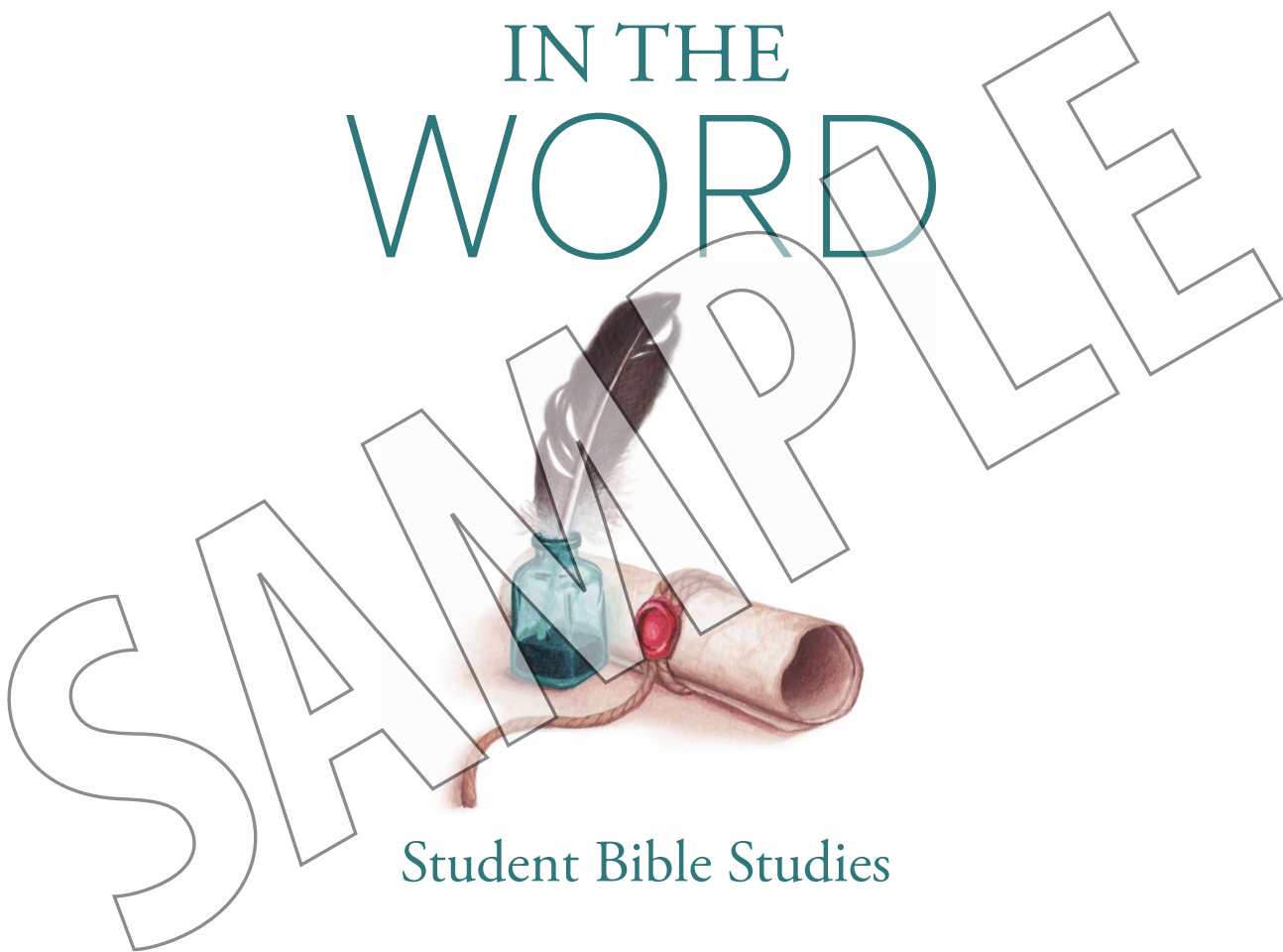


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IN THE WORD



Student Bible Studies

by Sonya Shafer

BOOK 3

OLD TESTAMENT LAW • PRAYERS • PROVERBS



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IN THE WORD

Student Bible Studies, Book 3
Old Testament Law • Prayers • Proverbs

by Sonya Shafer

On the cover: “Make them know the way in which they must walk and what they must do.”
(Exodus 18:20)

Cover illustration by Priscilla Baker



In the Word: Student Bible Studies, Book 3 is part of a complete Charlotte Mason curriculum. See where this course fits in the Simply CM curriculum at simplycm.com/curriculum.

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In the Word: Student Bible Studies, Book 3
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HOW TO USE

Complete one lesson each week to finish these studies in a school year.

Each lesson should take about 15 minutes.

Most lessons involve reading from the Bible and writing a response. If you are not comfortable reading for yourself, you can listen and follow along as someone else reads the passages aloud. Feel free to do some or all of the lessons with your teacher, answering the questions verbally, if you prefer. You could also use an audio recorder and record your answers for your teacher to review and discuss with you later. In other words, complete these lessons in a way that works best for you.

At the end of each lesson you will find a Bible Mastery Moment. The short exercises are designed to help you become familiar with your Bible and gain confidence in using it.

Three lessons are set aside as times to meet with your teacher and review your studies. Those are great opportunities to discuss any questions you might have. As you are doing each lesson, jot down in the margins any questions that come to mind. You might discover the answers in later lessons, or you can ask your teacher during your scheduled times together. Of course, you can also ask your teacher questions anytime as you dig into the Word for yourself.

Materials Needed

- Bible

Jashub's Journal

An Old Testament Law Story and Study

THIS STUDY IS A COMBINATION OF A BIBLE STUDY AND A fictional story. The story follows one year in the life of Jashub, a character based on Bible events. The background to the story is that Jashub's father was one of the men who helped Moses settle disputes according to God's Law. Jashub grew up listening to his father explain God's Law as the Israelites wandered through the wilderness. Now they have conquered Canaan under Joshua and have moved into its villages, and Jashub has become the person that everyone in his village goes to with their questions and situations.

In each lesson, read the story to set the stage, then pause and read a passage from God's Law to see how God said His people should handle the situation. Take a few moments to consider why God's Law would be good, fair, and wise in each situation described; and finish reading the story to discover how Jashub counseled the villagers and what the outcome was.

A Few Notes

1. Jashub's journal entries are written in English for this story, but keep in mind that he would have written in Hebrew.
2. The lesson titles are the months of the Jewish year. Shebat is the 11th month in the Jewish year. Some of the month names have changed over the years; we've used the early names for this story.
3. All characters, except Caleb, are fictitious.
4. This story is not meant to be an exhaustive study of the whole Mosaic Law. It is simply a living sampler of some of the laws, intended to reflect God's wisdom and justice.

Cast of Characters

Jashub: The main character, who is recording the events and giving counsel. Has one son, Noah.

Noah: Jashub's 10-year-old son, who has a pet lamb, Zelophehad.

Hamul: A soft-spoken shepherd.

Koshen: Hamul's oldest son, 15. Has a quick temper but a good heart.

Dathan: Hamul's younger son and Koshen's younger brother. Noah's friend.

Eliab: A priest and old friend of Jashub.

Gaddi: A merchant. Good with numbers, bad with tools.

Shelah: Gaddi's uncle. Inventor and carpenter.

Michael: An easy-going farmer. Has one married son. Lost his other sons in the conquest battles with Joshua.

Zaccur: Michael's and Peleth's father. Energetic and on-the-go.

Peleth: Michael's younger brother and Zaccur's son. Takes after his father.

LESSON 1

Shebat

This morning as I put the goats into the abandoned stable, I found three half-starved ewes. They were very weak and sick, and I wished I could ask Father what to do. I remember how careful he was with our goats as we wandered in the wilderness. Whenever he had a spare minute, he would teach me more about taking care of them and about the Law. Helping Moses judge the people was a hard task, but he did it with all his heart. I will always look up to my father and admire him. I hope that someday I may be half the man he was. He would have loved it here in Canaan.

Especially in our new home, the deserted town of Beth-Zur. I know that we will build our lives here in freedom and truth, following the Law. And one day, we will live in peace.

“Miriam,” Jashub called, “where’s Noah?”

“I don’t know, dear,” his wife called back. “He’s probably outside playing with Dathan.”

Jashub picked up a stack of wooden milk buckets and opened the front door. “If you see him, please tell him I’ll need his help with the new goats.”

“I will.”

Letting the door swing shut behind him, Jashub paused. He couldn’t hear the goats’ usual noisy demands for food. *Noah must have fed them*, he thought.

Mentally, he calculated the amount of produce they needed to feed the goats and winced. *Hopefully, in a few days I’ll be able to send them out with Hamul’s flocks.*

As he walked around to the back of the house, he thanked the Lord for the abandoned Canaanite town of Beth-Zur. They had spent only a few days here, but it felt like home already.

He passed a small pen built close to the stone wall bordering their property and caught sight of the open gate. With a sigh he set the buckets down. *Zelophehad got out again?* He surveyed the empty enclosure. That would explain where Noah was. Jashub smiled. His 10-year-old son’s pet lamb had broken out of more pens than he could count.

An insistent bleat from the stable reminded him that he had a job to do.

Milk streamed into the pail.

Jashub looked up as the barn door inched open, and a small boy poked his head in.

“Good morning,” Jashub said. “Did you find Zelophehad?”

Noah nodded. “Dathan and me had to go almost to the stream.”

“Dathan and I.”

Noah leaned against the wall. “Dathan and I.”

Jashub untied the goat and stood up. “Does this mean we need to pay Shelah a visit?”

Noah smiled and nodded. He took Jashub’s hand and they left the barn.

“He got out again?” The old carpenter was clearly annoyed. Pursing his lips, he clasped his hands behind his back and paced back and forth. “Hmm,” he mumbled, “maybe the lever was too low.” He stopped and squinted at Noah. “Was the gate broken or just open?”

“Open,” Noah replied.

Shelah drummed his fingers on his workbench and stared at a pile of wood shavings in thought. “What if I covered the lever . . .” He snatched up a sharp twig and began scratching on a piece of bark. “I can put a triangle of heavy wood here and a spike there.” He held up the sketch. “How does that look?”

Jashub studied the diagram. “Now, how can Noah get at the lever to open the gate?”

Shelah’s wrinkled face fell. “Guess I’ll need to work on it some more.”

Jashub turned to go. “I need to get back to the goats. A few of them aren’t doing so well.”

Shelah dug through a heap of scrap wood. “A few poles should do it.”

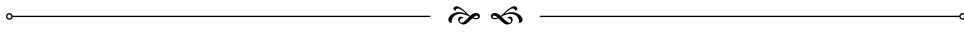
Noah looked up at Jashub. “May I stay and help?”

Jashub nodded. “Yes, you may. Goodbye, Shelah.”

“Goodbye,” Shelah replied, scratching away at the bark.

Jashub stepped out through the open door into the street.

“By the way,” Shelah called, “how are your goats?”



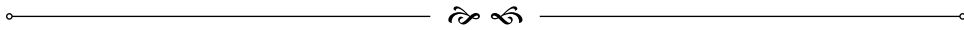
Jashub ladled goat's milk into a large wooden bowl. "Has Hamul found good pasture yet?" he asked the young woman who held the bowl.

Tirzah shook her head. "Father hasn't left yet today. Koshen and he are getting one of the sheep out of a pit."

Jashub set the ladle down on his cart. "A pit?"

Tirzah balanced the bowl in one hand and pointed down the road. "Over by Michael's house."

Holding the donkey's rope, Jashub started in the direction Tirzah had pointed. "I'll see if I can help. I've delivered all the milk."



"Pull!" Koshen shouted from inside the pit. "Pull!"

Jashub tied his donkey to a fence post and watched Hamul tug on the forefeet of a sheep. The shepherd lifted the animal over the edge and set it on the ground.

It lay unmoving.

"Is it dead?" Jashub asked.

Hamul sighed. "Yes."

Koshen climbed out of the hole, his face flushed and suffused with anger.

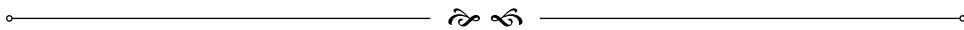
"Thanks to whoever dug this pit, we've lost one of our best ewes."

Hamul laid a hand on Koshen's shoulder. "Now, son, now. Calm down."

As the anger drained from Koshen's face, Jashub asked, "Do you know who dug the pit?"

Koshen took a deep breath and let it out slowly. Then he said, "Michael was digging it for a cistern."

Jashub walked around the deep hole. "Bring the ewe," he said. "We need to have a talk with Michael."



Complete the Bible study below, then continue reading the story.

Shebat Bible Study

SCENARIO

Michael dug a pit and left it uncovered. One of Hamul's sheep fell into the pit and died.

SCRIPTURE

Read Exodus 21:33 and 34 to discover what God's Law says about this scenario.

COUNSEL

Based on the verses you read, what should Jashub counsel Michael and Hamul to do?

GOD'S WISDOM

How would this solution be fair to the victim? _____

How does this solution encourage responsibility? _____

Continue reading to discover Jashub's counsel and check your answer.



After leaving the donkey in the barn, Jashub walked back toward the house. The smell of freshly baked bread filled the air. He stopped to check on Zelophehad. The lamb gazed back up at him with wide, innocent eyes and chewed a mouthful of grass. Jashub chuckled at the veritable fortress Shelah had erected around the gate. *Shelah never gives up*, he thought.



Jashub sat down at the empty table and spread out a roll of crackling parchment. Behind him he heard Miriam preparing supper.

“What are you doing?” Noah asked, coming in to stand beside him.

Jashub patted his son’s thatch of brown hair. “I am keeping a record, like Joshua did.” He dipped a twig into a bowl of ink and started writing.

When Hamul, Koshen, and I went to speak with Michael, I was rather worried that he might resent my interfering. However, he was very apologetic and appreciated my mediating between him and Hamul. He paid Hamul the money for the dead ewe and promised to cover the pit as soon as possible.



Bible Mastery Moment

As you probably know, your Bible is divided into two main sections: the Old Testament and the New Testament. We focused on the books of the New Testament in a previous study. In this study, you will be learning the books of the Old Testament and the categories in which they belong. Let’s start with the Old Testament History books. These books are named for what they are about.

- **Genesis** means “beginnings,” and it’s about the beginning of the world and the beginning of the Jewish nation as God’s people.
- **Exodus** is about how God rescued His people from slavery and brought them out of Egypt.
- **Leviticus** is a record of God’s good laws for the Levites who served in His tabernacle.

Practice saying those three books in order until you can say them without looking at the names.

LESSON 2

Adar

“Where are you going?” Noah asked.

Jashub stopped in the open doorway. “To a meeting of the elders. We are to decide on the laws that will govern our town.”

“Ready, Jashub?” someone called from the street.

“Coming, Michael,” Jashub called back. He gave Noah a smile. “I’ll see you when I get home.”

As he walked beside the burly farmer, Jashub could tell that Michael’s thoughts were elsewhere.

The mid-day sun beat down on the quiet town.

Michael marched along with his head down and arms folded.

What is he so worried about? Jashub wondered. *He hardly ever worries about anything.* A sudden thought occurred to him. “Michael,” he asked, “how’s Reuben?”

The farmer perked up at the mention of his married son. “He’s doing fine. It’s Sarah I’m worried about. She hasn’t been feeling well recently, and my wife is afraid it may affect the baby. It’ll be our first grandchild, you know.”

Jashub nodded sympathetically. “I’m sure it will be all right.” He caught sight of a hurrying figure up ahead. “Hello, Gaddi,” he called.

The puffing merchant slowed down. “Then I’m not late. How are you, Jashub?”

“Keeping busy. Gaddi, this is Michael, a neighbor of mine.” He turned to the farmer. “Michael, this is Gaddi, one of the most prosperous merchants in the tribe of Judah.”

Gaddi blushed. “Oh, I wouldn’t say that.” He bobbed his head at Michael. “It’s a pleasure to meet you.”

Michael shook Gaddi’s hand. “Likewise.”

Gaddi fanned himself with a large hand. “We should hurry, or we’ll be late.”

Michael smiled. “I don’t think they’ll start without us.”

The three men moved off along the road toward the city gates.

Jashub slipped into his place in the group and gave Hamul a friendly nod.

A few more latecomers straggled in.

Jashub spotted Shelah the carpenter.

Michael’s elderly father began to speak. “Now then, you all know why we’re here, so let’s get started.” Zaccur’s eyes twinkled, and his wrinkled face beamed. “First of all, there’s one here who knows a substantial amount about what the Law says. His father was one of the men who helped Moses judge disputes in the wilderness. Jashub, would you give us your counsel?”

Jashub collected his thoughts. “I believe we should begin with the foundational commandments that God gave to Moses at Mt. Sinai; Moses reminded us of those before he died.”



Complete the Bible study below, then continue reading the story.

Adar Bible Study

SCENARIO

The men of the town asked Jashub to help them determine laws for their town.

SCRIPTURE

Read Exodus 20:1–17 to discover the foundational commandments that God gave to Moses at Mt. Sinai.

COUNSEL

Record those foundational commandments in your own words here.

GOD'S WISDOM

Which commandments address man's relationship with God? _____

Which commandments address man's relationship with others? _____

Continue reading to discover Jashub's counsel and check your answer.



I reminded my countrymen of the foundational commandments. I'm recording them here:

And God spoke all these words, saying,

"I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.

"You shall have no other gods before me.

"You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.

"You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain.

"Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates. For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that

is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

“Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you.

“You shall not murder.

“You shall not commit adultery.

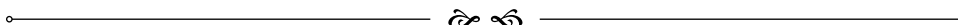
“You shall not steal.

“You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

“You shall not covet your neighbor’s house; you shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, or his male servant, or his female servant, or his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor’s.” (Exodus 20:1–17 ESV)

I also reminded them of the upcoming Passover, and we are all preparing for it. The barley fields are doing very well and will be ready to harvest next month.

After the meeting, Hamul told me that he would be taking the flocks out to pasture soon. I shall have to decide which goats to send with him and which to keep here.



Bible Mastery Moment

Can you say the names of the first three books of Old Testament History without looking back? The next two books are Numbers and Deuteronomy.

- **Numbers** is about how God protected His people (of whom there were many!) and brought them to the Promised Land.
- **Deuteronomy** is a second record of God’s good laws.

See if you can say all five books of Old Testament History learned so far.

LESSON 3

Abib

Puffs of dust rose beneath the travelers' feet.
 Jashub blinked sweat out of his eyes. He scanned the blue sky. Not a cloud in sight.

Gaddi trudged up beside him. "Whew," he sighed. "I'm more than ready for a little rain to cool things down. At this rate we might not reach Bethel before nightfall."

Jashub smiled at the little, waddling man. "I wouldn't worry. We'll get there in time for the Feast of Unleavened Bread."

Gaddi groaned. "If my camels weren't out on a trading trip, I would have ridden one." He sighed again.

Jashub felt something tug on his robe. He turned, expecting to see Noah.

A goat stared back at him and chewed a piece of cloth complacently.

The merchant burst out laughing.

Jashub examined the torn hemline. *It's not bad. Miriam should be able to fix it when I get back.*

The goat bleated and made a grab at the cloth.

Gaddi seized the animal's rope collar. "Did anyone lose a goat?" he bellowed at the surrounding crowd.

A commotion broke out towards the front of the group, and a young man shouldered his way back to them. He gave a relieved smile. "Thank you. He chewed through his rope before I noticed; then he vanished." The man held onto the goat's rope. "You're Jashub, aren't you?"

Jashub nodded. "Yes. And you?"

"My name is Peleth. I'm Michael's younger brother."

Jashub smiled. "Pleased to meet you."

Peleth stood on tiptoes, shaded his eyes, and squinted. "Can you see where Michael is?"

Jashub glanced around at the large assembly. "No. He must be here somewhere . . ."

"There he is!" Peleth exclaimed. "Thank you again." As he disappeared into the crowd, Jashub felt another tug on his robe.

"Father," Noah asked. "Do you know where Dathan is?"

Jashub patted his son's thatch of brown hair. "No, I don't. Why don't you—"

Shouts from the back of the group interrupted him. "Jebusites! Be on your guard!"

Gaddi's mouth fell open.

Noah clutched at Jashub's arm.

"No, it's all right!" someone else shouted. "It's our countrymen from Hebron!"

A cheer went up. The men of Beth-Zur stopped and waited.

Gaddi put his hand over his heart. "I don't think I can handle shocks like that anymore."

Noah scratched his nose. "So all the men from Hebron have to come too?"

Jashub watched the approaching group. "That's right, Noah. All the men and boys throughout Israel must appear before the Lord three times a year."



"Jashub!" a deep voice called.

Jashub looked up.

A large man wiggled through the crowd toward him. "Having a good journey?"

Jashub beamed with pleasure. "Eliab, how are you?"

The elderly Levite joined him. "Down in Hebron we're keeping busy repairing the walls. How's Miriam?"

"She's fine." Jashub looked around. "I don't know where Noah went. He was here a minute ago. Do you see him?"

Eliab shook his head. "So how is Shelah doing?"

The large group started moving again.

Jashub spoke louder over the noise. "He hasn't aged much. He's up ahead there with his family."

Eliab sped up. "I think I'll go see him. By the way, Jashub, don't forget, the seventh Sabbath after the feast is Shavuot."

"I'll remember," Jashub called after his friend. Once more he felt a tug on his tunic. He turned to find his son. "Noah, say hello to Eliab."

Noah blinked. "Where is he?"

Jashub sighed. *In a crowd like this, people come and go too fast for me.*

"Father," Noah said. "The lamb we're bringing isn't Zelophehad."

In his mind Jashub pictured the lamb's scarred muzzle moving as it chewed on a mouthful of grass. "That's right, Noah. We aren't going to offer Zelophehad as our sacrifice."



Complete the Bible study below, then continue reading the story.

Abib Bible Study

SCENARIO

Noah wondered whether they would offer his pet lamb, Zelophehad, as a sacrifice.

SCRIPTURE

Read Leviticus 4:27–35 and 23:4–12 to discover what God’s Law says about what kind of lamb should be sacrificed.

COUNSEL

Based on the verses you read, should Jashub offer Zelophehad as a sacrifice? Why?

GOD’S WISDOM

How does this law reinforce God’s supremacy and man’s acknowledgement of that supremacy?

Continue reading to discover Jashub’s counsel and check your answer.



“He’s scarred from the time he chewed through the fence,” Jashub continued. “We can’t offer a blemished animal.”

Noah nodded. He looked at the ground for a moment, then gave Jashub a smile. “So I can keep him?”

“Yes.” He watched Noah vanish back into the crowd.



“Excuse me, Jashub.”

Jashub waved away an inquisitive fly. “Yes, Gaddi?”

The insect buzzed around the merchant. Gaddi flapped his arms about. “I just remembered a question I wanted to ask you. I thought of it this morning before we left Beth-Zur.”

A nearby sheep bleated.

“I’m listening,” Jashub said.

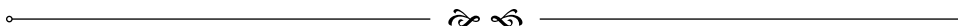
“It’s about one of my camels. Four days ago I got up early and went out to check on them. One of them was gone. Its rope had been cut and there was a hole in my stable wall the size of a cedar tree.” Gaddi held his hands wide apart to indicate.

Jashub swatted at the fly. “And?”

“I concluded that someone had stolen the camel, which I planned to send on a trading trip. There wasn’t any trail, so I had no idea where it went. I went house to house all morning asking if anyone had seen a large camel with a mean temper.”

Jashub smiled. *A camel with a mean temper? That doesn’t narrow it down.*

Gaddi kept going. “Finally, I walked by the window of a broken-down stable, and a camel inside stuck its head out and took a snap at me. It was my camel. I got him back, but I was wondering if, according to the Law, I needed to do anything else.”



Complete the Bible study below, then continue reading the story.

Abib Bible Study (part 2)

SCENARIO

Gaddi’s neighbor stole his camel.

SCRIPTURE

Read Exodus 22:1–4 to discover what God’s Law says about this scenario.

COUNSEL

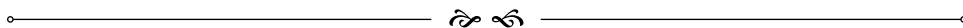
Based on the verses you read, what should Jashub counsel Gaddi to do? _____

GOD’S WISDOM

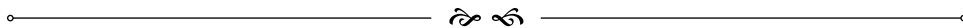
How would this solution be fair to the victim? _____

How is this solution an appropriate penalty for theft? _____

Continue reading to discover Jashub’s counsel and check your answer.



On the trip to Bethel, Gaddi told me about a camel that a neighbor had stolen from him and asked what he should do. I explained to him that if the camel was uninjured, then the thief should give him back both the camel and another camel as well.



Bible Mastery Moment

Can you name the first five books of Old Testament History, from Genesis through Deuteronomy? (If you're not sure, look at the contents page of your Bible.)

- Name the book that comes before Numbers.
- Name the book that comes after Genesis.
- Turn to the book of Exodus in your Bible.