

Ages 5 to 11 | Read-Aloud Lesson | Scripture-Centered | Apologetics-Rich | Christ-Centered

**SECTION 1** LESSON OVERVIEW

<b>Week</b>	23	<b>Date</b>	June 7, 2026
<b>Title</b>	Judges: God Is Our True Deliverer		
<b>Scripture</b>	Judges 2:6-23; 3:7-11; 6:1-16; 16:28-30		
<b>Timeline</b>	After Joshua's death, before the first kings. Israel is in the Promised Land but keeps forgetting God. This period covers roughly 300 years of rescue and failure.		

**BIG IDEA**

**When we forget God and fall into trouble, He still hears us and rescues us, and Jesus is the greatest rescuer of all.**

**SECTION 2** OPENING BIBLE FOUNDATION

Before we begin today, let's remember something important. The book we are reading from is the Bible. The Bible is not just any old book. It is God's true Word. It was written by more than forty different people, in different places, across more than a thousand years. And yet it tells one single, unified account about a God who loves His people and sent His Son Jesus to rescue them. God is the true Author who breathed His words through the people who wrote them down. That is why we can trust every word of it. Today we are going to look at a section of the Bible called the book of Judges. It comes right after the book of Joshua, and it covers a long, difficult stretch of Israel's history. It is a book about forgetting and remembering. About falling and being lifted. About people who could not save themselves, and a God who kept showing up anyway.

**SECTION 3** MEMORY VERSE

Our memory verse this week comes straight from the book of Judges. Let's read it together.

## MEMORY VERSE

**Judges 3:9**

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

A deliverer is someone who rescues you from danger. When Israel was in trouble and cried out to God, God did not ignore them. He raised up someone to set them free. That is what this verse is telling us. God hears. God responds. God rescues. Let's say it together right now. Repeat after me: *Then the Israelites cried out to the Lord, and He raised up a deliverer for them. Judges 3:9.* Keep that verse in your heart today. We are going to come back to it.

SECTION  
4

## SETTING THE SCENE

**Where we are in the Bible:**

Last week we saw how God brought Joshua and the Israelites into the Promised Land. They crossed the Jordan River. They watched the walls of Jericho fall. God was with them. But Joshua is now gone, and a new generation has grown up. This new generation did not see the miracles their parents and grandparents saw. And here is what the Bible tells us happened next: they forgot God. Not right away. But slowly. And forgetting God always leads somewhere dangerous. The book of Judges is the account of what happens when God's people forget Him, what they go through, and how God keeps reaching down to rescue them anyway. Listen carefully today for one question: Who is the real hero of this book?

SECTION  
5

## MAIN LESSON NARRATIVE

Imagine you are living in a time before cell phones, before cars, before grocery stores. You live in a village. Your whole family lives nearby. You farm the land. You raise animals. Your whole life depends on rain, good soil, and staying safe from the people around you. That is the world Israel lived in after they entered the Promised Land.

But here is the problem. When Joshua died, Israel had not finished driving out the people who worshipped other gods. Those people were still living nearby. And those people had gods. Not real gods, of course. But they had statues and rituals and temples. The most famous was a god called Baal. Baal was supposed to control rain and crops. If your whole life depends on rain and crops, and your neighbor says, 'Bow down to Baal and maybe it will rain,' that is a very tempting lie.

And one by one, Israelite families began to forget the God who had rescued them from Egypt. The God who had parted the Red Sea. The God who had fed them in the desert for forty years. The God who had brought the walls of Jericho down. They began to bow down to Baal instead. The Bible says this in Judges 2, and it is one of the saddest sentences in the whole book.

**Judges 2:10-11**

*After that whole generation had been gathered to their ancestors, another generation grew up who knew neither the Lord nor what He had done for Israel. Then the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the Lord and served the Baals.*

Did you hear that? A whole generation grew up who did not know the Lord. Not because God had gone anywhere. God was right there. But nobody had told them. Nobody had taught them. And when you do not know God, it is very easy to follow the crowd away from Him.

So here is what happened. Because Israel turned away from God, God allowed the surrounding nations to oppress them. Oppress means to push down hard, to make life very difficult. Israel would be raided. Their crops would be taken. Their people would be ruled by enemies. And when things got bad enough,

Israel would cry out to God. And here is what makes this account so important: God listened every single time.

This pattern happens again and again through the whole book of Judges. Scholars have given it a name: the Judges Cycle. It works like this: Israel follows God. Israel forgets God and chases other gods. God allows an enemy to oppress Israel. Israel suffers and cries out. God raises a deliverer, which is a person who rescues the people. The deliverer saves Israel. Israel has peace. The deliverer dies. Then the whole thing starts over. Around and around, twelve times in this one book.

Let's meet some of these deliverers, because each one teaches us something important.

### **Othniel: The First Judge**

The first judge was a man named Othniel. He was the nephew of a man named Caleb, one of the faithful spies from Moses' time. Israel had forgotten God and ended up under the rule of a king from far away. They were oppressed for eight years. Eight long, hard years. Then Israel cried out. And listen to what God did.

#### **Judges 3:9-10**

*Then the Israelites cried out to the Lord, and He raised up a deliverer for them. The Spirit of the Lord came on him, so that he became Israel's judge and went to war.*

There it is. Our memory verse, right in the middle of the account. *Then the Israelites cried out to the Lord, and He raised up a deliverer for them.* God heard their cry. God sent His Spirit. God gave Othniel the power to defeat the enemy. Israel had peace for forty years. Notice something very carefully: the Bible does not spend much time telling us how amazing Othniel was. It focuses on what God did. Because God is the real hero of this account.

### **Gideon: The One Who Was Hiding**

A few judges later, things had gotten very bad again. A people called the Midianites were so powerful and so cruel that Israelites were hiding in caves. Hiding in mountain clefts. Hiding grain in underground pits so the Midianites would not steal it. One young man named Gideon was threshing wheat at the bottom of a winepress, hidden from sight, trying to save just a little food for his family. That is where God found him.

An angel of the Lord appeared to Gideon and said something that must have sounded impossible. *The Lord is with you, mighty warrior.* Can you imagine how Gideon felt? Mighty warrior? He was hiding in a hole in the ground.

Gideon pushed back. He asked hard questions. He said: If God is with us, why is all this happening? Where are the miracles our ancestors told us about? And then Gideon said something that tells us exactly how he saw himself: *My clan is the weakest in the whole tribe, and I am the least important in my family.*

Someone might wonder: why would God choose someone like that? That is a fair question. And the answer is one of the most important things in the entire book of Judges. God did not choose Gideon because Gideon was powerful. God did not choose Gideon because Gideon had a great plan. God chose Gideon because it would be crystal clear to everyone that only God could do this. Listen to what God said.

**Judges 6:16**

*The Lord answered, 'I will be with you, and you will strike down all the Midianites, leaving none alive.'*

That was God's whole argument. Not: You can do this, Gideon. You are strong. Not: Believe in yourself. Not: Try harder. Just: *I will be with you.* That was enough. That has always been enough.

And what happened? Gideon went from hiding in a hole to leading 300 soldiers against an army of 135,000 men. That is not a typo. 300 against 135,000. No iron weapons. No chariots. Just clay pots, torches, and the word of God. And God won. Because God is the real deliverer. Gideon was just the one who said yes.

**Samson: The Flawed Hero**

Not every judge was as faithful as Othniel or as willing as Gideon. Near the end of the book we meet Samson, and his account is one of the most complicated in the Bible. Samson was set apart by God before he was even born. The angel of the Lord told his mother that her son would begin to rescue Israel from the Philistines. God gave Samson supernatural strength. Extraordinary power. Samson could do things no ordinary person could do.

But Samson also made terrible choices. He married people he was not supposed to marry. He let his pride get the better of him. He kept secrets from God's plan and followed his own desires. Eventually, he was betrayed by a woman named Delilah. His strength was taken. His eyes were put out. He was enslaved by the very enemy he was supposed to defeat, grinding grain in a prison like an animal.

Now someone might ask: if Samson was chosen by God, how did things go so wrong? That is an honest question. Here is what the Bible helps us understand: God's calling on a person's life does not cancel that person's choices. Samson had every gift God could give, and he used many of them for himself. Even the most gifted person still needs God more than they need their own strength.

But here is where the account takes one final, stunning turn. Blind and enslaved, Samson was brought out to be mocked at a Philistine celebration. Thousands of enemies were gathered. And Samson prayed. For what may be the first truly humble prayer of his life, he called on God.

**Judges 16:28**

*Then Samson prayed to the Lord, 'Sovereign Lord, remember me. Please, God, strengthen me just once more.'*

And God answered. His strength came back. Now picture this: Samson was standing between two massive stone pillars. These were not small pillars. These were the giant columns holding up the entire roof of the temple. Thousands of Philistines were packed inside and up on the roof watching, laughing, celebrating. Samson put one hand on one pillar and one hand on the other. He braced himself. He pushed. And the whole thing came down. The roof collapsed. The walls gave way. The entire temple fell on everyone inside. The Bible tells us that Samson killed more enemies in that one moment than in his entire life of fighting. Everything the Philistines thought they had won was gone in an instant. God's purposes were not stopped by Samson's failures. Even at the very end, with no eyes, no strength of his

own, and nothing left to give, Samson called out to God and God showed up.

**The Pattern That Points Beyond Itself**

If you read the whole book of Judges, one thing becomes very clear. The judges could rescue Israel from armies. But they could not rescue Israel from Israel's own heart. Every deliverer was temporary. Every season of peace ended. The cycle kept running because the real problem was inside the people, not outside in the enemy camps.

And that is exactly what the book of Judges is trying to teach us. People need more than a stronger fighter. People need a new heart. People need someone who does not just win one battle and then die. People need a rescuer whose rescue lasts forever.

Now let's say our memory verse one more time, because it is about to connect to something beautiful.

<b>MEMORY VERSE</b>
<b>Judges 3:9</b>
<i>Then the Israelites cried out to the Lord, and He raised up a deliverer for them.</i>

God raised up deliverers in Judges. But every single one of those deliverers was a picture, a shadow, a preview of the One who was coming. The One whose rescue would not end when He died. The One who would come back from the grave. The One who would not just free Israel from one enemy, but who would free every person who trusts in Him from sin, death, and separation from God. That One is Jesus. Hebrews 11 is a chapter in the New Testament that lists ordinary people who trusted God. And right there in the list are Gideon, Samson, and other judges. Not because they were perfect. But because even in their weakness, they pointed to the strength of God. And all of them were looking forward, without fully knowing it, to the day when the true and perfect Deliverer would come.

Jesus came not to rescue one nation from one enemy. He came to rescue every person who has ever lived from the greatest enemy of all: sin, which separates us from God. He lived a perfect life. He died on the cross to take the punishment our sin deserved. And on the third day, He rose again. He did not stay dead like the judges. He is alive right now. And His rescue never ends.

If you have never trusted Jesus, today is a day you can. If you have already trusted Him, today is a day to thank Him. Because no matter how many times we forget, no matter how many times we fall, God still hears when we cry out. And He has already raised up the greatest Deliverer of all.

**SECTION 6 WHY WE CAN TRUST GOD'S WORD**

The book of Judges names real places in the real land of Israel that archaeologists have found. The Philistines, the Midianites, and the Canaanites were real peoples whose existence is confirmed by ancient records outside the Bible. The New Testament writers treated Judges as real history. Jesus himself quoted the Hebrew Scriptures as true. If someone ever says to you, 'That's just an old book,' you can say: 'The Bible was written by more than forty people across more than a thousand years, and they all told the same account of a God who rescues His people. That does not happen by accident.' Honest questions are always welcome. God is not afraid of your questions.

**SECTION**  
**7****WHAT THIS SHOWS US ABOUT JESUS**

Every judge in this book pointed forward to Jesus. Othniel showed that God hears and responds. Gideon showed that God uses the weak so the power is clearly His. Samson showed that even the most gifted people fail, and that even in failure, God's mercy still answers the cry of the desperate. But all of them were temporary. All of them died. Jesus is the deliverer who rose from the dead. He lived without sin. He died on the cross for our sin. He rose again on the third day. His deliverance does not end. Everyone who trusts Jesus with their life is forgiven, receives new life, and is never separated from God again.

**SECTION**  
**8****GOD REVEALED AS TRINITY**

God is one God in three Persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. In the book of Judges we see the Father raising up deliverers in response to His people's cries. We see the Holy Spirit coming upon the judges to give them wisdom and strength. Judges 3:10 says the Spirit of the Lord came on Othniel. We see the same with Gideon and Samson. The same Holy Spirit who empowered those deliverers is the One Jesus sent to live inside every believer after His resurrection. The Father is not the Son. The Son is not the Spirit. The Spirit is not the Father. But there is one God. Three Persons, always together, always at work.

**SECTION**  
**9****LIFE APPLICATION**

Israel kept forgetting God. And if we are honest, we do the same thing. When things go well, it is easy to stop talking to God, stop reading His Word, stop going to church, and start thinking we can handle life on our own. That is exactly the beginning of the Judges cycle in our own lives. The good news is that what God did for Israel, He will do for us. When we cry out to Him, He hears. When we turn back, He receives us. Not because we earned it. Because He is that kind of God. This week, if there is something in your life where you feel stuck or scared or far from God, you can cry out to Him. He is not too busy. He is not too far. He raised up a deliverer for Israel. And He gave us Jesus.

**SECTION 10 DEFENDING THE TRUTH**

If a Friend Says...	You Can Say...	Scripture to Remember
'The Bible is just an old book full of made-up stories.'	'The Bible was written by more than forty people over a really long time and they all told the same account of God rescuing His people. Real places in Judges have been found by archaeologists. That does not happen by accident.'	2 Timothy 3:16
'If God is real, why do bad things happen?'	'The book of Judges actually asks that same question. God told Israel that trouble comes when people walk away from Him. But even in the middle of the hard times, He kept hearing their cries and rescuing them. God does not promise no trouble. He promises He will not leave us in it.'	Judges 2:18
'How could God use someone like Samson who made so many mistakes?'	'God uses broken people all the time in the Bible. That is the point. It shows that the power comes from God, not the person. And even at the very end, when Samson called out to God, God answered. That is what grace looks like.'	Judges 16:28-30

**SECTION 11 DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

**Core Questions for All Ages**

**1. What does the word 'deliverer' mean?**

*A deliverer is someone who rescues you from danger. God kept raising up deliverers for Israel. (Judges 3:9)*

**2. What was the Judges Cycle?**

*Israel followed God, then forgot God, then suffered, then cried out, and then God sent a deliverer. This happened again and again throughout the book. (Judges 2:16-19)*

**3. Why did God let Israel suffer when they turned away from Him?**

*God allowed natural consequences to bring Israel back to Him. He was not being cruel. He was showing them that life without God leads to trouble, and that He is the One they need. (Judges 2:20-23)*

**4. Why did God choose Gideon when Gideon said he was the weakest person in the weakest family?**

*God often chooses people who know they cannot do it on their own. That way, when God works through them, everyone can see clearly that the power came from God and not from the person. (Judges 6:14-16)*

**5. What did Gideon's 300 soldiers defeating 135,000 enemies teach us about God?**

*It taught us that the battle belongs to God, not to the biggest army or the strongest warrior. When God is for you, no enemy can stand against you. (Judges 7:2-7)*

**6. Samson made a lot of bad choices. Did God give up on him?**

*No. Even at the very end, when Samson cried out to God, God answered. God's love is patient and His mercy reaches even the most broken and failing people. (Judges 16:28-30)*

**7. What does the Judges Cycle show us about people?**

*It shows us that people easily forget God, especially when life gets comfortable. It also shows us that no human deliverer is enough. We need Jesus, whose rescue is permanent. (Judges 2:10-11)*

**8. How is Jesus different from all the judges?**

*The judges were temporary. They all died and the cycle started again. Jesus rose from the dead. He defeated sin and death permanently. His rescue never ends. (Hebrews 11:32-34; John 3:16-17)*

**Optional Deeper Questions**

**9. Why do you think Israel kept repeating the same cycle? Have you ever repeated a mistake more than once? What helps us break that pattern?**

*Encourage honest personal answers. Guide children to see that staying close to God through prayer and His Word helps us not forget Him the way Israel did. (Judges 2:18-19; Psalm 119:11)*

**10. If God knew Israel would fail, why did He keep rescuing them?**

*Because God is faithful even when people are not. He had made a covenant promise to Abraham. God does not break His promises. This is the same reason He sent Jesus even though people were still sinners. (Romans 5:8; 2 Timothy 2:13)*

**SECTION  
12**

**HANDS-ON ACTIVITY**

**THE JUDGES CYCLE WHEEL**

<b>Activity Name</b>	The Judges Cycle Wheel
<b>Purpose</b>	Help children see and remember the pattern of forgetting and rescue in Judges, and understand why Jesus breaks the cycle permanently.
<b>Supplies</b>	One paper plate per child, markers or crayons, one brass fastener per child (optional), one smaller circle of paper per child.
<b>Time Needed</b>	10 to 12 minutes
<b>Preparation</b>	Draw lines on the paper plate dividing it into four equal sections before class. Label the sections: 1. Follow God, 2. Forget God, 3. Cry Out, 4. God Rescues.

**Step-by-Step Instructions:**

1. Give each child a prepared paper plate and markers.
2. Ask children to draw a simple picture or symbol in each section representing that part of the cycle.
3. Talk through the cycle together as they draw: Follow God (sun, Bible), Forget God (sad face, idol), Cry Out (praying hands), God Rescues (raised arms, crown).
4. After all four sections are drawn, point to the center and say: 'The judges broke the cycle for a little while. But Jesus breaks it forever. Draw a cross in the center of your wheel.'
5. Ask: 'What is different about Jesus compared to all the judges?' Let children answer.

**Debrief Questions:**

Why does the cycle keep going? What would it take to stop it forever? How is Jesus different from the judges?

**For Younger Children (ages 5 to 7):** Focus only on sections 3 and 4. Cry out to God. God rescues. Draw that, then add the cross.

**For Older Children (ages 9 to 11):** Ask them to write one sentence in each section explaining what that part means and why people keep repeating the cycle.

**SECTION  
13**

**OPTIONAL REVIEW GAME**

**DELIVERER OR NOT?**

**Purpose:** Quick review of Judges content and the memory verse. **Supplies:** None. **How to Play:** Teacher reads a statement. If it is true, children stand up. If it is false, children sit down. First child to stand or sit correctly and explain why wins a point.

Statement	Answer
The judges rescued Israel permanently and the cycle never happened again.	False. Every judge was temporary. The cycle kept repeating.
Gideon was the strongest warrior in all of Israel when God called him.	False. Gideon said he was the least in his family and his clan was the weakest.
When Israel cried out to God in Judges 3:9, God raised up a deliverer for them.	True. This is our memory verse.
Samson's mistakes meant God could no longer use him at all.	False. Even at the end, God answered Samson's prayer.
Jesus is the true and permanent deliverer the judges pointed toward.	True. Jesus rose from the dead and His rescue never ends.
The Judges Cycle shows us that people can save themselves if they try hard enough.	False. The cycle shows the opposite: people need a Savior they cannot provide for themselves.

**SECTION  
14**

**TEACHER CLOSING**

**TEACHER CLOSING**

Today we walked through one of the most honest books in the whole Bible. The book of Judges does not hide the fact that God's people kept failing. It does not pretend the cycle was not real. But every time God's people cried out, He heard them. Every time. That is who God is. He is patient. He is compassionate. He does not give up on people who cry out to Him.

And now we have something Israel in the book of Judges did not yet have. We have Jesus. The permanent Deliverer. The One who rose from the dead. The One who breaks the cycle not just for a season, but forever. If you have never trusted Jesus, you can today. Just cry out to Him the way Israel cried out. He will hear you. He always does.

Let's say our memory verse one final time together.

*Then the Israelites cried out to the Lord, and He raised up a deliverer for them. Judges 3:9.*

**Closing Prayer:** Lord, thank You for hearing every cry. Thank You that You never grow tired of rescuing people who turn back to You. Help us remember You when life is easy and call out to You when life is hard. Thank You for Jesus, our true Deliverer. Amen.

**SECTION 15 TAKEAWAY TRUTH**

**TAKEAWAY TRUTH**

**God hears every cry, and Jesus is the deliverer whose rescue never ends.**

**MEMORY VERSE**

**Judges 3:9**

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