

# In the Beginning...Jesus

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## Lesson 24

### God Appoints Judges and Gives Israel a King

#### Themes:

- After God gave Israel the promised land, Israel turned to idolatry.
- God punished the people of Israel for their disobedience.
- God is merciful—He appointed judges to deliver His people.
- Israel rejected God's rule and desired a king.

#### Scripture:

Portions of Judges and 1 Samuel; Joshua 23:11-13

#### Memory Verse:

John 1:5 (and review verses 1-4)

#### Visuals for Lesson:

- Bible.
- *In the Beginning...Jesus* poster.
- Resource Packet:
  - Container of marshmallows and garlic from previous lesson.
  - JUDGES \_\_\_\_\_:\_\_\_\_\_—If teaching a large class, write out a larger copy of this visual on a white board or large piece of paper.
  - GOD—MAN visual (from previous lessons).
  - GOD IS FAITHFUL, GOD IS MERCIFUL, GOD IS GOOD, GOD'S JUDGMENT (from previous lessons).
  - SECRET CODE.
  - PIECES 1-5 TO FORM A CIRCLE.
  - COVENANT ARROW (see Resource Packet visual for Lesson 21).
- Large piece of paper, or white board and marker.
- Waste paper basket.

## Lesson

Tell the children that at the end of the previous lesson you asked them to remind you of something during this week's lesson. What was it? [To pass out the marshmallows as a treat for the class.] **Display** the container of marshmallows. Ask the children:

*Can you describe to me how marshmallows are supposed to taste? Do they have a pleasant smell or a bad odor?*

Ask the children if they would like to have some of these marshmallows. Choose one or two children who are willing to come up front to have a sample. Open the lid of the container and have them smell the contents. Do the marshmallows smell funny? If the children are willing, have them eat a marshmallow. Have them describe to the other children what the marshmallows taste like.

*What happened to the marshmallows? [They smell and taste like garlic now.] How did that happen? [You added cloves of garlic to the container.]*

Retrieve one of the garlic cloves and ask: *But how can these little pieces of garlic cause the marshmallows to go bad?*

Point out that you used this illustration last week to help the children understand Joshua's warning to the people of Israel before he died.

Quickly read **Joshua 23:11-13**:

***Be very careful, therefore, to love the LORD your God. For if you turn back and cling to the remnant of these nations remaining among you and make marriages with them, so that you associate with them and they with you, know for certain that the LORD your God will no longer drive out these nations before you, but they shall be a snare and a trap for you, a whip on your sides and thorns in your eyes, until you perish from off this good ground that the LORD your God has given you.***

Explain that the people of Israel were now living in the promised land. But God wanted them to finish the job of driving out the enemy nations so the Israelites would possess all the land God had promised to them. Joshua was worried that after he died, Israel would not finish the job and would let the Canaanites live among the people of Israel.

*Pretend for a minute that this container is the land God promised Israel and the marshmallows are the people of Israel. Let's also pretend that the two pieces of garlic are the Canaanites. Although the Israelites fill most of the container and the Canaanites only fill a very small part of it, would the Canaanites have an effect on the Israelites? Would it be a good effect or a bad effect? Did the Israelites understand Joshua's warning? Would they*

*pay attention? What happened next?*

*Read the following verse portions to the children:*

***Manasseh did not drive out the inhabitants... (Judges 1:27a)***

***And Ephraim did not drive out the Canaanites... (Judges 1:29a)***

***Zebulun did not drive out the inhabitants... (Judges 1:30a)***

***Asher did not drive out the inhabitants of Acco... (Judges 1:31a)***

***Naphtali did not drive out the inhabitants... (Judges 1:33a)***

*Did the tribes of Israel heed Joshua's warning after he died? What would be the result? Would the Israelites be changed by allowing the Canaanites to live in their land? In what way? Would they simply smell bad like these marshmallows?*

**Display JUDGES \_\_\_\_:** \_\_\_\_\_. Have the children read the verse as shown on the visual:

***And the people of Israel did what was \_\_\_\_\_ in the sight of the LORD and served the \_\_\_\_\_.***

Explain that this verse gives the answer to how living with the Canaanites changed the Israelites. In order to fill in the missing words the children must first find the chapter and verse revealed by solving the following clues:

*The chapter can be found by multiplying 2 times 4 and then subtracting 6.*

*The verse can be found by subtracting 1 son from Jacob.*

[Answer: **Judges 2:11**. Write this in on the visual.]

Have the children turn to **Judges 2:11**. Choose a child to come and write the missing words evil and Baals on the visual. According to this verse, did letting the Canaanites living among them have a good or bad effect on Israel? Who did they now begin to serve? [The Baals.] What are the Baals?

Explain that the Canaanites worshiped false gods called the Baals. They were idols made by human hands. Because the people disobeyed God and let the Canaanites live among them, they started to be influenced by the Canaanites and eventually even worshiped their false gods. This was the "snare" and "trap" Joshua had warned the people of Israel about. But they didn't listen.

**Display** the **GOD—MAN** visual. Ask the children if Israel was keeping the covenant and obeying God's voice. What specific law and command, written in stone, could God point to, proving that Israel was breaking the covenant? [The first and second commands.] Tear the **COVENANT ARROW** (the one with the **TEN COMMANDMENTS**) in half, from the bottom up. Was this okay with God? Can you predict how God might respond?

Choose a child to read **Judges 2:14**:

*So the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and He gave them over to plunderers, who plundered them. And He sold them into the hand of their surrounding enemies, so that they could no longer withstand their enemies.*

*Does God's response sound familiar? **Display** GOD'S JUDGMENT. Is this the end of the story? Does anyone remember a pattern we talked about in previous lessons? What might come next?*

**Display** **SECRET CODE**. Tell the children that the clue to what happened next is contained in this code. Can any of the children read it? Tell the children that the key to solving the code is in the pictures. Each picture represents a letter of the alphabet. (Give the children a few moments to solve the code. You may need to give them one or two additional hints. The solution is found in identifying the first letter in the name of each object.) Write the correct letters under each picture: GESDUJ. Do these letters make any sense? Can the children unscramble the letters and guess the word?

Have the children turn to **Judges 2:16**. The unscrambled word can be found in the verse:

*Then the LORD raised up judges, who saved them out of the hand of those who plundered them.*

*What is the word? Judges. God gave Israel judges in order to do what? [Save God's people from their enemies.] Does this sound like a familiar pattern? **Display** the **GOD IS FAITHFUL, GOD IS MERCIFUL, GOD IS GOOD** signs.*

**Display** **COVENANT ARROW** and *lightly* tape it over the torn visual on the **GOD—MAN** visual. Explain that God chose to deliver His sinful people by choosing men (and one woman) to lead His people and defeat their enemies. Deborah, Gideon, Samson, and Samuel were some of the judges. The rest of the book of Judges tells about Israel's life under the rule of these judges.

*And like many things that we have studied in the Bible so far, the book of Judges follows a pattern.*

Draw a large circle on a whiteboard or large piece of paper. One by one, attach **PIECES 1-5 TO FORM A CIRCLE** to the circle (beginning with **PIECE 1** at the top).

Israel does what is evil in the sight of the LORD.  
God judges Israel by giving them over to their enemies.  
The people cry out to God to save them.  
God raises up a judge to deliver His people.  
The judge dies.

When finished, the pieces will progress in a clockwise manner so that, following the large circle you drew, **PIECE 5** will lead to **PIECE 1**. (You may want to draw an arrow pointing from each visual to the following one in order to emphasize the cyclical nature of the pattern.)

Explain that this pattern is repeated over and over again in the book of Judges. Remove the top **COVENANT** from the **GOD—MAN** visual to reveal the torn pieces. Then place it over the torn pieces again. Repeat this several times to emphasize this repeated pattern. End by leaving the torn **COVENANT** visual visible. Point out that the last verse in the book of Judges gives a hint that something is going to change—something is going to stop this cycle.

Have the children turn to **Judges 21:25**:

***In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes.***

*What does it say that the people of Israel were doing in this verse? [Doing what was right in their own eyes.] Would that be a good or bad thing? Why? [Allow the children to respond.] How is doing what is right in your own eyes different from doing what is right in God's eyes? Is there a hint in this verse of something that might change this? What is it?*

Point out that this verse points to what is about happen in the book of 1 Samuel. Have the children turn to **1 Samuel 8**. Explain that Samuel was the last judge God chose to rule over Israel. Samuel was a very good judge, but during his rule the people of Israel decided they had the best solution to all of their problems: a king.

*How might having a king help Israel? [Allow the children to respond.] Here is why Israel really wanted a king:*

Read **1 Samuel 8:5b**:

***Now appoint for us a king to judge us like all the nations.***

*Why did Israel want a king? [So it could be like the other nations.] Is this a good or bad reason for wanting a king? Why?*

Point to the **GOD—MAN** visual again. Remind the children that in the covenant God had promised to do three things for Israel: 1) Make them His treasured possession; 2) Make them a kingdom of priests; 3) Make them a holy nation.

*Would being God's treasured possession make them like all the other nations or different? [Different.] So when the people of Israel say they want a king so that they can be like the other nations, are they wanting to be known as a very different kind of people—God's covenant people? [No.]*

Display the container of marshmallows again. Pick out one marshmallow and one garlic clove and hold each of them up before the class. Explain that not only had the Israelites become ruined by letting the other nations live in their land, they now wanted to be just like the other nations. Pour all the marshmallows into a trash can and pour the bag of garlic cloves into the container.

*Do you think Samuel was happy with the people? Why not?*

Explain that Samuel was angry with the people. He warned the people about what having a king like the other nations would be like. A king would require them to work for him. A king would demand more and more from them. But would Israel listen?

Choose children to read **1 Samuel 8:19-22a**:

***But the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel. And they said, "No! But there shall be a king over us, that we also may be like all the nations, and that our king may judge us and go out before us and fight our battles." And when Samuel had heard all the words of the people, he repeated them in the ears of the LORD. And the LORD said to Samuel, "Obey their voice and make them a king."***

*Do you think this king would solve their problems? Would this king be a better king than God? Here is a riddle to think about this week that will answer this question. The riddle also contains a "key" to the clue that will be revealed on our poster next week:*

*Look high. Look low. Look underneath.  
Look in between something special and often seen.*

### **Application**

- Ask the children if their predictions from last week came true. Did having two little garlic cloves in the container make a difference to the taste and

smell of the marshmallows? What did this illustration have to do with today's story? How can this illustration teach us something about the life of a Christian today? Read and discuss some of the following verses: **Romans 12:2; Philippians 2:14-15; Titus 2:11-12; 1 Peter 2:9-10; 1 John 2:15-16.**

- **WORKBOOK**—Choose children to look up and read the following verses from **Judges: 3:7; 3:12; 4:1; 6:1; 10:6; 13:1**. Do they see the pattern? Can they predict what happened after each of these verses? Have them turn to Lesson 24 in their workbooks. What is pictured on the workbook portion of the page? Have the children draw arrows connecting the order of events together in a clockwise manner beginning with "Start here."
- Have the children turn to **Judges 7**. Point out that Gideon was one of Israel's better known judges. Ask the children if they can recall the special circumstances involved with Gideon's defeat of the Midianites. (You may want to give the children some clues: trumpets, smashed jars, torches, and three hundred men.) Who really gave Israel the victory? Read what happened after this victory in **Judges 8:22-23**. What does this show us about Israel's heart? What was Gideon's response? Point out in the following verses that Gideon made a special garment of gold and jewels. It became like an idol both to him and the people of Israel. Is the pattern (as seen on the workbook page) already beginning to repeat itself?
- Point out that sometimes when we are having troubles, we believe there should be a quick solution to our problem. What did Israel think would solve their problems? What did they ask for? Have the children turn to **1 Samuel 8:4-18**. Choose children to read verses or carefully summarize the verses. Next, make a chart with two columns labeled: God vs. Human king. After reading through the warning from Samuel in verses 11-17, have the children think of words and phrases describing the kings of the other nations (e.g., they take things from you, make you work hard for them, etc.). Is this what God is like? What words or phrases describe the kind of king God was to his people (e.g., good, faithful, merciful, provides them with food, fights for them, saves them, etc.)? Which one would you want to rule over you? What did Israel choose? Read verse **19**. Are we ever like Israel? Are there times we reject God as King? How is this shown in our lives? How do we show whether or not we treasure God as our King? Read and discuss **Philippians 2:10-11**.

**Send Home**

- Parent Resource Page

