



# 4

## Israel Disobeys God

### Key Themes

- God alone is to be worshipped.

### Key Passages

- Joshua 21:43–45; Judges 2:8–12, 2:14; Luke 18:22–23

### Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Define Idolatry.
- Explain the consequences for Israel's idolatry.



## Lesson Overview



### Come On In

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Students will put the Memory Verse Cards in order and then practice saying the verses together and/or with a partner.



### Activity 1: Israel Disobeys God Class Notes

page 5

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



### Studying God's Word

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The nation of Israel under Joshua's rule continued to conquer the land of Canaan. God's promises had been fulfilled. After Joshua's death, however, the people became idolatrous, worshipping the false gods, and they turned their back on God. This angered God. He removed His hand of protection from Israel and the people suffered. God alone is to be worshipped and obeyed.



### Activity 2: Idol Charades

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Students will play a charades game to discover a variety of things that can become idols in our lives.

# Lesson Preparation

## WHAT YOU WILL DO

## WHAT YOU WILL NEED



### COME ON IN

- ☐ If you haven't done this, print and cut out the Memory Verse Cards from the Resource DVD-ROM for every 2–3 students. Print on cardstock if possible.
- ☐ If you want to do this as an individual activity, make one set per student.

- ☐ Memory Verse Poster
- ☐ Memory Verse Cards in envelopes or small plastic bags



### ISRAEL DISOBEYS GOD CLASS NOTES

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

- ☐ Israel Disobeys God Class Notes for each student
- ☐ Israel Disobeys God Class Notes Answer Key
- ☐ Pencils



### STUDYING GOD'S WORD

- ☐ Study the Prepare to Share section.
- ☐ Go Before the Throne.
- ☐ Print one Promised Land Map from the Resource DVD-ROM.

- ☐ Student Take Home Sheets
- ☐ Promised Land Map
- ☐ Tape or poster putty



### IDOL CHARADES

- ☐ Print one Idol Charades Activity Strips from the Resource DVD-ROM.
- ☐ Cut apart and fold strips and place them in a cup or bowl.

- ☐ Idol Charades Activity Strips
- ☐ Cup or bowl



## 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 your lesson this week, please prepare your heart and mind by reading Joshua 23:14–16; Judges 1–3; and Colossians 3:4–6 (paying particular attention to the fact that in verse 5, covetousness is identified as a form of idolatry).

Our last lesson described the event of the miraculous conquest of Jericho. Israel, after that victory, endured the consequences of one man's disobedience when it was defeated at Ai, the next city God commanded it to conquer (Joshua 7). After dealing with the problem of this man's sin, Israel conquered Ai; and the principle that God would bless obedience and withhold blessing from disobedience was firmly demonstrated. The rest of the book of Joshua is the history of that generation's conquest of the land of Canaan, culminating in Joshua's description in chapter 23:14 that all of God's promises of blessing and guidance in the giving of the Promised Land were fulfilled.

Judges chapter 1 gives a summary of the last part of the land's conquest and the failure of Israel to completely cast out the idolatrous inhabitants. Judges 2:1–3 records the Angel of the Lord warning Israel that this failure would have bitter consequences: "they shall be thorns in your side, and their gods shall be a snare to you." Joshua's generation seemed to take the warning to heart; Judges 2:7 says that the people served the Lord all the days of Joshua and of the elders of that generation who outlived him. However, after that generation's death, the people became idolatrous and did not know the Lord nor the work that He had done for Israel (Judges 2:10). Their idolatry took the form of worshiping the gods of the conquered people whom Israel had not cast out in the previous generation. These gods were the Baals, usually thought to be gods of fertility and prosperity (Judges 2:11).

Israel's quick fall into idolatry may seem far removed from us. In our culture, there is little temptation to actually worship a Baal or to make an idol and bow down to it. The root of the Israelites' idolatry, however, was that instead of trusting and serving the true God, and devoting themselves to His great purposes, they chose to worship gods whose claim to deity lay in their willingness to serve the desires of the people. In this, we are much like the Israelites, and we are warned by Paul in the book of Colossians to "put to death" selfish and impure desires (Colossians 3:5). In this exhortation, we see the common ground of our own sin with the idolatry of Israel: cov-

etousness—selfish, sinful desire for what God has not given. And the Apostle Paul warns that "no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God" (Ephesians 5:5). If we aren't fighting this sin of covetousness—putting it to death—it's evidence that we may not be a true believer.

The rest of Judges 2 describes the anger of the Lord against Israel's idolatry and disobedience as He delivered them into the hands of the surrounding nations (Judges 2:14). But we also see the undeserved compassion that God exercised in raising up judges to deliver Israel from her enemies again and again (Judges 2:16). Judges 2:11–23 gives a broad, general description of the cycle that history records of Israel during the era of the judges. The recurring pattern included the Israelites turning to idolatry, angering the true God; God bringing consequences against them in the form of oppression by idolatrous nations; the Israelites crying out, "groaning" to God for deliverance from oppression; God showing compassion on them and providing a deliverer by way of a judge; and finally after regaining deliverance, Israel turning again to covetous idolatry, beginning the cycle anew. Clearly, this is not a highlight of Israel's history. As the book of Judges closes, the Lord gives insight into the Israelites' condition: "In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes" (Judges 17:6).

## HISTORICAL/APOLOGETICS BACKGROUND

Note that the root of the Israelites' disobedience was always their failure to trust that the true God was caring for their best interests. Idolatry—including our bent toward putting pleasure, worldly possessions, and comfort before God—is never a matter of obedience alone. Idolatry reveals a heart that does not have faith and trust in God and all His purposes. Idolatry will put our selfish desires above the one true God. As we read Israel's history, although we see a stream of blessings for obedience and consequences for disobedience, the root issue is always faith. Would Israel trust that the true God is faithful to His promises and that His promises are the true prosperity of His people? Will we trust that the true God is faithful to His promises and that His promises are the true prosperity of His people? Whenever disobedience occurs, the answer to this question is no—whether we are talking of Israel or ourselves.

Luke 18:18–24—the account of the rich young ruler and Jesus—gives us a New Testament illustration of the struggle we often encounter between loyalty toward God and love for the world. Like the rich young ruler, we want the eternal life (and all the blessings) that God provides through Christ's sacrifice, and yet we often have conflicting desires to hold onto the immediate blessings that we can obtain in this life. God does not demand of His followers that they avoid all worldly blessings, but He clearly commands them to value Christ and a life honoring Him to the extent that worldly blessings have no hold on our hearts. Our failure to be able to “let go” of worldly desires may keep us from Him (Mark 8:34–38). What our hearts trust and value will ultimately lead us to obey or disobey our Lord.

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



## BEFORE THE THRONE

Holy and just Lord, you are gracious and so merciful. As I study the idolatry of the Israelites, help me to examine my own heart. Where there is any hint of something or someone in my life that comes before you, reveal it. In your mercy forgive me. And by the power of your Holy Spirit, help me get my relationship with you right, for you are all that matters. Help me to pass on the truth of this lesson to the children in my class. It is so easy to be entrapped by the things of this world. Give them the strength and discernment to avoid the sin of idolatry. Continue to open their eyes as we study your Word. I pray that each one of them would come to know you as the one true God of their life.



## COME ON IN

As students arrive . . .

- They will put the Memory Verse Cards in order and recite the verses 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 Cards 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.



# Israel Disobeys God Class Notes

## MATERIALS

- ☐ Israel Disobeys God Class Notes for each student
- ☐ Israel Disobeys God Class Notes Answer Key
- ☐ Pencils or pens

## INSTRUCTIONS

*Pass the class notes out at the beginning of class. Have students complete them as you study the lesson. Write the correct words on the board for students who have difficulty spelling.*

We will be completing the 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 write.

## CONNECT TO THE TRUTH

When we finish our class notes, we'll see that God made promises—"good news!" But Israel disobeyed—"bad news!" And that we should worship God alone!



# 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.

Jericho was the first city to be taken by Joshua and his men. They did it exactly as God had commanded. The city fell with a trumpet blast and the shouts of God's people. It probably seemed to the Israelites that if they could defeat Jericho, they could easily defeat all the other cities that still stood in the way. The Israelites were on their way to winning many battles that would gain them the land God had promised them so long ago. *Show the Jericho Promised Land Map.*

Shortly after their victory at Jericho, the Israelites planned to take a small town name Ai (*pronounced A-I*). *Refer to Ai on the map.* They were confident they could overcome the few people who lived there. But sadly, they suffered a terrible loss. Joshua wondered why they had been defeated, and God answered. It was because of the sin of one soldier named Achan. Achan had disobeyed God. He had stolen riches from Jericho that God had commanded them not to take.

Because one man disobeyed God, they lost the battle at Ai. God wants His people to obey all the time. Joshua obeyed Him at Jericho and God gave them victory. But Achan disobeyed God, and they lost the battle!

However, after God punished Achan, Joshua and the Israelites continued to conquer the land that God had promised them. They were obedient to God, and God gave them victory.

**Joshua 21:43–45**

You tell me what God gave them while I read Joshua 21:43–45. *Read the text aloud.*

► Because of the age and ability of 1st and 2nd graders to read and comprehend, we encourage you to read the Scriptures to the students. However, if you have strong readers, by all means have them participate by reading God's Word.

► As the students answer the questions, have them complete the class notes.

## EXAMINE THE WORD

### Observe the Text

? **What had the Lord given to Israel?** *Joshua 21:43. All the land that He had sworn to give them. Have students complete #1a of the class notes—land.*

So as the book of Joshua ends, we read that time had passed, battles had been won, and cities had been conquered. The Lord came through on His promise to the Israelites. That was some really great news!

? **What does Joshua 21:44 go on to tell us?** *Re-read the verse. The people had rest; no enemies stood against them. The Lord had delivered them from their enemies. Have students complete #1b of the class notes—rest.*

? **Yes. Good. Now, listen carefully to this. How many words of the Lord had failed?** *Re-read 21:45. None.*

- ? And what came to pass that the Lord had promised? *Re-read Joshua 21:45. All the Lord had promised had come to pass.*

## Discover the Truth

The Israelite people had the victory. They had rest and peace. They were finally living in the Promised Land. Everything the Lord had promised had come to pass. None of His words had failed.

- ? Remember. God wants His children to obey. Do you think God still wanted them to obey? Or could they just do what they wanted now that the promises had been fulfilled, and they had the land God had promised?  
*Yes, they still needed to obey God.*

God still wanted them to obey. That did not change, and it will never change. God demands and deserves obedience from you and all of His people!



## READ THE WORD

All the people and Joshua lived in the Promised Land and remembered everything God had done for them. God had been faithful to His promises. They were at peace and were successful. But this was not going to last for long.

Let's move on to the book of Judges and see what happened next. We are going to move out of the book of Joshua and to the next book in the Bible, the book of Judges. We'll read Judges 2:8–12. *Read the verses aloud.*

Judges 2:8–12

## EXAMINE THE WORD

Let's see what we can learn by asking questions about this text.

### Observe the Text

- ? How old was Joshua when he died? *Judges 2:8. 110 years old.*
- ? Yes. Joshua lived a long life obeying God. Then he died and was buried. The Bible tells us something about the generation after Joshua. Listen again and tell me about this next generation. *Re-read Judges 2:10 emphasizing they "did not know the Lord nor the work which He had done for Israel." They did not know the Lord or His works.*
- Right. The people born after Joshua did not know the Lord or His works. They forgot all about Him.
- The Bible tells us what they did. Listen to Judges 2:11. *Re-read Judges 2:11.*
- ? So how did the people begin to act? *They did evil in the sight of the Lord. Have students complete #2a of the class notes—evil.*
- ? They did evil. And who did they begin to serve? *Judges 2:11. They served the Baals.*



## Judges 2:14

? What does the Bible mean when it uses the term Baals? *Allow discussion.*

Baals refers to false gods. The Israelites had conquered many nations. Those nations did not know the true God. They worshipped many other gods, one of which was called Baal. And this verse tells us that Israel began to worship these other gods as well. They were not worshipping God alone. They were worshipping the false gods of the people all around them. *Have students complete #2b of their class notes—false.*

God doesn't like anyone to worship gods other than Him. Listen as I read this and tell me what God thought of His people worshipping false gods instead of Him. *Read Judges 2:14 emphasizing "the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel."*

? Did you hear that? How was God feeling now? *He got angry.*

Yes. The Lord was angry. The people had turned away from Him. Fill in #3 on your class notes. *Have students complete #3 of the class notes—angry.*

### Discover the Truth

While Joshua was still alive, the people remembered the mighty works of God. But, after he died, they soon forgot their mighty God. They started worshipping the false gods of the people they had conquered. They were bowing down and praying to other gods. That is called idolatry. Idolatry is worshipping something other than the true God. Fill in #4 on your class notes. *Have students complete #4 of their class notes—idolatry.*

? And how does God feel about it when we worship a false god? *Angry.*

Yes. That is idolatry, and God doesn't like it. Idolatry is sin against God. And God must punish all sin. In this case, God punished the people by turning other nations against them. The Israelites were taken over by their enemies, stolen from, and mistreated. God does not tolerate idolatry. His people must never worship anything but Him!



### READ THE WORD

So the Israelites were punished for their idolatry. Well, Jesus had something to say about that, too. In the book of Luke, in the New Testament, we read about a man who was very rich. He asked Jesus what he needed to do to get to heaven. Jesus told him he must obey all the



commandments. And the rich man said that he had done that. But there was one more thing Jesus told the rich man.

Listen carefully. I want you to raise your hand when you hear what Jesus told the man he must do. *Read Luke 18:22.*

Luke 18:22

## EXAMINE THE WORD

### Observe the Text

? Who heard it? What did Jesus tell him he had to do? *Sell all that he had and give it to the poor.*

? What would the man then have? *He would have treasure and riches in heaven.*

Now let me read one more verse. *Read Luke 18:23.*

Luke 18:23

? Was the man happy to do what Jesus asked him to do? *No.*

### Discover the Truth

This rich man thought he loved Jesus. He said he wanted to follow Him and have eternal life in heaven. But, Jesus told him he had to sell all of his things and give the money to the poor. And so the rich man left Jesus because he didn't want to sell all his stuff. He didn't want to obey what Jesus told him.

? This man had an idol in his life. He had something in his life that he loved more than Jesus. What was that idol he had? What was it that he would not give up to follow Jesus? *His stuff; his money.*

That's right. His money or his stuff was his idol. Fill in #5 on your class notes with the word "stuff." This man was committing idolatry. Idolatry is when we put anything we love above the love we have for Jesus.

? How does God feel about idolatry? Look back at #3 on your class notes. *It makes God angry.*

Idolatry does make God angry. And we need to be careful that we don't have idols in our lives. If we put anything before God or Jesus in our lives, that is idolatry. And, like the rich man in our account today, Jesus may ask us to give up something that is very important to us—something we love very much.





# Idol Charades

## MATERIALS

- ☐ Idol Charades Activity Strips
- ☐ Cup, bowl, or other appropriate container

## INSTRUCTIONS

*Print and cut apart the Idol Charades Activity Strips. Put strips in a container for the students to draw from. Have students take one strip and act out the item mentioned using motions like charades. When someone guesses the "idol" being illustrated, continue with the next person.*

*Your class may only have time for two or three of these to be acted out. When you run out of time, have the students who didn't have a turn read the rest of the slips out loud. (You can change this up and have the students draw the items on the board and let the class guess what they are trying to draw.)*

If we aren't careful, we can get caught up in idolatry ourselves. We're going to play a game to get us to think about some of the different things that can become idols in our lives. One at a time, I'll have a volunteer

come up to draw a slip of paper from the cup. I want you to act out the words on the paper, but you can't say anything. When you think you know what he is acting out, raise your hand. *Choose the first volunteer to begin the game.*

## CONNECT TO THE TRUTH

? We just played a game that showed us different things that can become idols in our life. What is an idol? *Anything we love more than God.*

God should be our treasure—the one thing we want above everything else. We need to be careful that our life—what we do, what we watch on TV, what video games we play, how we use the computer, what we read, and how we spend our money—doesn't put anything else ahead of God. Whenever we put something else before God, we are committing idolatry.



# Applying God's Word

## WHAT YOU HEARD IN THE WORD

The good news that we heard this week was that God fulfilled His promise completely and Israel lived in peace after conquering the people in the Promised Land. The bad news was how quickly Israel forgot about God. Shortly after Joshua's death, the next generation of people started to practice idolatry. They worshipped false gods—the Baals—not the one true

God. And they paid the consequences. God became angry and removed His hand of blessing. The hand of God turned against Israel in judgment.

God demands that we obey and worship Him alone. God does not tolerate idolatry. We commit idolatry when we have anything in our lives that we put before God. God has made it clear to us that we are to love Him with ALL our hearts, ALL our souls, and with ALL our minds. God wants us to love Him more than anything else. You can complete #6 on your class notes. *Have students complete #6 of the class notes—God.*

## GOD'S WORD IN THE REAL WORLD

We can practice idolatry and make God angry at us. Remember, an idol is anything we put before God. It can be our friends, if the friends are more important to us than God. It can be school work, if that school work is more important to us than God. It can be sports, if that sport is more important to us than God. It can be money and riches (as was the case of the rich ruler we read about), if the money and riches are more important to us than God. Idolatry can be sleep, if we are too tired to get out of bed on Sunday. It can be clothes, toys, TV shows, new games, phones, anything. These things are not bad. In fact, they are blessings from God. But we have to be careful not to turn these blessings into idols—things that we worship more than God.



➤ If time allows, assign students to read the class notes as a review of the lesson, or you can read it to them.

➤ Pass out the Student Take Home Sheets and remind the children 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 alone is worthy of our worship.
- Ask God to show us any idols we have in our life.
- Ask God to help us love Him with all our heart, mind, and soul.

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