

# The View From Above

## Week 7: God Grapples with His People

### Lesson Summary

In today's lesson we are going to be talking about the time of the Judges and how it reveals God's patience with his unfaithful people. This part of redemptive history contains a lot of instances of unfaithfulness. We will specifically look at the continual unfaithfulness in the book of Judges and the people's unfaithfulness in demanding a king like the other nations. The through-line of this lesson is going to be God's faithfulness, because despite the frustrating rebellion of his people God remains faithful. To show God's faithfulness, we are going to look at the cycle that occurs in the book of Judges where the nation of Israel continually disobeys God. Despite their constant stumbling God rescues them every time. Then, we are going to look at the people's demands for a king and see how God remained faithful to them despite their rejection of Him.

### Activity

This week's activity will have an activity for the older and the younger kids. For the younger kids there is a coloring sheet that depicts how Israel rejected God as their king. For the older kids there is a matching activity so that the cycle of the book of Judges can be solidified. The supplies for this activity are attached to this Parent Guide, you will just need to print the sheet and cut out the cycle names.

### Big Ideas

We don't make very good kings over our own lives

We don't just need God as a savior, we need Him as a king.

### Memory Verse

Judges 21:25

### Lesson Agenda

Intro: 5 minutes

Bible Reading: 10 minutes

Explain: 10 minutes

Activity: 20 minutes

Discussion Questions: 10 minutes

# The View From Above

## Week 7: God Grapples with His People

### Lesson Script

#### **Explain:**

Hello everyone! Today we get to talk about the book of Judges. We have been talking about the Bible as one big story, and we are going to continue that today. A couple of weeks ago we talked about how the nation of Israel was set free from their slavery in Egypt, and how God gave His people laws to live by so that they could honor Him and be set apart from the other nations. Last week we talked about the establishment of the nation of Israel. God set up a meeting with Moses to give him stone tablets with the 10 Commandments on them, and these rules were supposed to be the standard for living in the new nation of Israel. The Israelites were once slaves, and now they are being formed into God's people. That's a really cool story!

Today, we are talking about what happened a little while after Israel was established. Today we will be studying the book of Judges. At this point in the Bible story the Israelites are in the process of taking over the land that God promised them generations ago. They have kicked out or eliminated a bunch of enemies, and they are inching closer to settling into the land. But, despite all of the success they had so far there are some problems. Instead of removing the Canaanites from the land like God wanted them to, the Israelites kept them around. God wanted the Israelites to have the land for themselves but the Israelites disobeyed and kept these nations in the land. God knew that these other nations would be bad influences on the Israelites. These other nations worshipped false gods and this is where the problems start.

Let's read Judges 2:10-23 together.

A whole generation grew up disobeying God. They forgot all of the things that God had done for their ancestors, and they worshipped the other false gods that the surrounding countries worshipped. Because of their disobedience God was angry, and sent nations to take over the Israelites in order to punish them. Because of this, the people were in distress. In their distress they would cry out to God and He would raise up Judges to deliver them. After the people were delivered, they would worship God for a short time before they would disobey again.

# The View From Above

## Week 7: God Grapples with His People

### Lesson Script

The whole book of Judges is this repeating cycle over and over again. Let's draw this cycle out together.

- 1) The cycle begins with the Israelites falling into sin. The Israelites would worship the false gods of the other nations and this would make God very angry.
- 2) The next step in the cycle is God punishing them for their sin by sending another nation to attack them. Israel would get taken over by these enemies, and they would be enslaved for a short time. God disciplines His people because He loves them, just like a parent disciplines a child because it's for their best.
- 3) Next, the Israelites would cry out to God because they were suffering greatly. The people realized they had disobeyed God and they could cry out for help. They couldn't fix the situation on their own, so they asked God to step in.
- 4) God would hear the cries of the people and he would raise up a Judge in order to deliver the people. These Judges included people like Samson, Gideon, Deborah, and others. These Judges led the nation to fight back and become free from their enemies again.
- 5) Then, the people would temporarily worship the Lord again because He delivered them.
- 6) And predictably so, the people would fall into sin and the cycle repeats itself.

This cycle repeats itself many times in the book of Judges. In fact, when you read Judges straight through it's kind of sad how many times the Israelites wander away from God after He's saved them. It makes you think "how could they be so rebellious and hard-headed?" But, every time the people disobey God He is right there to rescue them. As frustrating as it is to read about the people's rebellion, God's patience and love for His people is on full display.

An example of this is the judge named Gideon. Gideon was called by God to tear down the symbols of worship to false gods, but he wasn't confident. Read with me Judges 6:11-22.

# The View From Above

## Week 7: God Grapples with His People

This isn't the first time this happens, though. Let's read Judges 6:33-40. This time, there are surrounding nations that rise up to attack Israel. God raised up Gideon again to gather the troops to fight, but before he could trust God to deliver the people he needed a couple of signs. Gideon couldn't trust God's word, he needed some signs to make sure it was really God. Again, God gave Gideon what he asked for and showed His abounding patience. It would have been better for Gideon to obey right away, but God is patient above what we can comprehend. God ended up using Gideon to save the people of Israel from their enemies, just as God promised.

Even though God delivers Israel time and time again in the book of Judges, people don't turn from their evil ways. Everyone was still doing what was right in their own eyes. Israel was in desperate need of a leader. The Israelites needed a king that loved God, and a king who would help them serve God only. Without that leadership the people would continue to run themselves into ruin and destruction. Let's go to another passage of Scripture, let's read 1 Samuel 8:6-7.

The Israelites needed a king who loved God to lead them. But, they saw what the other nations had for leadership and they wanted the same thing. They wanted a king that would help strengthen their army and their defenses so that they wouldn't get attacked again like they did in the book of Judges. They thought that having a king like the other nations would solve their problems, but what they really needed was a king that would obey God and help them to do the same. God would take care of His people, and He wanted to use a godly king to do that.

Despite the people demanding the sort of king that the other nations had, God was patient with His people once again. The people of Israel constantly disobey God, but God is constantly patient with them. That's good news for us, because we are constantly disobeying God too. We sin each and every day, and we separate ourselves from God. But, God is patient with us too, and He rescued us by sending Jesus Christ to save us. Praise God for His patience

### **Discussion Questions:**

When have you been impatient with someone? What was that like?

# The View From Above

## Week 7: God Grapples with His People

Why didn't the Israelites remove the other nations like God asked them to? How did that make God feel?

Why did God need to raise up Judges?

Everyone in Israel "did what was right in their own eyes." Is this right? Why or why not?

What kind of king did the Israelites need? What kind of king did they want?

Do you think God was happy that his people kept rebelling against Him? Why or why not?

Does God act in the way you would expect him to? Why or why not?

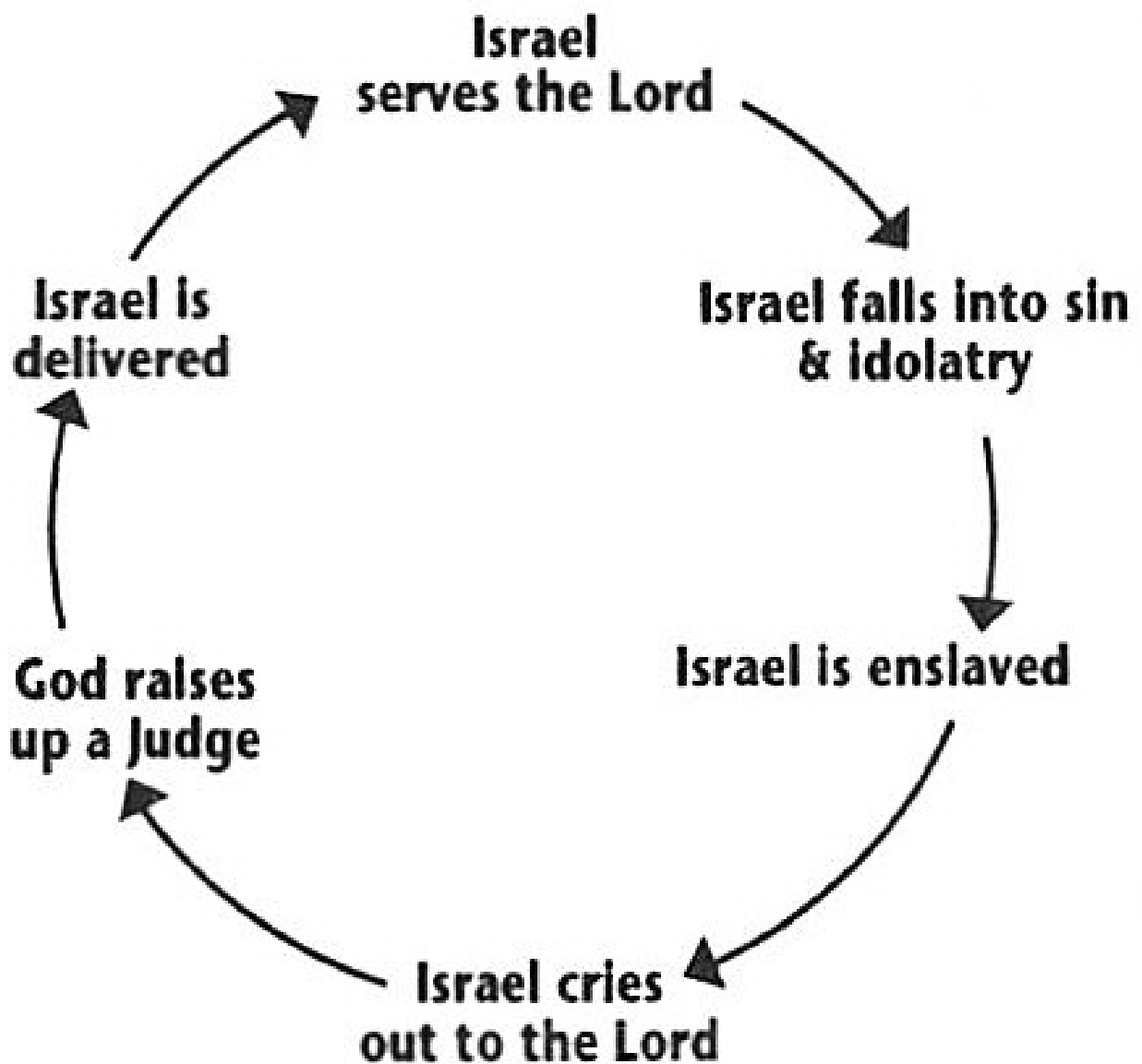
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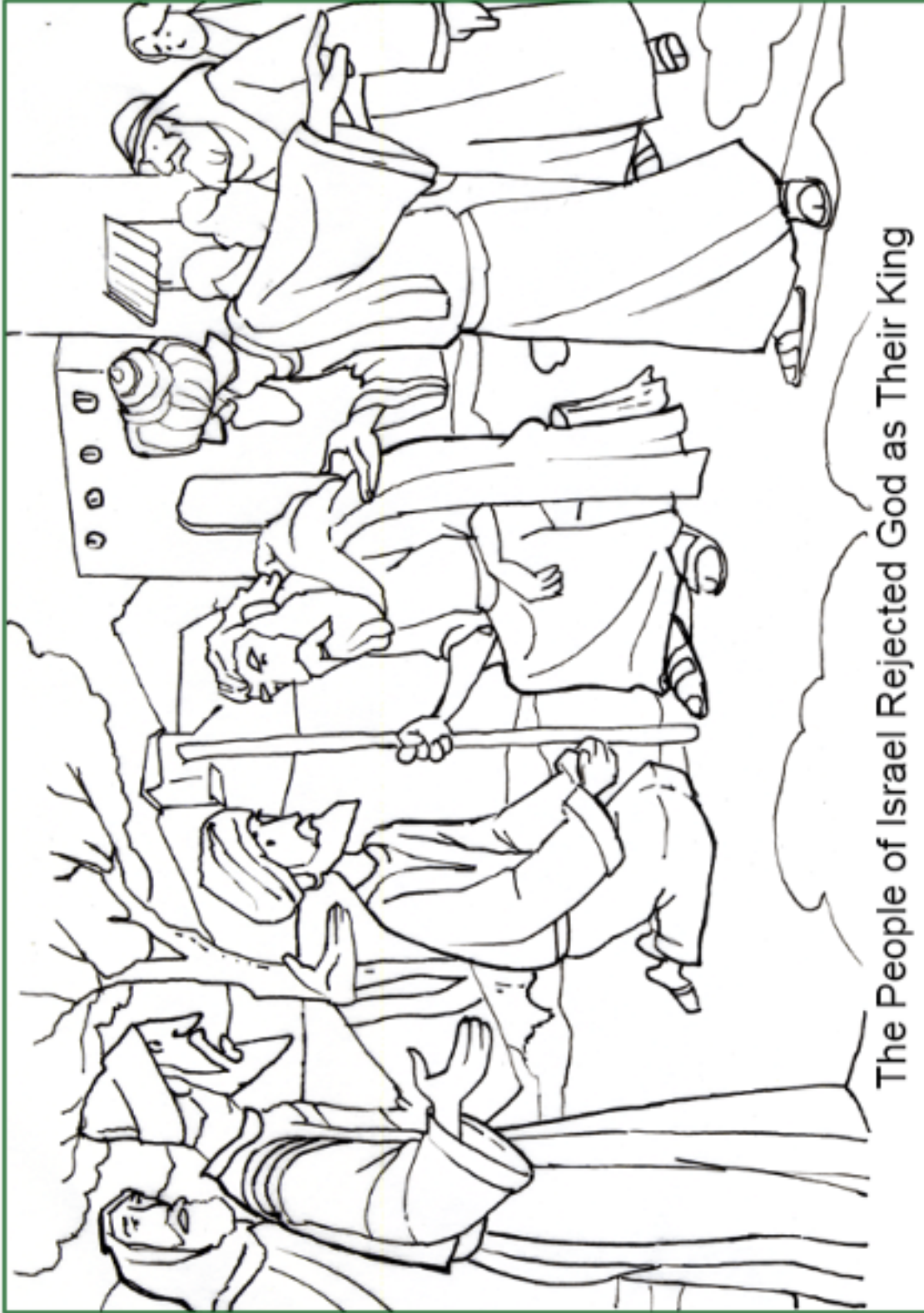
### CYCLE OF JUDGES





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# The Cycle of the Judges

Israel serves the Lord

Israel disobeys the Lord

Israel is punished

Israel cries out to the Lord

God raises up a Judge

Israel is delivered



