



MOSAIC Gospel Project

Volume 3, Unit 9, Lesson 1: Israel's Unfaithfulness

Bible Passage: Judges 1-3

Personal Preparation

Following Joshua's death, the Israelites were without a leader. They fell into a cycle of sin that can be seen during each reign of the judges. The cycle is marked by an A-B-C-D-E pattern. Let's look at the first judge, Othniel, to see this pattern.

First, the people fell into Apostasy. They turned away from God and served other gods (Judg. 3:7). Next, they experienced a period of Bondage. God was angry with the Israelites, and he gave them into the hand of the king of Aram (v. 8). Third, the people Cried out to God (v. 9). Then, God sent a Deliverer, Othniel, to save them (vv. 9-10). Finally, they had Ease in the land (v. 11). Then, Othniel died.

This pattern continued with Ehud. The people had again turned from God. Their apostasy made God angry. He sent them into bondage by strengthening the king of Moab to defeat Israel. The Israelites served the king of Moab for 18 years.

The Moabites were well-fed, especially the king. They enjoyed the fruit of the Israelites' labor while the Israelites went hungry. By thrusting a sword into the king's belly, Ehud disemboweled the king and left him dead on the floor of his room. The fat covered over the handle of the sword so that Ehud could not remove it.

After Ehud delivered Israel, the Israelites struck down the Moabites, and there was peace in the land for eighty years. But Ehud would die, and they would need another judge to lead them.

The Israelites needed someone better than a judge; they needed a king who would save them not only from the consequences of their sin, but also from the sin itself. That was all part of God's plan. God sent a true Deliverer; his Son, Jesus, died for our sin and delivered us forever from the oppression of sin and death.

Thank God for sending the judges to the Israelites to deliver them and to point them to Jesus, the true Deliverer. Thank him for sending his Son to save us from sin. Pray that the individuals would see their own need for a deliverer through learning about the judges. Pray that they would know that Jesus is the one who can rescue them.

Memory Verse

Begin the lesson by introducing the new memory verse.

1 John 1:9

"But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness."

Points of Emphasis

1. God's people repeatedly turned from him.
2. Repentance is turning away from sin and turning to Jesus.

Activity #1

Guide the group to begin filling out the activity sheet. Feel free to allow the individuals to continue working as you teach the lesson.

Video

God led his people through the wilderness. When they refused to enter the land, he made them wander for 40 years until the next generation was ready. The people who had been afraid to go into the land had died, and God fought for his people as they followed Joshua. They conquered the nations who lived in the land God promised them. When Joshua died, things started to go badly and the people disobeyed God. Our story picks up there.

Play the video for today's lesson titled "Israel's Unfaithfulness."

Bible Lesson

Oh no! God's people certainly had a way of making a mess of things. It wasn't long after Joshua died that the people began to do evil things, like worshiping false gods. God allowed enemies to move in and conquer the Israelites as punishment for their sin. But when they cried out for help, God sent judges to rescue them and lead them back to him—even though they did not deserve it! Despite God's faithfulness, God's people repeatedly turned away from him.

It's sad to realize, but we are not so different from the Israelites who lived those thousands of years ago. We are born with sinful hearts that want to run from God. We cannot be saved by trying hard to obey or by finding a great leader to follow. We need something more—someone more! We need Jesus! What is repentance? Repentance is turning away from sin and turning to Jesus. We cannot be saved from sin unless we turn away from it and toward Jesus.

Activity #2

Guide the group to finish filling out the activity sheet. Review the memory verse with the individuals and help them learn it. Encourage

them to put the verse together using the Velcro pictures.

Christ Connection

The judges saved the people from the consequences of their sin, but not the cause of it. God's plan was to one day send a true Deliverer—Jesus, his own Son—to be the King of his people. Jesus saves people from sin forever.

Jesus came to earth as a human child, grew up without any sin, and perfectly obeyed God in every way. Jesus did not deserve to die, but he laid down his life, choosing to die on the cross so that we could live with God. On the third day after his death, Jesus rose again. This proved that his sacrifice was perfect. It was enough to pay for sin. When we believe in Jesus, God forgives our sin and declares us righteous! That means we don't have to earn salvation; God gives it to us through Jesus! We worship a good and loving God.

Review Questions

(Optional: Play the Questions From Kids (QFK) video to continue the discussion on the first judges. Today's episode asks why our parents can't just forgive us and move on rather than giving us consequences.)

Group A

Early Learner

Encourage the individuals to point to the pictures provided or to draw in order to answer these questions.

- 1. Point to who forgot God's commands and worshiped other gods.** The Israelites
- 2. Point to who experienced consequences because of their disobedience.** The Israelites
- 3. Point to who sent judges to rescue the Israelites from the consequences of their sin.** God
- 4. Point to the judge who killed the Moabite king.** Ehud

Group B

- 1. What did the Israelites do that angered God?** Forgot about his commands; worshiped other gods.
- 2. Did God abandon the people for their sin?** No, he provided judges to rescue them when they repented.
- 3. Who were the judges we learned about today?** Othniel, Ehud, and Shamgar.
- 4. Why do you think the people kept turning from God?** Guide the individuals to discuss the sin nature we are all born with. We naturally drift away from God. We think we know what is best for us, and we tend to distrust God. We cannot save ourselves.
- 5. What makes Jesus different from the judges in the Old Testament?** Jesus is not just a man; he is also the Son of God. Jesus lived a perfect life and died for us to make the way to live with God. Jesus can change our hearts to repent, love God, and obey him. The judges could not change people's hearts but only remind them of God's laws.
- 6. How do we know God still loves us even when we sin?** God sent his Son to die for sinners. In Jesus, God declares us righteous. Jesus' perfect obedience is given to us because he took on our sin. Our sin will not stop God's love. We repent because we love God, not to earn God's love. Sin is not best for us—God is.

Group C

- 1. What cycle of behavior were the Israelites in?** Every time another nation ruled the Israelites, the Israelites would cry out for the Lord to deliver them. God would then raise up a judge to save them from the enemy. As the years went by, they forgot, went back into sin, and were captured by their enemies. This cycle of loving God, forgetting him, doing evil, being captured, and then being delivered was repeated.
- 2. What did the Israelites need to be rescued from their enemies?** The Israelites needed a Savior who could deliver them once and for all. They needed a Savior who would deliver them from their sin, not just their enemies.

- 3. How does Jesus deliver sinners?** Jesus is the only person who can free us from our sin. The Israelites continued to battle their enemies and the sin within until God sent the true Deliverer—Jesus. We are controlled by sin until we trust Jesus to deliver us from it. Jesus sets us free from sin, so we can stand against sin and can become more like Jesus.

Group D

Advanced Learner

- 1. What does this story teach us about God?** We might hear this story and shake our heads about how many times the Israelites turned away from God. But we are just like the Israelites. Every day, our sinful hearts want to turn from God. We choose to sin and live for ourselves instead of God. Like the Israelites, God can lead us to turn from sin and turn back to him.
- 2. Who were the first judges of Israel?** Israel's first judge was named Othniel. Othniel delivered the people from their enemies, and they lived in peace for 40 years. When Othniel died, God's people turned from him again. They were overtaken by the Moabites, and God raised Ehud to deliver them. When Ehud died, the people turned from God again. This time, when the people cried out to God for help, God raised up Shamgar to deliver the Israelites from the Philistines.
- 3. Why does sin have consequences, even if we've been forgiven?**
- 4. In what ways does Jesus change our hearts?**

Prayer

Lord God, we confess that just like the Israelites, we have sinned against you. Our thoughts, words, and behavior do not always honor you. We repent, confident that you will forgive. Thank you for loving us and for sending Jesus. Amen.

