

Study Series: Seamless

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 Lesson Title: “The Promised Land” (pp. 47-59)

Session 4

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The main point of this lesson is: As part of God’s seamless plan, He led His people into the land He had promised Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Focus on this goal: To help adults determine how their lives reflect the Israelites’ experiences in taking possession of the promised land

Key Bible Passage: Numbers 13–1 Samuel 8

During the Session

Step 1. Create Interest / Jumpstart Discussion

Request adults think about an episode in their lives when a trip that was supposed to take a certain amount of time took significantly longer. Ask: What was the reason for that delay? Did you learn anything from that delay?

State the eleven-day journey from Sinai (Horeb) to Canaan (Kadesh-barnea) (Deut. 1:2) ended up taking the Israelites forty years. State: As we examine that epic delay in arriving at a destination, we can examine how our lives reflect the Israelites’ experience and identify valuable lessons we can gain from their mostly negative example.

Step 2. The First Approach, Part 1

Use the first sentence of Day One (p. 47) to establish the timeline for this session.

Discuss Day One, activity 1 (p. 47). Invite a volunteer to read Numbers 14:1-9. Analyze how we might often respond to life situations like the Israelites did.

Summarize Numbers 14:10-18. Discuss Day One, activity 2 (p. 47). Evaluate why God didn’t want that generation who experienced the exodus to enter the promised land. Guide the group to identify valuable lessons they can gain from the Israelites’ bad example.

Explain the book of Numbers relates some episodes from those forty years of wandering. Invite a volunteer to read Numbers 20:2-12. Explore why this event would prevent Moses from entering Canaan.

Observe: Numbers takes us to the border of Canaan and to the book of Deuteronomy which is a series of speeches Moses gave the people summarizing all God had done for them despite their disobedience.

Ask two volunteers to read some of Moses’s opening and closing words to the people in Deuteronomy 1:6-8 and 32:45-47. Guide the group to identify valuable lessons they gain from these words of Moses.

Step 3. The First Approach, Part 2

Discuss Day Two, activity 1 (p. 48).

Invite a volunteer to read Deuteronomy 34:1-6. Ask if adults think this episode reflects a harsh severity or tender kindness in God and why. Read the Day Two Note (p. 49).

Guide the group to consider how their lives might reflect Moses’s experience and what valuable lessons they can gain from it (activity 2, p. 49, can help with that discussion).

Consider valuable lessons we can gain from the Fun Fact in Day Two (p. 50).

Step 4. Entering the Promised Land

Read Joshua 1:1-2.

Invite volunteers to share what they recall about the story of Rahab. Ask if they know what portion of her story reflects back on the Passover and reflects forward to the death of Jesus (refer to Josh. 2:17-19).

Summarize Joshua 3–4. Invite responses to Day Three, activity 1 (p. 51).

State a valuable lesson we gain from Joshua’s experience is that gaining a promise rarely comes easily; the Israelites had a lot of battles to fight to take possession of the land. Determine valuable lessons we can learn about battles from the battle of Jericho.

Explain the remainder of Joshua details battles and the division of land among twelve tribes.

Discuss Day Three, activity 2 (p. 52).

Step 5. The Judges, Part 1

Invite a volunteer to read Joshua 24:15. Note this verse that’s often seen on wall hangings and coffee mugs must not be taken lightly; it emphasizes the important lesson that we must constantly choose who we’re going to serve. The Israelites promised to serve Yahweh, but that promise didn’t last long, as evidenced by the book of Judges.

Request a volunteer read the first paragraph of Day Four (pp. 52-53).

Discuss Day Four, activity 1 (p. 53). Describe the cycle that occurs time and again in the book of Judges (see Judg. 3:12-15; 4:1-4; 6:1,11-12; 10:6-7; 13:1,24). Analyze how our lives might reflect the Israelites’ experience.

Discuss Day Four, activity 2 (p. 54).

Determine valuable lessons believers can gain from the book of Judges.

Step 6. The Judges, Part 2

Explain: Samuel was the last judge. Based on what we’ve already seen in God’s seamless story, it’s probably not a great surprise that his birth was a miracle.

Summarize 1 Samuel 1–3:17. Invite a volunteer to read 1 Samuel 3:19-21.

Explain Samuel was a bridge between the time of the judges and the kings. After twenty years of battling the Philistines and losing the ark of the covenant, the people rededicated themselves to God and had a victory over the Philistines. Unfortunately, the people’s dedication didn’t last long.

Summarize 1 Samuel 8:1-18. Ask a volunteer to read 1 Samuel 8:19-20. Evaluate how our lives reflect the Israelites.

Invite volunteers to tell the story of Ruth, who lived during the time of the judges. Determine valuable lessons we can gain from this beautiful book.

Discuss Day Five, activity 2 (p. 56).

Step 7. Practical Application – Live Out the Lesson

Invite volunteers to identify the most valuable lessons they gained today from the Israelites’ experience. Urge adults to put those lessons into practice.

Close in prayer.

