

SECTION 1 LESSON IDENTIFICATION

Week	23	Date	June 7, 2026
Lesson Title	Judges: God Is Our True Deliverer		
Primary Scripture	Judges 1:1; 2:6-23; 3:7-11; 6:1-16; 13:1-5; 16:28-30		
Supporting Scripture	Hebrews 11:32-34; John 3:16-17		

Bible Timeline Placement

The book of Judges follows immediately after the death of Joshua and the incomplete conquest of Canaan. Israel has entered the Promised Land but failed to fully drive out the surrounding peoples. Judges covers roughly 300 years of repeated spiritual failure and divine rescue. It ends with the nation in chaos, setting the stage for the books of Ruth and Samuel, where God begins raising up a king for His people.

MEMORY VERSE

Judges 3:9

Then the Israelites cried out to the Lord, and He raised up a deliverer for them.

SECTION 2 CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The World of Judges — After Joshua died, Israel had no central leader. The land was a patchwork of tribes, each responsible for their own territory. The surrounding nations — the Canaanites, Philistines, Midianites, and others — had not been fully expelled. This was partly disobedience and partly divine testing. God had told Israel that these nations would remain as long as Israel persisted in unfaithfulness (Judges 2:20-21). Militarily, Israel was outmatched. The Philistines had iron weapons. The Canaanites had chariots. Israel had God and too often forgot it.

The Cycle of the Judges — The book follows a repeated pattern that scholars call the Judges cycle. Israel serves God. Israel forgets God and chases the gods of the surrounding peoples. God allows a foreign nation to oppress them. Israel cries out. God raises a judge to deliver them. The judge dies. Israel forgets again. This cycle repeats twelve times across the book. The structure is not random. It is a theological argument: Israel cannot save itself. Every human deliverer is temporary. The people need something the judges could never permanently provide.

Canaanite Religion and Baal Worship — The gods Israel kept running after were primarily Baal and Asherah. Baal was the storm god of Canaan, believed to control rain and agricultural fertility. Asherah was a mother goddess. Their worship involved rituals performed at high places, sacred poles, and altars scattered across the land. For struggling farmers in a dry climate, the appeal was practical: worship Baal, get rain, get crops. Israel's God was invisible, made no images, and demanded total loyalty. The

surrounding gods were visible, local, and tolerant of divided worship. That tension runs through every chapter of Judges.

SECTION
3**WHAT HAPPENS IN THIS PASSAGE**

The Pattern Established (Judges 2:6-23) — After Joshua's generation dies, a new generation rises that does not know the Lord or what He did for Israel. They abandon God and worship Baal and Asherah. God allows surrounding nations to oppress them. The people cry out. God raises a judge. The judge delivers them. The judge dies. The cycle restarts. This passage is the interpretive key to the entire book.

Othniel: The First Judge (Judges 3:7-11) — Israel serves Baal. God allows Cushan-Rishathaim of Mesopotamia to oppress Israel for eight years. Israel cries out. God raises Othniel, Caleb's nephew. The Spirit of the Lord comes on him. He defeats the enemy. The land has rest for forty years. Then Othniel dies. This is the purest version of the cycle, presented briefly to establish the pattern before the longer and more complex stories that follow.

Gideon: Called When He Was Hiding (Judges 6:1-16) — Midian oppresses Israel for seven years, so severely that Israelites hide in caves and mountain clefts. Gideon is threshing wheat in a winepress to hide it from the Midianites. An angel of the Lord appears and calls him a mighty warrior. Gideon immediately pushes back: my clan is the weakest, and I am the least in my family. God's response is not a pep talk about Gideon's potential. It is a promise: I will be with you. That is the whole argument. Gideon goes on to defeat a 135,000-man army with 300 soldiers and clay pots.

Samson: The Flawed Deliverer (Judges 13:1-5; 16:28-30) — Samson is set apart before birth. The Spirit of the Lord moves on him. He has supernatural strength. He also has catastrophic personal failures: foreign marriages, compromise, and pride. His story ends with him blinded, enslaved, and grinding grain for the Philistines. In his final act he prays once more, God answers, and Samson destroys the Philistine temple killing more enemies in his death than in his life. Even the most flawed judge can only do so much. God's work outlasts human failure.

SECTION 4 KEY THEOLOGICAL TRUTHS

Truth	Statement	Scripture
1. About God	God is patient and compassionate. Even when Israel repeatedly abandons Him, He hears their cries and raises up deliverance. God's rescue is not earned. It is given. He is the only One who can break the cycle.	Judges 2:18
2. About People	People are spiritually forgetful and easily led away from God. Left to themselves, every generation tends toward the same idolatry. No human deliverer can permanently fix a heart problem. People need a Savior who transforms from the inside.	Judges 2:10
3. Points to Jesus	Each judge rescued God's people from physical oppression. Jesus came to rescue all people from a deeper bondage: sin, death, and separation from God. The judges kept dying. Jesus rose. His deliverance is permanent.	Hebrews 11:32-34; John 3:16

SECTION 5 GOSPEL CONNECTION

The book of Judges is one long argument for why Israel needs more than a judge. Every deliverer is temporary. Every hero has flaws. Every season of peace ends with another cycle of failure. The cycle exposes the real problem: the people's hearts. They do not need a stronger warrior. They need a new heart. Jesus is the deliverer the judges were always pointing toward. He came not to rescue Israel from one foreign oppressor, but to rescue all people from sin itself. He did not die and leave the cycle running. He rose, broke the power of sin and death permanently, and gave His followers the Holy Spirit to transform them from the inside. The book of Judges ends in chaos. The story of Jesus ends in resurrection and hope.

SIMPLE GOSPEL SENTENCE FOR THE CLASSROOM

The judges kept rescuing God's people, but the rescue never lasted. Jesus came to rescue us once and for all, and His rescue never ends.

**SECTION
6**

QUESTIONS CHILDREN WILL ASK

What a Child Might Ask	How to Answer It Simply
<p>Why did Israel keep forgetting God if He rescued them so many times?</p>	<p>Forgetting God is something people have always struggled with. When life gets comfortable, we tend to stop leaning on Him. That is why we need to keep talking to God and staying in His Word, not just in hard times.</p>
<p>Was God angry at Israel for doing the same thing over and over?</p>	<p>God was grieved by Israel's sin, and He did allow them to face consequences. But every time they cried out, He listened and helped. That tells us God's love is patient even when people keep making the same mistakes.</p>
<p>Why did God use people like Gideon who were scared, or Samson who made bad choices?</p>	<p>God loves using ordinary and broken people because it makes clear that the power comes from Him, not from the person. The Bible is full of imperfect people God chose to use for His purposes.</p>
<p>Did all the judges believe in God?</p>	<p>Most of the judges trusted God at key moments, but several had serious flaws. Samson is a good example. God still used them because God is faithful even when people are not. Hebrews 11 lists several judges as examples of faith.</p>
<p>If the judges rescued Israel, why did they need Jesus?</p>	<p>The judges fixed the outside problem, like an enemy army, but they could not fix the inside problem, which was Israel's heart turning away from God. Jesus fixes the inside. He forgives sin and gives us His Spirit to help us change.</p>

**SECTION
7**

TEACHER SUMMARY

Big Idea	When we forget God and get into trouble, He still hears us and still rescues us, and Jesus is the greatest rescuer of all.
What God Did	God raised up judges to deliver Israel from oppression every time they cried out to Him, even when they had turned away repeatedly.
How It Points to Jesus	The judges were temporary. Jesus is the permanent deliverer who broke the power of sin and death once and for all through His death and resurrection.
Error to Avoid	Do not make the lesson about the personal strengths of the judges. The heroes of Judges are not the judges. The hero is God who keeps showing up to deliver His people.
Hope to Emphasize	No matter how many times someone forgets God or walks away, God still hears them when they cry out. His rescue is not something we earn. It is something He gives.