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## “Be Strong and of a Good Courage”

*Joshua 1–6; 23–24*

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Study the following scriptures:

- a. Joshua 1. The Lord calls Joshua to succeed Moses. Joshua prepares the Israelites to possess the land that the Lord has promised them.
- b. Joshua 3–4; 6. The Israelites cross the Jordan River on dry ground and place 12 stones there as a memorial of their crossing. Through the faith of the Israelites, Jericho is destroyed.
- c. Joshua 23; 24:14–31. Joshua and his people covenant to serve the Lord.

Moses was the only leader an entire generation of Israelites had known. But the Lord took him at the end of their sojourn in the wilderness—just when they faced a great test.

Remembering his promises to Israel, the Lord raised up a new leader, Joshua.

- What did the Lord tell Joshua to do to “have good success”? (See Joshua 1:8.) Why do you think scripture study would have been important for Joshua to succeed in his calling? How has regular scripture study helped you?
- What important counsel did Joshua give at the end of his life? (See Joshua 24:14–15.) Why is it important to choose *today* to serve the Lord? How can we show that we have chosen to serve him?

Additional reading: Joshua 7; 14.

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## The Reign of the Judges

*Judges 2; 4; 6–7; 13–16*

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Study the following scriptures:

- a. Judges 2:6–23. The rising generation of the children of Israel forsake the Lord to serve false gods.
- b. Judges 4:1–16. Barak is commanded to free Israel from Jabin, king of Canaan (4:1–7). He agrees to go if Deborah will go with him (4:8–9). Deborah and Barak deliver Israel from the Canaanites (4:10–16).
- c. Judges 6–7. Gideon is commanded to deliver Israel from the Midianites (6:1–24). He and 10 other men destroy Baal’s altar (6:25–35). The Lord assures Gideon of help by granting him two signs (6:36–40). Gideon and 300 other men deliver Israel (7:1–25).

- d. Judges 13–16. An angel instructs Samson’s parents to raise him as a Nazarite (13:1–25). Samson performs great feats of strength but breaks many of his Nazarite vows (14–15). Samson gives in to Delilah’s enticing; his hair is cut, and he becomes weak, is captured by the Philistines, and dies while pulling down their temple (16:1–31).

After Joshua died, judges served as Israel’s rulers and military leaders. Most of their reign was tragic as Israel went through the cycle of apostasy, captivity, repentance, and delivery many times. Offsetting the tragic parts of this history are stories of righteous judges such as Deborah and Gideon, who remained true and exercised faith