

Adult Bible Study

in Simplified English

God Sends Help: A Study from Judges

Lesson 1: Caleb Was Used by God

Bible Text

Judges 1:1-2, 8-13, 19-20

Memory Verse

“Be strong and have strength of heart. For you will bring the people in to take this land which I promised to their fathers to give them.” (Joshua 1:6)

Word List

conquer: to work hard to take control over something, some place, or someone

success: to reach a goal you have set for yourself

weapon: something that is used to fight someone or to keep yourself or others safe while fighting

What are you afraid of? At times, fear can be good. It can stop us from doing something that would hurt us. We do not touch a hot stove because we are afraid it will burn us. We do not jump off a tall building because we are afraid we will break our legs or die.

Fear can also be bad. It can stop us from doing something that would be good for

us. We do not apply for a job because we are afraid we may not get the job. We do not try something new because we are afraid we might fail.

The whole world was afraid in 2020 when the COVID-19 virus started spreading around the world. Some fear was good because it helped us to do things that kept us safe. Too much fear was bad because it made some people stop wanting to live. It was a hard time for everyone.

The people of Israel needed to be brave. Fear was not good for them. God had told them to drive out the people who lived in the land that He had given to Israel. Moses had led them out of slavery in Egypt and into the new land. Joshua became their new leader after Moses died. Joshua was very brave and led the nation to fight 31 battles in 13 years. They took control of much of the land. Joshua’s last words to the people were to ask them whom they would serve. Joshua 24:24 tells us the people’s answer: “The people said to Joshua, ‘We will serve the Lord our God. We will obey His voice.’”

Fear Stronger Than Faith

(Judges 1:1-2, 8-10, 19)

1 After the death of Joshua, the people of Israel asked the Lord, “Who will be first to go up and fight against the Canaanites for us?”

2 The Lord said, “Judah will go up. See, I have given the land into his hand.”

... **8** Then the men of Judah fought against Jerusalem and took it. They destroyed it with the sword and set the city on fire.

9 After this the men of Judah went down to fight against the Canaanites living in the hill country, in the Negev and in the plains.

10 Judah went against the Canaanites who lived in Hebron. (The name of Hebron was Kiriath-arba before.) They won the war against Sheshai and Ahiman and Talmi.

...**19** The Lord was with Judah. They took the hill country for their own. They could not drive out the people living in the valley, because they had iron war-wagons.

God was with the people of Israel as they obeyed Him and took the land. They drove out many people. Judah was the first to continue the work that God had given them to do after Joshua died. He was brave at first, but then they came to the people living in the valley who had iron war-wagons. These were a new kind of **weapon**. These iron war-wagons were very strong.

Judah and his fighters believed that the iron war-wagons were too strong. They did not have the faith to believe that God was stronger. But God was with them. They had

seen God do many amazing things. God said that He had given the land into Judah’s hand (1:2). This time, though, their fear was stronger than their faith. They did not pray and ask for help. They did not try to take the land that God had given them. They needed someone to lead them to be brave. They needed someone who had the faith to believe God. They needed someone who would follow and obey God.

Faith Goes from One to Others

(Judges 1:11-13)

11 From there Judah went against the people of Debir. (The name of Debir was Kiriath-sepher before.)

12 Caleb said, “I will give my daughter Achsah as a wife to the one who fights against Kiriath-sepher and takes it.”

13 Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb’s younger brother, took the city. So Caleb gave him his daughter Achsah for a wife.

Caleb was that person that Judah and the people of Israel needed to lead them in faith to obey God. Caleb had seen Joshua’s faith and how he had obeyed God. God gave Joshua great **success**. Caleb had faith that God would continue to give His people success

when they obeyed Him. Caleb's faith was stronger than his fear.

Caleb was also wise. If the people stopped obeying, he would give them a reason to do the right thing. He wanted to find a brave person who would obey God. Caleb promised to give his daughter as a wife to anyone who would fight and win the next city. Othniel, a brave young man from Caleb's brother's family, obeyed God and took that city. Othniel married Caleb's daughter as promised. God later made him the first judge of Israel (see Judges 3:7-11).

Caleb had faith that was stronger than fear. Caleb's faith helped Othniel to trust God. Othniel and those who followed him had faith that God would do what He promised. They took the city with God's help. Their faith became strong enough to

fight against their fear and win. Their faith was an example to others.

Faith Becomes Strong

(Judges 1:20)

20 They gave Hebron to Caleb, as Moses had promised, and he drove out the three sons of Anak.

Caleb was an example of great faith to the people of Israel. But he was not a Jew by birth. Caleb's family came from the family of Esau who had lived hundreds of years earlier. Esau was the twin brother of Jacob, and their father was Isaac. The families of these two brothers had been enemies for a long time. But Caleb's family had chosen to join Moses and the people of Israel sometime after they left Egypt. Caleb and his family chose to believe in the One True God. He had helped Moses and Joshua decide to follow God to this special land (see Numbers 14:6-9).

Now as the leader of Israel, Caleb was an example of great courage. He led his group to drive away the three sons of Anak. He obeyed God. The three sons of Anak and their families were giants (Numbers 13:33). He could have said it was impossible. But Caleb trusted God and God was with him. Caleb was used by God to help others do the right thing. His faith and courage helped others to be brave enough to obey.

Things to Think About

1. Do you remember a time when you were full of fear? What made you so afraid? What did you do about your fear?
2. Do you remember a time when you were full of faith? What made you trust God and obey in faith? What did you do to show your faith?
3. How was Caleb an example of faith to others?
4. How was Caleb used by God to help the people of Israel?
5. What can you do to help others who are full of fear?

Things to Remember

The story of Caleb's faith can also help us to trust God. We can love and follow God with all our hearts the way Caleb did. We can be brave and **conquer** our fear. We can obey God by doing what God has given us to do. We can trust God for things that look impossible to us. God's Word tells us: "For God can do all things" (Luke 1:37). We can be strong and have strength of heart when we know that God is with us!

Hundreds of years after Caleb and Othniel lived, God sent Jesus to pay for their sins and for ours. Our trust and faith in God was made perfect when He sent Jesus. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son. Whoever puts his trust in God's Son will not be lost but will have life that lasts forever" (John 3:16).

This is the promise that God has given us. With this promise, we can be brave and not fear the future. We can be an example to others when we trust Jesus to save us. Fear is replaced by faith! We are made brave by God to face our fears and to go and tell others about Jesus!

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