

LESSON 13 | THE BEGINNINGS

WEEK 13: DAY 1

THE THREAD

DISCOVERING THE THREAD OF THE GOSPEL THROUGH THE BIG-PICTURE STORY OF THE BIBLE

“And the angel said to them, ‘Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.’” - Luke 2:10-11

This week you’ll continue the story of the Israelites as they finally enter the Promised Land. And then you’ll continue the story by seeing a little glimpse of life once they’ve settled in. You may ask yourself, what does this have to do with the angels announcing Jesus’ birth? Plenty.

Entering the Promised Land was one of several essential steps in the timeline of God’s plan to rescue humankind from the results of their sin. There is a sort of thread running from Jesus’ birth all the way back to the Israelites inheriting the land God promised them.

When the Israelites entered the Promised Land, there was much fanfare and pronouncements. It was a time to celebrate their deliverance. When Jesus came, there was also an announcement made (by angels). But the deliverance Jesus would bring was far superior to any land. Jesus’ deliverance was from sin. It was perfect. It was for all people. And it was once-and-for-all. Reflect on this verse this week.

Today, memorize Luke 2:10-11.

Write it down somewhere that you can see daily. It’s a powerful reminder of the amazing gift of grace Jesus is to all humankind.

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WEEK 13: DAY 2

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“Then Joshua said to the people, ‘Consecrate yourselves, for tomorrow the Lord will do wonders among you.’”
- Joshua 3:5

What does it mean to be holy? You may sing songs in the car or at church every week that talk about God’s holiness, and you may even strive to ‘be holy’ because that is what your Christian friends say they are doing. But do you know what it means, really? The word holy means to be set apart, especially in a religious or sacred way. Another word for holy is “consecrated.”

Read Joshua 3 and focus on verse 5.

Joshua told his people that if they were set apart, then God would do amazing things in and through them.

But what does it mean for you to be “set apart” today? People who stand out too much get a lot of attention, both good and bad. And sometimes, we feed off that energy and chase after one extreme or the other. Maybe we want to be liked by everyone, so we avoid living our lives like Christ when it could cause someone else to be upset. Or, maybe you like the idea of being everyone’s villain, and you say things in the least loving way possible to try and prove some sort of point. But the key to holiness is following Christ, not public perception. Being set apart and holy is about how much of Christ we display, and you can only see that in the way that you allow God to move in your life.

Something To Think About...

- What are some ways that you can be holy (or set apart) at school? At home? When you are hanging out with friends on the weekend?
- How can God set you apart to do amazing things throughout your life? How will being holy impact your life and the world around you?

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WEEK 13: DAY 3

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“And at the seventh time, when the priests had blown the trumpets, Joshua said to the people, ‘Shout, for the Lord has given you the city.’” - Joshua 6:16

One of the best board games ever is Quelf. Have you ever played it? In Quelf, when you land on a space, you choose a card. The cards have various activities on them: act out something funny, make something out of dough, answer a trivia question, draw something, or come up with a funny rule.

It sounds simple. But the things you come up with are usually hilarious and random. You may end up with a beard made out of toilet paper, writing a haiku about cat whiskers, or doing an interpretive dance about nachos.

Sometimes God’s instructions to His people sound super weird.

Read Joshua 6 and check it out for yourself.

God’s answer to Joshua’s problem with Jericho was to march around the city and sound a trumpet. Almost sounds like a funny game card from Quelf, right?

The people inside Jericho were probably laughing at first. But God pulled through and used the situation to spread Israel’s fame across the land, making God’s name great. It may have seemed silly at first, but the win, in the end, was worth it.

Something To Think About. . .

- Are there any things that God asks us to do that may seem odd to us at first? How could those things help spread God’s name?
- What are some very practical ways that you can use your influence to spread God’s name?

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WEEK 13: DAY 4

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And all that generation also were gathered to their fathers. And there arose another generation after them who did not know the Lord or the work that he had done for Israel. - Judges 2:10

Read Judges 2:6-19.

Joshua was a great leader for the armies of the Hebrew people. He was a great strategist; one of his basic war strategies, divide and conquer, has been used by military leaders throughout history. When he died, it did not take long for God's people to revert to not trusting God. They seemed to put too much faith in their earthly leader, Joshua, and not enough faith in their heavenly leader, God.

You may have witnessed something similar to this in your life. It could be that one person led your team well, but it was a struggle to recapture the spirit of the team once they left. Perhaps you have a friend that you only hang out with because of a friend the two of you share. There have even been businesses that have closed down after the retirement of their founder. If you are only focused on a single person and not the mission you are joining them in, then your reason for being somewhere leaves when they do.

Are you relying on the strength of someone in your church, youth group, friends, or significant other to give you the courage to live for God each day? What will happen when that person is no longer in your life? Odds are, if you do not take ownership of your faith, then you may find that you never really had an interest in God at all.

Something To Think About . . .

- It is wonderful to have strong leaders around you, but God wants you to learn from these leaders, not depend on them. Your spiritual strength comes from your relationship with God. Have you ever thought that God might be calling you to be a leader in your youth group, in your church, or at your school?

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WEEK 13: DAY 5

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“For this child I prayed, and the Lord has granted me my petition that I made to him. Therefore I have lent him to the Lord. As long as he lives, he is lent to the Lord.” - 1 Samuel 1:27-28

The word “sacrifice” means to give up something for the sake of something greater. Think about the last time you played a card game in a big group. Odds are, someone there had never played before, and everyone had to wait a few minutes while the rules were explained. Although this is a simple example of a sacrifice, you get the idea that sometimes moments must be sacrificed so that something bigger can take place.

Read 1 Samuel 1.

Hannah prayed for a child, and when she was finally able to conceive, she gave her son, Samuel, back to the Lord in service. Her sacrifice took the form of presenting him to the temple priest Eli when Samuel was around nine or ten years old. Hannah actually gave her son to Eli! Can you think of another example of this kind of sacrifice in the Bible?

Just as Hannah gave her son to the temple for the work of bringing people to God, the Lord gave His Son, Jesus, to redeem mankind. The sacrifice of Jesus’ life on the Cross was for something greater and made out of God’s great love for us. Jesus was sacrificed in order that all people could have a personal relationship with God.

Something To Think About. . .

- Take a few minutes to thank God for sacrificing His Son, Jesus. As you do, consider why it is so important that Jesus died on the Cross in our place.
- What are some of the sacrifices that God may be calling you to make for the sake of His name? It could be that you may need to give more of your time volunteering or that you need to remove certain things from your life that take your focus off of Jesus.