

A Very Simple Survey of the Old Testament

Block #5 — Lessons 33–40

Block #5 • Lessons 33–40 | Keith R. Blades | Enjoy the Bible Ministries®

Study Overview & Lesson Summaries

About This Block

Block #5 covers Deuteronomy through the beginning of I Samuel — from Moses’ final charge to the nation through their conquest of the land under Joshua and into the first course of punishment in the days of the Judges. Across 8 lessons Keith R. Blades traces the transition from Israel’s wilderness wanderings to the actual possession of the LORD’s land, followed by the sobering pattern of apostasy that quickly set in. The block opens with Moses’ farewell and the commissioning of Joshua, moves through the miraculous crossing of the Jordan and conquest of Jericho, and then turns to the approximately 450-year period of the Judges in which Israel repeatedly fell away from the LORD only to be graciously delivered. The stories of Gideon, Samson, Ruth, and the child Samuel are surveyed as illustrations of both Israel’s persistent failure and God’s unfailing mercy and grace toward His nation.

Lessons at a Glance

| Lesson | Title — Scripture Reference |
|-----------|---|
| Lesson 33 | Joshua Is Chosen Leader — Deuteronomy 31–Joshua 1 |
| Lesson 34 | Crossing the Jordan — Joshua 3–4 |
| Lesson 35 | Fall of Jericho — Joshua 5–6 |
| Lesson 36 | An Angel Appears to Gideon — Judges 6 |
| Lesson 37 | Gideon and the Three Hundred — Judges 7 |
| Lesson 38 | Story of Samson — Judges 13–16 |
| Lesson 39 | Story of Ruth — Ruth 1–4 |
| Lesson 40 | Child Samuel — I Samuel 1–2 |

Lesson Summaries

L33

Joshua Is Chosen Leader *Deuteronomy 31–Joshua 1 • Moses’ Farewell and Joshua’s Commission*

- Deuteronomy (“second law”) records Moses’ review of God’s dealings with Israel and his farewell charge to the nation before his death — God adds

another covenant (Deut. 29) beyond the Sinai Law contract, providing for Israel's future restoration after inevitable failure

- Moses' prophetic song (Deut. 32) foretells Israel's entire history of failure and God's eventual restoration — declaring that Israel will provoke God by turning to other gods, yet God will ultimately avenge and be merciful to His people

Joshua Commissioned

- God commands Moses to commission Joshua as the new leader: "Be strong and of a good courage" — Joshua is to bring Israel into the land and lead the conquest; God promises to go before him and never forsake him (Deut. 31:7–8, 23)
- Moses dies and the LORD buries him; Joshua now stands as leader with the same promise: "As I was with Moses, so I will be with thee" (Josh. 1:5) — the conquest of the LORD's land is about to begin
- Application: the land they are entering is the LORD's claimed land — the headquarters of Satan's usurped dominion over the earth; Israel's conquest is God's operation to repossess what is His and establish His kingdom

L34

Crossing the Jordan *Joshua 3–4 • God Parts the Jordan and Israel Enters the Land*

- Israel is now encamped across the Jordan River from the promised land — the last barrier between them and the beginning of the conquest; the Jordan is at flood stage, making the crossing naturally impossible
- God miraculously parts the Jordan just as He parted the Red Sea — the priests carrying the ark of the covenant step into the water and it stops flowing; Israel crosses on dry ground into the LORD's land

The LORD as "Lord of All the Earth"

- Joshua declares that the crossing will demonstrate that "the living God is among you" (Josh. 3:10) — the ark of the covenant is called "the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth": God is asserting His rightful dominion over the whole earth
- Twelve memorial stones are set up from the Jordan riverbed — a permanent testimony to Israel's children of what the LORD did, "that all the people of the earth might know the hand of the LORD, that it is mighty" (Josh. 4:24)
- The miraculous crossing serves the same function as the Red Sea: displaying God's power and demonstrating that this operation is entirely His — Israel's conquest will succeed not by her own might but by the LORD's hand

L35

Fall of Jericho *Joshua 5–6 • The Captain of the LORD's Host and the Conquest Begins*

- Before the conquest begins, Joshua encounters "the captain of the host of the LORD" (Josh. 5:13–15) — a pre-incarnate appearance of Christ who declares the land is "holy"; the real commander of Israel's armies is the LORD Himself
- God's battle plan for Jericho: march around the city once a day for six days, seven times on the seventh day with the priests blowing trumpets, then shout — a plan that makes no military sense but requires total faith in the LORD

Victory and Warning

- Jericho's walls fall flat and the city is destroyed — God's power alone gives the victory; Rahab and her family are spared because she believed the God of Israel (Josh. 2:11)
- Achan's sin at Ai (Josh. 7): one man's disobedience in taking the accursed thing results in Israel's defeat — a sobering reminder that God deals with His people on the basis of the contract and that disobedience brings consequences
- Joshua conquers 31 kings across the land — the LORD fights for Israel exactly as He promised; the land is divided among the tribes as their inheritance
- Joshua's farewell warning (Josh. 23–24): the "seeds of rebelliousness" remain — not all inhabitants were driven out, and Joshua warns that if Israel turns to their gods, God's contracted judgments will come upon them

L36

An Angel Appears to Gideon *Judges 6 • The First Course of Punishment and God's Raising Up of Deliverers*

- After Joshua's death, the book of Judges records approximately 450 years in which Israel fell into a repeated cycle: apostasy, punishment, crying out to the LORD, and deliverance through a judge — the first course of contracted punishment from Leviticus 26 is now in operation
- An angel of the LORD appears to Israel to declare that because they have not obeyed God's voice, He will not drive out their enemies any longer — the people weep but do not truly repent; the pattern of failure continues

Gideon's Call

- Israel is oppressed by Midian for seven years; Gideon is found threshing wheat in a winepress in hiding — the angel of the LORD addresses him as "thou mighty man of valour" and commissions him to deliver Israel
- Gideon's response reveals Israel's spiritual condition: "If the LORD be with us, why then is all this befallen us?" (Judg. 6:13) — he does not understand that the oppression is God's contracted judgment for disobedience
- God patiently confirms the calling through signs (fire from the rock, the fleece tests) — Gideon responds in faith, tears down his father's altar to Baal, and prepares to lead Israel against Midian

L37

Gideon and the Three Hundred *Judges 7 • God's Victory Through Weakness*

- God deliberately reduces Gideon's army from 32,000 to 10,000 to 300 men — the explicit reason: "lest Israel vaunt themselves against me, saying, Mine own hand hath saved me" (Judg. 7:2); the same lesson from the wilderness: Israel must learn to depend on God, not on herself
- The reduction method: first, all who are afraid depart (22,000 leave); then, only those who lap water from their hands rather than kneeling to drink are selected — God's criteria, not military strength, determines who fights

The Battle

- Three hundred men armed with trumpets, empty pitchers, and torches — weapons that make no military sense, just like the march around Jericho; the

victory must be unmistakably the LORD's

- At Gideon's signal the pitchers are broken, torches blaze, trumpets sound, and the cry goes up: "The sword of the LORD, and of Gideon" — the Midianites flee in terror and destroy one another; the LORD delivers Israel
- This victory perfectly illustrates the Leviticus 26:8 blessing in miniature: "five of you shall chase an hundred, and an hundred of you shall put ten thousand to flight" — when Israel is right with the LORD, this is what happens
- Application: God's method throughout is always the same — He works through weakness so that the glory belongs entirely to Him and Israel learns to trust the LORD rather than her own resources

L38

Story of Samson *Judges 13–16 • Israel's Worst Apostasy and God's Lone Deliverer*

- Samson's story comes during Israel's worst period of apostasy under Philistine oppression (40 years) — so deep is Israel's failure that no one in the nation even rallies around Samson as deliverer; Israel has sunk to her lowest point in the Judges period
- Samson is a Nazarite from the womb: set apart by God from birth with supernatural strength — the angel of the LORD announces his birth to his parents and prescribes the Nazarite conditions

Samson as a Type of Christ

- The Philistines recognize Samson as their enemy and seek to destroy him, but amazingly Israel does not rally behind him — Israel's own people hand him over to the Philistines (Judg. 15:12–13), just as Israel will later hand over her own Messiah
- Samson fights alone against Israel's enemies with divinely given power — he slays a thousand Philistines with the jawbone of a donkey; God confirms His presence by miraculously providing water from the jawbone
- Samson's downfall through Delilah: his persistent yielding to his flesh despite God's grace — the Philistines capture him, gouge out his eyes, and make him grind in prison; yet God allows his strength to return one final time
- Samson's death brings more destruction on the Philistines than his entire life — a picture of how God accomplishes His purposes even through the weakness and failure of His instruments

L39

Story of Ruth *Ruth 1–4 • The Kinsman-Redeemer and Israel's Need for Redemption*

- The book of Ruth is set during the Judges period and provides a beautiful picture of the kinsman-redeemer concept — a close relative who has the right, the ability, and the willingness to redeem one who has lost their inheritance
- Naomi's predicament: an Israelite woman left destitute without husband or sons in a foreign land — she has lost everything and cannot recover her inheritance on her own; her situation mirrors Israel's own condition under the contracted punishment

Boaz as Kinsman-Redeemer

- Ruth's faithfulness to Naomi and to the God of Israel brings her into the field

L40

of Boaz — a wealthy and mighty man of the family who is a near kinsman with the right to redeem

- Boaz exercises his right as kinsman-redeemer: he purchases the inheritance, takes Ruth as his wife, and restores everything that was lost — Naomi's emptiness is turned to fullness through the redeemer's gracious action
- The doctrinal parallel: just as Naomi and Ruth needed a kinsman-redeemer to restore what they could not recover on their own, so Israel needs God to act as her Redeemer — her failures under the Law contract have left her unable to obtain the blessings on her own merits
- Boaz and Ruth's son Obed becomes the grandfather of David — connecting the kinsman-redeemer line directly to the Davidic covenant and ultimately to Christ as Israel's true Redeemer

Child Samuel | *1 Samuel 1–2 • The Corruption of the Priesthood and God's Faithful Provision*

- The period of the Judges closes with Israel in a deplorable spiritual state — Eli's sons Hophni and Phinehas, who serve as priests at the tabernacle in Shiloh, are called "sons of Belial" (1 Sam. 2:12): they desecrate the sacrifices and corrupt the priesthood
- The very institution God designed to teach Israel about sin and grace — the tabernacle and its sacrifices — has been commandeered by wicked men; the testimony of the tabernacle is being perverted

Hannah's Faithfulness and Samuel's Birth

- Hannah, a godly woman barren and grieved, pours out her heart to the LORD and vows to dedicate her son to God's service — she is one of the rare examples of genuine faith and dependence upon the LORD during this dark period
- God grants Hannah a son, Samuel, and she keeps her vow: she brings the child to Shiloh to serve the LORD under Eli — Samuel is raised as a Nazarite in the very place where Eli's sons are corrupting God's house
- Samuel grows up in the presence of the LORD and is being prepared by God to serve as prophet, priest, and judge over Israel — God is faithfully raising up what Israel needs even in the midst of her worst failure
- Application: even at Israel's lowest spiritual point, God's mercy and grace do not cease — He is always working to provide what is needed for His plan and purpose with His nation

Key Doctrinal Distinctions

The Conquest Was God's Operation — Not Israel's Achievement

From the crossing of the Jordan to the fall of Jericho to the defeat of 31 kings, the conquest of the land was the LORD's operation, not Israel's military achievement. God parted the Jordan as He had the Red Sea, He toppled Jericho's walls by His own power, and He reduced Gideon's army to 300 men so that

Israel could not claim the victory as her own. The consistent testimony is that the land belongs to the LORD, the victory comes from the LORD, and Israel's only role is to trust and obey. When she did, she prevailed; when she did not (as at Ai), she was defeated. The conquest was a continuation of the same lesson Israel was being taught in the wilderness: she is not great in herself, only in the LORD.

Leviticus 26 in Action — The First Course of Punishment

The book of Judges records the first course of contracted punishment from Leviticus 26 being carried out in Israel's history. Having failed to fully drive out the inhabitants of the land as God commanded, Israel began to worship their gods and intermarry with them. In response, God brought the contracted consequences: enemy raids, oppression by surrounding nations, defeat in battle, and being ruled over by their enemies. The approximately 450-year cycle of apostasy, punishment, repentance, and deliverance through judges is precisely what Leviticus 26 contracted would happen. Understanding this connection transforms the book of Judges from a collection of disconnected adventure stories into a coherent testimony of God dealing with His nation exactly as He said He would.

God's Grace Even Under Contracted Punishment

Though the Judges period represents Israel's persistent failure under the Law contract, God's mercy and grace never ceased. Every time Israel cried out to the LORD, He raised up a deliverer. Gideon, Samson, and the other judges were all instruments of God's undeserved mercy toward a nation that continually failed to learn its lessons. Even Samson, who fought entirely alone because Israel was too apostate to rally behind him, was empowered by God's grace. The kinsman-redeemer in the book of Ruth provides the clearest picture: Israel cannot redeem herself, but God can and will provide a Redeemer. This is the same message the tabernacle was designed to teach — Israel's only hope is not in her own goodness but in God's mercy and grace.

The Seeds of Rebelliousness — Israel's Failure to Complete the Conquest

Joshua's farewell warning that the "seeds of rebelliousness" remained in the land proved tragically accurate. Israel did not drive out all the inhabitants as God commanded, and those remaining peoples became exactly the snare Joshua warned they would be. Israel turned to their gods, adopted their practices, and provoked the LORD to anger. This failure was not incidental but structural: it revealed that Israel was still not "great in the LORD." She had seen God's power displayed at the Jordan, at Jericho, and in battle after battle, yet she still did not learn to trust and obey Him completely. The entire Judges period flowed from this initial failure to fully obey God's command regarding the land.

The Corruption of the Priesthood — God's Testimony Perverted

By the end of the Judges period, Israel's spiritual decline had reached its lowest point: the very priesthood God had established to minister at the tabernacle was corrupted by Eli's wicked sons. The tabernacle — God's carefully designed "house with meaning" whose every feature was intended to teach Israel about her sinfulness and God's mercy — was being desecrated by the men charged with maintaining its testimony. Yet even in this darkest hour, God raised up Hannah's son Samuel to serve faithfully at Shiloh. God's plan and purpose for His nation was never in jeopardy, even when every human instrument appeared to have failed.

Key Scripture References

| | |
|---------------------------|--|
| Deuteronomy 29 | An additional covenant beyond Sinai, providing for Israel's restoration after failure under the Law |
| Deuteronomy 31:7–8 | God's charge to Joshua: "Be strong and of a good courage" — the LORD will go before him into the land |
| Deuteronomy 32 | Moses' prophetic song foretelling Israel's entire history of failure and God's ultimate restoration |
| Joshua 1:5 | "As I was with Moses, so I will be with thee" — God's promise to Joshua as the new leader of Israel |
| Joshua 3–4 | The miraculous crossing of the Jordan on dry ground — the ark of "the Lord of all the earth" leads the way |
| Joshua 4:24 | Memorial stones: "that all the people of the earth might know the hand of the LORD, that it is mighty" |
| Joshua 5:13–15 | The Captain of the LORD's host appears to Joshua — the land is holy and the LORD commands the armies |
| Joshua 6 | The fall of Jericho: God's unconventional battle plan requiring total faith in the LORD |
| Joshua 7 | Achan's sin at Ai: one man's disobedience brings defeat upon all Israel under the Law contract |
| Joshua 23–24 | Joshua's farewell warning: the seeds of rebelliousness remain; if Israel turns to other gods, judgment will follow |
| Judges 6:13 | Gideon's question: "If the LORD be with us, why then is all this befallen us?" — failure to understand contracted punishment |
| Judges 7:2 | "Lest Israel vaunt themselves against me" — God reduces the army to 300 so the victory is unmistakably His |
| Judges 15:12–13 | Israel's own people bind Samson and hand him over to the Philistines — a type of Israel handing over her Messiah |
| Leviticus 26:8 | "Five of you shall chase an hundred" — the contracted blessing displayed in Gideon's victory with 300 men |
| Ruth 4:14–17 | Boaz as kinsman-redeemer restores what was lost — the line of David and ultimately Christ as Israel's true Redeemer |
| I Samuel 2:12 | Eli's sons, "sons of Belial," corrupt the priesthood — the tabernacle's testimony is perverted at Israel's lowest point |

For further study visit www.enjoythebible.org