

YT22s

Chosen for a
Purpose

Student

CHOSEN FOR A PURPOSE

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CHAPTER ONE

THE LAND PROMISED

AIM: I will learn that God blessed Abram (Abraham) because he obeyed in faith.

BACKGROUND SCRIPTURE: Genesis 11:26-12:20

VERSES IN TODAY'S LESSON: Genesis 12

MEMORY VERSE: "By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place which he was to receive as an inheritance; and he went out not knowing where he was to go" (Hebrews 11:8).

A STUDY OF THE LESSON

INTRODUCTION

It is unusual for a person to do something without a reason. Everything a person does has a purpose. When a customer goes to a shop to buy a cooking pot, he has plan for using it. That becomes its purpose.

God created man with a purpose. He also chooses people for special jobs as he has done since creation. It is wonderful to discover that God chose you the way he did people in the Bible. You have special duties to do for his glory.

Sometimes the chosen ones fail to understand the will of God. Those chosen must recognize that they must communicate with God and acknowledge his leadership in their lives. He wants us to know his will, and he will show it to us if we will ask him.

Let us look at Abram and see why God called him.

INTERPRETATION

Abram was the son of Terah. He lived in Haran. God called Abram to leave his father's house and his homeland and go to a land he would show him. Abram did not know where that land was, and so he could not ask anyone what life was like there. All Abram's friends lived in Haran. He had prospered in that land and had many animals and servants. But when God called, Abram obeyed without hesitation. He took his family and his belongings and left his land.

In Genesis 12:2-3 God provided Abram with covenant promises which had divine blessings. God promised to bless Abram. All other people would be blessed through him. God would use him and his descendants to bless all peoples of the world. Abram's part of the covenant was to obey God.

When Abram left Haran he went to Canaan. Canaan is the land from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea and from Syria to Egypt. He passed through the land of Shechem. The Lord appeared to him there and assured him that he would give him all that land. Abram built an altar to the Lord there.

When he came to the mountain east of Bethel, he built another altar and called upon the name of the Lord. Bethel meant “the house of the Lord.” From there Abram journeyed on toward the Negeb. There was a severe famine there, and so Abram went on to Egypt to stay there for some time. He had a large number of cattle, and so he needed to go to where there was water for both cattle and crops.

Read verses 10-20. When he was about to enter Egypt, Abram was filled with fear. He thought Pharaoh would kill him for his beautiful wife, Sarai. He told his wife, “Say you are my sister, that it may go well with me because of you...” (Genesis 12:13). Sarai was Abram’s half-sister, but as God’s ambassador, it was shameful for Abram to give such information. It did not give the true picture. The marriage relationship was more important than the blood relationship.

Indeed, when they entered Egypt, the Egyptians saw how beautiful Sarai was and took her to the Pharaoh’s house. For her sake they were very kind to Abram.

The Lord, however, knew the truth, and he afflicted the Pharaoh and his house with plagues.

The Pharaoh realized something was wrong, and so he called Abram to know the truth. After Abram admitted that Sarai was his wife, the Pharaoh drove him from the land. Abram had sinned before God. He took Sarai and his belongings and went back to Bethel.

APPLICATION FOR MY LIFE

God called Abram from his father’s house to give him the land of Canaan. He also called him to serve, and through him all nations would be blessed. The Christian life is a life of faith. Just like Abram, God calls people out of the world. He has promised that they will inherit a heavenly kingdom. When Jesus came to the world, he came that all might receive abundant life. Read John 10:10. But only those who will obey his commands will receive the promise.

God calls everybody for a special purpose. The Lord has called you to serve him. He needs you as a Christian to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ. He wants all people to be blessed by being called the sons of the most high God. Read John 1:12 and Matthew 28:18-20.

Abram sinned when he deceived the Egyptians because of his fear, but when he came back to Bethel he renewed his faith. He called upon the name of the Lord, and God heard him. Christians must trust the Lord at all times. He promises to be with us forever. In times of temptation or trouble, no fear should shake our faith. He is our rock, our refuge and strength. We have only to put our faith in him. The Bible teaches in Proverbs 3:5-6, “Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not rely on your own insight. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.”

Whenever we wander away from the Lord, we Christians must renew our faith before him. We must remember where we have fallen, repent and return to him. Revelation 2:5 says, "Remember then from what you have fallen, repent and do the works you did at first...."

THINGS TO DO

1. Pray that you will be a faithful servant before God at all times, even in times of trouble, temptation or fear.
2. Is there some sin in your life that you need to confess to God? Go back to him in prayer and ask him to forgive you.

CHAPTER TWO JOSEPH LEAVES THE LAND

AIM: I will learn that Joseph enjoyed God's presence even during hard times.

BACKGROUND SCRIPTURE: Genesis 37 and 39

VERSES IN TODAY'S LESSON: Genesis 37:12-14, 19-21, 26-28; 39:1-4

MEMORY VERSE: "For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant; later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it" (Hebrews 12:11).

A STUDY OF THE LESSON

INTRODUCTION

Daniel often became annoyed when his younger brother, David, wanted to hide from him and tease him. One day, however, when the boys were out in the field, David fell and cut his leg on a rock. He screamed in pain and in fear when he saw his leg bleeding. Daniel also was very frightened when he saw that his brother was injured. He tried to comfort David.

Then Daniel told David he would carry him back to the house. Then their mother would wash the wound and treat it.

Joseph, in our Bible story for today, annoyed his brothers, but they did not give him such loving care. Let us study about him now.

INTERPRETATION

Joseph was the youngest and favourite son of Rachel and Jacob. Sometimes Joseph told Jacob things his brothers were doing, and so they hated him. One day Jacob made Joseph a long robe with sleeves. This made the brothers even more jealous of him.

Joseph also had dreams which foretold his future. He told the brothers that he dreamed of their sheaves bowing down to his. Then he dreamed of their stars bowing to him. Read about these dreams in Genesis 37:5-9. Because of this, Joseph became very unpopular with his brothers. He stirred all the fires of envy and hatred in them. But God had planned wonderful blessings for Joseph.

In verses 12-17, Joseph was sent by his father, Jacob, from Hebron where they lived to Shechem. Jacob wanted him to visit his brothers, who were looking after the flocks, and bring him word of their welfare. It was a long way to go, but Joseph agreed and went. On reaching Shechem, someone told him that his brothers had gone to Dothan, and he still followed.

In verses 19-34, we are told that Joseph's brothers' anger was burning, and they wanted to kill him when he approached them. They said to one another, "...Here comes this dreamer. Come now, let us kill him and throw him into one of the pits..." (Genesis 37:19-20a). Meanwhile Reuben encouraged them to throw him alive into one of the pits. He hoped to rescue him later and return him to his father. When the brothers sat down to eat they saw a caravan of Ishmaelites coming from Gilead. Judah then suggested that they sell Joseph to the Ishmaelites, who later sold him to Potiphar, an official in the court of the Pharaoh, the captain of the guard.

The brothers then killed a goat and dipped their brother's coat in the blood. They took it to their father who thought a wild animal had killed his son. "Then Jacob rent his garments, and put sackcloth upon his loins, and mourned for his son many days" (Genesis 37:34).

But what happened to Joseph? Read Genesis 39:1-4. While in Egypt, Joseph became a slave in Potiphar's house. When Potiphar saw that Joseph brought him success because the Lord was with him, he made him an overseer of his house and all his belongings. Genesis 39 and 40 tell us more of this interesting story.

Temptation came into his master's house, but Joseph did not yield. He experienced life in prison because of false charges against him, but God worked through him. You will get a blessing from reading these chapters. Joseph was later given a position second to the king.

When there was famine in Canaan, Joseph's brothers went to Egypt to buy grain. Joseph did not become angry with them but revealed himself to them and said, "And now do not be distressed, or angry with yourselves, because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life" (Genesis 45:5).

APPLICATION FOR MY LIFE

God directs the steps of everyone who fears him and follows his plans. He does not change.

Joseph was hated by his brothers. They plotted to kill him due to the favour he received from their father and the dreams which foretold his future. Reuben and his brothers told lies to their father, but God worked through Joseph who later welcomed them in Egypt.

Christians should be people who always tell the truth to others. God is everywhere and has all power. Those who tell lies will face eternal death. Read Revelation 21:8.

Jacob favoured Joseph, and this was a problem in the family. Christians should love all people the same because all are equal before God. Favour sometimes brings problems. Christians ought to love one another so people of the world will know they are Christ's disciples. Jealousy has no place in a Christian's life. We should show the love that Jesus Christ creates in us. With this love we can say as Jonathan said to David, "...Whatever you say, I will do for you" (1 Samuel 20:4).

Joseph continued to love his brothers even after they sold him. We should be able to love and forgive at all times. We should love both friends and enemies. Difficult times should cause our faith to grow. Christians should understand the will of God and stand firmly on it. Then we shall say with Joseph, "As for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good,...So do not fear; I will provide for you and your little ones..." (Genesis 50:20-21).

THINGS TO DO

1. Pray that you will live your life for the glory of God.
2. Ask the Lord to show you his plan for your life. Ask him to help you live according to his will.
3. Do you have trouble forgiving those who have done wrong to you? Ask God to forgive you and help you forgive others.

CHAPTER THREE LIVING IN EGYPT

AIM: I will learn that God is always faithful and keeps his promises.

BACKGROUND SCRIPTURE: Exodus 1-7

VERSES IN TODAY'S LESSON: Exodus 5:1-8; 6:1; 12:29-41

MEMORY VERSE: "It is the Lord who goes before you; he will be with you, he will not fail you or forsake you; do not fear or be dismayed" (Deuteronomy 31:8).

A STUDY OF THE LESSON

INTRODUCTION

Shadrack worked hard to build his small business, and his work paid off. He got more and more customers, and his profits increased nicely. He was also training his older son to take over the business someday. He hoped it would stay in the family for many years.

Then suddenly Shadrack became very ill. He was not able to carry the load of the business. It was necessary for his son to take over.

At first his son, Samson, seemed very interested in doing a good job. He went to work early each morning and tried to make good decisions. Then in a few weeks he began to feel pride in being the boss. He arrived later each morning, and he

made selfish decisions. He was not interested in serving his customers, and they began to go to other places with their business. Soon Samson was having trouble paying the bills. It seemed that he would lose the business because of his poor leadership.

God's chosen people, the Israelites, also needed a leader who would make wise decisions. God chose Moses to be that leader, as we learn in this lesson.

INTERPRETATION

Moses, a son from the house of Levi, was born during the time when Israelite boys were killed. He was spared because God led his mother to put him in a small basket at the edge of the river. (Exodus 2:1-10)

When Moses became a grown man, he was called by God to deliver his people from the land of the Egyptians. Did Moses agree to this job easily? Find the answer in Exodus 3 and 4.

Finally Moses and his brother, Aaron, went to the Pharaoh and said, "...Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, 'Let my people go, that they may hold a feast to me in the wilderness'" (Exodus 5:1). But Pharaoh refused and said he did not know the Lord. Then he ordered his men not to give the Israelites the straw they needed for making bricks. They would have to go gather it themselves. This made their work harder, and they were required to make a large number of bricks each day. This brought the Israelites to their lowest state of helplessness, despair and suffering. They had once been guests in the land of Egypt, but now they were slaves.

The Israelites also became unhappy with Moses. Their work was now even harder because they had angered Pharaoh. Moses returned to the Lord and asked why the people were treated worse when he had been sent to deliver them. Read Exodus 5:22-23.

Now read the first verse of chapter 6. Here we see that it was not Moses, it was God who would be the Redeemer. The Lord now gave Moses divine authority and power over the Pharaoh. The Lord sent nine signs and wonders, which we call plagues, to the Pharaoh, but he still refused to let the Israelites go. Finally the Lord sent the death angel to kill the first born of every home that did not have blood on the doorpost. This affected the lowliest home to the highest, even the home of the Pharaoh himself. It was only after this great tragedy that the Israelites were free to leave captivity in Egypt.

APPLICATION FOR MY LIFE

God cares for all people, and he never forgets his promises. The Israelites were slaves in Egypt, but God had a plan to deliver them. This is also true for each of us today. We have been slaves to sin, but God had a wonderful plan to save us from that bondage. Read Colossians 1:13.

Moses' life was spared when all other little boy babies were being killed in Egypt. Then he was afraid to speak to Pharaoh, but God assured him that he would lead him. Christians may be afraid to take a stand for Christ sometimes too, but

we can remember that he has promised to be with us always. "And I am sure that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ" (Philippians 1:6). There are many promises in God's Word that he will be our strength no matter what comes.

Moses became impatient when the people of Israel were not released as soon as he thought they should be. Do you ever get discouraged when your prayers are not answered as quickly as you expected them to be answered? Isaiah 40:31 says, "but they who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint."

The people of Israel lived in critical conditions in Egypt, but the Lord took great care of them. Christians today may have some difficult times, but we can be sure that we are in God's hands. He goes before us and will never forsake us.

THINGS TO DO

1. God called Moses for a special job, but he gave many excuses. Do you give excuses when asked to do something? What answer will you give when you are asked again?
2. God delivered his people from a time of oppression in Egypt. What should Christians do when trouble comes to them?
3. God has given many promises in his Word. He always keeps his promises. Keep a paper in your Bible and write down God's promises as you read. Learn them by memory so you can claim them when you need them.

CHAPTER FOUR WILDERNESS WANDERINGS

AIM: I will learn that God is faithful to keep his promises, but I must have faith to receive them.

BACKGROUND SCRIPTURE: Exodus 16:2-3; 17:2; Numbers 13:1-3, 17-20, 25-14:2, 11

VERSES IN TODAY'S LESSON: Exodus 16:2-3; 17:2; Numbers 13:1-3, 17-20, 25-14:2, 11

MEMORY VERSE: "The righteous shall possess the land, and dwell upon it for ever" (Psalms 37:29).

A STUDY OF THE LESSON

INTRODUCTION

Thomas was going to visit his brother for a few days, and the bus arrived later than he thought it would. His brother lived about two kilometres from the town, and it was necessary to pass through a forest to get to his house. Thomas walked as fast as he could, but when he got into the forest he realized he did not know which footpath to take.

Soon he heard another person coming, and he was afraid of who it might be. The man was friendly, however, and he explained that he knew Thomas' brother well. He would show Thomas the correct way to get to the house. The two walked on

together and soon came to the edge of the forest. Thomas saw the house which he knew was his brother's home. He was very grateful to the stranger who had guided him.

After God's people left Egypt, they passed through a wilderness where they wandered for many years. They needed help in finding their way to the Promised Land.

INTERPRETATION

After the Pharaoh told Moses and Aaron to take the people and leave Egypt, God led his people by a cloud in the day time and a pillar of fire to give them light so they could travel by night. (Exodus 13:21-22) He did not take them through the land of the Philistines, although that was the straight way. Read Exodus 13:17 to find out why he took them the long way.

When the people left Egypt, the Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he decided to go after them. He prepared his chariot and took his army with him. They came upon the Israelites camped by the sea, and they were very frightened. The people began complaining to Moses. Read their words in Exodus 14:11. Moses comforted the people in verses 13-14. Then God told Moses to tell the people to go forward toward the sea. Read the exciting story of their crossing the sea in verses 21-31.

The people were very happy because of the way the Lord led them until they wandered in the wilderness for three days and they found no water. When they came to Marah the water was bitter, and they could not drink it. Then they began to complain again. They told Moses they were better off in Egypt. Then Moses cried out to the Lord and he provided sweet water for them. (Exodus 15:25)

Their next complaint was about food. God provided bread in the mornings and the flesh of quails in the evenings so the people had enough food to eat. The people complained again for water, and God provided it.

Finally, after much wandering, the people camped at the wilderness of Paran. God told Moses to send men to spy out the land which he was going to give his people. Read Numbers 13:1-3. After forty days the spies returned. They brought some of the fruit of the land, and they said it flowed with milk and honey. It was a good land, but the people who lived there were strong, and their cities were large and well fortified. Ten of the spies said they would not be able to take the land. Two, however, challenged the people to go up and possess the land. Continue reading in your Bible, Numbers 13:25-14:2, 11. Even after all God had done to lead them, many of the people did not have faith to go forward. God took them back into the wilderness, and he said none of them would be allowed into the Promised Land. Their children would possess the land, and only the two faithful spies, Caleb and Joshua, would be permitted to go in with them.

APPLICATION FOR MY LIFE

God had delivered the people of Israel from the hand of the Egyptians. They had suffered much, but God made a plan for their deliverance. He led them through the Red Sea and killed their enemies, and he provided food and water for them. He

led them toward the good land he had promised them. Even in all this the Israelites complained and murmured against God. Christians today have been delivered from the hand of the devil through the wonderful plan of God. He gave his own Son to die for the sin of men.

Are you ever guilty of complaining because of the pain or trouble you might have on the way? The Lord provides a way through every temptation and every trial. Read 1 Corinthians 10:9-13.

Are you ever tempted to doubt God's leadership in your life? He does have a plan for your life, and he will never leave you. John 8:12 says, "...I am the light of the world; he who follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

Ten spies gave a bad report which caused the people to fail in their faith. Do your words and actions encourage weaker people to follow as God leads them? Or do you cause them to stumble and fall? Matthew 18:6 says, "But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a great millstone fastened round his neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea." May God help us to walk with him in faith.

THINGS TO DO

1. Pray every day that God will help your faith to grow, and that you will learn to depend on him and walk with him.
2. Think of your friends. Is there one who seems to be weak in his faith? Show him some of the promises of God which you are learning so they can strengthen him too.
3. Remember to be a thankful person, thanking God for his blessings to you every day. This will help you overcome any spirit of complaining.

CHAPTER FIVE THE LAW OF THE PROMISED LAND

AIM: I will understand about the law of God and learn to obey it.

BACKGROUND SCRIPTURES: Exodus 20

VERSES IN TODAY'S LESSON: Exodus 20:1-25

MEMORY VERSE: "You shall have no other gods before me" (Exodus 20:3).

A STUDY OF THE LESSON

INTRODUCTION

"You must read chapter three of your text book before the next class," the teacher told the students. "It is not very long, but it is important."

After class that day there was a game of volleyball then supper. When study time came Ruth worked on the paper she had to write for another class.

Ruth did not think of the chapter any more until she went to class again. As the teacher came into the room she told everyone to put all their books under their desks and keep only one piece of paper on top. Then she wrote one question on the chalk board. The answer was in the chapter. Those who had read the chapter could answer quickly, but those who had not read it did not know what to write.

“Why didn’t I obey the teacher and read the chapter?” Ruth thought. “I really needed a good grade to improve my average.”

God’s people also needed to learn to obey. They were even given the law in written form so they could understand what God expected. Let us look at that law today.

INTERPRETATION

Exodus means “going out.” It refers to the departure of Israel from Egypt. The Bible book, Exodus, is called one of the books of the law. The book, written by Moses, includes the Ten Commandments, God’s law for his people. He had seen how disobedient his people were, and the law would show them their sin.

What law did God give his people? God’s requirements for man are summarized in Exodus. The law shows man’s sinfulness, but it cannot bring victory over sin.

God knew from the beginning that man could not live without the law to guide him. When we have accepted the Lord as Saviour we must believe and abide by his law.

Please open your Bible to Exodus 20. Verse 1 tells us the law was uttered by the voice of God himself. It deals with man’s day to day activities.

In verse 2 God reminds man that he is the Lord who brought them out of Egypt, the land of bondage.

Exodus 20:3 says nobody is allowed to pray to other gods instead of the Lord. God is supreme and no-one should pray to any other gods. When you believe in God then you must have full confidence in him.

Exodus 20:4 says, “You shall not make for yourself a graven image....” The law tell us man should never make an idol or anything to worship. He should not even put a person before God. Nothing can be more important than God in the life of a Christian. Everyone should show steadfast love to God for he is a jealous God who will not share his glory with any other god.

In verse 7, we see that the name of our Lord should be respected. No-one should take it in vain. Those who believe in God should give honour to his name. It should never be misused.

We learn in Exodus 20:8 to keep the sabbath day holy after six days of work. God blessed the sabbath day. It should be a day of rest. Look at verse 12. According to the law given by God, his children must honour their parents. This law even has a promise with it. When one does this, his days will be long.

God's children cannot kill anybody. They cannot commit adultery. They cannot steal other people's property. Being a false witness would be a serious offense.

A person may say he knows and abides in the law of God, but his actions must prove his claim. God defined what obedience is, and because of this his children can know when they have sinned.

APPLICATION FOR MY LIFE

God helped his people with written words to know what obedience to him really is. There was no longer only a verbal agreement. God wrote to his people so they could know in their hearts when they had sinned. We must understand that God demands total obedience to his laws. This lesson will have meaning only when we come to realize that God wrote it for his people because he had seen how disobedient they were. Therefore he defined what obedience was.

How do you measure up to God's law? It is easy for us to say we have kept the Ten Commandments, but is that true? What is the most important thing in your life? Is it your family, your future, education, money, job, honour, praise, comfort or any other thing you want and for which you work. If these things are more important to you than God, they have become your god.

Have you made anything to become an idol about which you think constantly? Do you ever say the name of the Lord without respecting him? How do you observe the day set aside for worship? Is it a holy day of worship and rest? How do you treat your parents? Do you gladly consider them and their needs? What about killing? Read Matthew 5:21-22. Jesus said that whoever is angry with his brother is liable to judgement.

Regarding adultery Jesus said, "...every one who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart" (Matthew 5:28).

Have you ever stolen even a pencil? Have you taken a person's good name away by telling bad things about him? Have you ever told someone something that was not completely true? Have you ever wanted something that belongs to someone else and wished it belonged to you?

If you must answer yes in your heart to any of those questions, you need to confess that to God as sin. He will forgive you and use you again in his service. God has a plan for good things for your life if you will present yourself to him.

THINGS TO DO

1. Ask God to show you where you have broken his law. Repent of these sins and ask him to forgive you.
2. Pray that God will help you to live by his law.

CHAPTER SIX WINNING THE LAND

AIM: I will learn that obedience to God brings victory.

BACKGROUND SCRIPTURES: Joshua 5:1, 6-7, 10; 6:1-20

VERSES IN TODAY'S LESSON: Joshua 5:1, 6-7, 10; 6:1-20

MEMORY VERSE: "...But he who takes refuge in me shall possess the land, and shall inherit my holy mountain" (Isaiah 57:13b).

A STUDY OF THE LESSON

INTRODUCTION

Jacob and John practised faithfully for Saturday's inter-school marathon. Jacob had come in first the past two years, and John was second. If one of them won on Saturday, their school would keep the trophy.

Their coach instructed them, "Always keep a constant pace. Stay close to the opponents, and do not breath too fast," said the coach.

The long-awaited day came. As competitors approached the starting line, the coach reminded the boys, "Remember what I told you. I have no doubt that you will win." The runners were off.

Seconds past, minutes, then two hours. But on the fourth hour they heard cheers from afar. Each person was eager to see if it was someone from his school.

As he reached the final bend, shouts of, "Jacob, Jacob, Jacob," echoed everywhere. He was running like a tiger! He showed no sign of tiredness. John was only ten metres behind. Both had run very well. Victory was theirs.

Today's lesson is about the Israelites winning the Promised Land. This was the time for them to settle and inherit the land God had promised them. Let us see how they conquered it.

INTERPRETATION

The Israelites had wandered in the wilderness for many years. All the generation that had doubted God's promise had died. Even Moses, the servant of God, had died; but he had seen the Promised Land from Mt. Nebo.

God had told Moses that Joshua would be his successor. He had charged Joshua before the people to bring Israel into the Promised Land. God told Joshua that it was now time to possess the land. He promised Joshua victory if he and the Israelites would obey him.

God had been with Israel and helped them as they prepared to conquer the land. He had helped them cross the Jordan river by separating its waters. After crossing the Jordan, the Israelites camped at Gilgal on the eastern border of Jericho. God told Joshua how the Israelites should teach their children about his care for them. Read Joshua 4:19-24.

Now it was time for the people to prepare spiritually for the conquest. All those who came out of Egypt had been circumcised, but those born on the way had not. Therefore, Joshua circumcised them. Next they observed the passover. Read Joshua 5:6-10.

The Israelites now stood as the people of God ready to win the land God had promised to give them. God told Joshua to be strong and courageous in heart and leadership. He would enable the Israelites to succeed if they would be faithful to him.

The first step for acquiring the land for the Israelites was to capture the city of Jericho. This city was used to guard Canaan from any attack. The city was surrounded by a great wall. Israel had to conquer it before moving forward.

One day, when Joshua was by Jericho, he saw a man standing before him with a sword in his hand. This man called himself the "...commander of the army of the Lord..." (Joshua 5:14). He told Joshua he had already given Jericho, its rulers and armies into his hand. In Joshua 6:1-7, we see that God gave Joshua a strange plan for entering the city. They had to march around the city daily for six days. On the seventh day the priests would blow their trumpets and the people would shout. This would make the citizens of Jericho so afraid that they could not defend their city. The walls would fall down flat!

Joshua commanded the people to do as the Lord had said. Read Joshua 6:10 to see what Joshua told the people. The Israelites were told to destroy everything in the city. Only Rahab, the harlot, and her family would be spared because she hid the messengers that were sent to spy out Jericho. God commanded Joshua to be sure that he and the Israelites kept God's law. Read also verse 19.

In verse 20 we are told that the people shouted when the priests blew the trumpets. God caused the walls to fall exposing the city, and the Israelites went in, killed every man and captured the city!

God did not fail the Israelites. He helped them win the land as he had promised their forefathers. The Israelites defeated the Canaanites and inherited their land.

APPLICATION FOR MY LIFE

Winning the land depended on the faithfulness and obedience of the Israelites. God blessed their faith by giving them an unusual plan for capturing Jericho. They just had to follow God's commands. Obedience to God gave the Israelites wisdom to act in the way that would assure them success.

The Lord had already given the Israelites this land, but he wanted to use them to destroy the Canaanites completely. They would influence God's people with their life style if they were left to live together.

The city of Jericho was a fortress to the Canaanites. No enemy could attack them without being seen. But God was with the Israelites. The Israelites trusted God's ability to give them victory in an impossible situation.

Do you ever trust God to help you in whatever seems impossible to you? Do you always obey his commands and instructions? The Israelites obeyed God. They followed his instructions on how to fight the Canaanites. It was not easy, but God gave them the knowledge and wisdom they needed.

Christians are fighting a battle against Satan. Satan is our enemy. He does not want us to inherit God's kingdom. He does not want us to have eternal life. We can only win the victory if we obey God completely.

Philippians 4:13 says, "I can do all things in him who strengthens me." It is Jesus who strengthens us and gives us victory. You can be victorious in the world today if you give God the first place in your life. You are "more than conquerors" through Christ Jesus. (Read Romans 8:37.) He gives you victory over sin and Satan.

THINGS TO DO

1. Have you ever thought of how God can use your life? Ask him how your life can be useful to him. Invite him to use your life however he wants to.
2. Do you always obey God's commands in your life? Can God count on your faithfulness? If not, commit your life to obeying Jesus.
3. Take time to list on a piece of paper any problems in which you need God's help. Pray about each one daily. Write today's date by them so you will see how soon he answers your prayers.

CHAPTER SEVEN LIVING RIGHTEOUSLY IN THE LAND

AIM: I will learn that God will reward my faithfulness when I obey him.

BACKGROUND SCRIPTURES: 1 Samuel 7

VERSES IN TODAY'S LESSON: 1 Samuel 7

MEMORY VERSE: "...And they said, 'All that the Lord has spoken we will do, and we will be obedient'" (Exodus 24:7b)

A STUDY OF THE LESSON

INTRODUCTION

Peter and Joseph were talking about the changes in James' life since he accepted Christ as his Saviour and Lord three years ago.

"I wish I could be like James. He does not ever get into trouble," Peter said. "He always seems to be the one to keep other guys from doing bad things too."

"I know what you mean," said Joseph. "He just knows how to say no at the right time. Do you think it's because he is a Christian and goes to church so much?"

Their conversation was interrupted by the ringing of the bell. It was time for them to go to class.

It was true that James had real control over his life. He did not boast about his faith in God, but his relationship to God was real and personal. He would refuse to do anything that could spoil his Christian life.

James was a silent witness at school. He made sure he had his quiet time every morning before starting his daily activities. After that he lived a righteous life and showed love through his actions. James was an effective witness! Those who saw him knew his life had been changed. He lived a Christian life.

Let us learn today how the Israelites lived righteously in the land God gave them. They gained God's favour because they obeyed him.

INTERPRETATION

The people of Israel were now living in Canaan, the Promised land. They had fought many wars with the nations around Canaan. In one of their wars, the Philistines defeated them and took the ark of the Lord. They kept it for about seven months, but the Lord made their lives miserable. They knew the ark was the cause their suffering. The Philistines went to their religious leaders and asked them what to do. They decided to return the ark to Israel. Read 1 Samuel 6.

The Israelites received the ark of the Lord at Kir'iath-je'arim. They believed God dwelled in the ark, and so it was considered to be sacred. They brought it into the home of Abinadab and consecrated his son, Eleazar, to be in charge. The Israelites were inspired by the presence of the ark in their camp.

At this time, Samuel was ruling Israel, and the people trusted him. Read what he told them in 1 Samuel 7:3-4. They were suffering because they had not obeyed the Lord, and they had worshipped the Canaanites' gods. They had sinned before God when they failed to be faithful and worship only God.

The people did return to the Lord and committed themselves to serve him alone. God kept his promise to protect them.

In verses 5-11, Samuel commanded the people to gather at Mizpah. This was one of the three cities he served. (See 1 Samuel 7:16.) At Mizpah they drew water and poured it out before the Lord and fasted. Samuel led the people to confess their sins to God. He gave a sacrifice offering and prayed for them.

Israel confessed their sins. They knew they had done wrong, and so they openly declared their wrongs before God. Samuel continued to lead them.

The Israelites urged Samuel to speak to the Lord for them when the Philistines prepared to attack them. Read 1 Samuel 7:7-9. They knew the Lord would listen and respond to their prayer. God fought for them against their enemies because they

trusted him. Israel could not defeat the Philistines, but God could and did. God was with Israel. They destroyed their enemy and lived in peace.

God gave the Israelites victory because they worshipped him with pure hearts. Samuel never ceased to make intercession for them to God. He said, "...far be it from me that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you; and I will instruct you in the good and the right way" (1 Samuel 12:23).

God was faithful to the Israelites because they became faithful and obedient to him.

Samuel led and judged Israel all of his life time. He went from Bethel to Gilgal and Mizpah every year to lead God's people in the ways of the Lord. He lived at Ramah and built an altar to the Lord there.

APPLICATION FOR MY LIFE

The Israelites had sinned, but Samuel told them to return to God. God wanted their obedience and faithfulness.

God alone is the true God. The people of Israel were told to worship him only. They were to serve the Lord with their total being, heart, soul and all their might. Read Deuteronomy 6:4-5. This message is for us today too.

God was ready to deliver Israel from their enemies and let them live peacefully in the land if they kept his commands. Their relationship with God depended on their faithfulness. When they returned to obeying him, God rewarded them by protecting them from their enemies. Are you faithful to God? Can you call on him in times of need?

There are many idols that Christians worship today. They may be money, position, education, property or other things. Worshipping these things spoils our relationship to God. It prevents communication between God and the believer. God calls his people today to return to him. He wants us to reverse our direction, leave our false gods and commit ourselves to serving him alone.

We need to worship God with our whole being. The life of the Christian should be a life of worship wherever he is, in the church, at home, at work or at school. We need to pray, confess our sins and seek God's forgiveness. Then we can live a righteous life, ready to be called children of God.

Prayer and giving God praise is important. We should remember that God is our strength. He rewards our faithfulness when we trust him. Let us live righteously here on earth that we may be rewarded with eternal life in heaven.

THINGS TO DO

1. What do you need to do to let God help you live a righteous life?
2. Do you have a close relationship with God? Ask God to help you learn to depend on him and seek his kingdom first.
3. List some persons you could talk with when you want to know more about spiritual growth.

4. Prayer and praise are very important in a Christian life. Ask God to teach you to praise him in prayer. 5. Make a plan of how you will worship God daily.

CHAPTER EIGHT

LIVING WICKEDLY IN THE LAND

AIM: I will learn that calamity will fall on me when I leave following God.

BACKGROUND SCRIPTURES: Judges 13-16

VERSES IN TODAY'S LESSON: Judges 15

MEMORY VERSE: "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me" (Psalms 51:10).

A STUDY OF THE LESSON

INTRODUCTION

Anna finished among the top five in her cookery course. She had learned to follow the recipes in order to prepare delicious food. She was not surprised when she was offered a good job as a cook.

On her first day she was given the recipe to follow to make bread rolls. But with her training, she thought she knew how to prepare bread without the recipe. She ignored the instructions. She left out some things and added others. The bread did not rise, and it was very hard and dry. It was tasteless and useless.

Anna's employer was angry with her. She had spoiled the flour and embarrassed him in front of his guests. The employer called Anna in and warned her. He told her to always use the recipe for each food, but Anna kept preparing the food her own way. Finally Anna was sacked. She lost her job because she would not follow instructions.

Samson, in today's lesson, was like Anna. He ignored God's will in his life and followed his own desires. Let us study about him.

INTERPRETATION

Manoah lived in Zorah, a city on the border of Judah and Dan. Manoah's wife was barren for many years, but one day the angel of the Lord brought good news to her. She would conceive and bear a son. She would name him Samson.

The angel said her son would be a Nazirite from birth until death. A Nazirite was consecrated to God. A Nazirite vowed not to cut his hair, not to drink any wine and not to touch anything dead. Read Numbers 6:1-8. God had special work for the Nazirite to do. What was Samson's work?

At that time, the people of Israel did what was right before their own eyes. They forgot God. They had no one to judge or lead them. Then God raised up Samson to lead them. He blessed him and filled him with his Spirit. Samson was the last of the

judges. He was very popular and very strong. God planned for Samson to deliver Israel from the hand of their enemies, the Philistines.

Judges 14 tells us that Samson went to Timnah, a Philistine city, and fell in love with a Philistine woman. God had warned his people not to intermarry with foreigners. They worshipped idols, and this could influence the lives of God's people. Samson did not listen to God's voice. He said to his father, "...Get her for me; for she pleases me well" (Judges 14:3b).

Samson made a wedding party at the woman's home. During the party he gave a riddle. But the Philistines used this woman to get the answer. Samson was angry because he had to pay the debt for the riddle. He went to the Ashkelon and killed thirty men. He took their festal garments and gave them to the Philistines in payment of the riddle debt. Samson left in anger before ending the party, so his father-in-law thought Samson was not serious about the marriage. He gave his daughter in marriage to Samson's best man.

Judges 15:1-8 tells us Samson did not know what had happened after he left. He prepared to visit his wife. He took a kid (young goat) as a gift. But on reaching his wife's home, her father told him he had given his daughter to his best man. Samson was more angry than ever and sought revenge.

Samson caught three hundred foxes and tied them in pairs tail to tail. He lit a torch and put it between their tails. Then he let them go into the Philistine's grain. Everything was burnt up!

Then the Philistines sought revenge. They burnt up his wife and her father. Samson swore to do more evil to them. He killed many of them then went to stay in a cave at Etam near his home. Read Judges 15:8.

Verses 9-18 tell us that the Philistines followed him. They went to Samson, bound him and brought him to the Philistines. The Philistines were happy when they saw him. They went shouting to meet him. But Samson was filled with the Spirit of the Lord immediately. He broke the ropes that bound him, picked up a jawbone of a donkey and killed a thousand Philistines with it.

Samson became thirsty and prayed to God for water. God split a hollow place at Lehi and water came from it. He drank, his spirit returned and he revived. Although God helped Samson, Samson ignored God in his life. He forgot that it was God who made him what he was. He followed his own desires. God had promised to use him to guide the Israelites into following him. But he put God aside. He only turned to God when things went wrong.

Judges 16:1 says, "Samson went to Gaza, and there he saw a harlot, and he went in to her." What a life Samson lived! He left God's laws, and trouble came into his life.

APPLICATION FOR MY LIFE

Samson's physical strength and abilities came from God, but he chose to ignore God's will for his life. He failed to follow God completely. This prevented him from delivering Israel from her enemies.

God wanted to use Samson to accomplish his work, but Samson's sin limited his effectiveness. He let sin grow in his life as he gave way to it.

Samson compromised with sin. He chose to follow his own lust and desires rather than following God. The result of all this was tragic.

When a Christian compromises with sin he falls from God's glory. Sin affects one's influence on others. It hinders the witness of Christians. Ignoring God removes the usefulness of any person. We invite death when we allow sin to stay in our lives. Read Romans 6:23.

Nobody is perfect, but God is able to use us when we repent and ask for forgiveness. God uses weak and imperfect people to accomplish his work when they choose to follow him. God wants to use you, but you must choose to follow him.

THINGS TO DO

1. Whom do you follow in your life? What should you do to be a God's witness?
2. What is your attitude toward the abilities God has given you? How are you using them?
3. Are you committed to your church as a young person? What can you do to help others in your church.

CHAPTER NINE THE PEOPLE'S KING

AIM: I will learn that God often allows me to have what I choose.

BACKGROUND SCRIPTURE: 1 Samuel 8-9

VERSES IN TODAY'S LESSON: 1 Samuel 8:1-10, 19-22

MEMORY VERSE: "If my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land" (2 Chronicles 7:14).

A STUDY OF THE LESSON

INTRODUCTION

Stephen did not believe what he was reading. He had worked for his company for many years, and they were giving him a bonus to honour his service. He had not expected to get this money, so what would he do with it?

He hurried home to tell his wife the news. They thought of everything they could do with the money. Stephen thought of buying a beautiful car or taking his family on a vacation. He could buy new furniture for their house, but he wanted most to buy a car.

Stephen went to see his friend, Andrew, and told him the news. Andrew thought for a while then told him, "It is alright for you to buy a car, but it will be costly for you to maintain it. It will need petrol, road license, insurance, tyres and other things. I think you should save the money in a bank or buy a plot or a house."

But Stephen bought the car. As months passed he began to feel the burden of maintaining it. He did not have enough money to buy new tyres. The police were after him all the time. Later he decided to sell it at a loss. If he had listened to the advice of Andrew he would have been better off.

Israel fell into such a situation. They came to Samuel demanding a king. Samuel told them about the dangers of a king, but they insisted on having one. Finally God allowed it to happen.

INTERPRETATION

Israel had been led by prophets and judges since becoming a nation. These people were chosen and given revelation by God. At the time of this lesson Samuel was their judge and prophet, but he was very old. Therefore he appointed his two sons, Joel and Abijah, as judges over Israel. However the people insisted that they wanted a king. Their decision came about because of the age of Samuel, the corruptness of his sons and the desire to be like other nations.

The elders of Israel met together and came to Samuel with the request. They told Samuel, "...Behold, you are old and your sons do not walk in your ways; now appoint for us a king to govern us like all the nations" (1 Samuel 8:5). They probably wanted a change because they believed a king would make life easy for them. They did not know they were moving ahead of God instead of following him.

In 1 Samuel 8:6-9 we see that Samuel was not happy with the elders' request. He knew the people were rejecting God and his leadership. He also felt they were rejecting him and his work. Samuel prayed telling God about the plea.

The Lord told Samuel to grant the people's request. God told him clearly whom they were rejecting. They had not rejected Samuel but God himself. They had turned their backs on God, their true King. They wanted a king they could see and touch. Perhaps they felt God could not lead them as an earthly king could.

God told Samuel to do what the people asked, but he had to warn them of what they could expect from a king. Read verses 11-18.

Verse 19 says, "But the people refused to listen to the voice of Samuel; and they said, 'No! But we will have a king over us.'" They were determined to have a king despite what Samuel had said. They would have to live with their decision.

The elders rejected their present leadership. They insisted on being like their neighbouring nations. The elders listed two other reasons for wanting a king. They wanted a king who could govern them and lead them in wars. They believed a king could make their nation stronger.

God told Samuel to fulfil the people's request, and Samuel obeyed God's command. He agreed to do what they asked. Samuel told the people to return to their homes. He promised to give them what they wanted, a king!

APPLICATION FOR MY LIFE

God granted Israel's wish for a king although it was an unwise desire. He had been their king ever since he called Abraham. He had given them laws, victory in wars and leadership in times of danger, but they did not realize his kingship. They wanted a king like other nations, to rule them and lead them in wars!

The people's desire for a king was their own choice. They followed their own ways. They made their decision without consulting God, but he allowed it to happen. God had been providing everything for them. But now they were rejecting him. *They rejected his leadership, his work among them and even his presence.*

When Christians go to God with requests, he listens to them. How can you avoid making a request that will not be good for you? You can always pray telling God, "If it is your will." God always wants good things for his children. He will never provide something bad for them. He does not want you to decide on your own. He wants to help make your decisions.

Israel acted unwisely. The elders did not seek advice from the prophets or judges, God's chosen leaders. They thought they knew better, but they needed help. God often uses Christian friends to help others make decisions. Do not hesitate to ask a Christian friend for advice or to pray with you about a need.

God also wants you to help your friends when they act unwisely or need help. You can encourage and help them take the right action. You can pray with them.

God wants you to express your opinions, convictions and feelings kindly. Samuel's sons abused their privileges. They became corrupt and took bribes. They would have been a help to Israel if they acted righteously. They took their positions as an opportunity to gain from the people. They acted selfishly. God wants you to discover and develop your abilities. He wants you to use every opportunity to help others, but without pride. He wants you to seek his guidance.

God also uses his Word, the Bible, to guide his children. It is up to you to follow God's direction in your life. God will grant us many of the requests we make to him, but he will use our requests to teach us or and make us glorify him.

THINGS TO DO

1. Samuel prayed to God when the people came to him with their request. Do you pray to him before making decisions.
2. Think of a time when you asked God to do something. Did you include him in your request?

3. What lesson can you learn from the unwise request of Israel?

CHAPTER TEN GOD'S KING

AIM: I will learn that God makes his own choice when a person fails to obey him.

BACKGROUND SCRIPTURES: 1 Samuel 16; 18; 21; 23

VERSES IN TODAY'S LESSON: 1 Samuel 16:1, 7, 10-13

MEMORY VERSE: "...You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might" (Deuteronomy 6:5).

A STUDY OF THE LESSON

INTRODUCTION

When the pastor and deacons organized an evangelistic crusade, they asked Paul, a church member, to help in counselling those who would accept Christ during the crusade.

Paul had never done anything like that. He told his pastor, "I do not think I can do that. I've never done it before."

The pastor told him he had noticed Paul's interest in sharing and witnessing to others. He had seen him talking with people, and he felt he could do a good job. He wanted to help Paul discover his gift which he could use to serve the Lord.

Paul was surprised to learn that he did well at counselling. He had been a church member for many years but had not known about this gift. After this discovery, he committed himself to work for the Lord through counselling new Christians in his church. It was Paul's pastor who had noticed this ability in him. Others often see abilities in a person that he does not know about. This was true when David was chosen to be king. We will learn about him today.

INTERPRETATION

When the people insisted they wanted a king, God directed Samuel to anoint Saul to be that king. Saul sinned before God when he offered sacrifice offerings himself. This was the work of the priests whom God had chosen. It was not to be done by anyone else. Saul turned away from God and did not please God or his people as a king. God rejected him as a king and made his own choice. He saw someone in the house of Jesse who would be an obedient king.

We read in 1 Samuel 16:1, "The Lord said to Samuel, 'How long will you grieve over Saul, seeing I have rejected him from being king over Israel? Fill your horn with oil, and go; I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I now have provided myself a king among his sons.'"

God told Samuel where to go and whom to see, but he did not know which of Jesse's sons he would anoint. God promised to show him.

God was very specific. He enabled Samuel to know exactly what he should do. We learn in 1 Samuel 16:2-5 about the instructions of the Lord to Samuel. Samuel was afraid of Saul. He would kill him if he knew he was anointing another king. God told Samuel to go to Bethlehem as if going to offer a sacrifice to the Lord.

When he arrived, Samuel blessed Jesse and his sons. He invited them to the sacrifice. Samuel began to look at the sons to select God's choice. When he saw Eliab, he thought he was the chosen one. But God said no. Read 1 Samuel 16:7, then verses 10-13. The first seven of Jesse's sons passed by Samuel. Samuel and Jesse had assumed that one of them would be chosen, but God did not indicate any of them as his choice. God told Samuel that he does not look at the outward appearance or stature of man, but at his heart. God wanted Samuel to know that appearance and human abilities are not important.

Samuel asked Jesse if these were all his children. Jesse said his youngest son was in the field looking after his sheep. Samuel sent for him.

David, a young, healthy and handsome boy, came in. The Lord told Samuel that David was the right one. Samuel anointed him in the presence of his brothers. He was to be the next king of Israel. The Spirit of the Lord came upon him.

The Lord had chosen David. He only directed Samuel to confirm his choice. David was then filled with the Spirit of the Lord. He was ready to be the king. After this Samuel went to Ramah, his home, and David went back to his work of tending the sheep until God would call him to do something else.

APPLICATION FOR MY LIFE

Have you ever looked at a person and decided he or she would be good for some task? What did you use to help you make that decision? After studying this lesson, how do you think such a choice should be made? Men often make decisions by looking at outward appearances or the skill of a person, but God has shown us that the heart is more important. God knows what is in the heart, and so we should ask him to make choices for us.

Have you ever heard anyone say he or she was too young to do a certain job? Perhaps you have said it yourself. Today we learn that even the youngest person has a job to do for God. No one is too young to give himself to God's service. Jesse's youngest son was the one who was chosen to be the king. We read in 1 Timothy 4:12, "Let no one despise your youth, but set the believers an example in speech and conduct, in love, in faith, in purity." God has something for you to do, and you should be willing to do it as he shows you what it is.

There is another very important lesson for us to learn from this story. God knows what is in our hearts. There is no way we can hide from him. We may try to make some people think something about us that is not true, but God knows everything about us. He knows what we think and our motives for things we do.

King David wrote many psalms in his lifetime. One of them says, "Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting" (Psalms 139:23-24).

What can you do? Every day you can ask God to show you your sin, repent of it and ask him to cleanse you and make you ready for his service. He will never fail to do this if you ask him.

THINGS TO DO

1. What is the condition of your heart? Is there any unconfessed sin there that keeps you from being useful to God? Ask him to show you that sin, repent of it and ask him to forgive you.
2. Have you ever thought of someone as being too young to be useful to God? Take the time to say an encouraging word to someone younger than you are about how he or she blesses your life.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

GOD'S CONDITIONS FOR LIVING IN THE LAND

AIM: I will learn that people must eventually face the consequences of their choices.

BACKGROUND SCRIPTURE: 1 Kings 3:7-14; 5:12; 14:5-11

VERSES IN TODAY'S LESSON: 1 Kings 3:7-14; 5:12; 14:5-11

MEMORY VERSE: "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not rely on your own insight. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths" (Proverbs 3:5-6).

A STUDY OF THE LESSON

INTRODUCTION

Naomi and Elizabeth were sisters in a Christian family. Their parents taught them to do right things each day. Naomi listened to her parents' advice. She obeyed and was faithful to them. People praised her parents for having such a well-behaved daughter.

Elizabeth, however, often failed to do good things. She disobeyed her parents and did evil. She abused the younger children and even stole other girls' property at school. She caused her parents to be ashamed by the things she did. When asked about her actions she always said she tried to do right but could not do it.

This was true with the nation of Israel. Some kings obeyed God and lived faithfully before him. God rewarded them by making their nation prosper. Other kings disobeyed God. They did evil always. This caused trouble for the people and the land as a whole.

INTERPRETATION

The kings of Israel were responsible for ruling and governing the nation. God directed them through prophets and priests. Some of the kings were faithful to God, but others rebelled and did evil before the Lord. Their evil caused trouble to the whole nation.

Solomon was a king who loved God and wanted to be a good king. He was the son of David, and he walked in the ways of his father. One day he went to Gibeon to offer sacrifices to God. In the night God came to him in a dream. "...Ask what I shall give you" (1 Kings 3:5), God said. Look in your Bible to see what Solomon's answer was. You will find it in 1 Kings 3:6-9.

God was pleased with him. He told Solomon that since he had asked this instead of long life or riches or other personal things, he would grant his request. But God said he would also give Solomon the things he had not asked, riches, honour and long life.

No doubt Solomon had learned from his father David, to walk with the Lord. He was a faithful and righteous king. Read 1 Kings 3:16-28 and 5:1-12 for examples of how he used his wisdom in ruling his people.

David and Solomon were faithful to God. Their commitment and obedience brought prosperity to the nation of Israel. God enabled them to bring peace and unity in the land he gave them.

There were also kings who lived evil lives in the sight of God. They did not care to please, obey or honour God. They worshipped Baal and other idols.

In 1 Kings 14 we see an example of an evil king. He was King Jeroboam. God gave Ahijah, the prophet, a message of doom for the house of King Jeroboam and the nation of Israel. Jeroboam worshipped idols. He did not keep and follow God's commandments. Therefore he and his house would suffer.

Verse 9 says, "But you have done evil above all that were before you and have gone and made for yourself other gods, and molten images, provoking me to anger...."

King Jeroboam had sinned before God, and God's anger and wrath came upon him. God promised to raise up a king over Israel who was to destroy the house of Jeroboam. God was concerned for Israel. He promised to punish Jeroboam severely. (Read verse 11.)

Many other kings like Rehoboam, Joash and Ahab also rebelled against God. They did not honour God with their responsibilities. They followed their own desires. This brought troubles to the nation of Israel. God punished them by allowing other nations to conquer them, and they were defeated and taken as captives. Life was not easy for Israel when they turned their backs to God.

Read 1 and 2 Kings to see more examples of the kings who did not honour God.

APPLICATION FOR MY LIFE

How are you living your life? Do you honour God as his servant? Or, have you been overcome by evil and your own desires?

Christians are like kings to the world. They represent God and his righteousness to many people who never see him in any other way. What does the sinful world see when they look at your life? Are you a faithful, obedient servant of God, or do you seek your own ways?

King Solomon asked God to give him wisdom to do the job he had been given. God was so pleased with the request that he gave much more than wisdom. Truly, Solomon is remembered today as a very wise king. The decisions he made were a blessing to his people. But God warned Solomon, "But if you turn aside from following me, you and your children, and do not keep my commandments and my statutes which I have set before you, but go and serve other gods and worship them, then I will cut off Israel from the land which I have given them..." (1 Kings 9:6-7).

Solomon's actions involved himself and also his people. Did you know that your actions affect other people than yourself? Your family and friends will be blessed if you follow the Lord faithfully. They will come to you for help in making wise decisions themselves. But they will suffer if you turn your back on God. God is willing to give wisdom to anyone who will ask for it today as he did many years ago.

God was ready to punish Jeroboam and Israel for their sins. The whole nation suffered even though not all people participated in the evil. Evil had become part of the people's life style, and God punished them.

None of the evil doers will survive God's wrath. God hates sin and will punish us for our sins. Our punishment will also affect those whom we lead astray.

Is your life leading people to Christ? Or, are you like King Jeroboam who brings punishment to your family and to the church?

God wants you to live for him. He wants to bless you and others through you.

THINGS TO DO

1. What blessing would you like most for God to give you?
2. How would God say you live your life, as a faithful or an unfaithful servant?
3. What can you do to be a blessing to other people?

CHAPTER TWELVE

THE DESTRUCTION OF THE LAND

AIM: I will learn that God's judgement comes on those who ignore or disobey him.

BACKGROUND SCRIPTURES: 2 Kings 24

VERSES IN TODAY'S LESSON: 2 Kings 24

MEMORY VERSE: "...Choose this day whom you will serve...but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (Joshua 24:15).

A STUDY OF THE LESSON

INTRODUCTION

The people of Israel sinned over and over. This was not God's plan for them, but they kept on disobeying him. God became angry with them. He told them they must pay for their sins.

They had chosen to live in sin instead of following God. Their sins brought death. God let the nation of Israel be destroyed.

God must punish sin. He punished Israel because of their failure to fulfil their covenant. Israel was destroyed. The people were taken as captives by the king of Babylon. God gave them up. He cast them out of his presence.

INTERPRETATION

God had brought Israel out of bondage in Egypt. He had always directed and guided them. He gave them everything they needed. He made covenants with his people promising to be with them.

In Exodus 19:5-6, God had promised Israel they would be his own possession and a kingdom of priests if they obeyed him. God had forbidden Israel to worship idols and other gods. They were to keep the sabbath day. God told Israel to love him with all their hearts, soul and might. They agreed and said, "...The Lord our God we will serve, and his voice we will obey" (Joshua 24:24).

But many times they forgot about God and turned to doing evil. God renewed his covenant with them again and again, but they still disobeyed him.

In 2 Kings 22, we see how Hilkiah, the high priest found "...the book of the law in the house of the Lord..." (verse 8). Israel had neglected obeying God's laws. They had built altars for worship of Baal and other gods.

When King Josiah heard the words of this book and the punishment that God would send them, he repented before God. He asked the rest of Israel to do the same.

Evil had overtaken Israel. They had to destroy all the altars and images used for idol worship. Josiah helped Israel to be faithful to God, but things got worse after his death. Israel returned to her evil ways again. Sin was everywhere. Kings and other people alike did what was evil before the Lord. God became angry and decided to punish Israel.

Second Kings 24:1-7 tells us how God wiped the evil men out of his sight. Each king who was chosen rebelled against God. When Jehoiakim became king he made an agreement with Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon. He had agreed to serve him, but he stopped after three years. As punishment for not fulfilling his part, God sent other nations to destroy Israel. God commanded it because he wanted to get rid of Judah. Their sins and evil were too much to bear. Everyone suffered, even the innocent.

Verses 10-14 say the servants of king Nebuchadnezzar attacked the city of Jerusalem. Nebuchadnezzar followed them during the attack. When King Jehoiachin saw the danger, he surrendered. He was taken prisoner with his family, servants, princes and his officials.

The king of Babylon also took the treasures of the Lord's house, the king's house and cut in pieces all the vessels of gold in the temple of the Lord. This happened as the Lord had predicted. Nothing valuable remained. Only the poorest people were left behind with nothing.

Verses 17-20 tell us that the king of Babylon appointed Mattaniah, whom he named Zedekiah, as the new king. But Zedekiah also did what was evil in the sight of the Lord God. His deeds angered God. God cast them from his presence. He did not care to protect them any more. They had rebelled against him.

It was the evil of the people of Israel that brought destruction and ruin to their land.

APPLICATION FOR MY LIFE

Evil is the root of punishment. A person is fined or jailed after committing an offense or breaking the laws of the land.

Israel had committed many offenses. They had sinned before God. It was necessary for God to punish Israel for their evil. God could not stand their sins any longer. They had broken their covenant with him.

What is a covenant? It is an agreement between at least two people. Both have responsibilities to do something to make the covenant work. If one breaks the covenant, the other does not have any obligation to do what he had promised.

A good example is in 2 Chronicles 7:14, "If my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land." God will hear, forgive and heal only if the people humble themselves, pray, seek his face and turn from wickedness. If the people fail to do their part, then God has no obligation to do what he has said. Each person has a part to fulfil in a covenant. Failing to do his part breaks the covenant.

God's intention for man was to have fellowship with him, but sin came into the world and separated man from God. God provided a way to restore that fellowship if man will do his part.

What does God expect of you today? First, he expects you to accept his Son, Jesus, as your own Saviour. He expects you to give your life to him and let him live in your heart. He expects you to obey him and serve him with your whole heart. He has given his Word to help you know how to do this. He has given his Spirit to guide you every day. His Spirit comes to live in you the moment you receive Jesus in your heart.

If you will do these things, he will be your God, and you will be his child.

God does not ever force anyone to accept the salvation he offers. He has given everyone the right of choosing for himself. What is your choice today?

THINGS TO DO

1. What does God expect from your life? Are you keeping your part of your covenant with him?
2. Think about your life and the areas where you have failed God. Ask for forgiveness and then commit yourself to the Lord's leadership.
3. Worship God daily and ask him to give you power to resist evil.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN A SAVIOUR FOR THE LAND

AIM: I will learn of God's love toward his people.

BACKGROUND SCRIPTURE: Hebrews 8:10; Jeremiah 31:31; Isaiah 53

VERSES IN TODAY'S LESSON: Hebrews 8:10; Jeremiah 31:31; Isaiah 53

MEMORY VERSE: "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16).

A STUDY OF THE LESSON

INTRODUCTION

We make choices every day. We choose simple things like what we eat and what we wear. We also choose hard things, like our lifetime work or partner. We live with the choices we make.

The people of Israel had to make the same choices, but most of the time they made wicked and sinful choices. They chose to disobey God although they were his chosen people. They failed to fulfil their part of God's covenant with them.

God did not want to leave the world without a covenant. The old covenant had been broken. Therefore he initiated a new covenant which involved every person. It was an individual covenant.

God made a new covenant through Jesus Christ, his Son. Jesus is the Saviour who came to earth as the way, the truth and the life. It was through him that people would be saved and be called children of God.

INTERPRETATION

God had led Israel out of the land of Egypt. He led them in the wilderness and gave them victories over Canaan and their enemies. He gave them many promises that he would fulfil if they remained faithful and obedient to him.

God had a plan for the whole world. He chose the nation of Israel to carry out this plan. He wanted to use the nation of Israel to bring the whole world to fellowship with him. He tried many times to use them, but they sinned and disobeyed him. They even felt God was only for them and not to be shared with others. Israel disobeyed God and failed to carry out his plan. They failed to continue in the covenant God had made with them.

God would not have made a second covenant if the first one had not failed. It was the disobedience of Israel that made God act again with a new people who would be faithful and obedient to him.

In Jeremiah 31:31, we read of God's prophecy that he would make a new covenant with his people. This would happen at a later day with a new generation who would follow his direction.

Hebrews 8:10 tells again of the new covenant God promised to make with Israel. It would not be like the covenant he made with their forefathers. It would be for individual persons. God decided to put his laws in the minds and write them on the hearts of those who would be willing to follow him. Each person would know them. God promised to be their God and make them his people. Most important, God vowed not to remember their sins any more.

Isaiah 53:2-5 gives a picture of the Saviour who would be sent to earth. He was to bring a right relationship between man and God. He would not be noticed as he grew up. He would be despised and rejected by men. He was to bear the burden of the world's sin and carry our sorrows. He would suffer so each person could have eternal life. The Saviour was to be a bridge for man to reach God.

Verses 6-12 tell us it is easy to be led astray like sheep. We tend to value our own ways rather than God's way, but through the new covenant God has made his Son bear all our sin.

God sent his Son to be a sacrifice offering for man's sin. Jesus was the righteous Son of God, but God chose him to suffer. God himself acknowledged the suffering of his Son. He promised that he would see the fruits of his suffering. He would be a hero among sinners. He would bring justice to the whole world. He would make people live for him and his Father.

God's chosen people suffered because of their disobedience, but God showed them that he could use their suffering to bring good to their nation and to the world. The Saviour came from them.

God fulfilled his plan of bringing the lost world to himself by sending his Son, Jesus Christ. Through his suffering, the world can have forgiveness of sins and a new way of life. This brings victory to those who believe in him.

APPLICATION FOR MY LIFE

The earth was created to reflect God's glory and provide a place for man to obey God, but man rebelled against God. This separated man from God, but God came up with a new covenant. He planned to send his Son, Jesus Christ, as the Saviour of mankind. He would send Jesus to his people, Israel, to show his love for them.

But when Jesus came, the chosen people rejected him. God chose to adopt a new people to fulfil his purpose. Christ brought together a new family, all who would believe in him.

All God has done for us, even sending the Saviour, depends on his love. First John 4:8 says, "...God is love." He is the source of love. Everything he does shows his nature of love. God's love is unconditional. Sinful people do not need to meet any conditions to be loved. They are loved already.

Christ died for the ungodly. No one deserved God's love, but Christ died for us because God loves us. (Romans 5:6-8)

God's love is universal: "For God so loved the world..." (John 3:16). There is no barrier to his love. God wants all men to be saved and come to acknowledge his truth. (1 Timothy 2:4)

Christ brings people into a right relationship with God. He does for us what we can never do for ourselves. He represents a new race of people. These are the people who have been saved from their sin. Christ is the source of our life and hope. We belong to this new race because of our relationship to Christ.

Jesus is knocking at the door of your heart. (Revelation 3:20) You will only realize the fulfilment of God's promise of the Saviour as you accept Christ in your life. Christ will change your life as you turn from your sins and follow him.

THINGS TO DO

1. Have you chosen Jesus Christ as your Saviour? If not, today you have an opportunity to begin a new life with him.
2. Will you promise God that you will try to obey him all times?
3. Think of some of the promises of God you have learned recently. Have you claimed them in your life?