



Based on [Numbers 13, 14, 20, 21](#); [Joshua 1-4, 6](#)

My Bible First - Lesson 09 - "Up and Down Years"

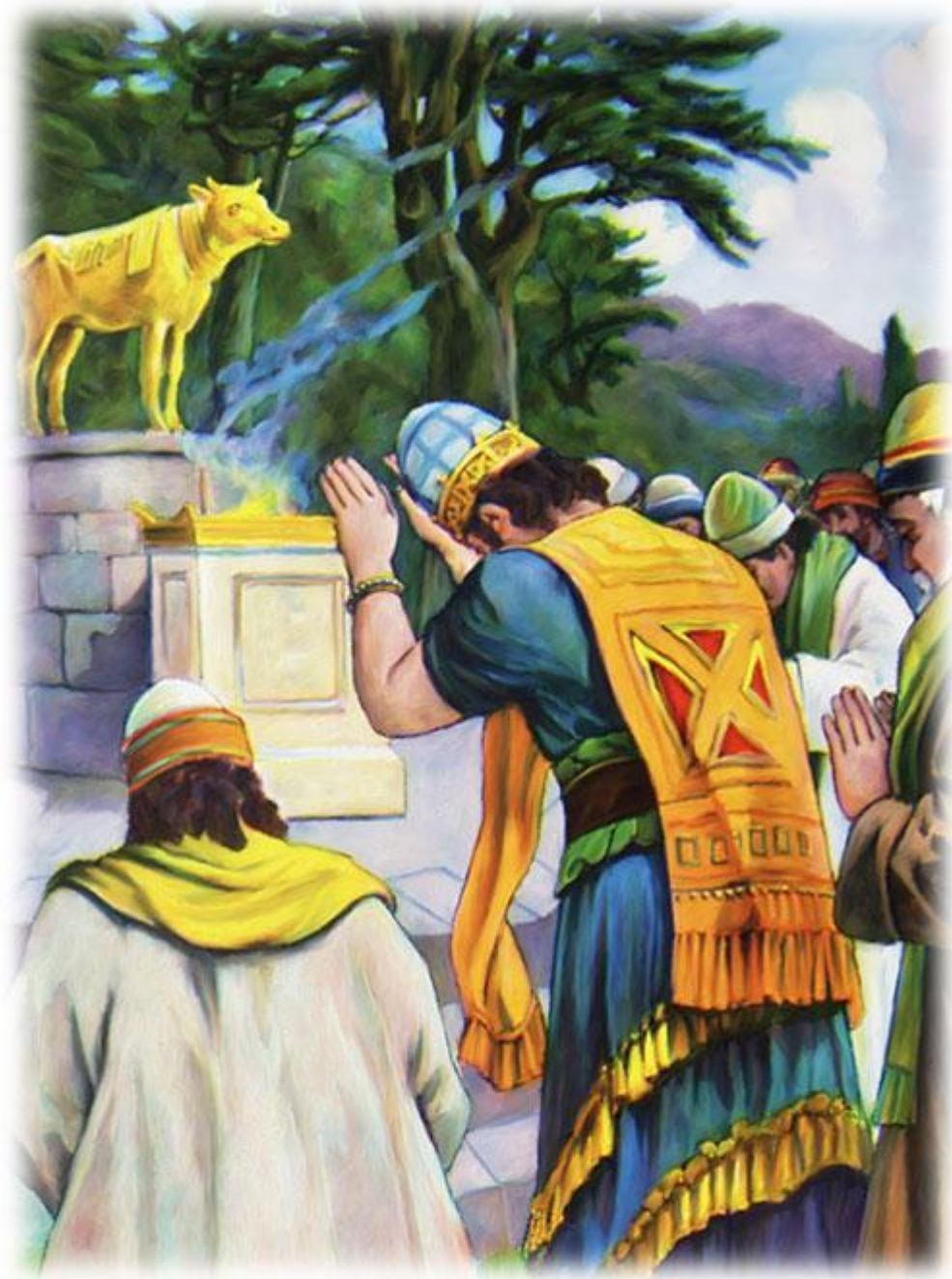
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MBF Lessons

My Memory Verse

"Choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve...As for me and my house,we will serve the Lord." –[Joshua 24:15](#)

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After the land of Canaan was divided among their different tribes, God wanted to help the Israelites finish driving out the rest of their enemies, if they would trust Him and do their part.

Their leader, Joshua, wondered whether the people would be faithful to God after he died. He wanted to talk to them one more time, so he called the leaders and people together. [Joshua 23:2, 3.](#)

He reminded them of how easily they forgot to obey God, and what would happen if they kept making wrong choices. What did the people promise to do? [Joshua 24:24.](#)

God would keep His promises to bless them as long as they chose to trust and obey Him. But little by little, the Israelites slipped back into their old habits. And even though some people felt sad about what was happening, many people chose to disobey God. He had warned them not to copy the wicked Canaanites, but they did. Many of them even worshiped idols. [Judges 2:11-13.](#)

Their wicked enemies soon grew bolder and bolder; and, instead of being safe and happy, the Israelites got into more and more trouble. Before long, it seemed as if everyone was following Satan. Then the consequences came, just as God had warned them.

But God was still patient. Whenever they were sorry for their sins and begged God to forgive and pity them, He did. And since He truly loved them, He found brave leaders to help them. They were called judges.



For more than 300 years, the Israelites made the same kind of wrong choices over, and over, and over. Soon after a judge died, the people would disobey again. Then, when terrible consequences came, they would become sorry and God would send them another judge to help them. Then they would make better choices, and the country would be peaceful again. But after that judge died, the same thing would start all over again.

One time, the Israelites were in trouble again—big trouble. They needed help, and they needed it right away. How would God help them this time?

The wicked, cruel Midianites were enemies of Israel. They kept coming into their beautiful country and stealing food and animals. Where did the Israelites have to hide to be safe? [Judges 6:1, 2.](#)

The very first words in our text tell the real problem, don't they? Just as the Israelites had been warned so many times, God couldn't help and bless them, because they were not choosing to trust and obey Him.

This time, God chose Gideon to help the Israelites. Gideon was a strong, brave man who loved God. One day, he was quietly threshing some wheat in a secret place so the enemy wouldn't find him. As he worked, he wondered why the Israelites were having so much trouble. Why couldn't they drive away the Midianites? Why didn't God help them?

Gideon was so busy thinking, he hadn't noticed a Stranger sitting under a tree nearby. When the Stranger spoke, Gideon quickly looked up. And when the Stranger greeted him, how did he answer? [Judges 6:11-13.](#)

The Stranger promised to save Israel from the Midianites, and asked Gideon to be His helper. As Gideon listened, he knew the Stranger must be someone very special. Could He be an angel? [Judges 6:16](#) What happened when he brought a special offering? [Judges 6:19-21.](#) Then, Gideon knew for sure that he had been talking to God.

What did God tell Gideon to do? [Judges 6:25, 26.](#) Gideon obeyed, and he and ten of his servants destroyed the altar of Baal and the wooden image beside it, all in one night.

The next morning, when the people found out what had happened, they were so angry that they wanted to kill Gideon. How did Gideon's father, Joash, defend his son? [Judges 6:28-31.](#)

The people knew that what Joash had said was true. Baal was supposed to be powerful, but he couldn't even keep his altar from being smashed. So the people decided not to kill Gideon.

Not long after this, the wicked Midianites and Amalekites came into the land of Israel again. God had been very patient with them. For many, many years, He had given them chances to change from the terrible things they did. But they had refused. They made fun of God, and they hurt the Israelites every chance they had. This time they came with thousands of soldiers.

When Gideon called for Israelite soldiers to fight the enemy, thousands came. But the enemy still had many thousands more soldiers than Gideon had. How could Gideon ever win in a battle with them?



Gideon knew that God had promised to help him drive the Midianites away. But now he felt that he must be absolutely sure that he was following God's plan. Twice he asked for a sign that God would be with him. And both times God showed that He would give him victory over the enemy.

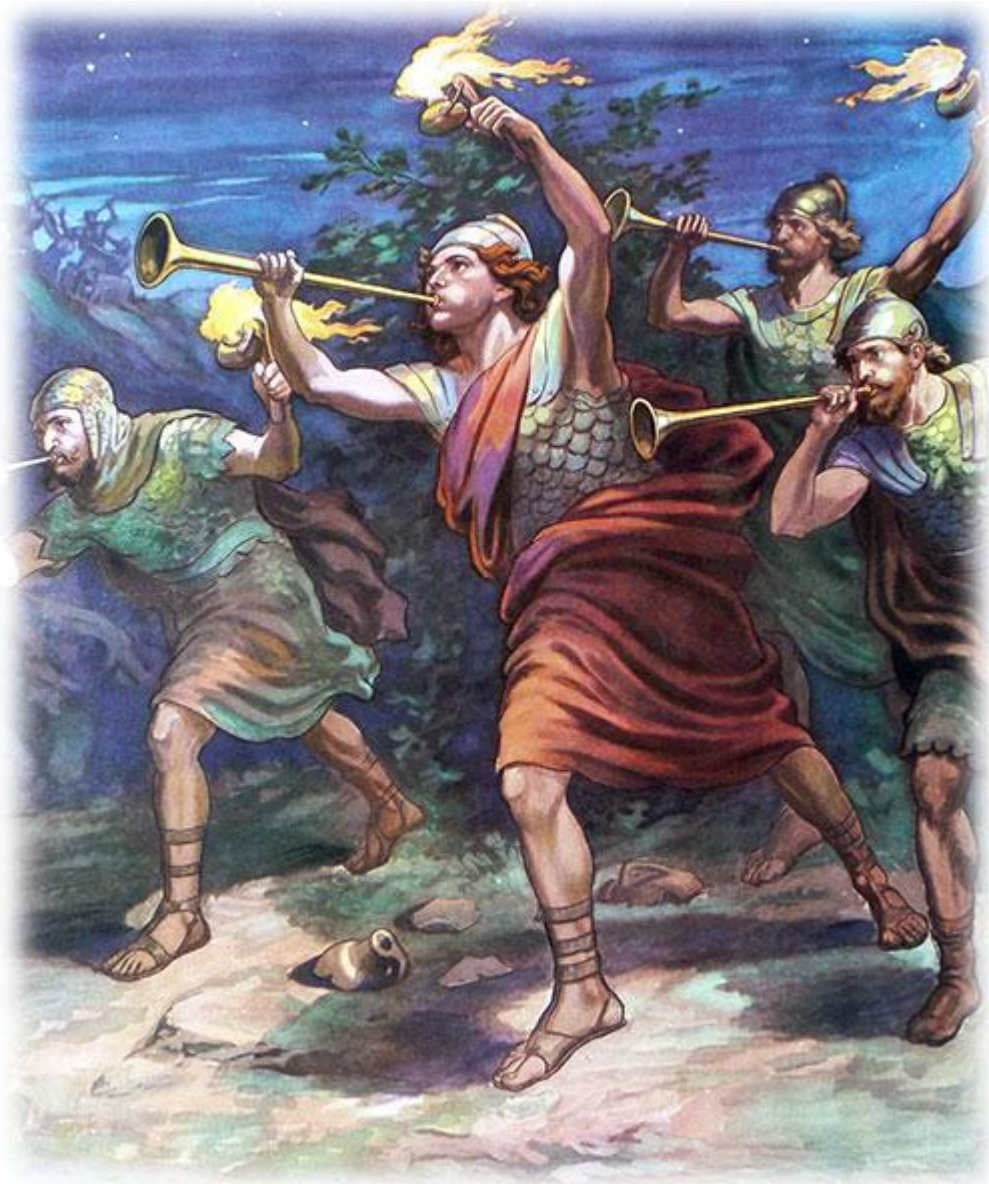
After Gideon and his soldiers camped near the Midianites, what did God tell him to do? [Judges 7:2, 3](#). Gideon could hardly believe his ears. Too many soldiers? He had wanted thousands more soldiers. How could God say there were too many?

But God had spoken; and because Gideon trusted God, he obeyed. Then more than half of his soldiers picked up their things and went home. What could Gideon do now with so few soldiers left?

What did God tell Gideon to do next? [Judges 7:4, 5](#). Again, Gideon was surprised. But again, he chose to trust and obey.

How many soldiers were left now? [Judges 7:7](#). God would save Israel with only those 300 men.

God knew Gideon needed one last encouragement before going forward. [Judges 7:9-15](#).



That night, Gideon woke up his 300 brave soldiers and gave each of them a trumpet and a torch hidden in a pitcher. Who ever heard of an army fighting like that? Could God do what He had promised?

Everyone listened carefully as Gideon told them what to do. They knew they must do exactly as he said. [Judges 7:17, 18](#).

Then the soldiers went silently down the hill. Everything was quiet as they took their places around the edges of the enemy camp. They were ready to go.

The moment Gideon blew his trumpet, all the rest of the soldiers blew theirs, too. They crashed their pitchers to the ground and waved their torches as they shouted, "The sword of the Lord and of Gideon!" [Judges 7:19, 20](#).

The sleeping enemy woke up in total panic. It seemed that everywhere there were flaming torches, trumpets sounding, and Gideon's soldiers shouting. The enemy soldiers ran in all directions in the dark, bumping into and killing each other, thinking they were killing Israelites.

The Israelites showed that they trusted God by doing exactly what He had said, and He had helped them win with just a few soldiers.

Gideon judged Israel for many years. After he died, other judges came, one after another, until a man named Eli became judge of Israel. He was also the priest in charge of the sanctuary at that time.

Another man named Elkanah lived about 12 miles from Shiloh, where the sanctuary had been for many years. His wife Hannah loved God very much. But she was very sad because she had never had a baby.

One time when Elkanah and Hannah were at the sanctuary, she talked to God about it. She promised that if God would give her a son, she would give him back to Him to be His special helper.

As Eli, the high priest, saw Hannah crying and praying, he was sure that she was drunk. [1 Samuel 1:9-14](#).

Poor Hannah must have felt terrible. She told Eli that she was not drunk, but that she had been praying to God. Eli immediately felt sorry. He had not meant to hurt an innocent person. He told her that God would answer her prayer.

Suddenly, the sad feeling in Hannah's heart was gone. She smiled gratefully, and then she hurried back to their tent. Did God answer Hannah's prayer? [1 Samuel 1:20](#). Oh, yes. Soon she had a baby boy. She named him Samuel.

Hannah had promised that her son would be a special helper for God. So even before Samuel could talk, Hannah started helping him learn to obey and to love God. She helped him learn to pray and to thank God. Also, she taught him to be helpful. Perhaps he picked up trash or put away his toys or carried little



She taught him what “No” means, and she gently helped him choose to obey. He soon learned what makes God happy and what makes Him sad. And he wanted to always make God happy.

Hannah must have thought about Eli’s home. Everyone in Israel knew that Eli, the high priest, was a kind man. But Eli had not trained his sons to obey God, and they were very wicked. Would they tempt Samuel to disobey, too? Samuel was so small. Would he remember what she had taught him? Would he make good choices? Oh, how Hannah must have prayed that he would!

Finally, Elkanah and Hannah took Samuel to Shiloh. He would be a special helper for God in the sanctuary, which was also called the tabernacle.

How different everything must have been for little Samuel after that day when his parents left him in Shiloh! Now he was living with the family of Eli, the high priest. And Eli loved Samuel just as if he were his own little boy. Samuel was always helpful and obedient.

But could such a little boy really be a helper? Of course. All children can start to be helpers as soon as they can walk. Samuel soon learned that there were many things he could do. As he grew older, he could do more and more to help Eli in the tabernacle.



The two sons of Eli were priests, too, and they were Eli's main helpers. While Samuel was growing and learning, what were they choosing day after day? [1 Samuel 2:12.](#)

They were "corrupt." That means that they did terrible sins. How sad! Do you think that Samuel ever copied them? No. Even though he was a little child, he had already learned what was right and what was wrong, And he had already chosen to love, trust, and obey God as long as he lived, no matter what anybody else did.

The Israelites always had a hard time choosing to do right. But when their leaders were not obeying God, it was even harder. They usually copied their leaders instead of obeying God.

Eli's sons, Hophni and Phinehas, were leaders in Israel. But they had chosen to obey Satan, not God. No wonder many of the Israelites didn't want to worship or sacrifice at Shiloh anymore. But what was Samuel choosing to do? [1 Samuel 2:18](#).

Elkanah and Hannah also chose to be faithful, even if other people didn't. How happy they must have been to know that their son was choosing to do right instead of copying Eli's sons.

Something else made Hannah happy. What did Eli say to Samuel's parents when they came to visit him at Shiloh? [1 Samuel 2:20, 21](#). Soon Hannah had more children, but she never forgot her son Samuel, who was growing up as he learned to be a helper for God.



One night, after Eli and Samuel had gone to bed, Samuel heard someone calling his name. Quickly he jumped out of bed. Eli must be needing him. "Here I am!" he cheerfully answered as he ran to Eli. But Eli was sure that Samuel must have been dreaming. What did Eli say, and what happened next? [1 Samuel 3:5, 6](#).

When Samuel heard his name called the third time, he must have wondered what was wrong with Eli. But by now, Eli was sure that God was talking to Samuel. What did he tell Samuel to



do? [1 Samuel 3:8, 9.](#)

Do you think that Samuel went back to sleep? Had the great, awesome God actually been calling him? Samuel's voice must have been small and trembling as he answered the next time his name was called. [1 Samuel 3:10.](#)

Even though Samuel was just a little boy, God was talking to him just as He did to grown-up prophets. He told Samuel the sad things that would happen to Israel and to Eli and his family.

What happened after God finished talking to Samuel? Do you think Samuel was able to go back to sleep? [1 Samuel 3:15.](#)

Samuel was being a helper for God even while he was still young. After he had grown up and after Eli died, Samuel became the next judge of Israel. Everyone knew that God had chosen him, and he did his best to help Israel choose to follow



Bible Lesson

Remembering What My Bible Says . . .

- The choices we make are important, aren't they? When we disobey, other people often copy our bad example. But when we choose to trust and obey God, other people choose to trust Him, too.
- God chose Gideon to help Israel be free from their enemies. What was the first thing that God told Gideon to do? Why did he have to destroy the idol and its altar before God could help them win the battle? He had to show that he was trusting only God, didn't he?
- Would you like to be as brave as Gideon was? Do you know how children learn to be brave? They learn by choosing to obey, even when other children are doing wrong. Can you think of times when it is hard to do that?
- How did Hannah show that she was thankful that God had answered her prayer? Has God answered any of your prayers? God has given you many special blessings, too. How can you show God that you are thankful for them?
- Jesus can always help us choose to do right, no matter how many other people are making wrong choices. And if we always make right choices in little things, it will be easier to choose to do right when we have big decisions to make.
- Because Samuel had been faithful, God could trust him with an important job. [Luke 16:10](#). If someone can't do a little job right, can they be trusted with a more important job? Think of some little things you can do to help you be ready for bigger responsibilities.

My Commitment

Because they had been faithful in their everyday responsibilities, Gideon and Samuel obeyed right away when God asked them to be His helpers. Do you want to learn to be a faithful helper, even in little things?

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My Bible First - QUIZ 9 - "Up and Down Years"

Based on Numbers 13, 14, 20, 21; Joshua 1-4, 6

Who was the leader of the Israelites after Moses?

1 point

Caleb

Joshua
Phineas
Aaron

After Joshua, the leaders of the Israelites were called ____.

1 point

Dit svar

Mark the true statements.

1 point

The Egyptians kept stealing the Israelites' food.

The Israelites hid in secret places.

God couldn't help the Israelites because they were worshiping idols.

God asked Gideon to destroy Baal's altar.

Jesus asked Gideon to tear down _____ and make an altar to God.

1 point

Dit svar

God told Gideon to get more soldiers.

1 point

True

False

Hannah was sad because she never had a _____.

1 point

Dit svar

Was Hannah careful in how she trained Samuel?

1 point

True

False

Eli's sons were good men.

1 point

True

False

How many times was Samuel's name called before Eli realized that God was calling him?

1 point

1

3
2
7

Even though you are still young, do you want to choose like Gideon and Samuel to love and trust God? (write your answer below)

Dit svar



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