



STILL
{un}faithful

The Book of Judges (Part 2)

STILL
{un}faithful



THE BOOK OF JUDGES
PART TWO

*Cover Statue: Jephtha's Daughter..
By Chauncey Bradley Ives [1810-1894]*

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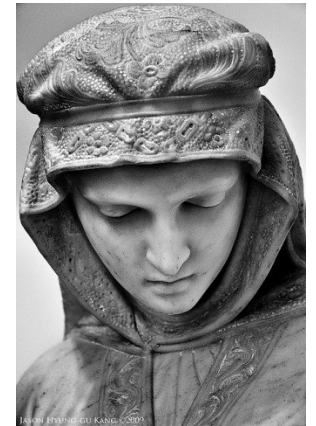
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Read this first

The first nine chapters of Judges contain some of the most disturbing narratives in Scripture, recounting some of the most disturbing people in Biblical history, doing some of the most disturbing things imaginable (This is probably why most churches choose not to preach it). And the second half of the book is darker than the first.

The book of Judges is the continuing story of God's people. It is the record of the generation that arose after the conquest of the Promised Land. Joshua has died and a new generation find themselves leaderless and faithless. Fathers have failed to pastor their homes and clans. Priests have failed to instruct their cities and tribes. As a result, everyone has forgotten who God is and what He has done. Their amnesia leads to idolatry. And their idolatry leads to enslavement in a cycle. They disobey. God spans them. They cry. God rescues them. And while there is peace for a time, eventually, they sin again, and the cycle resumes.

Instead of becoming more faithful with each new cycle, the people become more violent, more perverted, and more hopeless. By the end of the book, they are more faithless than when they started. Despite men's continued unfaithfulness, God is **STILL faithful**. As Paul so aptly writes, "...if we are faithless, he remains faithful—for He cannot deny Himself." God does not abandon us in our brokenness and rebellion. On the contrary, God uses broken men, to save a rebellious people, for His own possession.



The story of Judges is not just about the unfaithfulness of unholy men; it is primarily about the faithfulness of a Holy God who rescues men from themselves. As we remember Israel's failures, let us fight the temptation to be prideful. And as we come recognize our own failures, let us also fight the temptation to despair. Let us all look to the cross as we see the book of Judges is part of the larger story of God, one that climaxes in the death and resurrection of our true deliverer, Jesus Christ.

Come quickly Lord Jesus.

Prepared by the 3Strand Church Network

How to use this study guide

As groups of disciples gather to learn together, they can use this study guide to facilitate their conversation. The format is not intended as a strict formula to adhere to, rather, as a tool to ensure your time is intentional. Each section of this guide is organized to help groups go **D.E.E.P.** into gospel truth:



- ✓ **D- DISCUSSE****SERMON**: A key verse and a summary to help the group discuss the biblical text, answer basic questions, and review the sermon.
- ✓ **E- EXCHANGE VIEWS**: A general discussion question encouraging individuals to share their first reactions to the text or sermon. Often, this will inspire deeper examination into the text in a particular direction.
- ✓ **E – EXAMINE****TEXT**: A series of questions related to the biblical text and the sermon. These questions are designed to help the group dig deeper into what the text actually says and, together, determine what it might mean.
- ✓ **P- PERSONALIZE** **TRUTH**: One or two questions to help apply the text to your personal life and experience.

Remember, our groups are more than just a place to study the bible or rehash the sermon. They are smaller expressions of our larger church body. It is in these “mini-churches”, that we work to build deeper relationships with God as we learn, love “one another”, and serve on mission together.

Use this guide to prepare your family for Sunday

The Bible teaches us that parents, not pastors, are responsible for the biblical and spiritual training of their kids. As you are studying and learning, you need to teach your kids, share with them how God is challenging you, and impart to them a passion for Christ, His Word, and His Way (See Deuteronomy 6.4-9). Parents, we encourage you to spend the week preparing your family, especially the older children, for the public gathering and the sermon on Sunday. Here are some specific ways to prepare your family for worship:

Family preparation should always include reading of the passage that will be preached on Sunday. As you read, remember that the intent is not to teach them everything about the passage. Not only do you want to expose them to the Word of God, you also want to demonstrate its importance in your lives.

Family preparation should always include an age-appropriate discussion about the text. Following the reading, begin an age-appropriate discussion using the booklet as a guide. Ask probing questions that fit their specific maturity as they look forward to sitting under the preached Word on Sunday.

Your efforts, not your expertise, will set an example for your children, will make our church gathering more meaningful, and will help your family feel more cared for.

Family preparation should always include prayer. This should be done as a family and individually. First, pray to understand the text. Then, pray for the needs of your own family, for the church, and for our city. Individually read and pray with each of your children throughout the week and try to dialogue with them as individuals about the passage.

This is a simple way for parents to begin to shepherding your family. Your efforts, not your expertise, will set an example for your children, will make our church gathering more meaningful, and will help your family feel more cared for.

Use this guide to study as an individual

Before you begin, pray that Holy Spirit would open your eyes to see what He is teaching you in the Bible, and give that He will give you the spiritual strength to do something about it. Read the text. Then read it again. Take notes. Underline your Bible. Write down questions. At the same time, work through the study and write out answers to the questions. Resist any temptation to skip over the personalization questions. It is important to ponder how the truths apply to your life. Though these questions are sometimes the most penetrating and difficult, they are designed to help you think seriously about your life.

After you have spent time on your own studying the text, it is important for you to share with others who are wrestling with the same text. The Bible is meant to be

read and studied in community. So take the time to do it on your own first, and then considering gathering with others to discuss what you have learned.

Use this guide to study in a Road Group

What is a Road Group?

Road Groups are our version of community groups. As smaller expressions of our larger church body, it is in Road Groups that endeavor to learn together, love together, serve together, and go on mission together. In other words, we love like a family of families and we live like a team on mission.

We use the R.O.A.D. acronym as an effective tool to explain the essential qualities of Road Groups:

R - Relational

We believe that Jesus saves individuals but not to be individualistic. We are one body, one family, and one church. The groups exist to build relationships within the family of God. These groups will serve as a primary connecting point outside of corporate assembly for those in and outside of our church community. Preaching, music, and overall environment draw people into a church, but relationships are where people feel like they belong and are cared for.

O.A. - One Another

We believe that community is one of God's primary tools for sanctification. We believe that this one of the reasons why God commands us to love "one another"—we not only need love, but we need to love. Without a commitment to be in community, one will find it difficult to fulfill all of God's commands. At the same time, as larger assembly on Sunday mornings it is nearly impossible to fulfill these commands. Road Groups exist as an environment to encourage obedience to these commands for the glory of God and our joy.

*³⁵ By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."
John 13.35*

D - Discipleship

As brothers and sisters gather together, we intend to discuss gospel truth and to learn how to live more like Jesus. These groups help us to mature in our understanding of God's Word together, but also in tangible expressions of

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mission together. Even though many would not consider this "formal" discipleship, the groups do possess a leader who is intentionally praying for and speaking to their group on a regular basis. In time, relationships are built that will allow for spiritual growth, mutual shepherding, and commitment to mission.

Why should I join a Road Group?

The Bible is clear that we are made for community. That is because we are made in the image of a Trinitarian God who is one in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. When we are not living in community we suffer because life in this broken world is too overwhelming and tempting to navigate alone. Therefore, Road Groups are a place where we can live in relationship with one another through the joys and trials of life.

How do I join a Road Group?

We have groups meeting at different times, on different days, at different locations. You can find all of our current groups at www.roadgroups.org. There you will learn the name of the group leader, the host home location, and the unique makeup of the group (new people, single, families, etc.). Please contact the group leader personally at the church, through our ROAD LIFE social network, or by emailing the GROUPS address below BEFORE you attend their group. There is additional contact information listed at the church.

For more information, or if you need help finding a group that works for you, please email life@damascusroadchurch.org.

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The Unfaithfulness of Men: *Judges Part One (1-9)*

The book of Judges begins with the death of Joshua, one Israel's most faithful leaders. Within a generation, God and all that He accomplished through Joshua and His people is forgotten. Both pastors and parents fail in their responsibility to teach their children about who God is and what He does. A faithful generation, therefore, gives birth to an unfaithful one who does not "know the LORD or the work that he had done for Israel." Their amnesia leads Israel to sin. They worship false gods, make friends with their enemies, and marry foreign women. Judges is a time when "Everyone did what was right in their own eyes," giving little thought to God and His will.

When His children sin God proves faithful to His promise to judge. Like a just Father, He raises up enemies to spank His children. In pain, Israel cries for help. God responds to their cries, remaining faithful to His promise to bless. Like a loving Father, he rescues His people by raising up various deliverers to destroy Israel's enemies. But other than the first judge, Othniel, all of God's "heroes" are anything but heroic. They are sinful, unorthodox, and even dark. The story of Ehud is dirty and perverse. The story of Shamgar is strange and obscure. The story of Deborah and Barak is erotic and violent. The story of Gideon is full of pride and murder. The Bible's stories of the unfaithfulness of men probably don't shock us as much as they convict us. What shocks us is knowing that God works not despite the sins of men, but in fact through them to accomplish His perfect plan.

The Faithfulness of God: *Hope in the Book of Ruth*

All we see in Judges is that men are unfaithful and lost. Instead of becoming responding to God's faithfulness with obedience, the people become less faithful with every chapter and, by the end of the book, they are more disobedient and hopeless than when they started.

The book of Ruth is a refreshing reprieve. It takes place "In the days when the judges ruled." The book of Ruth is story of love and redemption that provides one of the clearest pictures of the gospel in the entire Bible. The story of Naomi, Ruth, and Boaz is God's bright light in the midst of the dark world of Judges—it is proof that God is still faithful, still invisibly at work, and still on mission to redeem a people.

The book of Judges displays the unfaithfulness of men on a humungous-gigantic-jumbo scale. We read about major rebellion and powerful judgments, brutal oppressors with big armies, and over-the-top heroes facing incredible odds. Conversely, in the book of Ruth, the faithfulness of God is displayed on a small scale, with characters who are not amazing but very ordinary.

The story of Ruth is a story within the story—a glimpse into what a sovereign and good God is doing to accomplish his mission, not despite the sinful choices of men, but in fact through them.

Though the story itself begins with same kind of darkness we find in Judges, it ends the light of hope designed to lead us to Jesus Christ—the light of the world. The story of Ruth exists as a commentary to be read as we study Judges, to remind us that when all things appear hapless and hopeless, there is still hope that God is still faithful.

As we study Judges, we must not forget Ruth. In fact, we should return to Ruth again and again to remember who God is, what He has done, and what He is still doing. The book of Ruth is a powerful reminder that God is always working invisibly, and mysteriously, to bring out His glorious plan, even within tragedy. It's a story for those of us who have, are, and will suffer tragedy, loss, or pain. It's a story for those wondering where God is in the midst of heartbreak upon heartbreak. It is a story for those who will doubt whether God is in control, whether God is good, and whether faithfulness to do what is right is worth it in hard times. And it's a story for people who question whether all things, including suffering, are in fact purposed for good.

Still {un}faithful: *Judges Part Two (Chapters 10-21)*

As the second half of Judges begins, God remains faithful and, inexplicably, men are still unfaithful. This is the unchanging pattern of Judges. It is the story of God who is faithful to His promise to love and, at the same time, faithful to His promise to judge.

This is also our story. **We don't need a hero who can save us from the enemies of the world; we need a hero who can save us from ourselves.**

The problem is not outside in the big bad world, it is inside our big bad sinful hearts. We need a man who can somehow deal with my sin without having to deal with his own. A man, whether I put the cape on myself or someone else, cannot change a heart. But the book of Judges shows us what happens not only when we seek salvation in false gods but when you put your hope in men, even

God's "best". The truth is, the "best" of God's men were bad—some really bad. In part two, we see that the best of God's men lead Israel from bad to worse—they are MORE unfaithful by the end than at the beginning. What began with war against God's enemies ends with a civil war among God's people.

Watching this kind of world, and seeing God's people, "do what was right in their own eyes" was enough proof for the author of Judges to know that they need serious help. This is why last verse in Judges points us to where he hoped to find it: ²⁵ *In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes. Judges 21.25. The author is thinking about David.* They need a King. We need a King. The irrational unfaithfulness of Israel, especially in view of God's immeasurable faithfulness, reveals man's urgent need not only for a king, but one who has to be more than a man. Enter King Jesus.

What shocks us is knowing that God works, not despite the sins of men, but through them to accomplish his perfect plan.

The unfaithfulness we see in judges should humble us. But the faithfulness of God should inspire us. As we come face to face with our own unfaithfulness, as seen in the actions of these judges, my prayer is that we will SEE IT, but we will not be driven to despair, but to the cross. That is not only where God proved his faithfulness to us, but to Himself as perfectly loving and just the same time. Judges confronts us with a God too big to explain, a God is bigger than any sin I have committed or any sin committed against me.

*In those days there was no king in Israel.
Everyone did what was right in his own eyes.
Judges 21.25*

{un}faithful

WK1 JUDGES 10.1-5;12.8-15

After Abimelech there arose to save Israel...(10.1a)

FAITHFUL SERVANTS

DISCUSSERMON:

They were born. They judged. They died. Tola, Jair, Ibzan, Elon, and Abdon are not given the words of the judges surrounding them, but they do allow for us to pause and consider the failures of some of the other judges (specifically Gideon and Abimelech leading up to this). Between them, these five men ruled Israel for eighty years. God blessed His people with 80 years of peace through the faithfulness of these men! They had wives, sons, daughters, and apparently a lot of donkeys, but their fullest most complete contribution is that they lived lives that were used by God. While judges around them get press, it is not always good press. May we strive to be the kind of servants of God that can be used without needing to establish our own name.

EXCHANGEVIEWS

Explain what part sermon had the greatest impact on you. What most impressed you about the text? What most encouraged or challenged you?

EXAMINETEXT

1. Why are Tola, Jair, Ibzan, Elon, and Abdon called 'minor judges'?
2. As the first judge following Abimelech's devastating reign, how do you think Tola probably spent his time "saving" Israel?
3. Why is it noteworthy that Tola, Jair, Ibzan, Elon, and Abdon all judged but none of them experienced God's rest?
4. Does the lack of information on Tola, Jair, Ibzan, Elon, and Abdon detract from or enhance Yahweh's saving activity? Why?
5. These five men have more recorded about their families than them. What can we learn about the importance of physical and spiritual offspring?

PERSONALIZE TRUTH

6. Jair gets one verse, recording absolutely nothing about him the fact that he reigned for 22 years. After 22 years of faithful service to Jesus and His church, would you struggle with this kind of memorial? Why?

7. In the book of life, what would be written about you? If your story were to be summarized in a few verses, what would heaven record?

SermonNotes

WK2JUDGES 10.6-11.28

The Lord, the Judge, decide this day between the people of Israel and the people of Ammon.” (11.27b)

{UN} FAITHFUL CONVERSATION

DISCUSS SERMON:

We are treated to three discussions which relate to one another in a few ways. The three discussions that take place are between God and Israel, Jephthah and leaders of Gilead, as well as Jephthah and the king of Edom. In each of these conversations we have someone who has been wronged, and the party doing the abuse with a request. In the case of God and Israel, Israel thinks that this pattern of God rescuing a faithless nation will continue, and so they play games with God, once again calling Him to their rescue. God will not be played. The leaders of Gilead come to Jephthah and asks him to lead them. This is an interesting request because years earlier these family members had thrown him out. Jephthah negotiates to be their leader if he rescues them. Jephthah then negotiates a conversation with the king of the Edom. In this back and forth we see that the king of Edom wants the land back that God had given to Israel in the book of Numbers. Jephthah clears up the history lesson for the king, and does not back down to his threats. The final word of this conversation comes by the sword of Jephthah and his army. In all of this, we see the danger of spin. In all three of these conversations, we see a people who have been convinced of their own rights: Israel's right to be saved, Gilead's right to have a great leader, and Edom's right to the land. Out of their 'rights' we see appeals being made. These appeals are baseless, form a sinful self-protectionism, and eventually lead to their destruction.

EXCHANGE VIEWS:

Explain what part sermon had the greatest impact on you. What most impressed you about the text? What most encouraged or challenged you?

EXAMINE TEXT:

1. In what way has Israel's unfaithfulness grown?
2. Having abandoned God, God abandons Israel telling them to “cry to the gods whom you have chosen.” Does this deny His love for Israel?

3. According to verse 16, what moves God—their repentance or their misery? What do we learn about God's heart through this?
4. Why is Jephthah an unlikely hero? What is Jephthah's first defense against the king of the Ammonites?
5. How is Israel's relationship with God and Gileadite's relationship with Jephthah similar?

PERSONALIZE TRUTH:

6. The King of Edom believed he deserved more land. The leaders of Gilead believed they deserved to have a good leader. And Jephthah believed he deserved to have his inheritance restored. When has your own sense of entitlement ever blinded you to reality, your own sin, or the needs of others?
7. Jephthah calls Yahweh a witness (10) and a Judge (27) How does confessing God as judge affect your view of who He is, what He does, and how you relate to him?

Sermon Notes

WK3 JUDGES 11.29-12.7

Yet you have forsaken me and served other gods; therefore I will save you no more. Go and cry out to the gods whom you have chosen; let them save you in the time of your distress. (10.13-14)

{UN} FAITHFUL WORDS

DISCUSS SERMON

The last section ends with the acknowledgement that God is the judge, while this section begins with Jephthah's deal with God. Before going to battle with the Ammonites, he promises to sacrifice the first thing that comes out of his house when he returns home. He is victorious, and he returns home to his excited only daughter. The great victory has now been tarnished as he keeps his word and sacrifices his daughter. Without any comments affirming or negating this action, the author moves on to a bloody civil disagreement between Jephthah and the people of Ephriam. The complaint is about involving them in the battle with the Ammonites, but in reality, it is an ethnic conflict between the *fugitives of Ephriam* and the *Sibboleths*. What is interesting in all of this is the silence of God. After His rebuke of Israel in chapter 10, the only thing that we have seen from God is the fact that He gave the Ammonites over to Jephthah. He did not tell Jephthah to sacrifice his daughter. He did not tell Jephthah to judge the Ephriamites. What we see here is the result of God allowing the people to lead themselves, while still faithfully exercising His grace through salvation.

EXCHANGE VIEWS:

Explain how the story of Jephthah's vow, and the sacrifice of his daughter, made you feel. What questions did God's relative silence generate?

EXAMINE TEXT:

1. In what way has Israel's unfaithfulness grown?
2. Having abandoned God, God abandons Israel telling them to "cry to the gods whom you have chosen." Does this deny His love for Israel?
3. According to verse 16, what moves God—their repentance or their misery? What do we learn about God's heart through this?
4. Why is Jephthah an unlikely hero? What is Jephthah's first defense against the king of the Ammonites?
5. How is Israel's relationship with God and Gileadite's relationship with Jephthah similar?

PERSONALIZE TRUTH:

6. Ephraim foolishly challenged the leader God had raised. In the end, their challenge proved self-defeating. When have you ever seen Christians at cross-purposes with other Christians (or churches with churches)? Instead of "waging war", how should we settle our differences?
7. Read James 3. 2-13. How has your tongue caused you (or others) distress? Do you feel that your "big mouth", or your silence, has ever undermined God's work through you?

SermonNotes

WK4 JUDGES 13

...and he shall begin to save Israel from the hand of the Philistines. (13.5)

FAITHFUL DELIVERER

DISCUSS SERMON

The best known character in the book of Judges is Samson. While his entrance into the world was certainly full of drama, it was not the same sort of up and down that would define the rest of life. As a matter of fact, his entrance into the world is most similar to that of John the Baptist: born to a barren mother, visit and promise from an angel, Nazirite vow, and the promise that he would be used by God for specific things. In this short account between the angel and the parents of Samson we see God reestablishing His promise (as we also see with John). God is making a promise that is a reflection of the promise he has already made. He will provide a Savior. He will do it miraculously (they are barren), so they know that it is Him. Their obligation is obedience. In the story of Samson's birth we are shown that God chooses and works through people not because of them. Like Israel, God chose Samson before he had ever done anything. And like Israel, God will use Samson in spite of the fact that He turns away. All of this points forward to another miraculous birth, promised by an angel, that provides the ultimate deliverer.

EXCHANGE VIEWS:

Who is Samson? What do you remember learning about Samson growing up?

EXAMINE TEXT:

1. There is one aspect of the "cycle of Judges" that is missing at the beginning of chapter 13—Israel never cries. What might that indicate about their present condition?
2. Barrenness is a common theme in the Bible. Great men often came from barren women such as Sarah, Rebekah, Rachel, and Elizabeth. What are we to learn from the fact that Samson's mother remains anonymous?
3. Read Numbers 6.1-8. What is a Nazirite vow? Why would God require this of Samson?
4. Read Isaiah 9.6. Who do you think was speaking to Manoah? What does Manoah request? Why does the angel refuse his request?
5. How is the record of Samson's beginning different than the rest of the judges? Why do you think this is?

PERSONALIZE TRUTH:

6. Though never named, Manoah's wife appears to be more faithful than her husband, going so far as comforting his fears with truth. Are wives always more spiritually sensitive than husbands? How should we feel about that?
7. Should we be taking special vows today in order to prepare ourselves for God's work? Why or why not?

SermonNotes

8.

WK5 JUDGES 14

His father and mother did not know that it was from the Lord, for he was seeking an opportunity against the Philistines. (14.4a)

{UN} FAITHFUL DELIVERER

DISCUSS SERMON

Samson does not grow from his predetermined birth into a righteous young man. In this chapter, he breaks the three major vows that he was born into: the command of God not to intermarry with the Canaanites, the Nazirite vow to avoid unclean animals, and he shows no willingness to submit to his parents, which reflects his lack of submission to God. But what we see is that his unwillingness to submit to God does not put him outside of the work of God. God's will is not some straight line that we teeter on. God uses sin, evil, and good to bring about the fulfillment of His plan. Samson is one of the greatest examples of God making a straight line with a crooked stick.

EXCHANGE VIEWS:

Samson's upbringing is probably like being raised in a Christian home. Does that describe you? How has that affected your story?

EXAMINE TEXT:

1. What is the weakness of Samson?
2. Samson is set apart and filled with God's Spirit at a young age. Why then doesn't Samson resist what is clearly forbidden?
3. According to verse 3 and 7, why does Samson pursue a Philistine woman?
4. By the power of God's Spirit, Samson rips a lion in half. Upon his return to Timnah, he stops to look at the carcass. What does he see?
5. How is this image representative of the book of Judges, specifically, in how God accomplishes His mission to save broken men?
6. Do you think it is Samson's anger or God's Spirit that brings trouble in Ashkelon?

PERSONALIZE TRUTH:

7. According to verse 4, Samson's desire was "from the Lord." In other words, God appears to use Samson's sinful desire for his own purposes (to bring judgment upon the Philistines). How does that make you feel?

SermonNotes

WK6 JUDGES 15

Then the Spirit of the Lord rushed upon him, and the ropes that were on his arms became as flax that has caught fire, and his bonds melted off his hands. (15.14)

FAITHFUL SPIRIT

DISCUSS SERMON

However unholy Samson was, he did intend to fulfill his marriage vows. Upon finding his wife given to another, he was filled with anger. You can almost see the Incredible Hulk moment, as he converts into big green angry Samson. He ties together 300 foxes into pairs with torches, lights them on fire, and sets them free in the wheat fields ready for harvest. The Philistines retaliate by burning his 'wife' and her father. Samson then *strikes them with a great blow*. It is at this point that the Philistines are done messing around and they gather an army to attack. The threat is more than the men of Judah can bear and they turn Samson in. He has no plan to go quietly, and the Spirit of God comes upon him, allowing him to break the ropes and kill 1000 with a donkey's jawbone. In contrast to reckless passion of Samson is the consistent passion of the Spirit. We see the Spirit of God filling Samson at exactly the moment when he needs strength. We then see God working to provide Samson with the water he needed. Amazing things can be done through a passionate person who is armed with the power of the Spirit. We may not know the end result, we may not have control, but we can be assured that we serve the one who does.

EXCHANGE VIEWS:

Can you ever remember a time where you experienced the Spirit of God "rushing upon you" in such a way that you were better equipped to do God's work?

EXAMINE TEXT:

1. Why does Samson burn the wheat fields? Is Samson's response justified?
2. Samson's appears to be humorously playing with the Philistines. The Bible often uses humor when it has a very sober point to make. What is God's point with in using it here?
3. Why do the men of Judah capture Samson? What does their complaint to Samson reveal about their relationship with God?

4. What can we learn about the timeliness, and passion, with which the Spirit rushes upon Samson?
5. Is Samson's cry to God a plea for help or a complaint—and how is this a picture of Israel (See 10.10-16)? What do we learn about God by what He does and what He doesn't do?

PERSONALIZE TRUTH:

6. Their fear in Judah makes it clear that the Philistines' have become their savior and Samson their enemy. How can fear help us identify what our idols (or saviors) are?
7. Even though God will accomplish his purposes through a Spirit-endowed person, sin still has consequences. When or where have you known this to be true?

SermonNotes

WK7 JUDGES 16.1-20

But he did not know that the Lord had left him. (16.20b)

{UN} FAITHFUL STRENGTH

DISCUSS SERMON

Samson has never been a character who has other's best interests at heart, but he has reached a new low. We first see him rip off the gates of the city so that he can escape. We then see him in the chambers with Delilah. Two times he tells her how to bind him, but easily breaks free. It is at this point that she pushes Samson to give up his greatest secret: he is set apart by God. But what this section shows us is that he had neglected to be set apart. He had used God one time too many. Like the conversation between God and Israel at the end of Ch.10, God is gracious, but He is not controlled. Samson was using his gifts to serve his own appetite, consisting of pagan whores. He seems as surprised as anyone else that the Lord has left him. None of us are so strong that we can take for granted the grace of God.

EXCHANGE VIEWS:

It is difficult to understand why God chose a slime ball like Samson. When, in the past, has God surprised with a questionable leader He has chosen for His work?

EXAMINE TEXT:

1. How is the story of Samson entertaining? Does God use humor?
2. Is Samson confident or arrogant toward the Gazites? Is there a difference?
3. In what ways did Samson desire to be like the world?
4. Unlike chapters 14 and 15, there is no mention of the Spirit in chapter 16. Why don't you think we see the work of the Spirit on Samson this time?
5. What persuaded Samson to finally tell Delilah the secret of his strength?

PERSONALIZE TRUTH:

6. Barak and Deborah (Chpt. 4-5) Samson and Delilah provide two very different pictures of couples. One couple fights for the things of God together, the other fights against Him and one another. If married, how would you characterize your "ministry" as a couple? If single, what kind of spouse should you be seeking to find?

7. What motivates Samson? What motivates Delilah? What motivates you to take similar risks or make sacrifices?

SermonNotes

WK8 JUDGES 16.21-31

So the dead whom he killed at his death were more than those whom he had killed during his life. (16.30b)

FAITHFUL DEATH

DISCUSS SERMON

Samson had been brought low. Here was a man who had been brought from the greatest heights of service to God, to now being the reason to celebrate the pagan god Dagon. Samson stood in the courtyard below, the trophy of their victory. Samson was now at his weakest and most vulnerable, but we will soon see, was actually at his strongest. Though his hair had grown back, he knew that this meant nothing without the Spirit of God. So he called out one last time to God. This plea was not for his own deliverance, but for the deliverance of God's people. He was no longer out for his own personal happiness; it was now about the destruction of the enemy. He had given his life over to this task. With the strength of God, he killed more in his death than in his life. Likewise, as we give our lives over, die to ourselves, and take on our part as those set apart, there is no limit to how God can use us.

EXCHANGE VIEWS:

What captivates you? What do you sacrifice for? What do you think about in your free time? What is that "thing" that you regularly give your life to?

EXAMINE TEXT:

1. How would you describe Samson's relationship with God?
2. Why didn't Samson's strength return when his hair grew back? What might this reveal about any of our gifts, talents, or skills relative to God's work?
3. How was Samson's prayer different than any of his others? What had changed?
4. Do you believe that Samson deserved Yahweh's help? Why or why not?
5. How is Samson's faith and life a picture of Israel's faith and life? How are his final moments a picture of Israel's true condition?
6. Is there only tragedy, or is there hope in the story of Samson?

PERSONALIZE TRUTH:

7. Samson was filled with God's Spirit, yet selfishly squandered his gifts. You are filled with God's Spirit. How do you plan to avoid wasting your gifts?

SermonNotes

WK9 JUDGES 17-18

In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes. (17.6)

{UN} FAITHFUL WORSHIP

DISCUSS SERMON:

If Samson was a picture of the nation of Israel, then Micah and the Danites are a picture of the church. We see that the people of Israel have denigrated themselves so low, that each man does what is right in his own eyes. Even in this land where anything goes, there is still a desire to worship, though it has been detached from its original source. Micah desires to worship, so he makes himself a god and buys himself a priest. But he is outdone by the Danites. They need religion so they steal his gods and his priests. What a web of false religion. All of this points to an individualized religion that goes with their individualized morality. It is every man for himself, in everything. Faithfulness has been fully replaced by opportunistic gain. And in this story, the guys who are the most corrupt win. Today we have a church full of individuals toting their own personal Jesus'. We have pastors who are looking to move up (why be a priest to one man when you can serve a whole clan). There is a full-scale belief system; just no living God.

EXCHANGE VIEWS:

What do you think are the first signs of corruption in a pastor or church? OR
What are the marks of a false teacher or false gospel/religion?

EXAMINE TEXT:

1. Moses' grandson becomes a priest to an idolatrous shrine. How long does it take for a community to go from faithful to unfaithful?
2. Even though he supposedly inquires of the LORD, why aren't the Levite's words to the Danites trustworthy?
3. Does Micah's success equal God's blessing? Do faithfulness and fruitfulness always go together? Why or why not?
4. How does this story speak of judgment on false religion?
5. The writer continues to remind the reader that there is no King in Israel. Why do the people need a King? What sort of King do they need?

PERSONALIZE TRUTH:

6. Once Micah's were stolen, he felt as if he had nothing. What, if taken away from you, would make you feel that insecure, fearful, or discontent?
7. Churches adopt many practices in their worship. Some are a part of culture. In making these decisions, which statement should guide us:
 - a. Anything that God doesn't forbid in Scripture is allowed.
 - b. Anything that God doesn't command in Scripture is forbidden.

How can it be dangerous to adopt a because "it works" philosophy?

SermonNotes

WK10 JUDGES 19

And all who saw it said, "Such a thing has never happened or been seen from the day that the people of Israel came up out of the land of Egypt until this day; consider it, take counsel, and speak. (19:30)



{UN} FAITHFUL ACTIONS

DISCUSS SERMON:

If there is a section of Scripture that most exemplifies the total depravity of man in the book of Judges, it is this. The next three chapters read like a rerun of the darkness experienced in Genesis 19 at Sodom and Gomorrah—cities God had destroyed with hot tar from heaven. This story begins with a Levite and his traveling companions who come into an Israelite town. They intentionally avoided foreign cities so that they might lodge with the people of Israel. They have no place to stay but are graciously taken in by an old man. As they are spending quiet evening at dinner “making their hearts merry”, the men of the city surround the house and beat on the door. They want to have sex with the visitor. Wanting to protect his guest, the host offers his own virgin daughter and the Levite’s concubine to satisfy the men’s sinful demands. The men refuse, but the concubine is thrust into the hands of the men who abuse her until morning. She is left on a doorstep to die. The Levite proceeds to butcher his concubine and send pieces of her body throughout Israel. Unfaithfulness and the worship of false gods has produced a wickedness never before seen or even heard. Left to themselves, this is what men see as “right.” But the problem is much deeper than sinful actions; it is the sinful heart that declares “I want to be like God.”

EXCHANGE VIEWS:

How does this story make you feel?

EXAMINE TEXT:

1. What is a Levite? How is this story a commentary on the spiritual leadership that exists in the time of Judges?
2. Read the narrative of Sodom in Genesis 19. What are the comparisons between Sodom and Gibeah?
3. Why do you think the Levite allow his concubine to be abused?

4. Each man (and woman) was doing what was “right in his own eyes.” But, who was most at fault for this tragedy?
5. What motivated the Levite to dismember his concubine and send her throughout all of Israel? Is this more abominable than the rape?

PERSONALIZE TRUTH:

6. The Levite travel passed Jebusi in order to avoid spending the night with God’s enemies and instead lodge with God’s people. Sadly, God’s people treat them worse than any of God’s enemies ever had. In terms of existing as a haven of refuge or safety, how might this bring into question our own reputation as the church when compared to the world?
7. Our culture continues to suffering from sexual sin. This story is especially difficult for those who have been sexual abused or exploited. Discuss how you might respond to someone who reads this story and is disturbed by God’s apparent silence?

SermonNotes

WK11 JUDGES 20-21

In those days, there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes (21.25).

FAITHFUL JUDGMENT

DISCUSS SERMON:

The book of Judges began with a call to fully possess the land they had just finished conquering. Their leader, Joshua, charged them to finish driving out the few remaining foreign enemies. Joshua then dies. Without a leader, within a generation, Israel turns on itself. The attack upon the Levite and his concubine results in civil war between all of Israel and Benjamin. For the first time since chapter 1, Israel “rises as one man” united in their commitment to punish sin in the land. This time, however, the enemy is their brother. The tribe of Benjamin refuses to punish the sin of one city. Blinded by self-righteousness, they proceed to defend the wickedness within and fight against God and his people. God judges Israel annihilates Benjamin much like they had the Canaanites years before. Following the battle, Israel grieves for Benjamin. Their solution is to exploit a loophole in their oath and, ultimately, kill more of their brothers. In the end we are left with a people who proceed with a certain amount of rightness and a certain amount of wrongness, making them completely unfaithful to God but not completely useless for Him.

EXCHANGE VIEWS:

Have you ever had to confront sin in someone you love or care about? Why is it easier to ignore sin than to confront it?

EXAMINE TEXT:

1. What is so tragic about Israel warring with Benjamites?
2. Why do you think Benjamin refuses to deal with the sin in their tribe?
3. What would have been said of Yahweh if Benjamin had been utterly destroyed? What would this say about his covenant promises?
4. How do you explain the grief of Israel over Benjamin?
5. Does the book of Judges end with hope or despair?

PERSONALIZE TRUTH:

6. Does your church practice church discipline? Have you ever seen church discipline exercised poorly? What should godly church discipline look like?
7. The “loophole” story of the last chapter illustrates the overall theme of the entire book—men did what was right in their own eyes. This time what was “right” wasn’t strictly forbidden, but it certainly wasn’t faithful.

Has your faith ever had the appearance of selflessness (faithfulness) but has, in fact, been quite selfish (unfaithful)? What are the differences between the following ways to live out our faith and practice:

- a. I’ll just do what is explicitly commanded.
- b. I’ll just do what is explicitly forbidden.
- c. I’ll do whatever works best.
- d. I’ll do what most glorifies God.

Sermon Notes

WK12HEBREWS 10.19-31

Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. (10.23).

{UN} FAITHFUL

DISCUSS SERMON:

If there is anything that we can conclude coming out of Judges it is that God is terrifying. In this overwhelming holiness, we also see His grace. In looking at a people who did nothing but act against Him, we find a God who is willing to act in order to deliver them. We may not understand his means. We may be appalled by His methods. But in the end, the same God that is pulling the strings in Judges is the God who rules today, is the God who will return with His robe drenched in blood. He will judge. He is love. What a complicated God we serve.

EXCHANGE VIEWS:

What story, character, or idea most impressed you from the book of Judges?

EXAMINE TEXT:

1. What does this book say to us about men?
2. What picture of God would you have if you had only the book of Judges?
3. According to the book of Judges, how does God deal with sin?
4. What does it mean that men are unfaithful and God is faithful?

PERSONALIZE TRUTH:

5. How does the book of Judges preach about Jesus? What happens if we forget that Jesus is BOTH Judge and Savior; both Holy AND Loving?
6. According to verses 24 and 26, what is essential to remain faithful to the truth of the gospel? Do you agree?

Appendix 1: Judge Quick-Reference Chart (Part 2)

Judge & the judged	Scripture reference	Major Events
6. Tola (Issachar) Son of Puah None Specified	Judges 10:1,2	Tola was probably from one of the leading clans of Issachar (Genesis 46:13; Numbers 26:23)
7. Jair (Gilead-Manasseh) None Specified	Judges 10:3-5	Jair may have been a descendant of the same Jair who distinguished himself during the days of Moses and Joshua (see Numbers 32:41; Deuteronomy 3:14; Joshua 13:30; 1Kings 4:13; 1Chronicles 2:21). He had 30 sons who were itinerant judges (10:4).
8. Jephthah (Gilead-Manesseh) Son of Gilead by a harlot (Judges 11:1) Philistines (Judges 10:7) Ammonites (10:7) Civil war with the tribe of Ephraim (12:4)	Judges 10:6-12:7; Hebrews 11:32	Jephthah was the son of Gilead by a harlot (Judges 11:1); he was driven away by his half brothers (Judges 11:2, 3). The Elders of Gilead brought him back and made him their chief at Mizpah (Judges 11:4-11). Jephthah refused to give up Gilead to the Ammonites (Judges 11:26). He fought the Ammonites and conquered some 20 cities (Judges 11:32,33). The swearing of a foolish vow cost him his daughter (11:31-40). He defeated the tribe of Ephraimites (12:1-16) who had been offended because they had not been asked to join in the battle against the Ammonites.
9. Ibzan (?Judah or Zebulun) see Joshua 19:15 None Specified	Judges 12:8-10	Ibzan was a socially prominent man who had 30 sons and 30 daughters for whom he arranged marriages. Jewish tradition identifies him with Boaz of Bethlehem-Judah.
10. Elon (Zebulun) None Specified	Judges 12:11, 12	He was buried at Aijalon in Zebulun (Judges 12:12)

11. Abdon (Ephraim) Son of Hillel None Specified	Judges 12:13-15	Abdon, the son of Hillel was a man of wealth and prominence. He had 40 sons and 30 grandsons (Judges 12:14). He was a native of Pirathon and was later buried there (Judges 12:13,15)
12. Samson (Dan)? Son of Manoah Philistines (Judges 13:1)	Judges 13:1-16:31; Hebrews 11:32	An angel announced Samson's birth. He was consecrated as a Nazarite from birth (Judges 13:5,7; 16:16; Numbers chapter 6). He had a fatal fondness for Philistine women. Samson was a man of immense strength: he killed a lion bear-handed (Judges 14:5,6); he killed 30 Philistines at Ashkelon (14:19), and "thousand" with a jawbone of an ass (Judges 15:14-19). Other amazing deeds included catching 300 foxes, tying them in pairs with torches and turning them loose to burn the gain fields of the Philistines (Judges 15:1-8), and carrying off the gate of Gaza (Judges 16:1-3). Samson was conquered by the Philistine girl, Delilah, who cut his hair, the source of his strength. He was blinded and imprisoned at Gaza (Judges 16:4-22). He called out to God who allowed his strength to return. He pulled down the Temple of Dagon killing himself and about 3,000 Philistines (Judges 16:23-31).

Appendix 2: Map of Judges



Appendix 3: Catechism for Young Children

Teaching your family to remember who God is and what He has done

The darkness of Judges begins when one generation fails to teach the next. Within a generation, who God is and what He had done is forgotten. Their amnesia led to idolatry. The priests failed to preserve God's Word, but not before the parents did. Deuteronomy 6 teaches that the parents of children, not the church, are primarily responsible for teaching their children about God. Many of us have failed in our God-given responsibility to pastor our homes, abdicating it to other people, institutions, or groups.

The following pages includes a Catechism for young children. The word Catechism comes from a Greek word used in the Bible, *katacheo*, that simply means "instructed" (Luke 1:4). This form of systematic instruction has been used by the church for centuries. In short, Catechism is a question and answer method of instruction in basic Christian doctrines; it forms a framework for personal interaction with the Scriptures. The series of questions and answers develops a fundamental understanding of God, sin, salvation, prayer, the Bible, the church, and heaven and hell; each answer in the catechism is supported by Scripture references.

We believe this teaching with catechism is important for children because:

1. Using catechism encourages the unity of essential beliefs among God's children. Many people want to know the primary teachings of the Christian faith are? Catechical instruction helps promote theological unity among Christians by helping establish the fundamentals of the faith.
2. Using catechism promotes a more efficient and effective understanding of Scripture through the use of age-appropriate questions. Children are helped connect verses to theological meaning through the use of questions and answers. Children begin to understand the authority and usefulness of God's Word to provide important answers to faith and life.
3. Using catechism also stimulates and motivates learning, because most children, especially younger ones, love to answer questions. Questions are a teacher's most useful ally, as Jesus himself demonstrated.

A Gospel Catechism for Families

THE NATURE AND ATTRIBUTES OF GOD

Who is God?

God is a spirit, immortal, invisible, without beginning or end. (John 4:24; I Timothy 1:17; Exodus 3:14)

Are there more Gods than one?

There is only one God. (Deuteronomy 6:4; Jeremiah 10:10; Mark 12:29; Acts 17:22-31)

In how many persons does this one God exist?

In three persons. (Matthew 3:16, 17; John 5:23; 10:30; 14:9, 10; 15:26; 16:13-15; 1 John 5:20; Revelation 1:4, 5)

Who are the three persons of the Godhead?

The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. (Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14; 1 Peter 1:2; Jude 20, 21)

Where is God?

God is everywhere. (Psalms 139:7-12; Jeremiah 23:23,24; Acts 17:27,28)

Can you see God?

No. I cannot see God, but he always sees me. (Exodus 33:20; John 1:18; 1 Timothy 6:15-16; Psalms 139 1-5; Hebrews 4:12, 13).

Does God know all things?

Yes. Nothing can be hidden from God. (1 Chronicles 28:9; 2 Chronicles 16:9; Luke 12:6, 7; Romans 2:16; Pro. 5:21)

Can God do all things?

Yes. God can do all his perfect will. (Ps 147:5; Jer 32:17; Dan 4:34, 35; Eph 1:11)

CREATION

Who made you?

God made me. (Gn 1:26, 27; 2:7; Ec 12:1; Acts 17:24-29, Ps. 139:13)

What else did God make?

God made all things. (Gn 1, esp. verses 1, 31; Acts 14:15; Rm 11:36; Col 1:16)

Why did God make you and all things?

For his own glory. (Ps 19:1; Jer 9:23, 24; Rv 4:11; 4:15)

How can you please God?

By loving him and doing what he commands. (Ec 12:13; Mk 12:29-31; Jn 15:8-10; 1 Cor 10:31)

I Cor. 10:31 So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.

Why ought you to please God?

Because he made me and takes care of me. (Rm 11:36; Rv 4:11; Phil 4:19)

What is the work of Creation?

The work of creation is that God made all things from nothing in six days and declared it to be good. (Gen. 1:1; Heb. 11:3; Ex. 20:11; Gen. 1:31).

What are the works of providence?

God's works of providence are how he wisely manages, rules and protects his created world and its creatures in all their actions. (Ps. 104:24; Isa. 28:29; Ps. 103:19; Matt. 10:29-31)

What is the purpose of human existence?

To glorify God and serve him forever. (1 Cor. 10:31; Rom. 11:36; Ps. 73:25-28)

How are humans unique from all other creatures?

Humans are created in the image of God. (Gen. 2:7; Job 35:11; Eccl. 12:7; Matt. 10:28; Luke 23:43)

What does it mean to be made in God's image?

The image of God is being created male and female, with the ability to reason, with an immortal soul, with the knowledge of God in our hearts, and the ability to obey or reject God. (Gen. 1:27; Gen. 2:7; Eccl. 12:7; Matt. 10:28; Gen. 1:26; Col. 3:10; Eph. 4:24; Rom. 2:14,15; Eccl. 7:29; Eccl. 3:11)

Who were our first parents?

Adam and Eve. (Gn 2:18-25; 3:20; 5:1, 2; Acts 17:26; 1 Tim 2:13)

Of what were our first parents made?

God made the body of Adam out of the ground, and formed Eve from the body of Adam. (Gn 2:7; 21-23; 3:19; Ps 103:14)

What did God give Adam and Eve besides bodies?

He gave them souls that could never die. (1 Cor 15:45; Eccl 12:7; Zech 12:1)

Do you have a soul as well as a body?

Yes. I have a soul that can never die. (Mt 10:28; Mk 8:34- 38; 12:30)

What is your soul?

My soul includes all of me that should know and love God. (Mk 8:34-38; Ep 3:16-19)

THE BIBLE AND REVELATION

In what condition did God make Adam and Eve?

He made them good and happy. (Gn 1:26-28; Ps 8:4-8)

Did Adam and Eve stay good and happy?

No. They sinned against God. (Gn 3:1-7; Eccl 7:29; Hos 6:7)

What was the sin of our first parents?

Eating fruit God asked them not to eat. (Gn 2:16, 17; 3:6)

Why did they eat the forbidden fruit?

Because they wanted the fruit and chose to disobey God's command in order to have it. (Gn 3:1-6; cf. Hb 11:6)

Who tempted them to this sin?

The devil tempted Eve, and she gave the fruit to Adam. (Gn 3:1-13; 2 Cor 11:3; 1 Tim 2:13, 14; cf. Rv 12:9)

What happened to our first parents when they had sinned?

Instead of being good and happy, they became sinful and unhappy. (Gn 3:14-24; 4:1-24; Jm 1:14, 15)

What effect did the sin of Adam have on all mankind?

All mankind is born in a state of sin and unhappiness. (Ps. 5 1:5; Rm 5:12, 18, 19; 1 Cor 15:21, 22; 1 In 5:19)

What do we inherit from Adam as a result of this original sin?

A sinful nature. (1 Kings 8:46; Ps 14:2, 3; 58:3; Eccl 9:3; Mt 15:18-20; Jn 2:24, 25; Rm 8:7).

What is sin?

Sin is disobeying the law of God. (1 John 3:4; Rm 3:20; James 2:9-11)

What is meant by disobeying the law of God?

Doing what God forbids, and failing to do what God commands. (1 Sam 13:8-14; 15:22, 23; Hos 6:7; Rm 1:21-32, James 4:17)

What does every sin deserve?

The anger and judgment of God. (Deut 27:26; Rm 1:18; 2:2; Gal 3:10; Eph 5:6, Rom. 6:23)

How do we know there is a God?

Through the Bible and through nature.

What does God reveal in nature?

God reveals in nature that he exists and is to be served. (Rom. 1:18-20; Ps. 19:1-3)

What does God reveal in the Bible?

Who God truly is and how to love and obey him. (2 Tim. 3:16-17; Jn. 20:31; Acts 24:14; I Cor. 10:11; Eccl. 12:13).

Who wrote the Bible?

Men who were under direct control of the Holy Spirit. (2 Pet 1:20-21; 2 Tim 3:16)

How many books are there in the Bible?

66.

How is the Scripture divided?

It is divided into the Old and the New Testaments.

How many books are in the Old Testament?

39

How many books are in the New Testament?

27

How many commandments did God give on Mt. Sinai?

Ten Commandments. (Ex 20:1-17; Deut 5:1-22)

What are the Ten Commandments sometimes called?

God's moral law. (Lk 20:25-28; Rm 2:14, 15; 10:5).

What do the first four commandments teach?

Our duty to God. (Deut 6:5, 6; 10:12, 13)

What do the last six commandments teach?

Our duty to our fellow men. (Deut 10:19; Mic 6:8; cf. Gal. 6:10)

What is the sum of the Ten Commandments?

To love God with all my heart, and my neighbor as myself. (Deut 6:1-15; 11:1; Mt 22:35-40; James 2:8)

Who is your neighbor?

All my fellow men are my neighbors. (Lk 10:25-37; 6:35)

Is God pleased with those who do not love and obey him?

No. (Ps 7:11; Mal 2:17; Pr 6:16-19; 1 Cor 16:22)

Can any man keep these Ten Commandments?

No mere man, since the fall of Adam, ever did or can keep the Ten Commandments perfectly. (Pr 20:9; Ec 7:20; Rm 3:19, 20; James 2:10; 1 Jn 1:8, 10)

Of what use are the Ten Commandments to us?

They teach us our duty, make clear our condemnation, and show us our need of a Savior. (1 Tim 1:8-11; Rm 3:20; Gal 3:24)

JESUS CHRIST AND SALVATION**What is a covenant?**

A covenant is an agreement between two or more persons. (e.g., 1 Sam 18:3; Mt 26:14, 15)

What is the covenant of grace?

It is an eternal agreement within the Trinity to save his people from their sins, and to provide all the means for their salvation. (Gn 17:1-8; Rm 11:27; Heb 10:16; 13:20, 21; Jer 31:31-34; Ez 36:25-28)

What is election?

It is God's goodness as revealed in his grace by choosing certain sinners for salvation. (Eph 1:3, 4; 1 Th 1:4; 1 Pet 1:1, 2)

What did Christ agree to in the covenant of grace?

Christ agreed to keep the whole law for his people, and to suffer the punishment due for their sins. (Gal 4:4, 5; Hb 6:17-20; 7:22; 9:14, 15; 13:20, 21)

Did our Lord Jesus Christ ever sin?

No. He was holy, blameless and undefiled. (Hb 7:26; Lk 23:47; 1 Pet 2:22; 1 Jn 3:5)

How could the Son of God suffer?

Christ, the Son of God, took flesh and blood, that he might obey and suffer as a man. (Jn 1:14; Rm 8:3; Gal 4:4; Phil 2:7, 8; Hb 2:14, 17; 4:15)

What is meant by the atonement?

The atonement consists of Christ's satisfying divine justice, by his sufferings and death, in the place of sinners. (Mk 10:45; Acts 13:38, 39; Rm 3:24-26; 5:8, 9; 2 Cor 5:19-21; Gal 3:13; 1 Pet 3:18)

For whom did Christ obey and suffer?

Christ obeyed and suffered for the world in general, and for his elect in a unique way. (Is 53:8; Mt 1:21; Jn 10:11, 15, 16, 26-29; 17:9; Hb 2:13)

What kind of death did Christ die?

Christ experienced the painful and shameful death of the cross. (Ps 22; Is 53; Gospel records)

What benefits do believers receive from Christ at death?

The souls of believers are at their death made perfect in holiness and immediately pass into glory and their bodies, being still united in Christ rest in their graves until the resurrection. (Heb. 12:23; 2 Cor. 5:1,6,8; Phil. 1:23; Luke 23:43; 1 Thess. 4:14; Isa. 57:2; Job. 19:26,27)

Who will be saved?

Only those who repent of sin and believe in Christ will be saved. (Mk 1:15; Lk 13:3,5; Acts 2:37-41; 16:30,31; 20:21; 26:20)

What is it to repent?

Repentance involves sorrow for sin, leading one to hate and forsake it because it is displeasing to God. (Lk 19:8-10; Rm 6:1, 2; 2 Cor 7:9-11; 1 Thes 1:9, 10)

What is it to believe in Christ?

A person believes who knows that his only hope is Christ, and trusts in Christ alone for salvation. (Jn 14:6; Acts 4:12; 1 Tim 2:5; 1 Jn 5:11, 12)

How were godly persons saved before the coming of Christ?

They believed in the Savior to come. (Jn 8:56; Gal 3:8, 9; 1 Cor 10:1-4; Hb 9:15; 11:13)

How did they show their faith?

They offered sacrifices according to God's commands. (Ex 24:3-8; 1 Chron 29:20-25; Hb 9:19-23; 10:1; 11:28)

What did these sacrifices represent?

They were symbolic of Christ, the Lamb of God, who was to die for sinners. (Ex 12:46 cf. In 19:36; Hb 9 & 10; In 1:29; 1 Cor 5:7; 1 Pet 1:19)

What does Christ do for his people?

He does the work of a prophet, a priest and a king. (Hb 1:1-3; Rv 1:5; Mt 13:57; Hb 5:5-10; Jn 18:37)

How is Christ a prophet?

He teaches us the will of God, reveals God to us, and really was God in human flesh. (Deut 18:15, 18; Jn 1:17-18; 4:25; 14:23, 24; 1 Jn 5:20)

Why do you need Christ as a prophet?

Because I am ignorant. (Job 11:7; Mt 11:25-27; Jn 6:67-69; 17:25, 26; 1 Cor 2:14-16; 2 Cor 4:3-6)

How is Christ a priest?

He died for our sins and prays to God for us. (Ps 110:4; 1 Tim 2:5, 6; Hb 4:14-16; 7:24, 25; 1 In 2:1, 2)

Why do you need Christ as a priest?

Because I am guilty. (Pr 20:9; Ec 7:20; Rm 3:19-23; Hb 10:14, 27, 28; 1 In 1:8, 9)

How is Christ a king?

He rules over us and defends us. (Ps 2:6-9; Mt 28:18-20; Eph 1:19-23; Col 1:13, 18; Rv 15:3, 4, Phil. 2:9-11)

Why do you need Christ as a king?

Because I am weak and helpless. (Jn 15:4, 5; 2 Cor 12:9; Phil 4:13; Col 1:11; Jude 24, 25)

What did God the Father undertake in the covenant of grace?

By His goodness and mercy, God the Father elected, and determined to justify, adopt and sanctify those for whom Christ should die. (Ex 33:18, 19; Eph 1:3-5; Rm 8:29-33; Gal 4:4-7; Hb 10:9, 10; 1 Cor 1:8, 9; Phil 1:6; 1 Thes 4:3, 7; 5:23, 24)

What is justification?

Justification is an act of God's free grace where he pardons all our sins, accepts us as righteous in his sight on us who receive Jesus Christ by faith. (Zech 3:1-5; Rm 3:24-26; 4:5; 5:17-19; 8:33; 2 Cor 5:21; Hb 8:12; Ph 3:9)

What is righteousness?

Righteousness means a right standing before God because he has declared us innocent. (Ex 33:19; 34:6; Ps 33:5; Rm 11:22, 2 Cor. 5:21)

Can anyone be saved by his own righteousness?

No. No one is good enough for God. (Pr 20:9; Ec 7:20; Rm 3:10-23; Ep 2:8-10; Ph 3:8, 9)

What is adoption?

It is God's goodness in receiving sinful rebels as his beloved children. (John 1:12; Ep 1:5; Ep 5:1; Gal 4:7, 31; 1 John 3:1-3)

What are the benefits we receive in this life which flow from justification and adoption?

We receive an assurance of God's love, peace of conscience, joy in the Holy Ghost,

increase of grace, and perseverance therein to the end. (Rom. 5:1,2,5; Rom. 14:17; Prov. 4:18; 1 John 5:13; 1 Pet. 1:5)

Holy Spirit**What is sanctification?**

Sanctification is the life-long process by which God changes our hearts and actions to conform to his will (1 Thess. 4:3; 5:23; 1 Pet. 1:2).

Is this process of sanctification ever complete in this life?

No. It is certain and continual, but is complete only in heaven. (Ph 3:12-15; 2 Pet 1:4-8; 1 Jn 3:1-3)

Who can change a sinner's heart?

Only the Holy Spirit can change a sinner's heart. (Jn 3:3; Rm 8:6-11; 1 Cor 2:9-14; 2 Thes 2:13, 14; Titus 3:5-6)

What is our heart?

It is the place of our thoughts, our moral choice, and our emotions. (Luke 6:45, Jer. 17:9)

What did the Holy Spirit undertake in the covenant of Grace?

He regenerates, baptizes, and seals those for whom Christ has died. (Ep 2:1-8; 1 Cor 12:13; Ep 1:13, 14; Ep 4:30; 2 Cor 1:22)

What is regeneration?

It is a change of heart that leads to true repentance and faith. (Gal 5:22; Ep 2:5-8; 2 Thes 2:13)

Can you repent and believe in Christ by your own power?

No. I can do nothing good without God's Holy Spirit. (Jn 3:5, 6; 6:44; Rm 8:2, 5, 8-11; 1 Cor 2:9-14; Gal 5:17, 18; Ep 2:4-6)

How does the Holy Spirit bring us to salvation?

He uses the Bible, which is the Word of God. (1 Thes 1:4-5; 2:13; 2 Tim 3:15, 16; James 1:18; 1 Pet 1:22, 23).

How does the Holy Spirit seal believers?

He comes to live within them to guarantee that they will receive the wonders God has promised those who love Him. (Rm 8:9-11; Ep 1:13, 14; Ep 4:30; 2 Tim 1:9; 2 Cor 1:22)

Who receives the sealing of the Holy Spirit?

All who repent of their sins and believe in faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus receive the sealing of the Holy Spirit. (1 Cor. 12:13; Eph. 4:30, 2 Cor. 1:21-22)

CHRISTIAN LIVING

Why should we love and obey God?

Because he first loved us. (1 John 4:10-16)

What is the Gospel?

The gospel is the good news story told in the Bible of how God saved and continues to save those he loves.

What are the parts of the gospel story?

Creation, Fall, Redemption, Restoration

What is Creation?

The original state of perfection in which God made the world and its creatures.

What was the moral state of humans at Creation?

They had the ability to choose to sin, and the ability to choose not to sin.

What is Fall?

Adam and Eve sinned against God and were condemned to physical and spiritual death.

What was the moral state of humans after the fall?

They only had the ability to choose sin. (Rom. 3:10-11; Luke 6:43)

Rom. 3:10-11 As it is written: "There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God.

What is Redemption?

Jesus came to represent Adam by destroying the curse of sin he brought into the world. (Rom. 5:12; Eph. 1:7)

What is the moral state of humans after redemption?

Those who believe in Jesus have the ability to sin and the ability not to sin. (Gal. 5:16-18; Rom. 6:11-14; 8:1-4)

What is Restoration?

God will one day resurrect the dead, recreate the world, and his children will live with him in heaven for eternity. (1 Pet. 1:3-4; Phil. 3:10-12)

What will be the moral state of man at the restoration?

Believers in heaven will no longer sin. (2 Pet. 3:13; Rev. 21:1-8)

Do our good deeds get God to love us more?

No. God loves us because we are identified with Christ.

Why do we still sin against God?

Our hearts have been damaged by sin so it is still a battle to do good. (Rom. 6:11-14)

Why does it matter that God is good?

I don't have to look anywhere else for comfort, peace, or joy.

Why does it matter that God is gracious?

I don't have to prove myself.

Why does it matter that God is great?

I don't have to be in control.

Can a true believer in Jesus ever lose the salvation he has been given?

No. God promises that all who are his can never be lost. (John 6:37; 10:29; 1 John 5:12-13)

What is prayer?

Prayer is talking with God. (Gn 17:22; 18:33; Neh 1:4-11; 2:4; Mt 6:6; Rm 8:26, 27)

In whose name should we pray?

We should pray in the name of the Lord Jesus. (John 14:13, 14; 16:23, 24; Hb 4:14-16)

What has Christ given to teach us how to pray?

The Lord's Prayer. (Mt 6:5-15; Lk 11:1-13)

Can you repeat the Lord's Prayer?

"Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done in earth, as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For yours is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen."

How many petitions are there in the Lord's Prayer?

Six.

What is the first petition?

"Hallowed be your name". (Mt 6:9; Lk 11:2)

What do we pray for in the first petition?

That God's name may be honored by us and all men. (Ps 8:1; 72:17-19; 113:1-3; 145:21; Is 8:13)

What is the second petition?

"Your kingdom come". (Mt 6:10; Lk 11:2)

What do we pray for in the second petition?

That the gospel may be preached in all the world, and believed and obeyed by us, and all men. (Mt 28:19, 20; Jn 17:20, 21; Acts 8:12; 28:30, 31; 2 Thes 3:1)

What is the third petition?

“Your will be done in earth, as it is in heaven”. (Mt 6:10; Lk 11:2)

What do we pray for in the third petition?

That men on earth may serve God as the angels do in Heaven. (Ps 67; 103:19-22; Jn 9:31; Rv 4:11)

What is the fourth petition?

“Give us this day our daily bread”. (Mt 6:11; Lk 11:3)

What do we pray for in the fourth petition?

That God will give us all things needful for our bodies. (Ps 145:15, 16; Pr 30:8, 9; 1 Tim 4:4, 5)

What is the fifth petition?

“And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us”. (Mt 6:12; Lk 11:4)

What do we pray for in the fifth petition?

That God will pardon our sins, and help us to forgive those who have sinned against us. (Ps 51; Mt 5:23, 1 Jn 4:20, 21, 24; 18:21-35)

What is the sixth petition?

“And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil”. (Mt 6:13; Lk 11:4)

What do we pray for in the sixth petition?

That God will keep us from sin. (1 Chron 4:10; Ps 119:11; Mt 26:41)

THE CHURCH**What is the universal church?**

It is the family of all Christians living and dead. (Eph. 4:4-6; Col. 1:24; 1 Tim. 3:15)

Eph. 4:4-6 There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to one hope when you were called—one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

What is the local church?

A local church is an assembly of believers joined in community who meet together regularly under the preaching of the Word of God and participate in the sacraments. (Mt 18:20; Acts 2:42)

What are the things the local church is suppose to do?

Teach the Bible, discipline sinners, and perform the sacraments.

What two sacraments did Christ give to his Church?

Baptism and the Lord’s Supper. (Mt 28:19; 1 Cor 11:24-26)

Why did Christ give these sacraments?

To show that his disciples belong to him, and to remind them of what he has done for them. (Mt 28:19; 1 Cor 11:24-26)

What is baptism?

The dipping of believers into water, as a sign of their union with Christ in his death, burial and resurrection. (Jn 3:23; Acts 2:41; 8:12, 35-38; Col 2:12)

What is the purpose of baptism?

Baptism testifies to believers that God has cleansed them from their sins through Jesus Christ. (Acts 22:16; Col 2:11-14, Rom. 6:4)

Who are to be baptized?

Only those who repent of their sins, and believe in Christ for salvation should be baptized. (Acts 2:37-41; 8:12; 18:8; 19:4, 5)

What is the Lord’s Supper?

At the Lord’s Supper, the church eats bread and drinks wine to remember the sufferings and death of Christ. (Mk 14:22-24; 1 Cor 11:23-29)

What does the bread represent?

The bread represents the body of Christ, broken for our sins. (Mt 26:26; 1 Cor 11:24)

What does the wine represent?

The wine represents the blood of Christ, shed for our salvation. (Mt 26:27, 28; 1 Cor 11:25)

Who should partake of the Lord’s Supper?

The Lord’s Supper is only for those who repent of their sins, believe in Christ for salvation, receive baptism, and love their fellow men. (Mt 5:21-24; 1 Cor 10:16, 17; 11:18, 20, 27-33; 1 Jn 3:24-27; 4:9-11)

LAST THINGS**Did Christ remain in the tomb after his crucifixion?**

No. He rose from the tomb on the third day after his death. (Lk 24:45-47; 1 Cor 15:3, 4)

Where is Christ now?

Christ is in heaven, seated at the right hand of God the Father. (Rm 8:34; Col 3:1; H1 1:3; 10:12; 12:2)

Will Christ come again?

Yes. At the last day he will come to judge the world. (Mt 25:31-43; 2 Thes 1:7-10; 2 Tim 4:1)

What happens to men when they die?

The body returns to dust, and the soul goes to be with God or to a place of suffering and waiting for judgment. (Gn 3:19; Ec 12:7; 2 Cor 5:1-6; Hb 12:22,23; Ph 1:23; 2 Pet 2:9; Rm 2:5)

Will the bodies of the dead be raised to life again?

Yes. There will be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust. (Acts 24:14, 15; Jn 5:28, 29; Dan 12:2)

What will happen to the unbelieving in the day of judgment?

They shall be cast into hell. (Ps 9:16, 17; Lk 12:5; Rm 2:8, 9,12; 2 Th 1:8, 9; Rv 20:12-15)

What is hell?

Hell is a place of dreadful and endless punishment. (Mt 25:46; Mk 9:43-48; Lk 16:19-31)

What will happen to the righteous in the day of judgment?

They will live with Christ forever, in a new heaven and a new earth. (Is 66:22; 1 Thes 4:16, 17; 2 Pet 3:10-13; Rv 21:1-4)

In light of these truths, what should you do?

I should strive with all my energy to repent of sin and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. (Lk 13:23, 24; Acts 16:31)

In those days there was no king in Israel.

JUDGES 21.25a

