

SUMMER  
2017

KJV

Standard LESSON  
QUARTERLY®

# KJV BIBLE TEACHER



**GOD'S URGENT CALL**  
*EXODUS; JUDGES; ISAIAH;  
JEREMIAH; EZEKIEL; AMOS; ACTS*

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INTERNATIONAL SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS  
UNIFORM SERIES INTERNATIONAL BIBLE LESSONS FOR CHRISTIAN TEACHING

**June • July • August**

## GOD'S URGENT CALL

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# GOD'S URGENT CALL

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# QUARTERLY QUIZ

Use these questions as a pretest or as a review. The answers are on page iv of *This Quarter in the Word*.

## Lesson 1

1. Deborah the judge was also a prophetess. T/F. *Judges 4:4*
2. Deborah lived under what kind of tree? (palm, oak, fig?) *Judges 4:5*

## Lesson 2

1. How did the Lord first contact Gideon? (vision, voice, angel?) *Judges 6:12*
2. Gideon was a wealthy farmer from a prominent family. T/F. *Judges 6:15*

## Lesson 3

1. After he attacked enemies and won, Jephthah demanded to be made chief. T/F. *Judges 11:9*
2. Jephthah made an unwise \_\_\_\_\_ before the battle. *Judges 11:30*

## Lesson 4

1. The mother of Samson was told to drink no wine while pregnant. T/F. *Judges 13:7*
2. Samson was under a vow known as what? (Levite, Nazarite, Hittite?) *Judges 13:7*

## Lesson 5

1. Who was the father-in-law of Moses? (Jediah, Rameses, Jethro?) *Exodus 3:1*
2. At the burning bush, Moses was required to put on special shoes. T/F. *Exodus 3:5*

## Lesson 6

1. Isaiah had a vision of Heaven in the year that King \_\_\_\_\_ died. *Isaiah 6:1*
2. Isaiah's lips were cleansed when touched by what? (holy oil, new snow, live coal?) *Isaiah 6:6, 7*

## Lesson 7

1. Jeremiah was chosen by the Lord on the day of his birth. T/F. *Jeremiah 1:5*
2. The Lord chose Jeremiah to be a prophet to what? (the nations, Israel, Assyria?) *Jeremiah 1:5*

## Lesson 8

1. What advantage did Ezekiel have in speaking to Israel? (same language, loud voice, many friends?) *Ezekiel 3:5*
2. The Lord promised Ezekiel that the people of Israel would accept his message. T/F. *Ezekiel 3:7*

## Lesson 9

1. Amos was forbidden to speak at the king's sanctuary at \_\_\_\_\_. *Amos 7:13*
2. Before the Lord called him to prophesy, Amos did what? (tended herds and fruit trees, made pottery, tanned leather?) *Amos 7:14*
3. The father of Amos was also a prophet. T/F. *Amos 7:14*

## Lesson 10

1. How many men were chosen to serve food to the widows? (seven, ten, twelve?) *Acts 6:2, 3*
2. Stephen not only served tables but also did miracles. T/F. *Acts 6:8*

## Lesson 11

1. The eunuch who met Philip was from where? (Egypt, Antioch, Ethiopia?) *Acts 8:27*
2. The eunuch was reading from the prophet \_\_\_\_\_ when Philip encountered him. *Acts 8:28*
3. Philip waited several days before baptizing the eunuch. T/F. *Acts 8:36*

## Lesson 12

1. Saul (Paul) was healed from blindness in the city of \_\_\_\_\_. *Acts 9:10*
2. Ananias was told that Saul would bear God's name to both Israelites and Gentiles. T/F. *Acts 9:15*

## Lesson 13

1. What position did Cornelius hold? (centurion, tribune, governor?) *Acts 10:22*
2. Cornelius resided in the city of Jerusalem. T/F. *Acts 10:24*

# QUARTER AT A GLANCE

by Douglas Redford

ONE EVENING some years ago, I helped serve what was called a midnight breakfast at the college where I teach. It was scheduled during final exam week in order to provide a break for the students, and faculty and staff were asked to help fill the students' plates. Before we did so, we were told to put on a pair of plastic gloves in preparation for handling the food. "Do these come in different sizes?" asked one faculty member. "No," was the reply. "One size fits all." Our clumsy attempts to don the gloves revealed that that was not the case.

Neither does "one size fits all" apply to how God calls people to serve Him—or for that matter, to how people respond to His call. Both are illustrated time and again in this series on "God's Urgent Call."

## A Specific Call

Consider our first unit of lessons, drawn from the chaotic time of the judges in the Old Testament. God used the prophetess Deborah to call Barak to provide deliverance for God's people from their oppressors (lesson 1). An angel of the Lord challenged Gideon to face the Midianites in battle (lesson 2). Jephthah was called by elders of Gilead to save Israel from the Ammonites (lesson 3). Samson's "call" actually began with an announcement to a childless woman that she would give birth to a very special son who would deliver God's people from the Philistines (lesson 4).

The prophets of the Lord (whose calls are the focus of unit 2) also demonstrate a variety of "sizes" when it comes to being called to convey the Word of the Lord. Moses' experience at the burning bush is well-known (lesson 5). Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel each received a vision of the Lord, but each setting was unique (lessons 6–8). Ezekiel's call included a command to eat a "roll of a book" that was written on both sides (Ezekiel

2:9–3:3). This represented how thoroughly he was to be filled with the Lord's message so he could convey it to God's people in exile. Amos (lesson 9) referred to his being called by the Lord (Amos 7:14, 15), but no specific details of that call are provided in Scripture. It is clear, however, from the courage and passion Amos exhibited that he was a called man indeed!

As the calls were not uniform, neither were the responses to them. Usually the called person was quite hesitant about saying *yes* to what God had in mind. Barak, Gideon, Moses, and Jeremiah each offered an explanation of why he could not do what God commanded. The only eager respondent was Isaiah: "Here am I; send me" (Isaiah 6:8).

## A General Call

Our third unit draws from the book of Acts and illustrates the more general nature of God's call. These four lessons focus attention on what Christians are called to do in presenting Jesus to a broken world. At times we may wish for a call that is just as direct or intense as those in the Bible. However, Christians from all centuries have all been called to make a difference in whatever sphere of influence they live or work. Every follower of Jesus

*At times we may wish for a call that is just as direct or intense as those in the Bible.*

can, by his or her lifestyle, witness, break down barriers, preach, and demonstrate the inclusive nature of the gospel (the themes for lessons 10–13). The means of delivering the gospel is not "one size fits all," since we are gifted differently.

Even so, we must remember that we speak for a Savior whose message does indeed "fit all," for He died for the sins of everyone. May our lives be a faithful testimony through which the call of that Savior to a lost world is clearly and lovingly heard.

# GET THE SETTING

by Lloyd M. Pelfrey

**I**NDIVIDUALS IN the Bible, both old and new covenant believers, experienced God's communication and calls in various ways (see Hebrews 1:1). But Satan counterfeits God's truth, and Satan uses a variety of methods to communicate his lies. People from antiquity to modern times have used Satan's methods in attempts to communicate with the supernatural. The choices literally range from A to Z—from abacomancy (examining patterns in dirt) to zygomancy (the use of weights in divination). Examples follow.

## Egypt

The famous Oracle of Amun was located at the Siwa Oasis in ancient Egypt. There a priest served as an intermediary for a god. Alexander the Great is one of many who went there to have his questions answered. The ruins of the site reveal that a narrow chamber existed next to the place where people asked their questions. Thus the god Amun in the next chamber was able to provide intelligible answers because a hidden priest had overheard the questions.

## Assyria

At the time that Jephthah was a judge in Israel (lesson 3), Tiglath-pileser I was king in Assyria. In his royal archives he gave credit to Ashur and other gods for commanding him to expand the borders of the land. The king made sure to record that the gods placed their weapons in his hands; thus victory was assured. This same king also recorded this success:

The gods Ninurta and Palil gave me their fierce weapons and their exalted bow for my lordly arms. By the command of the god Ninurta, who loves me, I slew four extraordinarily strong wild virile bulls in the desert.

Sargon II was the king of Assyria 722–705 BC. Samaria, the capital of the northern nation of Israel, fell to him; he states that he took 27,290 people captive (compare 2 Kings 17:6; Isaiah 20:1).

His annals describe another military action:

In the second year of my reign, [Ilubidi of Hamath] . . . a vast [army] he collected in the town of Qarqar and the oath [of fidelity he forgot].

By decree of the god Ashur, my lord, I inflicted a defeat upon [them]. I took away 9,033 people together with their numerous possessions.

## Moab

The Moabite Stone confirms the rebellions of Mesha, a king of Moab, against the kings of Israel (see 2 Kings 1:1; 3:4-27). On this stone, Mesha credits his god Chemosh for successes.

And Chemosh said to me, "Go, take Nebo from Israel." So I went by night and fought against it from the break of dawn until noon, taking it and slaying all: seven thousand men, boys, women, girls, and maid-servants, for I had devoted them to destruction for (the god) Ashtar-Chemosh. . . . And the king of Israel had built Jahaz, and he dwelt there while fighting against me, but Chemosh drove him out.

## Babylon-Persia

Cyrus the Great captured Babylon in 539 BC. The famous Cyrus Cylinder attributes the rise of Cyrus to Marduk, the lord of the gods. Marduk was unhappy with Nabonidus, father of Belshazzar (Daniel 5:1-30; 7:1; 8:1). So Marduk

called Cyrus, king of Anshan. He nominated him to be ruler over all. . . . [Marduk] gave orders that he go against his city Babylon. He made him take the road to Babylon, and he went at his side like a friend and comrade. . . . He got him into his city Babylon without fighting or battle. . . . He put an end to the power of Nabonidus the king who did not show him reverence.

## Problem and Solution

It's easy to credit a false god for a victory when you do it after the fact! But proof of having received divine communication comes when prophecy is fulfilled. Isaiah 44:28–45:13 predicted the rise of Cyrus 150 years in advance. The Lord, not Marduk, enabled him to establish the Persian Empire!

Mon, Aug. 14 **Saul's Mandate to Capture Believers**  
 Tue, Aug. 15 **A Trustworthy Preacher/Teacher**  
 Wed, Aug. 16 **Saul Proclaims Jesus in Damascus**  
 Thu, Aug. 17 **Saul in Tarsus; Jerusalem at Peace**  
 Fri, Aug. 18 **Paralytic Aeneas Healed in Lydda**  
 Sat, Aug. 19 **Jesus Calls Saul on Damascus Road**  
 Sun, Aug. 20 **Ananias Confirms God's Call to Saul**

Acts 22:1-5  
 Titus 1:5-9  
 Acts 9:21-25  
 Acts 9:26-31  
 Acts 9:32-35  
 Acts 9:1-9  
 Acts 9:10-20

Mon, Aug. 21 **The Servant's Mission to All Nations**  
 Tue, Aug. 22 **Jesus Heals Centurion's Slave**  
 Wed, Aug. 23 **An Angel Meets Cornelius in a Vision**  
 Thu, Aug. 24 **People Are Neither Unclean nor Profane**  
 Fri, Aug. 25 **Gentiles Hear and Accept the Gospel**  
 Sat, Aug. 26 **Gentiles Included by Spirit and Water**  
 Sun, Aug. 27 **Peter and Cornelius Together in Christ**

Isaiah 49:1-7  
 Luke 7:1-10  
 Acts 10:1-8  
 Acts 10:9-18  
 Acts 10:34-43  
 Acts 10:44-48  
 Acts 10:19-33

### Answers to the Quarterly Quiz on page 338

**Lesson 1**—1. true. 2. palm. **Lesson 2**—1. angel. 2. false.  
**Lesson 3**—1. false. 2. vow. **Lesson 4**—1. true. 2. Nazarite. **Lesson 5**—1. Jethro. 2. false. **Lesson 6**—1. Uzziah. 2. live coal.  
**Lesson 7**—1. false. 2. the nations. **Lesson 8**—1. same language. 2. false. **Lesson 9**—1. Bethel. 2. tended herds and fruit trees. 3. false. **Lesson 10**—1. seven. 2. true. **Lesson 11**—1. Ethiopia. 2. Esaias (Isaiah). 3. false. **Lesson 12**—1. Damascus. 2. true. **Lesson 13**—1. centurion. 2. false.

## THIS QUARTER IN THE WORD

Mon, May 29 **Angel Rebukes Israel's Faithlessness** Judges 2:1-5  
 Tue, May 30 **Joshua's Death Ends an Era** Judges 2:6-10  
 Wed, May 31 **The People Lose God's Protection** Judges 2:16-23  
 Thu, June 1 **Ode to Israel's Faithful Judges** Hebrews 11:29-40  
 Fri, June 2 **Victory Song of the Divine Warrior** Judges 5:1-5  
 Sat, June 3 **Jael Defeats the Enemy Leader, Sisera** Judges 5:24-27  
 Sun, June 4 **Deborah: Prophetess, Judge, and Commander**  
 Judges 4:1-10  
 Mon, June 5 **Oppression Results from Disobedience** Judges 6:1-10  
 Tue, June 6 **May God Judge Enemies Harshly** Psalm 83:1-12, 18  
 Wed, June 7 **Gideon Sees the Angel of the Lord** Judges 6:19-24  
 Thu, June 8 **Fleece Confirms Victory over Midianites**  
 Judges 6:36-40  
 Fri, June 9 **Midianites Defeated Without Weapons** Judges 7:19-23  
 Sat, June 10 **Gideon Dies, Israel Forgets God's Ways** Judges 8:29-35  
 Sun, June 11 **Gideon Answers Call to Deliver Israel** Judges 6:11-18  
 Mon, June 12 **Jephthah, Rejected by His Family, Flees** Judges 11:1-3  
 Tue, June 13 **Jephthah Tries Diplomacy** Judges 11:12-18  
 Wed, June 14 **Jephthah Reveals God's Aid of Israel** Judges 11:19-22  
 Thu, June 15 **Ammonite King Rejects Jephthah's Claims**  
 Judges 11:23-28  
 Fri, June 16 **Jephthah Fulfills Vow** Judges 11:34-40  
 Sat, June 17 **Leaders Discern the Way Forward** Acts 15:6-21  
 Sun, June 18 **Jephthah Called to Lead Israel** Judges 11:4-11

Mon, June 19 **Announcement of Samson's Birth** Judges 13:8-18  
 Tue, June 20 **Angel Accepts Manoah's Sacrifice** Judges 13:19-23  
 Wed, June 21 **Vow of Separation to the Lord** Numbers 6:1-8, 13-17  
 Thu, June 22 **Samson Marries a Woman of Timnah** Judges 14:1-9  
 Fri, June 23 **Samson Conquers the Philistines** Judges 15:1-8  
 Sat, June 24 **In Death Samson Defeats the Philistines** Judges 16:23-31  
 Sun, June 25 **God Blesses a Nazarite Judge** Judges 13:1-7; 24, 25  
 Mon, June 26 **Insist on Justice for All** Exodus 23:1-9  
 Tue, June 27 **Cost of Not Offering Justice** Matthew 23:41-46  
 Wed, June 28 **No Perversion of Justice Allowed** 2 Chronicles 19:4-7  
 Thu, June 29 **Persist Until Justice Is Done** Luke 18:1-8  
 Fri, June 30 **Seven Called to Ministry of Benevolence** Acts 6:1-7  
 Sat, July 1 **Israelites Meet God at Mount Sinai** Exodus 19:1-9  
 Sun, July 2 **Moses Called to Free Israelites** Exodus 3:1-12  
 Mon, July 3 **Reign of King Uzziah** 2 Chronicles 26:1-10, 15  
 Tue, July 4 **True Worship in Action** Isaiah 58:6-12  
 Wed, July 5 **Holiness Befits God's House** Psalm 93  
 Thu, July 6 **Gentiles Will Hear the Good News** Acts 28:23-29  
 Fri, July 7 **Perfect Your Holiness Living** 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1  
 Sat, July 8 **Practice Holiness While Waiting** 2 Peter 3:11-16  
 Sun, July 9 **Isaiah Called to Mission** Isaiah 6:1-8  
 Mon, July 10 **A Prophet like Moses** Deuteronomy 18:15-22  
 Tue, July 11 **By Almond Branch and Boiling Pot** Jeremiah 1:11-19  
 Wed, July 12 **Assured of the Lord's Deliverance** Jeremiah 15:10-21  
 Thu, July 13 **Prophetic Message from the Potter** Jeremiah 18:1-11  
 Fri, July 14 **Egypt Punished; Israel Saved** Jeremiah 46:25-28  
 Sat, July 15 **Jesus Calls Disciples** Mark 1:16-20  
 Sun, July 16 **Jeremiah Called to Prophecy** Jeremiah 1:4-10

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Mon, July 17 **Ezekiel, the Lord's Messenger** Ezekiel 2:1-7  
 Tue, July 18 **Words of Lamentation and Woe** Ezekiel 2:8-10  
 Wed, July 19 **Eat the Scroll and Prophecy** Revelation 10:8-11  
 Thu, July 20 **Written Edict Stops Jewish Calamity** Esther 8:7-10  
 Fri, July 21 **Watchman Must Convey God's Message** Ezekiel 3:12-21  
 Sat, July 22 **Israel Exalted at Last** Ezekiel 17:22-24  
 Sun, July 23 **Ezekiel's Call to Speak** Ezekiel 3:1-11  
 Mon, July 24 **The Elect Keep the Commandments** Deuteronomy 7:7-11  
 Tue, July 25 **Hananiah Opposes Prophetic Message** Jeremiah 28:12-16  
 Wed, July 26 **Oracle Against Israel** Amos 1:1, 2; 3:12-15  
 Thu, July 27 **Seek Good and Live** Amos 5:10-15  
 Fri, July 28 **Let Justice Roll Down like Waters** Amos 5:18-24  
 Sat, July 29 **David's Kingdom Restored** Amos 9:11-15  
 Sun, July 30 **Called to Prophecy to My People** Amos 7:10-17  
 Mon, July 31 **Jesus Commissions Disciples** Acts 1:1-11  
 Tue, Aug. 1 **Mathias Chosen to Replace Judas** Acts 1:15-17, 20-26  
 Wed, Aug. 2 **The Holy Spirit Descends upon Disciples** Acts 2:1-13  
 Thu, Aug. 3 **First Converts Called to the Faith** Acts 2:37-44  
 Fri, Aug. 4 **Stephen Arrested While Serving** Acts 6:8-15  
 Sat, Aug. 5 **Stephen Stoned to Death** Acts 7:54-8:1a  
 Sun, Aug. 6 **Stephen Called to Serve the Church** Acts 6:1-8  
 Mon, Aug. 7 **Jesus Heals a Woman's Daughter** Matthew 15:21-28  
 Tue, Aug. 8 **Good News for All Peoples** Galatians 3:23-29  
 Wed, Aug. 9 **All Who Call Will Be Saved** Romans 10:9-15  
 Thu, Aug. 10 **Persecution Scatters the Church** Acts 8:1b-3  
 Fri, Aug. 11 **Converts in Samaria Baptized** Acts 8:4-13  
 Sat, Aug. 12 **Simon Repents of Selfish Power Grab** Acts 8:14-25  
 Sun, Aug. 13 **The Good News Breaks Down Barriers** Acts 8:26-39

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# MAP FEATURE



# THE INCURABLE HABIT

*Teacher Tips by James B. North*

I HAVE ALWAYS been a reader. One of my earliest memories in this regard was when my sister often made the mistake of bringing her first-grade reader home from school. She was two years ahead of me, but I soon began to read that book avidly. I just about had it memorized when I got to first grade, so they soon put me up in second grade. My sister was furious that I was now only one grade behind her.

## Developing the Discipline

I attended three graduate schools after college, earning a Master of Arts (MA) degree in the first one. But because this school was not regionally accredited, the second graduate school put me through another MA. That was fine with me because I learned a lot there. Keeping track of my reading during one quarter of study, I discovered I was averaging 1,000 pages a week!

Both MA degrees I earned were in church history. But for my doctorate, I decided my studies would be in American history, political and secular. This meant I had to do a lot of reading to catch up with other students. As I was finishing up that degree, one of my professors said (in a casual conversation) that to keep up with the field I needed to “read, read, read.” Even if I read a book on a topic I already knew, there would be additional information, he observed. And if it was a topic with which I was not familiar, everything would be new information and useful.

## Reaping the Result

All that reading began to pay off when I finally finished school and began teaching at the college/university level. Because I had some expertise in both church and secular history, I often made associations between the two that illustrated points I was making. Having expertise “on both sides of the fence” meant that I often was able to answer students’ questions that went beyond the

immediate focus of the class presentations (not always, but often!).

## Redeeming the Time

In my current city of residence, I rode the bus for almost 20 years to the college campus every day. I always had a book with me, and I averaged reading 30 books a year—just while riding the bus! Other riders spent the time gazing absently out the window. Not me.

Since I was, in fact, riding a bus, my reading was not that of technical textbooks that would require deep concentration, underlining, or marginal notes—a bumpy ride didn’t lend itself to any of that! Rather, I often read biographies, novels, and similarly “light” material. But the result was the same: I was assimilating information that could be plugged into classroom presentations when unplanned issues or unexpected questions came up.

## Choosing the Type

I strongly recommend that teachers develop “the incurable habit” of reading! But your reading doesn’t have to be of biblical material only. Non-biblical material can provide illustrations to flesh out and enliven a Bible text.

Should you go for breadth or for depth in your reading? Obviously the more focused your reading program, the more in-depth you will become in the field you study. But don’t feel you have to become a specialist. Every thought, every genre of literature, every subject can provide insight.

As you read, you will discover that most all information can be applied to the Christian life in one way or another. The world is full of information that can be used to illustrate God’s creation, His grace, His providence, and His control. This is part of “bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ” (2 Corinthians 10:5). So as my professor said, “Read, read, read!”

# DEBORAH AND BARAK

DEVOTIONAL READING: Hebrews 11:29-40

BACKGROUND SCRIPTURE: Judges 4, 5

## JUDGES 4:1-10

1 And the children of Israel again did evil in the sight of the LORD, when Ehud was dead.

2 And the LORD sold them into the hand of Jabin king of Canaan, that reigned in Hazor; the captain of whose host was Sisera, which dwelt in Harosheth of the Gentiles.

3 And the children of Israel cried unto the LORD: for he had nine hundred chariots of iron; and twenty years he mightily oppressed the children of Israel.

4 And Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lapidoth, she judged Israel at that time.

5 And she dwelt under the palm tree of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in mount Ephraim: and the children of Israel came up to her for judgment.

6 And she sent and called Barak the son of Abinoam out of Kedeshnaphtali, and said unto him, Hath not the LORD God of Israel commanded, saying, Go and draw toward mount Tabor, and take with thee ten thousand men of the children of Naphtali and of the children of Zebulun?

7 And I will draw unto thee to the river Kishon Sisera, the captain of Jabin's army, with his chariots and his multitude; and I will deliver him into thine hand.

8 And Barak said unto her, If thou wilt go with me, then I will go: but if thou wilt not go with me, then I will not go.

9 And she said, I will surely go with thee: notwithstanding the journey that thou takest shall not be for thine honour; for the LORD shall sell Sisera into the hand of a woman. And Deborah arose, and went with Barak to Kedesh.

10 And Barak called Zebulun and Naphtali to Kedesh; and he went up with ten thousand men at his feet: and Deborah went up with him.



## KEY VERSE

*[Deborah] said, I will surely go with thee: notwithstanding the journey that thou takest shall not be for thine honour; for the LORD shall sell Sisera into the hand of a woman. And Deborah arose, and went with Barak to Kedesh. —Judges 4:9*

# GOD'S URGENT CALL

## Unit 1: Called to Be Strong

LESSONS 1–4

### LESSON AIMS

After participating in this lesson, each learner will be able to:

1. Describe the relationship between Deborah and Barak.
2. List possible reasons for doubts and fears on the part of Barak and evaluate their legitimacy.
3. Commit to helping one fellow believer overcome doubts regarding his or her leadership role in a ministry project.

### LESSON OUTLINE

#### Introduction

A. “Let’s Ask Granny!”

B. Lesson Background

#### I. Cry to God (JUDGES 4:1-3)

A. Sin and Subjugation (vv. 1, 2)

*What’s Right in Whose Sight?*

B. Score of Suffering (v. 3)

#### II. Challenge Others (JUDGES 4:4-7)

A. Deborah’s Role (vv. 4, 5)

B. Barak’s Call (vv. 6, 7)

*Prophets, True and False*

#### III. Collaborate as Needed (JUDGES 4:8-10)

A. Barak Balks (v. 8)

B. Barak Backed (vv. 9, 10)

#### Conclusion

A. Pick Your Heroes Carefully!

B. Prayer

C. Thought to Remember

## Introduction

### A. “Let’s Ask Granny!”

“Granny” was one of the sweetest, kindest, most humble persons in the congregation. “Let’s ask Granny!” was frequently heard when the leaders of the church needed additional input on an issue.

Granny knew the Bible’s precepts and principles better than many. Her wisdom had been accumulated through decades of Bible study, personal experience, and observations of the flow of events in her world. She held no official position of authority. But people willingly received her counsel, and she was willing to give it—especially when biblical concepts were involved.

Some are leaders by position. Others are leaders by their very natures. (And, of course, some are both.) A church’s official leaders demonstrate wisdom when they recognize what has been called “leadership from below” and seek to learn from those such as Granny.

Today’s lesson will help us better understand the importance of leadership skills as we examine how a leader of Israel, known as a judge, led her nation through a trying time.

### B. Lesson Background

Joshua had been appointed by God and commissioned by Moses to lead Israel in conquering Canaan (Deuteronomy 31). But something was different when Joshua passed off the scene in about 1370 BC: no one was appointed to succeed him! The solution was very simple. God was in charge, and each tribe or unit would obey God and take care of its area.

In Joshua’s farewell addresses (Joshua 23, 24), he warned the Israelites again, just as Moses had done, of what they would experience if they served other gods. But they did serve such gods, and Judges 2:10 explains why: “there arose another generation after them, which knew not the Lord.” What followed was disaster after disaster. If one generation does not teach the next generation about God, then tragedies follow.

The book of Judges is concerned primarily with the sin-cycles that Israel experienced during the period of the Judges. To date that era with preci-

sion is difficult. By one calculation, there were 330 years between the appearance of the first judge (Judges 3:9) and the passing of the last (1 Samuel 25:1). But depending on the interpretation of Acts 13:20 and other factors, some calculate the period to span 450 years.

Regarding the sin-cycles themselves, these have been summarized in terms of four stages: *sin, sorrow* (or *servitude*), *supplication*, and *salvation*. A different way of stating this cycle is *rebellion, retribution, repentance*, and *restoration*. When the Israelites worshipped other gods, they suffered. When the people eventually repented, the Lord would send a deliverer, known as a judge. Then the cycle repeated itself (see Judges 2:10-19).

The lessons of this unit are biographical studies of 4 of the 12 judges recorded in the book of Judges: Deborah, Gideon, Jephthah, and Samson. These 4 plus Othniel and Ehud are traditionally said to be the 6 “major judges” in light of all that is recorded about them. They were military deliverers; thus the word *judge* should not cause us to think exclusively in terms of civil magistrates.

The longest period of peace recorded within the book of Judges is the one of 80 years between Ehud and Deborah (Judges 3:30). Today’s lesson takes us back to about 1225 BC as that period of peace comes to an end.

## I. Cry to God

(JUDGES 4:1-3)

### A. Sin and Subjugation (vv. 1, 2)

#### 1. And the children of Israel again did evil in the sight of the LORD, when Ehud was dead.

The phrase *Israel . . . did evil* occurs seven times in the book of Judges, and this is the fourth of those. Since the first occurrence in Judges 2:11 is a general reference (see the Lesson Background), the phrase’s use here indicates the beginning of the third sin-cycle.

To consider what evil consists of in this context, we look to the use of the phrase *Israel . . . did evil* in Judges 3:7, which introduces the first sin-cycle. The sin mentioned there is summed up with a single word: *idolatry*. The nations the Israelites had failed to destroy had become a snare to them in

this regard (Deuteronomy 7:16; 20:16-18; Joshua 23:12, 13; Judges 3:5, 6).

The exploits of *Ehud*, the second major judge, are noted in Judges 3:12-30. The non-major judge who follows him is accorded only a single-verse description (3:31) as the author hastens to move to the next sin-cycle.

#### What Do You Think?

What are some ways to prevent negative things from happening during times of leadership vacuum in the church?

#### Talking Points for Your Discussion

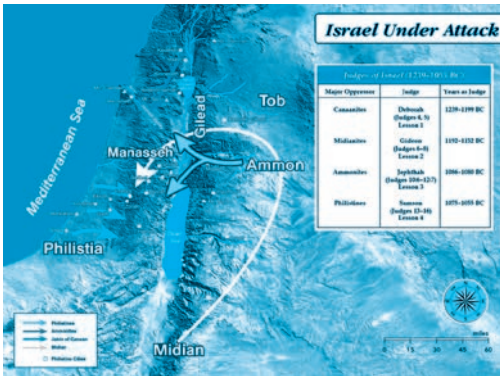
- Regarding coverage of ministry tasks
- Regarding use of church resources
- Regarding political viewpoints
- Regarding teaching or leadership roles
- Other

#### ◆ WHAT’S RIGHT IN WHOSE SIGHT? ◆

The U.S. Supreme Court issued a landmark decision on June 26, 2015, that declared same-sex marriage to be a constitutionally protected right. An amazing cultural shift had taken place in a ten-year period: in 2004, opinion polls showed about 60 percent of Americans opposing same-sex unions with about 40 percent supporting them; by 2014, those numbers had reversed.

The five justices who created this decision seemed to hold to the theory that the U.S. Constitution is a “living document.” This theory, known as *loose constructionism*, asserts that courts are free to interpret the Constitution in light of prevailing cultural winds. What’s illegal in one decade can become a “right” in another.

We must recognize that God and humans often do not share the same conclusions regarding what is good and what is evil (compare Isaiah 5:20). This is true whether or not one embraces a loose-construction theory for interpreting a country’s founding documents. The book of Judges offers this sobering observation twice: “every man did that which was right in his own eyes” (Judges 17:6; 21:25). The step from doing what is right in one’s own eyes to doing “evil in the sight of the Lord” (4:1) is smaller than one may think! —C. R. B.



Visual for Lesson 1. *Keep this map posted throughout the first unit of this quarter's studies to give your learners a geographical perspective.*

**2. And the LORD sold them into the hand of Jabin king of Canaan, that reigned in Hazor; the captain of whose host was Sisera, which dwelt in Harosheth of the Gentiles.**

The oppression arises from northern *Canaan*, since the city of *Hazor* is located about eight miles north-northwest of the Sea of Galilee. Before 1400 BC, Joshua had destroyed Hazor utterly (Joshua 11:10-14). Mention of “Jabin king of Hazor” occurs in conjunction with that military action of at least 175 years previous (11:1). Therefore we don’t know if the word *Jabin* is a title that is passed along or is simply a favorite name for kings.

Despite Joshua’s success, pockets of unconquered peoples remained by the time he had become elderly (Joshua 13:1-6). It was these people who rebuilt Hazor as a royal city. The mopping-up operations had been left to the individual tribes, but they did not follow through (Judges 1:27-34). In this particular case, it seems to have been the tribe of Naphtali that dropped the ball, since Hazor is in its tribal allotment (Joshua 19:32-39). Instead of obeying Joshua or the Lord, the tribes just became content with what they had.

Israel must confront *Sisera*, the military commander, not the king. Sisera’s base of operations at *Harosheth of the Gentiles*, near the Kishon River that flows into the Mediterranean, is perhaps 30 miles southwest of Hazor and 16 miles northwest of Megiddo. These factors become an important part of the battle plan that God designs.

**B. Score of Suffering (v. 3)**

**3. And the children of Israel cried unto the LORD: for he had nine hundred chariots of iron; and twenty years he mightily oppressed the children of Israel.**

The nature of the 20-year oppression that *the children of Israel* suffer isn’t specified. It may take the form of servitude (example: Joshua 16:10), a periodic taxation of gold and/or silver (example: 2 Kings 23:33), and/or a confiscation of crops and livestock (examples: Deuteronomy 28:51; 2 Kings 3:4). The latter could be collected as marauding groups go from place to place (example: Judges 6:2-6).

It is serious when oppressors take food that your family depends on to get through the rainy months of the winter season! Frustration and anger follow, as the Israelites watch the results of their labor snatched away. Prayers for deliverance undoubtedly begin far in advance of the 20-year point mentioned here. But it can take time for repentance to be joined with prayer. Even today, many people call upon the Lord in a crisis, but do not accompany that prayer with repentance.

A reason for the seeming hopelessness of Israel’s situation is the *nine hundred chariots* possessed by the enemy. The note that these are *of iron* is not a reference to the entirety of their construction. Rather, the chariots are made of wood, with iron covering strategic parts.

This is not the first time the issue of iron-reinforced chariots has come up; some Canaanites had them when Joshua divided the land among the 12 tribes in about 1400 BC (Joshua 17:16). The Iron Age is dated as beginning about 1200 BC, but some nations get technological advances later than others. Some Canaanites apparently know the techniques of processing iron ore that are yet unknown to the Israelites.

**II. Challenge Others**

(JUDGES 4:4-7)

**A. Deborah’s Role (vv. 4, 5)**

**4. And Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lapidoth, she judged Israel at that time.**

Deborah’s position in the line of judges is noted in the Lesson Background. She seems to have abil-

ities that are recognized by the people, resulting in her having become a leader in Israel in a two-fold way: that of judge and prophetess. The latter means she is a spokesperson for the Lord. This passage is the only place in the Bible that mentions her husband, *Lapidoth*.

**5. And she dwelt under the palm tree of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in mount Ephraim: and the children of Israel came up to her for judgment.**

Deborah's role as civil magistrate is revealed by the fact that Israelites come *up to her for judgment* (compare Exodus 18:13). The term *mount Ephraim* refers not to a mountain, but to the central hilly part of Israel (compare Joshua 17:15). The distance *between Ramah and Bethel* is about five miles, the towns lying about five and 10 miles, respectively, due north of Jerusalem.

The location of *the palm tree of Deborah* between the two towns probably places it within the tribal territory of Benjamin. We say "probably" because Bethel lies just outside the tribe's territorial boundary, in Ephraim (Joshua 18:13).

#### What Do You Think?

How do we keep cultural expectations regarding gender roles from being a greater influence in the church than the Bible itself?

#### Talking Points for Your Discussion

- Before such influence occurs (preventive measures)
- After such influence occurs (curative measures)

### B. Barak's Call (vv. 6, 7)

**6a. And she sent and called Barak the son of Abinoam out of Kedeshnaphtali, and said unto him, Hath not the LORD God of Israel commanded, saying.**

Deborah fulfills her role as a prophetess: having received a message from *the Lord God of Israel*, she delivers it to Barak as the one to lead Israel in battle. Barak is a popular name, so the man is further identified by the name of his father and his place of origin. *Abinoam* is mentioned only here and in Judges 5:12. The word *Kedeshnaphtali* combines

the name of the town Kedesh within the tribal territory of Naphtali. A bit of uncertainty exists regarding the location of this town. One proposal locates it on the southwestern shore of the Sea of Galilee; another proposal places it about 35 miles farther north (compare Joshua 12:22; 19:37; 20:7; 21:32; 2 Kings 15:29).

**6b. Go and draw toward mount Tabor, and take with thee ten thousand men of the children of Naphtali and of the children of Zebulun?**

Barak receives his orders in terms of route of march and recruitment. Keeping in mind the current location of Deborah and Barak according to verse 5, *mount Tabor* is roughly 50 miles to the north and about 11 miles east of the southern tip of the Sea of Galilee. This rounded mountain, which has been described as an upside-down teacup, lies just within the northern border of the tribe of Issachar, very close to where the border meets those of both *Naphtali* and *Zebulun*.

Men from these areas are likely to respond positively to a call to arms, for their families are likely to have suffered the most from two decades of oppression. The areas Naphtali and Zebulun form part of what is later called "Galilee of the Gentiles" in Matthew 4:15.

**7. And I will draw unto thee to the river Kishon Sisera, the captain of Jabin's army, with his chariots and his multitude; and I will deliver him into thine hand.**

## HOW TO SAY IT

Abinoam	Uh- <i>bin</i> -o-am.
Canaan	<i>Kay</i> -nun.
Ephraim	<i>Ee</i> -fray-im.
Esdraelon	<i>Es</i> -druh- <i>ee</i> -lon.
Harosheth	Huh- <i>roe</i> -sheth
Jephtah	<i>Jef</i> -tuh ( <i>th</i> as in <i>thin</i> ).
Kedeshnaphtali	<i>Kee</i> -desh- <i>naf</i> -tuh-lye.
Kishon	<i>Kye</i> -shon.
Lapidoth	<i>Lap</i> -ih-doth.
Manasseh	Muh- <i>nass</i> -uh.
Megiddo	Muh- <i>gid</i> -doe.
Naphtali	<i>Naf</i> -tuh-lye.
Sisera	<i>Sis</i> -er-uh.
Zebulun	<i>Zeb</i> -you-lun.

The Lord promises to do His part in the forthcoming battle: He will arrange for the enemy to gather near *the river Kishon*, which flows through the Jezreel Valley. The Israelite army at Mount Tabor will be several miles to the northeast. Once *Sisera, the captain of Jabin's army*, hears that Israel has formed a fighting force, his natural reaction will be to muster *his chariots and his multitude* for a showdown (Judges 4:12, 13).

The reason for Barak to have been instructed to take his force to Mount Tabor becomes clearer: his force of foot soldiers will have a great defensive position there against chariots. Wheeled conveyances don't function well in rugged, hilly terrain! But if Barak imagines the forthcoming battle to be defensive in nature, his thinking will change soon enough. The victory for his army is assured, but the manner of the victory will probably not be what Barak expects.

◆ **PROPHETS, TRUE AND FALSE** ◆

Yogi Berra (1925–2015), legendary baseball player, manager, and coach of the New York Yankees, was notable for his incongruous statements. One such is his purported lament that “it’s tough to make predictions—especially about the future.” Our laughter should not cause us to forget that false predictions have consequences. God’s people of the old covenant were beset with false prophets (Jeremiah 14:14; Ezekiel 22:28; etc.); Jesus warned of the same for our era (Matthew 24:11).

How right He has been! In September 2013, a purportedly Christian blog prophesied an earthquake of magnitude 9.7—the largest in recorded history—to strike the California coast on October 3. As with all such failed predictions, the primary result was to make Christianity seem a little less credible.

In striking contrast, true biblical prophets were always right (compare Deuteronomy 18:22), and Deborah’s prophecy of Israelite victory over the Canaanites came true just as she had relayed that assurance from the Lord (Judges 4:15). Jesus says we can recognize false prophets “by their fruits” (Matthew 7:15, 16). A track record of 90 percent accuracy isn’t good enough. Would you be able to explain why to a friend? —C. R. B.

### III. Collaborate as Needed

(JUDGES 4:8–10)

#### A. Barak Balks (v. 8)

**8. And Barak said unto her, If thou wilt go with me, then I will go: but if thou wilt not go with me, then I will not go.**

Although Barak knows the outcome that is promised, he voices the ultimatum we see here: he will go only if she will as well. His reasons are not given, so different ideas have been suggested. One theory is that Barak wants to have Deborah with him in case there are further instructions from God.

Another theory is that Barak lacks courage. Some object to this theory because Barak is listed as a man of faith in Hebrews 11:32 and is listed among other great leaders of the past in 1 Samuel 12:11 (there he is called *Bedan*, but the old Greek version, translated before the time of Christ, has the name spelled *Barak*). But courage can fail in even the greatest of leaders (example: 1 Kings 19:2, 3).

#### What Do You Think?

What are some ways to encourage others in their ministry tasks?

#### Talking Points for Your Discussion

- In contexts of doubt regarding spiritual giftedness
- In contexts of doubt regarding abilities
- In contexts of previous ministry failures
- Other

#### B. Barak Backed (vv. 9, 10)

**9. And she said, I will surely go with thee: notwithstanding the journey that thou takest shall not be for thine honour; for the LORD shall sell Sisera into the hand of a woman. And Deborah arose, and went with Barak to Kedesh.**

Deborah follows the Lord and has the ability to make good decisions quickly. This may explain why she is a recognized leader. She is also one who is prompt in encouraging others to fulfill their roles. This trait is a positive factor in the lives of the people who consult her.



### What Do You Think?

What has to happen for Christians to exhibit the leadership qualities of Deborah?

#### Talking Points for Your Discussion

- In terms of supporting appointments of others to leadership positions
- In serving as an example to those already in leadership roles
- In preventing godly confidence (2 Thessalonians 3:4; etc.) from becoming overconfidence (1 Timothy 1:7; etc.)
- Other

Deborah gives an additional prophecy, and Barak probably misunderstands the meaning of *the Lord shall sell Sisera into the hand of a woman*. He probably anticipates that it will be Deborah who brings an end to Sisera. However, the verses that follow the lesson text reveal that it will be Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite, who ends Sisera's life (see Judges 4:11, 18-21).

#### 10a. And Barak called Zebulun and Naphtali to Kedesh.

The Kedesh that is located on the southwestern shore of the Sea of Galilee (see v. 6a, above) is an ideal place to muster troops from *Zebulun and Naphtali* before advancing to Mount Tabor. Men traveling in small groups toward Kedesh in answer to a call to arms will not attract much attention, since movement toward Kedesh is away from Sisera's base at Harosheth (v. 2, above).

#### 10b. And he went up with ten thousand men at his feet: and Deborah went up with him.

As *ten thousand men* follow Barak with Deborah accompanying, they can think about the years of oppression that their families have endured. The thought of ridding themselves of such misery may be what attracts men of Ephraim, Benjamin, and Issachar to participate as well (Judges 5:13-15a). Members of other tribes, however, do not participate (5:15b-17). By and large, the latter are located in areas away from the oppression that originates from the north, so they may feel that it is not their fight. Even so, the result will be victory and 40 years of peace (4:23, 24; 5:31).

## Conclusion

### A. Pick Your Heroes Carefully!

A counselor asked his client to think of the people he knew whom he admired. Then he was asked to consider what those people had ever done that was worthwhile. The client replied, "As I think about it, all they have ever done is to complain. They never do anything else." He was advised to evaluate what he had said, and then to find some new heroes.

The account of Deborah and Barak illustrates that each respected the other. It also suggests that the soldiers in Barak's army trusted his leadership. The combination of interpersonal respect and God's help were the ingredients for success. And so it is yet today. Hebrews 11 encourages us to pick our heroes carefully! If their lives are not godly, how can they be our heroes?

### What Do You Think?

What character traits do you look for in those whom you would accept as mentors? Why?

#### Talking Points for Your Discussion

- Regarding spiritual issues
- Regarding vocational proficiency
- Regarding consistency
- Other

### B. Prayer

Almighty God, grant us the wisdom to select godly men or women as our heroes and mentors! But most of all, empower us by your Spirit to imitate Christ. We pray this in His name. Amen.

### C. Thought to Remember

Who we follow today  
shapes who we become tomorrow.

## VISUALS FOR THESE LESSONS

The visual pictured in each lesson (example: page 348) is a small reproduction of a large, full-color poster included in the *Adult Resources* packet for the Summer Quarter. That packet also contains the very useful *Presentation Tools* CD for teacher use. Order No. 4629117 from your supplier.

# INVOLVEMENT LEARNING

Enhance your lesson with KJV Bible Student (from your curriculum supplier) and the reproducible activity page (at [www.standardlesson.com](http://www.standardlesson.com) or in the back of the KJV Standard Lesson Commentary Deluxe Edition).

## Into the Lesson

Before class, write each of these names on a separate sheet of paper in large letters: *Bill Gates, Abraham Lincoln, Joan of Arc, Susan B. Anthony, Martin Luther, Winston Churchill, Cleopatra, George Washington, Harriet Tubman, Thomas Edison*. (Substitute other famous names for any you do not believe your group would recognize.)

To begin class, ask for 10 volunteers and tape one of the names to each of their backs. Have the volunteers move about the room while others talk to them as that person (without mentioning the name). As soon as a volunteer guesses his or her famous identity, that person can remove the label and take a seat.

*Alternative.* Distribute copies of the “Leading the Way” activity from the reproducible page, which you can download. Have students work individually or in pairs.

After either activity, discuss characteristics these leaders had that made them effective. Then lead into the Bible study by saying, “We can learn a lot from great leaders. Today we will examine how Deborah and Barak led their nation at a trying time.”

## Into the Word

Write this outline on the board with the title, *The Three Cs of a Leader*:

- I. Crisis: God can prepare strong leaders during times of trouble (Judges 4:1-3).
- II. Command: Good leaders not only identify problems but also identify solutions and those who can implement them (Judges 4:4-7).
- III. Collaboration: No one person can do everything. Good leaders build and work with good teams (Judges 4:8-10).

Divide learners into groups and assign each group one of the three points of the outline. Give each group strips of paper (approximately 3" x 12")

and markers. Have groups read their assigned text and summarize it with one or more bumper-sticker slogans. After several minutes of small-group creativity, allow groups to share their slogans.

Some suggested bumper stickers follow.

Crisis

*Troubles knock some down and raise others up.*

*Under Attack? Dial 1-800-CALL GOD*

Command

*Inspired Leaders Inspire Others*

*Looking for a Few Good Men*

*It Takes a Leader to Raise an Army*

Collaboration

*Surrender the ME for the WE*

*Together We Can*

*There are no limits when nobody cares who gets the credit*

## Into Life

Say, “Deborah seems to have been able to encourage Barak and help him believe in himself so he could accomplish the task God had given him. Has there ever been a person in your life who really believed in you and encouraged you during a difficult time?”

Ask students to pair off and tell their stories to a partner. Allow time for some students to share their stories. Then distribute an index card to each student.

Say, “Are there people you can encourage in their ministries? Write one person’s name, the method you will use to communicate with him or her, and a date by when you will have completed this task.”

Encourage your students to take these cards home with them and follow through on the task.

*Alternative.* Hand out copies of the “What’s Holding You Back?” activity from the reproducible page. Allow students to share their fears; have other students give words of encouragement.

Close either activity with group prayer.



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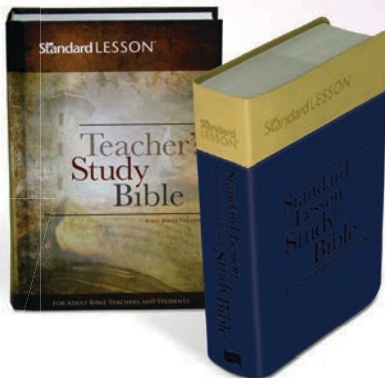
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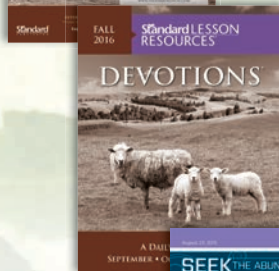
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