

SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASSES FOR THE MONTH OF JUNE 2026

June 7, 2026

Deborah, the Dutiful Judge
Printed Text: Judges 4:4-10, 14, 21-22
Devotional Reading: Matthew 20:20-28
Background Scripture: Judges 4-5
Key Verse: Judges 4:4-5

June 14, 2026

Hannah, the Faithful Supplicant
Printed Text: 1 Samuel 1:9-20, 25b
Devotional Text: Isaiah 49:13-17
Background Text: 1 Samuel 1:1-28; 2:1-11, 18-21; 3:1-18
Key Text: 1 Samuel 1:20

June 21, 2026

Jonathan and David, Resolute Friends
Printed Text: 1 Samuel 18:1-4, 1 Samuel 20:16-17, 32-34, 42;
2 Samuel 1:26-27; 2 Samuel 21:7
Devotional Text: Proverbs 27:6, 10-11, 17, 19
Background Text: 1 Samuel 19:1-7; 20:1-42; 2 Samuel 1:17-27
Key Text: 1 Samuel 20:42

June 28, 2026

Amos, the Courageous Prophet
Printed Text: Amos 1:1; Amos 2:11-12; Amos 3:7-8; Amos 7:10-15
Devotional Text: Psalm 23
Background Text: Amos 1:1; 2:6-16; 3:1-15; 7:10-17
Key Text: Amos 7:15

Zoom Sunday School Classes – 7 June 2026 09:00 AM EST

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Deborah, the Dutiful Judge
Printed Text: Judges 4:4-10, 14, 21-22
Devotional Reading: Matthew 20:20-28
Background Scripture: Judges 4-5
Key Verse: Judges 4:4-5

Daily Bible Readings

Monday: A Leadership Example - 1 Timothy 3:1-7
Tuesday: A Leader Who Cares - Acts 9:36-42
Wednesday: A Leader Who Teaches - Acts 18:24-28
Thursday: A Leader Who Listens - Nehemiah 2:1-8
Friday: A Leader Who Intercedes - Nehemiah 4:1-6
Saturday: A Leader Who Serves - John 13:3-17
Sunday: A Leader Who Inspires - Judges 4:4-10, 14, 21-22

KEEP IN MIND:

"At that time Deborah, a prophetess, wife of Lappidoth, was judging Israel. She used to sit under the palm of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in the hill country of Ephraim; and the Israelites came up to her for judgment. " (Judges 4:4-5, NRSV).

LESSON AIM:

ANALYZE the qualities Deborah possessed that made her a strong leader;
EMPATHIZE with Barak's sense of inadequacy and Deborah's sense of confidence;
APPRECIATE the need for leaders and **REFLECT** on specific qualities we look for in leaders.

BACKGROUND:

The Israelites had been following a pattern of disobedience, despair, and deliverance. They would do evil things in the sight of God. He would allow them to be routed by their enemies, and then He would raise up judges to deliver them from the hand of their adversaries. After the judge died, Israel would repeat the cycle, doing worse than before. After one such incident of transgression, God sold them into the hand of King Jabin of Canaan. Jabin oppressed the people of Israel for 20 years (Judges 4:3). The situation appeared hopeless. King Jabin's army was larger and more technologically advanced than Israel's, causing them to greatly fear the Canaanites. The Israelites cried out to the Lord. This time, the Lord did not raise up a judge to deliver Israel. Rather, He chose a prophetess who was already judging Israel to deliver them.

LESSON COMMENTARY:

Deborah Judges Israel (Judges 4:4-5, NRSV)

⁴At that time Deborah, a prophetess, wife of Lappidoth, was judging Israel.

⁵She used to sit under the palm of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in the hill

country of Ephraim; and the Israelites came up to her for judgment.

Deborah is judge of Israel during a time of hardship as a result of Israel's disobedience. Her office is under the palm of Deborah, a cultic site located between Ramah and Bethel in the hill country of Ephraim, north of Jerusalem. The palm tree is named in Deborah's honor, attesting to the high regard in which the Israelites held her. The Israelites came to Deborah to settle their disputes. As a prophetess, she would consult the Lord on behalf of the people, as well as receive oracles from the Lord to deliver to the people concerning setting wrong matters right. Deborah served as a mediator between the Lord and the people, as an administrator of justice, and as a problem solver. She is only the second person in the Old Testament to whom the Israelites went for judgment. The other was Moses (Exodus 18:13).

1. God calls ordinary people to do extraordinary things so that He might receive the glory. When has God challenged you to do something out of your comfort zone?
2. What character traits do you look for in those whom you would accept as mentors? Why?

Deborah Summons Barak (Judges 4:6-10, NRSV)

⁶She sent and summoned Barak son of Abinoam from Kedesh in Naphtali, and said to him, "The LORD, the God of Israel, commands you, 'Go, take position at Mount Tabor, bringing ten thousand from the tribe of Naphtali and the tribe of Zebulun.

⁷I will draw out Sisera, the general of Jabin's army, to meet you by the Wadi Kishon with his chariots and his troops; and I will give him into your hand."

⁸Barak said to her, "If you will go with me, I will go; but if you will not go with me, I will not go."

⁹And she said, "I will surely go with you; nevertheless, the road on which you are going will not lead to your glory, for the LORD will sell Sisera into the hand of a woman." Then Deborah got up and went with Barak to Kedesh.

¹⁰Barak summoned Zebulun and Naphtali to Kedesh; and ten thousand warriors went up behind him; and Deborah went up with him.

Deborah summons Barak from Kedesh-Naphtali, an undetermined holy place in Naphtali, located in southern Galilee. Barak heeds her command and appears before her. She instructs Barak that the Lord, the God of Israel, has commanded him to muster 10,000 men from the tribes of Naphtali and Zebulun from Galilee and go up to Mount Tabor. Mount Tabor is a prominent mountain in the northeast corner of the Jezreel Valley.

Deborah delivers a prophecy of assurance to Barak concerning the Lord's plan to use her to draw out Sisera, the commander of Jabin's army. He would be engaged in battle with Barak by the Kishon River. The Lord would give Sisera into their hand. Her prophecy was intended to summon the troops to battle and assure them of victory through the Lord.

Barak responded, "If thou wilt go with me, then I will go: but if thou wilt not go with me, then I will not go." His hesitancy is understandable. This message must have caught Barak unprepared. The Israelites had been under the cruel oppression of the Canaanites for 20 years (Judges 4:3). The Canaanite army was more sophisticated than any army the Israelites could muster. Israel is often viewed as a united nation, with all 12 tribes ready and willing to fight when called. However, God commanded Barak to deploy troops only from the tribes of Naphtali and Zebulun. (The poetic account in Judges 5 identifies six tribes as heeding the call: Ephraim, Benjamin, Machir, Zebulun, Issachar, and Naphtali. The others were chastised for not responding to Deborah's call.)

The odds might have seemed insurmountable to Barak without God's prophet along. However, that was God's intent. He wanted Israel to recognize that their victory was a result of His divine intervention in their situation, not a result of their physical might. Deborah agrees to accompany Barak to Kedesh. However, she informs him that the glory resulting from the victory would go to a woman rather than to him. Then Barak called the troops from the tribes of Zebulun and Naphtali to Kedesh—10,000 warriors in all—and went up with them to Mount Tabor accompanied by Deborah. Barak's cry was a call for the tribes to take up their weapons and prepare for battle.

Deborah's leadership and the prophecy about a woman defeating Sisera highlight the significant roles women can play in God's redemptive history. Barak's willingness to go into battle with Deborah shows the importance of faith and obedience, even when the path to victory is not as expected. The prophecy that Barak would not receive the glory for the victory serves as a reminder that true glory belongs to God, and humility is essential in serving Him.

1. How would you compare Deborah's faith with Barak's?
2. What are some ways to encourage others in their ministry tasks?

The Lord Defeats Jabin's Army (Judges 4:14)

¹⁴Then Deborah said to Barak, "Up! For this is the day on which the LORD has given Sisera into your hand. The LORD is indeed going out before you." So, Barak went down from Mount Tabor with ten thousand warriors following him.

Deborah, a prophetess and judge, plays a crucial role in Israel's deliverance. Her leadership is significant in a patriarchal society, highlighting God's use of unexpected individuals. Barak, a military leader, is called to action by Deborah, showing the importance of obedience to God's chosen leaders. The urgency in Deborah's command emphasizes the immediacy of God's timing. It reflects the biblical theme of divine appointments, where God orchestrates events for His purposes. This moment is pivotal in Israel's history, marking a decisive battle against oppression. These verses underscore God's sovereignty and the certainty of victory. Sisera, the commander of the Canaanite army, represents the oppressive forces against Israel. The assurance of

deliverance is a recurring theme in Scripture, where God fights for His people (Exodus 14:14). It echoes the assurance given to Joshua (Joshua 1:9) and reflects the biblical truth that God leads His people into battle. This assurance also foreshadows the ultimate victory through Christ, who goes before us in all things.

Deborah's declaration, "For this is the day," emphasizes the importance of trusting in God's perfect timing for deliverance and action. The assurance that "the LORD has delivered Sisera into your hand" reminds us that God is in control of our battles, both physical and spiritual. Deborah's role as a leader and encourager highlights the importance of spiritual mentorship and support within the community of faith. Barak's response to Deborah's call demonstrates the necessity of coupling faith with action, stepping out in obedience to God's command. The phrase "Has not the LORD gone before you?" reassures believers that God prepares the way for us, even before we step into our challenges.

1. How does Deborah's leadership challenge our understanding of gender roles in spiritual leadership today?
2. In what ways can we discern God's timing in our own lives, similar to how Deborah recognized "this is the day"?

God Uses the Unexpected (Judges 4:21-22, NRSV)

²¹But Jael wife of Heber took a tent peg, and took a hammer in her hand, and went softly to him and drove the peg into his temple, until it went down into the ground—he was lying fast asleep from weariness—and he died.

²²Then, as Barak came in pursuit of Sisera, Jael went out to meet him, and said to him, "Come, and I will show you the man whom you are seeking." So he went into her tent; and there was Sisera lying dead, with the tent peg in his temple.

Jael's account reminds us that God often uses unexpected people and means to accomplish His purposes. We should be open to how God might use us in ways we do not anticipate. Jael's boldness in a dangerous situation exemplifies the courage that comes from trusting in God's plan. We are called to act courageously in obedience to God, even when it seems risky. The tent peg and hammer, ordinary tools, become powerful in God's hands. This teaches us that God can use our everyday skills and resources for His glory. Sisera's death is a reminder of God's justice. While His timing and methods may be unexpected, God ultimately brings justice to those who oppose Him.

God uses unexpected instruments. Jael, a non-Israelite woman, becomes the instrument of God's deliverance, reminding us that God can use anyone, regardless of background or status, to fulfill His purposes. Jael's bold action demonstrates the courage required to act in alignment with God's will, even when it involves personal risk or unconventional methods. The fulfillment of Deborah's prophecy through Jael underscores the reliability of God's word and the certainty of His promises. This

passage highlights the significant roles women can play in God's redemptive history, challenging cultural norms and expectations. Sisera's defeat symbolizes the ultimate victory of God's people over their oppressors, encouraging believers to trust in God's deliverance in their own battles.

THOUGHTS TO PONDER:

1. Deborah is the only female in the Old Testament whom the Israelites consulted for judgment. Why do you think the people placed such trust in her?
2. Deborah is portrayed as a strong leader. She judged the people and gave them the confidence to confront the Canaanites. What are some of the qualities that she possessed that made her such an effective leader?
3. How does Deborah's role as a leader challenge or affirm your understanding of leadership in the church today?
4. How does Barak's reliance on Deborah's presence reflect our need for spiritual guidance and community in our faith journey?
5. What lessons can we learn from the prophecy that Sisera would be delivered into the hands of a woman, and how does this apply to our understanding of God's use of all people in His plans?

LESSON IN OUR SOCIETY:

Whenever crises have arisen in communities in the African diaspora, God has always used women and men to meet the challenge. God used the voice of Ida B. Wells to protest against the lynching of Black men in the South. Fannie Lou Hamer's faith led her to become an advocate for the voting rights of Black people in America. God called Princess Kasune Zulu of South Africa to speak out against the HIV/AIDS pandemic in Africa.

These women and countless, nameless others have responded to God's call to lead His people, not only during threats to our community, but in everyday acts of faith. They are the missionary board presidents in our churches, principals in our schools, candy strippers in our hospitals, soldiers in our militaries, and legislators in our governments. They are mentors, care providers, and activists meeting the needs of society. However, what they all have in common is their obedience to God's call, their willingness to go wherever God sends them, and their following through on the mission God gave them.

Zoom Sunday School Classes – 14 June 2026 09:00 AM EST

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Hannah, the Faithful Supplicant
Printed Text: 1 Samuel 1:9-20, 25b
Devotional Text: Isaiah 49:13-17
Background Text: 1 Samuel 1:1-28; 2:1-11, 18-21; 3:1-18
Key Text: 1 Samuel 1:20

Daily Bible Readings

Monday: Living a Righteous Life - Ezekiel 18:5-9
Tuesday: Trusting a God Who Sees - Genesis 16:1, 4-16
Wednesday: Keeping Wise Counsel - Proverbs 6:20-22
Thursday: Praising the LORD - Psalm 113
Friday: Comforting Like a Mother - Isaiah 66:9-13
Saturday: Rejoicing in God's Deliverance - Luke 1:46-55
Sunday: Praying for Provision - 1 Samuel 1:9-20, 25

KEEP IN MIND:

"In due time Hannah conceived and bore a son. She named him Samuel, for she said, "I have asked him of the LORD." (1 Samuel 1:20, NRSV).

LESSON AIM:

DEVELOP an approach to God in prayer,

UNDERSTAND the importance of unburdening your heart in His presence.

ASK God to reveal the areas of your life that are not submitted to Him.

BACKGROUND:

Hannah was a great woman, the mother of Samuel, one of Israel's outstanding prophets. Had it not been for her agony and the adversity in her life, the birth of her first child would soon have been forgotten. But her years of agony and her tears of distress make the birth of her son Samuel an incident to be remembered. They form the backdrop for her psalm of praise, which has become a comfort and inspiration to saints down through the ages.

The book of 1 Samuel records the process by which God provided His people with a king. Like Elizabeth in the New Testament, Hannah is the mother of the prophet who will designate God's chosen king. Saul will be anointed as Israel's first king. Then after his rejection by God, David will be anointed as the head of an eternal dynasty. In the midst of spiritual anemia, Hannah and her husband, Elkanah, stand head and shoulders above their peers.

LESSON COMMENTARY:

Anguished Prayer 1(Samuel 1:9-16, NRSV)

⁹After they had eaten and drunk at Shiloh, Hannah rose and presented herself before the LORD. Now Eli the priest was sitting on the seat beside the doorpost of the temple of the LORD.

¹⁰She was deeply distressed and prayed to the LORD, and wept bitterly.

¹¹She made this vow: "O LORD of hosts, if only you will look on the misery of your servant, and remember me, and not forget your servant, but will give to your servant a male child, then I will set him before you as a Nazirite until the day of his death. He shall drink neither wine nor intoxicants, and no razor shall touch his head."

¹²As she continued praying before the LORD, Eli observed her mouth.

¹³Hannah was praying silently; only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard; therefore Eli thought she was drunk.

¹⁴So Eli said to her, "How long will you make a drunken spectacle of yourself? Put away your wine."

¹⁵But Hannah answered, "No, my lord, I am a woman deeply troubled; I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but I have been pouring out my soul before the LORD.

¹⁶Do not regard your servant as a worthless woman, for I have been speaking out of my great anxiety and vexation all this time."

For Hannah, and probably for Elkanah as well, rejoicing before the Lord is most difficult. First, the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, minister there as priests (1:3). For those who are truly righteous, these pathetic priests cast a dark cloud over genuine worship (see 2:12-17, 22-25). But the primary source of Hannah's pain on this annual trek to Shiloh is that Peninnah takes advantage of this good opportunity to harass Hannah year after year without letting up (see 1:4-7). This results in many tears for Hannah and an inability to join in with the festive meal (1:7).

It is not that Elkanah, her husband, does not try to comfort her or to come to her aid. Elkanah assures her of his love by giving her a double portion of the meat which has been sacrificed (1:5). He makes sincere efforts to compensate for her barrenness, reminding her of what she means to him and what he intends to be for her (1:8). In spite of all this, Hannah dreads the annual pilgrimage to Shiloh where she must live in close proximity to Peninnah, her tormentor.

It is not difficult to envision how this happens. During the year, Hannah and Peninnah probably live in separate tents, well distanced from each other. They do not all eat at the same table. But on the annual trek to Shiloh, they must all travel and eat together. When the sacrificial meat is eaten, a portion is given to each wife. While it is true that Hannah receives a double portion, Peninnah is given enough meat for herself and her children.

On this particular trip to Shiloh, Hannah barely makes it through the meal. Somehow, she fortifies herself against Peninnah's cruel remarks and actions. But after

eating and drinking, she hurries off from the family to find her way to the tabernacle, where she pours out her soul to God. Inside, she prays silently as Eli, sitting by the doorway, looks on with interest. He sees her shoulders heaving as she sobs in great distress and weeps bitterly (1:10). Not hearing her words, Eli jumps to the wrong conclusion, assuming that she has been celebrating too much, and that her happiness is inappropriate drunkenness. He rebukes her for drunkenness and instructs her to give up this kind of drinking (1:13-14).

Hannah quickly assures Eli she is not drunk at all, but that she is pouring out her soul before the Lord (1:15). She begs him not to condemn her as a worthless woman (1:16). Ironically, the word Hannah uses (**“worthless”**) is the very term the author uses in chapter 2 (verse 12) to describe the two sons of Eli. She informs him that she has, up to this moment, been speaking out of her agony of soul.

Anguished Prayer 1(Samuel 1:17-20, NRSV)

¹⁷Then Eli answered, "Go in peace; the God of Israel grant the petition you have made to him."

¹⁸And she said, "Let your servant find favor in your sight." Then the woman went to her quarters, ate and drank with her husband, and her countenance was sad no longer.

¹⁹They rose early in the morning and worshiped before the LORD; then they went back to their house at Ramah. Elkanah knew his wife Hannah, and the LORD remembered her.

²⁰In due time Hannah conceived and bore a son. She named him Samuel, for she said, "I have asked him of the LORD."

Hannah's account teaches us the importance of persistent and heartfelt prayer. Despite her initial barrenness, she continued to seek God earnestly. This passage highlights God's faithfulness in answering prayers according to His will. Hannah's experience reminds us that God hears and responds to the cries of His people. The name "Samuel" serves as a testimony to God's answer to prayer. Our lives and actions can similarly testify to God's work in our lives. Hannah conceived "in the course of time," reminding us that God's timing is perfect, even when it requires patience and trust on our part. Hannah's vow to dedicate Samuel to the Lord reflects a heart of gratitude and commitment. We are encouraged to dedicate our blessings back to God in service and worship.

1. How does Hannah's approach to prayer challenge or inspire your own prayer life?
2. In what ways can you see God's faithfulness in your life, similar to how He was faithful to Hannah?
3. How can the meaning of Samuel's name ("heard by God") encourage you in your current circumstances?
4. What are some areas in your life where you need to trust God's timing more fully?
5. How can you dedicate the blessings you receive from God back to Him in service and worship?

Anguished Prayer 1(Samuel 1:25, NRSV)

²⁵Then they slaughtered the bull, and they brought the child to Eli.

Hannah and Elkanah bringing Samuel to Eli signifies the fulfillment of Hannah's vow to dedicate her son to the Lord's service. Eli, the high priest at Shiloh, represents the religious authority and leadership of Israel at the time. This act of bringing Samuel to Eli is significant as it places Samuel under the tutelage and authority of the priesthood, setting the stage for his future role as a prophet and judge of Israel. The dedication of Samuel echoes the Nazarite vow, a special commitment to God, which is also seen in the life of Samson (Judges 13:5, see Numbers 6:1-21). This moment foreshadows Samuel's significant role in Israel's history, including anointing the first two kings of Israel, Saul and David.

Hannah's commitment to her vow teaches us the importance of keeping promises made to God, even when it requires personal sacrifice. The act of bringing Samuel to Eli symbolizes dedicating our lives and the lives of our children to God's service, trusting in His plans. Elkanah and Hannah's actions remind us of the role parents play in guiding their children towards a relationship with God. Hannah's account encourages believers to trust in God's timing and purposes, even when they are not immediately apparent. Eli's role in Samuel's life highlights the importance of spiritual mentors in nurturing faith and guiding young believers.

THOUGHTS TO PONDER:

1. How does Hannah's fulfillment of her vow to God challenge us in our own commitments to Him?
2. In what ways can we dedicate our children or the next generation to the Lord in today's context?
3. How does the account of Samuel's dedication inspire us to trust in God's plan for our lives, even when it involves personal sacrifice?
4. What role do spiritual mentors play in our faith journey, and how can we seek or become such mentors?
5. How can the themes of faith and obedience in 1 Samuel 1:25 be applied to our daily walk with God?

LESSON IN OUR SOCIETY:

Hannah's attitude in prayer epitomizes the prayer life of a believer. First, Hannah prayed from her heart. Because God searches the heart and examines our motives, we are in a better position to receive what we ask from God when we approach Him with a sincere heart (James 4:3). Hannah's sincerity of heart is evident in the way she approached God. She was submissive, willing, and possessed a servant's attitude in

prayer. She did not demand that God meet her needs but approached God with humility (1 Samuel 1:10-11).

Hannah asked of God. Recognizing God as our source is the beginning of receiving from God, and the Word reminds us, "Ye have not, because ye ask not" (James 4:2). Hannah recognized God as the giver and provider. She did not let her childless state induce bitterness of heart to the point of not asking God for help. So often when we are despondent, resentment and self-pity set in and we stop asking God for help. Hannah refused to allow her circumstances to defeat her.

Hannah expected God to meet her need. Expecting God to move on our behalf is crucial. We cannot receive from God unless there exists a sincere desire to receive what we ask of Him, and we cannot receive from God unless our prayers are characterized by great expectations. Hannah could not have prayed with so much intensity unless she was praying to Someone she knew could fulfill her request.

Asking God for what we need is essential, but unless we expect Him to move on our behalf, our prayers won't reach His attentive ears. We should approach God with confidence, knowing that He hears the voice of His children and delights in giving us good gifts (Mark 11:24; James 1:17; 1 John 5:14, 15).

Zoom Sunday School Classes – 21 June 2026 09:00 AM EST

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Jonathan and David, Resolute Friends

Printed Text: 1 Samuel 18:1-4, 1 Samuel 20:16-17, 32-34, 42;

2 Samuel 1:26-27; 2 Samuel 21:7

Devotional Text: Proverbs 27:6, 10-11, 17, 19

Background Text: 1 Samuel 19:1-7; 20:1-42; 2 Samuel 1:17-27

Key Text: 1 Samuel 20:42

Daily Bible Readings

Monday: A Praying Friend - Romans 1 :8-12

Tuesday: Choose Your Friends Wisely - 1 Corinthians 15:30-34

Wednesday: A Friend Closer Than a Brother – Proverbs 18:19-24

Thursday: Friends Stick Together - Ruth 1:11-18

Friday: Friends Love Radically - John 15:9-17

Saturday: Sworn Friendship - 1 Samuel 20:16-17, 32-34, 42

Sunday: Grief for a Friend - 2 Samuel 1:17,19-27

KEEP IN MIND:

"Then Jonathan said to David, "Go in peace, since both of us have sworn in the name of the LORD, saying, 'The LORD shall be between me and you, and between my descendants and your descendants, forever.'" He got up and left; and Jonathan went into the city." (1 Samuel 20:42, NRSV).

LESSON AIM:

IDENTIFY the ways David and Jonathan show loyalty to one another,

EXPLAIN the significance of the covenant between David and Jonathan.

PLAN to show love and loyalty to a friend or church member.

BACKGROUND:

When David returns from killing Goliath, he is brought before Saul by Abner. Saul finds out who David's father is. Jonathan is impressed by David's victory over Goliath, but David's words with his father seem to be what impresses Jonathan most. Is it David's faith in God? Is it the fact that David is careful to give the glory to God? Is it David's humility and humble spirit? Is it David's care for the people of Israel? We are not told exactly what impresses Jonathan so much in this conversation, but from this point in time onward these two men are kindred spirits.

In contrast to the relationship between Jonathan and David, we shift to the destructive relationship between Saul and David and the devolving relationship between Saul and his own son, Jonathan.

LESSON COMMENTARY:

Jonathan and David, Resolute Friends (1 Samuel 18:1-4, NRSV)

¹When David had finished speaking to Saul, the soul of Jonathan was bound to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul.

²Saul took him that day and would not let him return to his father's house.

³Then Jonathan made a covenant with David, because he loved him as his own soul.

⁴Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that he was wearing, and gave it to David, and his armor, and even his sword and his bow and his belt.

Jonathan's love for David is described using the same language as the commandment to "love your neighbor as yourself" (Leviticus 19:18), which Jesus later emphasizes as a central tenet of the law (Matthew 22:39). This love is selfless and sacrificial, foreshadowing the love of Christ for humanity. Jonathan's willingness to support David, even at the cost of his own claim to the throne, exemplifies true biblical friendship and loyalty. This love also reflects the ideal of covenantal love found throughout Scripture, where relationships are based on faithfulness and commitment

rather than personal gain.

King Saul's decision to keep David close reflects both political and personal motivations. Politically, David's success against Goliath made him a valuable asset to Saul's military endeavors. Personally, Saul may have been drawn to David's charisma and the favor he had with the people. David's separation from his father's house signifies a break from his previous life and responsibilities as a shepherd. It also fulfills a pattern seen in Scripture where God calls individuals away from their familial ties to fulfill a greater purpose, as seen with Abraham and Moses. This separation is both a literal and figurative step towards David's future as king. Additionally, it foreshadows the eventual estrangement and conflict between Saul and David, as Saul's initial favor turns to suspicion and hostility.

Jonathan, the son of King Saul, initiates this covenant with David, signifying a deep bond and commitment. This act is significant as it demonstrates Jonathan's recognition of David's future as God's chosen leader of Israel, despite Jonathan's own royal lineage. The covenant reflects a selfless act of loyalty and friendship, transcending political ambitions. Jonathan's love for David is a model of true friendship and loyalty, reflecting the love that Jesus Christ later exemplifies in His teachings and sacrifice. The depth of Jonathan's love is further illustrated in his willingness to protect David from Saul's wrath, even at great personal risk. This relationship foreshadows the New Testament teaching of sacrificial love, as seen in John 15:13, "Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends."

By giving his robe to David, Jonathan is symbolically transferring his own status as the king's son and heir to David, acknowledging David's future role in God's plan. This act of humility and selflessness is reminiscent of Christ's humility, as seen in Philippians 2:7, where Jesus "made himself nothing" by taking on the nature of a servant.

The giving of the robe is a covenantal gesture, indicating a bond of loyalty and friendship. In the cultural context of the time, such an act would be seen as a pledge of support and alliance. The tunic was an essential garment, worn close to the body. By giving his tunic, Jonathan is offering something personal and intimate, further solidifying the bond between him and David. This act can be seen as a type of Christ's offering of Himself, as He clothes believers in righteousness (Isaiah 61:10).

The sword represents power and protection. By giving his sword to David, Jonathan is entrusting David with his own means of defense and authority. This gesture foreshadows the spiritual armor that believers are called to take up in Ephesians 6:17, where the "sword of the Spirit" is the Word of God. The bow, a weapon of warfare, symbolizes strength and skill. Jonathan's gift of his bow to David signifies his recognition of David's role as a warrior chosen by God. This act parallels the spiritual battles faced by believers, as described in 2 Corinthians 10:4, where the weapons of warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power. By giving his belt, Jonathan is equipping David for the challenges ahead. This is similar to the "belt of truth" mentioned in Ephesians 6:14, which is part of the full armor of God that believers are encouraged

to wear.

1. How does Jonathan's act of giving his robe and weapons to David demonstrate his understanding of God's plan for Israel?
2. In what ways can we demonstrate selfless love in our relationships, similar to Jonathan's love for David?
3. How does Jonathan's love for David reflect the love that Jesus calls us to have for one another in the New Testament?

Jonathan's Covenant with David (1 Samuel 20:16-17, NRSV)

¹⁶Thus Jonathan made a covenant with the house of David, saying, "May the LORD seek out the enemies of David."

¹⁷Jonathan made David swear again by his love for him; for he loved him as he loved his own life.

The reaffirmation of vows between Jonathan and David underscores the importance of keeping promises and the integrity that should characterize our relationships. Despite Saul's hostility, Jonathan and David maintain their integrity and commitment to each other, teaching us to uphold righteousness even in difficult circumstances. Godly friendships can have a profound impact on our lives, providing support, encouragement, and accountability. We should seek to cultivate such relationships.

Saul Seeks to Kill Jonathan (1 Samuel 20:32-34, NRSV)

³²Then Jonathan answered his father Saul, "Why should he be put to death? What has he done?"

³³But Saul threw his spear at him to strike him; so Jonathan knew that it was the decision of his father to put David to death.

³⁴Jonathan rose from the table in fierce anger and ate no food on the second day of the month, for he was grieved for David, and because his father had disgraced him.

Jonathan's question, "What has he done?" challenges us to critically evaluate situations of perceived injustice and to seek truth before passing judgment. Saul's attempt to kill his own son, Jonathan, underscores the depth of his jealousy and paranoia regarding David. Saul's actions reflect a heart hardened against God's will, as he prioritizes his own kingship over God's anointed successor, David.

Jonathan's realization marks a turning point in his relationship with both his father and David. Despite his loyalty to Saul as his father and king, Jonathan's covenant with David (1 Samuel 18:3) and his recognition of David's anointing by God (1 Samuel 23:17) compel him to protect David.

This knowledge confirms the seriousness of Saul's intentions and the danger David faces. Jonathan's role as a mediator and protector of David can be seen as a type of Christ, who intercedes on behalf of humanity. This moment also sets the stage for David's eventual rise to kingship, as Jonathan's support helps preserve David's life, ensuring the fulfillment of God's promise.

Jonathan's grief over his father's actions highlights the appropriate response to sin and injustice, prompting us to reflect on our own reactions to wrongdoing. Jonathan's willingness to risk his relationship with his father for David's sake mirrors the cost of discipleship, where following God's will may lead to personal sacrifice.

Jonathan Takes Leave of David (1 Samuel 20:42, NRSV)

⁴²Then Jonathan said to David, "Go in peace, since both of us have sworn in the name of the LORD, saying, 'The LORD shall be between me and you, and between my descendants and your descendants, forever.'" He got up and left; and Jonathan went into the city.

The covenant between Jonathan and David shows the seriousness of promises made before God. It reminds us of the importance of keeping our commitments, especially those made in God's name. Jonathan's blessing of peace to David, even as he returns to a hostile environment, teaches us to seek and extend peace, trusting in God's protection and provision.

David's Lamentation for Saul and Jonathan (2 Samuel 1:26-27, NRSV)

²⁶I am distressed for you, my brother Jonathan; greatly beloved were you to me; your love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women.

²⁷How the mighty have fallen, and the weapons of war perished!

Godly friendships, like that of David and Jonathan, are characterized by loyalty, love, and mutual respect. Such relationships are a gift from God and should be cherished and nurtured. The covenant between David and Jonathan was a solemn commitment that transcended personal gain and ambition. In our relationships, we should strive for commitments that honor God and reflect His faithfulness. David's lament for Jonathan shows that grief is a natural and healthy response to loss.

As Christians, we grieve with hope, knowing that God is our comforter and that He has conquered death through Christ. The love between David and Jonathan was selfless and pure, surpassing romantic love. True love seeks the best for others and is rooted in God's love for us. Jonathan's legacy was one of faithfulness and love, impacting David's life profoundly. Our actions and relationships leave a legacy that can influence others for generations.

Despite Saul's flaws, David's lament teaches us to respect those in authority and recognize their contributions, even when they fall short. Acknowledge that God is sovereign even in times of defeat and loss, and trust that He can bring about His

purposes through our trials.

1. How can we find comfort in God during times of grief, as David did in his lament for Jonathan?
2. How can we ensure that our legacy, like Jonathan's, is one of faithfulness and love that honors God and impacts others positively?

Making Matters Right^{21:7}, NRSV)

⁷But the king spared Mephibosheth, the son of Saul's son Jonathan, because of the oath of the LORD that was between them, between David and Jonathan son of Saul. Mephibosheth was the grandson of Saul, Israel's first king, and the son of Jonathan, David's close friend. In the context of ancient Near Eastern customs, it was common for new kings to eliminate potential rivals from the previous dynasty. David's choice to spare Mephibosheth demonstrates his commitment to his covenant with Jonathan and his respect for God's anointed, Saul.

David's decision to spare Mephibosheth underscores the importance of honoring commitments, especially those made before God. The relationship between David and Jonathan serves as a model for loyalty and faithfulness in friendships and family ties. David's mercy towards Mephibosheth reflects God's grace towards us, reminding us to extend grace to others. The account encourages us to consider the legacy we leave through our commitments and relationships.

THOUGHTS TO PONDER:

1. How does David's action in sparing Mephibosheth demonstrate the importance of keeping one's promises, and how can we apply this principle in our own lives?
2. What are some practical ways we can ensure that we honor our commitments, especially those made before God?
3. What can we learn from Jonathan's ability to see God's hand in David's life, and how can we apply this discernment in our relationships?
4. How can we overcome feelings of jealousy or rivalry in our relationships, following Jonathan's example of love and trust in God's plan?
5. What are some modern-day "robes" or symbols of status that we might need to relinquish to support God's work in others' lives?
6. How can we discern and support God's plan in the lives of those around us, even when it might require personal sacrifice?

LESSON IN OUR SOCIETY:

Godly friendships are characterized by selflessness and deep commitment, as seen in Jonathan's love for David. True friendships often involve a covenant-like commitment, where loyalty and love are prioritized over personal gain. Jonathan's love

for David is a reflection of the love God calls us to have for one another, loving others as we love ourselves. The meeting of David and Jonathan was orchestrated by God, showing His hand in forming relationships that fulfill His purposes.

Jonathan's acceptance and love for David, despite the potential threat to his own succession, teaches us to overcome jealousy with love and trust in God's plan. God orchestrates the rise and fall of leaders according to His divine plan. David's presence in Saul's court is part of God's preparation for his future role as king. David's journey from shepherd to king begins with humble service in Saul's court. Believers are encouraged to be faithful in small tasks, trusting God for future opportunities.

Jonathan's relationship with David stands in contrast to Saul's jealousy. As Kingdom Dwellers, we should seek to celebrate others' successes rather than view them as threats. Friendships like that of Jonathan and David can be instrumental in our spiritual journey, providing support, encouragement, and accountability. Jonathan's actions exemplify true friendship and selflessness. Believers are called to put others' needs before their own, reflecting Christ's love. True friendship is marked by selflessness and loyalty. Jonathan's willingness to make a covenant with David, despite the potential cost to himself, exemplifies this. Covenants in the Bible often involve deep commitments and responsibilities. In our relationships, we should strive to uphold our commitments with integrity and love. Jonathan's love for David reflects the kind of love God has for us—selfless, committed, and enduring. We are called to love others in the same way.

Zoom Sunday School Classes – 28 June 2026 09:00 AM EST

Meeting ID: 848-9423-0612

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Amos, the Courageous Prophet

Printed Text: Amos 1:1; Amos 2:11-12; Amos 3:7-8; Amos 7:10-15

Devotional Text: Psalm 23

Background Text: Amos 1:1; 2:6-16; 3:1-15; 7:10-17

Key Text: Amos 7:15

Daily Bible Readings

Monday: Prophecy: Toward Restoration - Isaiah 61:4-9

Tuesday: A Shepherd Rejoices - Luke 15:1-7

Wednesday: Prophecy: The Day of the LORD - Amos 5:16-20

Thursday: Prophecy: Let Justice Roll - Amos 5:21-27

Friday: Know the Shepherd's Voice - John 10:1-9

Saturday: The Good Shepherd - John 10:10-18

Sunday: A Prophet: Chosen - Amos 7:10-15

KEEP IN MIND:

"And the LORD took me from following the flock, and the LORD said to me, 'Go, prophesy to my people Israel.'" (Amos 7:15, NRSV).

LESSON AIM:

EXPLORE the challenges Amaziah and Jeroboam presented to Amos' prophetic ministry;

OBSERVE that like Amos, we are called to serve in unfamiliar places and capacities; and

SHARE examples of our commitment to serving God despite opposition.

BACKGROUND:

Amos was one of the many prophets whom God raised up during the period of the divided monarchy (931-722 BC) in Old Testament history. His ministry took place during the reigns of Uzziah as king of Judah and Jeroboam II as king of Israel (Amos 1:1).

Both Uzziah and Jeroboam II experienced lengthy reigns: Uzziah (also known as Azariah) from 792 to 740 BC and Jeroboam from 793 to 753 BC (dates are approximate). Spiritually, however, the kings were quite different. The Scriptures record that Uzziah "did that which was right in the sight of the Lord" (2 Chronicles 26:4; an exception being the incident noted in 26:16-21). Jeroboam, by contrast, "did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord" (2 Kings 14:24).

In fact, no kings of the northern nation of Israel were considered good or godly. This is an important reason the northern kingdom fell under God's judgment much sooner than did the southern kingdom of Judah. Prophets like Amos came on the scene to sound the alarm and warn of coming judgment.

Amos himself seemed an unlikely candidate for the prophetic task. He was a simple shepherd and fruit farmer from a village in Judah (Amos 7:14, part of today's text), but God sent him to shepherd His wayward people of northern Israel. In the warnings prior to today's text, Amos prophesied God's condemnation of various locations around Israel, including the southern kingdom of Judah (1:3-2:5). That was followed by a long, scathing indictment of Israel. Injustice was rampant there, and God intended to correct that problem (4:1; 5:7, 10-12; etc.).

Lesson Commentary:

Amos Proclaims (Amos 1:1, NRSV)

¹The words of Amos, who was among the shepherds of Tekoa, which he saw concerning Israel in the days of King Uzziah of Judah and in the days of King Jeroboam son of Joash of Israel, two years before the earthquake.

Amos's background as a shepherd reminds us that God often chooses ordinary people to accomplish His extraordinary purposes. We should be open to God's calling, regardless of our status or background. Despite prosperity, both Judah and Israel were spiritually complacent. We must guard against allowing material success to lead us away from God. As believers, we are called to advocate for the oppressed and live out God's justice in our communities.

Uzziah's reign in Judah was marked by prosperity and military success, but also by pride and eventual downfall (2 Chronicles 26). This period of prosperity led to complacency and moral decay, setting the stage for Amos's warnings. Uzziah's reign provides a backdrop of relative stability in Judah, contrasting with the spiritual decline Amos addresses.

Jeroboam II's reign in Israel was characterized by economic prosperity and territorial expansion (2 Kings 14:23-29). However, this prosperity was accompanied by social injustice, idolatry, and corruption, which Amos vehemently condemns. The mention of Jeroboam highlights the moral and spiritual issues in Israel, despite outward success. This context underscores the prophetic theme that true security and blessing come from obedience to God, not merely economic or military strength.

1. How does Amos's background as a shepherd influence his perspective and message? How can our own backgrounds shape our ministry or calling?
2. In what ways can prosperity lead to spiritual complacency, and how can we actively maintain our spiritual fervor in times of abundance?

Judgement Against Israel (Amos 2:11-12, NRSV)

¹¹And I raised up some of your children to be prophets and some of your youths to be Nazirites. Is it not indeed so, O people of Israel? says the LORD.

¹²But you made the Nazirites drink wine, and commanded the prophets, saying, "You shall not prophesy."

God raises up individuals for specific purposes, such as prophets and Nazirites, demonstrating His sovereign will and plan for His people. The Nazirite vow exemplifies a call to holiness and separation from worldly influences, encouraging believers to live consecrated lives. The role of prophets in Israel serves as a reminder of the importance of listening to God's voice and being open to His guidance and correction.

The Nazirite vow was a symbol of dedication to God. As Christians, we are called to live lives set apart for God's purposes, avoiding influences that lead us away from Him. Just as Israel was wrong to silence the prophets, we must be open to receiving God's word, whether through Scripture, sermons, or godly counsel. Israel's actions in making Nazirites drink wine reflect a broader theme of compromise. We must guard against allowing cultural or societal pressures to lead us away from God's standards. Israel's disregard for God's commands led to judgment. The community's role in leading Nazirites astray highlights the importance of accountability within the body of Christ. We should encourage and support one another in our spiritual commitments.

1. In what ways can we apply the principles of the Nazirite vow to our modern Christian walk?
2. How does recognizing God's sovereign choice in raising up leaders impact our view of leadership within the church?
3. How does the Nazirite vow in Numbers 6:1-21 help us understand the significance of Israel's actions in Amos 2:12?
4. In what ways can we ensure that we are not silencing God's voice in our lives today, similar to how Israel silenced the prophets?
5. What are some modern-day "wines" or temptations that might lead us away from our commitments to God, and how can we resist them?

Israel's Guilt and Punishment (Amos 3:7-8, NRSV)

⁷Surely the Lord God does nothing, without revealing his secret to his servants the prophets.

⁸The lion has roared; who will not fear? The Lord God has spoken; who can but prophesy?

God is sovereign and actively involved in the world, choosing to reveal His plans to humanity through His prophets. Prophets serve as God's messengers, and their role is crucial in understanding God's will and direction for His people. Divine revelation is essential for guiding believers in truth and righteousness, and it requires discernment to distinguish true prophecy from false. As believers, we are called to be attentive to God's word, as revealed through Scripture and the Holy Spirit, and to respond in obedience. While God spoke through prophets in the past, He has ultimately revealed Himself through Jesus Christ, and believers are to seek understanding through the entirety of Scripture.

The imagery of a roaring lion conveys an undeniable presence and an impending threat. In the context of Amos, the lion represents God's voice of judgment against Israel. The roar signifies a warning that demands attention and elicits fear. This metaphor is consistent with other biblical passages where God is depicted as a lion (Hosea 11:10, Joel 3:16). The fear mentioned here is not just terror but a reverent acknowledgment of God's sovereignty and justice. The cultural understanding of lions as fearsome predators would have resonated deeply with the original audience,

emphasizing the seriousness of God's message.

1. In what ways can we discern true prophetic messages from false ones in our current context, based on biblical principles?
2. How does understanding the role of prophets in the Old Testament help us appreciate the way God communicates with His people today?
3. How does the concept of divine revelation in Amos 3:7 relate to the ultimate revelation of God through Jesus Christ?
4. What practical steps can we take to ensure we are attentive and responsive to God's revealed word in our daily lives?
5. How can the assurance that God reveals His plans to His servants encourage us in times of uncertainty or difficulty?

Amaziah Complains to the King (Amos 7:10-13, NRSV)

¹⁰Then Amaziah, the priest of Bethel, sent to King Jeroboam of Israel, saying, "Amos has conspired against you in the very center of the house of Israel; the land is not able to bear all his words.

¹¹For thus Amos has said, 'Jeroboam shall die by the sword, and Israel must go into exile away from his land.'"

¹²And Amaziah said to Amos, "O seer, go, flee away to the land of Judah, earn your bread there, and prophesy there;

¹³but never again prophesy at Bethel, for it is the king's sanctuary, and it is a temple of the kingdom."

Amaziah the priest is no servant of God and neither is Jeroboam king of Israel. The vested interest that these two men share is the town of Bethel, described by Amaziah as "the king's chapel" and "the king's court," the town where Amos is. Should that which Amos prophesies about the town and its altars come to pass, both king and priest will be out of a job (Amos 3:14; 5:5, 6; compare John 11:48).

So Amaziah sends word to Jeroboam of a conspiracy against him, a conspiracy generated by Amos. It is noteworthy that Amaziah sends this report only after Amos prophesies against Jeroboam by name in Amos 7:9. This part of the report points to the effectiveness of Amos's message. He is not compromising the Lord's righteous standards or watering down his content just to curry favor with leaders such as Jeroboam and Amaziah. He is getting people's attention! But for someone like Amaziah, Amos is nothing but a troublemaker.

Note that Amaziah's quotation of Amos begins with, "thus Amos saith." The usual way to preface a prophet's message is with the phrase "thus saith the Lord" or some variation of it (that is how Amos responds to Amaziah in verses 16 and 17, below). Clearly, Amaziah sees nothing authoritative in Amos's message; he's just spouting his own words, not the Lord's. Though Amos's message as we see it recorded has little to say about Jeroboam specifically, the prophet does have much to say about Israel's

being led away captive out of their own land (Amos 3:12; 5:27; 6:7, 8; 7:17; 9:4). Sadly, that's just what happens. The Assyrians will conquer Samaria, the capital of the northern kingdom, as the prophecy is fulfilled (2 Kings 17).

Amaziah follows his message to the king with a straightforward directive to Amos: Go home! He is from the land of Judah, and the northern kingdom of Israel has no use for this meddler. If Amos wants to make people's lives miserable, then let him do it to his own countrymen! To eat bread in Judah may imply that Amos will be fed or paid better in his homeland than he currently is in the northern kingdom. Perhaps Amaziah believes that prophets are interested in nothing more than earning a livelihood.

1. How do we know when our message should primarily be one of dire warning?
2. How should we react when others try to restrict our message?

The Called Prophet (Amos 7:14-15, NRSV)

¹⁴Then Amos answered Amaziah, "I am no prophet, nor a prophet's son; but I am a herdsman, and a dresser of sycamore trees,

¹⁵and the LORD took me from following the flock, and the LORD said to me, 'Go, prophesy to my people Israel.'

Amos then lets Amaziah know the details of his call. Unlike some who were trained as prophets (perhaps at the school of the prophets mentioned in 1 Samuel 10, 10; 2 Kings 2, 6), Amos was a shepherd and farmer. He had no sights on making a name for himself; he had not planned this or put it into himself; he had not planned this or put it into motion. To put it simply, for Amos being a prophet was not a career move.

Amos was content as a shepherd. God had called him away from his flock so that he could speak the truth to God's wayward flock, Israel. Amos was called to prophesy and did not do this out of self-will; God sent him to speak the truth to Israel and call them to repentance.

1. What are some deciding factors when considering a change in vocation?
2. In what ways can prosperity lead to spiritual complacency, and how can we actively maintain our spiritual fervor in times of abundance?
3. How does Amos's message about social justice challenge us to address issues of injustice in our own communities?
4. How can we discern and respond to God's calling in our lives, even if it seems unexpected or beyond our current circumstances?

Lesson to Live by:

God called Amos to prophesy in a land that was not his own. He was called to do something that he was not trained to do. Many times, God calls us to situations we have not been in before where we are not properly trained. To get through the backlash

and rejection that comes with that, you must ensure your call. God's call is what qualifies you, not your training. Training is helpful, but the call keeps you going when everyone and everything is against you.

NEXT WEEK'S LESSON: 5 July 2026

The Believing centurion
Printed Text: Matthew 8:5-13
Devotional Reading: Acts 10:19-22, 30-35
Background Scripture: Matthew 8:5-13; Luke 7:1-10
Key Text: Matthew 5:10

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