



RUN THROUGH THE BIBLE



ATHLETE STUDY

WEEK 7

THE RESCUER

In 2018, twelve boys and their soccer coach got trapped in a flooded cave in Thailand. The flood forced them deeper and deeper into the dark, further from any light or way out on their own before sealing them in. The movie, *13 Lives*, recounts the story of the incredible international effort and the team of specialized divers it took to bring them out alive.

Last Week, God brought Israel out of the wilderness and into the Promised Land under Joshua. Even then we saw Israel wandering from God. This Week we step into the book of *Judges*, which is named for the period after the conquest. We'll only be scratching the surface, but in today's passage we'll see the cycle of Judges. But like the boys trapped in the cave, sin takes Israel further into darkness. Yet God doesn't leave them in their distress. He sent a rescuer.

RYHME REVIEW

1	CREATIONS GLORY NOW UNDONE
2	FLOOD OUT THE WORLD, START FRESH WITH YOU
3	NEW LANGUAGE BRINGS DISUNITY
4	THE SOD, THE SEED, AND BLESS SOME MORE
5	WALK THROUGH RED SEA AND STAY ALIVE
6	POSSESS THE LAND, BUT DO NOT MIX
7	IN SIN, ENSLAVED, THEN LOOK TO HEAVEN

JUDGES 2 (SELECTED)

¹⁰ And all that generation also were gathered to their fathers. And there arose another generation after them who did not know the LORD or the work that he had done for Israel. ¹¹ And the people of Israel did what was evil in the sight of the LORD and served the Baals. ¹² And they abandoned the LORD, the God of their fathers, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt. They went after other gods, from among the gods of the peoples who were around them, and bowed down to them.

¹⁴ So the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and he gave them over to plunderers...

¹⁵ Whenever they marched out, the hand of the LORD was against them for harm, as the LORD had warned... And they were in terrible distress.

¹⁶ Then the LORD raised up judges, who saved them out of the hand of those who plundered them.

¹⁸ Whenever the LORD raised up judges for them, the LORD was with the judge, and he saved them from the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge. For the LORD was moved to pity by their groaning because of those who afflicted and oppressed them.

¹⁹ But whenever the judge died, they turned back and were more corrupt than their fathers, going after other gods, serving them and bowing down to them. They did not drop any of their practices or their stubborn ways.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Judges is an incredibly significant period in Israel's history. It connects the time of Moses and Joshua to the kings of Israel. However, it's not a book that's often discussed or taught on in churches. Part of the reason is that Israel's sin led to extreme chaos and brutality that can be pretty discouraging for Sunday morning worship. Despite this, there's much to learn so we can break the cycle in our own lives.



DISCUSSION

What's something significant that you've only ever heard about from older people but never experienced yourself?

1. How did the new generation differ from Joshua's generation? (10)

2. What did Israel do, and how did God respond? (11–12, 14–15)

3. What was true every time God raised up a judge — and what happened after the judge died? (16, 18–19)

4. What does this passage reveal about God's nature?

5. What does this passage reveal about human nature?

6. Where may you be drifting? How should God's kindness lead you to repentance?

Like Israel, we are surrounded by a culture that encourages sin. In today's world, the pursuit of holiness is rebellion. If you have questions. Talk to your coach!

ICEBREAKER

OBSERVATION

INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION



ATHLETE STUDY

STUDY NOTES

FORGOTTEN HEROES

Two hunters hired a pilot to fly them into the Far North for elk hunting. Quite successful, they bagged six big bulls. When the pilot returned, the men began to load their gear and the six elk onto his plane. The pilot objected, "This plane can only take out four of your six elk. You'll need to leave two behind. The hunters argued, "Last year, we shot six bulls as well and the pilot allowed us to put all six aboard His plane was the exact same model and capacity as yours." Reluctantly, the pilot agreed.

However, as the pilot attempted to take off and leave the valley, the plane struggled and eventually crashed in the frozen wilderness. Climbing out of the wreckage, one hunter asked the other, "Do you know where we are?" The second hunter replied, "I think so. It looks like the same place we crashed *last year*."

Last Week, Joshua was still alive, commanding the tribes of Israel to go take possession of their allotted lands. He warned them of the dangers if they didn't clear the Land. Judges 1 shows Israel failing in this task. Like the hunters not learning their lesson, this failure led Israel into repeated cycles that plagued generation after generation.

SIN CYCLES INVITE GOD'S DISCIPLINE

In Judges 2, our passage picks up as Joshua and his generation are laid to rest. At this point in the story, we read the most fateful words in the book of Judges, "**Another generation grew up who knew neither the LORD nor what he had done for Israel.**" They had heard about God's mighty acts secondhand—campfire stories from parents and grandparents—but they had not personally experienced the Lord's presence nor seen what he had done for Israel when he **brought them out of Egypt**.

Forgetfulness led to forsakenness as Israel **forsook the Lord. They followed and worshiped various gods of the peoples around them.** Because of their failure to clear the land, they were immersed in a culture where sin surrounded them. It didn't take long before the sinful practices of pagan worship became their practice.

Verses 14–15 remind us of two important truths about God's character. First, the Lord is jealous for our affections, and will not always spare us from the consequences when we turn from him to something lesser. As they turned away, the Lord's **anger** kindled **against Israel**. This isn't

like a toddler's tantrum—this is the discipline of a good Father (see Hebrews 11:12).

Second, God is true to his word. The Lord promised **whenever Israel went out to fight, the hand of the LORD was against them to defeat them.** God must confront sin. Yet, he is merciful and compassionate, responding to the **distress** of his people.

As we've said, this Week the period known for the leaders the Lord raised up called "Judges." **The LORD raised up judges** responding to Israel's **distress... because of their groaning under those who oppressed and afflicted them.** However, whenever the Lord raised up judges for Israel, the Lord **was with the judge and saved them out of the hands of their enemies as long as the judge lived.**

But when the judge died, the people returned to ways even more corrupt than those of their ancestors. And, the cycle of Judges repeated. Each time, Israel descended further into sin and chaos.

#7, IN SIN, ENSLAVED, THEN LOOK TO HEAVEN

This cycle leads to a repeated theme that emerges toward the end of Judges. It says, "*In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes.*" Judges is marked by this descending cycle

that leads to horrific events including civil war and one of the twelve tribes of Israel nearly becoming extinct.

And yet, as bad as it ever gets, even in the middle of that downward spiral, God never stopped sending rescuers. Every single time Israel cried out, however half-hearted or self-inflicted their suffering was, God answered. That's who he is—not because Israel earned it, but because of who God is. The question worth asking isn't just "*how corrupt did Israel get?*" It's "*where in my own life am I already drifting, one small compromise at a time, without even noticing it?*"

God is jealous for our affections. He's jealous because he wants what's best for us. He *is* what's best for us. So, he wants us to want *him*.

However, God doesn't compel us to love him. He invites us into an intimate relationship. And, as the Apostle Paul said, "*God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance*" (Romans 2:4). Unlike Israel in the time of Judges, God has shown us the greatest kindness that could exist in the person and work of Jesus Christ—the perfect Judge.

