

**Episode:** Promised Land Series No. 01

**Narrator:** Shiphrah

**Primary Scriptures:** Exodus 1:1-4:17

**Story Summary:** The birth of Moses; exile of Moses; the burning bush

**Location:** Egypt, Midian

**Time:** c. 1526 BC Birth of Moses

c. 1446 BC The plagues and exodus

**Suggested Memory Scriptures:** Exodus 1:12, 1:21; 2:24-25; 3:5, 3:14

Exodus 1:7 gives the first hint of how many Israelites existed at the time Moses was born: they were numerous and the land was filled with them. Using other Scriptures, scholars and linguists have wildly varying opinions as to the actual number. Some think there were tens of thousands, while others peg the number to be more than three million. In any event, there were a lot of them. So many that the Pharaoh feared they would rebel against him.

Pharaoh's first self-serving solution was simple: make slaves of the Israelites and take advantage of their free labor. Egyptians are well-known for their massive building projects, so the Israelites were a blessing in disguise. Apparently, Pharaoh was happy with the number of slaves he had and did not want more, so he embarked on the world's first birth-control project – have the Hebrew midwives kill the baby boys at birth. When that didn't work, he ordered all the baby boys to be thrown into the Nile.

Moses' mother devised a plan that not only saved her son, but resulted in him being raised as a prince of Egypt. Moses lived as an Egyptian, but remained an Israelite at heart. At forty,<sup>1</sup> he killed an Egyptian for harming an Israelite. This resulted in Pharaoh wanting to kill Moses, which forced him to go into exile.

For the next forty years,<sup>2</sup> Moses was a shepherd in Midian, an area most likely in the Arabian desert. He became the son-in-law of a priest and learned to endure hard times in the desert. His good relationship with his father-in-law becomes an important factor in future years.

At the end of that period, God heard the cries of the Israelites in slavery, and resolved to have Moses do something about it. God appeared to Moses from a burning bush and commanded him to bring the Israelites out of slavery.

As you read these passages, you can see that the Israelites had been in Egypt for four hundred years. They had forgotten God and his power. Moses knew his job was going to start with convincing them about God and his power.

---

<sup>1</sup> Acts 7:23

<sup>22</sup> Acts 7:30

### Discussion Questions:

1. Exodus 1:5 says that when Jacob and his family entered Egypt, he took seventy descendants. Exodus 1:7 says the family had become so numerous that the land was filled with them. What was the time span between those two verses?
2. Looking at Exodus 1:10, did the Egyptians worry about the Israelites starting a rebellion? What were the Egyptians worried about?
3. According to Exodus 2:10, Moses was raised as a prince of Egypt. What privileges would that have entailed? Who would he have met? How would he have been educated?
4. How do you interpret Exodus 2:24-25? Did God literally forget them, was he ignoring their plight, or was he waiting to execute his plan?

1. Exodus 12:40-41 says 430 years. Earlier, God had told Abraham it would be 400 years, as Stephen quoted in Acts 7:6, and seemingly confirmed by Paul in Acts 13:20. However, many scholars think it was a shorter period of time by using verses such as Matthew 1:17. 2. No. They were worried about the Israelites aiding an enemy, and leaving the country. Either would have been a big problem for the Egyptians.

### Application Questions:

1. Exodus 1:17 is an example of civil disobedience based on prioritizing God over government. Are there examples of current government regulations that you should consider disobeying or opposing because of your religious convictions? How would that square with Romans 13:1-3?
2. Exodus 2:21 says that Moses married a woman outside of his clan, a foreigner (confirmed in Numbers 12:1). What kinds of issues and risks arise when someone marries a person from a far different culture? What areas of growth and benefit arise? Can cultural differences be mitigated if both are dedicated Christians?
3. Exodus 3:13 indicates that the Israelites had been away from God for so long that they might not even remember or know who he is. What do you say to people who don't know who God is? What characteristics of his do you accent?

### Application Questions for Teens:

1. In Exodus 2:12, Moses was overly zealous in protecting his own group. How do you determine the level to which you should protect your own group? Does it matter which kind of group it is?
2. Exodus 3:3 tells of a turning point in history. Apparently, Moses had the choice to go see the burning bush or not. How do you know which things you should pay attention to, and which to ignore? Do you think the Holy Spirit helps you make those choices?
3. In Exodus 4:13, Moses asked God to send someone else. Have you ever done that? Do you remember an event where you made a tough choice to act on God's behalf and someone received an obvious blessing as a result? What might have happened if you had made a different choice?

**Episode:** Promised Land Series No. 02

**Narrator:** Zipporah

**Primary Scriptures:** Exodus 4:18-28

**Story Summary:** Moses travels from Midian to Egypt to confront Pharaoh

**Location:** Egypt, Midian

**Time:** c. 1526 BC Birth of Moses

c. 1446 BC The plagues and exodus

**Suggested Memory Scriptures:** Exodus 4:19, 4:24

This episode covers only eleven verses, but a lot can be gleaned from them. These verses follow Moses' encounter with God at the burning bush. In that experience, God reveals that Moses will lead the Israelites out of Egypt, Pharaoh will resist until God prevails, Moses will be an unwilling participant, and the soon-arriving Aaron will be chosen as Moses' assistant.

In this lesson, Moses returns from the burning bush to his home with his father-in-law, Jethro. Apparently, Moses is secretive about the burning bush experience, because he requests permission to return to Egypt to see if his enemies are dead, even though God had already revealed this to Moses. Moses is asking permission as a courtesy, because he is taking Jethro's daughter and grandchildren with him.

Jethro would not have noticed such a mundane thing as Moses taking his staff with him on the trip. Jethro does not know that Moses' staff has been converted into the staff of God, useful for performing wondrous signs.

Exodus 4:21-22 give a preview of the coming plagues and Pharaoh's response. God calls Israel his "firstborn son." This is an interesting name, because Israel (as Jacob) was born after Esau, making him a natural second-born son.<sup>1</sup> It appears that Israel became the firstborn son by purchasing the birthright of Esau.<sup>2</sup> In these verses, we see unmistakable evidence that God had foreknowledge of the plague of the firstborn.

It is important to realize that the writer of Exodus moves from talking about firstborn sons to the subject of circumcision. Somehow, Zipporah was able to relate the circumcision of Abraham and his family to this circumstance with Moses and their uncircumcised son. Her actions apparently saved the life of Moses.

Moses' older brother, Aaron, is introduced in Exodus 4:14 as being a Levite, a person of the tribe of Levi. That verse also says Aaron was on his way to Moses at the time of the burning bush. Wouldn't it have been fun to have been at their meeting? The Bible isn't clear, but it is possible that Aaron had not known Moses as an adult but had been in Egypt while Moses had been in Midian and that Aaron did not know much, if anything, about God.

---

<sup>1</sup> Genesis 25:25

<sup>2</sup> Genesis 25:31

### Discussion Questions:

1. Who was Zipporah, and what do you know about her?
2. Who was Jethro, or Ruel, and what do you know about him?
3. Why wasn't the son of Moses circumcised prior to the trip back to Egypt?
4. While in Midian, what contact with Egypt did Moses have?
5. Based on Exodus 4:21, did Pharaoh have any choice over his response to Moses?
6. Explain Exodus 4:24-26 in your own words.

1. Zipporah was a daughter of Ruel, a priest of Midian. Moses met her when he went into exile from Egypt, and she became his wife. According to Number 12:1, she was a Cushite, possibly the land near the Red Sea or modern Ethiopia. She was not respected by Miriam or Aaron since she was a Cushite. 2. According to Exodus 18, Ruel, or Jethro, was a priest of Midian was the father-in-law of Moses. When Moses was tending the sheep of Jethro, he had had the burning bush encounter. It appears that Jethro cared for Moses' wife and children when Moses went back to Egypt, and then brought them to Moses at Sinai. He advised Moses on how to better rule over his people. 3. The rite of circumcision was given to Abraham and his descendants in Genesis 17:1-14. According to Joshua 5:2-5, the Israelites continued the rite through the time of the Exodus, but temporarily stopped it during the forty years in the wilderness. 4. It appears he did not know anything about his family or the court of Egypt except that those who wanted to harm him had died.

### Application Questions:

1. Aaron is the older brother of Moses. Do you think it was easy for him to serve under Moses' leadership? What challenges might you face in a similar situation?
2. What skills and talents have you acquired in the last ten years that might be useful in helping grow God's kingdom?
3. Do you think Aaron's prior reputation helped him deal with the elders of Israel?

### Application Questions for Teens:

1. Based on Exodus 4:14 and 4:27, how do you think Aaron knew to go meet Moses in Sinai? Do you think Aaron escaped slavery in Egypt to do so? How do you think God prepared Aaron to help Moses?
2. Are you willing to prepare yourself to do important things for God long before those things are to happen? What might that preparation look like? In what ways might preparation to serve God look different from the ways of worldly preparation?

**Episode:** Promised Land Series No. 03

**Narrator:** First Israelite Elder

**Primary Scriptures:** Exodus 4:29-31

**Story Summary:** Moses and Aaron meet the Israelite elders

**Location:** Egypt

**Time:** c. 1526 BC Birth of Moses

c. 1446 BC The plagues and exodus

**Suggested Memory Scriptures:** Exodus 4:29-31

The Israelites lived in Egypt for four centuries. It is easy to think of them as being faithful to God during that entire time period, but the dialogue at the burning bush refutes that idea.

Abraham's family worshiped other gods before he left Ur.<sup>1</sup> Rachel stole her father's gods, and Jacob/Israel had his family bury their gods.<sup>2</sup> When the family of Israel moved to Egypt, the notion of having many gods was probably as comfortable as the notion of having only one God.

When the Israelites first moved to Egypt, they had favor with the Egyptian pharaoh who placed them in the land of Goshen, a plain east of the Nile delta. This was an excellent idea, because Goshen was excellent for shepherds but useless for the Egyptian farmers who depended on the floods of the Nile to water their crops.

The Bible doesn't give precise details, but it does say the Israelites had many descendants. You can easily imagine that the Israelites outgrew the land of Goshen and wanted to expand their territory. You can also imagine that, as the Israelites became less isolated, they became more accustomed to the many Egyptian gods.

Four hundred years later, God does not appear to have been overtly active in the lives of the Israelites. They have essentially forgotten God. Easy to do since they don't have a written history, and were constantly exposed to the Egyptian gods, who do seem active and powerful.

As Joseph becomes a distant memory, the Egyptian royalty lose any sense of loyalty to the Israelites. Instead, they become fearful of them and choose to enslave them. This enslavement serves to make the Israelites see God as less powerful than the Egyptian gods. Why should the Israelites acknowledge God when he clearly refuses to provide for them?

When Moses and Aaron arrive, they bring an entirely new worldview with them, backed with signs of wonder. The Israelite elders have a serious, difficult choice to make: the God of Israel or the gods of Egypt? This is far from the last time they will have to make this choice.

---

<sup>1</sup> Joshua 24:2

<sup>2</sup> Genesis 31:19, 35:4

### Discussion Questions:

1. Exodus 3:1-4:17 is the story of Moses and the burning bush. In the past, did you read the beginning of that passage with the understanding that Moses was already well-acquainted with God or with the understanding that God was mostly introducing himself to Moses? Can you explain why you had that point of view? How would Moses have been well-acquainted with God?
2. Exodus 3:13 is Moses's first expectation of how the Israelites will respond when he tries to free them from slavery. Why do you think Moses had that first response? Was he worried about the Israelites or was he still trying to be convinced himself?
3. In Exodus 3:16, the target audience switches from the Israelites in general to the Israelite elders. How would that have changed the assignment in Moses' eyes? Do you think Moses was aware of who the elders were?
4. In Exodus 4:29, Aaron and Moses gather all the Israelite elders together. How many elders do you think there were? How would they have gotten them all together, and where would they have met? How long do you think it took Aaron and Moses to tell their story and perform their signs? Do you think the elders met together before they believed, or were the words and demonstrations of Moses and Aaron enough?

1. Moses could have learned about God while in Egypt, but it is hard to imagine that would have been easy or that it would have pleased the other Egyptian royals or priests. His father-in-law was a priest of Midian, but was not a Hebrew. If you read the story with no preconceptions, it seems to begin with God introducing himself to Moses, and Moses being very unsure of God's power. 2. He wanted to make sure God was a "big enough" god to make it happen. It was by the name of a god that people would impute power and authority. The Israelites were already convinced that the gods of Egypt had power. The only things they knew about God were stories that had been passed down through hundreds of years. God had not been active in their lives. 3. It was common for clans and tribes to be led by the elders, or older men. It is very possible that the overseers of Egypt sometimes dealt with the elders of Israel to make things happen, although we later find that the Egyptians had appointed Israelite overseers to get work done.

### Application Questions:

1. Exodus 4:30-31 says that Aaron and Moses told them what the Lord had said, and showed them the signs of the Lord. And, then the elders believed. Do you tend to be convinced more by words or by actions? Does John 20:29 strike you differently if you realize how you typically make decisions?

### Application Questions for Teens:

1. Exodus 4:31 says the elders believed. Since they had just met Aaron and Moses, how deep do you think their belief really was?
2. In Exodus 4:31, the Israelites bowed down and worshiped God. Do you think this looked different from the way they had been worshiping the Egyptian gods?

**Episode:** Promised Land Series No. 04

**Narrator:** Second Israelite Elder

**Primary Scriptures:** Exodus 5-14

**Story Summary:** Bricks without straw, the plagues, leaving Egypt, crossing Red Sea

**Location:** Egypt

**Time:** c. 1526 BC Birth of Moses

c. 1446 BC The plagues and exodus

**Suggested Memory Scriptures:** Exodus 5:2; 6:2-3, 6:9; 7:6; 10:7, 10:9; 12:24, 12:36; 13:8; 14:13-14, 14:31

When the Israelites choose God, they are probably expecting to be immediately released from slavery and given plenty of food. Instead, their hardship increases as Pharaoh decides they should also gather the straw for the bricks they were making. Both Moses and the Israelites were quick to question God.

God uses Pharaoh to show God's power. Think of each of the plagues as representing an important god or value of the Egyptians. Every time God imposes a plague, it demonstrates that he is much more powerful than the Egyptian gods.

The Israelites want immediate relief from their slavery, but God knows it is much more important to show his omnipotence, revealing the impotence of the Egyptian gods. God knows it will be simple to get the people out of Egypt, but nearly impossible to get Egypt out of the people.

The deaths of the firstborn of all the Egyptians was the last sign needed. This tenth plague is the basis for the Passover celebration that will be celebrated by God's own firstborn Son on the night before he is crucified.

God finally makes it more painful for the Egyptians to stay the same than to make a change. God instructs the Israelites to get treasures from the Egyptians on the way out. He knows the people won't need the treasure for themselves since they will be in the desert, but the valuables will be used for something much more important to them than personal riches.

Genesis 12:31-32 indicates that Pharaoh thought he was only releasing the Israelites to go worship in the desert as Moses had originally requested, and expected them to return. Genesis 14:5 describes Pharaoh's change of mind when he learned the Israelites had fled Egypt and had no intention of returning. Pharaoh may or may not have understood that his change of mind was in accordance with his hardening heart that God had imposed on him.

The crossing of the Red Sea is one of the most famous of all Bible stories. It is God's final blow to show his complete domination over the government and the gods of Egypt. The Israelites know they cannot ever return to Egypt, and they should be completely convinced of the power of God and his love for them. How long will their devotion last?

### Discussion Questions:

1. Exodus 5:22-23 tells of Moses' reaction after finding that Pharaoh took away the straw from the Israelites. Do you read those verses as Moses disbelieving God or more just wanting to understand what God is doing? Read Exodus 6:9-12 and see if your position changes.
  2. Exodus 6:12 shows that Moses did not have complete faith in God's power before the plagues. Do think his faith grew as the plagues progressed? When do you think Moses became fully convinced of God's power?
  3. To modern people, the ten plagues seem random and a little weird. Would it seem differently if the writer of Exodus had specifically correlated an Egyptian god with each of the plagues?
  4. Read Genesis 15:13, and obvious reference to the Israelites' time in Egypt. How does that verse impact your understanding of God's foreknowledge of the future?
  5. God planned for the Israelites to take immense wealth from the Egyptians. Why did he do that? What good would it do them in the desert?
5. He planned for some of it to be used in the building of the tabernacle. He may have held out hope that they would act in such a way that he could take them straight to the Promised Land.

### Application Questions:

1. From the very first meeting of the elders with Moses until Moses dies more than forty years later, the Israelites seem to cycle between belief and unbelief. But that cycle seems to be very correlated with their expectations of whether things will be easy or difficult. Do you find your level of belief wavering depending on the difficulty of circumstances?
2. Have you known people who walked away from their faith in God? Why did they do so?
3. What does it mean to have a hard heart? If you have ever felt like you had one, how did it get softened?

### Application Questions for Teens:

1. Throughout the story of the plagues, God hardens Pharaoh's heart. What does it mean to have a hard heart? Could Pharaoh have chosen not to have a hard heart?
2. This story tells us God visited the plagues on all the Egyptians even though Pharaoh who was the only one resisting God. How does this fit your concept of a loving God?
3. It took overwhelming, disastrous force to get Pharaoh's attention. What does it take to get your attention? What kind of force is the most effective?



**Episode:** Promised Land Series No. 05

**Narrator:** Aaron

**Primary Scriptures:** Exodus 15-18

**Story Summary:** After the Red Sea until the time of Mount Sinai

**Location:** Red Sea, in the deserts

**Time:** c. 1526 BC Birth of Moses

c. 1446 BC The plagues and exodus

**Suggested Memory Scriptures:** Exodus 15:1, 15:11, 15:26; 16:35; 17:12

The Israelites are deliriously happy after watching the destruction of Pharaoh and his army when they drown in the Red Sea. A tiny hint of dissention is revealed in Exodus 15:20 when Miriam is described as the sister of just Aaron instead of Aaron and Moses. Just three days after the destruction of Pharaoh, the Israelites are in full-blown complaint mode against Moses and God when no water can be found.

God quells their complaints by healing the water of Marah. After doing so, God makes a rather odd statement. "If you follow and obey me, I will not bring on you any of the diseases I brought on the Egyptians." The implied threat in this statement could not have been missed by the Israelites.

About six weeks later, the Israelites complain against Moses and Aaron once more. They are so unhappy that they wish to be back in bondage in Egypt, where they fantasize they had been fed well. It was clear there was absolutely no meat or food to be had in the desert. Only a miracle could save the Israelites. This is just the desperate situation God wanted for them. He proved to be their God by providing manna and quail for them.

The provision of manna and quail was also a test. God put stipulations on the ways the people could gather and eat the manna. The people failed the test, and showed that they did not trust God.

Plenty of manna, plenty of quail. Not plenty of water. The people get tired of having a minimum amount of water, and demand that Moses provide more. Moses knows their complaints are against God, not just against him. Once again, Moses obediently follows God's commands, and water is provided for the Israelites. God must surely be hoping that the Israelites are learning to trust him.

Do you ever wonder if your actions affect your descendants? If so, pay attention to the Amalekites, a wild desert people. They attacked the seemingly helpless Israelites, but God empowered the Israelites to defeat them. The penalty? God vowed to be at war against the Amalekites through the generations until they were completely destroyed, which happened hundreds of years later.

Moses is overwhelmed with the immense task of herding the Israelites. His father-in-law proposes some ways to relieve him, but things have to change. And they will. In a big way.

### Discussion Questions:

1. What did the Israelites do after the Lord defeated the Egyptians?
2. What were the main points of the song Moses and the Israelites sang after the defeat of the Egyptians?
3. What was the main point of the song Miriam and the Israelite women sang after the defeat of the Egyptians?
4. After the defeat of the Egyptians, how much time passed before the Israelites complained bitterly about not having enough water?
5. At Marah, what did God promise the Israelites if they would do what is right and obey his commands?
6. Why did God provide the Israelites with manna and quail?
7. Why did Moses preserve some of the manna? How long did the Israelites receive manna?
8. What did God promise to do to the Amalekites?

1. They sang to celebrate. 2. God is majestic and overwhelmingly powerful. God is the salvation of the Israelites. 3. God is to be exalted for his powerful deliverance. 4. Three days. They complained at Marah. 5. Not to bring the diseases on the Israelites that he had brought on the Egyptians. 6. So they would know he is God. Exodus 16:12 7. As a reminder for future generations. 40 years, until they reached Canaan. 8. Wipe them out.

### Application Questions:

1. Have you ever celebrated the Lord's greatness when he has provided a victory in your life? How did you celebrate? Have you ever acknowledged his greatness even in the midst of what felt like a defeat? How so?
2. The Lord showed his great power by delivering the Israelites from the Egyptians by the water of the Red Sea. Three days later, the Israelites complained because they didn't have enough water. Do your complaints show that you don't have much faith in God's power?
3. Even after they received manna and quail, many of the Israelites did not trust God to keep providing for them. Is there an amount of money that you could save that would indicate you do not trust God to provide for you?

### Application Questions for Teens:

1. When you pray, what do you pray for? Do you ever pray with the intention of telling God how amazing and awesome he is?
2. The Israelites were given the miracle of manna and quail, and were told to follow instructions that would prove if they really trusted God to provide for them. What could you do to prove that you trust God to provide for you?

God said he would wipe out the Amalekites. Does that action fit your concept of a loving God? Why or why not? What other characteristics of God are important to remember?

**Episode:** Promised Land Series No. 06

**Narrator:** Moses

**Primary Scriptures:** Exodus 19-24, 32-34

**Story Summary:** Mount Sinai, the golden calf, the tablets of stone

**Location:** Mount Sinai

**Time:** c. 1526 BC Birth of Moses

c. 1446 BC The plagues and exodus

c. 1445 BC. The Ten Commandments

**Suggested Memory Scriptures:** Exodus 19:5-7; 20:1-17; 22:22; 23:33; 24:3-4; 32:14; 32:28-29; 33:11; 34:14

The Israelites leave Egypt, cross the Red Sea, travel through the desert without water, start receiving manna and quail, and arrive at Sinai. How long does that take? Only two months! Apparently, God thinks that is long enough for the Israelites to be ready to become his people...or God wants to show them that they are far from ready.

It is not much of an overstatement to say that Exodus 19:5-8 sets the stage for the rest of the Old Testament. God says that if the Israelites obey him completely and keep his covenant that they will be his treasured possession. The people agree to do everything the Lord said.

Moses goes to the mountain and meets with God. In a long process of consecration and revelation, God ends up giving his all laws and revelations to Moses, including the Ten Commandments. The people and the elders agree to all of God's conditions again<sup>1</sup>, and Moses goes back on the mountain for forty days.<sup>2</sup> At the end of that time, God sends Moses down from the mountain carrying two tablets of stone on which the Ten Commandments were written by the very finger of God.<sup>3</sup>

While Moses is on the mountain with God, the fickle Israelite people make mischief. They convince Aaron to take their gold and fashion an idol in the shape of a calf. They worship the calf and give it credit for bringing them out of Egypt.

There are many ways to anger God, but the surest is to credit his powerful work to a false idol. God burns with anger and threatens to destroy the Israelites, but Moses intercedes. In an ironic twist, the tribe of Levi comes to back Moses (remember: Moses was of the tribe of Levi), and though they punish the people, they save them from complete destruction.

For their courageous action, the Levites become a tribe forever consecrated to God. Who becomes the leader? Aaron, the one who fashioned the golden calf idol! God works in mysterious ways.

---

<sup>1</sup> Exodus 24:7

<sup>2</sup> Exodus 24:18

<sup>3</sup> Exodus 24:12, 32:16

### Discussion Questions:

1. How long do the Israelites travel before reaching the Desert of Sinai?
2. Summarize the agreement God made with the Israelites when they reached Sinai.
3. At Sinai, when the Israelites agreed to obey God completely, did they know what they were agreeing to? (Exodus 19:8)
4. Why were the people not allowed to join Moses in meeting God on the mountain?
5. What were the first commandments given for the Israelites to follow?
6. Why did God want to instill a healthy fear into the people?
7. What does Exodus 21-23 comprise?
8. After God detailed more laws, did the Israelites still agree to follow them?
9. What did the Israelites do while Moses talked to God on Mt. Sinai for just over 6 weeks?
10. Who wrote down the Ten Commandments on the tablets of stone the first time?
11. Why did the Levites become the tribe dedicated to the Lord?

1. Two months. 2. If the Israelites will obey God completely, he will take them as his people and protect and treasure them. The Israelites agreed to obey God completely. 3. Probably not. 4. They would have died. 5. The Ten Commandments. 6. To keep them from sinning (Ex. 20:20) 7. Specific, detailed laws for the Israelites. 8. Yes, Exodus 24. 9. They got tired of waiting and made the golden calf under the direction of Aaron. 10. God 11. They led the punishment of the people because of their making the golden calf. Exodus 32:29.

### Application Questions:

1. The Israelites agreed to obey God completely before they knew what that entailed. Have you ever done that in your life? What did you do about it when you later found out you had agreed to so much? (maybe your marriage vows? When you were baptized? When you got a new job?)
2. The Israelites waited only a little over six weeks before making the golden calf. Have you ever gotten impatient for God and moved forward with your own plans and desires even though they were contrary to what you knew God wanted from you?
3. Look at the Ten Commandments in Exodus 20:1-17. Which one tends to get you in trouble the most? How could you overcome that behavior?

### Application Questions for Teens:

1. Would you be considered obedient if you obey only when you want to?
2. The golden calf was a sign that the Israelites wanted something to worship instead of God. Most people have some kind of golden calf in their lives. What do you see people worship? What in your life might be a kind of golden calf? What does your "worship" look like?
3. Look at the Ten Commandments in Exodus 20:1-17. Which one tends to get you in the trouble the most often? How could you overcome that behavior?

**Episode:** Promised Land Series No. 07

**Narrator:** Bezalel

**Primary Scriptures:** Exodus 25-31, 35-40

**Story Summary:** The tabernacle, its furnishings, and its worship order; priestly garments

**Location:** Mount Sinai

**Time:** c. 1526 BC Birth of Moses

c. 1446 BC The plagues and exodus

c. 1445 BC. The Ten Commandments

**Suggested Memory Scriptures:** Exodus 25:8, 25:22; 31:2-3; 35:21-22; 36:6-7; 39:42-43

About one-third of the book of Exodus features incredibly detailed instructions about the Tabernacle and its worship services. God intended for his house of worship to be perfectly designed and made for many years of service in the desert.

Keep in mind that the instructions for the Tabernacle were given *before* the Israelites behaved in such a way that God made them wander in the desert for forty years! Perhaps if the Israelites had made better choices, the Tabernacle would have been their place of worship in Canaan instead of the desert.

The Bible records a fascinating level of detail that God gives about the Tabernacle. He was clearly not going to settle for anything less than perfect. Still, there was so much more to specify that he specially gifted people to be craftsmen so he could instill in them the exact knowledge they needed.<sup>1</sup> As an example, read the instructions about the ark of the covenant in Exodus 25:10-22. On first blush, they seem pretty detailed. Now conceive of how detailed the work really was. Every brush stroke, hammer tap, or awl scratch. Perfect. Perfect. More exact and detailed than any piece of art or jewelry ever made. Now, visualize that every single square inch of the Tabernacle was made with the same amount of care and love.

The whole coverage of the tabernacle area was about the same size as one-quarter of a football field from the goal line to the 50 yard-line, from the center of the field to the sideline. The tabernacle tent itself was only 5 yards by 15 yards...for many people, that's about 7 steps by 20 steps.

It's easy to think of the Tabernacle as something that existed a long time ago, and had a purpose for a relatively short period of time. However, God sure spent a lot of time and resources on it. Perhaps, it was something else, too. Like, a copy of heaven? (Hebrews 8:3-5)

---

<sup>1</sup> Exodus 31:1-11

### Discussion Questions:

1. Name some reasons why you should know about the Tabernacle.
2. According to Exodus 25:1-8, who was supposed to give offerings to build the Tabernacle, what was the purpose of the Tabernacle, and how were the Israelites to build it?
3. Where did God intend to meet with Moses?
4. What was the purpose of the ring and poles for certain of the items of the Tabernacle?
5. Why were the priests to have special garments?
6. What were the purpose of the bells on Aaron's garments?

1. It is a copy of heaven (Hebrews 8:3-5); it reflects the perfection that God desires from anything or any place he inhabits; it shows that God specially prepares people to accomplish particular tasks; the plundering of the Egyptians illustrates how God prepares for some things way in advance. 2. From those whose hearts prompted them to give; so God could dwell in it among the Israelites; and, they were to build it EXACTLY according to the pattern God gave them. 3. At the Ark of the Covenant (Exodus 25:22) 4. So nobody would touch the sacred things. 5. To give them dignity and honor, and to allow them to serve as priests (Exodus 28:2-3) 6. To protect his life (Exodus 28:35)

### Application Questions:

1. According to Exodus 25:2, the Tabernacle was to be built from the offering of those whose hearts prompted them to give. How would you know your heart has prompted you to give to the Lord's work? When was the last time it happened?
2. God made it hard and exacting to worship him in the Tabernacle. Why did he do that instead of making it simple and convenient? Do you prefer your worship at church to be convenient, pleasant, and easy or difficult and costly?
3. According to Exodus 31:1-5, God made sure that certain people were specially skilled to accomplish the work he wanted done. How has God specially skilled or talented you? Name something you could do that only you are in a position to do.

### Application Questions for Teens:

1. According to Exodus 25:9, the Israelites were supposed to build the Tabernacle exactly like the pattern God gave them. What are some of the benefits of doing things exactly as you have been instructed? Is being a perfectionist a good thing or a bad thing? Did God give us exact instructions on how to live a life that honors him? Why or why not?
2. The whole purpose of the Tabernacle was so that God could live among his people. Do you tend to think that God wants to love you and be around you because of who he is, or because you behave well and deserve it? Why would the God who created the Universe want to be with you? (note: he does want that!)
3. Name some things you can do or people you can influence because God has specially talented or gifted you, or given you unique experiences? Name some things you could do to become more useful for God.

**Episode:** Promised Land Series No. 08

**Narrator:** Nadab

**Primary Scriptures:** Leviticus

**Story Summary:** Offerings and regulations

**Location:** Mount Sinai

**Time:** c. 1526 BC Birth of Moses

c. 1446 BC The plagues and exodus

c. 1445 BC. The Ten Commandments

**Suggested Memory Scriptures:** Leviticus 8:36; 9:24; 12:7-8

Except for chapters 8-10, *Leviticus* primarily consists of God's instructions to Moses about how the Israelites and their priests should conduct themselves in worship activities. It seems that the bulk of these instructions were given in the 1-2 months after the completion of the Tabernacle but before the Israelites' departure from Sinai.<sup>1</sup>

Although the instructions given to the Israelites are no longer directly relevant to Christians today, there are many lessons to be inferred. God wants to live among his people, and provides a way to do that. God insists that he is worshipped in the manner he desires, not in the manner his people choose. God wants his people to be set apart and to be identified as his people.

As you read through the multitudes of instructions in these chapters, you will no doubt become thankful that your relationship with God does not depend on minutely keeping these hundreds of instructions.

Leviticus 8 tells of the intricate instructions given for the ordination of Aaron and his sons. Moses was careful to follow the instructions exactly. The last verse of the chapter indicates that Aaron and his sons got the message: "Aaron and his sons did everything the Lord commanded."<sup>2</sup>

Leviticus 9 tells of the beginning of the ministry of the priests, Aaron and his sons. God was so pleased with the excellence of their actions that he sent down fire to consume the sacrifices in front of the joyous people.

Leviticus 10 tells of the willful disobedience of two of Aaron's sons in the manner of offering a sacrifice. The Scriptures are plain about the results of their doing so: the Lord kills the two sons. The Lord continues by insisting that the surviving sons and Aaron take even greater care in how they behave and worship.

---

<sup>1</sup> Numbers 1:1, 10:11

<sup>2</sup> Lev. 8:36

### Discussion Questions:

1. Do you think Leviticus 1:1 is a continuation from Exodus 40:38?
2. What are some reasons you should read *Leviticus*?
3. Most of the first seven chapters of *Leviticus* are detailed instructions about giving offerings to God. What might that tell you about your offerings to God?
4. Chapters 8 and 9 describe the details of how Aaron and his sons are supposed to perform their duties. Chapter 10 describes the deaths of Nadab and Abihu because they purposefully did not perform their duties exactly. Why didn't God punish Aaron and his other two sons for not performing their duties exactly? (Lev. 10:16-20)
5. Why might the Lord have separated animals into clean and unclean categories?
6. *Leviticus* contains many ordinances about dealing with skin diseases and other health issues. Why might that have been?
7. According to Leviticus 17:14, why shouldn't the Israelites eat or drink blood?
8. Why might Leviticus 18 have been written?

5. In some cases it might have prevented illnesses, i.e. eating pork in a hot environment. In some cases, it appears some animals were just classified that way from at least the time of Noah (Genesis 7:2-8). 6. They did not understand germs and how diseases were communicated. God was certainly protecting the health of his people. Also, as they travelled, they would be exposed to new diseases and new environments, so they needed to know what to do to stay healthy. 7. Because life of every creature is in its blood. 8. The Israelites could not have known how genetic defects could occur or the damage they could do. Also, social taboos were sure to be developed, so God was giving them good guidelines to go by.

### Application Questions:

1. Leviticus 10 tells an odd story about the deaths of Nadab and Abihu. It is not clear exactly how, but they purposely violated the instructions about sacrificing. Would you behave differently if you knew God would immediately and severely punish you whenever you purposefully disobeyed him?
2. Leviticus 18 comes from a time when families typically consisted of the original father and mother and their children. How would you modify Leviticus 18 for modern times?

### Application Questions for Teens:

1. Would most of the laws of behavior that God gave the Israelites been fulfilled if they had just followed Leviticus 19:2? Would that verse keep you from thinking that you have a list of rules you must follow?
2. Sometimes, obeying God has very unexpected results. Boaz followed the teaching of Leviticus 19:9. What happened because of it? (he met Ruth, married her, and became an ancestor of Jesus).
3. What do you think about Leviticus 19:28? What about the verse before it? How should we interpret these verses in a modern context?



**Episode:** Promised Land Series No. 09

**Narrator:** Caleb

**Primary Scriptures:** Numbers 1-24

**Story Summary:** Census, regulations, dedication of Tabernacle, spies to Canaan, wander in the wilderness, travel to Moab

**Location:** Desert of Sinai, wilderness, Moab

**Time:** c. 1526 BC Birth of Moses  
c. 1446 BC The plagues and exodus  
c. 1445 BC. The Ten Commandments  
c. 1406 BC The Israelites enter Canaan

**Suggested Memory Scriptures:** Numbers 1:54; 11:1; 12:3, 6-8; 13:30; 14:8-9, 29-30, 33; 20:12

The book of *Numbers* starts with a seemingly mundane event: God ordering the census of the Israelites. One purpose of the census is to count the fighting men over twenty years of age. The unspoken message in the census is that Moses can either depend on his fighting men or he can depend on God. Years later, King David takes a similar census not commanded of God, and it is a great sin.

The census is followed by instructions about how the tribes are to be arranged when camped or moving, and more instructions about the priests and regulations for the Israelites.

Numbers 7:89 imparts a little tidbit of information. Whenever Moses met with God in the tent, he heard the voice of God speaking to him from between the two cherubim above the ark of the covenant.

The Israelites finally left Sinai and were on the way to occupy Canaan. At the Lord's command, Moses sent out twelve tribal leaders to explore the land. Their job was to gather information. When they returned, ten of the twelve men not only reported on what they saw, but also incited the people to refuse to go to Canaan because of the potential danger. Only Caleb and Joshua insisted that the Israelites should go to conquer the land.

God was so angry about the Israelites' rebellion that he threatened to extinguish them. Moses talked God out of doing so, but God found another punishment. The Israelites were sentenced to forty years of wandering in the desert. This was the amount of time it would take before the death of all of the fighting men whose names were taken in the census.

The remainder of *Numbers* speaks of Korah's Rebellion, more priestly duties, the water from the rock at Kadesh, and the death of Aaron. It is hard to see in the passages, but the end of Numbers talks about the preparation to enter Canaan after wandering for forty years. This includes the trip around Edom and Moab, the defeat of kings, and the actions of Balaam. After this, the Israelites are on the Plain of Moab, ready to enter Canaan.

### Discussion Questions:

1. Why might have God wanted Moses to take a census of the Israelites?
2. Why didn't Moses include the Levites in the census?
3. What was the Nazirite vow?
4. What was one purpose of the cloud above the Tabernacle?
5. About how many months after leaving Egypt was it before the Israelites left Sinai?
6. Why did Aaron and Miriam oppose Moses?
7. Who wanted to send the twelve spies into Canaan to scope out the country?

1. For Moses to know how to allocate resources and jobs, and know how many fighting men were available for battle. 2. They were appointed to serve in the Tabernacle (Num. 1:50). 3. According to Numbers 6, it was a special vow of dedication to the Lord. 4. When the cloud lifted and moved, the Israelites were to follow; When it stayed still, the Israelites were to stay encamped. 5. About fourteen months. 6. They complained about his Cushite wife, but mostly they seemed to have been jealous of his power and gifts. 6. According to Numbers 13:1-2, God instructed Moses to do it.

### Application Questions:

1. Numbers 13 tells the story of the twelve spies. In 13:27, the spies report about how good the land is. In 13:28, they quit giving the report to Moses, and start scaring the people with the strength of the inhabitants. Despite the urgings of Moses, Aaron, Caleb and Joshua, the Israelites rebel and refuse to enter Canaan. Do you ever behave as if the power of worldly things is more than the power of God? What blessings have you missed out on because of that?
2. After the report from ten of the spies, the Israelites refused to enter Canaan. Their rebellion caused God to declare that he had had enough of their disobedience, and that they would have to wander in the wilderness for forty years. Do you perceive God will forgive you no matter how often you sin, or will there come a day when he says enough is enough?

### Application Questions for Teens:

1. Numbers 14:39-45 tells the story of what happened after the Israelites found out their punishment for rebelling against God. Their punishment was so harsh they wanted to have a second chance and tried to force God into giving it to them. Do you believe you should have to obey the first time you are told something, or do you rely on second chances? Is it unfair when you don't get a second chance?
2. Numbers 15:27 talks of the sacrifice that had to be given for unintentional sins. Do you believe God should automatically forgive your unintentional sins since it is not your fault?

**Episode:** Promised Land Series No. 10

**Narrator:** Phinehas

**Primary Scriptures:** Numbers 25-36

**Story Summary:** Moabite women, second census, prepare to enter Canaan

**Location:** Plain of Moab

**Time:** c. 1526 BC Birth of Moses  
c. 1446 BC The plagues and exodus  
c. 1445 BC The Ten Commandments  
c. 1406 BC The Israelites enter Canaan

**Suggested Memory Scriptures:** Numbers 25:10-13; 26:65; 27:22-23; 31:16; 33:55-56

It's been about forty years since the Israelites left Egypt. God had long been preparing the Promised Land for the Israelites. He left the Canaanites in place so the wild animals would not take over.<sup>1</sup> God had every intention of driving the Canaanites out slowly in front of the Israelites so the land would already be fruitful and the cities already built and in place. Yes, the Promised Land was perfectly prepared for the Israelites to invade.

The Israelites should also have been perfectly prepared to invade. After all, they had just spent the last forty years depending on God and watching him do miracles. No men who were older than twenty at the time of the Exodus had survived the Wilderness. Overall, the Israelites had overcome many enemies and hardships, and were on the banks of the Jordan River, in a position to cross over and take the Promised Land. But they weren't truly ready. It turns out the prophet Balaam had revealed a vulnerability of the Israelites that the Moabites quickly exploited.<sup>2</sup>

The Israelite men began to engage in sexual immorality with the Moabite women, and began to worship their false gods. God's anger burned! Moses demanded that any of the men who had done this horrific action be put to death to assuage the anger of the Lord. Still, 24,000 Israelites died in a subsequent plague as a result.

After a second census and more regulations, God gave Moses one last major battle: to take vengeance on the Midianites and Moabites for deceiving the people of Israel.

God instructed Moses about dividing up the land. God knew the land would be conquered, so this is not "counting the chicks before they are hatched." Two tribes determined to take land on the east side of the Jordan River, which was approved by Moses on the condition that they help the other tribes conquer the land west of the Jordan River. Now, the Israelites are truly ready to take the Promised Land. Without Moses.

---

<sup>1</sup> Exodus 23:29

<sup>2</sup> Numbers 31:16

### Discussion Questions:

1. Numbers 24 would lead you to believe that Balaam had not aided the Moabites in resisting the Israelites, but had actually blessed the Israelites. What information does Numbers 31:16 add? What was the result of Balaam's advice?
2. What was God's solution to the sexual immorality of many of the Israelite men?
3. Why did God instruct Moses to take a census before entering Canaan?
4. When Moses was told that he would not be allowed to enter the Promised Land, what was his immediate response?
5. When Joshua replaced Moses, what was Moses careful to do?
6. Why did the Reubenites and Gadites want to stay on the east side of the Jordan River? What was the condition for them to have that land?

1. That Balaam had advised the Moabites to entice the Israelite men into sexual immorality and idol worship. The Israelite men fell for the temptation. 2. Have their own people put them to death. God wanted the Israelites to be rid of obvious sin before entering the Promised Land. 3. So it would be clear how to allocate the land among the tribes. Num. 26:52. And, to verify that none had survived the Wilderness who were not supposed to. Num. 26:64-65. 4. That God immediately replace him with an excellent shepherd/leader Num 27:15-17 5. Approve of Joshua and transfer his authority in a public ceremony. Num 27:22-23 6. Because the land was suitable for them. They were to lead the other tribes in conquering the west side.

### Application Questions:

1. On the plains of Moab, the Israelite men fell into idol worship after succumbing to the sexual temptations of the Moabite women. Is it your experience or observation that other temptations are often tied to sexual immorality?
2. According to Numbers 25:11, why did God reward the actions of Phinehas? In your life, what would it look like to be zealous (over-the-top dedication and enthusiasm) for God?
3. God replaced Moses with Joshua. Joshua had faithfully been the assistant of Moses for forty years! When you have wanted promotions at work, church, or social groups, how dedicated had you previously shown yourself?

### Application Questions for Teens:

1. According to Numbers 25:11, God approved of Phinehas killing a man who committed sexual immorality. Does this seem like a fitting punishment to? How was this man's transgression similar to modern sexual promiscuity? How was it different?
2. According to Numbers 27:14, Moses wasn't allowed to enter the Promised Land just because he had made a mistake when he hit the rock at the Waters of Meribah. Moses served God faithfully for forty years, but was punished harshly for this mistake. Why?
3. According to Numbers 33:55-56, what would happen if the Israelites did not drive out all of the inhabitants of Canaan? What happens when you leave traces of sinful living in your life?

**Episode:** Promised Land Series No. 11

**Narrator:** Moses

**Primary Scriptures:** Deuteronomy

**Story Summary:** Moses reviews the exodus and laws; prepares Israelites to enter Canaan

**Location:** Plain of Moab

**Time:** c. 1526 BC Birth of Moses  
c. 1446 BC The plagues and exodus  
c. 1445 BC The Ten Commandments  
c. 1406 BC The Israelites enter Canaan

**Suggested Memory Scriptures:** Deuteronomy 1:6; 2:7; 4:2, 9, 29; 6:4-5; 7:26; 8:17-18; 11:13; 14:16-17; 30:19-20; 31:46-47

The book of *Deuteronomy* can be split into four sections. The first three are speeches given by Moses on the Plain of Moab shortly before the Israelites enter the Promised Land, while the fourth recounts matters having to do with Moses.

As you read this book, you almost get the feeling that Moses is a crotchety old man who slants the facts just a little. Perhaps he is out of sorts because he knows his life is at an end and that even after all his hard work, he will not get to enter Canaan.

The first speech by Moses is a review of the rebellion of the Israelites and their resulting forty years of wandering in the wilderness. It summarizes the Israelites' history until they reach the Plain of Moab. It ends with encouragement by Moses for the Israelites to follow the law.

The second speech is a demand by Moses that the Israelites follow the laws of God they have been given. Deuteronomy 6:4 and 6:5 are two of the most important verses in the Bible. Moses emphasizes that the Israelites' possession of the Promised Land depends on their faithful obedience to the many laws.

The third speech offers comfort to the Israelites in the event that they prove to be unfaithful. Moses comforts them that even if they fail, they can be restored if they repent. Perhaps Deuteronomy 30:19 and 30:20 are two summary verses that are useful in all times and places. You can imagine Jesus saying these exact admonitions. Choose between life and death, blessings and curses. Moses advises them to choose life and blessings.

The fourth section recounts speeches and admonitions of Moses, the passing of the leadership role to Joshua, and the death of Moses. In this section, God tells Moses that the Israelites will again rebel after they take the Promised Land. That must have been discouraging to Moses, but not surprising. He was probably more than ready to turn over leadership to Joshua, his aide for about forty years. Knowing the Israelites well, Joshua must have looked upon his upcoming leadership role with a fair amount of trepidation.

### Discussion Questions:

1. Deut. 1:3 says that the speech of Moses began after 40 years and 11 months. What did it come after?
2. In Deut. 1:22, Moses explained that the people had asked to send the twelve spies into Canaan. Is that what Numbers 13 says?
3. In Deut. 1:37, Moses blames the Israelites for him not being able to enter Canaan. Is he shading the actual reason?
4. Read Deut. 13:1-5. How serious is God about his people not following false teachings and false teachers?
5. Deut. 17:14-19 gives instructions about the future times when Israel would have a king. How many years in advance of the first king was this prophetic instruction given? Did the Israelites follow these instructions?

1. This probably refers back to Numbers 1:1, after the Israelites came out of Egypt. 2. Numbers 13:1 says that God commanded Moses to send men to explore Canaan. 3. God didn't let Moses enter because of his disobedience in striking the rock. 5. About 350 years. Solomon is an example of a king who disobeyed every one of these instructions.

### Application Questions:

1. In Deut. 4:2, Moses commands the people to keep the commands of the Lord, and not to add to them or subtract to them. As a Christian, how might you add to or subtract from the Lord's commands? How does this align with Jesus' teaching about the law (and his claim to fulfill it) in Matthew 5:17-20?
2. According to Deut. 4:5-7, what does being obedient to God show?
3. Read Deut. 6:4-8. How might you implement a plan to teach your family to love God and know his commands for them? Would Deut. 8:5 be part of your plan?
4. Read Deut. 8:17-18. How do these verses apply to you and your family? Do they apply to your church congregation?
5. According to Deut. 10:12-13, what is one reason we should follow the Lord's commands for us?

### Application Questions for Teens:

1. According to Deut. 4:29, how are you to seek the Lord when you want to repent?
  2. Read Deut. 7:1-6. The instructions given in the section seem barbaric and inhumane according to modern standards. Why was God so harsh with the commands? Does Deut. 7:7-9, 25-26 explain part of the reason?
  3. Do you think Deut. 8:9 has any application to modern Christians?
  4. Read Deut. 11:16. How can you be careful not to be enticed to follow false gods?
- Read Deut. 30:19-20. How can you choose to have life?

**Episode:** Promised Land Series No. 12

**Narrator:** Rahab

**Primary Scriptures:** Joshua 1-6

**Story Summary:** Joshua leads the people across the Jordan River; Jericho conquered

**Location:** Canaan

**Time:** c. 1526 BC Birth of Moses  
c. 1446 BC The plagues and exodus  
c. 1445 BC. The Ten Commandments  
c. 1406 BC The Israelites enter Canaan

**Suggested Memory Scriptures:** Joshua 1:7-8; 2:11; 3:5; 4:24

Joshua 1-6 is an intriguing passage. We get to see a war from the viewpoint of both opponents. The Israelites are numerous, but after forty years in the wilderness, they are still shepherds and former slaves. They have gotten some battle experience through victories over King Og, King Sihon, and the Midianites but they are not warriors at heart. They have just seen 24,000 of their kinsmen killed in a plague sent by God to punish them for their sexual misdeeds in the worship of false gods. They continue to behave as if they have some trust in God, but not complete trust.

The people of Jericho and other Canaanite cities greatly fear the Israelites. They don't know about the plague on the Plain of Moab nor the other times God has punished the Israelites. Their information consists only of glowing reports about the strength of the Israelites and the power of their God. They know of the Egyptians' destruction at the Red Sea, and the victories over Og and Sihon. They know the massive Israelite force is ready to invade Canaan, and they can do nothing but wait for it.

Against these backdrops, General Joshua prepares his troops and the people. He must have hoped for detailed instructions from God about what to do. Instead, he gets these instructions: be strong and courageous, meditate on the Law, obey the Law. Joshua tells the people to prepare to cross the Jordan River in three days, and sends two spies to check out the nearby city of Jericho.

Try to think of Rahab as a typical resident of Jericho. She is most interested in protecting her family. She has heard rumors of the invincible Israelites and is terrified. When she gets an opportunity to save her family, she makes a deal with the two spies: she saves them if they agree to save her family. She probably weighs the possibility of getting executed for being a traitor against probable death if the Israelites invade. It is not easy choice.

When the Israelites cross the Jordan, God dries it just as he did the Red Sea. That fires up the Israelites. When God causes the men to be circumcised, they finally feel like God's people. When they celebrate the Passover at Gilgal, they finally shake off the bonds of Egypt and its gods. The destruction of Jericho is a foregone conclusion.

### Discussion Questions:

1. What were God's instructions to Joshua when he took over from Moses?
2. How long did Joshua give the people to prepare to cross the Jordan River?
3. Rahab seemed to have complete faith in the power of the God of the Israelites. Why did she have more faith than many of the Israelites?
4. Describe how God stopped up the Jordan River so the people could cross over.
5. Joshua 4:9 gives a little information about when *Joshua* was written. What might you ascertain? Does that fit with Joshua 6:25 and 9:27?
6. What was the effect on the enemies of the Israelites of God drying up the Jordan?
7. Why did the Israelite men have to be circumcised after crossing the Jordan?
8. When did the manna from heaven stop coming down? Why?
9. Why were the men of the army to stay away from the metals of Jericho?

1. Be strong and courageous, obey the law, meditate on the Book, do not be discouraged. 2. Three days. 4. It was as if he built a dam across the river. The water piled up to the north, and the river dried up below it. 6. It took away all of their courage. 7. The men born in the previous 40 years of wandering in the wilderness had not be circumcised. 8. When the Israelites celebrated Passover after crossing into the Promised Land. It was harvest time, and the Israelites would eat the produce of the crops that had already been planted. 9. They were dedicated to God. Joshua knew the men would be tempted to take some.

### Application Questions:

1. Joshua sent two spies to check out Jericho. He sent them in secret. Why? Do you always want to hear the opinions of others before acting? What did Joshua learn from the experience with the twelve spies?
2. The two spies saw the fortifications of Jericho, but they were more impressed by the fear of the people of Jericho. Why did they assess the fear of the people to be a certain sign of an Israelite victory? (Josh. 2:24)

### Application Questions for Teens:

1. When the Israelites crossed over the Jordan, God had backed up the river's water to the north. This would have created a giant lake. When the cloud of God reflected off the lake, the people in Jericho must have surely been impressed. Describe what the people of Jericho might have seen during the day and during the night.
2. The Israelites placed twelve stones in the Jordan as reminders of how God helped them cross the river. What's a way you remember the important milestones of your life? How important is it to keep these reminders?
3. If you were Joshua and had 40,000 warriors, how would you have attacked Jericho? Now imagine you were an inhabitant of Jericho. How would you have reacted to the Israelites' strange invasion?



**Episode:** Promised Land Series No. 13

**Narrator:** Joshua

**Primary Scriptures:** Joshua 7-24

**Story Summary:** Joshua and the Israelites conquer most of Canaan

**Location:** Canaan

**Time:** c. 1526 BC Birth of Moses  
c. 1446 BC The plagues and exodus  
c. 1445 BC The Ten Commandments  
c. 1406 BC The Israelites enter Canaan

**Suggested Memory Scriptures:** Joshua 8:34; 9:14; 10:14; 14:9; 17:18; 21:45; 23:12-13; 24:14-15

The Israelites crossed into the Promised Land, the men were circumcised, Jericho was defeated, and Joshua was at his pinnacle of recognition by both the Israelites and God. The Israelites followed God's orders completely in the destruction of Jericho and the disposition of the devoted things. Except, unknown to the rest of the Israelites, one person...only one person...disobeyed God by stealing some of the devoted things.

Because one person disobeyed, the entire nation was punished. After this person was annihilated by the Israelites, God relented and allowed the Israelites to continue on their path of being victorious.

Once more, the pattern is set. The Israelites must obey God completely and exactly. If they do so, God will protect them and lead them to certain, low-cost victories. It is hugely important that the Israelites understand this pattern. Among other things, they know they must completely drive out or destroy the inhabitants of Canaan. They must not allow any of the inhabitants to live among the Israelites because they will cause the Israelites to worship other gods. Specifically, they must not make any treaties with the inhabitants. The Israelites must also completely conquer the land that has been promised to them. They cannot stop short. If they follow Joshua and rely on the Lord for his leading, all of this will happen.

The Israelites get a good start by renewing the covenant at Mount Ebal, just as Moses had instructed them to do. But things start falling apart immediately. Joshua and the people fail to inquire of the Lord, and so they are deceived into making a treaty that allows the Gibeonites to live among the Israelites. They make the best of the failure, and God leads them on a massive conquest of the Promised Land.

As you read through Joshua, the Israelites experience victory after victory. They allocate the land as they were supposed to do. But if you look closely, you see signs that things are not well. They do not completely drive out the Canaanites and they continue to worship other gods.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Joshua 24:23

### Discussion Questions:

1. Why would the Israelites have been so disheartened by the defeat by Ai?
  2. Why might God have designed a complex battle plan for Ai instead of just miraculously destroying it?
  3. Joshua 11:20 describes God wanting to destroy many people groups. How does that desire fit the notion of God being a good God.
  4. Study Joshua 11:22. Who was he talking about?
  5. When Joshua was old, God instituted another plan to conquer Israel. What was it?
  6. Discuss Joshua 24:14-15. How does that relate to your life and family?
4. Goliath and his relatives. 5. God would drive the inhabitants out. Joshua 13:6.

### Application Questions:

1. When the Israelites were defeated by Ai, Joshua immediately laid the blame at the feet of the Lord. If he had had faith in the Lord, what would he have assumed? Do we sometimes incorrectly blame God?
2. The story of Achan illustrates how our sins may be hugely destructive to our families. When you contemplate sinning, do you consider the effects on your family members? If you have done so in the past, did the effects end up being greater than you expected?
3. In Joshua 10:12, Joshua made an audacious request of the Lord in the presence of the people of Israel. If God had not fulfilled it, Joshua would have lost a lot of authority. God chose to fulfill the request, and that was a most special day in history. If you could make an audacious request of the Lord today, for which he would get the glory, what would that request be? Why?
4. Joshua 14 describes Caleb and his ambitions when he was 85 years old. How will you keep having goals and ambitions as you age?
5. Joshua 23:14-15 indicates that God will keep his promises...both for reward and punishment. Do you tend to remember God's promises for rewards and neglect the others?

### Application Questions for Teens:

1. Joshua 7:1 says that Achan took some of the precious metals devoted to God, and the Lord was angry with all of the Israelites because of it. Was that fair? Why did God feel that way? Was it fair that he demanded the death of Achan and his family?
2. Joshua 9:14 says the Israelites sampled the provisions of the Gibeonites, but did not inquire of the Lord. People tend to trust their own judgments and forget to inquire of the Lord. How could you put up some check points to keep you from doing that?
3. Joshua 15:63 describes one of the people groups that the Israelites did not choose to destroy. All of the people groups that were not destroyed ended up causing trouble to the Israelites by tempting them with idols and sexual immorality per Joshua 23:13. Is that a good example of why you should completely destroy sin in your life?

**Episode:** Promised Land Series No. 14

**Narrator:** Paul

**Primary Scriptures:** Judges 1

**Story Summary:** Israelites fail to completely conquer Canaan

**Location:** Canaan

**Time:** c. 1406 BC The Israelites enter Canaan

c. 1209-1169 BC The rule of Deborah

c. 1075-1055 BC The rule of Samson

**Suggested Memory Scriptures:** Judges 1:19-21, 27-33

The book of *Joshua* ends with the Israelites having mostly conquered the land of Canaan. There are pockets of resistance that just don't seem worth overcoming, though. It just doesn't seem worth the price to completely take over the land. The book of *Judges* picks up the story after the death of Joshua.

Chapter One begins with great promise. The tribes of Judah and Simeon work together to defeat the Canaanites living in the lands they have been allotted. Judges 1:8 says that they even took the city of Jerusalem and set it on fire. Judges 1:18 says they conquered the cities and associated territories of Gaza, Ashkelon and Ekron.

Starting with Judges 1:19, it becomes obvious that things are not perfect. We learn the Israelites they were unable to drive out the people of the plains because they had chariots. Hmm. Gaza, Ashkelon and Ekron were probably cities of the plains and are the cities that will later be inhabited by the Philistines.

Judges 1:21 says the Benjamites did not drive out the Jebusites who lived in Jerusalem, and the Jebusites continued living there. Hmm. Maybe Judah had not destroyed Jerusalem completely.

The tribe of Joseph spares an informant, who goes on to establish a city. Manasseh does not drive out the people completely. Nor does Ephraim. Nor Zebulun, Asher, Naphtali, or Dan. As a weak justification, the writer of *Judges* says things like, "When Israel became strong, they pressed the Canaanites into forced labor."

The most important part of taking over the Promised Land was to destroy or drive out *all* of the inhabitants. None were supposed to live with the Israelites. God knew the Israelites would succumb to the worship of the Canaanites' idols if they were ever available.

The failure of the Israelites to completely obey God will haunt them forever. The seeds of the destruction of future generations are sown by the incomplete obedience of the first generation to enter the Promised Land.

### Discussion Questions:

1. We sometimes forget that the events of the Bible took place within the context of wider world events. The period of the Judges coincides with the end of the Bronze Age, when the ruling cities of that time period collapsed. When the shepherds of Israel could no longer count on the food coming from other countries, how did they have to react?
2. Describe the events of Judges 1:1-17. How do those events differ from the ones in Judges 1:18-36?
3. Judges 1:8 says the men of Judah captured Jerusalem and set it on fire. How does that fit with Judges 1:21?
4. Find a detailed map of Israel during the time of the Judges, and try to plot the cities of Judges 1:18-36 that the Israelites did not destroy. Describe what you find.

1. They had to be less nomadic, and become more settled as they became farmers. This would have put them in conflict with the inhabitants of Canaan who had been farming. 2. The first verses describe victories of the Israelites after the death of Joshua. The second verses tend to describe the inability of the tribes of Israel to completely drive out the Canaanites as commanded by God. 3. It is hard to make those two verses fit. Possibly Judah did that many years before, and the Jebusites had time to recover and fortify the city so the Benjamites could not prevail. 4. The cities are scattered throughout Israel, and will likely be a thorn in the side of the Israelites for centuries to come.

### Application Questions:

1. Judges 1:1-17 describes the victories of Judah when they worked together with the men of Simeon. Would the stories of Judges 1:18-36 been different if some of those tribes had worked together? Do you prefer to try to overcome your difficulties by yourself or by working with others?
2. The Israelites disobeyed God by not completely driving out the Canaanites. Pretend that you are the leader of one of those tribes, and explain to God why you didn't complete the task. Would you try to use those same types of excuses to God about why you are disobedient in some area of your life today?

### Application Questions for Teens:

1. The stories of Judges 1:18-36 read like someone is trying to make excuses for why the Israelites did not completely obey God. Do you ever make excuses because the things you need to do are difficult and require a big sacrifice of time and energy? Are you in the habit of behaving that way or is it an occasional failing?
2. Judges 1:18-36 has stories of the Israelites making people groups do forced labor as an excuse for not killing those people groups. What do you think about God wanting the Israelites to wipe out the indigenous people of Canaan? Why did God insist that they do so? Was making them into slaves a good solution? How does this intersect with your thinking on the treatment of indigenous people and slaves in American history?

**Episode:** Promised Land Series No. 15

**Narrator:** King Solomon

**Primary Scriptures:** Judges 2

**Story Summary:** Joshua and the Israelites conquer most of Canaan

**Location:** Canaan

**Time:** c. 1406 BC The Israelites enter Canaan

c. 1209-1169 BC The rule of Deborah

c. 1075-1055 BC The rule of Samson

**Suggested Memory Scriptures:** Judges 2:3-4, 10, 15, 19, 22

God promised the Israelites he would lead them to conquer all of the land he'd given to Abraham and Moses. He promised to give them unbelievable prosperity in the land forever and ever. God made many promises to the Israelites, but almost all of them were conditional.

In order to fulfill the conditions of God, the Israelites had to do such things as conquer the land completely, drive out or kill all of the land's inhabitants, and follow the laws of Moses. And they had to do these things consistently, completely, and wholeheartedly. But no sooner had they conquered Jericho than they started breaking God's conditions.

Judges 2 begins with a stark call to reality. The angel of the Lord spoke to all of the Israelites and pointed out their failings, and told them that the Canaanites remaining in the land will be deadly traps to the Israelites, because the Israelites would eventually worship their false gods. The Israelites wept and worshipped, but did not deny their fate.

Joshua died at the age of one hundred and ten. He led the Israelites for about half a century while in the Promised Land. While he was alive, the people served the Lord. But not much later, the next generation fell away. They did not know the Lord and did not adequately acknowledge what the Lord had done for Israel. They started worshiping Baal, the Ashtoreths, and the local gods of the people around them. The Lord used the Canaanites still living in the land as a test to see if the Israelites would be faithful. The Israelites failed these tests miserably.

The Lord sent enemies to subjugate the Israelites, then Lord raised up a judge to deliver the people. When the judge died, the people returned to their evil ways. Repeat the cycle, over and over. This is the summary of the book of *Judges* provided in Judges 2. It is close to the pattern that will occur for the rest of the Old Testament.

Why did God give the Israelites chance after chance after chance to obey him? Answers will be found in the remaining pages of the Old Testament. It might be that 2 Peter 3:9 gives the best answer. God is patient, not wanting anyone to perish, but that all should come to repentance.

### Discussion Questions:

1. Judges 2:1 speaks of the “angel of the Lord.” Who is that?
2. Judges 2:4 says the people wept. Why did they do so?
3. According to Judges 2:3, why was the Lord intent that the people of Canaan be driven out by the Israelites?
4. According to Joshua 2:7, what is one reason the people stayed faithful during Joshua’s lifetime? According to Joshua 2:10-11, what happened after Joshua and the elders died?

1. Some think this is an angel representing the Lord, while some think it is a euphemism for the Lord himself. 2. They finally realized that God’s promises were conditional, and they had not fulfilled the conditions. Therefore, they would not get some blessings and would suffer some consequences. 3. Otherwise they would become traps and snares. 4. They had seen the great things the Lord did during the conquest of Canaan. 5. The people had no regard for the Lord and started worshiping false idols and false gods.

### Applications Questions:

1. In Judges 2:4 the people wept because they finally understood that many of God’s promises were conditional, and they had not fulfilled the conditions. When you rely on God’s promises, do you tend to have the idea that God will always fulfill his side even if you don’t fulfill yours?
2. Name some promises of God to you. Which ones of those are conditional and which are unconditional?
3. The Israelites became unfaithful after Joshua and the elders died. What did God do when they became unfaithful? How do you think God reacts when you act unfaithfully?
4. According to Judges 2:22, God left the enemies in Israel to test their faithfulness to God. Why did he test them when he knew they were going to fail?

### Application Questions for Teens:

1. Have you ever heard someone say that they rely on God’s promises, but they can’t really show in the Bible where those promises are made or what the conditions of the promises are? Do people tend to rely on promises that support what they want while neglecting those they don’t want? Do you think Christians are promised that they will suffer for the cause of Christ?
2. According to Judges 2:14-15, God severely punished and disciplined the Israelites when they became unfaithful. Do you think God still does that sort of thing today when Christians are unfaithful? If so, does he do it every time or sometimes?
3. According to Judges 2:16, God sent judges (or leaders) to help the Israelites get out of trouble. Does God send leaders to people today to help them get out of spiritual trouble? If so, what do those leaders look like?

**Episode:** Promised Land Series No. 16

**Narrator:** Deborah

**Primary Scriptures:** Judges 3-5

**Story Summary:** The first four judges of Israel: Othniel, Ehud, Shamgar and Deborah

**Location:** Canaan

**Time:** c. 1406 BC The Israelites enter Canaan

c. 1209-1169 BC The rule of Deborah

c. 1075-1055 BC The rule of Samson

**Suggested Memory Scriptures:** Judges 3:1-2, 7; 4:4

Judges 2-3 sets the stage for the rest of the book. God tests the generations of people who followed Joshua. The conquerors of the Promised Land did not drive out all of the original inhabitants as God had specifically instructed. God chooses to leave those surviving peoples as a test for the Israelites. The test consists of following the laws of Moses in at least two ways: will the Israelites refuse to intermarry with those peoples, and will the Israelites refuse to worship false gods?

Judges 3:6-7 summarizes how miserably the Israelites failed God's test. The Israelites took their daughters in marriage and gave their own daughters to their sons, and served their gods. The Israelites did evil in the sight of the Lord; they forgot the Lord their God.

The rest of the book of *Judges* is a tiring cycle of God's merciful response. God allows the Israelites to suffer until they call out and repent, God raises a savior in the form of a "judge," the people come back to God, and then the people fall away from God. Modern readers are surprised that the judges are not always righteous, blameless people. They are not saviors in the sense that Jesus is a savior, but in the sense that they deliver people from bondage.

The first judge of Israel was Othniel, the nephew (or possibly brother) of Caleb. Othniel had previously answered Caleb's challenge to conquer Kiriath Sepher, and thereby won the hand in marriage of Caleb's daughter.<sup>1</sup> Othniel delivered the Israelites from the King of Aram.

The second judge was Ehud, a left-handed man, who delivered Israel from the hugely obese Eglon, king of Moab. The somewhat humorous story of deliverance hinges on the physical characteristics of these men. The third judge, Shamgar delivers the Israelites from the Philistines using only an ox goad.

The fourth judge, Deborah, was also a prophetess. She delivered the Israelites from the king of Hazor. The story of Deborah has one of the best plot twists in the whole Bible. It is proof that God uses the least of people if they are willing to be faithful.

---

<sup>1</sup> Judges 1:12-13

### Discussion Questions:

1. Judges 3:1-4 says the Lord left Canaanites in the land to give the rookie Israelites battle experience, and to see if they would follow the Lord's commandments. Do you think he would have left them there if the Israelites had proven to be more faithful when they first entered Canaan and started conquering it?
  2. Judges 3:7 says the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the Lord. What did they do? What did the Lord do? How long did it take them to repent?
  3. The Israelites did evil, eventually repented, and God sent Othniel as a deliverer. What happened then?
  4. Judges 4:4 describes Deborah as a prophet. What does that mean? When you first read Judges 4:9, what are you left to think?
  5. Judges 5:4 might be giving you some important information. What might that be?
2. They worshiped the gods of the Canaanites, and did not worship. The Lord allowed them to be conquered and become servants. They waited eight years before they repented. 3. The Israelites stayed faithful until Othniel died forty years later. 4. That Deborah will be the woman will be that woman. 5. That God miraculously made it rain. So, the chariots of Judges 4:15 got stuck in the mud of the Jezreel Valley, which made them useless and their riders became defenseless.

### Application Questions:

1. Judges 3:5-6 describes the Israelites living among the Canaanites, intermarrying with them and serving their gods. This behavior was expressly forbidden by God. Can you think of anything you are doing that is against the commands of God? What excuses are you giving for doing so?
2. The first judge was Othniel. The Israelites stayed faithful to God until Othniel died. Then they went back to their old ways. If you are a Christian, you are a new creation. Even so, what could tempt you to go back to your old ways?

### Application Questions for Teens:

1. Describe the cycle of obedience, disobedience, punishment, and deliverance in Judges 3. Why did the Israelites not learn their lesson? Do you ever go through this same type of cycle? Why don't you learn your lesson?
2. In Judges 3:15, Ehud is described as being left-handed. Why is that detail important to the story?
3. Why do you think some people like the story of Shamgar?



**Episode:** Promised Land Series No. 17

**Narrator:** Gideon

**Primary Scriptures:** Judges 6-12

**Story Summary:** Gideon and the judges following him

**Location:** Canaan

**Time:** c. 1406 BC The Israelites enter Canaan

c. 1209-1169 BC The rule of Deborah

c. 1075-1055 BC The rule of Samson

**Suggested Memory Scriptures:** Judges 6:1, 12; 7:2; 8:27; 9:56; 12:6

Judges 6 opens with the Israelites being oppressed by the Midianites. The Midianites were descendants of Abraham and his second wife, Keturah.<sup>1</sup> It's hard to tell whether they were a single tribe or a confederation of tribes. Midian and the Midianites are mentioned as slave traders in the time of Joseph, as a place of refuge for Moses, and as participants in the downfall of the Israelites on the Plain of Moab prior to entering the Promised Land. They are often associated with Moabites and Amalekites, and possibly lived in the desert lands south and east of Moab.

In the time of Gideon, the nomadic Midianites oppress the entirety of Israel by occupying it from time to time and stripping it of all crops and animals. The Midianites are so large in number that the Israelites are helpless to stop their devastating invasions. It seems that the Israelites have become twelve independent tribes who do not act cohesively, and that the people have mostly become poor farmers.

God calls Gideon to put an end to his community's worship of false gods. When he successfully does that, God calls Gideon to rally the people of many other Israelite tribes to fight against the Midianites. Gideon was a reluctant leader, much as Moses was a reluctant leader. This is proof that heroes and leaders are not always looking for that position. The story of Gideon also proves that the battle belongs to the Lord, not the leaders he chooses.

Although Gideon was a successful leader and delivered his people, his pride and actions showed that he was susceptible to the charms of pride and false gods. Gideon's weaknesses had an influence on the devastating fates of his descendants.

Gideon was succeeded by Tola, Jair Jephthah, Ibzan, Elon, and Abdon. Their stories are powerful and often tragic. They are followed by Samson, one of the last, and best known, judges.

---

<sup>1</sup> Genesis 25:1-2

### Discussion Questions:

1. According to Judges 6:10, why did God let the Midianites ravage the lands of the Israelites?
2. Name two other stories in the Bible prior to Gideon that featured Midianites.
3. Judges 6:33 says the Amalekites joined the Midianites in ravaging the lands of the Israelites. Why would this have been extra irksome to the Israelites?
4. Why did Gideon make the gold earrings into an ephod? What was the significance of the ephod?
5. Describe the significance of Judges 8:33.
6. Describe the cycles of the behavior of the Israelites in Judges 6-12.

1. Because the Israelites worshiped the false gods of the people who lived among them. 2. Joseph was sold to Midianite traders. When the Israelites committed sexual immorality with the Moabite women just prior to entering Canaan, the Midianite women were also involved. 3. God had declared war against the Amalekites and said he would destroy them because they had attacked the Israelites on the Exodus. 5. Gideon made the ephod to take the glory away from God. It became a false idol. 6. Despite God saving them and providing for them, the Israelites forgot him and worshiped false idols. This was another repetition in the cycle of the disobedience.

### Application Questions:

1. The Angel of the Lord called Gideon a “mighty warrior” when he was just a scared farmer from a tiny clan. Does the New Testament lead you to understand that you are a mighty warrior in the cause of Jesus, no matter your earthly status? What does the phrase “mighty warrior” mean to you as a Christian?
2. In Judges 6:36-40, Gideon tested God twice and God chose to pass the test without getting angry. Can you name a time when you have put God to a test? Did you stake your faith on his passing the test in a manner you required?
3. Judges 8:10 said there were “only” fifteen thousand warriors left. Have you ever had a great victory that made the remaining obstacles in your life seem small?

### Application Questions for Teens:

1. Judges 6:31-32 tells of Gideon’s father calling out the worshipers of the false gods to let the false gods prove their own power. What are some false gods you see around you? What illusions of power do they exert over people? How can you demonstrate the might of Jesus in the light of those gods?
2. Judges 7:2 describes why God had Gideon reduce his number of warriors. Was that selfish of God to want the glory for the victory over the Midianites? Why or why not?
3. Describe the foolish vow made in Judges 11:30-31 and the outcome of it. Have you ever made a foolish vow that you regretted? How can you keep from doing so again?

**Episode:** Promised Land Series No. 18

**Narrator:** Delilah

**Primary Scriptures:** Judges 13-16

**Story Summary:** The many stories about Samson

**Location:** Canaan

**Time:** c. 1406 BC The Israelites enter Canaan

c. 1209-1169 BC The rule of Deborah

c. 1075-1055 BC The rule of Samson

**Suggested Memory Scriptures:** Judges 13:1; 14:4; 15:15; 16:16

According to historians, the Sea Peoples left Crete and other islands of Greece and settled around the Mediterranean Sea. One of these groups settled on the coastal plain of Israel and became known as the Philistines. This happened before the time of Samson. By the time of Samson, the Philistines had total control of the coastal plain and had powerful cities, such as Gaza, Ashkelon, Ashdod, Ekron, and Gath.

The Philistines were able to protect the coastal plain with chariots, which worked well on the flat lands. The Israelites first encountered these types of chariots in Joshua 11. The Israelites were pushed eastward into the Judean hills and mountains. Between the coastal plain and the mountains was a buffer zone of six fertile valleys known as the Shephelah. During Samson's time, it appears the Philistines were either taking or already had control of the Shephelah. Judges 13:1 says all of this happened because the Israelites did evil in the sight of the Lord and he delivered them into the hands of the Philistines.

Virtually all of the land controlled by the Philistines had been taken from the tribe of Dan. In fact, Dan controlled very little land in the time of Samson. The other tribes of Israel had their own problems, so they did not come to Dan's aid to dislodge the Philistines.

A man from the tribe of Dan, Zorah, and his wife were childless. God determined that they should have a child and raise him as a Nazirite (different from Jesus, who was a Nazarene). A Nazirite was someone who was dedicated to serving God and followed the regulations shown in Numbers 6. According to Numbers 6:5, during the time of their vows, Nazirites were not to cut their hair. God ordained that Samson should be a Nazirite his entire life.

Samson's many exploits revolve around his great strength. In the story of Delilah, it is revealed that the source of Samson's strength is that he never cut his hair, thus fulfilling a major portion of his Nazirite vow. When his hair is cut, he loses his strength. Not only is Samson weakened, but so are the Israelites.

The story of Samson does not end when his hair grows back. He cannot unbreak a vow that has been broken. But Samson's story comes to an end when he repents and asks the Lord to strengthen him one last time. Samson's death slows down the Philistine invasion but does not end it.

### Discussion Questions:

1. How long had the Philistines tormented the Israelites before Samson arrived? Why was it important that Samson came from the tribe of Dan?
  2. Zorah and Manoah were childless and unable to give birth. Why might God have chosen them to be the parents of Samson?
  3. Study Numbers 6 and compare it to Judges 13. What are the similarities and what are the differences?
  4. Judges 15:11 says the men of Judah came to Samson. Why is that important?
1. Forty years. The Philistines controlled land that had been allocated to the tribe of Dan. 2. Similar to other parents in the Bible who seemingly couldn't have children, they would demonstrate a high trust in God, and willingly make sacrifices to have a child. 4. Judah's land was next to those controlled by the Philistines. They knew they would have to pay the price for Samson's actions. Samson did not trust them, so he made them vow not to kill him themselves.

### Application Questions:

1. Judges 14:1-3 describes Samson requesting his parents to do something that was clearly against the instructions of God and Moses. His parents gave in to his demands. Are you ever tempted to give into the demands of your children because they've worn you down? Did you ever give in and regret doing so?
2. Based on Judges 15:20, Samson was probably in his late thirties or early forties when he met Delilah. Would his age have affected his judgment regarding her? Have you found that your age affects your judgment?
3. Have you ever tried to make someone love you? Did that work out well? When do you know you are trying too hard?

### Application Questions for Teens:

1. Judges 14:16-17 describes Samson being pestered by his wife/fiancée to tell her the answer to a riddle. By doing so, he pays a big penalty. When you do something wrong and pay a penalty, do you tend to learn your lesson or do you repeat the same type of a mistake...especially if it has to do with a boyfriend or girlfriend?
2. Judges 16:4 says Samson fell in love with Delilah, but the story never indicates she loved him in the least. Have you ever tried to get someone to like or love you? How did that work out for you? How hard should you try before it is unhealthy? How does this apply to non-romantic forms of love like friendships?

**Episode:** Promised Land Series No. 19

**Narrator:** Eli

**Primary Scriptures:** Judges 17-21; 1 Samuel 1-4

**Story Summary:** The judges following Samson, including Eli

**Location:** Canaan

**Time:** c. 1406 BC The Israelites enter Canaan

c. 1209-1169 BC The rule of Deborah

c. 1075-1055 BC The rule of Samson

**Suggested Memory Scriptures:** Judges 18:31; 21:25

Judges 17-21 tell stories that are, let's say, peculiar. They are about events in Israel toward the end of the period of the judges, but are not about judges themselves.

In the first story, an Ephraimite, Micah, steals 1100 shekels of silver from her mother. He later tells her that he did so and they celebrate by making 200 of the shekels into an idol. They make worship implements similar to that at the tabernacle, made a son a priest, and began to worship. Micah becomes friend with a Levite, who also becomes a priest for the idol. Five hundred men from the tribe of Dan steal the idol, conquer some land, and set up the idol for worship.

The next story involves a man and his unfaithful concubine. They travel through Gibeah, in Benjamin, where they spend the night. The men of the city ravage the concubine until she dies. The man cuts her up into twelve pieces, and sends each piece to the tribes of Israel. They punish the men of Gibeah and their fellow tribesmen by killing most of them. The survivors eventually have to find wives or the tribe will vanish. The wives are found in Jabesh Gilead, a city who had not followed the Lord in a matter. So, the tribe of Benjamin survives.

Overall, the last line of the book of *Judges* is a solemn judgment on the period: "In those days, Israel had no king, and everyone did as they saw fit."

The last person who was solely a judge was Eli. His story is told in 1 Chronicles 1-4. Following Eli was Samuel, but Samuel was also a prophet. The stories of Eli and Samuel are intertwined.

Eli was a judge who had two evil sons. Eli rebuked his sons for their actions, but they paid no attention to him. Eventually, God declared that both sons would die on the same day, and the authority of the office would transfer to another person.

When the Israelites and Philistines went to battle, the two sons took the ark of the covenant into battle as a good luck charm. They battle was lost, and the Philistines captured the ark. Both sons died in the battle, and Eli died upon hearing the bad news.

For many years, Eli had been raising Samuel as his own son. Samuel takes over from Eli. When Samuel takes over, it is the beginning of the end of the period of the judges. That doesn't mean it will get better.

### Discussion Questions:

1. Explain Judges 17:6 in light of Judges 17:5. When you read Judges 17:13, does it sound like Micah is worshiping God, or is he acting through superstition?
  2. Explain Judges 18:1-2.
  3. Do you see some inconsistencies of the Israelites' behavior in Judges 21?
2. The Danites had lost their land to the Philistines. They must have thought it was easier to take land from their brothers in Ephraim than to go battle the Philistines.

### Application Questions:

1. Give some possible explanations about the meaning of Judges 21:25. Do you ever choose to do as you want even though God is supposed to be the king over your life?
2. 1 Samuel 1:6 plainly says the Lord kept Hannah from having children. What do you think about that? Do you think the Lord still does such things today? If so, how would you know whether it is of the Lord?
3. In 1 Samuel 1:11, Hannah tries to make a deal with God in order for her to have a child. Have you ever tried to make a deal with God? How did that work out? 1 Samuel 2:21 indicates the Lord blessed Hannah for fulfilling her side of the bargain she made with God, which was sending her son away. How do you feel about that?
4. 1 Samuel 4:3 indicates the Israelites wanted to use the Ark of the Covenant as a good luck charm instead of for worshiping God. According to 1 Samuel 4:10-11, how did that work out? Do you ever try to use a Bible verse or a prayer as a good luck charm?

### Application Questions for Teens:

1. Read Judges 21:25. What do you think the outcome will be for a society where everybody does what they want? Does that partially describe the modern American society?
2. In 1 Samuel 1:28, Hannah permanently sends her son away as a dedication to the Lord. This is an Old Testament story. Do you think the New Testament would support that kind of an worshipful action or not? What would you think if your parents sent you away as a dedication to God?
3. 1 Samuel 2:17 describes one reason that Samuel's sons were evil. 1 Samuel 2:22-25 describe other ways they did evil. How would you describe their family dynamics according to those verses? Would you expect that dynamic to work out well? According to 1 Samuel 4:12-22, did it?