

**Grades
7-10**

History & Social Studies



History & Social Studies (Grade 7-10)

“The Ancient Hebrews (& Obedience)”

SUMMARY:

This unit integrates History, Geography and Civics through a biblical worldview to explore how obedience, faith, law and leadership shaped the development of ancient Israel and influenced later societies. Through a sequenced narrative from Moses and the Exodus to the Judges and early kingship, students examine key moments such as the giving of the Law, wilderness wandering, covenant renewal, conquest and settlement, and the lives of leaders like Joshua, Gideon, Samson, Ruth, Samuel, Saul and David. The course emphasises obedience as a personal, communal and civic responsibility, connecting ancient beliefs, laws and practices to moral decision-making, justice and leadership, and tracing their ongoing impact on Western legal and cultural traditions. Learning is story-based and inquiry-driven, with differentiated reflection questions, creative and hands-on activities, narration, and explicit Australian Curriculum v9 links, encouraging historical understanding, critical thinking and meaningful personal application.

RESOURCES:

All the information you need is included within the informational story in each lesson plan. The hands-on or creative activities are designed to use materials you will likely have already in your home, but you should maintain some **art and craft materials**.

Each child will also need a **History Journal** (i.e., a lined exercise book for writing responses to questions and writing activities).

It is also helpful to have a good **dictionary** and a **Timeline or ‘Book of Centuries’**.

To enjoy a richer learning experience, you could **supplement the lessons with extra books** about the topics in this unit, from your local library.

Some suggestions for extra reading include but are not limited to...

Humanities:

- “Bible Investigators: The 7 C’s of History” from Answers in Genesis [Ages 7 & up]

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Prior to starting each week, review the recommended resources.

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Topic	Description	Page
Topic 1	Moses	
Topic 2	The Law	
Topic 3	In the Wilderness	
Topic 4	Moving into the Promised Land	
Topic 5	Occupying the Land	
Topic 6	From Judges to Kings	
Topic 7	Saul & David	
Topic 8	King David	
Topic 9	Assessment: This term, just choose an example of the notes and activities from one lesson from each week (in your History Journal). You could include photographs of any practical activities or creative projects. Send these samples into the Homeward Academy Office 2226 Murphys Creek Rd., Ballard, Qld 4352 or via email at info@hesupport.com.au	

Lesson 1 – Rescued from the Nile

Theme: Obedience to God’s Leading

Australian Curriculum v9 Content Descriptions

- **History – AC9HH7K01:** Describe the roles and achievements of significant individuals and groups in ancient societies, including the influence of law, religion, and belief systems.
- **History – AC9HH7K02:** Explain the causes and effects of events and developments in ancient societies.
- **History – AC9HH7K03:** Describe the social, political, and cultural features of ancient societies.
- **History – AC9HH7K04:** Explain the significance of heritage sites and cultural practices in ancient societies.
- **History – AC9HH8K01:** Analyse the roles of significant individuals or groups and how they contributed to change.
- **Geography – AC9HG8K02:** Analyse interconnections between people, places and environments and explain how these interconnections influence characteristics of places.

Lesson Objectives

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Describe how Moses' early life was shaped by obedience within his family and culture.
- Explain how geography influenced the story of Moses’ rescue from the Nile.
- Reflect on how God uses faithful obedience to bring about significant change.
- Analyse how individual actions (like those of Moses’ mother and sister) influence the broader story of a nation.

B) Informational Story – “Rescued from the Nile”

The Egyptian sun beat down on the dusty streets of Goshen, where the Hebrews lived under Pharaoh’s rule. Once, this place had been a land of refuge. Joseph, the Hebrew prince who interpreted Pharaoh’s dreams, had brought his family here during a terrible famine centuries earlier. The Israelites had thrived in Egypt – at first. But times had changed. The new Pharaoh feared their growing numbers and enslaved them, forcing them into brutal labour to build cities like Pithom and Rameses.

Still, the Israelites multiplied. And Pharaoh’s fear deepened. “If war breaks out,” he warned his officials, “these Hebrews might side with our enemies.”

So, Pharaoh issued a dreadful command: every Hebrew baby boy was to be thrown into the Nile.

In a modest home among Goshen’s mudbrick dwellings, a woman named Yocheved cradled her newborn son. He was strong, healthy, and beautiful. But he was a boy. And that meant he was in danger.

She and her husband Amram were Levites, members of the priestly tribe. They were faithful to the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. And they feared the Lord more than Pharaoh. For three months, they hid the baby, muffling his cries, praying for protection, and whispering hope into the darkness.

But soon it became too risky. Egyptian soldiers patrolled the streets, searching for newborns. Even neighbours could become informants. Mothers who disobeyed the Pharaoh were not merely breaking a law – they were resisting an empire.

Yocheved knew the time had come. She wove a small basket from papyrus reeds, coating it with pitch and tar to make it watertight – much like Noah’s ark, a tiny vessel of obedience and faith. At dawn, with the baby swaddled inside, she and her daughter Miriam crept down to the banks of the Nile.

The Nile River, stretching thousands of kilometres through Egypt, was considered sacred. Egyptians worshipped it as the source of life and fertility. The annual flooding of the Nile made the soil fertile and allowed Egypt to grow food in abundance. But for the Hebrews, the Nile had become a place of sorrow. Pharaoh had turned the river of life into an instrument of death.

Still, Yocheved chose to trust. She nestled the basket among the reeds in a shallow inlet, a spot she knew was often visited by someone important – Pharaoh’s daughter.

Miriam stayed hidden nearby, her eyes fixed on the floating basket. Her heart raced with every splash, every bird cry, every whisper of wind. Hours passed.

Then came the sound of sandals on stone. The princess arrived, accompanied by handmaids. They laughed, bathed, and splashed in the shallows – until one pointed toward the reeds.

“There’s something there,” she said.

The princess ordered it brought to her. When she opened the basket, the baby cried. And the princess’ heart softened.

“This is one of the Hebrews’ children,” she said.

Miriam, with boldness and obedience far beyond her years, stepped forward.

“Shall I fetch a Hebrew woman to nurse him for you?”

Pharaoh’s daughter looked at the girl. “Yes. Go.”

Moments later, Yocheved stood before the princess, trembling with awe.

“Take this child,” the princess said, “and nurse him for me. I will pay you.”

So Yocheved raised her son under royal protection. And when he was older, he was brought to the palace and became the adopted grandson of Pharaoh. The princess named him Moses, meaning “drawn out,” because she had drawn him out of the water.

Papyrus, Pitch, and Providence

What Yocheved made was not just a container – it was a carefully engineered vessel. Papyrus was an ideal material: lightweight, abundant, and strong when woven. The use of pitch and tar to seal the basket reflects an understanding of waterproofing that dates back to ancient Mesopotamia. In fact, the Hebrew word used for the basket – *tevah* – is the same word used for Noah’s ark. Only two *tevah* are ever mentioned in the

Bible: Noah's and Moses'. Both were built to float. Both were instruments of salvation. Both required faith and obedience.

Yocheved's craftsmanship was matched by her wisdom. She placed the basket where it would be found, not by soldiers, but by the one person in Egypt who might spare the child – Pharaoh's own daughter.

This was not reckless desperation. It was brave, prayerful strategy.

Palace and Papyrus

Moses' new home was a world away from the muddy lanes of Goshen. The royal palace in Memphis, near the Nile Delta, was a place of opulence. Statues of gods lined its halls. Hieroglyphs adorned its walls. Priests, scribes, and soldiers bustled through its courtyards.

As a prince, Moses would have studied reading and writing – likely learning to use a reed pen and ink on papyrus scrolls. He learned arithmetic, astronomy, military strategy, history, and poetry. He read wisdom literature, studied Egyptian theology, and was trained in leadership.

He was groomed to be a statesman and commander, likely fluent in multiple languages. Yet, beneath the gold and linen, he never forgot the truth whispered to him as a child – that he was a Hebrew, loved by the God of Abraham.

Even in his adulthood, when he tried to ignore it, that identity echoed in his heart.

Hebrew and Egyptian: A Divided Heart

In the palace, Moses lived among people who worshipped Ra, Osiris, and Isis – gods carved from stone and imagined into stories. But in the stillness of night, perhaps he remembered the Shema his mother whispered: "Hear, O Israel, the LORD our God, the LORD is one."

His life was split. Egyptian by education, Hebrew by birth. Royal by adoption, servant by ancestry.

This dual identity made him restless. He knew the comforts of the palace were built upon the backs of his people. Every column he passed in the royal courts had been quarried by Hebrew hands.

Later, when he saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew slave, he could no longer remain silent. The boy rescued from the Nile became the man who stepped in. Though his actions forced him to flee Egypt, they began a journey toward becoming a deliverer.

Moses' earliest memory may have been water. His name, his mission, his entire identity flowed from that moment among the reeds.

The Geography of Deliverance

The Nile River shaped Egyptian life. It dictated where cities were built, how food was grown, how trade moved, and how people lived. It was a highway, a resource, and a religious icon. But in God's story, even Egypt's mighty river could be used for good.

Yocheved understood her landscape. She used the reeds as camouflage. She used the quiet of early morning. She anticipated who would come, where they would step, and when they would see. Her geographical awareness became part of God's plan.

It reminds us: faith is not blind. Obedience is not random. God calls us to act with courage and wisdom.

Obedience in Small Things

The story of Moses' rescue is built on small acts of obedience:

- Yocheved obeyed God by preserving life, even at great risk.
- Miriam obeyed by speaking up, wisely and bravely.
- Pharaoh's daughter, though raised in paganism, was moved by compassion and acted against her father's cruelty.
- Even the basket itself – a simple vessel – became a symbol of obedience and deliverance.

These actions were small at the time, but they laid the foundation for the Exodus of a nation. Obedience is rarely dramatic. More often, it's quiet, hidden, sacrificial – and immensely powerful.

When God calls us to obey, we may not see the outcome. But obedience in the present opens the door for redemption in the future. A mother's courage. A girl's voice. A floating basket. These were the seeds of a movement that would shake empires and deliver a people.

Looking Back – Moses Remembers

Many years later, as Moses stood on the edge of the Red Sea, wind whipping through his hair and the cries of a freed people behind him, he looked back. Not just at the chariots of Egypt, not just at the walls of water, but back further – to a river, a basket, and the faces of two courageous women.

He remembered the soft sway of reeds and the blinding sun overhead. He remembered the gentleness in the princess's voice and the fierce love in his mother's arms.

In that moment, he saw the full picture. God's hand had been on him from the very beginning. Not just to rescue him – but to shape him. Not just to protect him – but to prepare him.

God had placed him in Egypt not to become an Egyptian, but to lead the Hebrews out of it. His obedience had begun with someone else's faith. And now, he was the one called to act.

The Pattern of Redemption

The story of Moses echoes through Scripture. A child threatened by a king. A hidden refuge. A mother's faith. A deliverer rising from unlikely beginnings.

Centuries later, another young mother would wrap her baby in cloth and flee from another wicked ruler – Herod. Like Moses, Jesus would grow up to deliver His people – not from slavery in Egypt, but from slavery to sin.

Moses' story is a thread in the tapestry of redemption. And like every faithful servant, his story began with obedience to God – even when the future was hidden in reeds.

C) Reflective Thinking Questions

For Younger Students (Years 7–8):

1. Why did Yocheved choose to put Moses in a basket in the Nile? What might she have been feeling?
2. What do you think helped Miriam to be so brave?
3. How do you think God was working in the story even though He wasn't mentioned directly?

4. What does the story show us about how God can use small acts of obedience to do big things?

For Middle Students (Year 9):

1. What geographical and cultural knowledge did Yocheved use in placing Moses where she did?
2. How might Moses' upbringing in both Hebrew and Egyptian cultures have prepared him to lead later in life?
3. Why is obedience sometimes difficult, even when we know it's the right thing? Can you think of examples in your own life?
4. What do you think Miriam and Yocheved learned about God through this experience?

For Older Students (Year 10):

1. Discuss the theme of obedience in the story. Who obeyed and who defied commands? Why?
 2. In what ways does this story reveal God's providence through individual human choices?
 3. How does this story challenge our view of what faith and courage might look like in ordinary people?
 4. Compare the way Moses' life began with the life of Jesus. What do their stories show us about God's long-term plans for salvation?
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D) Activity Options

Option 1: Hands-on Practical – “Papyrus Basket Engineering”

- Gather reed-like materials (raffia, pipe cleaners, or paper strips) and waterproof lining (plastic wrap, beeswax, or glue).
- Construct a miniature "Moses basket" and test its ability to float in a tub or basin.
- **Extension (Years 9–10):** Research ancient papyrus, pitch, and waterproofing techniques. Test how design shape and materials affect buoyancy and stability. Record your results and conclusions.

Option 2: Creative – “Rescue from the Nile Illustrated Scroll”

- Create a long scroll-style comic or illustrated sequence depicting the story of Moses' rescue.
- Use Egyptian or Hebrew art styles for inspiration.
- Include emotions, thoughts, and captions.
- **Extension (Years 9–10):** Annotate your scroll with historical notes about Egyptian life, the geography of the Nile, and key theological reflections.

Option 3: Dramatization – “Voices of Obedience”

- Prepare a performance with roles: Yocheved, Miriam, Pharaoh's Daughter, and Moses (as an adult reflecting).
 - Use simple costumes, props, and a narrator if helpful.
 - Explore the thoughts, choices, and risks each person faced.
 - **Extension (Years 9–10):** Add a final monologue by Moses as an adult, reflecting on how his rescue shaped his calling and identity.
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E) Biblical Connection

Obedience in the life of Moses begins not with Moses himself, but with those around him – especially his mother and sister. Hebrews 11:23 tells us:

“By faith Moses’ parents hid him for three months after he was born... they were not afraid of the king’s edict.”

Yocheved’s faith was practical – woven into a basket, hidden in reeds, and entrusted to the hand of God. Obedience is not always loud or public. Often, it is hidden, quiet, and sacrificial. But God honours it.

Later, Moses would learn this for himself, as he led a people not just with power, but with obedience to God’s voice – even when it was hard.

This pattern continues in the life of Jesus. In Matthew 2, King Herod orders the death of Hebrew boys under age two. Joseph obeys God’s warning and flees with baby Jesus to Egypt. God protects the Deliverer so He can later deliver others. Just like Moses, Jesus would grow up to rescue His people – not from Pharaoh, but from sin. Both stories show us that God’s plan unfolds through courageous obedience.

F) Narration Activity

Narration Activity:

If your parent or tutor is available now, ask them to listen while you retell the story of “Rescued from the Nile.”

Include the key people involved, what happened, and how obedience played a role in God’s plan.

If you are in Years 9–10, try to also include something from Moses’ adult perspective – how might he look back on that moment as a turning point in his life and identity?

If your parent/tutor is not available now, then tell your story during your lunch break today.

Lesson 2 – The 10 Plagues + Passover

Theme: Obedience in the Face of Opposition

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- **History – AC9HH7K01:** Describe the roles and achievements of significant individuals and groups in ancient societies, including the influence of law, religion, and belief systems.
 - **History – AC9HH7K02:** Explain the causes and effects of events and developments in ancient societies.
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 - **History – AC9HH8K01:** Analyse the roles of significant individuals or groups and how they contributed to change.
 - **Geography – AC9HG8K02:** Analyse interconnections between people, places and environments and explain how these interconnections influence characteristics of places.
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Lesson Objectives

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Describe the events and purpose of the 10 plagues and the first Passover.
 - Explain the historical and theological meaning behind the plagues.
 - Analyse how obedience played a role in the Israelites' protection and identity.
 - Connect the Passover to the wider story of God's redemption throughout Scripture.
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B) Informational Story – “The 10 Plagues and the First Passover”

The heat clung to the Nile like a cloak, thick with the scent of water and dust. In the distance, thunder grumbled – but it wasn't a storm. It was something far more ancient, far more sacred. It was the sound of God's judgment beginning to stir.

Moses stood before Pharaoh, older now, weathered by exile and wilderness. He had once fled Egypt in shame. Now he returned not as a fugitive, but as a prophet – sent by God to deliver His people. By his side stood Aaron, his brother and spokesman. Before them sat the throne of Egypt, guarded by soldiers and shadowed by idols. And upon that throne sat Pharaoh, proud and defiant.

“The LORD, the God of Israel, says: ‘Let my people go, so that they may hold a festival to me in the wilderness.’”

Pharaoh's eyes narrowed. “Who is the LORD, that I should obey him and let Israel go? I do not know the LORD and I will not let Israel go.”

With that refusal, a divine showdown began. This would not be a mere contest of wills – it would be a demonstration of God's power over Egypt's gods, its land, and its people.

The Nile turned to blood. Fish died, and the river stank. The people had to dig for drinking water along its banks. It was a strike against Hapi, god of the Nile.

Then came frogs, swarming into homes and ovens, covering every surface. Heqet, the frog-headed goddess of fertility, was mocked as her symbol became a curse.

When Pharaoh begged Moses to pray to stop the plague, and then hardened his heart again, gnats followed. Dust became insects. Then flies. Each plague escalated, each one disrupting life, attacking the senses, and defying the Egyptian deities.

Livestock died next – sacred cattle of Apis and Hathor lay lifeless in the fields. Then boils erupted on the skin of man and beast. Even the priests of Egypt, who prided themselves on cleanliness, could not stand before Moses because of their sores.

Still Pharaoh would not yield.

Then came hail – fire and ice mingled – destroying crops, shattering trees, killing animals in the fields. Locusts followed, consuming what remained. Egypt was brought low. But Pharaoh's pride remained high.

Then came darkness. Not just overcast skies, but a supernatural blindness that covered the land for three days – so thick that no one moved. Ra, the sun god and Egypt's most powerful deity, was silenced.

But still, Pharaoh's heart was hard.

Then God spoke once more: one final plague.

“About midnight I will go throughout Egypt. Every firstborn son in the land will die – from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sits on the throne, to the firstborn of the servant girl at her hand mill, and all the firstborn of the cattle as well.”

But for Israel, there would be protection. God gave them instructions – strange, deliberate, sacred.

Each family was to take a lamb – perfect, without blemish. They were to kill the lamb at twilight, paint its blood on the doorposts of their homes, and roast the meat over fire. They were to eat it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs, their sandals on, their cloaks tucked in, ready to leave in haste.

For that night, the LORD would pass through Egypt. Where He saw the blood, He would pass over. But where there was no blood, there would be death.

That night, the cries of Egypt rose like a storm. In every household not covered by the blood of the lamb, someone died. From the palace to the prison, there was weeping.

But in the homes of the Hebrews, there was light. And safety. And hope.

Pharaoh called Moses in the night. “Go. Take your people and leave. Bless me also.”

And so began the Exodus.

For generations to come, Israel would remember this night. God commanded them to celebrate the Passover each year – to tell their children how the LORD delivered them from slavery with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm.

And deeper still, God was planting the image of something to come – of a greater Lamb whose blood would not just cover the door, but cleanse the heart. Whose sacrifice would not just spare one family, but offer life to the world.

The plagues were not only judgments – they were mercies. They broke chains, revealed the futility of idols, and displayed the holiness of a God who hears the cry of the oppressed.

And Passover was not just a feast. It was a prophecy.

It was obedience that saved the people – not their power, not their armies, not even Moses himself. Obedience to God's Word. Obedience to apply the blood. Obedience to walk out of Egypt with courage and trust.

And through it all, God showed that His people belonged to Him – not Pharaoh. That His power was supreme – not Egypt's. That His promises were sure – not forgotten.

Even now, thousands of years later, we still whisper the story at tables and in churches, in sermons and in songs:

“Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.”

The plagues were not random disasters. Each one was a direct confrontation between the God of Israel and the gods of Egypt. The Egyptians believed their deities controlled the elements of life – water, fertility, health, crops, animals, and even death itself. But with each plague, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob dismantled these beliefs, proving Himself the one true Creator.

The Nile, once a symbol of fertility and abundance, turned to blood. This was not just an environmental disaster – it was a spiritual statement. Egyptians revered the Nile as a divine giver of life. But it could not protect them. The blood in the water revealed the hidden violence of Pharaoh's rule – the blood of Hebrew children cast into its depths was now visible for all to see.

Frogs, considered sacred and associated with the goddess Heqet, flooded the land until they became a stench. What had once been revered was now cursed. Insects, representing the power of nature, overwhelmed the people – gnats rising from the dust, flies filling the air. The dust and breath of the earth were no longer allies of Egypt.

When disease struck the livestock, Egypt's economy and spiritual order collapsed. Sacred bulls, revered in temples, lay dead in the fields. Boils made even Pharaoh's magicians unclean, unfit for service. Their silence marked a turning point – there was no magic left to explain the plagues, no ritual strong enough to stop them.

Then came hail and fire, a meteorological impossibility in the Egyptian climate, destroying barley and flax, two of the nation's key crops. These plants were associated with key feasts and garments – flax for linen used by priests, barley for offerings. The hail shattered not only agriculture but religious order.

Locusts followed, a living storm that consumed what remained. The sky darkened with their wings, and the people begged Pharaoh to surrender. But his heart was hard.

Then the darkness fell – a deep, supernatural night that lasted three days. In a culture that worshipped Ra, the sun god, this was terrifying. The very presence of light, the order of days, was suspended. God was showing that He alone controlled light and darkness.

Finally, the death of the firstborn struck the heart of Egyptian society. The firstborn son represented the future, inheritance, and blessing. From Pharaoh's heir to the children of slaves, none were spared – unless they were under the blood.

The Israelites obeyed the detailed commands. They selected the lambs, prepared their homes, painted the blood on the doorframes. Some may have trembled. Some may not have understood. But they obeyed.

And it was enough.

They roasted the meat with fire, a symbol of judgment. They ate in haste – ready to move. The unleavened bread symbolised purity and urgency – no time for yeast, no time for delay.

As the angel of death moved through the land, those covered by the blood were passed over. And in that passing over, a new identity was born.

The Hebrews were no longer slaves. They were a redeemed people, bought not with silver or gold, but with the blood of a lamb.

In the centuries to come, Jewish families would gather to remember. They would eat bitter herbs to recall the pain of slavery. They would tell the story to their children: “We were slaves in Egypt, but the LORD brought us out with a mighty hand.”

Even Jesus, on the night before His crucifixion, shared this meal with His disciples. But He redefined it.

“This is my body... this is my blood.”

He was the Lamb. The final Lamb. The true Lamb.

Moses could lead people out of Egypt. But only Jesus could lead people out of sin.

The Exodus was the foundation of Israel’s national identity. But the Cross would become the foundation of a greater kingdom – a kingdom not built on bloodlines but on faith. A kingdom where obedience was no longer about painted doors, but about hearts marked by grace.

And yet the principle remained.

God delivers those who trust Him. God honours obedience. And God never forgets His promises.

Long after they left Egypt, the Israelites would still face fear, doubt, and wilderness. But they would always have one night to remember – that night when death passed over, and freedom began.

Obedience didn’t make sense to everyone. But it saved a nation.

And through that obedience, the world would come to know the God who sees, who speaks, who saves – and who still calls us to trust and follow Him today.

C) Reflective Thinking Questions

For Younger Students (Years 7–8):

1. What did God want Pharaoh to do, and how did Pharaoh respond?
2. Which plague do you think would have been the hardest to live through? Why?
3. What did the Israelites have to do to be protected during the last plague?
4. What does the story show us about why it’s important to obey God’s instructions?

For Middle Students (Year 9):

1. How did each of the plagues challenge Egypt's false gods?
2. Why did God ask the Israelites to do something so specific and unusual with the lamb's blood?
3. What lessons about obedience and trust can we learn from this story?
4. Why do you think God told them to remember the Passover every year?

For Older Students (Year 10):

1. Analyse how the plagues served as both judgment and mercy.
 2. How does the Passover point forward to Jesus Christ and the gospel?
 3. What does this story teach us about obedience in times of fear or confusion?
 4. Can you compare the obedience of Moses and the Israelites with what God asks of us today?
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D) Activity Options

Option 1: Hands-on Practical – “Plague Model or Map”

- Create a visual map of ancient Egypt and place markers for where each plague would have had the most impact (e.g. the Nile, cities, livestock areas).
- Use labelled illustrations or physical models to represent each plague.
- **Extension (Years 9–10):** Research the Egyptian gods associated with each plague and annotate your map with their names and the significance of each confrontation.

Option 2: Creative – “Passover Plate Project”

- Design a Passover Seder plate including the original elements (lamb, bitter herbs, unleavened bread).
- Write or illustrate a short booklet explaining the meaning of each item from both a historical and Christian perspective.
- **Extension (Years 9–10):** Include New Testament connections to Jesus and the Last Supper.

Option 3: Dramatization – “Pharaoh’s Courtroom”

- Create a courtroom-style drama: Moses and Aaron present God's commands, Pharaoh's advisors argue back, and the audience (or family) acts as the jury.
 - Explore how Pharaoh's heart becomes hardened over time.
 - **Extension (Years 9–10):** Add an epilogue scene from the perspective of an Israelite family on Passover night, preparing the lamb and wondering what will happen.
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E) Biblical Connection

Obedience is central to this story – not just Moses confronting Pharaoh, but the Israelites obeying God's very specific instructions about the lamb, the bread, and the blood. In Exodus 12:28 we read:

“The Israelites did just what the LORD commanded Moses and Aaron.”

They were not saved because they were strong, or numerous, or special. They were saved because they believed and obeyed. God made a way of escape, and they took it.

The Passover points forward to Jesus, whom John the Baptist called “the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.” Like the lamb in Egypt, Jesus had no blemish, no sin. His blood covers not a doorway, but a heart.

As Christians, we continue to celebrate this obedience – not with lambs and herbs, but with bread and wine. And we obey God not to earn His love, but because He has already rescued us.

F) Narration Activity

Narration Activity:

Retell the story of the ten plagues and the first Passover to your parent or tutor.

Include the main events, how Pharaoh responded, and what the Israelites did to stay safe.

Explain how this connects to Jesus as the Lamb of God.

If you’re in Years 9–10, include one or more reflections: Why do you think obedience mattered so much?

How does this story show God’s justice and mercy working together?

Lesson 3 – Escape from Egypt & the Red Sea

Theme: Obedience When the Way Is Unclear

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 - **Geography – AC9HG8K02:** Analyse interconnections between people, places and environments and explain how these interconnections influence characteristics of places.
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Lesson Objectives

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Describe the events of the Red Sea crossing and its significance for Israel.
 - Understand how geography played a role in the narrative of escape.
 - Reflect on the importance of obedience, even when facing fear and uncertainty.
 - Connect the crossing of the Red Sea with Christian themes of baptism, faith, and spiritual deliverance.
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B) Informational Story – “Escape from Egypt & the Red Sea”

The night was not silent.

Torchlight flickered across the hastily gathered belongings of hundreds of thousands of Israelites. The air was filled with the bleating of sheep, the creaking of carts, and the low murmur of voices – some urgent, some awestruck, some afraid.

They had left in haste. Egypt, their land of bondage, was behind them. The weight of four hundred years of slavery had been lifted in a single night. It had taken ten plagues and the death of Egypt’s firstborns, but Pharaoh had finally relented. “Go,” he had told Moses. “Take your people and worship the LORD as you have asked.”

And so they went – men, women, children, flocks, herds, and all. With them they carried the spoils of Egypt: silver, gold, and clothing, freely given by their former captors in fear and reverence.

But now, as they journeyed, many began to look behind.

At first, it was suspicion. Then fear. Then confirmed dread. In the distance came the thunder of hooves.

Pharaoh had changed his mind.

The Egyptian king, filled with rage and regret, had mustered his army – six hundred of Egypt’s finest chariots and horsemen, followed by infantry. He would not let his slaves escape. He would bring them back by force.

As the Israelites approached the edge of the Red Sea, panic began to rise. Before them – water. Behind them – death.

The people cried out to Moses: “Was it because there were no graves in Egypt that you brought us to the desert to die?”

But Moses did not panic. He stood firm and declared: “Do not be afraid. Stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which He will accomplish for you today. The Egyptians you see today, you will never see again.”

Then the pillar of cloud, which had been leading them, shifted position and moved behind the camp, standing between Israel and Egypt. To the Egyptians, it brought darkness. To the Israelites, it brought light.

And then God spoke.

“Lift your staff, Moses. Stretch out your hand over the sea.”

Moses obeyed. And all night, the LORD sent a strong east wind. The waters parted, rising like walls on either side, and the seabed was left dry.

The Israelites entered.

Step by step, they crossed through the sea, the ground firm beneath their feet, the towering waters held back by invisible hands. Children clung to their parents, elders leaned on staffs, flocks bleated nervously – but none turned back.

Pharaoh’s army followed.

Into the seabed they charged, but the LORD looked down from the pillar of fire and threw the army into confusion. Wheels jammed. Horses panicked. Chariots veered wildly.

“Let us flee!” the Egyptians cried. “The LORD is fighting for them!”

Then God said to Moses, “Stretch out your hand again.”

And as the last Israelite stepped onto dry ground, Moses lifted his staff once more. The sea returned.

Chariots were swallowed. Horses disappeared. Shouts turned to silence.

On the far shore, the Israelites stood in awe.

The sea had covered Pharaoh’s army. Not one had survived.

Then a shout went up. A song rose.

“I will sing to the LORD, for He is highly exalted. The horse and rider He has thrown into the sea!”

Led by Moses, and echoed by his sister Miriam with a tambourine in hand, the people sang their deliverance. It was a song of triumph, a song of obedience, a song of faith.

No longer slaves. No longer pursued. They were free.

The route they took was no accident. Though there were faster ways to Canaan, God led the Israelites by the desert road toward the Red Sea. He knew that if they faced war too soon, their courage might fail. So He guided them with a pillar of cloud by day and fire by night – not just to show them the way, but to remind them that He was with them.

But fear does not always listen to memory. When the sea loomed ahead and Pharaoh's army thundered behind, many forgot the miracles. They forgot the plagues. They forgot the promises.

Obedience, in that moment, looked like foolishness.

And yet Moses obeyed. Even when everyone else wavered, he lifted his staff. Not because he had power – but because God had spoken.

The Red Sea crossing was not just a geographical event – it was theological. It was God declaring that salvation does not come by strength, strategy, or numbers. It comes by trust and obedience.

In Egyptian belief, the sea was a place of chaos and danger. Their gods were thought to rule the sky, the Nile, and the fertile land. But the sea – the deep – was wild and untamed. By parting the sea, the LORD showed that even chaos obeyed Him.

By walking through it, Israel was reborn.

Later, the prophets would look back on this event and call it Israel's "birth." The apostle Paul would describe it as a kind of baptism – an immersion into death, followed by new life.

On the other side of the sea, the Israelites were no longer just a group of slaves. They were a nation – a covenant people. Their identity had changed, not because of what they did, but because of what God had done.

And yet, even in that moment of triumph, the lesson of obedience lingered.

The sea had opened because Moses obeyed. The people had been saved because they walked forward, step by trembling step, into what looked impossible. If even one had turned back, they would have perished.

God's power made the way. But human obedience walked it.

And when the waters closed behind them, the Israelites stood between the past and the future. Before them lay the wilderness. But behind them, the grave of their oppressors.

Freedom is never just an escape – it is a calling.

God didn't just lead them out. He was leading them to something – to Sinai, to covenant, to promise.

They didn't know it yet. But that night, beneath the stars and beside the sea, they had taken their first steps toward becoming God's chosen people – not just in name, but in heart.

And centuries later, that sea would still speak.

Every baptism, every act of courage, every step of obedience that defies fear – echoes that night.

"Stand still," Moses had said, "and see the salvation of the LORD."

And they did.

As the people sang by the shore, Miriam's voice rang out like a prophetess of praise. Her tambourine, a simple instrument, became a symbol of victory. Generations later, Israelites would tell the story to their children, and they would remember: God had split the sea for them.

But the memory of deliverance was not just for celebration. It was for obedience. Again and again in the wilderness, God would call His people to remember what He had done at the Red Sea. When they doubted His provision, when they feared their enemies, when they longed to return to Egypt – He would remind them: “I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt.”

The Red Sea was not only a dividing line between Egypt and Israel. It was a dividing line between slavery and obedience.

Before the crossing, Pharaoh's word held power over them. After the sea closed, only God's Word would lead them.

In the New Testament, this event is echoed in baptism. Just as the Israelites passed through the waters into new life, believers are called to die to sin and rise again with Christ. Baptism is not a magical act – it is a sign of obedience, of faith that follows God even into deep waters.

Obedience is not always easy. It rarely is. Moses had no guarantee the waters would part – only a command. The people had no assurance they wouldn't be trapped – only a path to follow.

But on the other side of obedience, there was freedom.

And that same truth still holds. When God calls us to obey, He may not show us the whole path. He may only say, “Go forward.” But when we do, we find that the seas part, the ground dries, and the way is made clear.

The story of the Red Sea is not just about escape. It's about trust. It's about stepping into what looks impossible, believing that God goes before you.

And it's about standing still – not in fear, but in faith – and seeing the salvation of the LORD.

Centuries after the crossing, the prophets of Israel continued to speak of it – not just as history, but as hope. Isaiah wrote, “Was it not you who dried up the sea, the waters of the great deep... so that the redeemed might cross over?” (Isaiah 51:10). The crossing became a symbol of what God could do again.

Whenever Israel felt overwhelmed by enemies, abandoned in exile, or hemmed in by fear, they remembered the Red Sea. They remembered that God makes a way where there is no way.

And Christians remember it too.

Jesus Himself, the greater Moses, passed through the waters of baptism before beginning His ministry. He was not escaping from slavery in Egypt, but beginning the work of setting His people free from sin. His obedience – perfect and unwavering – became the foundation for ours.

And so today, when a believer chooses to follow Christ, they too walk through a kind of Red Sea. They die to the old life, and rise again, cleansed and free.

What began that night on the shore of the Red Sea has echoed through every generation. The call to trust. The command to walk forward. The deliverance of those who obey.

The sea still speaks.

And so do the words of Moses:

“Do not be afraid. Stand firm. The LORD will fight for you; you need only to be still.”

C) Reflective Thinking Questions

For Younger Students (Years 7–8):

1. What happened when the Israelites came to the Red Sea?
2. How did Moses show obedience even when people were afraid?
3. Why do you think God told them to “be still”?
4. What does this story show us about trusting God when we are scared?

For Middle Students (Year 9):

1. What role did geography play in the Israelites’ escape?
2. How was the Red Sea crossing different from the plagues in Egypt?
3. What do you think God was teaching His people through this event?
4. How does this story help us understand the importance of obedience?

For Older Students (Year 10):

1. Compare the obedience of Moses with the fear of the people. What do we learn from this?
 2. How is the crossing of the Red Sea a symbol of baptism?
 3. What are some modern situations where obedience to God may feel risky or unclear?
 4. What does this story teach us about God’s power, timing, and faithfulness?
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D) Activity Options

Option 1: Hands-on Practical – “Geography of the Exodus”

- Using a map of Egypt and the Sinai Peninsula, trace the likely route of the Israelites from Goshen to the Red Sea and onward.
- Mark major sites: Goshen, Red Sea, Mount Sinai, Wilderness of Shur.
- **Extension (Years 9–10):** Research alternate historical theories about the Red Sea crossing and evaluate them in light of Scripture.

Option 2: Creative – “Song of Deliverance”

- Write your own short psalm or poem inspired by the song of Moses and Miriam after the Red Sea crossing.
- Include themes of fear, obedience, and victory.
- **Extension (Years 9–10):** Add a second stanza that applies these themes to a modern struggle or moment of faith.

Option 3: Dramatization – “Crossing Between Walls of Water”

- Re-enact the Red Sea crossing as a dramatic scene. Include: Moses, panicked Israelites, Egyptians, and the moment the sea parts.
 - Use flashlights and sound effects for atmosphere.
 - **Extension (Years 9–10):** Add a monologue from Moses reflecting on his obedience and God’s faithfulness.
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E) Biblical Connection

The Red Sea crossing is one of the most iconic events in all of Scripture. It shows us not only God’s power to save, but His invitation to obey – even when the path is uncertain. In Exodus 14:13, Moses says:

“Do not be afraid. Stand firm and you will see the deliverance the LORD will bring you today.”

This is not passive waiting. It is trust-filled obedience. Moses obeyed by raising his staff. The people obeyed by walking forward into the sea. God honoured that obedience by making a way where there was no way.

In 1 Corinthians 10:1–2, the Apostle Paul says that Israel was “baptised into Moses in the cloud and in the sea.” The Red Sea becomes a picture of Christian baptism – leaving the old life behind, walking through the waters, and entering new life.

Jesus also walked through the waters – of baptism, of temptation, of the cross. And because of His obedience, we too can be free.

F) Narration Activity

Narration Activity:

Ask your parent or tutor to listen while you retell the story of the Red Sea crossing in your own words. Include the moment of fear, the act of obedience, and the way God responded.

If you are in Years 9–10, reflect aloud on this question:

“What does it mean to obey when you don’t see the way forward yet?”

TOPIC 2

THE LAW

Lesson 4 – Manna from Heaven

Theme: Obedience in Daily Dependence on God

Australian Curriculum v9 Content Descriptions

- **History – AC9HH7K01:** Describe the roles and achievements of significant individuals and groups in ancient societies, including the influence of law, religion, and belief systems.
- **History – AC9HH7K02:** Explain the causes and effects of events and developments in ancient societies.
- **History – AC9HH7K03:** Describe the social, political, and cultural features of ancient societies.
- **History – AC9HH7K04:** Explain the significance of heritage sites and cultural practices in ancient societies.
- **History – AC9HH8K01:** Analyse the roles of significant individuals or groups and how they contributed to change.
- **Geography – AC9HG8K02:** Analyse interconnections between people, places and environments and explain how these interconnections influence characteristics of places.
- **Civics & Citizenship – AC9HC8S01:** Examine the responsibilities of individuals and groups in shaping communities and making decisions.

Lesson Objectives

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Describe the giving of manna and its significance to the Israelites' wilderness journey.
- Explain how obedience and daily dependence were tested through God's instructions.
- Connect the historical event of manna to broader spiritual truths including trust and Jesus as the Bread of Life.
- Reflect on their own lives and how obedience plays out in daily faith.

B) Informational Story – “Manna from Heaven”

The desert was a place of silence – of wind and dust and waiting.

It had been just weeks since the Red Sea parted and Pharaoh's army had vanished beneath the waves. The Israelites had walked out of Egypt with heads held high, victorious, rescued, free. But freedom, they were learning, came with tests.

The wilderness of Sin lay before them, a dry expanse between Elim and Mount Sinai. It was hot and barren. The people were tired. Their food supplies from Egypt were running out.

It was here, in the silence of the wilderness, that the grumbling began.

“If only we had died by the LORD’s hand in Egypt!” some cried. “There we sat around pots of meat and ate all the food we wanted. But you have brought us into this desert to starve!”

Moses listened, his face heavy with weariness. This was not the first complaint, and it would not be the last. But he turned to God, not in frustration – but in obedience.

And God answered – not with anger, but with provision.

“I will rain down bread from heaven for you,” the LORD said. “Each day the people are to go out and gather enough for that day. On the sixth day, they are to gather twice as much.”

The next morning, the miracle appeared.

When the dew evaporated, thin flakes like frost lay on the ground. The people stared. “What is it?” they asked one another.

Moses said, “It is the bread the LORD has given you to eat.”

They called it *manna*, which means, “What is it?”

It was white like coriander seed and tasted like wafers made with honey. Each person was to gather as much as they needed – no more, no less.

Some tried to hoard it, keeping leftovers overnight. But the next morning, it was full of maggots and smelled foul.

Others went out on the seventh day, ignoring the command to rest. But they found no manna. The lesson was clear: obedience was not optional. God provided – but He also expected trust.

Each day the people rose early to gather. They ground it in mills or crushed it in mortars, boiled it in pots or baked it into cakes.

And every day, except the Sabbath, manna fell. For forty years.

This strange, sweet bread became their lifeline. It was the food of faith – a daily reminder that they were dependent not on Egypt, but on the LORD.

But it wasn’t just about hunger. It was about trust.

God was teaching His people to listen. To wait. To receive – not to take by force, but to open their hands and believe.

It was obedience in the small things. Wake up early. Take what you need. Don’t hoard. Rest on the seventh day.

Those who followed the instructions were fed. Those who didn’t – went hungry.

And in this rhythm of gathering, God shaped a nation.

Later, Moses would remind them: “He humbled you, causing you to hunger and then feeding you with manna... to teach you that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD.”

Generations later, Jesus would echo those words in the desert when He was tempted by Satan.

“Man does not live on bread alone.”

And then He would say something even greater: “I am the Bread of Life.”

The manna in the wilderness pointed forward – to Jesus, the one who would satisfy more than stomachs. The one who would teach us to pray: “Give us this day our daily bread.”

And to trust that obedience still begins, as it did in the wilderness, with open hands and a listening heart.

The desert, by its nature, strips away excess. There were no cities, no farms, no storage barns. The Israelites had left behind everything familiar. In Egypt, even as slaves, they knew what to expect – predictable rations, regular work, a rigid routine. But freedom had delivered them into the unknown.

Each morning, they had to decide: Would they trust that God would provide again? Would they obey the pattern He set?

Some did, eagerly. They rose early, gathered their portion, and taught their children how to kneel on the ground with reverence, scooping up the gift God had laid before them.

Others hesitated. What if it didn’t come tomorrow? Shouldn’t they keep a little extra – just in case?

But hoarding was disobedience masked as caution. And by morning, the leftovers were rotten. It was a hard lesson to learn: God’s gifts were not to be stored in fear, but received in faith.

On the sixth day, something different happened. The people were told to gather twice as much. And this time, the bread did not spoil overnight. The maggots were gone. The smell was clean.

The seventh day – the Sabbath – was a day of rest. A day of trust. A day to remember that they were not machines, and that God’s provision did not depend on their effort.

Not everyone obeyed. Some went out, baskets in hand, only to find empty sand.

“Why won’t you listen to my instructions?” God asked through Moses.

In every bite of manna, God was shaping their hearts. He wasn’t just feeding their bodies – He was forming a people who would rely on Him day by day.

There were no shortcuts. No way to make the manna last a week. No clever workaround. Only the daily rhythm of obedience.

And still it came. Six days a week. Year after year. It came when they were thankful and when they grumbled. It came when they worshipped and when they wandered. It came, not because they earned it, but because God was faithful.

Among the people, the memory of slavery was still fresh. Parents who had hauled bricks in the hot sun now bent down beside their children to gather heavenly flakes from the earth. Grandmothers who had once served Egyptian mistresses now baked bread from heaven in their clay ovens. The contrast was overwhelming.

Some of the elders remembered Egypt clearly. They told stories around the fire – of garlic and leeks, of full water jars and strict masters. The younger ones, born on the journey, could not imagine those days. To them,

manna was normal. It was what the earth gave each day. They didn't know the cost of fear or the weight of Pharaoh's chains.

But Moses reminded them: "Do not forget the LORD your God. He fed you in the wilderness to teach you that life is more than bread. You are sustained by every word that comes from His mouth."

The manna was not just a test of obedience – it was a school of humility. It taught them to be grateful, to be patient, to walk by faith. It stripped away pride, entitlement, and independence. It replaced them with gratitude, simplicity, and trust.

When they finally entered the Promised Land, the manna stopped. On the day they ate the first grain of Canaan, the miracle ceased. The provision for the wilderness ended, and the provision for a new season began.

But they remembered.

Centuries later, when Jesus' disciples asked Him to teach them how to pray, He said:

"Our Father in heaven... Give us this day our daily bread."

Not weekly. Not monthly. Daily.

It was a prayer of trust. A prayer of obedience.

Not just for bread that feeds the body – but for the grace, the wisdom, the strength to follow Him today.

Manna still falls.

Not on the ground, perhaps – but in the quiet moments when we open the Bible. In the times of stillness when we ask for guidance. In the faith we exercise when we choose honesty, kindness, or courage.

Obedience is still gathered one morning at a time.

And in Christ, we receive not just bread – but the Bread of Life Himself.

C) Reflective Thinking Questions

For Younger Students (Years 7–8):

1. What was manna, and where did it come from?
2. What did the people learn when they tried to save extra manna?
3. Why do you think God made the people gather food every day?
4. How can you obey God in small, daily ways?

For Middle Students (Year 9):

1. What were the Israelites tempted to believe when food ran out?
2. What do we learn about God's character from the way He provided manna?
3. How does this story challenge modern ideas about independence and control?
4. What does the rhythm of daily gathering and Sabbath rest teach us about obedience?

For Older Students (Year 10):

1. Discuss how obedience in the story of manna shaped the Israelites' identity.
 2. How is manna a picture of dependence – and how does it compare to modern spiritual disciplines?
 3. In what ways does Jesus fulfil the symbol of manna in the New Testament?
 4. How might “daily bread” look different for Christians today – and what role does obedience play?
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D) Activity Options

Option 1: Hands-on Practical – “Manna and Map”

- Create a labelled map of the Israelites' journey in the wilderness (Elim, Wilderness of Sin, Sinai).
- Draw where they likely experienced the manna and how it related to key stops.
- **Extension (Years 9–10):** Research desert survival and write a brief paragraph explaining why the manna was a miraculous solution given the natural resources of the desert.

Option 2: Creative – “Bread from Heaven Poster”

- Create a visual collage or poster titled “Manna: Trusting God Daily.”
- Include images, scriptures, and your own artwork or poetry about depending on God each day.
- **Extension (Years 9–10):** Add a section that explores how Jesus redefined manna in John 6.

Option 3: Dramatization – “The Manna Test”

- Perform a short drama with characters: Moses, God (voice), several Israelites (some obedient, some disobedient).
 - Show a typical morning of gathering manna and the consequences of obedience/disobedience.
 - **Extension (Years 9–10):** Add a modern-day character who wrestles with trusting God in their daily life.
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E) Biblical Connection

The giving of manna was a physical miracle and a spiritual lesson. God provided daily bread – but only enough for one day at a time. It required faith, consistency, and patience. In Exodus 16:4 God said:

“I will test them and see whether they will follow my instructions.”

In the New Testament, Jesus linked this moment in history to Himself:

“I am the Bread of Life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry...” (John 6:35)

Just like the Israelites gathered manna each day, we are called to walk in daily obedience and trust. We pray not for a year's supply of strength, but for **today's** grace.

F) Narration Activity

Narration Activity:

Ask your parent or tutor to listen while you retell the story of manna in your own words.

Include what the people were taught, how they responded, and what God was showing them.

If you are in Years 9–10, reflect aloud:

“What does it mean to depend on God for ‘daily bread’ in your life today?”

Lesson 5 – The Ten Commandments

Theme: Obedience Through Covenant

Australian Curriculum v9 Content Descriptions

- **History – AC9HH7K01:** Describe the roles and achievements of significant individuals and groups in ancient societies, including the influence of law, religion, and belief systems.
 - **History – AC9HH7K02:** Explain the causes and effects of events and developments in ancient societies.
 - **History – AC9HH7K03:** Describe the social, political, and cultural features of ancient societies.
 - **History – AC9HH7K04:** Explain the significance of heritage sites and cultural practices in ancient societies.
 - **History – AC9HH8K01:** Analyse the roles of significant individuals or groups and how they contributed to change.
 - **Geography – AC9HG8K02:** Analyse interconnections between people, places and environments and explain how these interconnections influence characteristics of places.
 - **Civics & Citizenship – AC9HC8S01:** Examine the responsibilities of individuals and groups in shaping communities and making decisions.
 - **Civics & Citizenship – AC9HC8K01:** Examine how laws are developed and the role of citizens in influencing rules and laws.
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Lesson Objectives

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Understand the historical and spiritual significance of the Ten Commandments.
 - Identify each commandment and its application in biblical and modern life.
 - Explain the role of obedience in covenant relationships.
 - Reflect on the commandments' impact on personal faith and civic society.
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B) Informational Story – “The Ten Commandments”

The mountain rose like a throne from the wilderness, silent and terrible. Its jagged peaks pierced the sky, veiled in cloud and mystery. This was Mount Sinai.

The people had arrived after weeks of wandering through the desert, following the pillar of cloud by day and fire by night. They had seen the Red Sea part. They had tasted water from a rock and bread from heaven. Now, they waited for something even greater – the voice of God.

At the base of the mountain, the Israelites set up camp. But they were not invited to climb. Instead, they were told to consecrate themselves. Wash their clothes. Abstain from distractions. Prepare their hearts. For in three days, the LORD would descend.

On the morning of the third day, thunder cracked across the sky. Lightning forked down the mountain's slopes. A trumpet blared – louder and louder. Smoke billowed from the summit like a furnace, and the whole mountain trembled.

Then came the voice.

It did not echo. It filled the air, pressing down on every heart.

“I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.”

And then, one by one, the commandments:

1. You shall have no other gods before Me.
2. You shall not make for yourself a carved image.
3. You shall not misuse the name of the LORD your God.
4. Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.
5. Honour your father and your mother.
6. You shall not murder.
7. You shall not commit adultery.
8. You shall not steal.
9. You shall not give false testimony.
10. You shall not covet.

Each command struck like a hammer on stone. Not just because of the sound – but because they revealed something deeper. These were not arbitrary rules. They were the foundation of covenant.

God was not just rescuing a people. He was forming a nation. A holy nation. A people set apart to live differently from the world around them.

The commandments were not burdens – they were boundaries of freedom. They defined love: love for God (commandments 1–4) and love for neighbour (commandments 5–10).

When the voice fell silent, the people trembled. “Speak to us through Moses,” they begged. “But do not let God speak to us again, or we will die.”

So, Moses went up the mountain.

He stayed forty days and forty nights. There, he received the tablets of stone, written by the finger of God. But while he received law, the people below gave in to fear. They crafted a golden calf. They broke the very first commandment before it had even arrived.

Still, God showed mercy.

He renewed the covenant. He rewrote the tablets. He called Israel to obedience – not as a condition of His love, but as a response to it.

Each commandment spoke into a world that was used to doing things differently.

In Egypt, gods were many – stone, animal, sun, river. People worshipped whatever seemed powerful or useful. But the first commandment shattered that idea: There is only one God, and He will not share His glory.

The second commandment forbade images – not because beauty is wrong, but because God is not like anything made by hands. Idols shrink the infinite into something manageable. The Israelites were told: don’t reduce the Creator to a statue.

The third commandment protected God's name. In ancient cultures, names carried weight – authority, identity, presence. To misuse God's name was to treat Him as ordinary. But God is holy, and His name is not a tool.

The fourth commandment was revolutionary. In Egypt, slaves didn’t rest. But now, God told them: You are no longer slaves. You are free. You can stop. You must stop. Rest was not weakness – it was worship. The Sabbath reminded them that they were not defined by what they produced, but by the One who loved them.

Then came commandments about human relationships. The fifth was about honouring parents – not because they're perfect, but because the family is the first community. Respect builds strong generations.

The sixth commandment reminded them: life is sacred. Made in God's image. Murder is not just violence – it is rebellion against the Giver of life.

The seventh guarded faithfulness. Marriage was a covenant, not a convenience. Adultery damaged more than trust – it damaged the image of God's faithful love.

The eighth said: do not steal. In a world where survival often meant taking, God taught them a better way – respect, work, and generosity.

The ninth spoke of truth. A community without truth crumbles. False testimony could destroy lives. God calls His people to be truth-tellers because He is Truth.

The tenth commandment was perhaps the most radical. It dealt not with actions, but desires. Coveting is invisible – but powerful. It is the seed of all the others. God saw the heart, and He wanted it purified.

These weren't just ancient laws. They were mirrors, showing the people who they were – and who they were meant to be.

When Moses returned with the tablets, his face shone. He had been in the presence of God.

But his joy turned to anguish when he saw the golden calf. After all the signs and wonders, the people had still turned to an idol.

In a moment of fury and heartbreak, Moses shattered the tablets.

He climbed the mountain again, not with defiance but with pleading.

"Show me Your glory," he prayed.

And God passed by – not in thunder this time, but in kindness.

"The LORD, the LORD, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness..."

God gave Moses two new tablets. He renewed the covenant.

And so the law remained – not as chains, but as a gift. Not to save, but to guide. Not to enslave, but to set free.

Centuries later, Jesus would walk among people who had memorised the commandments but missed their heart. He would say, "You have heard it said... but I say to you..." Not changing the law – but revealing its depth.

"You shall not murder" became "Do not hate."

"You shall not commit adultery" became "Do not lust."

"Love your neighbour" became "Love your enemies."

Jesus showed that obedience was not just outward – it was inward. Not just about behaviour, but about transformation.

Throughout history, the Ten Commandments have shaped more than Israel. They have laid the foundation for justice systems, moral reasoning, and ethical societies across the world.

Even people who do not follow the Bible know these laws: do not kill, do not steal, do not lie. The world recognises their wisdom – because they are not merely ancient rules. They are rooted in eternal truth.

In times of crisis, people still return to these commandments. After wars, leaders have looked again to the value of life. After injustice, societies return to the need for truth, honour, and rest.

For Christians, the Ten Commandments are not a ladder to earn salvation. They are a response to salvation. God rescued the Israelites first – and then gave them the law. Grace came before obedience.

It is the same with us. Jesus has set us free. Now He calls us to live like it.

Obedience is not just rule-following. It is relationship. When we love God, we keep His commandments – not because we must, but because we want to.

The commandments teach us how to love. They show us where we fall short. And they point us to Jesus, who fulfilled the law perfectly.

Moses came down from Sinai with stone tablets. Jesus climbed a hill in Galilee and gave us the Sermon on the Mount. Both called people to live differently. Both gave words that would outlast kingdoms.

And now, God writes His law not on tablets of stone – but on hearts of flesh.

As you read the Ten Commandments, ask:

- What do they show me about God?
- What do they reveal about me?
- How can I walk in obedience, not to be loved, but because I am?

Obedience begins in awe. It grows in love. And it leads to life.

The mountain still stands. The law still speaks.

And the invitation remains:

“I am the LORD your God... walk in My ways.”

When Jesus was asked, “Which is the greatest commandment in the Law?” He did not hesitate.

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and mind... and love your neighbour as yourself. All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two.”

This was not a replacement – it was a fulfilment.

Every rule God gave points to love – either upward to Him, or outward to others.

So when we obey the commandments, we do more than follow rules. We learn to love.

And that is the highest obedience of all.

C) Reflective Thinking Questions

For Younger Students (Years 7–8):

1. What happened at Mount Sinai before God gave the commandments?
2. Why were the Ten Commandments important for the Israelites?
3. What do the first four commandments teach us about God?
4. Which commandment do you think is most important for helping people live well together?

For Middle Students (Year 9):

1. How did each commandment reflect a better way of living compared to Egyptian culture?
2. Why do you think God made rest (Sabbath) a command, not just a suggestion?
3. What do the Ten Commandments teach us about freedom and responsibility?
4. How does Jesus' teaching in the New Testament help us understand the commandments more deeply?

For Older Students (Year 10):

1. How did the Ten Commandments form the foundation of covenant identity for Israel?
 2. What is the relationship between obedience and grace in this story?
 3. Compare the moral vision of the Ten Commandments with modern legal systems.
 4. How can obedience to God's commandments be a way of expressing love?
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D) Activity Options

Option 1: Hands-on Practical – “Commandment Stones”

- Create a set of Ten Commandments using clay, salt dough, or cardboard to resemble stone tablets.
- Write one commandment on each “stone” and place them in order.
- **Extension (Years 9–10):** On the back of each stone, write how this commandment might apply in today's society.

Option 2: Creative – “Law and Love Infographic”

- Design an infographic or visual chart dividing the Ten Commandments into two categories: love for God (1–4) and love for others (5–10).
- Include a quote from Jesus (Matthew 22:37–40) about the greatest commandments.
- **Extension (Years 9–10):** Add a column showing how Jesus expanded or fulfilled each commandment.

Option 3: Dramatization – “Mount Sinai Encounter”

- Perform a short dramatization: God speaking the commandments, people reacting in fear, Moses climbing the mountain, the golden calf incident, and God's renewal of the covenant.
- Include narration or monologue reflections by Moses or Joshua.
- **Extension (Years 9–10):** Include a modern Christian character responding to Jesus' words on the Law and summarising its application today.

E) Biblical Connection

The Ten Commandments were given not just as laws, but as part of a covenant relationship. Exodus 20:2 begins:

“I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.”

Before God asked for obedience, He gave deliverance. Obedience was not a condition of love – it was the response to it.

Jesus affirmed the commandments, then took them deeper. He called people not only to obey externally, but to love sincerely. In John 14:15 He said:

“If you love me, keep my commandments.”

In Jesus, the Law is fulfilled. In the Spirit, the Law is written on our hearts.

F) Narration Activity

Narration Activity:

Ask your parent or tutor to listen while you retell the story of Mount Sinai and the giving of the Ten Commandments.

Include the setting, the experience of the people, the commandments themselves, and what happened afterwards.

If you are in Years 9–10, reflect aloud:

“How can obedience to God’s commands shape both personal faith and a healthy society?”

Lesson 6 – The Ten Commandments as the Basis of Western Law

Theme: Obedience and Justice in Society

Australian Curriculum v9 Content Descriptions

- **History – AC9HH7K01:** Describe the roles and achievements of significant individuals and groups in ancient societies, including the influence of law, religion, and belief systems.
- **History – AC9HH7K02:** Explain the causes and effects of events and developments in ancient societies.
- **History – AC9HH7K03:** Describe the social, political, and cultural features of ancient societies.
- **History – AC9HH7K04:** Explain the significance of heritage sites and cultural practices in ancient societies.
- **History – AC9HH8K01:** Analyse the roles of significant individuals or groups and how they contributed to change.
- **Civics & Citizenship – AC9HC8S01:** Examine the responsibilities of individuals and groups in shaping communities and making decisions.

Lesson Objectives

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Explain the historical influence of the Ten Commandments on Western legal traditions.
- Identify parallels between the Ten Commandments and modern law.
- Evaluate the ongoing relevance of biblical moral principles in civic life.
- Reflect on the role of obedience to God’s law within a changing legal culture.

B) Informational Story – “The Ten Commandments as the Basis of Western Law”

In a courtroom carved of stone, sunlight streamed through tall windows and glinted off the brass scales of justice. The judge sat high, robed and silent, as lawyers stood to argue their case. Beneath their feet was a foundation deeper than concrete – centuries of law, justice, and order. But what most never saw was that beneath it all lay words first spoken in the wilderness.

Words etched on stone tablets. Words thundered from Mount Sinai.

The Ten Commandments.

Across history, they had travelled far from that desert mountain. They had crossed oceans, languages, empires. They shaped the Hebrew nation, then influenced Greek and Roman moral thought, and eventually became embedded in the legal systems of Europe and the Western world.

But how? How did a set of commandments, given to a wandering people thousands of years ago, end up shaping the way millions think about right and wrong?

The answer begins with the nature of the commandments themselves. They were not like pagan laws, which pleased temperamental gods or enforced the will of kings. They were not just civic rules or military decrees. They were moral declarations – rooted in the character of God, applying equally to all.

“Do not murder” didn’t apply only to Israelites. It applied to everyone. “Do not steal” was not just about protecting property – it recognised the dignity of others. “Do not lie” upheld truth, the foundation of trust.

And that's where it begins: dignity, truth, equality, justice. Ideas that now seem common were once radical. The Ten Commandments proclaimed them boldly.

As Christianity spread across the Roman Empire, so did these values. Early Christians, though persecuted, lived by these laws. They honoured marriage, protected life, and valued honesty. Over time, as emperors converted and laws shifted, the commandments began to influence public policy.

In England, the Magna Carta echoed their voice. "No man is above the law," it declared – a truth first declared at Sinai, where even kings had to bow to God's commands.

Later, in the formation of Western democracies – especially in Britain, Europe, and the American colonies – the commandments appeared again. On courthouses, in textbooks, in oaths of office. They were the silent pillars of law.

Not everyone agreed with their religious origins. Enlightenment thinkers debated faith and reason. But even secular philosophers often echoed biblical truths. Laws protecting life, truth, property, marriage, and justice all mirrored the tablets of stone.

To this day, many legal systems are built on these ideas:

- That human life has value (You shall not murder)
- That families matter (Honour your father and mother)
- That truth is essential in courts (You shall not bear false witness)
- That property deserves protection (You shall not steal)
- That desire alone is not an excuse (You shall not covet)

Even the idea of regular rest – a right fought for in labour movements – finds its origin in the fourth commandment.

The influence runs deeper still. The very concept of law being above rulers – that there is a moral standard even kings must obey – flows from the mountain where God's voice was heard.

In medieval Europe, church and state were closely connected. Cathedrals stood beside courthouses. Sermons echoed through the same towns where laws were written. At the heart of many legal codes were principles rooted in Scripture – especially the Ten Commandments.

One early example was King Alfred the Great of England. In the 9th century, he compiled a set of laws known as Alfred's Law Code. What did it begin with? A direct summary of the Ten Commandments. Alfred believed no nation could prosper unless it submitted to the moral law of God.

Later, in the 13th century, the Magna Carta – signed at Runnymede in 1215 – established the idea that rulers were not above the law. This was not new to Christians. The prophets of Israel had long declared that kings must answer to God. King David repented when he broke the sixth and seventh commandments. King Ahab was judged for bearing false witness and stealing a vineyard. Justice applied to all.

In the courts of England, the concept of "common law" emerged. It was based on precedent and reason – but also on moral understanding. Judges cited biblical principles, especially the Decalogue, in matters of honesty, oath-keeping, and property rights.

Fast forward to the founding of America. Though the nation was not a theocracy, many of its early laws drew from the moral framework of the Ten Commandments. Oaths were sworn on Bibles. Laws forbade murder, theft, perjury, and adultery – not just as crimes, but as betrayals of the public good.

Even the architecture of governance testified to this legacy. In Washington D.C., the U.S. Supreme Court building includes carvings of Moses with the tablets. Other buildings show reliefs of the Ten Commandments, flanked by blindfolded figures of justice and truth.

Why did these values persist?

Because they worked. Societies built on truth, integrity, family, and life flourished. Those that abandoned these values often descended into corruption and collapse.

But some critics have asked: what about the “religious” commandments? The first four deal with our relationship with God – how can they belong in public life?

It’s a fair question. In pluralistic societies, it is vital to protect freedom of belief. But even these commandments teach universal truths: that humans need meaning, that worship shapes character, that words matter, that rest is a human right.

Remove God, and the foundation weakens. When morality is separated from its source, rules become preferences. Justice becomes negotiable. And power takes the place of principle.

C.S. Lewis once wrote: “You cannot go on explaining away forever. You will find that you have explained explanation itself away.”

The Ten Commandments offer something solid. Not just ideas – but standards. Not opinions – but truth.

For Christians, they are not obsolete. Jesus fulfilled the law, but He never discarded it. He said:

“Whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.” (Matthew 5:19)

He also said:

“All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments: Love the Lord your God... and love your neighbour as yourself.”

The Ten Commandments, then, are not chains – they are a compass. They point us toward love.

They also point us to Christ.

Only one man ever kept them perfectly. Only one fulfilled both the letter and the spirit. Jesus did not just avoid murder – He forgave. He didn’t just avoid adultery – He saw women with honour. He didn’t just honour the Sabbath – He became our rest.

And now, He writes the law on our hearts.

In courts, laws may change. But justice endures. And the voice from Sinai still whispers: Do not murder. Do not steal. Do not lie. Honour your father and mother. Worship the Lord your God.

These are not relics. They are roots.

In modern times, debates continue. Should the Ten Commandments be displayed in schools? Should they influence law in secular democracies?

Some argue for separation of church and state. Others insist that removing moral anchors leads to drift. But perhaps the question isn't whether they belong on walls – but whether they live in hearts.

In Australia, for example, the legal system is based on British Common Law. That heritage – while officially secular – is deeply influenced by Christian morality. Laws protecting marriage, children, and public decency reflect values long championed in the Ten Commandments.

But tensions arise. What happens when public policy allows what Scripture forbids? Or when courts enforce what God calls sin?

These are difficult questions. Christians are called to obey the law of the land – yet also to stand firm when conscience demands it. In Acts 5:29, Peter said, “We must obey God rather than men.”

Obedience to God's law may cost something. It may look strange in modern eyes. But it bears fruit: peace, integrity, justice, hope.

That's why the commandments still matter.

They remind us:

- That truth must be told
- That life must be protected
- That promises must be kept
- That God must be honoured

They are more than rules. They are a way of life.

And they are not meant to save us – but to point us to the One who can.

Jesus fulfilled the law. He bore its penalty. He gave us His Spirit to walk in righteousness. Now, we follow – not with tablets of stone, but with hearts renewed.

The foundation of Western law may not be fully visible anymore. But like bedrock beneath a city, it still holds much in place.

The commandments were given in thunder. But today they come in quiet conviction.

They still teach.

They still guide.

They still bless.

And they still ask:

Will you obey?

C) Reflective Thinking Questions

For Younger Students (Years 7–8):

1. Where did the Ten Commandments come from originally?
2. What rules or laws today seem similar to the commandments?

3. Why do you think laws are important in a society?
4. What does this story teach you about why we obey God?

For Middle Students (Year 9):

1. How did the Ten Commandments influence early English law or government?
2. Why do some people want to remove the commandments from public buildings?
3. What challenges might Christians face when public law and God's law disagree?
4. How can the commandments help us live well in a community?

For Older Students (Year 10):

1. Compare the moral authority of the Ten Commandments to that of modern secular law.
 2. How can Christians respond when civic laws conflict with biblical values?
 3. In what ways does Jesus fulfil the moral vision of the Ten Commandments?
 4. Can law and grace work together in a Christian's life? Why or why not?
-

D) Activity Options

Option 1: Hands-on Practical – “Commandment-Law Chart”

- Create a two-column chart. In the left column, write each of the Ten Commandments. In the right column, write examples of modern laws that reflect each principle (e.g. murder, perjury, theft).
- **Extension (Years 9–10):** Add a third column explaining how Jesus expanded each commandment in the New Testament.

Option 2: Creative – “Courthouse Mural Design”

- Design a mural or monument that shows how God's commandments promote justice and love.
- Include symbolic elements like tablets, scales of justice, light, or community figures.
- **Extension (Years 9–10):** Write a brief artist's statement explaining how the image reflects the relationship between divine law and public life.

Option 3: Dramatization – “The Law Beneath Our Laws”

- Perform a short skit of a courtroom trial where biblical truth and modern law are compared.
 - Include characters such as a judge, lawyer, citizen, and Moses or Jesus as witnesses.
 - **Extension (Years 9–10):** End with a reflection on what justice would look like if society followed the Ten Commandments today.
-

E) Biblical Connection

The Ten Commandments were not just moral codes for ancient Israel – they were God's voice echoing through generations, influencing nations, laws, and hearts. In Romans 7:12, Paul wrote:

“The law is holy, and the commandment is holy, righteous and good.”

Jesus fulfilled the law by living it perfectly and teaching its deeper meaning. In a world where laws are debated and justice is often imperfect, God's commands remain a reliable guide.

Obedience to God’s law helps us love rightly, live justly, and point others to Christ.

F) Narration Activity

Narration Activity:

Ask your parent or tutor to listen while you explain how the Ten Commandments have influenced modern laws and societies.

Mention historical examples, specific commandments, and how they shaped ideas about justice and fairness.

If you are in Years 9–10, reflect aloud:

“What is the difference between obeying God’s law out of duty and obeying it out of love?”

WEEK 3

IN THE WILDERNESS

Lesson 7 – The Tabernacle

Theme: Obedience in Worship and Holy Living

Australian Curriculum v9 Content Descriptions

- **History – AC9HH7K01:** Describe the roles and achievements of significant individuals and groups in ancient societies, including the influence of law, religion, and belief systems.
- **History – AC9HH7K02:** Explain the causes and effects of events and developments in ancient societies.
- **History – AC9HH7K03:** Describe the social, political, and cultural features of ancient societies.
- **History – AC9HH7K04:** Explain the significance of heritage sites and cultural practices in ancient societies.
- **History – AC9HH8K01:** Analyse the roles of significant individuals or groups and how they contributed to change.
- **Geography – AC9HG8K01:** Describe how the characteristics of places are perceived and valued differently.
- **Civics & Citizenship – AC9HC8S01:** Examine the responsibilities of individuals and groups in shaping communities and making decisions.

Lesson Objectives

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Describe the layout, purpose, and theological significance of the Tabernacle.
- Explain the relationship between worship, obedience, and God's presence in Old Testament Israel.
- Understand how Jesus fulfilled the meaning of the Tabernacle.
- Reflect on what it means to be a dwelling place of God today.

B) Informational Story – “The Tabernacle”

The desert sun scorched the sand by day, and the stars stretched wide across the night sky. But in the centre of the Israelite camp, something extraordinary was being built – something no nation had ever seen before.

It was called the Tabernacle.

This was no temple of stone, no pyramid or palace. It was a tent – a sacred tent, movable and mysterious, built exactly as God had commanded. Every measurement was precise, every material carefully chosen: gold, silver, bronze, fine linen, acacia wood, goat hair, ram skins dyed red.

But more than its materials, it was its purpose that made the Tabernacle holy.

God said, “Let them make a sanctuary for Me, and I will dwell among them.”

It was a staggering promise.

This was the God who had split the sea and thundered from Sinai. No one could look at Him and live. And yet now, He would live among them – in a tent, at the very centre of their lives.

But it had to be built His way.

God gave Moses the pattern on Mount Sinai. He showed him a heavenly design and said, “See that you make everything according to the pattern I have shown you.”

So the work began.

Bezalel, the master craftsman, was filled with the Spirit of God – with wisdom, skill, and knowledge in all kinds of crafts. He and Oholiab led the work, and every skilled artisan, every willing heart, contributed. The women spun yarn, the men cut timber, the elders offered gold and gemstones. No one was left out.

Piece by piece, the Tabernacle took shape.

The outer courtyard was enclosed by linen curtains, tall and white. Inside stood the bronze altar, where sacrifices were offered – bulls, lambs, doves. Nearby was the bronze basin, filled with water for cleansing.

Then came the tent itself, with its heavy curtains and sacred furnishings. Inside the first room – the Holy Place – stood the golden lampstand, the table for the bread of the Presence, and the altar of incense.

Beyond that, behind a thick veil, was the Most Holy Place. No one entered there, except the high priest – and only once a year.

Inside was the Ark of the Covenant, overlaid with pure gold. On top of the Ark were two golden cherubim, their wings stretched out, facing each other. Between them was the mercy seat – the throne of God on earth.

When it was complete, Moses inspected every piece. It was perfect – just as the LORD had commanded.

Then something breathtaking happened.

The cloud, which had hovered above the camp, descended. The glory of the LORD filled the Tabernacle. Moses could not even enter, because the presence of God was so overwhelming.

From that day on, whenever the cloud lifted, the Israelites broke camp and followed it. When the cloud settled, they stayed.

God had come to dwell with His people – not just in thunder and fire, but in daily presence. He was not a distant deity. He was right in their midst.

The Tabernacle was more than a structure. It was a symbol. It showed that a holy God desired to live among an unholy people – and made a way through sacrifice, cleansing, and careful obedience.

The camp of Israel was arranged around the Tabernacle, tribe by tribe. Three tribes to the north, three to the south, three to the east, and three to the west. And in the middle – at the heart of their identity – was the dwelling place of God.

Everything about the Tabernacle reflected order and holiness.

The outer courtyard reminded the people that they could not casually approach God. Entry required passing by the bronze altar – the place of sacrifice. Blood had to be shed, for sin was serious. The altar stood as both a warning and a welcome: sin must be dealt with, but God had made a way.

Beyond the altar stood the bronze basin, polished to reflect. Before entering the tent, the priests washed their hands and feet. The message was clear: only the clean could enter. Purity mattered.

Then came the tent itself, divided into two sections. The Holy Place was dimly lit by the golden lampstand, which had seven branches shaped like almond blossoms. Its light never went out. It symbolised God's presence, always watching.

Across from the lampstand stood the table of showbread – twelve loaves, representing the twelve tribes. It was a picture of fellowship, of God's provision, and of a meal shared between heaven and earth.

At the far end of the Holy Place was the altar of incense. Here the priests burned fragrant spices, day and night. The smoke rose upward, a symbol of prayer ascending to God.

But behind the thick curtain – woven with blue, purple, and scarlet yarn and embroidered with cherubim – was the Most Holy Place. Only the high priest could enter, and only once a year, on the Day of Atonement. He entered with fear and trembling, carrying the blood of sacrifice. There, in silence, he sprinkled the blood on the mercy seat above the Ark.

The Ark was a gold-covered chest. Inside were the tablets of the Ten Commandments, a jar of manna, and Aaron's staff that had budded. These were symbols of God's covenant, His provision, and His authority.

The mercy seat above the Ark was flanked by golden cherubim – angelic guardians. Between their wings, the glory of the LORD would appear.

This was not mythology. It was real. When the Tabernacle was dedicated, fire fell from heaven and consumed the offerings. The people fell face-down. The fear of the LORD was tangible.

And yet, this awesome God desired closeness. The Tabernacle made that possible. It was God's solution to the problem of distance.

The Tabernacle was also a place of daily work. The priests served from morning to evening. Lamps were trimmed. Bread was replaced. Incense was offered. Sacrifices were made. Every act was a form of worship, a rhythm of obedience, a declaration that God was holy and near.

For the people, it was a visual lesson. Children asked, "What is that building?" And parents replied, "That is where God lives." They saw the smoke rising, the priests entering, and they knew: God was with us.

And the obedience mattered. When Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, offered "unauthorised fire" before the LORD, they died instantly. Their death was not cruelty – it was a warning. Worship must be on God's terms, not ours.

The Tabernacle reminded Israel that access to God is a gift, not a right.

Centuries passed, and the Tabernacle was replaced by Solomon's temple – more permanent, more splendid, but built on the same pattern. The same three sections. The same furnishings. The same sacred order.

But even Solomon knew: "Will God really dwell on earth? The heavens cannot contain You, much less this temple I have built."

The Tabernacle, and later the temple, were never meant to be the final answer. They pointed forward.

The prophets spoke of a time when God would write His law on hearts, not stone. When He would pour out His Spirit, not just on priests, but on all people. When He would dwell not in a tent, but within His people.

Then Jesus came.

John wrote, “The Word became flesh and dwelt among us.” The Greek word – *eskenōsen* – means “He tabernacled among us.” Jesus was the true Tabernacle. He was the presence of God, walking in sandals, touching lepers, forgiving sinners, teaching crowds.

He spoke of the temple of His body, and when He died, the curtain in the temple tore in two. The way into the Most Holy Place was opened – forever.

He became the sacrifice on the altar. His blood cleansed more than hands – it cleansed hearts. His resurrection lit the lamp of eternal life. His ascension placed Him at the mercy seat in heaven, where He intercedes for us still.

And now, because of Him, we are invited in.

Paul wrote, “Don’t you know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit?” We are not just saved – we are indwelt. The glory that once filled a tent now fills believers.

But with this privilege comes responsibility.

God still calls us to obedience. To holiness. To worship not just with songs, but with lives.

We don’t bring goats to an altar – but we bring our hearts. We don’t offer incense – but we offer prayer. We don’t trim golden lamps – but we let our light shine before others.

The Tabernacle was built with costly materials – gold, silver, fine linen. Today, God builds with something more precious: willing hearts. Faithful lives. Obedient disciples.

And the pattern still matters.

In a noisy world, God still calls us to make space. To clear the clutter. To centre our lives on His presence.

The Tabernacle was never just about architecture. It was about access. Intimacy. Devotion.

In the end, the Bible closes with a Tabernacle image. In Revelation, John sees the New Jerusalem and declares:

“Now the dwelling of God is with men, and He will live with them. They will be His people, and God Himself will be with them and be their God.”

The story comes full circle.

From Eden, to Tabernacle, to temple, to Christ, to the Church, to eternity – God’s desire has always been to dwell with His people.

And His invitation remains:

Build your life around Me. Obey My Word. Welcome My presence.

Let your heart be My home.

C) Reflective Thinking Questions

For Younger Students (Years 7–8):

1. What did the Israelites build in the wilderness, and why?
2. What kinds of things were inside the Tabernacle?
3. How did the Tabernacle show that God was with His people?
4. What does this story teach us about obeying God?

For Middle Students (Year 9):

1. Why do you think God gave such specific instructions for building the Tabernacle?
2. What do the furnishings in the Tabernacle symbolise?
3. How was the Tabernacle different from temples of other ancient nations?
4. What does it mean that Jesus “tabernacled” among us?

For Older Students (Year 10):

1. In what ways did the Tabernacle represent both access and limitation?
 2. How does the structure of the Tabernacle point to Jesus' life and ministry?
 3. Discuss the difference between approaching God on our terms versus His terms.
 4. How can we prepare our hearts to be a place where God dwells?
-

D) Activity Options

Option 1: Hands-on Practical – “Model of the Tabernacle”

- Construct a 3D model of the Tabernacle using cardboard, paper, fabric, or other craft materials. Include labelled sections: Outer Court, Holy Place, Most Holy Place, Altar, Basin, Lampstand, Table of Bread, Ark of the Covenant.
- **Extension (Years 9–10):** Create a scale drawing and annotate how each section reflects God’s character or plan of redemption.

Option 2: Creative – “Tabernacle Devotion Journal”

- Write a personal reflection for each area of the Tabernacle. For example:
 - Bronze Altar – confessing sin
 - Basin – being cleansed
 - Lampstand – living in the light
 - Bread – trusting in God’s provision
 - Incense – offering prayer
 - Veil – drawing near through Christ
- **Extension (Years 9–10):** Turn your reflections into a written or video devotional presentation.

Option 3: Dramatization – “Worship in the Wilderness”

- Re-enact the construction and dedication of the Tabernacle. Assign roles: Moses, Bezalel, Aaron, Priests, Israelites. Include scriptural quotes and the cloud descending in dramatic form.
 - **Extension (Years 9–10):** Add a scene where Jesus enters the temple and declares Himself the fulfilment of God’s presence.
-

E) Biblical Connection

The Tabernacle was more than a tent – it was a visual promise that God wanted to dwell with His people. But His presence required holiness. Sacrifice, cleansing, and obedience were the means by which sinful people could draw near to a holy God.

Jesus fulfilled every element of the Tabernacle. He became our sacrifice, our light, our bread, our high priest. Through Him, the curtain was torn. We now enter God’s presence not with fear, but with confidence (Hebrews 4:16).

We are now the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19). God doesn’t dwell in tents anymore. He dwells in us.

F) Narration Activity

Narration Activity:

Ask your parent or tutor to listen while you retell the story of the Tabernacle.

Include what it looked like, what it symbolised, and how it pointed forward to Jesus.

If you are in Years 9–10, reflect aloud:

“What does it mean that my life is now a temple of the Holy Spirit?”

Lesson 8 – Rebellion & Wandering

Theme: Obedience in the Wilderness

Australian Curriculum v9 Content Descriptions

- **History – AC9HH7K01:** Describe the roles and achievements of significant individuals and groups in ancient societies, including the influence of law, religion, and belief systems.
 - **History – AC9HH7K02:** Explain the causes and effects of events and developments in ancient societies.
 - **History – AC9HH7K03:** Describe the social, political, and cultural features of ancient societies.
 - **History – AC9HH7K04:** Explain the significance of heritage sites and cultural practices in ancient societies.
 - **History – AC9HH8K01:** Analyse the roles of significant individuals or groups and how they contributed to change.
 - **Geography – AC9HG8K03:** Explain how human actions influence the environmental characteristics of places.
 - **Civics & Citizenship – AC9HC8S01:** Examine the responsibilities of individuals and groups in shaping communities and making decisions.
-

Lesson Objectives

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Describe the major episodes of rebellion during Israel’s 40 years in the wilderness.
 - Understand the link between disobedience, discipline, and God's ongoing guidance.
 - Recognise how the wilderness journey shaped a new generation of Israelites.
 - Apply the spiritual themes of faith, obedience, and perseverance to their own lives.
-

B) Informational Story – “Rebellion & Wandering”

The Tabernacle stood at the centre of the Israelite camp, and the cloud of God’s presence hovered above it. They had seen miracles. They had walked through parted seas. They had eaten bread from heaven. And yet, they grumbled.

Again.

The journey from Mount Sinai to the Promised Land should have taken just weeks. But it stretched into decades. Not because of distance, but disobedience.

It began with fear.

God told Moses to send twelve spies into Canaan – one from each tribe. They were to explore the land God had promised, the land flowing with milk and honey.

The spies returned with clusters of grapes so large they had to be carried on poles. They admitted the land was rich – but ten of them spread fear: “The people are giants. We are like grasshoppers in their eyes. We cannot conquer them.”

Only two – Joshua and Caleb – stood firm. “The LORD is with us,” they said. “Do not be afraid.”

But the people refused to listen.

They cried out. They accused Moses. They talked of appointing a new leader to take them back to Egypt.

Back to slavery.

God was grieved.

He had rescued them, fed them, led them, and still they would not trust Him. His judgment came swiftly: “Not one of this generation shall enter the land. They shall wander forty years in the wilderness – one year for each day the spies explored the land.”

Only Joshua and Caleb would live to enter the promise.

So, they wandered.

They camped. They moved. They followed the cloud. They buried their dead.

In that wilderness, rebellion continued. At Taberah, they complained about their hardships – so fire from the LORD burned at the edges of the camp.

At Kibroth Hattaavah, they cried for meat – so God sent quail in such abundance it became a curse. A plague broke out while the meat was still between their teeth.

At Hazeroth, Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses out of jealousy. God struck Miriam with leprosy. Only Moses’ prayer saved her.

At Kadesh, there was no water. The people quarrelled again. God told Moses, “Speak to the rock.” But Moses, angry and weary, struck it twice instead. Water gushed out – but Moses had disobeyed.

For this, even Moses would not enter the Promised Land.

Then came Korah’s rebellion. He, along with Dathan, Abiram, and 250 leaders, challenged Moses’ authority. “You’ve gone too far,” they said. “All the people are holy. Why do you exalt yourselves?”

Moses fell face down.

The next day, God gave a sign: the earth split open beneath Korah and his followers. They fell into the ground alive, and fire consumed the rest.

Still, the people grumbled.

That day, 14,700 died in a plague – only stopped by Aaron standing between the dead and the living, with a censer of incense.

Rebellion after rebellion. Complaint after complaint.

Yet every morning, the manna appeared. Every evening, the cloud glowed. God remained with them.

And slowly, a new generation grew up – children of the wilderness. They did not remember Egypt. They learned to follow. They buried their parents. They learned obedience.

The wilderness became a place of shaping.

At its heart, the story is not just about wandering. It is about the danger of unbelief. God had promised – but they had not obeyed.

And so, what should have been a season became a lifetime.

Even in judgment, God was faithful. He provided. He protected. He disciplined, but He did not abandon.

And in the end, when the old generation was gone, God led the new one to the edge of the Jordan.

Forty years later, they would enter the land.

But the lessons of the wilderness would remain.

The wilderness became a mirror. It reflected what was in the people's hearts – not just their hunger, but their fears, their faithlessness, their forgetfulness.

God had given them laws, leaders, and a visible sign of His presence. Yet in every trial, they forgot what He had done. Each complaint revealed a deeper resistance to trust.

When the spies returned with their report, the people stood on the edge of the land God had promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. They saw the vineyards, the fortresses, the Canaanites. But they did not see God.

This was not just fear – it was rebellion. It was the refusal to believe that the same God who brought them out of Egypt could bring them into Canaan.

That is why God judged so severely.

To rebel in the face of such mercy is to harden the heart. And hardened hearts must be broken if they are to be healed.

As the years stretched on, the wilderness became their teacher.

There were no supermarkets, no wells, no cities. Every day was a test of dependence. Every morning they gathered manna – just enough for the day. On the sixth day, they gathered twice as much. On the seventh, they rested. It was a rhythm of obedience.

They learned to pack up camp when the cloud lifted – and to wait when it stayed. They learned to look to Moses, not as a perfect leader, but as a man chosen by God.

And slowly, they changed.

The new generation was circumcised in the wilderness, raised on manna, trained by repetition. They did not build pyramids. They built tents. They did not follow Pharaoh. They followed the cloud.

God's judgment was not rejection. It was refinement.

Even the punishments carried grace. When fiery serpents struck the camp, and many were dying, the people cried out. God told Moses to make a bronze serpent and lift it on a pole. Whoever looked at it would live. No ritual. No payment. Just faith.

Jesus would later say, "Just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up..."

In every rebellion, there was also redemption.

At Mount Hor, Aaron died. Moses removed his priestly garments and placed them on Eleazar, his son. The priesthood continued. God's promises endured.

They defeated enemies – Sihon and Og, kings of the Amorites. They saw Balaam, the pagan prophet, hired to curse them, yet speak only blessings. God was protecting them even when they didn't know.

By the time they reached Moab, across from Jericho, the new generation was different. They had not seen the Red Sea, but they had seen the wilderness. They had not built the golden calf, but they had buried those who did.

And now they were ready.

Moses, old and weathered, climbed a mountain and looked out over the land. He would not enter. But he had obeyed. He had interceded. He had walked with God.

The story of the wilderness was not a story of failure. It was a story of forming.

And in the New Testament, it becomes a pattern.

Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 10 that the wilderness journey was written for our instruction: "These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us..."

The book of Hebrews picks up this theme. Chapters 3 and 4 warn believers not to harden their hearts as the Israelites did in the wilderness. "They were not able to enter because of unbelief," it says. The promise of entering God's rest still stands – but it must be met with faith and obedience.

The wilderness is not just a place on a map. It is a spiritual condition – a season of testing, of waiting, of trusting when nothing makes sense.

Every believer walks through wilderness seasons. Times of dryness. Times of uncertainty. Times when we feel God's silence more than His presence.

And in those seasons, the call is the same: Do not turn back. Do not harden your heart. Do not stop trusting the One who leads.

Obedience in the wilderness is not glamorous. It is daily. It is repetitive. It is faith without fireworks. But it is here that character is formed.

Jesus, too, was tested in the wilderness. For forty days He fasted, and Satan tempted Him with shortcuts. But He obeyed. Where Israel failed, Jesus succeeded. And now, He walks with us through our wilderness.

The story of Israel's rebellion is a warning – but it is also an invitation.

You may feel like you are wandering. But God is still providing. Still speaking. Still forming something holy in you.

The cloud still leads. The manna still falls. The Word still speaks.

And the promised land still lies ahead.

Let us not grow weary. Let us not lose heart. Let us learn from the wilderness, and walk forward in obedience.

For those who endure, there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God.

And the lesson of the wilderness remains:

Obedience may feel costly, but disobedience costs far more.

C) Reflective Thinking Questions

For Younger Students (Years 7–8):

1. What did the people of Israel complain about in the wilderness?
2. How did God respond to their disobedience?
3. What did the Israelites learn during their wandering?
4. What does this story teach you about trusting God?

For Middle Students (Year 9):

1. Why did God prevent an entire generation from entering the Promised Land?
2. What role did Moses play during the years of wandering?
3. What were the lessons behind the bronze serpent and the manna?
4. How does obedience build trust in difficult times?

For Older Students (Year 10):

1. In what ways did the wilderness journey expose the condition of the people's hearts?
 2. What does Hebrews 3–4 teach about spiritual “rest” and obedience?
 3. How can Christians today endure wilderness seasons faithfully?
 4. Reflect on the statement: “Obedience may feel costly, but disobedience costs far more.”
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D) Activity Options

Option 1: Hands-on Practical – “Wilderness Journey Map”

- Draw or trace a map showing the route of the Israelites from Egypt to the edge of the Promised Land. Label key locations (e.g. Sinai, Kadesh, Moab).
- Annotate the map with short notes about events that happened at each site.
- **Extension (Years 9–10):** Include Bible references and reflect on what each location taught Israel about obedience.

Option 2: Creative – “Journal of a Wilderness Child”

- Write a fictional journal from the perspective of a child who grew up in the wilderness. Describe what they saw, learned, and how they felt about God's presence and the elders' disobedience.
- Include personal prayers or reflections about trusting God.
- **Extension (Years 9–10):** End the journal with crossing the Jordan River and reflecting on the lessons of the past.

Option 3: Dramatization – “The Voice of the Wilderness”

- Create a dramatic presentation of one of the key rebellion events (e.g. the spies’ report, Korah’s uprising, Moses striking the rock).
 - Include a narrator, a few main characters, and a reflective monologue at the end explaining what was learned.
 - **Extension (Years 9–10):** Add a parallel scene of a modern Christian struggling with faith, and how the wilderness story provides perspective.
-

E) Biblical Connection

The wilderness was not a punishment alone – it was a place of discipline, shaping, and mercy. God remained with His people, even in their rebellion. He provided food, water, guidance, and correction.

The New Testament teaches that the wilderness journey is a picture of the Christian life. Hebrews 3–4 urges believers not to harden their hearts as the Israelites did, but to enter God’s rest through faith and obedience. Jesus Himself was tested in the wilderness – and succeeded where Israel failed.

Obedience is not always easy – but it is the pathway to growth and blessing.

F) Narration Activity

Narration Activity:

Ask your parent or tutor to listen while you retell the story of the Israelites’ rebellion and wandering in your own words.

Include the key events, the lessons learned, and how God remained faithful.

If you are in Years 9–10, reflect aloud:

“What does it mean to stay obedient when I feel like I’m in a wilderness season?”

Lesson 9 – The Bronze Snake

Theme: Obedience and Healing through Faith

Australian Curriculum v9 Content Descriptions

- **History – AC9HH7K01:** Describe the roles and achievements of significant individuals and groups in ancient societies, including the influence of law, religion, and belief systems.
 - **History – AC9HH7K02:** Explain the causes and effects of events and developments in ancient societies.
 - **History – AC9HH7K03:** Describe the social, political, and cultural features of ancient societies.
 - **History – AC9HH7K04:** Explain the significance of heritage sites and cultural practices in ancient societies.
 - **History – AC9HH8K01:** Analyse the roles of significant individuals or groups and how they contributed to change.
 - **Civics & Citizenship – AC9HC8S01:** Examine the responsibilities of individuals and groups in shaping communities and making decisions.
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Lesson Objectives

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Describe the biblical event of the bronze serpent and its significance in Israel’s wilderness journey.
 - Explain the connection between the bronze serpent and Jesus’ teaching in John 3.
 - Reflect on the relationship between obedience, faith, and healing.
 - Apply the spiritual principle of “looking to Christ” in response to sin and brokenness.
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B) Informational Story – “The Bronze Snake”

The wilderness had become familiar. The people of Israel knew the dry heat, the wandering, the daily manna. They had journeyed for decades now, and the new generation – children of the desert – were drawing near the edge of the Promised Land.

But old habits die hard.

As they travelled from Mount Hor by the route to the Red Sea, the people grew impatient. The land was harsh. The way was long. And once again, their hearts turned sour.

They spoke against God and Moses. “Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the desert? There is no bread! There is no water! And we detest this miserable food!”

The “miserable food” they spoke of was manna – heaven’s bread, God’s gift.

But they were tired of it. Tired of the routine. Tired of the waiting. Tired of trusting.

And then it happened.

Fiery serpents came among them – venomous snakes that slithered into tents, under blankets, around ankles. They struck swiftly. The camp was filled with screams. People fell sick. Some died.

Terror spread.

The people came to Moses. This time, they didn’t grumble – they confessed.

“We sinned,” they said, “when we spoke against the LORD and against you. Pray that the LORD will take the snakes away.”

Moses prayed.

But God’s solution was unexpected.

“Make a serpent,” He said. “Fashion it from bronze and mount it on a pole. Anyone who is bitten can look at it and live.”

So, Moses crafted a serpent – its coils curled, its mouth open, cast in metal and lifted high. He set it where all could see. And then he waited.

As the people were bitten, they looked. Some weak, some gasping, some on the edge of death – yet all who looked were healed.

Not by medicine. Not by ritual. Not by effort. But by faith.

God had not removed the serpents. He had not prevented the bite. But He had provided a cure – and it required obedience and trust.

It was a strange thing – a snake, the symbol of judgment, now lifted high as the sign of healing.

The people had known fear before – at the Red Sea, at Sinai, during the rebellion of Korah. But this fear was different. It crept under their skin. It turned to fever, swelling, pain. It robbed breath. And as loved ones fell to the sand, poisoned and lifeless, the gravity of their rebellion struck deep.

For once, they did not blame. They did not scheme. They did not fight Moses’ leadership. They repented.

The sound of their confession – “We have sinned” – was rare. In the history of their wandering, few moments stand out with such clarity of humility.

Moses, always the intercessor, lifted his voice in prayer. He who had stood between the living and the dead before now stood again. But the answer was not what he or the people expected.

Make a bronze serpent? Look at it?

Surely, the people thought, God would just take away the snakes. Surely, He would snap His fingers and end the plague.

But God’s ways are not our ways.

He wanted them to do more than survive. He wanted them to understand.

The snakes were not just a punishment. They were a mirror. A symbol. A reminder that sin bites, that rebellion has consequences, that healing is a choice.

Moses obeyed.

With hammer and heat, he shaped the metal. He crafted not a symbol of power or triumph, but of pain and poison. And then he lifted it high.

The people gathered, wounded and limping, eyes fixed on the impossible. Could looking really be enough?

Yes.

Because the point was not the bronze. It was the obedience. The trust. The turning of eyes from pain to promise.

Each glance was a silent prayer: “I believe.”

And as they looked, they lived.

The story passed down through generations. Parents told their children. Scribes copied the scrolls. And still, it puzzled many. Why a serpent? Why healing through something so strange?

Until Jesus explained it.

Centuries later, in the darkness of a Jerusalem night, a Pharisee named Nicodemus came to Jesus with questions.

And Jesus said:

“Just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that everyone who believes in Him may have eternal life.” (John 3:14–15)

The cross, too, would look strange. A place of death, now the source of life. A place of shame, now a throne of mercy.

Jesus was not merely executed. He was lifted. Displayed. Offered.

He took sin into Himself. The venom. The curse. And all who look to Him – not with eyes, but with faith – are healed.

Not of snakebites, but of sin. Not for a season, but forever.

Faith is still the path to healing.

We don’t lift bronze today. We lift the cross.

And when we confess, when we turn our gaze to Jesus, when we believe that His death is our life – we are saved.

Not by effort. Not by earning. But by grace through faith.

The Israelites had to choose. So do we.

And when we do, the poison loses its power.

Today, many people still feel the sting of the serpent – though not from reptiles in the sand. The venom of sin winds its way through thoughts, relationships, choices. Guilt infects the heart. Regret parches the soul. Some try to ignore it. Others run from it. Still others medicate the pain with distraction or denial.

But the cure remains the same.

Lift your eyes.

Look to the One who was lifted high, not in silver or bronze, but in flesh and blood. The One who bore not the symbol of sin, but sin itself. The One who bled so we could live.

In churches across the world, crosses stand above altars. On necks. In stained glass. On hilltops. But none of these hold power in themselves. The power is in what they represent – the sacrifice of the Lamb, the obedience of the Son, the grace of the Father.

We do not need to earn healing. We need to believe.

But belief is not passive. To believe is to look – to turn from our sin, to confess our need, to fix our gaze on Christ.

This is obedience.

Jesus did not say, “Fix yourself.” He said, “Follow Me.”

Healing comes through honesty. Freedom comes through faith.

And when we look to Him, as the Israelites looked at the bronze serpent, something shifts. The venom begins to fade. Hope returns. Breath deepens. Peace replaces panic.

God did not remove the snakes – but He removed the power of death.

He does the same today.

We may still live in a fallen world. We may still feel the sting of brokenness. But in Christ, we are not defeated. We are not alone. We are not condemned.

The bronze serpent was a shadow. The cross is the substance.

And just as Moses lifted it high, so now we lift high the name of Jesus – not in metal, but in message. Not in poles, but in proclamation.

Look to Him, and live.

The lesson of the bronze snake is simple but eternal:

Obedience opens the way.

Faith brings the healing.

And God, in mercy, makes a way where there is none.

C) Reflective Thinking Questions

For Younger Students (Years 7–8):

1. Why were the Israelites attacked by snakes in the wilderness?
2. What did God tell Moses to do to help the people?
3. What happened when the people looked at the bronze snake?
4. What does this story tell us about trusting God?

For Middle Students (Year 9):

1. Why didn't God simply remove the snakes from the camp?
2. What made the bronze serpent an act of both obedience and faith?
3. How does this story point forward to Jesus on the cross?
4. What is the difference between looking at something and believing in it?

For Older Students (Year 10):

1. Why is the bronze serpent considered both a symbol of judgment and salvation?
 2. How does Jesus use this story to teach about His crucifixion in John 3?
 3. In what ways does faith in Christ parallel the Israelites' act of looking at the bronze snake?
 4. How does the lesson of this story apply to personal experiences of sin, confession, and spiritual healing?
-

D) Activity Options

Option 1: Hands-on Practical – “Bronze Serpent Banner”

- Create a visual banner or hanging artwork of the bronze serpent on the pole. Use materials like paper, rope, wire, foil, or cardboard.
- Add a short written reflection or Scripture (e.g. John 3:14–15) to explain its meaning.
- **Extension (Years 9–10):** Display two sides – one showing the event in Numbers 21, the other showing Jesus on the cross as fulfilment.

Option 2: Creative – “Healing Through Obedience Journal”

- Write a personal reflection imagining you were in the Israelite camp when the serpents came.
- Describe your fear, your decision to look at the bronze snake, and what healing felt like.
- **Extension (Years 9–10):** Conclude with a comparison between that moment and a modern experience of looking to Christ in faith.

Option 3: Dramatization – “Look and Live!”

- Re-enact the event of the bronze serpent with roles: Israelites, Moses, God's voice (narrator), and a small group representing the crowd.
 - Show both rebellion and repentance, and end with a powerful visual of healing.
 - **Extension (Years 9–10):** Include a scene where Jesus explains the bronze serpent to Nicodemus in John 3.
-

E) Biblical Connection

The story of the bronze serpent reveals that God's healing often requires a response of obedience and faith. Looking at a snake on a pole made no logical sense – but it was what God commanded. It revealed the heart of trust.

In John 3:14–15, Jesus said:

“Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, that everyone who believes may have eternal life in Him.”

The cross, like the serpent, is a place of both judgment and salvation. Jesus bore the penalty of our sin, so that all who look to Him in faith might live – eternally.

F) Narration Activity

Narration Activity:

Ask your parent or tutor to listen while you retell the story of the bronze serpent and its meaning.

Include the Israelites’ sin, the serpents, the bronze image, and the lesson of looking in faith.

If you are in Years 9–10, reflect aloud:

“How does the story of the bronze serpent help me understand what it means to trust in Jesus when I’ve failed?”

TOPIC 4

MOVING INTO THE PROMISED LAND

Lesson 10 – Moses’ Final Words & Joshua Crosses the Jordan

Theme: Obedience in Transition and Inheritance

Australian Curriculum v9 Content Descriptions

- **History – AC9HH7K01:** Describe the roles and achievements of significant individuals and groups in ancient societies, including the influence of law, religion, and belief systems.
- **History – AC9HH7K02:** Explain the causes and effects of events and developments in ancient societies.
- **History – AC9HH7K03:** Describe the social, political, and cultural features of ancient societies.
- **History – AC9HH7K04:** Explain the significance of heritage sites and cultural practices in ancient societies.
- **History – AC9HH8K01:** Analyse the roles of significant individuals or groups and how they contributed to change.
- **Geography – AC9HG8K01:** Describe how the characteristics of places are perceived and valued differently.
- **Civics & Citizenship – AC9HC8S01:** Examine the responsibilities of individuals and groups in shaping communities and making decisions.

Lesson Objectives

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Describe the final moments of Moses’ leadership and the transition to Joshua.
- Explain the significance of crossing the Jordan River into the Promised Land.
- Understand the spiritual symbolism of obedience, inheritance, and faith in leadership.
- Apply the lessons of courage, memory, and trust in their own experiences of transition.

B) Informational Story – “Moses’ Final Words & Joshua Crosses the Jordan”

The sun hung low in the sky, casting long shadows over the dusty hills of Moab. The Israelites had reached the edge of the Promised Land. The journey had taken forty years – years of wandering, warning, and wonder.

Now they stood at the threshold.

But Moses would not cross.

God had told him so. Because of one moment of disobedience – striking the rock instead of speaking to it – Moses, the servant of the LORD, would see the land from a distance but not enter it.

Still, he led them one last time.

Moses climbed Mount Nebo, alone. Below him, the plains of Moab stretched out. Ahead lay Canaan – green and golden, dotted with towns and fields and forests. The Jordan River glimmered like a ribbon of light. He could see Jericho in the distance, its walls rising from the plain.

And God said, “This is the land I promised on oath to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. I have let you see it with your eyes, but you will not cross into it.”

Moses did not argue.

He had walked with God for eighty years – from the burning bush to Pharaoh’s palace, through parted seas and flaming mountains, with stone tablets and trembling hands. He had carried the burdens of a rebellious people and stood in the gap when God threatened to destroy them.

Now his task was finished.

But before he died, he spoke.

Gathering the people, Moses gave a farewell address – a series of sermons, prayers, and blessings now known as the book of Deuteronomy.

“Remember the LORD your God,” he told them. “He led you through the wilderness. He fed you with manna. He tested your hearts.”

He recited the law again, reminding them of the covenant. He warned them not to forget. Not to grow proud. Not to turn to idols.

“Choose life,” he pleaded. “So that you and your children may live... For the LORD is your life.”

Then Moses laid his hands on Joshua.

“Be strong and courageous,” he said. “For you must go with this people into the land. The LORD Himself goes before you. He will never leave you nor forsake you.”

And Moses, the prophet, the deliverer, the friend of God, went up the mountain and died.

No one knows where his body was laid. The Scriptures say that God Himself buried him.

But the people wept for thirty days.

Then came Joshua.

He had been Moses’ assistant – faithful, brave, devoted. One of the original spies who had believed when others had feared. Now, the mantle of leadership fell on him.

The LORD spoke to Joshua: “Moses My servant is dead. Now you and all these people get ready to cross the Jordan into the land I am about to give them.”

So, Joshua prepared.

The people consecrated themselves. The priests carried the Ark of the Covenant, and the tribes gathered by the river.

It was the season of flood. The waters of the Jordan ran swift and deep. But God would make a way.

As the priests stepped into the river, the waters stopped. Far upstream, the flow piled up in a heap. The riverbed dried, and the people crossed over – on dry ground.

Twelve men, one from each tribe, took stones from the riverbed and placed them on the other side as a memorial.

At last, they were in the land of promise.

As Moses stood before the people, he didn't just repeat the law – he wove it into the story of their lives. He reminded them of where they had come from and warned them of where they could go wrong. He recalled how God had carried them, “as a father carries his son,” through deserts of doubt and mountains of mercy.

He was not bitter. He was not afraid. He was full of holy urgency.

“You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your strength,” he said. “These words shall be on your hearts. Teach them to your children. Talk of them at home and on the road. Bind them to your hands and your foreheads.”

He spoke of blessings for obedience – abundant harvests, strong cities, peace. And curses for rebellion – famine, defeat, exile.

Moses knew the hearts of the people. He had seen them turn too easily, too quickly. But he also believed in the faithfulness of God.

At the end of his address, Moses sang a song – a song of warning and hope, of judgment and mercy. He blessed each of the twelve tribes, speaking destiny over their futures.

Then Moses turned and climbed Mount Nebo.

He breathed the mountain air. He saw the promise. And there, with no audience, no monument, no crown – only the smile of his God – he died.

His legacy was not in stone or scrolls. It was in people. A nation. A movement of faith. And one young leader, chosen to continue the journey.

Joshua had watched, listened, waited. Now, with Moses gone, the weight of responsibility settled on his shoulders. He could feel the eyes of the nation. He could feel the size of the task.

But God's words rang clear:

“Be strong and courageous... Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth. Meditate on it day and night... for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go.”

And Joshua believed.

He sent two spies into Jericho, a fortified city just across the river. They were hidden by Rahab, a woman of courage and faith, who would one day be named in the genealogy of Christ.

When the spies returned, Joshua moved quickly. He called the people to consecrate themselves – to be clean, to be ready. They were about to witness a miracle.

The Jordan River, swollen with spring rains, roared in its channel. But the priests carried the Ark forward. As their feet touched the water, the current halted. The river stood still.

The people crossed in silence and wonder.

When the last foot stepped onto dry land, the river returned.

Joshua took the twelve stones and built a memorial. “When your children ask what these stones mean,” he said, “tell them how the LORD cut off the waters of the Jordan... so that all the peoples of the earth might know that the hand of the LORD is powerful.”

As the dust settled on the far side of the river, a hush came over the camp.

They had entered the land of promise – but not yet the land of possession. Battles lay ahead. Cities to conquer. Foes to face. But the greatest threshold had already been crossed.

It was more than a river. It was a moment of transformation. A generation who had been wilderness-born was now promise-bound. They had known the discipline of God. Now they would know His deliverance.

The crossing of the Jordan marked more than geography. It was a spiritual shift. They had moved from wandering to inheritance, from waiting to fulfilling.

Joshua knew what lay ahead. He knew the strength of Jericho's walls, the cunning of the Canaanite kings, the uncertainty of war. But he also knew something greater: the LORD was with them.

And so he knelt and prayed. The people set up their tents. The Ark rested in their midst. And the stones stood tall – a reminder of God's power, God's promise, and the obedience that made both visible.

Moses had prepared them well. Not with military strategies, but with truth. With commandments. With the memory of mercy.

He had taught them that leadership is not about power, but about presence. Not about control, but about faithfulness.

And Joshua learned.

He did not try to be Moses. He did not rewrite the law. He walked in the path set before him, strong and courageous, obedient and humble.

The land before them was a gift – but it would take obedience to claim it.

The same is true today.

We often stand at the edge of God's promises – freedom, peace, purpose – but hesitate to cross. We fear the river. We doubt our strength. We forget that God goes before us.

But the story of Moses and Joshua reminds us:

Faith prepares the heart.

Obedience opens the way.

And courage steps into the water before the miracle comes.

The same God who parted the sea, who stopped the river, who led by fire and cloud, still calls His people to follow.

He does not promise comfort. But He promises presence.

He does not promise ease. But He promises strength.

And when the path is unclear, His Word is the lamp.

As we look back on Moses and forward with Joshua, we see the same thread: God is faithful. And those who walk in obedience – though they may not see the full promise – will never walk alone.

The baton has passed. The journey continues. And the river, though wide, will part for those who trust in the LORD.

C) Reflective Thinking Questions

For Younger Students (Years 7–8):

1. Why was Moses not allowed to enter the Promised Land?
2. What did Moses say to encourage the people before he died?
3. What happened when the Israelites crossed the Jordan River?
4. What can we learn about trusting God from Joshua's story?

For Middle Students (Year 9):

1. How did Moses prepare the people before he died?
2. Why did God choose Joshua as the next leader?
3. What role did the Ark of the Covenant play in crossing the river?
4. What does it mean that “obedience is the bridge” to receiving God's promises?

For Older Students (Year 10):

1. How does the transition from Moses to Joshua teach us about leadership and succession?
 2. What is the spiritual significance of crossing the Jordan River?
 3. How do God's promises, our faith, and our obedience work together in seasons of change?
 4. Reflect on a time when you had to step out in faith. What helped you move forward?
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D) Activity Options

Option 1: Hands-on Practical – “Twelve Stones Memorial”

- Gather twelve natural stones or draw them on paper. Label each stone with a word or phrase representing one of God's promises or past acts of faithfulness.
- Arrange them in a circle or stack them in a symbolic shape as a personal or family reminder.
- **Extension (Years 9–10):** Write a reflective paragraph about what these memorials mean and how they can strengthen faith during change.

Option 2: Creative – “Farewell Speech of a Leader”

- Write or perform a fictional farewell speech as if you were Moses passing on leadership. Speak to your people, reflect on past lessons, and give final encouragements.
- Include references to God's promises, laws, and guidance.
- **Extension (Years 9–10):** Compare your speech to Jesus' farewell discourse in John 13–17.

Option 3: Dramatization – “Crossing the Jordan”

- Re-enact the preparation and crossing of the Jordan River. Include roles: Joshua, the priests, the Ark carriers, elders, and children.
 - Use narration and actions to show both obedience and emotion.
 - **Extension (Years 9–10):** Add a scene of reflection by Joshua on Moses’ influence and the future ahead.
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E) Biblical Connection

Moses’ final words were not words of bitterness or regret, but of challenge and hope. He called the people to remember, obey, and love the LORD with all their hearts. Though he did not enter the land, he faithfully handed leadership to Joshua, who would lead with courage.

The crossing of the Jordan was a defining act of obedience. It marked a move from wandering to promise. God did not remove the river – He stopped it when the priests stepped in.

Jesus, like Moses, prepared His followers with words, prayers, and promises. And like Joshua, He leads us into God’s kingdom, calling us to trust, obey, and go forward.

F) Narration Activity

Narration Activity:

Ask your parent or tutor to listen while you retell the story of Moses’ final moments and Joshua’s first acts of leadership.

Explain what happened on Mount Nebo and at the Jordan River, and why these moments mattered.

If you are in Years 9–10, reflect aloud:

“How can I prepare for the next season of my life with courage and obedience, just like Joshua?”

Lesson 11 – The Fall of Jericho

Theme: Obedience in Faith and Spiritual Warfare

Australian Curriculum v9 Content Descriptions

- **History – AC9HH7K01:** Describe the roles and achievements of significant individuals and groups in ancient societies, including the influence of law, religion, and belief systems.
 - **History – AC9HH7K02:** Explain the causes and effects of events and developments in ancient societies.
 - **History – AC9HH7K03:** Describe the social, political, and cultural features of ancient societies.
 - **History – AC9HH7K04:** Explain the significance of heritage sites and cultural practices in ancient societies.
 - **History – AC9HH8K01:** Analyse the roles of significant individuals or groups and how they contributed to change.
 - **Geography – AC9HG8K03:** Explain how human actions influence the environmental characteristics of places.
 - **Civics & Citizenship – AC9HC8S01:** Examine the responsibilities of individuals and groups in shaping communities and making decisions.
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Lesson Objectives

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Describe the fall of Jericho and the unique strategy God gave His people.
 - Reflect on the spiritual significance of obedience and faith in achieving God’s purposes.
 - Understand how the story of Jericho relates to Christian faith, spiritual battles, and trust in God.
 - Discuss the role of individuals such as Joshua and Rahab in God’s unfolding plan.
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B) Informational Story – “The Fall of Jericho”

The sun had barely risen over the plains of Jericho. In the golden morning light, the city’s walls cast long shadows – thick, tall, and seemingly impenetrable. Inside the city, fear gripped the hearts of its people. Rumours had reached them: the Israelites had crossed the Jordan River on dry ground. The God who parted seas and defeated kings was coming.

Jericho was fortified like a fortress. Its double walls were wide enough for chariots to ride across. From its towers, soldiers could see for miles. And now they saw something strange – an army not preparing siege engines, not raising weapons, but walking.

Led by Joshua, the Israelites marched in silence.

At the front were the priests, carrying trumpets of ram’s horns. Behind them came others bearing the Ark of the Covenant – the throne of the invisible God. And behind them, the army of Israel, marching in total silence.

Around the city once, then back to camp.

No arrows fired. No commands shouted. Just the shofar’s blast echoing off stone.

The people of Jericho watched in dread. What kind of warfare was this?

For six days, the Israelites repeated the ritual: march once around, sound the trumpet, then return. Each day, the routine remained. And each night, the city slept more uneasily.

On the seventh day, something changed.

At dawn, the Israelite camp stirred early. This time, instead of one circuit, they marched around the city seven times. The priests blew the trumpets continually. Tension rose with each lap.

And then Joshua raised his hand.

“Shout!” he commanded, “For the LORD has given you the city!”

And they shouted.

A sound like thunder rolled across the valley. Trumpets blared, voices cried, and the ground seemed to tremble.

The walls of Jericho fell flat.

No siege towers. No battering rams. No human strength. Only obedience. Only faith.

The army charged straight in, every man as directed. Jericho was defeated.

Only Rahab and her family were spared. The spies had kept their word. A red cord still hung in her window – the sign of her faith, the mark of mercy.

Joshua declared that the city was under a ban. All silver, gold, bronze, and iron were to be set apart for the LORD’s treasury. Nothing else was to be taken. No spoils. No plunder. It was the LORD’s victory, not man’s.

And so Jericho fell – not by force, but by faith.

God had promised the land. But the people had to obey. They had to trust a plan that made no military sense. They had to walk, to wait, to shout when told.

The lesson was clear: victory belongs to the LORD.

Joshua stood on a rise just outside the city, watching the dawn mist rise from the valley. He had spent the night alone in prayer, seeking the LORD’s guidance. He remembered the weight of Moses’ hand upon his shoulder, the words of encouragement, the call to be strong and courageous. But now the task was his.

The day before, he had encountered a figure with a drawn sword – an angel, a commander of the armies of heaven. Joshua had fallen facedown and asked, “Are you for us or for our enemies?” The angel had replied, “Neither... but as commander of the LORD’s army I have now come.” Joshua had removed his sandals. He was standing on holy ground.

The battle plan was not Joshua’s. It came from the LORD Himself. And it was unlike anything any warrior had known.

The priests were to blow trumpets, not sound war cries. The people were to march, not charge. They were to circle a city for a week, then shout.

And they obeyed.

Some soldiers likely felt uneasy. What kind of war was this? Would they look foolish? Would the enemy mock? Yet they said nothing. Joshua had commanded silence. And so in reverent stillness, they obeyed.

Inside the city, Rahab waited. Her home was built into the wall itself. She had hidden the Israelite spies, lied to the king's men, and sent the scouts away safely. In return, they had sworn to protect her and her household. She had tied the red cord in the window – an echo of the blood that had once marked the Israelite homes in Egypt.

Rahab had heard the stories – of the Red Sea, of the wilderness, of the manna and miracles. She believed. And now she waited, trembling in faith.

Each day as the Israelites circled, she counted the laps. On the seventh day, when they did not return after one lap, she knew – this was the day.

The seventh circuit ended. The trumpet blast was long and wild. The shout of the people rose like a storm. Rahab clutched her family's hands.

Then came the sound.

Stone upon stone crumbled. Walls that had stood for generations fell in an instant. Dust filled the air. Screams echoed. And Rahab's home – marked by faith – remained.

Joshua ordered the two spies to find her. They escorted Rahab, her parents, siblings, and all she owned out of the rubble. She would live among the Israelites for the rest of her days. Her faith had made her a daughter of God's promise.

Back in the city, the people obeyed Joshua's command. No one took personal gain. The riches of the city – its silver, gold, bronze, and iron – were gathered and consecrated to the LORD. Everything else was destroyed. The city was set apart, like a sacrifice.

Joshua pronounced a curse: whoever rebuilt Jericho would do so at great cost. The LORD had won this battle, and His glory would not be shared.

For Israel, Jericho was more than a military success. It was a spiritual act. Obedience had led to victory. God's presence had brought down the walls.

Long after the dust settled, Jericho remained a lesson. Not in strategy, but in surrender. Not in force, but in faith.

For centuries, people would tell the tale – not of swords or siege towers, but of walking, waiting, and worshipping.

They would remember how God's people circled in silence, how the Ark of the Covenant – the symbol of God's presence – led the way, and how obedience won the battle before the first stone fell.

And they would remember Rahab.

A Canaanite woman. A former prostitute. An unlikely heroine. But one who believed. One who acted in faith. Her home was saved, her life redeemed, and her name – unthinkable – was recorded in the genealogy of Jesus Christ (Matthew 1:5).

The walls of Jericho fell, but God was building something new: a people who walked by faith.

The lessons endure.

We, too, face walls – walls of fear, addiction, doubt, pride, grief. They stand tall, ancient, fortified by years of pain and failure. And sometimes, God calls us not to batter them down, but to walk. To wait. To trust.

Sometimes He calls us to silence. To worship. To obey.

And then, when the time is right, to shout.

Not a shout of human strength, but a cry of dependence. A declaration that the battle belongs to the LORD.

Jericho is a picture of spiritual warfare. The enemy is real. The walls are thick. But God is stronger. And victory comes not through cleverness or control, but through faith that obeys even when it doesn't understand.

The book of Hebrews says: "By faith the walls of Jericho fell, after the army had marched around them for seven days." (Hebrews 11:30)

Faith that walks.

Faith that waits.

Faith that obeys.

Faith that shouts.

In a world that exalts effort and results, Jericho calls us back to surrender.

To move when God says move.

To stop when He says stop.

To act even when we don't see immediate results.

And to remember that salvation is always His work.

When Jesus was lifted on the cross, the final wall – sin itself – crumbled. The veil tore. The grave opened. And like Rahab, all who take shelter under the promise are saved.

The battle is the LORD's. And the walls will fall.

All He asks is that we walk with Him.

C) Reflective Thinking Questions

For Younger Students (Years 7–8):

1. What did God tell the Israelites to do each day around the city of Jericho?
2. Why did the walls fall down when the Israelites shouted?
3. Who was saved from Jericho, and why?
4. What does this story teach us about trusting God even when we don't understand?

For Middle Students (Year 9):

1. Why was the battle plan for Jericho unusual? What was the spiritual purpose behind it?
2. How did Rahab show faith, and what happened because of her decision?
3. What was the significance of the Ark of the Covenant leading the people?
4. What can we learn about obedience from the way the Israelites followed God's instructions?

For Older Students (Year 10):

1. How does the fall of Jericho demonstrate the connection between faith, obedience, and divine power?
 2. Why do you think God instructed the Israelites not to take any spoils for themselves?
 3. In what ways does Rahab's story prefigure themes of salvation in the New Testament?
 4. Reflect on a 'wall' in your life. What would it mean to trust God to bring it down through obedience?
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D) Activity Options

Option 1: Hands-on Practical – “Jericho Wall Model”

- Build a physical model of the walls of Jericho using materials such as Lego, cardboard, sugar cubes, or wooden blocks.
- Recreate the seven-day march and the final shout, demonstrating how God brought the walls down.
- **Extension (Years 9–10):** Attach Scripture references or personal faith reflections to different parts of your model.

Option 2: Creative – “Rahab’s Cord: A Story of Faith”

- Write a first-person short story or poem from the perspective of Rahab.
- Explore her fear, her decision to hide the spies, and the moment the walls fell.
- **Extension (Years 9–10):** Include a reflective epilogue that links her story to being part of the lineage of Christ.

Option 3: Dramatization – “The Fall of Jericho”

- Recreate the week-long march with actors playing Joshua, priests, Rahab, soldiers, and citizens of Jericho.
 - Include narration that highlights the obedience and symbolism of each step.
 - **Extension (Years 9–10):** Add a second act showing a modern parallel about spiritual warfare or trusting God in difficult times.
-

E) Biblical Connection

Jericho was not won by military strength but by faithful obedience. The Israelites followed a divine strategy that seemed foolish to human eyes – but God's power was revealed through their trust and worship. The Ark of the Covenant symbolised God's presence, and Rahab's scarlet cord symbolised faith and mercy.

The book of Hebrews reminds us: “By faith the walls of Jericho fell...” (Hebrews 11:30). And Jesus, like Joshua, leads us into victory – not by human power, but through obedience, surrender, and spiritual courage.

F) Narration Activity

Narration Activity:

Ask your parent or tutor to listen while you retell the story of the fall of Jericho in your own words.

Include what God asked the people to do, how they obeyed, and what happened when they shouted.

If you are in Years 9–10, reflect aloud:

“Is there a ‘wall’ I’m trusting God to bring down in my life? What might obedience look like for me this week?”

Lesson 12 – The Sun Stands Still

Theme: Obedience and Bold Faith in Battle

Australian Curriculum v9 Content Descriptions

- **History – AC9HH7K01:** Describe the roles and achievements of significant individuals and groups in ancient societies, including the influence of law, religion, and belief systems.
 - **History – AC9HH7K02:** Explain the causes and effects of events and developments in ancient societies.
 - **History – AC9HH7K03:** Describe the social, political, and cultural features of ancient societies.
 - **History – AC9HH7K04:** Explain the significance of heritage sites and cultural practices in ancient societies.
 - **History – AC9HH8K01:** Analyse the roles of significant individuals or groups and how they contributed to change.
 - **Geography – AC9HG8K03:** Explain how human actions influence the environmental characteristics of places.
 - **Civics & Citizenship – AC9HC8S01:** Examine the responsibilities of individuals and groups in shaping communities and making decisions.
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Lesson Objectives

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Describe the events surrounding the battle at Gibeon and the miraculous halting of the sun.
 - Explain how Joshua’s prayer reflects bold faith and alignment with God’s purpose.
 - Reflect on the significance of God’s authority over nature and time.
 - Apply the lesson of bold, obedient prayer to spiritual and personal challenges today.
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B) Informational Story – “The Sun Stands Still”

The sun rose over Gibeon with the promise of war.

Five Amorite kings had joined forces, angered by Gibeon’s peace treaty with Israel. Their armies marched swiftly to punish the Gibeonites, hoping to crush their allegiance to Joshua before it could strengthen. Outnumbered and outmatched, Gibeon sent urgent messengers to the Israelite camp at Gilgal.

“Do not abandon your servants,” they pleaded. “Come up quickly and save us!”

Joshua didn’t hesitate.

He assembled his warriors and marched through the night, climbing steep paths under moonlight. The LORD had spoken clearly: “Do not be afraid of them; I have given them into your hand. Not one of them will be able to stand against you.”

At dawn, Israel attacked.

Surprise was their weapon. The Amorite coalition was thrown into confusion as Israel’s soldiers swept through their lines with strength and confidence.

But God was not finished.

As the enemy fled, the LORD sent a storm. Hailstones, large and deadly, pelted the retreating Amorite armies. Scripture records that more died from the hail than from the sword.

Still, the day wore on. The sun crept across the sky. Joshua knew that night would allow the enemy to escape.

And so, he prayed a prayer unlike any before or since.

“Sun, stand still over Gibeon! And moon, over the Valley of Aijalon!”

The people froze. The soldiers paused mid-battle. The enemy stumbled and looked up.

And the sun obeyed.

Time itself bowed to the command of God’s servant.

Scripture says: “There has never been a day like it before or since, a day when the LORD listened to a human being. Surely the LORD was fighting for Israel!”

The battle continued until complete victory was secured.

The five kings were captured, hiding in a cave at Makkedah. Joshua ordered the cave sealed. Later, he brought out the kings and had his commanders place their feet on their necks.

“Do not be afraid or discouraged,” he said. “Be strong and courageous. This is what the LORD will do to all the enemies you are going to fight.”

The kings were executed, and their bodies hung on trees until sunset as a warning. Then they were buried in the very cave where they had hidden.

Joshua continued the campaign, capturing cities, striking down enemy kings, and fulfilling the promise God had made to Abraham.

But it was the day the sun stood still that would be remembered above all.

Not because of Israel’s might.

But because one man believed God could do the impossible – and asked boldly for it.

Joshua’s prayer was not reckless. It was rooted in promise. God had said the enemy would fall. Joshua simply asked for more time to walk out that promise.

It was a moment of radical faith.

And God answered.

In a world of natural law and certainty, the sun paused. The moon delayed. Creation bent in obedience to its Creator.

Because one man dared to pray.

And all Israel remembered: the LORD fights for His people. He hears. He acts. He delivers.

Even the heavens obey Him.

Before the battle, tension filled the land of Canaan. Word of Israel's victories had spread quickly. The fall of Jericho and Ai had shaken the region, and then came the unexpected alliance – Gibeon, a powerful city with skilled warriors, had made peace with Joshua. Though it came through deception, the covenant stood, and Joshua honoured it.

The five Amorite kings – of Jerusalem, Hebron, Jarmuth, Lachish, and Eglon – saw this alliance as a threat. If Gibeon stood with Israel, their own cities might soon fall. So they formed a coalition, uniting armies that had once competed for power. Their goal: to destroy Gibeon and send a message to any other city considering alliance with Israel.

When the Gibeonites sent messengers, Joshua faced a test of leadership. Gibeon had tricked him into a treaty. But honouring his vow mattered more than pride. Israel's integrity was on the line.

Joshua responded without delay.

With confidence in God's word, he led his troops on a forced march through rugged terrain, climbing under the stars. Soldiers walked in silence, their footsteps echoing through the hills. They had learned not to rely on numbers or strength, but on obedience.

God had promised, "Not one of them will stand against you." That was enough.

At first light, the Israelites struck.

The Amorite forces, perhaps confident in their numbers, were caught unprepared. The Israelites moved with precision. Gibeon's defenders joined in. Panic broke out in the enemy ranks.

As they retreated toward Beth Horon, the LORD joined the battle directly.

Hailstones – massive and fierce – rained from the heavens. The sound was deafening. Soldiers fell where they fled. No shelter could protect them. It was a clear sign: this was not just a human battle. God Himself was fighting.

But Joshua saw more than a victory – he saw a window.

Night was coming. If the sun set, the enemy would escape into mountain strongholds and regroup. The chance to end the battle would be lost.

So, he prayed.

In full view of his people and the fleeing enemy, he cried out:

"Sun, stand still over Gibeon. Moon, over the Valley of Aijalon."

It was a prayer of audacity. Of belief. Of dependence.

And the sun stopped.

No twilight came. No shadows lengthened. The sky remained lit, the battlefield clear. Time obeyed the will of its Maker.

The people of Israel stood in awe. The Amorites ran in fear. God was not only present – He was sovereign over creation.

What followed was a complete rout. The Amorites were chased, struck down, pursued to the edge of their cities. The five kings were cornered, found, and brought to Joshua.

Joshua's command to his officers – to place their feet on the kings' necks – was not one of cruelty, but of symbolism. These were enemies who had defied God, who had sought to crush His people. Their defeat was a sign to every Israelite: "The LORD your God will fight for you."

And the sun still hung in the sky, watching.

The kings were executed that day, their defeat fulfilling both judgment and justice. Their deaths marked a turning point in Israel's campaign – confidence surged, and fear spread among the remaining Canaanite cities.

But more than a military turning point, it was a spiritual one.

The day the sun stood still became a story passed down for generations. Fathers told their children. Elders reminded the community. Scribes recorded it in sacred scrolls.

Not to celebrate violence – but to exalt the power of God.

This was not just a day of battle. It was a day of divine response.

A man had prayed, and the cosmos had listened.

Theologians would later ponder how it happened. Did time itself pause? Did the earth stop rotating? Or was it a prolonged light, a miracle beyond our understanding?

Scripture is clear: it was a unique day. "There has never been a day like it before or since," says Joshua 10:14, "a day when the LORD listened to a man."

What made Joshua's prayer different?

It was bold, yes. But more than that – it was rooted in mission. Joshua was not asking for a sign to impress others. He was asking for time to complete the task God had given.

He knew God's heart. He understood God's promise. He acted in obedience and prayed in alignment with God's will.

And heaven responded.

In our modern world, we often pray small prayers. Safe prayers. But the story of the sun standing still challenges us:

What might God do if we prayed in faith, with obedience, for His purposes?

What if we believed He still moves mountains, still calms storms, still stops the sun – if that's what His will requires?

Today, we may not need the sky to freeze. But we do need courage. We need time. We need victory in our battles – against fear, sin, anxiety, temptation.

And we have a God who listens.

When Jesus prayed in Gethsemane, He surrendered fully: “Not my will, but Yours be done.” And when He was lifted on the cross, darkness covered the land – not because God had abandoned control, but because redemption was unfolding.

Joshua’s sun paused so victory could come. Jesus’ light was hidden so our victory could be won.

In both cases, time itself marked the moment when God intervened.

We are not called to control the heavens. But we are called to trust the One who does.

To pray big. To obey fully. To fight faithfully. To believe boldly.

The day the sun stood still wasn’t about astronomy. It was about alignment – of a man’s heart with God’s mission.

And God showed that when His people walk in faith, the impossible becomes reality.

Because the Creator of time is never limited by it.

And His glory shines – day or night – for those who walk in obedience.

And so, the story stands – not just as history, but as invitation.

To every generation, God still says: “Be strong and courageous. I will never leave you nor forsake you.”

And to those who believe, the sun may yet stand still.

C) Reflective Thinking Questions

For Younger Students (Years 7–8):

1. Why were the Gibeonites attacked by the Amorite kings?
2. What did Joshua do after hearing their call for help?
3. What miracle happened during the battle at Gibeon?
4. What does this story teach us about trusting God during a challenge?

For Middle Students (Year 9):

1. Why did Joshua pray for the sun to stand still?
2. How did God show His power in this battle?
3. What does it mean that the LORD listened to the voice of a man?
4. How is obedience connected to seeing God move in powerful ways?

For Older Students (Year 10):

1. What does this story teach about the relationship between prayer, faith, and mission?
2. How might we apply Joshua’s boldness in prayer to spiritual battles today?
3. What are some ‘impossible’ things we avoid asking God for, and why?
4. How does this story connect to the greater biblical narrative of God’s authority over time and creation?

D) Activity Options

Option 1: Hands-on Practical – “Battle Map and Timeline”

- Draw a detailed battle map showing the five Amorite kingdoms, Gibeon, Gilgal, and the route of the Israelite march.
- Mark major events: the hailstorm, sun standing still, capture of kings.
- **Extension (Years 9–10):** Add a timeline and Scripture references showing the sequence of God's interventions.

Option 2: Creative – “Prayer that Moves the Heavens”

- Write a fictional journal entry from Joshua’s perspective on the day the sun stood still.
- Reflect on the decision to pray such a bold prayer and how he felt seeing it answered.
- **Extension (Years 9–10):** Conclude with a parallel modern reflection about trusting God for the impossible.

Option 3: Dramatization – “A Day Like No Other”

- Recreate the battle with characters: Joshua, Gibeonite messenger, an Israelite soldier, Amorite kings, and a narrator.
- Include the moment of prayer and the reaction of all present when the sun halts.
- **Extension (Years 9–10):** Close with a scene showing a classroom or church group discussing how this story inspires modern faith.

E) Biblical Connection

Joshua’s bold prayer wasn’t about showing off; it was about finishing the mission God had commanded. His faith aligned with obedience, and the result was miraculous. God stopped time – not because Joshua demanded it, but because Joshua trusted God completely.

This echoes Jesus’ own obedience and boldness in the Garden of Gethsemane, praying not for comfort but for God’s will. When we step forward in faith, trusting God’s promises, we invite His power into our lives – even in impossible situations.

F) Narration Activity

Narration Activity:

Ask your parent or tutor to listen while you retell the story of the day the sun stood still.

Include Joshua’s decision to help Gibeon, God’s promise, the hailstorm, the prayer, and the outcome.

If you are in Years 9–10, reflect aloud:

“What kind of prayer would I pray if I truly believed God was listening – and willing to act?”

Lesson 13 – Dividing the Land

Theme: Obedience in Receiving God's Promises

Australian Curriculum v9 Content Descriptions

- **History – AC9HH7K01:** Describe the roles and achievements of significant individuals and groups in ancient societies, including the influence of law, religion, and belief systems.
- **History – AC9HH7K02:** Explain the causes and effects of events and developments in ancient societies.
- **History – AC9HH7K03:** Describe the social, political, and cultural features of ancient societies.
- **History – AC9HH7K04:** Explain the significance of heritage sites and cultural practices in ancient societies.
- **History – AC9HH8K01:** Analyse the roles of significant individuals or groups and how they contributed to change.
- **Geography – AC9HG8K01:** Describe how the characteristics of places are perceived and valued differently.
- **Civics & Citizenship – AC9HC8S01:** Examine the responsibilities of individuals and groups in shaping communities and making decisions.

Lesson Objectives

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Understand the process of dividing the Promised Land among the tribes of Israel.
- Reflect on the spiritual and practical significance of inheritance and obedience.
- Explain the roles of Joshua, Caleb, and the Levites in establishing Israel's national identity.
- Apply lessons of covenant faithfulness and trust in God's provision.

B) Informational Story – “Dividing the Land”

The battles were over. The land lay quiet under the sun. Smoke no longer rose from conquered cities, and the sound of swords had faded. Israel, after decades of slavery, wandering, and war, stood in the land God had promised.

But the work was not done.

God spoke to Joshua. “You are very old,” He said, “and there is still very much land to be taken.”

Though the greatest victories had been won – Jericho, Ai, the southern and northern coalitions – pockets of resistance remained. Cities still needed to be occupied, cleared, and cultivated.

And so God gave Joshua a task: divide the land.

Not by might, but by faith. Not by conquest, but by inheritance.

Each tribe would receive its portion. Each family its lot. The land was not a reward – it was a gift.

Joshua summoned the elders and leaders, the heads of tribes and clans. Together, they began the sacred process.

The land west of the Jordan had been largely secured. Judah would receive the southern highlands. Ephraim and Manasseh – sons of Joseph – would receive the central hill country. The northern regions would go to Naphtali, Asher, Zebulun, and Issachar. Dan would settle in the west.

The tribe of Levi received no territory – only towns scattered throughout all Israel. Their inheritance was the LORD Himself. They were priests, teachers, and servants of the tabernacle.

But not all the tribes were eager.

Seven tribes still had not claimed their land. Joshua confronted them: “How long will you wait before you begin to take possession of the land the LORD has given you?”

He appointed men from each tribe to survey the remaining regions. They walked the land, wrote descriptions, and returned to Joshua.

With the records in hand, Joshua cast lots before the LORD at Shiloh, where the tabernacle now stood. The distribution began.

It was not a perfect process. Some tribes grumbled. Others failed to fully drive out the Canaanites, allowing compromise and idolatry to creep in over time. But the foundation was laid.

Caleb, now 85 years old, stepped forward boldly.

“Give me the hill country the LORD promised me,” he said. “I am still as strong today as when Moses sent me to spy the land.”

Joshua smiled and blessed him. Caleb went and conquered Hebron, just as he had believed he could 45 years earlier.

Faith still claimed what fear had once delayed.

As the divisions were completed, peace settled over the land.

Years of war had reshaped the landscape, and now the land was to be reshaped again – not by destruction, but by design. The promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had matured into fulfillment, but it was not without its complexities.

Joshua’s task was both spiritual and administrative. He was now a warrior turned steward, tasked with organising a national inheritance. He walked among the leaders not as a conqueror, but as a father figure, a shepherd of tribes who needed to settle, farm, and worship.

The tribe of Judah was honoured first, receiving the large southern region. Their territory stretched from the Dead Sea to the Mediterranean and included Hebron – claimed by Caleb. This land was mountainous and rugged, a stronghold of faith and resilience.

Ephraim and the half-tribe of Manasseh followed. As the sons of Joseph, they received fertile central lands, ideal for agriculture and trade. Yet, their borders were not without issue. The Ephraimites soon complained that their territory was too small, revealing early signs of entitlement and unrest.

Joshua challenged them: “If you are so numerous, go into the forest and clear land for yourselves.” It was a gentle rebuke and a call to act in faith, not frustration.

The other half of Manasseh had already settled east of the Jordan, along with Reuben and Gad. These eastern tribes had requested their inheritance before the conquest was complete, and Moses had granted it on the condition they would fight alongside their brothers – which they had done faithfully. Now, they were free to return and build homes, vineyards, and cities of peace.

The northern territories went to Naphtali and Asher, overlooking the sea and nestled in fertile valleys. Zebulun and Issachar took land around the Jezreel Valley, rich with grain and vineyards. Dan received land near the coast but later migrated northward, unable to fully occupy their allotted portion due to Philistine resistance.

The Levites, as the priestly tribe, were given no centralised territory. Instead, they were scattered across forty-eight towns, each surrounded by pastureland. This ensured that teaching, worship, and the presence of God's law were accessible in every region.

The cities of refuge were established – Kedesh, Shechem, Hebron, Bezer, Ramoth, and Golan. These were not only places of legal justice but symbols of God's mercy. In a society built on law and honour, they provided safety for the accused until fair trial. They reflected a God who valued both justice and compassion.

Throughout the process, Joshua maintained deep reverence. Each allocation was done before the LORD at Shiloh, near the tabernacle, reminding the people that this was sacred work – not political division, but holy inheritance.

It was during this time that the community began to change. Tents gave way to homes. War cries gave way to lullabies. Fields were sown. Vineyards planted. Wells dug. Israel was no longer a wandering nation – it was a rooted one.

When the land had been fully distributed, and the people had begun to rest from war, Joshua knew his time was nearing its end. The young warrior who once stood beside Moses had grown old in service and obedience.

But before his final breath, he called Israel together one last time – at Shechem, the same place where Abraham had once built an altar after entering Canaan. It was a place of beginnings, now a place of commitments.

Standing before the assembly, Joshua recounted the story of their people – from the call of Abraham to the plagues in Egypt, from the parting of the Red Sea to the walls of Jericho. It was a testimony not of Israel's strength, but of God's faithfulness.

“Now fear the LORD and serve Him with all faithfulness,” Joshua urged. “Throw away the gods your ancestors worshipped beyond the Euphrates and in Egypt, and serve the LORD.”

He laid before them a choice – serve the LORD alone or turn back to false gods. His voice did not waver.

“But as for me and my household,” he declared, “we will serve the LORD.”

The people responded with conviction: “We too will serve the LORD, because He is our God.”

Joshua made a covenant that day. He recorded it in the Book of the Law of God and set up a large stone under an oak near the holy place at Shechem. “This stone will be a witness against us,” he said, “for it has heard all the words the LORD has said to us.”

It was a moment of national recommitment.

And with that, the leader who had crossed the Jordan, who had seen the sun stand still, who had apportioned the land with justice and reverence – Joshua son of Nun – died at the age of 110.

He was buried in the hill country of Ephraim, on the land of his inheritance.

The people remained faithful throughout his lifetime, and as long as the elders who had known him lived.

That generation honoured the LORD.

And though future generations would falter, the land stood as a testimony – a living witness to the God who keeps His promises.

From Abraham’s lonely journey, to Moses’ desert wandering, to Joshua’s courageous conquest, the story of the Promised Land was not just about geography – it was about grace.

Each boundary line marked not a reward earned, but a promise kept.

And the lesson for every future reader was clear:

God is faithful to fulfill what He promises.

But His people must be faithful to live in what He provides.

The inheritance was not just land – it was identity.

The covenant was not just law – it was relationship.

And the story was not just history – it was destiny.

Their obedience would shape their future.

Their trust would determine their peace.

And their remembrance would protect their hearts.

Joshua’s final words echoed long after his death.

They still echo today.

“Choose this day whom you will serve... But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.”

In the quietness that followed Joshua’s farewell, Israel stepped into a new season – not one of conquest, but of cultivation. And the land, once a battleground, became a home – a testimony to faith, obedience, and the enduring promises of God.

C) Reflective Thinking Questions

For Younger Students (Years 7–8):

1. What did Joshua do after the battles were mostly over?
2. Why didn't the Levites receive a region of land like the other tribes?
3. What did Caleb ask for, and why?
4. What was Joshua's final message to the people?

For Middle Students (Year 9):

1. Why do you think Joshua insisted the land be divided fairly before God?
2. What is the importance of the cities of refuge in Israelite society?
3. How does Joshua's farewell speech show good leadership?
4. What might it have meant for the people to say, "We will serve the LORD"?

For Older Students (Year 10):

1. How does the act of dividing the land fulfil God's covenant with Abraham?
 2. In what ways did Joshua demonstrate faithfulness in leadership to the very end?
 3. How might the tribes' reluctance to fully claim or clear their land foreshadow future problems?
 4. How does this lesson challenge you to trust God's provision and live obediently in what He has promised?
-

D) Activity Options

Option 1: Hands-on Practical – "Map of Inheritance"

- Draw a map showing the division of the land among the twelve tribes of Israel.
- Include key features such as Shiloh, Hebron, the Jordan River, and the cities of refuge.
- **Extension (Years 9–10):** Write a short report about one tribe's land and how geography may have shaped their development.

Option 2: Creative – "Speech from Joshua"

- Write or present an imagined farewell speech from Joshua to a small group of Israelite youth.
- Include a summary of what God had done, a challenge to stay faithful, and a personal testimony of obedience.
- **Extension (Years 9–10):** Compare it with Jesus' farewell words in John 14–17.

Option 3: Dramatization – "The Covenant at Shechem"

- Act out the final covenant renewal scene. Roles: Joshua, elders, tribal representatives, narrator.
- Include a dramatic reading of "Choose this day whom you will serve."
- **Extension (Years 9–10):** Add a modern parallel – how families today can choose to serve the LORD.

E) Biblical Connection

God's promise to Abraham was not only about receiving land – it was about forming a people set apart to live in relationship with Him. Joshua helped Israel transition from wandering to settlement, from conquest to cultivation. But the call to obedience remained.

Joshua's final words – "As for me and my house, we will serve the LORD" – echo throughout Scripture. They call each generation to make a choice, not just to receive God's blessings, but to walk faithfully in them.

F) Narration Activity

Narration Activity:

Ask your parent or tutor to listen while you retell how the Promised Land was divided among the tribes. Include Joshua's role, Caleb's request, the Levites' cities, and the final covenant at Shechem.

If you are in Years 9–10, reflect aloud:

"What promises of God am I called to step into with faith? How can I live obediently in what He has already given me?"

Lesson 14 – Covenant Renewed

Theme: Obedience in Remembering and Recommitting

Australian Curriculum v9 Content Descriptions

- **History – AC9HH7K01:** Describe the roles and achievements of significant individuals and groups in ancient societies, including the influence of law, religion, and belief systems.
 - **History – AC9HH7K02:** Explain the causes and effects of events and developments in ancient societies.
 - **History – AC9HH7K03:** Describe the social, political, and cultural features of ancient societies.
 - **History – AC9HH7K04:** Explain the significance of heritage sites and cultural practices in ancient societies.
 - **History – AC9HH8K01:** Analyse the roles of significant individuals or groups and how they contributed to change.
 - **Civics & Citizenship – AC9HC8S01:** Examine the responsibilities of individuals and groups in shaping communities and making decisions.
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Lesson Objectives

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Explain the significance of the covenant renewal ceremony at Shechem.
 - Understand Joshua’s leadership in calling the people to remembrance and obedience.
 - Reflect on the importance of communal values, shared memory, and personal commitment.
 - Apply the biblical theme of covenant renewal to their own spiritual life and community.
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B) Informational Story – “Covenant Renewed”

It was a day for remembering.

The people of Israel gathered at Shechem, beneath the great oak that had stood through generations. It was the same place where Abraham once built an altar, the place where Jacob buried foreign gods, the place where Moses commanded blessings and curses be read across the twin mountains, Gerizim and Ebal.

Now it was Joshua’s turn.

The battles had been fought. The land had been divided. The tribes had spread out to their homes. But Joshua, now very old, called the people together once more. Not for war. Not for travel. But for covenant.

The sun glinted off armour no longer needed. Elders, warriors, priests, women, and children gathered in a wide circle, listening.

Joshua stood tall but weary. He had led them across the Jordan, into Jericho, through valleys and mountains. He had seen the impossible – walls fall, sun stand still, promises fulfilled.

Now he spoke.

He began not with his own story, but with God’s.

“This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says...”

And then he told it all.

From Abraham's calling to Egypt's chains. From the ten plagues to the parting sea. From manna in the wilderness to the victories in Canaan.

"I gave you a land you did not toil for," God said, "and cities you did not build. You eat from vineyards and olive groves you did not plant."

It was all grace.

Joshua looked across the faces of the people. "Now fear the LORD and serve Him with all faithfulness," he said. "Throw away the gods your ancestors worshipped... and serve the LORD."

Then the words that would echo forever:

"But if serving the LORD seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve... But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD."

The crowd murmured. Then shouted.

"We too will serve the LORD!"

Joshua looked at them carefully. "You are not able to serve the LORD," he warned. "He is holy. He is jealous. If you turn away, He will bring disaster."

But they insisted.

"No! We will serve the LORD."

So, Joshua wrote the words. He recorded the covenant in the Book of the Law. Then he took a large stone and placed it under the great oak tree at the sanctuary of the LORD.

"This stone," he said, "has heard every word. It will be a witness against you."

It was more than ritual. It was renewal. A binding, sacred vow.

Shechem was not just a location – it was a testimony. Nestled between Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim, it had echoed with the voices of God's people since the days of the patriarchs. Here, Abraham had heard God's promise. Here, Jacob had buried idols. Here, Israel had shouted blessings and curses. The stones held memory.

And now, it was time again.

Joshua had grown white-haired, his eyes lined with years of leadership. He knew his time was short. But he also knew something deeper – that memory fades, and promises once fresh can turn stale.

So, he summoned Israel, all of them – from Dan in the north to Beersheba in the south. They came on foot, on carts, carrying infants and elders. It was not a command for battle. It was a call for choice.

Joshua's voice rang out like the voice of a prophet.

"This is what the LORD says..."

He didn't open with his achievements. He opened with God's mercy. He reminded them that their story began not with strength, but with calling. "Long ago," he said, "your ancestors lived beyond the Euphrates and worshipped other gods..."

But God had chosen Abraham.

He reminded them of Egypt. Of plagues and Pharaoh. Of how God brought them out "with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm."

He spoke of the Red Sea, of the manna, of Balaam's curses turned into blessings. Of Jericho's walls, of hail from heaven, of miracles they had seen with their own eyes.

"I gave you land you did not labour for... cities you did not build... vineyards you did not plant."

It was all grace.

The people listened. Some nodded. Some wept. All stood still.

Joshua paused, then gave them the moment:

"Now fear the LORD and serve Him with all faithfulness. Throw away the gods your ancestors worshipped... and serve the LORD."

The crowd's answer thundered: "We will serve the LORD."

Then came Joshua's warning. It was not cynicism – it was wisdom. "You are not able to serve the LORD," he said, "for He is holy. He is jealous."

They repeated: "We will serve the LORD."

And so he recorded the covenant, under the ancient oak, beside the listening stone.

The people returned to their towns after Shechem, carrying more than just supplies – they carried a renewed calling.

They had not merely said words. They had made a decision. One that would shape their future.

The covenant was not a contract – it was a relationship. A vow between God and His people. Not based on perfection, but on devotion. Not enforced by threat, but upheld by love.

And that stone, rough and unmoving beneath the oak, stood as a monument. A reminder that God had spoken. That His people had answered.

Years would pass. The children standing beside their parents that day would become leaders. Some would remember. Some would forget.

But Joshua's words would linger in their minds, carved into memory as clearly as they were carved into scroll and stone:

"Choose this day whom you will serve..."

It was not only a challenge. It was a warning. Because Israel's greatest threat would not come from enemies with swords – but from forgetfulness. From drifting hearts. From idolatry dressed as comfort.

And so the story of Shechem was told again and again.

In future generations, prophets would cry out, “Return to the LORD your God!” Priests would read the law aloud. Kings would tear their robes in repentance. And faithful families would whisper to their children, “As for us, we serve the LORD.”

Even Jesus, many centuries later, would walk near Shechem, speaking with a Samaritan woman at a well dug by Jacob. There, He spoke of living water, true worship, and a kingdom not of this world. The covenant continued – not carved in stone, but in hearts.

In the New Testament, the Apostle Paul would write that all who belong to Christ are Abraham’s offspring – heirs of the promise.

The choice still remains for every believer: Who will you serve?

Not just once. But daily.

Because covenant isn’t a one-time event. It’s a life-long direction.

And Joshua’s example remains.

He was not perfect. But he was faithful. He called the people to remember, to renew, and to walk in obedience. He didn’t lead them to victory and retire. He led them to faithfulness and called them higher.

That is godly leadership.

He left no dynasty. No golden throne. Only a legacy of obedience, of courage, and of covenant.

And that is enough.

The story of Shechem, at its heart, is not about stones or speeches. It is about decision.

God does not force love. He invites it.

He doesn’t demand fear. He desires devotion.

He doesn’t build empires. He builds people – people who choose Him.

And He builds them one decision at a time.

So choose this day.

And tomorrow. And every day after.

Let the stone at Shechem remind us all:

Faithfulness begins with a choice.

In the quiet days after the covenant ceremony, the tribes began to etch out their lives in the land. They tilled soil, built homes, gathered in worship, and taught their children to fear the LORD. At night, they looked up at the stars and remembered Abraham’s promise. In the morning, they remembered Egypt, the wilderness, and the Jordan.

Some of the elders would walk their sons and daughters to the oak at Shechem. They would run their fingers over the stone Joshua had placed, retelling every word he had spoken.

They spoke of a God who had fought for them, who had parted waters and broken walls. And they reminded each other that their story was not their own – it belonged to the God who saved.

The stone was not magic. It held no power. But it reminded them of a moment when a nation chose to say, “Yes.” A moment when grace had been met with gratitude, and fear had given way to faith.

And so, the covenant stood.

Not just in books or boundaries, but in the hearts of those who chose to live it.

Faithfulness would not be easy. Temptation would come. Neighbouring idols would whisper. Comfort would dull sharp convictions.

But the story of Shechem would remain.

A testimony.

A turning point.

A stone that still speaks.

And the people said again, “We will serve the LORD.” It was more than a promise spoken in unison – it was a path they would walk together. Generation to generation. Covenant to covenant. A people formed by grace, called to obedience, and shaped by every faithful ‘yes’.

C) Reflective Thinking Questions

For Younger Students (Years 7–8):

1. What was the purpose of gathering at Shechem?
2. What did Joshua ask the people to choose?
3. What did the stone under the tree represent?
4. What does this story teach us about following God faithfully?

For Middle Students (Year 9):

1. Why did Joshua begin his speech with a summary of God’s actions?
2. Why do you think Joshua warned the people that they might not be able to serve the LORD?
3. What does the covenant renewal at Shechem teach about communal responsibility?
4. What are some things that help you remember God’s faithfulness?

For Older Students (Year 10):

1. How is covenant renewal a pattern seen throughout the Bible, and why is it significant?
2. What parallels can you draw between the covenant at Shechem and Jesus’ call to discipleship?
3. How can symbols (like the stone at Shechem) help a community remember its commitments?
4. What might it look like for a household today to say, “As for me and my house, we will serve the LORD”?

D) Activity Options

Option 1: Hands-on Practical – “Build a Covenant Reminder”

- Create a personal or family reminder of your commitment to God. Use a small stone, woodblock, or canvas with a verse or commitment written on it.
- Display it somewhere in your home as a reminder of your decision to follow God.
- **Extension (Years 9–10):** Write a short essay or paragraph about what the symbol means to you and how it connects to Joshua’s story.

Option 2: Creative – “Joshua’s Speech in Your Words”

- Rewrite Joshua’s covenant speech in modern language as if he were speaking to today’s youth.
- Keep the themes of God’s faithfulness, the need to choose, and a call to obedience.
- **Extension (Years 9–10):** Record yourself delivering the speech or present it to your family or homeschool group.

Option 3: Dramatization – “The Stone that Listens”

- Act out the gathering at Shechem. Characters: Joshua, Narrator, Elders, Families, Stone.
- Include the reading of God’s acts, the people’s response, and Joshua’s challenge.
- **Extension (Years 9–10):** Add a modern closing scene where the characters reflect on how they will live differently after renewing the covenant.

E) Biblical Connection

Throughout Scripture, God calls His people to remember and recommit. From the Passover to communion, from Mount Sinai to Mount Calvary, covenant is central to God’s relationship with humanity. Joshua’s call to Israel was not just about the past – it was about their future.

Jesus, too, called people to choose. He invited them to follow, to count the cost, and to live in daily obedience. Like Joshua, He calls every generation to declare whom they will serve. Our obedience begins with remembering – and recommitting.

F) Narration Activity

Narration Activity:

Ask your parent or tutor to listen while you retell the story of the covenant renewal at Shechem. Include why the people gathered, what Joshua said, and how they responded.

If you are in Years 9–10, reflect aloud:

“Why is it important for communities and individuals to renew their commitment to God? What helps me stay faithful to that choice?”

Lesson 15 – Gideon’s Victory

Theme: Obedience in Weakness and Victory Through Faith

Australian Curriculum v9 Content Descriptions

- **History – AC9HH7K01:** Describe the roles and achievements of significant individuals and groups in ancient societies, including the influence of law, religion, and belief systems.
 - **History – AC9HH7K02:** Explain the causes and effects of events and developments in ancient societies.
 - **History – AC9HH7K03:** Describe the social, political, and cultural features of ancient societies.
 - **History – AC9HH7K04:** Explain the significance of heritage sites and cultural practices in ancient societies.
 - **History – AC9HH8K01:** Analyse the roles of significant individuals or groups and how they contributed to change.
 - **Civics & Citizenship – AC9HC8S01:** Examine the responsibilities of individuals and groups in shaping communities and making decisions.
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A) Introduction

Gideon’s story occurs during one of the most troubled eras in Israel’s history – the time of the Judges. There was no king, and the people regularly forgot God’s covenant, choosing instead to follow the gods of neighbouring nations. Each time they turned away, they fell into oppression. In this lesson, we explore how God raised up Gideon, a hesitant and humble man, to deliver Israel – not with a powerful army, but with a small band of obedient warriors. Students will discover how God often works through human weakness, calling us to courage and trust.

B) Informational Story – “Gideon’s Victory”

The wind swept softly through the hills of Ophrah as Gideon stood in the winepress, threshing wheat in secret. The Midianites had come again, their camel-mounted armies devouring Israel’s crops and livestock like a swarm of locusts. For seven years, they had oppressed the land, and the people of Israel cried out to the LORD.

And the LORD heard.

The Angel of the LORD appeared beneath the oak tree and greeted Gideon with a strange phrase: “The LORD is with you, mighty warrior.”

Gideon looked up in disbelief. “Pardon me, my lord,” he replied, “but if the LORD is with us, why has all this happened to us?”

The Angel’s answer was even stranger: “Go in the strength you have... Am I not sending you?”

Gideon protested. “My clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my family!”

But the LORD said, “I will be with you.”

Gideon built an altar and named it “The LORD is Peace.”

Yet peace did not come through passivity. It began with obedience.

That night, God told Gideon to tear down his father’s altar to Baal and cut down the Asherah pole beside it. He did so – but under cover of darkness, afraid of the people.

In the morning, the town awoke to outrage. “Who did this?” they cried. When they discovered it was Gideon, they demanded his death.

But Gideon’s father stood firm. “If Baal is really a god, let him contend for himself,” he said. And so Gideon was renamed Jerub-Baal – “Let Baal contend.”

The Spirit of the LORD came upon Gideon. He blew the trumpet and summoned the tribes.

Yet even then, Gideon wavered. He laid out a fleece – not once, but twice – asking for a sign.

And God, in mercy, answered both times.

Then came the test of strength.

Thirty-two thousand men responded to Gideon’s call. But God said, “You have too many.”

He told Gideon to send home anyone who was afraid. Twenty-two thousand left.

Still too many.

So God led them to the water and told Gideon to watch how the men drank. Those who lapped with their hands were chosen – three hundred in total.

Three hundred against an army “as thick as locusts.”

That night, God gave Gideon a final assurance. “If you are afraid, go down to the camp.” So Gideon crept to the edge of the Midianite tents and overheard a soldier sharing a dream. “A loaf of barley bread came tumbling into the camp and struck the tent with such force that it collapsed.”

“It can only mean,” the other replied, “that God has given Midian into the hands of Gideon.”

Gideon returned worshipping.

And with jars, torches, and trumpets, his 300 men surrounded the enemy at night. At Gideon’s signal, they shattered the jars, revealed the torches, and blew the trumpets, shouting: “A sword for the LORD and for Gideon!”

Confusion spread like fire. The Midianites turned on each other and fled.

Victory belonged not to numbers, nor power – but to obedience and the presence of God.

The days of the Judges were dark.

Each generation turned from God, chasing after the gods of their neighbours. And each time, God allowed their enemies to rise. Midian’s oppression was unlike any before. They didn’t conquer cities – they devoured them. Like desert raiders, they swept through Israel’s land each harvest, stripping it bare. They left no sheep, no oxen, no sustenance. Israel hid in caves and holes. They had become strangers in their own land.

It was in that fear that Gideon lived.

He threshed wheat not on the open floor, but in a winepress – hidden from the Midianites, crouched in silence, flinching at every sound. It was the picture of survival, not strength.

And yet, God called him “mighty warrior.”

The irony was not lost on Gideon. He asked, “Where are all His wonders our ancestors told us about?” He was not proud, but broken. Not brave, but tired.

Yet God was not looking for a warrior. He was looking for obedience.

The altar to Baal and the Asherah pole stood tall in Gideon’s town. It was more than idolatry – it was treason against the covenant. God began not with battle, but with repentance.

When Gideon obeyed and tore down the idols, even in fear, it was a sign that the true battle had begun.

And when the Spirit of the LORD clothed him, Gideon became something more than a farmer.

Still, he hesitated.

His fleece test has been mocked and mimicked by many – but it was not boldness. It was fear wrapped in fragile faith. And God, in gentleness, answered anyway.

Then came the culling.

God’s logic was upside down. “Lest Israel boast,” He said. And so the army was reduced from thousands to hundreds. From strength to seeming helplessness.

Those chosen were alert. They drank from their hands, eyes up, not bowed low. They were warriors – but more than that, they were obedient.

Even so, God knew Gideon’s heart. He told him, “If you are afraid, go and listen.”

And Gideon went.

He heard the Midianite’s dream, the fear in the enemy’s voice. He returned changed. He worshipped. He finally believed – not in himself, but in the God who fights for His people.

The battle was won not with swords but with symbols.

The jars – fragile, breakable. The torches – hidden until the right moment. The trumpets – used to signal armies far greater than 300.

God’s plan was to sow terror through symbolism, not violence.

And it worked.

The Midianites turned on each other in confusion. Gideon’s men didn’t need to kill – they needed only to obey.

Israel was saved.

But the story didn’t end there.

Gideon pursued the enemy, called on other tribes to help, and eventually secured the eastern borders.

He was offered kingship.

But he refused.

“I will not rule over you,” he said. “Nor will my son. The LORD will rule over you.”

Yet even Gideon stumbled.

He asked for gold from the plunder and made an ephod – a sacred garment – not for worship, but as a memorial. It became a snare. People came to worship it, and idolatry crept in once again.

In Gideon’s lifetime, the land had peace for forty years.

But the seeds of future struggle had been sown. Though he refused the crown, his legacy was confused. He had many wives and seventy sons. He even named one of his sons Abimelek – “my father is king” – despite denying the title.

It showed the tension of a man caught between obedience and influence, between humility and power.

Still, Gideon was remembered in Hebrews 11 as one who “through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, and gained what was promised... whose weakness was turned to strength.”

And that is Gideon’s truest story.

He began in weakness, in hiding, asking, “Why me?”

God answered not with reasons, but with presence.

“I will be with you.”

That was enough.

Gideon’s victory was not about tactics. It was about trust. Not about numbers. About kneeling to drink and breaking jars in the dark. About trembling faith that still obeyed.

We are not all called to battle Midianites. But we all face fear. We all ask, “Why me?”

And God still answers: “Go in the strength you have... I will be with you.”

He chooses the hesitant. The hidden. The ones who say, “I’m the least.” Because His strength is made perfect in weakness.

The world says confidence is everything. God says obedience is better.

When we break our jars – when we let our light shine and lift the trumpet of praise – He brings victory.

Gideon’s story is not a blueprint for strategy. It’s a portrait of grace.

The man in the winepress became a deliverer. Not because he believed in himself – but because he believed in God.

And that is the victory that matters most.

In later years, parents would tell their children the story of Gideon. Not because he was perfect, but because he was chosen. They would speak of the torch and the trumpet, of how obedience beat overwhelming odds.

Around fires and at festivals, children would ask, “Why did God choose Gideon?”

And the answer was always the same: “Because he said yes, even when he was afraid.”

That answer became a legacy.

The memory of Gideon reminded Israel that God doesn’t need the strongest or the bravest. He uses the willing. The ones who tear down idols at night. The ones who listen to dreams. The ones who break jars and shine light when all seems dark.

And so today, the story lives on.

Not just in books, but in hearts.

In every believer who chooses faith over fear.

In every voice that says, “I will obey.”

In every step taken toward the impossible – trusting not in human strength, but in divine presence.

And in every moment when, like Gideon, we whisper, “I’m not enough,” and God replies, “But I am with you.”

And that is where true victory begins – not in what we bring, but in who goes with us. For the LORD is still with those who listen, who trust, and who obey.

C) Reflective Thinking Questions

For Younger Students (Years 7–8):

1. Where was Gideon when the Angel of the LORD appeared to him?
2. How did God reduce Gideon’s army, and why?
3. What did the soldiers shout during the attack?
4. What does this story teach you about trusting God?

For Middle Students (Year 9):

1. Why did God reduce Gideon’s army so drastically?
2. What signs did God give Gideon to reassure him?
3. Why was Gideon afraid to tear down the altar during the day?
4. How is obedience more important than strength in this story?

For Older Students (Year 10):

1. How does Gideon’s story illustrate the biblical theme that God uses the weak to shame the strong?
2. Why is humility a necessary quality in leaders, according to this narrative?
3. What can we learn from both Gideon’s obedience and his later mistakes?
4. How might this story apply to your own spiritual or leadership journey?

D) Activity Options

Option 1: Hands-on Practical – “Build a Torch and Trumpet Model”

- Create a simple model of a clay jar, torch, and trumpet using craft materials to represent the tools God used for victory.
- Label each item with a spiritual quality: Light = God’s presence, Jar = Human weakness, Trumpet = Declaration of faith.
- **Extension (Years 9–10):** Write a paragraph explaining how each object represents part of the story’s message.

Option 2: Creative – “Gideon’s Inner Thoughts”

- Write a diary entry from Gideon’s perspective the night before the battle. Include his fears, prayers, and reflections on God’s commands.
- **Extension (Years 9–10):** Add a second entry written years later, reflecting on the ephod he created and its consequences.

Option 3: Dramatization – “From Winepress to Warrior”

- Create a short play with key scenes: Gideon in the winepress, the fleece signs, the army reduction, and the night attack.
- Characters: Gideon, Angel of the LORD, Soldiers, Midianite Scouts.
- **Extension (Years 9–10):** Conclude with a classroom discussion scene where students debate what made Gideon a good or flawed leader.

E) Biblical Connection

Gideon’s story echoes the New Testament truth that God’s power is made perfect in weakness (2 Corinthians 12:9). When we depend on our own strength, we miss the miracle. But when we trust God – even in fear – He uses our smallness for His glory. Like Gideon, Jesus chose obedience and trust in the Father to accomplish victory, not through worldly power, but through submission, sacrifice, and the Spirit.

F) Narration Activity

Narration Activity:

Ask your parent or tutor to listen while you retell the story of Gideon’s victory in your own words. Include how God called him, how the army was chosen, the strange battle plan, and what happened afterward.

If you are in Years 9–10, reflect aloud:

“What do I fear? Where might God be calling me to trust Him and obey even when I feel weak?”

TOPIC 6

FROM JUDGES TO KINGS

Lesson 16 – Samson & Delilah

Theme: Obedience, Consecration, and Redemption

Australian Curriculum v9 Content Descriptions

- **History – AC9HH7K01:** Describe the roles and achievements of significant individuals and groups in ancient societies, including the influence of law, religion, and belief systems.
- **History – AC9HH7K02:** Explain the causes and effects of events and developments in ancient societies.
- **History – AC9HH7K03:** Describe the social, political, and cultural features of ancient societies.
- **History – AC9HH7K04:** Explain the significance of heritage sites and cultural practices in ancient societies.
- **History – AC9HH8K01:** Analyse the roles of significant individuals or groups and how they contributed to change.
- **Civics & Citizenship – AC9HC8S01:** Examine the responsibilities of individuals and groups in shaping communities and making decisions.

A) Introduction

Samson is one of the most unusual and complex figures in biblical history. A man of supernatural strength, called by God from before birth, yet deeply flawed in character and discipline. His story highlights both the power of divine calling and the danger of drifting from it. In this lesson, students will explore the highs and lows of Samson’s life, his relationship with Delilah, and his final act of redemption. They will reflect on how God’s strength is made perfect in weakness, and how obedience – though often delayed – can still bring about God’s purpose.

B) Informational Story – “Samson & Delilah”

Before Samson was born, an angel visited his mother – a barren woman from the tribe of Dan – and foretold the birth of a son. “He will be a Nazirite, set apart from birth,” the angel declared. “No razor shall touch his head, and he will begin to deliver Israel from the Philistines.”

And so, Samson was born, a miracle child with a mission. The Spirit of the LORD stirred within him as he grew, and his strength became legendary.

But strength alone does not make a godly man.

Samson’s early exploits revealed both courage and recklessness. He killed a lion with his bare hands, posed riddles to enemies, and struck down thirty men when offended. He burned the Philistine crops with foxes tied to flaming torches and defeated a thousand men with the jawbone of a donkey.

Each time, God's Spirit empowered him – but each time, Samson walked a thin line between obedience and pride.

Then came Delilah.

Samson fell in love with her, a woman of the valley of Sorek. The Philistine rulers offered Delilah silver to discover the secret of his strength.

Three times she coaxed him. Three times he lied.

“Bind me with fresh cords,” he said.

“Weave my hair into a loom,” he told her.

“Fasten me with new ropes.”

Each time, she cried, “Samson, the Philistines are upon you!”

Each time, he awoke and broke free.

But Delilah pressed on.

“How can you say ‘I love you’ when you won’t confide in me?”

Day after day, she nagged him until his soul was vexed to death. Finally, he told her: “No razor has ever touched my head... If my head is shaved, my strength will leave me.”

Delilah lulled him to sleep, called a man to shave his head, and cried out once more.

“Samson, the Philistines are upon you!”

He awoke, but the LORD had left him.

They captured him, gouged out his eyes, and bound him with bronze shackles. He ground grain in prison, blind and broken.

But his hair began to grow.

Bound in bronze and blinded, Samson was led away like an animal. The mighty judge of Israel, once feared by entire armies, now pushed a grinding mill like a beast of burden in a Philistine prison.

But inside, something shifted.

He who had once relied on his strength now had none. He who had once scoffed at rules now remembered his vow. He who had once acted for revenge began to seek mercy.

As his hair grew, so did his awareness of his need for God. And slowly, his heart changed.

He heard the jeers through the prison walls. They sang songs mocking the God of Israel, declaring Dagon their victor. They praised the gods of stone and storm, celebrating Samson's downfall as their triumph.

Then came the feast.

Thousands of Philistines gathered in the great temple of Dagon. The roof groaned with the weight of people. Laughter echoed through marble halls. They called for Samson.

Blind, led by a young servant, he was brought to entertain them – humiliated for sport. The boy placed his hands on the central pillars for support.

And there Samson prayed.

“Sovereign LORD, remember me. Please, strengthen me one more time...”

It was not a prayer for vengeance – it was a prayer for redemption.

He stood between the pillars. He braced his arms.

“Let me die with the Philistines,” he whispered.

Then, with all his might, he pushed.

The pillars shifted. The ceiling cracked. Stones cascaded.

The entire temple fell.

Samson killed more in his death than in all his life.

The crowd was silenced. Dagon lay shattered. And God’s name, long dishonoured, was feared once more.

His family came and buried him. His story was told around fires and in hidden homes. A tale of power and pride, of downfall and grace.

Samson had judged Israel for twenty years. He was no model of consistency. But in the end, he remembered his God.

And God remembered him.

In the New Testament, Samson appears in Hebrews 11 – a list of the faithful. He is named with the likes of David, Samuel, and Moses.

Not because he was perfect.

But because he believed.

Because, at the end, he trusted not in himself, but in the One who gives strength to the weak.

His story is not an invitation to recklessness – but a warning, and a hope.

That no matter how far we’ve fallen, no matter how broken or blind we feel, God can still use us.

He redeems. He restores. He finishes what He began.

In generations to come, children of Israel would ask, “Why did God use Samson?”

And parents would answer, “Because God is not limited by our failure. He uses those who return to Him.”

They would speak of the boy with uncut hair and the man who died between pillars. They would talk of the strength that came not from muscle, but from mission. And they would whisper warnings: that pride leads to blindness long before the eyes are taken.

But they would also speak of hope.

That even when we're bound and broken, God sees. That even when others mock, God hears. That even when the pillars seem immovable, His power is not gone.

Samson's final act was not about violence. It was about surrender.

His death pointed forward – to another Deliverer who would stretch out His arms, not in revenge, but in love. Jesus, who bore the crushing weight of sin, not to destroy His enemies, but to save them.

Both men died with arms outstretched.

But only One rose again.

And yet Samson's life reminds us: we are never too far gone. When we pray, "Remember me," God does.

He turns failure into faithfulness. He turns shame into strength. He turns last moments into legacies.

The pillars fall. The temple crumbles. But God's plan stands.

Always.

C) Reflective Thinking Questions

For Younger Students (Years 7–8):

1. What special instructions were given before Samson was born?
2. What made Samson strong?
3. How did Delilah trick Samson?
4. What happened at the end of his life that fulfilled his calling?

For Middle Students (Year 9):

1. What was the Nazirite vow, and how did Samson break it?
2. Why do you think God continued to use Samson even when he made poor choices?
3. How did Samson's prayer in the temple show a change in his heart?
4. What do you think Samson learned while in prison?

For Older Students (Year 10):

1. How does Samson's story challenge our understanding of leadership and character?
 2. In what ways does this story warn against spiritual pride?
 3. How do the themes of grace and redemption come through in Samson's final moments?
 4. What parallels do you see between Samson's death and the sacrifice of Jesus?
-

D) Activity Options

Option 1: Hands-on Practical – “Nazirite Vow Visual”

- Create a poster or chart illustrating the Nazirite vow (no wine, no haircuts, no contact with the dead).
- Add sections for how Samson kept or broke each part of the vow.
- **Extension (Years 9–10):** Include verses and a reflection on how our personal commitments today are like spiritual vows.

Option 2: Creative – “Samson’s Letter from Prison”

- Write a reflective letter from Samson while in prison, describing his regrets, his hopes, and his relationship with God.
- **Extension (Years 9–10):** Write a second letter imagining Samson had lived and continued to judge Israel. What advice would he give to the next generation?

Option 3: Dramatization – “The Final Prayer”

- Perform a dramatic retelling of Samson’s final moments. Include narration, the temple scene, and Samson’s prayer.
- Add background sounds or simple props to bring it to life.
- **Extension (Years 9–10):** Include a modern reflection scene where someone today shares what they’ve learned from Samson’s story.

E) Biblical Connection

The life of Samson reminds us that God’s calling is real, and His gifts are not taken lightly. But even the most gifted can fall without discipline and obedience. Still, God is merciful. In his final moments, Samson turned back to God – not for personal glory, but to fulfil his mission. This act of faith, done in weakness, made him a hero of the faith (Hebrews 11:32). His story reminds us that failure does not have to be final. Redemption is always possible when we call upon the Lord.

F) Narration Activity

Narration Activity:

Ask your parent or tutor to listen while you retell the story of Samson and Delilah.

Include his birth, his Nazirite vow, his battles, his downfall, and his final act of strength.

If you are in Years 9–10, reflect aloud:

“What does it mean to live a life ‘set apart’? Have I ever needed to turn back to God after failure? What does this story teach me about grace?”

Lesson 17 – Ruth & Boaz

Christian Homeschool Course

Theme: Obedience, Loyalty, and the Redeemer

Australian Curriculum v9 Content Descriptions

- **History – AC9HH7K01:** Describe the roles and achievements of significant individuals and groups in ancient societies, including the influence of law, religion, and belief systems.
 - **History – AC9HH7K02:** Explain the causes and effects of events and developments in ancient societies.
 - **History – AC9HH7K03:** Describe the social, political, and cultural features of ancient societies.
 - **History – AC9HH7K04:** Explain the significance of heritage sites and cultural practices in ancient societies.
 - **History – AC9HH8K01:** Analyse the roles of significant individuals or groups and how they contributed to change.
 - **Civics & Citizenship – AC9HC8S01:** Examine the responsibilities of individuals and groups in shaping communities and making decisions.
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A) Introduction

While many stories in the time of the Judges are violent and chaotic, the story of Ruth and Boaz stands out as one of hope, kindness, and providence. Ruth, a foreign widow, showed remarkable loyalty and courage by choosing to care for her mother-in-law and embrace the God of Israel. Boaz, a man of honour, stepped forward as a redeemer to restore not only land but also dignity to Naomi’s family. This lesson explores how personal obedience and quiet faithfulness can impact generations, ultimately pointing toward Christ, the Redeemer of all.

B) Informational Story – “Ruth & Boaz”

In the time of the judges, when the land was full of chaos and every man did what was right in his own eyes, a quiet story unfolded – one of loss, loyalty, and love.

There was a famine in the land of Judah, and a man named Elimelek took his wife Naomi and their two sons to live in Moab. While there, Elimelek died. Naomi was left with her sons, who married Moabite women – Orpah and Ruth. But after ten years, both sons died too.

Naomi was broken. She had left her homeland full and returned empty. She heard the famine had lifted in Bethlehem and decided to go back.

She urged her daughters-in-law to stay in Moab and remarry. Orpah kissed her and went. But Ruth clung to her.

“Where you go, I will go,” Ruth said. “Your people will be my people, and your God my God. Where you die, I will die.”

So the two women returned to Bethlehem, arriving at the time of the barley harvest. They had no money, no food, no prospects. Ruth went to glean in the fields – picking up the leftover stalks after the harvesters.

She happened to enter the field of Boaz, a relative of Elimelek.

Boaz saw Ruth and asked about her. The workers said, “She is the Moabite who came back with Naomi. She has worked from morning until now, without rest.”

Boaz approached her.

“Don’t go to another field,” he said. “Stay here with my servant girls. I’ve told the men not to touch you. And when you’re thirsty, drink from the jars.”

Ruth bowed low. “Why have I found such favour?”

Boaz replied, “I’ve heard what you’ve done for Naomi. May the LORD reward you.”

At mealtime, he invited her to eat. She dipped her bread in vinegar and ate until she was full.

She returned to Naomi with an ephah of barley – nearly a full sack. Naomi was amazed. “Where did you glean today?”

Ruth said, “In the field of Boaz.”

Naomi’s eyes lit up. “The LORD bless him! He is our guardian-redeemer.”

Ruth continued to glean through the harvest.

One night, Naomi gave instructions: “Wash, put on perfume, and go to the threshing floor. When Boaz lies down, uncover his feet and lie there.”

It was a symbolic act – asking Boaz to redeem their family line.

Boaz awoke in the night. “Who are you?”

“I am Ruth,” she said. “Spread the corner of your garment over me, for you are a redeemer.”

Boaz was moved. “You’ve shown great kindness. I will do all you ask.”

The next day, Boaz met the elders at the city gate and arranged to redeem Elimelek’s land and marry Ruth.

Bethlehem was quiet when Naomi and Ruth returned. The women of the town whispered when they saw Naomi.

“Can this be Naomi?” they asked.

“Don’t call me Naomi,” she replied. “Call me Mara, because the LORD has made my life very bitter. I went away full, but the LORD has brought me back empty.”

Ruth said nothing. She carried the burden silently. She had given up her homeland, her people, and her future for a grieving woman who had nothing left to offer. But she had found faith – faith in the God of Israel, the God of covenant and kindness.

The Law of Moses made provision for the poor through gleaning. Harvesters were told not to strip the fields bare, and not to pick up what fell. That was for the widow, the orphan, and the foreigner.

So Ruth went to glean.

She walked into the fields with humble hope. The sun was hot, and her arms ached from stooping, but she gathered enough to feed them both.

And then Boaz came.

He was older than Ruth, perhaps by many years. A man of standing, respected in the community. His greeting was unusual: “The LORD be with you,” he said to his workers. And they replied, “The LORD bless you.”

Kindness lived in his speech. Faith lived in his eyes.

When he saw Ruth, something stirred. He had heard of her – how she left everything behind to care for Naomi. He saw more than a young foreign woman – he saw loyalty, humility, and courage.

He made sure she was safe. He invited her to lunch. He sent her home with extra grain.

Naomi’s eyes widened when she saw it.

“This man is a guardian-redeemer,” she said. “One who has the right to redeem our family line.”

A guardian-redeemer (or kinsman-redeemer) was a relative who could buy back land lost due to poverty, or marry a widow to preserve the family name. It was not a demand – it was a gift of grace.

Naomi saw hope again.

She devised a plan – not to manipulate, but to initiate.

The threshing floor was a place of work and celebration. Boaz would sleep there to protect the harvest. Ruth prepared carefully, as instructed.

It was not a seduction – it was a quiet, humble request.

“Spread your garment over me,” she said. It was the ancient symbol of marriage and protection. A way of saying, “Take me under your care.”

Boaz did not laugh. He did not scold. He blessed her.

He promised to act – but mentioned that another man had the first right of redemption.

In ancient Israel, the town gate was not just an entrance – it was the place of business, law, and witness. It was where deals were made and justice was declared.

Boaz sat there early, waiting.

When the other redeemer passed by – the one with the nearer legal right – Boaz called him to sit with the elders. He explained the situation: Naomi had land that could be redeemed. At first, the man was interested. But when Boaz added, “You must also marry Ruth, the Moabite,” the man declined.

“It might endanger my own estate,” he said.

So, he removed his sandal, sealing the transaction. In front of ten elders and many witnesses, Boaz declared, “Today you are all witnesses that I have bought from Naomi all that belonged to Elimelek, and Mahlon and Kilion. I have also acquired Ruth to be my wife.”

And the people cheered. “May the LORD make the woman like Rachel and Leah, who built the house of Israel. May your household be like that of Perez, whom Tamar bore to Judah.”

So, Boaz took Ruth, and she became his wife. In time, the LORD enabled her to conceive, and she bore a son – Obed.

Naomi, who once called herself bitter, now cradled new life in her arms. The women of Bethlehem rejoiced with her, saying, “Naomi has a son!” though biologically he was Ruth’s child. The redeemer’s child became Naomi’s joy.

They named him Obed.

Obed became the father of Jesse.

And Jesse became the father of David – the shepherd king, the poet, the warrior after God’s own heart.

Generations later, from the line of David would come another child, born in Bethlehem – Jesus Christ, the ultimate Redeemer.

Ruth, the Moabite, was no longer an outsider. Her story was woven into Israel’s heart. Her name would be remembered among the faithful. She had left her gods, her country, and her comfort – for a new home, a new people, and a new God.

Her reward was more than marriage or motherhood. It was legacy.

Her story reminds us that God does not forget the humble, the loyal, the faithful foreigner. He brings the outsider in. He gives the barren woman a child. He writes redemption into the quiet corners of history.

When all seemed lost, Ruth clung. When all seemed bitter, Naomi hoped. When all seemed impossible, Boaz acted with honour.

And through these small decisions – one step of faith at a time – God brought forth His greatest King.

And through that King, His own Son.

A redeemer who would not just buy back land, but souls.

The story of Ruth teaches us that God’s providence often moves quietly – through harvests, through heartbreak, through ordinary acts of kindness and loyalty.

No miracles happened in Ruth’s life. No seas parted. No mountains shook. But God was in every moment.

In Ruth’s clinging. In Naomi’s return. In Boaz’s generosity.

And God still works this way.

He brings beauty from ashes, joy from mourning, and redemption from ruin. He sees the widow, the foreigner, the one who stays faithful when no one is watching.

The fields of Bethlehem were once places of famine and sorrow. But in time, they became the soil where a Redeemer’s lineage would grow.

And that same Redeemer – Jesus – was born there to bring salvation, not just to Israel, but to the whole world.

The story of Ruth is our story too.

A story of being brought in when we were far away. A story of hope, of faith, and of love stronger than loss.

A story that ends with a child in a grandmother's arms – and the promise of a King who would never fail.

C) Reflective Thinking Questions

For Younger Students (Years 7–8):

1. Why did Ruth choose to stay with Naomi?
2. What is gleaning, and why was it important in this story?
3. How did Boaz treat Ruth when he saw her working?
4. What was Ruth asking Boaz to do at the threshing floor?

For Middle Students (Year 9):

1. What does the law of gleaning tell us about God's care for the poor and foreigner?
2. What role did the kinsman-redeemer play in Israelite society?
3. Why is Ruth's loyalty to Naomi and God so significant?
4. How does this story reflect quiet obedience rather than dramatic events?

For Older Students (Year 10):

1. In what ways does the story of Ruth & Boaz show how faithfulness in small things can impact history?
 2. How does the idea of "redemption" in this story prepare the way for Jesus?
 3. What cultural and legal processes shaped the events at the town gate?
 4. How might this story encourage us to trust God's providence in times of suffering?
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D) Activity Options

Option 1: Hands-on Practical – "Ruth's Gleaning Basket"

- Create a visual or physical basket filled with paper barley stalks.
- On each stalk, write acts of kindness or faith you've seen in others (or done yourself).
- **Extension (Years 9–10):** Write a short explanation of how small acts of obedience can be used by God for a bigger purpose.

Option 2: Creative – "Boaz at the Gate"

- Write or perform a short speech that Boaz might have given at the town gate explaining his decision to redeem Ruth.
- Use persuasive language and respect for the customs of the elders.
- **Extension (Years 9–10):** Compare Boaz's role to Jesus' role as Redeemer in a short essay or oral presentation.

Option 3: Dramatization – "From Bitterness to Joy"

- Re-enact key scenes: Naomi's return to Bethlehem, Ruth in the fields, the threshing floor, and Naomi holding Obed.

- Add narration to explain the emotions and significance of each moment.
 - **Extension (Years 9–10):** Include a final reflection scene where a modern-day believer talks about what Ruth’s story means to them.
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E) Biblical Connection

The story of Ruth is not only a personal narrative – it is deeply theological. Ruth’s inclusion in the lineage of Jesus Christ reminds us that God’s family is open to all who trust Him, regardless of background. Boaz acted out of obedience to the Law and love for God, foreshadowing Christ’s redeeming work. Ruth points us to a God who values loyalty, honours humility, and weaves redemption into the lives of ordinary people. Jesus, like Boaz, paid the price to redeem a broken world – and we are invited into that story.

F) Narration Activity

Narration Activity:

Ask your parent or tutor to listen while you retell the story of Ruth and Boaz in your own words.

Include Naomi’s loss, Ruth’s faithfulness, Boaz’s redemption, and the birth of Obed.

If you are in Years 9–10, reflect aloud:

“What does this story teach me about God’s care in everyday life? How can I show loyalty and faith even when life is hard?”

Lesson 18 – The Birth of Samuel

Theme: Obedience, Prayer, and Hearing God

Australian Curriculum v9 Content Descriptions

- **History – AC9HH7K01:** Describe the roles and achievements of significant individuals and groups in ancient societies, including the influence of law, religion, and belief systems.
 - **History – AC9HH7K02:** Explain the causes and effects of events and developments in ancient societies.
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 - **History – AC9HH7K04:** Explain the significance of heritage sites and cultural practices in ancient societies.
 - **History – AC9HH8K01:** Analyse the roles of significant individuals or groups and how they contributed to change.
 - **Civics & Citizenship – AC9HC8S01:** Examine the responsibilities of individuals and groups in shaping communities and making decisions.
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A) Introduction

At the end of the time of the Judges, the people of Israel were in spiritual decline. God’s voice had grown rare, and those in religious leadership were corrupt. Into this environment, God called a prophet – but not from the priestly elite. Instead, He answered the broken prayer of a barren woman. This lesson follows the story of Hannah, her son Samuel, and how obedience and prayer shaped the course of Israel’s future. Students will explore how God honours the humble and raises up leaders from unexpected places.

B) Informational Story – “The Birth of Samuel”

It was the time of the judges, and the nation of Israel was spiritually dry. The tabernacle was at Shiloh, but the Word of the LORD was rare. Eli the priest was old, and his sons, Hophni and Phinehas, dishonoured the offerings of God and led the people astray.

But in the midst of this darkness, a quiet woman named Hannah cried out.

She was the wife of Elkanah, a man who loved her deeply. But Hannah had no children, and her rival, Peninnah, taunted her year after year. Each time they went up to Shiloh to worship, Hannah wept and refused to eat.

One year, she stood at the entrance of the tabernacle and poured out her soul to the LORD.

“O LORD of Hosts,” she prayed, “if you will look on the misery of your servant and remember me, and not forget your servant but give her a son, then I will give him to the LORD all the days of his life, and no razor shall touch his head.”

She prayed silently, her lips moving but her voice unheard.

Eli saw her and thought she was drunk. “How long will you be intoxicated?” he asked. “Put away your wine!”

But Hannah answered gently, “No, my lord. I am a woman deeply troubled. I have not drunk wine or strong drink, but have been pouring out my soul before the LORD.”

Eli’s expression softened. “Go in peace,” he said, “and may the God of Israel grant you what you have asked of Him.”

And the LORD remembered Hannah.

In due time, she gave birth to a son and named him Samuel, saying, “Because I asked the LORD for him.”

When the boy was weaned, Hannah did not delay. She brought him to Shiloh, along with a sacrifice, and presented him to Eli.

“For this child I prayed,” she said, “and the LORD has granted me what I asked of Him. So now I give him to the LORD. For his whole life he will be given over to the LORD.”

And Samuel worshipped the LORD there.

Each year, Hannah returned with a little robe she had sewn. The LORD blessed her with more children, but her heart always treasured the son she had surrendered.

Samuel grew in the presence of God. And as he served, the LORD began to speak again. The silence broke. The Word returned. And Samuel would grow up to become prophet, priest, and judge – a man who heard God when others did not.

In the days before Samuel’s birth, the spiritual condition of Israel was grim. Though the tabernacle remained at Shiloh and sacrifices continued, true worship was rare, and genuine leadership was fading. Eli, the priest, had served faithfully for years, but his eyesight was dim and his sons were corrupt. Hophni and Phinehas, supposed priests of the LORD, stole from the offerings and lay with women at the entrance to the tabernacle. They treated the sacred as common. And the people of Israel followed their example.

It was a time of religion without reverence. Of noise without holiness.

And in the shadows of this corruption lived a woman with a broken heart.

Hannah.

Her name meant “grace,” but her life felt empty. She loved her husband, Elkanah, and he loved her. But she didn’t seem to be able to conceive and have a child. Each year, when the family went to Shiloh to offer sacrifices, Elkanah gave portions to Peninnah, his other wife, and to her children – but to Hannah, he gave a double portion, “because he loved her, though the LORD had closed her womb.”

Peninnah mocked her. She flaunted her fertility, turning Hannah’s sorrow into scorn. Day after day, she provoked her to tears. The pain of infertility became heavier with each passing year. Hannah’s heart grew raw.

And yet, she worshipped.

One year, after they had eaten and drunk in Shiloh, Hannah stood up.

She walked quietly to the door of the tabernacle, where Eli was seated on his chair. There, she bowed low and wept bitterly, her shoulders shaking. No one else would hear her cry – but God would.

She made a vow.

“O LORD Almighty, if You will look upon Your servant’s misery and not forget me, but give me a son, then I will give him to You all the days of his life, and no razor shall touch his head.”

It was a Nazirite vow – a life wholly set apart to God.

As she prayed, Eli watched. Her lips moved but no sound came out. He frowned, misjudging her devotion. “How long will you stay drunk?” he said harshly. “Put away your wine!”

Hannah looked up with tear-filled eyes.

“No, my lord,” she said, her voice trembling. “I am not drunk. I have poured out my soul before the LORD. Do not take me for a wicked woman. I have been praying here out of great anguish and grief.”

Eli’s rebuke softened. “Go in peace,” he said. “And may the God of Israel grant you what you have asked of Him.”

She walked away, her face no longer downcast.

In time, Hannah conceived. She gave birth to a son and named him Samuel, meaning “God has heard.” Her heart rejoiced – not because she had a child to keep, but because she had a child to give.

When the boy was weaned, likely around age three, she did what many would find impossible.

She travelled again to Shiloh, bringing a young bull, flour, and wine. She found Eli and said, “Pardon me, my lord. As surely as you live, I am the woman who stood here beside you praying to the LORD. I prayed for this child, and the LORD has granted me what I asked of Him. So now I give him to the LORD. For his whole life he will be given over to the LORD.”

And she left him there.

It was a sacrifice born of trust, not despair. Hannah’s story teaches us that what we give to God is not lost – it is multiplied.

Samuel served at Shiloh under Eli. He wore a little linen ephod, like a priest, though he was only a boy. Each year, Hannah returned with a new robe she had sewn with love, measuring his growth with stitches and hope. God saw her faithfulness and blessed her with more children – three sons and two daughters.

But Samuel was her first, and he was the LORD’s.

Meanwhile, Eli’s sons continued in wickedness. They treated the LORD’s offerings with contempt and slept with the women who served at the tabernacle entrance. Though Eli rebuked them, he did not restrain them.

So, God sent a prophet with a warning.

He told Eli that judgment was coming – that his house would fall, and that God would raise up a faithful priest.

And then came the night.

Samuel was lying in the tabernacle near the ark of God. It was still dark. The lamp of God had not yet gone out.

And the LORD called, “Samuel!”

The boy ran to Eli. “Here I am,” he said. “You called me.”

“I did not call,” Eli replied. “Go back and lie down.”

It happened again.

And again.

Finally, Eli understood. “If He calls again, say, ‘Speak, LORD, for Your servant is listening.’”

Samuel returned to his bed. The voice came again.

“Samuel! Samuel!”

And the boy answered, “Speak, LORD, for Your servant is listening.”

God gave him a message of judgment – a hard word for Eli. In the morning, Eli asked, “What did the LORD say?”

Samuel hesitated, but Eli urged him.

So, Samuel told him everything.

Eli sighed. “He is the LORD. Let Him do what is good in His eyes.”

From that day, the LORD was with Samuel.

He grew in wisdom, and all Israel came to know him as a prophet.

The Word of the LORD returned to Israel.

And it all began with the cry of a barren woman... and the whisper of a child in the dark.

Samuel’s story is one of obedience, from womb to whisper. His life was an answer to prayer and a vessel for God’s purposes. He bridged the era between judges and kings, anointing both Saul and David, standing before crowds and kings alike with courage born of calling.

But his strength was never in power or position – it was in attentiveness.

When God spoke, Samuel listened.

In a world full of noise, he heard the still small voice. In a time when few obeyed, he served faithfully. He is a reminder that one obedient life can change the course of a nation.

And it all began with a woman who dared to pray and a child who dared to listen.

Samuel’s legacy echoes through history – not in battles or monuments, but in words... words from God that called His people back.

May we, too, be a people who say, “Speak, LORD, for Your servant is listening.”

C) Reflective Thinking Questions

For Younger Students (Years 7–8):

1. Why was Hannah so sad?
2. What did Hannah promise to do if God gave her a child?
3. What was Samuel's job in the tabernacle?
4. What did God say to Samuel when He first called him?

For Middle Students (Year 9):

1. Why was it significant that God chose to speak to a child?
2. How was Samuel's obedience different from Eli's sons?
3. How did Hannah's faith change the nation of Israel?
4. What can we learn from Hannah's prayer?

For Older Students (Year 10):

1. How does Samuel's story show that leadership begins with attentiveness to God?
 2. Compare Hannah's vow and Samuel's calling with other examples of divine dedication in the Bible.
 3. What do you think the phrase "The Word of the LORD was rare in those days" means?
 4. What lessons can modern Christians learn about hearing and responding to God's voice?
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D) Activity Options

Option 1: Hands-on Practical – "Prayer and Promise Journal"

- Create a two-column journal page. One side is "My Prayers"; the other is "God's Promises."
- Begin filling it with your current prayers and scriptures that remind you of God's faithfulness.
- **Extension (Years 9–10):** Write a reflection on how Hannah's prayer could influence your own prayer life.

Option 2: Creative – "Samuel Hears God" Illustration or Poem

- Draw a picture or write a poem that captures the moment Samuel hears God's voice in the tabernacle.
- Include sensory details – darkness, quiet, surprise, obedience.
- **Extension (Years 9–10):** Add a second piece showing how someone today might hear from God.

Option 3: Dramatization – "Eli and Samuel at Night"

- Act out the night scene between Eli and Samuel: the three calls, the confusion, the final message.
 - Add a modern narrator who reflects on why this moment was important.
 - **Extension (Years 9–10):** Include a post-drama reflection where each actor shares what they learned about obedience or hearing God.
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E) Biblical Connection

The story of Samuel teaches us that God hears the cries of His people and that He speaks to those who listen. Though Israel was dry and spiritually dull, God began again with a faithful woman and an obedient child. Samuel's story echoes Jesus' teaching that the humble will be exalted and the meek will inherit the earth. God often calls those who are least noticed to accomplish His greatest purposes. And just as Samuel responded in the dark of night, so we are called to say, "Speak, LORD, for Your servant is listening."

F) Narration Activity

Narration Activity:

Ask your parent or tutor to listen while you retell the story of Samuel's birth and calling.

Include Hannah's prayer, her promise, Samuel's dedication, and his first hearing of God's voice.

If you are in Years 9–10, reflect aloud:

"How can I make space to hear God's voice in a noisy world? What does Samuel's obedience mean for me as a young believer?"

Lesson 19 – Israel Asks for a King & God Chooses Saul

Theme: Obedience, Leadership, and Trust in God

Australian Curriculum v9 Content Descriptions

- **History – AC9HH7K01:** Describe the roles and achievements of significant individuals and groups in ancient societies, including the influence of law, religion, and belief systems.
- **History – AC9HH7K02:** Explain the causes and effects of events and developments in ancient societies.
- **History – AC9HH7K03:** Describe the social, political, and cultural features of ancient societies.
- **History – AC9HH7K04:** Explain the significance of heritage sites and cultural practices in ancient societies.
- **History – AC9HH8K01:** Analyse the roles of significant individuals or groups and how they contributed to change.
- **Civics & Citizenship – AC9HC8S01:** Examine the responsibilities of individuals and groups in shaping communities and making decisions.

A) Introduction

The people of Israel, once led by judges and the direct guidance of God, now demanded a king. This moment marked a turning point in their history. While their desire reflected fear and frustration, it also revealed a deeper issue: they no longer wanted to live by faith in the unseen God. This lesson explores the events that led to Saul’s anointing as Israel’s first king and highlights the tension between human leadership and divine authority. Students will examine the responsibilities of leaders, the cost of choices, and the enduring relevance of trusting God over appearances.

B) Informational Story – “Israel Asks for a King & God Chooses Saul”

For centuries, Israel had lived without a human king. They were ruled by God through judges – men and women raised up in times of crisis. But those days were becoming harder. The Philistines were pressing in. Trade routes were dangerous. Corruption had crept even into the priesthood. People longed for security, structure, and strength.

And now, Samuel was old.

His sons, Joel and Abijah, served as judges in Beersheba, but they did not walk in his ways. They took bribes and perverted justice. The people saw it and lost faith in the old order. So, the elders of Israel gathered. They journeyed to Ramah with one demand on their mind. They would ask Samuel to choose a king for them.

One day, as the sun was low over the hills of Ramah, the elders of Israel arrived at Samuel's door. Their robes were dusty from travel, and their expressions were grim. Samuel, now old and grey-haired, welcomed them into his home.

But their message stung.

"You are old," they said, "and your sons do not walk in your ways. Now appoint for us a king to judge us like all the other nations."

Samuel was silent. Samuel listened, his face tight with sorrow. For years, he had led them. He had prayed, judged, taught, anointed. And now, they wanted a king – a leader they could see, like the nations around them. It felt like rejection.

This was not merely a political shift – it was a spiritual rejection. They no longer trusted the invisible rule of God.

His heart ached.

He turned to God in prayer.

And the LORD, gracious yet grieved, replied, "They are not rejecting you, Samuel. They are rejecting Me as their king. From the day I brought them out of Egypt until now, they have forsaken Me. Listen to them – but warn them."

God told Samuel to warn the people about the natural consequence of having a king to lead them instead of God.

So he stood before the elders and told them plainly: *"This is what the king who will reign over you will do. He will take your sons for his chariots and horses. He will make them run before his chariots. He will take your daughters to be perfumers and cooks and bakers. He will take your fields, your vineyards, and your servants. You will cry out for relief, but the LORD will not answer you in that day."*

But the people refused to listen.

"No!" they said. "We want a king over us. Then we will be like all the other nations, with a king to lead us and go out before us and fight our battles."

So the LORD said, "Listen to them and give them a king."

Meanwhile, in the quiet hill country of Benjamin, a tall young man named Saul lived with his father, Kish. Saul was striking – handsome, broad-shouldered, and a full head taller than any other man in Israel. At this stage in his life, he was also humble, reserved, and obedient.

One day, Kish's donkeys went missing. Kish sent Saul and a servant to search for them.

They travelled from Shalisha to Shaalim to Zuph, but the donkeys were nowhere to be found. Tired and discouraged, Saul suggested they return. "Let's go home," Saul said. "My father will be more worried about us than the donkeys."

But the servant had an idea, "There's a man of God in this town. Let's ask him for help."

That man was Samuel.

As they approached the town, Samuel was already waiting. God had spoken to him the day before: “Tomorrow I will send you a man from Benjamin. Anoint him ruler over My people.”

When Saul arrived, Samuel welcomed him warmly. “I am the seer,” he said. “Go up ahead of me to the high place. Today you shall eat with me, and tomorrow I will tell you all that is in your heart.”

Saul was stunned.

“But am I not a Benjamite – from the smallest tribe in Israel? And is not my clan the least of all the families of the tribe?”

Samuel smiled gently. “God has chosen you.”

At the feast, Samuel gave Saul the place of honour and a special portion of food. The next morning, as they walked together outside the city, Samuel took a flask of oil and poured it on Saul’s head.

“Has not the LORD anointed you to be ruler over His inheritance?”

He told Saul signs would follow: he would meet two men by Rachel’s tomb, three men carrying goats, bread, and wine, and a group of prophets playing harps and flutes. When he joined the prophets, the Spirit of God would come upon him, and he would be changed into another man.

And it happened just as Samuel had said.

The Spirit of the LORD rushed upon Saul, and he prophesied. People asked, “Is Saul also among the prophets?”

Yet when the time came for his public anointing, Saul hesitated.

Samuel gathered the tribes at Mizpah. Lots were cast. Benjamin was chosen. Then the clan of Matri. Then Saul, son of Kish.

But Saul was nowhere to be found.

They inquired of the LORD, and God revealed, “He has hidden himself among the baggage.”

They ran and brought him out. He stood a head taller than anyone else. And Samuel said to the people, “Do you see the man the LORD has chosen? There is none like him among all the people!”

The people shouted, “Long live the king!”

But not everyone rejoiced.

Some scoundrels said, “How can this man save us?” And they despised him.

Saul said nothing.

Later, when Nahash the Ammonite besieged Jabesh-Gilead, Saul rose to action. The Spirit of God came upon him, and he mustered Israel’s tribes, leading them to a swift and righteous victory. Then the people came to Samuel and said, “Where are those who questioned Saul’s kingship? Let us put them to death!”

But Saul replied, “No one shall be put to death today. For this day the LORD has rescued Israel.”

It was a noble beginning.

Samuel then addressed the nation one last time.

“Now you have a king,” he said. “But do not think you are free of responsibility. If you and your king follow the LORD, all will be well. But if you rebel, His hand will be against you.”

Then, though it was harvest time, Samuel prayed – and the LORD sent thunder and rain. The people trembled.

“Pray for us,” they begged.

Samuel answered, “Do not be afraid. You have done this evil, yet do not turn aside from following the LORD. Serve Him with all your heart.”

He paused and said words they would never forget:

“As for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the LORD by ceasing to pray for you. I will teach you the good and right way. But be sure to fear the LORD and serve Him faithfully with all your heart. Consider what great things He has done for you.”

The people now had a king. They had a leader.

But they still needed a Saviour.

And in time, they would learn that no human king – no matter how tall or mighty – could fill the place only God was meant to hold.

Saul’s story begins with promise and power, but also with warning. He was not chosen because of greatness, but because the people demanded a king. And though he stood tall among men, his heart would need to bow low before God.

Samuel’s message to the nation was clear: A human king is not a substitute for divine obedience. Only God can rule the heart. Saul’s success would not depend on his size or strength, but on his submission to God’s Word.

Israel’s first king would be a test – a glimpse of what happens when people choose appearance over dependence. And yet, even in this, God was patient. He gave Saul His Spirit. He gave him victory. He gave him every opportunity to trust and obey.

But in time, Saul would forget.

And the people would learn the difference between what they wanted and what they needed.

This lesson still echoes today: true leadership is not about outward stature, but inward surrender. And the greatest King – Jesus – would come not to take power, but to lay down his power, to lay down his life for all people.

He would not be chosen for height or prestige, but for humility and truth.

He would not take from the people, but give Himself for them.

And through Him, God would reign forever – not just on a throne, but in every willing heart.

C) Reflective Thinking Questions

For Younger Students (Years 7–8):

1. Why did the people of Israel want a king?
2. What warnings did Samuel give about having a king?
3. What was Saul doing when Samuel first met him?
4. How did Saul respond when he was announced as king?

For Middle Students (Year 9):

1. What does this story reveal about Israel’s spiritual condition at the time?
2. Why is it important that God told Samuel, “It is Me they have rejected”?
3. In what ways did Saul initially show humility?
4. What does this story teach us about trusting God versus trusting in human leaders?

For Older Students (Year 10):

1. How does the tension between divine kingship and human monarchy play out in this story?
 2. What are the consequences of choosing leaders based on appearance rather than character?
 3. How does Samuel’s final address to the people shape their understanding of obedience and leadership?
 4. What parallels can you draw between Saul and modern leadership models?
-

D) Activity Options

Option 1: Hands-on Practical – “Leadership Comparison Chart”

- Create a two-column chart comparing a godly judge (like Samuel) with a human king (like Saul).
- Include leadership traits, methods, and spiritual outcomes.
- **Extension (Years 9–10):** Add a third column comparing both to Jesus as the perfect King.

Option 2: Creative – “Samuel’s Speech to the Nation” Rewrite

- Write your own version of Samuel’s warning speech in modern-day language.
- Use persuasive techniques and address a current issue where people might demand a human solution over divine trust.
- **Extension (Years 9–10):** Turn your speech into a spoken-word performance or video script.

Option 3: Dramatization – “The Hidden King”

- Re-enact the scenes from Saul searching for donkeys to being found hiding in the baggage.
 - Add dialogue that shows his surprise and insecurity.
 - **Extension (Years 9–10):** Include a reflection scene where Saul wrestles with his identity and God’s calling.
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E) Biblical Connection

Israel's request for a king was not just a political shift – it was a spiritual turning point. They chose to follow what they could see, rather than continuing to trust in the invisible yet faithful guidance of God. Yet, even in their disobedience, God was patient. He gave them Saul, anointed by the Spirit, and through Samuel, reminded them that their fate still depended on whether they obeyed the LORD. In the New Testament, Jesus comes not as a king by human demand, but as the true King by divine design – serving, sacrificing, and leading perfectly.

F) Narration Activity

Narration Activity:

Ask your parent or tutor to listen while you retell the story of how Israel asked for a king and God chose Saul.

Include the elders' request, Samuel's warning, Saul's calling, and the people's response.

If you are in Years 9–10, reflect aloud:

“Have I ever chosen what looks strong rather than what is truly good? How can I follow God's leadership when others want control?”

Lesson 20 – David & Goliath

Theme: Obedience, Courage, and Trust in God

Australian Curriculum v9 Content Descriptions

- **History – AC9HH7K01:** Describe the roles and achievements of significant individuals and groups in ancient societies, including the influence of law, religion, and belief systems.
 - **History – AC9HH7K02:** Explain the causes and effects of events and developments in ancient societies.
 - **History – AC9HH7K03:** Describe the social, political, and cultural features of ancient societies.
 - **History – AC9HH7K04:** Explain the significance of heritage sites and cultural practices in ancient societies.
 - **History – AC9HH8K01:** Analyse the roles of significant individuals or groups and how they contributed to change.
 - **Civics & Citizenship – AC9HC8S01:** Examine the responsibilities of individuals and groups in shaping communities and making decisions.
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A) Introduction

One of the most well-known stories in history, the battle between David and Goliath is far more than a tale of a boy defeating a giant. It reveals a truth central to biblical faith: that God uses the weak to shame the strong and honours those who trust Him. In this lesson, students will explore how David’s courage flowed from his obedience and relationship with God, and how his actions affected the nation. They will examine the nature of godly leadership and consider the qualities that make someone fit to represent God in the world.

B) Informational Story – “David & Goliath”

The valley of Elah lay quiet in the early morning haze, flanked on either side by two armies. On one hill stood the Philistines; on the other, the Israelites. But for forty days, neither side had moved. Instead, a giant had stepped forward – Goliath of Gath, nearly ten feet tall, wearing a coat of bronze armour that shimmered in the sun. His spear was like a weaver’s beam, and the tip alone weighed as much as a small child.

“Choose a man to fight me!” he roared. “If he kills me, we will serve you. But if I kill him, you will serve us.”

Every morning and every evening, his challenge echoed through the valley.

And every time, the men of Israel shrank back.

King Saul – once the tallest in Israel – no longer stood tall. He remained in his tent, silent, dismayed, and afraid.

Meanwhile, far from the front lines, a shepherd boy was tending sheep.

David was the youngest son of Jesse, from Bethlehem. His three oldest brothers had followed Saul to war, but David remained behind to watch the flock. He was young, perhaps no older than seventeen, but he was brave and faithful. He played the harp and wrote psalms beneath the stars. And when a lion or bear came to attack his sheep, he pursued and struck it down.

One day, Jesse sent David with supplies for his brothers and gifts for their commander. When David arrived, he heard the shout – Goliath stepping forward again, defying the armies of the living God.

David asked, “Who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?”

Word reached Saul, and David was brought before him.

“You’re only a boy,” Saul said. “You can’t fight him.”

But David replied, “The LORD, who rescued me from the paw of the lion and the bear, will rescue me from this Philistine.”

Saul gave him his own armour, but it didn’t fit. David took it off.

Instead, he chose five smooth stones from the brook, took his shepherd’s staff and sling, and walked toward the giant.

Goliath laughed. “Am I a dog, that you come at me with sticks?”

David answered, “You come against me with sword and spear, but I come against you in the name of the LORD Almighty... Today the LORD will deliver you into my hand... and all the world will know that there is a God in Israel.”

He ran forward, slung a stone, and struck the Philistine in the forehead.

Goliath fell face down.

With no sword of his own, David ran and took the giant’s sword and cut off his head.

The Philistines fled.

And Israel rose.

From that day, David’s name was known.

The confrontation between Israel and the Philistines in the Valley of Elah was not just a military standoff – it was a battle of worldviews. The Philistines worshipped Dagon and trusted in weapons and strength. Israel, though faltering, was called to trust in the invisible God who had delivered them from Egypt and led them through the wilderness.

Yet in these days, faith was fading.

Saul, once anointed and empowered, now cowered in indecision. He had once walked in obedience but had faltered in pride. God had withdrawn His favour, and Samuel had spoken solemn words: “The LORD has torn the kingdom from you and given it to a better man.”

No one in Saul’s camp knew that “better man” was already among them.

David had been secretly anointed by Samuel, though he was still unknown to most. He continued his duties as a shepherd, his days filled with solitude, danger, music, and prayer. His hands bore the marks of labour. His heart, however, was fixed on God.

When Jesse asked him to bring food to his brothers at the front lines, David obeyed without hesitation. The journey from Bethlehem to Elah was several days on foot. David arrived just in time to hear Goliath’s voice thunder across the valley.

The sight shocked him – not the giant himself, but the fear he saw in the soldiers. How could they let this man defy the living God?

He asked questions – not to be bold, but to understand. “What will be done for the man who kills this Philistine?” he asked the soldiers. His oldest brother, Eliab, burned with anger.

“Why have you come? And with whom did you leave those few sheep in the wilderness? I know your pride.”

David replied gently, “Now what have I done? Can’t I even speak?”

Word spread fast. A youth asking about Goliath – sounding confident. Some said reckless.

Saul sent for him.

David stood before the king – humble, calm, firm. He recounted the stories of the lion and the bear, not to boast but to testify. “The LORD delivered me,” he said, “and He will deliver me again.”

Saul, perhaps sensing a flicker of what he once had, relented.

He offered his own armour, heavy and grand. David tried it on but soon took it off. “I cannot go in these,” he said. “I am not used to them.”

Instead, he chose his shepherd’s tools – a sling, a staff, and five smooth stones from the brook.

It was not foolishness. It was faith.

As David stepped into the valley, the armies held their breath.

His sandals kicked up dust with each step. His sling swung loosely in his hand. He walked steadily, his eyes fixed not on Goliath, but beyond – to the God he had worshipped in fields and caves, the God who had never failed him.

Goliath saw him coming and roared with laughter.

“Am I a dog, that you come at me with sticks? Come here, and I will give your flesh to the birds and the beasts!”

David stopped and called out across the valley:

“You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. This day the LORD will deliver you into my hands, and I will strike you down and cut off your head. And the whole world will know that there is a God in Israel. All those gathered here will know that the LORD saves not with sword or spear; for the battle is the LORD’s, and He will give you into our hands!”

He ran forward.

One smooth motion. One stone placed in the sling. One swing.

The rock flew.

It struck the giant in the forehead. Goliath stopped – staggered – and fell face down into the earth.

Silence.

Then chaos.

David ran to him, drew Goliath's own sword, and severed his head. He lifted it high.

The Philistines screamed and fled. Israel surged forward in pursuit. The enemy was routed. The valley that had echoed with fear now rang with victory.

The shepherd boy stood, breathing hard, blood on his hands and glory in his eyes – not for himself, but for the name of the LORD.

Saul, watching from afar, asked his commander, "Whose son is this youth?"

No one knew.

But everyone would.

David returned to camp with the giant's head and was brought before Saul. He was still a boy, ruddy and bright-eyed, holding a sword too big for his frame.

And so began the journey of a king – not by crown, but by courage.

In the days that followed, David's name was sung in streets and homes. "Saul has slain his thousands, but David his tens of thousands!" the people cried.

But David did not seek fame. He sought God.

He had stood before a giant, not to prove himself, but to defend the honour of the LORD.

And that is what made him different.

Goliath had relied on weapons. Saul had relied on armour. David relied on the LORD.

His story endures because it reminds us: true strength is not found in might, but in trust.

God does not need the strongest. He uses the willing.

And those who step forward in faith, even with trembling hands, find that the battle is never theirs alone.

The Valley of Elah still speaks – not with echoing boasts, but with a whisper of courage.

A shepherd's courage.

A young man's obedience.

And the everlasting faithfulness of God.

David's confrontation with Goliath was more than a battle – it was a declaration of who truly rules the earth.

When others trembled, David trusted. He did not compare Goliath's size to his own strength, but to God's majesty. This shift in perspective made all the difference. David saw not a giant to fear, but an opportunity to honour God.

This story is not just about courage – it’s about obedience rooted in worship. David didn’t act on impulse; he acted on conviction. He knew God’s name was at stake, and he could not remain silent while it was mocked.

In our lives, we too face giants – fear, rejection, temptation, injustice. Like David, we are not asked to overcome them in our strength, but to trust that “the battle is the LORD’s.” The slingshot is just a tool. Faith is the weapon.

Ultimately, David points forward to Jesus – the true Shepherd King. Jesus also faced a giant – sin and death – and walked alone into the valley for our sake. He did not come with sword or spear, but with the cross. And by His victory, we are set free.

The lesson is timeless: obedience over appearance, faith over fear, and God's honour over human pride.

May we, like David, be known not for our strength – but for our trust in the One who never fails.

C) Reflective Thinking Questions

For Younger Students (Years 7–8):

1. What made Goliath such a scary opponent?
2. Why did David believe he could defeat Goliath?
3. What did David take with him into battle?
4. How did David’s faith in God make him different from the other soldiers?

For Middle Students (Year 9):

1. What contrasts can you see between Saul and David?
2. Why was David’s response to Goliath an act of obedience to God?
3. What lessons does this story teach about spiritual courage?
4. What does it mean that "the battle is the LORD's"?

For Older Students (Year 10):

1. How does this story redefine leadership from a biblical perspective?
 2. How does David’s response to fear and mockery point to a different kind of power?
 3. What theological connections can be made between David and Jesus in this story?
 4. In what ways are we called to be like David in a world that honours physical power?
-

D) Activity Options

Option 1: Hands-on Practical – “Valley of Faith” Diorama or Map

- Create a simple 3D model or detailed illustrated map of the Valley of Elah.
- Include the two army camps, David’s path, and where the confrontation happened.
- **Extension (Years 9–10):** Annotate the scene with quotes and insights about David’s mindset and motivations.

Option 2: Creative – “A Psalm Before the Battle”

- Write a short psalm or prayer that David might have spoken to God the night before the battle.
- Include themes of trust, praise, and courage.
- **Extension (Years 9–10):** Add a second stanza from Goliath’s perspective, showing the emptiness of boasting in human strength.

Option 3: Dramatization – “When Giants Fall”

- Re-enact the story of David and Goliath. Add dialogue between David and his brothers, David and Saul, and David and Goliath.
- End with a reflection scene where someone narrates the meaning behind the victory.
- **Extension (Years 9–10):** Include a short speech from David explaining why he stepped forward and how he saw the battle as God’s.

E) Biblical Connection

The story of David and Goliath is not merely about bravery – it is about obedience. David saw what others refused to see: that God’s name was being dishonoured. He did not act for glory, but for God’s honour. In this way, David points forward to Jesus – the Shepherd King who also fought a giant no one else could face: sin and death. Jesus, like David, fought on behalf of the people and won. But His victory came not through a sling, but through the cross. Today, we are invited to face our own giants, not with fear, but with faith in the One who fights for us.

F) Narration Activity

Narration Activity:

Ask your parent or tutor to listen while you retell the story of David and Goliath.

Include details about Goliath’s challenge, the fear of Israel, David’s background, and how he defeated the giant.

If you are in Years 9–10, reflect aloud:

“What does this story teach me about courage and obedience? How can I honour God when others are silent?”

Lesson 21 – David & Saul

Theme: Obedience, Honour, and Waiting on God

Australian Curriculum v9 Content Descriptions

- **History – AC9HH7K01:** Describe the roles and achievements of significant individuals and groups in ancient societies, including the influence of law, religion, and belief systems.
 - **History – AC9HH7K02:** Explain the causes and effects of events and developments in ancient societies.
 - **History – AC9HH7K03:** Describe the social, political, and cultural features of ancient societies.
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 - **History – AC9HH8K01:** Analyse the roles of significant individuals or groups and how they contributed to change.
 - **Civics & Citizenship – AC9HC8S01:** Examine the responsibilities of individuals and groups in shaping communities and making decisions.
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A) Introduction

As David’s fame grew, so did Saul’s fear. This lesson explores the long, painful journey between David’s anointing and his accession to the throne, focusing on his relationship with King Saul. Despite being wronged, hunted, and betrayed, David chose honour over vengeance, repeatedly refusing to harm the man who wanted him dead. Through this lesson, students will examine the nature of true leadership, the cost of obedience, and the discipline of waiting for God’s timing.

B) Informational Story – “David & Saul”

David’s victory over Goliath changed everything. He had gone from a shepherd boy to a national hero overnight. Songs were sung in his honour. People cheered his name. But in the heart of King Saul, joy turned quickly to fear.

At first, Saul welcomed David. He made him a commander in the army. David succeeded wherever he was sent. The people loved him. Saul’s own son Jonathan became David’s closest friend, binding himself to David with a covenant of loyalty and love. He even gave David his robe, sword, and belt – symbols of royal succession.

But as the crowds grew louder in their praise – “Saul has slain his thousands, and David his tens of thousands” – a shadow fell over Saul’s heart.

Jealousy took root.

From that day on, Saul kept a watchful eye on David.

One evening, while David played music to soothe the king’s troubled spirit, Saul hurled a spear at him. David dodged and escaped. It happened again. And again.

Soon, Saul tried to remove David more subtly. He offered his daughter Michal in marriage – but with a condition: David must kill one hundred Philistines. Saul hoped David would die in battle. But David returned alive – with double the number.

Michal loved David. Jonathan loved David. The people loved David.

Only Saul’s heart grew darker.

He ordered his men to kill David. Jonathan pleaded with his father, and for a while, Saul relented. But it didn't last.

David fled.

For years, he lived as a fugitive – hiding in fields, caves, deserts. Others gathered to him: the outcast, the indebted, the distressed. They became his band of warriors. But David refused to lift his hand against Saul.

Twice, David had the chance to kill the king. Once in a cave in En Gedi, when Saul entered unaware. David crept forward and cut off the corner of his robe. Later, he held it up and called out, "I could have killed you. But I will not raise my hand against the LORD's anointed."

Saul wept. "You are more righteous than I," he said. "You have repaid me good, though I have done you evil."

But again, the jealousy returned.

David waited. He wept. He wrote psalms in caves. And he trusted God to be his defence.

Their relationship became a tragedy – one man consumed by fear, the other shaped by patience.

One refused to let go of power.

The other waited for God's time.

And in the end, only one would remain.

David's life changed forever after the valley of Elah. What began as an act of obedience and courage soon placed him at the heart of a national storm. Overnight, David became a symbol of hope, and without seeking it, a threat to the throne.

At first, Saul's affection for David seemed genuine. He brought the young man into his court, gave him a high military rank, and allowed him to marry his daughter. But Saul was not secure. He remembered Samuel's words – that the kingdom would be torn from him and given to another.

When Saul heard the song – "Saul has slain his thousands, and David his tens of thousands" – his insecurity erupted into jealousy.

And jealousy became obsession.

An evil spirit tormented Saul, and David, gifted in music, was called to play the harp and calm his soul. But one evening, as David strummed his lyre, Saul gripped his spear. Without warning, he hurled it at David. The spear missed, and David fled.

It would not be the last time.

David became a fugitive. He moved from palace to cave, from army leader to outlaw. But his loyalty to Saul never wavered. He refused to take revenge or claim the throne by force.

Jonathan, Saul's son, remained David's faithful friend. Their bond was remarkable – a rare friendship marked by honesty, honour, and deep trust in God's purposes. Jonathan warned David of his father's plans and risked his life to protect him.

One of the most poignant scenes took place in a field, where Jonathan and David met in secret. Jonathan said, “Go in peace, for we have sworn friendship with each other in the name of the LORD.”

David then fled to Nob, where the priest Ahimelek helped him. Saul, upon hearing this, massacred the entire priestly town in a fit of rage – another sign of how far his heart had turned.

In the wilderness, David was not alone. A band of 400 men joined him – men in debt, distress, or danger. They formed a community of misfits, bound together by a leader who taught them not only how to fight, but how to trust in God.

In the cave of Adullam, David found rest. But even there, Saul pursued him.

Then came the day at En Gedi.

Saul entered a cave alone – not knowing David and his men were hiding deep within.

David’s men whispered, “This is the day the LORD spoke of when He said to you, ‘I will give your enemy into your hands.’”

David crept forward – quiet, steady – and cut off a piece of Saul’s robe.

He returned to his men, holding the cloth in his hand.

Even this act, this symbolic humiliation of the king, struck David’s conscience. “The LORD forbid that I should do such a thing to my master, the LORD’s anointed,” he said. “I will not lift my hand against him.”

When Saul left the cave, David followed. He called out, bowed low, and held up the cloth. “Why do you listen to men who say, ‘David seeks your harm’? Look! The LORD delivered you into my hand today, but I spared you.”

Saul was cut to the heart. He wept aloud. “You are more righteous than I,” he said. “You have repaid me good, while I have repaid you evil... I know you will surely be king. Swear to me you will not destroy my descendants.”

David swore.

Yet Saul’s heart remained unstable.

In the wilderness of Ziph, David and Saul’s paths crossed again. One night, David and Abishai crept into Saul’s camp. Everyone was asleep – Saul, his commander Abner, and the entire army. David stood over Saul’s sleeping form, Abishai whispering, “Let me pin him to the ground. One stroke is all I need.”

But again, David refused. “Do not destroy him. Who can lay a hand on the LORD’s anointed and be guiltless?”

Instead, David took Saul’s spear and water jug and left the camp.

From a distance, he called out to Abner. “Are you not a man? Why did you not guard your master the king?”

He then called to Saul. “Here is your spear. Let one of your men come get it. The LORD rewards every man for his righteousness and faithfulness.”

Saul, once more, broke into tears. “I have sinned,” he said. “Return, David. You have esteemed my life today. I have acted like a fool.”

But David did not return.

The time of peace never came.

In their final meeting, Jonathan found David in the wilderness. The two embraced and wept. Jonathan strengthened his friend’s faith in God. “Do not be afraid. You will be king over Israel, and I will be second to you.”

But they would not meet again.

Jonathan would die beside his father in battle, loyal to the end. Saul, wounded and desperate, would fall on his own sword rather than be captured.

When David heard, he tore his clothes. He wept. He fasted. He wrote a lament: “Saul and Jonathan – in life they were loved and admired... How the mighty have fallen.”

David mourned them both.

He never celebrated Saul’s fall.

Because David had always trusted not in his own hand, but in the hand of God.

The story of David and Saul is not just a tale of rivalry – it is a study in contrast.

Saul had the crown but lost the character. David had the call but waited for the crown. Where Saul grasped at power, David laid it down. He refused to take what God had not yet given. His obedience was not passive – it was active trust, even in caves, deserts, and betrayal.

David’s restraint in not killing Saul, even when justified by others, speaks to a deeper reverence. He honoured God’s anointing even when the man no longer lived up to it. That choice – repeated over years – shaped David’s soul for kingship.

Waiting is not weakness. In the hands of the faithful, it becomes worship.

Through this season, David learned that leadership is not about commanding armies or sitting on a throne. It’s about trusting God’s timing, choosing honour over vengeance, and allowing God to fight your battles.

And in David’s long wait, we see a foreshadowing of Christ – the true King who refused to grasp power but chose instead the path of humility, surrender, and sacrificial love.

Jesus, too, was misunderstood, betrayed, pursued. And like David, He did not retaliate. He waited for the Father’s will. And by doing so, He brought true victory – not with a sword, but with a cross.

May we, like David, learn to wait well, trust deeply, and lead with reverence – for the LORD sees not as man sees, and His plans unfold in perfect time.

C) Reflective Thinking Questions

For Younger Students (Years 7–8):

1. Why did Saul become jealous of David?
2. How did Jonathan help David?
3. What did David do when he had the chance to kill Saul?
4. How did David show that he trusted God?

For Middle Students (Year 9):

1. What does David's refusal to kill Saul say about his character?
2. How does David's friendship with Jonathan demonstrate loyalty and faith?
3. What are some examples in the story of waiting on God rather than acting in anger?
4. What do you think shaped David into a good leader during this time?

For Older Students (Year 10):

1. Compare and contrast the leadership styles and character of Saul and David.
 2. What are the dangers of clinging to power, as seen in Saul's story?
 3. How does David's response to persecution reflect the teachings of Jesus in the New Testament?
 4. In what ways does this story challenge modern ideas of success, power, or self-defence?
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D) Activity Options

Option 1: Hands-on Practical – “Timeline of Trust”

- Create a timeline that maps the major events between David's anointing and Saul's death.
- Include places David fled to, key relationships, and turning points of choice or restraint.
- **Extension (Years 9–10):** Add reflection notes about what David may have been learning during each phase.

Option 2: Creative – “Letters from the Wilderness”

- Write a series of three journal entries from David's point of view – one from the cave of Adullam, one after sparing Saul's life, and one after hearing of Saul's death.
- **Extension (Years 9–10):** Compare these reflections to a modern Christian walking through a season of waiting or injustice.

Option 3: Dramatization – “Confronting the King”

- Re-enact the scene in the cave at En Gedi, including the dialogue between David and his men, and David's speech to Saul.
 - Add a narrator who explains what David could have done differently and why his choice mattered.
 - **Extension (Years 9–10):** End with a monologue from David on the discipline of waiting on God.
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E) Biblical Connection

David's refusal to harm Saul – even after multiple betrayals – echoes Jesus' teaching to love your enemies and bless those who persecute you. David's restraint was rooted not in fear, but in honour for God's authority and trust in God's justice. In this, he foreshadowed Christ Himself, who endured suffering without retaliation. David's years in the wilderness were not wasted; they were preparation. And in God's timing, he was raised up – not because he fought for the throne, but because he trusted the One who placed him there.

F) Narration Activity

Narration Activity:

Ask your parent or tutor to listen while you retell the story of David and Saul's long conflict.

Include the palace, the cave, the wilderness, and David's choices to show honour.

If you are in Years 9–10, reflect aloud:

“What does this story teach me about handling injustice and waiting for God's timing? What kind of leader do I want to be?”

Lesson 22 – David Becomes King

Theme: Obedience, Humility, and Trust in God’s Timing

Australian Curriculum v9 Content Descriptions

- **History – AC9HH7K01:** Describe the roles and achievements of significant individuals and groups in ancient societies, including the influence of law, religion, and belief systems.
- **History – AC9HH7K02:** Explain the causes and effects of events and developments in ancient societies.
- **History – AC9HH7K03:** Describe the social, political, and cultural features of ancient societies.
- **History – AC9HH7K04:** Explain the significance of heritage sites and cultural practices in ancient societies.
- **History – AC9HH8K01:** Analyse the roles of significant individuals or groups and how they contributed to change.
- **Civics & Citizenship – AC9HC8S01:** Examine the responsibilities of individuals and groups in shaping communities and making decisions.

A) Introduction

After many years of waiting, David was finally crowned king. But the path to kingship was not paved with ambition or force. It was shaped by patience, honour, and deep trust in God’s timing. This lesson traces David’s transition from fugitive to king, highlighting how he handled grief, betrayal, and leadership challenges without compromising his obedience to God. Students will reflect on what it means to lead with humility and how true authority is built on character, not conquest.

B) Informational Story – “David Becomes King”

The death of Saul left a silence across the land.

News of the battle at Mount Gilboa travelled fast. Israel had been defeated. Saul and his sons – Jonathan among them – were dead. The Philistines had desecrated their bodies, displaying them on the walls of Beth Shan. The hearts of the people melted with fear.

But David wept.

He tore his clothes and fasted. Though Saul had hunted him like a criminal, David had never stopped calling him “the LORD’s anointed.” His grief was real. And when an Amalekite messenger falsely claimed to have killed Saul, hoping for a reward, David had him executed. “Your own mouth has testified against you,” he said.

Then David wrote a lament:

“Your glory, O Israel, lies slain on your heights.
How the mighty have fallen...
Saul and Jonathan – loved and gracious in life,
swifter than eagles, stronger than lions.”

David did not rush to take the throne.

He waited.

He prayed.

“Shall I go up to one of the towns of Judah?” he asked.

The LORD answered, “Go up.”

“To which one?”

“To Hebron.”

So David went up, along with his men and their families. And the men of Judah came and anointed him king over the tribe of Judah.

But it was not yet the united kingdom.

Ish-Bosheth, a son of Saul, was made king over the northern tribes by Abner, Saul’s former commander. For two years, the kingdom remained divided – Judah under David, the rest under Ish-Bosheth.

There was tension. Civil war loomed. Yet David waited for God’s hand.

Eventually, Abner saw the truth: “The LORD has promised David to be king over all Israel.” He switched allegiance and tried to unite the kingdom – but was murdered by Joab, David’s general.

David mourned Abner too.

In time, Ish-Bosheth was also assassinated, and once again, David punished the killers.

He wanted no part in gaining the kingdom through bloodshed. He trusted God to establish him.

Then the elders of all Israel came to Hebron.

They said, “We are your own flesh and blood. In the past, while Saul was king, you were the one who led Israel. And the LORD said to you, ‘You will shepherd my people and become their ruler.’”

So David made a covenant with them before the LORD.

And they anointed him king over all Israel.

He was thirty years old.

And at last, the shepherd had become the king – not through force, but through faith.

The sun over Hebron was hot, but the air was thick with quiet reverence. David stood among his men – no longer fugitives, but still far from settled. He had spent years hiding in caves and deserts, always fleeing, always waiting. But now, the waiting was over.

Almost.

News of Saul's death had shaken the nation. The mighty king had fallen on his own sword. Jonathan – David's dearest friend – was dead. The Israelite army had been routed by the Philistines. In their wake, confusion spread across the tribes.

David mourned as few expected him to.

He didn't celebrate Saul's death, though it cleared the path to the throne. He didn't smile at the fall of his enemies. Instead, he tore his robe and fasted. He composed a lament that would be taught throughout Israel, not just to honour Jonathan, but to honour Saul.

"Tell it not in Gath," he wrote. "Proclaim it not in the streets of Ashkelon, lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice."

He understood that even fallen leaders were once chosen vessels of God.

But David did not move without prayer.

He asked, "Shall I go up to Judah?" The LORD said yes. "To which city?" David asked. "To Hebron," came the answer.

So he went – not with swords raised, but with his household, his warriors, and the people who had shared his exile.

In Hebron, the men of Judah anointed him king.

It was a beginning, but not the end.

While David reigned in the south, the northern tribes placed Ish-Bosheth, Saul's son, on the throne. But Ish-Bosheth lacked the character or courage of his father. The real power behind the throne was Abner, the commander of Saul's army.

For two years, there was division in Israel.

David did not provoke war, but conflict found him.

At Gibeon, the armies of Abner and Joab (David's commander) met in a deadly contest. What began as a controlled skirmish escalated into a fierce battle. Joab's brother Asahel pursued Abner and was killed. Bitterness began to brew.

And still, David waited.

He did not seek revenge. He did not seize opportunity by force. His heart was steady.

Then something shifted.

Abner quarrelled with Ish-Bosheth and defected to David's side. He came to Hebron with peace in his hands and promises on his lips. "Let us make a covenant," Abner said, "and I will help bring all Israel under your rule."

David received him with honour.

But Joab, burning with anger over Asahel's death, lured Abner out and murdered him in the gateway.

David was heartbroken at the news of Abner's death.

He publicly rebuked Joab and mourned aloud. "A commander and a great man has fallen in Israel," he cried. He led the funeral procession and fasted all day. The people noticed. Even those who had doubted David's intentions saw his integrity.

"Today," they said, "a king has acted nobly in Israel."

But the conflict was not over.

Without Abner's protection, Ish-Bosheth was vulnerable. Two men from his own army crept into his house during the heat of the day and killed him while he lay resting. They cut off his head and travelled to Hebron, hoping for a reward.

They misunderstood David.

When they presented the head, David's face turned to stone. "You thought to bring good news by killing a man in his own house, on his bed?" he said. "Shall I not now demand his blood from your hands?"

And he had them executed.

David's rise to power was marked not by ambition, but by restraint. Not by manipulation, but by honour.

Now, at last, the elders of Israel came to him. They remembered his courage, his leadership, his patience.

"We are your own flesh and blood," they said. "Even while Saul was king, you were the one who led Israel. And the LORD said, 'You shall shepherd my people and become their ruler.'"

So David made a covenant with them in Hebron.

It was not a moment of conquest, but of unity.

At age thirty, David became king over all Israel.

One of his first acts was to capture Jerusalem – a neutral city not owned by any tribe. It became his capital, the City of David. He ruled from there for forty years.

But David never forgot the journey.

He had walked through valleys, fled through deserts, and hidden in caves. He had waited when others would have acted. He had honoured Saul when others would have taken the crown.

His throne was not built on victory, but on obedience.

And behind every step was the hand of God.

David knew the weight of kingship. He was no perfect man – his flaws would soon be revealed. But in this moment, as he stood crowned in Hebron, his heart was humble.

He remembered the pasture.

He remembered the songs he sang under starlight.

And he knew: he had not climbed to power.

He had been led.

He was still a shepherd – only now, he shepherded a nation.

David's ascent to the throne is not the story of a man who grasped power – it is the story of a man who trusted God to lift him up in due time.

From the moment of his anointing as a youth, David could have taken shortcuts. He could have acted like the nations around him – seizing control, removing rivals, or forcing loyalty. But he chose the long road. The hard road. The righteous road.

He waited for God.

Even in pain, even in injustice, even when the way forward was slow, David let God write the story. And in doing so, he became a different kind of king.

Not one who ruled for personal glory, but one who longed to reflect God's character.

This is why David is called a man after God's own heart. Not because he was perfect, but because he trusted God's promises more than his own plans. He showed us that leadership in God's kingdom is not about domination, but about service.

Ultimately, David's life points forward to Jesus – the true and better King.

Jesus, too, was anointed long before He wore a crown. He waited, suffered, was misunderstood. He, too, refused to take power by force. Instead, He emptied Himself and became obedient to death – even death on a cross.

And in due time, God exalted Him to the highest place.

David's kingship was a shadow of a greater kingdom to come. His shepherd's heart would echo in the Good Shepherd who laid down His life for His sheep.

As followers of Christ, we are called to lead like David, serve like Jesus, and wait like those who know the true King is always on the throne.

Let us not seek to grasp, but to trust.

Let us not push forward, but walk humbly.

Let us not fear the cave or the wilderness – for in them, God prepares kings.

C) Reflective Thinking Questions

For Younger Students (Years 7–8):

1. What did David do when he heard Saul and Jonathan had died?
2. Why didn't David try to become king right away?
3. How did David treat people who tried to gain favour by harming his enemies?
4. What does this tell you about David's character?

For Middle Students (Year 9):

1. Why did David mourn his enemies rather than celebrate their deaths?
2. What leadership qualities did David show during the years before he was crowned?
3. How did David respond to injustice, betrayal, and delay?
4. Why do you think God chose David to lead?

For Older Students (Year 10):

1. Compare David's rise to power with other leaders in history who took power by force.
 2. How did David's restraint and mourning reflect his values and his faith?
 3. In what ways is David's kingship a model for Christian leadership?
 4. What does this story reveal about the importance of waiting for God's timing?
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D) Activity Options

Option 1: Hands-on Practical – “God's Timing Timeline”

- Create a timeline starting from David's anointing by Samuel to his coronation over all Israel.
- Highlight key events: his flight from Saul, time in caves, anointing in Hebron, and covenant with the elders.
- **Extension (Years 9–10):** Add a second row tracking David's choices to honour God at each stage.

Option 2: Creative – “David's Coronation Psalm”

- Write a psalm that David might have sung or prayed on the day he became king.
- Include references to past trials, trust in God, and hope for the future.
- **Extension (Years 9–10):** Add a chorus that reflects the theme “The LORD establishes, not man.”

Option 3: Dramatization – “The Elders of Israel Speak”

- Recreate the scene where the elders approach David in Hebron. Each student takes a role.
 - Include a speech from one elder explaining why David is the right king, and David's own speech in reply.
 - **Extension (Years 9–10):** End with a reflection from David on what true leadership looks like under God.
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E) Biblical Connection

David's journey to the throne reminds us that God often works through long processes, not instant outcomes. David honoured Saul, mourned his enemies, punished injustice, and waited patiently for the LORD to fulfil His word. This foreshadows Jesus, the King who would also refuse to grasp power but chose humility and obedience instead. Like David, Jesus came not to be served but to serve – and in the end, God exalted Him. As followers of Christ, we are called to lead with the same trust, humility, and obedience.

F) Narration Activity

Narration Activity:

Ask your parent or tutor to listen while you retell the story of how David became king.

Include the deaths of Saul and Jonathan, David's lament, his time in Hebron, the conflict with Ish-Bosheth, and his final coronation.

If you are in Years 9–10, reflect aloud:

“How can I learn to wait for God's timing? What does this story show me about how God prepares people for leadership?”

Lesson 23 – The Ark Brought to Jerusalem

Theme: Obedience, Reverence, and Joy in God’s Presence

Australian Curriculum v9 Content Descriptions

- **History – AC9HH7K01:** Describe the roles and achievements of significant individuals and groups in ancient societies, including the influence of law, religion, and belief systems.
 - **History – AC9HH7K02:** Explain the causes and effects of events and developments in ancient societies.
 - **History – AC9HH7K03:** Describe the social, political, and cultural features of ancient societies.
 - **History – AC9HH7K04:** Explain the significance of heritage sites and cultural practices in ancient societies.
 - **History – AC9HH8K01:** Analyse the roles of significant individuals or groups and how they contributed to change.
 - **Civics & Citizenship – AC9HC8S01:** Examine the responsibilities of individuals and groups in shaping communities and making decisions.
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A) Introduction

Bringing the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem was a defining moment in David’s reign. It was not just about national pride – it was about restoring the presence of God to the heart of Israel’s life. But joy without reverence led to tragedy. In this lesson, students will explore the holiness of God, the responsibility of leadership, and what true worship looks like. They will reflect on what it means to honour God not just with enthusiasm, but with understanding and obedience.

B) Informational Story – “The Ark Brought to Jerusalem”

The city of Jerusalem buzzed with life. It had only recently become the capital, the place where David chose to rule the united tribes of Israel. But now the king longed to bring something more than politics and power to the city – he longed to bring the presence of God.

For years, the Ark of the Covenant had remained away from the people. After being captured by the Philistines and returned, it had stayed in Kiriath-Jearim at the house of Abinadab. It had not returned to its rightful place among the worshipping people of Israel.

David decided to bring the Ark to Jerusalem.

He gathered thirty thousand men and set out with singing, lyres, harps, tambourines, and cymbals. The procession was joyful, exuberant – a national celebration of God's goodness.

The Ark was placed on a new cart, pulled by oxen, with Abinadab’s sons, Uzzah and Ahio, guiding it.

Then tragedy struck.

At the threshing floor of Nacon, the oxen stumbled. Uzzah reached out to steady the Ark. In that instant, God’s anger burned against him. He was struck down and died beside the Ark.

The music stopped. Joy turned to fear.

David was stunned. He was angry, and then afraid. “How can the Ark of the LORD ever come to me?” he asked.

The procession halted. The Ark was taken aside to the house of Obed-Edom the Gittite, where it remained for three months.

But during those three months, Obed-Edom's household flourished. Everything he touched was blessed.

When David heard this, his fear turned to reverence. He understood now: the Ark was holy, and it could not be handled casually. It must be carried by Levites, as God had commanded, not on a cart. Worship must be full of joy – but also full of obedience.

So David tried again.

This time, priests consecrated themselves. The Ark was carried on the shoulders of the Levites. Sacrifices were made. Trumpets sounded. Shouts rang out.

David wore a linen ephod and danced with all his might before the LORD.

His wife Michal saw him from a window and despised him, thinking it undignified. But David said, "I will become even more undignified than this, and I will be humble in my own eyes."

The Ark entered Jerusalem with praise. It was placed in a tent that David had prepared.

And there, before all the people, David blessed them in the name of the LORD.

The Ark of the Covenant had once stood at the centre of Israel's worship – a gold-covered chest built at the command of God in the days of Moses. It held the stone tablets of the Law, Aaron's staff that had budded, and a jar of manna. But more than what it contained, it represented the throne of the living God, the place where His glory would descend between the cherubim.

But for decades, the Ark had been in exile.

When Eli was priest, the Israelites had foolishly brought the Ark into battle, thinking it would guarantee them victory. But their hearts were far from God. The Philistines captured the Ark and carried it into the temple of their god Dagon. Yet even in captivity, the Ark brought judgement. Dagon's statue fell, broken before the Ark. Plagues broke out. The Philistines passed the Ark from city to city until they could bear it no longer. They returned it on a cart drawn by cows – an offering of guilt and fear.

From there, it rested in Kiriath-Jearim, in the house of Abinadab. And there it stayed – for years.

Now, as king of a united Israel, David longed to bring it home.

His heart burned with desire not only to rule well but to centre the nation's life around the presence of God. Jerusalem, freshly captured from the Jebusites, would be not just a political capital, but a spiritual one.

He gathered thirty thousand chosen men.

There was singing and music, a parade of praise. The Ark was placed on a new cart – just as the Philistines had done. Uzzah and Ahio, sons of Abinadab, walked beside it, confident and casual.

But the way of the world is not the way of God.

When the oxen stumbled, Uzzah reached out to steady the Ark. Perhaps his gesture seemed noble. But to touch the Ark was to disregard the holiness of God. Uzzah had grown too familiar with what was sacred.

And God struck him down.

In that moment, the celebration halted. Silence fell. David's heart, filled with joy a moment earlier, now trembled with fear.

"How can the Ark of the LORD ever come to me?" he asked.

He left it in the care of Obed-Edom the Gittite, unsure what to do next.

But the Ark brought blessing.

Three months later, when David heard how God had prospered Obed-Edom's house, he realised that the problem had not been the Ark – but the attitude of those who handled it.

David prepared differently the second time.

He consulted the priests and Levites, as instructed in the Law. He ensured that the Ark would be carried on poles by consecrated men – not transported like luggage, but borne with reverence. Sacrifices were offered. Every six steps, they paused and made another offering. It was slow, deliberate, and holy.

This time, joy and reverence walked side by side.

David himself dressed not in royal robes but in a linen ephod, like a priest. He danced – not with choreographed formality, but with reckless gratitude. His limbs moved with abandon, not to impress but to praise. He twirled, leapt, and shouted to the heavens, forgetting himself in the joy of the LORD.

The crowd joined him. Trumpets blared. Shouts rose. The city swelled with music and meaning.

It was the most sacred celebration Israel had seen in generations.

As the Ark approached the tent David had pitched for it, he offered burnt offerings and fellowship offerings. Then he blessed the people in the name of the LORD and gave each person a loaf of bread, a cake of dates, and a cake of raisins.

It was a feast of God's presence.

But not everyone rejoiced.

From a window, Michal watched.

She was the daughter of Saul and David's first wife. Perhaps she remembered the elegance of royal ceremonies under her father. Perhaps she struggled with David's public display. Or perhaps bitterness had taken root in her heart. Whatever the reason, she despised him in her heart.

When David returned home to bless his own household, she met him with sarcasm.

"How the king of Israel has distinguished himself today," she said, "going around half-naked in full view of the slave girls!"

David responded not with anger, but with clarity: "It was before the LORD, who chose me rather than your father. I will become even more undignified than this. I will be humbled in my own eyes."

David knew that true worship wasn't about appearance. It was about honour.

He had waited for years to lead the people. He had fought battles, wept in caves, sung psalms alone. Now, as the Ark entered the city, he danced – not to show off, but to say, “God is here. And He is worthy.”

This moment marked a turning point.

From now on, Jerusalem would be the city of God’s presence.

David would prepare the way for a Temple his son would one day build.

But for now, the tent was enough.

Because the LORD had come home.

The story of the Ark’s return to Jerusalem teaches us that God’s presence is both a joy and a responsibility.

Uzzah’s death reminds us that God is holy – He cannot be approached carelessly. Even well-meaning acts, when rooted in disobedience, carry consequences. David’s fear was not misplaced. But it was incomplete. What David needed – and what he gained – was reverence born of understanding.

When the Ark blessed the house of Obed-Edom, David recognised that God’s holiness is not a threat to those who walk in His ways. It is a promise. A joy. A light. The presence of God is life-giving – when it is honoured.

That’s why David danced.

His second procession was not just a political act – it was an act of worship. He laid aside royal garments to dress like a priest. He put away pride and embraced humility. He celebrated not his own victory, but God’s faithfulness.

True worship, like David’s, flows from a heart that remembers.

He remembered the desert. The caves. The times when he wondered if God had forgotten him. And now, with the Ark returning and the people singing, he knew: the God who had promised was the God who had come through.

And what of Michal?

Her reaction warns us that cynicism can harden the heart. When we look at others through the lens of status or dignity, we can miss the joy of surrender. Michal saw only the garments. She missed the God behind the celebration.

David’s words are a challenge to us all: “I will become even more undignified than this.”

Are we willing to lay down our pride in worship? To trade appearances for adoration?

The Ark’s arrival in Jerusalem foreshadowed another arrival – that of Jesus, entering the city to cries of “Hosanna.” He, too, would be misunderstood. He, too, would bear the presence of God – not in a box, but in His very being.

And through Him, the presence of God would move – not just into a tent, but into hearts.

The Ark pointed to the coming of Christ.

And the celebration of David calls us still: to worship in spirit and truth, with joy and reverence, knowing that the Holy One has come near – and dwells within.

C) Reflective Thinking Questions

For Younger Students (Years 7–8):

1. What did the Ark of the Covenant represent for the people of Israel?
2. Why did Uzzah die when he touched the Ark?
3. What was different the second time David brought the Ark to Jerusalem?
4. Why did David dance, and how did his wife Michal respond?

For Middle Students (Year 9):

1. How does Uzzah's death help us understand God's holiness?
2. What does David's change in approach between the first and second procession teach us about worship?
3. Why did Michal criticise David, and what was his response?
4. What can we learn from Obed-Edom's experience of hosting the Ark?

For Older Students (Year 10):

1. How is reverence for God shown (or not shown) in this story? What are the consequences?
 2. In what ways does David show leadership during both the crisis and celebration?
 3. What does this story reveal about balancing joy and fear in our relationship with God?
 4. How does this moment foreshadow New Testament themes of worship and the presence of God?
-

D) Activity Options

Option 1: Hands-on Practical – “Ark Procession Map & Timeline”

- Draw a map showing the journey of the Ark from Kiriath-Jearim to Jerusalem.
- Create a timeline with two sections: the first failed attempt and the second successful procession.
- **Extension (Years 9–10):** Annotate the timeline with reasons why the second journey succeeded spiritually.

Option 2: Creative – “David's Journal: The Day I Danced”

- Write a journal entry from David's perspective, reflecting on both the failure and success of bringing the Ark.
- Include thoughts on Uzzah, Michal, and what it means to worship with humility.
- **Extension (Years 9–10):** Write a follow-up entry from the perspective of a Levite or a citizen who witnessed the event.

Option 3: Dramatization – “The Two Journeys”

- Re-enact the two journeys of the Ark. First, show the error and Uzzah's death. Then, contrast it with the second, reverent approach.
- Include a narrator who explains the meaning behind each part of the story.

- **Extension (Years 9–10):** Add a reflection scene where David explains to a crowd what he has learned about worship.
-

E) Biblical Connection

This story points clearly to the character of God: He is holy and not to be approached lightly, yet He delights in the joyful, obedient worship of His people. Uzzah's death reminds us of the weight of God's presence; Obed-Edom's blessing reminds us of the beauty of it. David's worship, both exuberant and humble, points forward to Christ – who, like the Ark, carried God's presence into our world. In Christ, the holiness of God meets the love of God, and we are invited to worship in spirit and truth.

F) Narration Activity

Narration Activity:

Ask your parent or tutor to listen while you retell the story of David bringing the Ark to Jerusalem. Include both journeys, the mistakes and the corrections, and the final celebration.

If you are in Years 9–10, reflect aloud:

“What does this story teach me about how I approach God? Am I willing to worship with both joy and reverence?”

Lesson 24 – David & Bathsheba

Theme: Obedience, Consequences, Repentance, and Restoration

Australian Curriculum v9 Content Descriptions

- **History – AC9HH7K01:** Describe the roles and achievements of significant individuals and groups in ancient societies, including the influence of law, religion, and belief systems.
 - **History – AC9HH7K02:** Explain the causes and effects of events and developments in ancient societies.
 - **History – AC9HH7K03:** Describe the social, political, and cultural features of ancient societies.
 - **History – AC9HH7K04:** Explain the significance of heritage sites and cultural practices in ancient societies.
 - **History – AC9HH8K01:** Analyse the roles of significant individuals or groups and how they contributed to change.
 - **Civics & Citizenship – AC9HC8S01:** Examine the responsibilities of individuals and groups in shaping communities and making decisions.
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A) Introduction

King David had led his nation with courage and trust in God. But in this lesson, we see the darker side of leadership: the temptation to misuse power, the pain of sin, and the possibility of restoration through repentance. David’s actions towards Bathsheba and Uriah show the destructive power of selfishness and deceit. Yet through honest confession, David models a path back to God. This lesson calls students to wrestle with the reality of sin, the cost of consequences, and the hope of God’s mercy.

B) Informational Story – “David & Bathsheba”

Spring had come, and with it the season when kings usually went out to war. But this year, David stayed in Jerusalem. He had sent Joab, his general, to lead the army. David remained behind in the palace.

One evening, as the sun was setting and the air cooled, David rose from his couch and walked on the roof of his house. From that high place, he could see the city spread before him.

And there, he saw her.

A woman, bathing.

She was beautiful – extraordinarily so. David asked a servant, “Who is that woman?”

The answer came: “That is Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam and the wife of Uriah the Hittite.”

Uriah. A soldier. One of David’s own mighty men. A loyal warrior, currently away at war.

David should have turned away.

But he did not.

He sent messengers. He summoned her.

She came.

David lay with her, and she returned home.

Some time passed. Then word came from Bathsheba: “I am pregnant.”

David panicked. He called Uriah back from the battlefield under the pretence of wanting a report. But David’s real purpose was to send Uriah home – to his wife. If Uriah lay with her, it would cover the king’s sin.

But Uriah was too honourable.

He said, “The ark and Israel and Judah dwell in tents. My commander Joab and my fellow soldiers are camped in the open fields. Shall I then go to my house, to eat and drink and lie with my wife? As you live, I will not do this thing.”

David tried again. He made Uriah drunk.

Still, Uriah did not go home.

In the morning, David wrote a letter to Joab. He gave it to Uriah to carry – his own death warrant.

“Set Uriah in the front line where the fighting is fiercest. Then pull back from him, so that he is struck down and dies.”

Joab obeyed.

Uriah died.

Bathsheba mourned. When the time of mourning was over, David brought her to his house. She became his wife and bore him a son.

But the thing that David had done displeased the LORD.

David’s palace was full of silence.

The child was born. The marriage was complete. The people had moved on, but God had not. The sin was hidden from men, but not from the LORD.

Then came Nathan.

The prophet entered the king’s court with a story.

“There were two men in a city,” he said. “One rich, one poor. The rich man had many sheep and cattle. The poor man had only one little ewe lamb. He raised it with his children. It ate from his plate, drank from his cup, and lay in his arms. It was like a daughter to him.

“One day, a guest came to the rich man. But instead of taking a sheep from his own flock, he took the poor man’s lamb and prepared it for his guest.”

David’s anger burned.

“As surely as the LORD lives,” he said, “the man who did this must die! He must pay four times over, because he had no pity.”

Nathan looked at him.

“You are the man.”

The room froze.

“This is what the LORD says,” Nathan continued. “I anointed you king. I delivered you from Saul. I gave you your master’s house. If that had been too little, I would have given you even more. Why did you despise the word of the LORD? You struck down Uriah and took his wife. Now the sword will never depart from your house.”

David’s shoulders fell.

He did not argue. He did not deny. He did not make excuses.

“I have sinned against the LORD,” he said.

Nathan replied, “The LORD has taken away your sin. You are not going to die. But the child born to you will.”

David went to his room. He lay on the ground. He fasted. He wept.

For seven days, he pleaded.

But the child died.

David rose. He washed. He changed his clothes. He went to the house of the LORD and worshipped.

His servants were astonished. “Why are you eating now?” they asked. “While the child was alive, you wept. Now he is dead, and you rise?”

David said, “While the child was alive, I thought, ‘Who knows? The LORD may be gracious.’ But now he is gone. I cannot bring him back.”

Bathsheba’s grief was deep, though Scripture gives few of her words.

She had been taken, widowed, and made queen – all in the space of months. Her child, innocent and helpless, had died. She bore the weight of sorrow that came not from her sin, but from David’s.

Yet in time, healing came.

David comforted her. He went to her and spoke with her tenderly. She bore another son, and they named him Solomon.

The LORD loved Solomon.

And He sent word through Nathan the prophet to give him another name – Jedidiah, “beloved of the LORD.”

Through Bathsheba, the woman whose story began with tragedy, God brought forth the line of kings that would one day lead to the Messiah.

But David’s life would never be the same.

Nathan had warned: “The sword will never depart from your house.”

Soon after, one of David's sons, Amnon, committed a terrible sin against his sister Tamar. David was furious but did nothing. Tamar's brother, Absalom, took revenge and killed Amnon. Then Absalom fled.

David mourned again.

Later, Absalom returned and began to win the hearts of the people. He launched a rebellion, forcing David to flee Jerusalem. Though David eventually returned, the cost was great. Absalom died in battle, and David wept bitterly: "O my son Absalom! My son, my son Absalom! If only I had died instead of you!"

The consequences of sin rippled across David's household.

But so did the mercy of God.

In Psalm 51, David poured out his confession: "Have mercy on me, O God, according to Your unfailing love... Against You, You only, have I sinned... Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me."

This was the legacy David left – not perfection, but repentance.

He had fallen. He had sinned grievously. Yet he had turned back to God.

And God had forgiven.

From this brokenness, beauty still came. From Bathsheba came Solomon. And from Solomon, generations later, came Jesus.

A king's fall did not end the story.

It only magnified the grace of the true King to come.

The story of David and Bathsheba stands as one of the Bible's most honest accounts of human failure – and divine forgiveness.

David had everything: power, honour, and favour. But in a moment of unchecked desire, he fell. He took what was not his. He betrayed a loyal man. He tried to cover his tracks with deception and blood. He acted like the very kings that God's people were warned about.

And yet, when Nathan confronted him, David did not defend himself. He confessed. "I have sinned against the LORD." It was simple, raw, and sincere.

That confession became the foundation of David's restoration.

God forgave – but He did not erase the consequences. The child died. His house became troubled. His heart broke many more times.

Yet in the midst of sorrow, God showed mercy.

He gave Bathsheba another son – Solomon. A son not of shame, but of grace. A son who would build the temple. A son through whom the Messiah would one day come.

This reminds us that no failure is final when repentance is real.

God does not ignore sin – but neither does He abandon the sinner who returns with a broken heart. “A broken and contrite heart, O God, You will not despise.”

We learn from David that being a man after God’s own heart does not mean being sinless. It means turning back to God when you’ve strayed – no matter how far.

We learn from Bathsheba that God sees the silent sufferers. He redeems what is broken. He can take the story of a woman caught in the chaos of another’s sin and write a legacy of honour.

And we learn from the birth of Solomon that God's plans are greater than our past.

Jesus, the Son of David, would one day come – not as a king to conquer, but as a Saviour to redeem. He bore the sin we could not bear. And through Him, the door of mercy remains open.

If David’s worst moment became a path to God’s greatest promise, then no story is too broken for redemption.

That is the gospel hidden in this tale: judgment, yes – but grace even greater.

This account is also a caution to those in leadership.

With great influence comes great responsibility. David’s fall began with complacency – staying back when he should have led, letting his eyes linger when he should have looked away. His private choice became a national wound.

Leaders, especially those who bear God’s name, must walk in humility, integrity, and accountability.

Yet even when they fail, if they humble themselves, God can restore.

That is the tension – and the hope – of this story.

C) Reflective Thinking Questions

For Younger Students (Years 7–8):

1. Why was it wrong for David to take Bathsheba as his wife?
2. What did David do to try to cover up his sin?
3. How did God respond to David’s actions?
4. What does David do when he realises he has sinned?

For Middle Students (Year 9):

1. How does Nathan’s story help David see his own guilt?
2. What do David’s words in Psalm 51 teach us about repentance?
3. Why did the child of David and Bathsheba die, and how did David respond?
4. How do you think Bathsheba might have felt through this whole experience?

For Older Students (Year 10):

1. How does power affect a leader’s responsibility before God?
2. In what ways does this story illustrate both justice and mercy?

3. How can David be called “a man after God’s own heart” after such sin?
 4. What lessons can modern leaders learn from this story?
-

D) Be Careful What You Watch

(Accessed from Vision Word for Today, Vision Media, December 6, 2025)

‘I will lead a life of integrity in my own home. I will refuse to look at anything vile and vulgar.’
Psalm 101:2-3 NLT

As a teen, Megan arrived home from school just in time to watch an hour of soap operas before doing her homework. She enjoyed the escape into the TV world and wasn’t aware that the programs were arousing sexual curiosity in her.

After years of exposure to these soaps, her perspective on life took a shift. She began to think, ‘Relationships don’t need to be pure. In fact, the impure ones seem more exciting. Fidelity doesn’t matter, as long as a person is happy.’ As a college student, Megan found it easy to participate in one-night stands. Then after a short marriage ended in catastrophe as a result of her infidelity, she sought help from a counsellor. At first it was difficult for the counsellor to understand why Megan engaged in extramarital affairs. She had been a model teenager at home, church, and school, as far as her public behaviour was concerned. Finally the counsellor discovered the source of the temptation that drove Megan to participate in her supposed hidden life. What you watch on television and the internet becomes part of your memory bank. You’re putting images on file that Satan will use against you. David’s affair with Bathsheba started with a wrong look and ended up bringing tragedy to his family. Later David wrote: *‘I will lead a life of integrity in my own home. I will refuse to look at anything vile and vulgar...I will reject perverse ideas and stay from every evil...I will search for faithful people to be my companions’* (vv. 2–4, 6 NLT).

E) Activity Options

Option 1: Hands-on Practical – “Timeline of Sin and Restoration”

- Create a timeline of the events in 2 Samuel 11–12, from David’s temptation to Solomon’s birth.
- Mark the choices, consequences, and responses of David and God.
- **Extension (Years 9–10):** Annotate with verses from Psalm 51 that match key moments of repentance.

Option 2: Creative – “Psalm of Confession”

- Write a psalm-style poem confessing a personal mistake and asking God for forgiveness.
- Use phrases like “Have mercy on me” or “Create in me a clean heart.”
- **Extension (Years 9–10):** Compare your psalm to Psalm 51 and identify shared themes or phrases.

Option 3: Dramatization – “Nathan Confronts David”

- Act out the parable Nathan tells David and the king's response.
 - Add a narrator to explain what each part of the parable represents.
 - **Extension (Years 9–10):** Conclude with a modern parallel about confronting sin with truth and grace.
-

F) Biblical Connection

David's story is not one of moral success, but of divine mercy. He sinned greatly – lust, adultery, murder, deceit – but when confronted, he confessed sincerely. He accepted God's judgment and found forgiveness. His life reminds us that while sin has consequences, no failure is too great for God to redeem. The birth of Solomon, and eventually the birth of Christ, proves that grace runs deeper than shame. God does not only use the pure – He transforms the repentant. And His mercy rewrites broken stories.

G) Narration Activity

Narration Activity:

Ask your parent or tutor to listen while you retell the story of David and Bathsheba.

Include David's sin, Uriah's honour, Nathan's confrontation, and David's repentance.

If you are in Years 9–10, reflect aloud:

“What do I learn about leadership, confession, and mercy from this story? Am I willing to confess when I'm wrong?”

TOPIC 9

CULMINATING PROJECT OR ASSESSMENT

Differentiated Assessment Tasks

Unit: HASS (Obedience): The Ancient Hebrews

Years: 7–10

Assessment Approach: Progressive, inquiry-based, multimodal

Evidence Types: Written, oral, creative, analytical, reflective

OVERVIEW: ASSESSMENT DESIGN LOGIC

Year Level	Cognitive Focus	Assessment Emphasis
Year 7	Describe & explain	Historical narrative, cause–effect, source identification
Year 8	Explain & compare	Continuity/change, perspectives, reliability of sources
Year 9	Analyse & evaluate	Interpretation, contested ideas, evidence-based argument
Year 10	Evaluate & synthesise	Complex inquiry, multiple perspectives, judgment & reasoning

All tasks:

- Use **historical knowledge + sources**
- Use **appropriate HASS terminology**
- Address **History + Geography + Civics strands**
- Allow **choice of format** (written, oral, visual, creative)

ASSESSMENT TASK 1: HISTORICAL INQUIRY

“Obedience and Consequence in Ancient Israel”

YEAR 7 – Guided Historical Explanation

Task:

Choose **one key event** (e.g. Red Sea, Jericho, Bronze Serpent).

Explain:

- What happened
- Why it happened

- What happened because of obedience or disobedience

Product Options:

- 1–2 page illustrated report
- Timeline with written explanations
- Oral narration (5–7 minutes)

Achievement Standards Addressed (Y7 History):

- Describe causes and effects
- Identify roles of significant individuals
- Sequence events
- Use historical terms and evidence

YEAR 8 – Comparative Historical Account

Task:

Compare **two events** (e.g. Red Sea vs Wilderness Rebellion).

Explain:

- Continuities and changes
- How attitudes toward God and leadership shifted
- How obedience shaped outcomes

Product Options:

- Comparative essay (600–800 words)
- Two-sided infographic
- Scripted dialogue between two historical figures

Standards Addressed (Y8 History):

- Explain causes and effects
- Describe continuity and change
- Describe perspectives and values
- Explain historical interpretations

YEAR 9 – Analytical Historical Argument

Task:

Respond to the question:

“To what extent was obedience more important than military strength in Israel’s success?”

Use **at least two case studies** (e.g. Jericho, Gideon, Gibeon).

Product Options:

- Essay (800–1000 words)
- Structured oral presentation with notes
- Debate-style written argument

Standards Addressed (Y9 History):

- Analyse causes, effects, and interpretations
 - Compare perspectives
 - Develop historical arguments using evidence
-

YEAR 10 – Evaluated Historical Inquiry**Task:**

Evaluate the statement:

“The leadership failures of Israel reveal more about human weakness than divine absence.”

Include:

- Multiple leaders (Moses, Saul, Samson, David)
- Evaluation of leadership decisions
- Synthesis of evidence across the unit

Product Options:

- Research essay (1000–1200 words)
- Academic-style podcast or lecture recording
- Documented seminar presentation

Standards Addressed (Y10 History):

- Evaluate interpretations
 - Synthesise evidence from sources
 - Develop well-reasoned historical judgments
-

ASSESSMENT TASK 2: GEOGRAPHY & PLACE ANALYSIS

“Land, Movement, and Meaning”

YEAR 7 – Place Description

Task:

Create a map showing:

- Egypt, Red Sea, Wilderness, Canaan
- Explain how geography shaped events

Product Options:

- Labelled map with short explanations
- Diorama with written captions

Geography Standards (Y7):

- Describe place characteristics
 - Explain people–place relationships
-

YEAR 8 – Environmental Interaction Study

Task:

Explain how **environmental conditions** (desert, rivers, mountains) affected:

- Travel
- Survival
- Decision-making

Product Options:

- Annotated map + explanation
- Short report (400–600 words)

Standards (Y8 Geography):

- Explain interactions of people and environments
 - Identify impacts and responses
-

YEAR 9 – Analytical Geography Report

Task:

Analyse how **movement through landscapes** shaped Israel's identity.

Include:

- Physical geography
- Human responses
- Long-term consequences

Standards (Y9 Geography):

- Analyse interconnections
 - Explain patterns and impacts
-

YEAR 10 – Evaluated Strategy Proposal

Task:

If you were advising Israel **before entering Canaan**, what geographical strategy would you propose and why?

Evaluate:

- Risks
- Environmental factors
- Predicted impacts

Standards (Y10 Geography):

- Evaluate strategies
 - Predict outcomes
 - Justify recommendations
-

ASSESSMENT TASK 3: CIVICS & LAW

“Law, Leadership, and Community”

YEAR 7 – Law Foundations

Task:

Explain:

- What the Ten Commandments were
- Why laws mattered
- How they shaped community life

Standards (Y7 Civics):

- Describe legal principles
 - Explain social cohesion
-

YEAR 8 – Law in Practice

Task:

Compare:

- Mosaic Law
- Modern Australian law (values only, not theology)

Standards (Y8 Civics):

- Explain how laws are formed
 - Describe values and identity
-

YEAR 9 – Civic Analysis

Task:

Analyse:

- Power and accountability in Israel’s leadership
- Consequences when leaders disobeyed law

Standards (Y9 Civics):

- Analyse systems and participation
- Explain governance challenges

YEAR 10 – Comparative Government Study

Task:

Compare:

- Israel's covenant-based governance
- Australia's democratic system

Evaluate strengths and limits of each.

Standards (Y10 Civics):

- Compare systems of government
 - Evaluate democratic resilience
-

FINAL ASSESSMENT OPTION: PORTFOLIO (ALL YEARS)

Students compile a **History Journal / Portfolio** including:

- Weekly reflections
- One major inquiry task
- One geography task
- One civics task
- Visual or creative artifact

Meets assessment requirements while allowing **flexibility, differentiation, and authenticity**
