SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASSES FOR THE MONTH OF OCTOBER 2026

October 4

A Renewed Covenant
Printed Text: Joshua 24:18-27
Devotional Reading: Jeremiah 31:27-34
Background Scripture: Deuteronomy 29:1-20; Joshua 23-24
Key Text: Joshua 24:14b

October 11

A Faithless Generation
Printed Text: Judges 2:6-15
Devotional Reading: 1 Corinthians 10:1-14
Background Scripture: Judges 1-2
Key Text: Judges 2:11

October 18

An Unlikely Deliverer
Printed Text: Judges 3:15-23, 30
Devotional Reading: Ecclesiastes 7:1-13
Background Scripture: Judges 3
Key Text: Judges 3:15

October 25

A Lack of Instruction
Printed Text: Judges 17:1-6; 18:18-19, 27
Devotional Reading: Deuteronomy 6:10-16
Background Scripture: Judges 17-18
Key Text: Judges 17:6

Zoom Sunday School Classes – 4 October 2026, 9:00 AM EST
Meeting ID: 848-9423-0612
Pass Code: 669872
https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84894230612?pwd=Zk1ESitzbGZwTlJyV21UZXY5aTVPZz09

A Renewed Covenant
Printed Text: Joshua 24:18-27
Devotional Reading: Jeremiah 31:27-34
Background Scripture: Deuteronomy 29:1-20; Joshua 23-24
Key Text: Joshua 24:14b

Daily Bible Readings

Monday: Hold Fast to the Lord - Joshua 23: 1-11
Tuesday: Reaffirming the Covenant – Joshua 24:1-13
Wednesday: Obey Christ's Commandments - 1 John 1:8-2:5
Thursday: No Turning Back - Luke 9:57-62
Friday: The Greatest commandments - Matthew 22:34-40
Saturday: God, Deliver Your people - Psalm 2 5:12-22
Sunday: We Will serve the Lord - Joshua 24: 14-27

AIM FOR CHANGE:

UNDERSTAND that the decision to serve God is an individual one;
REFLECT on the faithfulness God has shown to us; and
COMMIT or RECOMMIT to serving God the rest of our lives.

KEEP IN MIND:

14"Now therefore revere the LORD, and serve him in sincerity and in faithfulness; put away the gods that your ancestors served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the LORD." (Joshua 24:14).

BACKGROUND

Under the leadership of Joshua, the tribes of Israel received their promised inheritance, a land flowing with milk and honey. After several military campaigns, each tribe has received land. At this point, they are enjoying a time of extended peace, free from enemy attacks (Joshua 23:1). But now they face a greater challenge: the impending death of Joshua. The aged leader calls the elders and the rest of the people together to remind them of the need to renew their covenant with God.

Joshua does so at Shechem, an important location in Israel's history. It was at Shechem that God promised to give the land of Canaan to Abram and his descendants (Genesis 12:6-7). Years later, Jacob would renew his obedience to God at that same location. There, under an oak tree, Jacob buried idols and earrings belonging to his household and others before heading to Bethel to worship God (Genesis 35:2-5).

Joshua's current gathering together of the leaders at Shechem was another call to obedience, to be demonstrated by following God, not idols. Joshua had earlier called for the key leaders of Israel and all the people, and reminded them of God's care and provision (Joshua 23:1-16). It was important for the leaders to appear, since they were the ones who had been specially appointed as tribal representatives and who could take any special message back to the rest of the individuals under them. (Thanks to Jethro's instructions, Moses had years before appointed leaders to head groups of specific sizes to assist in shepherding the nations, administering the law, etc.). Joshua offered a moving reminder to obey God (23:11) while warning of the consequences of

disobedience. He cautioned the people that, although the Israelites had previously enjoyed longevity, they would "perish quickly from off the good land" (v. 16) should they disobey the Lord.

LESSON COMMENTARY:

The Call to Commit to God (Joshua 24:18-20, NRSV)

18 and the LORD drove out before us all the peoples, the Amorites who lived in the land. Therefore we also will serve the LORD, for he is our God."
19 But Joshua said to the people, "You cannot serve the LORD, for he is a holy God. He is a jealous God; he will not forgive your transgressions or your sins.
20 If you forsake the LORD and serve foreign gods, then he will turn and do you harm, and consume you, after having done you good."

The people responded to Joshua's argument by saying that they would never forsake the Lord. They were fully aware of the things He had delivered them from. They understood that it was God who had delivered them out of the hands of their captors and had allowed them to reside in the Promised Land a land flowing with milk and honey. They believed that they had remained faithful to God even though some in this new generation of Israelites had no firsthand knowledge of God's miraculous deliverance. It had been easy for their forefathers to remain faithful and steadfast during those years in the wilderness as they followed Moses because God was their only source. However, this next generation of Israelites began to backslide, and it was Joshua who had to remind them of God's covenant and faithfulness toward them.

At first glance, it appears that verse 19 is a contradiction. Why would Joshua bring the people together to invite spiritual renewal, only to tell them "ye cannot serve the Lord"? It would appear that he was in fact asking for an impossible commitment. Not so. Joshua was not attempting to dissuade the people from making a commitment to God. Instead, he was warning the Israelites that such a commitment could not be fulfilled in their own strength, but only with the help of God. In Joshua's eyes, the people had rebelled against God. Their willful participation in worshiping other gods was a sin for which there was no forgiveness under the law (Numbers 15:30-31).

Most Christians would say that it is easier to remain faithful and steadfast during times of trials and tribulations. Our belief that God can and will deliver us is what gets us through tough times. But how often do we fall victim to the carnality of life when things are going well? All the bills are paid, the career is on track, the children are obedient, the marriage is solid: Life is good and flowing with milk and honey. Oftentimes, we get too busy for God. Church attendance falls off, our prayer life suffers, and time spent in God's Word decreases. But Joshua was letting the Israelites know then, and lets us know now, that God is a jealous God and will not have any other gods before Him. We, too, must choose Yahweh (God) over little gods (i.e., education, money, houses, cars, prestige).

1. What do you think would have happened if the nation's covenant with God had *not* been renewed before Joshua's death?
2. What does it mean to serve God in sincerity and truth?
3. Discuss present-day gods that people serve.

The Call to Recommit to God (Joshua 24:21-24, NRSV)

[21]And the people said to Joshua, "No, we will serve the LORD!"
[22]Then Joshua said to the people, "You are witnesses against yourselves that you have chosen the LORD, to serve him." And they said, "We are witnesses."
[23]He said, "Then put away the foreign gods that are among you, and incline your hearts to the LORD, the God of Israel."
[24]The people said to Joshua, "The LORD our God we will serve, and him we will obey."

Like a true leader, Joshua presented to the people a true and fair case based on their current behavior and asked them to make a choice. Thus, by agreeing to the covenant in their own words, despite Joshua's warnings, the Israelites were knowingly and willingly renewing their covenant with God. Consequently, subsequent generations could not say that they had entered the covenant unknowingly or unwillingly. They could never say that they did not know what God expected of them, or that they had not been warned of the ramifications of breaking their renewed covenant. The covenant was to bind the people to their promise to renounce their old life of sin and idolatry and to enter into covenant relationship with and remain true servants of God.

Sin happens. Of particular importance is Joshua's warning that one's covenant with God cannot be maintained in the flesh. Although the Israelites were in the midst of a prolonged season of peace, they still were prone to sin. To follow God completely, the Israelites needed to recognize this and make provision to eradicate sin, especially hidden sins (Galatians 5:19-21). In order to fully obey God's covenant, we need to deal with sin. We need to recognize daily how easy it is to sin. We need to renew our covenant daily, to confess our sins, and to accept God's abundant forgiveness, grace, and mercy. Then we can experience the fullness of joy that comes from consistently obeying God's Word.

1. How can we identify and create "Shechem moments" in our own lives where we reaffirm our commitment to God?
2. What role does community play in our spiritual journey, and how can we foster a supportive environment for covenant renewal within our church or small group?

Joshua Renews the Covenant (Joshua 24:25-27, NRSV)

[25]So Joshua made a covenant with the people that day, and made statutes and ordinances for them at Shechem.
[26]Joshua wrote these words in the book of the law of God; and he took a large stone,

and set it up there under the oak in the sanctuary of the LORD.
[27]Joshua said to all the people, "See, this stone shall be a witness against us; for it has heard all the words of the LORD that he spoke to us; therefore it shall be a witness against you, if you deal falsely with your God."

Realizing that further words would be fruitless, and semi-satisfied with the genuineness and sincerity of the people's consecration, Joshua solemnly renewed the covenant. He wrote down their agreement in the Book of the Law of God**,** which was probably placed beside the ark of the covenant (Deut. 31:24-27). Among the Hittites likewise the suzerainty treaty was placed in the sanctuary of the vassal state.

As a final reminder Joshua also apparently inscribed the statutes of the covenant on a large stone slab which was set up beneath the oak at this sacred location. Archeologists excavating the site of Shechem have uncovered a great limestone pillar which may be identified with the memorial referred to here. Joshua said this stone was a witness, as if it had heard all the transactions of the covenant.

THOUGHTS TO PONDER:

1. What does it mean to enter into a covenant relationship with God?
2. In what ways can we create "memorials" in our own lives to remember God's faithfulness and our commitments to Him?
3. How does the concept of covenant renewal in Joshua 24 relate to the New Covenant established through Jesus Christ?
4. What role do sacred spaces play in your personal worship and spiritual growth, and how can you make the most of them?
5. What significance does the stone have as a witness in Joshua 24:27, and how can we create similar reminders in our own lives?

LESSON IN OUR SOCIETY:

With the proliferation of cults and cultic movements, there are perhaps more religions available today than ever before. The problem is, many of these groups can easily sway the unknowing into spiritual darkness. That is why making the right choice regarding one's spiritual life is so important. But choosing to serve God is not enough. We must decide to live out our lives honoring our spiritual covenant with God. It is a day-in, day-out decision that requires courage and boldness. It is a decision that will make a difference today and throughout eternity.

Where do you stand? Have you chosen to follow Christ? Is your commitment rock solid? Or have you allowed the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches to drag you into spiritual quicksand? If the latter describes your situation, consider recommitting to Christ today. He is always ready to covenant with people who have a

heart to love and serve Him.

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Meeting ID: 848-9423-0612
Pass Code: 669872
https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84894230612?pwd=Zk1ESitzbGZwTlJyV21UZXY5aTVPZz09

A Faithless Generation
Printed Text: Judges 2:6-15
Devotional Reading: 1 Corinthians 10:1-14
Background Scripture: Judges 1-2
Key Text: Judges 2:11

Daily Bible Readings
Monday: Christ Died for All – Romans 5:1-10 **Tuesday: Grace Abounds Despite Sin – Romans 5:11-21** **Wednesday: Worship at the Chosen Place – Deuteronomy 12:1-14** **Thursday: Worship in the Chosen Way – Deuteronomy 12:20-32** **Friday: Put on the New Self - Colossians 3: 1-11** **Saturday: Clothe Yourself with Godliness - Colossians 3: 12-17** **Sunday: Faithfulness Despite Disobedience - Judges 2: 1-15**

AIM FOR CHANGE:

TELL why we need to listen to and obey God's commands;
REFLECT on the impact of our obedience and disobedience in our relationship with God; and
ASK God to help us to obey Him.

KEEP IN MIND:

"Then the Israelites did what was evil in the sight of the LORD and worshiped the Baals;" (Judges 2:11, NRSV).

BACKGROUND:

The book of Judges begins with the success and failures of Israel's military campaigns in Canaan (the Promised Land). The new generation of Israelites, the generation that was in the land of Canaan after the death of Joshua, receives a sudden appearance from the angel of the LORD, who pronounces judgment on the new

generation of chosen people for their disobedience and unfaithfulness. The Israelites' disobedience included not totally removing the Canaanites from the land. God noted their unfaithfulness to the Living God and their increasing propensity to worship other gods—their increasing propensity to be disobedient.

Evidence of God's anger is seen when God hands over the Israelites to their enemies. Yet God still shows His mercy and compassion toward His chosen people. He raises up judges to help win the battles against Israel's enemies and bring His chosen people back to a loving, covenant-keeping God.

LESSON COMMENTARY:

The Death of Joshua (Judges 2:6-10, NRSV)

6When Joshua dismissed the people, the Israelites all went to their own inheritances to take possession of the land.
7The people worshiped the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great work that the LORD had done for Israel.
8Joshua son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died at the age of one hundred ten years.
9So they buried him within the bounds of his inheritance in Timnath-heres, in the hill country of Ephraim, north of Mount Gaash.
10Moreover, that whole generation was gathered to their ancestors, and another generation grew up after them, who did not know the LORD or the work that he had done for Israel.

Joshua's final charge called Israel to covenant faithfulness and warned against serving the gods of Canaan. His departure marked the close of the unified conquest under the leader appointed after Moses. Israel now faced the responsibility of continuing in obedience without Joshua's direct guidance. The tribes returned to the territories assigned to them by the Lord through Joshua. God had fulfilled His covenant promise to give Canaan to Abraham's descendants, yet the remaining inhabitants still had to be driven out through faithful dependence on Him. Israel's success in settling the land was inseparable from its obedience to God's commands. Every tribe received its allotted portion according to God's wise distribution, and each family had a place within the covenant land. The inheritance testified that the land belonged ultimately to the Lord, who gave it to His people as a gift and stewardship.

God's promises are reliable and trustworthy. Just as He fulfilled His promise to give Israel the land, He will fulfill His promises to us. Joshua's role in leading the people to their inheritance shows the importance of faithful leadership and the need for leaders to prepare others for future responsibilities. Each believer has a unique calling and inheritance in Christ. We should seek to understand and walk in the specific purposes God has for us. While the community of Israel received the land, each individual had to take possession of their inheritance. This balance of community and personal

responsibility is vital in our spiritual lives.

Idolatry is not just the worship of physical idols but can be anything that takes the place of God in our lives. We must be vigilant in identifying and removing modern-day idols. The Israelites' repeated failure to remain faithful serves as a warning. We are called to steadfastness in our relationship with God, resisting the pull of cultural and spiritual distractions. The book of Judges illustrates a cycle of sin, oppression, repentance, and deliverance. Recognizing this pattern in our lives can help us seek God's help to break free from sin. Despite Israel's repeated failures, God remains patient and just. His discipline is meant to bring us back to Him, and His mercy is always available when we repent. The role of the judges highlights the need for godly leadership. We should pray for and support leaders who guide us according to God's Word.

1. Reflect on a time when you personally experienced God's work in your life. How can sharing this testimony impact others?
2. How does the failure of the Israelites in Judges 2:10 serve as a warning for us today in our spiritual walk and community life?
3. How does the cycle of sin and repentance in Judges reflect in our personal spiritual journeys, and what steps can we take to break this cycle?
4. How can the example of the judges inspire us to take on leadership roles in our communities and churches?

The Israelites' Unfaithfulness to God (Judges 2:11-14, NRSV)

[11]Then the Israelites did what was evil in the sight of the LORD and worshiped the Baals;
[12]and they abandoned the LORD, the God of their ancestors, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt; they followed other gods, from among the gods of the peoples who were all around them, and bowed down to them; and they provoked the LORD to anger.
[13]They abandoned the LORD, and worshiped Baal and the Astartes.
[14]So the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and he gave them over to plunderers who plundered them, and he sold them into the power of their enemies all around, so that they could no longer withstand their enemies.

The Israelites continued a pattern of abandoning their faith in the one true God, the one who led them out of Egypt—the one who drowned Pharaoh's army in the Red Sea, the one who fought for their ancestors (Exodus 14:13-31), the one who made bitter waters sweet when they were thirsty (15:22-25), the one who fed their ancestors bread from heaven (manna) when they were hungry (16:4-14). They violated the first two of the Ten Commandments: "I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me" (20:2-3). Instead, they chased after other gods; they worshiped the Canaanite gods, Baal and Ashtoreth. God deemed the Israelites' behavior as evil, and He deemed what they had done as abandonment of the one true God. Their disobedience of God's commandments stirred His anger against the people He had chosen to represent Him to

the rest of the world.

To those who worshiped him, Baal was considered to be the god of storms and rains and thought to control vegetation and agriculture. On the other hand, Ashtoreth was believed to be the mother goddess of love, war, and fertility. She was also known as Astarter or Ishtar. Not only did God's chosen people worship these idol gods, but even temple prostitution and child sacrifice were part of the worship of these Canaanite idols. God would not and did not tolerate the Israelites adding idols to their worship of Him. They could not possibly bow to an idol and still truly believe that He was the one true God. Therefore, His anger with the Israelites results in judgment on them. God gives the Israelites over to the "marauders" (their enemies, Judges 2:14). He delivers them into the power and hands of their enemies and removes His divine defense from around them.

1. How does the faithfulness of God in fulfilling His promise to Israel encourage you in your personal walk with Him?
2. In what ways can we ensure that the great works of God are remembered and passed down to future generations in our families and communities?
3. What are some practical steps we can take to avoid spiritual forgetfulness and maintain a vibrant relationship with God?

God's Punishment of the Israelites and His Mercy (Judges 2:15, NESV)

15 Whenever they marched out, the hand of the LORD was against them to bring misfortune, as the LORD had warned them and sworn to them; and they were in great distress.

Every time the Israelites went out to battle their enemies, they lost. God's arms of protection were no longer around them. In fact, before God's judgment against them when they went out to battle, it was the Lord Himself who fought against their enemies. Thus, the Israelites and their enemies were no match for an angry God. They were no match for the omnipotent (all-powerful) God. But the Israelites' disobedience demanded judgment, and God (the Righteous Judge) judged His chosen people. They had to suffer the consequences of their chosen actions. They had to pay their own sin-penalty.

DISCUSS THE MEANING:

1. How does Joshua's leadership style inspire you in your own roles of leadership or influence?
2. In what ways can you ensure that your life leaves a legacy of faith for future generations?
3. How can the concept of being a "servant of the LORD" be applied in your daily life and interactions with others?
4. What are some practical ways we can ensure that the next generation knows the Lord and His works?
5. How can we, as a community, create a culture of remembrance and teaching about

God's faithfulness?

LESSON IN OUR SOCIETY:

As with the Israelites, God has given us the opportunity to live responsibly before Him in a covenantal relationship. He allowed Adam and Eve to choose to obey Him, He did the same for the Israelites, and He does the same for us today. As we look around at the suffering in our world, much of it is due to the fact that too many have not chosen Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. Too many have not chosen to follow and obey Him and have instead chosen to go their own way. We must always remember that our way has led us down the path of sin and destruction.

Zoom Sunday School Classes – 18 October 2026, 9:00 AM EST
Meeting ID: 848-9423-0612
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An Unlikely Deliverer
Printed Text: Judges 3:15-23, 30
Devotional Reading: Ecclesiastes 7:1-13
Background Scripture: Judges 3
Key Text: Judges 3:15

Daily Bible Readings
Monday: Courage to Live or Die - Philippians 1:21-30
Tuesday: Let Your Light shine - Matthew 5:11-16
Wednesday: Blessed Is One Who Trusts the Lord - Psalm 84
Thursday: Let Us Strive for God's Rest - Hebrews 4: 11 -16
Friday: Promise of Better Things - Hebrews 6: 1-12
Saturday: God Tests God's People - Judges 3:1-7, 12-14
Sunday: Restoring Peace to the Land - Judges 3: 15-23, 30

AIM FOR CHANGE:

IDENTIFY the unexpected sources of help God provides;
REFLECT on how God has helped us in times of trouble; and
THANK God that we can use His strength in times of trouble.

KEEP IN MIND:

"[15]But when the Israelites cried out to the LORD, the LORD raised up for them a deliverer, Ehud son of Gera, the Benjaminite, a left-handed man. The Israelites sent tribute by him to King Eglon of Moab." (Judges 3:15).

BACKGROUND:

After 18 years of doing "what was evil in the sight of the LORD" (including idol worship), Israel cries out to God and God responds by raising up Ehud from the tribe of Benjamin. Ehud follows Othniel in the line of judges that God raises up to bring the Israelites out of the oppression of other tribes. Ehud is left-handed and chosen by the Israelites to carry their tribute or tax assessment to the Moabite king, Eglon. As Ehud carries out his mission and escapes passing by the Moabite idols, the Israelites receive an encouragement from Ehud that the LORD has granted victory against their oppressors.

LESSON COMMENTARY:

God Answered Israel's Pleas for Help (Judges 3:15, NRSV))

[15]But when the Israelites cried out to the LORD, the LORD raised up for them a deliverer, Ehud son of Gera, the Benjaminite, a left-handed man. The Israelites sent tribute by him to King Eglon of Moab.

After enduring oppression for 18 long years at the hands of the Moabites, who were Israel's enemies, God's chosen people cry out to God for help yet again. Their cycle of sin included:

(1) worshiping idols;
(2) being punished by a Holy (set apart from sin) God;
(3) crying out for help from the same faithful God they had been unfaithful to;
(4) being rescued by a judge raised up by the same faithful God who chose them as His people even though He knew they would be a hardheaded, stiff-necked bunch;
(5) obeying God for a season—as long as the judge was over them; and
(6) falling back into idolatry. They again go to their Source of strength—God Himself.

They know that God is a promise keeper, and that God loves them and is merciful and compassionate toward them. They need God to be loving, merciful, and compassionate because they have been disloyal to Him and have been a covenant-breaking nation. Being true to God's Word, His response to their cries for help is to raise up a deliverer. As Israel's second judge, he uses direct action and is a frontline leader in the battle. His name is Ehud. He is to take the tax money (also called a tribute) that the Israelites are forced to pay to the king of Moab.

King Eglon of Moab conquered part of Israel and set up his throne in the city of Jericho, the same city God had used Joshua to conquer (Joshua 6). God gave King Eglon control over Israel; He delivered them into King Eglon's hands. This was Israel's

judgment and punishment for disobedience. The Lord had already given the Israelites Jericho (Joshua 6), but because of their sin God used their enemy, the Moabites, to retake it. Therefore, King Eglon chose to take Israel's tax monies (the annual payment to Eglon that Israel had to make as part of their subjection to the Moabites) at that city. However, after Ehud delivers Israel's tribute, he kills King Eglon and escapes into the hill country of Ephraim.

1. How does the account of Ehud encourage us to trust in God's sovereignty, even when His methods or chosen leaders seem unconventional?
2. What can we learn from the Israelites' cry to God about the importance of repentance and seeking God's help in times of trouble?

God Used Ehud to Bring Israel Victory (Judges 3:16-23, NRSV)

16 Ehud made for himself a sword with two edges, a cubit in length; and he fastened it on
his right thigh under his clothes.
17 Then he presented the tribute to King Eglon of Moab. Now Eglon was a very fat man.
18 When Ehud had finished presenting the tribute, he sent the people who carried the
tribute on their way.
19 But he himself turned back at the sculptured stones near Gilgal, and said, "I have a
secret message for you, O king." So the king said, "Silence!" and all his attendants went
out from his presence.
20 Ehud came to him, while he was sitting alone in his cool roof chamber, and said, "I
have a message from God for you." So he rose from his seat.
21 Then Ehud reached with his left hand, took the sword from his right thigh, and thrust it
into Eglon's belly;
22 the hilt also went in after the blade, and the fat closed over the blade, for he did not
draw the sword out of his belly; and the dirt came out.
23 Then Ehud went out into the vestibule, and closed the doors of the roof chamber on
him, and locked them.

Ehud has a plan. In fact, he takes radical and violent action to rid the Israelites of this menace to their freedom once and for all. Even though being left-handed in Ehud's day was considered to be a handicap, many from the tribe of Benjamin were left-handed. God uses this perceived weakness to bring victory. He uses the way Ehud is made and what Ehud had in order to win the battle through him.

The manufacturing of the dagger demonstrates that Ehud had plans other than to simply deliver the Israelites' tax money to King Eglon. The double-edged dagger symbolizes the double words Ehud would use to gain a second visit to the king. The fastening of the sword to Ehud's right thigh concealed the dagger, which permitted him to cross over with his left hand to draw the sword. King Eglon's bodyguards assumed Ehud was right-handed, an assumption that overlooked the concealed dagger. Locking the doors gave Ehud time to escape after he killed King Eglon.

1. How does the description of Eglon as "an extremely fat man" reflect the spiritual state of Moab and its king? What lessons can we learn about the dangers of indulgence?
2. In what ways does Ehud's left-handedness serve as a reminder that God can use our perceived weaknesses for His glory? Can you think of other biblical examples where God used unlikely individuals?

God Brought Deliverance and Peace to Israel (Judges 3:30, NRSV)

30So Moab was subdued that day under the hand of Israel. And the land had rest eighty years.

Ehud and his army attack the Moabites and kill about 10,000 of their strongest and bravest warriors. Not one of them escapes. So, Israel conquers Moab. God gives the Moabites into the hands of the Israelites by arranging for the Israelites to lie in wait to ambush the Moabites, who are attempting to cross the Jordan River. After the successful defeat of the Moabites, the Israelites had 80 years of peace.

Make no mistake, it was the strength of the Lord that brought both victory and peace. It is also the strength of the Lord that will bring victory and peace into our lives. We must always remember that we are no match for Satan. We need God's strength to deal with our problems and to remain in faith as we deal with them. We need God's strength daily to walk with Him. We, too, must cultivate an intimate relationship with Him and appreciate that He is a God of love, mercy, and compassion. However, we should not forget that He is also a God of wrath. He means that we, too, should have no other god before Him.

DISCUSS THE MEANING:

1. How does the cycle of sin, oppression, repentance, and deliverance in Judges 3 relate to the broader account of Israel's history? How can this cycle be seen in our own spiritual lives?
2. In what ways can we see the role of Ehud as a judge reflecting God's use of individuals to bring about His purposes today?
3. What parallels can be drawn between the physical rest Israel experienced and the spiritual rest promised to believers in Hebrews 4?
4. How can the cycle of sin, oppression, repentance, and deliverance in Judges inform our understanding of personal spiritual growth?
5. What practical steps can we take to ensure that we are living in obedience to God to experience His peace and rest in our lives?

LESSON IN OUR SOCIETY:

As we look around at our world, we can see so much suffering, so much violence, and so much neglect. This is not just the case in our country; the world is crying out for

a power bigger than you and me. We need God! We need Him right now and in the midst of our circumstances. Still, so many are looking to other gods for solutions. Just as God told Israel not to have any other gods before Him, He is still telling us today that He must be our only God—only He is the true and living God. We as a nation need to call on God to heal our land, but first we need to ask for forgiveness for writing Him out of our daily lives. We must humble ourselves and pray. He will hear us! Only God's strength and power can solve the mess we have made of His world. We had better learn to tap into His omnipotent resources.

Despite our disobedience and unfaithfulness, God still loves all of us. When we confess and cry out to God, He delivers, forgives, heals, and provides for us. He is our strength in times of trouble. He is our bridge over troubled waters. Cry out to Him today for your personal deliverance. Then pray for those around you and in foreign lands.

Zoom Sunday School Classes – 25 October 2026, 9:00 AM EST
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A Lack of Instruction
Printed Text: Judges 17:1-6; 18:18-19, 27
Devotional Reading: Deuteronomy 6:10-16
Background Scripture: Judges 17-18
Key Text: Judges 17:6

Daily Bible Readings

Oct.19 Mon, No other Gods but the Lord - Exodus 20: 1-7
Tuesday: One God and One Lord - 1 Corinthians 8:1-6
Wednesday: Worship God Alone - Matthew 4: 1-11
Thursday: The Worship of Worthless Idols - Isaiah 44:9-20
Friday: Return to the Lord - Isaiah 44:21-28
Saturday: No One Can Serve Two Masters - Luke 16:13-17
Sunday: The People Cast off Restraint - Judges 17:1-6

AIM FOR CHANGE:

RECOUNT the story of Micah and his mother;
REFLECT on the impact of misplaced worship; and
PRAY for God's guidance in your life.

KEEP IN MIND:

"Then the Israelites did what was evil in the sight of the LORD and worshiped the Baals;" (Judges 17:6, NRSV).

BACKGROUND:

The account of the introduction of image-worship, or of the worship of Jehovah under the form of a molten image, by the Ephraimite Micah, and of the seizure of this image by the Danites, who emigrated form their own territory when upon their march northwards, and the removal of it to the city of *Laish-Dan*, which was conquered by them, shows us how shortly after the death of Joshua the inclination to an idolatrous worship of Jehovah manifested itself in the nation, and how this worship, which continued for a long time in the north of the land, was mixed up from the very beginning with sin and unrighteousness.

The *second* (Judges 19-21), the account of the infamous act which the inhabitants of Gibeah attempted to commit upon the Levite who stayed there for the night, and which they actually did perform upon his concubine, together with its consequences, the war of vengeance upon the tribe of Benjamin, which protected the criminals, proves, on the one hand, what deep roots the moral corruptions of the Canaanites had struck among the Israelites at a very early period, and, on the other hand, how even at that time the congregation of Israel as a whole had kept itself free and pure, and, mindful of its calling to be the holy nation of God, had endeavored with all its power to root out the corruption that had already forced its way into the midst of it.

LESSON COMMENTARY:

The Beginning of Idolatry in Israel (Judges 17:1-6, NRSV)

[1]There was a man in the hill country of Ephraim whose name was Micah.
[2]He said to his mother, "The eleven hundred pieces of silver that were taken from you, about which you uttered a curse, and even spoke it in my hearing,—that silver is in my possession; I took it; but now I will return it to you." And his mother said, "May my son be blessed by the LORD!"
[3]Then he returned the eleven hundred pieces of silver to his mother; and his mother said, "I consecrate the silver to the LORD from my hand for my son, to make an idol of cast metal."
[4]So when he returned the money to his mother, his mother took two hundred pieces of silver, and gave it to the silversmith, who made it into an idol of cast metal; and it was in the house of Micah.
[5]This man Micah had a shrine, and he made an ephod and teraphim, and installed one of his sons, who became his priest.
[6]In those days there was no king in Israel; all the people did what was right in their own

eyes.

The name Micah means “Who is like Yahweh?” and stands in sharp contrast to the idolatry that soon dominates his household. His account opens a closing section of Judges that exposes Israel’s spiritual collapse: private religion replaced obedience to God’s revealed commands, and individuals shaped worship according to personal desire. Micah’s household becomes a small but revealing picture of the wider nation, where “everyone did what was right in his own eyes” rather than submitting to the Lord.

Micah’s confession takes place within the household, where his theft had violated both family trust and covenant responsibility. In Israel, a son was accountable before God for his conduct toward his parents, and the disorder in this home reflects the wider spiritual disorder of the period of the judges. Wealth that might have been used in faithful service to the LORD would soon become connected with idolatry.

Micah had heard his mother’s words and feared the consequences of retaining what he had stolen. His return of the money exposes his guilt, but it does not yet reveal genuine repentance before God. Micah openly admits that he himself stole the silver. The confession brings the hidden sin into the open, yet the family’s response will show how far Israel had drifted from God’s revealed commands concerning theft, restitution, and worship. His mother withdraws the threat of the curse and invokes the LORD’s blessing upon Micah. The household speaks of the LORD while preparing objects of forbidden worship, illustrating the religious confusion that prevailed when everyone did what was right in his own eyes.

In an age when Israel lacked faithful national leadership, personal gain, fear, and false worship often governed the people. Micah’s mother invokes the LORD’s name and claims to consecrate the silver for her son, yet her intended use openly contradicts God’s covenant commands. Dedication to the LORD required obedience to His revealed will, not religious activity shaped by personal preference. Her words reveal the syncretism of the period, in which Israelites attempted to combine devotion to the LORD with practices borrowed from idolatry.

The planned images violate the second commandment and repeat the pattern seen in Israel’s worship of the golden calf (Exodus 32:4). What Micah’s mother presents as an offering to the LORD becomes material for rebellion against Him. The silver is returned to Micah so that the household can establish its own unauthorized shrine. The private worship center that follows becomes part of the wider corruption described in Judges: “Everyone did what was right in his own eyes” (Judges 17:6). Micah’s idolatry will later influence the tribe of Dan, contributing to a rival center of worship and further separating Israel from the worship God commanded.

Micah established a private sanctuary in the hill country of Ephraim, despite the Lord’s appointed place of worship at the tabernacle in Shiloh. His household religion combined the name of the LORD with practices God had forbidden. The disorder of

Micah's shrine reflects the wider spiritual collapse of the Judges period, when Israel lacked faithful leadership and did what was right in its own eyes. Micah fashioned an object associated with legitimate priestly service and the seeking of God's direction. The ephod belonged within the worship God had established through Aaron and his sons, not within a private shrine controlled by an Ephraimite household. Micah sought the appearance of devotion while disregarding the order God had commanded.

Micah appointed his own son to a role reserved for the descendants of Aaron, whom God had set apart for priestly ministry. No family authority or personal desire could confer that office. Micah's actions anticipated later unauthorized worship in the northern kingdom, where Jeroboam also established rival shrines and appointed priests outside God's command.

Personal preference replaced submission to God's revealed commands. Micah's homemade shrine, his unauthorized priesthood, and the Levite's willingness to serve for payment display the corruption that followed. Israel had been warned not to follow whatever seemed right to each person, but to worship the Lord according to His instruction (Deuteronomy 12:8). What appeared acceptable to individuals brought idolatry, injustice, and ruin, confirming that a way that seems right to man may lead to death (Proverbs 14:12).

1. How does Micah's establishment of a shrine reflect the spiritual state of Israel during the time of the Judges?
2. In what ways can modern Christians fall into the trap of syncretism (the combination of different forms of belief or practice), and how can they guard against it?
3. What are some contemporary "household gods" that might distract believers from true worship today?

The Folly of These Danites! Judges 18:18-19 (NRSV)

18 When the men went into Micah's house and took the idol of cast metal, the ephod, and
the teraphim, the priest said to them, "What are you doing?"
19 They said to him, "Keep quiet! Put your hand over your mouth, and come with us, and
be to us a father and a priest. Is it better for you to be priest to the house of one person,
or to be priest to a tribe and clan in Israel?"

The Danite spies and their armed companions returned to the house in the hill country of Ephraim where they had earlier received lodging and favorable guidance from Micah's Levite. Micah's private shrine represented the religious disorder of the age, when Israel had abandoned the unity of worship God required at His sanctuary. The Danites seized the carved image that Micah had made for worship, openly treating an object of idolatry as a prize to be carried into their new settlement. Israel's command against carved images had been clear from Sinai, yet Micah had established a shrine

around what God had forbidden.

The ephod was associated with priestly service and seeking divine direction, but Micah had appropriated it for unauthorized worship. Its removal shows that the Danites desired not merely territory but their own religious system, fashioned according to convenience rather than God's word. The household idols, or teraphim, belonged to practices of divination and false worship common among surrounding peoples. Their presence in an Israelite home reveals how deeply covenant unfaithfulness had entered ordinary life. The metal image had been made from silver dedicated by Micah's mother, yet the gift offered in the Lord's name had been turned toward idolatry. The Danites carried away the entire collection of cultic objects, establishing their conquest on spiritual rebellion.

Micah's Levite protested as the Danites removed the objects connected with his position and livelihood. His question exposed the theft, but he would soon accept the Danites' offer to become priest for a larger tribe, showing that personal advancement had displaced faithful service to God.

The Danites silenced the Levite with the force of armed men who had already taken Micah's idols. Their contempt for a Levite serving as a priest reveals how far Israel had departed from the worship and order God had established. The command required silence and submission. Rather than seeking the Lord or honoring the Levite's calling, the Danites treated religious service as something they could seize and redirect for their own purposes. "Father" describes a spiritual guide and honored religious leader. The Danites wanted a priest to legitimize their migration and provide direction, yet they carried stolen images and established worship apart from the Lord's appointed sanctuary. Micah's household shrine had already corrupted the Levite's calling by making priesthood a private arrangement supported by personal payment. The Levite had accepted a position that ignored God's commands concerning worship. The offer appealed to the Levite's ambition, security, and influence. He chose greater status over faithfulness to God, and his willing participation helped establish the idolatry that would remain among the Danites for generations.

1. How does the Levite's decision to join the Danites reflect the broader theme of compromise in our spiritual lives?
2. In what ways can we ensure that our roles and responsibilities align with God's calling, rather than personal ambition?
3. How does the account of the Levite and the Danites challenge us to examine the influences we allow in our lives?

The Danites Settle in Laish (Judges 18:27, NRSV)

[27]The Danites, having taken what Micah had made, and the priest who belonged to him, came to Laish, to a people quiet and unsuspecting, put them to the sword, and burned down the city.

Thie Danites' actions in taking the religious artifacts and the Levite priest from Micah's household reflects the spiritual confusion and idolatry prevalent in Israel during the time of the Judges, a period marked by the repeated cycle of sin, oppression, repentance, and deliverance. The taking of idols and a priest highlights the the lack of true worship of Yahweh, as the Danites sought to establish their own religious practices rather than adhering to the covenantal laws given to Israel.

Laish, later known as Dan, was located in the northernmost part of Israel. Laish was a prosperous and isolated city, which made it an attractive target for the Danites. The journey to Laish signifies the tribe of Dan's search for a permanent inheritance, as they had not yet secured their allotted territory. The description of the people of Laish as "quiet and unsuspecting" indicates their peaceful nature and lack of preparedness for an attack. This reflects the moral decline in Israel, where the Danites, rather than seeking God's guidance, chose to exploit the vulnerability of others for their gain. The peacefulness of Laish contrasts with the aggressive actions of the Danites, highlighting the ethical and spiritual decay during this period.

The violent conquest of Laish by the Danites is a stark reminder of the lawlessness and brutality that characterized the era of the Judges. This act of aggression was not sanctioned by God, as the Danites acted out of self-interest rather than divine command. The use of swords signifies the physical force and warfare that were common in territorial expansions during ancient times. The destruction removed the former inhabitants and allowed the Danites to rebuild and occupy the site. Yet Dan's new beginning rested on disobedience, and the stolen idol remained among them for generations. Religious corruption and moral violence often advanced together during the days when everyone did what was right in his own eyes.

1. How does the account of Micah and the Danites challenge us to examine our own lives for hidden idols?
2. In what ways can we ensure that our spiritual leaders remain accountable to God's Word?
3. How does the destruction of Laish serve as a warning for communities today to remain vigilant and discerning?
4. What are some modern examples of "doing what is right in one's own eyes," and how can we counteract this tendency in our lives?
5. How can we trust in God's sovereignty and justice when we see moral and spiritual decline around us?

LESSON IN SOCIETY:

Without a standard of truth, society falls into chaos. Judges 17:6 illustrates the consequences of everyone doing what is right in their own eyes, leading to spiritual and moral decay. The absence of a king in Israel points to the need for godly leadership. In our lives, we must seek guidance from God's Word and godly leaders to avoid spiritual confusion. Micah's actions show how easily idolatry can infiltrate our lives when we stray from God's commands. We must guard our hearts against modern-day idols that can lead us away from God. The chaos in Israel serves as a reminder of the importance of adhering to God's law. Obedience brings order and blessing, while disobedience leads to disorder and judgment.

Idolatry leads to spiritual blindness and moral decay. Leaders must remain faithful to God's Word. The Levite's actions warn against compromising truth for personal gain. Even in times of moral decline, God remains sovereign. Believers can trust in His ultimate plan and justice.

NEXT WEEK'S LESSON: 1 November 2026

The Prophet Is Called
Printed Text: 1 Samuel 3:8-20
Devotional Reading: 1 Thessalonians 5:11-22
Background Scripture: 1 Samuel 1:1-28; 3:1-4:1a
Key Text: Samuel 3:9

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