



6

God Remains Faithful

Key Theme

- God is merciful toward sinners.

Key Passages

- Judges 2:11, 2:14, 2:20, 3:7–9, 3:10, 3:12, 3:15, 4:1, 4:3, 6:1, 6:6, 8:33–35, 10:6–7, 10:10, 13:1; 2 Timothy 3:1–5

Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Describe Israel's tendency to wander from God.
- Describe God's mercy toward Israel.



Lesson Overview



Come On In

page 5

Students will place bookmarks at Judges 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 10, and 13. Students will practice the memory verse using the Memory Verse Strips.



Activity 1: God Remains Faithful Class Notes

page 5

Students will fill out God Remains Faithful Class Notes as you study the lesson. Pass out the class notes before you begin to teach.



Studying God's Word

page 6

During the 300-year period of Judges, Israel repeated a cycle of idolatry and disobedience to God. God punished Israel; she cried out to God. And each time, God delivered Israel, proving His faithfulness.



Activity 2: Which Phase Is It?

page 9

Students will race to be the first person to find a verse and then determine which phase of Israel's cycle in Judges it describes.

Lesson Preparation

WHAT YOU WILL DO



COME ON IN

- Cut paper into strips for each student to mark today's study passages in Judges 2, 3, 4, 6, 10, and 13.
- If you haven't done this, print and cut out the Memory Verse Strips from the Resource DVD-ROM for every 2–3 students. Print on cardstock if possible.
- Put complete sets into envelopes or small plastic bags.



GOD REMAINS FAITHFUL CLASS NOTES

- Print one God Remains Faithful Class Notes from the Resource DVD-ROM for each student. Keep the answer key for your use.



STUDYING GOD'S WORD

- Study the Prepare to Share section.
- Go Before the Throne.
- Print one Judges Scripture Sheet from the Resource DVD-ROM for each student.
- Print one Lesson Board Work Outline from the Resource DVD-ROM for your use.
- Print and cut apart one set of Board Work Mini-Posters from the Resource DVD-ROM.



WHICH PHASE IS IT?

- Print one Which Phase Is It? Scripture Sheet from the Resource DVD-ROM for your use during this activity.

WHAT YOU WILL NEED

- Memory Verse Poster
- Paper strips
- Memory Verse Strips in envelopes or small plastic bags
- If you want to do this as an individual activity, make one set per student

- God Remains Faithful Class Notes for each student
- God Remains Faithful Class Notes Answer Key
- Pencils

- Student Take Home Sheets
- Judges Scripture Sheet for each student
- Lesson Board Work Outline
- Board Work Mini-Posters

- Which Phase Is It? Scripture Sheet



Memory Verse

Joshua 1:9 Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.

► **Pace your lesson!** Use the clocks to mark the time you want to finish each section. This will help you stay on track and finish on time. You may need to shorten or drop sections as necessary.





Prepare to Share

SCRIPTURAL BACKGROUND

Before you begin to prepare for this lesson, please prepare your heart and mind by reading Judges 10–16; Hebrews 11:30–34; and 1 Corinthians 10:1–11. It is a substantial amount of reading, but you will find it helpful to see the continued pattern through Israel’s history in the period of the judges.

This period of the 13 judges extended over about 300 years. It began around 1350 BC with the first judge, Othniel, and ended with the prophet and judge Samuel. It occurred during a very dark time of backsliding in Israel’s history. Within the book we see the repeated themes of the Israelites’ disobedience to God and God’s faithfulness to forgive, reward, and protect the people when they turned in humble contrition. We also see the recurring theme that God uses people—even the wicked, idolatrous enemy nations of Israel, and the imperfect judges—to bring judgment, to promote reconciliation with His people, and to fulfill His perfect will however He deems necessary.

The recurring cycle of the book of Judges is recapped clearly in Judges 2:16–19:

Nevertheless, the Lord raised up judges who delivered them out of the hand of those who plundered them. Yet they would not listen to their judges, but they played the harlot with other gods, and bowed down to them. They turned quickly from the way in which their fathers walked, in obeying the commandments of the Lord; they did not do so. And when the Lord raised up judges for them, the Lord was with the judge and delivered them out of the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge; for the Lord was moved to pity by their groaning because of those who oppressed them and harassed them. And it came to pass, when the judge was dead, that they reverted and behaved more corruptly than their fathers, by following other gods, to serve them and bow down to them. They did not cease from their own doings nor from their stubborn way.

The moral climate during this time was pitiful. There was no king, and everyone did what was right in his own eyes (Judges 21:25). Yet as we read the book of Judges, it is hard to miss God’s faithfulness and compassion toward His people. Over and over the Lord

heard their cry and sent someone who would deliver them from the consequences of their own sin (Judges 3:9). This book provides an amazing picture of just how faithful God is to His people in spite of their lack of faith in Him (see 2 Timothy 2:13). He is always eager to forgive a truly repentant heart (1 John 1:9). He demands obedience and is gracious to discipline us in our disobedience—as a father chastens a son (Hebrews 12:6). It is good to remember that God’s faithfulness to us is based on His character, and will never waver.

Judge	Reference	Years Judged
Othniel	Judges 3:9–11	40 years
Ehud	Judges 3:15–30	80 years
Shamgar	Judges 3:31	10 years
Deborah	Judges 4:4–5:31	40 years
Gideon	Judges 6:7–8:35	40 years
Tola	Judges 10:1–2	23 years
Jair	Judges 10:3–5	22 years
Jephthah	Judges 11:1–12:7	6 years
Ibzan	Judges 12:8–10	7 years
Elon	Judges 12:11–12	10 years
Abdon	Judges 12:13–15	8 years
Samson	Judges 13:2–16:31	20 years

HISTORICAL/APOLOGETICS BACKGROUND

In order to make sense of the period of the judges, including the account of Samson, consider what God had been doing ever since Moses pleaded for Him not to forsake Israel (Numbers 14:11–19). Moses asked God to spare Israel, despite their faithlessness in siding with the ten spies who discouraged them from entering the Promised Land. The basis for Moses’s intercession was that God should show Himself faithful to Israel, not for their sake, but for His own glory’s sake. Otherwise, if Israel were forsaken, the nations would think God was unable to carry out His promises. In response to Moses’s plea, God relented. And in Judges, God’s glory was once again shown to Israel in His undeserved faithfulness, which was displayed in the constant cycle of Israel’s sin, God’s judgment, Israel’s cries, God’s deliverance, and the Israelites’ abuse of that deliverance by lapsing again into sin. God showed both justice in punishing Israel’s sin and

faithful covenant mercy in repeatedly delivering the people from the oppression of idolatrous nations. By doing so, the Lord continually acted as a just judge and showed Himself as the God who is greater than the idols of the nations who oppressed Israel.

These accounts in Judges are written as an example to us (1 Corinthians 10:11). In our lives, God's honor is at stake, and His faithfulness to us—His flawed, sinful, yet redeemed people—displays His greatness. This is a precious truth that we must handle carefully. Romans 6 warns that we must not abuse the grace of God. If we do, it may show that we are not truly His (1 John 3:4–9). Nonetheless,

God's faithfulness and forgiveness toward His own are indeed unconditional. Praise Him!

For more information on this topic, see the Online Resource Page.



BEFORE THE THRONE

Merciful Savior, I humbly enter your throne room today. I praise you because you are faithful to sinners like me. You are just as faithful today as you were to the Israelites. Help me to teach my students to see your faithfulness. Bless them, Lord. Help them apply this lesson to their own lives.



COME ON IN

As students arrive . . .

- They will mark their Bibles at Judges 2, 3, 4, 6, 10, and 13 with strips of paper.
- They will put the Memory Verse Strips in order and recite the verse together and/or to each other. They may work individually or in teams.

This time at the beginning of class should be used to review the memory verse. We have provided a template on the Resource DVD-ROM you can use to make Memory Verse Strips to be put in order each week. You may have other ideas and ways to encourage your students to memorize the verse.



After all the students arrive, pray with them before beginning the lesson.



REVIEW

Using the Lesson Theme Posters provided with each lesson, quickly review the previous lesson(s) with your students. Take 5 to 10 minutes to reinforce the important truths the students have heard so far in your class.

Ask the children questions about the previous lessons as you display the Lesson Theme Posters. Reflect briefly on the passages you read, bringing the objectives and themes back into focus. This will refresh the truths in your students' minds and maintain continuity as you teach through the lessons.



God Remains Faithful Class Notes

MATERIALS

- God Remains Faithful Class Notes
- God Remains Faithful Class Notes Answer Key
- Pencils or pens

INSTRUCTIONS

Print the class notes for each student. Pass them out at the beginning of class. Have students fill in the blanks as you study the lesson.

We will be completing these class notes as we study the Bible today. Try not to

work ahead. Fill in the blanks as we come to them. I'll let you know when to fill in something.

After filling in each point on the class notes, have the students re-read the statement together or call on individual students to read it.

CONNECT TO THE TRUTH

When we finish our class notes, we will know some important things about God's faithfulness.



Studying God's Word

READ THE WORD

► Use the History of Israel Poster included with your teacher kit to show your class where the biblical accounts you study chronologically fit into this timeline.

Judges 8:33–35

► You will be putting posters that depict Israel's cycle of disobedience on the board again this week to remind your students of this dark time of idolatry and sin.

Judges 2:11, 3:7, 3:12, 4:1, 6:1, 10:6, 13:1

We heard about Gideon last week. He was the fifth judge that God appointed to rule over Israel. By the time Gideon was judge, the cycle of Israel's sin and God's deliverance had been repeated for many years. *Refer to the Lesson Theme Poster.*

This cycle illustrated Israel's sinful heart. The cycle for 300 years went like this. 1) The Israelites sinned, practicing idolatry, and disobeying the Lord. 2) The Lord became angry and sent their enemies to punish them with defeat. 3) Then the Israelites cried out to God to forgive them. 4) God raised up a judge to deliver them from their enemies. 5) The Israelites again praised God for His deliverance and peace. That was the cycle Israel was in when God raised up Gideon to defeat the Midianites.

? Listen to what happened after God's miraculous victory over the Midianites. This is after Gideon died. It is in Judges 8:33–35. *Read the verses.*

? What did the people forget after Gideon died? *Judges 8:34. They did not remember the Lord their God.*

That's right. They forgot about God and the things He had done for them through Gideon. They turned back to their idols—worshipping other gods. Let's see how this continues. Turn in your Bibles to the book of Judges. You should have bookmarks at these chapters: 2, 3, 4, 6, 10, and 13.

Those are the chapters of the Bible we are going to be studying today. But to make it easier this week, instead of flipping back and forth to all those chapters, we will read the verses off this sheet. *Pass out the Judges Scripture Sheet to each student. They should already have their class notes and a pencil ready.*

Place the Israel's Cycle Mini-Poster on the board. We will be talking about Israel's cycle in Judges today. Let's begin by reading all the verses under heading 1 on your Scripture sheet. And when you read, please read the reference for each verse before you read the verse. Listen carefully. As we go through these verses, you will fill out your class notes. Choose several students to read the verses out loud.

EXAMINE THE WORD

Observe the Text

? What did the children of Israel continue to do in these verses? *Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord. Have students underline that phrase in each verse.*

Yes. In each of these separate accounts in Judges, Israel returned to do evil in the sight of the Lord. This is the beginning of the cycle. Each verse tells of another time Israel turned away from God to the false gods of the nations around them. *Place mini-poster 1 on the board. Complete #1 on your class notes. Turned.*

- ? The people worshipped Baals and Asherahs. What are those? *Allow discussion. Refer to Judges 2:11, 3:7, and 10:6. Look in the verses and see if you can figure it out. They are names for false gods of the other nations.*

So these verses give us a good idea of just how often the Israelites turned again from God to worship other gods and idols. It's very clear that Israel repeated this sinful cycle of idolatry.

Now let's take a look at the verses on your Scripture Sheet under heading 2. Let's read those. *Have several students read the verses out loud.*

- ? In all four verses we get a picture of the Lord's reaction. What was it? *He got angry.*
- ? Right. What is the phrase in those verses that repeats and tells us that the Lord got angry? *The anger of the Lord was hot against Israel.*

Yes. The anger of the Lord was hot against Israel. He was very angry.

And three of those verses describe what the Lord did to punish the children of Israel. Can you see that? *He delivered them into the hands of the plunderers and sold them into the hands of their enemies. Place mini-poster 2 on the board.*

God punished the Israelites. Now complete #2 on the class notes. *Punished.*

Discover the Truth

The people continued in their idolatry. They continued turning from God. They did evil in the sight of the Lord. God's anger continued to rise up. He continued to use their enemies—the nations surrounding them—to strike His people. God sent their enemies as His punishment on them for their idolatry and disobedience. God was in control of these battles and punishments.



READ THE WORD

Refer to the mini-posters on the board. We've read that the Israelites turned from God. Then God punished the Israelites.

- ? Let's continue by reading the verses under heading 3 on your Scripture sheet. *Choose several students to read the verses out loud.*

Judges 2:14, 2:20, 3:8,
and 10:7

Judges 3:9, 3:15, 4:3,
6:6, 10:10

EXAMINE THE WORD

Observe the Text

- ? First of all, what were the children of Israel doing in all of these verses?
Crying out to the Lord.

They cried out to the Lord. Complete #3 on your class notes. *Cried out. Place mini-poster 3 on the board.*

Israel would cry out to God for mercy. The people knew they had sinned against Him. They knew they had forsaken God and they would repent of their sin.

Let's read the verses under heading 4 on your Scripture Sheet. How did God respond to Israel's cry of repentance? *Choose students to read the verses out loud.*

- ? What did the Lord do in each of these verses? *The Lord provided a deliverer.*

Yes, The Lord delivered the Israelites out of the hands of the people who had troubled them.

- ? Who did the Lord raise up in Judges 2:16? *The Lord raised up judges who delivered them.*

- ? What about in Judges 3:9? *He raised up a deliverer.*

- ? And what about 3:15? *He raised up a deliverer.*

- ? And in Judges 6:14 we read that God sent a deliverer. Who was it? *Gideon.*

- ? And what was Gideon sent to do? *Save Israel from the hand of the Midianites.*

God responded to His people with mercy and love by sending them help even though they continued to turn from Him in sin. He is a very faithful God. Complete #4 on your class notes. *Mercy and love. Place mini-poster 4 on the board.*

Discover the Truth

We've really uncovered many verses that show us the terrible cycle Israel chose to repeat during the time of the judges.

- ? Can you see that throughout those years, even though Israel was unfaithful to God, God remained faithful to His people? *Yes.*

They turned from Him again and again. Although God punished them for their sin, when they cried out to Him, He would raise up another judge to help them. The judge would lead them in victory over the enemy and bring them out of the trouble and oppression they were in. God showed His faithfulness in spite of the people's continued disrespect, sin, and disobedience. When they turned back to Him, He forgave and protected them from their enemies once again.



Judges 2:16, 3:9, 3:15,
6:14



Which Phase Is It?

MATERIALS

- ☐ Which Phase Is It? Scripture Sheets

INSTRUCTIONS

Have students put their Scripture Sheets away and use their Bibles. This will be similar to a Bible drill. Using the Which Phase Is It? Scripture Sheet, give the reference for the first verse. Students will race to find it. After the students have found it, assign someone to read the verse out loud. Determine which phase in Israel's cycle it describes. Allow them to look at the board or their class notes to see what the phases are. Use additional verses if time allows—from the class Scripture sheet.

Now we are going to play a game to help recognize the different phases Israel repeated in the book of Judges. Refer to the mini-posters and/or the Cycle of Israel's Sin Chart. Explain how the game works.

CONNECT TO THE TRUTH

You did a good job recognizing the different parts of Israel's cycle in Judges. It was a sad cycle they repeated for about 300 years.



Applying God's Word

WHAT YOU HEARD IN THE WORD

Refer to the diagram on the board. So today we saw that Israel continued in the cycle of disobedience to God. Remember this period of history lasted 300 years! The people turned away from God to false gods, then God would punish them by sending nations to conquer them and make their lives very difficult. The people would then cry out to God and God would show His mercy and love by sending a judge who would deliver them from their enemies. Let's read through each of the steps in the cycle Israel repeated during the time of the judges. Choose students to read each of the first four steps.

There is still one more step in this cycle to add. After God would deliver the people and show His mercy and love, the people would praise God for His deliverance and peace. You can fill out #5 on your class notes. Place mini-poster 5 on the board. Have students complete #5 on their class notes. Praised.

So these are the five phases of Israel's cycle. It went on for 300 years. And yet God continued to be patient with the people and continued to show His mercy by delivering them once again, from their enemies.

GOD'S WORD IN THE REAL WORLD

In spite of God's willingness to forgive and show mercy and love to His people, the book of Judges does not end on a happy note. The very last verse of the book tells us that everyone did what was right in his own eyes.

? What does that mean, that everyone did what was right in his own eyes?
Allow answers.

It means that the people continued to do whatever pleased them and did not remain obedient to God. They continued in their ugly, self-centered sin.

I don't think things have changed much since then. Let me read these verses to you. Listen carefully. It was written long after the book of Judges and I believe it applies to us today. *Read 2 Timothy 3:1-5.*

The Bible says we are all sinners. We are still like the Israelites. Every time we sin we turn away from God. Yet, God is always ready to forgive us when we turn to Him. God is merciful toward sinners. He has shown His mercy through Jesus Christ, His Son, who died on the Cross that those who believe in Him may be forgiven and have eternal life. He is a great and wonderful, merciful and loving God.



2 Timothy 3:1-5

► Pass out the Student Take Home Sheets and remind the students to practice the memory verse this week.



MEMORY VERSE

Joshua 1: 9 Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.



GROUP PRAYER TIME

- Praise God because He is good and loving and wants what is best for us.
- Thank God because He sent Jesus to die for our sins.
- Ask God to give us the strength and the power to obey His Word and turn away from our own evil desires.