

## Lesson 69

# Israel Turns to Idols

Israel began a cycle of disobedience, punishment, and repentance.

# Studying God's Word

Don't forget! Review the Optional Supplements and determine where you can use them.

## Introduction

### Slide #3

Refer to Lesson 68 Theme Poster. In this lesson, we saw how God fulfilled his promise to give the Israelites the land of Canaan. God was with Joshua, Caleb, and the Israelites as they fought the people in the land and conquered their cities. Then Joshua divided the land for each of the tribes.

What tribe didn't receive a portion of land? Levi.

The Levites received cities and pastureland but not a large territory like the other tribes. That's because they were chosen to be God's servants in the tabernacle and to live throughout the land as teachers of the law.

The tribes went to the lands they were given. They enjoyed cities that they didn't have to build and fruit from trees they didn't have to plant! God gave them a fruitful land with everything they needed. They could live in comfortable homes and cities instead of tents like they had in the wilderness. But Joshua warned them to serve God alone and to obey his commands now that they were living in their new land. Would the Israelites continue to obey God or would they disobey? We'll find out in our lesson today!

## Israel's Disobedience

Pass out the Class Notes to the students.

Let's look at a passage that sums up the book of Joshua before we move into Judges.

Joshua 21:43-45

### Slide #4

### Slide #5

Who will read Joshua 21:43-45? Assign a reader.

What had the Lord given to Israel in verse 43? All the land that he swore to give to their fathers.

God fulfilled his promises to the "fathers" of Israel. The fathers of Israel included Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, or Israel. They all received the promise from God that their descendants would become a great nation and inherit a land, the land of Canaan.

What did God give Israel in verse 44? Rest on every side; victory over their enemies.

What does verse 45 say about the promises God made to Israel? They all came to pass; none of them failed.

God gave the Israelites victory and peace. They were living in the promised land.

So, could the Israelites just relax now that the promise had been fulfilled, or did God still require something of them? Allow answers.

God still required obedience to his commandments. He had chosen the Israelites as his people and saved them from slavery in Egypt. He wanted his people to worship him alone, to love him and serve him faithfully. He wanted them to obey the Ten Commandments and treat each other with kindness and respect.

Refer to the Books of the Bible Poster. Let's turn to the book of Judges chapter 2 verse 11 and see if the Israelites were faithful and obedient after Joshua's death. Joshua died at age 110, and all his generation that fought to conquer the land also passed away. The new generation of Israelites were not taught about all the miracles God had done for their people. They did not know or trust the Lord.

## Judges 2:11–15

Slide #6

Slide #7

Slide #8

Who will read Judges 2:11–15? Assign readers.

What did the people do in verse 11 that was evil? They served the Baals.

What were the Baals? Does anyone know? Allow discussion.

"Baals" refers to false gods. Although the Israelites conquered many people in the land of Canaan, some remained in certain areas of the land. The Israelites didn't completely destroy the Canaanites like God wanted them to. These Canaanites worshipped many false gods like the Baals and invited the Israelites to worship their gods, too.

What else does it say the Israelites did in verses 12 and 13? Abandoned the Lord, went after other gods and bowed down to them, provoked the Lord to anger, served the Baals and Ashtaroath.

So, did the Israelites obey or disobey God's commands once Joshua was gone? They disobeyed.

Refer to the Ten Commandments Poster. The Israelites were guilty of breaking the Ten Commandments. They served the false gods and goddesses of the Canaanites, the Baals and Ashtaroath. They put other gods before the Lord and bowed down to idols. They disobeyed the first two commandments!

What was God's response to Israel's worship of these false gods? Look in verse 14. He was angry.

How did God punish the Israelites for their disobedience? He gave them over to their enemies.

God no longer gave Israel victory over their enemies. Instead, God brought enemy nations against Israel to attack them and plunder them. Plunder means that their enemies stole their food and other possessions. Whenever Israel tried to march against their enemies, God was against them and caused them to lose the battle. They were in terrible distress!

Judges 2:16

### Slide #9

Who will read what God would do when the Israelites repented of their disobedience and cried out to him for deliverance? It's in Judges 2:16.

Assign a reader.

Who would God raise up to save the people? Judges.

These judges weren't like those we have in our courtrooms who decide if people are guilty or innocent. They were military leaders God raised up to deliver the Israelites by fighting against their enemies. The judges in the Bible were chosen by God to lead the Israelites to victory. God would be with the judge and help him save the people because God was merciful.

Refer to the Attributes of God Poster. Who will read the definition of merciful from the Attributes of God Poster? Choose a reader. Merciful: kind to those in misery; withholds deserved punishment.

In the book of Judges, God didn't withhold punishment, but he delivered his people from punishment when they cried out to him in their misery and distress.

## **Israel's Cycle in Judges**

### Slide #10

Refer to the Lesson Theme Posters. What we just read in Judges became a cycle that Israel repeated for about 300 years! This is what happened over and over: 1) The Israelites worshipped false gods; 2) God sent enemies to punish them; 3) The Israelites cried out to God to forgive them; 4) God raised up a judge to deliver them from their enemies; 5) The Israelites thanked God for saving them and giving them peace. Once they had peace and rest, the Israelites would forget what God had done for them and turn back to idols. This started the whole cycle again!

Judges 3:7–11

Slide #11

Slide #12

Slide #13

Turn to Judges 3 and follow along as I read verses 7–11. This is an example of the cycle we just discussed. Read the passage.

What evil did the Israelites do in verse 7? Served the Baals and the Asheroth.

Yes. Remember that the Baals and Asheroth were false gods and goddesses the Canaanite people worshipped. And now the Israelites were worshipping them, too. Note: The different spelling of Asheroth from Ashtaroth indicates the idols/images of the goddesses. What was God's response to their sin? He was angry. Refer to the Attributes of God Poster. What attribute of God means he cannot sin and hates all sin? Holy.

Because God is holy, he can be angry at sin and not sin! Because God is just, he must then punish sin. He loved Israel and wanted them to obey. When they disobeyed, he punished them—not to be mean but to help them learn that they'd sinned so they would turn to him and repent.

In this account in Judges, God punished Israel by sending the king of Mesopotamia against them. How long did this king rule over Israel and make them serve him? Look at the end of verse 8. Eight years. What did the people finally do in verse 9? Cried out to the Lord.

When Israel cried out to the Lord, that means they prayed and asked for forgiveness and help. That was what God was waiting for.

What did God do next? It's step four in the cycle. He raised up a judge, or deliverer.

The judge God raised up here was Othniel, who was Caleb's nephew, the son of Caleb's brother Kenaz. Remember Caleb, who spied out the land with Joshua? Caleb remained faithful to God for his whole life, even fighting giants when he was 85 years old!

What did Othniel do in verse 10? He went out to war against the king of Mesopotamia.

Othniel led the Israelites in battle against this king who had been oppressing the people. And God gave him victory! He defeated the king and led Israel for 40 years of peace and rest before he died.

#### Slide #14

Refer to the Lesson Theme Posters. Do you see how this account shows the cycle on our poster? They did each of these things: worshipped false gods, received punishment in the form of enemies, and cried out to God. Then God sent Othniel, a judge, to deliver them, and they had peace and rest.

Judges 3:12

#### Slide #15

Someone read Judges 3:12. This happened after Othniel died. Assign a reader.

What did the Israelites do again? Evil. Worship idols.

There they go, back to the first step in the cycle. Notice that even though Israel was unfaithful to God, God remained faithful to them. He didn't

abandon them, but he came to their aid when they cried out to him. He sent another judge to help them.

Slide #16

Slide #17

Slide #18

Let's begin the Class Notes. You will write answers in the crossword puzzle. What is the answer for #1? Who will read that? Choose a reader. Joshua. Have students complete #1.

What did the Israelites do shortly after Joshua died in #2? Choose a reader. False gods. Have students complete #2.

And #3, how did God punish them? Choose a reader. Enemies. Have students complete #3.

Who will read #4 about God's attributes? Choose a reader. Faithful. Have students complete #4.

Who did God raise up when the Israelites cried out for help? This is #5. Choose a reader. Judges. Have students complete #5.

And #6? This is the fifth step in the cycle. Choose a reader. Peace. Have students complete #6.

What did the Israelites repeat for about 300 years? Who will read #7? Choose a reader. Cycle. Have students complete #7.

Look at #8. What did Caleb's nephew do? Who will read that for us? Choose a reader. Othniel. Have students complete #8.

## Idolatry Today

When we read about the cycle the Israelites repeated for so long, we may be tempted to judge them and think that they are terrible sinners. But, we have the same sin problem and can be just as stubborn to sin and slow to repent. We may not worship Baals or statues, or bow down to idols like the Israelites did, but we can be guilty of idolatry, too. Idolatry is putting anything in our lives above God. Whenever we make anything more important than God, it's idolatry, which is disobedience to the first commandment.

Luke 18:18-23

Slide #19

Slide #20

Refer to the Books of the Bible Poster. Let's go to the New Testament book of Luke, the third Gospel, and see what Jesus said about idolatry. Who will read Luke 18:18-23? Assign readers.

What did the rich young ruler ask Jesus in verse 18? What must I do to inherit eternal life?

Jesus quoted five of the Ten Commandments to the young man. What did the ruler think about himself? Look in verse 21. He thought he was a good person. He believed he had kept God's commandments.

A lot of people are like this young man. He thought he was a good person doing a good job obeying God's commands. But no one can keep God's commands perfectly. We are all sinners.

What did Jesus tell him he still needed to do? Sell all that he had and give it to the poor then follow Jesus.

How did the ruler feel when he heard this? Luke 18:23. Sad.

He felt sad because he was very wealthy. Giving all his things to the poor and following Jesus was not something he wanted to do.

The rich young ruler had put his money and possessions before God. His possessions were his idol because he was not willing to give them up to follow Jesus. Jesus may ask us to give up the very thing that is most important to us—the thing we love the most. Jesus wants to know that he is truly our Lord and that we love him more than anything else.

If we are fully devoted to Christ, should we be willing to give up anything he asks us to? Yes.

In this case, the rich young ruler was guilty of idolatry just like the Israelites were, but riches were his idol instead of a false god like Baal.

Print and cut out the Idol Strips before class. Fold them and put them in a container for students to draw from.

Show the container with the Idol Strips inside. We're going to play a game like charades to get us thinking about what can be idols today. Things that are possible idols are written on the papers in this container. I'll choose students to come up and draw a paper strip. You will act out what is on the paper without speaking while the rest of the class will try to guess what you're acting out. Remember that these things can all become an idol in our lives. They can be anything we may love more than God. Who would like to start? Choose a volunteer to begin the game. Have students act and guess the idols.

#### Slide #21

Great job acting and guessing, everyone! Let's finish the crossword puzzle in the Class Notes. Who will read #9? Choose a reader. Anything. Have students complete #9.

And #10, what was the idol in the young ruler's life? Choose a reader. Riches. Have students complete #10.

## **Application**

### Slide #22

Refer to the Lesson Theme Posters. Today, we saw the cycle of disobedience that Israel repeated for hundreds of years. The Israelites turned away from God. Then God would punish them by sending enemies to conquer them and make their lives difficult. The people would cry out to God, and God would show his mercy and love by sending a judge to deliver them from their enemies. The Israelites would have peace, usually as long as the judge lived, and then they would disobey again.

What can we learn from the cycle in the book of Judges? We learn attributes of God, including his holiness and justice to punish sin, but also his mercy and faithfulness to deliver his people. We learn that idolatry is anything in our lives that we put before God.

Idols can be different things. It can be our friends, if the friends are more important to us than God. It can be schoolwork or getting good grades, if that 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 or possessions as was the case of the rich young ruler we read about. Idolatry can be sleep, if we are too tired to get out of bed to go worship God at church or to read our Bible and pray. It can be clothes, toys, video games, or the latest technology. These things are not bad. In fact, they are blessings from God. But we must be careful not to turn “good” things into “god” things—things that we worship more than God.

If one of these areas is a problem for you, you can pray and ask God to help you put him first. God may want you to give up that thing, or you may need to change your priorities to make sure that thing you really like doesn’t take up all your thoughts and time. When you ask God for forgiveness, he’ll forgive you and help you change.

## Lesson Review

We encourage you to play a lesson review game.

## Bible Baseball

Students will answer questions and run the bases!

### Materials

Review Questions  
Three chairs set out for bases  
Optional: gift wrap tube and a large balloon

### Instructions

Print one copy of the Review Questions for your use. Set out chairs as bases. Have the students line up by the home base area facing you (at the pitcher’s mound). Each student up to “bat” will have a chance to answer a review question. If he can answer it correctly, let him run the bases. If he can’t answer correctly, give the answer and ask him to go to the end of the line and try again.

You may want the students to sit on the chair at each base while they wait to run to the next base or have them run all the way around and return to the line. Repeat the questions until all the students have run around the bases.

For some added fun, you can use a gift wrap tube as a bat and toss a large balloon for students to hit after they answer each question.

## Box Toss

Students will answer review questions then toss the beanbag at the holes in the box to gain points for their team.

## Materials

Review Questions  
Medium-sized cardboard box  
Scissors or knife  
Four beanbags  
Masking tape

## Instructions

Print one copy of the Review Questions for your use. Use scissors or a knife to cut two or three holes in the bottom of the box. Make sure they are large enough for a beanbag to easily pass through. Label each hole with a point number: 5, 10, and 15. Use masking tape to make a tossing line several feet away from the box.

Divide the class into teams. Have the teams line up behind the line across from the box. Give each team two beanbags. Alternate asking each team a review question. Students who answer correctly will toss the beanbags at the target holes in the box to earn points for their team. If they answer incorrectly, they may toss the beanbags for fun without the points counting. Students will go to the end of the line after tossing the beanbags. Keep score for both teams. Continue play until all questions have been answered correctly and students have all had a chance to toss the beanbags.

## Draw Dice

Teams will answer questions and complete a simple drawing to win. Who will finish their drawing first?

## Materials

Review Questions  
One drawing area for each team (paper, white board, etc.)  
Pencils or white board markers  
One die

## Instructions

Print one copy of the Review Questions for your use. Divide the class into two teams. Give each team a sheet of paper and a pencil, or divide the white board in half. Draw a mouse on the board as an example.

Ask the first team a question from the lesson. If they answer correctly, have them roll the die.

To begin drawing their mouse, each team must wait until they get a six. They will then draw the mouse's body on their paper or the board. After they have drawn the body, as they give correct answers to the questions, they can

continue to draw the other parts of the mouse according to the numbers they roll.



They can draw according to the numbers below:

6 = body

5 = nose

4 = whiskers

3 = eyes

2 = ears

1 = tail

Continue giving each team a turn to answer a question and roll the die. Repeat the questions as necessary. The first team to finish their mouse wins.

You may choose to draw a simple object from the lesson, such as a crown, an open Bible, a fish, etc. Be sure to assign numbers (as above) to each part of the object to be drawn before the game begins.

## Four in a Row

Students will answer questions and add a marker for their team onto the grid. Which team will be the first to get four in a row?

## Materials

Review Questions

Masking tape

Red and black paper circles or other markers for each team

## Instructions

Print one copy of the Review Questions for your use. Use masking tape to make a 16-section grid on the floor. The grid should be four sections wide by four sections long. Each section should be equal in size. Use eight red circles and

eight black circles cut from construction paper or other markers for the two teams.

Divide the students into two teams. Give each team eight markers. They will take turns answering the questions. If they answer correctly, they can put a marker in a square on the grid. The first team to get four markers in a row wins the game.

## Goofy Golf

Hit the sock with the noodle? Teams must work together to answer the questions and putt to get a hole-in-one in this crazy golf game!

### Materials

- Review Questions
- Swimming noodles or rolled up newspapers
- Rolled up socks
- Masking tape
- Ten sheets of paper
- Markers

### Instructions

Print one copy of the Review Questions for your use. Use the markers to number sheets of paper 1–10 (use more or less depending on class size and time). Tape down the sheets of paper around the room in a random pattern to form a golf course. You may want to add chairs as obstacles in the path.

Divide the class into teams. Give each team a rolled up sock and a swimming noodle. Ask the first student a review question from the lesson. If he answers correctly, allow him to use the noodle to drive the rolled up sock toward the first sheet of paper labeled #1. Continue with the next team. Take turns allowing team members to answer questions and continue putting the socks along the course to each hole, continuing from where the last teammate left off. The sock must touch or roll over the sheet of paper to consider it in the hole. The first team to reach the tenth hole wins.

## Racetrack

Who will reach the checkered flag first? Teams will race to the finish by answering review questions.

### Materials

- Review Questions
- White board or chalkboard
- Markers/chalk
- Optional: paper cutouts for each team (cars, animals, circles, etc.), tape/poster putty

## Instructions

Print one copy of the Review Questions for your use. Draw a racetrack on the board. It may be as simple as a straight horizontal path or a curvy circle. Label "Start" and "Finish" (with a checkered flag) at either end of the track. Add numbers along the track (e.g., 1–10) at equal intervals between Start and Finish. The numbers will be used as placement points for the racers as they progress along the track.

Divide the class into teams. You may draw a different symbol (e.g., stick figure, circle, X or O) to represent each team at the Start, or use paper cutouts as team markers and stick them to the board with tape/poster putty.

Ask the first team a review question. If they answer correctly, move their marker or redraw their symbol along the track at #1. If they answer incorrectly, give the next team a chance to answer and move to the first number. If they do not know, give the answer and ask that question again later. Continue to alternate asking review questions and moving teams' markers along the racetrack according to the numbers along the track. The first team to reach the Finish wins!

## Pick a Point

Answer the questions correctly to earn the right to pick a point.

## Materials

Review Questions  
Small paper strips  
Cup or basket

## Instructions

Print one copy of the Review Questions for your use. Write various numbers in increments of 5 or 10 on strips of paper to use as point cards. Put the point cards into the cup or basket. Divide students into teams of 4–5 students each. Have each team take turns answering a review question. After each correct answer, let a member of the team draw a point card from the cup.

The number of points on the cards will vary, so the score will have nothing to do with how skilled one team might be. Keep track of each team's points. If time allows, repeat the questions!

## Toss for It

How many points? Toss for it! Students answer the questions and toss the beanbag to earn points for their team.

## Materials

## Review Questions

A deck of numbered cards, or numbers and “wild” written on index cards

One beanbag

Masking tape

Two baskets or containers for cards

## Instructions

Print one copy of the Review Questions for your use. Place several rows of numbered cards facedown with a few inches between them to form a grid pattern (make sure to put several wild cards or Jokers down, too). Use the masking tape to make a tossing line several feet from the cards.

Divide students into teams and have them line up behind the tossing line. Ask the first student a review question. If he gives the correct answer, have him toss the beanbag onto a card. Turn the card over to reveal the points he receives for his team. Face cards or word cards are 10 points each. Wild or Jokers are also 10—plus another turn. All other cards are face value.

Have the student pick up his card and put it in the team’s basket to be counted at the end of the game. Next team’s turn. If a student gives an incorrect answer, he should go to the end of the line. Give the answer and repeat that question later. Continue taking turns until all the questions have been answered. Add more cards to the grid if necessary.

## Limited License to Reproduce

A limited, non-exclusive, non-transferable, nonsublicensable license is hereby granted to a single local church or organization to print copies of the PDF materials in the Teacher Digital Resources if 1) you are the original purchaser; 2) you are using the copies for noncommercial purposes (such as for teaching in class) exclusively within your single local church or organization (multi-campus churches, and national/regional denominations are not covered under this license); and 3) you follow the instructions provided in the curriculum pertaining to the printable materials.

This license is for the specific purchaser of the product and does not include affiliated groups or organizations, or other churches or groups in the same denomination as the purchaser, not identified as the actual purchaser. There is no limit to the number of printed copies for use within the single local church or organization which is the actual purchaser. None of the material in this curriculum may be reproduced for any commercial promotion, advertising, or sale of a product or service, or to share with any other persons, churches, groups, or organizations.

The media (audio/video) portions are copyrighted and duplication is prohibited. This license is for materials in the Teacher Digital Resources only and does NOT include reproduction rights for pre-printed teacher books, student guides, student take home sheets, or posters, except on an emergency basis when purchased quantities are not sufficient for a given week.

## Bible Version

Scripture quotations are from the ESV® Bible (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®), copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.