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Educator's Guide

Israelites in Israel

After wandering in the desert for 40 years following the Exodus from Egypt, the return to Canaan held great promise for the exiled Israelites. They were no longer a wandering people but one with their own land and their own God. These elements are foundational for Israel's mission of building a holy society and being a "light unto the nations." But the path to gaining sovereignty in the Holy land would be a difficult one. This lesson will explore the challenges of leadership that plagued the Hebrews in their first attempt to live under their own sovereign rule.

Link to video

Glossary
Yehoshua - Joshua
Avraham - Abraham
Shlomo - Solomon
Devora - Deborah
Moshe - Moses
Tzfat - Safed
Yericho - Jericho
Yerushalayim - Jerusalem
Tiveria - Tiberias
Lashon hara - evil speech
Shimshon - Samson
Nazir - nazarite
Binyamin - Benjamin

Further Reading

1. Yair Hoffman, Conquering Canaan
2. Tikva Frymer-Kensky, Yael
3. Tzvi Sinensky, Tu Be'Av and the Concubine of Givah

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4. Raanan Eichler, Deborah
5. Bim Bam, Samson: The Final Judge

Review - Did the students understand the material?

1. Who led the Hebrews after the death of Moshe?
   A. Yehoshua
   B. Avraham
   C. David
   D. Shlomo

2. Before the arrival of the Hebrews, how many Canaanite tribes lived in the Land?
   A. 4
   B. 5
   C. 6
   D. 7

3. What was the first city the Israelites captured in Canaan?
   A. Yericho
   B. Yerushalayim
   C. Tzfat
   D. Tiveria

4. Why did God punish the Israelites after they conquered Canaan?
   A. They complained too much
   B. They kept worshipping idols
   C. They spoke *lashon hara*
   D. They didn't observe the laws of Shabbat

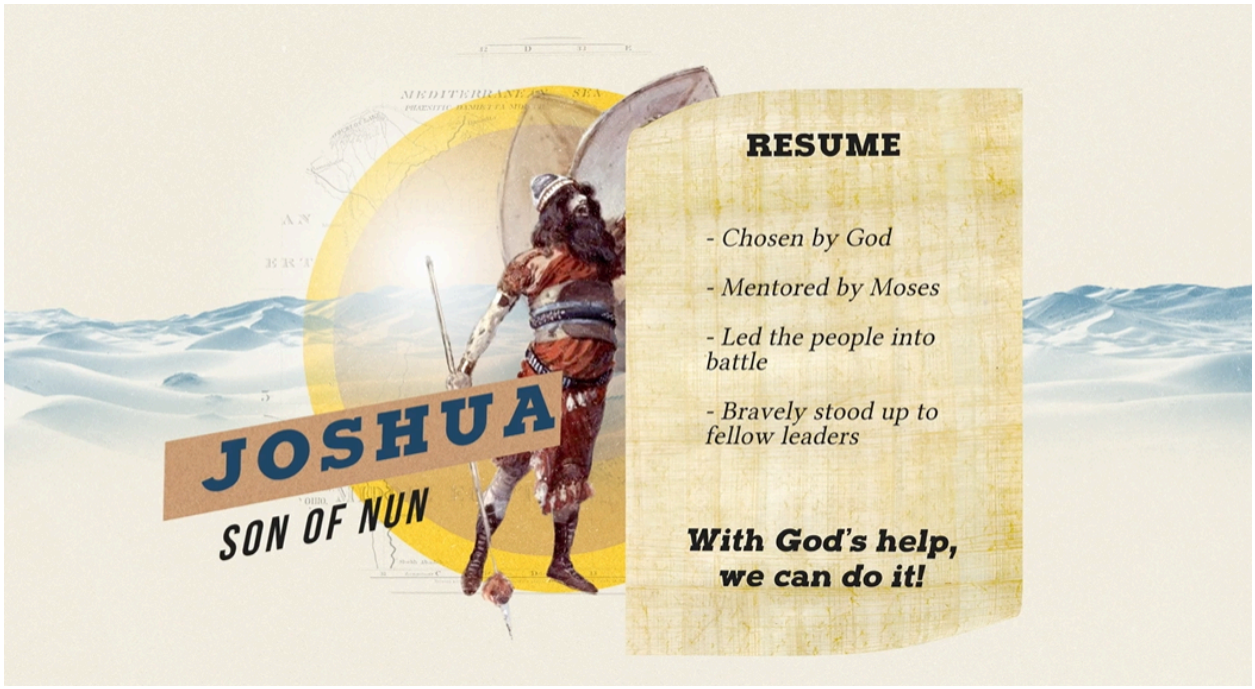
5. Who was the only female Judge in the Bible?
   A. Miriam
   B. Yocheved

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C. Tamar
D. Devora

Discussion Questions

1. Moshe took the people out of Egypt but Yehoshua brought them into Israel. Why is Moshe's leadership remembered much more famously?



2. In Judges (cite) we learn about Devora the Judge and prophetess, and Yael, who drove a tent peg through the enemy leader's head. Devora's commander Barak refused to go to war without her by his side. Why do you think Barak wanted Devora with him? How do you think the men at that time felt about female leadership? What similarities and differences do you see in today's world?

3. For the 200 years after Moshe, the leaders were called Judges and, as described in the video, they were appointed by virtue of their Bible wisdom, righteousness, and respected leadership abilities. Do you think the same **attributes** are used to elect leaders today? What other characteristics would you like to see in your governing leaders?

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4. Shimshon, renowned for his great strength, lost his power when his hair was cut by Delilah. Samson was a *nazir*, someone who tries to get closer to God by **breaking their cravings for certain physical pleasures**. Principal rules are no wine and no hair cutting or contact with corpses. Why do you think these two rules bring you closer to God? Being a nazir was only possible during Temple times - but if you were choosing rules for a nazir today, what might a nazir need to commit to, in order to bring them closer to God?
5. The concubine in Givah is one of the most graphic and harrowing stories of sexual violence in the Bible. During the war between the tribe of Binyamin and the other Israelite tribes that ensued, the Israelites questioned whether the fight was moral. As described in the video, God answers by saying that **when a society will not correct injustices within its midst, everyone is guilty.** What are some injustices that you would wish to see corrected today? Please describe one injustice in detail and brainstorm some suggestions you'd put forward to fix it.

Learning Activities

1. Use our ready made lesson plan about the Israelites in Canaan.
2. Leadership Styles

From Moshe to Yehoshua, and Devorah to Shimshon, Jews have experienced life under many different prophets, judges and kings. For this activity, think of the different leaders you were introduced to and categorize each by the following leadership definitions. Afterwards, think of your community and describe the leadership style under which you would most like to live and thrive.



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3. Give your students our Kahoot on the Israelites and Israel!

4. In groups of 3, come up with your own list of the **ten best qualities** you find in a leader. Now discuss amongst yourselves, and rank them in order of 1 -10 in importance.



Reflection Questions

1. With God on his side, Yehoshua could have battled his way to victory in each of the 31 cities already existing in the land of Canaan when the Jews arrived from Egypt to live there. Instead, Yehoshua spent several years and employed a variety of strategies to win the land. What were some of his strategies and what do these say about his leadership style? Considering what you know about Moshe as a leader, do you think he could have conquered the land of Canaan for the Jews?

2. The Talmudic Sages taught that God gave Israel three gifts which could only be acquired through suffering and one of these was the Holy Land. Why do you think God wants it to be this way?

3. The Book of Shoftim, Judges, begins by telling us that "In those days there was no king in Israel, everyone did as he pleased." What do you think the Bible is saying about the role of government?

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