretted how they had proceeded against the Benjamites, how could they now justify proceeding in a similar manner against the inhabitants of Jabeshgilead?

JUDGES 21:8-11 *And they said, What one is there of the tribes of Israel that came not up to Mizpeh to the Lord? And, behold, there came none to the camp from Jabeshgilead to the assembly. ⁹For the people were numbered, and, behold, there were none of the inhabitants of Jabeshgilead there. ¹⁰And the congregation sent thither twelve thousand men of the valiantest, and commanded them, saying, Go and smite the inhabitants of Jabeshgilead with the edge of the sword, with the women and the children. ¹¹And this is the thing that ye shall do, Ye shall utterly destroy every male, and every woman that hath lain by man.*

"Men are wanted whose sense of justice, even in the smallest matters, will not allow them to make an entry of their time that is not minute and correct—men who will realize that they are handling means that belongs to God, and who would not unjustly appropriate one cent to their own use; men who will be just as faithful and exact, careful and diligent, in their labor, in the absence of their employer as in his presence, proving by their faithfulness that they are not merely men pleasers, eye-servants, but are conscientious, faithful, true workmen, doing right, not for human praise, but because they love and choose the right from a high sense of their obligation to God." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, p. 25.

HUMAN THINKING**4. What did the Israelites now resort to in the attempt to repair the damage that had been done? What was the cause of the division between them and the tribe of Benjamin?**

JUDGES 21:12-15 *And they found among the inhabitants of Jabeshgilead four hundred young virgins, that had known no man by lying with any male: and they brought them unto the camp to Shiloh, which is in the land of Canaan. ¹³And the whole congregation sent some to speak to the children of Benjamin that were in the rock Rimmon, and to call peaceably unto them. ¹⁴And Benjamin came again at that time; and they gave them wives which they had saved alive of the women of Jabeshgilead: and yet so they sufficed them not. ¹⁵And the people repented them for Benjamin, because that the Lord had made a breach in the tribes of Israel.*

“No human invention can find a remedy for the sinning soul. ‘The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.’ ‘Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies.’ Romans 8:7; Matthew 15:19. The fountain of the heart must be purified before the streams can become pure. He who is trying to reach heaven by his own works in keeping the law is attempting an impossibility. There is no safety for one who has merely a legal religion, a form of godliness. The Christian’s life is not a modification or improvement of the old, but a transformation of nature. There is a death to self and sin, and a new life altogether. This change can be brought about only by the effectual working of the Holy Spirit.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 172.

THURSDAY

5. What was proposed to try to remedy the evil that had been committed, as well as to uphold the prior oath?

JUDGES 21:16-19 *Then the elders of the congregation said, How shall we do for wives for them that remain, seeing the women are destroyed out of Benjamin? ¹⁷And they said, There must be an inheritance for them that be escaped of Benjamin, that a tribe be not destroyed out of Israel. ¹⁸Howbeit we may not give them wives of our daughters: for the children of Israel have sworn, saying, Cursed be he that giveth a wife to Benjamin. ¹⁹Then they said, Behold, there is a feast of the Lord in Shiloh yearly in a place which is on the north side of Bethel, on the east side of the highway that goeth up from Bethel to Shechem, and on the south of Lebonah.*

“The Jews understood the third commandment as prohibiting the profane use of the name of God; but they thought themselves at liberty to employ other oaths. Oath taking was common among them. Through Moses they had been forbidden to swear falsely, but they had many devices for freeing themselves from the obligation imposed by an oath. They did not fear to indulge in what was really profanity, nor did they shrink from perjury so long as it was veiled by some technical evasion of the law.” —*Thoughts from Mount of Blessing*, p. 66.

RESOLVING ONE ERROR BY MAKING ANOTHER

6. Is it correct to try to obtain a wife through kidnapping? What could be seen in the Israelites' reasoning?

JUDGES 21:20-22 *Therefore they commanded the children of Benjamin, saying, Go and lie in wait in the vineyards; ²¹And see, and, behold, if the daughters of Shiloh come out to dance in dances, then come ye out of the vineyards, and catch you every man his wife of the daughters of Shiloh, and go to the land of Benjamin. ²²And it shall be, when their fathers or their brethren come unto us to complain, that we will say unto them, Be favourable unto them for our sakes: because we reserved not to each man his wife in the war: for ye did not give unto them at this time, that ye should be guilty.*

"The best way to deal with error is to present the truth, and leave wild ideas to die out for want of notice. Contrasted with truth, the weakness of error is made apparent to every intelligent mind. The more the erroneous assertions of opposers, and of those who rise up among us to deceive souls, are repeated, the better the cause of error is served. The more publicity is given to the suggestions of Satan, the better pleased is his satanic majesty; for unsanctified hearts will be prepared to receive the chaff that he provides for them. We shall have to meet difficulties of this order even in the church. Men will make a world of an atom and an atom of a world." —*Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, p. 165.

SABBATH

7. What could be seen in all of the questionable human manipulation that occurred? What bitter statement was made at the end of the book of Judges?

JUDGES 21:23-25 *And the children of Benjamin did so, and took them wives, according to their number, of them that danced, whom they caught: and they went and returned unto their inheritance, and repaired the cities, and dwelt in them. ²⁴And the children of Israel departed thence at that time, every man to his tribe and to his family, and they went out from thence every man to his inheritance. ²⁵In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes.*

"People cannot be expected to see at once the advantage of truth over the error they have cherished. The best way to expose the fallacy of error is to present the evidences of truth. This is the greatest rebuke that can be given to error. Dispel the cloud of darkness resting on minds by reflecting the bright light of the Sun of Righteousness." —*Pacific Union Recorder*, October 23, 1902.

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

"... Never forget that you are wholly dependent upon God; and if you pass one hour or one moment without relying upon His grace, without keeping the heart open to receive the wisdom that is not earthborn, being sure that without Christ ye can do nothing, you will be unable to distinguish between the common and the sacred fire. Words of a very forbidden character will flash

from your lips to destroy hope and courage and faith. Thus it is written in the books of heaven: Your words were not inspired of God, but of the enemy that wounded and bruised Christ in the person of His purchased possession. Souls of infinite value were treated indifferently, turned from, left to struggle under temptation, and forced on Satan's battleground." —*Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, p. 350.

"This do, and thou shalt live," Jesus said. He presented the law as a divine unity, and in this lesson taught that it is not possible to keep one precept, and break another; for the same principle runs through them all. Man's destiny will be determined by his obedience to the whole law. Supreme love to God and impartial love to man are the principles to be wrought out in the life." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 498.

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24

Sabbath, June 14, 2025

The Story of Ruth

"The children of Israel were to occupy all the territory which God appointed them. Those nations that rejected the worship and service of the true God were to be dispossessed. But it was God's purpose that by the revelation of His character through Israel men should be drawn unto Him. To all the world the gospel invitation was to be given. Through the teaching of the sacrificial service Christ was to be uplifted before the nations, and all who would look unto Him should live. All who, like Rahab the Canaanite, and Ruth the Moabitess, turned from idolatry to the worship of the true God, were to unite themselves with His chosen people. As the numbers of Israel increased, they were to enlarge their borders, until their kingdom should embrace the world." —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 290.

SUNDAY

1. What experience that was recorded in the book of Ruth occurred in the time of the judges? After the family moved to Moab to survive the famine, what happened to Elimelech, Naomi's husband?

RUTH 1:1-3 *Now it came to pass in the days when the judges ruled, that there was a famine in the land. And a certain man of Bethlehemjudah went to sojourn in the country of Moab, he, and his wife, and his two sons. ²And the name of the man was Elimelech, and the name of his wife Naomi, and the name of his two sons Mahlon and Chilion, Ephrathites of Bethlehemjudah. And they came into the country of Moab, and continued there. ³And Elimelech Naomi's husband died; and she was left, and her two sons.*

"Christians are not excusable for permitting the widow's cries and the orphan's prayers to ascend to heaven because of their suffering want while

a liberal Providence has placed in the hands of these Christians abundance to supply their need. Let not the cries of the widow and fatherless call down the vengeance of heaven upon us as a people. In the professed Christian world there is enough expended in extravagant display, for jewels and ornaments, to supply the wants of all the hungry and clothe the naked in our towns and cities; and yet these professed followers of the meek and lowly Jesus need not deprive themselves of suitable food or comfortable clothing. What will these church members say when confronted in the day of God by the worthy poor, the afflicted, the widows and fatherless, who have known pinching want for the meager necessities of life, while there was expended by these professed followers of Christ, for superfluous clothing and needless ornaments expressly forbidden in the Word of God, enough to supply all their wants?" —*Review and Herald*, November 21, 1878.

MONDAY

THE SONS' MARRIAGES AND DEATHS

2. What happened to Naomi's two sons, Mahlon and Chilion? How devastating must these things have been for Naomi and her two daughters-in-law?

RUTH 1:4, 5 *And they took them wives of the women of Moab; the name of the one was Orpah, and the name of the other Ruth: and they dwelled there about ten years. ⁵And Mahlon and Chilion died also both of them; and the woman was left of her two sons and her husband.*

"When we pray, 'Give us this day our daily bread,' we ask for others as well as ourselves. And we acknowledge that what God gives us is not for ourselves alone. God gives to us in trust, that we may feed the hungry. Of His goodness He has prepared for the poor. Psalm 68:10. And He says, 'When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbors.... But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind: and thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.' Luke 14:12-14." —*Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 111, 112.

TUESDAY

3. Having learned that the famine in Canaan had ended, what decision did Naomi make? What did she advise her daughters-in-law to do?

RUTH 1:6-8 *Then she arose with her daughters in law, that she might return from the country of Moab: for she had heard in the country of Moab how that the Lord had visited his people in giving them bread. ⁷Wherefore she went forth out of the place where she was, and her two daughters in law with her; and they went on the way to return unto the land of Judah. ⁸And Naomi said unto her two daughters in law, Go, return each to her mother's house: the Lord deal kindly with you, as ye have dealt with the dead, and with me.*

"Individual, constant, united efforts will bring the reward of success. Those who desire to do a great deal of good in our world must be willing to do it in God's way by doing little things. He who wishes to reach the

loftiest heights of achievement by doing something great and wonderful, will fail of doing anything.

“Steady progress in a good work, the frequent repetition of one kind of faithful service, is of more value in God’s sight than the doing of one great work, and wins of His children a good report, giving character to their efforts. Those who are true and faithful to their divinely appointed duties are not fitful but steadfast in purpose, pressing their way through evil, as well as good reports. They are instant in season and out of season.”
—Letter 122, 1902; *Evangelism*, pp. 329, 330.

WEDNESDAY

RUTH’S NOBLE CHOICE

4. How did Ruth respond to Naomi’s advice? What was her decision?

RUTH 1:15-18 *And she said, Behold, thy sister in law is gone back unto her people, and unto her gods: return thou after thy sister in law. ¹⁶And Ruth said, Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God: ¹⁷Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the Lord do so to me, and more also, if I ought but death part thee and me. ¹⁸When she saw that she was stedfastly minded to go with her, then she left speaking unto her.*

“Thus there was given Solomon and his people a most wonderful opportunity to reveal the character of the true God so clearly that men of all nations would be taught to reverence and obey the King of kings. To all the world the gospel invitation was to be given. Through the teaching of the sacrificial service, Christ was to be uplifted before the nations, and all who would look unto Him should live. All who, like Rahab the Canaanite and Ruth the Moabitess, turned from idolatry to the worship of the true God, were to unite themselves with his chosen people. As the numbers of Israel increased, they were to enlarge their borders, until their kingdom should embrace the world.” —*Review and Herald*, January 25, 1906.

THURSDAY

5. What did Ruth need to do to survive after she and her mother-in-law arrived in Israel with no resources? To whose field did she go to glean?

RUTH 2:1-3 *And Naomi had a kinsman of her husband’s, a mighty man of wealth, of the family of Elimelech; and his name was Boaz. ²And Ruth the Moabitess said unto Naomi, Let me now go to the field, and glean ears of corn after him in whose sight I shall find grace. And she said unto her, Go, my daughter. ³And she went, and came, and gleaned in the field after the reapers: and her hap was to light on a part of the field belonging unto Boaz, who was of the kindred of Elimelech.*

“In ancient times, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses with his meekness and wisdom, and Joshua with his varied capabilities, were all enlisted in God’s service. The music of Miriam, the courage and piety of Deborah, the filial affection of Ruth, the obedience and faithfulness of Samuel, the stern fidel-

ity of Elijah, the softening, subduing influence of Elisha—all were needed. So now all upon whom God's blessing has been bestowed are to respond by actual service; every gift is to be employed for the advancement of His kingdom and the glory of His name." —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 301.

FRIDAY

6. What permission did Ruth request? When Boaz, the owner of the field, came, he asked the servant who she was. After hearing about her, what did Boaz say to her?

RUTH 2:4-8 *And, behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem, and said unto the reapers, The Lord be with you. And they answered him, The Lord bless thee. ⁵Then said Boaz unto his servant that was set over the reapers, Whose damsel is this? ⁶And the servant that was set over the reapers answered and said, It is the Moabitish damsel that came back with Naomi out of the country of Moab: ⁷And she said, I pray you, let me glean and gather after the reapers among the sheaves: so she came, and hath continued even from the morning until now, that she tarried a little in the house. ⁸Then said Boaz unto Ruth, Hearst thou not, my daughter? Go not to glean in another field, neither go from hence, but abide here fast by my maidens.*

"The Bible is a revelation of the divine will and purpose of God. Those who follow its teachings are doers of the words of Christ, and by this means they bring solid timbers into their character building. Let us heed the words of inspiration, which exhort us to 'be pitiful, be courteous.' Boaz represented the character of the Christian gentleman. Like Abraham, he commanded his household after him to keep the way of the Lord to do justice and judgment. He showed courtesy to all his servants, and as he passed among his workmen in the field, he said unto the reapers, 'The Lord be with you. And they answered him, The Lord bless thee.' Here is a lesson for both masters and servants, for employers and the employed. The servants are strengthened in their hearts to do righteously, to be faithful to masters who manifest respectful kindness and courtesy towards them. Christians should be the most courteous people in the world." —*The Home Missionary*, December 1, 1894.

SABBATH

BLESSED MARRIAGE TO BOAZ

7. How was Ruth blessed, along with her mother-in-law? What royal lineage was she part of, even though she was a foreigner from Moab?

RUTH 4:13-17 *So Boaz took Ruth, and she was his wife: and when he went in unto her, the Lord gave her conception, and she bare a son. ¹⁴And the women said unto Naomi, Blessed be the Lord, which hath not left thee this day without a kinsman, that his name may be famous in Israel. ¹⁵And he shall be unto thee a restorer of thy life, and a nourisher of thine old age: for thy daughter in law, which loveth thee, which is better to thee than seven sons, hath born him. ¹⁶And Naomi took the child, and laid it in her bosom, and became nurse unto it. ¹⁷And the women her neighbours gave it a name, saying, There is a son born to Naomi; and they called his name Obed: he is the father of Jesse, the father of David.*

“Isaac was highly honored by God in being made inheritor of the promises through which the world was to be blessed; yet when he was forty years of age, he submitted to his father’s judgment in appointing his experienced, God-fearing servant to choose a wife for him. And the result of that marriage, as presented in the Scriptures, is a tender and beautiful picture of domestic happiness: ‘Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah’s tent, and took Rebekah, and she became his wife; and he loved her: and Isaac was comforted after his mother’s death.’” —*Conflict and Courage*, p. 58.

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

“God will not give His Spirit to those who make no use of the heavenly gift. But those who are drawn out of and away from themselves, seeking to enlighten, encourage, and bless others, will have increased ability and energy to expend. The more light they give, the more they receive.” —*The Southern Watchman*, October 31, 1905.

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25

Sabbath, June 21, 2025

Eli—Priest and Judge

“Eli had greatly erred in permitting his sons to minister in holy office. By excusing their course, on one pretext and another, he became blinded to their sins; but at last they reached a pass where he could no longer hide his eyes from the crimes of his sons. The people complained of their violent deeds, and the high priest was grieved and distressed. He dared remain silent no longer. But his sons had been brought up to think of no one but themselves, and now they cared for no one else. They saw the grief of their father, but their hard hearts were not touched. They heard his mild admonitions, but they were not impressed, nor would they change their evil course though warned of the consequences of their sins. Had Eli dealt justly with his wicked sons, they would have been rejected from the priestly office and punished with death. Dreading thus to bring public disgrace and condemnation upon them, he sustained them in the most sacred positions of trust. He still permitted them to mingle their corruption with the holy service of God and to inflict upon the cause of truth an injury which years could not efface. But when the judge of Israel neglected his work, God took the matter in hand.” —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 577.

SUNDAY

1. Who was the priest who ministered in the house of God when Samuel was born?

1 SAMUEL 1:9, LAST PART ... *Now Eli the priest sat upon a seat by a post of the temple of the Lord.*

“Samuel had been placed under the care of Eli, and the loveliness of his character drew forth the warm affection of the aged priest. He was kind, generous, obedient, and respectful. Eli, pained by the waywardness of his own sons, found rest and comfort and blessing in the presence of his charge. Samuel was helpful and affectionate, and no father ever loved his child more tenderly than did Eli this youth. It was a singular thing that between the chief magistrate of the nation and the simple child so warm an affection should exist. As the infirmities of age came upon Eli, and he was filled with anxiety and remorse by the profligate course of his own sons, he turned to Samuel for comfort.” —*Christian Education*, p. 216.

MONDAY

2. When the priest learned about Hannah’s great desire and pain, what blessing did he pronounce?

1 SAMUEL 1:17 *Then Eli answered and said, Go in peace: and the God of Israel grant thee thy petition that thou hast asked of him.*

“Pained and startled, Hannah answered gently, ‘No, my lord, I am a woman of a sorrowful spirit: I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but have poured out my soul before the Lord. Count not thine handmaid for a daughter of Belial: for out of the abundance of my complaint and grief have I spoken hitherto.’

“The high priest was deeply moved, for he was a man of God; and in place of rebuke he uttered a blessing: ‘Go in peace: and the God of Israel grant thee thy petition that thou hast asked of Him.’” —*Daughters of God*, p. 40.

TUESDAY

3. What news did Hannah give to Eli when she went to the sanctuary the next time? What blessing did the priest pronounce on Elkanah and his wife?

1 SAMUEL 1:26-28; 2:20 *And she said, Oh my lord, as thy soul liveth, my lord, I am the woman that stood by thee here, praying unto the Lord. ²⁷For this child I prayed; and the Lord hath given me my petition which I asked of him: ²⁸Therefore also I have lent him to the Lord; as long as he liveth he shall be lent to the Lord. And he worshipped the Lord there. . . . ^{2:20}And Eli blessed Elkanah and his wife, and said, The Lord give thee seed of this woman for the loan which is lent to the Lord. And they went unto their own home.*

“Hannah prayed and trusted; and in her son Samuel she gave to the Israel of God a most precious treasure—a useful man, with a well-formed character, one who was as firm as a rock where principle was concerned.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 304.

“All are given an opportunity to develop character. All may fill their appointed places in God’s great plan. The Lord accepted Samuel from his very childhood, because his heart was pure. He was given to God, a consecrated offering, and the Lord made him a channel of light. If the youth of today will consecrate themselves as did Samuel, the Lord will accept them and use them in His work. Of their life they may be able to say with the psalmist, ‘O God, Thou hast taught me from my youth: and hitherto

have I declared Thy wondrous works.' Psalm 71:17." —*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, p. 537.

WEDNESDAY

ELI AND HIS SONS

4. Sadly, what did the Scriptures record about Eli's sons? What rebuke did he give them when he learned of their evil actions?

1 SAMUEL 2:22-25 *Now Eli was very old, and heard all that his sons did unto all Israel; and how they lay with the women that assembled at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. ²³And he said unto them, Why do ye such things? for I hear of your evil dealings by all this people. ²⁴Nay, my sons; for it is no good report that I hear: ye make the Lord's people to transgress. ²⁵If one man sin against another, the judge shall judge him: but if a man sin against the Lord, who shall intreat for him? Notwithstanding they hearkened not unto the voice of their father, because the Lord would slay them.*

"The sons of Eli, instead of realizing the solemnity of this symbolic service, only thought how they could make it a means of self-indulgence. Not content with the part of the peace offerings allotted them, they demanded an additional portion; and the great number of these sacrifices presented at the annual feasts gave the priests an opportunity to enrich themselves at the expense of the people. They not only demanded more than their right, but refused to wait even until the fat had been burned as an offering to God. They persisted in claiming whatever portion pleased them, and, if denied, threatened to take it by violence." —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 576.

THURSDAY

5. How successful was Eli in restraining his sons and correcting their behavior?

1 SAMUEL 3:13 *For I have told him that I will judge his house for ever for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not.*

"The priest and judge of Israel had not been left in darkness as to the duty of restraining and governing the children that God had given to his care. But Eli shrank from this duty, because it involved crossing the will of his sons, and would make it necessary to punish and deny them. Without weighing the terrible consequences that would follow his course, he indulged his children in whatever they desired and neglected the work of fitting them for the service of God and the duties of life.... But Eli allowed his children to control him. The father became subject to the children. The curse of transgression was apparent in the corruption and evil that marked the course of his sons. They had no proper appreciation of the character of God or of the sacredness of His law. His service was to them a common thing. From childhood they had been accustomed to the sanctuary and its service; but instead of becoming more reverent, they had lost all sense of its holiness and significance. The father had not corrected their want of reverence for his authority, had not checked their disrespect for the solemn services of the sanctuary; and when they reached manhood, they were full of the deadly fruits of skepticism and rebellion." —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 575, 576.

6. Since Eli's sons rejected their father's reproof and he did not have the ability to influence and correct them, what prophecy did the Lord give to the elderly priest?

1 SAMUEL 2:30-34 *Wherefore the Lord God of Israel saith, I said indeed that thy house, and the house of thy father, should walk before me for ever: but now the Lord saith, Be it far from me; for them that honour me I will honour, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed. ³¹Behold, the days come, that I will cut off thine arm, and the arm of thy father's house, that there shall not be an old man in thine house. ³²And thou shalt see an enemy in my habitation, in all the wealth which God shall give Israel: and there shall not be an old man in thine house for ever. ³³And the man of thine, whom I shall not cut off from mine altar, shall be to consume thine eyes, and to grieve thine heart: and all the increase of thine house shall die in the flower of their age. ³⁴And this shall be a sign unto thee, that shall come upon thy two sons, on Hophni and Phinehas; in one day they shall die both of them.*

"God charged Eli with honoring his sons above the Lord. Eli had permitted the offering appointed by God as a blessing to Israel to be made a thing of abhorrence, rather than bring his sons to shame for their impious and abominable practices. Those who follow their own inclination, in blind affection for their children, indulging them in the gratification of their selfish desires, and do not bring to bear the authority of God to rebuke sin and correct evil, make it manifest that they are honoring their wicked children more than they honor God. They are more anxious to shield their reputation than to glorify God; more desirous to please their children than to please the Lord and to keep His service from every appearance of evil." —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 578.

SABBATH

PRIEST AND JUDGE

7. In addition to the priestly ministry, what office did Eli fill? For how many years did he carry this responsibility?

1 SAMUEL 4:16-18 *And the man said unto Eli, I am he that came out of the army, and I fled to day out of the army. And he said, What is there done, my son? ¹⁷And the messenger answered and said, Israel is fled before the Philistines, and there hath been also a great slaughter among the people, and thy two sons also, Hophni and Phinehas, are dead, and the ark of God is taken. ¹⁸And it came to pass, when he made mention of the ark of God, that he fell from off the seat backward by the side of the gate, and his neck brake, and he died: for he was an old man, and heavy. And he had judged Israel forty years.*

"Eli was priest and judge in Israel. He held the highest and most responsible positions among the people of God. As a man divinely chosen for the sacred duties of the priesthood, and set over the land as the highest judicial authority, he was looked up to as an example, and he wielded a great influence over the tribes of Israel. But although he had been appointed to govern the people, he did not rule his own household. Eli was an indulgent father. Loving peace and ease, he did not exercise

his authority to correct the evil habits and passions of his children. Rather than contend with them or punish them, he would submit to their will and give them their own way. Instead of regarding the education of his sons as one of the most important of his responsibilities, he treated the matter as of little consequence." —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 575.

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

"God held Eli, as a priest and judge of Israel, accountable for the moral and religious standing of his people, and in a special sense for the character of his sons. He should first have attempted to restrain evil by mild measures; but if these did not avail, he should have subdued the wrong by the severest means. He incurred the Lord's displeasure by not reproving sin and executing justice upon the sinner. He could not be depended upon to keep Israel pure. Those who have too little courage to reprove wrong, or who through indolence or lack of interest make no earnest effort to purify the family or the church of God, are held accountable for the evil that may result from their neglect of duty. We are just as responsible for evils that we might have checked in others by exercise of parental or pastoral authority as if the acts had been our own." —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 578.

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***Please read the Missionary Report
from Honduras on page 119***

26

Sabbath, June 28, 2025

Samuel—Priest, Prophet, and Judge

"Since the days of Joshua the government had never been conducted with so great wisdom and success as under Samuel's administration. Divinely invested with the threefold office of judge, prophet, and priest, he had labored with untiring and disinterested zeal for the welfare of his people, and the nation had prospered under his wise control. Order had been restored, and godliness promoted, and the spirit of discontent was checked for the time. But with advancing years the prophet was forced to share with others the cares of government, and he appointed his two sons to act as his assistants. While Samuel continued the duties of his office at Ramah, the young men were stationed at Beersheba, to administer justice among the people near the southern border of the land." —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 603, 604.

SUNDAY

MINISTERING BEFORE THE LORD

1. What service did Samuel perform from the very beginning, when he was just a boy?

1 SAMUEL 3:1 *And the child Samuel ministered unto the Lord before Eli. And the word of the Lord was precious in those days; there was no open vision.*

“Young as he was when brought to minister in the tabernacle, Samuel had even then duties to perform in the service of God, according to his capacity. These were at first very humble, and not always pleasant; but they were performed to the best of his ability, and with a willing heart...”
—*Conflict and Courage*, p. 144.

MONDAY

CALLED TO BE A PROPHET

2. What call did Samuel receive while he was ministering in the sanctuary?

1 SAMUEL 3:4, 5, 10, 11 *That the Lord called Samuel: and he answered, Here am I. ⁵And he ran unto Eli, and said, Here am I; for thou calledst me. And he said, I called not; lie down again. And he went and lay down... ¹⁰And the Lord came, and stood, and called as at other times, Samuel, Samuel. Then Samuel answered, Speak; for thy servant heareth. ¹¹And the Lord said to Samuel, Behold, I will do a thing in Israel, at which both the ears of every one that heareth it shall tingle.*

“Hannah dedicated Samuel to the Lord, and God revealed Himself to him in his childhood and youth. We must labor far more for our children and for the youth; for God will accept them to do great things in His name in teaching the truth to those in foreign lands, to those who are in the darkness of error and superstition. If you indulge your children, gratifying their selfish wishes; if you encourage in them the love of dress, and develop vanity and pride, you will do a work that will disappoint Jesus, who has paid an infinite price for their redemption. He desires that the children shall serve Him with undivided affection.” —*Selected Messages*, vol. 1, p. 319.

TUESDAY

3. How widely in Israel was it known that Samuel was a prophet appointed by the Lord?

1 SAMUEL 3:20 *And all Israel from Dan even to Beersheba knew that Samuel was established to be a prophet of the Lord.*

“During the years since the Lord first manifested Himself to the son of Hannah, Samuel’s call to the prophetic office had come to be acknowledged by the whole nation. By faithfully delivering the divine warning to the house of Eli, painful and trying as the duty had been, Samuel had given proof of his fidelity as Jehovah’s messenger; ‘and the Lord was with him, and did let none of his words fall to the ground. And all Israel from Dan even to Beersheba knew that Samuel was established to be a prophet of the Lord.’” —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 589, 590.

WEDNESDAY

SERVED AS JUDGE

4. What other office did Samuel occupy for his entire life? What did this mean year after year?

1 SAMUEL 7:15-17 *And Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life. ¹⁶And he went from year to year in circuit to Bethel, and Gilgal, and Mizpeh, and judged Israel in all those places. ¹⁷And his return was to Ramah; for there was his house; and there he judged Israel; and there he built an altar unto the Lord.*

“Samuel had judged Israel from his youth. He had been a righteous and impartial judge, faithful in all his work.” —*Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 4a, p. 65.

“And Samuel died; and all the Israelites were gathered together, and lamented him, and buried him in his house at Ramah.’ The death of Samuel was regarded as an irreparable loss by the nation of Israel. A great and good prophet and an eminent judge had fallen in death, and the grief of the people was deep and heartfelt. From his youth up Samuel had walked before Israel in the integrity of his heart; although Saul had been the acknowledged king, Samuel had wielded a more powerful influence than he, because his record was one of faithfulness, obedience, and devotion. We read that he judged Israel all the days of his life.” —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 663.

THURSDAY

5. Whom did Samuel appoint as judge when he became older and was no longer able to travel on long journeys? How faithful were they?

1 SAMUEL 8:1-3 *And it came to pass, when Samuel was old, that he made his sons judges over Israel. ²Now the name of his firstborn was Joel; and the name of his second, Abiah: they were judges in Beersheba. ³And his sons walked not in his ways, but turned aside after lucre, and took bribes, and perverted judgment.*

“These young men had received faithful instructions from their father, both by precept and example. They were not ignorant of the warnings given to Eli, and the divine judgments visited upon him and his house. They were apparently men of sterling virtue and integrity, as well as intellectual promise. It was with the full assent of the people that Samuel shared with his sons the responsibilities of office. But the characters of these young men were yet to be tested. Separated from their father’s influence, it would be seen whether they were true to the principles which he had taught them. The result showed that Samuel had been painfully deceived in his sons. Like many young men of today who have been blessed with good abilities, they perverted their God-given powers. The honor bestowed upon them rendered them proud and self-sufficient. They did not make the glory of God their aim, nor did they seek earnestly to Him for strength and wisdom. Yielding to the power of temptation, they became avaricious, selfish, and unjust. God’s word declares that “they walked not in His ways, but turned aside after lucre, and took bribes, and perverted judgment.” —*Signs of the Times*, February 2, 1882.

FRIDAY

ISRAEL ASKED FOR A KING

6. After many years of administration of the nation by the judges, what request did the elders of Israel present to Samuel? What did he think of this proposal?

1 SAMUEL 8:4-7 *Then all the elders of Israel gathered themselves together, and came to Samuel unto Ramah, ⁵And said unto him, Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways: now make us a king to judge us like all the nations. ⁶But the thing displeased Samuel, when they said, Give us a king to judge us. And Samuel prayed unto the Lord. ⁷And the Lord said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them.*

"Depending on men has been the great weakness of the church. Men have dishonored God by failing to appreciate His sufficiency, by coveting the influence of men. Thus Israel became weak. The people wanted to be like the other nations of the world, and they asked for a king. They desired to be guided by human power which they could see, rather than by the divine, invisible power that till that time had led and guided them, and had given them victory in battle. They made their own choice, and the result was seen in the destruction of Jerusalem and the dispersion of the nation." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, pp. 249, 250.

SABBATH

7. Although a monarchy was not according to God's ideal, how did Samuel carry out His command?

1 SAMUEL 9:15, 16; 10:1 *Now the Lord had told Samuel in his ear a day before Saul came, saying, ¹⁶To morrow about this time I will send thee a man out of the land of Benjamin, and thou shalt anoint him to be captain over my people Israel, that he may save my people out of the hand of the Philistines: for I have looked upon my people, because their cry is come unto me.... ^{10:1}Then Samuel took a vial of oil, and poured it upon his head, and kissed him, and said, Is it not because the Lord hath anointed thee to be captain over his inheritance?*

"But the people would not receive the advice of Samuel and continued to demand a king.... Here God granted to rebellious Israel that which would prove a heavy curse to them, because they would not submit to have the Lord rule for them. They thought that it would be more honorable in the sight of other nations to have it said, The Hebrews have a king. The Lord directed Samuel to anoint Saul as king of Israel. His appearance was noble, such as would suit the pride of the children of Israel. But God gave them an exhibition of His displeasure. It was not a season of the year when they were visited with heavy rains, accompanied with thunder." —*Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 4A, pp. 67, 68.

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

"The injustice of these judges caused much dissatisfaction, and a pretext was thus furnished for urging the change that had long been secretly desired.... The cases of abuse among the people had not been referred to Samuel. Had the evil course of his sons been known to him, he would have removed them without delay; but this was not what the petitioners desired. Samuel saw that their real motive was discontent and pride, and that their demand was the result of a deliberate and determined purpose." —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 604.

"The life of Samuel from early childhood had been a life of piety and devotion. He had been placed under the care of Eli in his youth, and the loveliness of his character drew forth the warm affection of the aged priest. He was kind, generous, diligent, obedient, and respectful....

"How touching to see youth and old age relying one upon the other, the youth looking up to the aged for counsel and wisdom, the aged looking to the youth for help and sympathy. This is as it should be. God would have the young possess such qualifications of character that they shall find delight in the friendship of the old, that they may be united in the endearing bonds of affection to those who are approaching the borders of the grave." –*Conflict and Courage*, p. 144.

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MISSIONARY REPORT FROM THE HONDURAN FIELD

To be read on Sabbath, June 28, 2025

*The Special Sabbath School Offering
will be gathered on Sabbath, July 5, 2025*

The believers in Honduras cordially greet the entire church of God around the world with a fraternal hug! *"Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth."* 3 John 1:2.

Honduras, which is located in the heart of Central America, with its capital in Tegucigalpa, obtained its independence from Spain on September 15, 1821. Its official language is Spanish, and its currency is the Lempira. The territory spans 112,492 square kilometers (69,900 square miles) and has a population of 9.5 million. Its borders touch both the Atlantic and the Pacific Oceans. Honduras is characterized by being the most mountainous country in the region; and it has many natural resources, flora, and fauna. It borders the countries of Guatemala, El Salvador, and Nicaragua. A survey carried out in 2020 listed 49 percent of the population as professing Catholicism; 40 percent, Protestantism; 8 percent, none; and 3 percent, other faiths.

The message of the International Missionary Society reached Honduras in the 1960s and was established in the capital city of Tegucigalpa. Elder Raul Escobar (Chile) and Nautilio Bolaños (Costa Rica) did a wonderful work of canvassing. Shortly afterward, Elder Carlos Kozel (Germany) visited the country as a representative of the General Conference, accompanied by Brother Pedro Prieto (Mexico). The latter visited the community of San Jose, Department of Choluteca, with Elder Escobar a little later, where they found many Adventist believers. Brother Santos Felix Barahona first accepted the message of Reformation, and he shared it with his daughter, Juanita Barahona, who later married Brother Roberto Lopez. This couple were missionaries who travelled to other places in the country.

The church in Honduras is duly established and organized. It meets all of the requirements of the General Conference and is registered and in compliance with the laws of the country and the constitution of the Republic of Honduras.

The Honduran Field currently has 3 active ministers, 1 retired minister, 18 active Bible workers, 6 ordained elders, and 2 canvassers. It is divided into six districts with their respective leaders, and 360 members are spread throughout the country. Evangelistic work is carried out in two health centers and a school with three educational lev-

els. Public campaigns are organized in different places with medical teams, and missionary outreach is conducted from house to house with massive distribution of small pamphlets taken from the Spirit of prophecy.

As is already known in the Latin American Division and the General Conference, Honduras is a field that lacks an adequate headquarters building. It has only a poorly equipped office that is used by the president, secretary, and treasurer. There is no meeting room or offices, so when leaders visit us, there are no facilities available to accommodate them. Furthermore, the regulations of the government of Honduras require that the field have a building that meets the needs of a non-profit Christian organization.

Therefore, we make an appeal and pray that God will touch the generous hearts of our brothers, sisters, and friends in the world who read this missionary report, so that they will give support, pray, and contribute generous offerings, knowing that God rewards the cheerful giver. Our desire is to build a headquarters building with appropriate offices where we can work for the honor and glory of God.

May He bless your donations richly and abundantly.

*—Pastor Inocencio Guardado Mejía
President of the Honduran Field*

American Union Headquarters

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 199 • Norman Park, GA 31771

Phone: 877-467-1914 • Email: info@sda1888.org

American Union Churches/Meeting Places

CA, Gardena Church (Korean)

"Church of Zion"
1047 West 164th Street
Gardena, CA 90247
562-331-7540

CA, Huntington Park Church

2877 E. Florence Avenue
Huntington Park, CA 90255
323-583-5444

CA, Riverside Church

7631 Philbin Ave.
Riverside, CA 92503-1971
908-578-4156

CA, Sacramento Church

For information call:
916-690-4847
(Gretchen Schendel)

CA, San Francisco Bay Area Church

For information call:
408-775-1984
(Jeanetta Wolokolie)

CA, Vista Church

For information call:
760-224-1041
(Susan Genter)

CO, Denver Church

9999 E. Mississippi Ave.
Denver, CO 80247-1927
303-361-9999

DC, Washington Church

Belle View Church
7415 Fort Hunt Road
Alexandria, VA 22307
240-805-4619

FL, Miami Church

"First Hungarian United
Church"
2230 NW 14th Street
Miami, FL 33125
305-643-1392

FL, Orlando Church

Church of the Nazarene
1670 N. Chickasaw Trail
Orlando, FL 32825
407-488-6202 (English)
786-274-3645 (Spanish)

FL, St. Petersburg Church

For information call:
813-767-5429
(Maggie Troncoso)

FL, Tampa Church

10306 N. Nebraska Ave.
Tampa, FL 33612-6823
207-512-0724 or
207-624-2986

GA, Acworth Church

6880 Rock Ridge Road
Acworth, GA 30102
770-318-6015

GA, Cedartown Church

625 West Avenue
Cedartown, GA 30125
770-748-0077

GA, Livingston Church

1348 Fosters Mill Road
Rome, GA 30161
201-281-7533

GA, Marietta Church

1152 Gann Road
Marietta, GA 30008
678-294-6972

GA, Norman Park Church

Peace Chapel, Admin. Bldg.
4243 US Highway 319 North
Norman Park, GA 31771
229-769-3011

IA, Des Moines Church

For information call:
515-630-9697
(Jorge Leon)

IL, Chicago Church

For information call:
224-310-7713
(Rufo Samano)

MI, Detroit Church

4411 5th Street
Ecorse, MI 48174
734-494-0368

NJ, Elizabeth Church

43 Johnson Avenue
Cranford, NJ 07016
813-812-9830

NY, Bronx Church

2808 Middletown Road
Bronx, NY 10461-5301
718-931-0592
720-325-0368

NY, Brooklyn Church

For information call:
917-816-2824
(Nidya Sanchez)

OH, Cincinnati Church

6730 Roosevelt Avenue. #404
Middletown, OH 45005
720-998-2446

PA, Pennsylvania Church

For information call:
787-326-7645
(Elvis Feliciano)

PR, Camuy Church

Barrio "Cibao"
Callejón los Rios, sec. Cuchilla
Carretera 456
Camuy, PR 00627
787-463-2634
(Humberto or Vilma Ajucum)

PR, Fajardo Church

Calle Quiñónez Carb. 209
Barriada Obrera
Fajardo, PR 00738
787-429-4810
(Rafael Feliciano)

PR, Arroyo Church

For information call:
787-382-8032
(Carlos Diaz)

PR, Hormigueros Church

Carretera Nueva 344
Hormigueros, PR 00660
787-486-7450
(Jose Luis Acevedo)

PR, Santurce Church

Ernesto Vigoreaux 502
Barrio Obrero
San Juan, PR 00916
787-463-2658
(Gary Ajucum)

RI, Providence Church

"Iglesia de Dios Peniel"
91 Montgomery Ave.
Pawtucket, RI 02860-5556
401-943-0131

TX, Dallas Church

11014 Shiloh Road
Dallas, TX 75228
321-278-5805

TX, Houston Church

411 Avenue East
Highlands, TX 77562
713-478-7480
832-605-4304