A Passage Through the Old Testament
Year One, Quarter Three

Taming Canaan

The Books of Joshua, Judges, Ruth
And First Samuel Chapters 1-6

A Thirteen Lesson Bible Study
by Jeff S. Smith

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7. We learn here that the Judges period did not end at the conclusion of the book of Judges. How did the messenger break Eli’s heart?

8. What did the Philistines do with the ark (5:1-5)? How did God spoil their fun?

9. How did God punish the cities of Ashdod, Gath and Ekron (5:6-12)?

10. How did they plan to test God to see if he had afflicted them or if it was just a coincidence (6:1-9)?

11. How did the cows’ performance prove God’s hand in the affliction (6:10-18)?

12. Why did God punish the men of Beth Shemesh (6:19-21)?

A PASSAGE THROUGH THE OLD TESTAMENT
Year One, Quarter Three
Taming Canaan

A PASSAGE THROUGH THE OLD TESTAMENT is designed to take a Bible class all the way through the thirty-nine books of the Old Testament in two years’ time. Sacrifices were made to arrange this pace, especially in obscure passages such as some found in the Pentateuch, major prophets and wisdom literature. Topical class books can supplement the cursory study of these books at other times, however, so that no part of God’s writ is slighted.

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Lesson 13: The Ark of the Covenant
First Samuel 4-6

1. What happened when the Philistines battled the Israelites (First Samuel 4:1-4)?

2. What did they think would change their fortunes?

3. How did the Philistines react when they understood the ark had come (4:5-11)?

4. Were the Philistines’ fears immediately confirmed? Explain.

5. What happened to the ark? Why didn’t it work as the Hebrews anticipated?

6. Why was the Benjamite covered in dirt and wearing torn clothes (4:12-22)?
9. What was Samuel’s job (2:1-11)?

10. Describe the character of Eli’s sons (2:12-25). What were their names?

11. Why did their sin especially touch God and anger him?

12. What did the man of God predict for Eli’s two sons (2:26-36)?

13. How long did it take Eli to figure out that God was calling Samuel (3:1-14)?

14. Why was Eli responsible for his sons’ actions?

15. How did Eli take the news (3:15-18)?

16. What did the phrase “let none of his words fall to the ground” mean (3:19-21)?

Lesson 1: Entrance Into the Land
Joshua 1-4

1. Whose death has left Joshua to lead Israel into Canaan (Joshua 1:1-9)? According to Deuteronomy 34:9, what was special about Joshua?

2. What promise did God make him in Joshua 1:5?

3. Observing what would give Joshua prosperity? The Bible says that God does not change; how does this promise illustrate that truth?

4. According to Joshua 1:10-18, two and a half tribes will not reside in the Promised Land. Refer to Numbers 32: Whose children had a great multitude of livestock, saw the lands east of the Jordan were good for livestock and asked Moses if they could receive this land and not go over the Jordan?

5. How did Moses react to this request? How did they compromise?

6. In whose house did Joshua’s spies lodge (2:1-7)? What did she do with them when the king sought them?
7. Why did she help the spies (2:8-14)? What did she ask in return?

She helped them because she had heard what God had already done for Israel and the courage to resist was gone from her land. She asked only that her family be spared.

8. Upon leaving, the spies placed a necessary condition upon their promise to Rahab (2:15-24). What was it?

She must tie the cord in the window and bring all her family into her home to be saved and keep it secret.

9. Would she and her family be saved without meeting the conditions? What would have happened to them, had they scoffed at such a command?

They would not have been saved, but would have been destroyed.

10. How was Rahab an example of great faith (cf. Hebrews 11:30-31)?

She feared God and did found his grace by trusting faith.

11. What are the two messages the Lord gives Joshua (3:1-8)?

Today He will begin to magnify him in Israel’s estimation; the priests should carry the ark into the Jordan and stand.

12. What happened to the Jordan when the priests stood in it (3:9-17)? What was the purpose of the memorial stones, according to 4:21-24?

The Jordan was stopped up and Israel crossed through. The stones were meant to remind future generations of what God had done for Israel.

13. (Are the two and a half tribes still with their brethren 4:1-24)? What was the stature of Joshua now?

The other tribes are still with the main nation. Joshua was feared as Moses was and magnified in Israel.

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Lesson 12: Samuel’s Beginnings
First Samuel 1-3

1. What was Hannah’s lament (First Samuel 1:1-8)?

2. How and why did Elkanah favor Hannah?

3. What did Peninnah do to Hannah?

4. What was Hannah’s vow (1:9-18)?

5. Why did Eli think she was intoxicated?

6. What cheered up Hannah?

7. After Samuel was born, what reminder did Elkanah have for Hannah (1:19-28)?

8. When did she carry through with her vow?
8. How did Naomi react when she heard about Boaz?

9. What did Naomi instruct Ruth to do (3:1-5)?

10. What did Ruth ask of Boaz (3:6-18)?

11. What two great compliments did he pay her in verses 10 and 11?

12. There was a problem—what was it? What did Boaz plan to do about it?

13. Boaz tells the man about the land Naomi had sold that he could choose to redeem and then springs the issue of redeeming Ruth on him (4:1-6). How did the nearer kinsman answer the land offer and then the Ruth offer?

14. What was the reason for this process (4:7-12)?

15. After the two are married and begin a family, where was this genealogy eventually headed (4:13-22)?

Lesson 2: Jericho
Joshua 5-6

1. What happened to the kings in Canaan when they heard about this crossing (Joshua 5:1)?

2. What was God’s next command to Joshua (5:2-8)? Why?

3. What was God’s punishment of the first generation of pilgrims? Why?

4. Why did the manna stop coming (5:9-12)?

5. Is this Man deity (5:13-15)? How do you know?

6. What did the Lord tell Joshua to do (6:1-14)?
7. What were the priests to do?

8. What three commands did Joshua give Israel in Joshua 6:15-19?

9. What happened to the city’s walls?

10. What would have happened if she had not tied the thread in her window (6:20-25)?

11. What curse did Joshua put on the city (6:26-27)?

Lesson 11: The Courtship of Ruth and Boaz
Ruth 1-4

1. In the days when the Judges ruled, Elimelech went to Moab with his wife. What was her name and those of her two daughters-in-law (Ruth 1:1-5)?

2. For what reason did Naomi plan to return to Judah (1:6-18)?

3. What did Naomi want her daughters-in-law to do? What did each do?

4. What common ceremony takes part of its vows from the words of Ruth?

5. Where did the two ladies land (1:19-22)? Did the people remember Naomi?

6. What relationship existed between Naomi and Boaz (2:1-13)? According to verses 10-13, why did Ruth find favor in his eyes?

7. What favor did Boaz show her in this passage (2:14-23)?
8. Who appeared at the old man’s door and with what evil plans (19:22-30)?

9. Who was offered to them? What befell the concubine?

10. What tribe harbored the criminals (20:1-17)?

11. How did the battle go for Israel at first (20:18-33)? From whom did Israel seek guidance throughout the battles? According to verse thirty-five, who defeated Benjamin?

12. What was the first oath the men of Israel made at Mizpah (21:1-15)? Why did this pose a problem now?

13. What was the second oath Israel made at Mizpah? Who fell victim to this? What was done with the few remaining virgins?

14. Where did Benjamin find enough wives (21:16-24)?

15. What was the closing statement in the book of Judges (21:25)?

Lesson 3: Ai and Other Conquests
Joshua 7-21

1. After victory, why was God disappointed in his charges (Joshua 7:1-9)?

2. Who was next on Israel’s battle agenda? Were the spies impressed by the next city’s size and capability?

3. What happened to Israel at Ai? What was Joshua’s response?

4. What did God tell Joshua he must do (7:10-26)? What happened to Achan when he confessed? How did God respond?

5. How did Joshua plan to use the first defeat by Ai to his advantage (8:1-8)?

6. What makes the outcome of the second battle at Ai different (8:9-29)? What practical lesson should Israel have gleaned from these two battles?

7. What did Joshua do to mark this important victory (8:30-35)?

8. What did most of the other kings in the region do when they heard about Ai (9:1-2)?
Lesson 10: Tribal Depravity
Judges 17-21

1. What was found in Micah’s house (17:1-13)?

2. According to verse six, what was the leadership situation in Israel?

3. Who happened into Micah’s house? What comment did he make in verse thirteen?

4. Who lodged with Micah now (18:1-14)? According to verse fourteen, with what were they impressed?

5. What did the army take after they were directed to Micah’s house by the spies (18:15-31)?

6. Did the priest go willingly? Why or why not?

7. There are four major characters involved in Judges 19:1-21. List them and describe the role of each.

9. What did the nearby inhabitants of Gibeon do instead (9:3-15)?

10. How did Joshua and the Gibeonites resolve the matter (9:16-27)?

11. Whom did the group of kings attack (10:1-11)? According to verse 11, with what weapons did Joshua and Israel prevail?

12. In what way did God heed Joshua (10:12-21)?

13. How thorough were Israel’s victories (10:22-43)? Why?

14. Why was Joshua prospering as a leader (11:1-12:24)?

15. According to Joshua 13:7, what did God instruct Joshua to do with the land he had already conquered? The completion of this task will cover the next nine chapters (13:1-21:45).

16. Why did Caleb get a special inheritance (14:6-15)?
8. What happened when the Philistines came to arrest him (15:9-20)?

The Philistines came to arrest him so the Judahites bound him and brought him to them. Samson broke free and killed a thousand men with the jawbone of an ass.

9. What did Samson do when he arrived in Gaza (16:1-3)?

He bought a prostitute and then wrecked the city gates as the people conspired to kill him.

10. (16:4-14) With whom did Samson fall in love? What did the lords of the Philistines entice her to discover? List Samson’s three lies.

He fell for a woman named Delilah, who was enticed by money to find the source of his strength. Samson lied that he could be bound with seven fresh bowstrings, could be bound only by new ropes, or could be bound only by weaving his locks into a web.

11. How did Delilah finally get the truth out of Samson (16:15-21)? What did he reveal to her? What happened to him?

She pestered him daily until he revealed that his strength lay in his relationship with God. His head was shaven and he was captured by the Philistines who put out his eyes and made him a grinder.

12. What was this festive occasion at which Samson was summoned by the Philistines (16:22-27)? What did Samson request of the lad beside him? How large was the assembled group?

The event was a sacrifice to Dagon, their god. Samson asked to lean on the pillars and see that the temple and its roof are full of thousands of men and women.


Samson wanted to avenge his eyes on the Philistines now. He felled the temple and killed himself and all there—buried after 20 years of work. His youthful impetuosity led him to do what was necessary to destroy the Philistines. His imprisonment led him to the place where he could kill so many at once.

Lesson 4: Covenant Matters
Joshua 22-24

1. Why are these two and a half tribes being sent away (Joshua 22:1-9)? What did Joshua command them to heed diligently?

2. What did they immediately build by the Jordan (22:10-12)? What did the rest of Israel plan to do about this affront?

3. When Phinehas comes to rebuke them, what two events from the past did he raise as proof (22:13-20; see also 7:1; Numbers 25:3, Deuteronomy 4:3)?

4. In reality, why had they built this replica of the altar of God (22:21-29)?

5. How was the problem resolved (22:30-34)? According to verse 34, what did they name the altar?

6. What did Joshua tell Israel they would have to do with the remaining nations (23:1-13)?
Lesson 9: Samson and Delilah
Judges 13-16

1. Again, the children did evil in the Lord’s sight (Judges 13:1-7). Into whose hands did the Lord deliver them for forty years? To whom did the Angel appear and with what message did he come?

2. What wondrous thing occurred that caused Manoah to fear he would die (13:8-23)? How did Manoah’s wife console him?

3. What did they name their son (13:24-25)? What does that name mean?

4. What did Samson desire (14:1-4)? Why?

5. What did he do at his feast (14:5-18)? What part did his wife play?

6. How did Samson make good on his wager (14:19-20)?

7. What happened when Samson returned for her (15:1-8)?

8. What was their marriage law? Under what penalty was this law enforced?

9. What was Joshua’s pessimistic but realistic vision of their future (23:14-16)?

10. What did Joshua summarize in chapter 24, verses 1-12?

11. Whom did Abraham’s father serve? Whom did Abraham serve?

12. Joshua commands the people to “Serve the Lord” (24:14-28)! In what three ways were they to do this, according to verse 14?

13. We know their obedience to God did not last forever, but at least how long did it continue (24:29-33)?
Lesson 5: Failure To Drive Out The Canaanites
Judges 1-2

1. Who was the most recent leader of the nation of Israel (Judges 1:1-7)? What had he told them in Joshua 24:20?

2. According to Joshua 24:31, what was the result of his leadership?

3. Consider Deuteronomy 7:2-5. What did God instruct the people to do as they were taking Canaan?

4. What great city did Israel take for the first time after Joshua’s death (1:8-15)?

5. Did Israel completely drive out the Canaanites (1:16-36)? Look especially at verses 19, 21, 25-36. Why do you think they followed this course?

6. What type of covenant did God want Israel to make with the Canaanites (2:1-10)?

7. What was Jephthah’s infamous vow (11:29-40)? How did God handle his part? How was Jephthah greeted?

8. Why was this a stupid vow to make?

9. Was Jephthah a man of his word? What did his daughter do?

10. Who contended with the judge here (12:1-7)? With what previous judge had they contended?

11. List the next three judges (12:8-15).

12. What was said of the last of these three?
7. According to verse three, what three results will come from Israel’s mistake?

a. God will not drive out the Canaanites
b. they shall be thorns in Israel’s side
c. their gods will be a snare to Israel

8. How could this principle apply to one who becomes a Christian?

A Christian should strive to remove temptations from his past life that may ensnare him again (Hebrews 12:1-2, Romans 12:1-2).

9. Describe the new generation of Israel that appears some time after Joshua’s departure.

They did not know God nor the history of their relationship (Joshua had recounted history to Israel in Joshua 24 to prevent his generation from forgetting).

10. What was Israel’s crime (2:11-15)? What was her punishment?

She served Baals and Ashteroths of neighbors and was delivered into the hands of plunderers and was weak before her enemies because God was against her.

11. Judges 2:16-19 provides a good introduction and general, brief summary of the Judges period. What was God’s strategy for restoring His people? How did the people react to this?

His strategy was to raise up judges to deliver Israel from her enemies. The people would not listen and turned from the word of God over and over.

12. Verse 18 describes the groaning of the judges and their oppression and harassment. What do you think were the sources of this maltreatment?

Certainly these enemies were a source, but one must also consider the children of Israel who never seemed to learn.

13. How did God respond to Israel’s rejection of his judges (2:20-23)?

God responded with anger and he left the nations where they were.

14. What was Jephthah’s reputation (11:1-3)?

- He was the son of a harlot and a raider and was of low report.

15. How did Jephthah respond when his people came to ask him back (11:4-11)?

He mocked their hypocrisy in dismissing him before and yearning for him now.

16. What was his request, if victorious?

He wanted to be their leader.

17. Why did the king of Ammon say he was fighting (11:12-28)? What did Jephthah ask of God in verse 27?

The king was fighting to regain lands Israel supposedly took while traveling to Canaan. Jephthah asked God to render judgment between Israel and Ammon today.

Lesson 8: Jephthah
Judges 10-12

1. After Tola and Jair served as judges, the children of Israel did evil in the Lord’s sight (Judges 10:1-9). God was angry so he sold them into whose hands for eighteen years?

- He gave them into the hands of the Philistines and Amonites for 18 years.

2. Summarize the exchange between God and Israel in Judges 10:10-18.

- Israel cries for deliverance; God says He has delivered and they will not serve him and to go ask the idols for help; Israel cries repentance and puts away the idols; God can’t endure their misery any longer.

3. What was Jephthah’s reputation (11:1-3)?
Lesson 6: Deborah and Other Judges  
Judges 3-5

1. Why were the nations left in Canaan (Judges 3:1-6)?
2. What did the children of Israel do in God’s sight (3:7-11)?
3. Who was the deliverer that followed their servitude to Cushan-Rushathaim? What was the result of his service?
4. Who was the next deliverer after the nation served Eglon of Moab for eighteen years (3:12-31)? What was the result of his service?
5. Who killed 600 Philistines?
6. When Ehud was dead, how did the children of Israel behave in the Lord’s sight (4:1-3)?

8. Describe the start of the battle (7:19-25).

9. How did Gideon repay those who hindered him along the way (8:1-21)?

10. Instead of ruling over the land, Gideon wanted to do what (8:22-28)? What was the result?

11. How many sons did Gideon (Jerubbal) have (8:29-35)? Were they all born by the same mother? What did the children of Israel do as soon as Gideon was dead?

12. Whose assistance did Abimelech hire to become king (9:1-15)? What was their bloody plot? Who escaped?

13. What group of people acted on Abimelech’s side (9:16-25)? Who foretells a difficult reign for Abimelech? According to verses 22-24, what did God do about it and for what reason?

14. How did Abimelech die (9:26-57)?
7. Who was the next judge after a servitude to Jabin of 20 years (4:4-13)?

8. Who was her military commander? What was his condition for going to war?

9. How did Sisera die (4:14-24)?

10. What truth of holiness and confidence did the singers express as the song opened (5:1-2)?

11. What application might this have in the church, spiritual Israel?

12. What was the lament that Sisera’s mother uttered (5:3-31)?

Lesson 7: Gideon
Judges 6-9

1. The children of Israel did evil in the Lord’s sight (Judges 6:1-10). For what specific reasons was Israel impoverished? What did the prophet report?

2. Whom did the Angel of the Lord visit (6:11-18)? With what charge did he come? How did the next judge respond?

3. How did God convince Gideon that this was for real (6:19-24)?

4. What did the Lord instruct him to do (6:25-35)? How did he accomplish this? How did Gideon’s father contend for his son’s life?

5. Summarize the sign of the fleece (6:36-40).

6. What problem did the Lord have with his army (7:1-8)? Why was this a problem? How was this problem solved? How many warriors were left?

7. Was Gideon afraid of battle (7:9-18)? How was he encouraged?