



Thank you for your interest in Look at the Book—a year-long study of the Bible.

The pages which follow include:

- A "Member Manual" that will give you a good overview of this series (8 pages)
- A sample sermon/class outline (4 pages)
- A sample handout (4 pages)

Again, thank you for your interest in our material. If you have questions or want to place an order, contact us at:

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Among all the voices that would speak to us about life today, one voice stands out—the Bible. Over the babble of TV talk shows and self-help manuals, the Bible sounds a clear and credible note about life and how it should be lived.

The Bible has all the action of a good western, the suspense of a murder-mystery, and the practical wisdom of the latest best-seller. It is a saga written over a 1600 year period . . . an epic with a cast of thousands, set in the most exotic regions of the world. It is not by accident that the Bible is the most popular book ever printed.

And yet, the Bible is so much more!

It tells the greatest story ever told . . . a tale of good and evil, love and hate, crosses and crowns. This book deals with the most crucial issues facing humanity. Though it knows the depths to which people can fall, the Bible focuses on the heights to which they can soar. And the author? None other than the God of the Universe.

Before we can enjoy the blessings of the Bible, it is vital that we know the message of the Bible. Many who claim to *believe* the Bible as God's Word lack a basic acquaintance with the book. As one survey indicates, only 12 percent of Bible believers spend any time in the Word on a daily basis; 34% read the Bible only once a week; 42% read it sporadically if at all.

If the Bible is so important, why are so few of us reading and studying it? Perhaps it is time for God's people to stop praising the Bible and start reading it!

Oh, we talk about the Bible, and defend the Bible, and praise the Bible, and exalt the Bible. Yes indeed! But many church members seldom ever even look into a Bible—indeed would be ashamed to be seen reading the Bible. And church leadership generally seems to be making no serious effort to get people to be Bible readers.

Henry Hailey
Hailey's Bible Handbook



BOOK
Look
at the

Member Manual

A Program of Reading and Study for the Year

The Book of Books

Within this ample volume lies
The mystery of mysteries.
Happiest they of human race
To whom their God has given grace
To read, to fear, to hope, to pray,
To lift the latch, to force the way;
But better had they ne'er been born
That read to doubt or read to scorn.

Sir Walter Scott

Does your Bible sit on a shelf and collect cobwebs? Do you use it more as a paperweight or a coaster than as a source of spiritual nourishment? Does the *T.V. Guide* get more use in your home than the Word of God?

Today, we begin a study of the entire Bible in one year. The purpose of the Look at the Book program is to give each of us a broad understanding of the Bible's message. Personal reading, sermons, Bible classes—all will be geared toward this end.

1. Bible Reading—On the last page of this Manual is a schedule of Bible reading that will allow us to read through the major portion of the Bible in the approximate order in which it was written. This schedule not only encourages us to read the Bible consistently but to learn when events occurred and where various books and people fit into the big picture of the Bible.
2. Weekly Bible Study - As we read through the Bible this year, we will be *studying* through the Bible on Sundays. The book[s] we read each week will be the focus of the sermons and adult classes on the Lord's Day. We don't have to tackle the Bible alone! Each Sunday, we can come together with other readers to study, learn and be encouraged.

Look at the Book is an invitation to embark on what could be the most exciting year of your Christian life. Taking time each day to listen to God, and spending time each week to study his Word, is one of the most rewarding and maturing things we could do this coming year.

Would you make a commitment to Look at the Book with us this year? There is reading to be done, notes to be taken, questions to be asked, and answers to be sought. But the goal is worthy of the effort—a better understanding of God's revelation to the human race. So dust off your Bible, and bring it with you to worship—we are about to take a good, hard Look at the Book.

Bible Reading

The major objective of this year will be to encourage personal Bible reading. Most of us want to be better acquainted with God's book, but lack either the discipline or the tools to become familiar with what God has revealed through his Word.

Look at the Book is designed to give each of us the encouragement and structure we all need to succeed in the resolution to read through the whole Bible in a year. We hope to do this through several means:

A Bible Reading Schedule

On pg. 8 of this manual, you will find a schedule of reading for each week of the year. On most weeks, you will have a single book to read. Some weeks, several shorter books make up the reading. By following this schedule, you will be able to read through the bulk of the Bible during the year. [Some books—like 1 & 2 Chronicles—are not covered because they are mostly repetition of material found elsewhere.] You may choose to read a little each day, in which case the normal reader should take no more than 20-30 minutes to cover the material. You may find it more convenient to read the entire book at one sitting. Some people purchase the Bible on audio-tape and listen during the commute to work!

In our hectic world, time is at a premium. Does it take time to read through the Bible in a year? Certainly. It is tragic, though, that so many Christians claim to be too busy to read the Bible. If you are too busy to spend time with God's word, perhaps you are too busy!

Chronological Approach

Unlike some systems of Bible reading, Look at the Book does not follow the ordering of books that has become standard in our Bibles. Instead, a chronological approach is used. Books are read in the approximate order in which they were written or in the order in which events occurred. This schedule not only allows us to read through the Bible, but helps us get a feel for when events

happened and how books fit into the big picture of the Bible story. Most of us know, for instance, that Paul wrote a book called *Galatians*. Did you realize, however, that Galatians was probably the first New Testament book to be written, and gives us our earliest insight into the issues faced by the early church? A chronological reading of the Bible alerts us to these kinds of issues, and helps us make sense of the Bible as a whole.

Aids for Understanding

One of the greatest barriers to Bible reading is the feeling that the Bible is hard to understand and apply. We hope to overcome this barrier, in part, by providing you with material which will enrich your understanding of the books you read. As you read Genesis, for instance, we want to help you get the most out of this book by explaining its background and theme, providing a brief outline of the major points and events, showing how and where Genesis talks about Christ, and putting the book in a historical perspective.

Accountability

The final thing all of us need is a check to make sure we are being consistent with our reading. Like dieting or exercise, Bible reading is easy to start—sticking with it is the difficult part! Each week we will keep a count of "Bible Readers"—those who have done the readings during the course of the week. A friendly competition between the Adult Bible classes, to determine which class had the highest percentage of Daily Bible Readers, will encourage us to be consistent with and committed to our reading.

There is only one word of caution we need to give about spending this much time with God's word. The Bible is "living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword." You can't read this book without it changing you. A year spent reading the Bible will result in a different "you." You will be a better person at the end of the year if you commit yourself this first Sunday to Look at the Book.

Sundays During the Year

**Great scholars of the Bible
are not necessarily great
Christians. But great
Christians have always
been committed students
of God's Word.**

Weekly Bible Study

As you are reading through the Bible during the year, we will also be studying through the Bible on Sundays. The particular book[s] you read each week will be the focus of the sermons and (perhaps, depending on how your congregation decides to implement Look at the Book) the adult Bible classes on the Lord's Day.

Every Sunday, a new book of the Bible will be explored. During this year, we will study through most of the 66 books of the Bible. Though we cannot do an indepth study of any one book in just two sermons and a Bible class, we do hope to provide an understanding of the major themes of each book and show how it contributes to the story of the Bible as a whole. Like someone eating at a buffet, we don't intend to digest everything on the table but only to sample the best of each dish.

Sunday A. M. Sermon

The purpose of Sunday morning sermons this year will be to carefully study one small part of each book. We may focus on a particular story in the book that teaches us an important lesson for living. We may study a principle or theme that needs to be re-emphasized in the church today.

Whatever the particular topic, there will be two ulterior motives in each of the Sunday morning lessons.

First, we want to show how to dig deeper into a book, and thus turn Bible reading into Bible study. We hope to model study methods that you can apply to other sections of the book to gain a deeper understanding of God's word. Many of us know the frustration of only skimming the surface in our Bible study. If we can learn some of the skills that good preachers and teachers bring to the study of a book - skills which allow them to draw lessons from a passage that many of us pass right over - we can enter a whole new world of understanding.

Secondly, we want to emphasize *application* of the Bible. The Bible is intended to make a difference in our lives. Things which were written to Jews 3000 years ago are just as relevant to Americans today. Each sermon on Sunday morning will be designed to help us put God's word into practice. It is worthy to note that great scholars of the Bible are not necessarily great Christians. But great Christians have always saturated themselves with the Word of God.

Sunday Adult Bible Classes

Most congregations will choose to continue the Look at the Book theme by focusing on the same book we have just read and heard a sermon about. Though the focus will be the same, the methods will be different.

First, these classes will encourage you to keep up your personal reading and study of the Bible. The percentage of "Bible Readers" in your class will be tabulated, and the winning class recognized each week. You cannot be counted as a "reader" unless you completed all the assigned reading.

Secondly, the Bible classes will provide a forum for questions and discussion on the book you have read. Did you not understand something in your reading? Ask the teacher and let the other members of the class help you with your question. Was there a theme or idea that caught your attention? Use the class period as a time to talk about that particular issue. Though we can't guarantee infallible answers, the struggle to find solutions will be healthy and profitable.

Finally, your teachers will spend some time looking at a section of the book *they* found particularly interesting. Whatever the subject, this will be one more opportunity to think a little more carefully about part of God's word and to apply God's teaching in a practical manner.

Sunday P. M. Sermon

Again, though this will differ from church to church depending on what each congregation decides is in its own best interest, many churches decide to end each Sunday with one more look at the book of the week. Perhaps there will be a general overview and summary of the book. Perhaps you will spend some time learning about such things as the author, date, and setting of the book. Perhaps you will think about why a particular book was written, how it fits into the Bible as a whole, and what it says to Christians today?

One of the most exciting things a church can do with their Sunday evening program is to look at *Christ* in the book. Every book of the Bible point to Jesus. What does a particular book teach about the Messiah? Are there prophecies or principles that apply directly to Jesus? What do we learn about Christ (and God) from this book?

We want to encourage you to keep a notebook or file of the information you will be provided (around 200 pages!). It will prove to be an invaluable resource in years to come.

A Handout Each Week

Background:

Title:
The term “Genesis” comes from the Hebrew “Bere’shith,” first word in the Bible. It means “in the beginning.” The term in the Greek Septuagint and the English translations means “origin” or “beginning.”

Author:
Moses—the lawgiver and leader of Israel during the exodus from Egypt and wilderness experience. He is known as the author by Jews and Christians alike. The Old Testament contains both direct and indirect references to the Mosaic authorship of the entire Pentateuch (Ex 17:14; Lev 1:1-2; Nu 32:2; De 1:1; Jos 1:7; 1Ki 2:3; 2Ki 14:6; Ez 6:18; Neh 13:1; Da 9:11-13; Mal 4:4). In the line, the New Testament also contains numerous references to Moses as the author (Mt 8:4; Mk 12:26; Lk 16:29; Jn 7:19; Ac 26:22; Ro 10:19; 1Co 9:9; 2Co 3:15).

Moses was called by God to be a leader for His people (Ex 3). Reluctantly he complies. It would be difficult to find another man as well qualified as Moses. He had received his formal education in Egypt (7:22), and possessed the practical skills to correctly integrate and understand all the available records, manuscripts and oral transmissions into the four inspired volumes called the Pentateuch. **Genesis** is the first.

Date:
Various times are given, but the most logical time seems to be when Moses was with God on Mt. Sinai (Ex 24:12).

Time Span:
From creation to the death of Joseph and the settlement of God’s chosen people in Egypt. The beginning of **Genesis** cannot be dated with certainty, but the final events of the book probably occurred around 1700 B.C. half of the entire period of Old Testament history.

Summary:
History is the account of the acts of God. In a real sense history is viewed as God’s story. **Genesis** is the beginning of the acts of God in human events and is in many respects the foundation book of the entire Bible. It starts with the beginning of all things and assumes the existence of an eternal, all powerful, holy God. Man is created and placed in a protected garden. He is driven out because of disobedience and establishes cities. Politically and religiously, man is under the dominion of Jehovah. It is not until after the flood that “nations” are formed, and not until the Exodus that the nation of Israel is created.

During the period from Abraham to Joseph, the rest of the world develops slowly. Signs of civilization are sparse. In the nearby Balkans, the Bronze Age has just begun. In the area of Western France, the dead were being buried in vast stone tombs, the last of the Stone Age. In Britain, the Temple of the Sun at Stonehenge was being built, and Germany was beginning to learn farming.

After the creation of the world, the sin of Adam and Eve, and the great flood, God calls a particular man, Abraham, from Ur of Chaldees, a city on the Euphrates River. By this man’s seed, all the families of the earth will be blessed. The Bible is the account of God’s covenant promise to mankind through Abraham and its ultimate fulfillment in Christ and the church (Gal 3).


GENESIS

The Drama Begins

Key Text: *Ge 3: 15*
I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.

Theme:

- I. Genesis is the Book of Beginning:
 - A. The creation of the universe and all living things.
 - B. Beginning of sin and death.
 - C. Beginning of the plan of redemption.
 - D. The distribution of peoples, languages and nations.
 - E. The Hebrews become the chosen nation.
- II. Genesis tells about God’s promise to Abraham. Three elements: (12:1-9)
 - A. A nation would arise from his seed.
 - B. A land will be given to his seed.
 - C. A blessing will be given through his seed.
- III. Genesis describes God’s providential care for His people, and gives assurance that His word will be fulfilled.



Each week you will receive a handout focusing on the book you are about to read. It is designed to help you get more out of your time in God’s Word. The handouts all follow a similar format:

Background

This section gives you a brief overview of the “Book of the Week.” By discussing the author, setting, and plot of the book, you are encouraged to put each book in context.

Key Text

The central passage of each book is quoted. Memorizing these verses will help you to grasp the heart of the Bible’s message.

Theme

A brief list helps you know at a glance why each book was written and what each book was trying to accomplish.

Sermon Outlines

This is the only tricky part of the Look at the Book program. Each Sunday, you receive the handout for the *next week’s* reading—so that you have the information about a book as you read it. The sermon outline included in the handout, however, is for *this week’s* sermon—so you can follow along and be a better listener.

For example, the sermon outline in the first handout is *The B-I-B-L-E . . .* a look at the sacrifices people were willing to make so that we could have a Bible. Everything else in the handout, however, is focused on Genesis. The *second* handout will include a sermon outline on Genesis (as you think about the book you have just read), but everything else in the handout will focus on Exodus (the book you will be reading next). Got it?

Sermon Outline

The B-I-B-L-E

Introduction:

I recently counted the number of Bibles I have in my office—seventeen. The next time you see the antique version I carry around in the car, or the Bibles I keep at the house. In the drawer of the bedside table of every hotel I’ve slept in, there has been a copy of the Bible—free for the taking. Walk into most bookstores in the USA and the problem you face is not finding a Bible but making a choice between the wide variety of Bibles available. There are King James or modern English versions. There are Simple-English Bibles. There are red-letter or illustrated editions. You can buy Amplified Bibles or Condensed Bibles or Bibles that contain eight translations in parallel columns. You can choose between leather or hardback or paperback bindings.

We are drowning in Bibles. They fill our shelves, clutter our coffee tables, slide around in the back seats of our cars. If we were a sweating people, we would always have handy the stack of Bibles to do it on.

Unfortunately, having a Bible is not the same as being hungry for what it says. The sad truth is that many of us do not read any of the Bibles in our possession. We open them on occasion. We read along when someone else is reading publicly. We can even recall vague snatches of scriptures learned in childhood. But as for a consistent, disciplined, sequenced pattern of personal Bible reading or study...we do not feel the need to die on God’s word. One recent survey indicated that only 12 percent of Bible believers spend any time in the word on a daily basis; 14% read the Bible only once a week while 42% of those who say they believe the Bible is God’s word read from it only once in a great while.

Almost 70 years ago, Henry Halley (the author of Halley’s Bible Handbook) identified the lack of Bible reading as the major crisis facing the church of his own day and fumed:

Oh, we talk about the Bible, and defend the Bible, and praise the Bible, and exalt the Bible. Yes indeed! But many church members seldom ever even look into a Bible—indeed would be ashamed to be seen reading the Bible. And church leadership generally seems to be making no serious effort to get people to be Bible readers.

Outline:

I. Instances of Bible Burning

A. Jeremiah: Read Jeremiah 36:1-7, 15b-32

B. The Jews under Antiochus IV (Epiphanes)

C. Diocletian

1. A.D.303. Roman emperor Diocletian ordered every Bible in Rome to be confiscated and burned.
2. 25 years later, Constantine ordered 50 copies of the Bible at state expense. There were plenty of Bibles around from which to make copies!

Transition: Voltaire boasted that in 100 years the Bible would be non-existent, replaced by his own work. 50 years after his death, the Geneva Bible Society bought his house and printing press and printed 1000’s of Bibles in his living room!

II. The Sacrifices involved in the making of manuscripts

A. The preparation of the materials

B. The Process of Copying

1. The Scriptoriums
2. Our debt to these men: “Only three fingers write, but the whole body is in agony.”

III. Getting the Book in our Own Language

A. John Wycliffe

1. Completed first translation of the N.T. in English.
2. Wycliffe was tried post-humously, convicted of heresy, dug up and burned.

B. William Tyndale

1. The story of Tyndale’s N.T.
2. In 1536, Tyndale was burned at the stake for the heresy of publishing a Bible in English Language.

C. The Great Bible

1. Henry VIII had an authorized English version placed in every church in the country.
2. A bishop complained that so many were reading they no longer listened to his sermons!

Conclusion: What sacrifices others were willing to make so that we could have a Bible. What a tragedy it is that so few of us read the Bibles their blood and sweat made readily available to us!

to Enhance Your Study

Outline of Book

A good outline is one of the most helpful means of grasping what a book is about. Each week, this section gives a bird's-eye view of the "Book of the Week."

Small Group Study

Each handout includes a Bible study designed for use in homes and other small group settings. Each study, of course, is based on the reading for that week. Bible class teachers may also find helpful questions for dialogue.

Christ in the Book

The Bible, from first to last, is the story of Jesus. What does each book teach us about the Messiah? What are the prophecies or principles which apply to him? This section highlights the way Christ is taught in every book.

Major Lessons

A list of the important teachings of each book is provided. Ideas for Bible classes or Sunday evening sermons can be gleaned from this material.

Topics

Christ in Genesis

This book of beginnings also anticipates the coming of Christ. Though veiled to those who do not believe, several verses speak clearly to the faithful and show the plan of God to bring His Son to the world.

Prophecies:
The "seed" of woman (Ge 3:15): This is the first prophecy of the redeemer. Sin has produced separation and condemnation for all men (Ro 5:14ff). The only remedy is the "seed" which will come. He will crush Satan's head (bring an end to Satan and his work), but He will be bruised (crucifixion and resurrection). Starting from this passage, the prophecies and promises of the Christ continue until their fulfillment in Jesus. (cf Heb 2:9-15; Gal 4:4-5).

The "seed" of Abraham (Ge 12:1-4; 18:18; 22:18; 26:4; 28:14): The undeniable meaning of these promises made to the Patriarchs is that through their posterity salvation should be extended to all the nations of world. The fulfillment can be seen in Christ (Jo 8:56; Gal 3:16-19; Ro 4:13-25).

The "Lion" of Judah (Ge 49:10): "Shiloh" means *pacifier*, or *peace-maker*; used in a concrete sense, he who is *powerful*, *secure*. Three things are predicted in this verse. First, the tribe of Judah will remain until the Redeemer should appear. Second, the Prince of Peace (Eph 2:14) would come from Judah. Third, His rule will extend over the nations (Rev 5:5).

Types:
Adam (Ge 1:3); Ro 5:14; 1Co 15:45
Melchizedek (Ge 14:18ff); Ps 110:4; Heb 6:20-7:28
Isaac (Ge 21:2); Heb 11:18-19
Jacob's Ladder (Ge 28:10-17); Jn 1:51

Major Lessons

1. Election
Abel, Noah, Abraham, Jacob and Joseph are all called by God and chosen for their place in the history of God's people. Sometimes, as in the case of Jacob, the choice flies in the face of traditional ways of doing things.
2. Salvation
As soon as man committed sin, God made it plain that He was concerned to rescue man. Ge 3:15, 4:4, and 22:8 may all refer to the work Christ was to do.
3. Work
Even before the fall, man had a task to do in the world (1:28). Man was made to work. After the fall, it became less enjoyable (3:17-19).
4. Rest
The idea of one day in seven being a rest day comes from these earliest chapters of the Bible (2:2, 3). This notion precedes the command given to Moses.
5. Satan
An evil influence is introduced into the world. Satan, active and lying and scheming, is shown at work in God's creation.
6. Death
Death is threatened (3:3), overcome (5:24), and often encountered (e.g. 49:1-50:3). It is one of the chief fears of man. There are two deaths encountered: physical and spiritual.
7. Marriage
Marriage is instituted by God as an honorable and holy state (2:18-25). It forms the thread from which the entire fabric of human society is woven.
8. Worship
From the very beginning, man has had the privilege and responsibility to worship God (4:1-7).
9. Soul
It is during the creation of man that God breathes into his body both life and the eternal soul. The eternal spirit or soul distinguishes man from animal life (2:7).
10. Providence
God's activity in the events of history is an ever present reality as demonstrated in the life of Joseph (37:1-36; 39-50).

Why Did God Speak To Men Through Prophecy?

1. If their views had been limited to the present, the covenant people would have been in danger of becoming selfish.
2. The promise of the Messiah was a means of retaining the allegiance of the people to the Lord during times of calamity.
3. The promise of the Messiah was a means of promoting genuine piety and true devotion to God. Only the righteous would receive the blessings.
4. Prophecy prepared the way for Christ, so that, when He did come, He might be identified by a comparison of the prediction with the fulfillment.

3

Outline

- I. **The History of the Primitive World (1-11)**
 - A. The Creation (1-2)
 1. Creation in general (1)
 2. Creation of man in particular (2)
 - B. The Fall (3-6)
 1. Fall of man; expulsion from paradise (3)
 2. History of Adam and descendants (4-5)
 3. Increase of wickedness and the flood (6)
 - C. The Flood (7-8)
 - D. The New World (9-11)
 1. Intoxication of Noah (9)
 2. Distribution of peoples (10)
 3. Dispersion of mankind (11)
- II. **The History of the Patriarchs (12:1-50:26)**
 - A. Abraham's Life: Covenant Promise (12:1-23:20)
 1. Covenant faith begins (12:1-14:24)
 - a. God's promise to Abraham (12:1-4)
 - b. wanderings of Abraham (12:5-13:1)
 - c. dispute and division of the land (13:2-18)
 - d. kings of the east capture Lot (14:1-24)
 2. Covenant faith tested (15:1-21:21)
 - a. an heir promised (15:1-20)
 - b. Ishmael not the heir (16:1-15)
 - c. circumcision a sign of the covenant (17:1-27)
 - d. son promised to Abram and Sarah (18:1-15)
 - e. Sodom and Gomorrah (18:16-19:38)
 - f. Abraham visits Abimelech (20:1-19)
 - g. Isaac born and Ishmael driven out (21:1-21)
 3. Covenant faith perfected (22:1-23:20)
 - a. offering of Isaac (22:1-19)
 - b. death of Sarah (23:1-20)
 - B. Life of Isaac: Covenant Passed On (24:1-26:33)
 1. Marriage to Rebekah (24:1-67)
 2. Isaac and his sons (25:19-26)
 3. Sale of the birthright by Esau (25:27-34)
 4. Covenant Given to Isaac (26:1-5)
 5. Deception of Abimelech (26:6-33)
 - C. Life of Jacob - Covenant Pursued (27:1-36)
 1. Secures physical blessing by deceit (27:1-45)
 2. The flight to Haran (27:46-29:14)
 3. Life in Haran (29:31-30:43)
 4. Laban Pursues Jacob (31:1-55)
 5. Peace with Esau and life in Canaan (32:1-36:43)
 - D. Joseph's Life: Covenant Practiced (37:1-50:25)
 1. His training by trials (37:1-40:23)
 - a. Joseph the dreamer (37:1-11)
 - b. sold into Egypt (37:12-40:23)
 - c. Judah and Tamar (38:1-30)
 2. His triumph by testing (41:1-50:25)
 - a. preparation for famine (41:1-57)
 - b. confrontation with his brothers (42:1-45:28)
 3. His death (50:22-26)

Small Group Study

Warm-up:
Share a time in your life when you spent a great deal of money for something of little value.

Look at the Book *Genesis 25:21-34*

1. What significance has Jacob's name and his holding to Esau's heel with Jacob's personality in this story?
2. Do you think Jacob was being cold and hard when Esau asked for "a swallow of that red stuff" and he would not give it to him until Esau sold his birthright?
3. How desperate do you think Esau was when he asked for the food? Do you think he was really about to die, or that he just *thought* he was about to die?
4. Why was the birthright so important?
5. Why do you think Esau "despised" his birthright?

Looking Closer:

1. If you were Jacob, how would you react to Esau despising his birthright?
 - a. It's mine now!
 - b. I didn't think he would do it!
 - c. I know he didn't want it.
 - d. He didn't deserve it anyway.
2. If you possessed a great spiritual blessing, what would it take for you to sell it?
 - a. Very little. They are not worth much.
 - b. Not much. They can be purchased again.
 - c. A great deal, but it has got to be the right price.
 - d. I would not sell it for any price!
3. What would cause you to despise your spiritual blessing?
 - a. The example of an unfaithful Christian.
 - b. My own faithless action.
 - c. Nothing.
 - d. Not valuing my "birthright" sufficiently.
4. What do you think about the moral implications in Jacob's deception? Was he right or wrong? Why?
5. Do you think we can be deceptive and please God? If there was one thing in the world that you really wanted, would you use deception to get it? What would it be? How do you think God would react?

Look Around:
Go around the group and share with them two of your greatest spiritual blessings.

4

Schedule

Week	Handout Title	Handout Page #	Week	Handout Title	Handout Page #
<input type="checkbox"/>	Genesis: The Drama Begins	1-4	<input type="checkbox"/>	Malachi: Sounds of Silence	101-104
<input type="checkbox"/>	Exodus: God Comes Down	5-8	<input type="checkbox"/>	Gospels: Greatest Story Ever Told	105-108
<input type="checkbox"/>	Leviticus: Making a Holy People	9-12	<input type="checkbox"/>	Luke: Jesus the Man	109-112
<input type="checkbox"/>	Numbers: Obey or Pay	13-16	<input type="checkbox"/>	Acts I: Can't Keep a Good Man Down..	113-116
<input type="checkbox"/>	Deuteronomy: Blessings and Curses	17-20	<input type="checkbox"/>	Acts II: How the West was Won	117-120
<input type="checkbox"/>	Job: Why Me, Lord?	21-24	<input type="checkbox"/>	Galatians: Born Free	121-124
<input type="checkbox"/>	Joshua: Canaan or Bust	25-28	<input type="checkbox"/>	1 /2 Thessalonians: Christian Primer ...	125-128
<input type="checkbox"/>	Judges: On Again, Off Again	29-32	<input type="checkbox"/>	1 Corinthians: One in the Spirit	129-132
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ruth: Love Story	33-36	<input type="checkbox"/>	2 Corinthians: Imitation of Christ ..	133-136
<input type="checkbox"/>	1 Samuel: Take Me to Your Leader	37-40	<input type="checkbox"/>	Romans: To Rome with Love	137-140
<input type="checkbox"/>	2 Samuel: The Best of Times	41-44	<input type="checkbox"/>	James: Practice What You Preach	141-144
<input type="checkbox"/>	Psalms: The Song Book	45-48	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mark: Jesus the Servant	145-148
<input type="checkbox"/>	1 Kings: The Good, Bad & Ugly I.....	49-52	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ephesians: Give Peace a Chance	149-152
<input type="checkbox"/>	Proverbs: Mini-Pearls	53-56	<input type="checkbox"/>	Colossians: To Know Him.....	153-156
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ecclesiastes: Wine, Women, & Song ..	57-60	<input type="checkbox"/>	Philippians: United We Stand	157-160
<input type="checkbox"/>	2 Kings: The Good, Bad, & Ugly II	61-64	<input type="checkbox"/>	1 /2 Timothy: Never Say Die	161-164
<input type="checkbox"/>	Pre-Exilic Prophets: Apocalypse Now	65-68	<input type="checkbox"/>	Titus: Sharp Focus	165-168
<input type="checkbox"/>	Isaiah I: Dare to Discipline	69-72	<input type="checkbox"/>	1 /2 Peter & Jude: Going Gets Tough ...	169-172
<input type="checkbox"/>	Isaiah II: Glimpses of Glory	73-76	<input type="checkbox"/>	Matthew: Jesus the King	173-176
<input type="checkbox"/>	Jeremiah: Going, Going, Gone!	77-80	<input type="checkbox"/>	Hebrews: New and Improved	177-180
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ezekiel: Towering Inferno	81-84	<input type="checkbox"/>	John: Jesus the God/Man	181-184
<input type="checkbox"/>	Daniel: Dream Weaver	85-88	<input type="checkbox"/>	1 /2 /3 John: Confident Christians ..	185-188
<input type="checkbox"/>	Post-Exilic Prophets: Recess is Over	89-92	<input type="checkbox"/>	Revelation: When Worlds Collide ..	189-192
<input type="checkbox"/>	Esther: Foiled Holocaust	93-96	<input type="checkbox"/>	The Battle for the Bible	193-194
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ezra /Nehemiah: Follow the Leader	97-100			

Instructions:

There are 49 weeks in the Look at the Book program. The date to the left of each line indicates the Sunday on which you will receive a particular handout. You will receive the handout *the Sunday before* you do the reading.

For example, you will receive the handout for Genesis on . You should read through Genesis during the following week and come prepared to dig a little deeper into the book the next Sunday during worship and Bible class.

Forget Me Not

Introduction:

For all the wonder and complexity of the human brain, in spite of man's intelligence and ability to learn, regardless of our capacity for abstract thought and mental gymnastics, many of us have trouble remembering the name of someone we met only moments before! Brag all you want to about your talent for learning . . . it's not what you learn but what you can remember that makes the difference in the end.

Why are we so prone to forget? Psychologists tell us that forgetting occurs at an alarming rate.

1. Much of what we "forget" we never even hear because we don't pay attention.
2. Over 50% of what we do hear and pay close attention to is forgotten within minutes.
3. The small piece of memory that remains is likely to be distorted in some way - what we remember does not always correspond with what actually happened.

The news gets even worse. Sometimes our problem is not forgetfulness but the motivation to recall. The child who is caught jumping on the bed for the tenth time in the last hour may claim to have forgotten his mother's warning. In reality, he didn't forget . . . he just didn't want to remember!

The book of Judges is a textbook on human forgetfulness. One of the most interesting themes of this book is the amazing capacity of the Israelites to forget God. They "forgot the Lord their God" (3:7) and "did not remember the Lord their God" (8:34). Perhaps they didn't pay close attention in the first place. Perhaps, in time, they forgot what he commanded them to do. Perhaps they just weren't very motivated to remember. Whatever the case, they spent many miserable years proving that man's poor memory affects not just his ability to recall names or anniversaries but to remember his God as well.

I. A Pattern is Established

A. Chapter 2: The Template for Judges

This chapter sets the theme for the book. A pattern develops in this chapter that will recur throughout the remainder of the book. In this chapter, we learn something not just about the Israelites but about ourselves as well. If we think we are any different from them, we are sadly mistaken.

1. A Leader Dies

a. Read Judges 2:7-9

- b. So long as Joshua lived, the people served the Lord.
- c. However, no leader lives forever. When this man, so committed to God and to obeying his commands, when he dies, these people react in a way that is completely characteristic of us all.

2. Apostasy Occurs

a. Read Judges 2:10-13

- b. A new generation did not know God.
 - i. It wasn't that they had not heard about what God had done for their forefathers in Egypt or in the wilderness or in the land of Canaan.
 - ii. They had heard all right. They just forgot what they heard.
- c. In the course of one generation, they forgot God and quickly began to do evil in His eyes. A wholesale apostasy takes place among the Israelites. In less than 25 years, the Israelites went from complete consecration to God to complete apostasy.

3. God Punishes

a. Read Judges 2:14-15

- b. God's anger brings punishment on His people.
 - i. Just as God had used the Israelites to punish the Canaanites, not God uses the Canaanites to discipline his people.
 - ii. They were defeated in battle and harassed by raiding parties.
- c. They were in "great distress" (vs 15).

4. God Saves

a. Read Joshua 2:16

- b. God raised up new leaders for his people.
- c. These men, who listened and obeyed, delivered the people from their enemies.

Transition: Read Joshua 2:17-19

The same pattern asserts itself time after time. God raises up a leader. The people return to God until the leader dies. The people forget God once more. God punishes his people until, once more, he raises up a leader.

B. The Pattern Followed Throughout Judges

1. Othniel - 3:7-11

- a. Joshua dies.
- b. **Read 3:7** - The Israelites forget God.
- c. Cushan-Rishathaim, king of Aram
 - i. An invasion from the north-east.
 - ii. He oppresses Israel for 8 years.
- d. Othniel - 40 years of peace.

2. Ehud - 3:12-30

- a. Othniel dies
- b. **Read 3:12** - The Israelites forget God.
- c. Eglon, King of Moab
 - i. An invasion from the south-east.
 - ii. Eglon oppresses Israel for 18 years.
- d. Ehud and his successor give Israel 80 years of peace.

3. Deborah - Chapters 4-5

- a. Ehud dies
- b. **Read 4:1** - The Israelites forget God.
- c. Jabin, king of Canaan
 - i. An invasion from the north
 - ii. Jabin oppresses Israel for 20 years

4. **Gideon** - Chapters 6-8
 - a. Deborah passes from the scene.
 - b. Read 6:1 - The Israelites forget God.
 - c. Midianites (to the south) oppress for 7 years.
 - d. 40 years of peace under Gideon.
 - e. **Read 8:33-34**
5. **Jephthah** - Chapters 10-12
 - a. The Israelites forget God (10:6)
 - b. Philistines and Ammonites oppress for 18 years.
 - c. God raised up Jephthah for 6 years.
6. **Sampson** - Chapters 13-16
 - a. The Israelites forget God (13:1)
 - b. Philistines oppress for 40 years.
 - c. God raises up Sampson for 20 years of peace.

II. Lessons for God's People of All Times

A. Apostasy is the Rule, Not the Exception

1. The Israelites kept forgetting God.
 - a. You would think they'd finally learn their lesson!
 - b. But the point of this book is that these people kept forgetting!
 - i. Sometimes it took 40 years for them to forget.
 - ii. Other times it took only 5 or 6 years.
2. Is the New Israel any different from the Old?
 - a. We are just as liable to forget as they were.
 - b. Though we hear all the stories about what God has done for our forefathers, we are no more likely to remember than they.
 - c. How many "restoration movements" have there been in church history, calling us to remember the way things were? After each movement grew up a new generation who forgot their God.
3. Apostasy is the Rule, not the Exception, for God's People.
 - a. Apostasy shouldn't surprise the church. It is only a matter of time unless we are very much on our guard.
 - b. Apostasy is only a generation away. All it takes is the failure to instill a burning love of God in the hearts of those who will take the reins when we are gone.

B. God Disciplines Those He Loves

1. We marvel at the patience of God.
 - a. God never gives up on His people.
 - i. I would have given up on them when they complained so bitterly in the wilderness.
 - ii. I surely would have given up on them after about the 3rd or 4th bout of forgetfulness here in Judges.
 - iii. But God never gives up. He becomes angry with them. He is disappointed in them. But he never gives up.
 - b. Even when they forget him repeatedly, when they rebel and follow other gods, God continues to draw them closer to Himself.

2. God's discipline is designed to bring his people back.
 - a. God consistently punishes his people in this book.
 - i. He brings wars and famine and poverty on them.
 - ii. They labor under foreigners who make them miserable.
 - b. But, like a father who loves his children, God's intent is not to cause suffering so much as to bring repentance. He wants his people back.
3. The same rules apply to the Church today.
 - a. When we find ourselves in the worst crises, when everything is going wrong and we want to give it all up, perhaps it is time to think about returning to God and recommitting ourselves to his Lordship.
 - b. Discipline is a sign of God's continued love, not of his abandonment. It is an invitation to return to him and to live under his blessings. It is a request for repentance.
4. If apostasy is the rule rather than the exception, it might be equally true that discipline is also the norm. God's discipline shouldn't surprise us. It is a warning that things are not as they should be and an inducement to return to the fold.

C. God Uses Leaders to Restore His People

1. It is always when God raises up a leader that change takes place among his people.
 - a. This entire book is about the men and women whom God chooses to lead his people back to himself.
 - b. They were not the most likely candidates for leading.
 - i. One was the son of a prostitute.
 - ii. Another was a doubting Thomas who asked for 3 signs before he would accept God's call.
 - iii. Yet another was a woman.
 - c. One of the great things Judges shows us about the Israelites is their willingness to follow the leaders God chooses for them. When they recognized that God had raised up a leader, they followed that leader whole-heartedly.
2. God raises up leaders today.
 - a. They are not always the most likely candidates.
 - i. They won't always be drawn from the elders, deacons or preachers.
 - ii. Title does not convey the right to lead in God's kingdom - only God gives that.
 - iii. There may be someone in this congregation today whom God is preparing to lead us into the future - someone with a burning commitment to be obedient to God.
 - b. Like the Israelites of old, we must be wise enough to recognize when God is raising up a leader and to follow the leader God gives to us.
 - i. How will we recognize such a leader?
 - a) He will be full of God's spirit.
 - b) He will demand obedience to God.
 - ii. How should we follow such a leader?
 - a) Heart and soul - He leads us back to God.
 - b) Lead, follow, or get out of the way!
 - c. It is only through strong and visionary leadership that real changes will take place in the church.

Background:

Title:

The title “**Judges**” refers to the men and women whose deeds are recorded in this book. The Hebrew judges were primarily liberators, deliverers, champions, heroes, sheikhs--men of war, not peace; men of the sword, not men of the courts; and not always *men*.

The Hebrew title is *Shophetim*, meaning “**Judges, Rulers, Deliverers or Saviors.**” The Greek word is *Kritai*, meaning “**Judges.**”

Author:

Again, scholarship is divided concerning the author. Various authors have been suggested: Phinehas, Hezekiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Ezra and Samuel. The majority of scholars attribute the book to Samuel, the last of the judges of Israel. Who wrote this book is, perhaps, less important than the fact that God has preserved for us a book of singular power and unblinking realism.

Date:

Judges was written after the establishment of the monarchy (9:1, 21:25), but before the capture of Jerusalem (1:21) by David (2Sa 5:6-8). The Canaanites were still in Gezer (1:29--The city was later given to Solomon’s wife--1Ki 9:16). Therefore, the most probable time of writing was sometime before the writing of 2 Samuel.

Time Span:

The record of **Judges** starts at the death of Joshua (1:1) and continues to the rise of Samuel. It is impossible to determine the exact years. Approximately 300 to 350 years are covered. Some judges may have ruled concurrently (e.g. Jephthah and Samson) or overlapped each other.

To Whom Written: The Israelites in general.

Summary:

2:11-23

When Joshua dies, he leaves no successor to the leadership of Israel. Therefore, there was no central government to hold the tribes together. Consequently, “*every man did what was right in his own eyes*” (17:6, 18:1, 19:1, 21:25). The promised land had not been fully conquered (1:21-36) and the Canaanites remained a serious threat to Israel’s power. Much of what took place during this period is not written down for us to read. However, the cycle of events depicts the entire period: a decline in morals, despotism by an oppressor, desperate cries for help, a deliverer comes to assist.

Judges demonstrates in a bold way that faith and obedience cannot be neglected.

This was an age of war, a period of rough, barbaric lawlessness that was demoralizing for Israel. But worst of all, it was an age of moral and spiritual decline. Israel allowed the influence of Baal to permeate its worship of Jehovah and the conscience of the people was corrupted. Thus, **Judges** stands in contrast with the book of Joshua. Joshua was a period of victory, **Judges** a period of failure. It demonstrates in a bold way that faith and obedience cannot be neglected.

JUDGES

On Again, Off Again

Key Text: Jdg 2: 10-13

After that whole generation had been gathered to their fathers, another generation grew up, who knew neither the Lord nor what he had done for Israel. Then the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the Lord and served the Baals. They forsook the Lord, the God of their fathers, who had brought them out of Egypt. They followed and worshiped various gods of the peoples around them. They provoked the Lord to anger because they forsook him and served Baal and the Ashtoreths.

[Also, read chapter 21:25.]

Theme:

- I. To show that the Lord will not tolerate sin. (This is true in respect to those who are His children as well as those who are not.)
- II. To show that when his people repent of sins and obey Jehovah, God will give them deliverance.
- III. To show that when humans are left to their own device, chaos ensues.



Sermon Outline

The God of Judgment

Introduction:

Early in the second century, one of the most interesting heretics in all of church history came to prominence. Marcion was a wealthy ship owner from the region of the Black Sea. He gave up his business, however, and decided to spend the remainder of his life dabbling in theology. Although he was the son of an elder, his own father excommunicated him because of his eccentric teachings in the church there. Sometime around A.D. 140, he came to Rome seeking membership in the church in that place.

While in Rome, Marcion preached the gospel as he thought it really happened. The Old Testament, in his view, was the product of a sick and evil mind. "Look at all the lying, pillage, and killing," he said. "Look at the favoritism: Yahweh selects a race of idolatrous schemers to be his chosen people, and calls an adulterous murdering brigand 'a man after my own heart.' No," concluded Marcion, "the one who made the world and inspired the Old Testament could not be good . . . The Old Testament god may be the powerful creator, but he is not the good heavenly father Jesus proclaimed."

Marcion preached that Christians must reject the Old Testament entirely. He believed Jesus opposed the work of the Old Testament god, claiming that Jesus really said (at Mt 4:17), "I have not come to fulfill the law but to destroy it." Marcion could not reconcile the God of gentleness and mercy that he saw in Jesus with the god of judgment and punishment he saw in the Old Testament.

Finally, he was excommunicated again. He became a travelling preacher, winning many converts to his thinking and establishing Marcionite churches throughout the East.

Have you ever had Marcion's problem with the Old Testament?

Outline:

I. The Dilemma of the Book of Joshua

- A. Passages in this book which cause problems.
 - 1. Jos 6:20-21 - the fate of Jericho
 - 2. Jos 8:24-28 - the fate of Ai
 - 3. Jos 10:40; 11:18-20 - the fate of Canaan
 - 4. This is a book about war and bloodshed. All of it is at the instigation of the God we worship.
- B. These passages highlight a major problem many have with the God of the Old Testament.
 - 1. Examples of this same problem from other books:
 - a. the Flood (Ge 6-8)
 - b. Sodom and Gomorrah (Ge 19)
 - 2. How can the God we know from the New Testament, the God we see in the face of Jesus, the loving and compassionate God of the cross, possibly be responsible for this kind of death and destruction?

II. The Message of the Book of Joshua

- A. The Earth is the Lord's.
 - 1. He created it, maintains it, and determines its fate.
 - 2. Especially true with Canaan -- "the Lord's land" (Jos 22:19).
- B. He Blesses those who Obey Him -- faith and obedience led to the inheritance of Canaan.
 - 1. **Read Joshua 1:6-9**
 - 2. "Success" in conquering the land was conditioned on the obedience of Joshua and those who followed.
 - 3. If they would be obedient, God would bless their efforts.
- C. He Judges Those Who Disobey Him.
 - 1. This was true of His chosen people: Ex. of Achan (Jos 7).
 - 2. This was equally true of other nations as well: God judged and punished Egypt (Ge 15:13-14).

III. The God of Judgment

- A. A "Full Measure" of Sin
 - 1. **Read Genesis 15:16:** The time would come for the descendants of Abraham to drive out the Canaanites and take possession of the land.
 - 2. The Sins of the Canaanites: A degraded and degrading religion -- Baal and Ashtoreth.
- B. **Joshua:** An Introduction to the God Who Judges
 - 1. A book about God's holy war.
 - 2. A book about a God who judges.

Conclusion:

The God of the second Joshua (Jesus) is the God of the first Joshua also.

Christ in Judges

There are no specific references to Christ in Judges. However, there does seem to be an allusion of the pre-incarnate Christ, the Word, in passages that relate to the Angel of Jehovah. We do not mean to suggest in any way that Christ is a created being or an angel in submission. **Christ, or the Word, is God.** But *one of the manifestations* of the Word in the Old Testament is in the Angel of Jehovah.

In this dark period of the Judges, the Angel of the Covenant appears to Joshua and states that He is the One who brought them from the land of Egypt and that He had established the covenant with them (2:1). For anyone familiar with the previous history of the Israelites, this person speaking could be none other than **Jehovah**. At His words “the people lifted up their voices and wept...and there they sacrificed to the **Lord**.”

About 150 years later, He appeared to Gideon to call him to his great work of delivering Israel. Gideon did not recognize that this was the **Lord** (6:13, 22). But the reader of Judges is not left to doubt (vss 11 and 14). Gideon brought a burnt offering and a meat offering, and the Angel of the Lord commanded him to lay them upon the rock and He touched the offering with His staff, the Angel did something only God could rightfully do — He accepted the offering. It was only then that Gideon recognized he was in the presence of the **Lord** and had seen Him face to face. Fear came into his heart for he knew this meant death. But the **Lord** assured him that he would not die (vss 22-24).

Thirty years after this event the **Lord** appeared again as the Angel of Jehovah to the wife of Manoah, then again to her and her husband together (13:2-23). Manoah did not recognize the “man” (vs 8) who spoke to them as the Lord (vs 16). When sacrifice was commanded and accepted, they both realized that this was **Jehovah** and experienced the same fear of death Gideon had earlier (vs 22-23). It was during this encounter that they ask the name of the “man.” The Angel said, “Why do you ask my name, seeing it is wonderful?” (vs 18). Literally, He said His name was “incomprehensible” or “wonderful.” Later this name is used by Isaiah (9:6) as a prophetic name for the Messiah. **Thus we are brought face to face with the Lord Jesus Christ in one of His pre-incarnate forms, the Angel of Jehovah.**

Major Lessons

1. We cannot retain sin and serve God.
2. Sin left in the heart becomes a snare.
3. Sin brings punishment.
4. The power that defeats the enemy is Jehovah — not the strength and wisdom of man.
5. Appearances of the Angel of Jehovah or the Angel of the Lord: He appeared to Hagar (Ge 16:7-14), to Abraham (Ge 18:1-33; 22:11-18), to Jacob (Ge 31:11-13), to Moses (Ex 3:2-5; cf. Jn 8:58), to Israel (Ex 14:19; cf. 23:20; 32:34), to Balaam (Nu 22:22-35), to Joshua (Jdg 2:1-5), to Gideon (Jdg 6:11-23), to Manoah (Jdg 13:2-25), to David (1Ch 21:15-17) and to Elijah (1Ki 19:5-7). In Genesis 18, one of the three “men” that appeared to Abraham is repeatedly represented as Jehovah (vss 13, 17, 20, 22-33).
6. God does not always look to men of high morality or perfect character and behavior to be deliverers. But God does call men out that they may act as His servants. As long as they yield to that calling, God speaks, acts, and glorifies His name through them. As soon as men begin to act and speak for themselves, to set themselves up as heroes and tyrants above their fellowmen, they rebel from God. God rules in the affairs of men. For man to govern without Him is folly.
7. The cycles of the book give clear evidence that people are the same in every age. When man strays away from God, he is on his way to disaster.
8. The seven cycles of the book are seen in the following four areas:

Apostasy	relapse into sin
Servitude	retribution for sin
Pleading	repentance from sin
Deliverance	rescue from sin

Outline

Small Group Study

I. Introduction (1:1-3:6)

- A. From Joshua to Judges (1:1-2:5)
 - 1. Summary of period after Joshua's death (1:1-8)
 - 2. Summation of the activities of Judah (1:9-21)
 - 3. The failure of Ephraim and Mannasseh (1:22-29)
 - 4. The failure of the other tribes (1:30-36)
 - 5. The angel of the Lord rebukes Israel (2:1-5)
- B. General Religious Climate of the Times (2:6-3:6)
 - 1. A remembrance of Joshua's death (2:6-10)
 - 2. The apostasy of the people (2:11-15)
 - 3. The rise of the Judges (2:16-23)
 - 4. Nations left in the land (3:1-6)

II. The Oppressions and the Judges (3-16)

- A. Oppressor–Mesopotamia, Deliverer–Othniel (3:7-11)
- B. Oppressor–Moabites, Deliverer–Ehud (3:12-30)
- C. Oppressor–Philistines, Deliverer–Shamgar (3:31)
- D. Oppressor–Canaanites, Deliverer–Deborah and Barak (4:1 - 5:31)
 - 1. The rise of Deborah and Barak (4:1-9)
 - 2. The battle against Sisera (4:10-17)
 - 3. The death of Sisera (4:18-24)
 - 4. The Psalm of Deborah and Barak (5:1-31)
- E. Oppressor–Midianites, Deliverer–Gideon (6:1-8:32)
 - 1. The oppression by Midianites (6:1-10)
 - 2. Call and commission of Gideon (6:11-26)
 - 3. Gideon's fleece (6:27-40)
 - 4. Selection of the 300 (7:1-8)
 - 5. Midianites and Amalekites destroyed (7:9-8:21)
 - 6. Lapse into idolatry (8:22-35)
- F. Abortive Attempt of Abimelech to be King (9:1-57)
 - 1. Abimelech made king conspiracy (9:1-6)
 - 2. Jotham's fable (9:7-21)
 - 3. Gaal's plot against Abimelech (9:22-41)
 - 4. Shechemites destroyed (9:42-49)
 - 5. Death of Abimelech (9:50-57)
- G. Oppressor–Ammonites, Deliverer–Tola and Jair (10:1-9)
- H. Oppressor–Ammonites, Deliverer–Jephthah (10:10-12:7)
 - 1. Oppressed (10:11-18)
 - 2. Call of Jephthah (11:1-11)
 - 3. Negotiations with Ammon (11:12-28)
 - 4. Vow (11:29-40)
 - 5. Conflict with Ephraim (12:1-7)
- I. No Oppression, Judged by Ibzan, Elon, and Abdon (12:8-15)
- J. Oppressor–Philistines, Deliverer–Samson (13:1-16:31)
 - 1. Birth of Samson (13:1-25)
 - 2. Marriage of Samson (14:1-20)
 - 3. Victory and defeat of Samson (15:1-20 to 16:1-22)
 - 4. Final victory of Samson (16:23-31)

III. Defeat of Israel Through Idolatry 17

IV. Defeat of Israel Through Immorality 18

V. Defeat of Israel Through Civil War 19-21

Warm-up:

What is one of the funniest remarks you have heard from a child?
What is the most complementary thing a teenager has said about you?

Look at the Book

Judges 11:29-40

1. Do you think that the vow Jephthah made was necessary? Why?
2. If you were Jephthah, how would you handle the situation?
 - a. Keep my vow
 - b. Ask God to exempt my daughter
 - c. I would exempt my daughter
 - d. Ask God if I could substitute something else
 - e. Wonder if I had done something wrong
 - f. Curse God for allowing her to come out
3. Why do you think her attitude is so accepting?
4. Do you think that Jephthah actually offered his daughter as a burnt offering? Do you think God would allow this?
5. What do you think verses 37 - 39 indicate about the sacrifice? Why was she weeping?

Looking Closer:

1. Have you ever made a vow to the Lord that you wish you had never made? (If so, will you share it with the group?)
2. Do you think that your commitment to Christ when you became a Christian constitutes a vow?
3. What is the difference between a vow to God, and striking a bargain with God? Can man ever bargain with God?

Looking Around:

Go around the group and have each person share what they want most to happen in their spiritual life.