



# Israel Disobeys God

*Judges 1–3*



## LESSON GOAL

Students will obey God and fear the devastating consequences of compromise.

## BIBLE TRUTHS

- Israel disobeyed God after Joshua died.
- The angel of the Lord warned Israel that if they disobeyed, they would have to leave the land.
- It was dangerous for the Canaanites to live in the land because of their unholy influence on Israel.

## KEY VERSE

“And they forsook the LORD God of their fathers, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt; and they followed other gods from among the gods of the people who were all around them, and they bowed down to them; and they provoked the LORD to anger” (Judges 2:12).

## APPLICATION

- Obey God’s Word.
- Pray that God will help you serve Him.
- Thank God for loving sinners.

## NEXT WEEK

God Uses Gideon to Deliver Israel  
Read Judges 6–8.

### Symbol Key



Craft



Finger Play



Memory Verse



Object Lesson



Game



Visual Aid



Center



Activity



Q & A



Age Group

# Teacher Planning Sheet

## PREPARE

Objectives/Truths to cover this week

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

### Personal Application

As a result of my study in this passage, God wants me to

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

Three ways students need to apply this passage are

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

## Materials Needed

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## POINT

Choose from various ideas to point students to the coming Bible lesson.

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

## PROCLAIM

Choose from various ideas to proclaim the Bible lesson.

### Presentation Ideas

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

### Praise/Music Ideas

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

## PRACTICE

Choose ideas to help review and apply today's lesson.

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

## PREPARE WITH THE TRUTH

*“Therefore you shall lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul.... You shall teach them to your children” (Deuteronomy 11:18–19).*

Please take time to prepare your mind and heart to accurately handle the truths of God’s Word (2 Tim. 2:15). Read through the Bible background and study the truths contained in this lesson. Crucial background information is included here to aid you in understanding the Scripture.

### Bible Background

The title of the book of Judges may be slightly misleading. While it is true that the largest section of the book (Judg. 3:7–16:31) records God’s sending judges or deliverers to lead and rescue Israel, the book is about more than just the exploits of the judges. It records a dark time in Israel’s history—a time when the people turned from God’s plan for them to be a holy nation and instead became like the Canaanite nations that remained in the Promised Land. The fact that the judges were needed even when God already had promised Israel victory over their enemies (Deut. 28:7) raises a question: What went wrong? Judges 1:1–3:6 reveals how Israel came to be in such a desperate situation that their only hope for relief was that God might pity them and send deliverance. Judges 1:1–3:6 shows the devastating consequences of compromise and disobedience.

#### Israel’s Failure to Remove the Canaanites (Judges 1)

The book of Joshua ends with Joshua reminding the Israelites of God’s promise to drive the Canaanites from the land (Josh. 23:5, 9–10). In Joshua 24, Joshua called on the people to commit to obey and serve the Lord. The people swore, “The LORD our God we will serve, and His voice we will obey!” (24:24). Although their obedience was not perfect, God’s evaluation of Israel was that they “served the LORD all the days of Joshua” (24:31). When Joshua died at the age of 110, Israel was faced with deciding whether they would continue to obey the Lord.

Judges 1:1 continues the history of Israel after Joshua’s death. It begins hopefully, with the Israelite tribes asking the Lord which tribe should attack the Canaanites first. The Lord’s answer that Judah should be the first to go and that He had delivered the land into their hands (Judg. 1:2) shows God’s pleasure with Israel’s willingness to obey. Israel appears eager to obey God in conquering the rest of the Canaanites.

Judges 1:3–26 records the exploits of the tribes of Judah and Simeon (who helped each other), Benjamin, and Joseph. For the most part, the tribes were highly successful in their eradication of the Canaanites. But even among these successful southern tribes, there were alarming hints of disobedience. In Judges 1:6, the tribe of Judah tortured a Canaanite king. Although the wicked king admitted he deserved the punishment (Judg. 1:7), Judah disobeyed God’s command to destroy all the inhabitants of the land (Deut. 7:2). Judah also was unable to drive out the “inhabitants of the lowland” (Judg. 1:19) although God had promised Israel certain victory. Similarly, the tribe of Benjamin failed to drive out the Jebusites who inhabited Jerusalem (1:21). Contrary to God’s command (Deut. 7:1–5), the tribe of Joseph offered to let a man live if he would betray his city. Despite these early indications of disobedience, the southern tribes were mostly obedient in following God’s commands to destroy the Canaanites.

In sharp contrast, Judges 1:27 begins, “However, Manasseh did not drive out the

### Additional Reference Materials

*Judges, Ruth; New American Commentary* by Daniel I. Block

*Such a Great Salvation: Expositions of the Book of Judges* by Dale Ralph Davis

*Ruth*. In *The Expositor's Bible Commentary, Volume 3* by F. B. Huey Jr.

*Bible Knowledge Commentary: Old Testament* by John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck, eds.

*Judges*. In *The Expositor's Bible Commentary, Volume 3* by Herbert Wolf

inhabitants.” Instead of telling of the success of the tribes of Manasseh, Ephraim, Zebulun, Asher, Naphtali, and Dan, the text records only their failures (Judg. 1:27–36). While in some of these tribes, the Canaanites dwelt among the Israelites (1:27–30), in others, the tribes dwelt among the Canaanites (1:32–33). The tribe of Dan was even driven out of their own territory (1:34–35)! Even when these tribes had enough strength to conquer the Canaanites, they chose to subdue them rather than destroy them as God had commanded (1:28, 30).

### **God’s Rebuke and Warning (Judges 2:1–5)**

Although the first chapter of Judges gives the Lord credit for Israel’s success (Judg. 1:4, 19), it is neutral in its presentation of the conquest. The chapter refrains from offering a spiritual evaluation of Israel’s failure to drive out the Canaanites. The spiritual evaluation begins in chapter 2, when the angel of the Lord comes to Israel to warn and rebuke them for their disobedience. The Lord reminds Israel of His past goodness in rescuing them from slavery in Egypt and bringing them to the Promised Land (Judg. 2:1). He also reminds Israel of their responsibility not to make treaties with the Canaanites and His command to tear down the altars of the Canaanite gods (2:2). These commands summarized how Israel should have been intolerant of the influence and presence of the wicked Canaanites. In verse 2, the angel of the Lord calls Israel to account for their disobedience.

The Lord concluded by reminding the Israelites of the promised punishment if they did not repent: He would not remove the Canaanites from the Promised Land. Instead, the Lord said to the Israelites, “They shall be thorns in your side, and their gods shall be a snare to you” (2:3). God had promised similar punishment in Exodus 23:33 and Joshua 23:13. If Israel did not remove the Canaanite influence, God would allow the Canaanites to remain and Israel to continue in their idolatry until they would “perish from this good land which the LORD your God has given you” (Josh. 23:13). Israel’s choice to disobey God ultimately would lead to their devastation and exile.

God’s warning initially was favorable to Israel, and they “lifted up their voices and wept” (Judg. 2:4). They appeared to repent for their disobedience, no doubt glimpsing how disastrous it would be for them if they continued to let the Canaanites live in their presence. But the next section reveals that Israel’s weeping was sorrow that did not lead to repentance.

### **Israel’s Apostasy and God’s Response (Judges 2:6–3:6)**

In Judges 2:2–5, the author reviews Israel’s failure to conquer the land and God’s warning. In Judges 2:6, the author continues to explain how Israel came to be dominated by the Canaanites. In establishing a larger pattern of disobedience, the author loops back to the dismissal of the tribes after Joshua’s speech in Joshua 24. Judges 2:6–10 repeats much information from Joshua 24:28–31. Although the people obeyed God while Joshua and the rest of the elders of his generation were still alive, verse 10 reveals the disturbing problem that resulted in Israel’s future failure: “Another generation arose after them who did not know the LORD nor the work which He had done for Israel.” The Israelites did not know God. Whether their parents had failed to train them in the ways of the Lord by telling them what God had done, or whether they simply refused to listen and respond to the truth, this generation did not know God.

The Israelites’ failure to know God resulted in their apostasy: “Then the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and served the Baals” (Judg. 2:11; also in 3:7; 4:1; 6:1; 10:6; 13:1). Judges 2:11–13 reveals how Israel abandoned God and followed other gods. Since the exodus, Israel had flirted with idolatry, and

now they completely rejected God for pagan monstrosities.

Israel's rejection of God infuriated Him. The "anger of the LORD was hot against Israel" (Judg. 2:14). Joshua warned the people that God is jealous and that if Israel were to forsake Him, He would do harm to them and consume them (Josh. 24:20). In righteous response to the rejection of His love, the Lord delivered Israel to "plunderers who despoiled them" and "sold them into the hands of their enemies, so that they could no longer stand before their enemies" (Judg. 2:14). As the Lord had sworn to them, Israel was defeated in battle and oppressed by the nations (2:15).

Although God responded in holy fury to their rejection, He also responded in divine mercy to the people's suffering (Judg. 2:18). The Lord, who had sovereignly declared their punishment, "was moved to pity by their groaning because of those who oppressed them" (2:18). The Lord raised up judges as the instruments of His deliverance. The judges were not like today's judges, who interpret the law and preside over court cases. They primarily were military leaders who governed the area they had delivered. The Lord was with each judge and delivered the people from their enemies as long as the judge lived (2:18). But when the judge died, the people became even more wicked and again worshiped other gods. The people "did not cease from their own doings nor from their stubborn way" (2:19). The people repented neither before nor after the Lord had mercy on them. In fact, after deliverance and the death of a judge, Israel "reverted and behaved more corruptly than their fathers" (2:19). The same cycle of apostasy, foreign oppression, suffering, and deliverance continued throughout the period of the judges.

Because Israel ignored God's covenant and His commandments (Judg. 2:20), the Lord punished them just as He had warned in Judges 2:3. God promised that He would not drive out the nations, "so that through them I may test Israel, whether they will keep the ways of the LORD" (2:22). Although God delivered the people through the judges, the land was not cleansed of the Canaanites as God had desired and commanded (Deut. 7:1-5). Without the Lord's help, the Israelites would not be able to destroy the Canaanites. Each generation of Israel would face anew the choice of whether they would obey God. God already knew the outcome of the test. The rest of the book of Judges reveals that the presence of the Canaanites would be a snare to the Israelites, who would not serve God while the Canaanites remained. Judges 3:5-6 summarizes well the results of the test: "The children of Israel dwelt among the Canaanites....And they took their daughters to be their wives...and they served their gods."

## POINT TO THE TRUTH

*"Give ear, O my people, to my law; incline your ears to the words of my mouth"*  
(Psalm 78:1).

This section includes questions to review last week's lesson and ideas to prepare students for this week's lesson. Choose from the following ideas to point to the truths of this lesson.



### Wipe out the Canaanites

In a short-timed race, draw stick figures (Canaanites) all over a dry-erase board while a student tries to erase them all. (Start with some already on there for a good lead.) After several students have tried, discuss their efforts to accomplish this task. In today's lesson, they will learn about Israel's lack of diligence to remove the Canaanites from the Promised Land.



### Mixing Israel and the Canaanites

Materials: sugar, iron filings, magnet, small plastic bag, large plastic container

Directions: Explain that God called Israel to be separate and holy. He had warned them not to dwell with the people who lived in the Promised Land. He warned them that the Canaanites would be like thorns in their side and irritants in their eyes (Num. 33:55). The Canaanites eventually would cause Israel's downfall and captivity. But although God warned them repeatedly, Israel became comfortable with the other nations and dwelt with them. (Illustrate Israel by placing white sugar inside a large plastic container.) Israel was to worship only God and destroy the people who worshiped false gods. Instead, Israel was disobedient to God and became comfortable with the other peoples of the land. They began to worship other gods. They began to practice traditions that the pagan nations practiced. (Mix iron filings into the sugar so that the sugar looks polluted.) God sent men and women called judges to lead Israel and bring them back to being set apart by worshiping only God. (Place the magnet inside a small plastic bag, and then place the bag in the large plastic container filled with the sugar and iron filings. Move the bag through the mixture. The iron filings should cling to the magnet, leaving behind the pure sugar.)



### Destroy the Idols

Judges 2:11–13 reveals that a sin Israel repeated was idolatry. Explain to the students what an idol is, literally and figuratively. Literally, an idol is a wooden or metal statue that people bow down to. Figuratively, it is anything we choose to worship above God (giving it time, money, energy, thought and devotion). What are some modern idols people worship? Find some pictures or make copies of some ancient and modern idols, and hide them around the classroom. Have the students search out, tear up, and throw away whatever idols they can find. Discuss with them some of the idols that they found.



### Half-Done Bowling

To illustrate that doing a job halfway is not completing it, make a bowling game using milk jugs and a large ball. Explain to the students that the goal is to knock down all the jugs. After knocking down only half of the jugs, ask the students whether you completed the goal. Explain that Israel was given a job, and they did not complete it. Allow the students to play milk-jug bowling.



### Joshua Gives Instructions

Have one teacher dress up as Joshua and come into the room giving the Israelites (students) instructions. These were instructions for Israel to follow as they began to build their houses in the Promised Land. The Israelites were to get rid of all the idols and complete the job fully. When Joshua leaves the room, explain to the students that Joshua died soon after he gave those instructions. God gave the leadership of the Israelites to elders of the 12 Israelite family groups. They did not have a king to rule them. They had elders to help them do what was right.



### Disobey When No One Is Watching

This game is an opposite game; students should do one thing when you are watching and the opposite when you are not. For example, they could freeze when you are watching and wiggle when you are not. Talk to them about how Israel “served the Lord all the days of Joshua” (Josh. 24:31), but the book of Judges tells us that the very next generation began to disobey.



### The Next Generation

Explain to the students that they are going to play a game but that you are going to explain the instructions to only one student. Do not allow that student to explain the instructions to any other students. Then tell the class to begin playing the game. Ask them whether they can play the game. (They should respond that they cannot play without the instructions.) Some students might want to make up their own activity, and some might become upset. Similarly, the Israelites who had seen God’s powerful works and heard His commandments did not teach the next generation how to live godly lives and obey the Lord. Because they were not taught how to live, the next generation did evil in the sight of the Lord.

## PROCLAIM THE TRUTH

*“Telling to the generation to come the praises of the LORD, and His strength and His wonderful works that He has done” (Psalm 78:4).*

This section includes the Bible lesson, lesson questions, and praise and worship ideas. Song suggestions are included that you can use to proclaim your worship to God. Use the lesson questions to check the students’ understanding. This section also includes various presentation ideas to use during the teaching time. Read the Bible passage several times before you read these pages. All teaching should be done directly from the Bible.

### Bible Lesson

What happens when you disobey your mom or dad? You get in trouble and are disciplined. There are consequences when you do not obey. Who else besides your mom and your dad are you to obey? You are to obey God. Just as when you disobey your mom and dad, there are consequences when you disobey God. Today we are going to learn about some of the consequences Israel faced after they disobeyed God.

We just learned about Joshua. Joshua led the Israelites into the Promised Land. Before he died, Joshua called all of the Israelites together and reminded them to serve and obey God. The Israelites promised Joshua that they would. They said, “The LORD our God we will serve, and His voice we will obey!” (Josh. 24:24) After

Joshua died, the Israelites had to decide whether they would keep their promise to Joshua and obey God.

God had commanded the Israelites to destroy all the people in Canaan. The Canaanites were living in the Promised Land, and they were very wicked. They worshiped idols instead of the one true God. God had commanded the Israelites to tear down all the Canaanites' idols. The Israelites asked God to help them fight the Canaanites, but they were not easy to beat. Some of the Israelites gave up and left the Canaanites in the land. Other times, the Canaanites were easy to beat, but the Israelites decided to let them stay anyway. The Israelites also failed to destroy the Canaanites' idols. In some parts of the Promised Land, the Israelites lived in the same towns as the Canaanites and learned their wicked ways. God was angry at the Israelites for disobeying Him.

The angel of the Lord came to the Israelites and reminded them of all that God had done for them in the past. He reminded them of how God had rescued them from slavery in Egypt and brought them to the Promised Land. Then the angel of the Lord reminded them of the punishment that God had promised if they disobeyed Him. The Israelites cried and wanted God to save them from their punishment, but they did not change. They kept disobeying God. They began to worship the Canaanite idols that God had commanded them to destroy. What do you think happened to the Israelites? God punished them because of their sin. He allowed them to be overtaken by the Canaanites. They became weak, and their armies could not fight. The Canaanites treated them very badly. Israel cried out to God once again. They begged Him to end their suffering. God had pity on them. That means He felt sorry for them. He helped them by raising a leader, called a judge, to strengthen them and deliver them from their enemies, the Canaanites. The Israelites would serve the Lord under their judge, until the judge died. Then the Israelites again would disobey God, and God still would show them mercy by raising up another judge to lead them. This happened over and over for a very long time. The Israelites were paying the consequences for not obeying God. If they had destroyed all the Canaanites in the beginning, as they had been told, God would have blessed them. They disobeyed God and suffered because of it. What can you learn from the Israelites?



## Lesson Questions

Did the people of Israel promise to obey God?

*Yes. The Israelites promised that they would serve and obey the Lord.*

What did God command the Israelites to do with the Canaanites?

*God commanded the Israelites to destroy the Canaanites and tear down their idols.*

Did the Israelites do what God commanded?

*No. It was not easy for them to get rid of the Canaanites, so they let the Canaanites live in some of the towns where they lived.*

In what other way did the Israelites disobey God?

*They began to worship the Canaanites' idols.*

Who came to the Israelites to remind them of what God had done for them in the past?

*The angel of the Lord.*



How did God punish the Israelites?  
*He allowed them to be taken over by the Canaanites.*

What did the Israelites do?  
*They cried out to God and begged Him to end their suffering.*

What did God do in response to their cries?  
*He raised up a leader, called a judge, to lead and strengthen the Israelites.*

## Presentation Ideas



### A Beka Book Flash-A-Cards

Use appropriate A Beka Book Flash-A-Cards with the lesson.



### Betty Lukens Flannelgraph

Use appropriate flannelgraph pieces with the lesson.



### Rescue Me

Materials: a life vest or lifesaving device from a pool

Directions: Show the students the life vest, and ask them whether they know why people use lifesavers. Explain that when someone is in danger in the water, the lifesaver is used to rescue him. Explain that over the next few weeks the Bible lessons will be learning about the book of Judges where God rescued Israel over and over. (If using a life vest, you could wear it to introduce all three lessons in Judges.)



### Thorns and Snares

God told the Israelites that because they disobeyed His instructions and did not destroy all the Canaanites, the Canaanites would be like “thorns in [their] side,” and the Canaanite gods would be “a snare” to them (Judges 2:3). Illustrate this during the lesson by showing the class a large thorn and a snare.

## Praise and Worship

*Change My Heart, Oh God*

*Create in Me a Clean Heart*

*I Have Decided to Follow Jesus*

*The B-I-B-L-E*

*Trust and Obey*



### A Pattern of Disobedience

The time of Judges was sad and dark.  
*(Cover hands with face.)*

Clearly, Israel missed the mark.  
*(Make a thumbs-down sign.)*

God had told them what to do:  
*(Point upward.)*

Cleanse the land, through and through.

*(Sweep hand in a wide arc.)*

But they did things their own way,

*(Cross arms defiantly; shake head.)*

Mixed with sin and disobeyed.

*(Intertwine fingers of both hands to illustrate mixing.)*

God, as promised, judgment sent.

*(Hold out hand; pound it with other fist.)*

At Israel's plea, He did relent;

*(Clasp hands together as though pleading.)*

But the cycle kept repeating,

*(Make a continual circle with your finger.)*

Sorrow for sin was only fleeting.

*(Trace tear down cheeks with index finger; close and open hands suddenly to indicate tears disappearing quickly.)*

## PRACTICE THE TRUTH

*"That they may set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep His commandments" (Psalm 78:7).*

Choose ideas from this section to review and apply the truths of the Bible lesson.



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### "The Vicious Cycle"

Materials: blank sheets of 8.5x11-inch paper, copies of "The Vicious Cycle" craft page, brads, tape, crayons

Directions: Have the students color the circle and rectangular shapes from "The Vicious Cycle" craft page and cut the circle out. Next, instruct them to fold up the bottom of the base sheet up along the solid line, forming a 3.5-inch pocket. The circle should be inserted into the pocket and a hole punched through the center of the circle and the base sheet at the dot. A brad can be used to connect the circle with the base sheet. Place tape over the brad ends on the back of the page. Spin the circle around as a reminder of the pattern of Israel's sin and God's faithful deliverance.



### Cycle Mobile

Materials: copies of the "Spiral Craft" page, scissors, crayons, hole puncher, yarn

Directions: Have students color the front and back of the spiral and then cut it out. Punch a hole in the top of the spiral where indicated. Thread a piece of yarn through the hole and make a knot for hanging. Talk to the students about Israel's downward spiral of sin.



### Thank-You Card

Materials: half-sheets of cardstock, thank-you stickers or stamps, pencils, glue, envelopes

Directions: In response to this lesson, students should be thankful that God has pity on sinners who trust Him as Savior. Using the materials above, students can make a thank-you card to God. Choose a Bible verse for them to write out, such as 1 John 1:9 or James 1:17. Seal the cards in envelopes. Students can save the cards and open them on a day when they are feeling unloved, bitter, ungrateful, or prideful.



### Save My Life

*This craft can be used over three weeks.*

Materials: paper grocery bags, markers or crayons, scissors, glue sticks, yellow construction paper, aluminum foil or metallic paper

Directions:

Week 1: Cut each grocery bag into a vest. Write each student's name on the left front.

Week 2: On the back of the vest, students can write "God is my Rescuer" in large letters. (For younger students, this could be photocopied on a sheet of paper and then glued or taped to the back of the vest.) Cut strips of yellow construction paper to glue onto the bag as decorative stripes.

Week 3: Cut strips of foil or metallic paper to glue to the vests as reflectors.

### Coloring Sheets

Give each student copies of the coloring sheets at the back of the lesson. Students can color the pages in class or at home.



### MEMORY VERSE

"And they forsook the LORD God...and they followed other gods...and they provoked the LORD to anger" (Judges 2:1).



# The Vicious Cycle



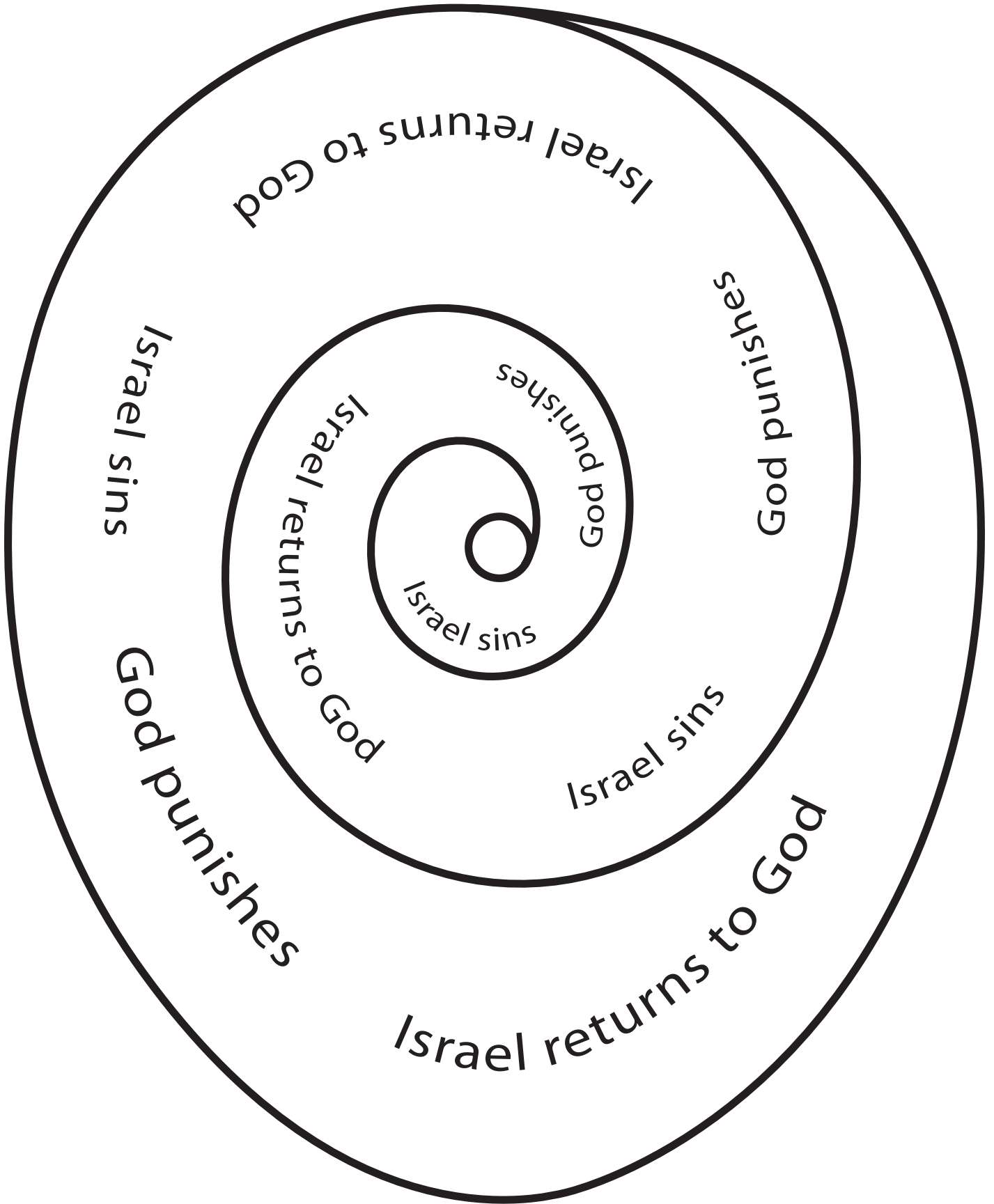
## The Vicious Cycle

Israel's Disobedience and God's Response

Judges 2:11–19



# Spiral Craft







# Thank-You Card

Dear God,

Today we read in Your Word, the Bible, about Israel in Judges. Sometimes they sinned, but You pitied them and saved them. Sometimes I sin, too, by \_\_\_\_\_.

Please forgive me. Thank You for Your forgiveness and pity. Thank You for keeping Your promises. Thank You for the other good things You give me, such as \_\_\_\_\_.

And thank You for sending Jesus Christ to be the Savior.

Love,

\_\_\_\_\_

Dear God,

Today we read in Your Word, the Bible, about Israel in Judges. Sometimes they sinned, but You pitied them and saved them. Sometimes I sin, too, by \_\_\_\_\_.

Please forgive me. Thank You for Your forgiveness and pity. Thank You for keeping Your promises. Thank You for the other good things You give me, such as \_\_\_\_\_.

And thank You for sending Jesus Christ to be the Savior.

Love,

\_\_\_\_\_





**“Then the Angel of the LORD came up from Gilgal to Bochim, and said,...”“You shall make no covenant with the inhabitants of this land; you shall tear down their altars.” But you have not obeyed My voice. Why have you done this?” (Judges 2:1a–2).**





**“They forsook the LORD and served Baal and the Ashtoreths. And the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel. So He delivered them into the hands of plunderers who despoiled them; and He sold them into the hands of their enemies all around, so that they could no longer stand before their enemies” (Judges 2:13–14).**

