

## Step Into Scripture: Shadows

### Week 14: From Promise to Pattern

In this final week of our first semester, we will reflect on the biblical metanarrative, culminating in the transition from the story of Israel's journey through the wilderness to their entry into the Promised Land. The recap highlights God's faithfulness in delivering His people and the consequences of Israel's compromise with idolatry, leading to cycles of rebellion and oppression detailed in Judges. We will dig into God's commands regarding intermarriage, which were about spiritual purity rather than ethnicity, underscoring the importance of maintaining holiness in worship. We will see how the narrative points to Jesus as the ultimate deliverer who breaks the cycle of sin and offers grace and redemption, contrasting Him with the unexpected leaders found in the Book of Judges.

#### Discussion Questions:

1. What does it mean to be created in the image of God, and how does this understanding impact our relationships with others?
  - Humanity was created in God's image for a relationship with Him, which changes how we interact with each other.
  - Reflect on a time when your belief in being made in God's image changed the way you treated someone. How can you apply that understanding in your daily interactions?
2. How did Israel's choices lead to a cycle of rebellion and repentance as described in the book of Judges?
  - The cycle of Judges included rebellion, oppression, repentance, and deliverance, showing how the Israelites repeatedly turned away from God.
  - Can you identify any similar cycles in your own life? What steps can you take to break that cycle and move closer to God?
3. How would you answer someone who insisted that God commands against intermarriage among different ethnicities?
  - God's concern was about sin rather than race, as the Canaanites practiced idol worship and immoral behavior.
  - How can understanding this distinction help you assess your own relationships and influences in your life today?
4. What role did unlikely leaders play in Israel's history, and what does this reveal about God's character?
  - God chose unexpected figures like Deborah and Ehud to deliver Israel, illustrating that God works through the seemingly weak or unqualified.
  - How can you embrace your own uniqueness or perceived weaknesses as a strength in serving God and others?
5. In what ways does the message of Jesus as the final Judge and perfect Savior bring you hope compared to the cycles seen in Judges?
  - Jesus does not leave us to repeat cycles of sin, offering grace and redemption instead.
  - How can acknowledging Jesus' role as your Savior change the way you approach challenges or mistakes in your life?

#### Prayer

- Ask God to help apply the lessons from this study throughout this week.
- Pray for courage to stand firm in faith despite any challenges.
- Seek guidance for areas of life that need transformation.
- Lift up any personal prayer requests from the group.