

Who Am I?

Unlocking and Understanding the Mystery of Christ

Week One

Day Three

Make a Choice Already!

Joshua-Samuel

“My purpose is that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love, so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding, in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge..” (Colossians 2:2-3)



Unlocking the Mystery

The Mystery of God is Jesus Christ. It is in Him that all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden. If we desire to have the full riches of complete understanding of this mystery we must set our hearts on knowing Him more. To gain a deeper understanding of Jesus it is important to study the OT Scripture as well as the New. The Old Testament holds the prophetic picture that Jesus Christ completes. It is easy to get caught up in the details of each book and how the facts relate to each other but if we step back from those details our spiritual eyes will be opened and those treasures of wisdom and knowledge become known.

In the next two lessons we will journey through the historic books of the Old Testament and see what riches we gain by unlocking the mystery of God, namely Jesus Christ. We will peek into each book to extract the prophetic picture that Jesus fulfills and learn to apply that treasure of wisdom and knowledge to our personal walk with Him.

JOSHUA



Understanding the Word

The book of Joshua is primarily divided into two sections; conquering the Promised Land and dividing it among God’s 12 tribes of Israel. It opens with the LORD commanding Joshua on how to lead the people into the land He promised.

DIGGING DEEPER: The book of Joshua

SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURE: Joshua 1:6-9; 7:1



V. 1:6-9 “Be strong and courageous, because you will lead these people to _____ the land I swore to their forefathers to give them. Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to _____ all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go. Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; _____ on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God _____ be with you wherever you go.”

Joshua got the people ready and led them to the fulfilment of God’s promise. God went before them each step of the way by introducing them to Rahab, splitting the Jordan River, making Jericho’s wall fall and making the sun stand still. In one case we witness a very serious act of disobedience.

V. 7:1 “But the Israelites acted _____ in regard to the devoted things; Achan son of Carmi, the son of Zimri, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took some of them. So the LORD’s anger burned against Israel.”

We learn of the seriousness of sin and the repercussion it brings upon those around us. We witness the wrath of God in accordance to the consequences of sin.

The land was conquered then divided. The Israelites however failed to drive all the foreign gods from the land and we witness time and time again the trouble this caused. After the nation’s sin was dealt with, Joshua then led the people to rededicate themselves to God and placed them back into the correct position of God’s covenant.

SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURE: Joshua chapters 23-24

I purposely opened this lesson with God's commands to Joshua and want to sit on Joshua's farewell address for just a moment. I personally think if a follower of Jesus Christ could grasp this portion of understanding, their relationship with our holy God will be taken to a whole new level.

They are in the land of promise experiencing a time of rest from their enemies. Joshua reminds them that it was God that fought for them to get them into their inherited land and it will be God that will continue to keep them in that land.

V. 23:6-11 He reminds the people to be strong, to obey and to not associate with the remaining nations among them and to love the LORD their God.

V. 12-13 A warning is issued to all that turn from these commands and ally themselves with those nations that God will no longer drive out those nations and they in turn will become traps and snares to them, until they perish from this good land.

V. 14-15 "You know with all your heart and soul that not one of all the good promises the LORD your God gave you has failed. Every promise has been _____; not one has failed."

If you violate the covenant...the LORD's anger will burn against you.

V. 24:14-15 "Fear the LORD and serve Him with all faithfulness." Joshua says, "...choose for yourselves who you will serve... as for me and my household we will serve the LORD."

The book of Joshua is one that has impacted me very much. It demonstrates God's power and promise fulfillment as well as it defines the impact and seriousness of sin. Joshua's farewell address hits me to the core every time I read his call to choose. It challenges me to re-evaluate my life and to re-align anything that is not pleasing to my Lord. This challenge is the means I'll use to look through the remaining historic books of the Old Testament.

I want to pause here for a moment... a prophetic picture of Christ... accepting His ways and His commands from Colossians 3:1-17. V. 2-3 "Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died and your life is now hidden with Christ in God." Joshua tells us to choose, Paul instructs us how to do that very thing through Christ. V. 17 "And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him."

JUDGES

DIGGING DEEPER: The book of Judges

SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURE: Judges 3:10; 6:34; 11:29; 14:6, 19; 15:4.

From the time of Joshua's death to the monarchy the people lived with the challenge Joshua put before them. They were warned of the danger of living among the foreign gods and people. There was no leader in the nation to keep them accountable to God so they began a downward spiral into doing just "as they saw fit" or as the KJV puts it, "that which was right in their own eyes." A cycle began, apostasy toward the covenant with God, God allowing foreign oppression from the godless neighbor nations, Israel crying out in distress to God, and God delivering them. God would raise up leaders anointed by His Spirit called JUDGES to lead the people back to Him.

Over and over we see when the people were serving God, usually only throughout the time of a specific Judge, God's hand was on them. When the people turned from God and allowed worldly influences in their life, God took His hand from them. Our LORD will not force His people to follow Him but blessings will occur for those that choose to serve the LORD full-heartedly.

God's mercy is continually demonstrated as He came to the rescue of those that first turned their backs on Him but after repenting of their sin chose to come back to serve Him. This is a powerful gift from our One True God. Another gift we see is the power of the Spirit of God enabling people that were called to minister to stand for God's righteousness.

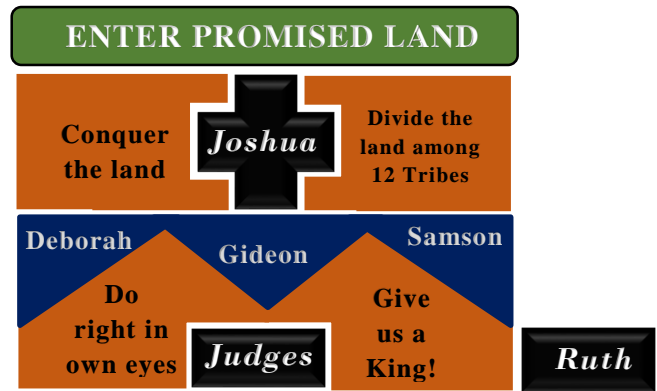
Hit pause... Romans 8:1-17... prophetic picture of Christ. V. 1-2 "Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death." In Christ we all become ministers and we all receive the Holy Spirit to accomplish His work of righteousness. Unpause...

Here are three judges you may have heard of before with a snapshot of their life and story.

SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURE: V. 4:4; 6:12, 15, 36-40; 13

V. 4:4 Who is the Prophetess that led Israel? _____

V. 6:12 Who is the Mighty warrior from the weakest and the least, that was obedient after a fleece moment and had a big victory with only 300 men? _____



V. Chapter 13 Who was the Nazarite that had great strength as long as his hair was not cut, and was married to the non-Israelite, Delilah? _____

RUTH

DIGGING DEEPER: The book of Ruth

SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURE: V. 1:16; 2:11-12; 4:9-10

In the time of the chaos of the Judges and ungodly living this book of Ruth tells the story how choosing to remain faithful in hard times enables God to turn things to good.

A godly Israelite couple and two sons from Bethlehem leave Israel to reside in Moab due to a famine. The sons marry Moabite women. Tragedy strikes when dad and both sons die leaving mom and two daughters-in-law to make it on their own. This mom is Naomi and the two girls are Ruth and Orpah. Naomi had enough of this life and decided to return home. She releases both girls to stay in their homeland and re-marry. Orpah chooses to stay but Ruth makes a life changing decision; she chose not only to go back with Naomi but chose also to follow her God.

V. 1:16 “But Ruth replied, ‘Don’t urge me to leave you or to turn back from you. Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your _____ will be my people and your God _____ God.’ ”

God led Ruth to glean from a field belonging to Boaz. Boaz was a member of Naomi’s husband’s family and recognized the faithfulness of the choice Ruth made.

V. 2:11-12 “Boaz replied, ‘I’ve been told all about what you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband –how you left your father and mother and your homeland and came to live with a people you did not know before. May the LORD repay you for what you have done May you be richly _____ by the LORD, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge.’ ”

Boaz also chose to step up as the Kinsman Redeemer, which is a family member that would buy the original property and restore Naomi’s family though marrying Ruth.

V. 4:9-10 “Then Boaz announced to the elders and all the people, ‘Today you are witnesses that I have bought from Naomi all the property of Elimelech, Kilion and Mahlon. I have also acquired Ruth the Moabitess, Mahlon’s widow, as my _____, in order to maintain the name of the dead with his property, so that his name will not disappear from among his family or from the town records. Today you are witnesses!’ ”

Boaz’s genealogy was traced back to Perez. Go to Matthew 1:5 to trace it even further but also to see that his mom was Rahab, the Harlot spy that helped Joshua conquer Jericho. Boaz and Ruth became grandparents of Jesse and great grandparents of King David.

Ruth chose to separate herself from her gods and family to be faithful to Israel’s God. She did not partially obey, she did not try to sneak idols with her. She made a decision and was completely obedient to that decision. Her obedience demonstrated faithfulness and therefore she was adopted or grafted into the family of God. Her choice to serve God made way not just for God’s redemption but also to be exalt to the very bloodline of the Messiah, Jesus Christ.

Hit pause... prophet picture of Christ... Matthew 10:32-42... V. 37-39 “Anyone who loves his father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who love his son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; and anyone who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.” All or nothing... take inventory... where do you stand? Unpause...

1 & 2 SAMUEL

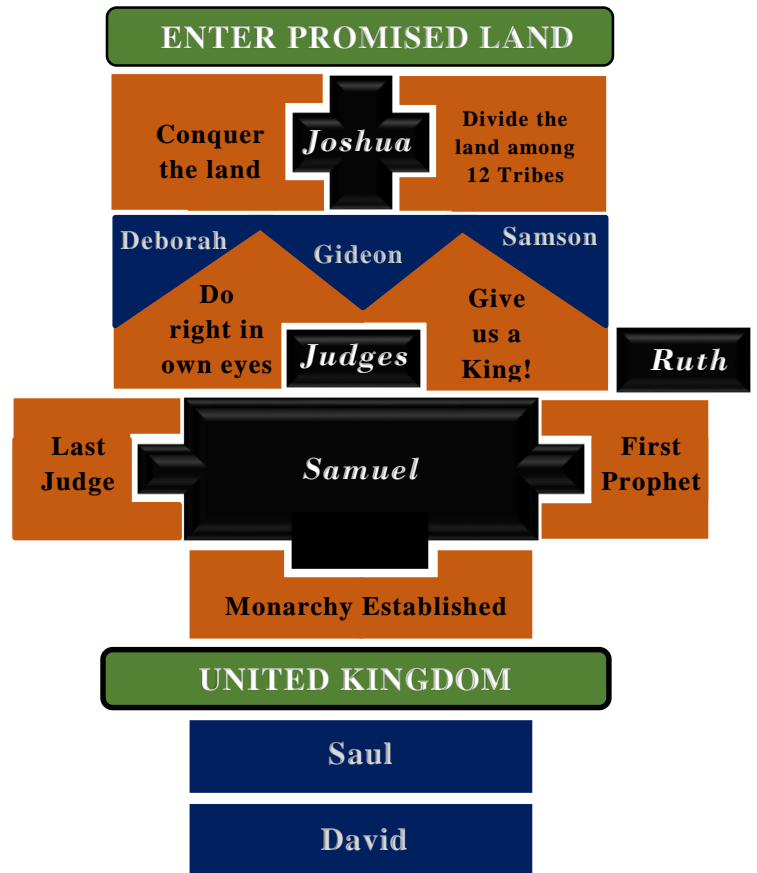
DIGGING DEEPER: Read 1 and 2 Samuel

SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURE: 2 Samuel 7:16

The book of Samuel begins with another faithful woman, Hannah. She loved God and chose to serve Him and chose to remain faithful to Him even to dedicate her son Samuel to His service. A study of Samuel’s life displays an integral man of God. He became the last of the nation’s judges and the first to work as prophet and he was the spiritual leader in this great time of change.

The nation of Israel continued in their cycle of sin, judgment, repentance, and deliverance. The nation had the judges raised up in regions but instead of looking to God as their king they pleaded for a king like the surrounding nations. God allowed this to happen and Samuel was the nation’s leader that was given instructions to anoint Saul as Israel’s first king. (Chapter 8). We soon learn that he did not continue to serve God first and then was rejected by God to rule. (Chapters 13, 15).

God allowed the monarchy to happen but Israel’s kings were to be fully submitted to God as the nation’s true king therefore obeying God’s laws and allowing themselves to be guided and corrected by His word through the prophets. Saul lost the hand of God. Samuel was instructed to anoint another as king of Israel... a shepherd, a musician, a warrior, and a man after God’s own heart...David.



David's great battle against Goliath takes place as well as his friendship with Jonathon, Saul's son. David was brought in to Saul's army to serve and eventually became more popular than Saul. The king became insanely jealous and began hunting David down to kill him. David fled and even though he had opportunity to kill Saul, chose to respect him and let him live. He left his own promotion in the hands of God.

Samuel's first book concludes with Saul's death thus beginning the second book with the reign of King David. This book covers only a period of about 40 years and gives much insight to David's relationship with God which offers us many lessons to apply to our own lives. Choice, David did make a choice to follow and serve God. He went through periods of time that show how worldly influences crept in but the choice that David continually made was to always confess, repent, and dedicate himself back to God. The life of David demonstrates the reality of following God.

V. 7:16 "Your house and your kingdom will endure _____ before me; your throne will be established _____."

Pause... the prophetic picture of Jesus comes through the covenant God made with David.

Luke 1:30-33 "But the angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God. You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end.'

Joshua's farewell cry continues to be the word from God we need to keep before us... "Choose this day who you will serve..." Not only is it a life choice but a day to day choice. We make that decision for Christ, but each day is an opportunity to keep that decision strong and new. Neglect of feeding or fueling this decision allows world views and apathy to sneak in until one day you wake up and realize you are not serving our Lord at all. We see this through the life of Samson and King Saul as well as many people in the bible. We know God is merciful and administers grace but we know throughout the word that there is a limit and He will take His hand off you... we just don't know that limit therefore should be purposeful in our dedication to Him each and every day.

