



LESSON 10

God is rejected by Israel

JUDGES 1:1-3:6



God's anger burns against those who reject Him.



***"And they abandoned the LORD, the God of their fathers, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt. They went after other gods, from among the gods of the peoples who were around them, and bowed down to them. And they provoked the LORD to anger"** (Judg 2:12).*

Supporting Truths

1. God is angry with those who reject Him.
2. Rejecting God is sin.
3. Acceptance of the world is rejection of God.
4. Rejection of God leads to corruption.
5. God is merciful even when His people reject Him.

Objectives

1. Describe how God displayed His anger against Israel.
2. Give an example of how Israel rejected God.
3. Explain how Israel loved the Canaanites and their idols more than God.
4. Describe how Israel's rejection of God led to more sin.
5. Describe how God displayed His mercy towards Israel.



Lesson Summary

After Joshua and the older generation died, the next generation rejected God. Instead of driving out the Canaanites, they let them stay in the land. Even though God rebuked them for this, they did not repent. Because they rejected Him, God stopped fighting for them and instead sent enemies to fight against them. God still had compassion on them and sent judges to save them from their enemies, but Israel continued in their sin.

Spotlight on the Gospel

God's anger burns against all men, because all men have rejected God. However, the pity God felt for sinful Israel is the same compassion that motivated Him to send Christ to die for His enemies. All who entrust themselves to Christ stop being God's enemies and instead become His friends. Since Jesus also broke the power of sin when He died and rose again, Christians should not let sin control them anymore. They should not be conformed to the world's standards, but instead be transformed by Christ's power within.

LAST WEEK



God is chosen by Israel
Joshua 23:1–24:29

THIS WEEK



God is rejected by Israel
Judges 1:1–3:6

NEXT WEEK



God uses Gideon to deliver Israel
Judges 6:1–8:34

Lesson Commentary

God's anger burns against those who reject Him.

As the book of Joshua ended, Joshua called Israel to make a decisive commitment to serve the LORD. He knew that as Israel came into close contact with the Canaanites and their gods, they would be strongly tempted to become like the Canaanites. Unfortunately, the book of Judges records how just one generation after Joshua, Israel proved unfaithful, leading to centuries of depravity, distress, and death. Only God's mercy kept the nation of Israel from destroying itself.

Israel rejected God (1:1–36)

The book of Judges begins with Joshua's death (Judg 1:1), just as the book of Joshua had begun with Moses' death (Josh 1:1). Would Israel stay faithful to God now that their human leader was dead?

At first, Israel obeyed. They rightly sought God's counsel (Judg 1:1), received His assurance (1:2), fought in His power (1:4), and achieved victory by His presence (1:19a). They completely destroyed several cities just as God had commanded (1:4, 17). They even worked together.

The story of Caleb, Othniel, and Achsah illustrates Israel's good beginning. Caleb, an old man of Joshua's generation, captured Hebron and slew its giants (Judg 1:20). He also encouraged the next generation to continue the conquest (1:12), as Othniel heroically

did (1:12–13). Caleb provided a good husband and good land for his daughter (1:15), and Achsah acted with initiative and respect (1:14). This quality family is very different than the broken relationships that fill the rest of Judges.

Despite a good start, Judah and Simeon rejected God. First, they borrowed Canaanite practices to punish Adoni-bezek instead of simply killing him

as they should have (1:6). Second, the Kenites, who had joined with Judah, lived among the Canaanites instead of driving them out (1:16). Third, despite initial victories, Judah failed to drive out the people in the valley, fearing their iron chariots more than they trusted God (1:19). So the story of conquest in the south ends badly with Benjamin's failure (1:21). Judah had captured and burned Jerusalem, but Benjamin could not finish the job by driving out the Jebusites. Despite many successes, the southern tribes rejected God's command to completely drive out all the inhabitants.

The story in the north was worse. Ephraim began well at Bethel, but they set aside God's instructions when they let the spy go free (1:23–26). After this, Israel failed again and again to drive out the inhabitants (1:27–35). Even when Israel eventually became strong enough to drive them out, they still did not do it.

At first, Israel's disobedience did not seem so bad. They became stronger and stronger until the land was under their control. But their success was only by the LORD's gracious presence. They had begun to reject the LORD, and their spiritual failure would have tragic consequences for generations to come. Their failure warns us not to excuse disobedience in our own lives just because everything on the surface appears to be going well. The devastating consequences of our sin may not come until much later in our lives, or even in the lives of our children and grandchildren.

God rebuked Israel (2:1–5)

The one who came to rebuke Israel is called the angel of the LORD, but He speaks as if He is the LORD Himself (2:1). This is an appearance of the pre-incarnate Christ, the Son of God appearing before He was born as a human. He is the Word of God (John 1:1) who cares for Israel (1 Cor 10:1–4) and reveals the Father to man (John 1:18).

He rebuked Israel for rejecting Him. They owed their loyalty to Him, because He had rescued them from Egypt and had brought them into the promised land. He had made an unbreakable covenant with them.



THINK ABOUT IT

God's people achieve the most when they serve together (Judg 1:3; Eccl 4:9–10; Eph 3:17–18).

STUDY THE BIBLE LESSON

God is rejected by Israel • Judges 1:1–3:6



But even though they were not supposed to make any covenant with the Canaanites (Exod 23:32), they did anyway (Judg 2:2). Because they rejected Him, He would stop driving out the Canaanites. He would use them and their gods as traps against Israel (2:3). Although God had chosen Israel forever, He withholds His blessing from those who reject Him.

Israel wept loudly and offered sacrifices (2:4–5), but they did not truly repent because they never changed. They did not give up idolatry or return to God with whole hearts. It is possible to be sorry because of sin but still be unrepentant. In addition to sorrow, **Repentance** also requires us to turn away from sin and turn toward God to forgive us and to rule over us (Joel 2:13; 2 Cor 7:9–11).

Israel resembled Canaan (2:6–3:6)

This section (Judg 2:6–3:6) begins by looking back on what has already been described, then it looks forward to summarize everything that will come in the rest of the book.

Although Israel obeyed for an entire generation, the next generation forgot God and rejected Him (2:6–10). Having forgotten the LORD, Israel switched their spiritual allegiance (2:11–13). They went after Baal, a false Canaanite god. Baal worship was attractive. It promised blessing here and now, and it promised fertile fields and flocks and families. It looked much better than worshiping an unseen God who required strict standards of morality and holiness. Our culture today is no different. It is like a Canaanite; addicted to the immediate, the physical, and the immoral. But

don't let it fool you. The promises of our culture, like the promises of Baal, evaporate quickly.

The LORD was angry with Israel. Because He is faithful, He faithfully punished (2:14–15; Lev

26:17; Deut 28:25). The rest of Judges describes God sending enemies against Israel (Judg 2:14). God is jealous for His people: He loves so much that he pursues with fierce anger. So He left enemies in the land in order to test Israel, to provoke them again and again to return to Him (2:20–3:4).

Because He loves, even in His anger He shows great compassion. So even though God sent enemies against Israel, He also raised up judges (military leaders) to save Israel from their enemies (2:16). This had nothing to do with Israel's repentance, because they continued in their idolatry (2:17, 19). It was all due to God's pity when He heard their suffering. Only by His mercy did Israel survive; only by His mercy are we not consumed (Lam 3:22).

In the end, Israel resembled the Canaanites (3:5–6). They lived with them. They married them. They violated God's specific commands (Deut 7:3–4; Josh 23:7, 12). As a result, they worshiped their gods. Instead of transforming the land into the land of God, they let the inhabitants of the land transform them into idolaters. Unlike sinful Israel, we must not let the world shape us but instead be the means of transforming others into God's image (Rom 12:2; Col 1:28). We must avoid **friendship with the world** (Jas 4:4). We must not think like the world thinks or love what the world loves (1 John 2:15). Instead, we must expose the godless culture around us (Eph 5:11).

Israel's downward spiral of sin shows the power sin has over everyone (Rom 3:9). We, like Israel, are incapable of putting an end to our sin. That is why Gabriel's message is such good news: Jesus came to save us from our sin (Matt 1:21). The pity God felt for sinful Israel is the same compassion that motivated Him to send Christ to die for His enemies (Rom 5:8). Through Christ the power of sin is broken (Rom 6:6–11), God's anger turns to peace (Rom 5:1), and God's unbreakable covenant to Israel proves true (Rom 11:26–31).



THINK ABOUT IT

Mere head knowledge is not enough. Israel knew stories of the LORD and His works, but they did not actually know Him.

Lesson Outline

God's anger burns against those who reject Him.



AGES 3–5 LESSON OUTLINE

1. Israel rejected God when they did not drive out the Canaanites (1:1–36).
2. God used Israel's enemies to discipline them (2:1–5, 14–15, 20–23; 3:1–4).
3. Israel became just like the sinful Canaanites (2:6–13; 16–19; 3:5–6).



AGES 6–11 LESSON OUTLINE

1. **Israel rejected God (1:1–36).**
 - In the south, Judah had great victory, but they rejected God's command (1:1–20).
 - In the north, Ephraim had some victory, but they rejected God's command (1:21–36).
2. **God rebuked Israel (2:1–5).**
 - The LORD led Israel out of Egypt into the promised land (2:1).
 - The LORD made an unbreakable covenant with Israel (2:1).
 - Israel rejected God by making a covenant with the Canaanites (2:2).
 - The LORD would not drive out the Canaanites (2:3).
 - Israel wept and offered sacrifices to the LORD (2:4–5).
3. **Israel resembled Canaan (2:6–3:6).**
 - After Joshua and the elders died, Israel worshiped Canaanite idols (2:6–13).
 - The LORD was both angry and gracious toward Israel (2:14–18).
 - Israel became more and more corrupt (2:16–19).
 - The LORD left enemies in the land to test Israel (2:20–3:4).
 - The Israelites resembled the Canaanites (3:5–6).





Lesson Questions

Use these questions to teach or to review this week's lesson.



Ages 3–5 Lesson Questions

1. **Did Israel drive out all the Canaanites?**
No.
2. **What does it mean to reject God?**
Choosing to disobey God's standard.
3. **Since Israel rejected God, what did God say He would do?**
He said He would stop helping them drive out the Canaanites. Instead, He would bring enemies against Israel.
4. **How did Israel keep sinning?**
They married the Canaanites and worshiped their gods.



Ages 6–11 Lesson Questions

1. **Did Israel have victory or failure when they fought against the Canaanites?**
They had victory in the beginning when they trusted in God, but they failed because they did not completely drive out the Canaanites.
2. **Why did they owe complete obedience to God?**
God had rescued them from Egypt, brought them into the promised land, and made an unbreakable covenant with them.
3. **What did the angel of the LORD say He was going to do?**
He said He would stop driving the Canaanites out of the land.
4. **Did Israel repent?**
No. They wept and offered sacrifices, but they did not change. True repentance requires turning away from sin and turning back to God.
5. **How did Israel's rejection of God lead to more corruption?**
Israel began worshiping the gods of the Canaanites.
6. **How did God respond to their idolatry?**
God was angry with them and brought enemies against them.
7. **How did God show compassion for Israel?**
He sent judges to rescue Israel from their enemies.
8. **Did Israel stop sinning?**
No. They became just like the Canaanites. Only Jesus' death and resurrection can set people free from sin.

Lesson Activities

Choose from the following ideas to introduce, illustrate, and apply this week's lesson.

AGES 3–5



WIPE OUT THE CANAANITES

In a short-timed race, draw stick figures (Canaanites) all over a dry-erase board while a child tries to erase them all. (Start with some already on there for a good lead.) After several children have tried, discuss their efforts to accomplish this task. In today's lesson, they will learn about Israel's lack of obedience to remove the Canaanites from the promised land.

HALF-DONE BOWLING

To illustrate that doing a job halfway is not completing it, make a bowling game using milk jugs and a large ball. Explain to the children that the goal is to knock down all the jugs. After knocking down only half of the jugs, ask the children whether you completed the goal. Explain that Israel was given a job, and they did not complete it. Allow the children to play milk-jug bowling.



THORNS AND SNARES

God told the Israelites that because they disobeyed His instructions and did not destroy all the Canaanites, the Canaanites would be like "thorns in [their] side," and the Canaanite gods would be "a snare" to them (Judg 2:3). Illustrate this during the lesson by showing the class a large thorn and a snare.

DISOBEY WHEN NO ONE IS WATCHING

Children should do one thing when you are watching and the opposite when you are not. For example, they could freeze when you are watching and wiggle when you are not. Talk to them about how Israel "served the Lord all the days of Joshua" (Josh 24:31), but the book of Judges tells us that the very next generation began to disobey.



CYCLE MOBILE

See *Year 2 Craft Book, Book 1*.

Materials: Craft sheet, yarn, hole punch, scissors, and crayons.

Directions: Pre-cut the spirals from the craft sheet. Have students color two spirals each and then glue them together (colored sides facing out). Punch a hole in the center of the spiral where indicated. Thread a piece of yarn through the hole and make a knot for hanging. Teach the students how to wind up the string to make the spiral go in motion. Talk to the students about Israel's downward spiral of sin.



Cycle Mobile
See *Year 2 Craft Book, Book 1*

TEACH THE BIBLE LESSON

God is rejected by Israel • Judges 1:1–3:6



AGES 6–8



INTRODUCE

THE “JUDGES” IN JUDGES

The book of Judges regularly refers to the “judges” whom God raised up to deliver Israel. These judges were quite different from modern judges. They were local civil or military leaders. They also often functioned as local tribal leaders or governors. There were 14 judges, six of whom were military leaders (Othniel, Ehud, Deborah, Gideon, Jephthah, and Samson). It might be helpful to compare the judges’ function to that of a school principal or a team captain who leads his team to win the game. Ask the children whether they ever have had someone help them out of a difficult situation at just the right time. The judges helped deliver Israel from the oppression of their enemies.

RESCUE ME

Show the children a life vest, and ask them whether they know why people use life vests. Explain that when someone is in danger in the water, the lifesaver is used to rescue him. Explain that over the next few weeks the Bible lessons from the book of Judges will show us how God rescued Israel over and over. (If using a life vest, you could wear it to introduce all three lessons in Judges.)



ILLUSTRATE

SNARES

Bring in some different snares (mouse trap, live trap, bear trap, etc.) to illustrate how the Canaanites gods would afflict the Israelites.

MIXING ISRAEL AND THE CANAANITES

Materials: Materials: sugar, iron filings, magnet, small plastic bag, large plastic container.

Directions: Although God warned them repeatedly, Israel became comfortable with the other nations and dwelt with them. (Illustrate Israel by placing white sugar inside a large plastic container.) Israel was disobedient to God and became comfortable with the other peoples of the land. They began to worship idols. (Mix iron filings into the sugar so that the sugar looks polluted.) God sent judges to lead Israel and bring them back to being set apart by worshiping only God. (Place the magnet inside a small plastic bag, and then place the bag in the large plastic container filled with the sugar and iron filings. Move the bag through the mixture. The iron filings should cling to the magnet, leaving behind the pure sugar.)



APPLY

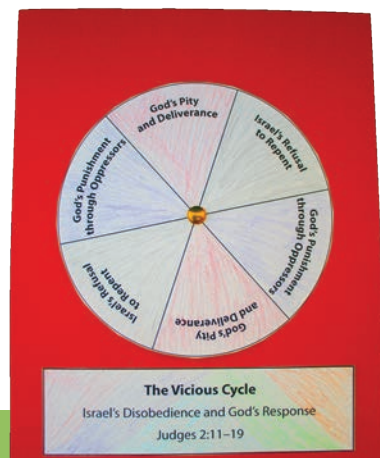
THE VICIOUS CYCLE

See Year 2 Craft Book, Book 1.

Materials: Craft sheet, cardstock, brads, scissors, glue, and crayons

Directions: Have the students color the circle and rectangular shapes from “The Vicious Cycle” craft sheet and cut them out. Instruct them to glue the rectangle to the bottom of a sheet of cardstock. Above the rectangle they should attach the circle with a brad.

The Vicious Cycle
See Year 2 Craft Book, Book 1



AGES 9–11



TALKING ABOUT TOMBSTONES

Draw two tombstones on the board, and write Judges 2:7 on one and Judges 2:11 on the other. Lead the children in a discussion of tombstones. Have any children been to a cemetery and read things written on the tombstones? What did the tombstones say? Explain that the two descriptions of Israel in Judges 2:7 and 2:11 show the drastic change that took place in their hearts after Joshua's leadership ended. Ask the children which verse they would want to have written on their tombstone when they die. Use this discussion to transition the class from the death of Joshua into the time of the judges.

MODERN IDOLS

Have two leaders or children discuss what is important in their lives. Have one talk about worldly things and how these things are more important to him than anything else in the world. Have the other talk about spiritual things and how it is not important to him what he accumulates on this earth. The only thing important is eternity with God. Point out to the children that when anything is more important to us than God is, that thing is an idol.



COMPROMISE

Talk to the children about a recipe for cake or cookies. Talk about how specific ingredients are used so that the cookies come out tasting good. Ask the children what they think will happen if instead of one teaspoon of salt you were to add two teaspoons. By compromising the recipe—not following it exactly—you have compromised the taste. This is like Israel not fully following God's commands. By not fully removing the Canaanites they compromised the blessing God had promised them.

JEALOUSY

Imagine a husband who loves his wife very much, but his wife leaves him to go live with another man. If the husband just said, "Oh well," would you really believe that he loves his wife? If he truly loved her, he would be grieved and rightly angered and would do whatever he could to win her back. Jealousy in this sense is not a bad thing. It is a good thing, because it shows true love. God's anger against Israel was a result of His covenant love for Israel.



REPROOF OF A FATHER

Talk to the children about punishment. Why are they punished? What is the reason for being punished? Is punishment good for them? Ask them to look at how God punished Israel. Have them talk about how even though God reproved them, they would still turn back to their sinful ways. Ask them if there are any parallels between themselves and Israel. Do they take the discipline of their fathers or mothers and then the next time the opportunity presents itself, sin again? When they are punished do they remember that it is meant as a reminder for them to obey? Talk to them about how God desires children to obey Him fully by obeying their parents.