



Gospel Doctrine Sunday School Lesson

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Slippery Rock Branch

Volume 2, Issue 19

Today's Word: shophetim

May 28, 2006

Lesson 19: "The Reign of the Judges"

Are You:

- Saying Your Individual Prayers Every Day?
- Reading Scriptures Daily?
- Praying Together as a Family?

Today's Scriptures

Judges 2

Judges 4

Judges 6-7

Judges 13-16

Next Week

Lesson 20:

"All the City . . . Doth Know That Thou Art a Virtuous Woman"

Ruth

1 Samuel 1

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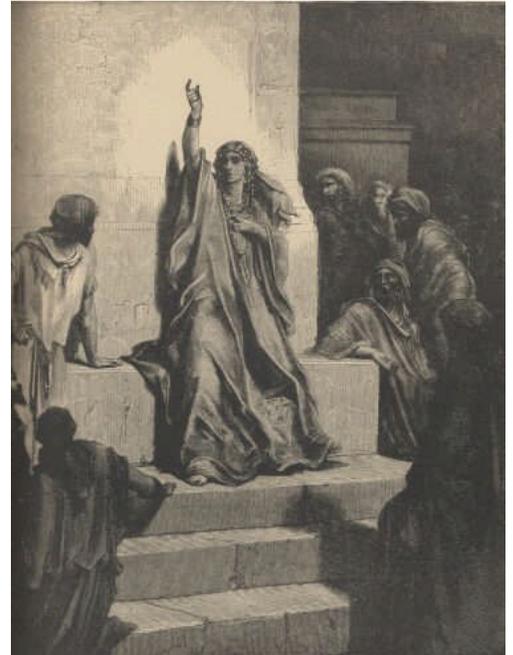
<http://ideawarehouse.blogspot.com>

Questions to Ponder

- Why do children sometimes forsake the righteous teachings and ways of their parents?
- What can we learn from Deborah about being a true friend?
- What can we learn from Gideon?
- What inner weaknesses did Samson have that caused his downfall?

Gideon

"There are growing numbers among the prospective elders who are not found in Church meetings nor filling Church assignments. This situation can and must be remedied. The task is ours. Responsibility needs to be assigned and effort put forth without delay. The presidencies of the Aaronic Priesthood quorums, under the leadership of the bishopric and quorum advisers, can be empowered to reach out and rescue. . . . Sometimes the task appears overwhelming. We can take fresh courage from the experience of Gideon of old, who, with his modest force, was to do battle with the Midianites and the Amalekites. You will remember how Gideon and his army faced an overwhelming strength of forces vastly superior in equipment and in number. The book of Judges in the Old Testament records that the united enemy, the Midianites and the Amalekites, 'lay along in the valley like grasshoppers for multitude; and their camels were without number, as the sand by the sea side for multitude.' Gideon went to Almighty God for his strength. To his surprise, Gideon was advised by the Lord that his forces were too many in number for the Lord to deliver the enemy into their hands, lest they say, 'Mine own hand hath saved me.' " (President Thomas S. Monson, "Stand in Your Appointed Place," *Ensign*, May 2003, 54.)



Illustrations by Gustave Doré: Above, "Deborah's Song of Triumph," Bottom Left, "Samson and Delilah"

Deborah

"The book of Judges . . . chronicles events concerning Israel's twelve judges. In Jewish literature, these judges were called *shophetim*—leaders who pronounced judgment and were chosen at various times to deliver different Israelite tribes from enemies intent on attacking and suppressing them. These judges labored during eras of spiritual turmoil, tribal divisions, and Baal worship, facing a great deal of temptation and opposition in their attempts to lead. . . . Of all the charismatic *shophetim*, of Deborah alone is it recorded that "the children of Israel came up . . . for judgment." (Judg. 4:5.) Chosen by the elders of her tribe to dispense justice beneath her palm tree headquarters in the hill-country of Ephraim, she was also the charismatic leader called by the Lord to deliver the northern Israelite tribes from Canaanite tyranny" (Kristin E. Litchman, "Deborah and the Book of Judges," *Ensign*, Jan. 1990, 32).

Samson

"Let me suggest the steps necessary to turn our lives in a new direction. The business of life is to climb higher. The divine step is to repent. Repentance means to find a better way and to follow it. First, eliminate from our thinking and our vocabulary the phrase "if only I had done something differently." **If only** Samson had known the results of his association with Delilah, he never would have made the first visit (See Judg. 16.). **If only** Sidney Rigdon had been able to foresee his pathetic end, he might have humbled himself and stayed with the Church. **If only** the rich man could have seen beyond the grave, he might have started praying sooner; but only in hell did he become a praying man (See Luke 16:19-25.). **If only** you had not gone on that date, or taken that trip, or made that investment, or met that person, your life might have been different. All of us can waste precious time by saying, "What if I had not done something or other?" Brothers and sisters, "What if" is not an appropriate question if we really want to start again. Let us face head-on where we are and where we want to be, and not dwell on the "what ifs" of yesterday (Hugh W. Pinnock, "Beginning Again," *Ensign*, May 1982, 12).